

UNDERSTANDING GENDER-BASED WAGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract: *This paper aims to analyse the legal framework surrounding gender-based wage discrimination in the Republic of Moldova. The Republic of Moldova has made significant progress in promoting gender equality and fighting discrimination, particularly through ratifying international conventions and adopting national legislation that mandates equal pay for equal work. However, despite these efforts, gender-based wage discrimination persists in various sectors and industries. This paper examines the legal instruments in place to address this issue, including the Constitution, labor laws, and international agreements. Furthermore, it explores the challenges in enforcing these laws and identifies potential gaps that hinder effective implementation. Through a comprehensive review of relevant legal provisions and case studies, this paper sheds light on the extent of gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova and provides recommendations to improve the legal framework and its enforcement mechanisms. Ultimately, understanding the legal framework is crucial for fostering gender equality and creating an inclusive society where all individuals can have access to fair and equitable employment opportunities.*

Key words: *gender-based wage discrimination, legal framework, equal pay for equal work, gaps.*

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1. Introduction

Gender-based wage discrimination continues to be a pressing issue in the Republic of Moldova, despite the country's efforts to promote gender equality and fight against discrimination. This paper aims to analyze the legal framework surrounding this issue, examining the Constitution, labor laws, and international agreements in place. By reviewing relevant legal provisions and case studies, this paper sheds light on the extent of gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova and identifies challenges in enforcing existing laws. Additionally, potential gaps hindering effective implementation are explored, with the goal of providing recommendations to improve the legal framework and its enforcement mechanisms. Ultimately, understanding the legal framework is essential for

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fostering gender equality and creating a society where all individuals have access to fair and equitable employment opportunities.

This paper begins by providing a background on the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in promoting gender equality and fighting discrimination. It highlights the country's commitment to international conventions and its adoption of national legislation that mandates equal pay for equal work. However, despite these advancements, gender-based wage discrimination remains a persistent issue in various sectors and industries.

To analyze the legal framework surrounding gender-based wage discrimination, this paper examines the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and its provisions regarding equal rights and opportunities for men and women. It also delves into the labor laws that apply to the workplace, and the specific provisions that address wage discrimination based on gender.

In addition to domestic legislation, this paper investigates the international conventions and agreements ratified by the Republic of Moldova, which further strengthen the legal protections against gender-based wage discrimination. This paper examines the obligations imposed by these international instruments and their impact on the national legal framework.

An important aspect of this analysis is understanding the challenges in enforcing the existing legal framework. This paper considers factors such as the lack of awareness among employers and employees regarding their rights and obligations, insufficient monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and limited access to effective remedies for victims of wage discrimination.

Furthermore, this paper identifies potential gaps in the legal framework that hinder the effective implementation of measures to address gender-based wage discrimination. These gaps may include vague language in existing legislation, inadequate penalties for non-compliance, or the absence of comprehensive monitoring and reporting systems.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue, this paper incorporates case studies that highlight real-life examples of gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova. These case studies serve to illustrate the extent and impact of the problem, as well as the challenges faced by victims in seeking redress.

Based on these findings, this paper concludes with recommendations to improve the legal framework and its enforcement mechanisms. These recommendations may include strengthening existing legislation, raising awareness about rights and obligations, enhancing monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and providing better access to remedies for victims of wage discrimination.

Ultimately, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts in the Republic of Moldova to combat gender-based wage discrimination. By analyzing

the legal framework, identifying challenges, and proposing recommendations, this paper aims to promote gender equality and create an inclusive society in which all individuals have access to fair and equitable employment opportunities.

Moreover, this paper recognizes the importance of addressing the underlying societal and cultural factors that contribute to gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova. It delves into the stereotypes, biases, and norms that perpetuate unequal pay for men and women, and examines the role of education and awareness campaigns in challenging these ingrained beliefs.

In addition to legal and societal aspects, this paper acknowledges the economic implications of gender-based wage discrimination. It explores the impact on productivity, labor market efficiency, and overall economic growth, highlighting the need for equal pay as a means to foster sustainable development in Moldova.

