



Women and employment: advances and challenges in policies for women's labour-force participation in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the post-pandemic recovery

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Note to the reader: the information contained in this Policy Paper is based on the study carried out by a group of researchers coordinated by the Anglo-American University (AAU) of the Czech Republic and commissioned by the EUROsocial Programme and the EULAC Foundation – (hereinafter "AAU study")¹

The EU-LAC Foundation, based in Hamburg, made up of the 61 countries of the European Union (EU), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the European Union as its own member, has among its objectives promoting spaces for reflection on the challenges faced by the EU and LAC to achieve higher levels of well-being for their societies and better routes for the future. In this sense, promoting an informed and proactive debate on the inclusion of young women in the world of work is at the centre of interest of the Foundation and the bi-regional actors that promote inclusive and sustainable development.

1. Lourdes Daza Aramayo, LAC-Center AAU was in charge of the study, and it was carried out by the following team of researchers: Alena Křížková, Purificación López Igual, Vanda Maufras Černohorská, Blanka Nyklová, Raquel Partida Rocha, Elin Peterson, Marie Pospíšilová, Cecilia Rocha Carpiuc, Paula Rodríguez-Modroño, Isabel Távora, Marta Vohlidalová, Eugenio Actis di Pasquale, Tindara Addabbo, Eliana Aspiazu, Romina Cutuli, Filippo Damiani, Lourdes Gabriela Daza Aramayo, Radka Dudová, Julia Espinosa Fajardo, Ana María Fernández Marín, Lenka Formánková, Marie Hermanová.

On the other hand, EUROsociAL+ is the third phase of the European Union Cooperation Programme promoted under the auspices of the conclusions of the CELAC-EU Summits of Heads of State and Government. Its objective is to support the national public policies of 18 Latin American countries with an impact on social cohesion, through the exchange of experiences, knowledge and technical assistance actions between the countries of Latin America and Europe. The Programme has three main areas of public policy: social policies, good governance and gender equality. In this context, the promotion of the integration of young women into the world of work is a key area of country support activities. The Programme is also a space for bi-regional dialogue on public policies between institutions in Latin America and Europe and seeks to promote reflection on the issues on its intervention agenda.

At the beginning of 2018, the European Union Programme EUROsociAL+ and the EU-LAC Foundation launched a call on "Good Practices and Innovations for the Inclusion of Young Women in the World of Work in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean". The purpose of this call was to collect and share among social organisations, business actors, public institutions and decision-makers, those positive experiences that managed to bear fruit to reduce the gender and generational gaps that still persist in the economic, political and social systems in both regions. Among the experiences received, 10 were selected that, due to their objectives, methodological processes and results, are of reference and innovative to achieve decent employment conditions and better living standards for young women in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. These good practices are published in a document available online. In addition, these good practices were presented and discussed at a bi-regional seminar organised in Mexico City in September 2018.

Following this initiative, in 2020, the EUROsociAL Programme and the EU-LAC Foundation launched a call for research on the field of public policies launched or in the design phase by the governments of the two regions to address the problems related to the labour insertion of young women, particularly in the pandemic and post-pandemic context.

This Policy paper is based on the research developed by a group of experts from the AAU, assignee of the call, and is the result of the work of review, systematisation and selection of experiences of the experts Sara Bayes² y Almudena Moreno³.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY⁴

The purpose of this document is to provide inputs and contribute to reflection for decision-making in the field of equality in employment between men and women. It aims to be a document of proposals and measures of public policies that **can be taken into consideration, both in the 27 countries of the European Union (EU27) and in their relationship with their partners in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**, to increase women's participation into labour market in a stable and equitable manner. To this end, the document has been organised in four structured sections as set out below.

The first section presents the **main problems faced by women** in their access to the labour market, highlighting their lower occupation, their increased presence in positions of worse quality (higher rate of temporary hiring and part-time jobs), a significant wage gap (inferior access to decision-making positions or lower wages comparatively) and an overload due to unpaid and care work. The evidence indicates that the starting situation has been aggravated with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Sara Bayes has proven experience in the coordination of institutional cooperation initiatives between the public administration of Latin American and Caribbean countries and European institutions, in addition to the management of bi-regional EU-LAC projects on public policies in the social field: employment and social inclusion, migration, gender issues and public health. She has experience in the elaboration of best practice studies, drafting of policy papers and coordination of knowledge transfer activities.
3. She is specialised in planning, monitoring and evaluation methodologies for projects with a gender approach, as well as in institutional strengthening of public entities and civil society. She has 25 years of professional experience in the field of international development cooperation at an academic level (Complutense University), with different international multidisciplinary organisations (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation -AECID- and the European Union) and in different positions and countries, with 9 years of professional experience in Latin America (Venezuela, Nicaragua and Ecuador) and the rest in Europe (Madrid, Brussels and Montenegro), in Asia (Indonesia) and in Africa (Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau). Since February 2011, she managed the Temporary Grouping of Organisations (ATO-SAGE) formed by IPADE, Solidaridad Internacional and Habitáfrica (today Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid), for the Food Security and Environmental Governance Convention in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau, becoming the Coordinator of the Local Sustainable Development Programme of Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid after the merger.
4. This policy paper has been translated from its original version in Spanish

In a second section it **compiles proposals and roadmaps** to promote the participation of women in the labour market. The source of these initiatives has its origin in various organisations of the United Nations System (especially UN Women and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean -ECLAC-), other specialised agencies (highlighting the International Labour Organisation -ILO-) and the European Union. Thus, according to the aforementioned documentation, these entities point out the need of promoting employment policy actions aimed at:

- increasing equitable participation in the different sectors of the economy;
- bridging the pay gap;
- promoting co-responsibility for work, personal and family life, putting the care economy and social protection systems at the centre.

The third section of the document highlights possible **solutions**, in terms of public policies, to address the problems identified in the previous chapters that have been promoted in EU27 and LAC countries; in particular those that have been defined as axes for the post-pandemic economic recovery. To this end, the most significant findings of the initial analysis, carried out by the Anglo-American University (AAU), have been systematised and categorised in relation to the measures that are necessary to favour women's access to employment in conditions of equity and quality. The knowledge to be acquired has been compiled according to four dimensions of the previous studies:

- Encourage parity and conciliation through experiences in Chile, Mexico, Portugal, Sweden, the Czech Republic and the European Union.
- Formalisation of jobs, analysing the initiative of the Dominican Republic.
- Training and active employment policies implemented in Chile and Uruguay.
- New technologies and employment: ICT and teleworking developed in Argentina, Chile and Spain.

Finally, the fourth section proposes a **series of recommendations** to improve the participation rate of women in the labour market and reduce the pay gap between men and women.

The concrete measures suggested have been categorised in a decalogue of initiatives that are expected to contribute to: (I) eliminate imbalances in women's access to and participation in the labour market; (II) ensure that promotion, training and working conditions (including remuneration) processes respect the principle of equal treatment and opportunities; and, (III) promote co-responsibility for work, personal and family life.

These recommendations are based on what was addressed in the previous sections, taking up the lessons learned with the implementation of public policy actions in LAC and the EU and the main programmatic documents that emerge from the international agenda that relate employment with the situation of women. To this end, a series of measures are suggested aimed at:

- Promoting training actions for women's employment
- Moving towards an equal remuneration for equal work between men and women.
- Increasing women's economic autonomy through the formalisation of self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- Training and incentives for the insertion of women taking into account jobs or positions in which they are underrepresented.
- Facilitating teleworking, ICT, digital platforms so that they can be tools that facilitate access to employment for women.
- Promoting a more equitable redistribution of unpaid care work by reducing the asymmetry of care that weighs on many women.
- Giving visibility and integrating actions related to care as part of the economy.
- Contributing to a social protection system that accompanies employment policies with equity

It is hoped that the implementation of the proposed actions, which are based on the diagnostic documents that originate this report, will help to place women at the centre of economic recovery in conditions of equality and social justice.

CHAPTER 1: STATE OF THE ART:

A GENERAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM AND MAJOR CHALLENGES

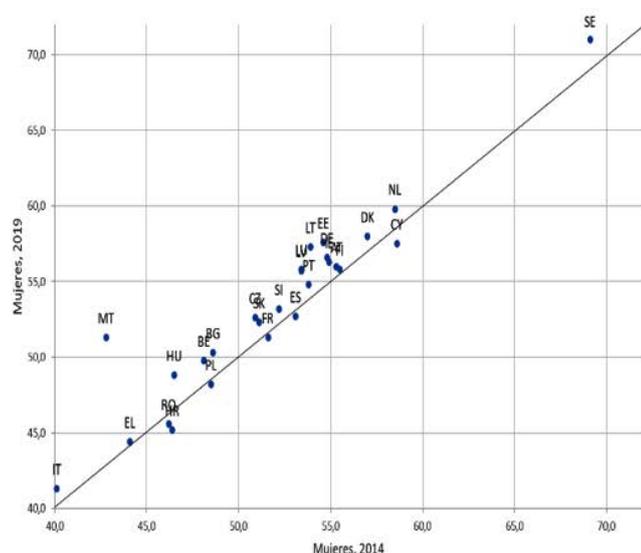
What are we up against when we want to promote women's participation in the labour market? Main problems in figures

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the participation rate of women in the labour market in the 27 countries of the European Union (EU27) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), in general terms,

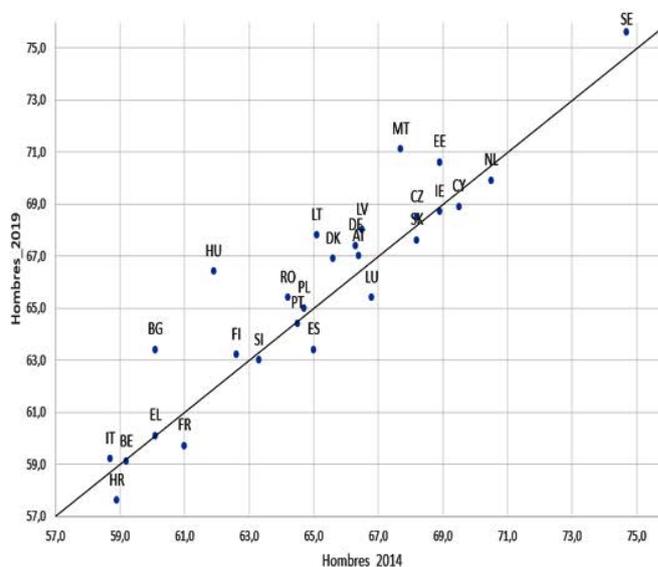
was lower than that of men. Thus, the employment rate of women in the EU27 was around 48% compared to 60% on average for men in 2019. In the case of LAC, and despite an improvement in previous years in terms of access to female employment in the region, the gender gap was greater than 20 percentage points (p.p.) in more than half of the countries, reaching 32.5 p.p. in Mexico.

