



Beijing Platform for Action

Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States

Acknowledgements

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European Institute for Gender Equality

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Foreword

A quarter of a century ago, 189 governments came together in Beijing to sign a commitment for the empowerment of women in all areas of life. The European Union was among the signatories to the Beijing Platform for Action, and since 2010 the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has been tasked with monitoring its implementation. As this report shows, no country has yet fully completed the objectives outlined in 1995. And, while there has been indisputable progress, there have also been setbacks.

In the area of decision-making, women in the European Union have gained more power. The proportions of women in national parliaments and on the boards of large companies have increased. Such improvements have not happened by chance; legislation and other government actions have helped stimulate change. Indeed, countries with electoral quotas have achieved almost twice as much improvement as those without.

However, women are still less likely to be in work than men, and the gender pay gap persists at around 16 %. Women perform an average of 13 hours more unpaid work each week than men, and care responsibilities keep 7.7 million women out of the labour market. Lower salaries, a higher likelihood of working part-time and career breaks to take care of dependants all lead to women receiving 37 % less in pensions than men. This is reflected in a greater risk of old-age poverty among women in many EU Member States.

In order to adapt to modern realities, more than half of EU Member States have introduced changes to childcare and benefit provisions to ease the lives of working parents. Expanding these benefits to cover long-term care for people with disabilities and older persons would help unbridle the potential of women currently shut out of the labour market and prepare the EU for the impact of ageing populations.

Certain challenges outlined in this report are likely to become more prominent over the coming years. The differences in employment patterns may put women at disproportionate risk of future

job loss due to automation. Women's under-representation in information and communication technology professions and among entrepreneurs may result in them losing out on some of the biggest employment opportunities offered by digitalisation.

As a response to the climate crisis, the EU has committed 25 % of its expenditures to meet environmental objectives. Conducting a gender analysis of spending commitments would ensure that women and men share equal responsibility for the transition to a low-carbon economy. Currently women are more likely to adopt environmentally friendly behaviour such as recycling, which adds to their burden of unpaid domestic work, while men head some 80 % of government ministries dealing with environment, climate change, energy and transport.

Migration will continue to be a key focus of policymakers. This report highlights the need for increased measures to protect migrant women and girls from gender-based violence, provide them with healthcare and support them through the asylum process.

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the EU, and narrowing the gender gap could result in an extra 10 million jobs and an increase of up to EUR 3.15 trillion in gross domestic product by 2050. Taking note of the assessments within this report will be central to ensuring that the ambitions of the Beijing Platform for Action and other international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals are fulfilled.

I would like to thank Virginija Langbakk, EIGE's former Director for her invaluable contribution to this report. Her expertise helped develop the recommendations that will assist the EU and the Member States to fulfil their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Carlien Scheele,
Director

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Abbreviations

Member State abbreviations

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czechia
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
EU-28	28 EU Member States

Frequently used abbreviations

AROP	at risk of poverty
AROPE	at risk of poverty or exclusion
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoR	Committee of Regions
CSDP	common security and defence policy
CSO	civil society organisation
CSR	country-specific recommendation
CVD	cardiovascular disease
EEAS	European External Action Service
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EHW	education, health and welfare
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ENEGE	European Network of Experts on Gender Equality
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
Equinet	European Network of Equality Bodies
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural Investment Funds
ET 2020	strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training

Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	NRIS	national Roma integration strategies
FEMM Committee	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (European Parliament)	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
FGM	female genital mutilation	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
GDP	gross domestic product	p.p.	percentage point(s)
GEAR	Gender Equality in Academia and Research	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children	SES	Structure of Earnings Survey
ICT	information and communication technology	SIP	social investment package
ILGA-Europe	European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association	STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
LGBTQI*	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other non-dominant sexual orientations and gender identities in society	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
MFF	multiannual financial framework	VAW	violence against women
NEET	not in employment, education or training	VAWG	violence against women and girls
NGO	non-governmental organisation	WAVE	Women Against Violence Europe
		WHO	World Health Organization
		WLB Directive	Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers
		WPS	women, peace and security

Disclaimer

In this report we have opted for using the abbreviation LGBTQI*, as it represents the most inclusive umbrella term for people whose sexuality differs from heteronormativity and whose gender identity falls outside binary categories. The language used to represent this very heterogeneous group is and has been in continuous evolution towards inclusion. For this reason, different researchers and organisations have adopted other versions of the abbreviation, such as LGBT and LGBTI. Accordingly, the report will use those researchers' and organisations' chosen abbreviations when describing the results of their work.

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Executive summary

Although the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was established 25 years ago, many of the challenges identified in 1995 remain relevant today (such as the gender pay gap, unequal distribution of unpaid work or experiences of gender-based violence, to name just a few). This report both tracks progress against these long-standing challenges and goes beyond them to assess new challenges that have emerged in recent years, including those brought by digitalisation, recent migration flows and a mounting backlash against gender equality.

The report is the fifth review of the overall developments at EU level related to the 12 BPfA areas of concern. The report focuses particularly on trends and developments observed since 2013, picking up where the last such review (Beijing + 20, review period 2007-2012) left off. The report covers research and policy developments only up to March 2019, with a few exceptions in cases where important EU-level developments have happened more recently (such as the coming into force of the Work-Life Balance Directive or the recent elections to the European Parliament).

Much of this review also reflects on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all UN Member States in 2015. These include a specific SDG related to gender equality (SDG 5), and other goals highly relevant to this review: ending poverty (SDG 1); equal access to education and training (SDG 4); improving health, including universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SDG 3); equal access to justice (SDG 16); addressing gender-based violence; good-quality employment for both women and men; and gender

equality in decision-making positions (all under SDG 5).

The executive summary of key findings from the Beijing + 25 review is organised around five key themes emerging from this research:

- 1) gender inequalities in the economy;
- 2) gender-responsive public infrastructure, social protection and services;
- 3) freedom from gender-based violence, stereotypes and stigma;
- 4) parity democracy ⁽¹⁾, accountability and gender-responsive institutions;
- 5) peaceful and inclusive societies.

These themes were chosen to highlight key findings emerging from this review, which often cut across multiple BPfA areas and are closely connected together. Presenting key findings in this way allows us to reflect on their different aspects in a comprehensive way while avoiding unnecessary repetition. The way the themes link to individual BPfA areas of concern and individual SDGs is summarised in Annex 1 — Beijing Platform objectives and Sustainable Development Goals' targets.

1. Gender inequalities in the economy ⁽²⁾

Women's economic empowerment is considered to be a prerequisite for fairer, more inclusive economic growth. It is intimately linked to women's well-being and to the protection of their human

⁽¹⁾ Defined as in this report as the full integration of women, on an equal footing with men, at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society, by means of a multidisciplinary strategy.

⁽²⁾ The executive summary for the most part does not feature references, as these are included in the main body of the report, where findings are presented in more detail. References are provided only for sources used exclusively in the executive summary and nowhere else in the report. These references are provided in footnotes.

rights⁽³⁾. It calls for a broader approach to analysing economic inequalities and the interaction between well-being and the economy, known as the economy of well-being. This cross-sectoral approach aims to improve and reinforce both the economy and overall levels of well-being. It takes a broader view of economic growth than just gross domestic product (GDP) growth, considering gender equality (among other factors) an important aspect of growth. It also emphasises the importance of analysing the gendered impacts of economic policies. This is reflected in a wider trend in EU policy towards a more social Europe; for example, gender equality features among the key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and work-life balance has become a key EU policy priority, most recently marked by the Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers.

Gender inequalities in the labour market persist

Women's relation to the formal economy continues to be characterised by a number of long-standing gender inequalities. First and foremost, this includes lower employment rates for women than men, particularly for women who come from certain vulnerable ethnic and migrant backgrounds and for lone mothers.

Once in the labour market, women are more likely to have jobs that are precarious, untenured and part-time. This became particularly visible in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008-2009, which led to reductions in the number of public-sector jobs (mostly performed by women) and worrying deregulation of working conditions in private-sector job alternatives. Poor working conditions are among the key risk factors for in-work poverty⁽⁴⁾.

In contrast, women continue to be under-represented among entrepreneurs. This can be at least partly linked to additional challenges faced by women, including difficulties in accessing the necessary finance to start up a business⁽⁵⁾.

Women and men also remain concentrated in different fields of study, sectors and occupations, partly because of gender stereotypes in education. Women miss out on education and jobs in some high-tech fields, including computer science and information and communication technology (ICT). Women are also under-represented in environmental professions (e.g. in the energy sector), which has potential negative implications for environmental policies that could benefit from more diverse ideas and approaches. Men are under-represented in education, health and welfare studies.

The above inequalities contribute to a substantial and persistent gender pay gap in the EU (16 % in 2017), which reaches particularly high levels in some Member States (up to about 25 % in Estonia). They also contribute to other inequalities over the life course, since women accumulate less experience in the labour market, lower lifetime earnings and fewer pension rights. This puts them at greater risk of poverty than men, particularly when taking care of children without a partner or in older age. More broadly, this situation undermines social justice, as it stands in opposition to the right of women and men to have equal pay for the same work or for work of equal value, and the right to have equal opportunities to acquire pension rights - both of which are protected under the European Pillar of Social Rights.

⁽³⁾ Although individual well-being has multiple dimensions, it is increasingly judged based on individuals' capabilities to pursue activities or to experience states that they find valuable or positive (e.g. working, participating in politics or enjoying a state of good health). At individual level, access to income and commodities usually affects personal well-being, but it is not an end in itself. For example, higher individual income can ultimately lead to improvements in life satisfaction and health. At population level, higher gross domestic product correlates with higher average subjective well-being, even if continued income growth is not always linked to greater happiness. Conversely, research has shown that loneliness and an extreme gap between the rich and poor are both factors that can undermine well-being.