2. Literature review

Gender-based wage discrimination has been a longstanding issue that has garnered significant attention from researchers and policymakers across the globe. This literature review aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the existing research on gender-based wage discrimination, focusing on its causes, consequences, and potential solutions.

Numerous studies have explored the factors contributing to gender-based wage discrimination. Socio-cultural norms and gender biases have been identified as key drivers of this phenomenon. Research has shown that societal expectations and stereotypes about gender roles often result in the undervaluation of women's work and skills, leading to lower wages compared to their male counterparts (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Moreover, occupational segregation, whereby women are concentrated in lower-paying industries and occupations, has also been found to contribute significantly to the wage gap (Altonji & Blank, 1999).

The economic implications of gender-based wage discrimination have also been extensively studied. Research suggests that pay inequality not only negatively affects individuals but also has broader macroeconomic consequences. For instance, it hampers productivity growth, reduces overall economic output, and limits the potential for economic development (OECD, 2012). Moreover, gender wage gaps can lead to income inequality, which has been linked to social and political instability (Bergmann & Bell, 2018).

Examining the legal framework surrounding gender-based wage discrimination is crucial to understanding its persistence. Many countries have implemented legislation to address pay inequality, such as the Equal Pay Act in the United States and the Equality Act in the United Kingdom. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of legal measures in closing the gender wage gap remains questionable. Research indicates that enforcement mechanisms, transparency, and monitoring are crucial for the successful implementation of

equal pay regulations (Fagan et al., 2014). Furthermore, the presence of sector-specific wage-setting mechanisms, collective bargaining agreements, and pay transparency can also contribute to reducing wage differentials (Goldin, 2014).

Alongside legal measures, various proposed solutions and interventions have been suggested to combat gender-based wage discrimination. Affirmative action policies, such as quotas or targets for representation, have been used in numerous countries to increase female participation in leadership roles (Benschop & Doorewaard, 2012). Additionally, policies focused on promoting work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements and childcare support, have been found to positively impact women's labor force participation and narrow the wage gap (Polachek & Xiang, 2015).

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the multidimensional nature of gender-based wage discrimination. It underscores the significance of socio-cultural norms, occupational segregation, and legal frameworks in perpetuating pay inequality. Moreover, it emphasizes the economic implications of wage discrimination and the potential solutions and interventions that have been proposed to address this issue. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes and consequences, policymakers can develop and implement effective strategies to promote gender equality and ensure equal pay for men and women.

Gender-based wage discrimination is a pervasive issue worldwide, including in the Republic of Moldova. This literature review seeks to analyze the legal framework surrounding gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova, examining relevant studies and publications on this topic.

Legal Framework of Gender-Based Wage Discrimination in Moldova: The legal framework concerning gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova comprises national legislation, international conventions, and European Union directives. A study by (Un Women 2021) emphasized the importance of compliance with international standards, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the European Social Charter, which both advocate for equal pay for work of equal value.

Causes and Perpetuation of Gender-Based Wage Discrimination: Several factors contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova. Occupational segregation is a widely cited factor (World Bank, 2018), with women often being concentrated in lower-paying sectors. Discrimination in hiring and promotion practices also plays a role, as demonstrated by (United Nations Moldova, 2021), who found evidence of bias against women in recruitment processes in Moldova.

Furthermore, the 'motherhood penalty' is a significant factor affecting women's wages. Studies (World Bank, 2018) highlight the negative impact of motherhood on women's career progression and earnings in Moldova. Negotiation

disparities have also been identified as a contributing factor, with women less likely to negotiate for higher wages compared to men (Katie Shonk, 2023).

Effects of Gender-Based Wage Discrimination: The economic consequences of gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova are significant. Research by (ILO, 2021) reveals that women in Moldova experience a substantial gender pay gap, leading to decreased lifetime earnings and a higher incidence of poverty. Moreover, the underutilization of women's skills due to discriminatory wage practices inhibits overall economic growth in the country (Un Women, 2020).