Figure 1. European Union (27 countries): female and male participation rates, 2014 and 2019 (in percentages)

A. Women



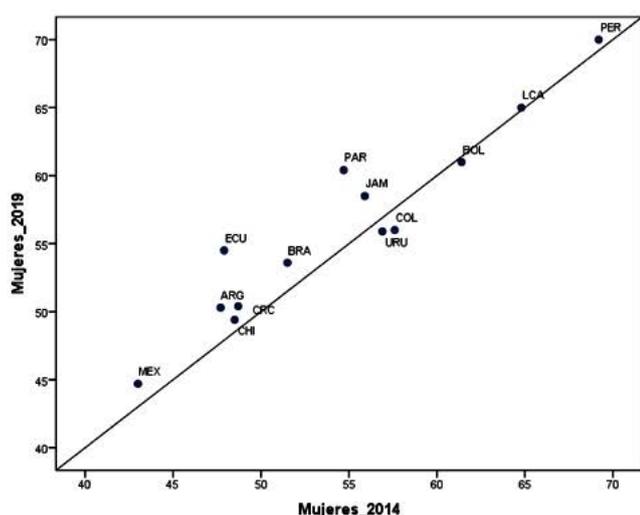
A. Males



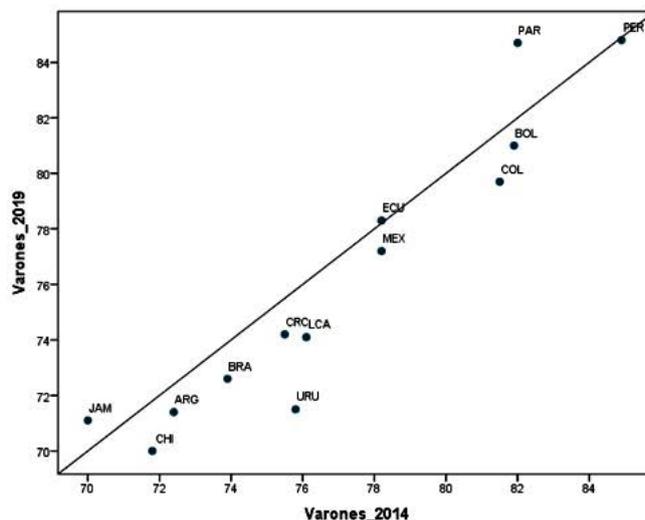
Source: Own elaboration by the AAU team with data from ILOSTAT

Figure 2. Latin America (13 countries): female and male participation rates, 2014 and 2019 (In percentages)

A. Women



A. Males

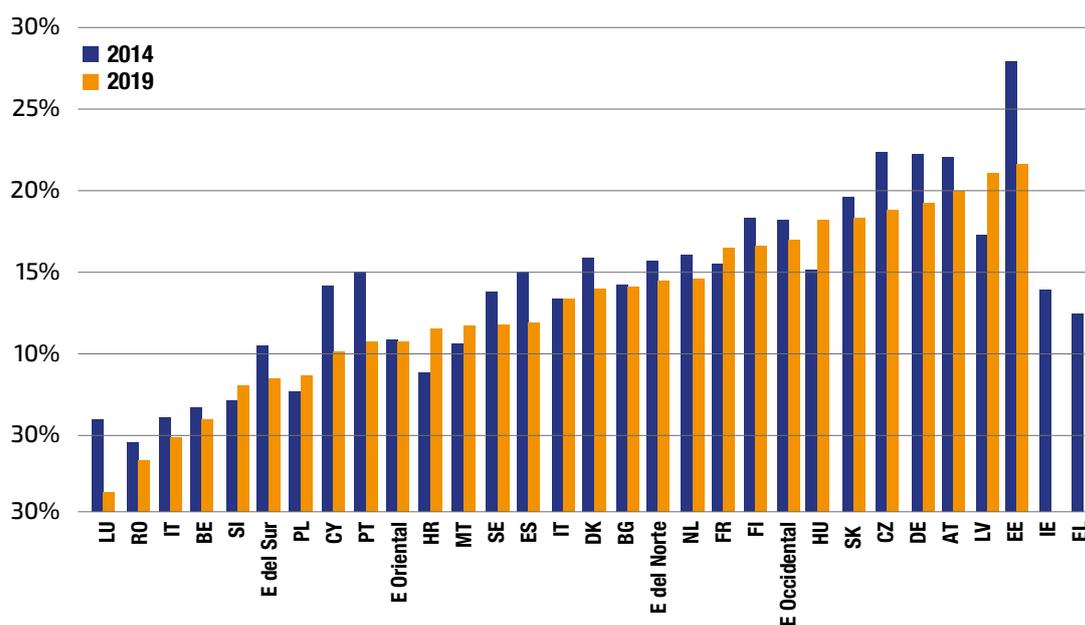


Source: Own elaboration by the AAU team with data from ILOSTAT

It should be noted that, in general, both women and men in the EU27 and LAC had higher employment rates the higher their level of education. The southern European countries or Argentina, Chile and Costa Rica stand out, countries where a directly proportional relationship between level of study and female occupation is manifested, with a higher occupation for women with higher levels of education.

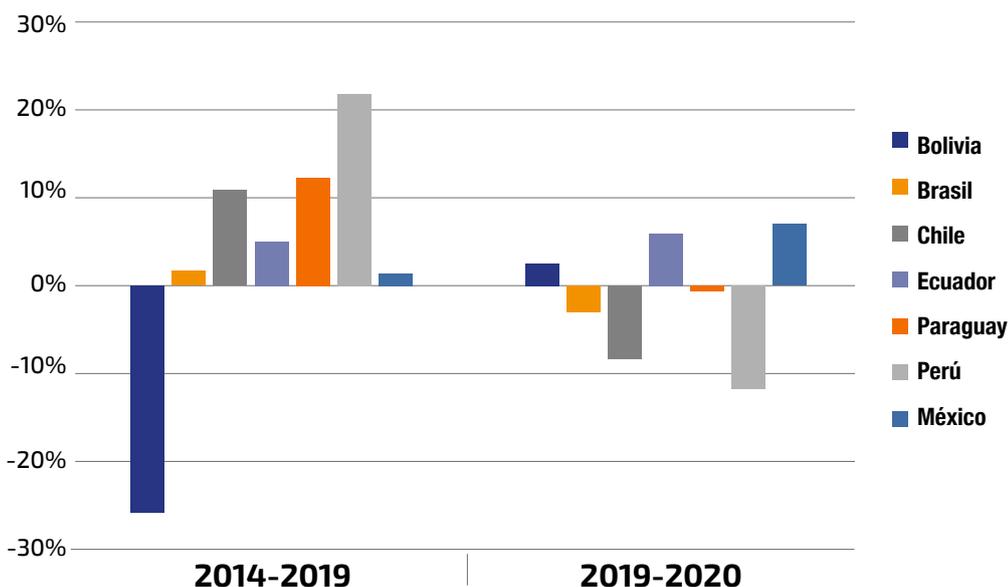
To the lower rate of female employment, **it should be added that they occupied jobs of worse quality** (higher rate of temporary hiring and part-time jobs), presented a significant wage gap (lower access to decision-making positions or comparatively lower wages) and **an overload due to unpaid domestic and care work**.

Figure 3. European Union: Unadjusted hourly wage gap, 2014 and 2019



Source: Own elaboration by the AAU team with Eurostat data

Figure 4. Latin America (7 countries): Year-on-year variation pre-pandemic and during the pandemic in the proportion of women in managerial positions (in percentages)



Source: Own elaboration by the AAU team with data from ILOSTAT

With the arrival of the pandemic, according to the study carried out by the AAU, in EU countries, the activity rate of women fell by 3.7% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter of the previous year, with a more negative impact on the countries of Southern Europe (-6%), followed by Western Europe (-2.8%), Northern Europe and Eastern Europe (-2%). The fall in male activity rates has been lower in Europe as a whole (-2.7%), highlighting Southern Europe with -4.3%, Western Europe with -3% and less than 1% in the rest of Europe. This fall would be explained by the greater presence of women in sectors affected by the confinement measures for a longer time.

In the LAC region, there was a greater impact for women than for men and, at the same time, a slower recovery in employment. It should be noted that informal employment, highly feminised, suffered the greatest impact during 2020, which meant that a large number of women lost their source of income.

