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Work life Balance Directive

Statement by Ernest Urtasun

The European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commission have reached an agreement on the Directive on work-life balance. In the future, the right to ten days of paid paternity leave will apply to all EU countries, as well as the right to five days/year of carers leave and the right to four months of parental leave per parent (two of which will be non-transferable and paid). In the European Union, women take almost three times more unpaid leave than men do to care for their children or parents.

Statement by **Ernest Urtasun**, shadow rapporteur for the Greens/EFA group comments:

"We welcome the introduction of paternity leave at a EU level and the introduction of 2 month non-transferable and paid which are measures that aim to encourage men to take on more care responsibilities. The right to five days off to care for children or relatives is also good start, but we think that much more needs to be done. Still in most EU countries, women continue to bear the big part of the care work. Caring for children and relatives is neither a hobby nor a women's affair: reconciliation of work, family, care and personal life needs to be guaranteed as a fundamental right for all people and equally shared between men and women.

However, we deeply regret that during the negotiations the Council, as result of the pressure of some member states, has pushed and managed to reduce the ambition of the text and of many demands of the European Parliament. We believe that this is a missed opportunity to promote cultural changes. Only when men take up the same level of caring responsibilities we will be able to start building more equal societies. That is why we regret that the directive does not fix a high level of payment for the leaves. We call on member states to not be restrictive when transposing the Directive and to ensure at least 80% of payment for all leaves. It is known that, poorly paid leaves only lead to the counterproductive effect of pushing people, especially women, out of the labour market or into "unwanted" part-time employment from which they will have a hard time to escape. The European Union and its member states must start advocating for new models of masculinity where egalitarian men take on a new role as carers".

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