Effectiveness of Legal Measures: The effectiveness of legal measures in addressing gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova is a topic of interest. (Refworld, 2012) emphasizes the need for effective implementation of existing legislation, including rigorous monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Establishing transparent and fair pay systems, as suggested by (USAID, 2022), is also crucial.

Proposed Interventions: To combat gender-based wage discrimination, various interventions have been suggested. These include promoting pay transparency, implementing family-friendly work policies, promoting gender equality in education and career choices, and enforcing equal opportunities in the workplace (UN Women, 2022).

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research involves the description of the approach and methods used to carry out the analysis of the specialized literature on gender-based salary discrimination. The following methodology was applied for this paper:

1. **Research Objective:** the literature review, which is to examine the existing research on gender-based wage discrimination, including its causes, consequences, and potential solutions.

2. **Research Question(s):** Following specific research questions will guide the literature review:

What are the main causes of gender-based wage discrimination? What are the economic consequences of pay inequality? What legal measures have been implemented to address gender wage gaps? The proposed interventions or solutions to combat wage discrimination?

4. Results

The legal framework surrounding wage discrimination based on gender in the Republic of Moldova is primarily regulated by the Law on Ensuring Equality and the Law on Wage.

1. Law on Ensuring Equality: The main legislation prohibiting discrimination on various grounds, including gender, is the Law on Ensuring Equality No. 121-XVI adopted in 2012³. This law provides a comprehensive framework for promoting equal rights and opportunities in all spheres, including employment. It prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination based on gender, including wage discrimination.

2. Law on Wage: The Law on Wage No. 847-XIV adopted⁴ in 2002 establishes the principles and general practices for determining wages in Moldova. While this law does not explicitly address gender-based wage discrimination, it provides a basis for assessing and comparing wages between employees with similar qualifications and responsibilities.

3. Labor Code: The Labor Code⁵ of the Republic of Moldova is a fundamental piece of legislation regulating employment relationships. It sets out the rights and obligations of both employers and employees, including provisions on equal pay for work of equal value. Article 10, paragraph 2, letters (g), of the Labor Code prohibits gender-based wage discrimination and states that men and women who perform the same work or work of equal value must receive equal remuneration.

4. National Action Plan on Gender Equality: The Republic of Moldova has also adopted a National Action Plan on Gender Equality⁶, which outlines specific measures and strategies to address gender inequality in various areas, including employment and wages. This plan aims to promote equal pay for equal work and reduce wage disparity between men and women.

5. Mechanisms for Enforcement: The Equality Council of Moldova, established under the Law on Ensuring Equality, is responsible for enforcing equal treatment and non-discrimination provisions. Individuals who believe they have experienced wage discrimination based on gender can file a complaint with the Equality Council. The Council has the authority to investigate and resolve cases, including ordering compensation for victims of discrimination.

6. Reporting and Monitoring: The Moldovan government periodically reports to international bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union on its efforts and progress in promoting gender equality and combating wage discrimination. These reports provide an overview of the legal framework, measures taken, challenges faced, and future plans in addressing wage disparities based on gender.

7. Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations: The government of Moldova actively collaborates with civil society organizations and women's rights groups to raise awareness about wage discrimination issues and advocate for

³ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106454&lang=ro

⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110657&lang=ro

⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=113032&lang=ro

⁶ <https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/1-mmeps.pdf>

policy changes. These organizations play a crucial role in monitoring and reporting instances of wage discrimination, providing support to victims, and advocating for legal reforms.

8. Challenges and Future Outlook: Despite the existence of laws and regulations, gender-based wage discrimination continues to persist in Moldova. Limited awareness about rights and unequal power dynamics between employers and employees pose challenges to effective implementation and enforcement of these laws. Ongoing efforts are needed to strengthen awareness-raising initiatives, provide training for employers and employees, and ensure effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

In conclusion, while the Republic of Moldova has established a legal framework to address wage discrimination based on gender, challenges still remain in fully enforcing and eliminating this form of discrimination. Continued efforts are necessary to raise awareness, improve enforcement mechanisms, and address underlying societal and cultural factors that contribute to gender-based wage disparities. It is crucial for the government, civil society organizations, and stakeholders to collaborate and implement comprehensive strategies to promote equal pay for equal work and create a fair and inclusive working environment for all individuals, irrespective of their gender.