According to the same AAU study, women in both Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean since before the pandemic were the main caregivers of paid and unpaid care work. With the implementation of confinement measures, women increased a good part of these activities of care in homes and the care of dependents during quarantine. In addition, as women generally earned less than their male partners, women were more likely to lose their jobs or have to quit them in order to care for their children during the lockdown.

Another issue that should be highlighted is that women lost more jobs because they were to a greater extent in affected sectors -usually paralysed- for a longer time, without the possibility of teleworking (personal services, hospitality, catering, commerce, artistic activities or tourism).

Additionally, in LAC, as a region characterised by labour structures still with low implementation and use of ICTs and with high technological gaps, the possibilities of teleworking were presented in a non-homogeneous way among the different groups of workers⁵.

WITH ALL THIS, IT CAN BE SAID THAT COVID-19 HAS CLEARLY IMPACTED THE LABOUR MARKET ON THE TWO CONTINENTS, AND, AS THE REFERENCE STUDY INDICATES⁶, IT HAS CREATED A “DOUBLE INEQUALITY” TOWARDS WOMEN WITH PRE-EXISTING JOB INSECURITY SITUATIONS: LOWER REMUNERATION, WITH A LOW-SKILLED PROFESSIONAL PROFILE AND A GREATER FAMILY BURDEN.

5. Challenges and opportunities of teleworking in Latin America and the Caribbean; available at [wcms_811301.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

6. Study of the AAU

CHAPTER 2: THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA: WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES AND PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD OF WORK

2.1-WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET: THE CENTRAL THEMES

The promotion and implementation of inclusive policies that facilitate women's equal and real participation in the **labour market** is a historic demand and, for the United Nations Office for Women, is the cornerstone of their **economic empowerment**. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration⁷ to the present, different regional and international bodies have proposed and set out policies with a **gender perspective** in mind. Therefore, **decent work**, **gender equality** and **non-discrimination** feature prominently in the **2030 Agenda** and the related SDGs⁸. Particular mention should be made of Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) and Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and between countries). It is also relevant to highlight the rights and problems of domestic work contained in the **2011 Domestic Workers Convention**⁹ of the International Labour Organisation. In conclusion, there is a robust international agenda in terms of measures and recommendations to foster the equal participation of women in employment. From the decent work approach, however, this is far from being a reality in most Latin American countries.

The European Parliament in its resolution of 15 December 2021¹⁰ underlines that "the respect for the **right to work, as well as equal pay and treatment, is an essential precondition** precondition for equal rights, economic independence and professional fulfilment of women". Similarly, the AAU study affirms that the pillars for the **economic empowerment** of women and, with it, their full inclusion in society, would include: (1) **macroeconomic policies** with a **gender perspective**: occupation and employment, occupational segregation, training and generation of skills and the wage gap, and (2) policies related

to **social protection**: health, education, inclusion and the fight against structural poverty. The approach of both pillars in a coordinated manner would be the lever of change for a true inclusion of women in the labour market. The **European Union** in its **gender equality** strategy argues that "increasing women's participation in the labour market has a strong positive effect on the economy.... It also allows women to shape their own lives, play a role in public life and be economically independent." ECLAC also stresses that the care economy will be a key element for a sustainable economic recovery, and it is essential to agree on a fiscal pact. This legal framework should focus on women to direct resources to investment, job creation and the promotion of their digital and financial inclusion¹¹.

The challenge we face

Undoubtedly, the challenge that policy makers face is how to **maximise the interrelationship between women & employment & training** by putting into practice solutions that take into account both social needs / priorities and actions linked to the labour market; it is about betting on a **systematic approach**. As indicated by the European Commission in the Gender Strategy 2020-2025, the look at gender issues must prioritise a "dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with specific actions and rests on **intersectionality** as a horizontal principle for its application."

The challenge for the coming years: a great opportunity for women

As the AAU study points out and is also underlined by the **International Labour Organisation**¹² the health, social work and education sectors are important generators of employment, especially for women, because they bring resilience to economies and societies. It is identified as a priority to act on the "**economic axis of care**" this being

7. Beijing Statement. paragraph 35

8. Source United Nations: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, New York, 2015, A/RES/70/1

9. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/es/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460

10. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0500_ES.html

11. ECLAC Study-August 2020; <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45916-cuidados-america-latina-caribe-tiempos-covid-19-sistemas-integrales-fortalecer>

12. [wcms_814506.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/wcms_814506.pdf) (ilo.org)

one of the least regulated areas and where there are high rates of informality both in the European context and in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this sense, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission has pointed out within the European Employment Strategy the specific package on “*personal and domestic services*”¹³ disaggregated into two concepts:

- 63% are care activities: childcare, assistance to the elderly, dependent or disabled, excluding health care, which is recognised as care activities, and
- 37% are non-care activities: cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, gardening, repairs of small houses and private lessons, which it is recognised as non-care activities, in strict terms, although related.

It is true that there is a highly complex economic and social context, where the International Labour Organisation¹⁴ cites that fewer women will recover employment after the pandemic “*in the near future, inequalities between women and men in the world of work exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic will persist*”¹⁵. We also understand that it **is an opportunity for policy makers** to carry out the necessary reforms and put in place new policies and strategies that can be the way to a true inclusion of women in labour markets.

In order to **offer inputs and clues for reflection for the future**, it seems necessary to analyse and rescue the proposals and strategic plans that were formulated before 11 March 2020¹⁶ as well as the new intervention proposals that have been proposed by international organisations, ECLAC or through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF¹⁷) of the Next Generation funds of the European Union (NGUE).

2.2. ILO PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION POST-COVID-19

The International Labour Organisation, in its role as promoter of social justice, the creation of jobs and the improvement of working conditions in its member States, establishes the need to **apply the gender perspective** not only to combat structural obstacles but also to incorporate women into the world of work¹⁸, what is often called in various reports “the gender glasses”.

Similarly, the ILO calls on states to prioritise support for the most affected groups, in particular young people, women and low-skilled low-paid workers, so that they can achieve decent employment and not suffer any kind of long-term “sequelae”.

In the current context of the pandemic, the ILO has identified a **list of challenges** that must be addressed and that, without a doubt, have an impact on improving the quality of work of women and can facilitate their incorporation into the labour market. The following being the most remarkable¹⁹:

- Giving greater attention to **the care economy**
- Facilitating the **transition** of workers from the **informal to the formal economy**
- **Increasing the** quality of women's incomes
- Promoting **the balance** between work and family responsibilities at home
- Improving the working **conditions of care workers**
- Designing **specific employment services** for mothers
- Compensating women health workers through benefits and higher remuneration (permanent or temporary)
- Incorporating women into **STEM** (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) jobs while appropriating the development of STEM skills in them
- Promoting **universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems**

13. Personal and domestic services - Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

14. Gender equality: Fewer women than men will regain employment during the post-COVID-19 phase, according to the ILO (ilo.org). 19 July 2021

15. Globally, between 2019 and 2020, women's employment fell by 4.2 percent, the equivalent of a drop of 54 million jobs, while men's employment fell by 3 percent, or 60 million jobs.

16. Date on which the pandemic status was declared by WHO

17. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0241&from=EN>

18. The Action Plan on Gender Equality 2018-2021. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_650469.pdf

19. Advancing reconstruction with more equity: Women's rights to work and workplace, at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery (19 July 2021) [wcms_814506.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcms_814506.pdf) (ilo.org)

To respond to these challenges, the ILO has developed a series of **proposals and recommendations** addressed to member States and classified into four dimensions:

2.2.1 Promoting new employment policies with a gender perspective:

- Protecting and creating new jobs with a focus on women's incomes
- Driving changes in public employment services to apply an explicit gender approach
- Combating wage inequality

2.2.2 Investing in the care economy:

- Proposing flexible working modalities
- Professionalising jobs linked to the care economy
- Designing balanced benefits that facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy

2.2.3 Promoting new social policies (social protection):

- Designing and implementing a battery of policies that encourage the reconciliation of family and professional women

2.2.4 Increasing women's knowledge and skills:

- Implementing policies that combat the gender competence gap
- Intervening in the generation of new skills (ICTs)
- Adapting the content and scope of vocational training to improve the fit between supply and demand for qualifications²⁰

2.3 THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE - UN WOMEN

The United Nations Office for Women aims to develop programmes, policies and strategies for the defence of the rights of women and girls. One of the pillars of its work is the economic empowerment of women²¹. As mentioned above, building women's economic autonomy through access to quality, formal and paid jobs is the step towards true gender equality.

Regarding the object of analysis of the AAU study on the participation of women in the world of work, from UN – Women, we identify two milestones of interest that, given their capacity for advocacy, can mark the roadmap on this issue:

- The **Global Partnership for Care**²²: a joint platform by UN Women that aims to reduce inequalities by ensuring the recognition, reduction and redistribution of domestic and care work among co-responsible actors, as well as the remuneration and recognition of care workers. Among other actions proposed by this multi-stakeholder space was the declaration of 14 December 2021 where states are urged to recognise the right to care as a human right.
- The document prepared jointly with ECLAC "**Towards the construction of comprehensive systems of care in Latin America and the Caribbean**"²³ which highlights the need to professionalise jobs linked to the care economy. Main proposals: care as a right, universality, social and gender co-responsibility, promotion of autonomy and the establishment of new financing systems.