⁽⁴⁾ Defined as individuals living in a household with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold. This threshold is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) (Eurostat, 2018, retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20180316-1>).

⁽⁵⁾ This is reflected in the findings of a 2013 survey, which found that in the EU, on average, only 24 % of women reported that they had access to the money needed, compared with 32 % of men.

Although the above inequalities are well known and long-standing, progress in addressing them has been fairly slow. This can be illustrated by several key indicators from this area.

- The gender pay gap and gender pension gap have reduced somewhat since 2013, but still remain large (around 16 % and 37 % respectively).
- Even though employment rates have improved for both women and men since 2013, the gender employment gap remains almost the same, at 11.5 percentage points (p.p.).
- Women are still almost four times more likely to be in part-time employment than men, with little reduction in this difference since 2013.

Looking forward, there are some challenges that are likely to become more prominent. The differences in employment patterns and content may put women at disproportionate risk of future job loss due to automation and digitalisation. Women who are less educated, older and employed in low-skilled clerical, services and sales positions are most at risk in this respect. Women are also under-represented in ICT professions and among entrepreneurs, which means that they could lose out on some of the biggest future employment opportunities afforded by technological advancements and digitalisation. Finally, the dominance of men in environmental sectors weakens the influence of women in areas that will become more important as the EU takes further steps to tackle climate change after 2020.

Disproportionate share of unpaid work carried out by women leads to major gender inequalities in the labour market

Many of the economic inequalities described above stem, at least partly, from the unequal distribution of care responsibilities and other forms of unpaid work.

- Women continue to bear more of the responsibility of caring for children and older relatives than men. This makes it difficult for them to achieve a good work–life balance, often preventing or reducing their involvement in the (formal) labour market.
- Women are also more likely to carry out other forms of unpaid work, such as housework, shopping and volunteering ⁽⁶⁾. In the EU, women are estimated to undertake an average of about 13 hours more unpaid work per week than men ⁽⁷⁾.
- Although unpaid care work is indispensable to the well-being of individuals and wider society, its contribution to economic growth is largely invisible. The most popular economic aggregates used in measuring economic growth (i.e. GDP growth) do not reflect the contribution of such work.
- Despite some progress, the Barcelona objectives for providing formal childcare have not yet been fully met within some Member States ⁽⁸⁾. Cost plays an important role in impeding use of these services; nearly a third of households face some difficulty in affording them.

⁽⁶⁾ Based on the most recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) survey data from 21 Member States.

⁽⁷⁾ Here, unpaid work includes routine housework; shopping; care for household members; childcare; adult care; care for non-household members; volunteering; travel related to household activities; other unpaid activities. The data cover all women and men aged 15 to 64. For more information see for example https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf or <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757>.

⁽⁸⁾ The Barcelona objectives envisaged that Member States would provide childcare to at least 33 % of children under 3 and at least 90 % of children aged between 3 and the mandatory school age by 2010. At the EU level, the former target has already been met, but the latter target is still some way off. At country level, the picture is less favourable, as only 11 Member States meet both targets.

- Similarly, there are gaps in the availability of formal long-term care services for older people and people with disabilities, as well as significant variation when it comes to Member State spending on these services.
- Flexible working arrangements can help women participate in the labour market, but can also reinforce gender differences in unpaid work. Recent research suggests that men who work flexibly often do so to enhance their work performance, whereas women often use such arrangements to meet increased family responsibilities.
- Finally, there are ongoing issues related to variation in eligibility, length and compensation of family-related leave across the EU Member States, and its overall low take-up by men.

Since 2013, at least 20 Member States have introduced changes to their family-related leave. Over the same period more than half have introduced changes to childcare and benefit provisions designed to ease the lives of working parents. At the EU level, the Directive on work-life balance of parents and carers came into force in August 2019, taking the first steps towards harmonising minimum entitlements to family-related leave in the EU, improving flexible working arrangements and encouraging the take-up of these among men.

Looking forward, an important challenge will be to ensure the efficient use of flexible working arrangements and family-related leave to promote gender equality rather than reinforce traditional roles. The increasing need for long-term care for the ageing population of the EU also represents a significant challenge for achieving gender equality, given that women continue to be the main providers of care and that long-term care services remain

insufficient across many Member States. Moves towards zero waste lifestyles may place even more pressure on women to take up unpaid work activities, since women are often assigned more responsibility for the domestic environment.

Women are at greater risk of poverty or social exclusion than men, with negative impacts on their well-being

Largely as a result of gender inequalities in the economy, women are at greater risk of poverty or social exclusion than men (23.3 % of women compared with 21.6 % of men). This gender gap is likely to be understated in available data, since current approaches to poverty measurement are prone to underestimate women's exposure⁽⁹⁾. This is because incomes are typically measured at household level, assuming equal sharing of resources within households.

Poverty or social exclusion is often concentrated among certain particularly vulnerable groups of women (and men).

- Almost one in three single women and men are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Having children further increases the risk of poverty for single adults, with almost half of lone parents at risk. The vast majority (87 %) of lone parents are women.
- Around one in two people from a non-EU migrant background are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- Four out of five members of the Roma⁽¹⁰⁾ communities have incomes below the (monetary) poverty threshold in the country they reside in. Fewer than one in five Roma women (aged 16 and over) are in employment, and many Roma girls do not complete secondary education.

⁽⁹⁾ See Betti, G., Mangiavacchi, L., and Piccoli, L. (2017), 'Individual poverty measurement using a fuzzy intrahousehold approach', *Institute of Labor Economics Discussion Paper Series*, No 11009. Retrieved from <http://ftp.iza.org/dp11009.pdf>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Following the Council of Europe definition, this includes 'Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as "Gypsies".'

- Almost a third of women with disabilities are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, largely due to additional employment challenges they face.
- Although older people are less exposed to poverty and social exclusion than younger age groups, the gender gap between women and men is widest among those aged 65 and over (20.6 % for women compared with 15.2 % for men). This is partly because women receive on average lower pensions than men.

The increased risk of poverty or social exclusion for the above groups is often associated with (a combination of) unemployment or inactivity, low work intensity at a household level, low educational attainment, poor working conditions, insufficient financial resources, material deprivation and/or discrimination.

Since 2013, the total number of women and men at risk of poverty or social exclusion has reduced by 10 million, representing progress against this long-standing challenge but falling short of the EU's 2020 target. More than one in five people in the EU continue to be at risk, and a small yet significant gender gap persists.

Gender inequalities in the economy result in increased vulnerabilities of women that go beyond higher poverty risks. Women with a lower socioeconomic status are at greater risk of poor physical and mental health than both men with the same socioeconomic status and women with a higher socioeconomic status. Because they have fewer resources on average, women are more likely than men to be affected by the impacts of climate change and are more vulnerable to energy poverty. Moreover, high levels of economic inequality have been linked to worse child well-being and impaired economic growth ⁽¹⁾.

2. Gender-responsive public infrastructure, social protection and services

Gender-responsive public infrastructure, social protection and services are those that recognise the specific needs of both women and men, and aim to promote gender equality. Public infrastructure can include both social infrastructure (such as childcare services) and physical infrastructure (such as transport and energy provision).

Welfare, pension and tax systems are often not gender-responsive

The design of some national welfare systems does not recognise the gendered nature of poverty. For instance, means-tested benefits are often delivered at the household level. Thus, women's entitlement is linked to their partner's status/income, reducing their independence. Tax systems can also reinforce gender inequalities. In some Member States, they may discriminate against the lower-earning partners within couples (most often women). This can act as a barrier to women's entry to the labour market.

Similarly, the design of pension systems can increase older women's exposure to poverty, particularly in countries with low wages. Contributory pension schemes can disadvantage those in non-standard forms of employment, such as part-time, low-paid and temporary workers (the majority of whom are women). These systems can also work against people who take career interruptions, disproportionately affecting women, who are more likely to leave paid work because of their care responsibilities.

Since 2013, the proportion of people taken out of poverty by social transfers in the EU has declined somewhat, even though social benefits continue to play an important role in reducing the risk of poverty. This is, at least in part, due

⁽¹⁾ Pickett, K. E., and Wilkinson, R. G. (2007), 'Child wellbeing and income inequality in rich societies: ecological cross sectional study', *BMJ*, 335(7629), 1080. OECD (2015), *In It Together: Why less inequality benefits all*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264235120-en>. OECD (2019), *Under Pressure: The squeezed middle class*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1787/689afed1-en>.

to austerity measures, such as cuts to public services and benefits, adopted in response to the financial crisis. There is some evidence that social transfers have become less effective at tackling poverty among women in particular ⁽¹²⁾.

Looking forward, many Member States are projected to reduce their spending on pensions in coming years. This may exacerbate the gender pension gap, as adequate pensions increasingly rely on long and full careers and access to pension top-ups, both of which women may be less able to access. An alternative, implemented in some countries, may be to use minimum income schemes to top up pensions.

Healthcare services do not always fulfil gendered needs

Women and men have a range of gendered health needs, linked both to biological differences and to psychosocial factors. Non-communicable diseases are responsible for the vast majority of ill health in Europe, and women experience higher levels of morbidity and mortality from certain non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, than men do. Women and men also have different mental health needs; for example, women are more likely to experience depressive symptoms than men, and significantly more likely to experience major depression (estimated at 3.5 % compared with 2.2 %).

Although self-reported unmet health needs have halved overall since 2013, gendered health needs continue to go unfulfilled for lack of available services in some cases. For example, variations in the level of services available, by mental health disorder and by Member State, leave substantial proportions of people without access to required treatments. Many women and girls (particularly among migrants, refugees, those living in rural areas and women from Roma communities) continue to lack access to necessary prenatal, maternal, sexual and reproductive health services. Nearly half of

pregnant refugees and migrants in Europe may lack access to appropriate antenatal care.

