

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS
AND GENDER EQUALITY
COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

ASSOCIATED COMMITTEE:
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

INVITED COMMITTEES:
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS

HEARING OF HELENA DALLI
COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
(Equality)

WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2019
BRUSSELS

1-002-0000

IN THE CHAIR**EVELYN REGNER***Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality***LUCIA ĎURIŠ NICHOLSONOVÁ***Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs**(The hearing opened at 14.36)*

Evelyn Regner, *Chair FEMM*. – Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome. Please take your seats.

Dear Members of the European Parliament, dear listeners from all sides in Europe and, first of all, dear Commissioner-designate Helena Dalli. You are very welcome here, as Commissioner-designate for Equality, to this joint hearing that I am happy to co-chair with Ms Ďuriš Nicholsonová. I'm also very happy that the LIBE Committee, which is associated with this hearing is represented today.

It's a great success that we will have a dedicated Commissioner for Equality in the future. This is really something new for the European institutions.

Before we start our hearing, let me recall that, in line with the guidelines for the approval of the Commission, Annex VII to the Rules of Procedure, the Parliament evaluates Commissioners-designate on the basis of their general competence, their European commitments and their personal independence, and it also assesses their knowledge of their prospective portfolio and their communication skills.

Let me also recall that, before the hearing, the Commissioner-designate had replied in writing to a preparatory questionnaire. The written answers have been distributed to the Members in all languages. Finally, please note that the Committee on Legal Affairs has raised no objection to the holding of the hearing.

1-004-0000

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, *Chair EMPL*. – Hello everybody. Welcome to the hearing of the Commissioner-designate, Ms Dalli, whom we warmly welcome.

Let me introduce you to the structure of today's debate. First, the floor will go to Ms Dalli and she will have 15 minutes to introduce her portfolio and her priorities, then we will move on to 25 questions from MEPs in two rounds. The first round will be seven questions put by representatives of political groups, and the second round will be 18 questions based on the overall distribution of questions among the political groups, also including a representative from the non-attached Members.

The debate will be divided into five-minute slots: one minute for the question, two minutes for the answer, then one minute to the same Member for a follow-up question and then one minute for the answer.

Please note that the timing is very tight, so we will be very strict in measuring the time. That is why we have the gavel here. And we are not afraid to use it! So please be careful with the timing so that

everything goes smoothly. Yesterday we had a first hearing with Commissioner-designate Schmit and everything went just perfectly.

Please note also that interpretation will be provided in 23 languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of our House. All speakers can therefore use their own language, but I would like to remind speakers that what they say will need to be interpreted. Therefore whatever language you use, please do not talk too quickly. Always bear in mind that the interpreters will do their best to interpret what you say.

Finally, the debate will be streamed live on Parliament's website. It will also be possible to access a video recording of the hearing on the same site. That is all the technical information you need, so now let's just start.

The floor is yours, Commissioner-designate. Please don't exceed the 15 minutes that you have for your introductory remarks.

1-005-0000

Helena Dalli, *Kummissarju nominat*. – Onorevoli Presidenti, onorevoli Membri, huwa ta' pjaċir u unur ghalija li llum qieghda hawn quddiemkom. Qatt ma hsibt li se jkolli l-opportunità li settur li ddedikajt il-hajja politika tiegħi ghalih – l-ugwaljanza – inkun qed niddiskutih magħkom wara li kont nominata sabiex navvanza dan il-portafoll fuq livell Ewropew.

F'dan il-Parlament l-ideat ikunu diskussi minn spettru wiesa' ta' perspettiva, u jiena konvinta li dak li jgħaqqadna hu ferm akbar minn dak illi jifridna.

Equality is an infinite resource. Indeed, there is enough equality for everyone and we can sustain it. On the other hand, discrimination excludes, marginalises, and leads members of society to the brink. Discrimination is a wasteful practice. It robs members of society of their wellbeing, fulfilment and prosperity. Yes – discrimination harms individuals and minorities directly; but it also harms society as a whole, as it disconnects relations, diminishes trust and alienates people.

The setting-up of Equality as a portfolio in itself is a bold statement by President-elect von der Leyen towards a vision of a Europe where human dignity and human rights, freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law are strengthened and brought further to the fore. A Europe free from discrimination. This development follows on from her publication of the first Political Guidelines that contain a whole section on equality with clear measures that must be implemented during this term, and the setting-up of the first gender-balanced Commission.

The President-elect laid out her vision, and if I have your support following this hearing, I am ready to work hard with the Task Force on Equality that is purposely being set up on a permanent basis composed of senior representatives from all services of the Commission and the European External Action Service, and chaired by the Deputy-Secretary General in charge of Policy Coordination. And this together with my Cabinet; the Directorates-General; the thematic gender equality and anti-discrimination High-Level Groups; the European Institute for Gender Equality; and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to deliver on all of these measures.

Additionally, I intend to work in dialogue with you, the Members of the European Parliament, as well as Member States and civil society. I intend to work collaboratively with all, free from finger-pointing to elevate this area both within the European Union and also externally.

During the conversations that I had with many of you here, as well as with anti-discrimination intergroups here at the European Parliament and umbrella civil society anti-discrimination

networks in the past weeks, I found a lot of common ground. There is agreement that we need to step up our resolve for gender equality and the fight against gendered violence and multiple discrimination; as well as promote equality on the grounds of race and ethnic origin, age, disability, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

In the conversations that I had, many have expressed their support for this portfolio's orientation – including its vertical and horizontal dimensions – and asked me to flesh out my vision for how it is to be implemented. Equality needs to be enjoyed by everyone, and we all need to be part of its growth process. The European Union needs to continue to take a leading global role in this area.

All my life, I have done anything and everything in my power to improve the lives of citizens. I entered politics – perhaps like many of you in this room – when I was a 17-year-old student. Full of enthusiasm and commitment. Full of idealism. With faith that by engaging, listening, campaigning, every single day, I would be able to bring about positive change in society. Many years later, all I know is that this fight is far from over. But I learned an important lesson: real change is only possible if we, the politicians, have the courage to make change happen at all levels of governance.

The 21st century must be the century of women being equal. Exactly 40 years ago, in 1979, Simone Veil was elected as the first female President of this Parliament, one of the largest democratic assemblies in the world. Today, in 2019, we need to ensure that women have the right to be equal, in all the spheres of their lives, through an ambitious gender mainstreaming process, both within the European Union institutions and their respective outputs. This is why, if confirmed by you, I will use my energy, my experience and my conviction to build fairer societies in our Union, ones in which, in the words of President-elect von der Leyen: 'those who share the same aspirations [will] have the same opportunities to fulfil them'.

I know that this is an uphill struggle. As a Minister responsible for European Affairs and Equality at the national level, I worked hard to fight societal stereotypes, table legislative proposals, adopt strategies and stand my ground against calls to water down equality initiatives. As a Commissioner, I will need to use a similar approach, and work with Member States to convince them that taking action at the EU level is the right way to go. Because promoting inclusion and fostering equality are European issues as much as tackling climate change or solving economic crises. It's a fight which deserves a European response. And it needs our full attention. Let me just give you a few figures as sometimes numbers can say more than words.

In the European Union, 31% of women work part-time, largely because they bear most of the caring responsibilities for children and the elderly; one in three women are subject to gender-based violence at least once in their adult life; more than half of Muslims looking for housing feel discriminated against because of their first or last names; 80% of Roma persons are below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; 50% of citizens with a disability have no access to work and are excluded; older persons receive on average 39% fewer invitations for job interviews, even when they have identical profiles with younger jobseekers; two in five trans persons are victims of violence every year; and in at least 21 Member States, medical interventions are carried out to impose a sex on intersex children.

This gross discrimination may be further compounded when individuals are targeted on multiple grounds. We need to take action, and live up to the values that the European Union holds very dear.

Honourable Members, I will make the fight for inclusion in the EU my personal fight. I will not hesitate to use every tool to promote equality and to strengthen Europe's commitment to inclusion in all of its forms.

I want to focus my work in particular on three strands: the fight against discrimination in all of its senses; the inclusion and empowerment of women; the promotion of equality and full participation. All these for women and men, racial and ethnic minorities, religious and non-religious minorities, persons with disabilities, older and younger persons, and LGBTI persons.

Right from the beginning of my mandate, I will seek support from my fellow Commissioners in proposing whatever is needed to advance equality in the EU and also externally. To serve this purpose, I will establish within the first three months of this Commission mandate the Task Force on Equality. It will be mandated with the complicated mission of swiftly building an intersectional approach for equality in all the policies of the EU. My intention is that the Task Force will be operational soon, and that it should be well equipped to tackle the huge task of mainstreaming equality in the EU.

Concurrently, I will put forward a new European Gender Strategy, which will include new legislative proposals, as well as incisive policy measures.

It is high time the Commission delivered on this call by you MEPs and civil society alike. Within this framework and the first 100 days, I will propose new measures to address pay transparency – one of the key priorities throughout my mandate. I will insist we continue working on the gender pay gap and the pensions gap until we know that 'who we are does not dictate our chances of being paid the same as others for the same work'.

As Commissioner for Equality, I will closely monitor that the work-life balance directive is fully and properly implemented in all Member States. I cannot accept that the economic loss due to the gender employment gap still amounts to EUR 370 billion per year. I want work-life balance to be a success story. I will continue to work throughout my mandate on women's empowerment and see – together with Member States – that gender stereotypes are tackled and childcare and care facilities are improved.

I will prioritise the inclusion of persons with disabilities. I will make sure that all EU sector legislation pays attention to the issue of disability. In 2020, it is expected that one in six EU citizens will live to some degree with a disability. In this regard, I will give priority to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An evaluation of the current strategy is also under way.

I want to sit down with you, honourable Members, and discuss how to move this policy framework forward. I will do everything in my power to advance key legislation in the equality area.

As a Minister, I participated in endless debates in Council on proposals that have remained blocked for too long. The Horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive was proposed more than 11 years ago. The Women on Boards Directive dates back to 2012. The proposal for the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention dates from 2016. How can I explain that to our citizens?

(Applause)

In this framework, should I not be able to remove the outstanding stumbling blocks and convince the remaining sceptical Member States in Council, I will not hold back from finding new remedies and proposing new legislation.

We owe this political transformation to our citizens who are excluded, who are struggling to make ends meet because of discrimination, and who are suffering from violence. Equality is not a zero-sum game. The empowerment of women and persons from minority backgrounds is of benefit to all.

Finally, I heartily welcome the inclusion of a gender-mainstreaming question in the written questions for all of the College. Equality mainstreaming is the way forward.

(Applause)

1-007-0000

Frances Fitzgerald (PPE). – Welcome to Ms Dalli. Your record as an equality champion while a minister in Malta is well known and appreciated, and I was very impressed when I met you. Your commitment and competence are well established; however, as I am the first speaker to question you, it would be remiss of me not to raise this issue. This Parliament has concerns with the situation in Malta on the record and values of the government you have been part of for the past six years in relation to two specific issues.