Finally, and within the structure of the United Nations, it is relevant to take into account **the UNDP programme²⁴ to monitor from a gender perspective the responses that governments have put in place to combat the effects of COVID-19**. Two types of responses are analysed: 1) women's participation in COVID-19 working groups and measures adopted by governments on: women's economic and social security, unpaid care work, the labour market, and women's participation quotas.

20. Labour Outlook 2021: ILO: After two years of pandemic, the recovery of employment has been insufficient in Latin America and the Caribbean (ilo.org)

21. <https://www.unwomen.org/es/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>

22. <https://alianzadecuidados.forogeneracionigualdad.mx/acerca/>

23. Towards Construction Care System_15Nov21-v04.pdf (unwomen.org)

24. COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker (undp.org)

2.4 The European Union

Before the pandemic and during the pandemic, the European Institutions have highlighted the importance of maximising the connection between gender & employment & rights, highlighting that women's **economic empowerment** is the key to gender equality.

In its **dimension of leadership and policy-building**, the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (1st half of 2022) as well as the Troika of the Presidency²⁵ have pointed out the **roadmap (challenges)** to be followed by the Member States and the European institutions, highlighting the following measures:

1. Promoting a directive to **improve the conditions** of workers through digital platforms.
2. Promote the right to equal pay for work of equal value²⁶
3. Promoting women's participation in **decision-making bodies**
4. Promoting different measures for the economic empowerment of women: the most remarkable priorities²⁷ being the following:
 - Eliminating gender gaps in the labour market.
 - Addressing gender-related wage and pension gaps.
 - Reducing/eliminating the gender gap in care,
 - Achieving equitable participation in the different sectors of the economy.

In the **operational and programmatic dimension** there are different proposals and documents prepared by the European Commission; in this document we analyse those that have a more programmatic character and those that make a specific regard on young people. They are as follows:

2.4.1 The European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan²⁸

The European Pillar of Social Rights²⁹ is the instrument designed by the European institutions to set the agenda on which the rule of law must be based. There are **20 basic principles** of which we highlight the three that in

our opinion are of interest to this document:

2.4.1.1 Education, training and learning: The European Commission prioritises "new skills development: European Skills Agenda 2020-2025". The European Skills Agenda is one of the European Commission's strategies to respond to future challenges affecting women's participation in the labour market. For the development and improvement of capacities and their implementation, three actions are proposed:

- Vocational training and skills.
- European approach to micro-credentialing.
- Harmonised information systems such as EUROPASS.³⁰

2.4.1.2 Gender Equality: highlighting the need to promote equal treatment and opportunities for women to access the labour market. In order to achieve this goal, the **Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025** is established (see below).

2.4.1.3 Active support for employment (youth employment) as the right of people to be trained and to increase their career prospects. It is important to note that the measures aimed at generating employment for young women through the youth support package³¹ are:

- Updating vocational education and training systems focused on the ecological and digital transitions.
- Intervening on the gender gap and other forms of discrimination through measures that promote balance between women and men in traditionally "male" or "female" professions.
- Promoting and facilitating the social entrepreneurship of young women
- Promoting atypical forms of employment such as digital platforms

The European Pillar has subsequently been developed in its Action Plan (March 2021). The purpose of the Action Plan is to point to a more concrete roadmap

25. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/>

26. Porto's Social Commitment (7 May 2021) Social Commitment of Porto (2021portugal.eu)

27. Conclusions of the conference on Economic Empowerment as a key element of Gender Equality (31/01/2022)

28. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_es- Approved on 17/11/2017 and the Action Plan.

29. "The 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights are the beacon that guides us towards a strong, fair, inclusive and opportunity-filled social Europe."

30. Free set of online tools that allow you to manage skills and plan learning and career in Europe (linked to occupational mobility)

31. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0276&from=ES>

through the definition of commitments and measures that countries must take into account for the fulfilment of the social agenda. The following are those that impact on women's ability to participate in the labour market³²:

Commitments	Measures
Increase an inclusive employment rate	Reduce by at least 50% the employment gap
	Increase the provision of child education and childcare (conciliation)
	Reduce the rate of young NEETs (who neither study, nor work, nor receive training) aged between 15 and 29 from 12.6% (in 2019) to 9%, in particular improving their job prospects
At least 60% of adults should participate in training activities every year	At least 80% of people aged 16-74 should have basic digital skills
	Early school leaving should be further reduced and participation in upper secondary education increased
Application of the principle of equal pay for men and women workers for the same work or for work of equal value	Wage transparency measures and enforcement mechanisms

2.4.2 The European Employment Strategy

The European Employment Strategy brings together employment guidelines, the employment assessment report, national reform and regional programmes and country reports where recommendations are made to the different Member States. With regard to this document, the recommendations on women's employment and participation are as follows:³³

- Promote equity, fight poverty and **promote equal opportunities** for all.
- Boosting **demand for labour** and, in particular, guidance on job creation, work taxation and wage setting.
- Improve the supply of labour and **qualifications**, addressing the structural weaknesses of education and training systems, and addressing youth and long-term unemployment.
- Better **functioning of labour markets**, with a specific focus on reducing labour market segmentation (horizontal and vertical segregation).
- Increase active labour market measures and labour market mobility.

2.4.3 The Strategy for Gender Equality

The Strategy for Gender Equality "A Union of Equality" (2020-2025)³⁴ is the EU policy document that sets out the roadmap to be followed to promote Gender Equality in the EU. Specifically, the priority "equal opportunities to thrive in society and the economy" is identified and for the purposes of this work we highlight the following **challenges**:

- Combating the gender gap in the labour market,
- Achieving equal participation in the different sectors of the economy,
- Addressing the pay gap and pension gap between women and men
- Reducing the gender gap in care responsibilities.
- Generate evidence on which to support proposals and reforms

The Strategy for Gender Equality points to a series of measures related to 4 dimensions that directly impact women's participation in the labour market:

32. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b7c08d86-7cd5-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

33. <https://ec.europa.eu/social>

34. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=ES-5/03/2020>

2.4.3.1 Employment policies

- Encouraging the possibility of thriving as investors and entrepreneurs (EUInvest programme)
- Achieving equal participation in the different sectors of the economy
- Promoting gender balance in professions where one or the other sex traditionally predominates and address the issue of gender stereotypes.
- Combating the gender pay gap: a comprehensive approach to its root causes such as women's lower participation in the labour market, invisible and unpaid work, women's greater use of part-time work
- Promoting the definition of binding measures on wage transparency.

2.4.3.2 Care economy

- Investing in care services to support women's participation in paid employment and professional development.
- Improving the availability and affordability of quality childcare and care services for other dependents through investments from European programmes such as ESF+.

2.4.3.3 Social policies

- Transposing and implementing the "Directive on work-life balance" where a list of minimum standards is established encouraging flexible work, family leave and quality solutions for families with children.
- Promoting national systems of taxation and benefits so that they can act as incentives or financial disincentives for people who contribute the second source of family income.
- Providing childcare, social assistance and domestic services, in particular for single-parent families

2.4.3.4 Knowledge and skills

- Designing and implementing monitoring indicators on Women in the digital environment "Women in the digital environment"
- Combating horizontal segregation through the acquisition of new skills

Finally, on the gender strategy, the European Parliament adopted the resolution of 15 December 2021 on equality between women and men in the European Union³⁶, which called for increasing the links between the **European Green Deal** and the gender strategy because of its implications for defining new niches and employment opportunities.

2.4.4 The European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF³⁷)

The objective of the Recovery and Resilience Facility is to mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green economy and digital transitions. Among the relevant issues, gender equality and equal opportunities for all³⁸ are determined as a transversal objective that should permeate the actions and projects carried out by the EEMM. Specifically, it identifies **the challenges** to which the RRF must respond:

- Investing in **robust healthcare infrastructure** to ensure gender equality.
- **Empowering women economically** to develop resilient societies.
- Combating **precarious conditions** in a sector where women predominate,
- Boosting job **creation** and preventing poverty and social exclusion to have a positive impact on gross domestic product (GDP)
- Facilitating more women in paid work (**combating informality**)

35. Directive (EU) 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers

36. European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2021 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020 (2021/2020(INI))

37. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0241&from=EN>

38. Section 28

As an example, the Spain Can Programme in its component 23 “new public policies for a dynamic and inclusive labour market³⁹” proposes the following actions:

Concept: Reforms	Actions
Regulation of remote work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Decree-Law on remote work (RDL 28/2020)
Measures to eliminate the gender gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Equality Act and aligning maternity and paternity leave progressively up to 16 weeks Royal Decree for equal pay for men and women (pay transparency) Royal Decree on equality plans and their registration
Youth Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The training programme in alternation with employment YOUTH EMPLOYMENT-TanDEM First professional experience in public administrations Research programme
Employment Women and gender mainstreaming in public policies to support activation for employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for women in rural and urban areas (raising awareness to increase their participation in the economic activities of their area, which will entail offering training opportunities as well as advice in these areas: digital, technological, entrepreneurship and social economy that is linked to endogenous products (local and green dimension), forest and agricultural use, online business activities, and support to dependency) Training and insertion programmes for women victims of gender violence or trafficking and sexual exploitation with a commitment to recruitment Actions to promote gender mainstreaming in all active employment policies
Acquisition of new skills for digital, green and productive transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional requalification of employed workers in the tourism sector Financing of training actions that include commitments to hire unemployed workers Provide funding to employed and unemployed workers to carry out concrete training actions Perform the detection of training needs

2.5 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Since the **Montevideo Strategy** for the Implementation of the “Regional Gender Agenda in the Framework of Sustainable Development towards 2030⁴⁰” topics of consensus for Latin America and the Caribbean have been identified. These mark the **employment & women agenda**, including:

- Combating the sexual division of labour and the unjust social organisation of care.
- Defeminizing **global chains of care**: the transfer of care work from one woman to another, based on power relations according to sex, class and place of origin.
- Avoiding **the concentration of power** and hierarchical relations in the public sphere.
- Combating patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns and the predominance of the culture of privilege.

