



## Gender Equality Index 2022: Gender Equality under Threat, Specific Groups Hardest Hit

The freshly launched Gender Equality Index 2022 reveals that progress continues at a snails' pace, with a mere 0.6-point increase since last year's edition. As a result, the EU average score now stands at 68.6 out of 100 points, only 5.5 points higher than in 2010.

**Given that the Gender Equality Index 2022 focuses for the first time mainly on data from the first pandemic year 2020, the scores present strong warning signs amid continued uncertainty and turmoil.**

*"What is most pressing is that this year's score has taken a turn with decreases in several areas for the first time since 2010,"* says EIGE Director Carlien Scheele.

*"This requires urgent scrutiny, as our results show that specific groups of people, who tend to be in more vulnerable situations during times of crises, are most at risk, where stark gendered inequalities compound the issue. We cannot afford to lose our sight on gender equality,"* she asserts.

European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli said, *"Our commitment to gender equality must remain steadfast. In the aftermath of the pandemic, the Russian aggression in Ukraine and resulting economic crisis, regional institutions and EU countries alike must be sensitive to gender equality in their budgetary and policy measures. Women, in all their diversity, must not lose out.*

*It is crucial we see progress on our legislative proposals, to improve gender balance on corporate boards, to have pay transparency, and to put an end to violence against women and domestic violence. I call on all stakeholders to do their part for equal opportunities, safety and equal say for women and men."*

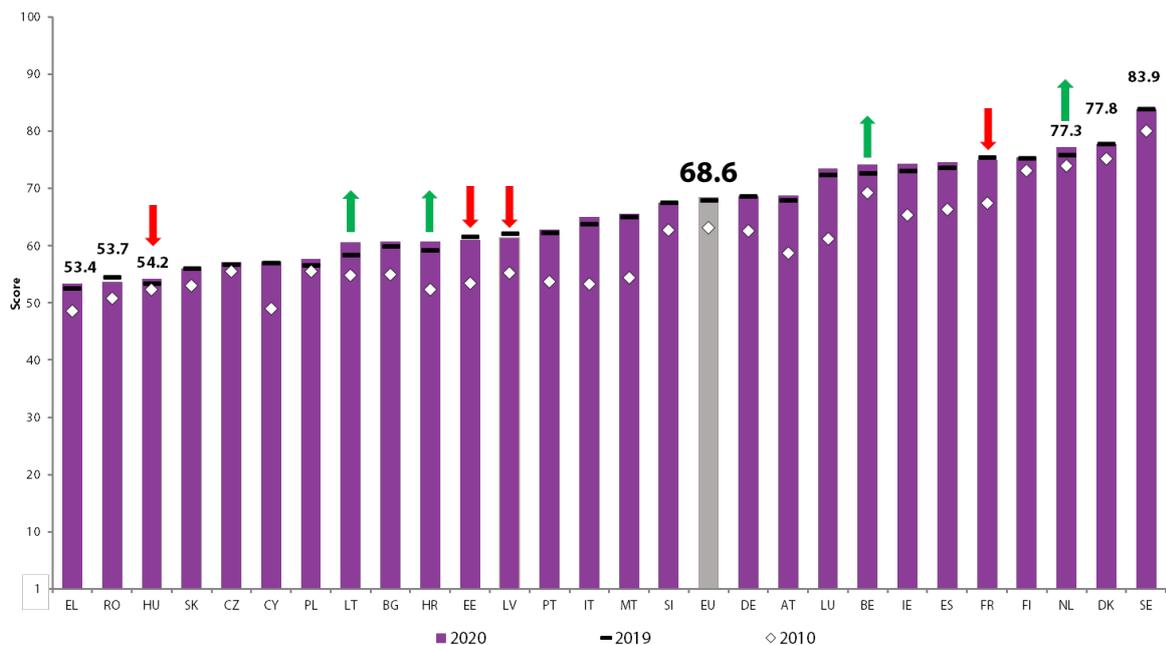
**For the first time since its inception, the Gender Equality Index has recorded decreases in scores in several areas of core Index domains.** A decrease in the score of participation in work indicates that women are increasingly likely to spend fewer years of their lives in employment, hindering career and pension prospects. Also, fewer women than men participated in formal and informal education activities in 2020. And as COVID-19 created unprecedented pressure on the health sector, decreases in gender equality impacted women in terms of health status and access to healthcare services.

**Had it not been for the progress in the domain of power, the Index would have experienced an overall decrease in score.** Much of this progress is due to increased women's participation in economic and political decision-making, which in turn is linked to the introduction of legislated quotas in a handful of EU Member States. This underlines the importance of the political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the EU Council on the directive to improve gender balance on corporate boards in June 2022.

**Looking at the pandemic's impact on specific groups of people is also crucial.** For instance, older women and men, and women and men with disabilities reported higher unmet needs for medical checks over the pandemic year. In addition, young women faced more elevated levels of unemployment in the economic fallout of the pandemic, and women with a migrant background were at an even higher risk.

**An uptick in overall care responsibilities during the pandemic was revealed through a complementary online survey EIGE carried out across the EU in 2021.** It focused on critical aspects related to the time spent on unpaid care. However, the increase was not evenly distributed between women and men, aggravating existing gender inequalities. This is particularly true for high-intensity childcare, where 40 % of women compared to 21% of men spend at least 4 hours on a typical weekday caring for young children. The gender gap in time-intensive housework also widened during the pandemic, with 20 % of women compared to 12 % of men doing housework for at least 4 hours daily.

**Country scores continue to present a mixed picture.** Top performers include Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands – although progress towards gender equality stalled in Sweden and Denmark. Meanwhile, Greece, Hungary and Romania are struggling the most to advance gender equality. On a more positive note, since the last edition, the most significant increases in Index scores were found in Lithuania, Belgium, Croatia and the Netherlands.



*Gender Equality Index 2022*

**Against this backdrop, EIGE is organising for the first time a two-day Gender Equality Forum in Brussels and online.** The aim is to put the most critical issues affecting gender equality in the EU on the table in a series of panel discussions, practical workshops, and experience-sharing sessions. With a slew of high-level political decision-makers, practitioners and civil society coming together, commitments and actions to take #3StepsForward will be identified with a follow-up Forum planned for 2024.

More information about the Gender Equality Index [here](#).  
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