

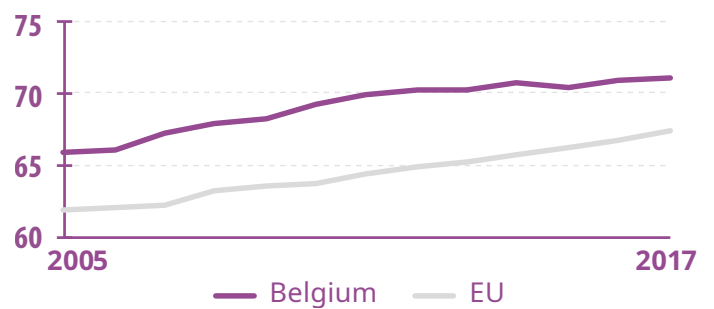
Gender Equality Index 2019: Belgium

With **71.1 out of 100 points**, Belgium ranks 8th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Its score is 3.7 points higher than the EU's score. Between 2005 and 2017, Belgium's score increased by 5.1 points (+ 0.6 points since 2015). Despite this progress, Belgium is progressing towards gender equality at a slower pace than other EU Member States. Its ranking has dropped by two places since 2005.

Belgium's scores are higher than the EU's scores in all domains, except for the domains of time and health. Gender inequalities are most pronounced in the domains of power (55.2 points) and time (65.3 points). Belgium's highest score is in the domain of money (88.3 points), where it ranks second in the EU. Scores improved most in the domains of power (+ 15.4 points) and money (+ 7 points). Progress stalled in the domain of health and regressed in the domain of time (- 9 points).

Between 2005 and 2017, Belgium improved its Index scores. In this period, Belgium's score was higher than the EU's score, but improved more slowly. Therefore, the distance between Belgium and the EU has reduced over time.

Belgium and the EU average are advancing in the same direction

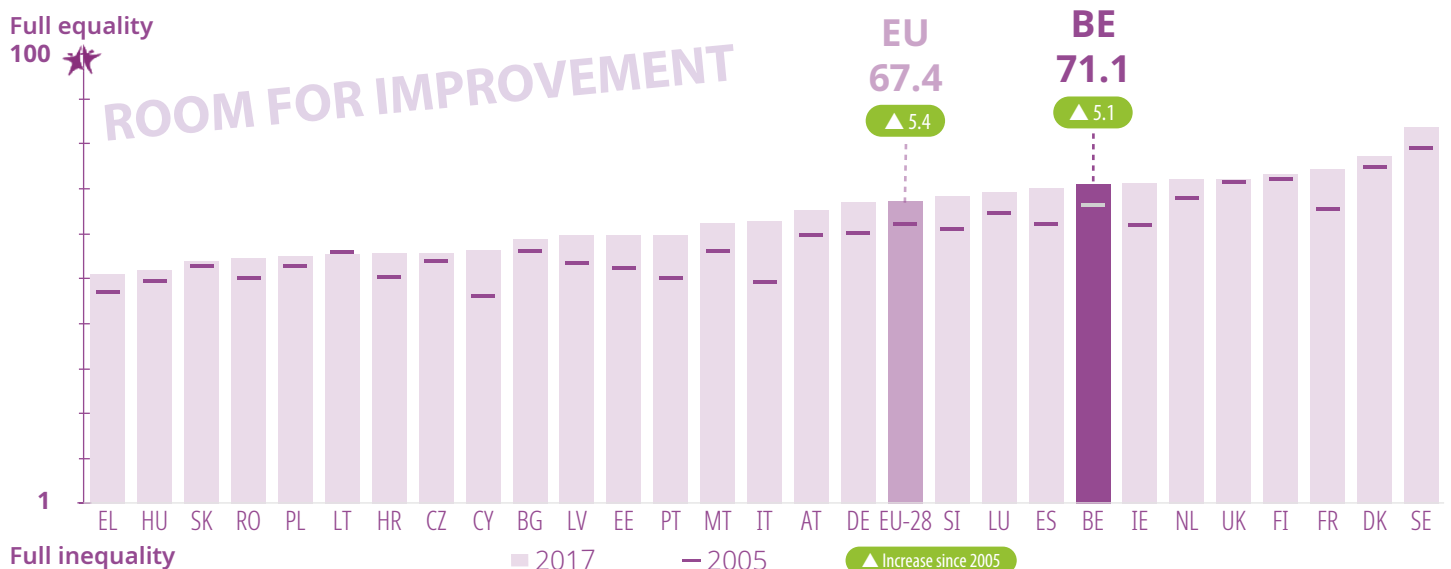


Each year we score EU Member States and the EU as a whole to see how far they are from reaching gender equality. The Index uses a scale of 1 to 100, where 1 is for total inequality and 100 is for total equality.