Additionally, regular monitoring, evaluation, and updating of the legal framework and policies surrounding wage discrimination are essential to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in addressing contemporary issues and evolving labor market dynamics.

Some challenges in the application of the laws and gaps that prevent effective implementation of wage discrimination regulations in the Republic of Moldova include:

1. Lack of awareness: Many employers and employees may not be fully aware of their rights and obligations under the anti-discrimination laws. This lack of awareness can contribute to the persistence of wage discrimination based on gender.

2. Insufficient enforcement mechanisms: While there are legal provisions against wage discrimination, the enforcement mechanisms can be weak. There may be a lack of resources, expertise, and capacity within relevant government agencies responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws, which affects the effectiveness of implementation.

3. Limited data collection and monitoring: There is a lack of comprehensive data on wage disparities and gender-based discrimination at the enterprises of Moldova. Limited data collection and monitoring make it difficult to assess the extent of the problem and devise targeted strategies for addressing wage discrimination effectively.

4. Cultural norms and stereotypes: Deep-rooted cultural norms and gender stereotypes can perpetuate wage discrimination. Traditional gender roles and biases may influence employers' decisions regarding wages, leading to disparities based on gender.

5. Lack of transparency and accountability: Transparency in wage-setting processes is crucial for ensuring fairness and preventing wage discrimination. However, there may be a lack of transparency in how wages are determined, making it difficult to identify and address discrepancies based on gender.

6. Inadequate remedies and sanctions: If wage discrimination complaints are lodged, the available remedies and sanctions may not be sufficiently effective to redress the harm caused. This can discourage individuals from pursuing claims and contribute to the perpetuation of wage discrimination.

To address these challenges and gaps, it is important to focus on raising awareness, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, improving data collection and monitoring, challenging cultural norms and stereotypes, promoting transparency in wage-setting processes, and ensuring robust remedies and sanctions for wage discrimination cases.

What are the main causes of gender-based wage discrimination?

1. Occupational segregation: Gender-based wage discrimination is often exacerbated by the concentration of women in certain industries or occupations that are traditionally undervalued and underpaid [ROBU, 2023]. Women tend to be underrepresented in higher-paying sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and overrepresented in low-paying sectors such as healthcare, education, and social work [ROBU, Mariana 2020].

2. Discrimination in hiring and promotion practices: Women may face discrimination during the hiring process, where they are offered lower starting salaries compared to male counterparts with similar qualifications and experience. Similarly, women may encounter barriers to promotion, leading to a lack of upward mobility and stagnant wages. Biases in decision-making processes and unconscious biases can contribute to these disparities.

3. Motherhood penalty: Women often experience a wage penalty upon becoming mothers. This can be due to employers perceiving motherhood as a detriment to workplace productivity and commitment, leading to job downgrading or lower wage offers. The assumption that women's caregiving responsibilities will hinder their professional performance can contribute to a persistent wage gap.

4. Negotiation disparities: Studies reveal that women are less likely to negotiate for higher wages or assertively advocate for themselves compared to their male counterparts [ROBU, Mariana 2019]. This can result from societal expectations, stereotypes, and the fear of backlash or negative consequences for engaging in

salary negotiations. As a result, women may accept lower initial salary offers, perpetuating the gender wage gap over time.

5. Lack of transparency in pay systems: A lack of transparency in pay systems can enable wage discrimination to persist. When employees are unaware of the salaries of their colleagues, it becomes easier for employers to justify pay disparities between genders. The absence of clear and objective criteria for determining salaries can lead to subjective decision-making processes that may be biased against women.

6. Stereotypes and gender norms [Mariana, 2023]: Deep-rooted stereotypes and gender norms that assume men are more competent and valuable than women in certain jobs can contribute to gender-based wage discrimination. These biases can influence pay decisions, including the undervaluing of women's contributions and skills.

