

laws related to civil rights, such as election interference.

The law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value, but a pay gap exists between men and women. In June the National Statistics Institute reported that in 2019, the most recent year for which data was available, women earned on average 80.5 percent of what their male counterparts earned, though the gap narrowed when considering similar positions in the same occupation, type of contract, and type of schedule. Women comprised 64 percent of those whose hourly wage was two-thirds or below the average hourly wage.

In April labor inspectors in La Rioja, citing discrimination, fined an agricultural firm for firing four employees who had contracted COVID-19.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Wage and Hour Laws: The law provides for a national minimum wage, which barely met the poverty level in 2020. In June 2020 the government approved an increase to the minimum living income, a monthly stipend provided to those at a certain level of poverty, which sought to guarantee a monthly income of between 461 euros (\$530) and 1,015 euros (\$1,167) for approximately 850,000 households. The measure aimed to reduce extreme poverty in the country by 80 percent. The government effectively enforced minimum wage, hours of work, and occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in the formal economy but not in the informal economy. Penalties were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud. The Ministry of Labor's Inspectorate of Labor and Social Security is responsible for enforcement of wage and hour laws. Infractions of wage, hour, and overtime laws as well as social security benefits for workers were most common in the informal economy. In 2019, the most recent year for which data was available, the most common infraction identified by the inspectorate was employment contract violations, followed by hour and overtime violations and wage violations.

The law provides for a 40-hour workweek, with an unbroken rest period of 36 hours after each 40 hours worked. The law restricts overtime to 80 hours per year unless a collective bargaining agreement establishes a different level. Pay is required for overtime and must be equal to or greater than regular pay.

In June, Second Vice President and Minister of Labor Yolanda Diaz met with

women who worked as seasonal strawberry pickers in Huelva (Andalusia). The women reported labor exploitation, including poor working conditions, gender discrimination, degrading treatment and abuse, as well as noncompliance on the part of their employers in terms of pay, working hours, and housing conditions. The Ministry of Labor modified its regulations to allow its inspectors to assess work housing conditions.

Occupational Safety and Health: The National Institute of Safety and Health in the Ministry of Labor has technical responsibility for developing OSH standards. OSH standards are appropriate for the main industries in the country and labor inspectors generally enforce OSH standards by identifying unsafe conditions. The law protects workers who remove themselves from situations that could endanger their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment.

The Inspectorate of Labor and Social Security has responsibility for enforcing OSH laws through inspections and legal action if inspectors find infractions. Inspections for OSH were conducted by the same division that inspects wage and hour compliance. Inspectors have the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. Due to a lack of resources, the inspectorate had an insufficient number of inspectors and therefore, could not enforce the law in all instances. The penalties were commensurate with those for crimes such as criminal fraud or willful obstruction of justice. There were 89,230 violations identified in 2019, the latest year for which data was available. Unions criticized the government for devoting insufficient resources to inspection and enforcement. The most common OSH workplace violations were in the construction sector.

In 2020 the Ministry of Labor recorded 505,528 workplace accidents, of which authorities considered 3,643 as serious but nonfatal. There were 634 fatal accidents, 182 fewer than in 2019.

Through July the Ministry of Labor recorded 317,258 workplace accidents, of which 329 were fatal accidents, 17 fewer than the same period in 2020.