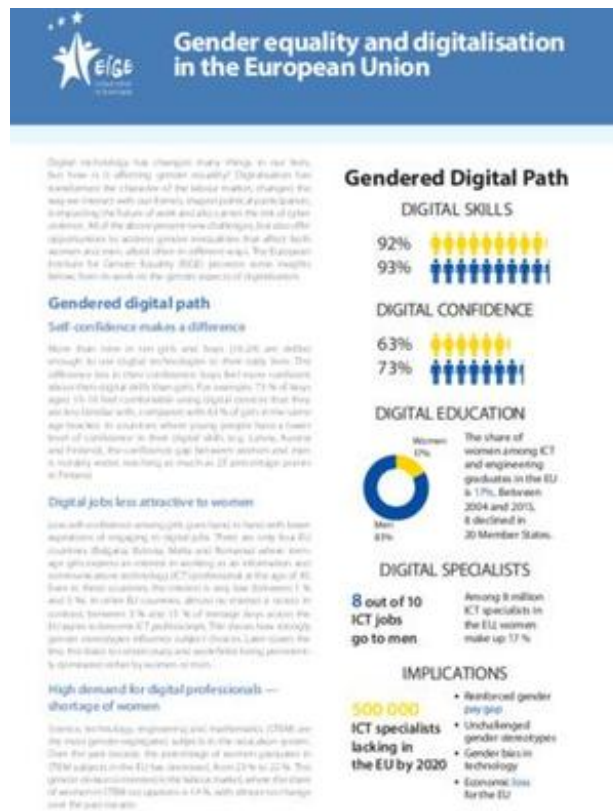


# Gender equality and digitalisation in the European Union



**Gender equality and digitalisation in the European Union**

Digital technology has changed many things in our lives, but how is it affecting gender equality? Digitalisation has transformed the character of the labour market, changed the way we interact with our friends, shaped political participation, is impacting the future of work and also carries the risk of cyber violence. All of the above present new challenges, but also offer opportunities to address gender inequalities that affect both women and men, albeit often in different ways. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) provides some insights in this factsheet, from its work on the gender aspects of digitalisation.

**Gendered digital path**  
Self-confidence makes a difference

More than twice as many girls and boys (19.2% and 10.6%) are confident enough to use digital technologies in their daily lives. The difference lies in their confidence: boys feel more confident about their digital skills than girls. For example, 71% of boys aged 15-16 feel comfortable using digital services that they are less familiar with, compared with 41% of girls in the same age bracket. In countries where young people have a lower level of confidence in their digital skills, for example, Austria and Finland, the confidence gap between women and men is notably wider, reaching as much as 22 percentage points in Finland.

**Digital jobs less attractive to women**

Low self-confidence among girls contributes to their self-perception of engaging in digital jobs. There are only five EU countries (Belgium, Estonia, Malta and Romania) where teenage girls express an interest in working as an information and communication technology (ICT) professional at the age of 16. Even in these countries, the interest is only low (between 1% and 3%). In other EU countries, almost no interest is shown in working in ICT professions. This shows how strongly gender stereotypes influence subject choices, later career decisions, motivation and confidence being perceived to discriminate either by women or men.

**High demand for digital professionals — shortage of women**

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are the most gender-marginalised subject in the school curriculum. Over the past decade, the percentage of women graduates in STEM subjects in the EU has decreased, from 23% to 22%. This gender inequality continues in the labour market where the share of women in STEM occupations is 14%, with almost no change over the past decade.

**Gendered Digital Path**

**DIGITAL SKILLS**  
92% (Men) vs 93% (Women)

**DIGITAL CONFIDENCE**  
63% (Men) vs 73% (Women)

**DIGITAL EDUCATION**  
The share of women among ICT and engineering graduates in the EU is 17%. Between 2004 and 2013, it declined in 20 Member States.

**DIGITAL SPECIALISTS**  
8 out of 10 ICT jobs go to men. Among 8 million ICT specialists in the EU, women make up 17%.

**IMPLICATIONS**

- 500,000 ICT specialists lacking in the EU by 2020
- Reinforced gender pay gap
- Unchallenged gender stereotypes
- Gender bias in technology
- Economic loss for the EU

Digital technology has changed many things in our lives, but how is it affecting gender equality? Digitalisation has transformed the character of the labour market, changed the way we interact with our friends, shaped political participation, is impacting the future of work and also carries the risk of cyber violence. All of the above present new challenges, but also offer opportunities to address gender inequalities that affect both women and men, albeit often in different ways. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) provides some insights in this factsheet, from its work on the gender aspects of digitalisation.

This factsheet is based on the results from the report Study and work in the EU: set apart by gender prepared at the request of the Estonian Presidency (2017); the research note Women and men in ICT: a chance for better work, life balance prepared at the request of the Bulgarian Presidency

ICT: a chance for better work–life balance, prepared at the request of the Bulgarian Presidency (forthcoming 2018); and the report Gender equality and youth: opportunities and risks of digitalisation (forthcoming), prepared at the request of the Austrian Presidency (2018). More information on the data referred to in the text, including exact references can be found in the report.

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## Downloads



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