

Beijing Platform for Action - 25 years on

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the [Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing](#), which represented a turning point for the global agenda for gender equality and resulted in pivotal commitments and objectives, the results of which we still measure today.

The [Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action](#), adopted unanimously by 189 countries at the Conference in 1995, is considered to be the most comprehensive global policy framework for the rights of women. It recognises women's rights as human rights and sets out a comprehensive roadmap for achieving equality between women and men, with concrete measures and measurable outcomes across a range of issues affecting women and girls. These outcomes are divided into 12 inter-related areas where a need for urgent action was identified: poverty, education and training, health care, violence against women and girls, armed conflict, economic empowerment, power and decision-making, mechanisms to promote advancement of women, women's human rights, the media, the environment and the rights of the girl child.

The United Nations has held a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action every five years, including consideration of future actions and activities. The existence of solid data and comparable statistics has been crucial in this effort, but lack of good data is still a problem in certain areas, even in regions considered to be at the forefront of the fight for gender equality, such as the EU.

In December 1995, the [European Council](#) acknowledged the commitment of the EU to the Beijing Platform for Action and expressed its intent to review it on a yearly basis. The EU has developed a number of qualitative and quantitative indicators to monitor progress, and by 2013 the Council had agreed indicators in eleven out of twelve areas (the indicators for the human rights of women are yet to be developed). The EU Member State data for these indicators are held in one place by the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) (EIGE).

An overview of these indicators shows that although there is data for most of the twelve areas, there are serious gaps in consistent collection, making the measurement of progress over time difficult. Coverage of some of the categories, such as violence against women is also lacking. EIGE has also identified other challenges in data collection that may affect interpretation, such as poverty measurement being based on incomes at household and not individual level, potentially leading to the underestimation of the gender gap in poverty. Gaps in the collection and analysis of data to explore how gender interacts with other characteristics such as age, ethnicity or sexual orientation may also hide problems certain groups of women may face more than men.

EIGE publishes evaluation reports of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States every five years. Its latest [report](#), evaluating progress 25 years after the Conference in Beijing, finds that many challenges, such as the gender pay gap and unequal distribution of unpaid work remain very much relevant today. It also recognises and assesses new challenges that have emerged in recent years, such as those stemming from digitalisation, recent migration flows and a backlash against gender equality. Some areas, such as environment, were recognised by the Beijing Platform for Action, but have taken on additional importance in the intervening years. In order to address these challenges, EIGE proposes concrete actions that can be carried out at EU and Member State level. With respect to economic empowerment and poverty reduction, these include strengthening care services across the EU to reduce the disproportionate burden of unpaid care on women. To cover the care gap, these care services should be provided both for children, and for incapacitated adults. Gender needs to be mainstreamed in environmental and climate policy to take account of gender differences in this area. Accession to the Istanbul Convention is also considered an important step towards reducing levels of gender-based violence. Education free of gender stereotypes and increasing the participation of women in decision-making are also aims for the future period. They are especially important because they have the potential to decrease gender gaps in several other areas as well. The report also considers it necessary to improve data collection and promotes the importance of new research, especially on the effects of intersectional discrimination.

This paper presents gender gaps in the EU27 with a focus on poverty, employment, education and climate change.



EU27 population	Female	Male	Total
0 - 14 years old	33.1	34.8	67.9
15 - 64 years old	144.3	144.9	289.2
More than 64 years old	51.0	38.1	89.0
Total population	228.3	217.8	446.1

