

The effect of the Pay Transparency Directive on the protection of the right to equal treatment: legal possibilities and challenges in enforcement and non-contentious proceedings

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ABSTRACT

The Pay Transparency Directive (EU) 2023/970 represents a significant step toward reducing gender pay gaps and promoting equal treatment in employment. This article provides an in-depth legal and empirical analysis of the Directive's implementation challenges and opportunities within the Slovenian context, with a particular focus on enforcement and non-contentious legal mechanisms. Based on qualitative interviews with Slovenian employees, the study explores how workers perceive transparency measures and legal protections against discrimination. Findings reveal that pay transparency strengthens perceptions of fairness but also highlight practical concerns related to privacy, procedural delays, and cultural attitudes toward pay disclosure. The article concludes with policy and legal recommendations for effective implementation, including awareness-raising, the development of alternative legal remedies, and the alignment of national jurisprudence with the case law of the CJEU.

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Učinek Direktive o preglednosti plačil na varstvo pravice do enakega obravnavanja: pravne možnosti in izzivi pri uveljavljanju ter v nepravdnih postopkih

POVZETEK

Direktiva (EU) 2023/970 o preglednosti plač predstavlja pomemben korak k odpravi plačnih razlik med spoloma in krepitvi enakega obravnavanja v delovnih razmerjih. Prispavek ponuja poglobljeno analizo pravnih določb direktive in možnosti za njeno implementacijo v slovenskem kontekstu, pri čemer izpostavlja vlogo izvršilnega in nepravdnega prava. Temelji na poglobljenih intervjujih s slovenskimi zaposlenimi, ki razkrivajo, kako ti dojemajo ukrepe za plačno transparentnost ter pravno zaščito pred diskriminacijo. Rezultati kažejo, da plačna transparentnost pozitivno vpliva na občutek pravičnosti, vendar opozarjajo tudi na izzive, povezane z varstvom zasebnosti, dolgotrajnimi postopki ter kulturnimi razlikami pri dojemanju preglednosti. Članek ponuja konkretna priporočila za učinkovito implementacijo direktive, vključno s potrebo po ozaveščanju zaposlenih, razvoju alternativnih pravnih poti in prilagoditvi pravne prakse smernicam SEU.

Ključne besede: plačna preglednost, enako plačilo, pravna zaščita, direktiva EU, delovno pravo

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU), through the Pay Transparency Directive (Directive (EU) 2023/970, 2023), aims to promote greater equality in the labor market, particularly in address-

ing gender pay gaps. The Directive, which entered into force on June 6, 2023, introduces extensive changes focused on increasing transparency in pay practices. These include employees' right to access information about the salaries of colleagues performing comparable work, the obligation for employers to report gender pay differences, and the prohibition of requesting candidates' pay history. By implementing these measures, the EU seeks to ensure fairer working conditions and reduce structural barriers to equal pay, with Member States given three years to transpose the provisions into national legislation (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti, 2023).

Despite the clear objectives of the Directive, numerous challenges arise in practice regarding its implementation. The Slovenian labour environment, which records a relatively low gender pay gap compared to other EU Member States (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2020), offers an interesting context for exploring the legal and practical aspects of pay transparency. This article addresses two key gaps in the existing literature: (1) how employees perceive measures aimed at ensuring pay transparency and equal treatment; and (2) how legal mechanisms, particularly within enforcement and non-contentious proceedings, can contribute to the more effective implementation of the Directive. Methodologically, the study combines doctrinal legal analysis of relevant laws and case law with qualitative data from interviews, bridging the gap between the legal framework and workplace realities.

Our research is based on in-depth interviews with Slovenian employees, offering valuable insights into their perceptions of the Directive and the legal opportunities it presents. We build upon this analysis with a discussion of the legal procedures available for enforcing the right to equal treatment, as well as the identification of potential obstacles to implementation within the Slovenian legal and labor con-

text. This article goes beyond existing studies, which predominantly focus on the economic and organizational effects of pay transparency (Duchini, Simion & Turrell, 2024), by offering a deeper exploration of the legal dimensions of this critical issue. In our discussion, we focus on whether stronger legal support and pay transparency can reduce perceived gender differences, while also addressing concerns related to potential infringements on employee privacy and employer flexibility. In doing so, we contribute to a better understanding of how legal regulation impacts perceptions of fairness and satisfaction in the workplace. Additionally, we offer recommendations for improving the legal framework and corporate policies, which are crucial for the successful implementation of the Directive in Slovenia.

Through in-depth interviews with Slovenian employees and a theoretical review of existing literature, we aim to answer the following research questions: (1) How do Slovenian employees perceive gender-based pay discrimination? (2) How does pay transparency influence employees' perception of fairness and job satisfaction? (3) What legal opportunities, challenges, and possibilities does the Pay Transparency Directive introduce for the enforcement of the right to equal treatment, and what are the specific challenges and opportunities related to its implementation within enforcement and non-contentious proceedings?

2. Foundational perspectives on pay transparency

2.1. Pay transparency as a means of ensuring equal treatment

Pay transparency is increasingly being recognized as a key tool in addressing gender pay gaps and other forms of labor market discrimination. It is based on the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, as defined

in Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (TFEU, 2016). The Pay Transparency Directive introduces specific obligations requiring employers to disclose information about pay structures and the criteria used to determine them. These requirements empower workers to identify potential discrimination and take appropriate action more easily.

The theoretical aspect of transparency goes beyond the mere issue of access to information. Transparency also fosters greater trust between employers and employees and acts as a preventive mechanism for reducing inequality (Estlund, 2010). However, it raises concerns regarding the protection of employee privacy and the competitive sensitivity of disclosed information. Legal theories such as equity theory (Adams, 1965) and signaling theory (Spence, 1978) help explain how the disclosure of pay information influences perceptions of fairness and employee behavior. The practical implementation of pay transparency introduces numerous questions about the effectiveness of legal mechanisms in enforcing this principle. Without appropriate sanctions for non-compliance or mechanisms for the swift resolution of disputes between employers and employees, the Directive risks remaining merely declarative (Shelton, 2009). Research indicates that legal remedies are often complex and time-consuming (Schuck, 1992), thereby reducing access to legal protection for affected workers.

2.2. Enforcement law and legal mechanisms for implementing pay transparency

Enforcement law is essential for operationalizing the rights established by the Pay Transparency Directive (Eur-Lex, 2023). The Directive requires Member States to ensure access to effective legal remedies for workers who suspect discrimination. These mechanisms include the right to ob-

tain pay information, compensation for damages, and financial or criminal sanctions against employers who violate the provisions. In addition, the Directive promotes a shift from a reactive approach—where workers must file lawsuits—to a proactive one, in which employers are obliged to report on their pay practices periodically. However, implementing these mechanisms is not without challenges. Case law shows that lawsuits related to pay discrimination are often lengthy and complex, reducing the likelihood of swift and effective legal protection. Real-world cases, such as *Defrenne v. Sabena* (Case 43/75, 1976), highlight the difficulties in proving violations, as workers are often required to provide extensive evidence to demonstrate systemic discrimination and unequal pay. The Directive seeks to ease this burden by introducing a reversal of the burden of proof—meaning that if there are indications of discrimination, the employer must prove that no discrimination occurred.

In addition to judicial proceedings, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms—such as mediation, arbitration, and the involvement of supervisory bodies—are becoming increasingly important (Ministrstvo za pravosodje, n.d.). National labour inspectorates, in cooperation with independent equality bodies, play a key role in monitoring the implementation of legislation and sanctioning violations. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms varies significantly across Member States, highlighting the need for harmonized standards at the EU level.

