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GENDER EQUALITY: A MATTER OF DEMOCRACY

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Horizontal and Vertical Segregation

Although women form about **half of the population** and **the electorate**, they continue to be **under-represented** in **high-level positions** concerning **elected office**, **public administration**, **corporate boardrooms** and **academia** (European Commission, 2021).

The system is affected by a concentration of women and men in specific disciplinary or professional areas (**horizontal segregation**) as well as by the difficulty of women to progress in their studies or professional path and to hold positions of responsibility (**vertical segregation**).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Gender Equality is the fifth goal among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals fixed in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. This **Agenda** is a plan of action **for people, planet and prosperity** and it aims to strengthening universal peace in larger freedom by ending poverty and other deprivations.



European Commission COMMUNICATION 152 final,
Brussels, 5.3.2020.

A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025

As highlighted in the **European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**, **gender equality** is a **fundamental right** and key principle of the European Pillar of **Social Rights**.

*Everyone should be safe in their homes, in their close relationships, in their workplaces, in public spaces, and online. **Women and men, girls and boys**, in all their diversity, **should be free** to express their ideas and emotions, and **pursue their chosen educational and professional paths** without the constraints of stereotypical gender norms.*

The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 focuses on two objectives:

- ending gender-based violence;
- challenging gender stereotypes.

Ending gender-based violence



33% of women in the EU have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.



22% of women in the EU have experienced violence by an intimate partner.



55% of women in the EU have been sexually harassed.

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA survey, 2014)

The survey reveals for the first time the **extent to which women are abused at home, at work, in public and online.**



An estimated **600,000 women and girls** have been subjected to FGM in Europe and **180,000** girls are at risk.

Source: End FGM (female genital mutilation) European Network

Challenging gender stereotypes



44% of Europeans think that the most important role of a woman is to take care of her home and family.



43% think the most important role of a man is to earn money.

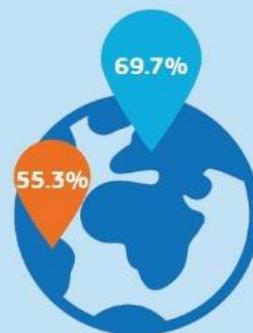
Source: European Commission (2017), Special Eurobarometer 465,

Women's employment rate in the EU is higher today than ever before, yet many women still experience barriers to joining and remaining in the labour market. Based on data from Eurostat (2020), in 2019, 79% of men were employed compared to only 67.3% of women.

Some women are structurally underrepresented in the labour market, often resulting from the intersection of gender with additional conditions of vulnerability or marginalization such as belonging to an ethnic or religious minority or having a migrant background.



The difference between women's and men's employment rate in the EU is **11.6%**.



Only **55.3%** of women born outside the EU are in employment, compared to **69.7%** of women born in the EU.

Only **16%** of Roma women are in paid employment in the EU.



10% of construction workers and **25%** of agriculture, forestry, fishing and transportation workers are **women**, while **25%** of workers in education and **20%** of workers in human health and social activities are **men**.

Source: Eurostat (2019)

While there are **more women university graduates in Europe than men graduates**, women remain **underrepresented in higher paid professions**.

More **women** than men **work in low-paid jobs and sectors**, and in **lower positions**. Discriminatory social norms and stereotypes about women's and men's skills, and the undervaluation of women's work are some of the contributing factors.



Out of high-performing students in maths or science in OECD countries, **1 in 4** boys expect a career as an engineer or scientist, compared to **1 in 6** girls; **1 in 3** girls expect to work as health professionals, compared to **1 in 8** boys.



The share of men working in the digital sector is **3.1 times** greater than the share of women.



Only **22%** of AI programmers are women.

Source: PISA report 2019

European Commission (2018), Women in the Digital Age – Final Report
World Economic Forum Global (2020)

Women still earn on average less than men.
Accumulated lifetime gender employment and pay gaps result in an even **wider pension gap** and consequently **older women** are more **at risk of poverty** than men.



15.7% gender pay gap in the EU.