The scores are based on the gaps between women and men and levels of achievement in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. Two additional domains are integrated into the Index but do not have an impact on the final score. The domain of intersecting inequalities highlights how gender inequalities manifest in combination with age, dis/ability, country of birth, education and family type. The domain of violence against women measures and analyses women's experiences of violence.

In addition to providing a snapshot into the Index scores, the Gender Equality Index 2019 includes a thematic focus on work-life balance.

Gender Equality Index scores for EU Member States, 2005 and 2017



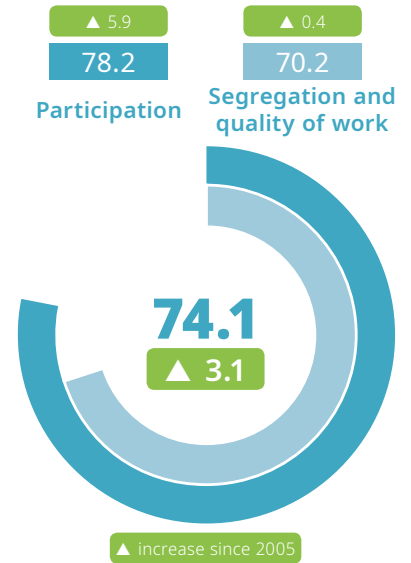


Work

Belgium's score in the domain of work is 74.1, showing progress of 3.1 points since 2005 (+ 0.3 points since 2015). The gender gap in the sub-domain of participation decreased.

The employment rate (of people aged 20-64) is 66 % for women and 74 % for men. With the overall employment rate of 70 %, Belgium has not reached its national EU 2020 employment target of 73.2 %. The full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate increased from 35 % to 38 % for women and decreased from 55 % to 53 % for men between 2005 and 2017, narrowing the gender gap (from 21 percentage points (p.p.) to 14 p.p.). Between women and men in couples with children, the gap is much wider than in couples without children (24 p.p. and 6 p.p.). The gender gap is much narrower between highly educated women and men than between people with lower levels of education.

Around 41 % of women work part-time, compared to 11 % of men. On average, women work 33 hours per week and men 40. The uneven concentration of women and men in different sectors of the labour market remains an issue. About 40 % of women work in education, health and social work, compared to 11 % of men. Fewer women (6 %) than men (34 %) work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations.

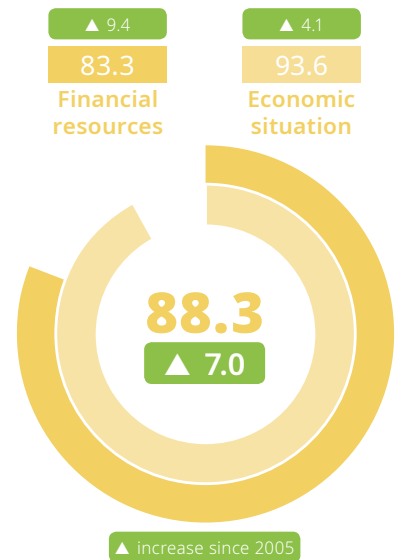


Money

Belgium's score in the domain of money is 88.3, showing progress of 7.0 points since 2005 (+ 0.8 points since 2015), with improvements in the economic and financial situations of women and men.

Despite increases in mean monthly earnings of both women (+ 21 %) and men (+ 18 %) from 2006 to 2014, the gender gap persists. Women earn 11 % less than men. In couples with children women earn 32 % less than men (28 % less for women in couples without children). The gender gap in mean monthly earnings persists across all levels of education and is wider between women and men in older age groups.

The risk of poverty increased between 2005 and 2017. Around 17 % of women (+ 2 p.p.) and 14 % of men (+ 1 p.p.) are at risk. People facing the highest risk of poverty are lone parents (38 %), people born outside Belgium (36 % of women and 33 % of men) and people with low levels of education (27 %). The higher a person's education, the lower their risk of poverty. Inequalities in income distribution remained similar among women and decreased among men between 2005 and 2017. Women earn on average 94 cents for every euro a man makes per hour, with a gender pay gap of 6 % (among the lowest in the EU). The gender pension gap is around 26 %.