2.3. Legal aspects of privacy and pay transparency

The disclosure of salary information raises essential questions concerning the protection of personal data and employee privacy. Salary is often considered sensitive personal data, which means that employers, in fulfilling transparency obligations, must comply with the provisions of the Gen-

eral Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, 2016). Ensuring alignment between the Pay Transparency Directive and the GDPR is essential to guarantee the lawful processing and sharing of salary data (Hooton & Pearce, 2023).

One of the central issues concerns the scope and format of data disclosure. The Directive stipulates that salary information must be anonymized when it includes data on individual employees, to avoid potential stigmatization or conflict. Nevertheless, in practice, there are often tensions between protecting individual privacy rights and the need to ensure collective fairness. Case law from the European Court of Human Rights regarding privacy in the workplace emphasises that any interference with employee rights must be proportionate and adequately justified. National legislation in Member States must strike a balance between these rights and obligations, requiring a comprehensive approach to implementing the Directive.

3. Legal possibilities and challenges

The Pay Transparency Directive offers numerous legal opportunities to enhance equal treatment in employment relationships. One of its key innovations is the obligation for employers to provide employees with clear and comprehensible information about pay structures (Directive (EU) 2023/970, 2023). This promotes a preventive approach to discrimination, as workers can more easily identify potential irregularities based on this data. The legal framework also includes whistleblower protection, which reduces the fear of retaliation and strengthens trust in the legal system. At the same time, the Directive empowers workers and trade unions to play a more active role in monitoring compliance with the legislation. Collective actions and the authority of equality bodies are additional legal tools that support more effective enforcement of rights. These mechanisms are de-

signed to function as systemic correctives to prevent pay discrimination.

Despite the clear legal basis, the implementation of the legislation faces several challenges. The publication of salary information can infringe on individuals' right to privacy, which requires employers to establish robust anonymization and data protection mechanisms. Another challenge lies in cultural differences regarding attitudes toward pay disclosure. In some EU Member States, disclosing salaries is socially undesirable or even stigmatized, which can hinder enforcement of the law. Furthermore, there are practical difficulties in establishing standardized procedures for reporting pay data, particularly in small businesses where this may represent a disproportionate burden.

The implementation of the Directive is likely to trigger several legal disputes, particularly concerning issues of proportionality and potential infringements on employers' rights. Precedent-setting cases, such as *Barbulescu v. Romania* (ECtHR, 2017), highlight the need to balance workers' right to information with employers' right to protect trade secrets. Such cases will be crucial for the development of case law and the harmonization of legislation across Member States. In addition, lengthy legal proceedings and limited access to legal aid may hinder the enforcement of rights. Special attention must also be given to mechanisms that ensure effective sanctions and compensation for victims of discrimination. To overcome these challenges, the role of equality bodies should be strengthened, enabling them to act as intermediaries between workers and employers. Furthermore, it would be advisable to develop guidelines to align transparency with data protection and to introduce specific support measures for small and medium-sized enterprises.

4. Anticipated challenges arising from perceptions and interpretations of the directive

The Pay Transparency Directive opens new opportunities for strengthening employee rights, particularly in the context of ensuring equal treatment. Nevertheless, questions remain about how employees in Slovenia perceive and trust the legal protections provided by the Directive. Many workers continue to express scepticism about the effectiveness of legislation in reducing inequality, primarily due to a lack of information and awareness about their rights (Wong, Cheng, Lam & Bamberger, 2023). In Slovenia, the perception of legal protection is often linked to employees' exposure to labour disputes and their experiences with employers. Research shows that employees in the private sector frequently doubt the capacity of enforcement bodies to uphold the law, particularly in cases involving discrimination or unequal pay (Bamberger, 2023). Such perceptions can weaken the potential positive impact of the Directive, as employees may lack the confidence to exercise the legal remedies it offers. Another barrier is the low level of union membership in certain sectors. Trade unions play a key role in raising awareness and encouraging employees to demand transparency and equal rights. However, unions often lack sufficient resources to provide effective support to all workers, meaning the success of the Directive will heavily depend on individual initiative and trust in the legal system.

The introduction of pay transparency also raises numerous questions about its impact on organizational culture and interpersonal relations among employees. Among the most common concerns are increased envy and conflict among colleagues, especially when pay differences are not fully understood or justified. Transparency in pay practices can reveal systemic injustices or favouritism toward certain groups, potentially leading to decreased employee satisfaction and

weakened trust in management (Rosenblatt, 2012). Additionally, companies highlight the challenges of attracting and retaining unique talent. Firms required to disclose salary ranges may find it harder to attract top experts who demand above-average compensation. This is particularly evident in industries dominated by highly specialised professionals, such as IT, medicine, or advanced manufacturing sectors.

The Directive also raises concerns related to privacy violations. Employees may feel uncomfortable if their salaries are made publicly accessible, which could affect their job performance and motivation. Moreover, increased regulation creates additional administrative pressure on companies, potentially leading to higher costs associated with maintaining systems to ensure compliance with the Directive (Aragón-Correa, Marcus & Vogel, 2020). Despite these challenges, there remains strong potential for positive change, such as reducing gender pay gaps, increasing transparency in promotions, and encouraging fairer and more equitable pay-setting practices. The Directive provides an opportunity for a comprehensive review of company pay policies and, with it, the potential to eliminate existing injustices.

5. Methodology

To address the research questions, we employed a mixed-method approach combining doctrinal legal analysis with qualitative empirical inquiry. The legal methodology involved a review of relevant EU and Slovenian legislation, case law (including CJEU and ECtHR judgments), and scholarly literature to interpret the Directive's provisions and enforcement mechanisms. This normative analysis was integrated with the empirical findings to inform our recommendations. Concurrently, we conducted a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews as detailed below, to capture personal experiences and perceptions regarding pay transparency.

The implementation and introduction of the new Directive into work environments is a complex process, as it involves various perspectives and interests of employees. To gain a deeper understanding of these aspects, we employed a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews. This approach enables in-depth insight into personal experiences, perceptions, and expectations regarding the Pay Transparency Directive, as well as legal and organizational mechanisms that support or hinder its implementation. In line with the research objectives, we developed a structured interview framework that included both open-ended and semi-structured questions. These were designed to elicit in-depth and content-rich responses while covering all key aspects of the topics addressed. The main research goals guided the formulation of the questions to ensure clarity, relevance, and effectiveness in the data collected. All interviews were conducted in the Slovenian language to ensure participants could express their views comfortably and accurately.

The main objectives guiding the interview questions focused on gaining insight into: (1) awareness of the Directive, (2) transparency's influence on employment decisions and satisfaction, (3) experiences with pay inequality, and (4) perceptions of legal protections and remedies. Addressing these goals facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the current situation and employees' expectations regarding pay transparency, which in turn supports the subsequent analysis.

A total of eight interviews were conducted with employees from both public and private sectors, covering diverse industries including retail, manufacturing, international corporations, marketing, engineering, and public administration. The sampling strategy was purposive, aiming to achieve maximum demographic and professional diversity in terms of gender, age, education, and job role. Participants were at

various career stages, from entry-level employees to experienced professionals, and had direct experience with salary negotiations, employment contracts, or HR-related procedures. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and was conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on participant availability.