Where required services are available, women may face gendered challenges in accessing and using these, particularly when they belong to certain marginalised or minority groups, such as Roma, refugees, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex people and other non-dominant sexual orientations and gender identities in society (LGBTQI*). This is reflected in the slightly higher proportion of women than men who report unmet need for medical examinations, usually because they are not able to afford them. There are also some concerns around the gender sensitivity of such services. For example, women's health services tend to focus on their sexual, reproductive and maternal health, while other health needs remain overlooked, particularly in cases of non-communicable diseases.

In the future, it will be important to ensure that medical research adequately responds to gendered health needs. The prevalence of various medical conditions differs between women and men, as does their response to pharmaceuticals. Despite this, pharmaceuticals have been primarily tested on men so far. This means that adverse side effects that are more common in, or appear only in, women, may go unidentified. To some extent, the EU has addressed this issue through the 2014 Clinical Trials Regulation, which requires the consideration of gender in clinical trials. However, the full effects of this regulation (information available at the time of writing of this report indicated that the regulation would enter into application in 2019) remain to be seen.

New transport and smart home technologies present an opportunity to challenge gendered behaviours

The gender differences in mobility and transport are well documented. Women are less likely to own or use a car. They often travel shorter

⁽¹²⁾ This is assessed by considering the risk of poverty among women and men, both before and after social transfers. In 2013, the impact of social transfers was approximately the same for women and men. By 2017, social transfers led to a larger reduction of poverty among men than among women (34.5 % versus 33.1 %).

distances, have more complex trip patterns, and walk, cycle or use public transport more frequently than men. Many of these differences can be traced to the disproportionate care responsibilities of women. Despite this, there is a lack of consideration of these gendered patterns within transport policy, perhaps in part explained by the strong masculinity embedded in this sector at all levels and the small share of women in decision-making.

Looking forward, new transport technologies may present opportunities to challenge gendered behaviours. For example, autonomous driving might challenge the symbolic connection between automobility and masculinity, which may help to redefine the gendered human-car relationship and contribute to less car use and to a more environmentally friendly form of mobility.

Smart home technologies may also have potentially transformative effects on care and domestic work (e.g. through ambient assistant systems) if gender-differentiated use and users' needs of the new technical devices are taken into account.

3. Freedom from gender-based violence, stereotypes and stigma ⁽¹³⁾

Women face gender-based violence, stereotypes and stigma in their daily lives, which lead to persistent gender inequalities throughout various areas of life and their ongoing acceptance. They contribute to, for example, gender-differentiated choices within education, training and the economy, as well as to the under-representation of women in positions of power.

Gender stereotypes persist in media and education

Gender inequalities, sexism and stereotypes persist throughout various media sectors ⁽¹⁴⁾, for example in television advertising, visual media, gaming and social media. This is alarming, since even 'minor' stereotypes presented in the media can serve as a basis for escalating acts of gender bias and discrimination, and ultimately lead to (gender-based) violence ⁽¹⁵⁾.

There are multiple examples of inequalities and stereotypes in the media: women are frequently portrayed in stereotypical roles in advertising; they are more likely than men to be portrayed naked or in sexually revealing clothing in films; if they feature in video games at all, they are often depicted in sexualised, secondary roles; and recent technological developments in online social media platforms may propagate gender stereotypes through built-in artificial intelligence algorithms.

Such inequalities are driven, at least in part, by gender imbalances among those responsible for developing, producing and regulating media content. Since 2013, the proportion of women employed in motion picture, video and television programme production, sound-recording or music-publishing activities has remained under 40 %, with no overall increase in this period. Women also account for only around 30 % of media regulatory authority employees.

Overall, there is a lack of EU-wide comparable data on a range of gender-related issues (such as women's depiction in the media or online harassment on social media platforms) in the sector. Existing monitoring initiatives have been under-financed, and data collection has not been consistent or comparable.

⁽¹³⁾ 'Stigma is a powerful social process of devaluing people or groups based on a real or perceived difference — such as gender, age, sexual orientation, class, race, ethnicity, or behavior. Stigma is used by dominant groups to create, legitimize, and perpetuate social inequalities and exclusion. Stigma often leads to discrimination, which is the unfair and unjust treatment of an individual based on that socially identified status' (USAID (2014), *Resource Guide: Stigma & discrimination*. Retrieved from https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/pubs/272_StigmaandDiscriminationResourceGuide.pdf).

⁽¹⁴⁾ The BPfA framework identifies media as electronic, print, visual and audio media communications, including new technologies of communication. For this review, media includes the following: news; adverts; commercial audiovisual materials; the entertainment industry; social media (including users); and pornography.

⁽¹⁵⁾ For more on this, see the Pyramid of Hate (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/pyramid-of-hate-definition-examples.html>).

Against this backdrop, some online entertainment services appear to be having a positive impact on the portrayal of gender and the visibility of the LGBTQI* community through influential television programmes. Looking forward, the increasing use of such services gives them power to shape public perceptions in a positive manner.

Beyond the media, gender stereotypes play an important role in education. Crucially, gendered expectations affect the study and career choices of young people and significantly contribute to the segregation of study fields and labour markets. The stereotypes that contribute to segregation can be found in many contexts, such as educational materials and curricula or distribution of household roles.

New forms of violence against women emerge in the context of digitalisation

It is not yet possible to know the full extent of violence against women, largely because of differences in national legal and monitoring systems and under-reporting of violence. Despite these limitations, it is clear that gender-based violence continues to be a daily reality for millions of women and girls living in the EU. As many as one in two women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment and one in three have been affected by physical and/or sexual violence. Women and girls account for more than two thirds of victims of trafficking in human beings and they are overwhelmingly trafficked for sexual exploitation. Certain life circumstances, including living with a disability, being a refugee or asylum seeker, or being economically dependent on a partner, can further increase women's vulnerability to various forms of gender-based violence.

Women are also subject to gender-based harassment and bullying in the workplace, which was visibly demonstrated by the recent #MeToo movement. There are concerns that harassment will discourage women from participating in politics and public life; for example, a global survey found that over 80 % of female parliamentarians have experienced some form of psychological violence. Women in other public

functions, such as journalists and those fighting for women's and minority rights, are victims of sexual cyberharassment.

Despite the pervasiveness of the problem, there is currently no EU-level legislation that comprehensively addresses violence against women and girls; and the efforts to prevent violence and support its victims are often insufficient at Member State level. If the EU ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (the Istanbul Convention), that would be decisive in addressing this situation. The EU has already taken steps in this direction, but there has been resistance from several Member States. The implementation of the previously adopted Victims' Rights Directive and European Protection Order Directive also helped address some aspects of violence against women and girls, even though important limitations in their implementation were highlighted in assessment reports.

Against these long-standing challenges, little progress has been seen. The total number of recorded instances of rape and sexual assault has steadily increased since 2013. Regarding support for victims of gender-based violence, there has been a small increase in the number of telephone helplines for women, but a significant decline in the number of women's shelters. Judged against the standards outlined in the Istanbul Convention, it was estimated that there were only 1 in 20 of the necessary women's centres and fewer than half of the required number of beds in women's shelters in 2017.

Looking forward, the emergence of cyberviolence (including online hate speech, cyberstalking, bullying or harassment, and non-consensual pornography) is of increasing concern. Such violence can silence women and discourage them from taking a prominent role in public life. For example, around 4 in 10 journalists have reported self-censorship following online abuse. It also amplifies other types of victimisation through digital means, and may be the precursor to other forms of abuse - around one in five young women living in the EU have experienced sexual cyberharassment, and those who have experienced it are more likely to have also

faced violence from an intimate partner. Certain aspects of the digital world have a particularly negative impact on girls, including the impacts of pornography, child sexual abuse material and cyberbullying.

Despite these challenges, there is no specific instrument at EU level to tackle these forms of cyberviolence. Given this, some cases of online abuse are not recognised as harassment and go unpunished. The definitions of harm on online platforms also rarely acknowledge violence against women.

Women face barriers to accessing justice, and support for victims of gender-based crimes is insufficient

Women face a range of challenges in accessing justice, especially in legal cases relating to rights violations. These challenges include certain broad social stereotypes (e.g. people still often think that victims exaggerate abuse or rape claims), discrimination through gender-blind legislation, inconsistent application of gender-related legislation, high costs of legal proceedings and gender biases in the judiciary.

These challenges are apparent from the application of legislation on gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is often under-reported, and has low prosecution and conviction rates. In some cases, criminal proceedings regarding cases of domestic violence can be discontinued and lenient sentences are sometimes awarded to perpetrators. Moreover, domestic violence is regarded as subsidiary to more serious offences, which means that, when a more serious crime has been committed in an intimate relationship, prosecution generally proceeds under laws against the latter offence, which obscures the gendered dimension of the crime. Besides facing challenges in accessing justice, women who have experienced gender-based crimes may not receive sufficient support services. In 2016, the EU fell well short of the recognised international targets on minimum levels of service availability.

Since 2013, several important improvements in the gender-responsiveness of justice systems in the EU have been noted. These include the steps taken towards ratifying the Istanbul Convention, and the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive and the European Protection Order Directive.

4. Parity democracy, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Parity democracy involves 'the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society, by means of multidisciplinary strategies' ⁽¹⁶⁾.

