

The data for 2023 Index is mostly from 2021.

Progress in gender equality

With 76.0 points out of 100, Belgium ranks 5th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Its score is 5.8 points above the score for the EU as a whole.¹

Since 2010, Belgium's score has increased by 6.7 points, mainly due to improvements in the domain of power (+ 23.7 points). Since 2020, Belgium's score has increased by 1.8 points. Improvements in the domains of power (+ 4.6 points) and knowledge (+ 4.0 points) have been the main drivers of this increase. As a result, Belgium's ranking in the Index has risen by three places since 2020.

[1] The Gender Equality Index 2023 has been affected by certain changes in EU-wide surveys and through the use of the most up-to-date sources. For the first time, it benefits from EIGE's survey data on gender gaps in care, individual and social activities carried out across the EU in 2022, and from new data from the 2021 EWCTS survey (Eurofound). Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, which came into force from 1 January 2021, also introduced some changes into the EU-LFS. These methodological changes will affect nine indicators included in the domains of work, knowledge and time, together with their respective scores, as well as the overall Index and the analysis of intersecting inequalities using the respective indicators.

An analysis has been carried out of the possible impact that these changes may have had on the Index and on the interpretation of the corresponding time series. Despite the break in time series that the changes entail, the time series analysis can be considered adequate (see Index 2023 report).

| | | | Change since | |
|-----------|-------------|--|--------------|------------|
| | | | 2010 | 2020 |
| SE | 82.2 | | 2.1 | -1.7 |
| NL | 77.9 | | 3.9 | 0.6 |
| DK | 77.8 | | 2.6 | 0.0 |
| ES | 76.4 | | 10.0 | 1.8 |
| BE | 76.0 | | 6.7 | 1.8 |
| FR | 75.7 | | 8.2 | 0.6 |
| LU | 74.7 | | 13.5 | 1.2 |
| FI | 74.4 | | 1.3 | -1.0 |
| IE | 73.0 | | 7.6 | -1.3 |
| AT | 71.2 | | 12.5 | 2.4 |
| DE | 70.8 | | 8.2 | 2.1 |
| EU | 70.2 | | 7.1 | 1.6 |
| SI | 69.4 | | 6.7 | 1.9 |
| IT | 68.2 | | 14.9 | 3.2 |
| MT | 67.8 | | 13.4 | 2.2 |
| PT | 67.4 | | 13.7 | 4.6 |
| BG | 65.1 | | 10.1 | 4.4 |
| LT | 64.1 | | 9.2 | 3.5 |
| PL | 61.9 | | 6.4 | 4.2 |
| LV | 61.5 | | 6.3 | 0.1 |
| HR | 60.7 | | 8.4 | 0.0 |
| CY | 60.7 | | 11.7 | 3.4 |
| EE | 60.2 | | 6.8 | -0.8 |
| SK | 59.2 | | 6.2 | 3.2 |
| EL | 58.0 | | 9.4 | 4.6 |
| CZ | 57.9 | | 2.3 | 0.7 |
| HU | 57.3 | | 4.9 | 3.1 |
| RO | 56.1 | | 5.3 | 2.4 |

Best performance

Belgium's highest ranking and score (2nd among all Member States) is in the domain of money, in which it scores 90.7 points. Since 2020, Belgium's score has increased slightly by 0.9 points, maintaining its position in the ranking. Within this domain, the country performs best in the sub-domain of economic situation (96.5 points), where it ranks 4th in the EU. In the sub-domain of financial resources, Belgium also ranks 4th with a score of 85.2 points.

Most room for improvement

Gender inequalities in Belgium are most pronounced in the domain of time (64.7 points). Belgium's score in this domain has decreased by 0.6 points since 2020, leading to a drop of four places in its ranking, to 15th. With a score of 50.5 points, the country has the most room for improvement in the sub-domain of social activities. Since 2020, Belgium's score in this sub-domain has decreased by 11.4 points, resulting in a drop in its ranking from 9th to 21st place.

Biggest improvement

Since 2020, the biggest improvement in Belgium's score has been in the domain of power (+ 4.6 points), in which it currently ranks 7th in the EU. An improvement in the sub-domain of economic decision-making (+ 9.2 points) has been the key driver of this change. As a result, the country's ranking in this sub-domain has moved up from 7th place to 3rd among the EU Member States. Belgium has also improved in the sub-domain of political decision-making (+ 6.1 points), moving the country's ranking up from 5th place to 3rd in this sub-domain.

