

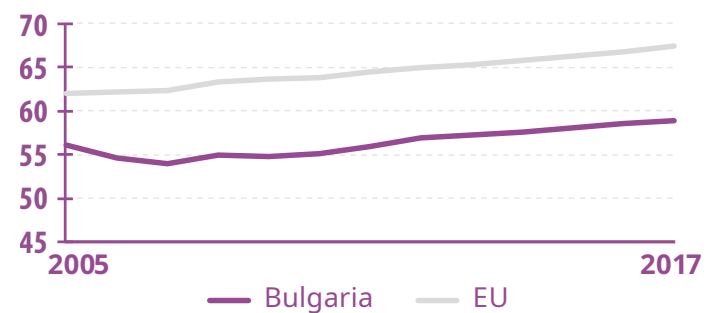
# Gender Equality Index 2019: Bulgaria

With **58.8 out of 100 points**, Bulgaria ranks 19th on the Gender Equality Index. Bulgaria's score is 8.6 points lower than the EU's score. Between 2005 and 2017, Bulgaria's score increased by only 2.8 points (+ 0.8 points since 2015). Bulgaria has been progressing towards gender equality at a slower pace than other EU Member States. Bulgaria's ranking has dropped five places since 2005.

Bulgaria's scores are lower than the EU's scores in all domains, except the domain of power. Bulgaria's score in this domain has improved the most (+ 11.5) since 2005, placing Bulgaria 6th in the EU in this domain. Progress has stalled in the domain of knowledge (+ 0.7 points), and Bulgaria's score sharply decreased in the domain of time (- 8.2 points). Bulgaria's highest score is in the domain of health (77.1 points), but this is the second lowest score in the EU. Significant challenges persist in the domains of money (61.8 points) and time (42.7 points). Both scores rank last in the EU.

Between 2005 and 2017, Bulgaria improved its Index score but had a much lower score than the EU in the entire period. Moreover, Bulgaria has moved towards gender equality at a slower rate, meaning that the gap with the EU has increased over time.