There are a range of factors that can contribute to achieving parity democracy, which include:

- gender mainstreaming as a key transformative strategy to support the realisation of gender equality in practice;
- balanced representation of women and men in different areas of life, as well as equal representation of women's and men's concerns and interests in decision-making;
- high-quality, relevant, comparable and comprehensive data collection to accurately assess progress against various gendered challenges facing the EU;
- strong and effective civil society organisations (CSOs) that promote gender equality and women's rights, and hold governments accountable when they threaten these.

EU and Member State efforts towards gender mainstreaming show an overall lack of progress

The approach to mainstreaming gender across different areas of EU policy is fragmented and

⁽¹⁶⁾ Council of Europe (2003), *Genderware – The Council of Europe and the Participation of Women in Political Life*. Integrated project 'Making democratic institutions work'.

suggests a lack of continuity and progress. Gender-mainstreaming tools, such as gender impact assessments ⁽¹⁷⁾ or gender budgeting ⁽¹⁸⁾, are used infrequently at EU level throughout different stages of the policymaking process. Even where gender equality objectives are included, a cross-cutting gender-mainstreaming approach is often lacking. For instance, although it is promising that the European Pillar of Social Rights includes a gender-specific principle, it lacks a gender dimension to some of its other key principles.

Notably, efforts to mainstream gender into the EU budget are not improving. The proposals for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) regulations show an even lower level of ambition to support gender equality objectives than those of the 2014-2020 and 2007-2013 MFFs. The understanding of and approach towards gender mainstreaming continue to be based on the definition of gender equality as a horizontal principle, with no standalone quantitative target.

Some EU funds, strategies and processes have a strong gender-mainstreaming element in their design, but fail to follow up sufficiently at the monitoring and evaluation stages. This is the case with the 2014-2021 European Structural and Investment Funds, which provide a gender-specific *ex ante* conditionality for funding, but often fail to include gender-specific indicators and sex-disaggregated data (except for the European Social Fund). In other cases, such as with the Europe 2020 strategy, a lack of gender mainstreaming at the design stage was later addressed within the EU's mechanism for coordination of economic and social policy (the European Semester). Here, efforts were made to improve reporting on the gender dimension through important instruments, particularly the joint employment reports.

Although the EU increasingly focuses on tackling climate change and drastically reducing carbon emissions, gender mainstreaming is strikingly weak within the EU's environmental policies. Despite growing evidence of gender differences in environmental behaviours and the gendered impacts of climate change, EU climate change policy has largely remained gender-blind. Its solutions focus on market, technological and security measures, thereby excluding a people-focused approach that could enable gender-sensitive policy. Gender is also rarely mentioned in the draft national energy and climate plans for 2012-2030 that Member States submitted to the European Commission in 2018.

At Member State level, the levels of achievement in the area of gender mainstreaming were already low in 2012 ⁽¹⁹⁾ and weakened in 18 Member States in 2018, reflecting changes in the structures of gender mainstreaming and reduced use of certain gender-mainstreaming methods and tools.

Progress towards gender balance in decision-making is slow and uneven

Women continue to be under-represented in virtually all fields of decision-making considered under the BPfA, including the areas of politics, economics, business, health, research and innovation, armed conflict, environment, media, science and sports. Although the proportion of women in decision-making roles has mostly increased since 2013, progress has typically been slow and uneven.

The extent of women's under-representation varies between and within sectors and Member States. Particularly poor levels of representation of women (around 20 % or fewer) are seen in many economic and business decision-making positions, in sports, in the diplomatic sector and in the European Court of Justice. In contrast,

⁽¹⁷⁾ A policy tool for the screening of a given policy proposal, in order to detect and assess its differential impact or effects on women and men, so that these imbalances can be redressed before the proposal is endorsed. Definition taken from: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1180>

⁽¹⁸⁾ The application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Definition taken from <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1158>.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Comparator year, as no data available for 2013.

representation is better (35 % to 41 %) among science decision-making bodies of funding organisations, representatives elected to the European Parliament, national public administrations and supreme courts, regional political executives and the boards of public broadcasting organisations, including TV, radio and news agencies.

The systemic under-representation of women in decision-making roles is linked to gender stereotypes, inequalities, discrimination in employment practices and gender-based violence. Gender stereotypes contribute to gendered education and career choices and affect the ways in which employed women (especially women in leadership) are perceived, treated and valued. Gender inequalities - particularly unequal caring responsibilities - limit women's participation in the labour market and thus restrict their career and progression opportunities. In some fields, such as politics, there is also increasing concern about online harassment and the risk that it will discourage women from engaging in political debate or running for office.

Government action has been a significant driver of gender balance in decision-making

Although women continue to be under-represented in political and economic decision-making, there have been some signs of improvement. For example, the percentage of women on the boards of large companies across the EU has visibly increased since 2013 (from 16.6 % to 27.7 % in 2019). The proportion of women in national parliaments has also increased, albeit at a slower pace (by about 4 p.p. since 2013).

Such improvements have not happened by chance; legislation and other government actions have helped stimulate change. The most significant improvements in the proportion of women on the boards of large compa-

nies (+ 18.3 p.p. since 2013) were seen in Member States that have adopted binding quotas in this area⁽²⁰⁾. Similarly, in the last decade, countries with legislative electoral quotas⁽²¹⁾ have on average achieved almost twice as much improvement in the proportion of women in parliament as those without quotas, although much of this difference resulted from pre-2013 developments.

Supporting more women into corporate and political decision-making has been shown to have positive consequences. In addition to supporting good governance and democracy, it can lead to improvements to corporate financial performance, better career progression of other women at lower levels of the same organisation, and less corruption. Recent research also suggests that companies with more gender-equal boards tend to be more mindful of protecting the environment.

Significant challenges remain in collecting high-quality gender-sensitive data

There are significant shortcomings when it comes to the quality, relevance, comparability and comprehensiveness of the EU monitoring framework used to measure progress under the Beijing Platform framework. Some objectives and sometimes entire critical areas (i.e. women's human rights) continue to lack indicators to measure progress against them, even after 25 years.

Such data limitations are most apparent in the area of violence against women, where challenges with data quality and its harmonisation between Member States severely limit the accuracy and comparability of national monitoring of gender-based violence. Limitations are also apparent elsewhere. As mentioned above, poverty measurement is currently based on incomes at household rather than individual level, which is likely to lead to underestimation of the gender gap in poverty; and pharmaceu-

⁽²⁰⁾ Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Portugal have adopted binding quotas and now have 35.3 % women on boards. In the 11 Member States where no substantial action has been taken, women make up just 15.4 % of board members and there has been little progress since 2013.

⁽²¹⁾ Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia.

ticals have been primarily tested on men, which means that adverse effects more common among women may remain unidentified.

There are also substantial gaps in the collection and analysis of data to explore how gender interacts with other characteristics (age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) that affect women's experiences in various areas of life.

Since gender-sensitive data are crucial for effective gender mainstreaming, including gender impact assessments, these shortcomings impede the integration of a gender perspective in various policy areas.

The rise of 'anti-gender' movements creates serious threats to the wider agenda for equality

In recent years, some countries have seen a growing importance of movements that contest the concept of 'gender' and misinterpret it to deny certain rights of women and LGBTQI* people. They often suggest that gender is in direct opposition to traditional views of family, femininity and masculinity, which they claim to defend.

These 'anti-gender' movements have contested the role and significance of the Istanbul Convention, with misinformation being spread by politicians to suggest that 'gender' has a hidden, politicised meaning, in order to generate opposition to the convention's ratification at national and EU levels.

Certain anti-gender movements focus their attention on trying to ban sexual reproductive health and rights education in schools, because they see this as ideological. Although such opposition is not new, it is now extending to other areas such as gender studies. Currently this is most notable in Hungary, where the government has banned gender studies in higher education and has taken actions that seriously threaten the human rights of women, asylum seekers and LGBTQI* people.

Other movements threaten to limit women's access to legal and safe abortions. Some Mem-

ber States permit abortion only under specific restricted circumstances (or not at all in the case of Malta), and there have been moves to restrict abortion in other Member States such as introducing additional requirements, restricting available methods of abortion and permitting conscientious objection among gynaecologists.

The role of civil society organisations has been undermined in several Member States

The rise of the anti-gender movements has also been connected to attempts to reduce the importance of CSOs and women's rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in several Member States. This backlash has led to measures and initiatives hostile to women's rights NGOs, including smear campaigns and restrictive legislative measures. This has complicated the sustainable operation of these organisations, for example by creating additional barriers to accessing funding through restrictive criteria and administrative burdens; increasing the controls placed on CSOs and additional restrictions on access to government information.

It has led to some particularly hostile actions in a few Member States. For example, in Romania, CSOs have been blacklisted from nationalist media outlets. Similarly, in Hungary there has been a backlash against NGOs from the media and the state, with parliament adopting a new law that criminalises activities that support asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This legislation is likely to affect women's human rights CSOs.

5. Peaceful and inclusive societies

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies based on respect for human rights of all is an important condition for achieving women's empowerment, particularly for women affected by armed conflicts, women who face serious human rights violations and women from minority backgrounds. The efforts to promote such societies include measures that help pre-

vent or reduce impacts of armed conflicts, gender-sensitive asylum processes in place for receiving victims of serious human rights violations and respect for the rights of various minorities.

Gender mainstreaming in the EU's external action has improved

Since 2013, there have been important improvements in gender mainstreaming within the EU's policies linked to armed conflict. In 2017, the Council of the EU highlighted 'considerable advances' in gender mainstreaming in common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions, mandates and strategic documents. All strategic planning documents now include a commitment to integrating human rights and gender. In its strategic approach to women, peace and security, the EU commits to systematically integrating a gender perspective into all peace and security activities.

