

Minister for Education must act as ‘pay equality gone into reverse, says IFUT

Sat May 9th, 2015

The Deputy General Secretary of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT), Joan Donegan, has called on the Minister for Education and Skills to make a clear and detailed public statement on a new European Commission Recommendation that Member States improve pay transparency measures.

She was speaking on a gender pay equality motion at the organisation’s Annual Conference in Dublin, Saturday May 9th, 2015.

Ms Donegan said that the EU Commission estimates that, at the current rate of progress, it will take another 70 years before equal pay is achieved.

“In Ireland the situation has gone into reverse. The gender pay gap in Ireland increased to 14.4% in 2012, up from 12.6% in 2009.”

EU member states including Ireland have to report to the European Commission by the end of this year on the actions they have taken on foot of the new Recommendation, which was issued in March 2015, Joan Donegan said.

“The recent success of Dr. Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington at the Equality Tribunal highlights the situation in our universities.

“The fact that NUI Galway is now appealing another equality case won by Dr. Mary Dempsey in her pursuit of justice, highlights the extent of deliberate foot dragging on equality issues that women experience at university level, as in so many areas of society.”

Joan Donegan said that there are high levels of underreporting of discrimination generally.

“It is particularly difficult to bring forward equal pay cases. The former Equality Authority recommended reform of the Employment Equality Act, to ensure access by employees to necessary information from their employer.

This issue awaits implementation by government.

Specifically the new European Commission Recommendation proposes a set of actions for member states, to ensure that:

- employees can request information on pay levels, broken down by gender, for categories of employees doing the same work or work of equal value.
- employers in companies with at least 50 employees inform employees, workers’ representatives and social partners of the average remuneration by category of employee or position, broken down by gender.
- pay audits are conducted in companies with at least 250 employees.
- the issue of equal pay including pay audits is discussed at the appropriate level of collective bargaining.

“These are straightforward, practical measures and by no means draconian.

“It is imperative that the Minister for Education, without delay, publicly signals her strong commitment to implementation of these recommendations and raises the matter with our third-level institutions,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS.

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Motion to Conference:

“The ADC notes that in March of this year the European Commission adopted a Recommendation asking Member States to improve pay transparency for women and men in a bid to help close the gender pay gap. The European Commission has estimated that, at the current rate of progress, it would be another 70 years before equal pay is achieved. The gender pay gap in Ireland was 14.4% in 2012. It has risen from 12.6% in 2009. Member States including Ireland have to report to the European Commission by the end of this year on the actions they have taken on foot of this recommendation.

The ADC therefore calls on the Minister for Education and Skills to make a clear and detailed public statement on this issue before the closing date of end of year.”