Progress in Bulgaria is slower than the EU average

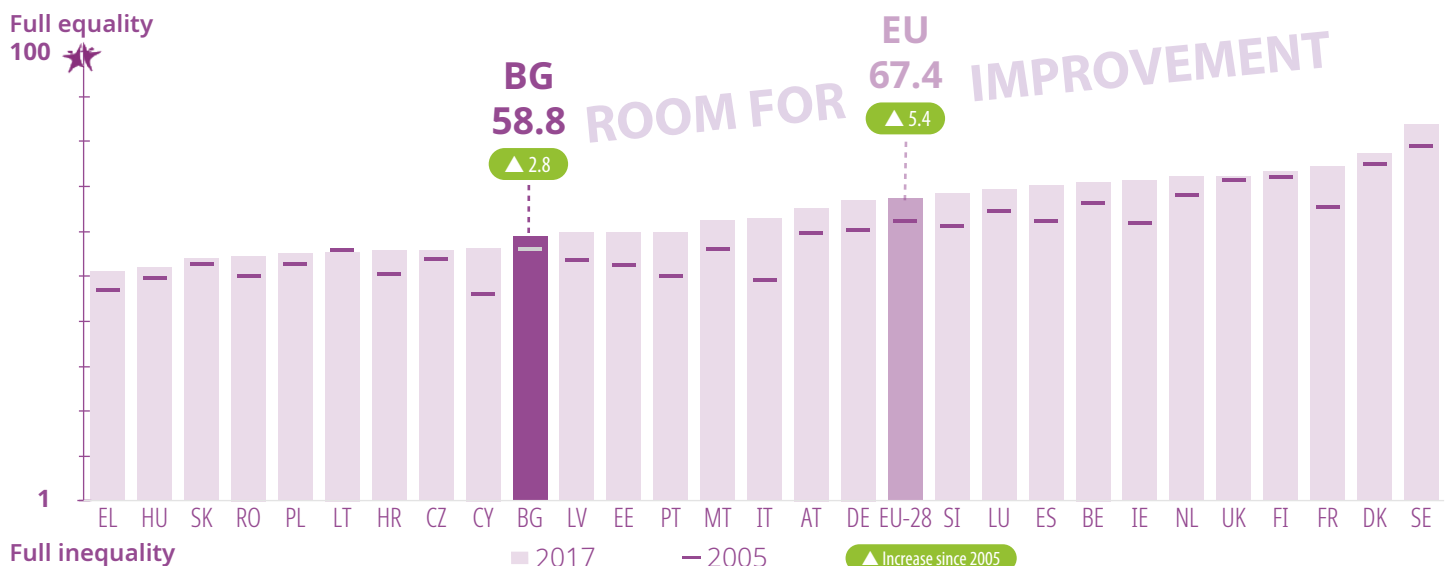


Each year we score EU Member States and the EU as a whole to see how far they are from reaching gender equality. The Index uses a scale of 1 to 100, where 1 is for total inequality and 100 is for total equality.

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

Bulgaria's score in the domain of work is 69.0, showing progress of 1.7 points since 2005 (+ 0.4 points since 2015), with increased participation of women and men in employment.

The employment rate (of people aged 20-64) is 68 % for women and 77 % for men. With an overall employment rate of 72 %, Bulgaria has not reached its national EU 2020 employment target of 76 %. The full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate rose from 40 % to 45 % for women and from 49 % to 55 % for men between 2005 and 2017. The gender gap is much narrower among highly educated women and men (2 p.p.), compared to women and men with low (11 p.p.) and medium (14 p.p.) levels of education.

Around 3 % of women work part-time, compared to 2 % of men, which are the lowest rates in the EU. On average, women work 40 hours per week and men 41. The uneven concentration of women and men in different sectors of the labour market remains an issue. Around 18 % of women work in education, health and social work, compared to 4 % of men. Bulgaria has the highest proportion of women (11 %) working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations in the EU (compared to 28 % of men). This gender gap is the second lowest in the EU.

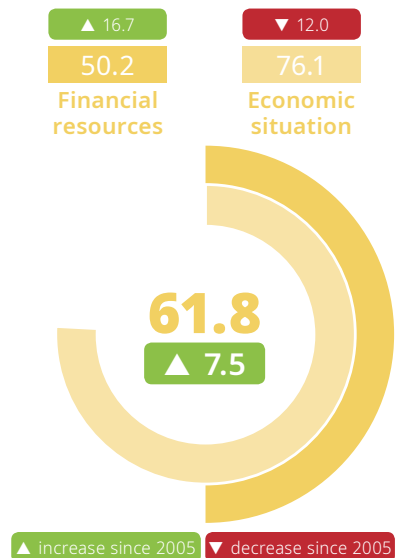


## Money

Bulgaria's score in the domain of money is 61.8, showing progress of 7.5 points since 2005 (- 0.1 points since 2015), with improvements in the financial situation of both women and men. Poverty and inequality in terms of distribution of wealth have increased. Bulgaria's score in this domain is the lowest in the EU.

Despite the mean monthly earnings of women and men doubling from 2006 to 2014, inequalities persist: women earn 14 % less than men. The gap is even wider among women and men with low education levels: women earn 28 % less. Among single people, women earn 7 % more than men.

The risk of poverty increased for both women and men from 2006 to 2017: 24 % of women and 20 % of men are at risk. Half of people with low education levels are at risk of poverty. People facing the highest risk of poverty are single women (52 %), disabled women (39 %) and lone parents (35 %). Inequalities in income distribution increased among women and men between 2007 and 2017. Women earn, on average, 86 cents for every euro a man makes per hour, resulting in a gender pay gap of 14 %. The gender pension gap is nearly 28 %.

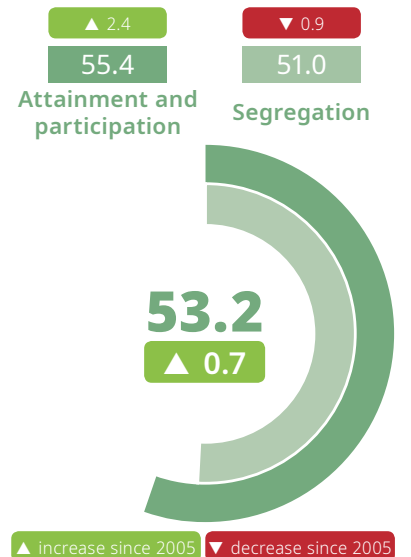


## Knowledge

Bulgaria's score in the domain of knowledge is 53.2, with no significant change since 2005 (- 0.1 points since 2015). Bulgaria has dropped six positions since 2005 to rank 25th in the EU.