First of all, in relation to the assassination of investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, whose family may indeed be watching today, are you satisfied yourself with the progress to date with the investigation and public inquiry? How would you seek to protect journalists in your role as Commissioner to prevent such a horrendous crime happening again, given your experience in Malta? This is an opportunity for you to address and clarify your views.

Secondly, in relation to the Panama Papers and the involvement of one of your fellow ministers, do you agree with that minister's actions at the time? What lessons have you learned from government at that point and how would you put them into practice in your role as Commissioner?

1-008-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for your question and thank you for your appreciation and I must say that the feeling is mutual.

Yes, you mention the brutal crime of the femicide of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, and I must say that extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary measures. In fact we wanted to have the involvement of European institutions, such as Europol and the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) and even international institutions such as the FBI.

I remember myself saying that the NFI should investigate because I already had experience of them as I had brought the NFI to Malta to train our police and forensic investigators. So I had an experience of how very good they are.

And I must say there has been significant progress, for instance, in 50 days, three persons were arrested and placed under indictment, and this is something which is still ongoing, as you know.

But with reference to the other part of your question, I will do all in my power to guarantee a free press – free from harassment or intimidation.

With regard to your second part of the question and you ask, whether I agree, and I say no. I do not agree. I would have done things totally differently.

Throughout my political career, I stood up for good governance and the rule of law and democracy, and as minister, I pushed for the introduction of a commissioner for standards in public life, which is now in place.

(the Chair cut her off)

1-009-0000

Evelyn Regner, Chair FEMM. – I'm very strict already at the beginning in order to remind you that we have this rule: one minute for the questions, two minutes for the answer, one minute for a follow-up, one minute for the follow-up answer. I'm already quite strict at the beginning in order to remind all Members to respect the rules please, and of course you, Commissioner-designate. With this, I give the floor back to Frances Fitzgerald for the follow-up question.

1-010-0000

Frances Fitzgerald (PPE). – Thank you for your response. Obviously, issues around the rule of law, freedom of the press and justice are central to any equality or, indeed, gender strategy. That's why I ask those questions, because of the concern about those issues across this Parliament.

Returning to the gender equality strategy that you intend to build, could I ask you to outline in some detail how you intend to build that strategy? What methodology do you intend to use? What consultation with NGOs? Perhaps you would also outline the kind of timetable that you envisage.

1-011-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – As we know, there's so much that we have to do, but this gender strategy will contain pay transparency, gender participation, the pay and pension gap and violence against women. It will address gender stereotypes because, as you know, it is pointless legislating unless we change attitudes and unless we change cultures, so there will be a specific section on how to address gender stereotypes. There will also be a chapter on work-life balance, so all that we are going to do throughout this mandate vis-à-vis gender equality will be part of this strategy.

1-012-0000

Evelyn Regner (S&D). – I'm asking on behalf of the S&D Group. The European Union Strategy for Gender Equality is worth more than a follow-up question. My question is going exactly in this direction. Commissioner-designate, you highlight among your priorities the European Union Strategy for Gender Equality. Can you guarantee a binding communication from the Commission? What will be the means and the tools in order to implement it? Are you thinking of monitoring tools, benchmarks and sanctions? Will what is commonly known as the 'Women on Boards Directive' be part of this strategy?

What concrete actions are you going to take to unblock the unbearable situation in the Council and keep the binding 40% target? What do you aim for, and what will you do on that?

1-013-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, certainly I will be working to unblock the women on boards directive. It's a shame that it has been there for too long. I remember one of my first actions as Minister was to change my country's position on that, so you can understand my willingness and my commitment to deal with this women on boards proposal and actually make it happen. So I will engage with the Member States and convince them of the added value to unblock this file in the Council.

You asked me about the gender equality strategy. It will be a very important strategy for us all, and it will be issued shortly. I will obviously also be taking into account stakeholders and consultations, and will engage further and also develop the necessary tools to bring gender mainstreaming across EU policies to another level. As you know, this will also be the work of the task force, which will be working across DGs in order to see that gender mainstreaming is really materialising.

1-014-0000

Evelyn Regner (S&D). – I refer back to the Women on Boards Directive. Are you going to propose any changes to the text that has been on the table for so many years, as you mentioned that? And do you have plans for any other measures to achieve equal representation of men and women in European top positions?

1-015-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – I think it is a balanced proposal and I will meet with all Ministers who have a reservation on this proposal and push for a general approach in Council.

1-016-0000

Irène Tolleret (Renew). – Comme vous l'avez bien dit tout à l'heure, il y a exactement 40 ans, Simone Veil était élue première Présidente du Parlement européen.

Elle avait voué sa carrière à défendre et promouvoir les droits des femmes. Ce faisant, elle est devenue notre icône à toutes et à tous.

Aujourd'hui, son héritage est menacé de par le monde – comme l'emprisonnement d'une journaliste marocaine pour avortement nous l'a rappelé hier – mais également en Europe, où 15 millions de femmes n'ont pas accès à un avortement sûr et légal. C'est inacceptable, car contradictoire avec les valeurs que nous partageons: des valeurs de dignité humaine, de respect, de liberté, d'égalité, comme les décrit l'article 2 du traité de l'Union, et comme elles figurent dans votre portefeuille.

Les droits des femmes sont des droits de l'homme. Si vous êtes confirmée, pourriez-vous nous décrire trois actions concrètes pour améliorer l'accès aux droits sexuels et reproductifs dans l'Union européenne? Sous quelle forme? Dans quelle temporalité? Comment envisagez-vous de travailler avec le commissaire à la santé pour mieux intégrer les droits sexuels et reproductifs dans une future stratégie européenne de la santé?

1-017-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, as you rightly say, women's rights are human rights. I am a committed feminist and you have my word that I will do all possible in order to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). So I will work with the task force to mainstream SRHR, especially in dialogue with the Health Commissioner, and we will stay strong with each and every step if I encounter resistance. But I believe that when you stand your ground you do find allies to build coalitions for the willing.

We also need to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on women's health and universal access to sexual and reproductive care and family planning and education. So you have my word that this is a guarantee that sexual and reproductive rights – without exception.

1-018-0000

Irène Tolleret (Renew). – My follow up question is whether all these attacks are, in summary, attacks against gender equality and the choice to love whom we want and live our life as we want. So what sort of action would you be ready to take to counter all the attacks against all this gender equality and the choice to live freely?

1-019-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – I think we should stand our ground with our work and we have to counter this resistance by being strong and by fighting it. And, as I said before, we should find allies to build our coalitions of the willing with and we really must persevere and not give up. These things are happening around us, but we must be strong and fight them.

1-020-0000

Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Ms Dalli. To achieve true gender equality, we need, as you said, to adopt an intersectional lens. Until now, the specific forms of discrimination faced by Muslim and black women, LGBTI persons, women with disabilities, migrant women, and women from diverse minorities have not been properly addressed by the European Union equality policies. It is positive that we, for the first time, will have a Commissioner in charge of equality. However, racial equality and diversity are not mentioned in your list of responsibilities. You have said that you want to unblock and adopt the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, Ms Dalli, how do you expect to build a political majority to unblock the directive in the Council? What concrete actions will you take and if you can't unblock the directive, will you propose a new directive and will you also commit to an intersectional approach in order to ensure a comprehensive protection against discrimination, based on all grounds?

1-021-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – The horizontal directive?

1-022-0000

Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE). – I spoke about the horizontal anti-discrimination directive.

1-023-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – I shall first wait for the outcome of the EPSCO meeting on 24 October, which should be discussing this anti-discrimination directive, and then I shall proceed from there. It is my will to unblock this directive, because as you rightly say, discrimination is still highly prevalent and the protections against discrimination outside employment in the EU are not guaranteed.

So of course it is a challenge, as you know, because unanimity is required in the Council, but I will speak to all the Ministers concerned because we need to find a way forward fast. It's also very good that we have high-level groups which do a lot of work, and it's important to have strong equality bodies. I think this is key. The equality charters are also essential. But I will pursue my endeavour to unblock this anti-discrimination directive.

1-024-0000

Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE). – To mobilise support for a new inclusive directive you will, as you said, also need internal support from other Commissioners, like your Vice-President, Mr Schinas, who has been tasked with protecting the European way of life, and you will also need support from Ursula von der Leyen herself. As you said, she has the plan to set up a Task Force. How will you, from your responsibility, work within the task force to mobilise support for your ideas?

1-025-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Yes, as you rightly say, I have to work with Vice-President Schinas and we both agree that equality is a European way of life, so we are agreeing on that. With President von der Leyen, the fact that she put equality in a portfolio on its own shows her determination in this area of policy, and also the setting-up of this task force, which will be operated by high-level officers in all the DGs, is a very good message that we want to get the work done, and we will get the work done.

1-026-0000

Christine Anderson (ID). – Frau Dalli! Sie haben vorhin betont, dass Sie sich dafür einsetzen wollen, dass Menschen frei über das Geschlecht, dem sich zugehörig fühlen, entscheiden können. In den USA haben wir bereits in einigen Bundesstaaten die Praxis, dass Menschen ihr Geschlecht

durch eine bloße Willensentscheidung ändern können – unabhängig von jeglicher amtlichen Feststellung oder auch einer geschlechtsumwandelnden Operation. Eine solche Entscheidung muss dann natürlich auch akzeptiert werden. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Praxis? Halten Sie das für sinnvoll? Würden Sie sich als Kommissarin für ein solch weitreichendes Selbstbestimmungsrecht einsetzen wollen?

1-027-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Yes, I agree with the legislation you refer to. In fact, I passed this legislation in my country and it's legislation which I passed after I met with people and I heard their stories. I met with families who had transgender, intersex children and they told me of the pain and the suffering which these families go through, and some people, like in the case of trans people, they did not want to undergo gender reassignment surgery, but they had these young people at home who did not want to go out because their name did not correspond with the person you are seeing. I had the sad story of a young girl who committed suicide because she wouldn't go out because she was ashamed because her identification card, her passport, her school results, had the name of a boy on them, but she identified as a woman, and when you see her, you see a girl. So when you are in front of these situations, how can you not legislate so that the lives of these people improve, so that these families could have a better quality of life? I can also speak about my experience with intersex people, who also have a lot of difficulties, and I know that this Parliament has also passed a resolution on intersex people and I think that as legislators, as politicians, we are here to improve people's lives.

(the Chair cut her off)

1-028-0000

Evelyn Regner, *Chair FEMM*. – Sorry, it's my job. As I said, I have to cut you off, but there is a follow-up question. Please, Ms Anderson.

