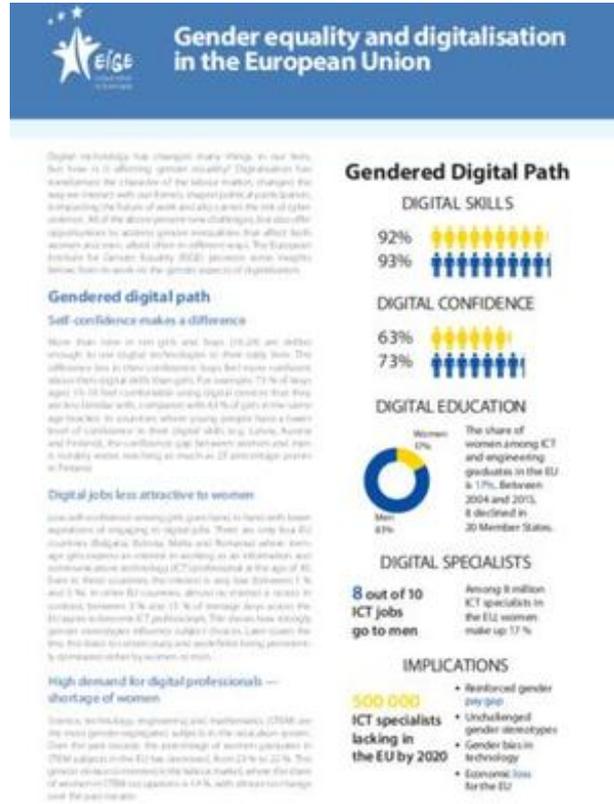


Gender equality and digitalisation in the European Union



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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 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%) are skilled enough in our digital technologies to show their best. The difference lies in their confidence: boys feel more confident about their digital skills than girls. For example, 71% of boys aged 15-18 feel comfortable using digital devices that they are less familiar with, compared with 61% of girls in the same age bracket. In countries where young people have a lower level of confidence in their digital skills, Iraq, Latvia, Romania and Finland, the confidence gap between women and men is notably wider, reaching as much as 23 percentage points in Finland.

Digital jobs less attractive to women

Jobs well-represented among girls (compared to boys) with lower aspirations of engaging in digital jobs. There are only four EU countries (Belgium, Estonia, Malta and Romania) where teenage girls express an interest in working as an information and communications technology (ICT) professional at the age of 16. Even in these countries, the interest is very low (between 1% and 3%). In other EU countries, almost no interest is shown in contrast: between 1% and 13% of teenage boys across the EU express interest in ICT professions. This shows how strongly gender stereotypes influence subject choices. It also shows the importance of encouraging and supporting young professionals equipped either by women or men.

High demand for digital professionals — shortage of women

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are the most gender-unequal subjects in the school curriculum. Over the past decade, the proportion of women graduates in STEM subjects in the EU has decreased, from 23% to 22%. This gender discrimination is reflected in the labour market, where the share of women ICTs has stagnated at 17%, with almost no change over the past decade.

Gendered Digital Path

DIGITAL SKILLS
92% (Boys) / 93% (Girls)

DIGITAL CONFIDENCE
63% (Boys) / 73% (Girls)

DIGITAL EDUCATION
Women: 17% / Men: 31%
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

- Reinforced gender pay gap
- Unchallenged gender stereotypes
- Gender bias in technology
- Economic loss for the EU

500 000 ICT specialists lacking in the EU by 2020

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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 (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.

Downloads



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