39. <https://planderecuperacion.gob.es/politicas-y-componentes>

40. <https://www.cepal.org/es/documentos/estrategia-montevideo-la-implementacion-la-agenda-regional-genero-marco-desarrollo>

The same strategy set out a number of measures that ECLAC Member States should implement, including some of the following measures that remain in force.

Subsequently, from 27 to 31 January 2020, the **Santiago Commitment** was approved⁴¹ where the following priorities were again placed on the region's agenda:

2.5.1 Knowledge and Skills

- Promoting the labour participation of women in **areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, eliminating labour segregation.**
- Strengthening women's capacities and promoting their full participation in the digital ecosystem in LAC.
- Incorporating the approach of gender equality, intersectionality, interculturality and intergenerationality in the design and implementation of digital agendas and national strategies for innovation and ICT.

2.5.2 Employment policies

- Guaranteeing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and urge the public and private sector to take action in this regard (combat the wage gap)
- Ensuring decent work and equal pay, particularly in emerging sectors, including the digital economy, which are key to structural change with equality and the decarbonisation of economies;
- Promoting public-private partnerships and the generation of new jobs and opportunities for women, particularly in emerging sectors of economies;

Finally, in a recent study on the impacts of COVID-19 "Gender gaps in the labour market and the effects of the health crisis on women's economic autonomy"⁴² coordinated by the gender division, it pointed out the following challenges:

- Combating horizontal and vertical segregation in both the professional and educational fields
- Increasing women's participation in science, technology and innovation through:
 - o Detailed analysis of gender dynamics in STEM.
 - o Linking vocational training to STEM⁴³
- Encouraging women's participation in "jobs of the future" such as: sustainable energy, clean mobility, health industry, circular economy and sustainable tourism.
- Investing in the generation of new capabilities

Taking into account the information prepared by the AAU Study that indicates the broad participation of women in the assistance and care economy in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the high growth of this sector as a vector of the economy, ECLAC **proposes to put into operation comprehensive care systems**⁴⁴. From here it follows that it is a priority to influence:

- Actions linked to making visible and putting actions linked to care as a central element of welfare states,
- Giving a value to the activity as part of the economy,
- Redistributing unpaid care work more equitably
- Reducing the burden of unpaid domestic work from a rights-based approach

To this end, the Member States are called upon to implement:

- Travel permits for care
- Rights of domestic workers
- Leave for care.
- Measures for people in situations of dependency and their caregivers.

41. https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/14/sites/crm14/files/20-00089_crm14_compromiso_de_santiago.pdf

42. Educational and work trajectories of youth in post-pandemic recovery - ECLAC

43. <https://www.cepal.org/es/proyectos/educacion-formacion-tecnico-profesional>

44. <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45916-cuidados-america-latina-caribe-tiempos-covid-19-sistemas-integrales-fortalecer>

CHAPTER 3: KNOWLEDGE

ACQUIRED ON PUBLIC POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE EU AND LAC

The AAU study has carried out a comparative analysis between countries in the two regions, identifying the limitations and main challenges of public policies for the promotion of women's labour participation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study analysed in detail the experiences in: Argentina, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Portugal, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Sweden and Uruguay.

Taking as a point of reference the aforementioned work, in this section of the policy paper a process of selection and systematisation of the main knowledge acquired directly linked to measures that can be useful to strengthen public policies and strategies that favour women's access to employment in conditions of equity and quality is carried out. This knowledge acquired has been compiled considering the problems, priorities and challenges identified in the second part of this document. In this regard, the most relevant knowledge has been extracted from the practices identified in the reference study and that will **guide the recommendations** of the next chapter.

According to the study carried out by the AAU, the knowledge has been organised as follows:

Dimension analysed	Countries analysed
Encouraging parity, conciliation and the care economy	Chile, Mexico, Portugal, Sweden, Czech Republic and the European Union
Formalisation of jobs	Mexico and Dominican Republic
Training and active employment policies	Chile and Uruguay
New technologies and employment: ICTs and teleworking	Argentina, Chile and Spain

3.1 Measures that promote parity, conciliation and the care economy to facilitate women's labour participation.

The International Labour Organisation points out the need to address and regulate the so-called "**care economy**" being one of the least regulated labour segments and, where the participation of women has a greater representation. In the same vein, the **European Commission** in its European Employment Strategy has designed a specific package on "personal and domestic services" in order to be able to define and regulate work and services, as well as to confer the rights and social protection that are its own. Undoubtedly, the care economy goes hand in hand with policies that promote parity and conciliation between family and work life and, therefore, must be systematically analysed and addressed as part of a whole.

3.1.1 Promote parity and conciliation within public institutions: the case of Chile.

Increasing women's labour participation in the public sector structure has a better chance of success if it starts from clear and convergent long-term guidelines. Actions that combine the **promotion of parity and conciliation** ensure women's access and permanence in public structures in a resilient manner.

Among the various public administrations that contemplate this type of intervention, the case of Chile stands out for its **systematic approach and the clear political will** to apply parity measures within the administration as a pioneering example for other sectors of the economy.

Under the supervision and leadership of the **National Women's Service**, in 2006 the "Code of Good Labour Practices on Non-Discrimination for the Central State Administration" was adopted in order to promote equal socio-employment opportunities within the public administration⁴⁵. One of the objectives was "to advance more sustainably in equality of opportunity and treatment, in greater reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for the improvement of

44. <http://www.comunidadmujer.cl/biblioteca-publicaciones/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/C%C3%B3digo-de-Buenas-Pr%C3%A1cticas-Laborales.pdf>
Siendo uno de los objetivos: avanzar más sostenidamente en la igualdad de oportunidades y de trato, en mayor conciliación de las responsabilidades laborales y familiares para el mejoramiento de las relaciones de trabajo

45. <http://www.comunidadmujer.cl/biblioteca-publicaciones/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/C%C3%B3digo-de-Buenas-Pr%C3%A1cticas-Laborales.pdf>
One of the objectives being: to advance more sustainably in equal opportunities and treatment, in greater reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for the improvement of labour relations

labour relations." This Code laid the foundations for subsequent more inclusive regulations such as Law No. 20,545 of 2011⁴⁶ on "Protection of maternity and post-natal parental leave" which allowed the breastfeeding period to be extended up to six months as well as the possibility offered to the father to be able to enjoy part of this leave.

In line with these measures, in 2015 the **Presidential Institute** implemented the obligation to have a **policy for the development of people**, including the gender approach and trying to make women visible in management roles. The AAU study indicates that, from the Civil Service (the public administration responsible for workers in the public sphere), strategies have been carried out to identify good practices and implement mentoring exercises on gender. As indicated in the aforementioned document, these measures have led to a participation rate of 60.2% for women in the Central Administration⁴⁷.

Another experience of interest is led by the **National Institute of Intellectual Property (INAPI)** in Chile. It brings together different elements that facilitate the participation of women: an equal participation of women⁴⁸, a strategic direction in terms of gender through an Institutional Gender Strategy Committee as well as different actions aimed at reconciling family and work life that has been gradually strengthened since 2019.

This institution has its own gender agenda, whose objective is "to contribute to gender equity in the industrial property system, through the generation of collaborative learning and promotion initiatives." To support this initiative, the **Institutional Gender Strategy Committee** was created in 2020. The Committee has a comprehensive approach that addresses, on the one hand, an internal agenda aimed at the officials who work in the institution and, on the other, an external agenda in the international arena. The objectives of the Committee are: (1) the **mainstreaming of the gender approach** (training all female officials), (2) to establish a mechanism to **monitor progress**,

and **(3) to identify and promote new strategies** with a gender focus. An example of the work done is the first statistical report on the evolution of the participation of women inventors in the country. In 2020, the good work of the Committee was recognised, obtaining, for the fourth consecutive time, the Gender Parity Index (GPI). Likewise, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity of Chile recognised this Committee as a good practice in favouring women's civil service careers, gender equity and the reconciliation of work and personal life.

3.1.2 Practices for non-discrimination and inclusive policies: Mexico's proposal.

In LAC there are a high number of women who earn their income from the informal economy. An economy that makes them be outside the public system, leaving them completely unprotected. The pandemic has shown the enormous fragility of this situation and makes it essential to address it so that women can access economic income in a stable way.

It is important to highlight in a special way the case of **Mexico** and its actions through the **National Council to Prevent Discrimination** (CONAPRED⁴⁹), as well as the programmes promoted by the **National Institute of Women** (INMUJER⁵⁰).

Specifically, we highlight the **Pro-Equality** Programme launched by the Institute, whose primary objective is to implement good practices for **the reduction of wage gaps**. This programme, which is valid until 2024, focuses on enhancing women's economic autonomy through 5 measures⁵¹:

1. Promoting normative changes for women's economic participation.
2. Promoting the elimination of sexist behaviours.
3. Promoting the labour insertion of women.
4. Expanding the security and social protection of working women.
5. Promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship.

46. <https://www.dt.gob.cl/legislacion/1624/w3-article-99740.html>.