A step backwards

Since 2020, Belgium's ranking in the domain of work (75.4 points) has dropped by 10 places, moving from the 8th to 18th place among the EU Member States. This fall is due to a stalling of Belgium's progress in this domain, combined with other Member States making faster progress. In the domain of work, the sub-domain of segregation and quality of work has decreased by 1.0 point since 2020. Belgium's score of 69.9 points in this sub-domain puts it in 7th place. In the sub-domain of participation, the country scores 81.2 points, and ranks 23rd in the EU.

Convergence

Upward convergence in gender equality describes increasing equality between women and men in the EU, accompanied by a decline in variations between Member States. This means that countries with lower levels of gender equality are catching up with those with the highest levels, thereby reducing disparities across the EU. Analysis of convergence patterns in the Gender Equality Index shows that disparities between Member States decreased over the period 2010–2021, and that **EU countries continue their trend of upward convergence**.

Looking more closely at the performance of each Member State, patterns can be identified that reflect a relative improvement or slipping back in the Gender Equality Index score of each Member State in relation to the EU average.

Belgium is *flattening*. Its Gender Equality Index score is higher than the EU average, but has grown at a slower pace over time than other Member States. The gap between the country and the EU average has narrowed over time.

Explore Belgium's Index results

| | | | | | | | | | Change since | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 2010 | 2012 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2010 | 2020 |
| Index | 69.3 | 70.2 | 70.5 | 71.1 | 71.4 | 72.7 | 74.2 | 76.0 | 6.7 | 1.8 |
| Work | 72.7 | 72.8 | 73.8 | 74.1 | 74.7 | 74.9 | 75.5 | 75.4 | 2.7 | -0.1 |
| Participation | 75.7 | 75.4 | 77.5 | 78.2 | 79.5 | 80.2 | 80.4 | 81.2 | 5.5 | 0.8 |
| Segregation and quality of work | 69.8 | 70.4 | 70.2 | 70.2 | 70.1 | 69.9 | 70.9 | 69.9 | 0.1 | -1.0 |
| Money | 85.5 | 85.6 | 87.5 | 88.3 | 88.7 | 89.9 | 89.8 | 90.7 | 5.2 | 0.9 |
| Financial resources | 77.9 | 78.6 | 82.7 | 83.3 | 83.8 | 84.6 | 84.9 | 85.2 | 7.3 | 0.3 |
| Economic situation | 94.0 | 93.3 | 92.6 | 93.6 | 93.8 | 95.4 | 95.1 | 96.5 | 2.5 | 1.4 |
| Knowledge | 70.6 | 70.6 | 71.1 | 71.3 | 71.4 | 70.8 | 70.1 | 74.1 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| Attainment and participation | 73.3 | 72.5 | 73.3 | 74.3 | 73.8 | 74.0 | 73.8 | 81.9 | 8.6 | 8.1 |
| Segregation | 68.1 | 68.8 | 68.9 | 68.4 | 69.0 | 67.7 | 66.6 | 67.0 | -1.1 | 0.4 |
| Time | 70.3 | 71.8 | 65.3 | 65.3 | 65.3 | 65.3 | 65.3 | 64.7 | -5.6 | -0.6 |
| Care activities | 72.6 | 75.7 | 68.9 | 68.9 | 68.9 | 68.9 | 68.9 | 82.8 | 10.2 | 13.9 |
| Social activities | 68.1 | 68.1 | 61.9 | 61.9 | 61.9 | 61.9 | 61.9 | 50.5 | -17.6 | -11.4 |
| Power | 47.9 | 50.5 | 53.4 | 55.2 | 55.7 | 61.0 | 67.0 | 71.6 | 23.7 | 4.6 |
| Political | 65.8 | 70.0 | 70.2 | 67.8 | 68.1 | 72.0 | 80.9 | 87.0 | 21.2 | 6.1 |
| Economic | 32.8 | 36.0 | 38.0 | 40.2 | 41.8 | 53.3 | 63.6 | 72.8 | 40.0 | 9.2 |
| Social | 50.9 | 51.0 | 57.1 | 61.7 | 60.8 | 59.2 | 58.6 | 58.0 | 7.1 | -0.6 |
| Health | 86.5 | 86.4 | 86.3 | 86.3 | 86.5 | 86.3 | 88.5 | 88.5 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Status | 92.6 | 93.4 | 93.3 | 93.3 | 93.6 | 93.3 | 93.8 | 94.3 | 1.7 | 0.5 |
| Behaviour | 70.3 | 70.3 | 70.3 | 70.3 | 70.3 | 70.3 | 75.1 | 75.1 | 4.8 | 0.0 |
| Access | 99.3 | 98.1 | 98.0 | 97.9 | 98.4 | 98.1 | 98.3 | 97.8 | -1.5 | -0.5 |

