

Patriarchy  
Inclusive society Tax justice  
Beyond Gross Domestic Products

# PURPLE PACT

Democracy Feminist future  
Intersectionality Budgets  
Decent work  
Caring economy

**A FEMINIST APPROACH TO THE ECONOMY**



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
**LOBBY**  
EUROPÉEN DES FEMMES

## ABOUT THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Founded in 1990, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest alliance of over 2,000 women's non-governmental associations in the EU coming together to campaign for their common vision of a Feminist Europe.



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# FOREWORD

As we experience a new leadership of the European institutions, with the first woman President of the European Commission leading a more gender balanced Commission, more women than ever elected to the European Parliament and the first woman President of the European Central Bank (ECB), the European Women's Lobby (EWL) is working hard to ensure that the EU puts women's rights back at the heart of its political agenda. As the European institutions debate the future political and economic strategies, we will continue to push for a feminist Europe - including our demands for feminist economics based on care, social rights and equality, and an end to exploitation and violence against women. We will demand that women's rights be at the centre of the future EU macro-economic framework.

We continue to see women disproportionately impacted by the disastrous austerity measures imposed across Europe. Migrant women, young women, women experiencing poverty and women with disabilities are particularly impacted by unemployment, precarious jobs and increasing inequality, and the erosion of social protection, welfare and pension schemes. With pressure on jobs and the very future of work, we are witnessing a restructuring of the economy and society that may lead to increasing pressure on women to revert to traditional roles in the home, as well as becoming even further exposed to exploitation and violence.

The urgent need for economic transition to address the climate crisis also demands an understanding of the links between women's rights and the environment. As part of European governments' commitments set out in the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, the EU must play a decisive role in adopting the European Green Deal to promote the necessary changes for gender equality, creates jobs for all and ensures the well-being of present and future generations.

**We are united in presenting our Purple Pact** as an important contribution to the current feminist debates on the future of Europe at a time when people in Europe and European leaders seek solutions to massive global challenges. This paper analyses the current economic system from a critical feminist perspective with the aim to

propose a radical shift in economic policy aiming to build a new and inclusive economic framework based on core feminist values.

The feminist approach to the economy embodied in the EWL's **Purple Pact** takes as a starting point the full participation of women in all areas of life and equal representation of women in all their diversity at all levels of decision-making, including economic decision-making. It aims to build an inclusive economy for the well-being of all. The focus is a universal social care system with an infrastructure that can provide social and care services for all and quality services which are accessible and affordable. It also stresses the fact that environmental issues have always been, and are increasingly, also a matter of human rights and social justice and are thus feminist issues and an integral part of feminist economic analysis.

Our **Purple Pact** presents a profound challenge to the current European macro-economic framework, which represents the characteristics of what is essentially a patriarchal model:

- The Stability and Growth Pact, the EU framework for fiscal surveillance and fiscal policy coordination, constraints on social expenditure and economic growth, forcing more economically vulnerable Member States into stagnation and generating excessive fiscal austerity during recessions, thereby contributing to aggravating gender inequalities and women's double workload.
- Gross domestic product (GDP), as the main indicator of countries' economic performance, play a key role in the assessment and design of economic policy and decision-making on a macro and micro-economic scale. In omitting the value of un-paid care work and voluntary work in GDP calculations, governments ignore the decisive contribution of this type of work to the well-being of society and the economy. Failure to account for environmental depreciation generated by resource-intensive production gives dangerous signals to public and private decision-makers, encouraging investments and consumption in activities that are detrimental to future sustainability. These

omissions are particularly serious in view of the fact that, within the framework of the European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA 2010, annexed to Regulation EU 549/2013)<sup>1</sup>, which is compulsory to apply in Member States, illegal activities that are harmful to fundamental human rights, such as prostitution, drug production and trade, and smuggling, are included.

- Public expenditure on education, training and culture is treated in national accounts as public consumption expenditure rather than assuming that it is a decisive investment for the future sustainability of the economy and the prevention of future burdens in health, crime, unemployment, etc.

- The financialisation of the economy, where money generates money for the benefit of a small number of people living off capital income, works to the detriment of the directly productive activities that underpin the employment and well-being of most people.

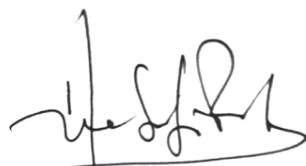
- Unfair tax competition between States, taxing labour income at rates much higher than capital income and admitting perverse «tax planning» strategies of large multinational corporations lead, in practice, to tax evasion and fuel economic and political corruption.

- The maintenance of tax havens in European countries or under European jurisdiction aggravates the possibility of tax evasion for high income earners and companies and contributes to decapitalisation of public budgets and social security systems, weakening the social state and undermining the social cohesion and the *acquis* humanist of the European Social Model.

With this **Purple Pact**, we are building on EWL's previous work on austerity, the care economy, poverty and social rights. This present report has been drafted with inputs and insights of many brilliant women from within our movement working together across Europe through the European Women's Lobby Feminist Economics Working Group. The Working Group will continue to develop, deepen and expand upon the concepts, ideas and recommendations in this report. As we work to spread and deepen our vision for a feminist economy in the "**Purple Pact**", we will work with our members and allies to bring feminist perspectives into the future EU strategies on the economy and jobs.



Joanna Maycock - EWL Secretary General



Ana Sofia Fernandes - EWL Vice-President

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic processes have a profound influence on social life, gender relations and equality between women and men.

This paper analyses the current economic system from a critical feminist perspective with the aim to propose a radical shift in economic policy aiming to build a new and inclusive economic framework based on core feminist values.

The feminist approach to the economy embodied in the EWL's **Purple Pact** takes as a starting point the full participation of women in all areas of life and equal representation of women in all their diversity at all levels of decision-making, including economic decision-making. It is a fundamental pillar of democratic, universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights. It aims to build an inclusive economy for the well-being of all. The focus is a universal social care system with an infrastructure that can provide social and care services for all and quality services which are accessible and affordable. It also stresses the fact that environmental issues have always been, and are increasingly, also a matter of human rights and social justice and are thus feminist issues and an integral part of feminist economics.

This paper is divided into three sections, which address the three pillars of the feminist care economy and are conceptualised as the Purple Economy.

### CHAPTER 1 - Towards a Purple Economy: Creating an inclusive society in Europe

The chapter addresses the issues raised by the current macro-economic policy approach in Europe including monetary, fiscal and tax policy. It shows that the so-called 'gender-neutral' approach wreaks havoc on women and the natural environment, including non-human species. It makes a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. The intersection of gender, as well as ethnic, racial and global social inequalities, makes climate change in particular a feminist issue.<sup>2</sup>

It advances an inclusive approach to macro-economics by proposing the Purple Economy, which seeks to integrate a gender perspective into fiscal, economic and employment policies and put care at the centre of macro-economic policy-making with a view to enhancing the well-being of all as well as protecting the natural environment.

### CHAPTER 2 - The Care Economy for the well-being of all: Building a caring society for the people and the planet

In the Purple Economy care is the backbone of society; it is what makes society function. It is the 'invisible unpaid contribution to the economy' that has so far been undervalued and unaccounted for. This includes taking care of children, the elderly, the sick, and persons with disabilities, as well as performing domestic work such as cleaning and catering. The Purple Economy argues that care must be embedded in a human rights framework recognising the rights of carers and those that are taken care of and their capacity to act independently and to make their own free choices. It underlines that the state must build and maintain care infrastructures and services achieving the highest quality standards and in the same way, it shall invest in civil society self-organised care structures. The feminist care economy proposes a new **Care Deal for Europe**.

### CHAPTER 3 - Building a feminist future: women, employment and the challenges of a changing labour market

The world today faces major employment challenges, in particular for women. At the same time, income inequality has increased across and within countries. This chapter highlights the challenges of the future labour markets (aging, atypical forms of work, the gig economy, migration and intersectionality, etc.) from a gender perspective. It argues that given these challenges, women must be afforded decent work, security, personal development and an adequate social protection system.

On the basis of the analysis and the proposal for a Purple Economy, the paper offers a coherent and timely set of recommendations to European and national policy-makers with a view to establishing a **Purple Pact**, i.e. an invitation to reshape the economy on the basis of a feminist approach to the economic framework in Europe.

## GLOSSARY

### Conventional Economic Models

**ECONOMICS** is a social science, constructed and embedded in a political ideology; i.e. liberalism, neo-liberalism, etc.