47. The same study cites that 34.9% of women occupy positions without professional qualifications.

48. According to the study, the percentage is around 67%.

49. CONAPRED. (218) Structural discrimination and social inequality. CONAPRED-ECLAC. Mexico. <https://sindis.conapred.org.mx/>

50. <https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres>

3.1.3 The European model to facilitate the reconciliation of family and work.

The European Union, through the Work-Life Balance Directive⁵² (a mandatory measure by EU Member States), provides "incentives for men to actually make use of parental leave to care for their children and increase their participation in domestic and care work, and offers greater flexibility to workers, in order to facilitate the care of minors and family members." This regulation has a direct impact on the "reduction of gender gaps in the labour market, in terms of participation, times, salaries, professional career, length of the day and/or working life" (Andersen 2018; O'Brien and Wall 2017).

Similarly, it is interesting to note that the approach of this measure is innovative in different aspects:

- It focuses on the concept of **co-responsibility** "*understanding that the cause of the increase in stereotypes and gender differences is generated from the imbalances in the use of reconciliation measures by men and women*" (López, 2019).
- It removes the somewhat controversial link between the gender dimension and reconciliation policies.
- It incorporates reconciliation for situations of care for minors, the elderly and dependents.

In the context of reconciliation, the same directive points to flexible working formulas that go beyond the possibility of opting for teleworking.

Within the European Union it is interesting to present the **case of Sweden** as a paradigm of the welfare state. The Swedish model is based on a central idea: women's economic independence **requires care services** that allow the reconciliation between work and family life. This perspective relieves women from the "classic role" linked to the care economy since it is the **public system that must be responsible** for covering these needs through taxes. This model called the "Swedish salaried-caregiver model" to which both women and men opt (parental benefits) has been the cornerstone for gender equality during COVID-19.

3.1.4-Strengthening the care services available as a necessary action to promote the quality participation of women in the labour market: the case of Portugal.

The Portuguese Government implemented a series of measures to support parents since the beginning of the pandemic on 13 March 2020 (Decree-Law no. 10-A / 2020). These included also the authorisation of a leave (leave of absence) of 14 days for working parents who needed to take care of children receiving a subsidy equivalent to 100% of their salary and that could be added to the sick leave or leave of absence for care of a sick child. Also, during the period of closure of schools and kindergartens, **a number of schools remained available to ensure the care and schooling** of the children of workers in essential services (health services, police, fire and rescue and armed forces). Last but not least, a special leave plan was provided to help parents who would not be able to continue working due to the need to care for dependents (exceptional leave of absence from Decree-Law No. 10-A/2020).

The same rule granted the right to paid leave during school closures for dependent employees with children under the age of 12, or older disabled or chronically ill. Domestic and self-employed workers were also included in this case with a support system, but with lower wages.

Undoubtedly, this measure was extremely important to **protect the employment of women by:**

- Allowing parents, especially mothers, to keep their jobs and a significant portion of their income during school closures.
- Maintaining the same remuneration that was granted to employees who benefited from the work retention plan (dismissal).
- Ensuring the economic independence of both parents and recognising the importance of the contribution of men and women to the family budget.

3.1.5-Economy of care: the proposal of the Czech Republic.

Women disproportionately take on unpaid care work. Some documents indicate that women spend between 1 and 3 hours more than men on domestic work⁵³; between 2 and 10 times more time a day to provide care (to sons and daughters, elderly and sick people). The European Union's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025 goes so far as to point out that 75% of unpaid

52. Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers.

53. Human Development Report, 2012, p. 80.

domestic and care tasks are performed by women. This has a direct negative effect on women's participation in the labour force.

Considering that the **non-equal distribution of care tasks** between women and men is one of the factors that prevent the full participation of women in the labour market, it is necessary to strengthen the available care services, understood as a right of both the working population and the caregivers.

The more restrictive lockdown measures at the beginning of the pandemic showed the unequal division of care responsibilities and domestic work in EU and LAC households.

Prior to this period, family networks played an important role, but health risks restricted this usual care arrangement, with the only accessible solution being for a parent to be absent from work. This implied, in the absence of an ad hoc policy, a loss of employment and even of the job, especially affecting women, since gender roles remain traditional (EIGE 2021, Tavora 2012).

In the **Czech Republic**, the policy measures that had the greatest potential to mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on women were those linked to the care economy. A positive measure was the inclusion in the collective insurance of those workers who were not entitled to it under normal circumstances (self-employed, alternative employment contracts,..). This measure facilitated the decision of some mothers to continue their employment relationship and not to resign from their job or reduce working hours for reasons of care.

All the practices presented in this section have as a common element the will to implement measures that, based on a systematic approach, favour the economic autonomy of women, parity and personal and family reconciliation and, with it, achieve the participation with quality of women in the labour market both in the public and private sectors.

Similarly, these practices demonstrate that the assignment to women of social responsibility & care work in relation to men can deepen gender gaps in both wages and pensions, since this challenge must be a fundamental focus in public recovery policy.

3.2-Formalising the jobs linked: to self-employment and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

As UN Women points out, women are disproportionately represented in the informal sector. Although it is a very representative source of income for women, when working in the informal economy, women **lack the protection offered by labour laws and social benefits such** as pensions, health insurance or paid sickness benefits⁵⁴. Hence, the transition to the formal economy can represent many opportunities to expand women's economic autonomy.

As noted above, in LAC there are a high number of women who earn their income from the informal economy. An economy that makes them be outside the public system, leaving them completely unprotected. The pandemic has shown the enormous fragility of this situation and makes it essential to address it so that women can access economic income in a stable way.

3.2.1-Measures led by Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Thus, in Mexico, the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the existence of an informal sector of non-salaried women without access to social security. In the case of informal salaried persons (underground economy), who were already excluded from the protection offered by an employment contract, the impossibility of being able to access support instruments in the face of job loss was added.

In line with the actions linked to the promotion and regulation of self-employment, it is relevant to highlight the actions that some countries took to promote women's entrepreneurship. It is undoubtedly of the utmost interest to present the experience of the **Dominican Republic** through the Strategic Plan "PLANEG III". The main objectives of this Plan were to promote entrepreneurship, inclusion in the formal market and access to social benefits with measures that **would promote intersectionality**. In turn, this strategy sought to promote a social protection policy with a gender focus by bringing women closer to the social protection system. The deployment of this plan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out through:

- Supporting economic transfers.

52. Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano, 2012, p. 80.

53. <https://www.unwomen.org/es/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy#notes>

54. <https://www.unwomen.org/es/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy#notes>

- The Stay-at-Home programme.
- The Pa' Ti Programme.

The **Pa' Ti Programme⁵⁵** in **the Dominican Republic**, was specially designed to face the challenges generated by the pandemic through the promotion of the **sustainability of the entrepreneurship of women who work in the informal sectors of the economy and who before the declaration of the pandemic did not contribute to social security⁵⁶**.

As keys to its scope, and its success, is the simplification of the application under the modality of virtual single window. Among the eligibility criteria to receive the support of the programme are: the impossibility of returning to their jobs due to restrictive mobility measures (confinement), having a loan, not being a contributor to social security before 29 February 2020, not being a beneficiary of other programmes and not having the classification of large local or large national company.

Furthermore, the programme included **specific measures to reduce informality** such as: tax incentives to reduce the cost of regulated work, the simplification of procedures for the consolidation of business activities or financing so that workers and informal companies were productive enough to formalise their activities.

Similarly, the government of the Dominican Republic carried out an excellent tripartite coordination exercise with the Employers' Confederation by preparing different documents on occupational safety and health such as the "Guide for employers on COVID-19". Additionally, and from the field of international cooperation, it should be noted that the Government's commitment to entrepreneurship and Dominican microenterprises received financial support from the Organisation of **American States through the implementation of the MSME Reactivation Plan** to benefit 245 microentrepreneurs in Puerto Plata⁵⁷. Finally, the Dominican Republic, together with the Andalusian Cooperation Agency, accompanied a women's entrepreneurship programme to benefit 20 women.

The will of the Government of the Dominican Republic was to increase the formal labour market and thereby facilitate the formalisation of self-employment and

accompany the structuring of women's entrepreneurial actions.

The lesson we can learn from the aforementioned practices is that actions linked to the **formalisation of women's self-employment activities** are effective initiatives that increase the income of the most vulnerable female population. This type of measure shows the need for the public authorities to implement actions to formalise and legalise self-employment activities, since the impact they generate throughout the social care system is extremely transformative by directly impacting on the economic autonomy of women (social benefits, access to labour protection, access to credit, certified work experience, employment rights, etc.) and in economic development (taxes, share of national GDP, etc.).

3.3-Strengthening active employment policies by linking all their components in a continuous and systemic approach

As indicated in the European Union Gender Strategy 2020-2025, the systemic approach is essential to define and implement policies and strategies that combine vocational training, intermediation, skills certification and employment incentives. The comprehensiveness of the intervention has been identified as a **vector of effective** inclusion for the incorporation of women into the labour market. For this, it is essential to prioritize a holistic approach.

One of the problems that must be addressed is the **horizontal segmentation**, typical of stereotypes, which means that there are activities and / or sectors with a low participation of women. This low participation seems to be related to the social perception that considers certain trades as masculine and that this consideration applies from the moment of training.

As indicated by the AAU study, for a public policy to be effective, the offer of training and labour empowerment requires that the investment strategy in training programmes be adjusted to the existing demands in the market, as well as a financing scheme that combines public and private investment.