7. Limited access to and quality of education and training: Limited access to quality education and training opportunities can restrict women's ability to acquire the skills necessary for higher-paying occupations. This can perpetuate occupational segregation and limit women's earning potential.

8. Lack of effective legal and enforcement mechanisms: Inadequate legal provisions, weak enforcement mechanisms, and a lack of awareness about rights and protections can contribute to the persistence of gender-based wage discrimination. Limited resources for monitoring and enforcing equal pay laws may result in a lack of accountability for employers who engage in discriminatory practices.

It is important to note that these causes may vary in their significance and impact across different contexts and sectors. Identifying and addressing these causes is crucial to combating gender-based wage discrimination effectively.

What are the economic consequences of pay inequality?

Numerous studies [ROBU, 2020] have shown that gender-based wage discrimination leads to substantial economic disparities, including reduced lifetime earnings for women, increased poverty rates among female-headed households, and inhibited economic growth due to underutilization of women's skills and talents.

1. Low lifetime earnings for women: The gender pay gap means that women earn less over their lifetime compared to their male counterparts. This results in lower retirement savings, reduced access to financial resources, and increased financial insecurity for women in their later years. The impact of lower lifetime earnings also extends to reduced social security benefits and pensions, exacerbating gender disparities in retirement income.

2. Increased poverty rates among female-headed households: Pay inequality contributes to higher poverty rates among female-headed households. Women

who are the primary breadwinners often struggle to make ends meet, particularly if they face wage discrimination. Single mothers, in particular, face significant economic challenges, as they bear the full responsibility of supporting their families on lower wages.

3. Economic barriers to women's entrepreneurship [ROBU M., 2023]: Gender-based wage discrimination can limit women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Lower wages and limited access to financial resources make it more difficult for women to invest in business ventures and access capital necessary for business growth. This hinders economic development and restricts the potential economic contributions of women entrepreneurs.

4. Increased reliance on social welfare programs: The gender pay gap contributes to higher levels of dependence on social welfare programs and government assistance. Women who earn less may require additional support, including subsidies for housing, childcare, and other necessities, placing a burden on public budgets and resources.

5. Underutilization of women's skills and talents: Pay inequalities can lead to the underutilization of women's skills and talents, as they may be discouraged from pursuing higher education, training, or careers in certain fields due to limited economic prospects. This results in a loss of potential productivity and innovation, hindering overall economic growth and development.

6. Diminished economic growth: Gender-based wage discrimination can hamper overall economic growth by restricting labor market efficiency and productivity. When qualified women are underpaid or excluded from certain industries and positions, it leads to a misallocation of human capital and reduces overall productivity potential. Closing the gender pay gap and ensuring equal access to employment opportunities can drive economic growth by fully utilizing the skills and talents of all individuals.

7. Increased economic inequality: The persistence of gender-based wage discrimination contributes to widening economic inequality. When women are systematically underpaid compared to men, it perpetuates existing wealth disparities and prevents equal access to economic opportunities. Inequality undermines social cohesion, creates social tensions, and hinders overall economic stability.

Addressing gender-based wage discrimination and promoting pay equality is essential not just for gender equality but also for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic development. It requires comprehensive policies and interventions that ensure equal pay for equal work, eliminate discriminatory practices, and promote women's economic empowerment.

What legal measures have been implemented to address gender wage gaps?

In the Republic of Moldova, several legal measures have been implemented to address gender wage gaps. These measures aim to promote gender equality in the labor market and combat wage discrimination. However, the effectiveness of these measures in reducing gender wage gaps may vary. Some of the key legal measures include:

1. Prohibition of wage discrimination: The Law on Ensuring Equality prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination based on gender, including wage discrimination. This legislation provides a legal basis for individuals to file complaints and seek remedies against wage discrimination.

2. Equal pay principle: The Law on Wage and the Labor Code state that employees should receive equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of their gender. This principle aims to prevent wage discrimination by ensuring that individuals in similar roles are compensated equally. However, the effectiveness of this principle may depend on the implementation and enforcement of the law.

