

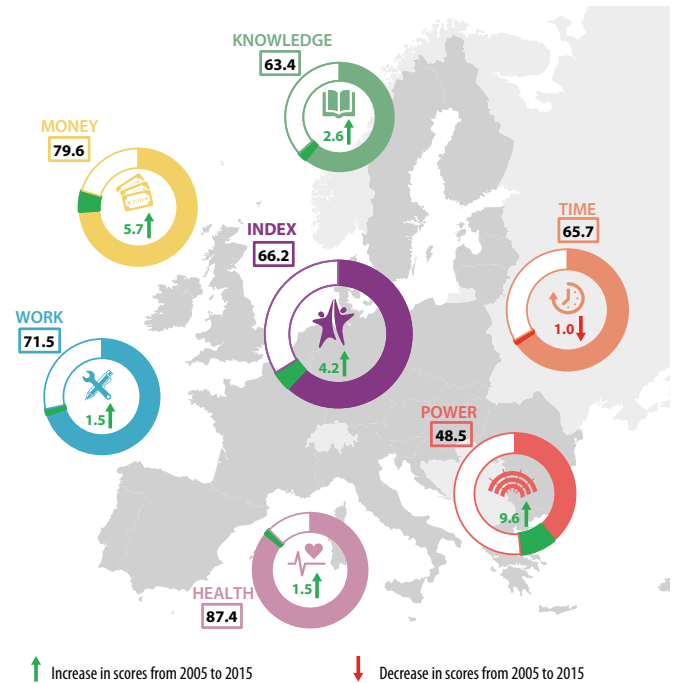
Gender Equality Index 2017 in brief

A snail's pace towards gender equality

Over the past decade, progress towards gender equality in the European Union has been rather slow. With an average Gender Equality Index score of 66.2 out of 100 in 2015, the EU still has a lot of room for improvement of equality between women and men. This score represents a 4.2-point increase since 2005, of which 1.2 points were gained from 2012 to 2015.

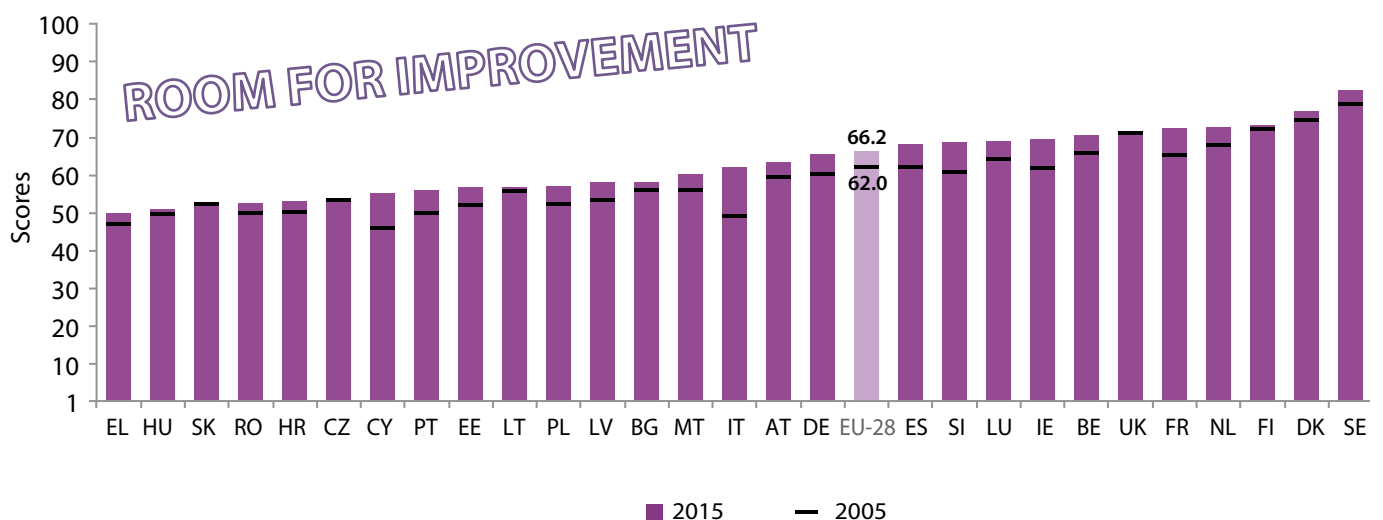
Sweden and Denmark have consistently been the most gender-equal societies. Italy and Cyprus show the greatest improvement in gender equality, while scores in three Member States did not change throughout the 10-year period (CZ, SK, UK). Spain, Croatia, Cyprus and Latvia improved in all six domains, and Malta, Austria and Sweden progressed in five domains. The majority of the Member States (19) progressed in five domains. In nearly all Member States, the main driver of progress was improved balance in decision-making. The share of women in political and economic decision-making notably increased, especially since 2010.

