



# Exchange of good practices on gender equality

**Equal Pay Days**  
Estonia, 18-19 June 2013

Summary Report

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## Summary of the exchange meeting

The exchange of good practices held in Tallinn, Estonia on the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June 2013 discussed the use of Equal Pay Days where a date each year (which can be fixed or variable) highlights the fact that women have to work extra time to have the same pay as a man over a 12 month period. In addition to exploration of the host country's approach, there were presentations from two associate countries, Belgium and Spain, on the approaches taken there and 12 other countries participated in the discussions.

### 1. The good practice of the host country and associated countries

#### Estonia

Since 2010 Estonia has had an Equal Pay Day campaign organised by the Estonian Association of Business and Professional Women (BPW Estonia). The principal aim of this initiative is to raise public awareness and encourage public debate on how to close the gender pay gap.

In Estonia the Equal Pay Day is known locally as '*Tilliga ja Tillita*' which translated literally means '*with and without dill*'. The title derives from the herb dill used in cooking but is also used colloquially to refer to the male genitalia. Moreover 'the *gap*' (as in pay gap) translates into Estonian as '*lõhe*' which literally means '*salmon*'. From this humorous wordplay the campaign has received a culinary focus involving the serving of salmon with or without dill.

During the Equal Pay Day, throughout the country restaurants and cafes serve salmon and sometimes other dishes with two different prices, depending on whether dill is included or not. Each year the price difference reflects the latest gender pay gap from the available statistics. For example, in 2010, salmon with dill had a price that was 30.3 per cent higher than the same dish without dill. In 2013 the price difference was 27.7 per cent. While initially the campaign focused just on salmon dishes, now each establishment can choose the kind of dish they wish to offer, displaying the price differential.

The selected date of the Equal Pay Day also depends on the size of the gender pay gap, using the same principle as the European Equal Pay Day. In 2013, for example, the date selected was 11<sup>th</sup> April, this representing the additional period that women in Estonia need to work in order to receive, on average, the same annual income as men.

The Equal Pay Day campaign in Estonia operates with a very low budget. In 2010, for example, it purely depended on the voluntary work of the members of BPW Estonia and in 2012 the campaign had a very small budget of 1,500 EUR from BPW Estonia in order to cover the costs of seminars and printing the information flyers. In 2011 the Equal Pay Day was supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) which, combined with the BPW Estonia funds, gave a total budget of 10,289 EUR. The budget was used to set up the campaign website (<http://www.bpw-estonia.ee/tilliga-ja-tillita>), to print posters and flyers in three languages (Estonian, Russian and English) and to organise a conference. In addition, real life examples of gender pay differences in the workplace were collected and short summaries

published on the campaign's homepage. The website is still in use and updated regularly.

The most crucial element in the effectiveness of the campaign is the cooperation of the different stakeholders and their willingness to engage. In addition to the work of the voluntary organisations and by BPW Estonia, cooperation with the private sector is crucial since they represent the main players in implementing the campaign (the restaurants and cafes).

The ways in which the campaign is implemented are relatively simple. The campaign is mainly coordinated via Facebook, e-mail and personal contacts with restaurants and cafes. The participating establishments are provided with campaign posters and the names are published on Facebook, the website of BPW Estonia and in a press release. In 2013, around 30 restaurants or cafes in four towns in Estonia agreed to participate in the campaign.

Other activities support the '*dill*' campaign. For example, each year the Equal Pay Day has included the collection and publication of real life stories of unequal treatment related to the career and earnings of women and these are posted on Facebook and the campaign website. In 2012 an Equal Pay Day seminar entitled '*Women's successful career*' was held and focussed on the career and earnings development of women and explored the possible ways of narrowing the pay gap. In addition, European Commission booklets '*Tackling the Gender Pay Gap in the European Union*' and national campaign flyers were distributed.

Because the awareness campaign is organised on a voluntary basis by the civil society and has a very low budget, this does not permit any formal assessment of the results of the campaign or the gathering of feedback from the guests of the participating restaurants and cafes. Therefore it is difficult to assess the number of people reached by these activities.

