



Youth and gender equality: opportunities and risks of digitalisation

*Review of the implementation of the
Beijing Platform for Action in the EU*

**Journalist Thematic Network meeting,
Vienna,
October 16, 2018**



Our starting point: Beijing Platform for Action

Critical area L: The girl child

- L1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
- L2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
- L3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential;
- L4. Eliminate discrimination in education, skills development and training;
- L5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
- L6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work;
- L7. Eradicate violence against the girl child;**
- L8. Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life;**
- L9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

Why this research?

- How digital technologies promote gender equality through youth social and political participation?
- How digital technologies could be safer for girls and boys?

What did we want to know?

- **access** to digital technologies by different groups of girls and boys;
- different **risks and opportunities** for girls and boys;
- **digital spaces** as gendered spaces;
- forms of **online social and political participation**;
- use of **digital technologies for gender equality** and social inclusion;
- **digital literacy** to recognize gender stereotypes, cyber harassment and violence;

Methodological approach

- Quantitative data on access to digital technologies, social and political participation, risks and digital skills (15-24)
- Review of literature
- Focus groups discussions with girls and boys (15-18) in 10 countries (AT, EE, FR, HU, IE, IT, PL, RO, ES, SE)
- Experts' interviews on risks and opportunities in 10 countries

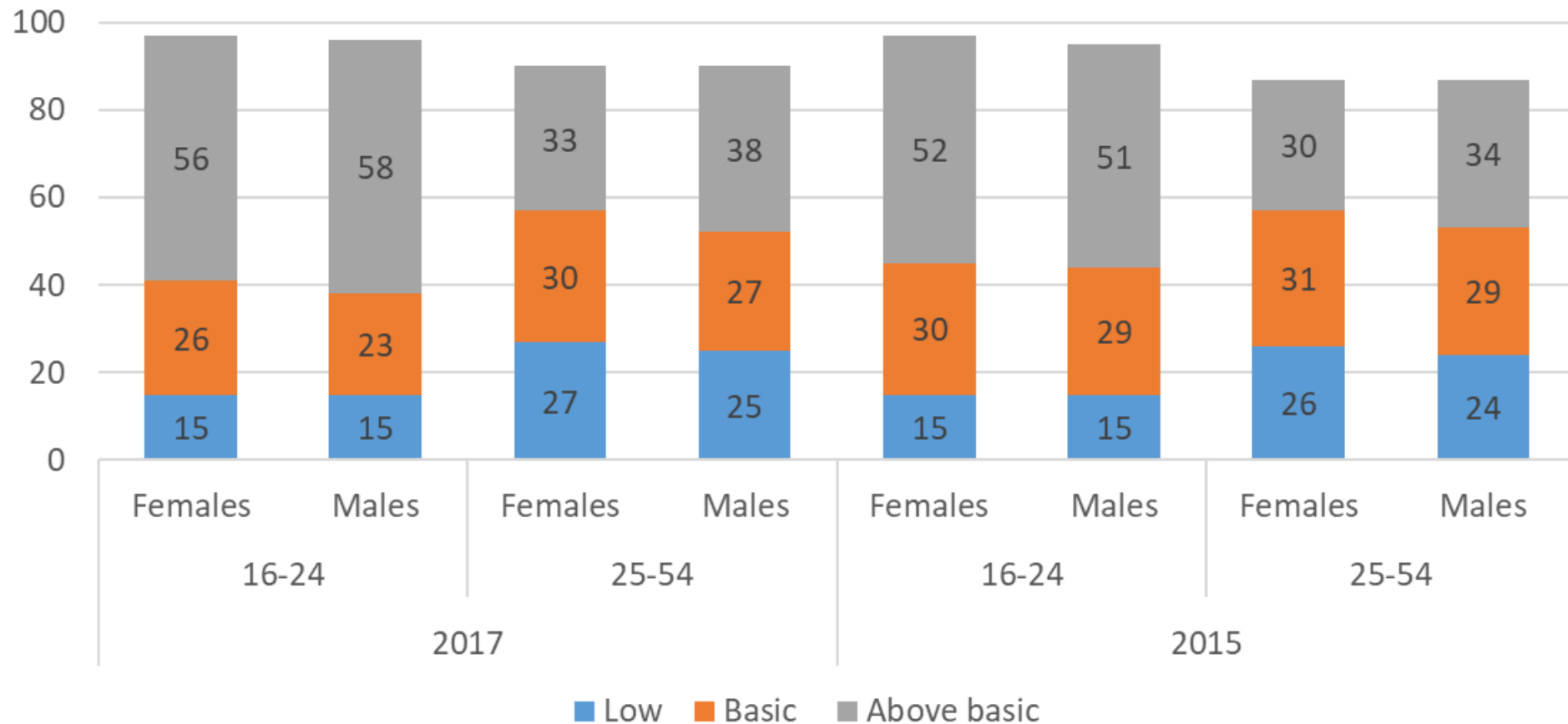


Research findings

Policy recommendations

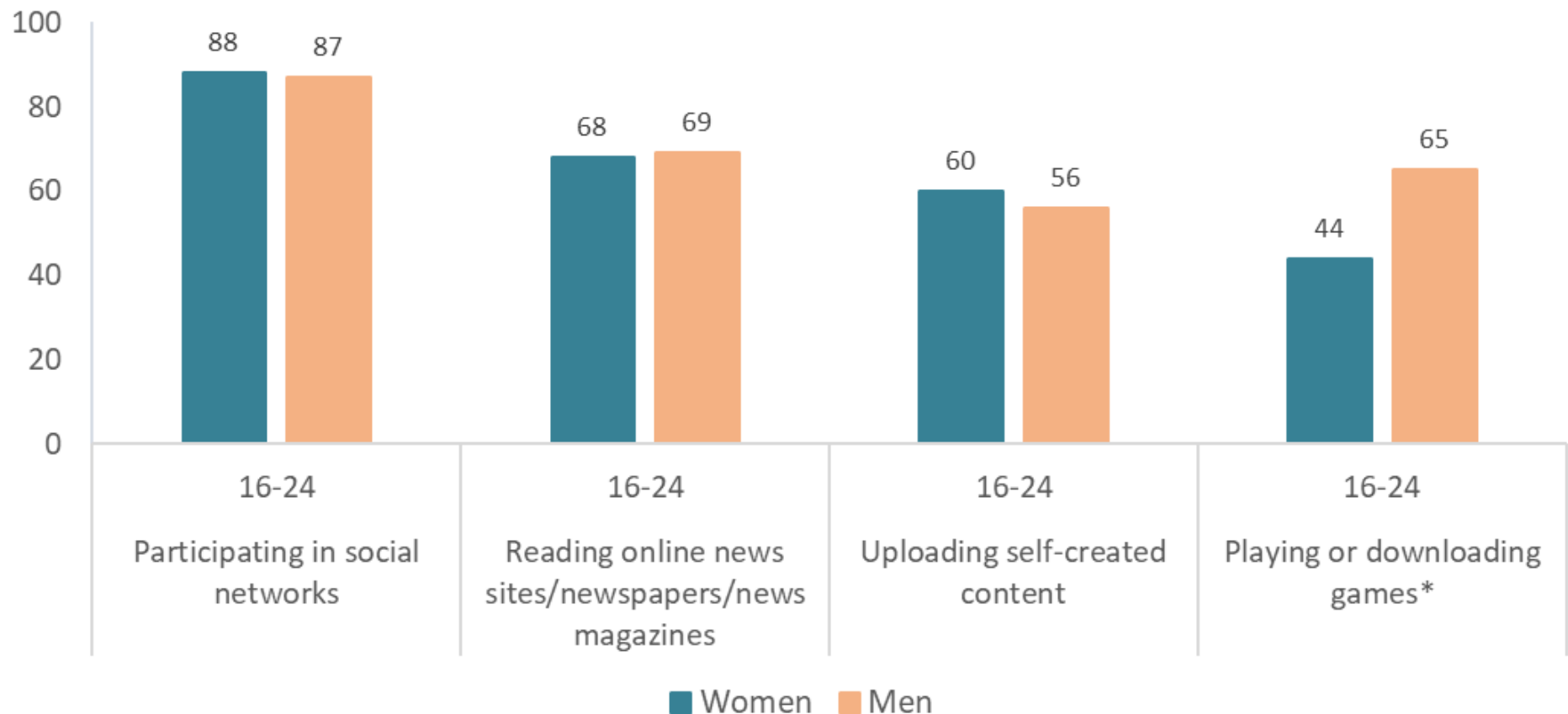
Most active users of internet and most skilled age group