In addition, the systems must include the groups with the

55. <https://coronavirusrd.gob.do/pa-ti-programa-de-asistencia-al-trabajador-independiente/>

56. At the closing date of the report made by the AAU, the programme had a total of 202,405 independent beneficiary workers (data not disaggregated by gender)

57. <https://www.micm.gob.do/noticias/plan-de-reactivacion-de-las-mipymes-beneficiara-a-245-microempresarios-de-puerto-plata>

greatest difficulties of insertion and must be adapted to the demand of companies so that employment policy is also a development strategy (Weller and Gontero, 2016, cited in Bensusán, Eichhorst and Rodríguez, 2017). In the case of training proposals, these must move towards **overcoming the segmentation of the labour market**.

3.3.1-The practices promoted by Chile and Uruguay.

The **Ministry of Labour of Chile** adopted the opening of multiple channels and opportunities for labour insertion for women. The insertion of women was carried out through traditional hiring incentive programs that had the application of positive discrimination criteria in the hiring of women as they were accompanied by a greater bonus, as well as in the design and implementation of specific programmes to **break stereotypes in strategic economic sectors for the economic reactivation** of the country.

The Ministry of Labour, with the support of **Chilequalifica** and **Chilevalora**, has set up a qualifications framework structured by sectors, professions and profiles. Likewise, it is possible to define training & labour routes through a social dialogue body.

With regard to active employment policies, priority has been given to systems **involving different institutions** such as the labour intermediation service (SENCE, Labour Intermediation Offices, Chile Valora and the National Employment Exchange), also using the Omil Development Programme (FOMIL).

A relevant practice that includes the different dimensions of the continuum is the Technical Work Table **"Women and Construction"**⁵⁸, promoted by the Ministry of Labour of Chile through SENCE⁵⁹ and the National Employment Exchange. A public-private partnership has been formed between companies⁶⁰. The "Women and Construction Roundtable" has led measures for the hiring, training and tendering of activities with the purpose of reinserting women into the labour market (ECLAC & UN Women, 2021)⁶¹. This measure also has since mid-2021 a portal <https://www.bne.cl/mujeresenobra> aimed at women. This portal functions as a one-stop shop, this being a fundamental instrument of conciliation policies by optimising management times for both men and women. This tool has a triple purpose: (1) to provide information to women so that they can access job offers, (2) to offer training courses, job orientation, and (3) to facilitate the certification of specific competencies in the construction industry through Chile Valora⁶². This is intended to enable women to certify their knowledge (acquisition of non-formal knowledge) and skills. Likewise, the portal makes available to interested parties experiences and testimonies of other women working in construction. The strategy is also communicational on the demand side, as the Ministry of Public Works has urged companies to join the "2X" challenge that aims to double the number of women hired working directly in the construction sector.

In line with Chile's experience, the AAU study has analysed the stimuli that the **Government of Uruguay** implemented in the tourism sector. In this sense, during the restrictions imposed during the most critical moments of the Pandemic and taking into account that jobs in tourism had twice as many women, a strategy was designed to support companies linked to the tourism sector⁶³.

Similarly, it is worth mentioning as a relevant practice the **"Comprehensive Plan for the Promotion of Employment - PIPE"** that prevailed, during the year 2021, the implementation of measures for the hiring of female labour. To this end, spaces for collaboration between different ministries and institutions have been proposed (as a way of policy coherence). The measures that PIPE aimed at were:

Identifying new employment opportunities.
Identifying new professional profiles/talents for the new economy.
Providing new services.
Establishing a system for monitoring and evaluating the results.

- Identifying new employment opportunities.
- Identifying new professional profiles/talents for the new economy.
- Providing new services.
- Establishing a system for monitoring and evaluating the results.

58. <https://cchc.cl/comunicaciones/noticias/subsecretaria-de-la-mujer-y-cchc-lanzan-mesa-mujer-y-construccion-para-articular-reinsercion-laboral-femenina-en-reactivacion-del-rubro>

59. <https://sence.gob.cl/>

60. It also includes the participation of the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism.

61. ECLAC & UN Women (2021). Santiago Commitment A regional instrument to respond to the COVID-19 crisis with gender equality. In https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46658/1/S2100047_es.pdf

62. <https://www.chilevalora.cl/>

63. The measures focused on credit lines to companies

64. <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-trabajo-seguridad-social/institucional/normativa/ley-n-19973-fecha-13082021-promocion-empleo>

Finally, we highlight the Employment Promotion Law (N° 19.973)⁶⁴ for its comprehensiveness and its approach in favour of young people by promoting a series of measures to promote active employment policies; among them:

- Differentiated state contributions, to subsidies to tax obligations with the Social Security Bank.
- Tax benefits for companies.
- The compatibility between training activities and the working day.
- Expanding benefits for the self-employed and within the framework of cooperatives.
- Facilitating access to technical assistance lines and/or access to credit.

The Law establishes as guiding principles of the same: decent work, non-discrimination, social protection, social dialogue and special attention to groups prioritised, as “the situation of women”.

These experiences show that measures aimed at promoting the employability of women and that allow breaking the gender gap must have a training and employment system that considers the need of the labour market, identifies gender biases and establishes training actions for the connection of supply and demand for work with training and economic incentives.

In this sense, it stands out as good practice to support the training of women in “non-traditional trades” through digital **platforms and the certification of acquired skills, in any way**, together with incentives to hire them, the set of actions can help incorporate women in masculinised trades and linked to new employment niches.

The learning of the practices outlined is the need to link occupational training according to the labour market and combine it with the process of labour insertion with incentives to hire, which allows breaking the barriers of access to jobs with little representation of women. Public-private collaboration is considered a powerful partnership for the achievement of this goal.

3.4 Digital platforms and ICTs as a lever of change for women's access to employment.

In the current context of rapid transformation and

digitalisation of the economy and labour market, **90% of jobs currently require basic digital skills**⁶⁵. Increasing women's participation in the digital world is therefore a good opportunity to break the imbalance in women's access to employment.

3.4.1 ICTs: Chile's experience.

The experience of Chile presented in the AAU study indicates that a source **of job creation** would be produced from the introduction of new technologies, especially from new digital platforms (Weller et al., 2019). The COVID-19 crisis has shown great potential in adapting modes of production to the context of restricting mobility and movement to the workplace, creating new jobs in these emerging models of production and organisation of work.

In a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and SENCE, the “Digital Woman” and “Connected Entrepreneurship” programmes have been created in 2020. Both share the objective of providing digital tools and perfecting the knowledge in the digital field of all those women who want to learn or reconvert in different work environments, including those entrepreneurs, to face the changes resulting from the pandemic. The programmes have more than forty free courses on: Basic computing, social media marketing, digital marketing or tools for data analysis. The contents aim to develop five areas of competence: information technology; entrepreneurship; languages; duties, rights and inclusion; and skills for the XXI Century.

However, it is necessary not to forget that LAC has a deficit of necessary skills and abilities, and this imbalance between the demand of the technological revolution and the supply of skills is a brake on the adoption and use of new technologies that generate jobs for women.

3.4.2 Teleworking to facilitate women's access to employment: three cases of interest.

The experiences analysed in the study indicate that teleworking can favour the incorporation of women into the labour market if it is accompanied by corrective and/or compensatory measures. INAPI's experience in **Chile** indicates this. This institution had begun in 2016

65. European Commission, «ICT for Work: Digital skills in the workplace» (ICT at work: digital skills in the workplace), 2017

66. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180425-1>.

to consider teleworking as a possibility through an unprecedented pilot project at the national level, which initially covered 10% of civil servants, and which was later extended to 35% of them with an average of 64% of the days of teleworked weeks.

These actions allowed to work on-line (virtual) almost immediate to the establishment of the confinement measures. During this period of remote work, INAPI found the improvement of productivity, the continuity of services with high quality standards and exceeding the proposed goals. However, not everything is positive. As noted in an ILO report for INAPI, "... domestic affairs interfere with women's work and even reinforce the division of labour by gender in the home, intensifying their roles as mothers and therefore significantly reducing leisure and free time opportunities for them and generating job burnout..."⁶⁷. An example of this is that those women who chose to telework during the pandemic dispensed with domestic support and / or school transport or made decisions that eventually led them to assume a greater burden of tasks at home. All this generated greater fatigue and performance problems, in addition to deepening gender roles. This led to various adjustments and lessons about time balances, responsibilities and also new domestic arrangements in homes.

Given this scenario, the collaboration of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was sought in the design of a model, a manual and recommendations to establish policies around teleworking. This has meant the identification of the positive effects of teleworking, particularly in the case of women with children or people in their care and that also points to some clues to continue advancing in the matter. These achievements have been recognised with the 2020 Institutional Excellence Award, this being the third obtained by the entity positioned as a reference for other State institutions.

On the other hand, **Argentina** set forth teleworking as a proposed solution to the reconciliation between work and domestic care and, by default, for women. Therefore, the AAU study points out as necessary to frame the strategy of remote work in the design of policies that promote:

- Equal opportunities.
- The reduction of the socioeconomic segmentation of jobs linked to teleworking (access, connectivity, equipment,...).
- The insertion of people from the informal market to formality.

Another example to promote a teleworking model that is respectful of the rights of workers, is the **Royal Decree Law promulgated by Spain** on 23 September 2020. This rule, agreed by the actors of social dialogue, regulates the management of remote work with the aim of establishing "a sufficient, transversal and integrated regulation in a single substantive rule that responds to various needs, balancing the use of these new forms of work provision (...) with a framework of rights that satisfy, inter alia, the principles of their voluntary and reversible nature or the principle of equal treatment under professional conditions"⁶⁸. Among the measures that are established to balance the burden of this modality are **the need to sign an agreement with the employee who will work remotely more than 30% of the weekly working day** for a period of three months and forces the employer to pay the expenses that the employee may incur. "

By way of synthesis, **in order for teleworking to be an ally to break the gender gap** in employment, it is necessary that its formal objectives are explicitly included in terms of issues such as the reconciliation of family and work and the attraction or retention of female talent. Based on these objectives, trends in the effects of teleworking and how it is managed should be measured and evaluated more precisely.