Within diplomatic missions, providing appropriate gender-sensitive training and the use of gender advisors are key tools in developing the capacity and expertise to ensure that the overlapping issues of conflict and gender are tackled appropriately, and that gender is mainstreamed throughout security and defence activities. Available data suggest that gender-sensitive training and gender advisors are reasonably widespread among Member State diplomatic missions (within UN or CSDP missions). However, there is limited information to assess their day-to-day impact.

The gender sensitivity of asylum processes varies by Member State

Asylum-seeking women and girls face a range of grave challenges during their displacement. They are at a high risk of being subjected to gender-based violence during their journeys, including human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. They usually take on caring roles for children and older relatives, which increases their need for support and protection. When making asylum claims, they often lack full awareness of their rights and have greater difficulties establishing the harm they have experienced, which puts them into more vulnerable situations. Reception conditions and gender-sensitive sup-

port in making asylum claims also vary a lot by country.

These issues are particularly important in the context of the increases in migration from certain countries that took place mainly between 2013 and 2015 (and have often abated since). The response across the EU to these migration flows revealed a securitised approach focused on border control, which is often exploited for political purposes at the expense of migrants' human rights.

To improve the gender-responsiveness of asylum processes, the EU is taking steps to accede to the Istanbul Convention, which requires violence against women to be recognised as a form of persecution and as a form of serious harm giving rise to grounds for asylum. At Member State level, some positive developments in identifying and supporting vulnerable asylum seekers have been identified, such as specific services for pregnant women and lone parents in Belgium. There have been some negative developments as well, such as the lack of reception of asylum seekers and integration of refugees in Hungary, the severe inadequacy of Greece's reception facilities and general allegations of violence against migrants occurring on the western Balkan route.

People from certain minority backgrounds continue to face everyday discrimination

Women (and men) from certain minority groups continue to face additional challenges arising from societal prejudices and stereotypes, including the following.

- Around one in four people from Roma communities report experiences of discrimination in various areas of their life. Infringements of the reproductive rights of Roma women, such as forced sterilisations, are a particularly concerning example.
- Prejudice against and exclusion of people of African descent are deep-rooted and prevalent across the EU, with one in four reporting an experience of discrimination in the last year. For women of African descent, the challenges of access to employment seem to be particularly exacerbated.

- Almost one in five Muslim respondents reported discrimination based on religious identity over a 5-year period; and more than a third of Jewish respondents reported incidents of antisemitic harassment over the same period. Findings from national research show that Muslim women may face particularly high levels of discrimination in the context of employment.
- Of LGBTQI* people, around a half of women and a third of men felt discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Transgender women are among the most vulnerable; 44 % of them have suffered three or more physical/sexual attacks or threats of violence in the EU over a 1-year period.
- Women with disabilities are at increased risk of having their reproductive rights violated (notably, forced sterilisation, abortion and other forms of control on fertility remain a reality for many) and face a number of harmful gender and disability stereotypes in education and employment.

Looking forward

Many long-standing challenges are still present even 25 years after the BPfA was launched. In some cases the situation has actually worsened in recent years, despite repeated calls for action (e.g. setbacks to gender mainstreaming and reduced access to sexual and reproductive services). This may be indicative of a lack of political will at EU and Member State level to address these challenges, even though this is vital for building a more social Europe and for achieving SDGs related to poverty, health, education, affordability of energy, climate action, decent work, reducing inequalities and achieving peaceful and inclusive societies.

To sustain economic growth and foster (women's) individual well-being, it is crucial to strengthen care services across the EU and reduce the burden of unpaid care on individuals, particularly women. Currently EU-level targets on care cover only child-care, but they should be expanded to cover long-term care for people with disabilities and older persons. It will be important to review the regulation of the care sector, to ensure that paid carers

(most of whom are women) are sufficiently valued for their work and enjoy a sufficient quality of employment. More widely, it will be important to foster women's economic independence through changes to work and social protection. Responding to shortcomings in public services, such as healthcare, will also help to move towards higher levels of individual well-being. Ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services is crucial, in the light of some retrogressive policies at Member State level.

To help overcome challenges related to gender-based violence, accession to and implementation of the Istanbul Convention are crucial. This will strengthen the EU's legal framework to address violence against women and girls, and will help ensure sufficient prevention efforts and support for victims at Member State level. To address online gender-based stereotypes and violence, the EU and its Member States should develop further monitoring and guidance. Ensuring that education is free of gender stereotypes and supports young people in navigating the digital world will also be important.

To progress towards parity democracy, increased gender-mainstreaming efforts are needed. Targeted measures such as quotas have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in increasing the participation of women in decision-making, and should be considered. Measures to support CSOs at Member State level should be taken to ensure they are able to hold those in power to account and support parity, gender equality and the human rights of people in vulnerable situations. It is necessary to take steps to improve data collection in several areas of the BPfA in order to improve the gender sensitivity of policymaking, especially in monitoring and evaluation stages. In this context it is important to promote new research to gain insights into intersectional forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

Finally, the increased levels of migration between 2013 and 2015 demonstrated the shortcomings in the gender sensitivity of current asylum processes. Gender-sensitive asylum processes are needed to take into account the gendered challenges women face during displacement and when going through such processes.

Introduction

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It sets an agenda for women's empowerment in all spheres of private and public life, outlining strategic objectives and actions to empower women in 12 critical areas of concern. Since then, quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed to monitor progress in achieving the objectives in 11 out of the 12 critical areas.

All EU Member States have adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and committed themselves to its implementation. More recently, the Member States also adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These include one SDG specifically dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, and several other SDGs linked to gender equality.

Yet many of the challenges identified in the Beijing Declaration back in 1995 remain high on the policy agenda today, including the gender pay gap, unequal distribution of unpaid work and experiences of gender-based violence, to name just a few. Some new challenges have also emerged in the light of more recent developments, including advances in digital technology, the recent fluctuation of migration flows and a mounting backlash against gender equality.

This report is the fifth review of the overall developments at EU level related to the 12 BPfA areas of concern. It takes stock of both the long-standing and the emerging challenges currently facing the EU, and assesses major developments related to these challenges since 2013 (following up on the previous Beijing + 20 review, which covered developments up until 2012). The report covers research and policy developments only up to March 2019, with a few exceptions in cases where important EU

level developments happened more recently (such as the coming into force of the Work-Life Balance Directive or the recent elections to the European Parliament).

To cover a comprehensive range of challenges and developments, the report presents data from a range of indicators established to monitor progress towards gender equality (under the BPfA and SDG frameworks), but often goes beyond these, and analyses additional data and sources of information where necessary. It draws on a wide range of EU-wide and national research and policy reports, a sample of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe reports that was available at the time of writing of this report (mid-May 2019) and in a few cases also additional reporting by Member States on promising policy practices at national level.

The review aims to contribute to important future policy decisions and ensure that these support the empowerment of women and girls in the EU. It will feed into the 2019 European Council Conclusions of the Finnish Presidency, inform the discussions and preparation of the post-Europe 2020 strategy and post-2019 EU gender equality strategy, and inform the EU's position in discussions on progress towards gender equality during the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2020. It provides a range of practical recommendations for action to promote gender equality at Member State and EU levels.

The report consists of three chapters. The first chapter provides an assessment of institutional developments related to gender equality at EU level. The second chapter analyses major trends and developments in the 12 areas of concern of the BPfA at EU and national levels. The final chapter provides practical recommendations for action to address key gender equality challenges identified in the previous analysis.

1. Institutional developments at the EU level since 2013

This chapter presents the institutional, legal and policy context for gender equality in the EU, with emphasis on developments since 2013 in this area. It is organised as follows.

- Section 1.1 presents the structures in place to support gender equality in the EU to set the context for the analysis that follows. More detailed information about each structure, including its mandate and key priorities, is presented in Annex 1.
- Section 1.2 briefly analyses the major EU legislative developments since 2013.
- Section 1.3 presents major EU policy developments in the field of gender equality.
- Section 1.4 presents the progress in mainstreaming gender in the EU, including mainstreaming in key EU strategies, financial resources and selected policy areas.

Further information on key EU legislative and policy developments in the 12 areas of critical concern of the BPfA is integrated in Chapter 2, as part of the review of progress in each area.

1.1. Structures for the promotion of gender equality in the EU

EU structures for gender equality have remained essentially unchanged since 2013

The coordination of gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming across the European Commission's directorates-general is currently under the central responsibility of the Director-

ate-General for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. Inside the Directorate-General, the Gender Equality Unit is responsible for policy development and strategic work related to gender equality, and the operational tasks related to the planning, monitoring, coordination and central reporting of the gender equality and gender-mainstreaming activities in the Commission⁽²²⁾. The Gender Equality Unit chairs the inter-service group on gender equality, which was established to support gender mainstreaming in the Commission. It brings together representatives from all the Commission's directorates-general. Two bodies support the gender equality work under the coordination of the Commission. (1) The Advisory committee on equal opportunities for women and men is composed of representatives of the EU Member States and EU-level social partner organisations, as well as EU-wide NGOs, international organisations and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) as observers. The committee assists the Commission in delivering opinions on issues of relevance for gender equality and implementing EU activities aimed at promoting gender equality. (2) The High Level Group on gender mainstreaming is an informal group made up of high-level representatives of the EU Member States who are responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level. It supports the trio Presidency in identifying relevant policy areas to be addressed, provides a forum for planning the follow-up of the BPfA and assists the Commission in the preparation of its annual reports on gender equality.