Individuals' level of digital skills in the EU-28, by sex and age group, Eurostat (%)



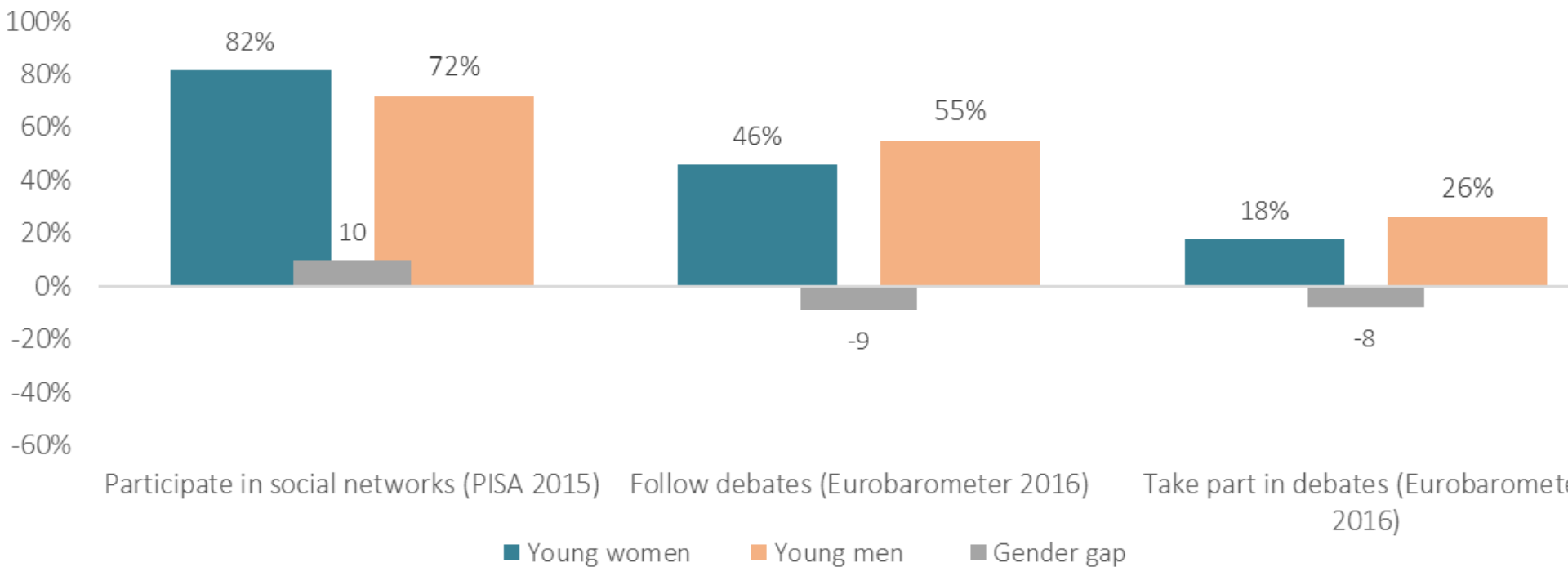
Very high engagement for young women and men

Online social participation in the last three months in the EU-28, by age and sex, 2017, %, Eurostat