Explore Belgium's performance by indicator

| | | Belgium | | EU | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Work | | | | | |
| Participation | Full-time equivalent employment rate (% , 15-89 population, 2021)* | 41 | 54 | 42 | 57 |
| | Duration of working life (years, 15+ population, 2021) | 32 | 36 | 34 | 38 |
| Segregation and quality of work | Employed people in education, human health and social work activities (% , 15-89 employed, 2021) | 40 | 12 | 30 | 8 |
| | Ability to take one hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters (% , 15+ workers, 2021) | 27 | 33 | 29 | 37 |
| | Career Prospects Index (points, 0-100, 2021) | 66 | 66 | 62 | 63 |
| Money | | | | | |
| Financial resources | Mean monthly earnings (PPS, working population, 2018) | 2778 | 3075 | 2321 | 2818 |
| | Mean equivalised net income (PPS, 16+ population, 2021) | 23866 | 25198 | 20261 | 21221 |
| Economic situation | At-risk-of-poverty (% , 16+ population, 2021) | 13 | 12 | 17 | 15 |
| | Income distribution S20/80 (16+ population, 2021) | 30 | 28 | 20 | 20 |
| Knowledge | | | | | |
| Attainment and participation | Graduates of tertiary education (% , 15-89 population, 2021) | 37 | 33 | 28 | 26 |
| | People participating in formal or non-formal education and training (15-74 population, 2021) | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 |
| Segregation | Tertiary students in education, health and welfare, humanities and arts (% , 15+ population, 2021) | 51 | 29 | 43 | 21 |
| Time | | | | | |
| Care activities | People caring for and educating their children or grandchildren, elderly or people with disabilities, every day (% , 18-74 population, 2022) | 31 | 24 | 34 | 25 |
| | People doing cooking and/or housework, every day (% , 18-74 population, 2022) | 64 | 41 | 63 | 36 |
| Social activities | Workers doing sporting, cultural or leisure activities outside of their home, at least daily or several times a week (% , 16-74 workers, 2022) | 26 | 32 | 29 | 34 |
| | Workers involved in voluntary or charitable activities, at least once a month (% , 15-74 workers, 2022) | 8 | 17 | 11 | 15 |
| Power | | | | | |
| Political | Share of ministers (% , 2nd quarter 2023) | 55 | 45 | 34 | 66 |
| | Share of members of parliament (% , 2nd quarter 2023) | 43 | 57 | 33 | 67 |
| | Share of members of regional assemblies/local municipalities (% , 2023)** | 43 | 57 | 30 | 70 |
| Economic | Share of members of boards in largest quoted companies, supervisory board or board of directors (% , 1st semester 2023) | 39 | 61 | 33 | 67 |
| | Share of board members of central bank (% , 2022) | 40 | 60 | 28 | 72 |
| Social | Share of board members of research funding organisations (% , 2022) | 36 | 64 | 41 | 59 |
| | Share of board members of publically owned broadcasting organisations (% , 2022) | 36 | 64 | 38 | 62 |
| | Share of members of highest decision making body of the national Olympic sport organisations (% , 2022) | 19 | 81 | 20 | 80 |
| Health | | | | | |
| Status | Self-perceived health, good or very good (% , 16+ population, 2021) | 74 | 79 | 67 | 72 |
| | Life expectancy at birth (years, 2021) | 84 | 79 | 83 | 77 |
| | Healthy life years at birth (years, 2021) | 64 | 65 | 64 | 63 |
| Behaviour | People who don't smoke and are not involved in harmful drinking (% , 15+ population, 2019)*** | 72 | 51 | 73 | 56 |
| | People doing physical activities and/or consuming fruits and vegetables (% , 15+ population, 2019) | 37 | 41 | 38 | 43 |
| Access | Population with unmet needs for medical examination (% , 16+ population, 2021) | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| | Population with unmet needs for dental examination (% , 16+ population, 2021) | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 |