In the European Parliament, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (the FEMM Committee) is the principal political body in charge of advancing women's rights and gender equality. Although the Parliament has been a key institution driving the development of EU

⁽²²⁾ For more detail see EIGE's gender-mainstreaming platform (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/institutions-and-structures/european-union>).

action on gender equality, especially since the beginning of the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the FEMM Committee has ‘remained one of the smallest and less legitimate committees’ and ‘had to fight for its opinions to be taken up in plenary sessions’⁽²³⁾ (Jacquot, 2017, page 38). The committee also promotes gender mainstreaming by coordinating the Parliament’s Gender Mainstreaming Network, chaired by the chair of the FEMM Committee. The network is made up of the chair or vice-chair of each parliamentary committee, who are appointed to implement gender mainstreaming in the work of their committee and to share best practices in the different policy areas.

The Council of the European Union does not have a special formation that would regularly gather all EU Member States’ ministers responsible for gender equality. Gender equality is generally addressed in the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council. Importantly, the EPSCO Council adopts conclusions regarding the follow-up of the BPfA in the EU and takes note of the BPfA indicators. The council is also supported in its work by two advisory committees, the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, which are made up of representatives of the Member States. Their work is centred around advising ministers on the European Semester.

The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions need to be consulted during the EU policymaking process. EIGE is explicitly assigned to support the EU in the area of gender equality. Since 2010, it has supported the Council of the EU in the follow-up of the BPfA by reviewing progress in selected BPfA areas of concern and advising on

indicators used to measure progress. Besides EIGE, several other EU agencies support the EU in its efforts to promote gender equality; among them are the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

Other structures for equality established or funded by EU institutions underwent some changes during the period under consideration. The European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination was established in 2014, combining two previously existing networks⁽²⁴⁾. Scientific Analysis and Advice on Gender Equality in the EU operates to support the European Commission in policy analysis and policy development on gender equality. The European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming was a learning network set up and funded by the European Commission in 2007-2013 to support national managing authorities and intermediary bodies to mainstream gender in the implementation of the European Social Fund (ESF). It was, however, discontinued in the current programming period (2014-2020). National equality bodies⁽²⁵⁾ continued to be supported by the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet).

Beyond this, a number of European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social partners play a fundamental role in shaping the EU’s gender equality policy by initiating policy debates and providing relevant inputs⁽²⁶⁾. At the EU level, these include civil society organisations (CSOs) promoting gender equality, such as the European Women’s Lobby, the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisex-

⁽²³⁾ This is partly due to successive reforms of the internal regulation of the Parliament. The FEMM Committee currently deals mainly with proposals already subject to consultation. Furthermore, a core characteristic of the FEMM Committee is that it ‘has always stood apart on its intensive use of own initiative reports in order to promote public debate on questions of gender equality in a range of areas’ (Jacquot, 2017, p. 38). At the Parliament level, however, ‘the successive reforms to the internal regulations of the Parliament aimed to streamline the plenary session and thus strengthen the hierarchy between the reports, so that since 2012 only those deemed “strategic” could be presented and voted on in plenary session — own initiative reports being among the least “strategic”’ (ibid.).

⁽²⁴⁾ The European network of legal experts in the non-discrimination field and the European network of legal experts in the field of gender equality (see <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/about-us>).

⁽²⁵⁾ Across a range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

⁽²⁶⁾ Engaging with civil society, through participatory governance, is a condition for the development and implementation of gender-mainstreaming and gender equality policies. It also ensures effective national structures for gender equality (EIGE, 2018b).

ual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe), Transgender Europe, MenEngage, European Network of Migrant Women, Coface Families Europe or Age Platform⁽²⁷⁾. They also include social partners committed to enhancing gender equality⁽²⁸⁾ in the labour market, such as the European Trade Union Confederation, Business Europe, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services. This is important in the context of the BPfA, which promotes the active involvement of public, private and civil society bodies in advancing gender equality as part of its strategic objectives; and considers stakeholder consultation a fundamental process for the advancement of women's rights (EIGE, n.d.).

The political space for civil society organisations is shrinking

Civil society organisations have recently been 'confronted with a political and economic context that is less and less hospitable, and a political space that is more and more restricted' (Jacquot, 2017, page 38; see also European Women's Lobby, 2018b). A 2018 survey of women's rights defenders in 32 countries⁽²⁹⁾ confirmed that in many cases their space for operating has shrunk (Kvinna till Kvinna, 2018).

This is linked to the strong backlash against gender equality reported in various European countries in recent years, whose origins can be (at least partly) traced back to campaigns against so-called gender ideology. These campaigns often deny some aspects of the political freedom to live with one's gender without discrimination or fear⁽³⁰⁾, misrepresenting this freedom as an ideology that aims to undermine

traditional family structures and culture (European Parliament, 2018a). They often oppose political positions linked to certain rights of women and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and of other non-dominant sexual orientations and gender identities in society (LGBTQI*), for example the right to abortion or same-sex marriage.

In a number of Member States⁽³¹⁾, the backlash has led to measures and initiatives hostile to women's rights NGOs, including smear campaigns or restrictive legislative measures (European Parliament, 2018a). This complicated the sustainable operation of these organisations (for more detail, see Section 2.9 of this report).

1.2. Legal developments and trends

EU measures foster pay equality through transparency and disclosure of organisational diversity

The main legal developments in this area focused on the disclosure of non-financial and diversity information (legally binding Directive 2014/95/EU — European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2014) and on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (non-binding Recommendation 2014/124/EU — European Commission, 2014k).

The directive obliges large companies⁽³²⁾ to disclose material information on social and employee matters, which include diversity issues, such as gender diversity and equal treatment in employment and occupation (including age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disa-

⁽²⁷⁾ Although the list is in no way exhaustive, these organisations represent excellent examples of meaningful and continuous relationships between EU institutions and civil society.

⁽²⁸⁾ See for example the joint Framework of Actions on Gender Equality (https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/framework_of_actions_gender_equality_010305-2_2.pdf) or ETUC's Action Programme on Gender Equality 2016-2019 (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-action-programme-gender-equality-2016-2019>).

⁽²⁹⁾ The research covered 12 Member States: Czechia, Denmark, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Finland and the United Kingdom.

⁽³⁰⁾ See for example Butler (2019).

⁽³¹⁾ Most notably in Italy, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

⁽³²⁾ With more than 500 employees.

bility, ethnic origin and other relevant aspects). The directive also covers the board diversity policies of large companies, which must form part of their corporate governance statements. The statement is to describe the objectives of the diversity policy, its implementation mode and results for the reporting period. If no such policy is applied, the statement must contain an explanation of why this is the case. The directive is accompanied by Commission guidelines⁽³³⁾ that help standardise the process and encourage the use of measurable targets and time frames, in particular regarding gender representation (e.g. number of employees entitled to parental leave disaggregated by gender or the ratio of employees working under temporary contracts by gender). All Member States have now adapted their legislative provisions to meet the directive's requirements (GRI et al., 2017).

Although the directive is a welcome step forward, its scope is limited: it excludes small and medium-sized enterprises, which make up 99 % of businesses within the EU⁽³⁴⁾. In addition, it does not absolutely require reporting on gender equality, so it leaves significant discretion for companies to choose what diversity information they disclose. As yet, there is insufficient information available to assess the degree to which businesses are focusing on gender aspects within their diversity reporting.

The Recommendation on strengthening pay equality through transparency invites Member States to take measures that encourage employers and social partners to adopt transparency policies on wage composition and structures, such as reporting pay by gender, gender pay audits and the right to request information on gender pay levels.

The European Commission (2017h) highlighted limited progress in implementation of the recommendation, with only about a third of Mem-

ber States adopting some of the recommended measures.

Halfway towards an improved work-life balance: the provisional agreement

The 2017 proposal for a Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers (WLB Directive) seeks to improve access to work-life balance arrangements, including family- and care-related leave and flexible working arrangements, and to increase men's take-up of such provisions (European Commission, 2017j).

In January 2019, the Council and the European Parliament achieved a provisional agreement on the WLB Directive. The agreed directive addresses limitations within the current EU legal framework, particularly regarding leave policies⁽³⁵⁾. It introduces short-term paternity and carers' leave and strengthens existing rights to parental leave and flexible working arrangements⁽³⁶⁾. The directive applies the intergenerational approach to work-life balance, considering the needs not only of young families, but also of adults with ageing parents or family members with disabilities. Gender equality and equal sharing of caring duties in families are also recognised as a cornerstone of work-life balance. The directive also paves the way for future actions on improving access and quality of care services. It was ratified in April 2019 by the European Parliament and entered into force in August 2019, with Member States required to comply within 3 years (European Parliament, 2019c; European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2019).

Some have warned that the final negotiated agreement represents a step back from the original proposed directive. For example, they have pointed to the removal of minimum pay levels for those taking parental leave and carers' leave, and the fact that access to some forms of leave is dependent on a minimum length of ser-

⁽³³⁾ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0705\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0705(01)).

⁽³⁴⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes_en.

⁽³⁵⁾ The proposed legal instrument builds on a number of policy instruments and pieces of legislation in this area, such as amending Directive 2010/18/EU on parental leave and following the withdrawal of the 2008 proposal to revise Council Directive 92/85/EEC on pregnant workers. See European Commission (2010f); European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (n.d.).

⁽³⁶⁾ See <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en>.

vice with an employer (Coface Families Europe, 2019; European Public Service Union, 2019). It is also worth noting that the directive stemmed — in part — from Member States' refusal to adopt a revised Maternity Leave Directive, which would have increased the levels of guaranteed maternity leave, with a higher rate of minimum pay (European Commission, 2015i).

EU closer to acceding to the Istanbul Convention, despite some national resistance

Ending all forms of violence against women is a priority for the EU. In 2011, the adoption of the Anti-trafficking Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011a) initiated binding legislation to protect victims and to prevent and prosecute trafficking. In 2012, minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, including violence against women, were established through the Victims' Rights Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2012). On a similar note, the European Protection Order Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011b) and Regulation EU (No) 606/2013 (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2013a) further developed protection mechanisms for the victims of crime in the EU. According to the implementation assessment reports, the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive and European Protection Order Directive helped address some aspects of violence against women and girls, even though there remain important limitations (EIGE, 2017e; European Parliament, 2017a, 2018h).