However, the most visible outcome of the Equal Pay Day is the media coverage. The BPW Estonia suggests that the Equal Pay Day campaigns so far have been visible and recognised. Each year, the campaign receives good media coverage and especially the '*dill*' activity. For instance in 2012 the Prime Minister referred to the campaign during a government press conference and acknowledged the fact that the gender pay gap was an issue that should be taken seriously and efforts made to eliminate it. Furthermore, the press release on the Equal Pay Day was presented hourly in the main national news and received additional coverage from other television and radio channels. The leaders of the campaign were invited to participate in shows and articles were published on the websites of these broadcasters. In terms of the important Facebook site, by April 2013 this had 627 followers and the '*palgalõhe*' (which translates as the '*pay gap*' but also as a '*pay salmon*') has been named the new national fish further promoting the issue of the gender pay gap.

## Belgium

In Belgium the first equal pay day was organised on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2005 by the socialist trade union ABVV/FGTB<sup>1</sup> together with the political women's organisation 'Zij-kant' of the Flemish Socialist Party. In 2007 also another main trade union, the

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<sup>1</sup> Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique/Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond - General Federation of Belgian Labour.

Christian trade union ACV-CSC<sup>2</sup>, started their equal pay days. Since then Equal Pay Days are held annually by both Trade Unions and are considered of particular symbolic importance as they serve to underline the gender pay gap and to encourage a legislative process that culminated in the drafting of a new law on equal pay<sup>3</sup>.

Both the Socialist and Christian trade union confederations have the common goal of eradicating the gender pay gap and addressing other manifestations of gender inequality such as the unequal distribution of domestic tasks, part-time working, vertical and horizontal segregation, and stereotypes. They are also focused on tackling associated problems with a gender dimension such as the work/life balance, childcare, and pensions. To this end, both trade union confederations are active in publishing video clips on their websites and on YouTube and interact via Facebook with their members.

The ACLVB/CGSLB<sup>4</sup>, the liberal and smallest trade union, has taken a particularly distinctive approach to the pursuit of equal pay. It has focused on unequal positions of women and men in the labour market, such as the effects of part-time work on pensions, job classification systems and the need for detailed information on women's individual career paths in the knowledge that some women follow atypical paths that could impinge on their entitlements to pensions and other benefits.

In 2012, the ACLVB/CGSLB organised an Equal Pay Day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March focusing on the effects of inequality on women's pensions. The women's organisation of the confederation requested the use of '*gender glasses*' to see the gender perspective each time new social and economic reforms are proposed. The ACLVB/CGSLB motivates companies to focus more on equal opportunities policies, equal pay, work/life balance and (as do the two other trade union confederations) the empowerment of women to stand as candidates during the elections of trade union representatives in private enterprises.

The following are some examples of the latest Equal Pay Days organised by the three trade union confederations and which were presented during the seminar:

The socialist trade union confederation (ABVV/FGTB) started its own set of campaigns in 2005, all featuring a humorous and, in many cases, provocative style. The 2012 campaign, for example, involved the central question (for the French-speaking region of the country) what was the work/life balance? This led to specific recommendations, flyers, animation and publicity on how individuals could manage their household responsibilities. The campaign in the Flemish-speaking region was much more provocative and used the slogan '*close the pay gap - become a porn actress*'. A brochure entitled '*your studies now also determine your pay later*' addressed students and explored the link between study, career and pay, emphasising the importance of a work-life balance and underlining the impact of family decisions on pay and an individual's further career.

In 2013, the Flemish-speaking part of the confederation continued their campaigns. Under the motto '*extreme housekeeping - sometimes a man's gotta do what a*

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<sup>2</sup> Confédération des syndicats chrétiens/Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond - Confederation of Christian Trade Unions.

<sup>3</sup> See the law at:

[http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi\\_loi/change\\_lg.pl?language=fr&la=F&cn=2012042229&table\\_name=loi](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=fr&la=F&cn=2012042229&table_name=loi)

<sup>4</sup> Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique/Liberale Vakbond.

*woman usually does*', press releases, banners, buttons, flyers, posters and a video clip, promoted housekeeping in *'Rambo-style'*. The ABVV/FGTB website was updated to provide an overview of all campaigns up to 2013 and other social media as Twitter and Facebook were used to spread the messages.

The Christian trade union confederation (ACV/CSC) started campaigning in 2007, concentrating on one of the main causes of the gender pay gap, the reconciliation of family and work responsibilities. For example, the Equal Pay Day campaign of 2011 challenged women to stop ironing until the pay gap disappeared. Several video clips were posted on Facebook and a specific website set up with the aim of teaching men how to iron.