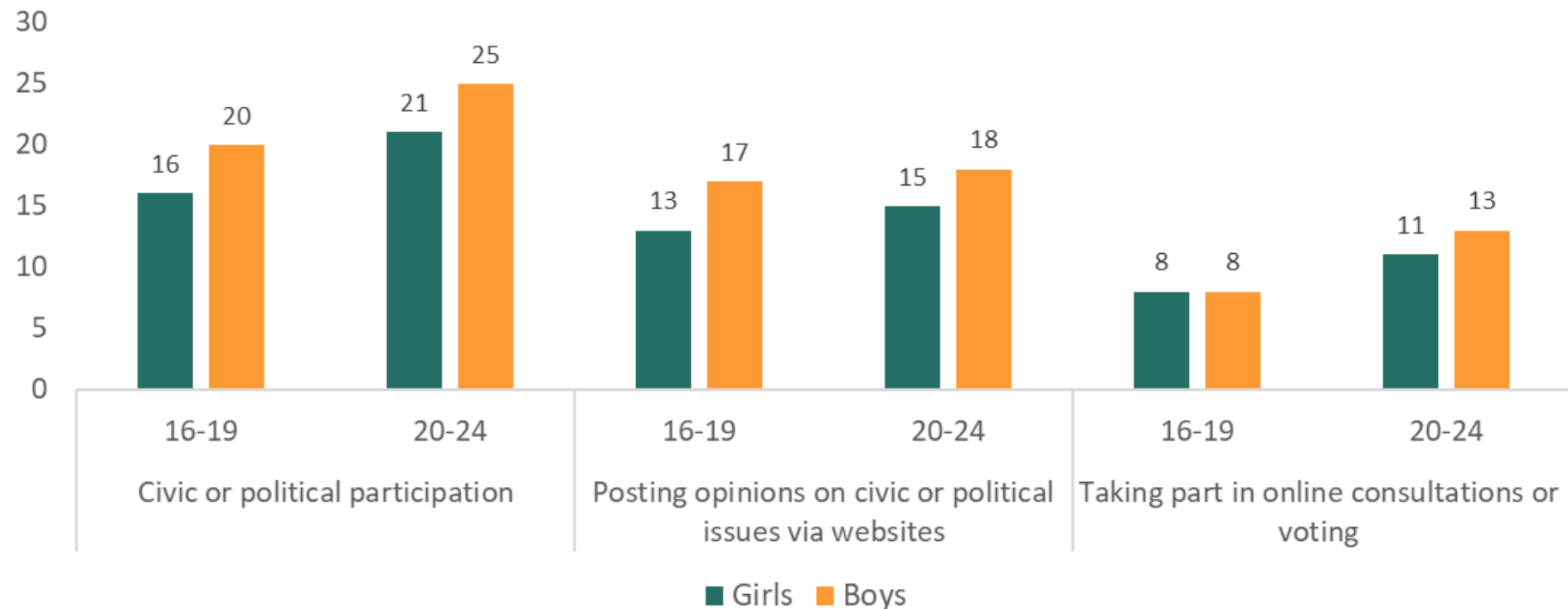
Despite higher engagement girls and young women participate less

Activities performed with digital devices the EU-28 by sex, 15-16 or 15-24



Political participation online is fraught for girls and young women

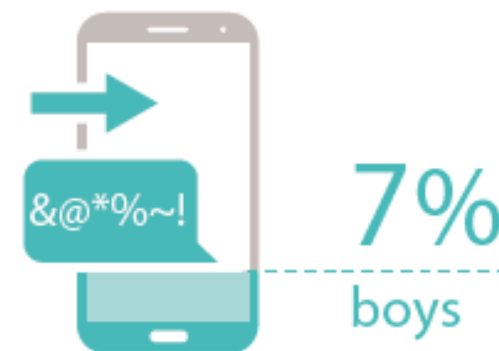
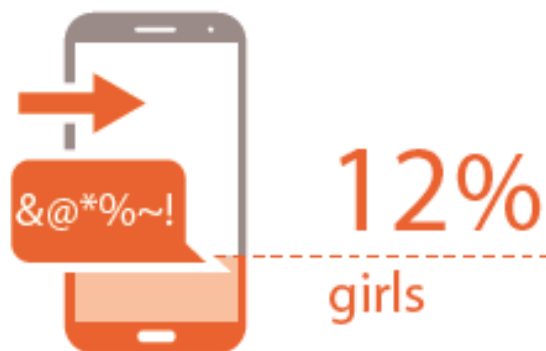
Activities related to political participation by sex and age, 2017, Eurostat