However, a number of Member States experienced drawbacks in gender equality in the past 10 years. Nearly half of the Member States (12) had reduced scores in one domain, Finland, Germany and Slovakia in two domains, and Greece in three domains. From 2012 to 2015, progress in gender equality stagnated, largely as a result of a reversed trend in the domain of time, where the score dropped by 3.2 points. Compared to 2005, the way women and men organise their time became even more unequal in 12 Member States (BE, BG, DE, EL, FR, LT, LU, HU, NL, PL, SK, FI).



Furthermore, a unique feature of the third edition of the Gender Equality Index is an intersectional approach, which is applied within each domain and sub-domain. The data demonstrate how gender intersects with age, education, family composition and parenthood, country of birth and disability. The evidence calls for a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach in policymaking to target unique experiences of discrimination and disadvantage for both women and men.

Gender Equality Index, scores for EU Member States, 2005 and 2015





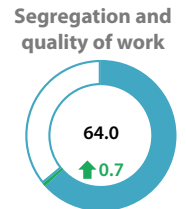
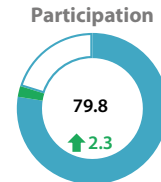
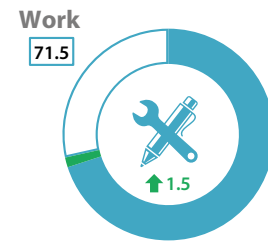
Work

The domain of work progressed very slowly over the last 10 years in the EU. The average score for this domain only marginally increased since 2005, to 71.5 points. The highest scores could be found in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, and the lowest in Italy, Greece and Slovakia. Scores went up in most Member States, with major improvements in Malta and Luxembourg. Only in Romania did the score drop slightly over the decade, and no noticeable change took place in five Member States (CZ, DK, SI, SK, FI).

The gender gap in employment in the EU is wide and persistent, with the full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate of 40 % for women and 56 % for men. The FTE employment rate is particularly low for women with disabilities (19 % for women compared to 28 % for men), women with low qualifications (17 % of women and 34 % of men) and women in pre-retirement age (50-64), which is just 44 %, with a gender gap as high as 19 percentage points. Among couples with children, the FTE employment rate is 28 percentage points in favour of men. Sweden, Finland and Estonia are performing best in the participation sub-domain while Italy, Malta and Greece are at the bottom of the ranking.

The sustainability and quality of work raise concerns across the EU and men consider their jobs to have better prospects more often than women, in particular women in pre-retirement age. As regards work-life balance, only 23 % of women and 27 % of men find it very easy to take 1 hour off during their working hours to take care of family or personal matters. Women with children would benefit most from improved work-life balance.

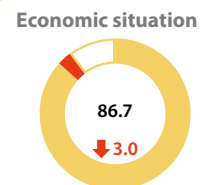
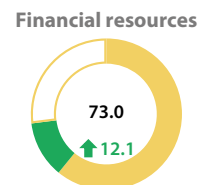
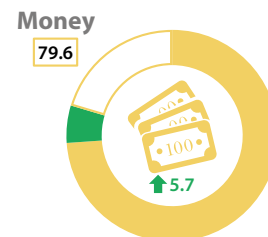
Gender segregation in employment is resistant to change. The Netherlands, Malta and Denmark are the best-performing Member States in this sub-domain, with room for improvement most noticeable in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and education, health and welfare (EHW) remain highly segregated fields with no change in the last decade. At the EU level, men represent over eight in 10 workers in STEM occupations, while women comprise nearly three quarters of workers in EHW occupations ⁽¹⁾.



Money

The domain of money is the second-fastest improving area, with an EU-28 score of 79.6. The highest scores in this domain are in Luxembourg, Belgium and Sweden and the lowest scores are in Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia. Over the past 10 years, scores in this domain increased in all Member States except for Greece (which experienced a small decrease) and Germany (no change). The most significant improvement was achieved in Slovakia, Malta and Poland.