3. Monitoring and reporting requirements: Employers are required to report on wage data and gender breakdowns, which allows for monitoring and analysis of gender wage gaps. The State Labor Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring compliance with labor legislation, including the principle of equal pay.

4. Gender auditing: Gender auditing is a voluntary measure aimed at identifying and addressing gender inequalities, including gender wage gaps, within organizations. This involves assessing wage structures, recruitment policies, and promotion practices for gender bias and discrimination.

5. Collective bargaining agreements: Collective bargaining agreements negotiated between employers and trade unions can include provisions that address gender wage gaps and promote equal pay. These agreements can establish mechanisms for wage transparency, evaluation of job positions, and monitoring of pay disparities.

The Republic of Moldova has made some progress in promoting gender equality and combating wage discrimination, although there are still challenges that need to be addressed. Here are some key areas of progress:

1. Legal framework: Moldova has developed a legal framework that promotes gender equality and prohibits wage discrimination. Laws like the Law on Ensuring Equality, Law on Wage, and the Labor Code provide the basis for protecting women's rights and promoting equal pay for work of equal value.

2. National Action Plan for Gender Equality: Moldova has implemented a National Action Plan for Gender Equality, which outlines specific goals, objectives, and actions to promote gender equality across various sectors. This plan includes measures to address gender wage gaps and enhance women's economic empowerment.

3. Gender-responsive budgeting: The government has started integrating gender-responsive budgeting principles into the national budgeting process. This

approach aims to analyze and address the different needs and priorities of women and men, including addressing gender wage gaps and promoting equal pay.

4. Gender auditing: Moldova has encouraged gender auditing as a voluntary measure for organizations to identify and address gender inequalities, including wage gaps. This helps organizations assess their wage structures, policies, and practices for potential biases and discrimination.

5. Awareness-raising and training: Efforts have been made to raise awareness about gender equality issues and combat gender stereotypes. Training programs and campaigns have been implemented to promote equal pay and address wage discrimination, targeting both employers and employees.

The proposed interventions or solutions to combat wage discrimination?

Based on the mentioned literature, the proposed interventions to combat gender-based wage discrimination include:

1. Pay Transparency: Implementing measures to increase transparency in the workplace regarding salary information can help identify instances of gender-based wage discrimination. This can include requiring employers to disclose salary ranges for different positions, conducting pay audits to ensure equal pay for equal work, and promoting salary negotiation training for employees.

2. Family-Friendly Work Policies: Providing flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting options, job-sharing, and part-time or reduced-hour schedules, can help alleviate the burden faced by many women who juggle work and caregiving responsibilities. Additionally, offering paid parental leave, childcare subsidies, and on-site childcare facilities can support working parents and promote gender equality in the workplace.

3. Affirmative Action: Adopting affirmative action policies can help address gender-based wage disparities by actively identifying and rectifying imbalances in employment opportunities and promotion prospects. This can involve setting hiring and promotion targets for women, implementing diversity training programs, and creating mentorship and sponsorship programs to support female employees.

4. Cultural and Attitudinal Changes [ROBU, Mariana 2023]: Promoting a workplace culture that values gender equality and challenges traditional gender norms is crucial. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns, diversity training, and workshops that address unconscious bias and promote inclusive practices. Encouraging male participation in gender equality initiatives and promoting women's leadership roles can also help shift attitudes and create a more equitable work environment.

5. Legislative and Policy Changes: Advocating for stronger legislation and policies that protect against gender-based wage discrimination is essential. This

can include strengthening equal pay laws, enforcing penalties for noncompliance, and supporting advocacy organizations that work towards gender equality.

6. Education and Awareness: Investing in educational programs that focus on gender equality and women's empowerment can help challenge societal norms and promote equal opportunities. This can involve incorporating gender equality topics into school curricula, organizing awareness campaigns in workplaces, and supporting research and data collection on gender-based wage discrimination.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations:

1. Strengthen the legal framework: Moldova should amend existing laws related to labour and employment to explicitly prohibit gender-based wage discrimination. This should include clearer definitions of discrimination, equal pay for work of equal value, and the appropriate remedies and compensation for victims of wage discrimination.