Since 2013, the EU has taken important steps towards ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (Istanbul Convention). The decisions⁽³⁷⁾ adopted by the Council of the EU in 2017 effectively ensured the signature of the convention by the EU.

For the convention to become fully binding, the EU must now ratify it. Discussions to achieve this are already under way in the European Commission and the Council (European Parliament, 2019b). At national level, a majority of EU Member States (21 as of May 2019) have already ratified the Istanbul Convention⁽³⁸⁾. However, several Member States (such as Bulgaria, Czechia and Slovakia) have shown increasing resistance to ratifying the convention, arguing that the convention goes against their countries' traditional family structures and cultures (European Parliament, 2018a).

Proposal to improve gender balance in corporate decision-making blocked at Member State level

In 2012, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a directive to improve the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (European Parliament, 2018e). The proposal aimed to achieve a minimum of 40 % of non-executive members of the under-represented sex (typically women) on company boards or 33 % for all types of directors in the EU.

Despite efforts from the European Commission and some Member States to make progress, the negotiations continue to be blocked at the Council of the EU. Some Member States believed that binding measures at EU level were not the best way to pursue gender balance within economic decision-making, instead preferring national or non-binding measures (European Parliament, 2018e). This was despite the European Parliament's and several Member States' strong support for the proposal, and evidence linking legislative action to faster improvements in gender balance in decision-making (European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, 2016).

⁽³⁷⁾ Council Decision 2017/865/EU and Council Decision 2017/866/EU.

⁽³⁸⁾ Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden (see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures>, accessed 9 May 2019).

1.3. Policy developments and trends

EU remains committed to international agenda for gender equality

The EU has long demonstrated its dedication to gender equality through its international commitments. Firstly, the EU committed to the BPfA soon after it was adopted in 1995. Since then, successive presidencies of the Council of the EU have developed a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators to help monitor the EU's progress in reaching the objectives of the BPfA (EIGE, 2018a). The Council has also published periodic conclusions that provide recommendations and measure progress in the critical areas of concern of the BPfA ⁽³⁹⁾.

In addition, all EU Member States have ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW; see Section 2.9 below for more detail) ⁽⁴⁰⁾, the central and most comprehensive binding international law document on human rights of women (United Nations, 2018c). As a result, states submit regular reports to the CEDAW Committee that contain detailed information about legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures that have been undertaken to implement CEDAW.

More recently, the EU has committed to pursuing the SDGs within its external and internal policies (European Commission, n.d.-a). These were outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). One SDG is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, while several other SDGs are linked to gender equality ⁽⁴¹⁾.

The UN 2030 Agenda highlights the interlinkages between sustainable development and gender equality, and reaffirms the necessity of follow-up to the BPfA. Acknowledging this, the Council of the EU called on the Commission and Member States to ensure that the EU harmonises its follow-up to the BPfA with its follow-up to the UN 2030 Agenda (Council of the European Union, 2016a).

In the field of external activities, the EU is also bound by various international commitments, among which UN Security Council Resolution 1325 represents the most significant framework for progress on gender equality and the rights and empowerment of girls and women in EU external actions (see Sections 1.4 and 2.5 for further details).

Gender equality is one of the key principles in creating a more 'social' Europe

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the Commission emphasised the need to achieve 'a social triple-A rating' by strengthening the focus on social inclusion and protection in the European policy agenda (Juncker, 2014). One of most significant signs of this shift was the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017, which aims to set out 'new and more effective rights for citizens' ⁽⁴²⁾. Gender equality and equal opportunities are among the standalone key principles of the pillar and feature in several other of its priorities (see Section 1.4 for more details).

The pillar includes the 'New Start' initiative of the European Commission, to overcome work-life balance challenges experienced by working parents and carers. In addition to legislative measures (such as the WLB Directive), the ini-

⁽³⁹⁾ Since 2013, the Council of the EU has adopted conclusions in the areas of women and the media (Council of the European Union, 2013a), the Beijing + 20 review (Council of the European Union, 2014b), gender equality in decision-making (Council of the European Union, 2015c), women and poverty (Council of the European Union, 2016d) and horizontal gender segregation in education and employment (Council of the European Union, 2017b).

⁽⁴⁰⁾ For more detail on when the convention was signed and ratified by each Member State, please visit: https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=_en.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Notably SDGs dedicated to poverty, quality education, decent work and economic growth, and reduced inequalities.

⁽⁴²⁾ Quoted from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en

tiative covers non-legislative measures, such as support to Member States in achieving gender balance in the use of family-related leave entitlements, improving the availability of affordable and high-quality care for children and other dependents, and better protection against discrimination and dismissal for parents.

No post-2015 Gender Equality Strategy: a major setback for the EU's political action

The current European Commission policy document on gender equality, *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* (European Commission, 2015i), maintains the five broad areas for action outlined in the previous *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men, 2010-2015* (European Commission, 2010g), with 30 key actions planned across them⁽⁴³⁾. Several serious limitations can be noted.

1. The policy document was published as a staff working document of the Commission. This was a significant downgrade compared with the previous strategy (European Parliament, 2016g), which had the status of a communication and was considered a type of soft law (44) (Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2017). Thus, the engagement has less weight within the EU policy agenda than in the past, reflecting 'a slowdown in political action for gender equality at EU level over the last decade' highlighted by both the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2015d) and CSOs⁽⁴⁵⁾ (European Women's Lobby, 2015). The downgrade occurred despite calls by the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Women's Lobby for a separate post-2015 strategy for gender equality (Council of the European Union, 2016a; European Parliament, 2015d; European Women's Lobby, 2015). It has been described as a 'major set-back' and the 'end of gender equality policy programmes as previously known' (Ahrens,

2018, page 1), drawing criticism from both the European Parliament (2016g) and Member States (Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2017).

2. Key weaknesses identified in the 2010-2015 strategy do not appear to have been addressed in the strategic engagement. For example, despite recommendations by the Council of the European Union (2016a), no thorough assessment of the gender impact of welfare cuts was undertaken, nor was any focus placed on the role of the media in fighting gender stereotyping. The European Parliament has also highlighted that the post-2015 gender equality strategic document needs to address multiple discrimination (European Parliament, 2015d, 2017f) and to adopt concrete benchmarks to measure progress (European Parliament, 2016g).
3. There is no dedicated budget for pursuing the objectives of the strategic engagement, as highlighted by the European Parliament (2016g). Therefore, resources from EU funding programmes cannot be directly channelled to specific activities within the strategic engagement (Jacquot, 2017) (45). The lack of targeted funding is a longer-term issue facing EU-level gender equality policies (ibid.).

Beyond the strategic engagement, the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) was adopted in 2011 by the Council of the EU to enhance the links between the EU commitments to gender equality and the Europe 2020 strategy. The pact called for strengthening of the commitments to gender equality in the context of the financial crisis and highlighted the role of social partners and enterprises in advancing gender equality in the workplace. It also called for a gender perspective to be included in various instruments used in the European Semester.

⁽⁴³⁾ The five areas are (1) equal economic independence for women and men; (2) equal pay for work of equal value; (3) equality in decision-making; (4) dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence; and (5) promoting gender equality beyond the EU.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Requiring approval both by the European Parliament and by the Council of the EU.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Although they can be indirectly used to pursue gender-related objectives.

The European Commission adopts an action plan to tackle the gender pay gap

Despite the lack of a post-2015 strategy on gender equality, the European Commission has adopted the EU action plan 2017-2019: Tackling the gender pay gap (European Commission, 2017c). The plan highlights the stagnation of the gender pay gap in the EU since 2012 and proposes a number of policy priorities and actions to address it.

Although this effort was acknowledged by the European Economic and Social Committee (2018a), the committee pointed out that all the identified priority areas merit further attention and that stronger measures are needed to combat labour market segregation. Its opinion also called for stronger financial investment from the EU to implement the action plan.

1.4. Trends in gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a fundamental element of EU gender equality policies. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination (EIGE, 2016f). The European Commission 'committed itself to a "dual approach" towards realising gender equality, which involves both mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and implementing specific measures to eliminate, prevent or remedy gender inequalities. Both approaches go hand in hand, and one cannot replace the other' ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

The analysis in this section provides an assessment of the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Semester, the EU budget, the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) and some other relevant EU funds and programmes. It then proceeds to examine how gender is mainstreamed within the social inclu-

sion and protection processes of the EU, which have come under increased scrutiny during the recent financial crisis and its aftermath. Finally, the approach to gender mainstreaming is briefly explored in a couple of selected policy areas to examine how consistently it is applied in different policy settings.

1.4.1. The Europe 2020 strategy and the European Semester

The Europe 2020 strategy represents the EU's 10-year growth strategy (European Commission, 2010b). It sets out five headline targets for 2020 in the areas of employment, research and development, climate change and energy, education, and poverty and social exclusion. The European Semester, which was introduced as part of a reform of the EU's economic governance, serves, among others, the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and Member States' progress towards its headline targets. It is an annual cycle of economic policy coordination between Member States, whereby national policies are reviewed at EU level (European Commission, n.d.-c).

Gender is not mainstreamed into the Europe 2020 strategy, which limits the gender sensitivity of its monitoring and evaluation

The Europe 2020 strategy shows a diminished focus on gender compared with its predecessor, the Lisbon strategy, with no comparable general commitment to gender mainstreaming (Jacquot, 2017). There is no gender-specific Europe 2020 target; the only brief reference to gender can be found under the employment target. There is no evidence that a comprehensive gender analysis or gender impact assessment has been undertaken, or that this has been integrated into the strategy's rationale, objectives or indicators (Jacquot, 2017).