The current economic model promotes self-interest and profit-making, which continue to underpin the dominant economic system, from capitalism to neo-liberalism. Such a model does not provide the basis for sustainable development and has systematically excluded so-called 'non-productive' work, i.e. women's invisible contribution to the economy.

#### MACRO-ECONOMICS

The branch of economics concerned with large-scale or general economic factors, such as interest rates and national productivity.

Source: Oxford dictionary

#### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

The total value of goods produced and services provided in a country during one year.

#### GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP)

The total value of goods produced and services provided by a country during one year, equal to the GDP plus the net income from foreign investments.

"**GDP** measures the monetary value of final goods and services - that are bought by the final user - produced in a country in a given period of time (say a quarter or a year)." IMF, 2016

GDP may determine the economic 'health' and 'wealth' of a country but fails to capture the invisible contribution made by those outside what is traditionally considered as the workforce, which includes un-paid work and environmental impacts.

### Feminist Economic Terms

**FEMINIST ECONOMICS** broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies a feminist lens.

Feminist economics is often linked with welfare economics or labour economics, since it emphasises child welfare, and the value of labour in itself, as opposed to production for a marketplace, which is the focus of a classical economy.

Feminist economics attempt to not only examine women's issues in economics, but to also bring in the issues of as many other different groups of people as possible by explicitly considering age, sex, dis/ability, race, class and other factors.

Source: <http://www.academicroom.com/topics/what-is-feminist-economics>

See also, Atria Glossary of Atria feminist economics

#### FEMINIST LENS ON GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

Feminist economists argue that economic success cannot only be measured in terms of goods and services at market prices as these do not reflect the full costs and benefits to society in terms of economic performance and social progress. Human and environmental well-being must also be measured. To evaluate economic performance, distribution of wealth or income alone are not sufficient.

Feminist economists and philosophers (such as Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Ingrid Robeyns, and others) have been involved in the development of alternatives to GDP, such as the **Capabilities Approach** and the **Human Development Index** (based on three indicators: life expectancy at birth/health; knowledge/education and standard of living/income).

**Marilyn Waring**, in her *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics* (1988), was one of the first feminists to highlight that GDP is a "surrogate for progress" in which the absence of the value of women and nature's contributions lead to "terrible consequences for the world", in terms of economic decisions.

### Conventional Economic Models

#### SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Is a concept originally proposed by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*, (1867) and is a variety of his broader idea of reproduction. It «refers to the emphasis on the structures and activities that transmit social inequality from one generation to the next». (Christopher B. Doob, 2003). According to Pierre Bourdieu, (French Sociologist), there are four types of capital that contribute to social reproduction in society. They are financial capital, cultural capital, human capital, and social capital.

#### PATRIARCHY TODAY AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Characteristics of patriarchy:

- Separates the public and private;
- Relies on the systemic exploitation of women;
- Considers the private domain as a 'household unit' which shapes statistical data on income, distribution and social rights (cohabitant, dependents, etc.) assuming that gender equality is inherent in households;
- Relies on the capitalist system which promotes private ownership and is profit-driven;
- Focuses on the individual homo economicus – literally "economic man" – and individual consumption;
- Creates jobs only to meet market needs;
- Counts only the visible (goods and services, financial products...);
- Considers budgets and investments to be 'neutral';
- Limited role of the state;
- Relies on the male breadwinner model as the standard of a 'worker' which determines social rights (pensions, tax, etc.);
- Exploits the natural environment and non-human animals.

"A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it." Oxford dictionary

### Feminist Economic Terms

#### THE FEMINIST LENS ON SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Non-waged social-reproductive activity is necessary to the existence of waged work, the accumulation of surplus value and the functioning of capitalism as such. None of those things could exist in the absence of housework, child-rearing, schooling, affective care and a host of other activities which serve to produce new generations of workers and replenish existing ones, as well as to maintain social bonds and shared understandings. Social reproduction is an indispensable background condition for the possibility of economic production in a capitalist society.

Source: Nancy Fraser (2016)

#### FEMINISTS CHALLENGE THE SYSTEM NOTING THAT

- the private is political, including all forms of male violence against women;
- women are individuals in their own right;
- feminism values the invisible and un-paid work;
- an 'equal earner-equal carer model' is central to equality;
- people want decent quality work, i.e. in terms of pay, conditions, safety, well-being, rights and sustainability (as opposed to precarious work);
- women's collective vision and collective mechanisms of solidarity provide the framework for a fairer economy;
- the (re-)distribution of resources are both challenging and unavoidable, notably in the spending of public money, i.e. gender budgeting. Because spending and investments are not gender neutral, it argues for a gender lens to spending, revenue and investments;
- the state has to remain the key 'broker' in the distribution of resources/wealth, collection of revenue for collective needs, investments and sustaining democratic systems;

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## Conventional Economic Models

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### THE EUROPEAN MACRO-ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ALMOST PERFECT PATRIARCHAL MODEL:

- Claims to be gender 'neutral';
- Glorifies private ownership;
- Feeds on growth and consumption;
- Maximises profits through systems of exploitation;
- Concentrates its attention on the short-termism;
- Risks Crises – Responds to crises with austerity rather than social investment;
- Measures wealth through GDP/GNP not taking account of un-paid work;
- Designs monetary and fiscal policies for the benefit of the growth model including financial markets;
- Treats most environmental factors (such as pollution, biodiversity, and forest preservation) as "externalities", because there are no markets in which their prices can be set;
- Generates poverty/feminisation of poverty; inequalities between women and men/ inequalities of all;
- Promotes the shrinking of the public sector/quality, affordable and accessible public services;
- Drives artificial needs using a "supply and demand" model;
- Creates an environment for commodification of human exploitation: in a profit-driven society everything can be for sale;
- Separates public/private space (including violence against women);
- Caters to economic performance indicators and subjects itself to the dictates of international financial institutions.

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### GROWTH

An increase in the amount of goods and services produced per head of the population over a period of time. The growth model presupposes that resources are unlimited, but should they turn out to be finite, technology will solve the problem.

## Feminist Economic Terms

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### EWL PURPLE PACT: AN INVITATION TO RESHAPE THE ECONOMY TAKING A FEMINIST APPROACH TO MACRO- ECONOMICS IN EUROPE

- Takes full account of the contribution that women are already making to the economy;
- Strives for the well-being of women and men, girls and boys at all levels;
- People-centred for the well-being of all and the planet;
- Care-centred;
- Invests in public services;
- Embraces solidarity, equality, including equality of opportunities, non-discrimination, respect of diversity with particular attention to intersectionality (that is, the different systems of oppression interacting with/ reinforcing one another);
- Uses alternative economic measurements and monitoring mechanisms, which go way beyond GDP and allow for assessments based on real economic value;
- Values un-paid work, accountability and transparency;
- Offers a holistic approach linking economics to well-being and considers everybody's activities as contributing to the economy;
- Proposes that economics should be redefined as being about "provisioning", or how society is or might be organised to meet people's needs and wants and thus, to reproduce itself.
- Understands that cooperative action is central to how economies work.

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### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Feminist economics argue for a **sustainable development model**, in which economic development is conducted without depletion of natural resources and social care. This requires public investment in social infrastructure and the green economy as an engine of a sustainable economy. A sustainability growth model supports in the short, medium and long term: quality of life across the life cycle, well-being, education and health. Job creation in both the social and green economy would generate higher revenue for the state in terms of taxes and contributions to social security/ protection systems.

### Core Feminist Values

Equality between Women and Men  
/ Intersectionality / Diversity /  
Peace / Respect / Solidarity /  
Dignity / Justice

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Economic processes have a profound influence on social life, gender relations and equality between women and men. A feminist lens on macro-economic policy is urgently required.

The feminist economic model, i.e. Purple Economy<sup>3</sup>, is based on three pillars:

**1.** A new macro-economic policy framework encompassing three fundamental dimensions: economic justice, social justice and environmental justice. Such a macro-economic framework must be embedded in universally agreed human rights, civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, respecting diversity and being vigilant to address multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination whilst ensuring climate justice.

**2.** A universal social care infrastructure which allows for caring for others and being cared for at different stages of our lives. In a feminist economic model, care is the backbone of society; it is what makes society function. It is the 'invisible hand of the economy' that is undervalued and uncounted for under the current economic model.