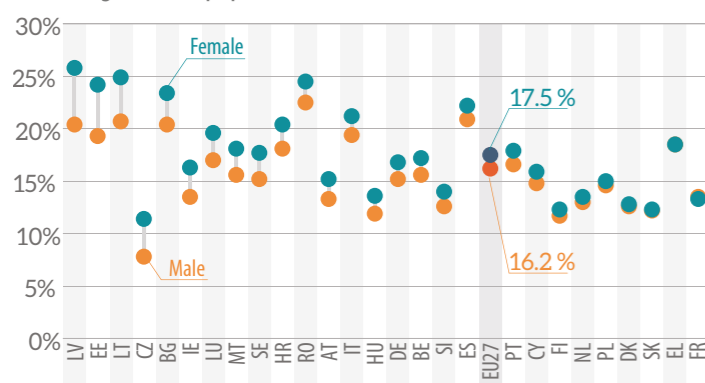
Million persons



At-risk-of-poverty rate

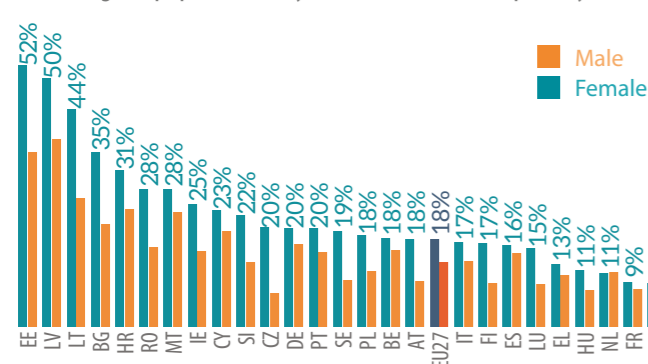
Economic indicators relating to poverty show that women are still more at risk of poverty than men, especially in some countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE). However, this is not the case for all CEE countries, because in Slovakia and Poland this difference is minimal.

Percentage of total population



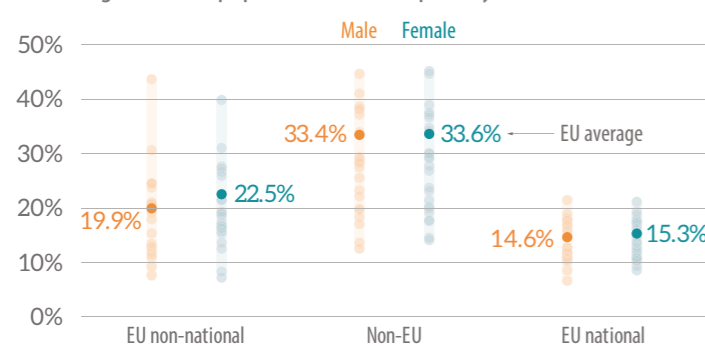
Risk of poverty means having an income that is significantly lower than that of the population as a whole. Here it refers to the percentage of the EU population with an income below the 60% of the national median income (60% of the median national adult equivalent household disposable income in each Member State).

Percentage of population 65 years or over at risk of poverty



The risk of poverty significantly increases for those over 65 years of age, resulting in a shocking figure of half of women of that age at risk of poverty in Latvia, and more than half in Estonia.

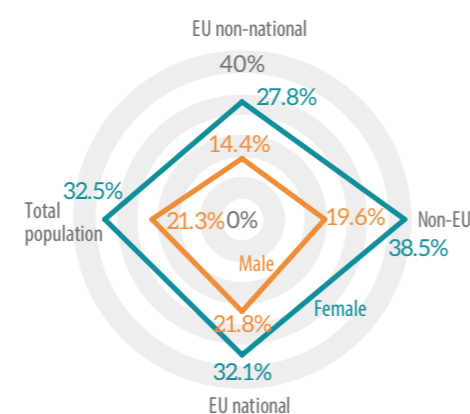
Percentage of 18-64 population at risk of poverty



Risk of poverty increases for those who are not citizens of the EU country in which they live, be they EU citizens (EU non-national) or third-country nationals (Non-EU). The risk of poverty for third-country nationals is significantly higher, but here the difference between men and women is negligible at EU level.

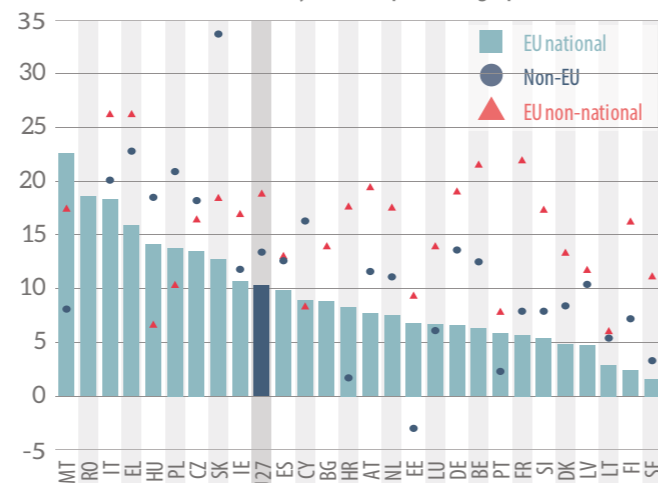
Inactivity rate

Percentage of 15 - 64 population



Women are also more inactive in the labour market, with a difference of 11.2 percentage points (p.p.). The difference dramatically increases for third-country nationals (Non-EU), where the percentage of inactive women is almost double that of men. Women who are EU non-nationals are less likely to be inactive than women who are nationals.