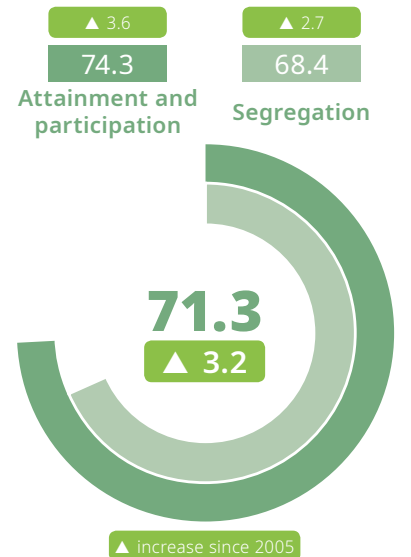


Knowledge

Belgium's score in the domain of knowledge is 71.3, a 3.2-point increase since 2005 (+ 0.2 points since 2015). Belgium moved one position forward, to rank third in the EU in the domain of knowledge. There are improvements in both attainment and participation, and segregation.

The share of women with tertiary education is higher than the share of men (32 % compared to 29 %), and increased at a faster pace as well, resulting in a wider gender gap (from 0 to 3 p.p.) between 2005 and 2017. The gender gap in attainment is most significant between women and men aged 25-49 (10 p.p. to the detriment of men) and those aged 65 or more (9 p.p. to the detriment of women). Belgium has reached its national EU 2020 target of having 47 % of people aged 30-34 with tertiary education. The current rate is 48 % (with 55 % for women and 41 % for men). Participation in lifelong learning increased for women (from 15 % to 16 %) and remained the same for men (15 %), between 2005 and 2017. Belgium's participation rate is 2 p.p. lower than that of the EU.

The uneven concentration of women and men in different study fields in tertiary education continues to be a challenge for Belgium. Around 55 % of women students and 30 % of men students study education, health and welfare, or humanities and art.



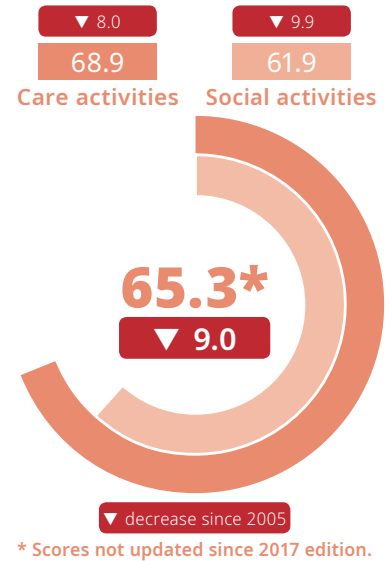


Time

Belgium's score in the domain of time has not changed since the last edition of the Index, because new data is not available. The next data update for this domain is expected in 2021. More frequent time-use data would help to track progress in this domain.

In the domain of time, Belgium's score is 65.3, with persisting gender inequalities in the distribution of time spent on care activities and a lower involvement of women and men in social activities. Women continue to do the bulk of care work for their family: 43 % of women, compared to 29 % of men, spend at least one hour a day on care responsibilities. The gender gap slightly narrowed (from 16 p.p. to 14 p.p.) between 2005 and 2016. This gender gap is wider in couples with children (87 % of women and 68 % of men). A substantially higher share of women (81 %) than men (33 %) does cooking and housework every day for at least one hour.

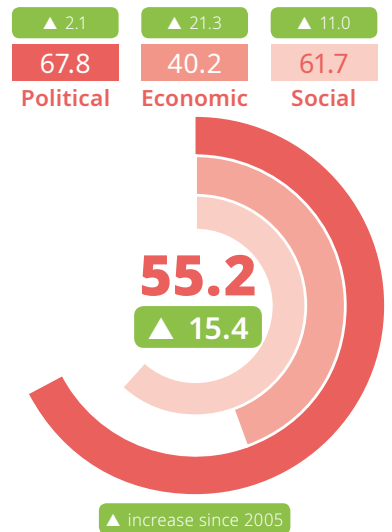
Women are less likely to participate in sporting, cultural and leisure activities outside the home (32 % compared to 39 % of men). Around 10 % of both women and men are involved in voluntary or charitable activities.



Power

Belgium's score in the domain of power is 55.2, with an increase of 15.4 points since 2005 (+ 1.8 points since 2015). Progress is driven by significant improvements in the sub-domains of economic and social power.