Income gaps have narrowed, but on average women still earn less than men and poverty reduction remains a challenge despite the increase in average income. The EU average gender gap in monthly earnings of 20 %, to the disadvantage of women, masks wide disparities at the national level and is twice as high for couples with children and for lone parents, mostly women. Having children means a financial penalty for women and an earnings boost for men. Inequalities over the life course are compounded in the gender gap in retirement pensions, which on average is 40 % in the EU ⁽²⁾. The best performers in the sub-domain of financial resources (earnings and income) are Luxembourg, Belgium and Denmark; the Member States with the most room for improvement are Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia.



Lifetime inequalities lead to acute gender gaps in older age. As the life course of women often involves economic inactivity, part-time work, unpaid work, lower wages and an average of 5 years shorter working life than men, they face a significant risk of poverty in old age. In the EU, 18 % of women and 12 % of men aged 75+ are at risk of monetary poverty. The risk of poverty is more than double for those born outside the EU and lone mothers are at a higher risk than lone fathers. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia have the highest scores in the sub-domain of economic situation (risk of poverty rate and equality of income distribution), while Bulgaria, Estonia and Latvia have the lowest.

⁽¹⁾ EIGE (2017), *Gender segregation in education, training and the labour market, review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States*, publication forthcoming.

⁽²⁾ European Parliament (2016), *The gender pension gap: differences between mothers and women without children*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571363/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571363_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571363/IPOL_STU(2016)571363_EN.pdf).

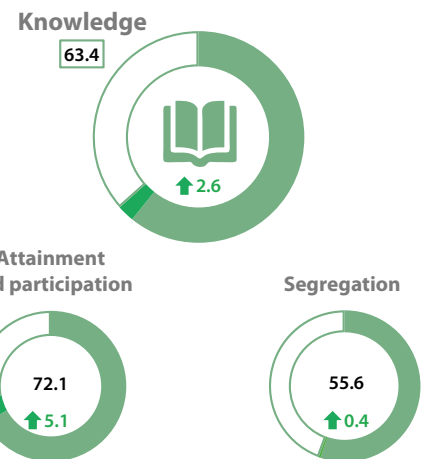
Knowledge

The slight rise in the score of the domain of knowledge to 63.4 points is mostly the result of increased educational attainment. Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom have the best results in the domain of knowledge and Latvia, Croatia and Romania have the lowest scores. Over the last decade, the most progress in this domain was made in Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg and Italy. Drops in scores can be found in the United Kingdom and Germany, while another five Member States saw no change over the 10 years (BG, DK, LT, HU, PL).

Young men are losing out on educational attainment and there is a widening of the gender gap since 2005. While women aged 30-34 have reached the Europe 2020 target in tertiary education (40 %), the gender gap is nine percentage points to the detriment of men. Within the sub-domain of educational attainment and participation in formal and non-formal education and training, Luxembourg is at the top of the rankings, followed by the United Kingdom and Denmark. Improvement most needs to take place in Romania, Bulgaria and Italy.

Despite improving educational attainment, gender segregation persists. Men still dominate the STEM fields (66 %), while women represent around three quarters of tertiary students in the fields of education (78 %), health and welfare (71 %), and humanities and the arts (65 %). Segregation in educational choices leads to further gender divisions in the labour market and reinforces the undervaluation of work, skills and competencies traditionally attributed to women. In the past ten years, a positive trend can be observed in Cyprus and scores of the sub-domain of segregation dropped substantially in Germany and Malta.

While there is a greater need to keep up with the changing labour market and increasing job requirements, lifelong learning in the EU has not increased since 2005. Participation in formal and non-formal education and training is often low for those who could benefit from it most, such as women and men with low qualifications and women and men who work in precarious jobs.

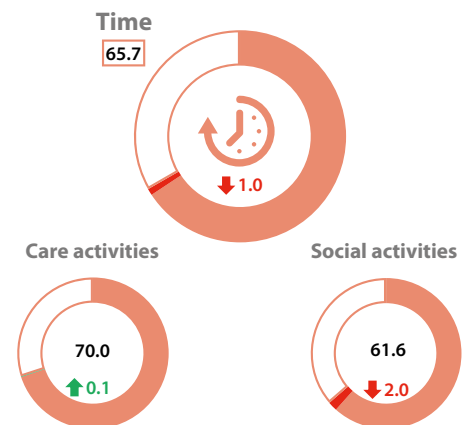


Time

Gender inequalities in time use for housework and caring of dependent family members (children, the elderly and people with disabilities) and social activities (leisure activities and volunteering) are persistent and growing. Improved gender equality in the sharing of time between women and men occurred in only eight Member States. The most equal division of caring responsibilities and social activities between women and men is in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark; the overall score increased the most in Latvia, the Czech Republic and Spain. The most unequal time sharing between women and men is observed in Slovakia, Greece and Bulgaria and the biggest decrease in scores took place in Slovakia, Belgium and Bulgaria. With 65.7 points, the domain of time has a lower score than in 2005; in 12 Member States gender gaps in time use worsened.