During the 2013 campaign entitled *'rent-a-man'*, ACV/CSC issued the message that the fight for equal pay starts at home with an equitable share of domestic tasks. It created a website, published a brochure, launched a Facebook poll for 'the most caring man' and consulted the public in the street. From this process firm requests included the compulsory extension of 'birth leave', higher social security benefits for new parents and affordable quality childcare offering flexible hours to meet the needs of parents.

## Spain

Following a declaration by the Spanish Council of Ministers in 2010, the Equal Pay Day has been celebrated each year in Spain on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. The event is publicised using various methods including:

- The issuing and distribution of National Lottery tickets featuring the official logo and the caption *'22 February, Equal Pay Day'* started in 2011.
- The issuing and distribution (also from 2011) of a ONCE (National Organisation of Blind People) lottery ticket with the same caption. In 2013, five million such lottery tickets were issued.
- The issuing and distribution (from 2013) of a specific postage stamp supporting the Equal Pay Day showing the image of a man and a woman and posing the question *'if we work equally, why do we earn unequally?'* and the caption *'International Equal Pay Day'*.

The Equal Pay Day has also been used to provide and disseminate information and data about the gender pay gap and how to combat it, contributing to the transparency and understanding of the issue. This resulted in the development of a number of actions such as:

- Press conferences and presentations of studies and statistical data concerning the gender pay gap.
- Conferences, seminars and forums addressed to stakeholders (political agents, women's organisations, trade unions, business organisations, researchers and academic representatives) to promote, debate, and highlight measures to tackle the gender pay gap.
- Information mailing campaign addressed to stakeholders as well as via institutional websites.

Most of these actions are developed without any additional costs to the public purse by using the regular resources allocated to the State Secretariat for Social Services and Equality, as well as through non-profit agreements with other organisations.

Above all, the Spanish good practice was devised from the outset as a collaborative policy between the gender equality institution, other public institutions and organisations (for instance, the national postal service of Spain), and charities and/or not-for-profit organisations (for example, the National Organisation of Spanish Blind People).

## 2. The situation in the participating countries

In addition to Estonia, Belgium and Spain, the following countries participated in the seminar: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Serbia and the United Kingdom. Among this group of countries there were some who currently organise a national Equal Pay Day while others have yet to engage in this activity. Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Serbia and the United Kingdom do not currently organise a national Equal Pay Day and in three of these countries (Lithuania, Malta and Serbia) there are no correlated initiatives. However, in Poland and in the United Kingdom parallel initiatives do take place as described below.

In the **UK**, the Fawcett Society (a major campaigning organisation for women's equality and rights, founded in the nineteenth century) publicises the day in the year when *'women in effect start 'working for nothing' compared to men'* (7<sup>th</sup> November in 2012). Equal Pay Day (calculated as the date until which women have to work in order to earn the same as men) has also been taken up to some extent in the UK. For example, Opportunity Now, a business led organisation that *'works to increase women's success at work because it benefits business and society'* has adopted this and some trade unions are also active in this area.

In **Poland** several institutions and organisations refer to and provide links to EU sites (in English and Polish) covering Equal Pay Days. Furthermore there are some recent localised initiatives at sub-national level, such as an initiative of the Business and Professional Women's Federation which implemented Equal Pay Day at an organisational level in April 2011. It drew attention to the gender pay gap and invited other organisations and activist groups to take part in the action. In fact the federation launched an Equal Pay Week where women from business, academia and culture participated in a debate on equal pay for equal work.

The second group of countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Finland, Latvia, Portugal and Serbia) are holding Equal Pay Days using several means at different levels and within different legislative and cultural contexts.

The case of **Austria** is particularly interesting because two Equal Pay Days are held each year, one in the autumn and one in the spring by different actors. The autumn event is primarily organised by trade unions, social democratic and other left-of-centre institutions and initiatives. The day on which it takes place marks the day from which women work for free based on income gap calculations (6<sup>th</sup> October in 2012). The Federal Minister for Women and the Civil Service regularly uses the autumn Equal Pay Day as an opportunity to launch new equality campaigns.