In the sub-domain of political power, Belgium introduced a legislative candidate quota of 50 % in 2002, supporting an increase in the share of women in parliament (from 23 % to 39 % between 1999 and 2014). The share of women parliamentarians rose from 35 % to 40 % between 2005 and 2018, while the ratio of women among ministers declined from 26 % to 22 %. Women comprise 40 % of members of regional assemblies. The sub-domain of economic power has improved the most. Belgium introduced a legislative quota for 33 % of women on company boards, which supported a rise in the share of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies from 6 % to 31 %. The share of women slightly increased on the board of the central bank (from 9 % to 12 %) between 2005 and 2017. Belgium's progress in the sub-domain of social power is significantly faster than overall progress in the EU. Women comprise 32 % of board members of publicly owned broadcasting organisations and half of the board members of research funding organisations. Only 11 % of members of the highest decision-making bodies of national Olympic sports organisations are women.

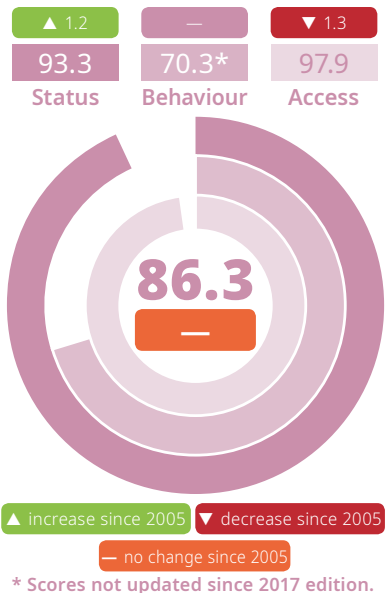


Health

Belgium's score in the domain of health is 86.3, with no change since 2005 (nor since 2015). It has dropped three positions and ranks 17th in the EU. There is no new data for the sub-domain of health behaviour.

Self-perceptions of good health slightly increased from 70 % to 71 % for women and from 76 % to 78 % for men between 2005 and 2017. Health satisfaction rises in proportion to levels of education and declines in proportion to increases in age. The gender gap is wider between single women and men (15 p.p.), as well as women and men with low (9 p.p.) and medium (8 p.p.) levels of education. Life expectancy increased for both women and men between 2005 and 2016. On average, women live five years longer than men (84 years compared to 79 years).

Belgium is among the four Member States where adequate access to health services has declined. About 3 % of women and 2 % of men report unmet needs for medical care (compared to 1 % of both in 2005). Unmet needs also increased for dental care (from 3 % to 5 % for both women and men). Lone mothers and lone fathers report the most unmet needs for dental care (11 % and 15 %). Around 7 % of women and 5 % of men with disabilities have unmet medical needs, compared to 2 % of women and 1 % of men without disabilities.





