

# **Unlock Equality**

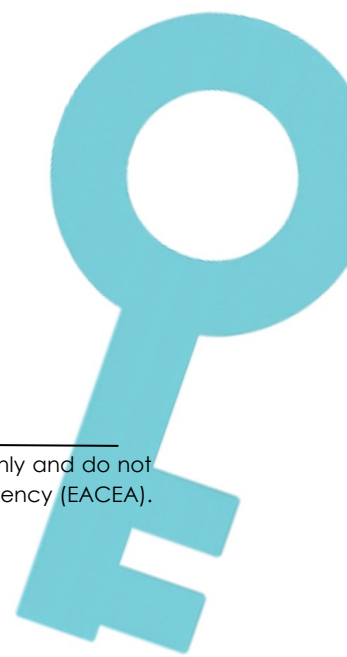
**UnlockEquality:**  
**Level up your workplace**

**Work Package 2 / Activity 2 (WP2/A2)**

**Full section 2 checklist: Everyday behaviours**

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### 2.1. Microaggressions

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## Short Description

Microaggressions refer to subtle, often unintentional behaviours or comments that communicate bias, undermine competence, or reinforce gender stereotypes. Although individually minor, their cumulative effect contributes to a hostile and exclusionary work environment and disproportionately affects women and gender-diverse employees.

## Practical Example

Female employees are routinely interrupted or spoken over in meetings, while similar behaviour directed at men is socially sanctioned.

## What to Observe

- Patterns of interruption or dismissive communication directed at specific genders
- Comments that reinforce gender norms (e.g., “women are naturally better at organising”)
- Credibility undermining (“Are you sure you understand this technical part?”)
- Token inclusion without meaningful participation
- Normalisation of biased humour or “jokes”

## EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive 2006/54/EC – prohibits discrimination and harassment  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>
- Directive 2000/78/EC – framework for equal treatment  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>.

## Checklist Assessment Table

	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
Interruptions or dismissive behaviour targeted by gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender-stereotypical comments normalised in daily			<input type="checkbox"/>	

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	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Undermining credibility through patronising remarks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tolerance of biased humour or “jokes”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 2.2. Unequal Treatment in Meetings

### Short Description

Unequal treatment in meetings includes disparities in speaking time, influence, visibility, and access to strategic conversations. Such disparities reinforce gender inequalities in leadership pipelines and decision-making processes.

### Practical Example

A woman presents a solution; the idea goes unnoticed until a male colleague repeats it and receives acknowledgment.

### What to Observe

- Distribution of speaking time by gender
- Who is invited to strategic meetings and who is excluded
- Attribution of ideas (who receives credit)
- Moderation patterns reinforcing power imbalances
- Decision-making influence by gender

### EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive 2006/54/EC – equal treatment in working conditions  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>

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- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – equality between men and women  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

## Checklist Assessment Table

	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
Equal distribution of speaking time regardless of gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Balanced participation in strategic meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fair attribution of ideas and contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Meeting moderation prevents dominance by one gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Decision-making influence equally distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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## 2.3. Aggressive Communication Patterns

### Short Description

Aggressive communication patterns—shouting, belittling, intimidation, or applying double standards—create unequal psychological safety. Women are disproportionately judged for assertiveness, while similar behaviour in men is perceived as leadership.

### Practical Example

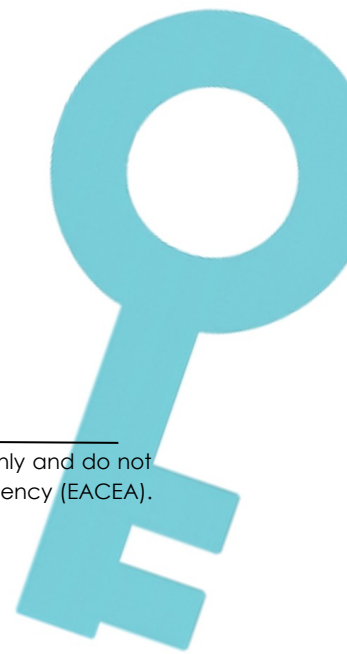
A female manager giving firm instructions is labelled “emotional”, while a male peer expressing the same tone is described as “confident”.

