

February 14th, 2022

## PRESS RELEASE

### OesteCIM promotes a Focus Group to share good practices of reconciliation and gender equality in the Region

On February 11th, 2022, OesteCIM promoted 2 Focus Group sessions within the scope of the Oeste + Igual Project, financed by EEA Grants, with the aim of compiling good practices for reconciliation and gender equality, at the level of the Oeste Region, in a digital manual.

The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of OesteCIM, Paulo Simões, who referred to the Porto Social Summit to highlight the growing importance of equality between men and women, equal opportunities, and a balance between professional and private life, for which the authorities will need to share responsibility national, regional and local levels, the social partners and civil society.

Then, Susana Almeida Lopes, Coordinator of the SHL Portugal Equality Forum, presented the results of the Conciliation Diagnosis in the West Region in 2021. The diagnosis revealed that most companies in the West do not have defined equality policies and that also in the Municipalities there will be space to improve practices. In addition, according to the results of the diagnosis, citizens of the West revealed that there is a greater ease in the career for men. In schools, however, there is a lack of information about the means that teachers can use to promote equality and non-discrimination in the school context.

After the presentation given by Susana Almeida Lopes, businessmen, managers, counselors for equality and citizens were divided into their respective rooms to start the Focus Group sessions.

As a conclusion to the Focus Group session:

- Entrepreneurs and managers from the West: there were a weak adherence of entrepreneurs to the invitation to participate in the Focus Group. Participants who responded to the invitation expressed their willingness to have more concrete approaches and practical implementation and could even collaborate in the preparation of the intervention plan.
- Councilors for Equality and Citizens: there is a need for greater knowledge of the reality in which the Municipalities intervene. Furthermore, there are few technical and human resources in the Municipalities, which ends up having a significant impact on the work that can be done. Another point that was mentioned concerns the need to articulate the work of Municipalities through OesteCIM to allow smaller Municipalities to have greater support. It will also be necessary to have a greater commitment through intervention and sharing with the services, mayors, councillors, heads and municipalities and an autonomy of the issue of equality in the sense that it is not confined to the area of social action and involves other relevant stakeholders. In the process, making this a transversal issue.

*Through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the internal market with the Member States of the European Union.*

*As a way of promoting a continuous and balanced strengthening of economic and trade relations, the parties to the EEA Agreement have established a multi-year Financial Mechanism, known as EEA Grants.*

*The EEA Grants aim to reduce social and economic disparities in Europe and strengthen bilateral relations between these three countries and the beneficiary countries.*

*For the period 2014-2021, a total contribution of €2.8 billion has been agreed for 15 beneficiary countries. Portugal will benefit from an amount of 102.7 million euros. Learn more at [www.eeagrants.gov.pt](http://www.eeagrants.gov.pt)*

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