30.1% gender pension gap in the EU.

Source: Eurostat, 2018

Women often **align** their **decision to work**, and how to work, with their **caring responsibilities** and with whether and how these duties are shared with a partner.



Women in the EU spend **22 hours** per week on care and household work, while men spend only **9 hours**.



80% of care in the EU is provided by informal carers, **75%** of whom are women. Many of them have a migrant background.

An equal sharing of care responsibilities at home is crucial, as is the availability of childcare, social care and household services, in particular for single parents.

Investing in care services is therefore important to support women's participation in **paid work** and **their professional development**. It also has potential for job creation for both women and men.

There are still far too **few women in leading positions**: in **politics** or **government agencies**, at the **highest courts** or on **companies' boards**.

METRICS

In literature there are several **indices** to **capture gender in(equality)**, such as the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), both developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the **Gender Equality Index (GEI)**, launched by the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**.

The Gender Equality Index (GEI) is a **composite indicator** developed by the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** to measure and monitor the progress in gender mainstreaming within EU Member States.



EIGE's GEI covers **six core domains** (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) and **two satellite domains** (violence, intersecting inequalities), even though the later domains are not included in the index because of their descriptive content.

Gender Equality Index



Gender Equality Index

The GEI, which is based on **31 indicators**, provides a **measure of how far (or close) each Member State is from achieving gender equality** and it assigns a score from 1 (total inequality) to 100 (full equality).

The index measures gender disparities, irrespective of whether these differences favor women or men. This means that Member States are equally treated whether a gap is to the advantage of women or men.

Humbert, A.L. & Hubert, A. (2021). Gender Equality Index, , in E.S. Ng, C. L. Stamper, A. Klarsfeld & Y. J. Han (eds.), *Handbook on diversity and inclusion indices* (pp. 117–132), Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.



The first domain – *work* – looks at **participation** in the labour market, recognising that women are more likely to work **on a part-time basis**. Furthermore, it takes into consideration patterns of **segregation** with women and men working in **different sectors**. Finally, it also examines **quality of work**, to recognise that it is not only more work that policy should aim for, but also better work.



The second domain – *money* – examines gender differences in **pay** and **income**, since **women earn less than men** and **receive lower pensions**. It also looks at **poverty** since it affects women to a greater extent.



The third domain – *knowledge* – looks at educational attainment, with a focus on female **third-level graduates**. It also looks at **segregation** since women and men are unequally represented in some **subjects** such as science. Finally, it looks at women's and men's opportunity to equally engage in **lifelong learning**.



The fourth domain – *time* – captures **care** and **work-life balance**, by looking at the **time** spent on activities other than work and related to care or social activities, reflecting women's greater involvement in much of **care work** whether that is **within the household (housework)** or at **community level**.