*"Feminist economics takes a holistic approach, factoring in all activities that currently fall outside of the mainstream economic sphere, but without which the economy would not be able to run. In short, it is concerned with all of the things that human beings need to survive and flourish, but particularly with the provision of care and un-paid domestic labour, sometimes referred to as "social provisioning". In making this its focus, it seeks to challenge notions of "work" and "production" that are based solely on manufacturing, and asks us to rethink how we value the different sorts of activity that occur within our economy."* Women Budget Group, UK

**"DEMOCRACY NEEDS A FEMINIST ECONOMY!"  
THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW!**

# A FEMINIST VISION OF THE ECONOMY

*"The great mistake of economics is thinking of the economy as separate from the society of which it is part and the environment in which it is embedded." Prof. Kate Raworth, Oxford University*

Macro-economic policy, including fiscal and monetary policy, is all too often seen as gender neutral. But economic policy choices affect women and men differently because they occupy different positions in the economy, both market (paid) and non-market (un-paid). As UN Women describes it, "budget cuts that reduce social spending may increase the demands on women's un-paid household labour, while trade liberalisation may negatively affect women's employment in contexts where they are overrepresented in import competing sectors such as agriculture or food crops."<sup>4</sup> The measure of all success, and the yardstick of current patriarchal economics, is the performance of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Feminist economics, however, urge us to think beyond GDP as a goal for governments to pursue growth and look instead for new measures of well-being.<sup>5</sup> Feminist economists are engaging in exciting new analyses and campaigns emphasising the potential role of tax and public spending as a means to redistribute power and resources to women and to ensure the outcome of equality between women and men. Moreover, there are new, powerful and interesting allies in institutions and civil society in this struggle.

Our vision of feminist economics:

- Is based on a macro-economic framework that takes full account of the contribution that women are making to the economy and the well-being of women and men at all levels, whilst introducing economic measurements and monitoring mechanisms which go beyond GDP and allow for assessments based on real economic value, i.e. un-paid work, accountability and transparency;
- Outlines concrete ways to restructure the economy, introduces policies and actions based on the fundamental values of feminism, which embrace justice, solidarity, equality, including equality of opportunities, non-discrimination and respect of diversity and the natural environment;

- Takes a new approach to labour market policies and regulations, and support structures so that they take full account of people's lives and life-courses rather than the other way around (as currently practiced under the patriarchal system).

These are the pillars that define the EWL's vision of a Purple Economy<sup>6</sup> in support of an inclusive society, which will help build a caring and rights-based economy.

This will require a radical systemic shift in thinking and policy-making; which is necessary if we want to stop the destruction of the planet and ensure sustainability and human security today and for future generations of people. As such, the feminist Purple Economy is a formidable alternative to current policies and a real challenge to the current patriarchal system.

The transition to the Purple Economy needs strong democracies, good governance and transparent political structures. **Europe will have a pivotal role to play** in the transition to the Purple Economy. Its core principles of peace, justice, inclusion, equality and the promotion of well-being are already in line with the people-centred approach embedded in the vision of a feminist society. What is needed now is action.



# POLICY MILESTONES TOWARDS A PURPLE PACT

- All measures must address the multiple and intersecting discrimination faced by women
- Specific recommendations are addressed to different actors at the end of this document

**Adopt a Care Deal for Europe / Carry out gender impact assessments of macro-economic policies / Ensure that the EU macro-economic framework, including post Europe2020 specifically seeks to realise gender equality / Close the gender pay, poverty and pension gaps by concentrating on eradicating the underlying cause / Implement gender budgeting / Invest in the Care Economy and divest in military spending / Eradicate all forms of male violence against women / Guarantee all women's economic independence / Invest in decent and quality jobs that guarantee decent pay, healthy working conditions and full and equal rights / Ensure that the judicial system plays its full role to end all forms of exploitation of persons whilst ensuring comprehensive victims' rights / Establish quality, accessible and affordable care services throughout the lifecycle**

# CHAPTER 1

## TOWARDS A PURPLE ECONOMY: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY IN EUROPE

“Ignoring the feminist perspective is bad economics. The discipline aims to explain the allocation of scarce resources; it is bound to go wrong if it ignores the role that deep imbalances between men and women play in this allocation. As long as this inequality exists, there is space for feminist economics.” The Economist, March 12, 2016

### 1.1 Feminist Approaches to Macro-economics

Current macro-economic policies, including monetary, fiscal and tax policy, are deemed to be gender-neutral when in fact they have very different impacts on women and men. They matter for gender equality because they shape the overall economic environment for realising women’s rights by affecting opportunities for paid employment, resources for policy (budgets) aimed at reducing inequalities, and the demand for women’s un-paid labour. Current macro-economic policies typically turn a blind eye to these issues and does not take into account economic and social rights, income distribution, equality between women and men, equality between different groups of women, or the environmental impact on the planet and on the natural environment.

Feminist economics, building on the approaches of a number of feminist scholars,<sup>7</sup> offers much needed and viable alternatives to traditional economics based on well-being rather than on profit. Its basic values encompass human rights, equality, and intersectionality.

*“The changing climate further increases disparities, as its impacts hit vulnerable populations – who have done the least to contribute to this crisis – the hardest. And among those at the frontlines of climate impacts are the bodies, lives and livelihoods of women around the world – particularly rural and indigenous women.” Maria Alejandra Rodriguez Acha, a Peruvian activist*

Feminist macro-economic analysis demonstrates that the current growth model perpetuates existing gender and environmental injustices and investigates whether these can be mitigated through a “de-growth work-sharing strategy”. It illustrates how the monetised economy geared to growth systematically devalues ecological processes and caring activities.<sup>8</sup> Environmental injustices also continue since “green growth” does not address the root cause of the problem, i.e. the exploitation of the environment for the purposes of growth.

The **Purple Pact** criticises the current growth model and supports a strategy of de-growth, which not only promotes environmental justice, but also envisions a society centred around care. De-growth can be designed in a gender-sensitive way, making work-sharing and care part of a broader value transformation that has the potential to address both gender and environmental injustices.



ENSURE THAT THE EUROPEAN MACRO-ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING POST EUROPE2020, SPECIFICALLY SEEKS TO REALISE GENDER EQUALITY AND PROTECTS THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

### 1.2 Intersectionality – an inclusive approach to a feminist economy

*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.” Audre Lorde, feminist civil rights activist*

Adopting an intersectional approach means recognising the various forms of discrimination one may experience and how these intersect. They span across gender, race, disability, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, religion and locality among others. Being a woman cannot be considered in isolation from ethnic origin, age, class, migration status, dis/ability, etc. Each of these identities contribute to shaping a woman’s experience of oppression. These identities interact with one another to create social inequalities and discrimination and they determine access to resources.

At the core of the **Purple Pact** is an intersectional approach, crucial for an inclusive economy defined by the well-being and equality of all. The feminist movement continues to

unite around this vision while keeping a critical eye on the various systems of oppression. Such an approach prepares the way for de facto equality of all people and allows us to identify specific policy measures on how to get there.

 **ADOPT AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH FOR ALL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION.**

### 1.3 Fiscal policies for the benefit of women and the well-being of all

*“Taxation policy must have a redistributive effect with the aim of an equalisation of wealth between women and men. Fiscal policies play a key role in increasing maximum available resources which are vital to strengthening the capacity of governments to reduce gender inequalities.” UN Women*

Since the mid-1980s, gender budget analysis, which has been undertaken in many countries, has been a key strategy to challenge macro-economic theorising and policy-making. Such initiatives, along with a variety of pro-poor budget initiatives, constitute the major challenges to the prevailing fiscal policy stance in many countries.

Fiscal policy has two major components: taxation/revenues and spending and they have explicit and implicit gender biases. In some Member States taxation may target men and women in different ways, e.g. tax reductions when there is a dependent spouse in the family or tax credits for sole earner couples. There are also implicit biases where tax provisions appear gender neutral but “in reality there is discrimination as the policy interacts with behaviour/ income patterns that impact the genders differently.”<sup>9</sup> Most EU Member States have abolished tax regulations that explicitly differentiate between women and men (with some notable exceptions, such as ongoing campaigning to remove the so-called “tampon tax”). However, specific policy measures to “raise and redistribute revenues can impact on women’s income and economic security disproportionately and reduce their access to quality public services, undermining their ability to exercise their economic and social rights and progress towards gender equality.”<sup>10</sup>

In its report on gender equality and taxation policies in the EU, the European Parliament observes that the “lack of a gender perspective in the EU and national taxation

policies reinforces current gender gaps (employment, income, un-paid work, pension, poverty, wealth, etc.), creates disincentives for women to enter and remain in the labour market, and reproduces traditional gender roles and stereotypes.”<sup>11</sup>

There is also an observable trend in taxation policy to lower taxation of corporate entities. Between the 1980s and today, corporate taxes globally have fallen from 49% to 24%<sup>12</sup> whilst the value-added tax (VAT) – consumption tax – rate has risen steadily. This means that the tax burden for lower income groups has grown and has thus impacted on women disproportionately.

