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THE GENDER PAY GAP IN BELARUS

Gender inequality is a pervasive feature in many developed and developing countries. The gaps between male and female outcomes and opportunities are present in various dimensions: education, earnings, occupation, access to managerial positions. And these gaps are particularly dramatic.

Achieving gender equality isn't just a moral issue – it makes economic sense. Equality between men and women in all aspects of life, from access to health and education to political power and earning potential, is fundamental to whether and how societies and economies thrive.

The most important factor in a country's competitiveness is its human talent – the skills and productivity of its workforce. It is the same for a company or an organization. That's why the proper participation of half the world's population is so important for the well-being of both businesses and countries. Although many countries are well-placed to maximize women's economic potential, they are failing to reap the returns from their investment in female education. In addition, too few countries are preparing to meet the challenges and harness the gender parity opportunities posed by the changing nature of work.

The main economic indicators of society are the level of development of its economy and the level of its involvement in world economy. By using these indicators it is possible to characterize not only the degree of a country's development, but also its influence on neighboring countries and the world economic system as a whole. There is a clear relationship between economic and gender development. There is a direct impact of the gender gap index on GDP per capita. Econometric modeling shows that every 1% increase in this index leads to an increase in per capita GDP by \$ 2,445. The more equal the society, the richer it is, therefore, the people themselves are interested in the development of gender balance.

Despite all attempts to overcome disparity there is still considerable gender inequality in labour market payments in Belarus. That is the difference in pay between the middle-ranking man and the middle-ranking woman. Nowadays women often work in the same positions as men. However, for their work, they get less.

According to The Global Gender Gap Report 2018, which was introduced and annually compiled by the World Economic Forum, Belarus ranked the 28th position. This is due to the increased ratings over the last year in the positions “Economy” and “Political Rights and Opportunities”.

However, according to WEF experts, the gender gap in average labor incomes (at the level of 23–25%) and gender inequality between women and men in general in the labor market still persists in our country.

In Belarus, women earn an average of 828.4 rubles, men - 1,110.7 rubles. The average hourly earnings of men are 1 ruble higher than those of women.

The reason for this discrimination in the labor market is quite unclear, as the data show that women are more involved in education. Statistics indicate that in 2017, 432749 men and 718811 women had higher education, 279104 men and 500339 women had post-secondary education, 397150 men and 318138 women had vocational education. The statistics are still relevant for 2018-2019, therefore it can be concluded that education is not the cause of disparity in the labor market.

It can be assumed that the most likely factor of existence of inequality is that the men's efficiency and readiness for processing overtime is much higher than women's. As women are under additional pressure due to homework and childcare; therefore, they are more likely to get jobs in those industries that offer less pressure but also lower pay. Additionally, men have fewer factors of temporary interruptions in the labor process: there is almost no risk of taking parental leave, and they also take sick leave less often.

It becomes evident that there is a need to combat inequality in order to equalize wages of the middle-ranking men and the middle ranking women. Gender differences in wages are not only unfair, but also detrimental to the functioning of the economy, since they can lead to poverty and social exclusion.

On the part of the state, measures should be taken to develop and comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Legislatively, this gap should be reduced by current Article 14 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Belarus, which prohibits any discrimination in the sphere of labor relations. As statistics show, this law is rather theoretical. As a result, a National action plan for 2017-2020 years has been adopted to ensure gender equality in the Republic of Belarus. This measure will help to reduce the gender pay gap and improve the quality of citizens' life....

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