

The Gender Equality Index is a unique measurement tool that synthesises the complexity of gender equality into a user-friendly and easy-to-understand measure. Based on the EU policy framework, it assists the monitoring of progress in gender equality across the European Union over time.

The Gender Equality Index consists of six core domains (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) and two satellite domains (violence and intersecting inequalities). The Gender Equality Index assigns scores for Member States between 1 for total inequality and 100 for full equality. It measures gender gaps between women and men as well as takes into account the country context and the different levels of achievement of Member States in various areas. A high overall score reflects both small (or absent) gender gaps and a good situation for all (e.g. high involvement of both women and men in employment).

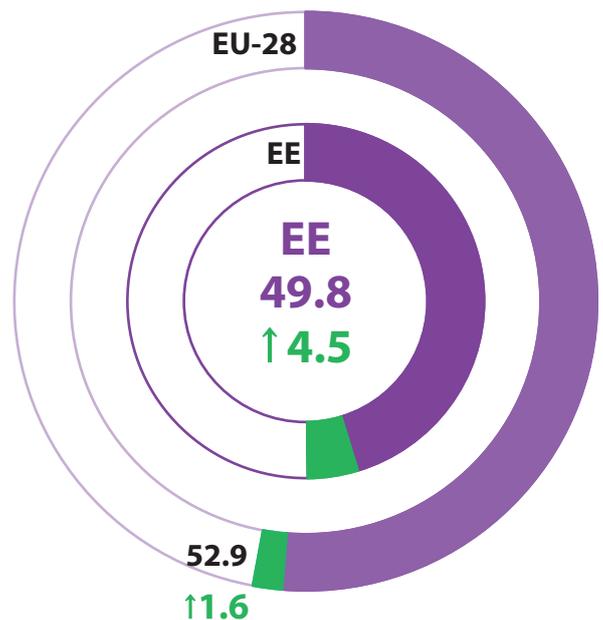
The Gender Equality Index 2015 measures how far (or close) the EU and its Member States were from achieving gender equality in 2005, 2010 and 2012 ⁽¹⁾. It provides results for each domain and subdomain. It also presents the first attempt to calculate a composite measure for violence against women.

Progress in gender equality in Estonia since 2005

With an increase in the score by 4.5 points, progress in Estonia has been marginal. The country has a score of **49.8 out of 100** — still less than halfway towards full gender equality — and remains behind the average of the EU-28 Member States.

Significant challenges persist in some areas. In the domain of money, women still earn on average 29 % less than men. In the domain of power, women remain widely under-represented in both political and economic spheres. Gender imbalance in decision-making positions hinders women's democratic representation in society.

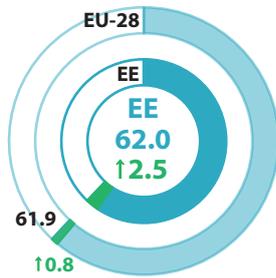
The domain of work shows signs of improvement with better working conditions for both women and men, although the gender gap in employment slightly increased. In the domain of knowledge, the number of women with a tertiary education degree became significantly higher than the number of men, but a strong segregation of study fields along traditional gender lines hinder the achievement of gender equality in education. In the domain of time, the situation in Estonia improved remarkably. Since 2005, more men have been caring for their children or other dependants and carrying out domestic tasks, resulting in more equal sharing of time between women and men at home. The gender equality score in the domain of health progressed with regards to access to services and overall health status. However, differences in health-related behaviours of women and men will be added to the Gender Equality Index in the future to provide a more complete picture of gender equality in health.



⁽¹⁾ The Gender Equality Index is based on the data of Eurostat (EU labour force survey, structure of earnings survey, EU statistics on income and living conditions, demographic statistics), Unesco/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Eurostat questionnaires on educational statistics, Eurofound's European working conditions survey, the Commission's database on women and men in decision-making, and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights's (FRA) violence against women survey.

Work

Domain of work

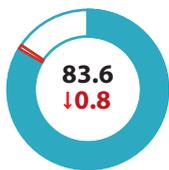


Scores in the domain of work have increased since 2005 due to progress in the subdomain of segregation and quality of work. However, the gender gap in the general employment gap has grown.