Tax evasion, tax avoidance and tax havens all reduce the capacity of states to redistribute wealth. Counteracting these illegal doings is crucial for women’s rights and public investment in social infrastructure and care.

#### Economic governance at EU level

Economic governance at the EU level has systematically focused on the reduction of public spending (to decrease or maintain public deficits under 3% of GDP) and has done very little to raise income taxes, which impacts on public investments, such as health and education. Instead, it has focused on increasing VAT which disproportionately hurts women as they form the majority of poorer households, and in particular, single women heads of households. The deliberate choice to carry out austerity policies in the last decade has had a disproportionate impact on women and rolled back a lot of progress in achieving equality between women and men. Such policies are counterproductive in the short, and especially, the long-term.

#### Cutting back public services means relying on women’s un-paid labour

Decreased public revenue means that when governments make decisions to ‘cut back’ on public services, these are expected to be met by women’s un-paid labour. The failure to consider public spending in areas that directly affect women’s (and men’s) lives as an investment is not only short-sighted but expensive in the long run. The gendered division of labour ensures that women continue to provide social services without being paid, particularly in times of debt management and anti-inflation policies; what is more, reliance on women’s un-paid labour for such services has increased alarmingly. Governments practicing these debt management policies do not heed the impacts on women such as the burden of educating children by themselves, caring for sick family members, staying at home with pre-school children, etc. Such measures do not contribute in any way to the creation of sustainable decent employment,

which would also increase the state’s income in terms of tax revenue.

Failure to regulate tax revenue at the European level, if not on a global level (especially corporate), has resulted in a race to the bottom, fuelling global inequality, particularly between women and men.

#### Increase in public spending is a long-term public investment

Feminist economic analysis reveals that an increase in public spending constitutes a long-term collective investment. For this reason, it rejects the argument that public spending is ‘unproductive’. Better economic governance, the dismantlement of tax havens and holding corporations to their fiscal responsibilities will provide sufficient income for such an investment. There are other sources of income, which could be re-directed to spending on care, such as taxing of financial transactions, and the benefit of the care economy. Measures addressing corruption and fiscal evasion are also useful to fill the public coffers.

Pensions also play an important part in governments’ fiscal policies. The pension system today reflect the male-breadwinner model and severely impact on women’s economic independence and old age security. Cuts and tightening conditions of access negatively affect women, while public pension schemes are used to reduce public deficits.

 **END AUSTERITY POLICIES WHICH HAVE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES ON ACHIEVING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN. ENSURE THAT PUBLIC SPENDING IS UNDERSTOOD AS AN INVESTMENT. ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE GENDER GAPS IN PAY, PENSION PROPERTY AND POVERTY.**

### 1.4 Gender budgeting: Making public finance and economic policies work for equality between women and men

*“The EU needs to demonstrate its accountability and move effectively to steer finances and resources for equality between women and men. This means developing and*

*implementing budget processes using gender mainstreaming at every level of policy.” Joanna Maycock, Secretary-General of the EWL*

#### 1.4.1 Gender Budgeting is Gender Mainstreaming

Budgets reveal political priorities. The budget is the most important economic policy instrument and a powerful tool to transform societies. How money is spent, and income generated, tells us about the type of values our society supports.

While there is no uniform definition of gender budgeting, there are a number of **key principles**. These include: **gender-based assessment** of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and **restructuring** revenues and expenditures in order to **promote** gender equality<sup>13</sup>. To address additional structural inequalities faced by women more analysis is needed to recognise the impact of inter-generational wealth, race and ethnicity, migrant status... etc. on gender equality in the economy. It means being clear about the objectives and outcomes as public budgets are examined in order to assess whether **they do or they do not** contribute to further equality between women and men, and then to **introduce changes** that promote gender equality accordingly.

Gender budgeting has the potential to re-organise state budget planning and decision-making processes. To be effective, it has to be implemented at all stages of the budget cycle and at all economic levels: planning, debate, decision and evaluation. Its methodology includes gender impact assessments and gender responsive evaluation and an active steering process for finances and resources (monetary policies, currencies, pricing, taxes, money flow of trade investments and subsidies, land, paid and un-paid work, time) with a view to establishing gender equality and (women’s) human rights in all EU financial policies.

In a nutshell, gender budgeting is essential to ensuring that revenue generated through collective taxation is allocated in a way that will reduce gender inequalities and reduce women’s un-paid work.

Gender budgeting is a proven way to create transparency based on measurable results and includes those residing in the EU in a participatory way. However, the EU has not yet started to implement gender budgeting within the EU Budgets, the European Commission’s operational programmes or any of the EU institution’s policies<sup>14</sup>, despite the fact that commitments were made in 2001 by the EU finance ministers to implement gender budgeting until 2015 and agreed under regional EU and international legally binding instruments and soft law.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it is one of the priority areas of UN Women.

Gender budgeting is at the heart of the EWL's Purple Pact. Only gender-responsive budgets can deliver the desired result of gender equality and help support the transition towards a care economy.

 IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WOMEN HAVE A MANDATED SAY IN HOW PUBLIC MONEY IS SPENT. THE EU SHOULD BE THE DRIVING FORCE TO ACCELERATE CLOSING GENDER GAPS BY IMPLEMENTING AND APPLYING GENDER BUDGETING PRINCIPLES TO THE EU BUDGET.

#### 1.4.2 An urgent focus on military spending

There is a strong correlation between the increase of domestic violence and trafficking, arms trade as well as actual conflict, in addition to well-documented sexual and gender-based violence, post-conflict and returning combatants' situations. The funding and trading of arms and greater military spending contributes to escalating conflicts and thus to women's (and everybody else's) harm, physically and socio-economically whilst diverting precious funds away from social progress and stability. The global trend for excessive military contracts and spending well beyond budgetary means, even more sometimes than the military both requests and requires, takes valuable resources away from far more essential needs.

Countries which seek to boost their own economy through arms sales or the manufacturing of weaponry to sell into conflict zones further promote the escalation and prolongation of conflict. This can cause women, men and children to flee their homes, increasing their mortality risk whilst promoting a surge in migration to conflict-free countries beyond the rates predictable as part of modern progressive migration flows. It is crucial to recognise the role that Western states play in driving migration into the EU due to external policies.

 ALL EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS MUST ADOPT THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH AND WORK TOWARDS COMPLETE DISARMAMENT.

#### MILITARY SPENDING IS ANATHEMA TO A FEMINIST ECONOMY

The global trend for excessive military contracts and spending well beyond budgetary means, even more sometimes than the military both requests and requires, takes valuable resources away from far more immediate and vulnerable domestic needs.

The Beijing Platform for Action's section on women in armed conflict calls for an "appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures, including global military expenditures, trade in arms and investment for arms production and acquisition" so as "to permit the possible allocation of additional funds for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of women."<sup>16</sup>

### 1.5. Human dignity and the costs of violence against women

The economic cost of violence against women in Europe is estimated at 226 billion euro each year<sup>17</sup>. Male violence against women is intrinsically linked to women's inequality. Inequality between women and men perpetuates, reinforces and legitimises male violence against women. Women's often limited economic resources, especially in times of recession, are a risk factor as women without financial resources are hard pressed to afford alternative accommodation or support themselves independently<sup>18</sup>. Cuts in funding of public services and NGOs create conditions whereby women and girls have fewer resources to protect themselves and their children from male violence. Robust and resourced public services and support to mainstream services such as health, employment, housing and education are urgently required. Male violence has a direct impact on the health and well-being of women and impacts on women's performance in the work place, oftentimes threatening their employment status (and independent livelihood). Male violence against women is a contributing factor to the feminisation of poverty as women often see a drop in income after separation. For a significant proportion of women, domestic violence is a pathway to homelessness. Older women and women and girls with disabilities, in particular, experience male violence, oftentimes in silence.

The Convention concerning the elimination violence and harassment in the world of work<sup>19</sup>, recently adopted by the International Labour Organisation recognises that domestic violence can affect employment, productivity and health and safety, and that governments, employers' and workers' organisations and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognise, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence.

