



The data for 2023 Index is mostly from 2021.

Progress in gender equality

With 65.1 points out of 100, Bulgaria ranks 16th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Its score is 5.1 points below the score for the EU as a whole.¹

Since 2010, Bulgaria's score has increased by 10.1 points, mainly due to improvements in the domains of time (+ 19.9 points) and power (+ 16.9 points). Since 2020, Bulgaria's score has increased by 4.4 points, which is one of the biggest improvements among Member States. This can be attributed to increases in the domains of time (+ 21.1 points) and money (+ 2.0 points). As a result, Bulgaria's ranking in the Index has risen by two places since 2020, moving up to the 16th place.

[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

Bulgaria performs best in the domain of power (11th out of all Member States), in which it scores 62.7 points. However, progress has stalled (– 0.3 points) since 2020, resulting in a fall of two places in its ranking in this domain. Within the domain of power, the country performs best in the sub-domain of social decision-making (70.6 points), in which it ranks 8th in the EU. Bulgaria's score in this sub-domain has increased by 5.4 points since 2020. In the sub-domain of economic decision-making, the country scores 60.9 points, and ranks 10th.

Most room for improvement

Bulgaria ranks last among all Member States in the domain of money, with a score of 67.0 points. Since 2020, Bulgaria's score in this domain has increased only slightly (+ 2.0 points), thus maintaining the same ranking. With a score of 56.9 points, Bulgaria's greatest room for improvement lies in the sub-domain of financial resources, in which the country ranks 26th in the EU. In the sub-domain of economic situation, the country scores 78.9 points, and ranks 26th.

Biggest improvement

Since 2020, the biggest improvement in Bulgaria's score has been in the domain of time (+ 21.1 points), moving the country's ranking up 10 places to 17th. An improvement in the sub-domain of care activities (+ 20.8 points) has been the key driver of this change. As a result, the country scores 76.5 points in this sub-domain, and its ranking has moved up from 25th place to 16th. Bulgaria has also improved in the sub-domain of social activities (+ 20.6 points), in which it scores 53.2 points and ranks 19th in the EU – a rise of eight places compared with 2020.

A step backwards

Since 2020, Bulgaria's ranking in the domain of work (70.0 points) has dropped by two places, moving down to the 22nd place among the EU Member States. Within this domain, Bulgaria's ranking dropped from 12th to 18th place in the sub-domain of participation, with its score remaining unchanged since 2020. In the sub-domain of segregation and quality of work, the country's ranking has dropped by three places since 2020, with Bulgaria scoring 58.6 points and ranking 26th in the EU.

Convergence

Upward convergence in gender equality describes increasing equality between women and men in the EU, accompanied by a decline in variation 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.

Bulgaria is catching up. This means that while its Gender Equality Index score was initially lower than the EU average, it has grown faster over time, reducing the gap.

Explore Bulgaria's Index results

									Change since	
	2010	2012	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2010	2020
Index	55.0	56.9	58.0	58.8	59.6	59.9	60.7	65.1	10.1	4.4
Work	67.9	68.7	68.6	69.0	69.0	69.6	69.3	70.0	2.1	0.7
Participation	81.3	82.0	82.7	83.5	83.5	84.6	83.6	83.6	2.3	0.0
Segregation and quality of work	56.7	57.6	56.9	57.0	57.0	57.3	57.4	58.6	1.9	1.2
Money	60.8	60.5	61.9	61.8	62.3	64.5	65.0	67.0	6.2	2.0
Financial resources	44.7	44.2	48.2	50.2	49.6	54.6	55.3	56.9	12.2	1.6
Economic situation	82.8	82.7	79.5	76.1	78.2	76.1	76.5	78.9	-3.9	2.4
Knowledge	50.4	51.9	53.3	53.2	54.9	55.2	56.2	57.8	7.4	1.6
Attainment and participation	53.9	54.6	56.1	55.4	57.3	56.3	57.0	59.7	5.8	2.7
Segregation	47.1	49.3	50.7	51.0	52.7	54.1	55.4	56.1	9.0	0.7
Time	43.9	47.4	42.7	42.7	42.7	42.7	42.7	63.8	19.9	21.1
Care activities	48.6	56.6	55.7	55.7	55.7	55.7	55.7	76.5	27.9	20.8
Social activities	39.7	39.7	32.6	32.6	32.6	32.6	32.6	53.2	13.5	20.6
Power	45.8	49.4	56.0	59.9	61.5	60.2	63.0	62.7	16.9	-0.3
Political	50.3	53.4	49.2	53.8	56.5	58.8	58.4	57.5	7.2	-0.9
Economic	27.6	32.7	53.2	59.9	60.0	60.2	65.6	60.9	33.3	-4.7
Social	69.3	69.3	67.0	66.8	68.5	61.8	65.2	70.6	1.3	5.4
Health	75.3	75.8	76.4	77.1	77.2	77.2	78.0	77.8	2.5	-0.2
Status	88.1	88.4	88.1	89.0	89.1	89.1	88.4	87.8	-0.3	-0.6
Behaviour	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	54.4	54.4	2.1	0.0
Access	92.6	94.1	96.9	98.5	98.5	98.8	98.8	98.7	6.1	-0.1

