

## The FADA's research at a glance: Gender Pricing in Germany

### Overview of the survey

The survey systematically examines the gender-based differentiation of prices (gender pricing) in case of the same or very similar products and services in Germany. Moreover, on the basis of empirical findings a legal evaluation with regard to the General Equal Treatment Act (German abbreviation: AGG) is conducted. The survey is based on empirical research into the product and services category of the basket of goods of the Federal Statistical Office.

### Authors, year of publication and title of the survey

Iris an der Heiden ( Institute of Socioeconomic Research and Consulting (IF!) at 2HM & Associates GmbH) and Professor Dr Maria Wersig (Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts) (2017): Gender Pricing in Germany. Research report. Edited by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

### Results

#### Definition:

- Gender-based differentiation of prices (gender pricing) describes the practice of providers or suppliers to offer the same or very similar services at prices which are different for women and men.
- Gender-specific product varieties of the same brand are considered to be comparable when they only differ in those properties (colour, product name, product description etc.) which are meant to appeal to a particular gender.

#### Gender pricing of products is not significant/very low

- The vast majority of products, i.e. altogether 85%, in sectors offering gender-specific product variants, as e.g. children's toys, clothes for adults and children and personal care products, do not have any comparable or similar gender-specific variations.
- Only 3.7% of 1,682 like products which could be identified in the survey had different prices. In 2.3% of those cases women pay higher prices for the female variant of the same product, in 1.4% of those cases men pay higher prices for the male product variant. The average surcharge for women and men amounts to approximately 5.00 €.

#### Services increasingly show gender-specific price differences

- Services as hairdressing, dry cleaning, cosmetic facial treatments and tailoring usually appeal to a specific gender.
- The survey identified 381 similar services variations for different genders, 59% of them revealing a price difference: 50% were more expensive for women, and 9% were more expensive for men.

- The more obvious gender-based price differences refer to services offered by dry cleaners and hairdressers: 89% of the hairdressers offer different rates for the same short haircuts for women and men, whereas women pay an average surplus amount of 12.50€. One third of the dry cleaners have different flat rates for men's shirts and women's blouses. The price difference in this case, too, is borne by women, who on average have to pay 1.80 € more for the dry cleaning of blouses than men for shirts.

#### **Evaluation of gender pricing from the point of view of non-discrimination law**

- The General Equal Treatment Act is applicable to the pricing of goods and services which are available to the public.
- An infringement of the General Equal Treatment Act may exist in particular when prices for services differ on the basis of gender just to take more advantage of women's or men's acceptance to pay higher prices. Equally, it is not admissible to draw conclusions about the expected effort connected with a particular service (e.g. hairdressing) merely from an individual's gender. Finally, price differences for basically the same products which are offered in two gender-specific versions through gender marketing also need to be justified.

#### **Need for action**

Although the majority of products and services in Germany is offered at the same price for both genders, the survey shows some approaches for action:

- Consumer protection agencies should see to it that consumers are better informed and educated about gender-specific price differences and gender marketing.
- It is necessary to raise the providers' and suppliers' awareness of gender-based price differences and to inform them on circumstances where their pricing could result in an infringement of the General Equal Treatment Act.
- Especially dry cleaners and hairdressers should not gear their pricing policy to a specific gender but to the real costs and efforts connected with their services. The prices for individual services should be indicated in a transparent and gender-neutral manner in price lists. Consequently, hairdressing services (such as e.g. short haircuts) should be offered at the same price for women and men, just as e.g. the dry cleaning services of shirts and blouses and other comparable garments.
- The relevant associations of service providers (hairdressing trade, cleaning business) should promote a renunciation of gender pricing in favour of a service-oriented pricing policy, suggest appropriate voluntary commitments as well as develop gender-neutral standard price lists.
- A regular monitoring of goods and services should be introduced with a view to gender pricing, for example at the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection.

#### **More information**

The entire report on the survey can be downloaded [here](#) (in German language only).

Contact details: Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency  
Glinkastrasse 24  
D-10117 Berlin  
Telephone helpline: + 49 (0) 3018 555 – 1855  
E-mail: [beratung@ads.bund.de](mailto:beratung@ads.bund.de)