The share of women with tertiary education increased, between 2005 and 2017, at a faster pace than the share of men, widening the gender gap (from 5 p.p. to 8 p.p.). Around 26 % of women have tertiary degrees, compared to 18 % of men. The gender gap is wider (24 p.p.) between lone parents: 39 % of lone mothers and 15 % of lone fathers are graduates in tertiary education. Bulgaria has not yet reached its national EU 2020 target of having 36 % of people aged 30-34 obtain tertiary education. The current rate is 34 % overall — 41 % for women and 27 % for men. Participation in formal and non-formal education and training decreased from 9 % to 8 % for women and from 10 % to 9 % for men between 2005 and 2017. Bulgaria's participation rate in lifelong learning is the second lowest in the EU.

The uneven concentration of women and men in different study fields in tertiary education remains a challenge for Bulgaria. Around 32 % of women students and 17 % of men students study education, health and welfare, or humanities and art.



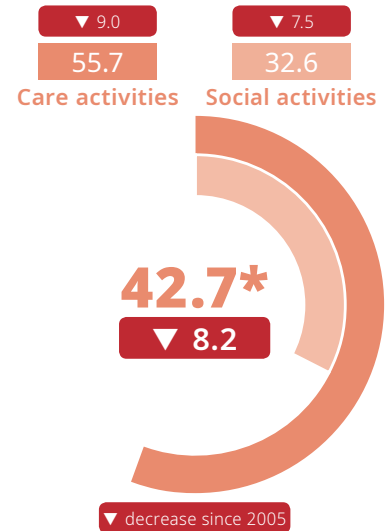


## Time

Bulgaria'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, Bulgaria's score is 42.7, which is the lowest in the EU. Inequalities in time share, related to both care and social activities, have risen since 2005. Women are more likely to spend time caring for their family. Around 39 % of women and 26 % of men spend at least one hour per day on care activities. In couples with children, 93 % of women take care of their family daily, compared to 72 % of men. Women are five times more likely to spend their time cooking and doing housework: 73 % of women compared to 13 % of men do cooking and housework every day for at least one hour. This gap has widened since 2003 and is much wider in couples with children.

Fewer women (12 %) than men (20 %) participate in sporting, cultural or leisure activities outside the home. Proportions of women (3 %) and men (2 %) involved in voluntary or charitable activities are the lowest in the EU.



\* Scores not updated since 2017 edition.

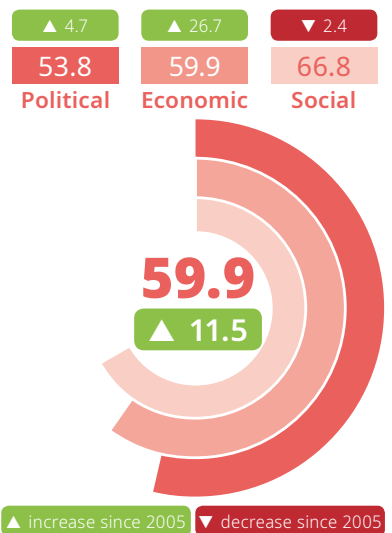


## Power

Bulgaria's score in the domain of power is 59.9, with an increase of 11.5 points since 2005 (+ 3.9 points since 2015). The domain of power has seen the greatest progress, placing Bulgaria sixth in the EU for this domain.

Progress in the domain's score is driven by significant improvements in the sub-domain of economic power. The share of women on the board of the central bank substantially increased from 17 % to 57 % between 2005 and 2018. The share of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies has decreased from 19 % to 15 %. Bulgaria ranks third in the sub-domain of economic power in the whole EU.