Explore Bulgaria's performance by indicator

		Bulgaria		EU	
		Women	Men	Women	Men
Work					
Participation	Full-time equivalent employment rate (% , 15-89 population, 2021)*	46	59	42	57
	Duration of working life (years, 15+ population, 2021)	31	34	34	38
Segregation and quality of work	Employed people in education, human health and social work activities (% , 15-89 employed, 2021)	19	4	30	8
	Ability to take one hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters (% , 15+ workers, 2021)	23	31	29	37
	Career Prospects Index (points, 0-100, +15 population, 2015)	66	62	62	63
Money					
Financial resources	Mean monthly earnings (PPS, +16 working population, 2018)	1078	1256	2321	2818
	Mean equivalised net income (PPS, 16+ population, 2021)	12056	12483	20261	21221
Economic situation	At-risk-of-poverty (% , 16+ population, 2021)	24	20	17	15
	Income distribution S20/80 (16+ population, 2021)	14	14	20	20
Knowledge					
Attainment and participation	Graduates of tertiary education (% , 15-89 population, 2021)	27	20	28	26
	People participating in formal or non-formal education and training (15-74 population, 2021)	10	10	19	18
Segregation	Tertiary students in education, health and welfare, humanities and arts (% , 15+ population, 2021)	43	22	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)	43	32	34	25
	People doing cooking and/or housework, every day (% , 18-74 population, 2022)	72	37	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)	25	32	29	34
	Workers involved in voluntary or charitable activities, at least once a month (% , 16-74 workers, 2022)	8	11	11	15
Power					
Political	Share of ministers (% , 2nd quarter 2023)	37	63	34	66
	Share of members of parliament (% , 2nd quarter 2023)	24	76	33	67
	Share of members of regional assemblies/local municipalities (% , 2022)**	27	73	30	70
Economic	Share of members of boards in largest quoted companies, supervisory board or board of directors (% , 1st semester 2023)	19	81	33	67
	Share of board members of central bank (% , 2022)	43	57	28	72
Social	Share of board members of research funding organisations (% , 2022)	55	45	41	59
	Share of board members of publically owned broadcasting organisations (% , 2022)	40	60	38	62
	Share of members of highest decision making body of the national Olympic sport organisations (% , 2022)	21	79	20	80
Health					
Status	Self-perceived health, good or very good (% , 16+ population, 2021)	64	72	67	72
	Life expectancy at birth (years, 2021)	75	68	83	77
	Healthy life years at birth (years, 2021)	65	62	64	63
Behaviour	People who don't smoke and are not involved in harmful drinking (% , 15+ population, 2019)***	70	47	73	56
	People doing physical activities and/or consuming fruits and vegetables (% , 15+ population, 2019)	11	20	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)	3	3	5	5

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

** BG: Local municipalities

*** 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

				Gender gap		Gap change
		Women	Men	2014	2021	
Full-time equivalent employment rate (% , 15-89 population, 2021)*						
Family type	Couple without children	42	42	2	0	●
	Couple with children	77	92	-8	-15	●
Level of education	Low educated	15	30	-9	-15	●
	Medium educated	48	64	-10	-16	●
	High educated	72	79	1	-7	●
Country of birth	Native born	46	59	-7	-13	●
	Foreign born	n/a	n/a	-11	n/a	

At-risk-of-poverty (% , 16+ population, 2021)

Age groups	15/16-24	30	28	1	2	●
	25-49	17	18	0	-1	●
	50-64	16	17	-2	-1	●
	65+	40	27	8	13	●
Disability	With disabilities	35	26	4	9	●
	Without disabilities	22	20	0	2	●

Graduates of tertiary education (% , 15-89 population, 2021)

Age groups	15/16-24	3	2	2	1	●
	25-49	39	26	14	13	●
	50-64	28	20	9	8	●
	65+	19	17	-3	2	●
Country of birth	Native born	27	20	7	7	●
	Foreign born	41	45	-4	-4	●

People caring for and educating their children or grandchildren, elderly or people with disabilities, every day (% , 18-74 population, 2022)

Family type	Couple without children	21	8	7	13	●
	Couple with children	73	58	21	15	●
Disability	With disabilities	49	39	14	10	●
	Without disabilities	40	29	14	11	●

Self-perceived health, good or very good (% , 16+ population, 2021)

Age groups	15/16-24	96	97	0	-1	●
	25-49	89	90	0	-1	●
	50-64	62	66	-1	-4	●
	65+	24	29	-8	-5	●
Disability	With disabilities	16	19	-3	-3	●
	Without disabilities	76	81	-5	-5	●

● gender gap decreased (< -1 p.p.)

