

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Equal Pay Day: Women expect 500,000 euros less than men

- **Women anticipate unequal treatment and accumulate salary losses**
- **EPOS study analyzes data from 15,000 students**

Bonn, Mannheim, 29.02.2024 – **A new EPOS study on the gender pay gap shows that female students expect to earn significantly less than men throughout their professional careers. All in all, they expect to earn more than half a million euros less in their working life. In line with their expectations, women demand lower wages, so that the gender pay gap persists. These are findings of the discussion paper “Gender Differences in Wage Expectations and Negotiation” published by the EPOS Economic Research Center.**

“The earnings expectations are already drifting apart between males and females during student life,” says Pia Pinger from the EPOS Economic Research Center. “The comparatively modest expectations of female students largely correspond to the later earnings gap.”

### **Different approach in salary negotiations**

While the pay gap is 14 percent at the start of a career, it rises to 27 percent at the age of 55. Over the entire working life, the gap in expectations amounts to more than 500,000 euros, according to the study. Women with lower salary expectations are less courageous in salary negotiations than their male colleagues and demand lower salaries. According to the study, this gap amounts to 19 percent. In addition, women set themselves a significantly lower minimum salary at which they are prepared to accept a job. The difference to men amounts to 18 percent.

### **Women anticipate unequal treatment**

“Such differences in negotiation objectives between women and men explain around 15 percent of the gender pay gap,” says Pinger. “This makes them about as important as the choice of subject or profession.” The EPOS researcher notes that even several years after entering working life, a strong and significant correlation between pay demands and outcomes remains. Her advice to working women is therefore not to set the bar too low from the outset.

“Salary expectations that are too modest virtually anticipate your own unequal treatment,” says Pinger. “It is important that women find out about realistic earning prospects at the beginning of their careers if possible, so that they can enter into salary negotiations in a stronger position.”

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The presented discussion paper is a publication without peer review of the Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 EPOS. The data comes from the student survey “Fachkraft 2030” (Maastricht University / jobvalley). Access the full discussion paper here:

<https://www.crctr224.de/research/discussion-papers/archive/dp496>

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## The Collaborative Research Center (CRC) Transregio 224 EPoS

Established in 2018, the [Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 EPoS](#), a cooperation of the universities Bonn and Mannheim, is a long-term research institution funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). EPoS addresses three key societal challenges: how to promote equality of opportunity; how to regulate markets in light of the internationalization and digitalization of economic activity; and how to safeguard the stability of the financial system.

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