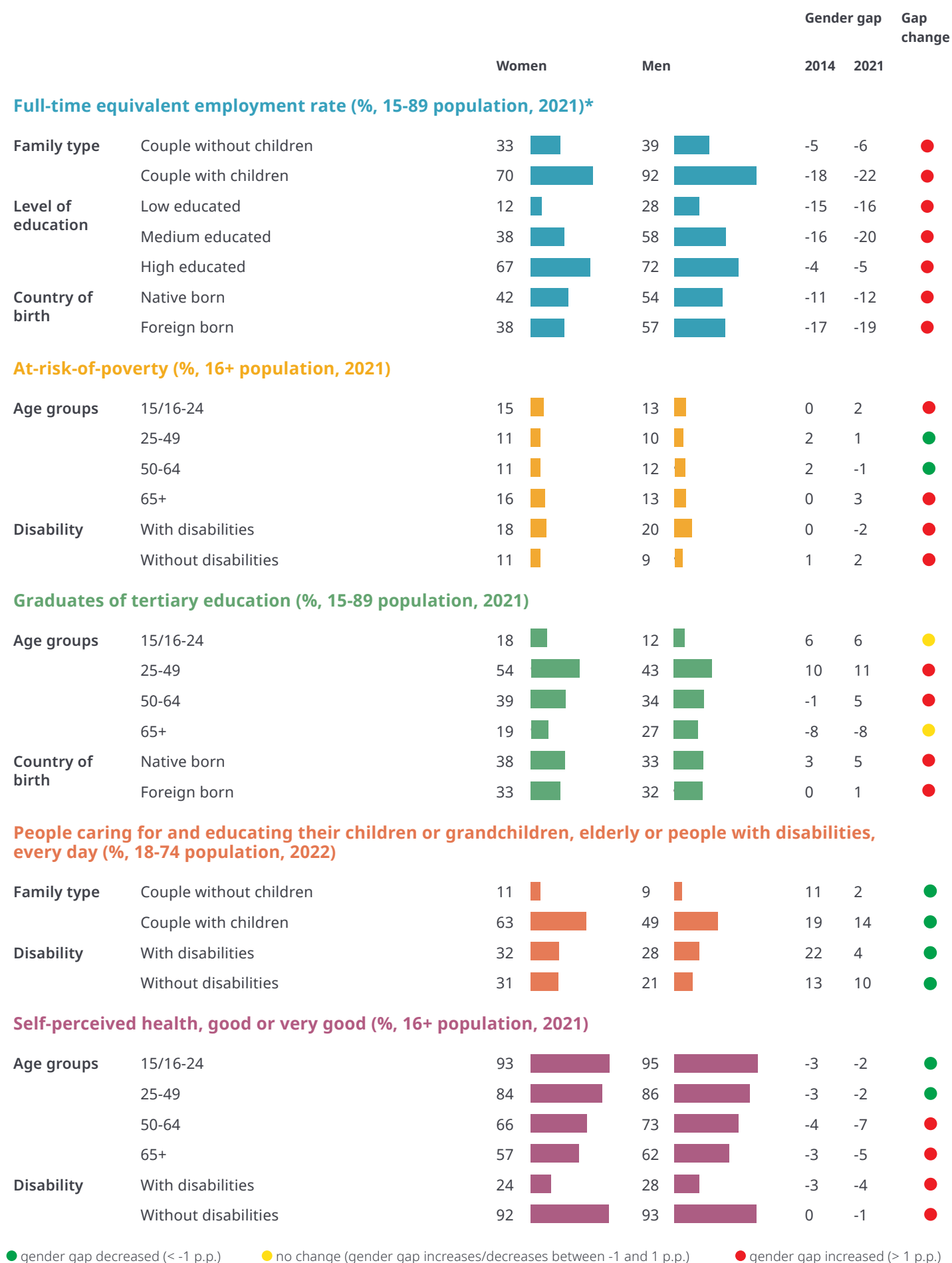
* FTE employment rate measures employed persons in a comparable way, even though they may work a different number of hours per week

** BE: Regional assemblies

*** EU: EIGE estimation

Source: Eurostat (education statistics, European Union Labour Force Survey, European Health Interview Survey, European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, Structure of Earnings Survey), EIGE (Survey on gender gaps in care, individual and social activities, Women and Men in Decision-Making)

Explore intersecting inequalities



* FTE employment rate measures employed persons in a comparable way, even though they may work a different number of hours per week

Source: Eurostat (European Union Labour Force Survey, European Health Interview Survey, European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, Structure of Earnings Survey), EIGE's survey on gender gaps in care, individual and social activities.