Interviewees were contacted in advance, informed about the purpose of the study, and gave verbal consent to participate. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, in line with ethical research standards. Interviews followed a pre-prepared structure, which allowed for flexibility and the exploration of emerging themes. The atmosphere during interviews was kept relaxed to encourage open and honest responses. The following table 1 summarizes key characteristics of the interviewees:

Tabel 1: Overview of Interviewees

Interview- ee no.	Gender	Sector	Job role	Experience level
1	Female	Retail	Sales clerk	Mid-level
2	Male	Retail	Sales associate	Mid-level
3	Male	International corp.	Business analyst	Senior
4	Female	Manufacturing	HR assistant	Junior
5	Male	Engineering	Team leader	Mid-level
6	Female	Marketing	Project manager	Senior
7	Male	Public sector	Administrative officer	Mid-level
8	Female	International corp.	Operations assistant	Mid-level

Source: Own work

After completing the interviews, we transcribed the recordings carefully, preserving the essence and context of the conversations. The transcribed material was then prepared for systematic analysis. We applied thematic analysis, combining deductive coding (informed by research questions and legal literature) with inductive coding (to capture emerging insights directly from the data). The focus was on identifying recurring patterns and trends in participants' narratives. Key themes were reviewed iteratively and compared across demographic groups to detect meaningful differences related to gender, organizational context, and transparency level.

This methodological design ensures both theoretical relevance and empirical robustness. It also contributes to the reliability of the findings and their applicability to real-world discussions on the implementation of the Pay Transparency Directive in Slovenia. The rich, contextual data obtained through interviews allows for a more novel understanding of the Directive's legal and practical implications and offers a solid foundation for the development of targeted recommendations.

6. Analysis of interviews and interpretation of findings

In this chapter, we conduct a detailed analysis of the interviews to explore how the participants' responses shed light on the research questions posed. For each research question, we examine and interpret the relevant responses, paying attention to both individual perspectives and broader patterns and trends. The results will be linked to the findings from the theoretical framework to gain a comprehensive understanding and develop well-founded conclusions, which will be presented at the conclusion of the analysis.

6.1. Perceptions of gender pay discrimination among Slovenian employees

The study revealed diverse perceptions of gender pay discrimination in Slovenian workplaces. While most interview-

ees did not report experiencing direct discrimination, some perceived subtle forms of inequality and pointed to structural factors that affect the fairness of pay practices. Gender pay discrimination was often perceived as less of an issue in the public sector due to regulated pay scales, whereas in the private sector—where formal policies are often less clearly defined—perceptions of discrimination were more pronounced.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of pay transparency as a tool for empowering employees and ensuring fair compensation for equal work. In their view, access to information on pay levels by gender and job position would allow for better identification and elimination of injustices. A lack of transparency contributes to mistrust and makes it difficult to prove discrimination, which negatively affects employee satisfaction and workplace dynamics. In the context of the Directive, interviewees identified provisions such as the right to information on average pay levels by gender as essential for addressing the information asymmetry between employers and employees. These findings align with academic literature, which highlights that transparent pay policies reduce the likelihood of discrimination and strengthen trust among employees (Wong et al. 2023).

Most interviewees stated that they received clear information about their salary at the start of employment, which positively influenced their decision to accept the job. However, they also noted that this is not always the case, as practices still vary across companies. Transparency in determining pay is crucial for building trust between employer and employee and for preventing potential injustices. One interviewee emphasized that she would not accept a job at a company where men and women were paid differently for the same work. These views are consistent with the provisions of the Directive, which require employers to inform job applicants about the starting salary or salary range and prohibit

inquiries about candidates' previous salaries (Directive (EU) 2023/970, 2023).

Despite mostly positive views on the Directive, interviewees pointed out practical challenges in its implementation. One such challenge is the lack of awareness regarding workers' rights and employers' obligations related to pay transparency. Some interviewees noted that they had only learned about the Directive through trade unions or in international companies where European standards are already being integrated into daily practices. This highlights the need for more systematic communication with workers, which could contribute to more effective implementation of the Directive. The research also revealed that pay differences are often the result of subtle factors, such as differences in education, experience, or negotiation skills. On average, women are less likely to negotiate their salaries, which can result in lower starting pay. This finding aligns with existing literature (Recalde & Vesterlund, 2020), which emphasizes that women are more likely to accept initial offers without negotiation, potentially leading to cumulative income differences over the course of their careers. These challenges suggest that pay transparency alone may not be sufficient to eliminate disparities, and additional measures—such as negotiation training and mentorship programs for women—may be necessary.

Some interviewees highlighted the difficulties younger women face in career advancement. Traditional gender roles and expectations, such as family caregiving responsibilities, may influence perceptions of women as less reliable candidates for leadership positions. One interviewee reported that male colleagues in leadership roles often receive higher pay, which is not always apparent due to a lack of transparency. Such situations underline the need for additional mechanisms to ensure equality, such as gender quotas in leadership or incentives for companies actively addressing

pay disparities. Overall, interviewees expressed support for the Directive as a step in the right direction, but emphasized that its effectiveness will depend on implementation. Practical challenges—such as limited knowledge of the legislation and insufficient resources for enforcement—are obstacles that must be overcome. In addition, clear performance indicators will be needed to monitor progress in reducing pay discrimination.

The Directive does not only address gender pay equality, but also the broader issue of fairness in the workplace. By ensuring transparency and objectivity in pay-setting practices, it creates a framework for reducing disparities that are not linked to performance or experience. At the same time, it introduces challenges, as excessive rigidity in salary structures may reduce flexibility for companies—something interviewees from the private sector identified as a potential issue. The research shows that Slovenian employees perceive gender-based pay discrimination as a less widespread, but still present, issue. Pay transparency, as outlined by the Directive, has the potential to contribute to reducing these gaps and improving working conditions significantly. However, to achieve these goals, employee awareness, strict enforcement, and a comprehensive approach that addresses structural causes of discrimination will be essential. Only with a balanced approach can we move toward a fairer and more inclusive working environment that benefits both employees and employers.

6.2. The impact of pay transparency on employee satisfaction by gender

The research revealed that pay transparency significantly influences employees' perception of fairness and overall job satisfaction, with this impact differing by gender and work environment. Interviewees emphasized that transparency in pay-setting processes enhances the sense of fairness, reduces

suspicion of injustice, and improves the general workplace climate. Women expressed greater satisfaction in terms of increased self-confidence, respect, and better opportunities for salary negotiations, while men highlighted clarity and equality as key factors contributing to their satisfaction.

For women, pay transparency was often associated with a stronger sense of confidence and trust in their work. Transparent policies enable the identification and elimination of unfair practices, thereby enhancing their ability to negotiate salaries and pursue career advancement. One interviewee noted that transparency reduces the possibility of concealing incompetence and encourages mutual respect among employees. This finding aligns with academic research emphasizing that transparent pay policies reduce information asymmetry between employers and employees and strengthen perceptions of fairness (Bamberger, 2023).

Men frequently associated satisfaction with increased pay transparency with the assurance of equal conditions for all employees. They emphasised the importance of equal pay for equal work, which eliminates discrimination and builds trust in the workplace. For them, clarity in pay-setting processes represented a crucial factor in reducing uncertainty and enhancing their understanding of company policies. One of the key advantages highlighted was the simplification of decision-making regarding job choices, as transparent policies offer clearer information even before the hiring process begins.

Both groups agreed that transparency contributes to a better working environment. It reduces mistrust among employees, strengthens the sense of respect, and decreases discrimination. Interviewees emphasized that the feeling of fairness directly affects their motivation and job satisfaction. When they are confident that their salaries are fair and comparable to those of their colleagues, they are more willing to invest effort and contribute to the success of the company.

Despite predominantly positive attitudes, interviewees also pointed out certain challenges and concerns. One key issue related to direct comparisons of job roles—particularly in cases where differences in education or experience make objective comparisons more difficult. Some interviewees also noted that transparency alone is not sufficient to eliminate all forms of inequality. Additional policies are needed to promote training and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender.

