



Platform for Equal and Non-transferable Parental Leave

Summary and Conclusions

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

'From Daddy Quotas to Care Parity: For Equality, Equal Leave Rights' Civil society making policies for the future to achieve equality

“In order to reach true equality between men and women it is necessary that parental leave for birth and adoption be equal and non-transferable for both parents”.

- *“Equal paternity and maternity leave rights are not a luxury but a right in itself”*: Gertrud Åström, President of the Swedish European Women’s Lobby
- *“Increasing the length of the maternity leave perpetuates the role of women as carers”*: Soledad Murillo, former General Secretary on Equality Policies, Spain
- *To even start thinking about equal payment rights, it is absolutely essential that men and women have the same availability for employment*: Óscar García, Aalborg University, Denmark.

On Saturday 11 December about 400 people arranged to meet at the Auditorium of **Reina Sofía National Art Center Museum** in Madrid, on the occasion of the **2nd EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ‘WITH YOUR PERMISSION’ ‘From Daddy Quotas to Care Parity: For Equality, Equal Leave Rights’**.

This conference, organized by the Spanish Partner of PLENT *Plataforma por los Permisos Iguales e Intransferibles de Nacimiento y Adopción* (PPIINA) summoned many sectors of civil society: feminists, egalitarian men groups, young students, trade unions, political parties, important academic figures and prominent members of the newly formed PLENT, which on an international level pursues the same objectives as the Spanish platform (PPIINA).



Besides **Jesús Carrillo**, Reina Sofía Museum representative, other guests who participated at the opening ceremony were **Asunción Bernárdez**, from the Complutense University of Madrid, **Laura Nuño**, from the Rey Juan Carlos University, **Raquel Osborne**, from the UNED and **Cristina Saucedo**, from the Women's Institute. On behalf of PPiINA, **José Carlos Santamaría** stressed that equal and non-transferable parental leaves entail a form of policy-making for happiness.

Before an audience, really eager for more creative policies which could address the problems caused by gender inequality, there was a general consensus among the different discussion roundtables in emphasizing the advantages gender equality recognition could bring about for the whole society. Consequently, many voices **demanded a law reform to establish non-transferable maternity and paternity leave rights, fully paid at 100% and with an equal length for both men and women.** Just as **María Pazos**, PPiINA spokeswoman, pointed out such a measure would bear mutually beneficial effects:

“both for achieving parity in caring as for increasing fertility rates and most importantly for accomplishing equal employment opportunities”

During the busy conference, besides workshops and discussion roundtables, a self-explanatory video was shown to delegates about the importance of gender equality recognition, with special guest appearances by **Amelia Valcárcel**, **Carmen Sarmiento**, **Juan Torres** and **Jorge Calero**. Other audiovisual materials were also shown and a play was performed by artist **Gemma Peris**.

All the broad team of expert speakers agreed that it is precisely at times of economic and demographic crisis when a change to an egalitarian gender regime is required in order to make society humanely and economically sustainable: and the [PPiINA](http://www.equalandnontransferable.org) demands summarise such direction towards true gender equality.

International contributions



After opening conference by **Gertud Aström**, a panel discussion took place on international scientific evidence supporting gender equality.



Just as **Carmen Castro**, [PPIINA](http://www.ppiina.org) spokeswoman, pointed out:

“the equalization of paternity leave with maternity leave rights should not be seen as a costly choice but, on the contrary, as an extremely profitable investment for the future”

The political and trade union visions

The conference programme included two discussion roundtables where the subject of parental leave for birth and adoption were dealt with from both a trade union and a political party perspective. Speakers participating at the discussion panel entitled “**The Role of Equal And Non-Transferable Parental Leave in Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace**” were **Elisa García**, confederate representative of UGT’s Department for Working Women, **Susana Brunel**, deputy to CCOO’s Women’s Confederate Secretariat and **Inmaculada Gimeno**, PPIINA member and Coordinator of the Valencian Intersindical Women’s Area.



The trade union representatives pointed out the main obstacles women encounter to remain within quality employment, after those periods of absence due to their caring responsibilities, and also stressed the need for men to embark themselves on that kind of responsibilities, and the requirement to protect their jobs. Despite the economic crisis, such measures are essential because “investing in equality results in progress and welfare”, they stated.

On the other hand, the speakers attending the discussion roundtable entitled “**From Daddy Quotas to Care Parity: What Roadmap?**” were **Carmen Montón**, from the Parliamentary Socialist Party, **Gaspar Llamazares**, from the Parliamentary IU Party and **Carmen Quintanilla**, from the Parliamentary Popular Party.



As political representatives, all involved agreed on a seeming consensus about the need for Spanish paternity leave periods being extended. Following the speakers’ interventions, some members of the audience addressed the speakers to explain why, despite this apparent political consensus, the extension of the legal paternity leave period to four weeks had been held up for so long, and a hot debate ensued which demonstrated the little interest in facing coherent gender equality policies. **Rosa Cobo**, professor at the Coruña University and of Forum of Feminist Policy, pointed out that “We feminists have

been so concerned with supporting the institutionalization of gender equality policies that have pushed into the background our very criticism ability”.

Introducing PLENT

The conference was also the setting for the public inauguration event of the **Platform for Equal and Non-Transferable Parental Leave** (English acronym **PLENT**) formed at a meeting in Madrid the previous Friday.



The establishment of this platform is a sign that “feminist demands have no boundaries”, just as Rey Juan Carlos University professor and PPIINA member **Ana de Miguel** asserted.

On that event there were many distinguished members from bodies of several European countries fully committed to the fight for gender equality, like **Julia Kubissa** from the East-West Women’s European Network NEWW-POLSKA (Poland), **Valeria Seigelshifer** from Women’s Budget Forum (Israel), **Gertrud Aström**, from the Women’s European Lobby (Sweden), **Klass Hyllander**, from Men Engage Europe, **Ingólfur V. Gíslason**, chair professor from Iceland University, and **Óscar García Agustín**, from Aalborg University (Denmark).

“It is a long way to go and efforts need to be joined”, stated Julia Kubissa, for whom progress is already taking place because “in recent years a new thinking model has emerged, the discourse on family and child care has evolved and a more shared co-responsibility has been introduced”

Likewise, Klass Hyllander emphasized the positive contributions of working in a network, as the correct means to achieve gender equality, and pointed out how PLENT needs “to build arguments and evidence to persuade politicians and society about the undoubted benefits which equal, non-transferable and 100% fully-paid leave rights entail;” which according to the Swedish activist,

“it is precisely for its simplicity and rationality that this way of thinking has the great advantage of being impossible to refute”

From these principles, the civil platform Ppiina, co-founder member of PLENT, is formed by more than eighty organizations working alongside with the aim of **demanding the equalization of fathers and mothers leave rights.**