Only every third man in the EU engages daily in cooking and housework, compared to nearly eight in 10 women. Time spent on domestic and care work has a major impact on women's employment opportunities, economic independence and capacity to participate in leisure activities. Almost every second working woman spends 1 hour or more on caring and educating children or grandchildren, the elderly and people with disabilities, in comparison with around one third of working men and young women. The burden of unpaid care work is especially heavy among non-EU born women and young women. Time use in care and domestic activities is the most gender equal in Sweden, Latvia and Denmark, and the least in Greece, Croatia and Bulgaria.

In almost all Member States, men are more likely than women to participate in sporting, cultural or leisure activities outside the home. Men are significantly more involved in physical aerobic activities, an important component of a healthy lifestyle. The largest gender gap of 17 percentage points to the disadvantage of women can be found among young workers (15-24). Within the sub-domain of social activities, the most gender-equal Member States are Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark. The Member States with the most unequal time use in social activities are Bulgaria, Portugal and Romania.





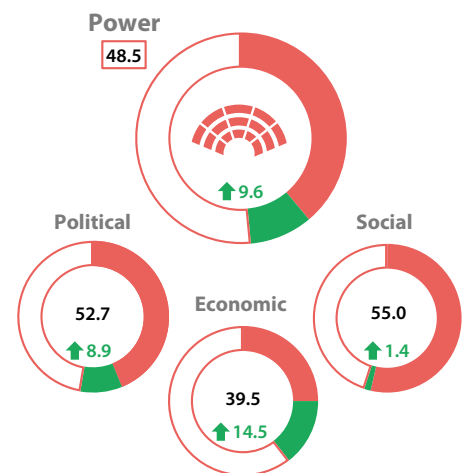
Power

Gender equality in decision-making in political, economic and social areas is progressing at the fastest rate, but continues to have the lowest score of all domains. Sweden, France and Finland are the most gender equal in the domain of power, and Hungary, Greece and the Czech Republic need to improve the most. Overall, the share of women in decision-making positions increased in 23 Member States since 2005. Improvement was most made in Italy, France and Slovenia, scores dropped in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Finland, and the situation remained unchanged in Lithuania and Malta.

Much of the success in political and economic decision-making, as shown by narrowing gender gaps in national parliaments and on corporate boards, was driven by legislative action and/or intensive public debates on the issue. In 2015, the highest female representation in politics (parliaments, ministries and regional assemblies) was in Sweden, Finland and France, and the lowest was in Hungary, Cyprus and Slovakia. Only seven Member States have reached or are close to reaching gender-balanced parliaments of at least 40 % representation of women (BE, DE, DK, ES, FI, NL and SE).

Progress in gender equality is most pronounced in corporate boards: the proportion of women on the boards of the largest listed companies in the EU more than doubled, from 10 % in 2005 to 22 % in 2015. However, women account for only 7 % of board chairs/presidents and 6 % of CEOs in the largest companies in the EU. Men also continue to dominate central banks and finance ministries. In 2015, the most gender equality in economic decision-making was achieved in France, Slovenia and Sweden, and the lowest in the Czech Republic, Greece and Slovakia.

As shown by data provided for the first time, men continue to dominate decisions in research funding, media and sports. On average in the EU, women remain under-represented in decision-making positions in these areas, holding 40 % of top positions in research-funding organisations, less than one third of top positions in public broadcasting organisations (32 %) and 14 % of top positions in the most popular sports federations. The most equality in social power is achieved in Sweden, followed by Ireland and Finland, and the least-equal Member States are Hungary, Estonia and Greece.