Transparent pay policies have already been implemented in some companies, though practices vary. Interviewees from companies where such policies are formalized reported higher levels of satisfaction and greater employee engagement. In contrast, those from companies without formal policies expressed dissatisfaction, as the lack of clear guidelines led to confusion and a sense of unfairness. This highlights the need for consistent implementation and ongoing monitoring of the effects of transparency policies. The link between pay transparency and employee satisfaction is closely tied to perceptions of fairness. Theoretical frameworks such as Adams's Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) support the finding that perceived fairness reduces interpersonal conflict and promotes higher productivity. Transparent policies that provide insight into salary ranges and criteria for pay decisions not only help reduce gender disparities but also contribute to an improved overall organizational culture.

The research indicates that pay transparency plays a crucial role in enhancing workplace satisfaction and fairness. However, its effectiveness depends on comprehensive implementation and a genuine commitment by companies to equality. Employees express a need for clear and consistent policies that not only enhance transparency but also ensure that salaries are determined in an objective and fair manner. Transparency is therefore not merely a legal matter, but a

crucial element in fostering trust and engagement in modern work environments.

6.3. Legal possibilities, challenges, and opportunities of the pay transparency directive for ensuring equal treatment in enforcement and non-contentious proceedings

The EU Pay Transparency Directive represents a critical legal framework for improving fairness in the labor market and reducing gender pay gaps. Its key provisions—such as the right to access information on average pay by gender, the obligation to apply objective criteria for setting salaries, and the prohibition of asking candidates about their previous salaries—are designed to address systemic inequalities in the workplace. Nevertheless, both interviewees and the academic literature point to the complexity of achieving these goals in practice.

The analysis of the interviews shows that employees recognize the benefits brought by increased transparency. Most believe that the right to access average pay levels by gender strengthens the sense of fairness and trust in employers. One interviewee from an international company emphasized that such a measure not only increases transparency but also reduces the risk of discrimination, as it prevents employers from concealing pay disparities. It was also pointed out that information on pay scales is crucial for more effective salary negotiations—especially important for more vulnerable groups, such as young women and less experienced employees.

On the other hand, interviewees highlighted certain challenges that may arise from the implementation of the Directive. Some expressed concerns that employers might formally introduce certain policies without actually improving real workplace conditions. One interviewee mentioned a case where a company claimed pay equality on paper, but in

practice, there were differences in promotion opportunities between men and women. Additionally, the lack of knowledge and awareness among employees regarding the rights granted by the Directive may limit its actual impact. The Directive also creates important opportunities for addressing discrimination in a more structured way. By emphasizing objective and neutral criteria for setting pay, it encourages the standardization of pay policies, which can improve the work environment and strengthen trust between employees and employers. One of the advantages highlighted by interviewees is the reduction of conflicts in the workplace, as transparency lowers speculation and feelings of inequality. An interviewee from the public sector pointed out that such a framework allows for greater clarity and facilitates dispute resolution—especially relevant in organizations where pay is a matter of public interest.

The theoretical review confirms that the Directive provides strong tools for enforcing equal treatment, but its success requires coordinated efforts among legislation, supervisory authorities, and companies. Mediation and arbitration—key mechanisms within non-contentious proceedings—are important for the swift and effective resolution of disputes related to pay transparency (Nolan-Haley, 2002; Rubino-Sammartano, 2014). The literature also highlights that the success of such policies often depends on employers' ability to adapt them to the specific characteristics of individual work environments (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan & Plamondon, 2000), as well as on the active involvement of employees in decision-making processes. Despite the positive expectations, the interviews also revealed some concerns regarding the Directive's practical feasibility. Interviewees pointed out that in companies where salaries are heavily dependent on individual performance or variable components, objective criteria may struggle to capture all relevant factors influencing pay. They also emphasized the need for additional

training for both employers and employees to improve understanding of the rights and obligations introduced by the Directive.

The Pay Transparency Directive represents an important step forward in ensuring equal treatment; however, its success will depend not only on the legislative framework but also on the effectiveness of its implementation and the support of the broader societal context. Transparency can serve as a powerful tool for improving working conditions, but only if it is supported by clear rules, effective oversight, and widespread awareness among all stakeholders. In this context, the Directive presents a valuable opportunity to reshape pay practices to become more fair and transparent. Nevertheless, its actual impact will only be measurable over time and through continuous monitoring of its implementation.

7. Discussion and recommendations

The EU Pay Transparency Directive (Directive (EU) 2023/970, 2023) represents one of the most significant legislative measures by the European Union aimed at eliminating systemic gender pay disparities. With this measure, the Union strengthens the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, as defined in Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (TFEU, 2016). The findings of our research confirm the importance of this measure in achieving workplace fairness, while also clearly highlighting the complexity of its effective legal and organizational implementation in the Slovenian context.

In the Slovenian legal framework, the principle of equal treatment has long been established in both the Employment Relationships Act (ZDR-1) and the Protection Against Discrimination Act (ZVarD). However, in practice, subtle and concealed forms of pay discrimination still frequently occur—forms that employees often struggle to recognize and

even more so to prove in court or other legal proceedings (Green, 2003). The new Directive aims to address these barriers by explicitly requiring transparency in pay policies. This includes employees' right to information about the salaries of colleagues performing comparable work, the obligation for employers to publish reports on gender pay gaps, and the prohibition of questions about candidates' past salaries.

The findings of the research indicate that Slovenian employees largely support the introduction of pay transparency, viewing it as a key tool for strengthening perceptions of fairness and mutual trust. In this light, legal arguments are also confirmed—namely, that transparency serves a preventive function and reduces the risk of hidden discrimination and systemic injustices in pay structures (Latino, 2024). The women who participated in our research were especially positive about the introduction of such measures, as they see them as a means of empowerment in salary negotiations and in overcoming traditional patterns of discrimination. Male interviewees also emphasized the importance of objectivity in pay determination, which stems from transparency, as it enables fairer treatment of all employees regardless of gender.

Despite these positive potentials, the introduction of the Directive also brings significant legal challenges, as highlighted by both theory and practice. A key obstacle in the implementation of the Directive's provisions will be ensuring effective legal protection for employees—something that has long been one of the greatest challenges in Slovenian labor law practice (Dimovski & Žnidaršič, 2007). Employees often lack adequate knowledge of their rights, and legal proceedings tend to be lengthy, costly, and uncertain in outcome. As emphasized by the European Commission (Carlson, 2022), effective implementation of the Directive will depend on whether Member States provide clear, accessible, and swift legal pathways for enforcing employee rights, as well as ef-

fective sanctions for employers who violate the principle of transparency. This gap in awareness was evident in our interviews as well – several participants admitted they were not fully aware of the Directive of their entitlements until informed by unions or colleagues – highlighting the need for more proactive dissemination of information and worker education regarding pay transparency. Likewise, the skepticism many workers expressed toward enforcement bodies and legal remedies (as noted in Section 4) indicates that building trust in these mechanism is critical.

Within the legal system of the Republic of Slovenia, it will therefore be necessary to ensure greater efficiency of enforcement procedures and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, which could represent a key channel for the swift and effective protection of rights. In line with Directive (EU) 2023/970, Member States should also promote the use of mediation and other forms of ADR, which allow for faster and less formal resolution of disputes (Melenko, 2020). For these procedures to be carried out effectively, it will also be essential to strengthen the role of national institutions, such as the Labour Inspectorate and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, both of which must take an active role in monitoring and advising on the implementation of the Directive.

