

Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance

Paying the price for motherhood

To better capture the impact of income-generating opportunities for women and men, various income sources, measures and breakdowns in gender gaps in pay that combine the effect of individual, household, organisational and country characteristics have to be examined (EIGE, 2019c). The gender gaps in individual earnings point to women's much larger disadvantage than men in gaining income when compared to what household-level statistical measures, such as at-risk-of-poverty rates, show.

The rise of household disposable income (mean annual equivalised net income) observed during 2005-2015 continued into 2017. Between 2015 and 2017, women's income increased by 874 PPS to 17 343 PPS and men's by 925 PPS to 18 121 PPS. The latter increases sustained the gender gap in disposable income at 4 % to women's disadvantage. This statistical measure is calculated on the basis of various incomes pooled at the household level, which suggests that all adults, irrespective of their gender, are attributed the same share of household income if living in the same household. Gender differences in mean equivalised net income are therefore mainly due to varied income situations of different household types rather than differences, for example, in the salaries of women and men. Mean monthly gross earnings (before tax deductions and social security contributions) of women and men employees, which refer to individual incomes, show that on average in the EU, women employees in companies with at least 10 employees earn about 80 % of what their male counterparts earn (2 249 PPS vs 2 809 PPS respectively). The latter gender gap depicts the magnitude of gender gaps in financial resources, as also indicated by individual-level measures, for example the EU average gender pay gap of 16 % or the gender gap in overall earnings of 40 % (EIGE, 2019c).



Mean monthly gross earnings in PPS of women and men, by age, family type, level of education, country of birth and disability, EU, 2017
Note: Gender gaps (%) are calculated as the difference between the mean monthly earnings of men and women as a percentage of the mean monthly earnings of men.

Further differences across women's and men's employee groups exist. For example, the gender gap (7 %) in gross monthly earnings in PPS (Figure 15) among employees aged 15-24 years was more than five times lower than among employees aged 65 years or above (gender gap of 38 %) or employees with dependent children and living in a couple (gender gap of 36 %). This statistic supports wider research findings that family formation and corresponding gender norms and stereotypes are key factors in both the occurrence and widening of gender inequalities in pay during the life-course (EIGE, 2019c).