

Confusion of terms

In relation to Gender equality several terms are used which are very often used incorrectly, or are used interchangeably as if they were synonyms:

Equal opportunities (of women and men)

Equality of opportunities is the concept that is based on the general perception of human rights. It emphasizes equality of all the people regardless of sex, race or ethnicity, age, health status, social status, etc.

Equality of opportunities refers to the fact that it is not enough just to declare equality for all, but it must also ensure the conditions for this equality to be reasonably achieved. Each person must have equal opportunities for fulfilling their needs, aspirations and life goals. Equality of opportunities therefore implies the need for compensatory measures where equal opportunities are not guaranteed.

Imagine that someone will build a beautiful building, to which all people are invited. Entry into the building is via a beautiful, massive staircase with perfect decoration. Although the building is open to everyone, even if an invitation to all people irrespective of sex, age, ethnicity, race, health etc. is published, people who cannot handle the staircase, in reality do not have the same chance to enter the building. In order to ensure equal opportunities for these people, it is essential to invest in a modification of the entrance to the building so that they are able to manage it. In the past, such a measure was called **Positive discrimination**. Certain people got more than others (in our case from the total package of money they received a special grant to improve access to the building just for them). Such a name evoked a feeling of injustice in many people. As such, it has been replaced by a more accurate term **Compensatory measure** that more accurately reflects the essence of such measures.

Equality of opportunities for women and men is a concept that focuses on achieving equal opportunities for women and men, especially in the labor market, in education and in political and professional life, but also in other areas. Barriers that (mostly) women have to overcome which prevent them from achieving equal rights with men, come mainly from social prejudices and stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity - Gender stereotypes. An example of countermeasures on the labor market for people taking care of family members (taking care of young children or helping other dependent relatives is still carried out mostly by women) is the reconciliation of work and family life. However, in order to ensure equality of opportunities such measures must be able to be carried out by caregivers regardless of sex, ethnicity, age etc. It is therefore clear that equality of opportunities must respect all possible barriers - not only arising from social expectations associated with masculinity and femininity, but also others which have already been mentioned (especially - race, ethnicity, age and state of health, which, together with sex, remain the most common source inequality in our society).

Equality between women and men

Equality of opportunities between women and men is the concept which highlights the barriers, which we face on the basis of sex. It is not just the lack of equality of opportunities in the labor market, in access to education and in education, but also the inequalities that manifest as consequences of gender-stereotyped social concepts - such as pay, the Gender segregation in employment, but also in the division of labor in households, or in the education of girls and boys. Equality between women and men is part of Gender equality; however, it only represents one part of it.

Gender equality

Gender equality is a condition where Gender is not a determining element in society, where equal opportunities for women and men, as well as institutions and language do not cause disparities based on unequal understanding of masculinity and femininity, including other gender identities - not only de jure, but mainly de facto. Jarmila Filadelfiová (2006, p. 68) defines Gender equality as equal visibility, equal status and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Its objective is to promote full participation of women and men in society.

At the same time, however, she points to the need for the perception of gender equality as a value, on which we rely in the process of promotion and fulfillment of human rights– she argues Gender equality in this respect as the basis of each activity in the field of human relations. In this case, Gender equality is seen as "the fact that from a human rights perspective there are no specific differences between men and women that would justify restricted access to the full exploitation of the rights by individuals" (Filadelfiová 2009).

The concept of Gender equality is closely related to the term **Gender justice**, which means "a state" when both women and men equally fulfill social functions and have equal access to resources and benefits independently of sex." (Filadelfiová, s. a) Gender justified treatment may mean both the same treatment and treatment which is indeed different, but comparable in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities - that it provides.

However, the requirement of equality does not mean that men and women should be the same - their sameness is required in terms of their status, dignity and rights (Pilcher, Whelehan, 2004).