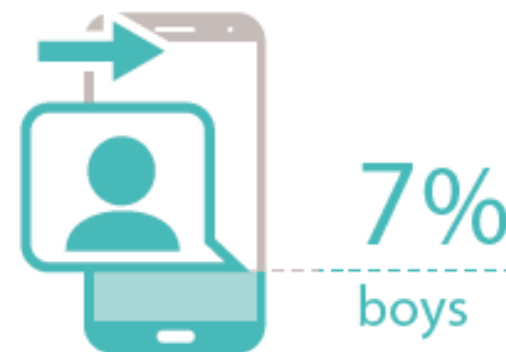
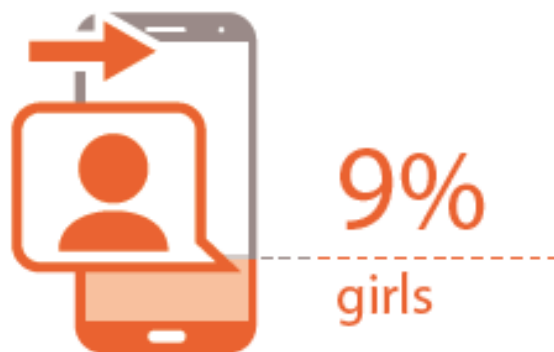
Girls are more exposed to cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying by message or picture, 15 years old (2014)

