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FLASH REPORT

Country:	Estonia
Title:	Low paid job offers for women
Date:	29 April 2020
Expert:	Anu Laas
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Gender division of labour
Grounds of discrimination:	Gender
Field of application:	Employment
Source:	Local newspaper
Applicable law:	Gender Equality Act, Employment Contracts Act

Content

Policy development: The managers of the Esfil Tehno AS are trying to increase the production capacity and to hire about 50 employees. The essence of the work is sewing, which is seen as women's work. In 2020, some employers declare publicly that low paid, routine and precision work suits women. However, in Estonia, discrimination based on sex is prohibited. On the contrary, employers must promote gender equality and avoid gender stereotyping.

Key points of analysis: Due to COVID-19, the world is experiencing a shortage of surgical masks and respirators. The Estonian company Esfil Tehno AS has 50 years of experience in producing and developing highly efficient respirators and other filtering materials. The company plans to hire people and the job offer is communicated in the local media and other media channels. The CEO of the company states that:

'The salary starts from EUR 600,¹ but if a person learns quickly and starts to meet the standard, he or she can earn more. The training is on-site, no special skills or knowledge are needed, usually a week is enough. The work is rigorous and laborious, so it is especially suitable for women because they are more patient.'

The CEO has pointed out that no special skills and knowledge is needed, which means that sewing is unskilled labour, but over the course of the demanding work process, a high-quality product must be produced.

The gender division of labour is still deeply rooted in the Estonian value system. Equality legislation and gender equality policies have had a positive impact on employers and usually they do not make statements about vacancies suiting only women or only men. The majority of companies in Estonia do not use gender stereotypes in their job announcements. However, this does not mean that they do not recruit only women or men for certain jobs in practice.

¹ The minimum salary in Estonia for 2020 is EUR 584.

More: Masso, J., Meriküll, J., Vahter, P. (2020), The role of firms in the gender wage gap, <https://majandus.ut.ee/sites/default/files/mtk/dokumendid/febawb120.pdf>.

Internet link source: Kiviselg, I. (2020), Sillamäe tehas võtab tööle 50 inimest, et suurendada kaitsemaskide tootmist (*The Sillamäe plant will employ 50 people to increase the production of face masks*), 26 March 2020, <https://pohjarannik.postimees.ee/6932865/sillamae-tehas-votab-toole-50-inimest-et-suurendada-kaitsemaskide-tootmist>.

Soolise võrdõiguslikkuse seadus (*Gender Equality Act*), RT I, 10.01.2019, 19, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/516012019002/consolide>.