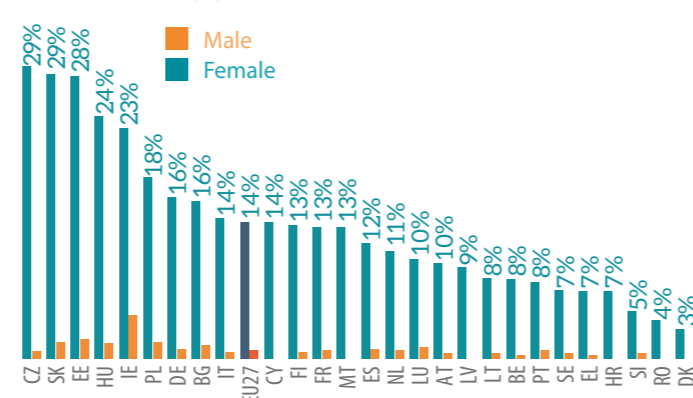
Gender difference in inactivity rate (in percentage points)



Looking at the Member States, the gender difference for EU nationals varies between 22.6 p.p. (MT) and 1.6 p.p. (SE). The range of gender differences for EU non-nationals across Member States is even larger: from Estonia, where women are more active by 3 p.p. to Slovakia, where men are more active by 33.7 p.p.

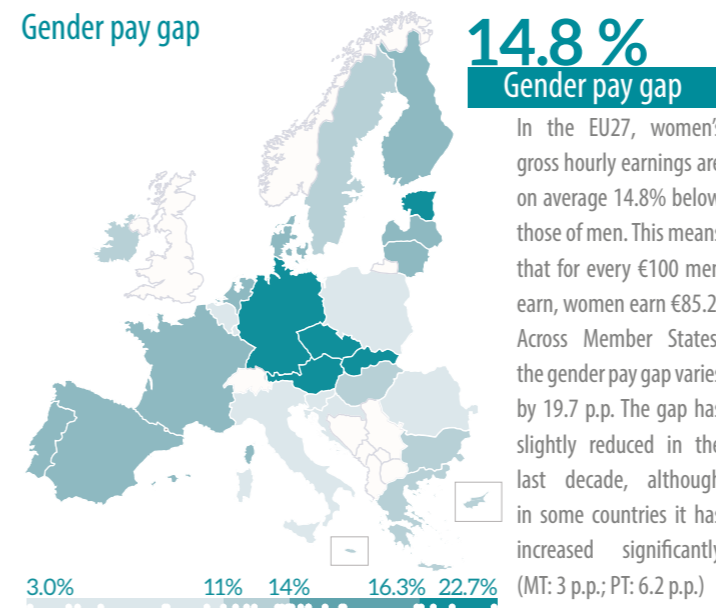
Inactive population not seeking employment for family care reasons

(% of inactive 15 - 64 population)



There are also gender differences in reasons behind inactivity, with 14% of women in the EU not seeking work because they are looking after children or incapacitated adults, compared with only 1% of men. Here, the differences between Member States are staggering, ranging between 29% of women (CZ and SK) and 3% (DK).

Gender pay gap

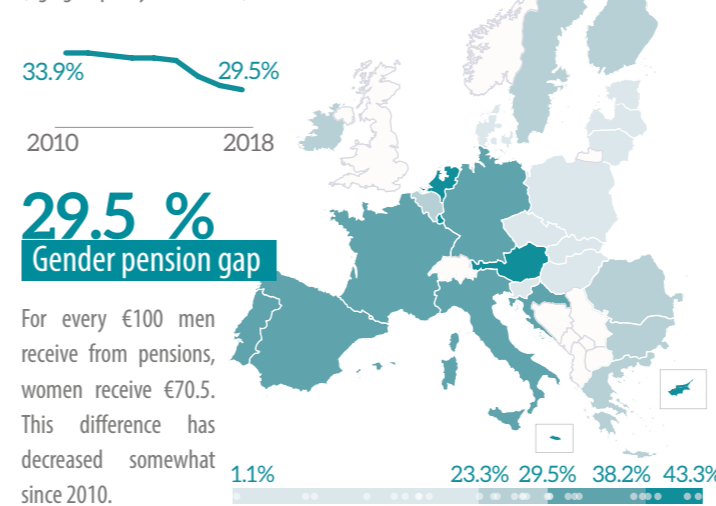


14.8 %
Gender pay gap

In the EU27, women's gross hourly earnings are on average 14.8% below those of men. This means that for every €100 men earn, women earn €85.2. Across Member States, the gender pay gap varies by 19.7 p.p. The gap has slightly reduced in the last decade, although in some countries it has increased significantly (MT: 3 p.p.; PT: 6.2 p.p.).