by
MESSAGE

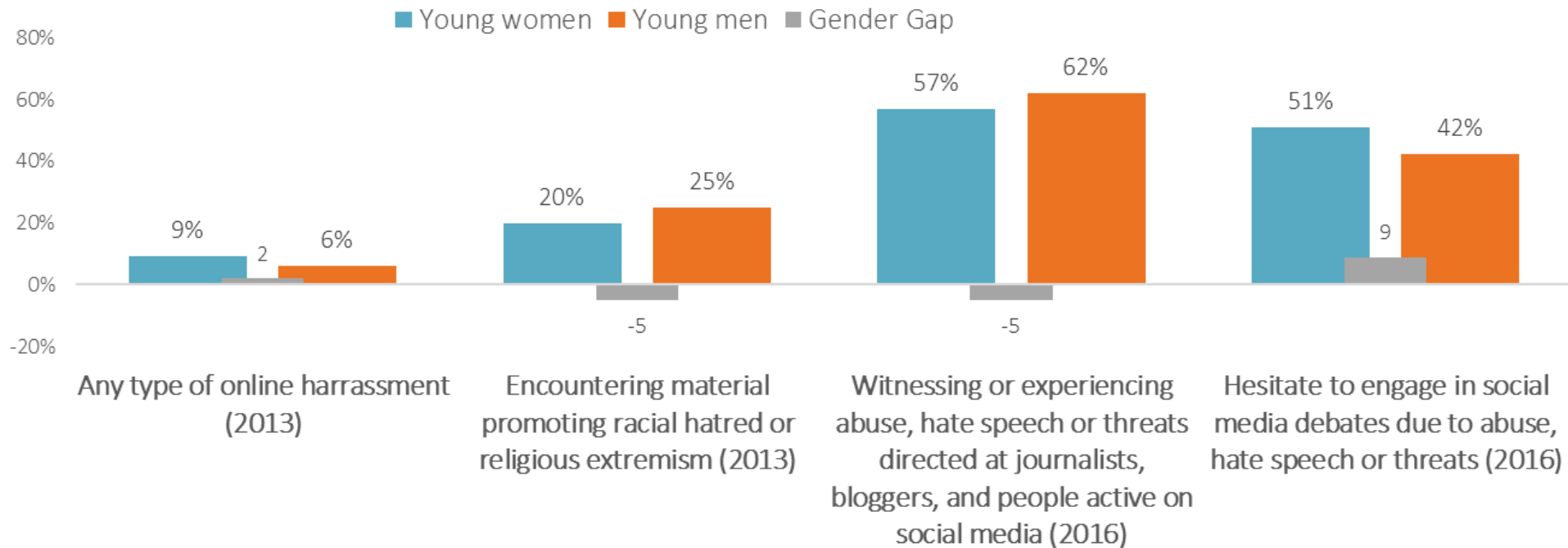


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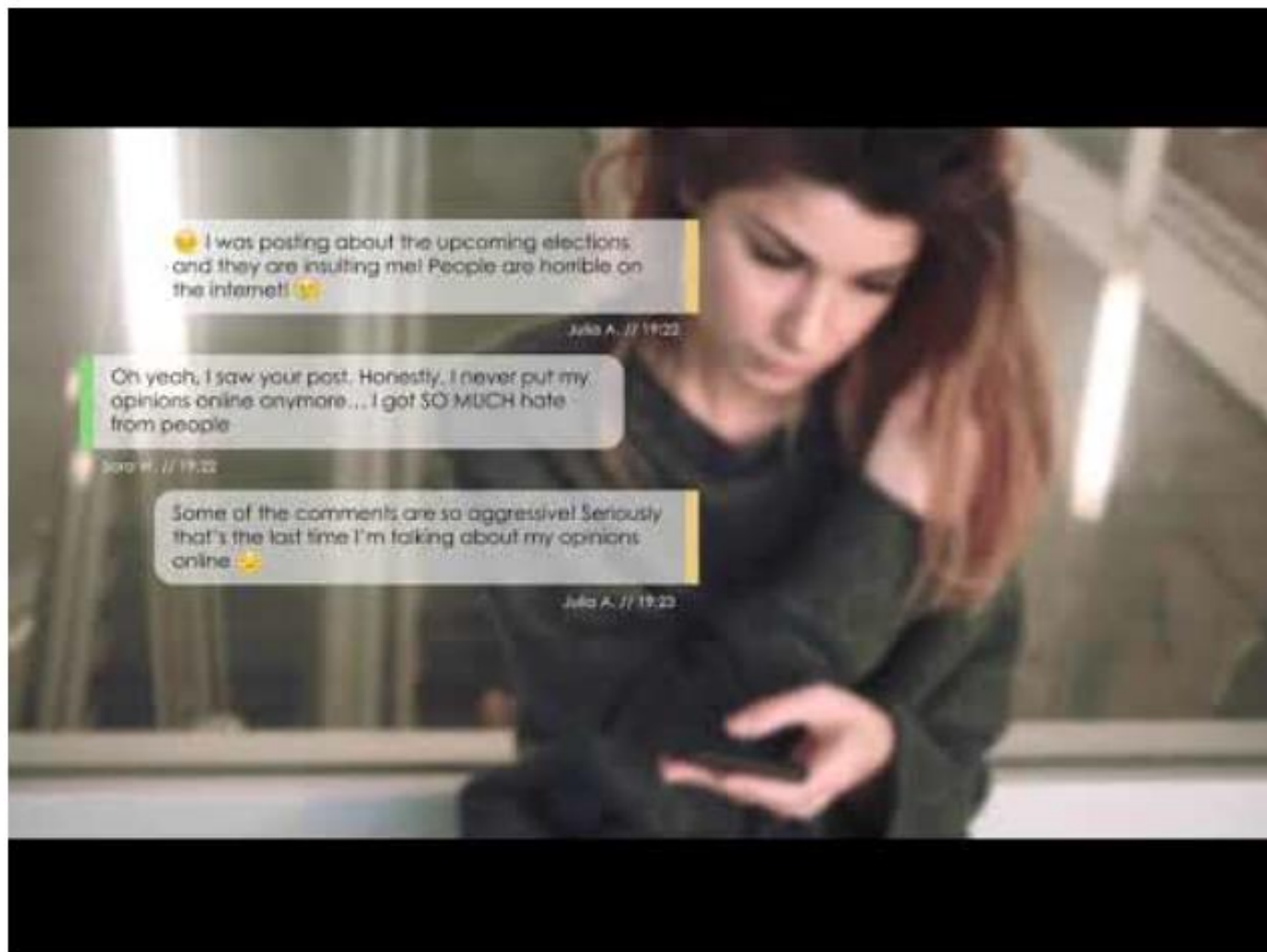
Abuse or threats impact women's behavior more

Issues encountered on the internet by sex (15-24)



EIGE's first video

<https://youtu.be/thkzG77CEA0>



“The things you get hated for are your opinions and sexual things, if you’re a girl. That’s about it.”