For instance, relatively few equal pay claims have been pursued in Slovenian courts to date, reflecting the practical difficulties employees face in bringing such cases forward. By shifting the burden of proof onto employers and protecting whistleblowers, the Directive may lower some of these barriers, but only if these legal provisions are enforced vigorously. It will be critical to monitor and adapt national case law to ensure it aligns with the guidelines of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). In its judgment in *C-624/19 Tesco Stores* (2021), the Court clearly emphasized that pay systems must be designed in a way that allows for

objective comparisons between the value of different job positions, thereby reducing the space for covert forms of discrimination. Slovenia must therefore ensure that its national courts follow the CJEU's guidance, which will require appropriate judicial training and alignment of national jurisprudence.

Moreover, a comparative examination of other jurisdictions underscores the need for a comprehensive approach. Countries that have introduced pay transparency measures in recent years, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, have encountered mixed results. In the UK, mandatory gender pay gap reporting led to only a modest reduction in the wage gap (Bennedsen et al. 2019), suggesting that transparency alone produces gradual change at best. Similarly, Germany's 2017 pay transparency Act (*Entgelttransparenzgesetz*) has seen limited use of its disclosure rights, indicating that cultural and procedural barriers can dampen the law's effectiveness (OECD, 2021). Notably, research from Denmark found that transparency requirements reduced pay disparities mainly by curbing higher male wages rather than boosting female wages (World Bank, 2024), thus partially addressing the gap but not its root causes. These comparative experiences highlight that while transparency is a crucial tool, it must be accompanied by robust enforcement, supportive institutions, and cultural shifts to achieve equal pay truly. They also illustrate the importance of continuous monitoring and refinement of the measures once implemented, as transparency policies may need adjustments based on evidence of what works in practice.

From a practical perspective, the implementation of the Directive will also face the sensitive task of balancing the right to transparency with the protection of employee privacy. Clear guidelines must be developed to ensure that disclosed pay data is sufficiently aggregated or anonymized, especially in smaller organizations where individual salaries

might otherwise be deduced. Data protection authorities should be involved in crafting these rules so that transparency initiatives comply with GDPR principles such as data minimization and purpose limitation. Employers will also need to implement internal policies to manage pay information sensitively, ensuring that sharing pay-related data serves the goal of equality without unnecessarily exposing personal information. While the Directive foresees the anonymization of individual pay data, effective implementation will require the development of more detailed national guidelines for personal data protection in accordance with the GDPR. The formulation of national legislation must take into account the recommendations of the European Data Protection Supervisor (European Data Protection Supervisor, 2021) to ensure an appropriate balance between the right to transparency and individual privacy.

8. Conclusion

This study contributes to a more novel understanding of how legal regulation interacts with perceptions of fairness, employee satisfaction, and organizational culture. Through in-depth interviews with Slovenian employees, it becomes clear that while the legal framework offers strong tools for promoting pay equity, its success depends heavily on awareness, implementation, and the broader institutional context. What we know now is that employees generally welcome pay transparency as a principle that enhances fairness and trust in the workplace. However, the practical application of the Directive surfaces numerous unresolved issues: insufficient knowledge of legal rights, inconsistent corporate practices, administrative burdens, and tensions between transparency and privacy. Notably, the legal mechanisms remain underutilized and often inaccessible, especially in the private sector. It must also be noted that these findings, derived from a qualitative sample of eight interviewees, are exploratory

in nature. While they highlight important perceptions and issues, further research with larger samples or quantitative data would be necessary to generalize the results. Nonetheless, the trends identified here provide valuable early insight into the Directive's on-the-ground implications.

Looking forward, further attention must be given to building legal and institutional capacity. This includes empowering equality bodies, equipping courts and mediators with the knowledge to interpret new obligations, and developing sector-specific guidelines that balance legal compliance with operational feasibility. Research should also expand to examine the long-term organizational impacts of transparency policies and explore comparative experiences across EU Member States.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Transcript of the first interview (female interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Pozdravljeni, ali vam lahko zastavim nekaj vprašanj glede nove direktive EU o transparentnosti plač in enakopravnosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Seveda, kar izvolite.
- **Interviewer:** Ali ste seznanjeni z novo direktivo o transparentnosti plač?
- **Interviewee:** Ne, sploh ne vem, kaj določa ta direktiva.
- **Interviewer:** Zdi se mi pomembno, da bi vsak delavec to vedel. Mislim, da bi država morala bolje obveščati o tem, saj gre za pravico delavcev in obveznost delodajalcev, da so pregledni in pošteni pri izplačevanju plač.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je vaša izkušnja glede obveščanja o plačah ob začetku dela? Ali ste bili seznanjeni s plačnimi razredi in višino plače?
- **Interviewee:** Ko sem začela delati, sem vedela, da so plače enake za moške in ženske.
- **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za svojo trenutno zaposlitev, če bi imeli popolno plačno transparentnost že na začetku (na primer, če bi vas delodajalec že ob razgovoru obvestil o višini plače in razponu plačnih razredov)?
- **Interviewee:** Ne bi delala v podjetju, kjer bi bile razlike v plačah med moškimi in ženskami za isto delo. Zame je nujno, da delodajalec že na začetku razgovora jasno predstavi plačo in plačne razrede. V mojem primeru so mi te informacije podrobno predstavili.
- **Interviewer:** Kako bi komentirali prepoved vprašanj o prejšnjih plačah kandidatov? Kakšen je po vašem mnenju cilj tega ukrepa?
- **Interviewee:** Delodajalec ne potrebuje informacije o prejšnji plači, saj so delovna mesta lahko zelo različna.

Sama sem na primer prej delala v skladišču, zdaj pa delam v trgovini, kar pomeni, da primerjava plač ni smiselna.

- **Interviewer:** Kako vi v vašem podjetju zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** V našem podjetju ni razlik v plačah glede na spol.
- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki bi na primerljivem delovnem mestu prejemal višjo plačo, čeprav ima manj izkušenj kot vi?
- **Interviewee:** Ne, ne poznam nikogar.
- **Interviewer:** Se vam zdi plačna transparentnost smiselna?
- **Interviewee:** Absolutno! Kot sem že omenila, mora delodajalec biti iskren z iskalcem zaposlitve že na razgovoru. To tudi odraža vrednote podjetja.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšne so po vašem mnenju prednosti, ki jih prinaša plačna transparentnost, predvsem glede na plačno neenakost med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Zaposleni se bodo počutili bolj cenjene in delovno okolje bo bolj sproščeno. Če so razlike v plačah povezane s spolom, to ustvarja slabo vzdušje in nezadovoljstvo.
- **Interviewer:** Ali vaše podjetje vključuje politike za zagotavljanje plačne enakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Da, naše podjetje ima takšne politike. Na primer, že v oglasih za delovna mesta jasno navedejo, da je plača enaka za moške in ženske.
- **Interviewer:** Menite, da so takšne politike učinkovite?
- **Interviewee:** Seveda. Ključno je, da se delavec pri delu počuti cenjenega.
- **Interviewer:** Najlepša hvala za vaše odgovore in čas.
- **Interviewee:** Ni za kaj!