The **Purple Pact** sets out to eradicate violence against women, addressing gross violations of women's rights as well as subtle and/or distorted forms of men's control over women's lives, bodies and sexuality, whether directly or through economic coercion. It aims to combat all forms of violence against women and always link them to the issues of gender equality and women's human rights.

#### 1.5.1 Not for sale: challenging the commercialisation of women and girls' bodies

Women's and girls' bodies are not for sale. The exponential explosion of the commercialisation of women's and girls' bodies in all their forms (including trafficking, prostitution, pornography, surrogacy, the "sugar baby" phenomenon, "escort's", etc.) is a huge profit-making business based on the exploitation of women and girls reminiscent of the days of slavery in centuries past.

Recent reports present evidence of the **direct link between some forms of disability and different patterns of trafficking**, such as forced begging and labour exploitative practices<sup>20</sup> as well as sexual exploitation. In the latter case, they may not immediately identify themselves as victims, or are less likely to be believed when reporting the abuse<sup>21</sup>.

The sex industry is a prime example of the exploitation and commodification of women and girls that happens when patriarchy and capitalism see eye to eye. The vast majority of those in prostitution are women and girls in highly vulnerable situations.

The **Purple Pact** seeks to eradicate the objectification and commercialisation of women and girls. A feminist economic approach such as the **Purple Pact** addresses first the needs of women, girls and others in precarious situations and seeks to stop the coercion of women and girls to sell their bodies for the gratification of male clients. Therefore, the **Purple Pact** advocates for a strong welfare system; access to state-funded educational programmes; access to justice including quality legal representation; routes to decent employment; and housing assistance. In addition, those seeking to profit – sexually or financially – from women's vulnerability and further objectify women must be held to account legally.

 ENSURE THE RATIFICATION AND FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOLLOWED BY EU LEGISLATION AND A POLICY FRAMEWORK.

 THE EU MUST ADOPT STANDARDS IN EDUCATION AND MEDIA REGULATION, WHICH REDRESS AND SHIFT EXISTING MODELS OF TOXIC MASCULINITY AND ENTITLEMENTS TOWARDS RESPECTFUL GENDER RELATIONS WHERE WOMEN ARE UNDERSTOOD AS EQUALS AND NOT INSTRUMENTS FOR PATRIARCHAL USE OR ENHANCEMENT.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE CARE ECONOMY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL: BUILDING A CARING SOCIETY FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

“The ability to take into account resources that are not marketed and not produced for a profit, whether un-paid work caring for family and friends, or the atmosphere and oceans; not taking them for granted as ‘bottomless pits’, able to absorb any demands made on them [...] all this is central to the attainment of women’s empowerment and environmental sustainability.” Diane Elson, UK Women’s Budget Group

### 2.1 Caring – the backbone of a feminist economic model

Caring for others and being cared for at different stages of our lives are two of the central emotional experiences of our shared humanity. In the Purple Economy, care is the backbone of society; it is what makes society function.

Care, simply put, is the act of caring for others and for oneself. This includes taking care of children, the elderly, the sick, and persons with disabilities as well as performing domestic work such as cleaning, catering and care services. Care work is, therefore, central to the process of social reproduction that enables the continued existence of individuals, families and society itself. Social reproduction comprising both emotional and material work, often not paid, is indispensable to society. Care represents a key to the continuation of the social order. Without care, there could be no culture, no economy, and no political organisation.<sup>22</sup> For persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, care must be understood as an independent right.

### 2.2 A feminist approach to the care economy

The **Purple Pact** affirms that care is a collective need that requires a collective responsibility.

*“No society that systematically undermines social reproduction can endure for long. Today, however, a new form of capitalist society is doing just that. The result is a major crisis, not simply of care, but of social reproduction in this broader sense.” Nancy Fraser*

#### 2.2.1 Care as an investment

**Care is as essential as technology to our economy.** An economy that values caring creates well-being, accepts diversity as an enrichment of our society and uses ethical criteria to develop a world where nobody is left behind. The care economy should go beyond the gender-based differentiation of breadwinning and caregiving. Feminist scholars, like Nancy Fraser, have long proposed a care economy where neither the universal breadwinner model, which pushes women into feminised roles nor the caregiver parity model, where gender difference in care remains costless, are favoured. Instead, the approach of the Purple Economy envisages a society in which women’s current life-patterns are the norm for everyone<sup>23</sup>.

Feminist economics push for more public investment to provide quality, accessible and affordable care. States must build and maintain care infrastructures and services achieving the highest quality standards of education and training, life-long qualification of professional carers and invest in an educational, recreational and supportive infrastructure for those who deliver “informal” care. In the same way, states should recognise the value of and invest in civil society self-organised care structures. Collectively-organised care services have shown to create jobs and are more efficient than individualised care at home. However, attention must be paid to individual needs in the provision

of services. These must be available, accessible to all and provided on the basis of equal opportunity, free and informed consent allowing in particular persons with disabilities flexibility in their daily lives<sup>24</sup>.

The Purple Economy recognises the crucial role of un-paid care work in a national economy. It proposes to think of the economy as consisting of four sectors – the business sector, the public sector, the household sector and the non-profit sector. The economy encompasses the interaction of all of these four sectors.<sup>25</sup>

While the feminist perspective on care and the care economy propose a holistic approach, conventional economists also recognise –slowly though– that investments in care (mainly childcare) would boost women’s participation in the labour market. Recent studies<sup>26</sup> have shown that such investments would increase (conventional) GDP.

The **Purple Pact** has already identified the care economy as the most rational and effective policy approach. It has shown that the care economy could easily serve as a potential bridge between different actors in the macro-economic framework, to meet care needs across the life-cycle. There are positive signs that major institutions and established economists are realising the benefits of a feminist approach.

#### The European Investment Bank – A great potential for the promotion of the care economy

The European Investment Bank (EIB) Gender Strategy,<sup>27</sup> which took effect in 2017 aims at embedding gender equality in the Group’s activities. The strategy covers EIB lending, blending and advisory activities both inside and outside the European Union. The Strategy supports the protection of women’s and girls’ rights, enables the EIB to increase its positive effect on gender equality and helps focus support on projects that increase the participation of women in the labour market. The EIB will identify targeted investment opportunities to empower women in the economy. Such investments, in support of the care economy, could have positive transformative effects.

#### 2.2.2 Care as a right

Across Europe, lack of availability, high costs and inaccessibility of care services often prevail. To cut costs, austerity measures pushed for the re-institutionalisation of persons with disabilities and, in general, dependent persons. In light of an aging population, care needs will continue to rise over the next decades, therefore, it is crucial that care services meet the demographic challenges.

Professionalism of potential and present employees in the care sector is needed. Member States must allocate budgets for the development of personnel through capacity development (training, skills, awareness-raising) activities. Training is particularly needed as regards to specific groups of women such as undocumented women, migrant women without clear access to the workforce or recognition of international qualifications, older women post-retirement etc.

#### 2.2.3 Care and autonomy: two sides of the same coin

The **Purple Pact** affirms that care is not about dependency but about autonomy, embedded in a human rights-based approach. The right to be cared for and to care for others requires addressing the needs and the rights of all at different stages of our lives.

From the perspective of disability, it is crucial that care services and provision are aligned to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and in particular Article 19 to avail of support services to live independently and be included in the community framework. The Convention forms part and parcel of the policy framework of the EU, not least it was signed and ratified by both the EU and the Member States. For women and girls with disabilities, investments in different forms of support services, including the right to live independently, and thus to meet their needs and responsibilities are inherent to a feminist economic care model.

Domestic care work is one of the largest sectors acting as a pull factor in international female labour migration today. A feminist economic model challenges the relegation of migrant women domestic workers to the margins of society, and invisible in the absence of social rights and often residence or citizenship rights, which must be addressed in a human rights care economy framework.

The feminisation of international migration in the context of the global care chains is an increasing trend in Europe, as migrant women fill the care gap due to the failure of

public investments. While the push factors of migration (including lack of economic opportunities in the country of origin, conflict, persecution and human rights abuses) must be responded to, the rights of migrant women must be respected and protected including safe, fair and decent employment.

The continuum of care is also an important issue for rural women. Their work is in fact indispensable (though often un-paid) throughout rural economies, taking on a multitude of roles, which include agricultural production and marketing, food processing and distribution, house cleaning and laundry, child rearing and education, caring for the elderly and sick, growing fruits and vegetables and taking care of domestic animals. In the context of a feminist economic model such as the **Purple Pact**, rural women who are at the forefront of environmental protection are valued and supported for their immeasurable contribution to sustainable development.

