

# Work in the EU: women and men at opposite ends


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Gender is a defining factor in the EU labour market that divides the workforce. This leads to the untapped potential of talent, unmet aspirations and lost opportunities for women, men and society at large. In all EU Member States, men dominate specific fields such as engineering and technology but are not present in others, such as teaching and care work. Out of the 28 EU member states in the EU, only five have a gender-balanced workforce (at least 40% of each gender).

Gender divisions in the labour market extend to the distribution of leadership positions, career advancement possibilities, allocation of job tasks or income.

Gender segregation (vertical and horizontal) persists throughout the European labour market. Vertical segregation refers to career progression and higher or lower income positions in IT and engineering. Segregation also extends to pay, with higher rates of poverty and lower income inequalities for women. For instance, behind this segregation are complex and varied factors, such as family factors. A gendered division of labour exists between women and men in the EU labour market, with some women and men working in similar sectors, some together to create the conditions for gender segregation.

**Little change in the past decade**

In the Education, Health and Social Work (EHSW) sector, there are two main clusters: health care (2004-2008 and 2014-2018) and social care (2009-2013 and 2014-2018). In the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sector, the share of women has only increased by one percent, from 17% to 18% over the same time. Segregation between different fields within the labour market, allowing that progress is possible.

**What is gender segregation?**

It happens when women and men concentrate in certain parts of society. For example, women in care and education and men in technical and engineering.

Search for more information on gender segregation in EIGE's Gender and Technology, Inequality and Education, and Inequality and Education.

In 2014-2018, Hungary, Lithuania and Portugal had the highest percentage of women among teaching professionals, the Netherlands and Austria, segregation was highest. A high percentage of men among engineering professionals in Germany and Luxembourg had highest in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

**Figure 1. Share of women among science and engineering professionals - share of men among teaching professionals**



Note: There are no data for Malta due to lack of comparable statistics from Eurostat's consolidated Euro 2018 results.

Still today, gender is a defining factor in the EU labor market that divides the workforce. This leads to the untapped potential of talent, unmet aspirations and lost opportunities for women, men and society at large. In all EU Member States, men dominate specific fields such as engineering and technology but are not present in others, such as teaching and care work. Gender divisions in the labour market extend to the distribution of leadership positions, career advancement possibilities, allocation of job tasks or income.

## Further reading

[EIGE's studies on education](#)



[EIGE's Economic Benefits of Gender Equality study](#)



[Employment on EIGE's Gender Mainstreaming Platform](#)



[Domain of work in EIGE's Gender Equality Index](#)



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EN (PDF, 1.12 MB)

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## Metadata

**AREAS:** Gender Mainstreaming

**AUTHOR:** EIGE

**ISBN:** MH-05-17-163-EN-N

**DOI:** 10.2839/443173