Appendix 2: Transcript of the second interview (male interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Pozdravljeni, hvala, da ste si vzeli čas za odgovore na nekaj vprašanj o transparentnosti plač.
- **Interviewee:** Ni problema, kar vprašajte.
- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo direktivo o transparentnosti plač?
- **Interviewee:** Iskreno povedano, direktive ne poznam. (*Intervjuvanec na kratko predstavi vsebino direktive.*)
- **Interviewee:** Nisem vedel, da je danes takšen poudarek na tej temi. Po mojem mnenju direktiva ureja del obveznosti, ki jih ima delodajalec do zaposlenih in kandidatov za zaposlitev.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja ob začetku zaposlitve? Ste bili obveščeni o plačnih razredih in višini plače?
- **Interviewee:** Ko sem začel delati, plače niso bile različne med moškimi in ženskami. S kolegicami smo se pogovarjali o tem in ugotovili, da imamo vsi enake osnovne plače. Razlike so bile le zaradi provizij, ki jih prejmemo ob doseganju določenega zneska prodaje. Delam v trgovini, če to ni bilo jasno.
- **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za trenutno zaposlitev, če bi že na začetku imeli popolno plačno transparentnost?
- **Interviewee:** Nikoli ne bi delal v podjetju, kjer obstaja plačna neenakost. Plača za isto delo ne sme biti različna za moške in ženske. Pri meni so obseg plače in razpone razredov pojasnili že na razgovoru, zato sem imel jasno sliko o plačilih.
- **Interviewer:** Kako bi komentirali prepoved vprašanj o prejšnjih plačah kandidatov?
- **Interviewee:** Mislim, da delodajalec lahko vpraša približno, kakšna je bila prejšnja plača, ampak to je odvisno od dela, ki ga je kandidat opravljal. Večina delodajalcev ima

v istem sektorju podobne plače, razlike so lahko le v malenkostih, kot so prevoz ali prehrana.

- **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v vašem podjetju?
- **Interviewee:** V našem podjetju ni razlik v plačah za isto delovno mesto glede na spol.
- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki bi na podobnem delovnem mestu prejemal višjo plačo, čeprav ima manj izkušenj?
- **Interviewee:** Ne, ne poznam nobenega takšnega primera.
- **Interviewer:** Ali se vam plačna transparentnost zdi smiselna?
(*Intervjuvanec predstavi ključne točke direktive.*)
- **Interviewee:** Seveda. Delodajalec mora biti jasen glede teh stvari. Delavec mora že pred razgovorom imeti vse potrebne informacije, da lahko sprejme najboljšo odločitev glede zaposlitve.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšne so po vašem mnenju prednosti uvedene plačne transparentnosti v smislu odpravljanja plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Prednost je predvsem v tem, da zagotavlja jasno sliko: za enako delo je enako plačilo, ne glede na spol.
- **Interviewer:** Ali vaše podjetje izvaja politike, ki zagotavljajo plačno enakost med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Da, podjetje to zagotavlja z enakimi plačami za enake naloge.
- **Interviewer:** Menite, da so takšne politike učinkovite?
- **Interviewee:** Da, so učinkovite, saj pomagajo preprečiti notranje konflikte med moškimi in ženskami.
- **Interviewer:** Najlepša hvala za vaše odgovore in vaš čas!
- **Interviewee:** Ni za kaj.

Appendix 3: Transcript of the third interview (male interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo direktivo o preglednosti plačil v EU?
- **Interviewee:** Za direktivo sem že slišal. Sodelavka, ki je članica sindikata in sveta delavcev, je to temo omenila na enem od sestankov. Delam v multinacionalki, ki se mora prilagajati evropskim pravilom.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja ob začetku zaposlitve? Ste bili seznanjeni s plačnimi razredi in višino plače?
- **Interviewee:** Vedno sem prejel točne informacije o višini plače že na razgovorih. Na enem razgovoru sem bil sicer zavržen, ker je bila ponujena plača 10 % nižja od moje trenutne. Direktor, s katerim sem govoril, mi je pojasnil, da sem sicer najboljši kandidat, a me ne morejo sprejeti, ker ne želijo, da bi kasneje zahteval višjo plačo. Čeprav mi je bilo to sprva neprijetno, sem cenil njegovo iskrenost.
- **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za trenutno zaposlitev, če bi že na začetku imeli popolno plačno transparentnost?
- **Interviewee:** V našem podjetju je osnovna plača jasno navedena v pogodbi, prav tako so predstavljeni pogoji za variabilni del plače. Če teh informacij ne bi bilo, bi bila odločitev odvisna od števila drugih možnosti. Če imaš več opcij, lažje izločiš tiste z manj transparentnosti.
- **Interviewer:** Se vam zdi smiselno, da delodajalci ne bodo smeli spraševati kandidatov o prejšnjih plačah?
- **Interviewee:** Če plače postanejo transparentne, se mi zdi takšna prepoved nesmiselna. Delodajalca je treba prepričati z veščinami in kompetencami, saj denarna komponenta izgubi pomen.
- **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v vašem podjetju?
- **Interviewee:** Tega ne zaznavam. V našem podjetju ni raz-

lik v plačah za isto delovno mesto glede na spol. Tudi komentarjev o različnih plačah nisem slišal.

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki bi na primerljivi poziciji prejemal višjo plačo, čeprav ima manj izkušenj?
- **Interviewee:** Teh informacij nimam, vendar v našem podjetju velja, da se za plačo lahko pogajaš le ob zaposlitvi. To pomeni, da lahko novinec prejme višjo plačo od obstoječih zaposlenih. S tem se ne strinjam, saj sem to že dokazal. Ko sem izzval direktorico, naj najde nekoga, ki bi opravljal moje delo za enako plačilo, tega ni uspela.
- **Interviewer:** Ali se vam plačna transparentnost zdi smiselna? Se strinjate z vsebino direktive?
- **Interviewee:** Da, popolnoma se strinjam. Transparentnost je nujna in že dolgo potrebna.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšne so po vašem mnenju prednosti, ki jih prinaša plačna transparentnost v smislu odpravljanja plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost bi koristila tudi podjetjem, ki nimajo ustreznih politik. Pomagala bi zmanjšati razlike med spoloma.
- **Interviewer:** Ali vaše podjetje izvaja politike za zagotavljanje plačne enakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Da, v našem podjetju to strogo upoštevamo. Smo mednarodna korporacija z naprednimi pravili, ki zagotavljajo enakost. Tudi našo upravo vodi ženska, kar potrjuje našo zavezanost.
- **Interviewer:** Menite, da je takšna politika učinkovita?
- **Interviewee:** Absolutno. Imamo visok odstotek žensk na vseh ravneh, kar dodatno utrjuje enakost.

Appendix 4: Transcript of the fourth interview (female interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo direktivo o preglednosti plačil v EU?

- **Interviewee:** Ne, nisem vedela za to direktivo. Mislim, da bi bilo dobro, če bi o tem več poročali v medijih.
 - **Interviewer:** Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja ob začetku zaposlitve? Ste bili seznanjeni s plačnimi razredi in višino plače?
 - **Interviewee:** Osnovno plačo sem vedno izvedela, bodisi so mi jo povedali sami bodisi sem vprašala. To je zame ključna informacija, še posebej pri menjavi službe, saj je pomembno vedeti, če bo plača višja od trenutne.
 - **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za trenutno zaposlitev, če bi že na začetku imeli popolno plačno transparentnost? Kaj pa, če ne?
 - **Interviewee:** Že na začetku sem vedela za višino osnovne plače in to je poleg pogojev dela najbolj vplivalo na mojo odločitev. Če ne bi izvedela te informacije, bi se odločila za drugo službo, kjer bi mi to povedali.
 - **Interviewer:** Se vam zdi smiselno, da delodajalci ne bodo smeli vprašati kandidatov o njihovih plačilih v prejšnjih delovnih razmerjih?
 - **Interviewee:** Na nekaterih razgovorih so me to vprašali, kar mi ni bilo všeč. Menim, da delodajalci nimajo pravice vedeti moje prejšnje plače. Bolje je, da se osredotočijo na svojo ponudbo.
 - **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v podjetju, kjer ste delali?
 - **Interviewee:** V prejšnjem podjetju sem imela občutek, da imajo moški višje plače. Eden od primerov je bila sodelavka, ki je delala doktorat in je morala vložiti več truda v pisanje člankov kot njeni moški kolegi.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki bi na primerljivi poziciji prejemal višjo plačo, čeprav ima manj izkušenj?
 - **Interviewee:** Imela sem sodelavko z univerzitetno izobrazbo, ki je bila manj cenjena za svoje delo v primerjavi s sodelavcem z enako izobrazbo.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali se vam plačna transparentnost zdi smiselna? Se strinjate z vsebino direktive?
-

- **Interviewee:** Zdi se mi zelo smiselna. Končno bi dobili vpogled v plače in ugotovili, kdo pošteno dela za svoje plačilo ter kdo ne.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšne so po vašem mnenju prednosti plačne transparentnosti v smislu odpravljanja plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost lahko razkrije nepravilnosti in omogoči primerjave med zaposlenimi ter podjetji. Vpliv na plačno neenakost bo dolgoročen, saj je problem tudi v miselnosti, ne le v denarju.
- **Interviewer:** Ali vaše podjetje izvaja politike za zagotavljanje plačne enakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** V prejšnjem podjetju tega ni bilo. Panoga (proizvodnja) ni dajala poudarka na te teme.
- **Interviewer:** Ali bi bila takšna politika sploh izpeljiva v vašem podjetju?
- **Interviewee:** Mislim, da ne, ker so razlike v izobrazbi prevelike, delavci z nižjo izobrazbo pa ne bi imeli dovolj vpliva pri oblikovanju teh politik.

Appendix 5: Transcript of the fifth interview (male interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo Direktivo o preglednosti plačil? Ste že slišali zanjo?
 - **Interviewee:** Da, z direktivo sem že seznanjen.
 - **Interviewer:** Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja ob začetku zaposlitve? Ste bili seznanjeni s plačnimi razredi in višino plače?
 - **Interviewee:** Delal sem v dveh zasebnih podjetjih, kjer nisem bil seznanjen s plačnimi razredi. Menim pa, da je to pomembno, saj omogoča zaposlenim večjo preglednost in boljše razumevanje možnosti v podjetju.
 - **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za trenutno zaposlitev, če bi imeli popolno plačno transparentnost?
-

- **Interviewee:** V prejšnjem podjetju so bili določeni problemi s transparentnostjo glede napredovanj in plač, ki niso sledile obljubam. V trenutnem podjetju je bilo vse predstavljeno zelo jasno, s čimer sem zadovoljen.
 - **Interviewer:** Kako bi argumentirali prepoved, da delodajalci ne smejo vprašati kandidatov o njihovih prejšnjih plačah?
 - **Interviewee:** To je dobra stvar, saj so informacije o prejšnjih plačah zasebne. Če delodajalec ve za tvojo prejšnjo plačo, lahko manipulira in ti ponudi nižje plačilo.
 - **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v vašem podjetju?
 - **Interviewee:** Naša panoga je pretežno moška, razmerje je približno 10 moških na eno žensko. Kljub temu, kolikor sem seznanjen, so plače za isto delovno mesto enake.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali poznate primere, ko imajo novozaposleni višjo plačo od izkušenih delavcev?
 - **Interviewee:** V našem podjetju za to še nisem slišal, a vem za primere v drugih podjetjih. To je pogosto posledica pomanjkanja delovne sile, zaradi česar delodajalci ponujajo višje plače novim kandidatom.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali se vam plačna transparentnost zdi smiselna? Ali se strinjate z vsebino direktive?
 - **Interviewee:** Da, zdi se mi zelo smiselna. Transparentnost omogoča boljše obveščanje bodočih zaposlenih in lahko zmanjša neenakosti med spoloma.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali v Sloveniji vidite večji problem v plačni neenakosti med spoloma ali pomanjkanju transparentnosti?
 - **Interviewee:** V Sloveniji se mi zdi plačna neenakost manjši problem, večji izziv so slabo definirani plačni razredi in pogoji za določitev plač.
 - **Interviewer:** Kakšne prednosti vidite v uvedbi plačne transparentnosti glede plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
 - **Interviewee:** Za Slovenijo menim, da je ta praksa že dokaj uveljavljena. Direktiva bi lahko prinesla izboljšave predvsem tam, kjer tega še ni.
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- **Interviewer:** Ali ste slišali za primere, ko ženske težje napredujejo zaradi pričakovanja, da bodo imele otroke?
- **Interviewee:** Sam za tak primer nisem slišal. Morda bi se ženskam obdobje porodniškega dopusta ne štelo kot delovne izkušnje, ne bi pa smele biti diskriminirane zaradi tega.
- **Interviewer:** Ali vaše podjetje uporablja politiko, ki zagotavlja plačno enakost med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Uradno zapisane politike ne poznam, vendar se zdi, da podjetje že v praksi zagotavlja enakost pri plačilu za enake pogoje in izkušnje.
- **Interviewer:** Ali bi bilo smiselno takšno politiko zapisati, da bi bila bolj učinkovita?
- **Interviewee:** Čeprav sistem deluje, bi bilo mogoče koristno, da je politika uradno zapisana, saj bi to prispevalo k dodatni transparentnosti.
- **Interviewer:** Hvala za vaš čas in odgovore!
- **Interviewee:** Ni problema, z veseljem.

Appendix 6: Transcript of the sixth interview (female interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo Direktivo o preglednosti plačil?
- **Interviewee:** Da, seznanjena sem z njo. Direktiva uvaja ukrepe za večjo preglednost plač in zmanjšanje plačnih razlik med spoloma, vključno z obveznostjo poročanja o plačnih razlikah ter zagotavljanjem informacij o plačnih razredih.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja ob začetku zaposlitve? Ste bili seznanjeni s plačnimi razredi in začetno plačo?
- **Interviewee:** Moje izkušnje so bile različne. Pri nekaterih delodajalcih so bile informacije o plačah jasne, pri drugih ne. Transparentnost je po mojem mnenju pomembna, saj

krepi zaupanje med zaposlenimi in delodajalci ter pomaga zmanjšati plačne razlike.

- **Interviewer:** Bi se odločili za trenutno zaposlitev, če bi imeli popolno plačno transparentnost?
- **Interviewee:** Da, vendar mi plačna transparentnost ni najpomembnejši dejavnik. Kljub temu bi mi omogočila boljše razumevanje vrednotenja mojega dela in močnejšo pogajalsko izhodišče.
- **Interviewer:** Kako bi utemeljili prepoved, da delodajalci ne smejo spraševati o prejšnjih plačah kandidatov?
- **Interviewee:** To je ključnega pomena za enakost in transparentnost. Če delodajalci ne poznajo prejšnjih plač, morajo ocenjevati kandidate na podlagi njihovih izkušenj in znanj, kar prispeva k pravičnejšemu izhodišču.
- **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v vašem podjetju?
- **Interviewee:** Plačna neenakost obstaja, kar se vidi predvsem pri vodilnih položajih, kjer so večinoma moški, ki imajo tudi višje plače. Podjetje se sicer trudi izboljšati transparentnost, vendar razlike še vedno obstajajo.
- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate primere, kjer novi zaposleni prejmejo višjo plačo kot izkušeni delavci?
- **Interviewee:** Da, poznam takšne primere, ki so pogosto posledica nepravičnih plačnih sistemov in pomanjkanja delovne sile.
- **Interviewer:** Ali menite, da je plačna transparentnost smiselna?
- **Interviewee:** Da, izjemno smiselna. Nova direktiva določa obveščanje kandidatov o začetni plači in razponu plač, prepoveduje vprašanja o prejšnjih plačah in zagotavlja dostop do podatkov o plačnih razlikah, kar je ključno za zmanjšanje diskriminacije.
- **Interviewer:** Katere prednosti vidite v plačni transparentnosti, zlasti glede neenakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost zmanjšuje plačne razlike, krepi zaupanje med zaposlenimi in delodajalci ter izboljš

šuje delovno okolje. Prav tako omogoča boljša pogajanja in manj diskriminacije.