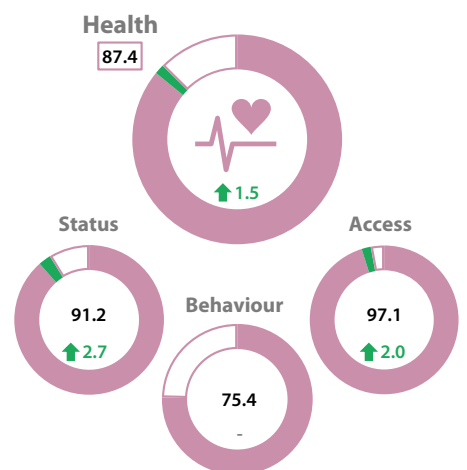
Health

The domain of health displays a relatively high score, at 87.4, but the score improved only marginally over the 10 years and many challenges remain. By pre-retirement age, a large share of women suffers from ill-health, while a worrying proportion of men die prematurely. Nearly half of these deaths could be prevented by well-targeted public policy measures. The highest scores are found in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Malta, whilst the biggest improvement needs to be made in Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia.

Health is closely related to one's economic situation and education. Low education means poorer health, especially for women. On average, men in the EU live 5.4 years less than women (77.9 years and 83.3 years, respectively, in 2015), and in some Member States men live on average about 10 years less than women. The most positive situation regarding gender equality in health status (self-perceived health, life expectancy and healthy life years) is in Sweden, followed by Ireland and Malta, and at the bottom are Lithuania, Latvia and Portugal.

Gender inequalities are most prominent in the sub-domain of health behaviour, which is covered for the first time and has an EU average score of 75.4. Men are more physically active than women but smoke and drink more. 46 % of men and 28 % of women smoke and/or are involved in dangerous levels of drinking. The share of men who are either sufficiently physically active or are eating enough fruits and vegetables is higher than that of women (36 % of women and 42 % of men). Sweden, the United Kingdom and Austria are closest to gender equality in this sub-domain and Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania are the furthest.

Overall, the majority of the population feels that it has sufficient access to healthcare and only 5 % of women and men say they have unmet needs for medical examination. However, medical and dental care needs of lone mothers and people with disabilities are more often unmet. For example, in 2014 12 % of lone mothers had unmet medical needs in the EU-28 and 14 % had unmet dental needs. The Netherlands, Austria and Slovenia have the best and most gender-equal access to health and dental services, while improvement is most needed in Estonia, Greece and Latvia.