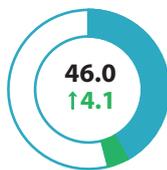
The employment rate of women (69 %) is still behind the Europe 2020 target which aims to have 75 % of the adult population (aged 20-64) in employment. However, the traditional employment rate counts the number of people with a job and masks the propensity of women to work on a part-time basis. When the number of hours worked is counted, the full-time equivalent employment rate of women in Estonia drops to 47 %.

Subdomains

Participation



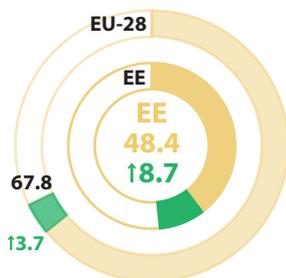
Segregation and quality of work



Progress in the subdomain of segregation and quality of work has been mainly brought by the improvement of working conditions. The share of workers who can take an hour or two off during working hours almost tripled since 2005 (from 11 % to 31 %), especially for women, progressively closing the gender gap. Despite this progress, the horizontal gender segregation of the labour market remains a reality for both women and men in Estonia. There were five times more women than men (26 % compared to 5 %) working in education, human health and social work activities in 2012.

Money

Domain of money



Scores in the domain of money increased by 8.7 points from 2005 to 2012, although Estonia remains far from the EU-28 average level. The situation improved for both women and men but major gender gaps remain, particularly in the subdomain of financial resources.

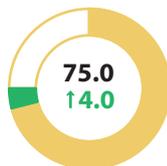
While earnings of both women and men increased on average by almost 30 %, and income by 61 %, between 2005 and 2012, women continuously earn 29 % less than men and have a lower income, including pensions. Progress in closing the gender gaps in earnings and income has been remarkably slow.

Subdomains

Financial resources



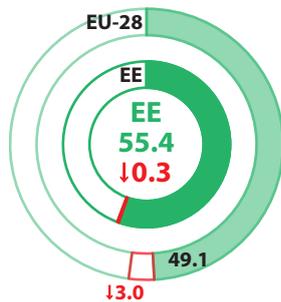
Economic situation



This domain aims to grasp the inequalities in the distribution of monetary resources between women and men. This remains challenging since the income and poverty indicators are calculated at the household level: the economic situation of women and men living in the same household is presumed to be equal and therefore nearly no gender differences are visible in poverty and household income levels. Measurement of the availability of resources at individual level would thus provide more gender-sensitive information and depict a more realistic situation of income sharing between family members.

Knowledge

Domain of knowledge



Subdomains

Attainment and segregation



Lifelong learning

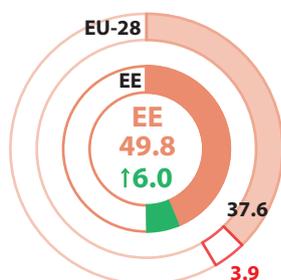


While the number of people with a tertiary education degree is high and has increased slowly but consistently since 2005, the gender gaps widened to the disadvantage of men. Segregation in the choice of study fields remains: women are over-represented in the fields of education, health and welfare, humanities and arts (42 % compared to 14 % of men). Gender segregation at all levels in education leads to occupational segregation and subsequently impacts on the future career options of both women and men.

Positive developments are visible in education and training over the life course. The number of women and men participating in lifelong learning has increased since 2005, although women are more likely than men to undertake such training. In a context of rapid technological change and transformation of the labour market, lifelong learning is an area of crucial importance for both women and men.

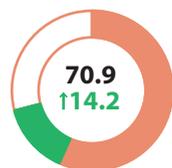
Time

Domain of time

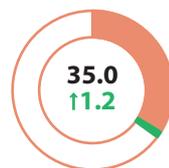


Subdomains

Care



Social



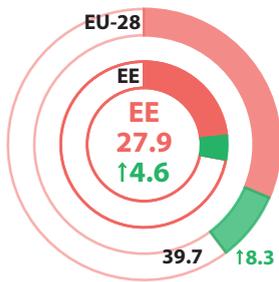
The domain of time shows noticeable progress in Estonia compared to the rest of the EU. As shown by the six-point increase, inequalities between women and men in the allocation of time to different activities have decreased.