Violence

A lack of evidence to assess violence against women

No score is given to Belgium in the domain of violence, due to a lack of comparable EU-wide data.

Femicide

In 2021, 720 women were murdered by an intimate partner, family member or relative in 17 EU Member States, according to official reports. Belgium does not provide comparable data on femicide.

Source: Eurostat, 2021

Violence at a glance

Intimate partner violence

No data is available. Data on intimate partner violence will be updated in 2024 using Eurostat data, complemented by the survey on violence against women carried out by FRA and EIGE.

Source: Eurostat, 2021

Sexual harassment at work

No data is available. Data on sexual harassment at work will be updated in 2024 using Eurostat data, complemented by the survey on violence against women carried out by FRA and EIGE.

Source: Eurostat, 2021

Istanbul Convention: state of play

The Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive international human rights treaty on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence. Belgium signed the Istanbul Convention in September 2012 and ratified it in March 2016. The treaty entered into force in Belgium in July 2016.

The European Council approved the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention on 1 June 2023.

EIGE/FRA survey on violence against women

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) will carry out a survey on violence against women (VAW II) in eight EU Member States (CZ, DE, IE, CY, LU, HU, RO, SE), which will complement the Eurostat-led data collection on gender-based violence and other forms of interpersonal violence (EU-GBV) in the remaining countries. The use of a unified methodology will ensure the availability of comparable data across all EU Member States. Data collection will be completed this year, and the results will be used to update the domain of violence in the Gender Equality Index 2024, with its thematic focus on violence against women.

Thematic focus

The Gender Equality Index 2023 focuses on the socially fair transition of the European Green Deal. This thematic focus analyses the following aspects:

- **Public attitudes and behaviours on climate change and mitigation**
- **Energy**
- **Transport**
- **Decision-making**

The data was collected through various surveys, such as the EIGE 2022 survey on gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities, as well as other EU-wide surveys.¹ The EIGE survey focused on gender differences in unpaid care, including links to transport, the environment, and personal consumption and behaviour.

Focus 2023: The European Green Deal

Women tend to choose environmentally friendly options more often than men in Belgium

In 2018, around 66 % of women and 59 % of men in Belgium felt a personal responsibility to reduce climate change. In 2022, more women (24 %) than men (17 %) reported regularly avoiding animal products, which is lower than the EU average (31 % and 23 %, respectively). Around 42 % of women in 2022 reported regularly avoiding plastic and/or single-use products, compared with 37 % of men. These percentages are below the EU average, where 49 % of women and 42 % of men report that they regularly avoided plastic and/or single-use products.

Women in Belgium are highly underrepresented among tertiary graduates in natural sciences and technologies

In Belgium, the share of women among tertiary graduates (ISCED levels 5 and 6) in natural sciences and technologies in 2021 was 30 %. This imbalance is more marked than across the EU as a whole, where women represent 36 % of graduates in this field.

Women are highly underrepresented in the energy and transport sectors in Belgium

In Belgium, only 30 % of workers in the energy sector in 2022 were women. Similarly, women accounted for just 21 % of workers in the transport sector. In national ministries dealing with environment and climate change, 32 % of senior administrators employed women, which is lower than the EU average of 44 %. In 2022, only 38 % of decision-makers in parliamentary committees focusing on the environment and climate change were women.

[1] The following sources were used: the EIGE survey on gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities; the European Social Survey; Eurostat-LFS; EU-SILC; education statistics; and the EIGE's WiDM.