1-029-0000

Christine Anderson (ID). – Danke für die Antwort! Ich sehe allerdings in einer solchen Praxis, sein Geschlecht jederzeit ändern zu können, eine erhebliche Gefahr: dass nämlich alle unsere Bemühungen, die Benachteiligung von Frauen abzuschaffen, gerade konterkariert, wenn nicht rückabgewickelt werden. Wenn sich ein Mann nämlich als Frau identifiziert von heute auf morgen, muss er natürlich zum Beispiel im Profisport auch gegen Frauen antreten dürfen – mit den entsprechenden Konsequenzen für Frauen. Es konterkariert auch das Programm, was wir als FEMM-Ausschuss gerade verfolgen – *Women on Boards* –, weil er dann natürlich auch im Rahmen dieses Programms als Frau berücksichtigt werden müsste. Wie wollen Sie sicherstellen, dass der Benachteiligung von Frauen nicht gerade durch solche unproblematischen Geschlechterzugehörigkeitsbekenntnisse Einzelner erneut Vorschub geleistet wird, um nicht zu sagen, sogar noch übertroffen wird, was wir in der Vergangenheit gesehen haben?

1-030-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Gender reassignment and gender identity is certainly not a walk in the park. It's not something which you would do –

(Applause)

It's not something you would definitely do to be on a board or to compete. It's something which you are born with, it's something which makes your life and the life of your family very sad and very hard, and I am sure that there won't be the cases which you mentioned. Please let's have some respect for people who need –

(Applause)

– us to help them, who need us to understand their situations, who need us to put on their shoes and walk a few paces in their shoes to understand their realities. This is what we are here for. This is what we are all about: to help people who are in situations whereby, if we don't do anything, they will live a life of misery – themselves and their families.

1-031-0000

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Szanowni Państwo! Pani mówi dużo o szacunku. Ja też bym oczekiwała, żeby komisje zebrane tutaj wyrażały szacunek dla poglądów wygłaszanych przez wszystkich, tak jak na przykład dla mojej przedmówczyni. To jest właśnie też dyskryminacja.

Pani Kandydatko, reprezentuje Pani kraj, którego ustawodawstwo przewiduje całkowity zakaz aborcji. W traktatach europejskich zapisane jest poszanowanie uprawnień państw członkowskich w zakresie określania ich polityki dotyczącej zdrowia, organizacji i świadczenia usług zdrowotnych oraz opieki medycznej. Aborcja jest jedną z tych kwestii. Mimo to ta tematyka jest podejmowana na forum unijnym i od wielu lat wywierane są coraz większe naciski, żeby sprawę poszanowania ludzkiego życia w jego fazie prenatalnej kształtować na arenie europejskiej. Czy może Pani zagwarantować, że będzie działać z poszanowaniem traktatów, tak aby każdy kraj członkowski kreował swoją politykę bez nacisków pod względem kształtowania polityki mającej odniesienie do sfery wartości i ochrony życia i zdrowia?

Druga rzecz dotyczy okaleczania narządów płciowych i przymusowych małżeństw. Niestety w swoim wystąpieniu w ogóle Pani pominęła ten temat. Szacuje się, że w Unii Europejskiej około 200 tys. kobiet rocznie jest narażonych na okaleczanie narządów płciowych. Pominęła Pani zupełnie problem przymusowych małżeństw, który niestety również występuje na terenie Unii Europejskiej. Proszę o Pani opinię na ten temat.

1-032-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, okay, as you say, abortion is a Member State competence and yes, of course, I will always respect all the Treaties and yes, you are right about FGM, which is another terrible scourge. It's the result of patriarchy and it is something that we really should work on and apart from actions and maybe legislation, I think that we must look at the everyday lives where these people are and how they can be affected. I'll give you an example. For instance, there's a refugee girl attending school and all of a sudden, she doesn't go to school anymore, and she comes back after two weeks and probably FGM has been performed on her. Away from all that we could do as a Union, I think we have to be vigilant as people in our communities to look out for these realities and maybe understand what is happening, and even on forced marriages, so of course there is a lot that we have to do. But the first thing that we really need to do is care for our societies and observe what's going on around us because there can be laws in place, but sometimes things are happening which we are not understanding, and if we observe and we ask questions, we can see that these things are going on, as you rightly say.

1-033-0000

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Chciałabym Panią prosić o rozwinięcie określenia „stereotypy płciowe”. Co Pani przez to rozumie? Czy Pani uważa, że stereotypem jest rola matki i żony w tym europejskim wymiarze? Chciałabym również Panią poprosić o jasne sprecyzowanie, jak zamierza Pani walczyć z małżeństwami przymusowymi, które tak naprawdę są pedofilskimi działaniami.

1-034-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Stereotyping is a very important issue and, in fact, it will be addressed in our gender strategy. Stereotyping is one of the reasons why people look at other people in a particular way – because they think they should behave or they should work in a particular manner. You said 'mother', 'wife', yes. In fact, I am very happy with the Directive on Work-Life Balance because women are very often victims of this stereotype, and that is why we

need, for instance, to change the contribution of fathers in families, so that there isn't this stereotyping that the mother is always the carer or she's the 100% carer and the father is the one who works outside the home. So yes, stereotypes are very bad and stereotypes are what lead to certain situations where we have to change things and legislate and with this Work-Life Balance Directive, I think that stereotypes are going to be addressed. For instance, the 10 days' leave for fathers. That's a good thing to do because mothers and fathers are both parents and they should both enjoy caring for their children and also they can balance better their family life with their work outside the home. So yes, stereotypes are very bad always, and one reason that we have to establish so many directives and laws is because of these stereotypes. So let's address these. I was very happy to see some children's books recently in which they're seeing how family life is and the sharing of what goes on in the family between all the members, and so these children are being brought up with these models of families now. Also, there's books with women achievers, such as scientists and artists, and this also helps to break down stereotypes. Mothers can also be scientists, mothers can also be artists, like fathers can be, so I think it is changing, but obviously you have to do a lot more.

1-035-0000

Evelyn Regner, *Chair FEMM*. – I'm so sorry. This time, we realised the clock was not running. We were just watching and so somehow it happened and I was looking and looking, so one minute seemed to be a very long minute, so sorry. I hope now it's working because time's running out anyway in real life. So thank you very much for your answer.

1-036-0000

Sandra Pereira (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Comissária indigitada, em muitos países da União Europeia é muito difícil encontrar creches públicas, e as privadas são demasiado caras para muitas famílias. A ausência de uma rede familiar que possa cuidar das crianças leva a que muitos pais, sobretudo mães, optem por deixar de trabalhar para cuidarem dos filhos.

Isto tem um impacto na sua vida profissional, mas também na emancipação da mulher e na estabilidade financeira do agregado em causa. Os objetivos de Barcelona estão, assim, por cumprir.

A existência de uma rede pública de creches de acesso universal e gratuito e de uma rede pré-escolar são essenciais para a promoção da participação da mulher no mercado de trabalho e da conciliação da sua vida profissional e pessoal.

Pergunto qual a estratégia da futura Comissão para o cumprimento dos objetivos de Barcelona, nomeadamente se serão disponibilizados meios financeiros, fundos, programas ou instrumentos para apoiar os Estados-Membros a desenvolverem uma rede pública de creches e de pré-escolar e, em caso afirmativo, se está disponível para excluir este tipo de investimento dos critérios do défice?

1-037-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you for that question, which is of the essence if we are speaking about the participation of parents in the labour market. I speak from the experience of Malta, where we introduced free-of-charge universal childcare for parents who are studying or working and the number of women in the labour force rose exponentially. We could see that women were not working because it was not viable for them to work when they had to pay so much for childcare.

Yes, we must work on this. We must find ways to have, at the least, affordable childcare. Another part of what we are doing about this is the Work-Life Balance Directive, whereby we are helping parents to balance their family responsibilities with their work responsibilities. This is another

area that we should be working on. I shall certainly be pushing for this, as well as pushing for funds, in order to come out with measures to help people to have affordable childcare.

1-038-0000

Sandra Pereira (GUE/NGL). – Já aqui falou, mas gostava que precisasse mais a questão dos direitos sexuais e reprodutivos das mulheres. É lamentável que, em alguns Estados-Membros, eles tenham retrocedido nos últimos anos e, no nosso entender, precisamos de avançar nestes direitos e não voltar para trás.

De que forma pode contribuir para estes avanços e para promover, junto dos Estados-Membros, medidas que garantam a universalidade destes direitos em igualdade para todas as mulheres, em todo o ciclo de vida, no domínio dos rastreios, diagnósticos e tratamentos, que reforcem a oferta de cuidados de saúde reprodutiva assegurando formas mais flexíveis de intervenção junto de grupos populacionais como as jovens, as mulheres imigrantes e as mais carenciadas, que possam financiar programas de formação de médicos ginecologistas e de obstetras e enfermeiros especialistas e que providenciem o acesso universal a tratamentos e medicamentos inovadores?

1-039-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Of course, we need to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals where it concerns women's health and we must have universal access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning, education, so I shall be working, as I said, with the Commissioner for Health and with the Vice-President for Democracy and Demography to ensure that this principle continues to be supported throughout the European Union.

1-040-0000

Evelyn Regner, Chair FEMM. – Thank you. With this, we finish our first round and before coming to our second round, I would like to remind all Members who would raise their voice right now what was already said for the first round: that Parliament evaluates the Commissioners-designate on the basis of their general competence, European commitment and personal independence, and also assesses the knowledge of their perspective portfolio and their communication skills, simply to give the frame. With these words, I give the floor to the next one on the speaker's list, who is from the EPP, Mr Casa.

1-041-0000

David Casa (PPE). – Sinjura President, Sinjura Dalli, jiena ha nindirizza t-tema tal-ugwaljanza. Kif issemma diġà s-sena l-oħra, dan il-Parlament ivvota favur direttiva ġdida, li tissejjaħ il-“Work-Life Balance” u anke hawnhekk qiegħdin nipprovaw nindirizzaw l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ir-responsabbiltajiet tal-familja. Naturalment, issa rridu naraw li din il-liġi tiġi implimentata, u behsiebek tagħmel biex tassigura li din il-liġi tkun implimentata malajr u bl-iktar mod effettiv? Din hija l-ewwel domanda tiegħi.

1-042-0000

Helena Dalli, Kummissarju nominat. – Nirringrazzjak ukoll tax-xogħol tiegħek fuq din id-direttiva. Kif taf inti, hemm tliet snin biex din id-direttiva tiġi implimentata, però jekk ikun ikkonfermata bħala Kummissarju, se nkun qiegħda ngħin lill-pajjiżi, lill-Istati Membri, sabiex jimplementaw din id-direttiva. Inti taf kemm din hija direttiva għal qalbi wkoll, u kemm jiena impenjata u kommessa sabiex immexxi din id-direttiva, li naraha li tiġi implimentata. Issa għandi f'moħħi illi nagħmlu workshops fuq l-implimentazzjoni, ħalli iktar l-Istati Membri jifhmu x'inhi din id-direttiva, u kif għandha tiġi implimentata, u nahseb jiena rridu nqajmu wkoll kuxjenza fost il-ħaddiema biex ikunu jafu xi tisser din id-direttiva. Però nahseb ukoll li l-Istati Membri għandhom rwol importanti x'jagħmlu sabiex din id-direttiva sseħħ, tkun f'postha u jgawdu minnha l-familji.