#### 2.2.4 A Care Deal for Europe

Care policies and the provision of care services are intrinsically related to the achievement of equality between women and men. The lack of affordable, accessible and high quality care services in most EU countries and the fact that care work is not equally shared between women and men have a direct negative impact on women’s ability to participate in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life.

A **Care Deal** is urgently needed. Such a deal would spark more robust policies, particularly with regards to meeting care needs in Europe throughout the lifecycle. A Care Deal includes investment in care provisions, work-life balance policies and valuing the care sector in Europe particularly regarding working conditions and pay in light of the fact that the workforce in the care sector comprises primarily of women and constitutes one of the largest sectors in a gender-segregated labour market.

 VALUE OF CARE AS THE KEY ELEMENT OF A MACRO-ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK BY ADOPTING A CARE DEAL FOR EUROPE

# CHAPTER 3

## BUILDING A FEMINIST FUTURE: WOMEN, EMPLOYMENT AND THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING LABOUR MARKET

“The crises of reproduction in many societies - from the educational and employment crises for young people to the care crisis for senior citizens - will not be solved without reorganising care and social reproduction.”

Professor Christa Wichterich, Senior fellow and independent researcher

### 3.1 The Purple Economy and the changing nature of paid and un-paid work

Feminist economists promoting the care economy start from the fact that gainful employment is constantly becoming more informal, more precarious and difficult to access. They argue that society needs to develop a new understanding of labour and a new model for securing basic income. It is their understanding that the foremost goal of all necessary labour in society is care and existential security.

In this context, the **Purple Pact** proposes to re-evaluate the concept of labour by means of minimum and maximum wages as well as a redistribution of labour, with a view to superseding gender stereotypes. Furthermore, it aims to promote a general reduction of working time for everybody so that caring and work responsibilities can be better balanced for both women and men. Finally, and equally important, it underlines the crucial role of a comprehensive public infrastructure and public services, ranging from healthcare to public transport.

### 3.2 Current and future challenges for women in the labour market

More than 10 years after the 2008 global financial and economic crisis which led to massive job cuts, many developed economies have achieved only a fragile recovery. The world continues to face major employment challenges, particularly for women and girls. Labour markets in most countries have not fully recovered both in terms of quantity and quality of jobs. At the same time, income inequality has increased across and within countries. In a number of developed economies high unemployment rates persist while working conditions have worsened<sup>28</sup>.

Many EU countries have seen an increase in particular contract types that diverge from the “standard employment contract”, i.e. a full-time employment contract of indefinite duration, which provide social rights throughout the life-cycle including pensions. There are serious concerns about job security, job quality and the potential negative impact of excessive and/or improper use of such contracts on equality, productivity and growth, fair competition among companies, and the sustainability of social protection systems<sup>29</sup>.

International observers have noted that the potential for job insecurity, isolation, violence and lack of representation in all the growing atypical working arrangements will particularly impact on women and their position in the European labour market. Already existing gross inequalities, like the gender pay, pension and care and life-long earnings gaps risk to be exacerbated in the changing labour market<sup>30</sup>.

#### 3.2.1 The aging care challenge

The continued undervaluation of work that is coded as ‘female’ in the existing patriarchal gender hierarchy is a vital feminist concern. Europe’s population is aging, but the care for older generations who are living longer and with increased dependence on care cannot unthinkingly be displaced onto female family members, neighbours, and others. It is imperative that we take measures to address the exorbitant and growing un-paid care burden, which is negatively impacting on women’s capacity to work in the paid labour market, and address the needs of low-paid undervalued workers in the care sector. European institutions have not lived up to the care challenge and are far from developing a sustainable model for care, embedded in a human rights-based framework, which allows for self-determination and choice embodied in the concept of “agency”.

#### 3.2.2 The challenges of intersectionality in the European labour market

Employment rates for some groups of women are very alarming. Young women, women with disabilities and those

belonging to ethnic minorities face particular challenges. Migrant women play essential roles in labour markets and make a valuable contribution to the economies and societies. However, despite this positive contribution, they face significant obstacles to their effective integration into the labour market.

Highly-educated **migrant women** who obtained their qualifications outside the EU are twice as likely to be employed in low-skill jobs in comparison to EU-qualified and native women with the same level of education<sup>31</sup>. They tend to find work in traditionally gendered women's roles – as domestic and care workers in households, accommodation and food services, human health and social work, manufacturing and administration and support service – where they often work long hours for low pay and may be at risk of being severely exploited, especially if working in households.

A significant number of women enter countries as the spouses of migrant workers, which may impact on their legal status, limit their personal entitlements and render them dependent on their spouse, especially in the first few years before permanent residence or right to work has been granted. Many women also enter for purposes of employment, although the majority have not found a job before arrival. A substantial number have also entered as asylum seekers and refugees and are a particularly vulnerable category of women in the labour market as their legal status depends on lengthy asylum applications and the lack of permanence makes it difficult for them to obtain employment.

**Women with disabilities** encounter a variety of barriers in the world of work. Young girls may need specific programmes to make education and future career opportunities accessible to them. Working-age women face barriers to entering and participating in the workforce. Inaccessible work environments, low wages, and lack of jobs leave many women with disabilities reliant on public benefits and living in poverty. In the EU, women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities or women without disabilities; a woman with a disability is less likely to work full time and is paid less than workers from all other groups<sup>32</sup>. Women with disabilities often experience sexual violence at work and redress from the justice system is compounded by the intersection of gender and disability.

Employment rates for **women living in rural areas** are also lower than their male counterparts. The additional obstacles faced by these groups of women are due to the intersectionality of their gender with, and aggravation by, other grounds of discrimination which must be addressed in employment policies.

 **THE EU MUST ADOPT A HOLISTIC STRATEGY ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN TO ADDRESS ALL WOMEN, AND SET OUT MEASURES TO TACKLE THE SPECIFIC BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN WHO ALSO MAY EXPERIENCE OTHER FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION.**

 **ADOPT TARGETS TO REDUCE WOMEN'S POVERTY, INCLUDING IN THE CONTEXT OF REDUCING CHILD POVERTY, ESPECIALLY THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY AUSTERITY, INCLUDING LONE MOTHERS, WOMEN PENSIONERS, ROMANI WOMEN, MIGRANT AND MINORITY WOMEN, WOMEN LIVING WITH DISABILITIES AND WOMEN LIVING IN RURAL AREAS.**

### 3.2.3 The challenges of the digital economy – women's plights remain the same on or off-line

*"ICT may well be seen as a rapidly growing sector – a promising field for future employment as well as a sector strongly associated with innovation. But it is still marked by gendered dynamics and segregation, in a very similar way to what can be found in the majority of other economic sectors."*  
- Catherine André and Marzia Bona, *Journalists*

The digital market, products and range of (financial) activities performed world-wide is expansive, encompassing jobs across the ICT sector, digital platforms, machine learning quantified as 'artificial intelligence', cyber security etc. There is a silent revolution taking place. The potential that digitalisation presents on increasing women's socio-economic independence could be distinctly transformative, if implemented through the lens of the feminist economic model and its core principles. However, the current financial prioritisation of digital markets is instead exacerbating the issues highlighted within traditional economic models and as such, women's inequalities including increasing women's precarious work.

Within science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations, only 14% are held by women. Of the 8 million ICT specialists in the EU, only 17% are occupied by women.<sup>33</sup> The development of digital economic and social policies are overwhelmingly shaped by men. The current implementation of the EU Digital Strategy has contributed to the widening of the digital gender gap and has systematically disenfranchised women digital

entrepreneurs and leaders, as it prioritises economic growth embedded in patriarchal concepts. Increasing women's participation in the digital job market would create an additional 16 billion euros annually and would contribute to the development of digital innovations that bridge the gap and would allow for the creation of a digital space which is not only safe for women, but in which they lead.

### 3.2.4 Decent work in the gig economy

While some sectors of the economy have always centred or survived based on casual labour (short-term or once-off hire), this does not mean that an adequate framework has been established by either the private sector or national governments to ensure casual workers' rights are protected. Often those working in such spaces are not unionised and have no means to negotiate for standardised pay rates, social protections or access to i.e. parental leave or sick leave payments. In a society where women carry the burden of childcare and other forms of care work, they will be the hardest hit by this lack of infrastructure.

This has been enhanced by app-based "self-employment" where rates are set by a company with high profit margins, yet those doing the work on the ground are not earning a sustainable living.