Green Deal in Belgium

| | Belgium | | EU | |
|---|---------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Public attitudes and behaviours on climate change and mitigation | | | | |
| Personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change (% , 15+, 2018) | 66 | 59 | 62 | 61 |
| Avoiding animal products (% , 16-74, 2022) | | | | |
| Regularly | 24 | 17 | 31 | 23 |
| Sometimes | 46 | 44 | 43 | 41 |
| Never | 30 | 39 | 26 | 36 |
| Avoiding plastic single-use products (% , 16-74, 2022) | | | | |
| Regularly | 42 | 37 | 49 | 42 |
| Sometimes | 48 | 50 | 44 | 46 |
| Never | 9 | 13 | 7 | 11 |
| Choosing environmentally friendly options in childcare activities (% , 16-74, 2022) | | | | |
| Regularly | 37 | 36 | 51 | 49 |
| Sometimes | 49 | 47 | 41 | 41 |
| Never | 14 | 17 | 8 | 10 |
| Choosing friendly options in housework activities daily (% , 16-74, 2022) | | | | |
| Regularly | 49 | 48 | 59 | 53 |
| Sometimes | 42 | 43 | 35 | 39 |
| Never | 9 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| Tertiary graduates in natural sciences and technologies (% , 15+, 2021) | | | | |
| Natural sciences and technologies | 30 | 70 | 36 | 64 |
| Natural sciences | 44 | 56 | 56 | 44 |
| Technologies | 26 | 74 | 28 | 72 |
| Energy | | | | |
| People unable to keep the home adequately warm (% , +16, 2021) | | | | |
| 65+ | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 |
| Low educational attainment | 5 | 6 | 12 | 12 |
| Single | 4 | 7 | 10 | 9 |
| Lone parents | 7 | 9 | 12 | 11 |
| Non-EU migrants | 6 | 6 | 12 | 13 |
| People with disabilities | 6 | 6 | 12 | 11 |
| People with arrears on utility bills (% , +16, 2021) | | | | |
| 16-24 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| Low educational attainment | 4 | 5 | 9 | 10 |
| Single | 4 | 7 | 10 | 9 |
| Lone parents | 7 | 9 | 12 | 11 |
| Non-EU migrants | 6 | 5 | 11 | 12 |
| People with disabilities | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| Employed in the energy sector (% , +15, 2022) | 30 | 70 | 24 | 76 |
| Transport | | | | |
| People opting for low carbon-emission modes of transport (% , 16-74, 2022) | | | | |
| Regularly | 41 | 39 | 42 | 41 |
| Sometimes | 39 | 39 | 39 | 41 |
| Never | 20 | 23 | 19 | 18 |
| People using the car as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022) | 67 | 68 | 66 | 70 |
| People using public transportation as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022) | 30 | 27 | 32 | 29 |
| People using walking as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022) | 46 | 44 | 46 | 43 |
| Employed in the transport sector (% , 15+, 2022) | 21 | 79 | 22 | 78 |
| Decision-making | | | | |
| Senior administrators in national ministries dealing with environment and climate change (% , 2022) | 68 | 32 | 56 | 44 |
| Members of parliamentary committees dealing with environment and climate change (% , 2022) | 62 | 38 | 70 | 30 |

Source: EIGE Survey on gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities, European Social Survey, Eurostat LFS, EU-SILC, Education statistics, EIGE Women and Men in Decision-Making.

About Index

The Gender Equality Index is a tool for monitoring progress in gender equality across the EU over time. It measures gender gaps between women and men in six core domains – work, money, knowledge, time, power and health – and is composed of 31 indicators. The Index uses a scale of 1 to 100, where 1 stands for total inequality and 100 for total equality.

Two additional domains are included in the Index, but do not impact a country's final score. The domain of intersecting inequalities highlights how gender inequalities manifest in combination with age, dis/ability, education, family type and migrant background (based on the country of birth). The domain of violence against women monitors, measures and analyses the most common and widely criminalised forms of violence against women across the EU.

The Gender Equality Index 2023 also includes a thematic focus on the socially fair transition of the European Green Deal.

This year's edition of the Index includes a long-awaited update to the domain of time using the EIGE survey on gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities.

EIGE's survey on gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities

This EIGE survey focuses on gender differences in unpaid care in order to better understand how they impact the job opportunities, work-life balance, leisure and social activities of women and men. The survey aims to fill current data gaps and improve the capacity of the Gender Equality Index to capture changes in the domain of time in a more conceptually sound, coherent and regular way. The findings from this EIGE survey will contribute to monitoring the European Care Strategy and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, as reducing the gender gap in care is a key objective of these strategies. The survey was carried out during the summer of 2022, and involved over 60,000 respondents aged 16-74 across the 27 EU Member States.

European Institute for Gender Equality

We are an independent centre and the primary source for information on gender equality in the European Union. We contribute to making the European Union become a Union of Equality, where women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our societies.

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