
COVID-19 Coronavirus: study by EU Parliament shows pandemic “disproportionately” impacts women

Whilst figures worldwide seem to suggest that more men than women are dying of COVID-19, “the short- and medium-term socio-economic effects of COVID-19 fall disproportionately on women”. This is according to a study commissioned by the European Parliament’s Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs on “The gendered impact of the COVID-19 crisis”. The study also shows that these critical times disproportionately affect those social groups who are already the most vulnerable such as ethnic minorities, foreigners, the LGBT community. This is not because of the virus itself, but because of “the public health interventions and policies introduced” to curb the pandemic. The effects are evident in several fora. Firstly: 76% of healthcare workers are women, which means women at present are the most exposed to the virus (almost 11% of total infections in Italy are among healthcare workers, a figure that is about 32% in Ireland). Furthermore, women also make up most of the social care workforce (elderly care, education, cleaning). Secondly, “women have absorbed most of the informal and unpaid care in the COVID-19 pandemic”, which has led to women having to take unpaid leave from paid employment or a reduction of hours. In mono-parental households (the majority of whom are women), this has had a significant impact on family finances and may also be a factor in the job cuts expected in the next few months. Thirdly, the rise in domestic violence. A fourth factor is that, due to the health crisis, there have been “significant changes” in the way ante- and post-natal care is usually accessed, which has led to women feeling more alone during childbirth and after

Valentina Bombelli