Men have been taking on more domestic duties since 2005, although women still shoulder the biggest share of the care for children and dependants and domestic tasks. Inequality in time sharing at home also affects how much time can be spent on social activities. Men are almost twice as likely as women to participate in sporting, cultural or leisure activities outside the home, however they are less involved in voluntary and charitable activities.

The unequal share of personal time spent on caring responsibilities has a major impact on women's employment opportunities and economic independence. The findings reaffirm the importance of better work-life balance measures for women and men, such as flexible working arrangements and an adequate supply of affordable and high-quality care services for children and other dependants. Men should also be encouraged to take more responsibility for household activities and childcare (e.g. parental leave).

Power

Domain of power



The situation in the domain of power improved slightly, although Estonia remains far behind the EU-28 average.

In 2012, women were still greatly under-represented in the government (8 %), the parliament (20 %) and the regional assemblies (29 %).

The subdomain of economic power shows the lowest score. The share of women on boards of the largest publicly listed companies dropped below 10 % and only 2 out of 11 members of the key decision-making bodies of the central bank were women in 2012.

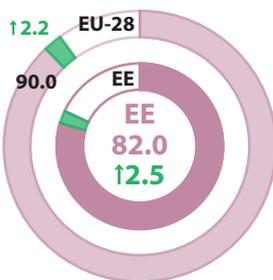
Subdomains



Broader public debate and awareness raising are needed to change the corporate culture. Long working hours and physical presence at work, combined with traditional masculine leadership styles and a lack of transparency in recruitment and promotion practices, advantage men and reinforce gender inequalities.

Health

Domain of health



Health is directly linked not only to personal, social and economic well-being, but also to human dignity and physical integrity. Currently, the index reflects two aspects: health status and access to health services.

The overall score in the domain of health has risen slightly by 2.5 points since 2005 as a result of a small advance in health status and access to health structures. However, even if life expectancy and the number of healthy years increased for both, the gender gaps remain significantly wider than the EU-28 average, with women living longer and in better health than men.

Subdomains



The current measurement does not include differences in health-related behaviour due to an unavailability of suitable indicators and data, which means that gender inequalities might be underestimated. The behaviour and lifestyles of women and men differ according to the prevalence of traditional gender role models; therefore, it is very important to capture the gender-related behavioural differences behind inequalities in health.

Gender Equality Index 2015: satellite domains

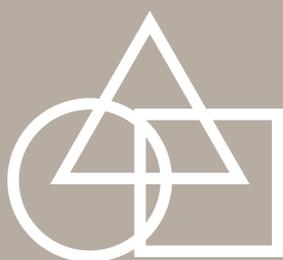
Violence



Building on FRA's violence against women survey and Eurobarometer data, the Gender Equality Index 2015 proposes a possible composite measure of violence against women. It also analyses attitudes towards violence against women, awareness levels and trust in police and justice institutions. The analysis shows that in those countries where the scores in the Gender Equality Index are higher, women are more likely to disclose violence. In Estonia the level of disclosed violence against women is similar to the EU-28 average. Every second person (55 % of the population) is aware of at least one case of domestic violence, 3 % of the population considers violence against women acceptable while only 55 % and 73 % of the population has trust in the justice system and the police respectively.

The commitment of the EU and its Member States to eradicate violence against women needs to be supported by regular collection of systematic, comparable and harmonised data.

