



## European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

### NEWS REPORT

<b>Country:</b>	Poland
<b>Title:</b>	The 'Family 500 plus' program and the employment situation of women
<b>Date:</b>	12 August 2018
<b>Expert:</b>	Eleonora Zielińska
<b>Update of news report:</b>	<a href="#">Poland - Gender quotas and parliamentary candidates (PDF 82 kB)</a>
<b><u>Context</u></b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	The 'Family 500 plus program' discourages women from engaging in work and disadvantages single parents, disproportionately affecting women Possible sex discrimination
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	
<b>Source:</b>	Policy development
<b>Field:</b>	Employment, statutory social security
<b>Applicable law:</b>	Law of 11 February 2016 on state support in the upbringing of children, JoL 2016, pos. 195

### **Content**

**Policy development:** Since 2016 the governing party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) has introduced a special monthly benefit for each second and subsequent child, which applies to all families with the exception of the poorest ones, which are also entitled to the benefit for their first child. The benefit amounts to PLN 500 and is called the 'Family 500 plus program'. This initiative is highly criticized by the opposition, which considers it as a means to 'buy votes' in elections and to promote the demographic growth of society by preserving the traditional family model. The program in fact discriminates against single parents. This is because the program foresees that entitlement to social benefits is based on a threshold calculated in relation to the household's monthly income per capita divided by the number of family members. In a two-parent household, this corresponds to the monthly income per capita divided by three (the two parents and the child). By contrast, in single-parent households, the calculation is made based on the monthly income per capita divided by two (the parent and the child). This often overcomes the maximum limit conditioning entitlement to social benefits, which would not be exceeded in the case of a two-parent household with the same monthly per capita income. Since in most cases single-parent households are headed by women, this rule could amount to indirect sex discrimination. In addition, in two-parent households, it discourages women from engaging in work so as to maintain the family's entitlement to social benefits through keeping the monthly income per capita under the maximum threshold (see FR 2016/1).

**Key points of analysis:** When this program was introduced, objections were raised because it was feared that it would incentivise many mothers from families with multiple children, especially those who receive lower wages, to give up their economic activity. A survey of the impact of the 500 plus program, conducted in 2018, has provided evidence (though somewhat inconclusive) that this might have been the case. The authors of the survey refer to data from the GUS (Main Statistical Office), which indicates that in the third quarter of 2017, the professional activity of women aged 25-34 dropped to the lowest level since 2003, amounting to 74.2%. In their opinion, it might be the effect of Family 500 plus program. However, the hypothesis advanced by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is not excluded, namely that women could have resigned from work because, for instance, men began to earn better, thus improving the financial situation of the whole family.

**Internet link source:** [https://businessinsider.com.pl/finanse/makroekonomia/efekty-500-plus-podsumowanie-programu-500-plus/r8kwrhnrnm\\_500\\_plus\\_a\\_rezygnacja\\_z\\_pracy\\_przez\\_kobiety](https://businessinsider.com.pl/finanse/makroekonomia/efekty-500-plus-podsumowanie-programu-500-plus/r8kwrhnrnm_500_plus_a_rezygnacja_z_pracy_przez_kobiety), accessed 2 June 2018.  
<https://stat.gov.pl/badania-gospodarstw-domowych-i-rolnicze/badanie-aktywnosci-ekonomicznej-ludnosci-bael/>, accessed 27 July 2018.