● no change (gender gap increases/decreases between -1 and 1 p.p.)

● gender gap increased (> 1 p.p.)

* 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 Bulgaria 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. Bulgaria does not provide comparable data on femicide.

Source: Eurostat, 2021

Violence at a glance

Intimate partner violence

In Bulgaria, 21 % of women who have ever been in a relationship have experienced violence by an intimate partner during their adult life. In total, 9 % have experienced physical violence (including threats) or sexual violence, while 19 % have experienced psychological violence. Around 5 % have experienced intimate partner violence during the last 12 months, while 10 % have experienced it in the last five years.

Source: Eurostat, 2021

Sexual harassment at work

In Bulgaria, around 12 % of women who have ever worked have experienced sexual harassment at work. Up to 3 % of women have experienced sexual harassment at work in the last 12 months, while 7 % have experienced it in the last 5 years.

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. Bulgaria signed the Istanbul Convention in April 2016, but has not yet ratified it. The Convention has not yet entered into force in Bulgaria.

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. Its 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 in Bulgaria tend to use more environment-friendly means of transport than men

In Bulgaria, notably more women (51 %) than men (41 %) used walking as one of their three main means of transportation during a typical week in 2022. The figure for women (but not for men) is thus higher than the EU average (46 % and 43 % for women and men, respectively). Around 41 % of women, compared with 34 % of men, used public transport as one of their three main means of transport. These figures exceed the EU average, where 32 % of women and 29 % of men opt for public transportation.

Single women in Bulgaria struggle the most to keep their homes warm

In Bulgaria, the gender gap was most pronounced among single people, with greater disadvantage being experienced by women. In 2021, 40 % of single women reported being unable to keep their homes adequately warm, compared with 30 % of single men. These percentages are higher than the EU average (10 % and 9 %, respectively). Keeping homes adequately heated was also a struggle for those with low levels of education, with 41 % of women and 40 % of men in this category experiencing difficulties in this regard. These figures are likely to have risen considerably with the ongoing energy crisis.

Representation of women in the EU energy and transport sectors in Bulgaria, as well as in decision-making roles, is significantly lacking

In 2022, only 15 % of workers in the energy sector in Bulgaria were women – a share that is below the EU average of 24 %. Similarly, women accounted for only 19 % of workers in the transport sector. In 2022, only 21 % of decision-makers in parliamentary committees focusing on the environment and climate change were women, which is notably lower than the EU average (30 %).

[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 Bulgaria

	Bulgaria		EU	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Public attitudes and behaviours on climate change and mitigation				
Personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change (% , 15+, 2018)*	n/a	n/a	62	61
Avoiding animal products (% , 16-74, 2022)				
Regularly	29	25	31	23
Sometimes	41	39	43	41
Never	30	36	26	36
Avoiding plastic single-use products (% , 16-74, 2022)				
Regularly	45	41	49	42
Sometimes	44	42	44	46
Never	11	17	7	11
Choosing environmentally friendly options in childcare activities (% , 16-74, 2022)				
Regularly	44	49	51	49
Sometimes	39	41	41	41
Never	18	11	8	10
Choosing friendly options in housework activities daily (% , 16-74, 2022)				
Regularly	49	48	59	53
Sometimes	39	40	35	39
Never	12	12	6	8
Tertiary graduates in natural sciences and technologies (% , 15+, 2021)				
Natural sciences and technologies	36	64	36	64
Natural sciences	72	28	56	44
Technologies	28	72	28	72
Energy				
People unable to keep the home adequately warm (% , +16, 2021)				
65+	34	27	8	6
Low educational attainment	41	40	12	12
Single	40	30	10	9
Lone parents	35	37	12	11
Non-EU migrants	36	n/a	12	13
People with disabilities	35	30	12	11
People with arrears on utility bills (% , +16, 2021)				
16-24	21	25	8	9
Low educational attainment	33	34	9	10
Single	40	30	10	9
Lone parents	35	37	12	11
Non-EU migrants	24	n/a	11	12
People with disabilities	24	25	8	9
Employed in the energy sector (% , +15, 2022)	15	85	24	76
Transport				
People opting for low carbon-emission modes of transport (% , 16-74, 2022)				
Regularly	43	46	42	41
Sometimes	34	36	39	41
Never	23	18	19	18
People using the car as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022)	55	64	66	70
People using public transportation as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022)	41	34	32	29
People using walking as main means of transport during a typical week (% , 16-74, 2022)	51	41	46	43
Employed in the transport sector (% , 15+, 2022)	19	81	22	78
Decision-making				
Senior administrators in national ministries dealing with environment and climate change (% , 2022)	33	67	56	44
Members of parliamentary committees dealing with environment and climate change (% , 2022)	79	21	70	30

* n.a.: not available or not reliable

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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