In the sub-domain of political power, the share of women increased among ministers from 26 % to 38 % between 2005 and 2018. In parliament, 26 % of members are women, compared to 25 % in 2005. The share of women among members of local councils is 25 %. In the sub-domain of social power, equality between women and men is greatest, but the score has decreased since 2005. Women comprise 36 % of board members of research-funding organisations, 40 % of board members of publicly owned broadcasting organisations and 22 % of members of the highest decision-making bodies of national Olympic sports organisations.

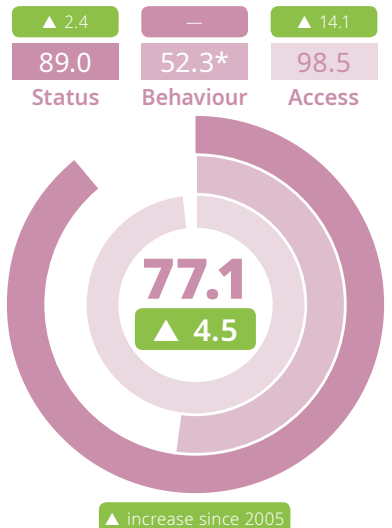


## Health

Bulgaria's score in the domain of health is 77.1, with a 4.5 point increase since 2005 (+ 0.7 points since 2015). Progress is driven by improvements in access to health services and greater gender equality in health status. There is no new data for health behaviour.

The overall level of health satisfaction in Bulgaria has increased. Around 63 % of women and 71 % of men perceive their health as good (compared to 55 % and 66 % in 2006). Health satisfaction increases with a person's level of education and decreases with age. Women with low education levels and women aged 65 or over are less satisfied with their health. Life expectancy increased for both women and men between 2005 and 2016. Women, on average, live seven years longer than men.

Adequate access to medical and dental care has significantly increased in Bulgaria. Around 3 % of both women and men report unmet medical needs (compared to 27 % of women and 23 % of men in 2005) and 4 % of women and 3 % of men (compared to 29 % and 26 % in 2005) report unmet needs for dental examinations. Women and men with lower education levels have the highest unmet needs for medical services (11 % and 12 %).



\* Scores not updated since 2017 edition.



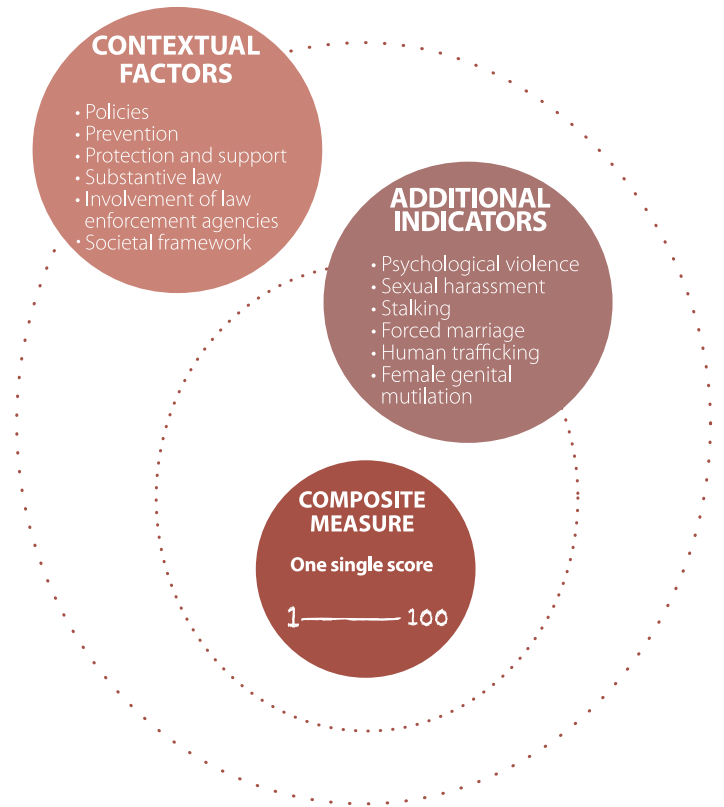
## Violence

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.

Bulgaria signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in April 2016 but has not ratified it.

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.