*Girl, focus group participant,
Sweden*

“But I think men have more trouble to talk about things. Even if we are abused, we don’t talk about it.”

***Boy, focus group participant,
Sweden***

Gender norms are alive and well on line

Digital platforms both spaces of empowerment and identity formation, but also surveillance and self-monitoring, in terms of gender norms

Concerns over social media as promoting sexual objectification of women and girls

Beauty standards online = an aesthetic norm that weights on women and girls and hinders their participation in public and political life

Boys exposed to 'toxic masculinity': mocked if not manly enough, if homosexual, pressured to request nude pictures from girls

Pre-emptive strategies particularly for girls = refrain from expressing themselves

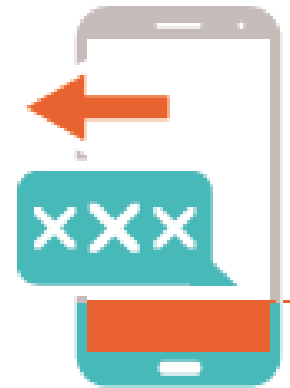
How young people see sexting

Romance is a strong motive of peer online communication

Sexting is fun and flirty if trust is there

Young people sext to explore intimacy

Consent is a key parameter for young people



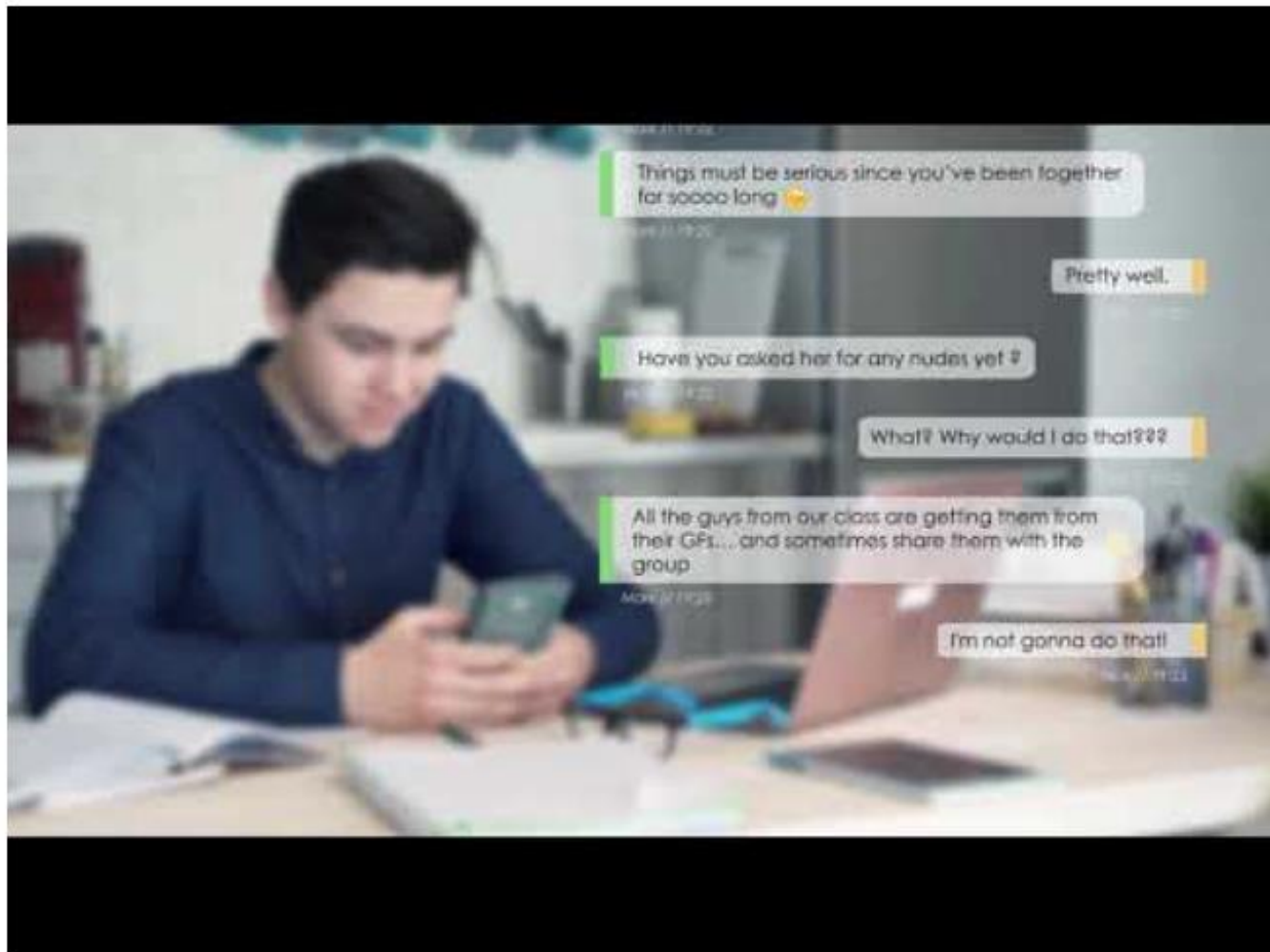
Peer-pressure to request nude pictures



“It’s because the guys put pressure on other guys and then girls put pressure on other girls because they’re like, ‘Oh we’re doing this, why aren’t you doing it?’ sort of thing” (boy, IE, 17).

EIGE's second video

<https://youtu.be/U0tyVbrpz10>



“Moral panic” around sexting highlights double standards about sexuality

“Generally, I also think that there are especially against women in our society more sexist accusations, can you say that, or, sexism against women is simply a lot stronger than against men. That’s why it’s also a bigger problem for women, if such pictures of themselves exist. [...] if someone is timid or not so good with girls, at our age [it is a problem for boys too]. But, apart from that, we have less to fight with that, compared to girls our age” (boy, AT, 17).

Slut-shaming and victim-shaming attitudes common among girls and boys

“This girl was doing stupid things in the swimming pool and shared that picture. And people started to call her things that normally one calls a girl when doing those stupid things. [...] She was wearing a bikini and two/three guys started to call her things... Things such as whore. She deleted that photo” (boy, ES, 15).

