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The gender pay gap situation in the EU

Women in the EU earned on average 14.1% less per hour than men in 2019 (EU27 data). Still, there are huge differences between the EU countries.



Facts and figures

Women in the EU are less present in the labour market than men. The gender employment gap stood at 11.7% in 2019, with 67.3 % of women across the EU being employed compared to 79% of men (EU27 data).

The gender pay gap in the EU stands at 14.1% and has only changed minimally over the last decade. It means that women earn 14.1% on average less per hour than men.

Women in the EU even earned 36.7% less than men overall in 2018. One of the reasons is the fact that on average women spend fewer hours in paid work than men: Whereas only 8% of men in the EU in 2019 worked in part-time, almost a third of women across the EU (30.7 %) did so and their employment rates are lower.

Why do women earn less?

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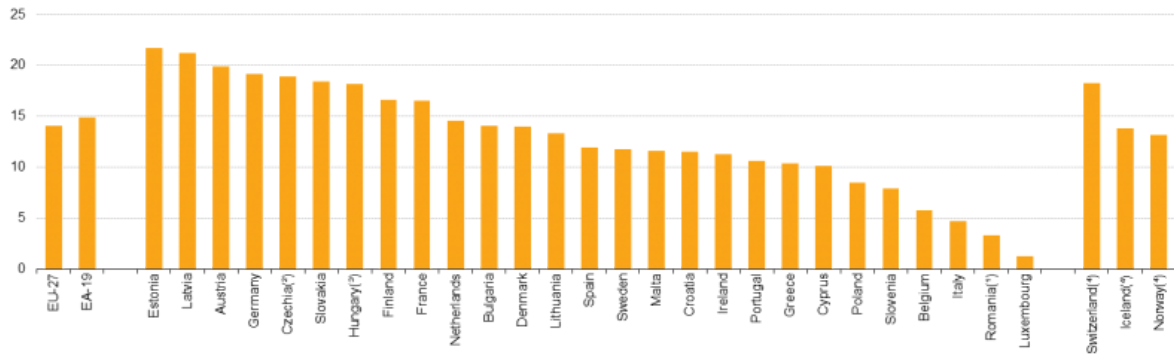
The reasons for the gender pay gap go beyond the simple issue of discrimination. They are a consequence of various inequalities women face in access to work, progression and rewards.

- Sectoral segregation: Around 30% of the total gender pay gap is explained by the overrepresentation of women in relatively low-paying sectors, such as care and education. On the other hand, the proportion of male employees is very high (over 80%) in better-paid sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- Work-Life Balance: Women spend fewer hours in paid work than men on average but more hours in unpaid work. In total, women have more work hours per week than men, which might affect their career choices. This is why the EU promotes a more equal sharing of parental leaves, an adequate public provision of childcare services and adequate company policies on flexible working time arrangements.
- The glass ceiling: The position in the hierarchy influences the level of pay: less than 10% of top companies' CEOs are women. The profession with the largest differences in hourly earnings in the EU were managers: 23 % lower earnings for women than for men.
- Discrimination: In some cases, women earn less than men for doing jobs of equal value. However, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is enshrined in the European Treaties (article 157 TFEU) since 1957.

Differences between the EU countries

There are considerable differences between EU countries. The gender pay gap ranges from less than 5% in Luxembourg, Italy and Romania to more than 19% in Austria, Germany, Latvia and Estonia. In most countries, the gender pay gap is decreasing, whereas it is even growing in a few.

The unadjusted gender pay gap, 2019
(difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees as % of male gross earnings)



Note: For all the countries except Czechia and Iceland: data for enterprises employing 10 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 B to S (-O); Czechia: data for enterprises employing 1 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 B to S; Iceland: NACE Rev. 2 sections C to H, J, K, P, Q. Gender pay gap data for 2019 are provisional until benchmark figures, taken from the Structure of Earnings survey, become available in December 2024.

(*) Estimated data.

(**) Definition differs (see metadata).

(†) Break in series.

(‡) 2018 data.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: sdg_05_20)

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However, a lower gender pay gap in certain countries does not automatically mean that women in general are better paid. A lower gender pay gap often occurs in countries with a lower employment rate of women. A high pay gap is usually characteristic of a labour market

- in which women are more concentrated in low-paid sectors.
- in which a significant proportion of women work part-time.

[Find more about gender pay gap statistics](#)

Documents



2021 Factsheet on the gender pay gap

08 November 2021

English (1.1 MB - PDF)

Url link -

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_