Gender pension gap

(age group 64 years or over)

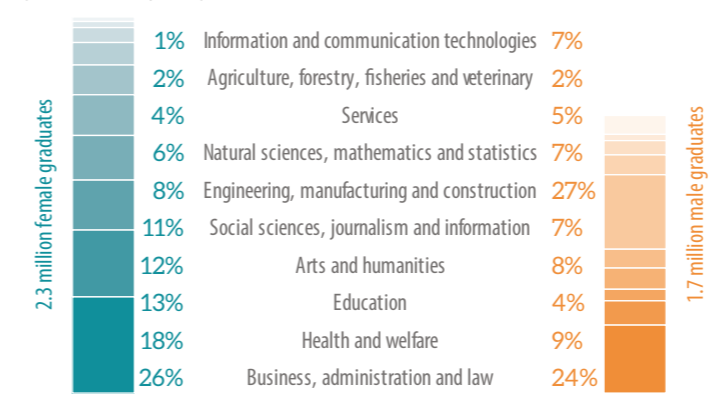


29.5 %
Gender pension gap

For every €100 men receive from pensions, women receive €70.5. This difference has decreased somewhat since 2010.

Graduates in tertiary education by programme

(ISCED level 5-8, 2017)



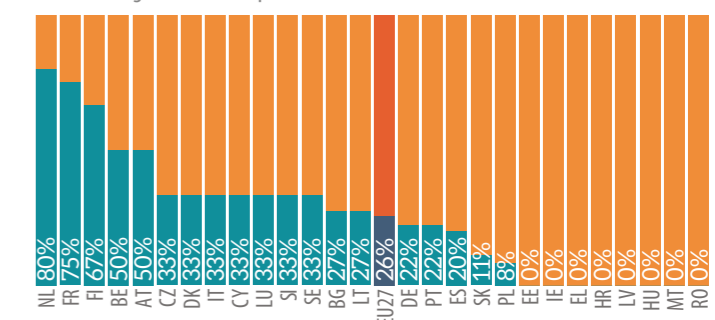
Whilst there are more women graduates from tertiary education in general, they opt for certain fields, such as engineering, manufacturing and construction and ICT, less than men. Education, health, and welfare are among the fields with disproportionately high representation among women compared to men.

Women and the environment

National ministries dealing with environment and climate change (2019)

Women are also less present in positions of power, and this includes policy areas dealing with climate change, an area that has become crucial for our future. In fact, in 8 Member States there is not a single woman in a political leadership position in any of the ministries dealing with environment and climate change.

Members of government or political executive

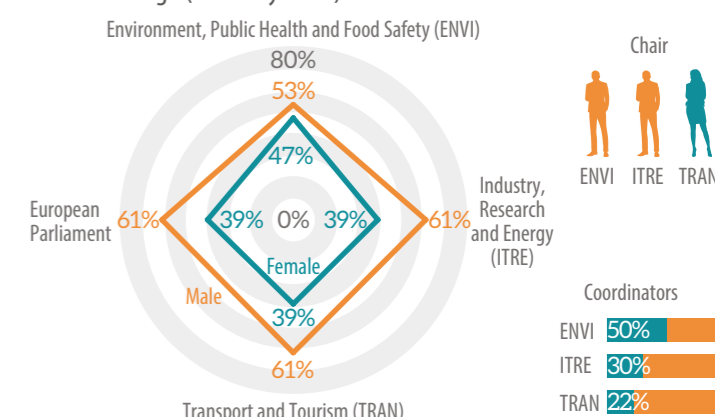


Senior administrators dealing with environment and climate change (2019)



At the level of senior administrators in national ministries dealing with environment and climate change there is also no gender parity, with the EU average of 42 % of senior administrators being women. This corresponds to the percentage of women at EU level in senior administrator positions in national ministries in general.