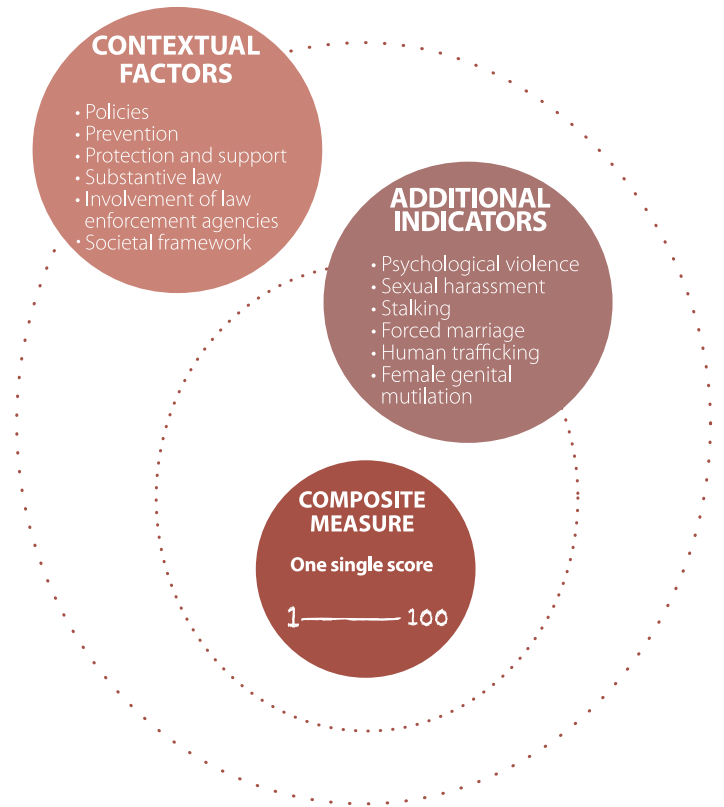
Violence

Violence against women is both a consequence and cause of persisting gender inequalities in the areas of work, health, money, power, knowledge and time. In contrast to other domains, the domain of violence does not measure differences between women's and men's situations but examines women's experiences of violence. For this reason, the domain of violence is not captured in the calculations of the Gender Equality Index. Instead, it is calculated as a separate composite measure of three aspects: prevalence, severity and disclosure of violence against women. The calculation of scores relied on the 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results. No EU-wide survey on gender-based violence has been carried out since then. Until the completion of the next survey, the scores cannot be updated.

Belgium signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in March 2016.

The domain of violence presents updated data on three additional indicators to help monitor femicide, female genital mutilation and trafficking in human beings. However, not all Member States collect such data and improvements in data collection are necessary.

Belgium does not provide data on women victims of intentional homicide by an intimate partner or family member. EIGE's estimates show that 16 % to 27 % of 22 544 girls (in the migrant resident population) are at risk of female genital mutilation. Statistics on trafficking in human beings are gathered and reported. There were 409 registered women victims of trafficking in human beings in 2016. Comparable



data, disaggregated by sex, is essential to the development of EU-wide strategies on preventing and eliminating violence against women across Member States.



Thematic focus on work-life balance

Gender Equality Index 2019 focuses on work-life balance — an issue of high political importance in the EU. In addition to work-life balance related indicators captured by the Index (e.g. in the domains of work, time and knowledge), the thematic focus presents additional indicators — a work-life balance scoreboard (WLB scoreboard). The WLB scoreboard cuts across three broad areas: paid work, unpaid work (care) and education and training. It presents 15 indicators in six specific areas of concern: parental leave policies; caring for children and childcare services; informal care for older persons and persons with disabilities and long-term care services; transport and infrastructure; flexible working arrangements; and lifelong learning.

Parental leave policies

Parental leave helps parents balance their caring duties and work life. However, it is often unavailable to potential parents as their eligibility might be dependent on criteria such as whether a person is in paid work; if they are an employee or self-employed; the sector in which they work; the length of service; or leave might not be accessible to same-sex couple or migrants. Changes in the labour market, such as the spread of atypical forms of employment (e.g. temporary contracts and on-demand work, bogus self-employment, voucher-based work) have increased concerns about parents' access to leave, especially in cases where it is based on definitions of traditional standard employment.

In 2016, 36 % of women and 35 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Belgium. Unemployment or inactivity was a reason for ineligibility for 67 % of women and 38 % men. Due to self-employment status, 21 % of women and 41 % of men were ineligible. For the remaining 12 % of women and 21 % of men, inadequate length of employment (this condition applies only to workers in the private sector) was a reason of ineligibility. Same-sex parents are eligible for parental leave in Belgium. Among employed population, 15 % of women and 25 % of men were ineligible for parental leave.

Informal childcare and childcare services

As the number of dual-earning and single-parent families grows, new needs for childcare services appear. High quality, available, accessible and affordable childcare services are essential to allow parents to stay in or join the labour market and reduce the gender gap in employment.

In Belgium, 55 % of all informal carers of children are women. Overall, 55 % of women and 58 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week. Compared to the EU average (56 % of women and 50 % of men), slightly fewer women and more men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren in Belgium. The gender gaps are wider among women and men aged 50-64 (35 % and 43 %) and women and men working in the public sector (69 % and 63 %).

Belgium has reached both Barcelona targets to have at least 33 % of children below the age of three and 90 % of children between the age of three and school age in childcare. More than half of children below the age of three (53 %) are under some form of formal care arrangement, and 30 % of children this age are in formal childcare for at least 30 hours a week. Formal childcare is provided for 99 % of children from age three to the minimum compulsory school age, which is the highest coverage in the EU (78 % are in formal childcare for at least 30 hours a week). Around 7 % of households in Belgium report unmet needs for formal childcare services, which is the fifth lowest percentage in the EU.

