

# Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the future of work

## Europe 2020 employment target unlikely to be achieved without increased employment of women

The Europe 2020 strategy set an overall EU employment rate target of 75 %<sup>[1]</sup>, which was then translated into varying employment targets at national level. Initially gender blind, the targets were later accompanied by other indicators from the Social Scoreboard and the SDGs, notably on the gender employment gap, the gender gap in part-time employment and the population inactive due to caring responsibilities.

There has been some progress towards achieving the EU2020 employment target since 2010, with the overall employment rate growing from 69 % in 2010 to 73 % in 2018 (Figure 7). Both women's and men's employment rates grew, to 67 % and 79 % , respectively, meaning that men have already met the EU employment target but women have not. It feels optimistic to expect the employment target to be met in 2020, as the current data does not account for the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.



Figure 7. Europe 2020 target – employment rate (% of people aged 20–64), EU, 2018

The overall progress has reduced the gender employment gap only slightly. This gap stood at 12 p.p. in 2018, compared with 13 p.p. in 2010. The share of women working part-time continues to be much higher than the equivalent Figure for men (by 23 p.p.), with a marginal improvement in the past decade.

The slow progress on closing gender gaps is linked to the disproportionate share of caring responsibilities borne by women: in 2018, 32 % of inactive women were inactive because of their care responsibilities, a proportion that had grown by more than 4 p.p. since 2010. Less than 5 % of inactive men were inactive for that same reason.

The EU employment target of 75% was met in 23 EU Member States for men and only four for women (Germany, Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden). National targets were met for men in all EU Member States apart from Spain and the United Kingdom<sup>[2]</sup> but met for women only in Sweden, Lithuania and Latvia.

Reducing gender employment gaps seems to be an important precondition for achieving such targets: all five countries with the lowest gender employment gaps (Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Portugal) had already surpassed the EU2020 employment target in 2018. By contrast, four of the five countries with the highest gender employment gaps (Malta, Greece, Italy, Romania and Hungary) remain below the EU2020 employment target, three by more than 5 p.p.<sup>[3]</sup>.

## Footnotes

[1] Defined as the percentage of the total population aged 20–64 in employment. The approach to labour market participation in the context of EU2020 is different from that in the context of the Index, in that EU2020 looks at employment regardless of its intensity. By contrast, the Index focuses on the FTE employment rate, which captures work intensity.

[2] Where a national target has not been set, but the employment rate exceeds the EU target of 75 %.

[3] Only Malta achieved an employment rate higher than 75 %, but most of its recent employment gains have come from the greater involvement of women in the labour market.