“... but it seems to me that the girls provoke it themselves, i.e. provoke these people to criticism, besides, if you want to be famous on the internet, you have to reckon with hate, this is my opinion, if the girl posts a photo in a bathing suit, or out of bounds and then others criticise her that in reality ... well I think that it is not entirely the fault of these people, she only wants to present herself on the internet” (girl, PL, 15)

“You kind of build a relationship with that person [...]. It comes to a point when he may invite you to do sexting and if you say no, this person may say, ok, I am no longer speaking to you. In that case, if you don’t want to lose your relationship with this person, you may accept, you feel pressure to accept” (girl, ES, 17).

or exert violence

“Yes, a lot, a lot of girls. Girls that are threatened, ‘Look, send the picture, if not... I will catch you on the street’. And the girl is like ‘I will give you to the police’, then [the response] “if you give me to the police, I will still catch you on the street’. And girls [...] they feel pressured, and they are too scared and don’t know what to” (boy, RO, 18).

Access of girls and young women to information and high use of social media networks does not lead to active participation.

Not only are young women more exposed to online abuse, the effect of such abuse is disproportionately felt

For many, aggressive behaviour on line is expected and normalised

For girls to grow into political leaders, need full access to opportunities in digital spaces: learning, exposure to political ideas, debate, mobilisation and activism.

For young people to become active citizens able to shape their societies, they need to tap into the full potential of digital technologies in a safe, empowering manner.

Need for a strengthened gender perspective in digitalisation policies.

Gender equality to become a structural part of the future EU youth strategy and policies

Provide comprehensive, sustainable and continuous professional development of digital competences for teachers and educators

Promote positive gender norms offline and online would support young women's full participation in digital spaces

Enforce legislation protecting girls from all forms of gender-based cyberviolence

Thank you !