



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

IS/AB

Brussels, 05.09.2024

To: Social Attachés

[Letter sent by e-mail]

Dear Social Attachés,

I am contacting you as a matter of urgency regarding the draft Council Conclusions on *Women's and Girls' Mental Health as a Pillar of Gender Equality*, specifically in order to request that you include the following points in the draft Council Conclusions:

- **Propose decisive measures tackling gender-based violence in the world of work in the draft conclusion**
- **Recognise of the role of trade unions and collective bargaining as a core component for safe workplaces, quality jobs and women workers' financial independence**
- **Call for investment in public services and improve working conditions, including pay, of public service workers as frontline services supporting women and girls' mental health**

It is positive that the draft Council Conclusions establish a clear link between exposure to gender-based violence and financial dependence, among other, as high-risk factors affecting mental health. At the same time, quality employment and economic independence are correctly identified as stabilizing factors for mental health.

It should be noted that the Directive combatting violence against women and domestic violence is **by no means sufficient to effectively combat gender-based violence in the world of work**. Further measures, shaped by trade unions and social dialogue, are urgently needed. Forthcoming measures tackling psychosocial risks must target gender-based violence in the world of work as a matter of urgency.

Inequalities linked to caring responsibilities, equally negatively affecting mental health, must be addressed through work-life balance measures. Here, again, trade unions play a key role that should be adequately reflected in the council conclusions.

As trade unions and social dialogue, in particular collective bargaining are key tools to deliver safe workplaces and good working conditions, I call on you to propose actual measures supporting collective bargaining and social dialogue in the draft council conclusion.



Lastly, I alert you to point 27c of the draft council conclusion.

It remains fully unclear what Member States are invited to do in order to “*address the link between lifestyle and mental health, including with respect to eating habits (...)*”. Moreover, the paragraph insinuates that poor mental health is a result of poor lifestyle choices, ultimately blaming women and girls and refuting the role of structural gendered inequalities and discrimination. I ask you to delete this paragraph.

I am looking forward to the inclusion of the above mentioned points in effort to significantly improve the text and to include the concerns of women workers across Europe.

Kind regards,

Isabelle Schömann
Deputy General Secretary