

JT INTERNATIONAL BECOMES EQUAL-SALARY CERTIFIED IN CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY

Vevey/ Prague, March 14, 2024 – The EQUAL-SALARY Foundation is pleased to announce that **Japan Tobacco International** has obtained the EQUAL-SALARY certification for all its employees in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The international EQUAL-SALARY certification is a symbol of excellence in terms of equal pay and equal opportunities, combining a statistical analysis of all the salaries and an on-site audit entrusted to PwC. With our certification, JT International Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary prove that they apply equal pay and equal opportunities for women and men.

The EQUAL-SALARY certification is valid for 3 years, during which, the company undergoes two monitoring audits. After 3 years, the organization needs to renew the certification process with a new salary analysis and a full on-site audit.

*« If the pay gap in OECD countries continues to narrow at the current rate, we will not see equal pay in practice for another 50 years. It is therefore important that companies such as JTI take a proactive approach to the issue and play their part in bringing about change for the better. We are delighted that JTI opened its doors to our auditors, demonstrated its commitment to equal pay and is only the third company in the Czech Republic to become EQUAL-SALARY certified », commented **Lisa Rubli** co-CEO of the EQUAL-SALARY Foundation.*

*« It goes beyond simply closing the pay gap – this is about ensuring governance to prevent pay gap to arise again due to inequalities in various processes. This involves empowering women, enhancing talent management, refining recruitment practices. For the recent three years I believe we progressed significantly in our cluster with the DEI Policy. This year, we took a significant step forward by conducting an external audit across all cluster countries. The audit was not a simple statistical analysis of wages. It comprised of focus group discussions with randomly selected employees, meetings with management, it was a comprehensive evaluation », added **Yelena Yugova**, JTI's People & Culture Director for the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia.*

Equal pay in practice

While most companies claim to pay women and men the same, the gender pay gap is still close to 20% on a worldwide level, according to ILO report published on February 2020¹.

About the EQUAL-SALARY Foundation

EQUAL-SALARY is a not-for-profit Foundation established in 2010. It is the first and only certification, based on a robust and transparent methodology, that focuses on equal pay and equal opportunities. The development of the EQUAL-SALARY Certification was financially supported by the Federal Office for Gender Equality and its methodology was used as a reference by the Swiss Federal Court of High Justice. EQUAL-SALARY is the first certification for equal pay highlighted by the European Commission in a report on Gender Pay Gap. EQUAL-SALARY is a member of EPIC (Equal Pay International Coalition) and of the UN Global Compact Network. EQUAL-SALARY has been recognized by Equileap (the world leading provider of data and insights on gender diversity and equal opportunities in companies) as a gender equality auditor.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_735949.pdf

EQUAL PAY IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT. LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

To date, the EQUAL-SALARY Foundation has completed over 150 certification procedures throughout the world. Many of the certified companies have renewed their commitment, demonstrating a strong will to promote fairness, gaining trust and respect from their employees, clients and partners as a result.

About the EQUAL-SALARY Certification process, a symbol of excellence

Similar to an ISO standard for wages, all EQUAL-SALARY Certification processes include two phases: First, experts contracted by EQUAL-SALARY run statistical analyses of salary data. Upon having concluded phase 1 successfully, demonstrating an overall pay gap equal or lower than 5 percent, phase 2 is initiated. Phase 2 consists of an audit conducted by major audit firms such as PwC, Mazars or SGS who assess both the company's overall commitment to equal pay and its implementation in Human Resources processes. To allow further investigation and a more comprehensive approach, employees are involved by means of surveys and interviews during the on-site audit. Only the companies that meet all requirements of all phases successfully are awarded the EQUAL-SALARY Certificate, proving their excellence in equal pay and equal opportunities.

The EQUAL-SALARY Certification allows organizations to verify and communicate that they pay their employees fairly across gender, ethnicity, or both. It is a practical and scientific solution to achieve transparency while preserving confidentiality.

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