Jiena, din hija xi haġa, din il-Work-Like Balance Directive, illi se tgħin ħafna, anke f'dak li ssemma diġà hawnhekk, fejn jidhlu sterjotipi. Sterjotipi ta' min għandu jagħmel xiex u kif għandha timxi l-familja. Jiena nahseb illi kull familja għandha torganizza lilha nnifisha fl-aħjar mod li jkun tajjeb

għaliha. U din id-direttiva se tkun qiegħda tgħinha dwar kif hija tqassam il-hin tagħna, fix-xogħol barra d-dar, kif tqassam il-hin tagħha meta qiegħda tieħu hsieb it-tfal, meta qiegħda tieħu hsieb ukoll persuni anzjani, u allura nara hafna skop illi, jekk jiena nkun ikkonfermata bhala Kummissarju, nagħmel l-almu tiegħi kollu biex ngħin lill-Istati Membri fuq din id-direttiva.

1-043-0000

David Casa (PPE). – Ha nsaqsiha tema ohra tal-ugwaljanza. Kif intqal diġà, u anki s-Sinjura Dalli tkellmet fuq ir-rule of law, int kont ministru ma' persuni f'Kabinett illi, kif smajna fil-Panama Papers, ippjanaw li jdahhlu EUR 5 000 kuljum b'mod illegali, u ma ttieħdu ebda proċeduri kontrihom, kif insista kemm-il darba dan il-Parlament Ewropew. X'ser tagħmel, bhala Kummissarju, biex tara li tassew il-liġi tkun tgħodd l-istess għal kulhadd, u jekk taqbilx miegħi li ma għandux ikun hemm liġi għall-allat u liġi għall-annimali?

1-044-0000

Helena Dalli, Kummissarju nominat. – Jiena, fil-ħajja politika tiegħi, dejjem hdimt għal governanza tajba, għas-saltna tad-dritt, għad-demokrazija, għall-valuri fundamentali f'kull demokrazija u imbuttajt sabiex f'pajjiżna jkollna Kummissarju għall-Istandards fil-Ħajja Pubblika. Hdimt biex titneħħa l-preskrizzjoni minn fuq il-politiċi, jiġifieri politiku, jinqabad meta jinqabad, ma għandekx it-time-bar ta' għaxar snin, imma inti trid tibqa' accountable sakemm tmut. Imbuttajt ukoll biex pajjiżna għandu l-Whistleblower Act, biex għandu l-Liġi tal-Finanzjament tal-Partiti, jiġifieri dan huwa kollu xogħol illi imbuttajt għalih jien, li għamilt jiena wkoll, jiġifieri l-kredenzjali tiegħi, tafhom.

1-045-0000

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Chair EMPL. – So far you have experienced the good Chair and now the bad Chair is coming! I will be very strict with the timing.

1-046-0000

Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D). – Madam Commissioner-designate, according to recent data, as you know, women's gross earnings per hour are more or less 16% below the pay of men and the gender gap in pensions even reaches 36% as a differential. We know that fighting inequalities is of course of the utmost priority, both from a cultural point of view, opposing stereotypes and bias, but also from a quantitative point of view, so there is mathematics in politics too. If women do the same job at the same level and in the same place, they have to get the same amount of money. It's as simple as that.

So we very much welcome the reference to pay transparency but, in concrete terms, what do you intend to do to reduce – or even to eliminate – the gender pay gap in the legislative measure we all hope that you will be implementing?

1-047-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – As you say, the pay gap in the EU stands at 16% and what I will be doing if confirmed as Commissioner is in the first 100 days I will work on a proposal on pay transparency, because you cannot address the gender pay gap and then eventually the pensions pay gap unless you have pay transparency. This is the tool which we are going to use in order to be able to see where the discrepancies are. As you know, I've been mandated by the President-elect to present this proposal on pay transparency in the first 100 days.

Also in the Gender Equality Strategy there is a section on pay transparency, as well as measures to ensure equal work pay for work of equal value. We know that this gender pay gap is also resulting in the pension pay gap, which can be up to 36%. We know how this happens. It is because women, even if they start work with an equally qualified and equally experienced man, throughout their working life, because sometimes they have to work reduced hours so they are paying fewer contributions, sometimes they have to work part-time. This is where the other

directive comes in, and it's going to help this balance. So at the end of your working life you find that not only have you earned less than your male colleague even though you did exactly the same thing, but even your pension is going to be affected because you paid fewer contributions. It's a lot of work that we have to do, but the starting point is pay transparency.

1-048-0000

Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D). – Okay, so two very short additional questions. First, do you intend to include the social partners in the negotiations and in some preliminary agreements on the directive and on pay equality?

And second: do you intend to include in the legislative measure on pay – which will include the pay equality – some indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact and the good implementation of the legislative measure?

1-049-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, of course, the social partners are very important ... that they are part of this policy, of this proposal, which we will be presenting. This is also my way of working.

I used to be Minister for Industrial Relations and social dialogue was of the utmost importance to me because it is very important to have the stakeholders on board when you are doing something which affects, especially, employment in this case. And yes, of course, we will have measuring instruments and indicators to see how we can proceed and assess the results and revise, amend and improve.

1-050-0000

Radka Maxová (Renew). – Paní Dalliová, sama jste ve své úvodní řeči zmínila, že 50 % osob se zdravotním postižením má problémy v přístupu k práci. Má otázka tedy zní: Jaká opatření plánujete z pozice kandidátky na komisařku pro rovné příležitosti v otázce inkluze a ochrany lidí s tělesným postižením na trhu práce a v širší společnosti? Mám na mysli opatření, která by byla v souladu s našimi povinnostmi vyplývajícími z Úmluvy OSN o právech osob se zdravotním postižením. Jaké plány máte na zlepšení implementace této úmluvy v rámci evropských institucí a agentur? Vidíte v nadcházející strategii pro osoby s tělesným postižením nějaké nové pole působnosti? Jak konkrétně budete spolupracovat s ostatními komisaři na tom, aby se otázka lidí s handicapem stala jednou z hlavních?

A co se týče interní struktury Komise, uvítala byste, aby se oddělení zodpovědné za otázky osob s tělesným postižením přesunulo přímo pod hlavní sekretariát Komise, aby byla zajištěna nutná horizontální perspektiva napříč evropskými institucemi?

1-051-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – By 2020, it is expected that one in five EU citizens will live with a disability to some degree and, as you say, the employment of persons with disabilities is very, very low when compared to others. As you know, there's the Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which is coming to a close. The Commission recently started evaluating this strategy and also a lot has been achieved under this strategy, such as the Accessibility Act, which is currently being transposed and the web accessibility, the Disability Card, so the evaluation now of this strategy will help us clearly to proceed on the way forward. I shall be working very hard to unblock the Equal Treatment Directive and I will also continue with the implementation at EU level of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. So we have the instruments and we can work within these instruments that we have. So what's next now is the evaluation of what has been achieved under the current strategy.

1-052-0000

Radka Maxová (Renew). – Zahrnete perspektivu osob s tělesným postižením do budoucí genderové strategie a genderovou perspektivu do chystané Evropské strategie o osobách se zdravotním postižením tak, aby vše bylo v souladu s článkem 6 Úmluvy OSN o právech osob se zdravotním postižením? Ten vyzývá všechny signatáře, aby otevřeně přiznali, že ženy a dívky se zdravotním postižením jsou terčem mnohonásobné diskriminace, a aby učinili taková opatření, díky nimž by tyto ženy mohly požívat veškerých lidských práv a základních svobod v plném rozsahu.

1-053-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, of course, mainstreaming is very important and I shall see to the mainstreaming of persons with disability. I'm also working with the Disability Intergroup and with the European Disability Forum. I have already had meetings with them and I want persons with disability to be on board with me so that I can bring about the changes which are necessary for persons with disability. I believe that that is the best way to work: nothing about persons with disability without persons with disability. So, in all that I do, persons with disability will be with me.

1-054-0000

Maria Walsh (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, equality is supposed to be the bedrock ensuring that our European Union is one of fairness, where our values are protected and where double standards have no place. But I'm sure you can agree that there is still some work, if not a lot of work, to be done on that.

Picking up from your previous question, I just wanted to ask, as Equality Commissioner you would be tasked with ensuring the full inclusion of people with disability, that includes psychosocial disability also. One fifth, as you said, of our EU population is expected to have some form of disability by 2020. How can we build further on the European Accessibility Act to ensure this inclusion? What other instruments will you push forward? And are you ready to look at increased harmonised accessibility requirements in transport services for example? And finally, how can we encourage more students with disability to participate in EU education programmes like Erasmus?

1-055-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – As I said, we shall now be evaluating the strategy to see what has been done, what needs to be done and what needs to be done better, maybe. But I also think that it is very important that we unblock the Equal Treatment Directive because that will obviously then have results on some of the questions that you are asking, and also the UNCRPD to see that it is being implemented. That is part of the work which we shall be doing and, as I said before, I want to work with all persons representing persons with a disability, as I have also done at other times.

This is a very important area of policy and, as you say, a lot still needs to be done, also I'm looking forward to mainstreaming issues of disability across the whole Commission through the use of the task force, which is there for equality mainstreaming, equality for everyone.

1-056-0000

Maria Walsh (PPE). – I know your support of President von der Leyen's decision to allocate a portfolio protecting the European way of life, and I applaud that. I was pleased to see your written answers to a commitment on tackling hate speech, both on and offline. I just want to ask what more, concretely, do you believe can be done on tackling the issue of hate crime both on and offline?

1-057-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – This type of hate speech which you speak about is obviously a very, very serious issue, not least because it also keeps many people offline in the sense that, for example, some women stay away because of hate speech and some things which they have to suffer because of these kinds of attitudes. So we also see a result of that in women in artificial intelligence and women in IT, so I shall work with the Commissioners working in that area such as ...

(the Chair cut her off)

1-058-0000

Pina Picierno (S&D). – Signora Commissaria, Lei ha citato l'adesione dell'UE alla Convenzione di Istanbul come una priorità fondamentale per la Commissione. Noi naturalmente ci rallegriamo di questo Suo convincimento perché pensiamo che la Convenzione di Istanbul sia uno strumento fondamentale per combattere la violenza contro le donne. Però sappiamo anche che il processo di adesione è bloccato a causa di alcuni governi conservatori che, come sa, ne impediscono la ratifica per ragioni che sono esclusivamente ideologiche.

Allora ci piacerebbe sapere come pensa di superare questo problema e ci piacerebbe anche sapere se non crede che sia arrivato per davvero il momento di proporre una direttiva UE che affronti e combatta la violenza contro le donne in maniera coerente in tutti gli Stati membri.

Nelle Sue risposte scritte, Lei ha fatto riferimento all'intenzione di affrontare anche le nuove forme emergenti di violenza di genere, soprattutto quelle online. Allora Le chiediamo quali saranno i modi e le misure attraverso i quali Lei intende affrontare quella che è una vera e propria piaga per le donne e se pensa che la direttiva sulla lotta alla violenza dovrebbe includere anche queste forme di violenza.