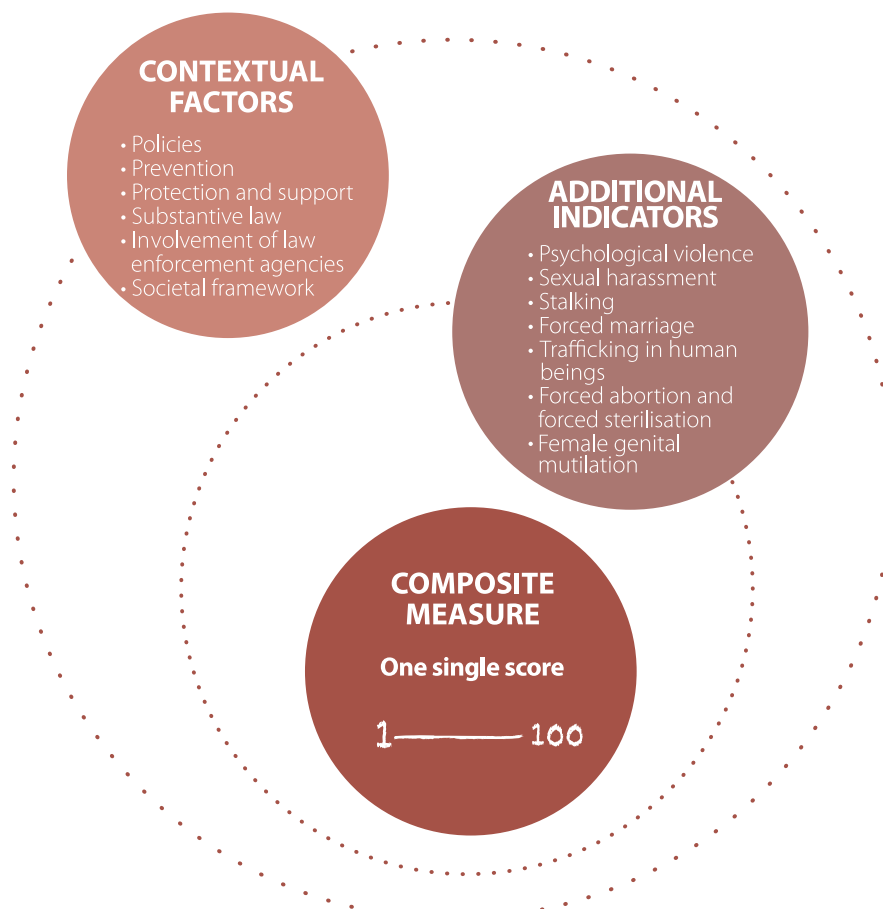
Violence

Violence against women is the cause and result of structural inequalities experienced by women in many aspects of life — work, health, money, power, knowledge and time use — and remains the most brutal manifestation of gender inequality. The first legally binding European instrument on violence against women, the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), adopted in 2011, frames violence against women as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women ⁽³⁾. Violence against women is included in the Gender Equality Index as a satellite domain. This stems from the fact that, unlike the core domains, violence against women measures a phenomenon that only applies to a selected group of the population. As such, the overall objective is not to reduce the gaps of violence between women and men, but to eradicate violence altogether. The domain of violence builds upon the findings of an EU-wide survey on violence against women conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2012.

The domain of violence comprises three tiers of indicators: (1) a set of indicators to form a composite measure of the extent of violence against women; (2) additional indicators covering a broader range of forms of violence against women; and (3) contextual factors to provide insight into some of the causes and circumstances surrounding violence against women.

The composite measure of violence is made up of three sub-domains: prevalence, severity and disclosure. Prevalence measures the percentage of women having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator since the age of 15 and during the 12 months prior to the survey interview, as well as femicide. ‘Femicide’ is the killing of women and girls on account of their gender. Severity measures the health consequences of violence against women and multiple victimisation by any perpetrator. Disclosure measures the reporting to anyone of violence experienced in the past 12 months.

The full theoretical and measurement framework of the domain of violence, including the rationale behind the choice of variables, steps taken to compute the composite measure on violence against women and data analysis for all indicators, are described in detail in EIGE’s forthcoming publication *Gender Equality Index 2017: Measurement framework of violence against women* (EIGE, 2017), to be released in November 2017.

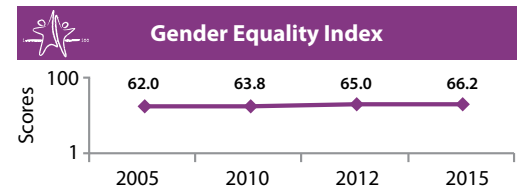


⁽³⁾ Council of Europe (2011), *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*, Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 210, Date: 11.05.2011, Istanbul.



Unique features and benefits of the Gender Equality Index

The Gender Equality Index 2017 assesses progress and challenges in achieving gender equality across the European Union by providing scores for 2005, 2010, 2012 and 2015. It measures differences in the situation of women and men within core domains relevant to the EU policy framework (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) on a scale from 1 (full inequality) to 100 (full equality). The core Index is complemented by two additional, equally important, satellite domains of violence and intersecting inequalities. They are a part of the framework of the Gender Equality Index in all respects but do not have an impact on the overall score of the Index.



The Gender Equality Index:

- allows for the monitoring of progress in gender equality across the EU and over time;
- supports decision-makers in assessing how far a given Member State is from reaching gender equality;
- shows the different outcomes of the EU and national policies for women and men;
- allows for meaningful gender analysis and comparisons between different policy areas;
- supports the development and implementation of gender equality policies and legislation;
- increases awareness among decision-makers and the public of progress and challenges in implementing gender equality policies;
- highlights data gaps and calls for harmonised, comparable and reliable data that are both sex-disaggregated and available for all Member States.

The Gender Equality Index 2017 is based on the data of Eurostat (education statistics, EU Labour Force Survey, European Health Interview Survey, EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, mortality data, population statistics, Structure of Earnings Survey), of Eurofound (European Quality of Life Survey, European Working Conditions Survey), of Women and Men in Decision-Making (EIGE's Gender Statistics Database) and of FRA's Violence Against Women survey.

Read more about the Gender Equality Index 2017

- *Gender Equality Index 2017: Main report (2017)*
- *Main findings (2017)*
- *Methodological report (2017)*
- *Intersecting inequalities*
- *Measurement framework of violence against women (2017)*

Explore the Gender Equality Index at <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

Further reading from EIGE

- *Gender segregation in education, training and the labour market (2017)*
- *Gender, skills and precarious work in the EU (2017)*
- *Economic benefits of gender equality in the European Union (2017)*
- *Poverty, gender and intersecting inequalities in the EU (2016)*
- *Gender equality in power and decision-making (2015)*
- *Gender gap in pensions in the EU (2015)*
- *Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment (2014)*

European Institute for Gender Equality







The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

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European Institute for Gender Equality
Gedimino pr. 16
LT-01103 Vilnius
LITHUANIA

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