

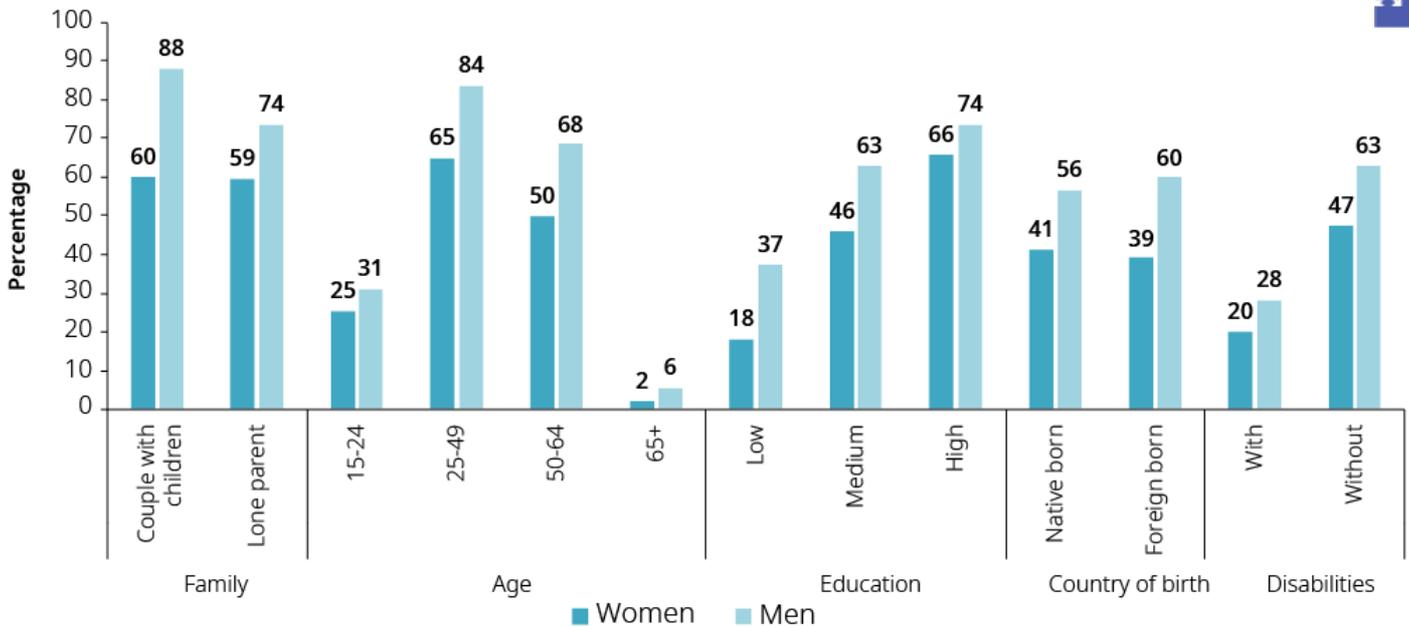
Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance

Motherhood, low education and migration are particular barriers to work for women

Being a parent continues to hinder women, but not men, in the labour market. FTE employment rates of women with children were around 60 % (Figure 12) regardless of the family type. Lone fathers had a higher FTE employment rate (74 %), though this was still far lower than those of fathers living in a couple (88 %). These figures not only reveal the extent of fathers' possibilities to participate in the labour market when living in couples, they also show that the arrival of a child has the greatest negative impact on the mothers living in couples. The disproportionate weight of care duties on mothers limits their participation in or forces their withdrawal from the labour market. This is further backed up by 2014-2017 trends showing FTE employment rates for lone fathers improved at double the speed (+ 8 p.p.) of those for lone mothers and couples with children (+ 4 p.p.).

While the most acute gender gap in FTE employment was observed among couples with children (28 p.p.), very large differences between women and men's labour-market participation were noted also for those aged 25-49 (19 p.p.) and 50-64 years (18 p.p.). These ages coincide with the peak times for family formation and increasing care duties – be it for children, grandchildren or those who are older and ill. These gender gaps in FTE employment stress the need for wider and more gender-sensitive opportunities for the equal sharing of care duties in our societies (see [Chapter 9](#)).

Figure 12: Full-time equivalent employment rate (FTE) by women and men, age, family type, level of education, country of birth and disability (15+ %), EU, 2017



Source: EIGE calculation, EU LFS.

Note: Calculated as: (sum of total working hours/mean working hours on full time jobs)/population. Disability status based on EU-SILC.

Other major disparities between women and men exist among those with a lower level of qualifications and foreign-born population groups, where both strong gender norms still in play and fewer possibilities for employment lead to much lower participation by women in paid work. The gender gaps in FTE employment rates were as high as 19 p.p. among those with low qualifications and 21 p.p. among people born outside the EU. These gaps widened by 2 p.p. between 2014 and 2017, worsening an already worrying situation.

Migrant women, moreover, are disproportionately engaged in the informal economy, such as in informal care work that usually entails poor working conditions and low pay (ILO, 2018a). In addition, very low FTE employment rates are noted among people aged above 65 years and those with disabilities, especially women. Inter alia, this has consequences for current and future social security entitlements, as well as for upskilling and wider societal integration opportunities.

By extending its analysis of intersecting inequalities to show how different groups of women and men are affected, the Gender Equality Index also highlights the situation of LGBTQI* people, Roma women and Muslim women in areas where statistics or other research evidence are available.

In several Member States, the use of a headscarf by Muslim women is an obstacle when applying for a job, regardless of a candidate's qualifications (EFOMW, 2017). It can similarly exclude them from certain jobs and sectors, such as those involving contact with customers (ENAR, 2016a, 2016b). Roma women report a much lower employment rate than Roma men, mostly due to lower educational attainment, traditional gender roles and the lack of childcare options outside the household. Access to the labour market is made even more difficult by living in segregated areas and the discrimination Roma face (FRA, 2014b).

Similarly, discrimination and harassment in the workplace pose a problem for LGBT people in the EU. An LGBT survey found that one in five LGBT people had felt discriminated against in the workplace in the previous 12 months because of their sexual orientation (FRA, 2013). More recent research (Eurofound, 2016) identified large disparities within the group, with 15 % of bisexual men and 23 % of transgender people reporting discrimination at work.