Committees in the European Parliament dealing with environment and climate change (February 2020)



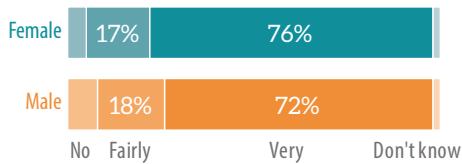
There is also no gender parity in the European Parliament. The committees dealing with environment topics have a slightly higher percentage of female MEPs than the Parliament as a whole.

Data in this paper refer to the year 2018, unless otherwise stated.

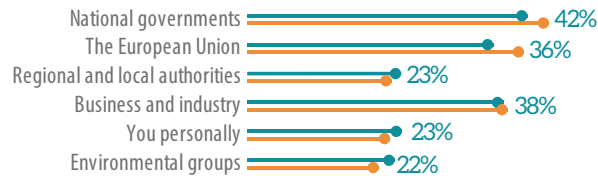
Gender opinions on climate change (2017)

The lack of gender parity at higher levels does not follow the level of importance that women in the EU give to this topic, which is slightly higher than that of men. A higher percentage of women than men also take actions relevant for fighting climate change on a daily basis, potentially adding to their burden of unpaid work.

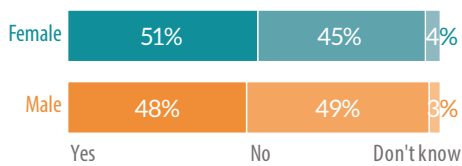
Climate change: a serious problem?



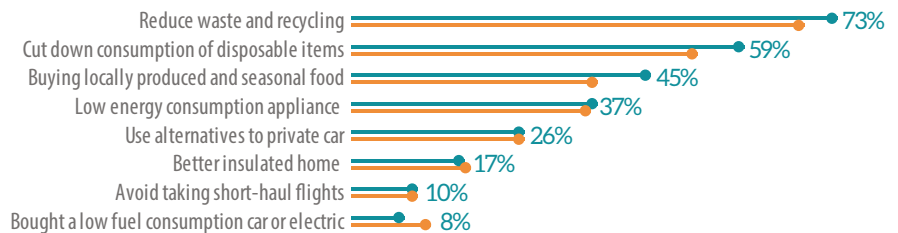
Who within the EU is responsible?



Do you take any action to fight climate change?



Which actions?



Definitions:

At-risk-of-poverty rate: the at-risk-of-poverty rate is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.

Inactivity rate: a person is inactive, according to the International Labour Organization definition, if he or she is not part of the labour force, meaning he or she is neither employed nor unemployed. The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or men, for example, provided that they are not working at all and not available or looking for work either.

The inactivity rate is the proportion of people outside the labour force (i.e. economically inactive persons) in the total population of the same age group.

Gender pay gap: the gender pay gap, abbreviated as GPG, refers to the difference in average wages between men and women. The unadjusted gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of male and female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees.

Gender pension gap: the gender pension gap shows the percentage by which women's average pension income is higher or lower compared with men.

Graduate in tertiary education by programme: the International standard classification of education, abbreviated as ISCED, is an instrument for compiling internationally comparable education statistics. The tertiary education is defined as levels 5-8 in the ISCED and includes: Short-cycle tertiary education (ED5), Bachelor's or equivalent level (ED6), Master's or equivalent level (ED7) and Doctoral or equivalent level (ED8)

National ministries dealing with environment and climate change (members of government or political executive): proportion of women and men amongst members of the government in ministries with competences in environment, climate change, energy and transport with and without seats in the cabinet or council of ministers.

National ministries dealing with environment and climate change (senior administrators): proportion of women and men amongst highest-ranking civil servants in ministries with competences in environment, transport and energy.

Committees in the European Parliament dealing with environment and climate change: the infographic shows the composition of the committees after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

EU national: EU citizens living in their own country.

EU non-national: EU citizens of countries other than the one in which they live.

Non-EU: third-country nationals.

Country codes: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czechia (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE).

Data sources: At-risk-of-poverty rate ([ilc_li02](#) and [ilc_li32](#)), [inactivity rate](#), [inactive population not seeking employment for family care reasons](#), [gender pay gap](#), [gender pension gap](#), [graduate in tertiary education by programme](#) are from Eurostat. Women and the environment ([members of government or political executive](#) and [senior administrators](#)) are from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Committees in the European Parliament data supplied by Members' Administration Unit. [Gender opinions on climate change](#) comes from Eurobarometer (Special Eurobarometer 459: Climate change).

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