



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

### FLASH REPORT

<b>Country:</b>	Spain
<b>Title:</b>	Gender equality sensitive COVID-19 measures
<b>Date:</b>	20 July 2020
<b>Expert:</b>	Dolores Morondo
<b>Context</b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	COVID-19 measures with an impact on gender equality
<b>Grounds of discrimination:</b>	Gender
<b>Field of application:</b>	All fields
<b>Source:</b>	Policy development

### Content

The crisis produced by COVID-19, as well as the measures taken by the authorities to fight against the disease, affect women significantly in various areas. In Spain, generalized measures of confinement and social distancing were adopted since March 14 2020. From the beginning, the concern of the lack of a robust gender perspective in the Spanish (and European) response to the crisis was aired.<sup>1</sup> Several analyses on the gender impact of the crisis have recently been published, making visible the gender measures adopted and compiling recommendations to incorporate the gender perspective in various response areas.<sup>2</sup>

In Spain, the situation of women in the economic, labor and social fields creates three areas of differential impact of the crisis, especially relevant.

Firstly, both care within the family and the care professions are highly feminized in Spain. Domestic care tasks, 70 % of which are carried out by women, have multiplied with the closure of schools and day centers for the elderly and disabled. In order to avoid layoffs, the government has determined the preferential nature of teleworking, over temporary cessation or the reduction of activity.<sup>3</sup> Despite the possibility of adapting the schedule and reducing the working day to favor conciliation, teleworking has been a very limited conciliation mechanism under these circumstances and a study by the University of Valencia has revealed the higher levels of stress and anxiety of women who have teleworked with dependent children during lockdown.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

[http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano\\_es/contenido?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano\\_es/zonas\\_es/ari33-2020-solanas-crisis-del-covid-19-y-sus-impactos-en-igualdad-de-genero](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/ari33-2020-solanas-crisis-del-covid-19-y-sus-impactos-en-igualdad-de-genero).

<sup>2</sup> Women's Institute (2020) La perspectiva de género, esencial en la respuesta a la COVID-19 (Gender perspective, essential in the response to COVID-19), [http://www.inmujer.gob.es/disenovovedades/IMPACTO\\_DE\\_GENERO\\_DEL\\_COVID\\_19\\_\(uv\).pdf](http://www.inmujer.gob.es/disenovovedades/IMPACTO_DE_GENERO_DEL_COVID_19_(uv).pdf); Ministry of Equality (May 2020) 'Igualdad de género y COVID-19' (Gender equality and COVID-19), Boletín de Igualdad en la Empresa, [http://www.igualdadenaempresa.es/novedades/boletin/docs/BIE\\_60\\_Igualdad\\_Genero\\_COVID19.pdf](http://www.igualdadenaempresa.es/novedades/boletin/docs/BIE_60_Igualdad_Genero_COVID19.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Royal Decree 8/2020, of 17 March 2020, of extraordinary urgent measures to face the social and economic impact of COVID-19, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-3824>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.womennow.es/es/noticia/estudio-conciliacion-teletrabajo-mujeres-durante-el-confinamiento/>.

Also in the labor market, care jobs - essential to face the pandemic - are mostly carried out by women. Women represent 66 % of the health personnel, 84 % of the personnel hired in the nursing homes and dependents, and practically all of the domestic workers. These jobs that the crisis has shown as essential are generally precarious. In this area, the government has established an extraordinary subsidy for lack of activity for domestic workers registered in the special social security regime for domestic workers,<sup>5</sup> since this regime does not contemplate unemployment benefits. However, this is a group of workers with a high percentage of irregular work, and many workers in the sector are not registered in the social security system or are fraudulently registered with shorter working hours, so they will not receive the subsidy or will receive a very limited one.

Secondly, in a context of job destruction, women start from a structural disadvantage in the labor market. The gender gap in the employment rate is 11.7 %. Further, women's employment is highly concentrated in a few sectors and occupations, 88.5 % of them work in the service sector. Women, and especially migrant women, are also disproportionately present in the informal economy (domestic work, agriculture and textile industry). Feminised economic sectors likely to suffer from the crisis (such as retail, tourism, hotel and leisure) show higher rates of precarious labour: the conjunction of temporary contract of part-time work affected 9.1 % in 2019 whereas for men the rate is half (4.3 %). The opposite situation, employment stability, i.e. permanent contract for full-time work, shows a gender gap of 13.7 %.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the government has taken a wide range of social and labour related measures (the so-called social shield), the gender perspective is limited to the conciliation measures for adapting and reducing worktime, the preference for tele-work and the extraordinary subsidy for domestic workers.

Finally, in a situation of confinement, gender-based violence worsens, and female victims of gender-based violence and victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation face greater risks and have less possibilities of defending themselves or finding help. Official data reflects an increase in the request for help due to gender violence for the period 1-15 April 2020 of 48 % (telephone) and 733.3 % (online consultations). The Government established a Contingency Plan against gender violence<sup>7</sup> with a series of organizational measures aimed at guaranteeing the continuity of the operation of the existing services aimed at the protection of victims of gender violence, and victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The Plan also established mechanisms adapted to the circumstances of the confinement such as psychological, legal or social remote assistance (via WhatsApp, telephone or other channels), an action guide for female victims of gender violence in situation of home confinement by COVID-19, and a free mobile application for health and police alerts (SOS Button).

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<sup>5</sup> Royal Decree 11/2020, of 31 March 2020, that adopts urgent complementary measures in the social and economic field to face the COVID-19, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-4208&p=20200404&tn=2>.

<sup>6</sup> General Union of Workers (UGT) (2019) Una fotografía de la temporalidad y parcialidad en el mercado laboral español, (A photograph of temporal and part-time traits in the Spanish labour market), <https://servicioestudiosugt.com/fotografia-de-la-temporalidad-y-parcialidad-en-el-mercado-laboral-espanol/>.

<sup>7</sup> Royal Decree 12/2020, of 31 March 2020, on urgent measures regarding the protection and assistance to victims of gender violence, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-4209>.