Intersecting Inequalities

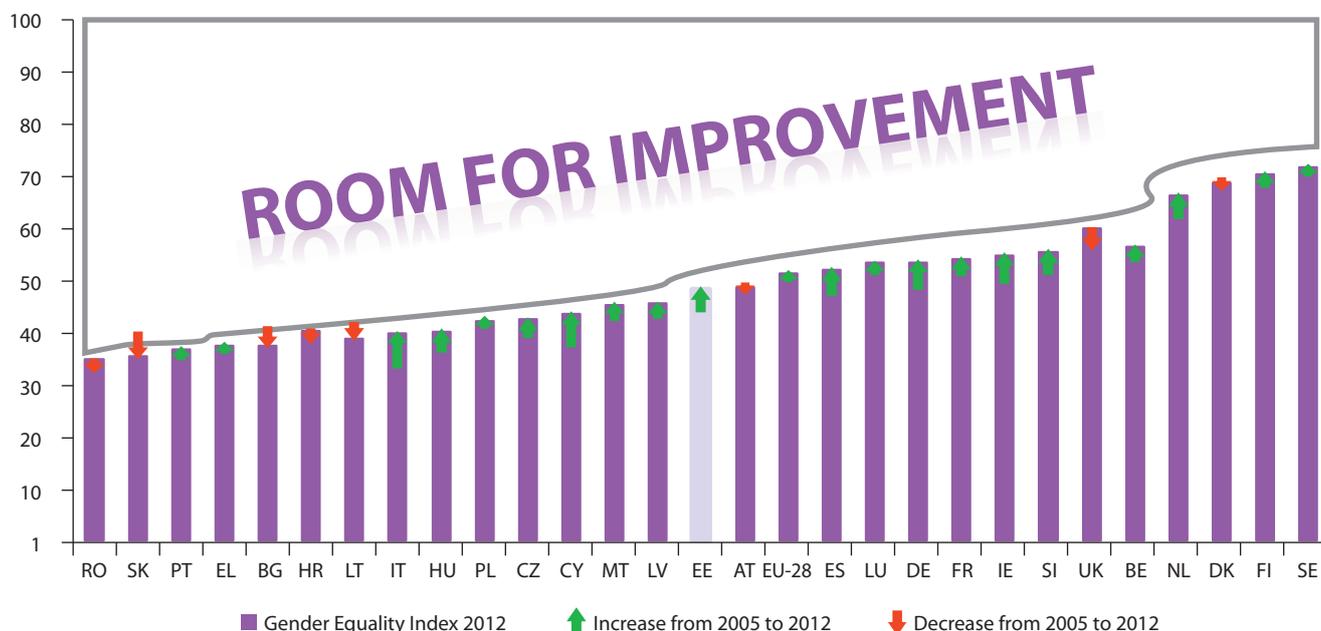


It is imperative to recognise that women and men are not homogeneous groups. The domain of intersecting inequalities considers how gender intersects with other aspects that may influence women's and men's life experiences. The report analyses and compares gender gaps in employment in two age groups (15-54 and 55-64), between foreign and national-born workers and finally lone parents and single people without children.

In Estonia, the employment rate for foreign-born workers, both women and men, is comparable to national-born workers. Older workers are more vulnerable and experience lower access to employment, while gender gaps in employment are higher for younger workers and disadvantage women. The gender gap in employment between lone parents is significantly wider than for single people without children. This has a specific impact on the poverty level of lone mothers. The next update of the Gender Equality Index will focus on intersecting inequalities in more detail.

The Gender Equality Index 2015

For the first time in the European Union, the Gender Equality Index builds a time series to monitor gender equality across several years. Results show that Estonia is not yet halfway towards the gender equality landmark, leaving significant room for improvement. In order to reach gender equality in Estonia and the EU-28, a more targeted and holistic approach to gender equality is needed.



Unique features and benefits of the Gender Equality Index

The Gender Equality Index:

- allows for monitoring of progress in gender equality across the EU and over time;
- supports decision-makers in assessing how far a given Member State is from reaching gender equality;
- shows the different outcomes of the EU and national policies for women and men;
- allows for meaningful gender analysis and comparisons between different policy areas;
- supports the development and implementation of gender equality policies and legislation;
- increases awareness among decision-makers and the public of progress and challenges in implementing gender equality policies;
- highlights data gaps and calls for harmonised, comparable and reliable data that are both sex disaggregated and available for all Member States.

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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