1-059-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – We know that the situation today is that we have one in three women who are victims of gender-based violence and one in four women who are victims of domestic violence and the approximate cost of this reality is EUR 226 billion annually. The Istanbul Convention combines areas of EU and national competence and, as you know, there are 21 Member States which have ratified the Convention. You may also be aware that during the Maltese Presidency, we worked to get the convention signed. The EU has signed the Convention and, obviously, we all want the four Ps to be addressed: prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of offenders, and integrated policies. I shall speak to the reluctant Member States and visit capitals, if necessary, to try and secure an agreement on this Convention. For me, this is so important, and it's very hard for me to understand the resistance to it. There may be some differences in opinion of certain words used, but when you see these statistics – one in three women a victim of gender-based violence – how can you not say, okay, let's go ahead and have the European Union ratify this Convention?

1-060-0000

Pina Picierno (S&D). – Ritorno sul tema della direttiva UE, che dovrebbe affrontare in maniera coerente il tema della violenza, perché Lei sa perfettamente – e citava dei dati importanti – che ogni donna, che sia ricca o che sia povera, che sia potente o meno, che sia famosa o sconosciuta, ogni donna in qualsiasi condizione – di religione, di censo – è sottoposta ogni giorno, signora Commissaria designata, a varie forme di violenza. Che sia fisica o verbale, che sia esplicita o implicita, io ritengo che sia un limite insopportabile per la nostra libertà e, in definitiva, per la nostra vita, per cui Le chiedo per davvero di agire in maniera concreta.

1-061-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissaria designata*. – Sono totalmente d'accordo, totalmente. Nella *Gender Equality Strategy* ci sarà anche, sarà affrontata anche la violenza. Ma poi, se non riusciamo – ma io non voglio guardare lì, io voglio riuscire a fare ratificare la *Istanbul Convention* dall'Unione europea – c'è la *Victims' Rights Directive*, which can be strengthened, c'è anche EuroCrime per la violenza contro la donna, ci sono altre cose, ma io non voglio guardare lì, io voglio prima provare ad assicurare la Convenzione.

1-062-0000

Katrin Langensiepen (Verts/ALE). – Frau Dalli! Wir als Grüne und ich als erste Frau aus Deutschland mit sichtbarer Behinderung begrüßen, dass die neue Kommission Gleichstellung und Inklusion als Priorität setzt. Ihre Hauptaufgabe wird darin bestehen, Gleichstellung und Nichtdiskriminierung in allen EU-Politikfeldern zu verankern. Ich persönlich freue mich darüber, dass Sie, Frau Dalli, besonderes Augenmerk auf die Intersektionalität und die vollständige Umsetzung der UN-Konvention über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen haben werden. Zugang, Inklusion und Beteiligung sind Menschenrechte!

Ich möchte Ihnen daher eine einfache Ja-oder-nein-Frage stellen: Sind Sie bereit, Ihr Veto einzulegen, bei jeglichen Vorschlägen der Kommission, die diesem Recht der Inklusion entgegenstehen? Werden Sie alle Gesetzesvorschläge und Ausgaben stoppen, die Inklusion, Zugang und Gleichstellung erschweren? Werden Sie alle Kommissionsvorschläge prüfen, ob sie die UN-Konvention über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen erfüllen?

1-063-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – My answer is yes.

(Applause)

I commit to do everything in my power to ensure that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is implemented fully and without exceptions. I will also make sure that disability is mainstreamed, including by means of the task force and I will also extend the principle of equality vetting. Additionally, as I had the opportunity to tell you, I will work very closely with the Disability Intergroup and with the European Disability Forum.

1-064-0000

Katrin Langensiepen (Verts/ALE). – Frau Dalli! Ich möchte noch kurz anmerken: Sie hatten erwähnt, dass man darauf achten sollte, dass bei Projekten Menschen mit Behinderungen beteiligt werden sollen – das ist gut und richtig. Ich möchte darauf hinweisen, dass eine Forderung der Vertreterin von Menschen mit Behinderungen ist: Nichts ohne uns über uns! Also es darf keine *Nice-to-have*-Geschichte werden, sondern ganz klares Menschenrecht: die Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderungen bei jeglicher Projektentscheidung. Wir als Grüne im Europäischen Parlament werden all dies aufmerksam verfolgen und wir werden Sie auch an Ihre heutige Zusage erinnern, die Hüterin für Gleichstellung und Inklusion in Europa zu sein.

1-065-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Of course, you will be guarding me, and you will also be advising me. As I said, I want an open dialogue with Parliament. I want to engage with each and every one of you in particular areas. It is important that parliamentarians, together with civil society, are listening, and that we are listening to each other, exchanging our thoughts and exchanging our critique, which is important. It is important that you criticise us, because constructive criticism gives better results.

1-066-0000

Annika Bruna (ID). – Madame Dalli, dans vos réponses au Parlement européen, vous annoncez vouloir renforcer la protection des membres les plus vulnérables de nos sociétés, trouver les moyens de renforcer le soutien apporté aux victimes – notamment de la violence domestique –, renforcer la directive sur les droits des victimes.

Or, au sein des institutions européennes, en ce qui concerne les violences conjugales, il n'a que rarement été abordé, et en tout cas jamais de façon suffisante, le terrible traumatisme causé aux enfants témoins impuissants de l'agression de leur mère.

Il est récurrent, dans nos murs, de plaider et de financer largement les causes chères au lobby LGBT, comme vous l'avez fait dans votre pays, alors que l'enfant brisé par les actes de violence ne dispose, lui, d'aucune commission pour le défendre spécifiquement, ni au Parlement ni à la Commission. Il devrait pourtant faire l'objet d'un intérêt primordial et bénéficier de mesures strictes assurant sa protection.

Alors, je vous le demande, vous qui êtes amenée à devenir commissaire à l'égalité quelle action envisagez-vous précisément pour pallier cet oubli de l'enfant?

1-067-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Of course, when we speak about families, when we speak about work-life balance, when we speak of families with difficulties, families with violence problems in them, of course we are thinking of the children as well. The children are victims of situations which they find themselves in and they must have the protection and also they must be separated from the perpetrator of the violence, together with the victim – most of the time it's the mother and the children, who all have to be protected against the person who is perpetrating the violence towards them. I shall be working with the Commissioner who has children in her remit on this, thereby we can combine the issue of violence against women and domestic violence with the work she will be doing in the area of children and children's rights. Definitely, protecting children is paramount in these situations, because they are the defenceless party in this. Thank you for bringing this up. Even when we speak about the Istanbul Convention in the strategy, we include children, too.

1-068-0000

Annika Bruna (ID). – Merci de votre réponse car, évidemment, cette cause a une place très importante et elle est incontestable dans ce débat. Je vous remercie du soin que vous voudrez apporter à l'avenir à ce problème.

1-069-0000

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Chair EMPL. – No answer, so we move to the next question.

1-070-0000

Elżbieta Rafalska (ECR). – Pani Komisarz! Zostało Pani powierzone zadanie walki z wszelkimi formami nierówności i dyskryminacji. Unia Europejska została zbudowana na fundamencie chrześcijańskim, tymczasem w ostatnich latach mamy coraz więcej przypadków dyskryminacji, a nawet zwolnień z pracy za noszenie symboli chrześcijańskich, postępowanie zgodne z nauką Kościoła czy stosowanie klauzuli sumienia. Chrześcijanie stają się coraz częściej obiektem ataków ze strony środowisk, które z jednej strony głoszą hasła tolerancji i ochrony praw człowieka, a z drugiej strony obrażają uczucia religijne chrześcijan w czasie obrazoburczych manifestacji. W związku z tym chciałabym zapytać, w jaki sposób zamierza Pani chronić prawa chrześcijan przed dyskryminacją?

1-071-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – I shall be pushing for the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Directive, which speaks about discrimination on age, religion or belief,

disability and sexual orientation. I will wait for EPSCO on 24 November to see the outcome of this discussion on this Anti-Discrimination Directive, which has been stuck for too long and, in that way, if we manage to unblock this, we shall be offering this protection to all people who are discriminated against, including for the reasons that you mentioned. Obviously, it's also very important to have strong equality bodies in Member States – because there also they can work on the various discriminations which occur in our society. I also think that equality charters are very important for this, but the most important thing for me right now is the unblocking of this Anti-Discrimination Directive, so I'm waiting with a lot of enthusiasm for the EPSCO Council later on this month to see how we can proceed.

1-072-0000

Elżbieta Rafalska (ECR). – Pani Komisarz, czy zna Pani orzeczenie Europejskiego Trybunału Praw Człowieka w Strasburgu w sprawie brytyjskich linii lotniczych, które dyskryminowały pracownicę z powodu przekonań religijnych? Została ona zwolniona za noszenie krzyżyka. W Polsce mamy przykład pracownika Ikea zwolnionego z pracy za cytowanie Biblii. Czy nie uważa Pani Komisarz, że są to przypadki o zasadniczym znaczeniu? Stawką jest nie tylko przyszły kształt chrześcijańskiego zaangażowania w życie społeczne, ale również ochrona ważnych praw i wolności osobistych.

1-073-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – I go by the maxim of 'Don't do to others what you don't want done to you'. And that is why I think that this anti-discrimination directive is important, because it is about equal treatment. Whatever your religion, whatever your belief, whatever your age, whatever your sexual orientation, OK? So let's work to unblock this directive.

1-074-0000

Ελισσάβη Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρουνίδη (PPE). – Κυρία Dalli, καλησπέρα σας. Είμαι Ελληνίδα δικηγόρος επί τρεις δεκαετίες και αισθάνομαι την υποχρέωση να σας πω ότι το γεγονός ότι παραμένει ανεξιχνίαστη η συγγερή δολοφονία της Daphne Galizia θεωρείται πλήγμα για τη δημοκρατία στη χώρα σας και για το κράτος δικαίου, όχι γιατί ήταν γυναίκα, αλλά γιατί ήταν μια αγωνίστρια της αλήθειας και υπηρετούσε την αποκαλυπτική δημοσιογραφία. Ως προς την ερώτησή μου, θα ήθελα να σας μιλήσω για τη «γυάλινη οροφή». Είχα την ευθύνη της έκθεσης στην προηγούμενη κοινοβουλευτική περίοδο και ξέρετε πολύ καλά ότι ο όρος αυτός αναφέρεται στα εμπόδια που ορθώνονται για τις γυναίκες καριέρας στην επιστήμη, την τεχνολογία και την έρευνα —όπου υπάρχει και μια αύξηση της συμμετοχής των γυναικών. Θέλω να σας ρωτήσω εάν έχετε μια εμβληματική πρωτοβουλία ή προβλέπετε με διαφορετικό τρόπο χρήση των ήδη υπάρχουσών πολιτικών, με στόχο την εξάλειψη των προκαταλήψεων και των στερεοτύπων που εμποδίζουν την ισότιμη εκπροσώπηση των γυναικών στις θετικές επιστήμες, την τεχνολογία, τη μηχανική και τα μαθηματικά.

