



## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual ETUC 8 March Survey 2011\*

### General Introduction

As part of the follow up to the 11<sup>th</sup> ETUC Congress held in Seville (Spain) in May 2007, ETUC carried out the fourth of what has become an annual 8<sup>th</sup> March survey<sup>1</sup>. The aim of this survey is to assess progress in reducing the gender representation gap in trade unions and to highlight successful gender mainstreaming activities that are taking place within our affiliated organisations. Every year the survey also focuses on a topic that is crucial for trade unions and/or EU institutions. This year's survey tackled the issue of the impact of the crisis on female employment.

#### ➤ Who replied to this survey

**55** (of 83) **national confederations** from **30 (of 36) European countries** took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey of 2011. These confederations represent in total about 41 million workers. Almost all the organisations (50) were able to indicate the number of women members, which amounts to 17.173,199. The percentage of female members is given by the proportion of women accounted for those organisations able to provide gender disaggregated data of their membership, and the numbers of female members. This gives a total of 45,2% of female members of a total membership of 37. 932, 545 workers.

The number of organisations that responded to this year's survey is the same as for the 2010 survey and higher than previous 2008 and 2009 survey, when 46 and 48 confederations replied respectively. This steady high average response to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey confirms the commitment of ETUC member confederations in contributing to this yearly exercise that enables us to monitor and assess female participation in trade unions' ranks.

The number of non-responding confederations to the 2011 survey amounts to **28**.

As in the case of previous 8<sup>th</sup> of March surveys, members of the PERC Women's Committee were also involved in the survey. Replies were received from trade unions based in: Serbia (Nezavisnost), Russia (FNPR), Macedonia (KSS), Georgia (GTUC), Ukraine (KVPU), Montenegro (CTUM), Kosovo (BSPK) thus bringing the total number of trade union confederations' replies to 62.

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\* 1<sup>st</sup> Draft presented at the Women's Committee – Brussels 30 – 31 March 2011

<sup>1</sup> The previous «8th of March Survey» conducted in 2008, 2009 and 2010 are available at: <http://www.etuc.org/a/5827>.

**Table1: Confederations that did not reply to this 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey 2011**

COUNTRY	TRADE UNION	COUNTRY	TRADE UNION
Andorra	<b>USDA</b>	Malta	<b>CMTU</b>
Croatia	<b>NHS</b>		<b>GWU</b>
Cyprus	<b>SEK</b>	Monaco	<b>USM</b>
	<b>TURK-SEN</b>	Netherlands	<b>MHP</b>
Denmark	<b>FTF</b>	Norway	<b>UNIO</b>
Estonia	<b>TALO</b>	Poland	<b>OPZZ</b>
Finland	<b>AKAVA</b>	Romania	<b>CNSLR-Fratia</b>
Germany	<b>DGB</b>		<b>CARTEL ALFA</b>
Greece	<b>ADEDY</b>		<b>CSDR</b>
Hungary	<b>ASzSz</b>	San Marino	<b>CSdl</b>
	<b>MOSz</b>		<b>CDLS</b>
Iceland	<b>BSRB</b>	Turkey	<b>DISK</b>
Liechtenstein	<b>LANV</b>		<b>KESK</b>
			<b>TURK-IS</b>

Of the 28 national confederations which did not take part in this year survey, 20 national confederations had not taken part in the 2010 survey either, and **11 have never taken part in any 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey** since the adoption of the Charter of Gender Mainstreaming, included in the Seville Manifesto<sup>2</sup>. They are: USDA-Andorra, TURK-SEN-Cyprus, ADEDY-Greece, ASzSz-Hungary, BSRB- Iceland, CMTU – Malta, USM-Monaco, CSDR-Romania, CSdl and CDLS from San Marino, DISK - Turkey

Nordic unions generally record very **high rates** of female members. The highest is the one of STTK-Finland 67%, followed by the Baltic union LBAS-Latvia 64% and TCO-Sweden 61,9%. Two Southern unions reported the **lowest percentage** of female members (HAK-IS - Turkey 12.6% and DEOK-Cyprus 13.8%). It is however useful to note that since last year HAK-IS has reported an increase of + 2.6 of its female membership.

13 confederations reported **more female than male members** (EAKL-Estonia, ICTU-Ireland, LBAS-Latvia, LDF, LPSK/LTUC Lithuania, YS, LO-Norway, TCO, SACO, LO-Sweden, STTK-Finland, AC-Denmark, SZEZ/ESZT-Hungary, Travailleur Suisse - CH).

13 national confederations have a **gender balanced membership** (comprising between 45% and 51%).

With regard to the **European Industry Federations**, six (of 12) replied to this year’s survey. They are EFFAT, EPSU, EMCEF, ETUCE, ETF and EMF. 6 did not: EFJ, EAEA, ETUF-TLC, EUROCOP, EFBWW, and UNI-Europa. As we did for trade union confederations, we list below those EIFs that did not give their feedback.

<sup>2</sup> The ETUC Charter on Gender Mainstreaming, adopted by the Seville Congress in 2007 calls both national and European members of the ETUC to the elimination of the gender representation gap. By adopting this document affiliates committed themselves to provide the ETUC with all the necessary data in occasion of the 8th of March survey. Failure to do so will be publicly addressed at the Executive Committee and the next Congress. See: [http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf\\_gender\\_mainstreaming\\_charter1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf_gender_mainstreaming_charter1_EN.pdf)

**Table:2 European industry Federations that replied to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March surveys (2008-2009-2010-2011)**

<b>EIF</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>ETF</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>EFFAT</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>EMF</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>EFJ</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>EAEA</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>EFBWW</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>EPSU</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>EMCEF</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>UNI-EUROPA</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>ETUF-TCL</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>ETUCE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>EUROCOP</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

Finally, this year a number of sectoral national unions volunteered to contribute to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey thus further enriching the result. They are: TUHSSC CR (Czech Republic), Ver.di (Germany), FSP-UGT (Spain), SKTF (Sweden), PCS and UNISON (UK), all members of EPSU; Prospect (UK), Finansförbundet and UNIONEN (Sweden), UILTuCS (Italy), Postkom (Norway), CGSP (Belgium) members of UNI-Europa; BTB-ABVV (Belgium) member of ETF<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Since the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey is primarily addressed to ETUC direct members, the replies provided by the national sectoral unions will be accounted separately.

## Section I) Female membership in national trade union confederations

This part of the report aims to underline the changes that occurred in the female trade union membership in confederations between 2010 and 2011 as well as progress that has been made in reducing the gender representation gap with respect to the figures that were presented at the 2007 Congress, following a detailed questionnaire that was sent to ETUC members in 2006<sup>4</sup>.

Since the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey has been taking place for four years, it is important to compare replies over the years of those organisations that have always contributed to this exercise.

42 of the organisations that provided this year numbers or percentages of women in their ranks had also responded to the same question in the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey of 2010. A good number of confederations also responded to the 2009 and 2008 surveys (36 and 31 respectively). It is consequently possible to make comparisons and highlight some trends over the last three years.

If we take into account the figures provided by the respondents of this year, women members account for 45,2 %, meaning 17.173,199 of 37.932,545 of the total members of the 50 confederations that were able to provide gender disaggregated data.

With regard to the trend in the last four years of **changes in female trade union membership of the ETUC members**, we can observe that the total amount of members<sup>5</sup> has slightly decreased since 2010 (from 36.521,650 in 2010 to 36.161,870 in 2011) as well as the number of female trade unionists (from 16.653,355 in 2010 to 16.614,076 in 2011). This could be partially explained by the decline in employment generated by the economic crisis in most of the countries where the ETUC has members. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the loss of female members is less than of males, at least with respect to 42 confederations that provided gender disaggregated figures of their membership for both years. It thus appears that the share of female affiliates has increased from 45,5% in 2010 to 45,9% in 2011.

This assumption is confirmed if we look at the change in the female membership since 2008 (when the first 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey was realised). The total trade union membership of the 34 confederations that are comparable in this case has moved from 31.892,082 in 2008 to 31.045,147 and the female members have increased from 13.770,600 to 14.521,566, meaning an increase in percentage from 44,5% in 2008 to 46,1% in 2011.

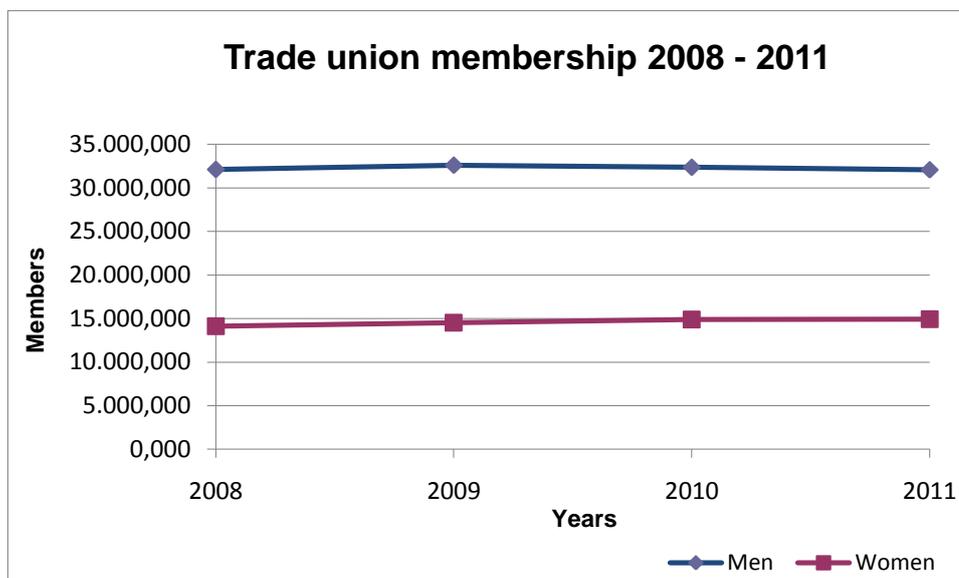
This tendency clearly confirms the trend that already emerged in previous 8<sup>th</sup> of March surveys. Despite unions' general membership contraction, more and more female workers are joining trade unions' ranks and this is playing a crucial role in maintaining their existence.

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<sup>4</sup> See: "Women in trade unions: bridging the gap" (2007) at <http://www.etuc.org/a/4142>

<sup>5</sup> This figure does not represent the total of ETUC membership, but the total of the membership of the 42 confederations that replied to the 2010 and 2011 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey.

**Figure 1: Trade union membership in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 on the basis of 8th of March surveys' figures.**



Source: 8<sup>th</sup> of March Surveys 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

Five confederations (AC-Denmark, SZEF/ESZT-Hungary, LPSS (LDS)-Lithuania, BNS-Romania and Travail Suisse - Switzerland) took part for the very **first time** in the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey. One organisation (MsZosZ – Hungary) had contributed to the survey in the past by indicating data on its total membership, but only this year for the first time also provided figures about its female members.

**21 confederations** reported **no change** (or almost) in their female membership since 2010. Of these, **12 provided exactly the same figures** as in 2010 (ABVV/FGTB, ACV/CSC Belgium, CITUB-Bulgaria, CMK-OS Czech Republic, LO-Denmark, CFTC, FO France, UIL-Italy, LBAS Latvia, LDF-Lithuania, CGTP-Portugal, TCO Sweden).

Between 2010 and 2011 (or between 2009 and 2011\*), **24 confederations** reported an **increase** in their female trade union membership. The **highest increase** recorded since last year is reported by the Swedish confederation LO (+4.1), by HAK-IS-Turkey (+2.6) and UGT Spain (+2.2). Of these 21 trade unions, eight organisations (CGT and CFDT-France, CC.OO and ELA Spain, KOZ-SR Slovakia, TUC-UK, SACO and LO-Sweden) have reported a gradual increase in their female membership throughout the three years of reference. At country level, an increase in female trade union membership has been observed in all the Spanish unions affiliated to the ETUC. As regards Ireland, ICTU highlighted that this year it reached the historical achievement of a higher female trade union membership than male in its ranks.

A similar exercise was conducted to assess where **female membership has decreased**. Only **seven confederations** reported a fall in their female membership between 2010 and 2011. The decrease ranged from 0.3 (as in the case of NZZZ Solidarnosc Poland and UGT-Portugal) to -3 (UATUC-Croatia and STTK-Finland).

\* In the case where figures were not available for 2010 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey

## Section II) Women in positions of power within national trade union confederations

The 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey monitors not only changes in trade union membership, but also the situation of women at the level of the highest decision-making positions in trade union confederations.

A strong case for a renewed and strategic approach to achieving gender balance in unions' decision-making and leadership structures was made by the ETUC executive committee on 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 when a resolution was adopted. "*Improving gender balance in union leadership and decision-making structures remains a fundamental challenge for the trade union movement*" states the resolution, and ETUC members are called upon to tackle remaining political and structural challenges to overcome the gender representation gap existing in trade unions key positions in the four years to come by implementing specific recommendations<sup>6</sup>.

Before addressing the issue of leadership in trade unions, it is necessary to recall the powers of the different leadership positions within unions. These are in general recognised as: President, Vice-President, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary. In some unions (such as in the Nordic unions, the Netherlands, Germany, etc.) the President is the highest position of the organisation, while in others (Italy, Spain, UK, etc.) the political leadership is held by the General Secretary. It is therefore important to keep these differences in mind when looking at the figures indicating the number of women in trade unions' leadership positions.

This year again, all confederations replied to this section of the survey questionnaire. In 2011 it appears that of 55 trade unions, only **four** national confederations (of 39) reported having a woman **President. They are in power in the following unions:** FNV-Netherland, LPSS (LDS)-Lithuania, LO and SACO Sweden.

This is the **same number** with respect to 2010 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey where four female Presidents were also recorded and regression with respect to 2009 where there were 6 female presidents (at that time TUC also had a woman President).

From the organisations that responded to this year survey, 31 confederations have 74 **Vice-Presidents**, of which **28 are women**. It should be noted that in half of these (16 unions) these are positions held jointly with men. In eleven unions there are two vice-presidents of each sex. In the remaining unions, eight have more male vice-presidents than female vice-presidents (usually the proportion is two men and one woman).

With respect to the 2010 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey the number of vice-presidents has changed (if we compare the organisations that replied for both years). In fact in 2010 we had 51 vice-presidents (of which 20 were women, i.e. 41%), while in 2011 we register a total of 65 for the same position, of which 25 women (38%). This result therefore shows a downturn in the total proportion of women holding this position despite the fact that the number of Vice-President positions has increased.

With regard to the position of **Secretary General** only **ten confederations have a woman in this position** (of 40): ÖGB-Austria (jointly with two male colleagues), ABVV/FGTB-Belgium, STTK-Finland, CGIL-Italy, LPSK/LTUC, LPSS (LDS) and LDF – Lithuania, FNV-Netherlands, TCO-Sweden, Travail Suisse Switzerland. The number of female Secretary Generals has increased by two, since in 2009 eight female General Secretaries were reported.

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<sup>6</sup> To read the resolution on "Recommendations for improving gender balance in trade unions" see : <http://www.etuc.org/a/8485>

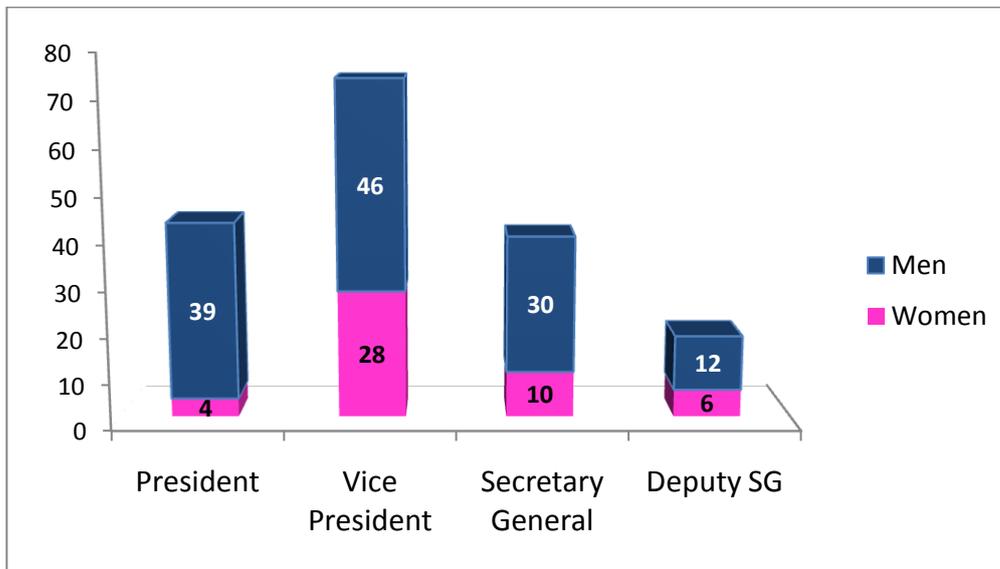
Where comparison is possible with respect to last year's respondents, we note that changes occurred at CGIL - Italy where this position is now held for the very first time in the history of the union by a woman. In Lithuania, all the three unions affiliated to the ETC have a female secretary general in power.

Nevertheless, the value of this already very low figure is diminished if we consider that in some of these organisations the General Secretary is not the highest political leader.

The situation is slightly more balanced for the position of **Deputy General Secretaries**. Of 18 in place, **six are women**. They are jointly held with a male colleague in: CFTC-France, LCGB - Luxembourg, ICTU-Ireland and UGT-P Portugal. TUC-UK has two deputy secretary-generals and they are both female.

**Treasurers** of national confederations, where such position exists, are as follows: 15 men and 11 women.

**Figure 2: Trade union leaders by sex (2011)**



*Source: 8<sup>th</sup> of March Surveys 2011*

### ➤ **European Industry Federations**

We received replies from six European Industry Federations – ETUCE, EMCEF, EMF, ETF, EFFAT and EPSU and four provided data on their female members.

Not surprisingly the most highly feminised union is ETUCE, with 72% of women members, followed by EPSU (68%) and EFFAT (about 40%).

At the level of leadership positions, EMF and EMCEF have no women holding any of the three highest leadership positions of the organisation (President, Vice-President and Secretary General). EPSU has a female president and secretary general, one male and one female vice-president and one male deputy secretary general. ETUCE and ETF have both a male president and gender parity at the level of the vice-presidency. EFFAT has a male secretary general and president but one female vice-president. ETF has a male secretary general and a female deputy.

### Section III) The impact of the economic crisis on female employment

As in previous years, the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey tackles a topic which is relevant for female European workers. This year the ETUC women's committee decided to have a specific section of the survey dedicated to the impact of the economic crisis on female employment.

- **Introduction**

Only a few months ago, it was quite common to read articles or hear statements merely highlighting the fact that the current economic crisis hit more men than women. Some even referred to this downturn as a “he-cession” and not as a recession, in order to underline the assumption that the crisis was generated primarily by men (the financial sector being mainly a male dominated one) and hitting primarily men since the sectors that have been heavily affected were the construction and manufacturing ones, where again the high share of the workforce is male. However, this blunt theory has more recently been challenged by spill-over effects of the crisis, which are also severely affecting female employment or sectors where women are mostly employed. As some forward-looking economists have highlighted, the overall impact of the crisis on both women and men appears to be far more complex than to be simply referred to as a he-cession and the impact on female employment may be more critical than it has been so far<sup>7</sup>.

This part of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey therefore aims to provide some information to deconstruct the gender dimension of the crisis on the basis of the contributions given by the 51 ETUC confederations that took part in this year's survey. It does not intend to oppose men to women in the context of the economic downturn, but to shed some more light on the ways in which the economic downturn is affecting female employment and portray trade unions' gender equality specific issues that can be considered in policy responses to counteract the economic downturn. This is particularly relevant, since nearly all experts in international economic research and policy foresee major setbacks in the level of gender equality achieved over the last decades if adequate gender-neutral policy responses are not taken<sup>8</sup>.

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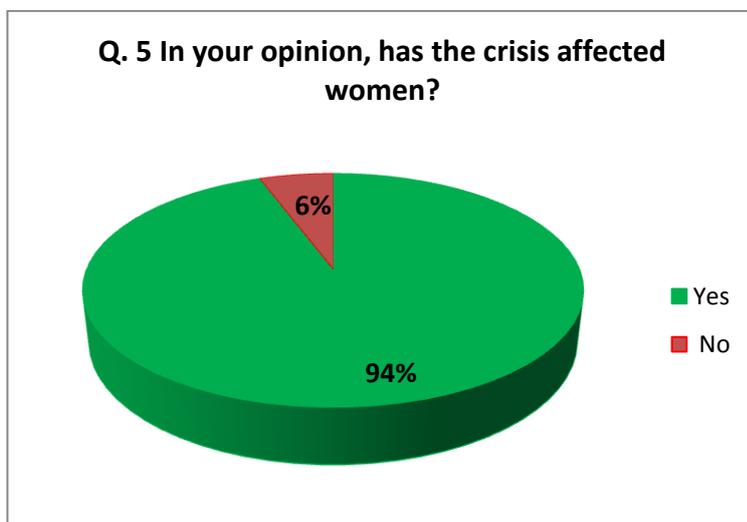
<sup>7</sup> See the article “Re-cession or He-cession — gender dimensions of economic crisis and economic policy”, Friederike Maier, ETUI, *After the crisis: towards a sustainable growth model*, 2010

<sup>8</sup> See Seguino, S. (2009) *The global economic crisis, its gender implications and policy responses*, Burlington: The University of Vermont

- **Outcomes of the replies**

The section of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey on the impact of the crisis on female employment was completed by the vast majority of confederations (94%), by four of six European industry federations, and by all PERC respondents. In various cases the organisations made reference to figures and/or studies that were conducted at the national or sector level on this topic or attached them to their reply. An exhaustive list of these resources is provided at the end of this report.

**Almost all confederations (50 of 53<sup>9</sup>) and the six industry federations that took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> of March survey 2011 replied affirmatively that the current economic crisis has affected women workers.** Different replies highlighted that the “he-cession” effect of the crisis is becoming less and less straightforward and that the economic downturn is somehow unveiling its female face.



The reply from CFTC-France illustrates the feeling that several other respondents (i.e CSC-Belgium, ZSSS Slovenia) outlined in their reply: *“It has long been argued that women were less affected by the crisis or that the deteriorating employment of women compared to men would be less. Another argument that was used was that women’s better performance in education would protect them this time, unlike in the past. Some suggested that occupational segregation could act as a shield: women are mainly employed in sectors – e.g. the service sectors - less affected by the recession in the recent past and less threatened in the near future. It is now clear that this was a sham: economic trends in unemployment among men and women in 2008-2009 first show a lag in time. Male unemployment rose earlier and faster than women, but a catch-up occurred in 2009. It was only partial, for structural reasons: women and men do not work in the same sectors, and the response of employment in industry is traditionally faster and further than the employment services. Moreover, among the young, the better training for women protects them in part, even if they are less successful than men in enhancing their qualifications”*.

It is useful to compare this comment to the findings of the Report of Employment in Europe published by the European Commission in 2010: *“Focusing on overall changes in employment levels over the total period since the downturn in the EU labour market started, the relative falls in employment likewise vary considerably across different population sub-groups. Men, young people, the low-skilled and non-EU nationals have been relatively most affected by falling employment over this period.*

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<sup>9</sup> 2 organisations did not reply the question (FTF-Denmark and CNV-Netherlands).

*With regard to gender, men have suffered the brunt of the contraction in employment, with their employment having fallen by 3.4% (versus only a 0.7% decline for women) and accounting for around 85% of the total net reduction in employment to the second quarter of 2010. This different gender impact of the recession on employment strongly reflects differences in the types of jobs that women and men perform. The greater concentration of women in part-time work, lower-paid jobs and smaller firms has had an impact on the relative effects of the downturn”.*

Nevertheless, as the replies to the other questions of the survey highlight, the fall in employment cannot be regarded as the only component to be taken into account and economic analysis, as well as policy responses, should also take into consideration the composition of the labour market and the vulnerable position of certain groups of workers, of which women make up a great portion. The decrease in female employment rate is likely to come in a second phase, as the latest figures for some countries seem to confirm. These job losses will be mainly due to the end of fixed-term contracts, loss of purchasing power of customers and service users and the financial savings of the government. They could be less massive, dramatic and visible, but certainly no less serious.

Some confederations believe that one of the reasons that the impact of the economic crisis on female employment has been somehow disregarded is partly due to the scant attention paid by media to the gender effects of the crisis. This has led some to affirm that European female workers' would be by a silent crisis and some are concerned that no adequate mechanisms focused on female jobs lost are being put in place (i.e. reply from Solidarnosc-Poland). Several unions have pointed out that the effect of the crisis on women's working conditions has taken place more slowly and certainly in a less abrupt manner than for men, especially when the economic downturn began. However, most of the respondents seem to be quite aware of the different effects that the crisis is having on female workers.

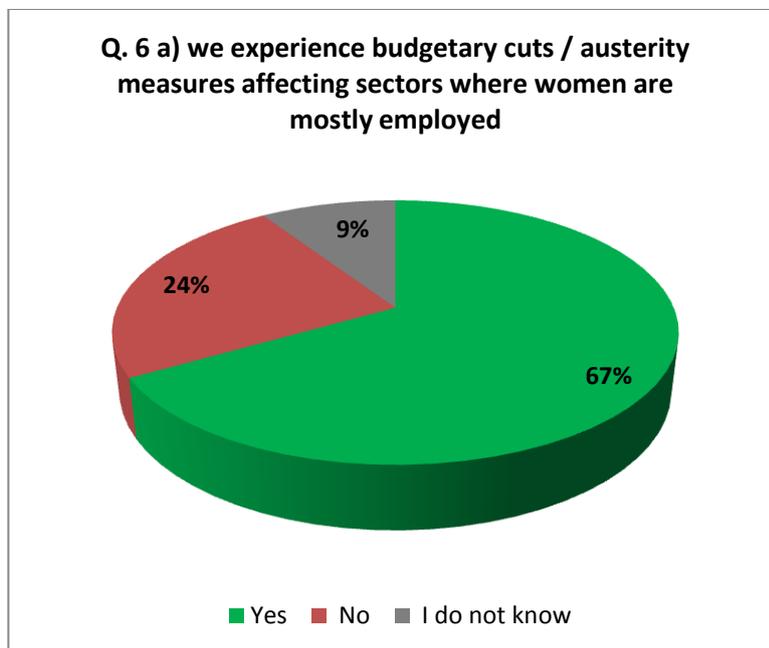
CSC-Belgium for instance published a dossier that analysed the situation of women facing the economic crisis in Belgium. *“Too little gender disaggregated statistics, too few studies on the situation of women in the context of the economic slowdown, too many stereotypes conveyed. CSC has tried to see more clearly and it questioned trade union representatives at different levels geographical and sectoral concerning changes caused by the crisis on living and working conditions of men and women”.* The issue concerning the lack of adequate statistics is shared by other Belgian unions (i.e. FGTB-Belgium) and it could be probably assumed that this is the case for other countries. Comprehensive gender disaggregated statistics would be very useful to tackle the impact of the crisis and enable measures to be taken that meet both male and female workers needs in the context of this critical economic period. In this sense some unions (i.e. CGSLB-Belgium, DEOK-Cyprus) have highlighted the positive impact that gender mainstreaming could bring to crisis measures.

Five confederations (LCGB-Luxembourg; LO-Norway, the three Swedish confederations LO, SACO and TCO) complemented their reply by stating that although the crisis affected women, in their opinion it hit them as much as men and not to a higher degree than men. Interestingly, these are almost the same confederations that appear to be more satisfied with how their member states are facing the economic downturn. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO-N) for instance has been one of the few affirming that they have actively influenced government in handling the crisis in general and so far this has resulted in a success.

The three Swedish organisations reported that already when the crisis started in 2008, Swedish unions successfully convinced the government to transfer more money to the local and county governments. They are important employers of women. The government followed unions' proposals which led to fewer layoffs caused by the crises and a more stable labour market.

**i. Budgetary cuts**

**66% of respondents (36 confederations of 54) reported that their government has introduced measures (budgetary cuts or the adoption of austerity measures) that have affected sectors where women are mostly employed.**



Trade union confederations of Austria, Luxembourg, Sweden and Norway affirmed that measures of this kind have been introduced. LO-N reported that the government has adopted economic measures that have stimulated and favoured those sectors employing mostly women.

The situation is less clear for: Belgium, Hungary and Italy where the unions responding to the questionnaire seem not to agree on the gender effects of the measures adopted (where it is the case) by governmental authorities.

At national level, the situation seems to be quite worrying in Romania where BNS reported that the government adopted measures that particularly hit women's lives, such as: the reduction of child allowance and maternity leave, of the allowances for single parents (over 90% of single parent families are represented by single women with children), reduction of benefits for the aid of the disabled persons. *“The austerity measures have increased the risk of poverty among women and increased their degree of dependence on other family members, with all the negative effects implied”.*

Similar measures were reported in the Czech Republic where the government, using an emergency procedure, introduced in November 2010 austerity measures as proposed by the Ministry of Labour of Social Affairs.

In its reply to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey CMKOS illustrated each of these measures and pointed out those that were supported or opposed by the confederation. Unsurprisingly, amongst the measures mostly criticised by the Czech union we found those that will have a severe negative effect on female workers' lives. They consist of: the withdrawal of social benefit that are paid to low-earning families, the reduction in the amount of parental leave benefits and more stringent conditions to their take up, the reduction of birth benefits usually paid to families, of care and housing allowances.

Another country that has been highly affected by the crisis is Ireland. In this respect, the reply from ICTU described measures taken by the previous Government and how they affected women: *“Ireland is suffering from a five part crisis: economic, social, fiscal, banking and reputational. The previous Government focused only on the banking and fiscal elements - doing little or nothing about unemployment. In attempting to resolve the fiscal crisis, it passed four extremely harsh budgets. This is imparting such a deflationary shock that domestic demand has collapsed, with businesses going into liquidation and thousands of jobs being lost. As a result, domestic demand has plummeted. The last Government made insufficient and weak efforts to spread the burden of adjustment fairly, cutting social welfare, imposing higher taxes - especially on the low paid, cutting the minimum wage by 12% when overall wages in the private sector remained stable in real terms, and attacking the low wage pay determination systems of the labour market etc. All of these affect women disproportionately”*.

These three examples clearly show how gender equality could be undermined if governments do not take adequate policy responses to counteract the crisis and go completely against the spirit of recommendations that were addressed to Member States by the European Commission’s Advisory Committee on equal opportunities as well as the European Parliament in order to make sure that women do not bear the burden of the economic downturn<sup>10</sup>.

Experience shows that cuts to welfare systems are dangerous for workers in general, but they are particularly threatening for those who are vulnerable and precarious in the labour market. The TUC-UK brochure “The gender impact of the cuts” illustrates particularly well what the government’s proposed austerity programme would mean for women: *“The government’s savage austerity programme – including £18bn of cuts to social security and welfare and hundreds of thousands of job losses in the public sector – is clearly going to hit women hard. Particularly pregnant women, women pensioners and single mothers. Women make up 65% of the public sector workforce. Just under 40% of women’s jobs nationally are in the public sector, compared to around 15% of men’s jobs, so women’s unemployment is set to soar as public sector jobs are cut. We already know that women will pay for roughly 72% of the changes in taxes, benefits and tax credits set out in the budget [...] A raft of benefits relating to pregnancy and families have been axed or frozen. The Health in Pregnancy Grant, Child Benefit, the Baby and Toddler Elements of Tax Credits have all been cut or frozen, to name but a few. Other cuts such as housing benefit cuts will disproportionately affect women as more women rely on these benefits than men. If family-related benefits and tax credits are taken of the equation, women still pay 66% of the welfare changes compared to men who pay 34%. This is because women will also be hardest hit by housing benefit cuts and the switch to CPI uprating for benefits and pensions. [...] Research commissioned by the TUC shows that female lone parents will lose 18.5% of their net income (-£3,121 in cash terms)”*.

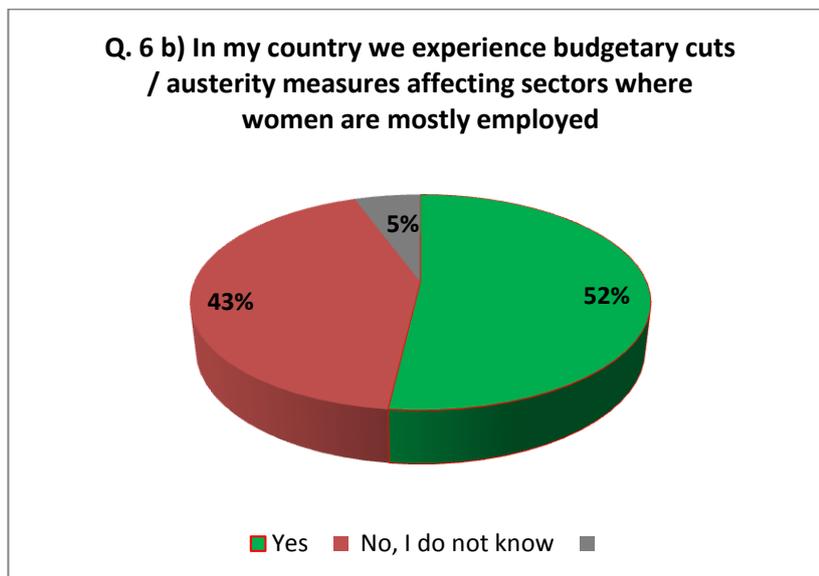
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<sup>10</sup> See European Commission (2010), Advisory committee on equal opportunities for women and men, *“Opinion on the gender perspective on the response to the financial crisis”*, [ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2878&langId=en](http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2878&langId=en) and European Parliament Resolution of 17 June 2010, *“Gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis (2009/2204(INI))”* <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0231+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

## ii. Job cuts

**Slightly half of respondents (28 of 54) indicated that their country experienced job cuts in sectors where mostly women are employed.** No job cuts were reported by the ETUC member confederations of Austria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

The picture is less clear in the following member states: Belgium, Finland, France and Hungary where the confederations reported diverging replies.



Some organisations have reported that the **unemployment rate has been rising (or is higher)** for men than women.

In Portugal, UGT-P reports that the loss of employment since the beginning of the economic recession is higher for female than male; in the UK women's unemployment is beginning to rise. In a country like Greece, which has been suffering a chronically low level of female employment, unemployment of women has reached the historical high of 17% in November 2010 compared to 13,3% of the previous year, the highest ever since 2004 according to the Greek statistical authority.

A detailed picture of unemployment changes for subgroups in Europe is provided by the report *Employment in Europe 2010*. “While the overall EU unemployment rate has risen by 2.9 percentage points since the low of spring 2008, there are significant underlying variations according to gender, age group, skill level and nationality. Nevertheless, for each group the increase was significantly higher over the first year of the labour market downturn than in the second year. Focusing on gender, the crisis has had a more dramatic effect on the labour market situation of men than that of women, and the increase in the overall unemployment rate has been driven predominantly by the rise in the rate for men, in particular in the first year of the labour market downturn.

Consequently, the gender gap in unemployment rates, still at 1.2 percentage points to the disadvantage of women in the beginning of 2008, had switched to the disadvantage of men by spring 2009. However since autumn 2009, the lagged impact of the crisis has shifted more from men to women, and by July 2010 the male and female rates, both at 9.6%, were equal again for the first time since March 2009”.

The trend highlighted by this report should be cautiously taken into account. In addition it is worth remembering that unemployment rates report only part of the story. As some confederations indicated, unemployed women are, more often than not, unaccounted for in unemployment data, as they tend to withdraw from the labour market into unpaid or informal work, etc.

According to Maier *“The impact of the changing economic conditions for either women or men is therefore not fully captured by employment and unemployment data. As with other areas of labour market performance, the statistics often disguise feminised patterns of behaviour shaped by national rules and norms around labour market activity, as well as the constrained labour supply decisions faced by women”*<sup>11</sup>.

This is well documented in the 2010 report by UGT-Spain *“Women facing the economic crisis: impact and opportunities”*: *“In Spain, the alarm created by male unemployment resulting from the decline of sectors such as the construction industry, which has produced a number of layoffs in many companies, has somewhat eclipsed the problem of female unemployment and job insecurity faced. It is not news to remember that difficult situations are arising in vulnerable and fragile professional sectors. It is not news to recall that the economic crisis first expels from the labour market those left most exposed by economic fluctuation. Therefore, we run the risk of forgetting once again the impossibility of satisfying professional and occupational expectations of women while the focus is on the precariousness to which male workers are currently subject, too. Female participation rates remain lower, the unemployment rate among female workers exceeds that of male workers and discriminations continue to affect women with a consequent weaker position in the labour work”*.

Similarly, CFDT France highlights that even if the industrial is hit particularly hardly, female employment levels are lower in all sectors of the economy.

It is clear that the situation is quite alarming for workers employed in the public sector, where women are predominantly employed. According to the respondents to this 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey, public sectors appear to be under pressure in the Czech Republic (CMKOS), Denmark (LO), Estonia (EAKL); Greece (GSEE) Iceland, Ireland, Romania and UK. More data and trends are currently being studied by EPSU which is currently undertaking research to explore exactly which sectors have been affected. According to the European industry federation representing workers in public services, in principle job cuts would affect more local and regional government, national administration, and health and social services.

According to UNISON, in the UK unions have started to use statutory public sector equality duties to challenge the cuts. Public bodies are legally obliged to carry out equality impact assessments before taking major decisions such as cutting budgets or projects. Most recently UNISON won a case against local councils in London who had cut funding to 200 projects without carrying out an equality impact assessment<sup>12</sup>. In Sweden the public sector union Kommunal has demanded increased subsidy for the welfare sector and is pushing the issues of full-time employment and permanent employment on the government policy agenda.

Another highly feminised sector that has been negatively affected by the crisis is education. The replies from ASI-Iceland and CGT and CFTC France have put particular emphasis on the changes that are under way in their respective countries in this sector.

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<sup>11</sup> Maier, F. (2010) *“Re-cession or He-cession — gender dimensions of economic crisis and economic policy”*, in *“After the crisis: towards a sustainable growth model”*, Brussels, ETUI

<sup>12</sup> See: [http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease\\_view.asp?id=2140](http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2140)

The negative developments are confirmed by the ETUCE study “Assessing the impact of the economic crisis on social dialogue in education”. According to this European study, the countries where the economic crisis has struck the education sector were: Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Romania and the UK. The level of the cuts varied between 0,3% of GDP in Greece and 25% in the Czech Republic (implemented in equipment only). This group consisted of 13 of the 30 countries in the study. In Iceland, the cuts in public funding of education were 7 % on average, with small variations between the sectors of 6-8%. In the case of Estonia, the unions reported that there have been increases, which later on were reduced.

With respect to the transport sector, ETF says that is difficult to draw a clear cut picture given the different distribution of male and female workers in transport sub-sectors that this European organisation represents (road, aviation, inland navigation, rail, etc.). According to ETF, the transport sectors most likely to be affected by the austerity plans are railways and urban public transport. Even if it is not clear to what extent women will be particularly targeted, it is likely that all past policies (governmental or at company level) to encourage recruitment and retention of women in the sectors, as well as policies to invest in the work environment to make it more women friendly will be revised; particularly in urban transport, progress was made in the past decades to attract women in professions such as drivers, etc. (not only white collar). “*It is for this reasons*” concluded ETF “*that these women workers may feel in a different – more acute way – the impact of the crisis in the sector*”.

Finally other industrial sectors, where mostly women are employed, that have been reported as having suffered from the economic downturn are: textiles (according to the replies of the confederations based in Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and Turkey) and leather processing (Bulgaria).

As different studies have indicated, the different sectoral concentration of male and female employment has played a key role in determining the effect of the downturn. The Employment in Europe 2010 report describes the following situation “*To date, the economic downturn has had a much greater impact on male-oriented sectors, such as the construction and manufacturing sectors (which combined account for around two-thirds of total sectoral employment declines, and in which men account for more than two-thirds of overall employment). Conversely, women more often work in sectors shielded from business cycle fluctuations — such as the public sector, health, education and the social sector (...) Nevertheless, it is to be expected that, when the economy recovers, growth in the male dominated sectors will outstrip growth in female dominated ones as these sectors will be more affected by the upcoming fiscal tightening. Moreover, even though fewer women than men have lost their jobs in this crisis, those who become unemployed may have more difficulty in finding a job, being more vulnerable on the open labour market, in so far as they have less labour-market experience on average, and their careers are more often based on part-time jobs with temporary contracts*”.

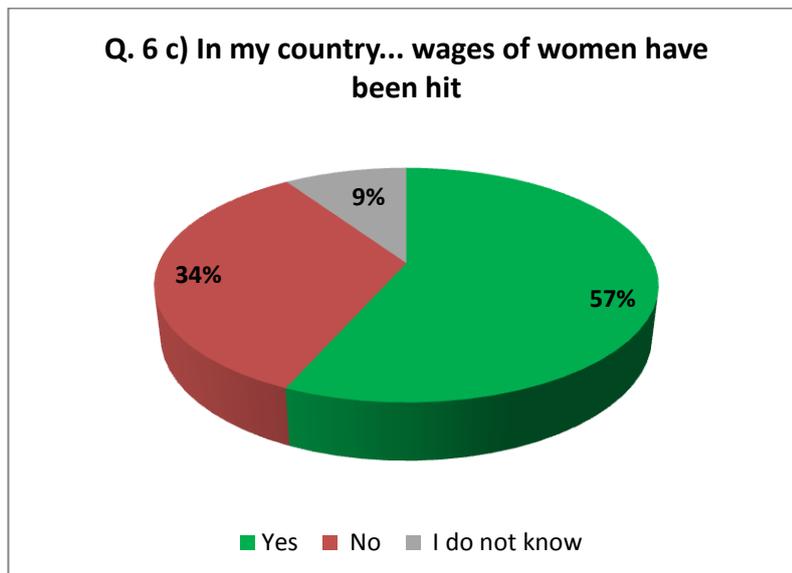
A further concern was also put forward by the reply of CISL-Italy which recalled that also in previous economic downturns women who lost their jobs got **back into regular employment** at a slower pace than men.

Finally, in France the CFDT has requested and obtained the creation of Fiso in April 2009 in order to address the economic crisis. Fiso is a cyclical device which aims to coordinate efforts to promote employment and vocational training undertaken by the state and social partners in the fight against the crisis. Fiso embodies CFDT’s idea to train employees en masse rather than dismiss them.

Fiso provides for the improvement of partial unemployment benefits from 60% to 75% of gross salary, lump sum payment of 500 euros for job seekers not receiving compensation, retraining of employees holding a contract of employment transition and personalized reclassification conversion, training for job seekers and low-skilled employees or partially unemployed and strengthening policies for employment and vocational training for youth. It is controlled by a committee composed of trade union and employers' leaders and chaired by the Minister of the Economy. The CFDT has asked to deal with part-time within Fiso, since part-time work almost exclusively concerns women.

### iii. Wage cuts

**Slightly half of the respondents (30 of 53) indicated that women's wages have been reduced because of the crisis.** Conversely, no wage cuts were reported in: Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden and Turkey. Views among national confederation differ in the replies of: Belgium, France, Hungary, Lithuania and Italy. However, in three of these five countries (Hungary and Italy) respondents agree that they have **experienced pay freezes**, especially in the public sector.



Quite interestingly the confederations from countries that expressed concerns on the measures undergone in their public sectors are almost the same of those in a study compiled by the Labour Research Department and commissioned by EPSU on ten EU member states that have cut or planned to cut public sector pay<sup>13</sup>.

Those countries are: Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The report highlights a number of elements which are common to several states, for instance: the existence of repeated cuts, the elimination or reduction of bonuses and additional payments, reforms to pay systems and finally, the fact that the cuts are normally imposed rather than agreed with the unions. The report shows that public sector workers are carrying the heaviest weight of the crisis.

<sup>13</sup> "The wrong target – how governments are making public sector workers pay for the crisis", Labour Research Department, December 2010, [http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/The\\_wrong\\_target-2.pdf](http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/The_wrong_target-2.pdf)

A short outline of the situation in eight countries is set out below (on the basis of EPSU reply to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Survey):

- *Estonia* a series of overlapping budgetary measures first to freeze and then to cut personnel costs began in April 2008, with the decision to freeze pay in 2009 and 2010. This was followed by an 8% cut in July 2008, 10% in February 2009, 8% in June 2009 and 9% for 2010. The overall impact is that the total paybill in 2010 is 15% below that of 2008.
- *Greece* measures began in November 2009 with a pay freeze for public sector workers earning more than €2,000 per month; in January 2010 there was a 10% cut in allowances, and in March 2010 this was increased to a 12% cut and the 14th month salary was cut by 60%. Those working in state-owned companies also had their 14th month payment reduced by 60% and saw their pay cut by 7%. In May the IMF and other financial institutions became involved and the cut in allowances increased from 12% to 20%, while the 13th and 14th month salaries were reduced to three flat rate payments worth a total of €1,000 (and abolished completely for those earning more than €3,000).
- In *Hungary* in November 2008 the government proposed freezing public sector pay and eliminating the 13th month payment. Following union opposition it was agreed in January 2009 to reinstate a payment of equivalent value for lower paid employees (70% of total), with higher paid employees getting a lower amount. In a new package of austerity measures in April 2009, the 13th month payment was permanently abolished and replaced by a flat-rate payment for most public sector employees. Wages were frozen in 2010 and in October, the government said it was extending the pay freeze to 2011.
- In *Ireland* in February 2009, the government announced that the 3.5% increase planned for September 2009 would not be implemented and that it would impose an average 7.5% pensions levy on all public service employees. In December 2009 the government introduced new cuts in pay, again after failing to reach agreement with the unions. These cut pay by at least 5%, with the higher paid losing more. For someone on average earnings in the public sector, the reduction was 6.0%.
- In *Latvia* the crisis began in October 2008. The government agreed to cut pay by 15% in 2009, although with protection for the lower paid. The large number of those whose pay was protected meant that the impact of the cuts was less than planned and in June a second round of cuts was adopted, cutting pay by 20% for the higher paid and by 15% for the lower paid; many bonuses were abolished and there was widespread use of unpaid leave.
- In *Lithuania* the government's anti-crisis programme was agreed in December 2008 with an average 12% reduction in salary for most employees. In May 2009 the pay bill was cut by a further 11.2%, which institutions achieved by cutting additional payments and supplements and introducing unpaid leave. A cut in basic pay of 10% was planned for August 2009 but following opposition from the unions this was changed, with the 10% reduction still being achieved, but through a 5% cut in basic salary and other payments being cut by more. Following discussions a national agreement was reached between the government, unions and employers in October 2008, which confirmed the cuts. In June 2010 these pay reductions which had initially only been supposed to last until the end of 2010 were extended to the end of 2012.

- *Romania* cuts to public sector pay and conditions began in April 2009 as part of a package of measures agreed with the IMF. Promised pay increases would not be implemented and most bonuses would be eliminated or consolidated into the basic wage over three years as part of a unified pay system for the public sector. In August 2009 further cuts in additional payments and bonuses were announced and employees were compelled to take two weeks unpaid leave between October and December 2009. In May 2010 the government introduced a temporary 25% cut in public sector pay to run from 1 July 2010 until the end of December 2010. In the longer term – from January 2011 the government intends to replace this temporary cut with the promised unified system of public sector pay, which will eliminate a wide range of bonuses and the 13th month pay.
- *Spain* the government announced its intention to cut public sector pay by an average of 5.0% in May 2010. The reduction came into effect on 1 June 2010 and pay is frozen at this lower level throughout 2011. For those public sector employees with special status, some elements of pay are cut by more than 5% for the higher paid and by less than 5% for the lower paid, but for those on normal employment contracts – around 40% of the total – the 5% applies to all equally.

Even though they were not dealt with by this study, at least three more countries can be added to this list. They are: the Czech Republic and Portugal (where in September 2010 the government announced plans to cut public sector pay by respectively 10% and 5%) and the UK. In addition, according to the reply of FNV, wages in the public sector are currently being challenged in the Netherlands and the confederation organised a massive demonstration in protest that has resulted in the temporary suspension of these wage cuts.

In Ireland, serious concerns have been raised by ICTU with regard to the future of the national statutory pay and conditions protection mechanisms in sectors such as catering and hotel. In particular, one of the measures mostly opposed by the Irish union has been the cut to the minimum wage introduced by previous Government.

ICTU vigorously claimed that this would undermine purchasing power of the already declining domestic economy and that a lower minimum wage would especially hit the most vulnerable workers, many of whom are women. Congress launched a campaign with affiliate unions to ensure that those already in employment on the original minimum wage would not have their contracts changed to new lower level without agreement, however cases of employers putting pressure to take a cut in employees' minimum wage level have already been reported and been dealt by the courts.

According to ICTU *“The incoming government has pledged to reverse the cut in the minimum wage and stop other employers acting in this manner. However, there is a fear that this will be done while trying to end other arrangements to fix wages. Some industry groups such as fast food chains have mounted a legal challenge to the Joint Labour Committee system which sets minimum wages and conditions for workers in the restaurant and catering industry. Women are over represented in these industries”*.

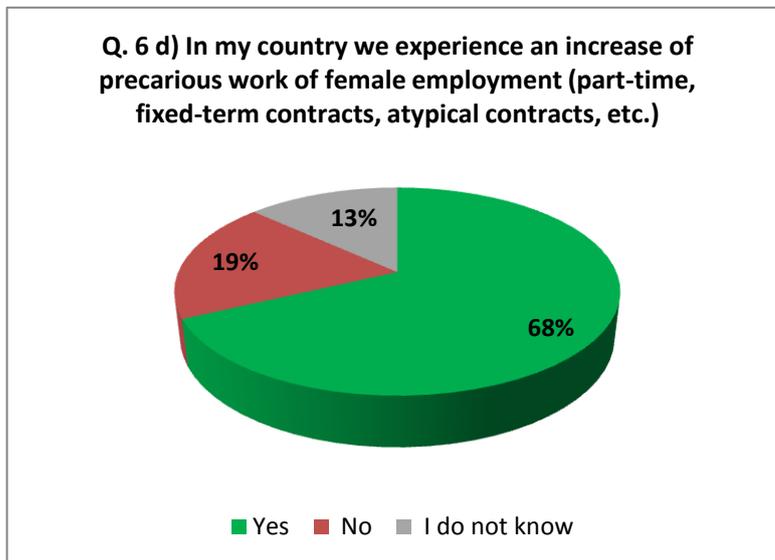
Some respondents indicated that although wage cuts or freezes did not occur, according to some replies, it appears much more difficult for unions to negotiate pay increases (Lithuania, Hungary), especially in mostly female dominated sectors (Austria).

In some countries this has a direct effect in the widening of the gender pay gap. The Bulgarian union CITUB reported that: *“Overall for the period September 2009 - 2010 the average wage increased by 9.3%, which means that we do not have a wage freeze. The problem is that the growth rate of wages for men is 10.9 percent, while for women is 7.1%. Accordingly, the gender pay gap deepens: In September 2009 the share of wages of women was 85.2% that of men, and in Sept. 2010 is 82.4%. In some sectors, these differences are deepening: in 2009, in "Health and social activities" the share of women's wages is 64.3% that of men and in 2010 it was 62%; in "Education" the share women wage was 86.2 percent that of men and in 2010 was already 80.2%.”*

Conversely, in Iceland, research shows that the gender pay gap has narrowed in the country after the financial crisis – the reason, according to the study is that men are not getting extra overtime payment, production bonuses, etc. Another reason for the change in the pay gap is that the financial crisis hit male dominated sectors first and it affects female dominated sectors later. However, the respondent from ASI specifies that this research covered the period 2009/2010 and that *“it will be interesting to follow the change of the gender pay gap next 2 years, when the public sector will be hit by budgetary downcut”*.

#### iv. Precarious work

**More than two thirds of the confederations (36 of 53) believe that an increase in precarious female employment (part-time, fixed-term contracts, atypical contracts, etc.) is taking place due to the effects of the economic downturn.** No increase in precarious employment was reported by the confederations based in Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg and Sweden. The unions from Hungary and Lithuania expressed different opinions on the rise of precariousness among female workers in their countries.



An increase of female part-time work has been reported by the following confederations : OGB-Austria, FGTB-Belgium, CITUB-Bulgaria, ZSSS-Slovenia and CCOO-Spain. This is validated by the statistics in the 2010 Employment in Europe report.

The reply of ZSSS refers to this European report to illustrate the specific case of part-time workers in Slovenia. *“The Employment in Europe 2010 report clearly states that the great concentration of women in part-time work, lower paid jobs and smaller firms has had an impact on relative effects of the downturn. Slovenia is a case of extremely worrying precarious position of women on the labour market. In fact, according to the Eurostat data, in Slovenia the share of temporary employment among women has risen from 15.8% in 2009 Q1 to 19.2% in 2010 Q3. In the same period, the share of temporary employment among men has risen from 12.4% to 16.1%. What is extremely worrying is the share of temporary employment among young people (15 – 24 years); for men 67.2% and for women – 81.2%, which is the highest share in the EU27”.*

The Polish confederation Solidarnosc also warned of the high increase of female temporary and part-time workers: *“The amount of work provided by the temporary agencies doubled last year. Also, twice as many women than men work part time. The amount of workers on fixed-term contracts reached almost 30% of salaried employees. Women being secure on the labor market, accept less favourable forms of employment and dominate amongst the self-employed”.*

Finally, a fourth emblematic example is given by USO-Spain that quotes the findings of the National Institute of Statistics: *“If we focus on the female bias data on all contracts of this type (of total part-time contracts, many are women), we see that since 2007, over 75% of part-time contracts are women (2007 = 80.4%, 2008 = 80%, 2009 = 77.6%, 2010 = 77.2%). The explanation of why the proportion of women with part-time contracts has decreased (80.4% in 2007 - 77.2% in 2010), is that fewer women are working, i.e. it has reduced the number of employed women, which affects the rates of full-time employment and part-time.*

*If we look at absolute figures we see that while in 2007 there were 8,479,800 working women in 2010 this figure decreased to 8,198,500 (- 281,300). Full-time contracts have been particularly affected: unemployment rose from 6,562,900 in 2007 to 6,288,300 in 2010, with a total of 274,600 full-time contracts less (97 % of jobs have disappeared). In this sense, it is noted that only part-time employment has fallen by 6,700 (3% of the total jobs lost), demonstrating the difficulties of women to access a full-time job”.*<sup>14</sup>

With regard to fixed-term contracts, the following confederations: UATUC-Croatia, DEOK-Cyprus, CMKOS-Czech Republic, UGT-Portugal mentioned in their replies that fixed term contracts are increasingly offered to women.

Fixed-term contracts are more frequent among female than male workers in most European countries (20 of 27). The differences are striking in Finland, Sweden and Cyprus. In addition male workers stand a better chance of moving to a permanent contract than women.

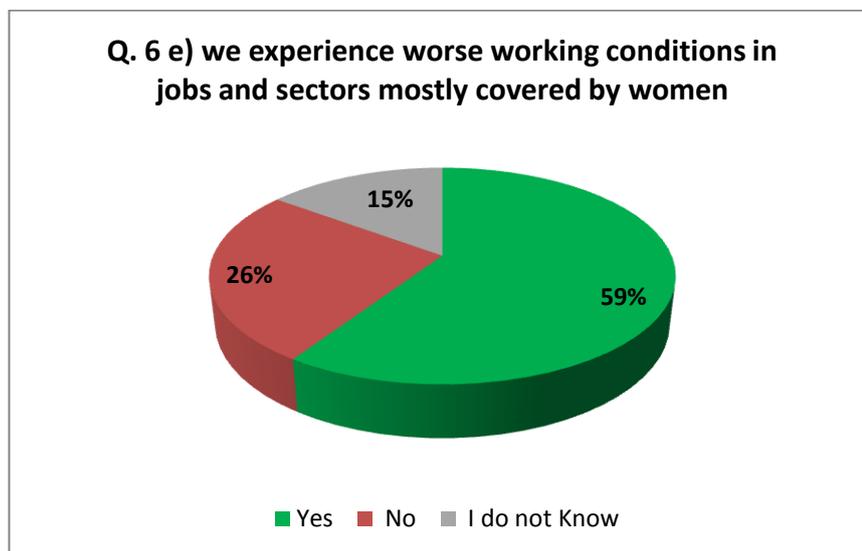
Finally, another concern that has been raised by some confederations, is the difficulty in obtaining data and information on the impact of crisis on the **informal economy** where a large number of women can be found. The Turkish union HAK-IS highlights that gender disparities have been increasing over the last decade and that the current crisis has generated a surge in informal employment. According to their figures, 58% of women and 38% of men work in the informal labour market economy. *“Therefore it is clear that if you want to participate in the labour market in Turkey, the risk of working without having any social security is a normal event and one in every two workers can be found working in this unsecure position in labour market. And for women the risk of working informally is higher than men especially during the time of crises”.*

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<sup>14</sup> Source: INE, Encuesta de Población Activa, IV Trimestre 2010 (reply from USO-Spain)

v. Working conditions

**59% of the confederations (32 of 50) are of the opinion that the working conditions of women have worsened since the beginning of the economic downturn.** In five countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) the different national confederations that replied reported that they did not experience a deterioration in the working conditions of women. In Finland, France and Hungary confederations have different views.

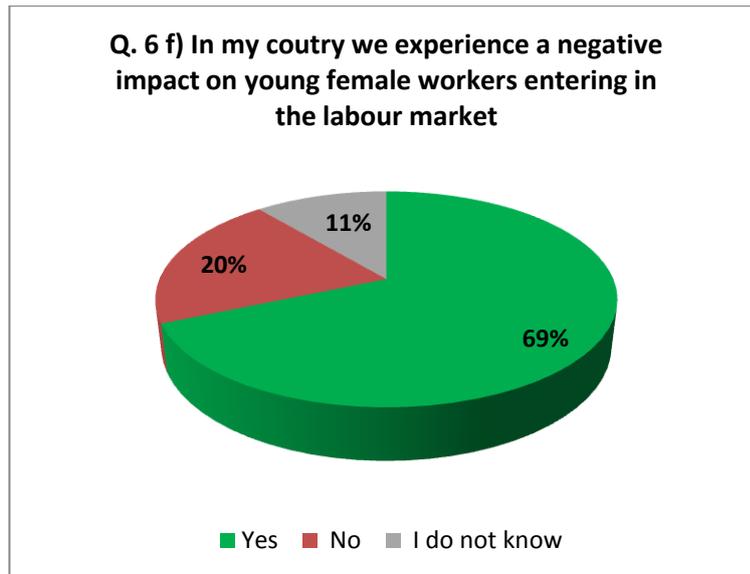


In almost all other cases those confederations that have indicated a decline in female workers' conditions mentioned an increase in the workload, work pressure, stress at work, moral and psychological harassment. The difficulty in assessing these replies is due to the fact that most of the respondents were unable to quote figures or refer to studies to validate their reply. Respondents often say that their reply in this case is mostly based on perceptions or discussions with trade unions representatives at territorial or company level.

Some respondents indicated an increase in working hours (especially in those sectors that experience massive job losses). Other referred to pressure by employers to employees not to use family-related leaves. Some confederations suggested that it would be interesting to analyse the figures in a few years' time.

vi. Young female workers

Most of the respondents highlighted in their reply that the group that has been put most at risk by the crisis is young people. **69% of the confederations that replied to the survey also think that the crisis has a particularly negative impact on young female workers entering the labour market.** However the Danish confederations disagree with this statement. The confederations in France, Hungary and Sweden have different opinions.



The following observation by CFTC-France illustrates in detail the situation of young female workers in the country: *“In France, the full-time employment of young women has been declining since early 2009, while the rate for young men fell slightly, and even appears to recover later in the year. The difference in the employment rates for young men and young women remains about 10 points. The rate of part-time employment shows an opposite trend: the rate for young women is higher than young men (about 4 points on all period) and this gap is growing: the employment rate of young women decreased while young men were stabilized at low levels, even during the crisis. Thus, some young men work part-time, while young women are going into part-time”*.

A strong decline in the employment rate of young women has been reported by OGB-Austria: *“Concerning the young workers between 15 and 19 years we experienced a stronger decline of the employment-rate under the female workers (- 1.7%) compared to young male workers (-1,3%) (from 2008 to 2009)”*.

According to the OGB reply to the survey two aspects are important in the context of young Austrian workers:

- 1) usually young women stay longer in school or do not quit their apprenticeship as often as young men do. In January 2011 16200 young women and 31100 young men between 15-24 years were unemployed. Compared to January 2010 the unemployment rate for young women went back – 3.5%, but under young men a lower rate of –10% was achieved;*
- 2) in general unemployment among young workers is around twice as high as among adults.*

*Also the unemployment rate of young workers, who enter in the labour market for the first time, is higher among young women (18.7%) compared to young men (13%).*

The OGB concludes by saying that *“unfortunately no measurements for young female workers in particular were taken. The negotiated initiatives were realised during the crises, but the intention to act was caused by high unemployment among young workers – male and female - already before the impact of the crises reached the labour market”* So measures were set, but for young workers in general, and it will be interesting to see in a couple of years' time if they were equally effective for both (young) men and women.

From the report *Employment in Europe 2010* it is also possible to look in more detail to the gender aspects of the crisis for young Europeans: “*comparing employment rates with those a year earlier indicates that the pace of decline from late 2008 through to mid-2009 was much stronger for men than for women [...] It still remains the case that men have suffered much more from employment contraction than women. But nevertheless, there is a growing problem of declining employment rates for young women [...]*”<sup>15</sup>.

As can be extrapolated from the various replies, there is also a growing concern regarding the gender driven segmentation of labour market, in which flexible work arrangements and lower paid jobs are more and more often being taken by young women despite their higher educational attainments.

LO-Denmark has indicated how the crisis could provide an opportunity to combat professional segregation and labour market segregation: “*We are exploring ways to get men to take up positions in the public care sector; dealing with both children and elderly people is one defined strategy. The high number of men that have lost their jobs in the private sector, jobs which are not coming back to the Danish labour market no matter what, need to find new positions – and the demographic changes means that the care sector will be lacking ‘hands’ within a very short time*”.

The complex situation of the impact of the downturn on young men and women shows again that to take the complete picture into account we should go beyond statistics of employment and unemployment. Again the analysis provided by the *Employment in Europe* report is quite illustrative in this regard: “*Youth (those aged 15–24) continue to be proportionately the most affected by employment contraction, with a decline in employment of 11.4%, reflecting the high share of temporary employment among young people (in 2008, 40% of employed 15-24 year old had temporary contracts, whereas among 25-64 year olds the share was only 11%)*.”

*In terms of the absolute rise in unemployment in the EU from the second quarter of 2008 to the second quarter of 2010, men account for almost two thirds of the increase. Men aged 35–44, young male adults (aged 25-34) and male youth (aged 15-24) have been the worse affected during the downturn in absolute terms, together accounting for 45% of the overall increase in unemployment.*

*However, the distribution of the total rise in unemployment differed in the two years of the downturn, shifting from younger men to older men and women. While in the first year of the downturn men aged 15-44 were affected most by rising unemployment (accounting for more than half of the total increase), in the second year men aged 45-55 and older men 55+ were hit more strongly, together with women aged 25-44, while young men were little affected.*

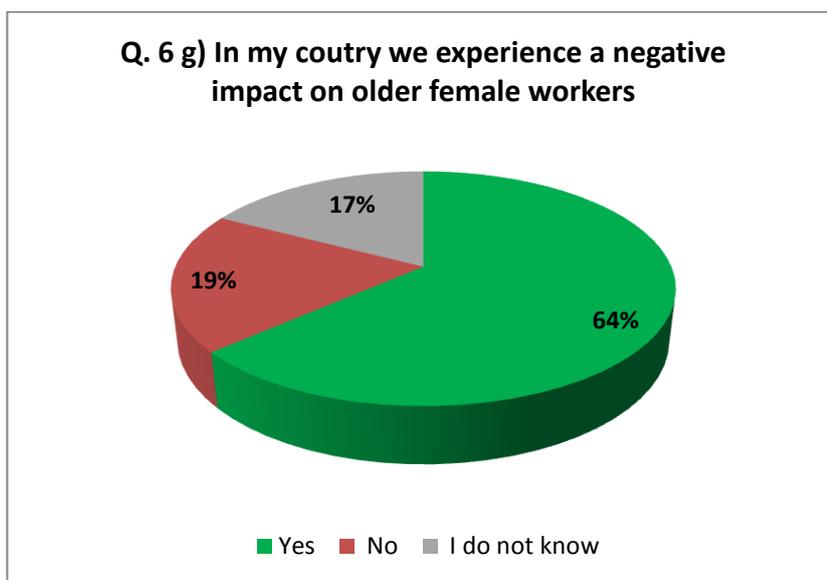
*Overall, the rise in male unemployment has been more substantial than that for women across all age groups, being nearly double the rise in female employment for all groups. In terms of relative increases, the level of male unemployment jumped by 50% from the second quarter of 2008 to the second quarter of 2010, while for women the rise was more limited, amounting to around 30%. Nevertheless, it is important to qualify this gender comparison, since measures of unemployment may not necessarily capture the full impact of the changing economic conditions on women, especially as they are more likely than men to leave the labour market altogether”.*

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<sup>15</sup> « *Employment in Europe 2010* », cit., p. 52

**Slightly fewer confederations (63%)** compared to the previous section on young workers, **considers that the crisis has a negative impact on elderly female workers.** In terms of age, it is known in fact that employment performance has generally been better the older the age group: “*Employment of older workers aged 55-64 has held up well, and had even increased 5.0% compared to the second quarter of 2008. Similarly, even employment of those aged over 65 increased significantly (by 3.4%)*”.

The Employment in Europe report 2010 explains these positive development “*partly thanks to labour-market reforms in past years, which have encouraged older workers to remain economically active, together with governments not repeating the mistakes of past recessions (when early retirement schemes were introduced to reduce unemployment), but it may also indicate that the negative impact of the crisis on the wealth of private households has induced many older employees to postpone retirement*”<sup>16</sup>.



Nonetheless, many unions have expressed strong reservations concerning the pension reforms that have been introduced by some member states (i.e. France, Spain) and indicated what this would strongly harm older female workers. For instance CFTC-France comments that: “*Women are - once again - the great forgotten of the draft reform that has been introduced by the French government. Existing inequalities may be exacerbated. Women are more likely than men to pay the price.*

*They must work longer to liquidate their rights, and the current reform will not fix anything. They are also experiencing the longest gap between retirement age and age of business liquidation of pension rights. The decline in age and, therefore, the age at which the full rate can be obtained will automatically hit women hard. Without measures to enable seniors to remain in employment, we expect that the number of poor women will increase, as they are already the big battalions of the beneficiaries of the minimum pension and the minimum contribution”.*

LO-Norway and ASI-Iceland stated that the economic downturn has not affected elderly female workers, while confederations based in Italy, Spain and Sweden expressed contrasting views. What is underlined, however, by some respondents is that it is more difficult for elderly female workers to get back to work if they lose their jobs. It is also recalled how this group of workers is particularly at risk of poverty, due to low levels of retirement pension schemes.

<sup>16</sup> « Employment in Europe 2010 », *cit.*, p. 54.

## **vii. Trade unions initiatives to address the impact of the economic crisis on female workers**

34 confederations replied that they have undertaken specific measures to tackle the impact of the economic crisis on female workers, 15 reported that they have not and six did not reply to the question. The initiatives undertaken by reporting trade unions are quite diverse: they range from the organisation of events on the impact of the crisis on women, to studies at the national or sectoral level, to campaigns and demonstrations. Given the variety of the activities reported we have tried to categorise them below:

### ➤ **Publications / studies / policy position papers**

- OGB- Austria position paper (2010) “*Ways of the crisis from women's point of view*” (*Wege aus der Krise von Frauen Sicht*)  
[http://www.oegb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=OEGBZ/Page/OEGBZ\\_Index&n=OEGBZ\\_11.a&cid=1138433420990](http://www.oegb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=OEGBZ/Page/OEGBZ_Index&n=OEGBZ_11.a&cid=1138433420990)
- CSC-Belgium brochure (2011) “*Women against the crisis*” (*Les femmes vs crise*), Femmes.DOCX, N°1, 2010  
<http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEN.cfm?Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=35299>
- UGT-Spain report (2010) “*Women facing economic crisis: impact and opportunities*” (*Mujeres ante la crisis económica. Impactos y oportunidades*)  
[www.ugt.es/actualidad/2010/.../INFORMEMujeresantelacrisiseconomica.pdf](http://www.ugt.es/actualidad/2010/.../INFORMEMujeresantelacrisiseconomica.pdf)
- TUC-UK brochure (2011) “*The gender impact of the cuts*”  
[http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/Gender\\_Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Cuts.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/Gender_Impact_of_the_Cuts.pdf)
- TUC-UK leaflet (2011) “*Bearing the brunt, leading the response. Women and the global economic crisis*”  
[www.tuc.org.uk/extras/TUC\\_Global\\_Women.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/TUC_Global_Women.pdf)
- UATUC (2011), “*Workers or slaves? Women for safe, creative and productive workplaces!*”  
<http://www.lo.no/Global/UATUC%20Info%20No%2014.pdf>
- ETUCE study (2010) “*Assessing the impact of the economic crisis in the education sector and in different national contexts according to trade union education*”  
[http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE\\_Newsletter/newsletter\\_en/2009/Newsletter\\_June\\_2009\\_eng\\_fin.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_Newsletter/newsletter_en/2009/Newsletter_June_2009_eng_fin.pdf)
- EPSU study commissioned to LRS (2010) “*The wrong target – how governments are making public sector workers pay for the crisis*”  
[http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/The\\_wrong\\_target-2.pdf](http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/The_wrong_target-2.pdf)
- UNISON Factsheet 21 (2010) “*Women and public spending cuts*”  
<http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19576.pdf>
- ICTU, TUC, STUC and WTUC (5 November 2010) Joint Press Release of Women’s Committees, “*Women Trade Union Leaders to Resist Senseless and unjust Austerity Measures*”  
[http://www.ictu.ie/download/doc/women\\_and\\_cuts\\_press\\_release.doc](http://www.ictu.ie/download/doc/women_and_cuts_press_release.doc)
- NICICTU-Ireland, leaflet “*How cuts impact on women*”  
<http://www.ictuni.org/uploads/67b098da-831b-4ef7-ba01-f5111705d2bc/WOMENlores.pdf>
- PCS-UK booklet (2010): “*There is an alternative... the case against cuts in public spending*”  
<http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/campaigns/campaign-resources/there-is-an-alternative-the-case-against-cuts-in-public-spending.cfm> ;

➤ **Seminars / Conferences**

- CSC-Belgium organised a seminar “*Women against the crisis*” in August 2009;
- CITUB-Bulgaria organised a regional Conference on “*Women in times of economic crisis and the informalisation of the economy*” where the participants presented a memorandum to the government and employers;
- UGT-Portugal organised a conference to look at the effects of crisis on family and professional lives.
- ICTU-Ireland Joint Women’s Committee Seminar “Impact of the Recession on Women’s Rights” , 4-5 March 2011  
<http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2011/03/03/congress-national-womens-seminar-cork-45th-march-2/>

➤ **8<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

- FO - France “The crisis will not end for us, either” (*Non, la crise ne passera pas pour nous non plus !*)  
[http://www.force-ouvriere.fr/page\\_principal/communiqu/index.asp?lk=c&id=1962&fl=2011](http://www.force-ouvriere.fr/page_principal/communiqu/index.asp?lk=c&id=1962&fl=2011)
- CFTC – France focused on inequalities especially linked with the pension reform (*La retraite au féminin...et autres inégalités*)  
[http://www.cftc.fr/ewb\\_pages/a/actualite-12592.php](http://www.cftc.fr/ewb_pages/a/actualite-12592.php)

Finally, some respondents mentioned their current work on gender equality (but not specifically addressed to the issue of the crisis). For instance in Germany ver.di (together with the DGB) has undertaken a campaign against precarious work and the women’s department has developed special information material. In Spain in the local and regional government and national administration unions try to activate gender equality plans.

Other respondents have made reference to their participation in tripartite discussions. In particular, STTK mentioned the Finnish Equal Pay Programme (2007 – 2015) which tackles, amongst others, the impact of the economic downturn on women.

viii. **REFERENCES**

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Annex I: Female trade union membership in confederations (2008 - 2009 - 2010 -2011)

COUNTRY	TRADE UNION	TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP TOTAL				TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP WOMEN			
		2008	2009	2010	2011	(%) 2008	(%) 2009	(%) 2010	(%) 2011
Andorra	USDA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Austria	OGB	1.272,011	1.247,795	1.238,590	1.220,190	33.3%	34.1%	34,0%	34,4%
Belgium	ABVV / FGVB	1.367,000	1.434,527	1.455,454	1.620,674	42.0%	43.0%	43,0%	43,0%
	ACV / CSC	1.616,145	1.646,733	1.635,579	1.658,188	43.0%	45.0%	45,0%	45,0%
	CGSLB/ACLVB	265,000	265,000	265,000	265,000	42.0%	42.0%	42,0%	43,2%
Bulgaria	CITUB-KNBS	NA	210,000	220,000	190,000	NA	48.0%	48,0%	48,0%
	PODKREPA	153,250	153,350	153,350	153,350	42.0%	46.0%	42,6%	44,0%
Croatia	NHS*	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	NA
	SSSH / UATUC	210,000	211,000	164,732	103,000	48.0%	NA	48,0%	45,0%
Cyprus	SEK	NA	64,945	76,737	NA	NA	37.4%	37,2%	NA
	DEOK	8,807	9,250	9,500	9,652	13.3%	24.7%	13,5%	13,8%
	TURK-SEN	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Czech Rep	CMK OS	503,000	482,000	444,570	409,000	44.0%	45.5%	45,5%	45,5%
Denmark	AC	NA	NA	NA	144,148	NA	NA	NA	53,2%
	FTF	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	LO-DK	1.300,000	1.300,000	1.300,000	1.000,000	49.0%	49.0%	49,0%	49,0%
Estonia	EAKL	NA	NA	35,878	33,031	NA	NA	59,3%	59,9%
	TALO	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finland	AKAVA	NA	536,792	536,792	NA	NA	50.1%	50,1%	NA
	SAK	800,000	800,000	800,000	758,000	46.0%	46.0%	46,0%	47,0%
	STTK	650,300	640,000	623,200	640,000	68.0%	70.0%	70,00%	67,0%
France	CFDT	803,635	808,720	814,636	833,168	45.0%	45.0%	45,8%	47 ,0%
	CFTC	160,300	160,300	140,000	140,000	39.0%	39.0%	50,0%	50,0%
	CGT	700,000	711,000	735,000	735,000	28.0%	32.0%	34,0%	34,8%
	FO	800,000	NA	800,000	800,000	45.0%	NA	45,0%	45,0%
	UNSA	307,000	NA	307,000	307,000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Germany	DGB	NA	NA	6.200,00	NA	NA	NA	30,0%	NA
Greece	ADEDY	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	GSEE	502,000	NA	498,000	498,000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hungary	ASzSz	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	LIGA	103,000	103,000	103,000	110,000	35-40%	30%	NA	32%
	MOSz	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	MSzOSz	NA	NA	205,000	205,000	NA	NA	NA	47%
	SZEF- ÉSZT	NA	NA	NA	140,000	NA	NA	NA	60,0%
Iceland	ASI	107,856	110,722	112,815	108,597	45.0%	45.0%	45,0%	47,0%
	BSRB	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ireland	ICTU	NA	843,637	843,995	798,000	NA	49.0%	48,9%	51.0%
Italy	CGIL	5.850,942	5.697,774	5.697,774	5.746,167	45.0%	50.0%	50,0%	49,4%
	CISL	NA	NA	4.507,349	2.640,999	NA	NA	51,0%	NA
	UIL	1,776,733	2.116,299	2.174,151	2.174,151	40.0%	35.0%	44,0%	44,0%
Latvia	LBAS	134,422	130,120	110,602	110,602	62.6%	68.0%	64,0%	64,0%
Liechtenstein	LANV	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

\*Member of ETUC since December 2010

COUNTRY	TRADE UNION	TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP TOTAL				TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP WOMEN			
		2008	2009	2010	2011	(%) 2008	(%) 2009	(%) 2010	(%) 2011
Lithuania	LDF	20,000	20,150	20,150	20,150	60.0%	58.0%	58,0%	58,0%
	LPSK / LTUC	100,000	75,000	70,000	60,000	61.5%	58.0%	58,0%	57,0%
	LPSS (LDS)	NA	NA	NA	7,200	NA	NA	NA	47,0%
Luxembourg	CGT-L	NA	62,732	69,040	69,806	33.9%	34.0%	32,7%	32.9%
	LCGB	34,000	35,000	36,000	36,000	33.0%	31.0%	29,5%	30,0%
Malta	CMTU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	GWU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Monaco	USM	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Netherlands	CNV	52,710	NA	NA	330,000	63.0%	NA	NA	31,0%
	FNV	1.192,951	1.368,000	1.373,400	1.378,000	32.0%	36.3%	36,92%	37,50%
	MHP	NA	140,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Norway	LO-N	822,629	865,392	865,000	871,360	49.7%	50.1%	51,0%	51,1%
	YS	206,000	216,000	217,141	217,600	56.0%	56.0%	56,8%	55,8%
	UNIO	268,218	NA	226,915	NA	72.2%	NA	75,4%	NA
Poland	NSZZ-Solidarnosc	NA	680,334	700,000	667,572	NA	37.0%	38,0%	37,7%
	OPZZ	NA	NA	318,000	NA	NA	NA	48,0%	NA
Portugal	CGTP	683,250	653,000	653,000	653,000	NA	NA	53,0%	53,0%
	UGT-P	510,000	510,000	510,000	505,000	48.0%	48.0%	46,0%	45,7%
Romania	BNS	NA	NA	NA	150,000	NA	NA	NA	40,0%
	CARTEL ALFA	1.000,000	1.000,000	NA	NA	48.0%	48.0%	NA	NA
	CNSLR-Fratia	NA	800,000	800,000	NA	NA	44.0%	44,0%	NA
	CSDR	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
San Marino	CSdI	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	CDLS	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Slovakia	KOZ SR	337,600	319,600	319,600	296,400	40.9%	41.9%	41,9%	43,6%
Slovenia	ZSSS	281,465	NA	250,000	250,000	46.5%	50.5%	44,8%	NA
Spain	CC,OO	1.001,000	1.001,000	1.200,200	1.157,800	36.6%	37.5%	38,3%	38,9%
	STV-ELA	NA	110,054	115,000	108,307	NA	37.4%	38,1%	38,8%
	UGT-E	887,009	810,000	880,000	880,000	33.4%	33.7%	33,3%	35,7%
	USO	NA	81,090	121,760	122,856	25.0%	34.5%	36,0%	36,3%
Sweden	LO-S	1.473,583	1.404,865	1.384,879	1.346,756	47.0%	48.0%	48,0%	52,1%
	SACO	580,000	586,000	610,000	617,738	52.0%	52.0%	52,0%	52,6%
	TCO	974,959	1.175,276	958,745	962,629	62.3%	62.2%	61,9%	61,9%
Switzerland	Travail Suisse	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58,0%
	SGB	384,816	NA	NA	377,327	24.1%	NA	NA	26,8%
Turkey	DISK	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	HAK-IS	NA	NA	441,917	550,000	NA	NA	10,0%	12,6%
	KESK	NA	200,000	NA	NA	NA	42%	NA	NA
	TURK-IS	700,000	820,000	250,000	NA	10.0%	12.8%	11,0%	NA
UK	TUC	6.500,000	6.500,000	6.200,992	6.135,126	44.0%	41.0%	46,0%	47,0%

Source: ETUC Surveys 2008-2009-2010-2011

Annex II: Female trade union membership in PERC Members (2011)

COUNTRY	TRADE UNION	TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP (TOTAL)	TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP (% WOMEN)
		2010	2010
Albania	KSSH	-	-
Bosnia and Hercegovina	BiH	-	-
Macedonia	KSS	70,000	60,0%
Kosovo	BSPK	100,000	40,0%
Montenegro	CTUM	52,000	43,0%
Georgia	GTUC	206,645	65,0%
Ukraina	KVPU	271,000	48,6%
Russia	FNPR	24.700,00	59,2%

Source: ETUC Survey-2011

Annex III: Women members in European Industry Federations 2009 - 2010 - 2011

EIF	TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP (TOTAL)			TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP (% WOMEN)		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
ETF	-	-	2.500,000	-	-	13,0%
EFFAT	-	1,500,000	1.500,000	40,5%	40,5%	40,5%
EMF	-	6,000,000	6.000,000	-	± 20%	20,0%
EFJ	260,000	-	-	-	-	-
EEA	-	-	-	-	-	-
EFBWW	2,300,000	-	-	1%	-	-
EPSU	± 5,600,000	8,000,000	8.000,000	± 70%	68,5%	68,5%
EMCEF	2,500,000	-	1.912,718	± 20%	-	NA
UNI-EUROPA	13,596,577	-	-	47,5%	-	-
ETUF-TCL	-	-	-	-	-	-
ETUCE	-	-	5.500,000	-	-	72%

Source: ETUC Surveys 2008-2009-2010-2011