

# TOWARDS A CLOSING OF

Towards a closing of the gender pay gap is a project illuminating the gender differences within three specific occupations: teaching, engineering and the fish and food industry.

The case studies describe each profession in each country with regard to wage formation, gender segregation and union participation.

It also presents statistics as well as interviews with representatives from employer and employee organisations at the workplace level. A comparative report has been produced on the six national studies.

The overall findings are general for all the countries. The most prevalent finding is that the gender segregation is distinct both between as well as within professions. Occupations dominated by women have systematically lower wages than the male dominated ones.

The trade unions' involvement and the structure of the bargaining systems have a less clear effect on wage formation. But union presence and centralised bargaining systems are linked to smaller wage differentials in general, and as such they also reduce the gender pay gap.

The project also reveals the importance of having good statistics as a tool for promoting equal pay between women and men. As a direct consequence of this, our Icelandic partner is now developing new statistics.

This folder addresses specifically politicians, decision makers, employees and employers, trade unions and labour confederations within these three occupations.

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The Norwegian Centre for Gender Equality has been managing the project, with partners from Austria, Denmark, Greece, Iceland and the United Kingdom.

To find out more about the project and the partners, please visit our web site. All the publications from the project are published here.

[www.genderpaygap.no](http://www.genderpaygap.no)

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## Suggested steps towards a closing of the gender pay gap

for

Teaching associate professionals  
Engineering professionals  
Food- and fish processing workers

Some findings from  
an European project

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## Teaching associate professionals

The wage formation system in the teaching profession is highly centralised and based on specific pay scales, according to working hours, formal qualifications and seniority. However, there is a tendency towards more decentralisation and experimentation with performance related pay in certain situations. This is an overall employer driven process.

A recurring pattern appears where female teachers more often specialise in subjects which require more preparation time per classroom hour. Male teachers tend to specialise in more technical subjects, which are often highly esteemed. Also, these subjects are generally harder to recruit teachers in to. This again can lead to higher wages for these teachers, which are mainly men.

### *Suggested steps towards a closing of the gender pay gap*

- ♀ A decentralised bargaining system needs to include mechanisms that actively counter the gender pay gap.
- ♀ The wage system ought to value the actual workload for the various subjects – not only the market value for specialised teaching qualifications.
- ♀ A better gender balance within the various subjects needs to be aspired to. This may be done by encouraging men and women to be more "untraditional" in choosing their vocational training.

## Engineering professionals

Engineering professionals belong to the typically "decentralised and individual pay" occupation. The wage determination system becomes less transparent and less predictable the more it is based on individual negotiations and performance pay. Lack of transparency may have an impact on the gender pay gap. With the exception of Norway, the unionisation is low, especially in the private sector.

The higher up in positions we get, the fewer women we find. The glass-ceiling phenomenon is reported to be quite high within this occupation.

### *Suggested steps towards a closing of the gender pay gap*

- ♀ There needs to be an increase in transparency. The involvement of unions, also at the local and individual levels, seem to facilitate this.
- ♀ A second tool for increasing transparency is to develop local wage statistics for each work place.
- ♀ Another measure is to implement positive actions in order to recruit more women into management positions and steering tasks.
- ♀ Family friendly practises could be developed, such as flexibility around working hours and work place.

## Fish and food processing industry

This occupation is in a low paying industry. Denmark and the United Kingdom have decentralised wage negotiation, while Austria, Iceland and Norway have predominantly centralised wage formation. It seems that decentralised bargaining systems tend to increase the wage gap. Another important consequence observed, is that centralised bargaining systems tend to diminish wage differences between similar establishments.

This occupation is characterised by strong segregation, where women work typically on the line while men work as truck drivers or within butchering and storing.

The gender pay gap is overall large within this occupation. Typical men's work is also more highly valued with compensations been granted for hard working conditions. This seems to apply to all six countries.

### *Suggested steps towards a closing of the gender pay gap*

- ♀ Negotiating personnel need more training on the gender perspective.
- ♀ An overall job evaluation system could bridge the differences in existing wage classification systems, which without exception favour male workers.
- ♀ A more gender integrated delegation of work could contribute to reduction in the great pay differences.