1-075-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – I had the opportunity to say earlier that the investigations on the Caruana Galizia femicide are ongoing and after the first 50 days, 3 people were arrested and placed under indictment.

With regard to the glass ceiling, yes, it's still very much there. I think it would be an understatement to say that. I am a firm believer that we should eliminate stereotypes and have more women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Incidentally, I happen to be the person who promoted the International Day for Girls and Women in Science at the United Nations. On 11 February, the United Nations celebrated the day on a proposal which I had put forward. That is how much STEM is close to my heart, and getting women and girls in STEM – girls to study and women who are already there to have decision-making positions in STEM so that they can encourage more girls and also serve as role models. What we are doing it is that we are addressing these stereotypes in our gender strategy.

1-076-0000

Ελισάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυωνίδα (PPE). – Η δεύτερη ερώτησή μου επίσης αφορά το θέμα της ισότητας —εφόσον πρόκειται να είστε Επίτροπος για την Ισότητα— και, συγκεκριμένα, το θέμα του χάσματος που υπάρχει σχετικά με τη συμμετοχή των γυναικών στην ψηφιακή εποχή. Το χάσμα αυτό θέλει ειδική αντιμετώπιση και θέλω να σας ρωτήσω αν έχετε κάποια σχετική εμβληματική πρωτοβουλία, ούτως ώστε να μπορούμε την επόμενη μέρα να πούμε ότι υπάρχει ισότιμη εκπροσώπηση στους τομείς της τεχνολογίας, των πληροφοριών, των επικοινωνιών και των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης, δεδομένου ότι ο συγκεκριμένος τομέας χαρακτηρίζεται από υψηλές αμοιβές και η εκπροσώπηση των γυναικών είναι στα κατώτατα επίπεδα, κάτι που δεν τιμά τη δημοκρατία μας και το κράτος δικαίου.

1-077-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – IT cannot remain a men’s domain, and – as you rightly say – it’s very highly paid. It’s a very highly paid profession, and that also continues to have an effect on the gender pay gap. So it is all connected.

But we must really address stereotypes. Why aren’t women and girls being channelled in that direction? That is why I mentioned the International Day for Women and Girls in Science. Also, with regard to academic achievement, I know of a case where a science subject was not obligatory and girls were not being channelled to take it. Once it was made obligatory, girls were getting better results than boys. It’s really a question of stereotyping and of counselling about professions and where should we lead these girls. We don’t channel them through this, and that’s why we also have the digital gap.

1-078-0000

María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos (Renew). – Gracias, señora Dalli, y enhorabuena por su compromiso y valentía en la defensa de la igualdad.

La discriminación contra de las personas LGTBI está presente en toda la Unión Europea. Tiene distintas formas, desde el abuso verbal al acoso cibernético o violencia física, y afecta a muchas áreas, como la seguridad social, la asistencia médica o el acceso a la educación.

Usted ha dicho que quiere desbloquear la Directiva Horizon sobre discriminación. Imagino que sabe que la inclusión de la orientación sexual ha sido uno de los motivos por los que muchos Estados la han bloqueado. En este sentido, quiero saber cuál es su estrategia para convencerlos y también cuál es su estrategia para trabajar con los Estados nacionales y conseguir que estos adopten los motivos de identidad de género en sus legislaciones nacionales.

1-079-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – I will explain that sexual orientation is not a choice, so if this is the reason why the directive is being blocked, I will want to understand that, because I don’t if this is the reason why. But there’s more. In some Member States, less than 50% of people believe that LGBTI persons should have equal rights to heterosexuals, so this is the environment in which we are working. As you know, there’s the list of actions, which is about improving the rights of LGBTI people and their families, monitoring and enforcement of existing rights, supporting key actors who are responsible for advancing LGBTI rights. There’s a lot of work going on, so we will now have to evaluate the outcome of the current list of actions and then propose strong measures, but as you say, we need to move forward this horizontal anti-discrimination directive. That is the way in which I want to go and I want to try and understand why it is so difficult to unblock. I also want to mention the High Level Group on Equality and Non-Discrimination, where we’re also doing a lot of work.

1-080-0000

María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos (Renew). – Usted dice también en sus respuestas que tenemos que luchar por los más vulnerables y por la defensa de sus derechos humanos.

Quisiera saber, en este sentido, cuál es su valoración de la iniciativa Spotlight, lanzada por la Unión Europea y dotada con quinientos millones de euros, que implementarán las Naciones Unidas, para iniciar un movimiento mundial contra la violencia contra las mujeres y niñas.

¿Cómo la valora y cómo cree que tenemos que garantizar en la Unión Europea la defensa de los derechos fundamentales de las mujeres contra la violencia institucional, individual y estructural, independientemente de su condición legal, bien sean mujeres inmigrantes, refugiadas o indocumentadas?

1-081-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – As you know, we are committed to the SDGs and to rights which come out of instruments vis-à-vis people of different realities and all that you mention, and we obviously work internally and externally and we support all initiatives and all legislation in terms of protecting the rights of the different people, so obviously we shall be working in the areas which you mention and pushing forward the rights of the different people which you spoke about.

1-082-0000

Λευτέρης Νικολάου-Αλαβάνος (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, θα μιλήσω στα ελληνικά προφανώς.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και οι κυβερνήσεις προωθούν την πολιτική της συμφιλίωσης επαγγελματικής και οικογενειακής ζωής για να διαχειριστούν τις συνέπειες από την αύξηση της γυναικείας απασχόλησης και την έλλειψη μέτρων στήριξης της οικογένειας. Κομβική θέση σε αυτές τις κατευθύνσεις κατέχει η πλήρης ευελιξία χρόνου και χώρου εργασίας, που σπάει κάθε κανονικότητα στα ωράρια και οδηγεί στον κατακερματισμό της κοινωνικής ζωής της εργαζόμενης γυναίκας-μητέρας. Το ενδιαφέρον για την προστασία της μητρότητας φτάνει μέχρι το σημείο όπου τα όποια μέτρα δεν έχουν κόστος για τις μεγάλες επιχειρήσεις. Στο έδαφος της πλήρους ευελιξίας των εργασιακών σχέσεων, το 71% των εργατοϋπαλλήλων γυναικών στερείται ακόμα και τις πενήνδες άδειες και τα επιδόματα μητρότητας, τα οποία απαιτούν ορισμένο αριθμό ημερομισθίων. Μεγάλο ποσοστό των εγκύων στερείται τη στοιχειώδη προστασία από απόλυση, όπως υπογραμμίζουν επίσημα στοιχεία του ILO. Ποια είναι η τοποθέτησή σας σχετικά με την κατάργηση των ελαστικών σχέσεων εργασίας για τη νομοθετική κατοχύρωση της κοινωνικής προστασίας της μητρότητας για όλες τις μισθωτές, ανεξαρτήτως σχέσης εργασίας, και για την απαγόρευση της απόλυσης εγκύων;

1-083-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, the protection of conditions of employment and the protection of employees is obviously a very important issue. As you said, we speak about work-life balance and that is exactly to improve the quality of life of working families. But also, obviously, there is always room for improvement and the issues which you mentioned are issues which I shall be discussing with Commissioner-designate Schmit, whereby we can discuss these conditions of work which you mentioned and we'll see a way forward on how we can propose ways forward and how what you mentioned can be addressed.

1-084-0000

Λευτέρης Νικολάου-Αλαβάνος (NI). – Για να κάνουμε λίγο πιο συγκεκριμένα τα ζητήματα, ποια είναι η θέση σας όσον αφορά το γεγονός ότι με την απόφαση του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου, που γνωστοποιήθηκε στις 22 Φεβρουαρίου 2018 και επιτρέπει την απόλυση εγκύων εργαζομένων στο πλαίσιο ομαδικών απολύσεων, ανοίγει στην πραγματικότητα ο δρόμος για περαιτέρω εξαιρέσεις που θα οδηγήσουν στο να μην υπάρχει καμία απόλυτως προστασία των εγκύων και των νέων μητέρων στην εργασία τους;

1-085-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – I will have to see that decision and I will be very happy to meet you and discuss it, but obviously pregnant women should have protection.

1-086-0000

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Kummissarju nominat Dalli, bħala Malti ma nistax ma nkunx kburi li inti ġejt fdata bil-portafoll tal-ugwaljanza. F'Malta, matul dawn l-aħħar sitt snin, bħala ministru responsabbli mill-istess settur, irnexxielek tmexxi 'l quddiem rivoluzzjoni soċjali fejn illum pajjiżi, minn tal-aħħar fil-lista, fejn jidhlu drittijiet tal-minoritajiet, spiċċa eżempju tal-aqwa prattiċi fis-settur fl-Unjoni Ewropea. Għaldaqstant ninstab ċert illi għaladarba tiġi fdata b'din ir-responsabilità, hames snin oħra ha nkunu qegħdin niġu f'dan il-Parlament, nitkellmu dwar Unjoni Ewropea ferm aktar ugwali.

Nghaddi għall-mistoqsija tiegħi. Fil-bidu tal-2019, il-Parlament Ewropew u l-Kunsill adottaw id-direttiva tal-Work-Life Balance. Il-Grupp tas-Socjalisti u d-Demokratiċi, li għalih jiena nappartjeni, kien wiehed mill-aktar gruppi voċiferi li imbotta 'l quddiem din l-istess direttiva, iżda llum, sfortunatament, qed naffaċċjaw sitwazzjoni fejn għandna numru ta' Stati Membri li qegħdin jippruvaw jostakolaw il-progress li għamilna. Għalhekk jiena naqbel miegħek, li dan l-ewwel riżultat legiżlattiv, li johroġ b'mod dirett mill-European Pillar of Social Rights, għandu jiġi implimentat b'mod shih u mingħajr dewmien. Iżda nixtieq nistaqsik, jekk taqbilx illi l-iskop ta' din l-istess direttiva jitwessa' sabiex ikopri wkoll aktar drittijiet godda, fosthom id-dritt tal-liv tal-maternità, dritt għal self-employed u dritt għall-ġenituri adottivi?

1-087-0000

Helena Dalli, *Kummissarju nominat*. – Grazzi ta' dik il-mistoqsija. Ovjament hija direttiva illi, kif għedt lill-Onorevoli Casa wkoll, se nkun qiegħda naħdem mal-Istati Membri sabiex tiġi implimentata.

Inti qed issaqsin jekk din hux ha tiġi estiża. Jiena nahseb illi l-focus bħalissa għandu jkun fuq l-implimentazzjoni f'dawn it-tliet snin. Ejja naraw illi, kif inhi, id-direttiva ha tiġi implimentata. Però, imbagħad, nafu illi d-direttiva għandha r-review clause, illi nkunu nistgħu aħna, meta naraw li hemm bżonn, nifthuha din il-clause, u naraw li jekk hemmx l-iskop illi nwessgħu din id-direttiva u mbagħad, dak illi semmejt inti, naraw jekk ikunx jista' jiġi inkluż. Però, jiena nixtieq illi, għal dawn it-tliet snin, naħdem sabiex nara illi kull pajjiż qed jimplimentaha, u jimplimentaha sew.

