

Business and trade unions in joint plea for 'accessible childcare' [EU] ^[1]

Social Europe, EurActiv.com

Source: EurActiv.com

Format: Article

Publication Date: 8 Jul 2008

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

EU countries are not investing enough in childcare, according to a joint letter from European businesses, SMEs and trade union organisations, despite its benefits for employment and growth.

The letter, sent yesterday (8 July) to EU Employment Commissioner Vladimir pidla, stresses the critical role of childcare in promoting women's participation in the labour market.

It was signed by representatives from the business world (BusinessEurope), SMEs (UEAPME), trade unions (ETUC/CES) and public sector companies (CEEP).

The letter urges EU member states to adopt measures to make childcare accessible and affordable to all as a way of enhancing participation in the labour market. It is part of joint action by social partners to reconcile professional, private and family life, and they said it will be followed by other initiatives.

Affordable childcare is considered crucial to full employment and increased competitiveness as the existing gap between supply and demand for childcare and high costs often discourage parents from re-entering or remaining in the labour market.

Women's participation in the labour market is still low in many member states. According to Eurostat data, only 57.2% of women in the EU 27 were in employment in 2006, well below the goal of 60% spelt out in the EU's Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

Figures are particularly low in Greece (47.4%), Italy (46.6%) and Malta (34.9%), whereas Scandinavian countries score highly in terms of female employment rates (Denmark 73.4%; Sweden 70.7%; Finland 67.3%). The data also mirrors investment in pre-primary education, which is significantly higher in Nordic countries than to the continent's south and east.

When European leaders met in Barcelona in March 2002, they identified a number of priority actions for the achievement of full employment, one of the core goals of the Lisbon Strategy.

These priority actions included the removal of disincentives for female labour force participation, in particular the provision of accessible childcare for all. The targets to be reached by 2010 include providing childcare for 33% of children under three years of age and 90% of children between three and the mandatory school age.

...

- reprinted from EuroActiv.com

Region: Europe ^[2]

Tags: affordability ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/07/business-and-trade-unions-joint-plea-accessible-childcare-eu>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/07/business-and-trade-unions-joint-plea-accessible-childcare-eu> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability>