



Equal Pay in the Nordic countries

The law and policy strategies
A Summary



The Nordic countries have political objectives and broad strategies for achieving a labour market that where gender-based discrimination does not occur. Despite this, differences in pay between men and women who do the same or equivalent work still persist. Gender-based pay differences are closely associated with other gender equality challenges in the Nordic countries, including the gender-segregated labour market, levels of employment and the unequal distribution of household chores and caring for other family members in these countries. Here are some of the main findings in NIKK's report Equal Pay in the Nordic countries - the law and policy strategies presented.

Gender hierarchy influences how work is valued

Research shows that a very basic phenomenon influences the pay gap: the gender hierarchy structure of the labour market, where women's work and female-dominated occupations are undervalued. This pattern is clearly apparent in the gender-segregated labour market, where female-dominated occupations are generally lower paid than male-dominated occupations of a similar degree of difficulty.

More oversight and sanction options

According to experts and researchers, there is potential for improvement in the Nordic countries in the design of legislation, oversight and sanctions. One challenge is poor enforcement of the legislation and that the probability of suffering the consequences of breaching the legislation is very low. This is apparent in the supervisory authorities' own evaluations as well as in official government reports.

Involve workers in equal pay processes

Research shows that an important element in addressing this challenge is involving representatives of trade unions in equal pay processes and job evaluation. To get all aspects of a job included in the

job's description, it is vital that those who actually do the job are involved in the process.

Job evaluations need gender awareness

To effectively classify and assess different jobs, more awareness of gender stereotypes and of expectations linked to ideas about men and women is needed. Otherwise, there is a risk that female-dominated jobs will continue to be undervalued in job evaluation systems.

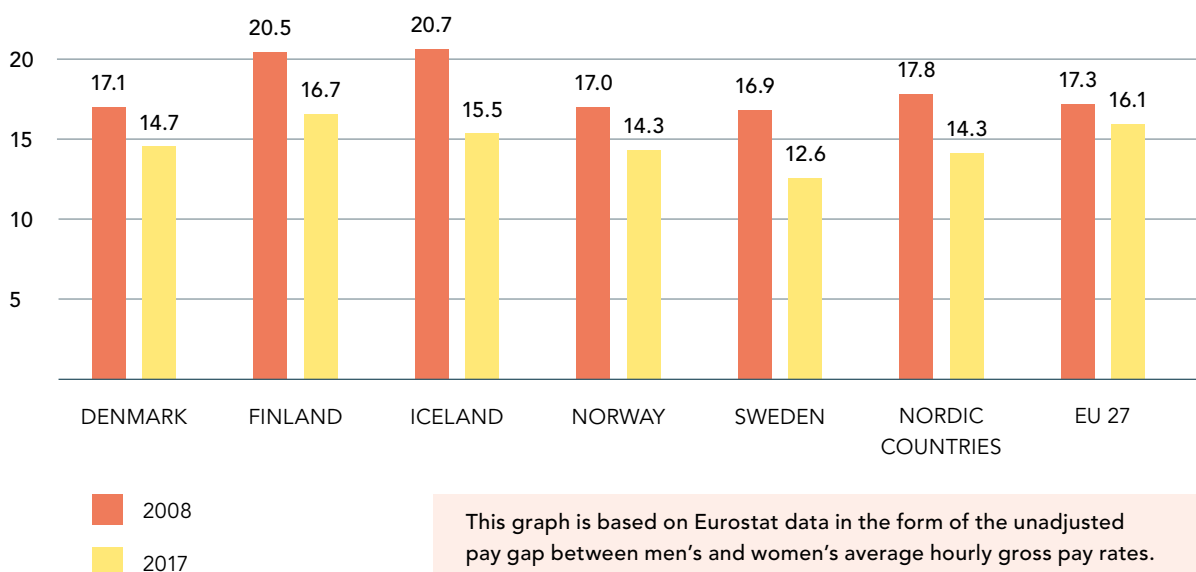
Look at how different grounds of discrimination interact

The equal pay legislation in the Nordic countries shines the spotlight on gender-based pay differences. Studies show that it is also necessary to gather statistics and take action on pay differences based on other grounds of discrimination. These statistics help to highlight how several factors, such as ethnicity and gender, interact. For example, the research shows that in the Nordic countries, the employment gap between people born in the country and those who are foreign-born has grown, and that foreign-born women are the biggest group outside the labour market.

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	LEGISLATION	REQUIREMENTS
DENMARK	Ligelønsloven (Equal Pay Act) Section 5a.	Employers with at least 35 employees must submit pay statistics by gender with the aid of Statistics Denmark. They can also choose to submit a statement of wages and salaries.
FINLAND	Lagen om jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män (Act on equality between women and men) Section 6.	Employers with at least 30 employees must conduct a survey of pay rates every two years in order to determine that no unfounded, gender-based pay differences exist. If such are found, the employer must take appropriate corrective action.
ICELAND	Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008 Section 19.	Employers with at least 25 employees must be certified under a pay standard. Employers must demonstrate that they have set up a payroll system that guarantees equal pay setting; if not they are in breach of the law.
NORWAY	Act relating to Gender Equality Chapter 4 Section 26a.	Private sector employers with more than 50 employees and all employers within the public sector must report their efforts to achieve gender equality annually. Producing gender-based pay statistics or a wages and salary review may constitute one part of this, but is not a legal obligation.
SWEDEN	Diskrimineringslagen (Antidiscrimination Act) Chapter 3 Section 8.	All employers are to annually conduct a survey of and analyse the provisions in law and usual practice concerning equal pay as well as actual pay differences between men and women. This process aims to detect, take action on and prevent differences in wages and salaries without any objective ground as well as other conditions of employment. Employers with at least ten employees must document this process in writing.

Pay gap in %, trend over time 2008–2017



*This is a summary of the report *Equal Pay in the Nordic countries – the law and policy strategies*. The report sheds light on the Nordic countries' policy strategies and legislation in the area of equal pay and is based on interviews with researchers in the field, experts and professionals. Find the full report on nikk.no.*

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– the law and policy strategies**

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