The spring Equal Pay Day marks the day until which women have to work in order to earn the same as men have earned up to the end of the previous year (April 5<sup>th</sup> in 2013). It was implemented in Austria in 2009 and has since taken place in April each year. The event is organised by the international network Business and Professional Women International (BPWI) of which BPW Austria is a part. As in other countries, the symbol for the BPW's Equal Pay Day is a red handbag symbolizing women being 'in the red' financially and women having less disposable income than men. The aims of the BPW event include fostering debates about the gender pay gap, raising awareness about the extent and relevance of the problem, mobilising all involved actors, empowering women to take action and take over responsibility, reducing the pay gap in Austria, creating income transparency and establishing the national Equal Pay Day.

In **Germany** the organisation of the Equal Pay Day involves a wide set of actions. In 2009, when BPWI launched their worldwide campaign in New York, the campaign was endorsed by the German National Council of Women and numerous women's associations. The date of the Equal Pay Day is based on figures from the Federal Statistical Office. A National Action Alliance for Pay Equality (comprising the Federal Association of Municipal Offices for Women and gender equality bodies (FOPH), the Federal Association of German employers (BDA), the German Women's Council (DF) and the Association of German Entrepreneurs (VdU)) was implemented on the initiative of the BPW in Germany. This was initially for three years, with financial, conceptual and research support from the Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). The aim of the initiative is to disseminate information on the gender pay gap and encourage women to take the initiative in addressing the issue of unequal pay in a more proactive way.

The initiative has been judged a success with around 60,000 citizens across Germany actively involved in approximately 180 actions in the first year alone. This increased in the second year to 259 actions in 173 towns and cities with at least 70,000 activists involved, rising to over 1,000 actions in 2013.

Another important initiative was the opening of an **Equal Pay Day Office** in September 2011 funded by the BMFSFJ. This was charged with a range of tasks including keeping the theme of equal pay on the political agenda throughout the year, as well as distributing campaign material supporting the coordinated actions such as red bags and flags carrying the printed label of Equal Pay Day. It also offers guidance in organising events, advertising and providing information about the annual focus of the day in an *'EPD Toolkit'* (comprising videos, PowerPoint presentations, flyers, various guidelines, drafts for invitations and press releases and other supporting tools). The Equal Pay Day Office regularly updates the event's website and publishes the nationwide actions in the form of an online map (*'Aktionslandkarte'*) to facilitate finding the location of events across the country.

In addition, Germany organises a **Forum Equal Pay Day**. This consists of a series of meetings for opinion leaders with the aim of a 'top down' approach to spreading the major Equal Pay Day topic of the year across the country. Throughout Germany action groups and women's organisations are encouraged to raise awareness of the issues and provide the necessary information for grassroots activities. Each Forum is linked to a priority theme and five forums were organised for the preparation of the priority theme for 2013, *'wage determination in health professions – too much service, too little merit'*. Video recordings were made and offered as tools for providing information or for use in other events. In addition, the main speeches, supplemented by photographs and other contributions, were combined in a print



publication called the '*EPD journal 2013*'. Around 20,000 of this publication were distributed to women's organisations, gender equality offices, media representatives and other interested parties.

As for the other participating countries, their initiatives were similar to those in Estonia, Belgium and Spain with only minor variations, as explained below.

In **Finland**, for example, as in Estonia, Business and Professional Women Finland (BPW) has organised the Equal Pay Day campaigns since 2010. At a local level organisers are doing similar things such as providing information desks and activities in public areas in cities where active BPW members were located. Equal Pay Day was named the '*Day of Red Bags*' to represent wage discrimination and auctions of red bags belonging to Finnish celebrities were held to heighten interest in the issue. In addition, local shopkeepers were encouraged to put red bags in their window displays. However, because the Equal Pay Day actions are essentially voluntary, the activities have been relatively small scale.

Moreover, as in Belgium, the trade unions have been active in the Equal Pay Day activities in Finland. Since 2011 one of the three trade union confederations, the Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK) has organised '*Women's Pay Day*' campaigns. The 2012 campaign highlighted the fact that women's pay in Finland was 82.4% that of men. In terms of yearly income, women's pay had been paid by the 28<sup>th</sup> October and so for the rest of the year women worked for free. The STTK distributed postcards and chocolate Euros in the centre of Helsinki and gave a symbolic wooden Euro to the Minister of Equality Affairs in parliament, who also wrote a blog about the day. The campaign attracted significant media interest and was mentioned in the web pages of all major newspapers and on national television.