67. ILO, INAPI (2021). Teleworking. Model, manual and policy recommendations for INAPI. Collaboration Project ILO-INAPI Final Consulting Report. In https://www.inapi.cl/docs/default-source/2021/centro-de-documentacion/estudios/teletrabajo/informe_teletrabajo_inapi_oit_2021.pdf?sfvrsn=1cd6873d_2_p

68. https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/bxt.php?id=BOE-A-2020-11043

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

BASED ON KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED FROM PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY THE AAU STUDY AND TRENDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Undoubtedly, the approach to women's participation in the world of work can only be achieved from a **systemic, systematic and determined approach** on the part of the public authorities. In the same way, it is essential that it be done from a clear commitment to policy coherence to impact and **obtain real and necessary achievements** in the empowerment of women, allowing their participation in an equitable and full way in society.

Taking into account the international agenda that prioritises the economic autonomy of women through full, formalised and rights-based inclusion, as well as the learnings identified in this document that, with an innovative approach, have tried to respond to the XXI challenge of maximising the interrelationship between Women & Employment & Training, we think that a proposed roadmap to be followed by Policy Makers could be profiled considering the elements highlighted below.

The recommendations of this section are based on the key ideas raised in the previous chapters, taking up both the programmatic documents that emerge from the national and international employment and women agendas and the lessons learned from the implementation of measures and public policies in LAC and the EU. These recommendations aim to contribute to three strategic challenges:

1. Eliminate imbalances in women's access to and participation in the labour market;
2. Ensure that promotion and training processes and working conditions (including remuneration) respect the principle of equal treatment and opportunities; and
3. Promote co-responsibility for work, personal and family life.

These issues are seen as key to improving the rate of women's participation in the labour market and reducing the gender pay gap.

For all these reasons and as a synthetic list, a **decatalogue of recommendations** is proposed to guide future policies and strategies in the EU and LAC. It will not delve into each of them because they emerge from the previous analysis referring to the best practices

highlighted in each case:

1. To encourage women's access to employment, it would be advisable to prioritise training actions such as:

- (I) Implementing measures that combine training for employment and incentives for women's employment.
- (II) Having a resource centre (as a one-stop shop) that facilitates access to a single virtual and/or face-to-face space, and access to training and job offers for women.
- (III) Establishing special accompanying measures for an adequate labour insertion for women.

2. To move towards remuneration for work of equal value between men and women, it is suggested:

- (I) To ensure that employers define jobs based on technical, professional or training skills, avoiding asymmetries in the net salaries received by women and men.
- (II) Linked to the above, it is necessary to work to equalise the differences in remuneration both in the basic salary and in the various supplements, implementing the provisions of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay between men and women for the same work or work of equal value through measures of pay transparency and mechanisms for effective compliance (COM(2021) 93 final of 4 March 2021).
- (III) Finally, considering the high percentage of women who take advantage of a reduction in working hours or do part-time work to face the tasks of care, it would be of interest to encourage two things in all countries: i) greater co-responsibility so that care does not limit the full incorporation of people (usually women) into the labour market and, ii) legislate to generate social protection and rights in part-time or reduced-time work, equating rights with other workers.

3. To promote the transition from the informal market to the formalisation of self-employment or entrepreneurship as a measure to increase women's economic autonomy, it should be carried out:

- (I) Developing tax incentives that accompany the transition from informality to business formalisation during a certain period of time.
- (II) Simplifying the procedures for the consolidation of business activities that could be grouped in the same space where all labour, social security and tax procedures could be carried out.

4. To facilitate the training of women with a view to their incorporation into jobs or positions in which they are underrepresented, measures could be carried out to:

- (I) Programme a training offer adapted to women according to the results of the studies of labour market needs with a gender focus.
- (II) Create information and/or training programmes to detect and eliminate barriers that hinder the professional advancement of women.
- (III) Establish coordination with women's organisations and institutions to bring the training offer closer to the target population.
- (IV) Adapt the spatial-temporal framing of training actions to the characteristics of the target population (schedules, places of celebration, etc.)

5. Increasing the recruitment of women in trades with low female participation would require:

- (I) Implementing incentive programmes (higher bonuses) for hiring women in non-traditional trades.
- (II) Designing a job placement plan for women as an employee, describing management procedures, referrals, and evaluation and control systems.
- (III) The design and implementation of specific programmes to break stereotypes in strategic economic sectors for the post-pandemic economy.

6. For teleworking to be a resource that facilitates access to employment, the following elements should be taken into account:

- (I) (I) It is necessary to establish reconciliation measures to prevent teleworking from deepening the overload that care tasks can represent on women.
- (II) Propose formal objectives of teleworking based on issues such as: reconciliation of family and work, attraction or retention of female talent.
- (III) It would be positive if more regulations were promoted that promote voluntariness, reversibility, equalisation of rights between teleworkers and face-to-face workers, formalisation of the labour modality in a written agreement without forgetting the prominence of collective bargaining.
- (IV) Carry out measures that guarantee the right to digital disconnection and to a greater rationalisation of schedules and uses of time, as well as the costs linked to teleworking (light. PC, consumption...).

7. To ensure that digital platforms and ICTs are allies in breaking the gender gap in women's training and access to employment, the possibility of:

- (I) Encouraging the creation of easy-to-navigate digital platforms that compile public and private work initiatives for women, in addition to connecting the demand and supply of jobs from different areas and sectors in one place.
- (II) Incorporating the labour regulation that already exists in non-technological labour relations to technological ones.
- (III) Facilitating access to digital management of social protection as facilitating mechanisms for care.

8. To encourage a more equitable redistribution of unpaid care work that helps reduce the care asymmetry that burdens many women, consideration could be given to:

- (I) Taking measures to advance and / or continue advancing in paternity leave for men of longer duration and egalitarian, promoting the balanced enjoyment by women and men.

- (II) Establishing compensatory measures (extra days, social protection systems linked to care, labour flexibility measures, etc.) associated with care.
- (III) Preparing and disseminating campaigns on the need for greater co-responsibility between women and men in domestic and care tasks, highlighting those men who also make use of reconciliation measures (with dependants, minors or dependents).

9. With the idea of making visible and integrating the actions linked to care as part of the economy, it would be of interest to:

- (I) Carry out detailed studies that allow to know the distribution of the visible and invisible costs of care. Giving them visibility will help a redistribution between the state, the market, men and women.
- (II) Give a public projection to unpaid care work as an important contribution to the economy, including communicative actions that recognise, value and measure unpaid care work.
- (III) Support advocacy measures to increase the rights of women working in the care economy such as the Alliance for Care led by UN Women, France and Mexico

10. To promote a social protection system that accompanies employment policies with equity, it would be desirable to:

- (I) Carry out a restructuring of the social health and care systems, which is accompanied in turn by legislative changes that place them on an equal footing with other segments of the labour market, especially in limits on working hours, minimum wages (which are sometimes lower), unemployment insurance or other labour benefits.
- (II) Provide a system of provision of care services subsidised by the State, and accessible digitally and in person

- (III) The social protection system must consider the nature of care, the relationships between the demand for care and the capacity and availability of those who perform it; the socio-economic status, age, ethnic group, place of residence or even the immigration status of the caregiver and, of course, the level of social protection to which households have access.

- (IV) Allocate resources for the direct provision of care services, aimed at both children and the elderly. This should also include care-related transfers and social protection benefits for workers with family or care responsibilities, unpaid carers, or persons requiring care.

CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion and in a very summarised way, some clues are pointed out for reflection and ideas with the purpose of continuing to encourage political debate and the construction of a system committed to the equal participation of women in all areas of society.

Citizens and the numerous international undertakings demand a commitment without further delay to parity in the system of **governance and the generation of public policies** that meet the demands of the feminist agenda. Demands that **request a greater presence of women in decision-making instances**, both in the business, political and social spheres. The objective is clearly defined. It is time for positive action for parity in women's representation and participation at all stages of policy.

This report has mentioned the direct link between employment policies and the role of women in the so-called care economy. It seems appropriate to highlight **the similarity and convergence** between the agendas on this subject both in the European Union and in Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, international initiatives **such as the Global Alliance for Care** where experiences are shared and social policies are built are always encouraging and can be an optimal space for **collaborative innovation**.

In line with this purpose, it seems essential to have a **gender impact assessment system for the policies and programmes that are carried out** to promote employability. Achievements and their real impact on women's access to labour markets need to be analysed, corroborated and evaluated. In this way, rigorous evidence will be available to assess compliance with the results of a programme, policy or public intervention, enabling the generation of shared knowledge.

The challenge is to **generate new intervention models** so that they can be scaled and thereby amplify the benefits. In a way, the Recovery and Resilience Facility promoted by the European Union to respond to the crisis generated by COVID-19 will mark the starting point to carry out a comparative analysis of the different measures that member states have promoted and how they have impacted on women's access to employment. We will have a baseline to analyse, assess and improve.

Therefore, we understand that it may be **interesting to incorporate in the social field the modus-operandi of other disciplines** such as those of the world of technology and co-creation models. Undoubtedly, **social innovation** as the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to complex and often systemic social and environmental problems (Stanford Social Innovation Review) is the new paradigm of public policy. Similarly, generating **an ecosystem** that facilitates the implementation of new measures through multi-stakeholder platforms to face a common problem must be identified as a true value proposition to give new solutions to old problems.



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