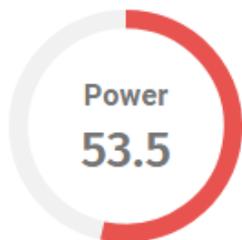
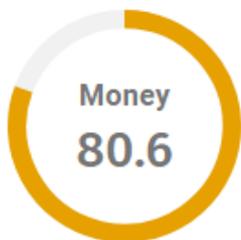
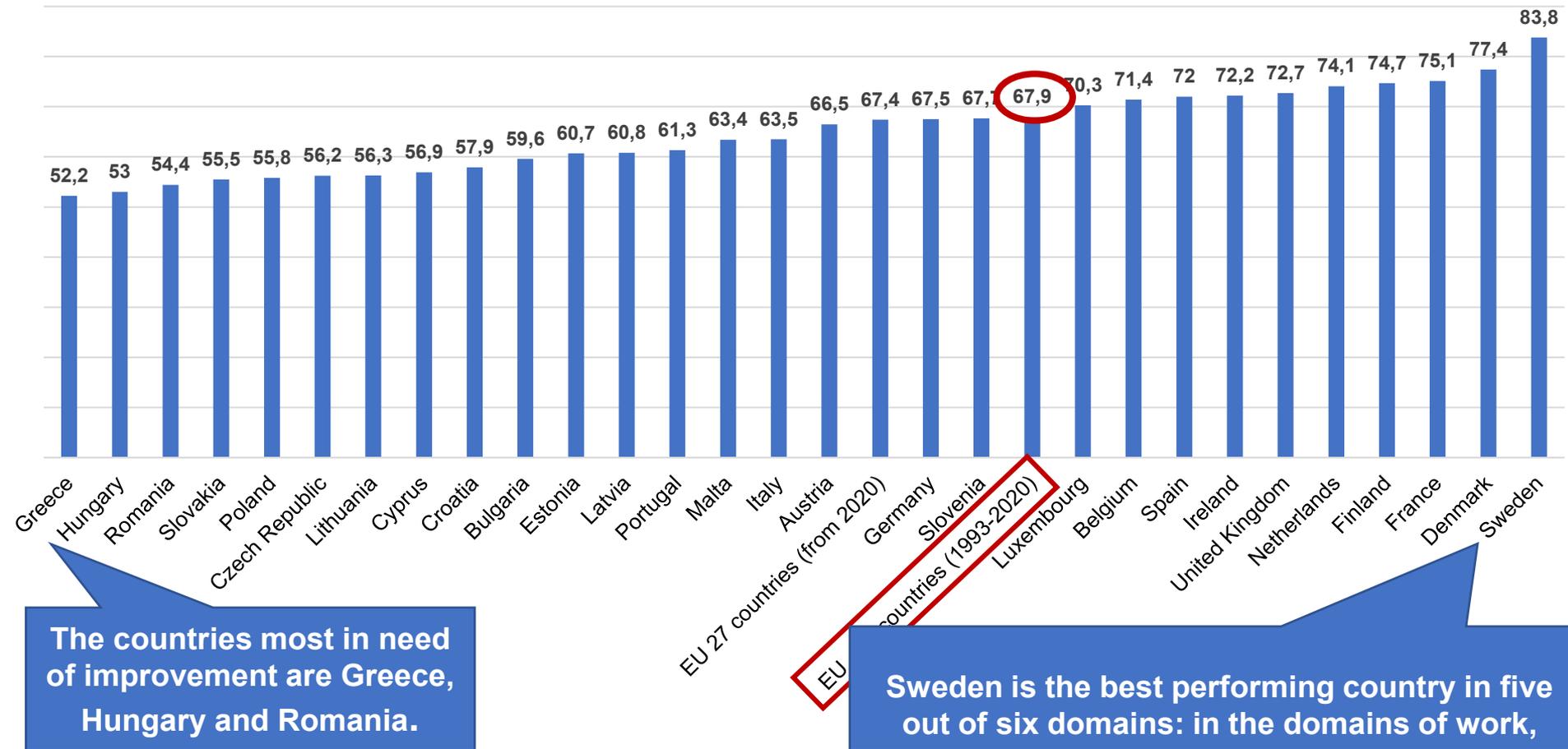


The fifth domain – *power* – looks at the representation of women and men in **decision-making positions**, such as in **politics**, the **economy** or **social roles** such as **the media**. It considers for example women's under-representation as **ministers, in parliaments, on company boards** or **on scientific boards**.



The sixth domain – *health* – focuses on gender differences in health outcomes: **although women live longer, they get sicker**. It also includes determinants of health, to capture men’s propensity to engage in more risky-behaviours such as smoking or drinking. Finally, it measures equal access to health structures, since women are more likely to engage with these as part of their social roles.

Gender Equality Index scores (2020: the fifth edition)



Gender Equality Index scores (2020)

The domain of *health* is where the **highest scores are achieved**, likely because of the high levels of care afforded to EU residents compared to globally.

The **lowest scores** across countries are in the domain of *power*, which focuses on gender gaps in **decision-making positions** in the **public and private sectors**.

