

Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance

Introduction

This fourth edition of the Gender Equality Index comes at a turbulent time when gender equality and those promoting it are facing increasing challenges to protect this core value of the EU.

Measuring gender equality is integral to effective policymaking in the EU. Since the first edition in 2013, the Gender Equality Index has tracked and reported progress by providing a comprehensive measure of gender equality, tailored to fit the EU's policy goals. It reveals both progress and setbacks, and explores what can be done better to seize opportunities for change.

The Index measures gender equalities in the domains of work, money, knowledge, time, power, health and violence, as well as intersecting inequalities. By providing relevant statistics, data and measures, all essential components for evidence-based policymaking and successful gender mainstreaming (EIGE, 2015b), it supports the assessment of policy outcomes on women and men.

This edition includes scores for 2005, 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2017, providing an insightful tracking of gender-equality progress in the EU and individual Member States over a period of 12 years.

As of 2019, the Gender Equality Index will be updated annually. This will enable more timely contributions to EU policy monitoring systems. A new feature is the introduction of a thematic focus linked to selected domains in the Index. The special focus for this, the 2019 edition, is on work–life balance, an issue of high EU political importance. The Index also presents an additional set of indicators on work–life balance not included in the calculations of the core Gender Equality Index, but which are conceptually and statistically linked.

The analysis of work–life balance cuts across three broad areas: paid work, unpaid work (care), and education and training. It presents indicators in six specific areas: parental-leave policies; informal care for older adults or people with disabilities, as well as LTC services; caring for children and childcare services; transport and public infrastructure; flexible working arrangements; and lifelong learning. Such analysis aims to establish strong connections between work–life balance and gender equality. It also provides new insights into the monitoring of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its ‘New start’ initiative on Work–life Balance.

Building on previous editions and EIGE’s approach to intersecting inequalities (EIGE, 2019a), the Gender Equality Index 2019 continues to show the diverse realities that different groups of women and men face. It examines how elements such as disability, age, level of education, country of birth and family type intersect with gender to create different pathways in people’s lives. For the first time, the Index highlights the situation of LGBTQI* people and Roma and Muslim women in areas where statistics are available.

This edition further extends the Index’s scope by presenting a convergence analysis of gender equality over time. This not only reveals whether Member States are individually advancing in gender equality but also whether gender equality gaps between Member States are decreasing. A narrowing or widening of gaps is evidence of EU progress on building cohesive societies.

Chapter 1 presents the results of the Gender Equality Index 2019, the main trends since the last edition of 2017 and developments since 2005. The outcomes of the convergence analysis provide a broader context for the main findings. Chapters 2-7 summarise the main findings of the six core domains of the Index. Developments in the domain of violence are presented in Chapter 8. The broad thematic focus of work–life balance and its links with the Gender Equality Index are explored in Chapter 9.



The work-life balance scoreboard covers three broad areas: paid work, unpaid work (care) and education and training