These developments spell precariousness for women. Getting **decent work** in a highly gendered labour market, with lesser union coverage – i.e. collective bargaining, an increasing number of atypical working arrangements, and lesser regulation will become the exception than the norm for women. The situation is worse for those women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination because of their class, race, sexual orientation, disability, age or migrant status, amongst other dimensions.

 **WOMEN MUST BE AFFORDED ACCESS TO DECENT WORK, INCLUDING A DECENT INCOME, EQUAL PAY, SECURITY, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ADEQUATE SOCIAL PROTECTION. A EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SECURITY IS RECOMMENDED TO WORK TOWARDS ESTABLISHING AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN AND THROUGHOUT THE EU TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK.**

 **GOVERNMENTS MUST SET MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ALL SECTORS, AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR ANYONE WHO MAY QUALIFY AS 'SELF-EMPLOYED' BUT NOT BE IN A SECURE WORK ENVIRONMENT. COMPANIES SHOULD ENSURE FAIR PAY, DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR ALL, AND BE HELD TO ACCOUNT WHEN THESE STANDARDS ARE NOT MET.**

**CONSTRUCTING A FEMINIST ECONOMY - ENGAGING IN A PURPLE PACT**

POLICY PROPOSALS TO STAKEHOLDERS FOR 2020 - 2030

	European Union	European Commission	European Parliament
<b>MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICIES</b>	<p>Ensure that the macro-economic framework, including the post Europe2020 framework includes a gender equality perspective and specifically seeks to realise gender equality.</p> <p>Launch campaigns to positively promote feminist economics.</p> <p>Explore degrowth strategies.</p> <p>Undertake studies to gauge the impact of environmental exploitation on women.</p> <p>Include women, especially feminist economists in economic policy planning at the European and national level and take binding measures for the equal representation of women in economic decision-making.</p>	<p>The economic framework of the EU must be evaluated, with gender impact assessments, and include a feminist economics approach for effective gender equality outcomes.</p> <p>DG Budget to initiate stakeholder inclusive processes regarding public expenditure and funding allocation and invite in particular feminist economists.</p> <p>Ensure that the post Europe2020 Strategy applies gender mainstreaming throughout the whole Strategy and has a gender equality pillar that ensures specific measures and funds aimed at closing the gaps between women and men.</p> <p>Use consistently the European Semester's country-specific recommendations to enforce specific actions to improve women's situation, demonstrate the gendered impact of proposed policy measures, and to encourage more systematic gender mainstreaming and specific measures in the National Reform Programmes (NRPs), including in the macro-economic policies</p> <p>Apply a gender lens to budgets, i.e. gender budgeting methodologies, in the MFF 2021-2027 and the annual budgets.</p> <p>Increase funds for women's organisations to alleviate the increased pressure on women to fill the gaps left in social structures after 10 years of austerity.</p>	<p>Follow-up on the European Parliament Resolution on Tax and Gender<sup>1</sup> on how fiscal policies impact on women, gender equality and human rights as per the principles stipulated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.</p> <p>Engage with civil society organisations, particularly women's organisations on the post Europe2020 strategy and subsequent European Semester process.</p> <p>Conduct a thematic annual review of gender equality aspects of the implementation of the post/future 2030 Strategy at the EU and at national level to identify gender gaps and recommendations aimed at redressing existing imbalances; address these gaps by providing guidelines to be adopted with follow-up.</p>

EUROSTAT	Member States	Social Partners
<p>Develop additional indicators to measure macro-economic performance including paid and un-paid work, care economy, gaps in time use, etc.</p>	<p>Ensure that taxation policies have a redistributive effect with the aim of an equalisation of wealth between women and men and an increase in investments in public services, namely care services.</p> <p>Refrain from increasing value-added-tax (VAT) as a means to increase public revenue.</p> <p>Governments need to raise taxes in a progressive way and curb tax incentives (i.e. individual tax rebates) to ensure collective contribution to state budgets.</p> <p>Ensure effective participation of civil society organisations including women's organisations in the drafting, implementation, and evaluation of National Reform Programmes in the context of economic governance, partnership agreements, operational programmes, etc.</p>	<p>Put equality between women and men at the core of collective bargaining to address working conditions and persistent gaps in pay, income and pensions.</p>

	European Union	European Commission	European Parliament
<b>GENDER BUDGETING</b>	European Council decision to adopt gender budgeting as a tool for all EU budgets and public spending.	<p>Create a Commissioners' group on gender budgeting. Set up a task force to steer gender budgeting; initiate a pilot project.</p> <p>Set an EU wide target for gender mainstreaming in budgetary decisions, monitor implementation and outcomes.</p>	<p>Create a sub-committee in the Committee on Budgets on gender budgeting. Ensure that gender budgeting is applied in EU budgets and programmes.</p> <p>The Committee on Budgets and Budgetary Control should apply gender budgeting methods and analysis.</p>
<b>CARE ECONOMY</b>	<p>Acknowledge the central value of care work within a human rights framework.</p> <p>Carry out, promote and publicise more research on care needs, paid and un-paid carers' status, working conditions and needs, and care economy.</p> <p>Accede to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention (2011).</p>	<p>Acknowledge the central value of care work, including its economic value.</p> <p>Carry out, promote and publicise more research on care needs, paid and un-paid carers' status, working conditions and needs, and care economy.</p> <p>Introduce a Care Deal for Europe, similar to the Youth Guarantee, i.e. increased funding to ensure that all care needs are met within a rights-based approach and central to future EU policies.</p> <p>Present new legislation to improve maternity leave provisions for women in Europe, in the framework of free movement of workers to ensure that all women have equal rights in relation to maternity leave provisions throughout the whole of the EU, to overcome the current conditionality clauses in Member State legislation.</p> <p>Introduce care targets 'beyond Barcelona', (Barcelona+) to take into account caring needs in an aging society.</p> <p>Ensure long-term public investment in quality and affordable social infrastructure and caring skills development including care services.</p>	<p>Prioritise on the care economy during the next legislature.</p> <p>Carry out, promote and publicise more research on care needs and the care economy.</p> <p>Call on the European Commission to Introduce a Care deal for Europe.</p>

EUROSTAT	Member States	Social Partners
Develop indicators to track gender budgeting.	Apply gender budgeting methodologies to national public budgets and audits.	Support gender budgeting in collective bargaining.
Work on indicators, in collaboration with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), on the value of care work, paid and un-paid, and develop indicators on the take-up rate of women and men in relation to the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) provisions.	<p>Implement the WLB Directive.</p> <p>Acknowledge the central value of care work, including its economic value.</p> <p>Provide inclusive, quality and free access to caring and caring services. These should be developed within a rights-based framework to ensure autonomy of the carers and those being cared for and within the rights based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and within the rights and principles stated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.</p> <p>Allocate significant budgets to improve training and skills for carers and their recognition in the labour market.</p> <p>Increase public investment in the care economy.</p> <p>Sign and ratify the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (2011).</p>	<p>Raise salaries of care workers to a level that matches the social importance and real economic value of care work.</p> <p>Employers and Trade Unions should ensure the implementation of the WLB directive and work towards the measures on 'flexible' leave as proposed in the Directive.</p> <p>Support the call for a legislative framework to improve maternity rights for all women in Europe.</p> <p>Monitor the implementation of the WLB Directive and call for new measures if this fails to meet the outcomes, in particular regarding paternity rights and take-up of paternity/parental leave by men.</p>

	European Union	European Commission	European Parliament
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	<p>Revise and update the European Employment Strategy (2012) with a focus on the future of work and on ecological transition.</p> <p>Develop robust support to social enterprises.</p> <p>Create the conditions for an 'equal-earner-equal-carer model' to move away from the 'male-breadwinner-model'.</p> <p>Promote the social and economic rights set out in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights within the framework of the economic governance of the Union.</p> <p>Further develop efforts to promote the EU's accession to the European Social Charter so as to ensure the effective protection of economic and social rights.</p>	<p>Develop a care-centred employment strategy.</p> <p>Propose a directive on pay transparency with a specific focus on the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Ensure equal representation for women in the green job sector through positive action measures.</p> <p>Actively seek to improve women's engagement in the ICT sector, and the inclusion of women in the digital skills agenda and annual index for inclusivity, by supporting for example the European Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>Ensure that the future EU Digital Strategy, including the digital economy is developed within a gender equality perspective by actively seeking the input of women's organisations and feminist economists in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Consider how social security and employability programmes can best ensure economic autonomy for women during this period of labour market upheaval and in the perspective of the future of work (i.e. digital economy, etc.).</p>	<p>The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs has played an instrumental role in pursuing employment policies in the EU. This role should be strengthened to include a more robust gender perspective in light of the changing world of work and the establishment of a defined digital economy.</p> <p>More systematic joint initiatives with the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.</p>
MILITARY POLICIES	<p>Adopt as a guiding principle the concept of human security.</p> <p>Sign the United Nations Arm Trade Treaty (ATT).</p> <p>Sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.</p>		