1-088-0000

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Nixtieq nistaqsik fuq settur għal qalbi hafna: is-settur tad-diżabilità. L-Istrateġija Ewropea tad-Diżabilità tal-2010-2020 thares sabiex timplimenta l-provvedimenti tal-Konvenzjoni tal-Ġnus Maqghuda għad-drittijiet ta' persuni b'diżabilità fil-prattika, kemm fuq livell nazzjonali u anke fuq livell Ewropew. Jiena, għalhekk, nixtieq nistaqsik, kif se nkun qiegħda taċċerta li jkun hemm mainstreaming tal-Konvenzjoni fil-policies kollha Ewropej? Ser tkun qiegħda tmexxi 'l quddiem review tal-legiżlazzjoni sabiex taċċerta l-applikazzjoni shiha tal-Konvenzjoni? U ser tkun qiegħda tniedi mill-ġdid l-Istrateġija Ewropea tad-Diżabilità b'miri aktar ambizzjużi għall-għaxar snin li ġejjin? U grazzi wkoll tal-commitment illi għamilt illi anke assoċjazzjonijiet li jaħdmu ma' persuni b'diżabilità ha jkollhom lehen fil-proċess illi ha tkun qiegħda tmexxi 'l quddiem.

1-089-0000

Helena Dalli, *Kummissarju nominat*. – Kif issa qiegħda tasal għat-tmiem tagħha din l-Istrateġija, se nkunu qegħdin nevalwawha u naraw kif nistgħu nimxu 'l quddiem. Però l-ewwel trid issir l-evalwazzjoni tal-Istrateġija 2010-2020. Għax imbagħad, meta tevalwaha, tkun tista' tipproċedi b'mod aktar ċar għaliex tkun taf x'inhuma d-deficits tagħha, fejn tista' ttejjeb, fejn tista' żżid.

Sewwa, issa, staqsejtni fuq il-mainstreaming, il-mainstreaming, ukoll, tad-diżabilità se jkun ha jsir permezz ta' din it-task force illi għandha membri minn kull DG u li d-Deputat Segretarju Ġenerali

ħa jkun qiegħed imexxiha, allura qiegħda fil-qalba tal-Kummissjoni, din it-task force. U meta tara li dawn l-affarijiet kollha li qegħdin issemmu llum, se nkunu qegħdin ngħadduhom għol-Kummissjoni, b'dan il-mod, nahseb illi se jkun pass importanti 'l quddiem għall-ugwaljanza.

1-090-0000

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE). – Gracias, señora Dalli. Muy brevemente, le quiero hacer dos preguntas.

La primera sobre la Estrategia Europea sobre Igualdad de Género. La estrategia no contempla la vertiente de mujer con discapacidad. Le pediría que se contemplara y le pediría una ampliación del permiso de maternidad para la mujer con discapacidad.

La segunda sobre la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad. No contempla tampoco a la mujer con discapacidad. Es una buena oportunidad elaborar una nueva estrategia y no hay que demorarla mucho, porque, si se ultima la estrategia, después la tenemos que valorar y luego tenemos que elaborar una nueva estrategia, habrá pasado la legislatura.

Elaborar la estrategia para corregir los defectos que tuvo el Acta Europea de Accesibilidad. Mire usted si el Acta Europea de Accesibilidad incumplía el Convenio para la Protección de los Derechos Humanos que hay una transposición de tres años, más otros tres años para ponerla en vigor. Algunos servicios se demorarán hasta 2030.

Usted ha comparado la discapacidad con el cambio climático. Pues, cambiémoslo. Pero para esto hay que hacer más cosas que leyes. Hay que cambiar conciencias.

1-091-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, disability will be in the gender strategy, because again we are speaking about mainstreaming and also mainstreaming within the work of the Commission. But with regard to the strategy, I think that first we have to evaluate. I'm not saying that we have to wait until 2030, what I'm saying is that before committing to other means of working in this area, first we have to evaluate what we have, what we had and then carry on from there, from what we have learned from the previous strategy.

1-092-0000

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE). – El Acta Europea de Accesibilidad dejó fuera a las microempresas, dejó el entorno construido, dejó al transporte urbano, dejó los servicios turísticos, dejó los servicios de alojamiento, dejó la restauración, dejó el transporte regional.

Por lo tanto, es una buena oportunidad para que la estrategia corrija todo esto. Deseo pedirle también que, en todos los temas de igualdad, no hagamos demagogia. Porque muchas veces, pudiendo llegar a acuerdos, se mete por medio el aborto, por ejemplo, y no todos los grupos están de acuerdo. Entonces, lo que sí le pediría es que dejemos lo ideológico que nos separa y vayamos unidos en lo que verdaderamente nos une, que son los derechos humanos, que no tienen ideología, como no tiene ideología la paz.

1-093-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, exactly, but that is exactly the reason why we have to analyse this and evaluate it, also for the reasons that you mention, and say how we can move on from all that you are mentioning here, which are all very good points. They are points which I heard when I met with the representative NGO, and you are reflecting exactly what they have told me, so it's at the back of my mind that, during this evaluation, I will take in these points which you are making, which are very good points.

1-094-0000

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (GUE/NGL). – Señora Dalli, buena parte de las trabajadoras domésticas corren el riesgo de ser explotadas y no están protegidas, entre otras cosas, por la falta de inspecciones laborales. Sufren abuso y acoso por parte de sus empleadores y empleadoras, temen sufrir malos tratos, la pérdida de sus trabajos e incluso, en el caso de las mujeres migrantes, la deportación. Con frecuencia están mal pagadas y tienen que trabajar hasta dieciocho horas al día, con descansos cortos y pocas posibilidades de disfrutar de días libres.

¿Piensa tomar medidas para mejorar la protección y las condiciones laborales de estas trabajadoras? ¿Promoverá la ratificación y aplicación, por parte de los Estados miembros y el Consejo, del Convenio de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo sobre las trabajadoras y los trabajadores domésticos?

Finalmente, ¿se van a adoptar medidas para proteger y mejorar las condiciones de trabajo en otros sectores feminizados y precarizados, como el del personal de limpieza de los hoteles, por ejemplo?

1-095-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for that question. Yes, of course, this is an area which should be addressed and will be addressed. In fact, I have already spoken with Commissioner-designate Schmit about these realities, but again I mentioned the taskforce. This is where we can work together across portfolios and this area which you mentioned – of domestic workers and of conditions of work and on the ILO Convention – they all fall within the remit of the Commissioner-designate for jobs, but there will be a person working within that portfolio who will be speaking about women's rights and the conditions of women workers in these particular situations which you mentioned. So yes, the problems which you mentioned will certainly be addressed.

1-096-0000

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (GUE/NGL). Sabemos que una buena parte de esas trabajadoras domésticas son mujeres migrantes, y, como tales, tienen un riesgo mayor de sufrir trata con fines de explotación laboral, porque este tipo de trata es, además, especialmente invisible en el servicio doméstico.

¿Van a tomar alguna medida para garantizar que el estatus migratorio de estas mujeres no las haga más vulnerables a la trata con fines de explotación laboral ni vulnera sus ya limitados derechos laborales, su jubilación y pensiones? Sobre todo, en un momento en el que se está vaciando la hucha de las pensiones y promocionando fondos privados, un eje más del proceso de privatización de la protección social.

¿Cuál es su opinión sobre los productos paneuropeos de pensiones individuales? ¿Van a valorar o han valorado el impacto que van a tener sobre las mujeres, teniendo en cuenta la brecha salarial y de pensiones que ya existe?

1-097-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Well, as you know, there is the Race Equality Directive, which provides redress for discrimination in all areas of life. One of these areas is conditions for access to employment and employment conditions, so really what we should see is that the directive is being implemented. I know that this is easier said than done, but what I'm saying is that the protection is there, but we will have to see how to check on the implementation of this directive. Therefore, I should be working with other Commissioners also on this issue.

1-098-0000

Heléne Fritzon (S&D). – Det senaste decenniet har vi bevittnat ett aktivt motstånd mot jämställdhet och kvinnors grundläggande mänskliga rättigheter. Ser man på effekterna så visar *Gender Equality Index* att det finns otaliga ojämlikheter mellan könen, och de kvarstår.

Ett betänkande som Europaparlamentet har antagit om detta akuta läge i år visar att motståndet har skilt sig från land till land och fått olika effekter. Ibland har det handlat om retoriska utfall, men i andra fall har det blivit åtgärder och initiativ.

Vi kan konstatera att vi befinner oss i en backlash för kvinnors rättigheter i unionen. Jag vill kunna berätta för mina döttrar att vi ska bekämpa denna backlash, och därför blir min fråga till dig: Hur kommer du att bekämpa detta och vad blir ditt första initiativ?

1-099-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – I think our work on gender equality – as you have seen given importance the President-elect has given to this area of policy – is a way of seeing that women's rights are not only protected but enhanced. So this will be not only a gender-balanced Commission, as you can see from the number of Commissioners, but also a Commissioner which is on the ground working on the protection of women's rights. I can assure you that it is very high on the agenda of President-elect von der Leyen, and this is also the reason why there is a standalone portfolio for equality, so that the work of this portfolio can also be focused on the problems which you mention. The gender equality strategy, which should be coming out soon, is also addressing some of the realities you mentioned.

1-100-0000

Heléne Fritzon (S&D). – Vi vet ju att kvinnors möjligheter att försörja sig själva är helt avgörande för att man ska ha ett självbestämmande. Då måste vi ha en politik som är inriktad på arbete och som bidrar till att bekämpa ojämlikhet och diskriminering i arbetslivet.

Du har redan presenterat flera åtgärder. Vilka ytterligare åtgärder vill du se på detta område för att kvinnor verkligen ska kunna bli ekonomiskt självbestämmande?

1-101-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – Financial independence is of the essence. Every woman should be able to support herself and also, once a woman is financially independent, other realities don't happen anymore. For instance, if you are financially independent and in an abusive relationship, you can choose to leave that relationship because you are not financially dependent on your abuser. So, to work on creating more jobs for women, creating more education, more training, for women, is all working towards this reality which we have today whereby quite a number of women are not financially independent.

1-102-0000

Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillips (Verts/ALE). – Commissioner-designate, you said earlier that you were very happy with the work-life balance directive, and whilst there are very many positives to it, it only provides for 10 days for fathers to take care of their children when they are born, and even this is not mandatory. And while parents are each entitled to two months of parental leave, it does not have to be paid at a rate above the poverty line, and therefore is often not taken up as families cannot afford it. This is an equality issue, not only for women who still bear an unfair share of caring responsibilities, but also for men, LGBTQI+ parents and parents of all genders who would like to be able to afford to take more time off to care for their children.