**Portugal** shares some similarities with the actions that have been undertaken in Spain. The initiatives were coordinated by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) and the material used for awareness-raising came from the campaigns launched by the European Commission. In 2013, Portugal celebrated for the first time its own Equal Pay Day on the 6<sup>th</sup> March reflecting the fact that to receive the same pay as men in 2012, Portuguese women would have to work 65 days more than their male counterparts. Again, activities were coordinated by the CITE, and mainly oriented to the dissemination of public awareness-raising tools. For that purpose, three logos were produced for the celebration and attempts were made to publicise them. In Portugal the logos were mainly used in a poster campaign on buses, ferries and the metro, as well as at the respective stations.

Additionally the CEOs of the largest companies, the social partners and some other opinion-makers received a symbolic gift, a small box containing a pencil with two equal points, representing a man and a woman at each end, followed by the message '*do you know that in Portugal women earn 18% less than men? Using the same tools and in order to earn the same as women, men only need to start working on 6 March? It's time to put an end to this difference. The only value that matters is equality*'. The campaign was disseminated through the internet and social networks. A press release was issued to the media and a programme ('*Sociedade Civil*') was devoted to the topic on public television. The range of initiatives and the general approach taken by the CITE meant that this was a relatively low cost campaign.

Croatia and Luxembourg both have Equal Pay Days, but these are low key events that fail to fully engage the attention of the public or institutions.

The marking of an Equal Pay Day was recognised by the Government Office for Gender Equality in **Croatia** in 2011 and set within the National Policy for Gender Equality for the Period 2011-2015. Specifically, the document envisages that: (a) Croatia will mark the European Equal Pay Day each year; (b) that activities will be conducted to raise the awareness among all stakeholders involved in collective bargaining of the importance of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and the implementation of the Labour Act; and (c) that the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistical indicators of the pay gap between women and men will be improved.

However, despite these provisions, Equal Pay Days have passed almost unnoticed in the last two years. From the official side, the Government Office for Gender Equality issued a press release about the importance of closing the pay gap, underpinned by basic data on the gender pay gap in the EU and Croatia and this attracted some media attention. The women's sections of three trade unions, together with the Women's Network Croatia (an alliance of female non-governmental organisations) held events in 2011 and 2012 that included an official request to parliament and the government to address gender equality issues, including the gender pay gap. However, aside from this no other activities were visible.

Similarly, in **Luxembourg**, Equal Pay Day was launched in 2010 by the National Council of Women (CNFL) through a petition distributed throughout the municipalities, asking the government to enforce the law on equal pay in employing organisations. However, the Equal Pay Day has not been followed since then and any future activities such as the 2010 petition are uncertain. The initiative attracted some criticism for its lack of success and some of the blame was attributed to the CNFL which, due to its diversity and lack of social partner representation, was considered by some to be not the best organisation to launch and manage the Equal Pay Day.

### 3. Summary of the discussions at the exchange seminar

All the participating countries agreed that **the experiences presented were interesting examples** of different actions deployed during Equal Pay Days in order to maintain interest and awareness of the gender pay gap. However, they were not always considered to be easily transferable due to their specificity and different national contexts.

In particular, the discussion stressed the **importance of considering the different starting point of each country**, especially with regard to the political and cultural vision towards gender equality. It also stressed the need to **adopt specific tools and activities according to the local sensitivities** on the issue and to the capacity for activating and/or maintaining awareness. This was particularly true in relation to the possible transferability of the Belgium campaign carried out by the Socialist Trade Union. Many countries considered this to be potentially too controversial and provocative and could be less effective or, in some cases, counter-productive. In contrast the approach in Estonia of the lighter humorous and creative way to heighten awareness of what can be a complex issue (calculation of the gender pay gap) was considered to be particularly effective and transferable, especially due to its relatively low cost. In addition the potential to involve the wider society as well as the private sector through restaurants and cafes in this lighter manner was favoured by many participants.

The issue of local sensitivities was also stressed in the importance of **paying attention to the language and the symbols used** in the awareness-raising campaigns and more generally in all activities carried out during Equal Pay Days. This was considered essential to maintain a gender equality perspective and to stress the importance of raising public acknowledgement of the illegitimacy of gender-based discrimination.

