

Conference on "The social dimension in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans"

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Belgian women workers and gender analysis of Belgian recovery and resilience plans

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The project in brief

2 parts :

- An online and paper questionnaire (FR and NL) to union representatives on the impact of COVID-19 on female workers in 6 key sectors
- A gender analysis of the Belgian resilience and recovery plans (national and regional)
- Project started in February 2022 - April 2023

A gender analysis the Belgian resilience and recovery plans

- July 2020: **€1,824.3 billion** package
- An opportunity **to invest in the future**, notably by projects linked to climate protection and the digital revolution
- 4 Belgian plans: 3 regional plans and 1 national plan
- **Gender analysis of these 4 plans:** check whether these plans take into account any differences in the situation of women and men and their effects

A gender analysis the Belgian resilience and recovery plans

- **Wallonia recovery plan** (7 billion euros - 300 projects)

Several sections explicitly mention women or the gender dimension, for example:

- In project 13, the gender dimension is a key cross-cutting element in the fight against gender stereotypes in educational and career guidance.
- Program 230, which aims to improve the inclusion of all Walloon men and women by reducing the digital divide, cites women as a target audience.
- The aim of project 315 is to finance gender-related actions as part of the integration of women in the construction sector.

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- **Flemish Resilience Plan**

- **Very succinct** plan (32 pages) and the gender dimension is rather absent
- The terms "women" and "gender" do **not appear**
- **Possible indirect effects:** better remuneration and lighter workloads for healthcare staff, a stronger approach to domestic violence and support for initiatives to help vulnerable groups go digital.

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- **The Brussels-Capital Region's recovery and redeployment plan**
 - Although short (31 pages), this plan does a **good job of integrating the gender dimension**, and includes a number of measures to promote equality between women and men.
 - Gender equality is cited as one of **the cross-cutting objectives** for all measures, which must be accompanied by indicators for monitoring gender equality objectives (with no further details).

A gender analysis the Belgian resilience and recovery plans

- The "NextGen Belgium" national recovery and resilience plan (5.9 billion - 105 investments and 35 reforms)
 - 50% of the plan will support climate objectives and 27% of the plan will support the digital transition
 - Analysis by the Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men
 - The investments envisaged in the plan are mainly directed towards **male-dominated sectors** (such as construction, energy, STEM/ICT...) which could **in the short term exacerbate inequalities between women and men** on the labor market.
 - **18%** of investments will have a positive impact on gender equality, and **52%** could have a potential positive impact.

A gender analysis the Belgian resilience and recovery plans

- The "NextGen Belgium" national recovery and resilience plan
 - In the longer term, certain investments will contribute to gender equality
 - Examples:
 - Several projects aim to **digitalize public administrations**. In addition to improving efficiency, these projects offer the possibility of increasing the **amount of gender-disaggregated data** available within administrations and integrating it into the implementation of public policies.
 - Several projects to **build bicycle lanes, which** can be seen as beneficial to gender equality by increasing women's access to mobility.
 - **The creation of new childcare places** will help to improve women's access to the labour market, which will in turn benefit gender equality.

Conclusions

- **Ambitious plans with varying degrees of gender mainstreaming**
- These plans will only have a real impact in the field if the results of the measures put in place can **be measured** so that accurate monitoring can be carried out.
- The European Commission has set up two monitoring tools:
 - **A specific tag** is assigned to each social measure focusing on gender equality, so that specific reports on gender equality expenditure can be drawn up at a later date.
 - **14 indicators common to all member states** to track spending on recovery and resilience plans. Unfortunately, of these 14 indicators, only **4 are broken down by gender**

Conclusions

- **These plans lack quantifiable and measurable indicators** for monitoring and evaluating gender equality.
- One solution could be the application of "***gender budgeting***" or "integrating a gender perspective into the budgeting process".
- Trade unions have a **crucial role to play in** ensuring that the gender issue is systematized when drawing up this type of investment plan, as well as when monitoring and evaluating projects.

THANK YOU