- **Interviewer:** Kako vaše podjetje zagotavlja plačno enakost med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Podjetje ima politiko za zagotavljanje enakosti, vendar nanjo ne daje velikega poudarka. Organiziramo ankete o zadovoljstvu zaposlenih, ki pomagajo razumeti, kako se zaposleni počutijo glede delovnega okolja in enakosti.
- **Interviewer:** Menite, da je ta politika učinkovita?
- **Interviewee:** Da, saj smo opazili izboljšanje zadovoljstva zaposlenih. Čeprav se osredotočamo predvsem na splošno zadovoljstvo, analiziramo tudi plačno enakost. Še vedno pa obstajajo možnosti za izboljšave.
- **Intervjuvanec:** Hvala za vaš čas in odgovore!
- **Interviewee:** Z veseljem, hvala tudi vam.

Appendix 7: Transcript of the seventh interview (male interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo direktivo EU o transparentnosti plač?
- **Interviewee:** Zgolj bežno.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je vaša izkušnja, ko ste začeli z delom? Ste bili obveščeni o plačnih razredih in višini plače? Ali menite, da je to smiselno?
- **Interviewee:** Da, v javnem sektorju, kjer sem zaposlen, so plačni razredi del slovenske zakonodaje, in zato sem bil seznanjen. Transparentnost glede teh informacij je smiselna, saj zaposleni vedo, kje stojijo.
- **Interviewer:** Ali bi se odločili za trenutno službo, če ne bi bili obveščeni o plačnih razredih in višini plače?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost je pomembna, vendar v privatnem sektorju tak sistem pogosto ne obstaja. Tam je vse odvisno od dogovora, kar pomeni, da se zaposleni težko odločajo brez teh informacij.

- **Interviewer:** Kako bi utemeljili prepoved, da delodajalci ne smejo vprašati kandidatov o njihovih prejšnjih plačah?
 - **Interviewee:** To se mi zdi logično. Pretekla plača ne bi smela biti pomembna za novega delodajalca. Če to vprašajo, to običajno pomeni, da želijo ponuditi manj.
 - **Interviewer:** Kako v vašem podjetju zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma?
 - **Interviewee:** Ker so plače javnih uslužbencev javne, ne zaznavam razlik. Vendar tudi ne vem, koliko zaslužijo moji sodelavci.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki je na primerljivi poziciji in ima višjo plačo, kljub temu da imate sami več izkušenj?
 - **Interviewee:** Včasih sčasoma izvem za takšne primere. Čeprav je zakonodaja jasna, ni vedno transparentno, v kateri plačni razred je kdo uvrščen.
 - **Interviewer:** Ali se vam zdi plačna transparentnost smiselna, kot jo predvideva direktiva?
 - **Interviewee:** Transparentnost je pomembna, vendar obstajajo situacije, kjer bi lahko omejevala fleksibilnost delodajalcev, na primer, če bi želeli bolje nagraditi kandidata z večjo usposobljenostjo ali drugačnimi sposobnostmi.
 - **Interviewer:** Katere prednosti prinaša plačna transparentnost glede plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
 - **Interviewee:** Transparentnost je dobra, vendar je vprašanje, kako jo uporabiti v praksi. Enakost je smiselna, vendar ni vedno enostavno primerjati dela različnih ljudi, tudi če sta na enakem delovnem mestu.
 - **Interviewer:** Kako vaše podjetje zagotavlja politiko plačne enakosti med spoloma?
 - **Interviewee:** V javnem sektorju je to sistemsko urejeno, zato ne bi smelo biti razlik.
 - **Interviewer:** Menite, da je ta politika učinkovita?
 - **Interviewee:** Na papirju je, vendar v praksi je lahko drugače. Različni zaposleni imajo lahko različno ovrednoteno delo, čeprav je uradno enako.
 - **Interviewer:** Imate še kakšen komentar?
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- **Interviewee:** Sistem se sliši dobro, vendar je težko doseči popolno enakost v praksi.
- **Interviewer:** Hvala za vaše odgovore in čas!
- **Interviewee:** Prosim, hvala tudi vam!

Appendix 8: Transcript of the eighth interview (female interviewee)

- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate novo direktivo EU o transparentnosti plač?
- **Interviewee:** Ne, nisem seznanjena.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšna je vaša izkušnja pri začetku zaposlitve? Ali ste bili obveščeni o plačnih razredih in višini plače? Menite, da je to smiselno?
- **Interviewee:** Nikoli nisem bila obveščena o plačnih razredih v nobeni od prejšnjih služb, kjer sem delala. Vsa podjetja so bila zasebna. Mislim pa, da bi bilo smiselno in nujno, da teh razlik med spoloma sploh ne bi bilo.
- **Interviewer:** Ali bi se odločili za trenutno službo, če bi bila plačna transparentnost popolna?
- **Interviewee:** Da, bi se odločila, čeprav mi to ne bi nujno vplivalo na odločitev za zaposlitev.
- **Interviewer:** Kako bi argumentirali prepoved, da delodajalci ne smejo vprašati kandidatov o njihovih prejšnjih plačah?
- **Interviewee:** To se mi zdi pravilno, saj se delodajalec lahko na podlagi pričakovanj o plači že sam odloči, kakšno plačo bi ponudil. Prepoved tega vprašanja bi pripomogla k bolj pravičnemu izhodišču za pogajanja.
- **Interviewer:** Kako zaznavate plačno neenakost med spoloma v podjetju, kjer delate?
- **Interviewee:** Ne zaznavam nobene plačne neenakosti. Tudi v prejšnjih podjetjih tega nisem opazila.
- **Interviewer:** Ali poznate koga, ki je na primerljivi poziciji in ima višjo plačo, kljub temu da imate sami več izkušenj?

- **Interviewee:** Ne, takih primerov nisem doživela.
- **Interviewer:** Ali se vam plačna transparentnost zdi smiselna glede na določila direktive?
- **Interviewee:** Da, zdi se mi smiselna. Predvsem bi bilo koristno, da podjetja že ob razpisu jasno navedejo razpon plač, kar bi prihranilo čas tako kandidatom kot delodajalcem.
- **Interviewer:** Kakšne prednosti prinaša uvedba plačne transparentnosti glede plačne neenakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost bo imela smisel le, če bo pripomogla k izenačevanju plač. Če se to ne zgodi, bo samo razkrivanje razlik lahko celo demotiviralo zaposlene.
- **Interviewer:** Kako vaše podjetje vključuje politiko za zagotavljanje plačne enakosti med spoloma?
- **Interviewee:** Tega ne bi vedela. Nimam informacij, ki bi kazale na to, da bi podjetje imelo takšno politiko.
- **Interviewer:** Menite, da bi bila takšna politika izvedljiva v vašem podjetju?
- **Interviewee:** Težko bi bilo, saj smo mednarodno podjetje s pisarnami v več kot 20 državah. Primerjava plač med državami je kompleksna.
- **Interviewer:** Imate še kakšen komentar na to temo?
- **Interviewee:** Transparentnost je še posebej pomembna v javni upravi, kjer gre za sredstva iz državnega proračuna. V zasebnem sektorju pa menim, da podjetja potrebujejo več fleksibilnosti pri določanju plač.
- **Interviewer:** Hvala za vaše odgovore!
- **Interviewee:** Prosim!