The importance of the **effectiveness of the actions** carried out during and in support of Equal Pay Days was discussed with regard to a number of different aspects as discussed below.

The first aspect is related to the **need to identify specific target groups and/or specific sectors** to focus the Equal Pay Day activities on and of **using multiple methods and content able to reach a different range of audiences**. The Belgian case provides a good example of raising awareness among women and men such as linking lower wages to lower pension entitlement and showing the costs to women, families and society as a whole. This clearly demonstrates the short and long-term implications of working arrangements and pay inequalities. The Estonian campaign clearly shows how one factor (being male and symbolised by adding dill to salmon) influences pay (and price) and has the potential to engage the public in the issue. The Spanish example, through the use of lottery tickets and postage stamps, shows that addressing the gender pay gap is important and should be pursued even when other labour market issues (such as high unemployment) are prevalent.

The second aspect is related to the **importance of a wide participation of both state and non-state actors** in the events leading up to and following the Equal Pay Day. These include workers' and employers' organisations, the academic community and other NGOs. This approach helps to secure ownership of the problem within a range of key actors who can react by adapting their behaviour to create change. This also means that the responsibility for making progress on equal pay does not depend solely on women.

However, to engage a broader coalition, especially bringing on board the trade unions and employers, was considered to be a key challenge. Furthermore, as the Belgian example shows, such broad participation does not necessarily have to be a unified action since having a shared goal while acting independently, can be a viable alternative. In particular the goal of increasing the involvement of employers and their representatives in the Equal Pay Day activities was related to a call for corporate social responsibility so that the issue could be tackled in a more structured way. In any case a collaborative policy between the relevant gender equality institution(s), other public institutions and organisations and trade unions and employers' organisations was considered paramount, as was the need to customise actions to local contexts. The full and official support for a joint day by government institutions (such as in the Spanish good practice) was also considered important to improve the impact of the actions implemented.

Another set of considerations was also raised with regard to the **importance of using the Equal Pay Day activities to explain the hidden causes of the gender pay gap** in addition to highlighting the statistical gap. Here a useful element was the studies and analyses that might accompany the Equal Pay Day campaigns to help understand the nature and roots of the gender pay gap and to assist in outlining the means of addressing it. However, it was felt that this approach was not without risk

since the different aspects of the gender pay gap and factors contributing to it might receive more attention than the gap itself.

The importance of studies and analyses is also related to the methodological difficulties and constraints related to the way the gender pay gap is officially calculated by EU statistics. The discussion raised the **importance of identifying other ways of calculating the gender pay gap** for example by establishing a complementary set of indicators.

The issue of calculation was also linked during the discussion to considerations of the **effectiveness of having the Equal Pay Day on a fixed date** (in order to make it more memorable) or **on movable dates reflecting changes in the pay gap**, the latter helping to highlight any progress year-to-year. Different views emerged on this point though for both options the **importance of identifying a set of activities that can be continued once awareness is raised** was stressed to ensure the issue remains prominent.

## 4. Conclusions

The good practice exchange seminar provided an opportunity to consider the options for developing Equal Pay Days in Europe with the primary aim of increasing public awareness on the issues related to the gender pay gap.

The national examples provided were often quite different in terms of the actors involved and activities undertaken and show a wide range of possibilities to consider. However, transferring any approach must take into account the local context and in particular the culture and attitude towards those factors at the root of the gender pay gap.

It was widely felt that Equal Pay Days are an important tool to communicate with the population in general on a sometimes complex issue. However, the exchange seminar also stressed the importance of identifying ways to improve collaboration and coordination on the issue between the European Commission, the Member States and relevant stakeholders operating at national and European levels.

At a European level, it was felt that the European Commission could give active support to the organisers of Equal Pay Days and allocate more funds for this purpose. Raising awareness might require different kinds of complementary measures to delivering information (such as, for example, training sessions in firms and/or in schools or studies and researches), and these measures may be costly.

Drawing on the discussion of the national practices, the following conditions were felt to be optimal for maximising the success of Equal Pay Days:

- A basic level of awareness of the issues related to the gender pay gap;
- The involvement of key actors;
- The explanation of the causes of the gender pay gap in a light and easy way;
- The importance of the language and symbols used.