What will you propose to address the gender imbalance between those taking up leave for caring responsibilities? What will you propose so that families don't risk poverty when taking parental leave? How will you push Member States to provide for decent remuneration levels for this leave?

1-103-0000

Helena Dalli, *Commissioner-designate*. – I guess it's never enough, is it? We started with this directive, which is in the right direction, I must say, and that is why I said I will monitor Member States – to see how they are implementing this directive, and maybe even hold workshops and

presentations – in the sense that I will make them aware that this is added value to the place of work when you have such measures. Obviously, we want to do more and, as I mentioned, in three years, it will be reviewed and also I think that employers will realise that this was a good thing. But as you know, whenever you have to do something which is related to industrial relations, you want your social partners on board, which is how it should be. The social dialogue part is important and we must make the social partners understand the value added to good working conditions. When workers have better conditions they are better workers, they produce better and they have more peace of mind that at the place of work, so it is to the benefit, actually, of the employer that there are very good conditions. All you said is very true and I will have more discussions on this even with Commissioner-designate Schmit when we speak about conditions of employment, but also there's the equality perspective in it and we must see.

1-104-0000

Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillips (Verts/ALE). – The traditional division of work and care responsibilities in the household is shifting, but only very slowly. Talking about it is important, but we've talked for far too long. You mentioned workshops and speaking to other Commissioners and so forth. Legislation is what makes the difference. What will you do concretely to overcome this injustice which will be more than workshops, more than talking?

1-105-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes. I'm sorry I'm going to have repeat this, but once we review the directive and see how it worked and if there is – there probably will be – scope for opening it up then we will consider these proposals which you are making.

1-106-0000

Monica Semedo (Renew). – Frau Dalli! Meine Frage thematisiert auch die Istanbul-Konvention. Sie wollten vorhin nicht näher darauf eingehen und doch würde ich gerne von Ihnen wissen, welche konkreten Möglichkeiten es eigentlich im EU-Vertrag gibt, damit Gewalt gegen Frauen als EU-Verbrechen anerkannt wird. Und neben dem Schutz ist auch die Stärkung und die Reintegration der Betroffenen, denke ich, sehr wichtig. Damit meine ich Frauen, die Gewalt erfahren haben, aber auch Frauen, die zum Beispiel an Krankheiten wie Krebs gelitten haben, sie überstanden, sie überlebt haben, aber danach Schwierigkeiten haben, zum Beispiel, im Arbeitsmarkt wieder Fuß zu fassen.

1-107-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Inclusion of violence against women as a European crime requires unanimity as well. It is also mentioned in the guidelines. But I would rather first concentrate on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. I think that is the gold standard. So let's concentrate on that first, but I also have to say that making violence against women a European crime also requires unanimity, so we're basically in the same position. We can also strengthen the Victims' Rights Directive – and there I will have to work with Commissioner-designate Reynders – and also we can strengthen non-legislative action to combat violence against women, but my preferred route is the ratification of the Convention by the EU.

1-108-0000

Monica Semedo (Renew). – Würden Sie auch eine Sensibilisierungskampagne zum Schutz vor häuslicher Gewalt und Gewalt gegen Frauen unterstützen und finanziell fördern, eine Sensibilisierungskampagne für jüngere und ältere Mitbürger? Und würden Sie auch das Bewusstsein der Opfer stärken, dass es zu den Grundwerten der Europäischen Union gehört, dass niemandem Gewalt angetan werden darf und dass auch niemand unterdrückt werden darf?

1-109-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, of course, that will be included in the gender equality strategy. We are also including online violence against women in the strategy and the points that you are making will also be included because it's a very robust section which deals with violence against women in this strategy which shall soon come out.

1-110-0000

Livia Járóka (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, congratulations on your nomination. After the painful realisation of the death of the wonderful Maltese Daphne Caruana Galizia, it's wonderful to see another strong woman. We were shocked that women are being killed in your country for journalism, but my question would just follow up on another question where you were talking about the gender pension pay gap, which is 37% as you said, and the other, 16.2%, which is the gender pay gap itself. Would you have some concrete steps on this?

1-111-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, obviously, first we have to establish the measuring instrument, so, in the first 100 days I will have to present this pay transparency measure. Once we have this transparency measure then we can address the gender pay gap and the pensions pay gap, so it is work which I will be doing at the outset. It is one of the first areas which I am mandated to work upon. This is how serious this problem is and how the Commission is looking at it with a lot of prominence. We obviously want to get results because it is unacceptable that you have a 36% gap in pensions especially. But this is the residue of all that we have been saying here all along in terms of the life cycle and work cycle of a woman. Our progression is interrupted many times because we work sometimes for less hours – because the family needs are what they are. Also, sometimes when you are on maternity leave or working on reduced hours, you may also miss out on a promotion, and therefore you don't continue with your progression, so we are being penalised for the simple fact that we are women and we have children and we want to have children and we want to work. It is important that we contribute by our work, but then who is seeing to these realities where we end up with this discrepancy?

1-112-0000

Livia Járóka (PPE). – Because discrepancies are creating the further povertisation of women and children, I would like to ask you about those for whom the pay gap is only a dream, because in the portfolio there will be so many who have no jobs at all. There are 120 million poor, only 16 million are Roma, but thank you very much for mentioning the situation of the Roma. But do you think that we could further elaborate with the Parliament, with the Finnish Presidency and the Croats on upscaling the Roma strategy to an all-EU anti-poverty strategy? Because there are not only eastern European ghettos, but all over Europe. The World Bank maps from 2016 show you perfectly which are those ghettos, which are those 30 000, 80 000 people settlements which we have to tackle. So would you go further on anti-poverty for these poor people?

1-113-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – One of my first visits will be to a Roma settlement. Roma people are the most discriminated against in the European Union at 61%. As you know, there is the Roma framework strategy, which has four priorities: education, employment, health care and housing. You know that this framework is coming to an end, and we will be reviewing this strategy. That is why I want to visit a settlement so that I know more about what I am reviewing and we will evaluate how best to proceed in terms of follow-up. The post-2020 framework will also have a stronger focus on anti-Gypsyism. So I can assure you that a lot of work will be done in that area.

1-114-0000

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Chair EMPL. – Very good, your last answer. But there is no rest for you, Madam Commissioner-designate as now the floor is yours again, and you have five minutes for your final statement.

1-115-0000

Helena Dalli, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for the exchange and for the important questions posed. And what we can see from what we really spoke here together today that equality can never be taken for granted. I know that if I have your trust to take on the role of

Commissioner, I will need to answer several tough questions for us to achieve the goals that we set out for ourselves, and I look forward to these exchanges.

So, to conclude, I will make a personal observation. Whenever I visited an elementary school, a nursery or a kindergarten as Minister, I always observed how little children interact without distinction. How children do not even have a notion of discrimination. How children interact with other children, despite the differences. They do not discriminate. They do not hate. Children teach us the meaning of unconditional love. Discrimination is learned later in life and we need to work so that society unlearns its discriminatory ways and stereotypes about persons with particular personal characteristics. We need to value diversity and inclusion. We are stronger together as a union of Member States, as we are stronger together as diverse societies. We are stronger when we are all valued, when all are included. I will work tirelessly for equality for women and men, race and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to the Roma minority, religious and non-religious minorities, persons who are discriminated against because of their age, persons with disabilities and gender and sexual minorities. If confirmed by Parliament, I will work for a Europe of equality with concrete results. I reiterate that we have enough equality for everyone. We need to make it a reality that is experienced by all. In the words of Nelson Mandela, which have and will continue to guide me, no one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or her background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

(Applause)

1-116-0000

Evelyn Regner, *Chair FEMM*. – Dear Commissioner-designate Ms Dalli, dear Members of the European Parliament, we made it. So you see, it's really a tough cookie. All these questions, a wide journey when it's about equality.

We see that equality is really an issue that needs a fit, tough, committed Commissioner and a Commissioner that is not only deep in the portfolio, but a Commissioner that is also understanding what it means to be discriminated against. What does it mean to suffer when there are inequalities. And so many people, different groups are attached to this issue, so we really had this wide-range of questions right now, covering all groups.

Above all, and I speak on behalf of the FEMM Committee, women are exposed to inequalities in their daily life, so you gave us right now clear and pragmatic answers on work-life balance, what does it mean to implement it, what do we need further in the future from the Commission.

You tackled the questions on the gender pay gap, because this is really a shame. We know already for decades and decades and decades that we are moving so slowly and we need transparency as a step in order to really know how to implement measures so that women are treated the same way as men.

You also tackled the question of violence against women, the Istanbul Convention that has to be really alive. How difficult the situation is in so many countries and what excuses we always hear from governments, and whomever, not to do what has to be done.

You were also referring of course to the gender strategy that we need from the European Union in order to tackle all those measures, because it's nice when we do one piece of the mosaic, but of course we have to give the whole picture life. And of course you were dealing with a lot of other issues that are of the utmost importance for more equality between men and women, and of course also dealing with discrimination that happens in all fields of life.

And with these words, I just would like to congratulate you for this marathon of questions and answers covering all those issues. We all know, right now it's up to the coordinators to decide. We have been quick on all that. So we do our best and we just thank you for this marathon and for your performance and will give right now the floor also to my Co-Chair Ms Nicholsonová.

1-117-0000

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, *Chair EMPL*. – Thank you, Ms Dalli. You were very disciplined, you were very good in timing. In this you succeeded.

On behalf of EMPL, I have to say that your portfolio is so wide and your plans are so ambitious, and we would love to cooperate with you on all of your ambitious plans. But we live in times when I think we should only promise what we can actually deliver, because out there are thousands of people with huge expectations from Brussels, as they call the European Union. And when it comes to our new initiatives, I think we should first evaluate how we succeeded in the implementation of the old ones, because let's be honest, we didn't succeed in all areas.

There are still Member States where people with disabilities face enormous discrimination. There are people in wheelchairs who can't enter the streets because of the barriers, they can't go to cinemas, to theatres. They can't find a job, they can't succeed in the labour market – the enterprises, the employers, would rather pay the fee than employ people with disabilities.

When we talk about other forms of discrimination we have to talk about people 50+ on the labour market. They face enormous discrimination in various Member States, and this is the sandwich generation that we have to mention when it comes to work-life balance, because we can't only talk about the young families with young children, but we also have to talk about 50+ people who have to take care of their kids, on the one side, and on the other side, their ageing parents.

And last but not least, the huge discrimination about the socially excluded communities that in many Member States are the Roma communities, separated and segregated. We have Member States where we openly discriminate against Roma kids by sending them to special schools where they can't really end up finishing their elementary school, and they end up not being able to read or write when they leave the special schools at 16 years of age. And we expect them to succeed on the labour market. I am very happy that Ms Dalli showed interest in being a part of the delegation of EMPL that will go to Slovakia to visit the separated and segregated areas with Roma communities, and we have to stop it together.

(Applause)

1-118-0000

Evelyn Regner, *Chair FEMM*. – That's it, ladies and gentlemen, the hearing is over.

(The hearing closed at 17.15)