Boards of the largest publicly listed companies

Women remain heavily **outnumbered** by men in large **corporations**. In October 2020, the **share of women** on the **boards** of the **largest publicly listed companies** registered in the EU Member States were **29.5%**, with the **France** as the only Member State in which the largest listed company have at least **40%** of women at board level. **Belgium**, **Italy** and **Sweden** follow, all having a percentage of around **38%** (EIGE, 2020).

Binding quotas

Only **seven Member States** have adopted legislative measures to reduce the **gender gap** in **boardrooms** through the introduction of a **national gender quota** that establishes a **minimum proportion** for the under-represented female gender: France and Italy (40%), Belgium and Portugal (33%), Germany and Austria (30%) and, most recently, Greece (25%).

The impact of quotas is evident. Indeed, always in October 2020, women accounted for **37.6%** of **board members** of the **largest listed companies** in the six Member States with binding quotas (because of the recent introduction, Greece was excluded), while they accounted **24.3%** in countries that have taken soft measures or no action at all (EIGE, 2020).

COVID-19

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, **women** have been largely **missing** from the **decision-making bodies** established to tackle the pandemic. While women represent the **majority of healthcare workers**, decision had been taken mostly by men.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, the **lockdowns** and **closure of schools** and **workplaces** put **extra pressure** on families, especially **women** and lone mothers, to **combine childcare responsibilities** and **home-schooling** while **teleworking**.

Education (STEM) and economic impact of gender equality

Women remain underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (**STEM**) sectors, where **75%** of **students** are **men** (EIGE, 2017).

Gender equality can have strong and positive impacts on **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** per capita.

Reducing the gender gap in STEM education would help reduce **skills gap**, increase **employment** and **productivity** of women, reduce **occupational segregation**, and ultimately foster **economic growth**. By 2050, the improvement of gender equality would lead to an increase in EU **GDP per capita** by **6.1%** to **9.6%**, which amounts to €1.95 to €3.15 trillion (EIGE, 2017).

Time



A lack of free time, due to caring responsibilities, makes it harder for women also to find time for **regular training** to update their skills.

On average, **40% of women** compared to **24% of men** cannot participate in **lifelong learning** due to **family responsibilities**.

The digital transition is of utmost importance in this context. With rapid transformation and digitization of the economy and the labour market, today **90% of jobs** require basic **digital skills**.

Jobs in the **ICT sector** are generally **quite secure, well paid** and offer **flexible working conditions**. While women are largely missing from these jobs, there is a big dependence on women in the **care sector**, whose **jobs** are characterised by **low pay** and **irregular working hours**.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender equality is neither **inevitable** nor **irreversible**.

Gender stereotypes are the **root** of **gender inequality** and impact all areas of society.

Gender diversity – the **equitable** or **fair representation** of people of different genders documented and generally accepted in business – can introduce **different perspectives**, **problem-solving approaches**, and **increase innovation** and **competitiveness**.

Closing gender gaps in the labour market ➔ Increasing women's participation in the labour market has a strong, positive impact on the **economy**, notably in the context of a **shrinking workforce and skills shortages**. It also **empowers women** to shape their own lives, play a role in **public life** and be **economically independent**.

Companies, communities and countries should be led by both women and men, in all their diversity. Whether you are a woman or a man should not influence the career you pursue.

CONCLUSIONS

So, what do we need to change?

We need **work-life balance policies** that not only aim to **get more women into the labour market**, but which also aim to **get men to do more housework and caring for children (childcare), older and sick family members, and persons with disabilities** (e.g., **child and elderly care** accessible to everyone and scheme like **parental leave** with incentive for both women and men to take up the leave).

We need to **challenge gender stereotypes early on the school system to encourage young people** to choose their **subjects freely, regardless of gender**. New opportunities in the labour market can benefit both women and men, if more diverse career choices are offered to girls and boys, not just traditionally narrow career options.

We need to develop **awareness-raising campaigns that target both women and men**, and to **improve specialist support for victims**.

We need to **ensure women are included in decision-making processes in all ordinary and emergency responses**, including COVID-19 recovery plans.

I thank you for your attention!