Informal care for older persons and persons with disabilities and long-term care services

Available, accessible, and affordable care services and infrastructure are crucial if people with caring responsibilities are to maintain a healthy balance between their care duties and work life. This is especially relevant for women, who are often more engaged than men in both formal and informal care of older persons and/or persons with disabilities. In light of emerging demographic trends, such as ageing societies, lower birth rates and consequently the decline of the working age population, the need for formal and informal long-term care services becomes more important than ever.

Most informal carers for older persons and/or persons with disabilities in Belgium are women (68 %). The shares of women and men involved in informal care for older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every

day are 26 % and 12 %. The proportion of women involved in informal care is 11 p.p. higher than the EU average, while the involvement of men is 2 p.p. higher. About 37 % of women and 16 % of men aged 50-64 take care of older persons and/or persons with disabilities, in comparison to 21 % of women and 9 % of men in the 20-49 age group. Around 42 % of women carers for older persons and/or persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 50 % of men combining care with professional responsibilities. There are also fewer women than men informal carers working in the EU. But the gender gap is narrower in Belgium than in the EU (8 p.p. compared to 14 p.p. for the EU). In the 50-64 age group, 42 % of women informal carers work, compared to 82 % of men. Around 19 % of women and men in Belgium report unmet needs for professional home care services.

Transport and infrastructure

Access to affordable and quality public infrastructure, such as care and educational facilities, health services and transportation, impacts women's and men's opportunities to balance paid work with other activities. The uneven division of caring duties and household tasks between women and men influences the ways in which they use or need certain types of transport and infrastructure. Time spent commuting is a good indication of whether existing public infrastructure helps or hinders women and men in juggling their everyday activities.

In Belgium, men spend more time commuting to and from work than women (around 51 minutes per day for men and 45 minutes for women). Couples with or without children

spend a greater amount of time commuting compared to single people. Men and women in couples without children spend equal amounts of time travelling, while men commute longer than women in couples with children (55 minutes compared to 45 minutes). Single women commute less (37 minutes) than single men (45 minutes). Both women and men working part-time travel to and from work around 44 minutes per day, compared to 46 minutes for women and 52 minutes for men working full-time.

Generally, men are more likely to travel directly to and from work, whereas women make more multi-purpose trips, to fit in other activities such as school drop-offs or grocery shopping.

Flexible working arrangements

Flexible working arrangements, such as opportunities to transition between part-time and full-time work, flexibility in working hours and remote work, typically give employees a greater ability to control how much, when and where they can work. If carefully designed, keeping in mind the different needs of women and men, flexible working arrangements can make it easier to balance work and family life. They can support people with caring responsibilities to enter the labour market, as full-time employees.

Around 47 % of women and 51 % of men have no control over their working time arrangements. Access to flexible working arrangements is higher in Belgium than in the EU

where 57 % of women and 54 % of men have no possibility to change their working time arrangements. The private sector provides more flexibility over working time to women (46 % have no control over their working time arrangements, compared to 53 % in the public sector). Around 51 % of men have no flexibility in their working time in both private and public sectors.

Even though there are more women than men working part-time in Belgium, fewer women (10 %) than men (26 %) part-time workers transitioned to full-time work in 2017. The gender gap is wider than in the EU, where 14 % of women and 28 % of men moved from part-time to full-time work.

Lifelong learning

Constant advances in technology require workers to upskill continuously and stay up-to-date with new developments and technologies over the course of their careers. Lifelong learning is a catalyst for gender equality as it gives women and men greater choice in their work options and more opportunities to achieve their full potential. Insufficient financial resources and time-related barriers such as conflicts with work schedules and/or family responsibilities can prevent access to lifelong learning for both women and men. Lifelong learning can help women re-enter the labour market after career breaks due to care responsibilities.

Belgium's participation rate in lifelong learning (9 %) is below the EU average (11 %), with a narrow gender gap (1 p.p.). Women (aged 25-64) are more likely to participate

in education and training than men regardless of their employment status, except for economically inactive men, who are more likely to participate in lifelong learning than economically inactive women (by 1 p.p.). Conflicts with work schedules are a greater barrier to participation in lifelong learning for men (41 %) than for women (37 %). Family responsibilities are reported as barriers to engagement in education and training for 33 % of women compared to 23 % of men. Both work schedules and family responsibilities are less of an obstacle for participation in lifelong learning in Belgium than in the EU overall. In the EU, 38 % of women and 43 % of men report their work schedule as an obstacle, and 40 % of women and 24 % of men report that family responsibilities hinder participation in lifelong learning.

Read more about the Gender Equality Index at <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

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