EUROSTAT	Member States	Social Partners
<p>Collect sex disaggregated data when policies, programmes and projects are planned, implemented and evaluated for the environment and climate and in the green job sector; the absence of such data and statistics make it difficult to address gaps and to implement appropriate measures to improve gender equality in the green economy.</p> <p>Provide sex disaggregated on the impact of social protection systems (access, level of coverage, adequacy).</p>	<p>Strengthen the public care sector through EU funding and target-setting. Ensure that access to quality jobs recognise the importance of a broad range of care services, the core of which must be provided publicly.</p> <p>Close the gender pay gaps by concentrating on eradicating the underlying causes.</p> <p>Introduce binding measures for companies to be transparent about pay, salaries and bonuses.</p>	<p>In the context of collective bargaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose the collective reduction of working time for all.</li> <li>• Develop measures that enable women to take their rightful place in the digital economy in terms of roles, pay and working conditions.</li> <li>• Close the gender pay and income gap.</li> </ul>
	<p>Redress priorities in spending away from militarisation to "sustainable livelihoods" i.e. research on climate change; combating poverty, tackling mass waste.</p> <p>Implement the UN ATT, the UN Programme of Action on small arms and its international Tracing Instrument, UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions, and obligations of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to ensure the protection and inclusion of women in decision-making processes, and that a gender perspective is taken in situations of military spending and in armed conflict.</p>	

	European Union	European Commission	European Parliament
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION</b>	<p>While recognising that Social Protection/Social Security is a national competence, it is crucial to establish a level playing field in the EU and to meet the European Pillar of Social Rights through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a European Strategy on Social Protection/Social Security, similar to the past European Employment Strategy to explore areas of closer convergence, avoid pitfalls in maintaining and generating gender gaps in social protection systems and to ensure social cohesion in the EU.</li> <li>• Developing a Directive to ensure adequate social protection.</li> <li>• Establishing an EU wide social security/poverty/pension risk fund.</li> </ul>	<p>Propose an integrated European Social Protection/Social Security Strategy which could lead (in the long term) to the establishment of an EU wide social security/poverty/pension risk fund.</p> <p>Follow-up with legislation to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights from a gender perspective to ensure that all of the (current) principles are translated into gender sensitive rights.</p> <p>Guarantee decent income for all by moving towards an EU Directive on Minimum Income, building on the 1992 Recommendation<sup>3</sup> and the Active Inclusion Recommendation endorsed by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council in December 2008<sup>4</sup>.</p> <p>Develop a Human Rights Framework to combat poverty and social exclusion, which affirms the right of all women, men, girls and boys in the EU to lead a dignified life, free of poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>Develop a European Housing Strategy and a Strategy to end homelessness in Europe.</p>	<p>Call for, support and engage in an integrated European Social Protection/Social Security Strategy.</p> <p>Hold Public Hearings on affordable housing and homelessness with the view to progressing with a European Strategy.</p>
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</b>	<p>Ratify and fully Implement all aspects of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).</p> <p>The EU must ensure that all stakeholders involved in combating trafficking, including those involved in early detection, protection and referral of women who survived gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and victims of trafficking in persons, are trained on gender, women's and women and girls' disability rights.</p>	<p>Monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Propose a Directive on violence against women.</p> <p>Carry out a European-wide study, with recommendations, on prostitution/pornography and its interlinkage with crime and human rights violations.</p>	<p>Monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Convention at EU level, annual reporting and recommendations for further follow-up and implementation.</p>

EUROSTAT	Member States	Social Partners
<p>Contribute to closing the gender pension gaps by developing sex disaggregated statistics on the impact of social protection systems.</p> <p>Develop sex disaggregated statistics that go beyond the household unit, namely as regards to poverty.</p>	<p>Guarantee individualised rights with regards to taxation and social protection entitlements.</p> <p>Increase investments in public services.</p> <p>Guarantee affordable housing for all by investing in social housing and combatting homelessness.</p>	<p>Ensure that workers' rights are guaranteed on an equal playing field across the EU ensuring equality between women and men and within the framework of the free movement of workers.</p>
<p>Provide data on the costs of all forms of violence, particularly pornography, prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Ratify and fully implement the Istanbul Convention.</p> <p>Support the harmonisation of national laws on trafficking in persons to ensure that the definition of trafficking specifically covers women and girls and by inserting specific references to the groups at higher risk such as children, girls and women with disabilities.</p>	<p>Implement and set policies to address sexual violence at work as a follow-up up to the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment at work.</p>

	European Union	European Commission	European Parliament
<b>INTERSECTIONALITY</b>	<p>Adopt an intersectional approach for all policies and legislation, through ensuring any policy or legislation has specific measures to correct the additional barriers faced by women, women of colour, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds and classes, women with disabilities and LGBTI. Any reference to such measures must include corresponding economic and financial measures to ensure the possibility of effective implementation. It should be ensured that women facing multiple barriers can access additional support in acknowledgement that they (may) face multiple barriers to equality.</p> <p>The development of these policies should include various representatives of the groups identified as experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination as a monitoring and implementation measure.</p>	Adopt an intersectional approach for all policies and legislation.	Adopt an intersectional approach for all policies and legislation.

EUROSTAT	Member States	Social Partners
Propose appropriate methods for the collection of comparable data from an intersectional perspective.	<p>Adopt an intersectional approach for all policies and legislation.</p> <p>Set specific quantitative targets in National Reform Programmes regarding women's employment in general together with specific measures targeted for groups of women with very low employment rates such as young women, older women, migrant women, women with disabilities, single mothers, and Romani women.</p>	Adopt an intersectional approach for all collective bargaining and in all labour relations.

## ENDNOTES

1 European System of Accounts (ESA) 2010 annexed to Regulation (EU) No 549/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union Text with EEA relevance [OJ L 174, 26.6.2013, pp. 1–727].

2 Perkins, P. E. (2009), “Feminist ecological economics”, in Gowdy, J.M. (Ed.), *Economics Interactions with Other Disciplines*, Volume II, EOLSS Publications, Oxford, pp. 192–205. Available at: [http://base.socioeco.org/docs/doc-88\\_en.pdf](http://base.socioeco.org/docs/doc-88_en.pdf)

3 The idea of the Purple Economy was first developed by Ipek Ilkkaracan from the EWL coordination Turkey as the vision of a gender egalitarian and sustainable economy. The original model has a fourth pillar of rural economy and agricultural policy in addition to the three adopted here (i.e. social care, labour market regulation and a purple macro-economic framework). For the earliest description of the Purple Economy Model see Ilkkaracan (2013) ([http://www.genanet.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumente/Care\\_Gender\\_Green\\_Economy/Int\\_WS\\_Sustainable\\_Economy\\_Green\\_Growth\\_who\\_cares\\_EN.pdf](http://www.genanet.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/Care_Gender_Green_Economy/Int_WS_Sustainable_Economy_Green_Growth_who_cares_EN.pdf)); or Ilkkaracan (2016) (<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317239017/chapters/10.4324%2F9781315627762-13>); also for a brief introduction: <https://www.iwraw-ap.org/ipek-ilkkaracan-purple-economy/>

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6 The Purple Economy is a concept proposed by Ipek Ilkkaracan from the EWL coordination Turkey as a vision of a gender egalitarian and sustainable economy based on four pillars: public provisioning of care services, the right to paid forms of leave, public policies specific to address care needs of rural communities, focusing the macro-economic environment on care provisions.

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8 Dengler, C. and Strunk, B. (2018), “The Monetized Economy versus Care and the Environment: Degrowth Perspectives on Reconciling an Antagonism”, in *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 24, Issue 3.

9 European Parliament report and resolution of 15 January 2019 on Gender equality and taxation policies in the EU (2018/2095(INI)). Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0416\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0416_EN.html)

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

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14 European Institute for Gender Equality (2018) *Gender budgeting: Mainstreaming gender into the EU budget and macro-economic policy framework*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-budgeting-mainstreaming-gender-eu-budget-and-macro-economic-policy-framework>

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