

# Gender equality needs to reach everyone: Gender equality and disability



**Gender equality needs to reach everyone**  
Gender equality and disability

**Gender equality is moving at a snail's pace**

From 2005 to 2015, progress towards gender equality in the European Union was very slow. EIGE's Gender Equality Index shows that the EU score for gender equality is **64.2 out of 100**. There is still a lot of work to be done.

European policies need to be based on an accurate picture of the different needs of citizens. For example, persons with a disability are often prevented from fully taking part in society because of barriers in educational attainment, employment and access to health care.

Both women and men with disabilities face disadvantages because of their disability, but their experiences often differ depending on their gender. The situation of women with disabilities is especially difficult. They are worse off than women without disabilities and also face more challenges than their male peers because of gender stereotypes that push women and men into traditional roles.

For example, women are more likely to be the main carers in the family and this is also true for women with disabilities, which makes it more difficult for them to engage in paid work outside the home.

There are around 75.8 million adults with a moderate disability and 14.6 million with a severe disability in the EU (1, 2). **16.1 million women (30% of all women) and 4.7 million men (25% of all men) have disabilities (3).**

In 2015, 39% of women aged 16 and 17% of men in the same age group reported having a disability (4) in the EU. Among people older than 65, just under half (46%) of the men and just over half (51%) of the women reported having a disability (5). These figures are consistent with the EU population pyramid.

**Women with disabilities are disadvantaged in the labour market**

The Gender Equality Index shows 10 years of slow progress in the domain of work, with participation in employment particularly low for women with disabilities.

While the labour market participation rate (6) in 2014 was 61% for women and 53% for men, it was only 14% for women with disabilities and 20% for men with disabilities.

Monthly earnings of both women and men with disabilities are around 5% lower than those without disabilities. On average, women in the EU-28, regardless of whether they have a disability or not, earn about 30% less than men.

Women with disabilities (2) face a higher risk of poverty compared to women without disabilities (2). Men with disabilities face a lower risk of poverty (2) compared to women with disabilities, but they still have a higher risk compared to men without disabilities (2). Low participation in the labour market, low work intensity and discrimination are the main factors that lead to a higher risk of poverty and exclusion for persons with disabilities compared to the rest of the population (7).

1. The higher threshold has better the level of gender equality.  
2. Eurostat (2016), Gender Equality Index: Country comparison data on Europe 2016 (www.eige.europa.eu)  
3. Eurostat (2016), p. 27.  
4. Eurostat (2016), p. 27.  
5. Eurostat (2016), p. 27.  
6. The EU labour market is characterised by a sectoral gender divide. It is not surprising that the sectoral gender divide of the labour market is also reflected in the higher incidence of part-time employment among women.  
7. Eurostat (2016), p. 27.

Explore the Gender Equality Index of Europe and the Gender Equality Index

This factsheet looks at how the intersection between gender and disability affects women and men in the EU. It is based on the Gender Equality Index 2017, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The Index measures gender equality and helps to monitor its progress across the EU and over time. It is composed of six core domains (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) and two satellite domains (intersecting inequalities and violence).

## Further information

[Explore the Gender Equality Index 2017 online](#)



## Downloads



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## Metadata

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**AUTHOR:** EIGE

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