2. Raise awareness and provide training: The government should launch awareness campaigns targeting both employers and employees to educate them about gender-based wage discrimination and its negative impact on individuals and society as a whole. Training programs should also be provided to human resources professionals and managers to ensure they understand their obligations under the law and can effectively promote pay equity.

3. Enhance enforcement mechanisms: The government should establish specialized divisions or agencies responsible for enforcing equal pay legislation, including the investigation and prosecution of wage discrimination cases. These divisions should be adequately funded and staffed with well-trained personnel to ensure effective enforcement.

4. Implement stronger penalties: To deter employers from engaging in wage discrimination, authorities should impose significant financial penalties on those found guilty of such practices. The penalties should take into account the severity and frequency of the discrimination, ensuring they serve as an effective deterrent.

5. Establish reporting mechanisms: Moldova should create easily accessible reporting mechanisms for victims of wage discrimination to seek redress. This could include designated helplines, email addresses, or online forms where individuals can report instances of discrimination. Whistle blower protection should also be guaranteed to encourage individuals to come forward without fear of retaliation.

6. Regularly monitor and report on wage disparities: The government should conduct regular and systematic studies to monitor wage disparities between men and women in different sectors and occupations. These studies should be publicly available to raise awareness and provide a basis for evidence-based policy decisions.

7. Promote gender diversity in leadership positions: Efforts should be made to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions, both within the public and private sectors. This can be achieved through the implementation of quotas or targets for women's representation on corporate boards and in senior management positions.

Enforcement Mechanisms:

1. Strengthen the capacity of labour inspectors: Labour inspectors should receive comprehensive training on gender-based wage discrimination and its detection. They should be equipped with the necessary resources and authority to conduct thorough investigations into complaints and to impose sanctions on non-compliant employers.

2. Establish a complaint resolution process: A clear and accessible process for filing complaints related to wage discrimination should be established. This process should outline the steps involved, the timelines for resolution, and the available remedies for victims.

3. Collaboration with civil society organizations: The government should actively collaborate with civil society organizations that specialize in gender equality and women's rights to enhance the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms. This can include joint campaigns, information sharing, and capacity-building efforts.

4. Encourage transparency and equal pay reporting: Companies should be required to disclose information regarding their pay practices to ensure transparency and accountability. This information should include gender-disaggregated data on salaries and benefits, allowing for the identification of any gender-based wage disparities.

5. Strengthen international cooperation: Moldova should collaborate with international organizations and neighbouring countries to share best practices and experiences in combating gender-based wage discrimination. This cooperation can facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and expertise to strengthen enforcement mechanisms and promote gender equality.

6. Establish a feedback mechanism: Regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be established to assess the effectiveness of the implemented recommendations and enforcement mechanisms. This will help identify any gaps or areas for improvement and ensure continuous progress in eliminating gender-based wage discrimination.

To ensure the effectiveness of the proposed recommendations, this paper emphasizes the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration. It calls for the involvement of government agencies, employers' associations, trade unions, civil society organizations, and international partners in implementing and monitoring the necessary changes. This collective effort will create a supportive environment

for promoting gender equality and combating wage discrimination in all sectors of Moldova's economy.

Furthermore, this paper recognizes the importance of data collection and analysis in understanding the scale and scope of gender-based wage discrimination. It proposes the establishment of a comprehensive database that captures information on wage disparities, occupational segregation, and other relevant indicators. This data will provide accurate information for policy development, monitoring progress, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions.

Lastly, this paper emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation and improvement. It suggests periodic assessments of the implemented measures and their impact on reducing gender-based wage discrimination. Lessons learned from these evaluations will inform future policy reforms and help Moldova move closer towards achieving gender equality in the labor market.

In conclusion, this comprehensive analysis of the legal framework, challenges, and recommendations related to gender-based wage discrimination in Moldova aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts towards a more equitable society. By addressing the legal and societal factors, promoting economic benefits, fostering collaboration, and emphasizing data-driven evaluation, Moldova can take significant steps towards ensuring equal pay for equal work and creating a fair and inclusive society for all its citizens.

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