Bulgaria does not provide data on women victims of intentional homicide by an intimate partner or family member. Nor does it provide data estimating the proportion of girls (in the resident migrant population) 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 not available to all parents, or potential parents, as their eligibility might be restricted by certain conditions. For instance, countries may set employment-related eligibility conditions such as whether a person is employed, unemployed or inactive, whether the person is an employee or self-employed, the sector in which they are working, length of service, or restrict access for same-sex couples or non-citizens. 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 par-

ents' access to leave, especially in cases where it is based on definitions of traditional standard employment.

In 2016, 38 % of women and 27 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Bulgaria. Unemployment or inactivity was the main reason for ineligibility for 75 % of women and 74 % of men. The remaining 25 % and 26 % of women and men were ineligible for parental leave due to inadequate length of employment. Same-sex parents are eligible for parental leave in Bulgaria. Among the employed population, 13 % of women and 9 % 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 Bulgaria, 60 % of all informal carers of children are women. Overall, 56 % of women are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week, compared to 52 % of men. Compared to the EU average (56 % of women and 50 % of men), the same percentage of women and slightly more men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren in Bulgaria. The gender gaps are wider among women and men who are not working (45 %

and 34 %) and women and men working in the public sector (71 % and 62 %).

Bulgaria has not reached either of the 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. Altogether 9 % of children below the age of three are under some kind of formal care arrangements, which is the third lowest coverage in the EU. Formal childcare is provided for 74 % of children from the age of three to the minimum compulsory school age (64 % are in formal childcare for at least 30 hours a week). Around 3 % of women and men report unmet needs for formal childcare services, this is among the 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 of older persons and/or persons with disabilities in Bulgaria are women (65 %). The shares of women and men involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every

day are 9 % and 6 %, respectively. The proportion of women involved in informal care is 6 p.p. lower than the EU average, while the involvement of men is 4 p.p. lower. Overall, 16 % of women and 6 % of men aged 50-64 take care of older persons and/or persons with disabilities; in the 20-49 age group, 6 % of carers are women and 4 % are men. Around 29 % of women carers of older persons and/or persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 36 % 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 Bulgaria than in the EU (7 p.p. compared to 14 p.p. for the EU). In the 50-64 age group, 36 % of women informal carers work, compared to 17 % of men. Around 47 % of women and 43 % of men in Bulgaria 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 Bulgaria, women and men spend almost equal amounts of time commuting to and from work (around 33-34 minutes per day). Couples with or without children spend similar time commuting compared to couples with children.

Single people spend around the same time commuting as people in couples do, with single men travelling around 36 minutes per day compared to 31 minutes per day for single women. Women spend slightly more time commuting than men, if they work part-time, but both women and men spend almost the same time travelling travel to and from work if working full-time. Women working part-time travel 31 minutes from home to work and back, and men commute 30 minutes, compared to 34 minutes for women and 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.

More than three quarters of women (84 %) and men (76 %) are unable to change their working arrangements in Bulgaria, which represents the highest restrictions for both women and men for access to flexible working time

in the EU (where 57 % of women and 54 % of men have no control over their working time arrangements). Among public-sector employees, 93 % of women and 97 % of men have no possibility to change their working arrangements, compared to 65 % of women and 62 % of men public-sector employees in the EU overall. Among private-sector employees, 81 % of women and 71 % of men have no control over their working time.

Even though women are over-represented among part-time workers, they are less likely than men to transition from part-time to full-time work in the majority of EU countries. In 2017, 7 % of women part-time workers transitioned to full-time work, compared to 15 % of men.

## 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.

Bulgaria has the second lowest participation rate in lifelong learning (2 %) in the EU, with no gender gap. Men (aged 25-

64) are more likely to participate in education and training than women regardless of their employment status. Conflicts with work schedules are a greater barrier to participation in lifelong learning for women (60 %) than for men (50 %). Family responsibilities are reported as barriers to engagement in education and training for 25 % of women compared to 15 % of men. Work schedules are more of an obstacle for participation in lifelong learning in Bulgaria than in the EU overall, while family responsibilities are reported as less of an obstacle than the EU average. 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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