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### **Letter of support for CERV-2024-GE Project**

The Ministry of Social Affairs supports the CERV-2024-GE project, an initiative aimed at advancing women's rights, promoting gender equality, and fostering women's empowerment in Estonia.

This project aligns closely with challenges our society faces today. Recent statistics underscore the urgent need for heightened awareness and concerted action to encourage families to share caregiving responsibilities more equally. We recognize the detrimental effects of gender pay gaps, which often result in families favoring mothers to stay at home and take care of children, thereby perpetuating traditional gender norms. Although there is a gradual increase in the proportion of men taking parental leave in Estonia, considerable progress remains to be made, particularly in cultivating positive attitudes towards men's involvement in caregiving duties. Encouraging girls to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields represents a proactive strategy to counter this trend and foster gender equality from an early age.

It is crucial to underscore that the CERV-2024-GE project endeavors to offer alternative pathways for women who aspire to maintain ties to the workforce or enhance their qualifications while being on parental leave or taking care of young children. In doing so, we aim to dismantle barriers and empower individuals to pursue their professional ambitions while juggling caregiving responsibilities effectively.

In conclusion, the CERV-2024-GE project signifies a significant step towards realizing gender equality and empowering women in Estonia. We commend the project's endeavors and pledge our unwavering support to its successful implementation.

Yours sincerely,

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