### What to Observe

- Tone, volume and emotional framing of communication
- Gendered interpretations of assertiveness
- Public humiliation or subtle intimidation
- Penalising or rewarding behaviour unequally based on gender

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## EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive 2006/54/EC – protection from harassment  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>
- Directive 2000/78/EC – protection from hostile environments  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>
- ILO Convention C190 – protection from workplace violence  
<https://www.ilo.org>

## Checklist Assessment Table

Item (Checkpoint Title)	Y e s	N o	NeedsWo rk	Not es
Aggressive communication addressed consistently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assertiveness evaluated equally across genders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No public humiliation or intimidation tolerated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communication standards applied without double standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 2.4. Exclusion from Decision-Making

### Short Description

Excluding employees—especially women, pregnant workers, caregivers or LGBTQ+ persons—from strategic discussions restricts their influence, professional growth and organisational visibility.

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## Practical Example

A pregnant employee is bypassed for high-level planning meetings due to assumptions about reduced availability.

## What to Observe

- Which employees consistently participate in strategy-making
- Patterns of exclusion based on caregiving, pregnancy or gender
- Informal “decision-making circles” dominated by one gender

## EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 – work-life balance  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1158/oj>
- Directive 2006/54/EC – equal access to opportunities  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>

## Exclusion from Decision-Making - Croatia

Data shows that women are underrepresented in management positions, and pregnant women and parents of young children are often excluded from strategic meetings. The Ombudsperson cites cases in which decisions were made without involving employees whose jobs are affected by the decision in question, which is contrary to the Labour Act and the Maternity and Parental Benefits Act.

## Checklist Assessment Table

	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
Equal access to strategic discussions and planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No exclusion based on pregnancy or caregiving roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Transparent criteria for participation in decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
Informal decision-making circles monitored for bias	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 2.5. Customer-Preference Discrimination

### Short Description

"Customer preference" is often incorrectly used to justify discriminatory task allocation. It reinforces gender stereotypes, segregates roles and violates EU equal treatment principles.

### Practical Example

Female staff are assigned only to hosting or customer-facing roles while men handle negotiation or decision-making tasks.

### What to Observe

- Gender-based role assignment justified through customer expectations
- Systematic segregation of duties
- Job roles aligned with stereotypes rather than competencies

### EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive 2006/54/EC – prohibits discrimination  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>

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### Checklist Assessment Table

	Y e s	N o	Needs Work	Not es
Tasks assigned based on competence, not customer stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No gender-based role segregation justified by "customer preference"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Awareness that customer preference is not a legal justification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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## 2.6. Social Inclusion in Workplace Culture

### Short Description

Workplace culture often relies on informal networks and activities that disproportionately exclude women and caregivers, limiting access to mentoring, visibility, and advancement.

### Practical Example

Team-building events or networking sessions are held exclusively after working hours, disadvantaging parents (mostly women).

### What to Observe

- Timing and accessibility of social events
- Representation in informal networks
- Whether social interaction reinforces gendered power structures

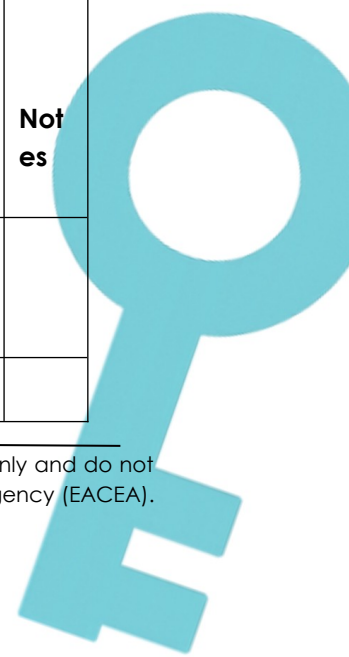
### EU Law / EU Reference

- Directive 2006/54/EC – equal access to opportunities  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>
- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 – equal participation for caregivers  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1158/oj>

### Checklist Assessment Table

	Y e s	N o	NeedsWo rk	Not es
Workplace social activities accessible to all employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Informal networks do not exclude caregivers or	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

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	Y e s	N o	NeedsWo rk	Not es
women		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Social norms support inclusive participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No career disadvantage linked to limited social participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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