This presents fewer opportunities to apply gender mainstreaming in the monitoring and evaluation of national policies (Jacquot, 2017). A mid-

⁽⁴⁶⁾ See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>.

term review (European Commission, 2014b) of progress towards the Europe 2020 targets did not use any gender-sensitive monitoring in its reporting, nor did it analyse the relative impacts of the strategy on women and men ⁽⁴⁷⁾. In this context, it is not surprising that only around one fifth of Member States include sex-disaggregated indicators for employment when monitoring progress towards Europe 2020 targets at national level.

More positively, in 2013, Eurostat started publishing annual progress reports on Europe 2020 ⁽⁴⁸⁾ that provide data on gender-sensitive indicators broken down by age for three of the five thematic areas: employment, education, and poverty and social exclusion. These indicators show some improvements in gender equality, such as the narrowing gender employment gap. Such improvements are difficult to attribute directly to the effects of Europe 2020, since the strategy lacks gender-specific targets.

The lack of a gender perspective in Europe 2020 also translates into limited mainstreaming of gender into the European Semester (see Table 1). Gender equality lacks visibility in the process of the European Semester at EU and national levels. At each step, for each document and for the results produced throughout the European Semester, there are entry points, tools and specific actors that can advance the introduction of a gender perspective (EIGE, 2019a).

An assessment of key instruments used in the European Semester (see Table 1) shows some

signs of improvement, such as increased gender sensitivity of the joint employment reports, whereas other changes may signal a reduction in the use of gender mainstreaming (e.g. the 2015 revision of the Employment Guidelines).

Improvements in mainstreaming gender into the European Semester are linked to the increased emphasis on the priorities of the European Pillar of Social Rights in monitoring Europe 2020 (European Commission, 2018i). Notably, the use of the Social Scoreboard in the joint employment reports has led to a greater acknowledgement of socio-economic gender inequalities and to increased use of sex-disaggregated data. Since 2015, the joint employment reports have also given Member States 'an indication of the types of policies that they can introduce or reform to improve the situation and reduce gender gaps. However, this methodology is not systematically or consistently replicated in the budgetary reviews for the CSRs (country-specific recommendations) in the European Semester' (EIGE, 2019a, page 23).

Overall, Europe 2020 and the European Semester have paid little attention to the Lisbon Treaty's gender-mainstreaming provisions, representing a setback in terms of gender mainstreaming at EU level (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016). In addition, little use has been made of gender-mainstreaming tools: there is no indication of either gender budgeting or gender impact assessments being used in the various policymaking stages of Europe 2020 and the European Semester.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Despite acknowledging that EU or national averages in relation to employment and education targets often hide very significant gender differences.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ The reports published so far can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators/europe-2020-strategy/publications>

Table 1: Gender mainstreaming within key European Semester instruments

Instrument	Purpose	Summary assessment of gender mainstreaming	Explanation of assessment
Annual Growth Survey (AGS)	Marks the start of the annual European Semester cycle. Identifies the economic and social priorities for the EU and its Member States for the year ahead (European Commission, 2010b).	Generally weak, but some improvements in recent years.	In several cases, the AGS recommendations reflect a gender dimension, although often indirectly. This appears to be a relatively recent development. For example, the 2017 AGS highlighted the need for Member States to ensure access to high-quality services and in-kind benefits, such as childcare, housing, healthcare, long-term care, education and training, as these contribute to increased labour market participation, particularly for women (European Commission, 2016d). The 2018 AGS had a similar recommendation, suggesting that work-life balance is crucial for gender equality and higher female labour market participation (European Commission, 2017b).
Alert Mechanism Report (AMR) (macroeconomic monitoring), produced in conjunction with the AGS	Scoreboard of indicators to screen Member States for economic imbalances needing action.	Weak, although some aspects of macroeconomic monitoring present challenges for gender-sensitive monitoring due to the nature of the monitored indicators ⁽⁴⁹⁾ .	The AMR does not publish relevant gender information. Only the 2016-2018 reports contained several ad hoc references to women's labour market participation, but reporting on this is weak.
Joint Employment Report (JER) — part of the AGS package launching the European Semester Linked instruments: Social Scoreboard and European Pillar of Social Rights	JER provides an annual overview of the main EU employment and social developments. Social Scoreboard monitors Member State performance in relation to the European Pillar of Social Rights, with 14 headline indicators on employment and social trends (European Commission, 2018m).	Strong in the JER and potentially getting stronger in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Social Scoreboard.	The JER makes positive efforts to incorporate gender-sensitive monitoring across its main areas, providing relevant data disaggregated by sex. For instance, it presents data on employment and education of women and men, their poverty rates and the gender pay gap. In 2018, the JER presented data derived from the Social Scoreboard, which is analysed with a gender breakdown (for all indicators where possible). The gender-mainstreaming approach has become more evident in recent years. In 2018 the JER also began to monitor Member State performance in relation to the European Pillar of Social Rights.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ However, note that the European Council (2011) reiterates that the Commission and the European Council are invited to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the AGS.

Instrument	Purpose	Summary assessment of gender mainstreaming	Explanation of assessment
Employment guidelines	Present common priorities and targets for national employment policies and provide the basis for country-specific recommendations (CSRs).	Strong in the period 2010-2014, but weaker since 2015, following revision of the guidelines.	Guidelines from 2010 to 2014 incorporated a cross-cutting gender dimension on a wide range of issues, including labour market participation, inactivity, equal pay, work-life balance policies, lifelong learning and social inclusion policies (Council of the European Union, 2010). In 2015, revised integrated guidelines were adopted and amended in 2018 to align with the European Pillar of Social Rights. However, since 2015, gender-specific policy objectives have been mentioned in only one of the guidelines (women's labour market participation and ensuring equal pay for equal work). Gender-mainstreaming elements in other guidelines, such as those on lifelong learning and on poverty and social exclusion, have been lost.
European Semester country-specific recommendations (CSRs) For this analysis, 81 CSRs from 2016 to 2018 (inclusive) covering 27 Member States ⁽⁵⁰⁾ were assessed for mention of gender equality issues and the themes covered (see Annex 4 — Country-specific recommendations of the European Semester)	Provided by the European Commission to each Member State on an annual basis to set employment and social priorities for the coming 12-18 months.	Some improvements to the level of gender coverage in reports, but reduced coverage in the CSRs themselves.	In 2016-2018 the consideration of gender-specific issues in the CSR reports increased. However, the increased coverage of gender issues has not translated into a higher number of concrete recommendations for Member States ⁽⁵¹⁾ . Looking at the themes in gender-related CSRs, the labour market participation of women appears most frequently, followed by recommendations related to childcare provision.
European Semester country reports (prepared by the European Commission) ⁽⁵²⁾	These reports form part of the European Semester analysis phase. They cover significant economic and social issues and assess the extent to which each country has addressed the previous year's CSRs.	The reports have introduced information on the European Pillar of Social Rights and mainstreaming of its priorities. Very limited differences are observed in the indicators covered by the 2018 country reports ⁽⁵³⁾ compared with 2017.	The indicators covered have not changed much despite the inclusion of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as the pillar itself remains relatively focused on women's labour market participation. The presentation of indicators sometimes varies between country reports, with some including more gender-relevant indicators than others, and some reporting on other indicators, such as women at risk of poverty.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Greece was excluded from the analysis, as it does not receive standard CSRs. Keyword searches were performed on all CSRs. The terms 'gender', 'women', 'men', 'girls' and 'boys' were searched in all reports and results were recorded to indicate if the term was mentioned, and in what context.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Note, however, that because of improvements in the economy there may have been fewer CSRs issued overall.

⁽⁵²⁾ For example, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-european-semester-country-reports_en.

⁽⁵³⁾ The 2018 indicators were as follows: unadjusted gender pay gap; likelihood of employment by gender; gender differences in educational attainment; gender differences in early school-leaving rates; gender employment gap; gender gap in part-time employment (with and without children); gender differences in employment rate of non-EU-born persons; employment rate of women; and proportion of women at risk of poverty. The 2017 indicators were as follows: gender pay gap; gender pension gap; employment rate of women; gender differences in employment rate of non-EU-born persons; gender employment gap; gender gap in part-time employment; tertiary education attainment rate by sex.

1.4.2. EU financial resources

The EU's budget remains gender-blind

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) has significant capacity to promote gender equality as a funding priority across all EU financial resources. However, neither the 2013 Council Regulation (European Council, 2013) laying down the multiannual financial framework between 2014 and 2020 nor the 2017 amendment to the regulation (European Council, 2017) prioritises gender concerns in its general provisions, nor is gender mentioned in the articles relating to special instruments, revision or implementation of the MFF. Similarly, the 2016 mid-term review on MFF 2014-2020 contained no gender dimension (European Commission, 2016e). According to a 2015 report by the European Commission, gender budgeting is not applied systematically to the EU general budget. If not addressed, this omission could limit systematic EU action on gender equality (European Commission, 2015c).

The proposals for the post-2020 regulations show an even lower level of ambition in supporting gender equality objectives than those of MFFs 2014-2020 and 2007-2013 (EIGE, 2019a). The understanding of and approach to gender mainstreaming are — again — based on the definition of gender equality as a horizontal principle, laying down a rather general set of requirements for implementing gender mainstreaming, with no standalone quantitative target. In addition, the programming cycle is not required to apply explicit procedures to handle gender equality (EIGE, 2019a).

European Structural Investment Funds are the largest financial resources for gender equality, even though estimates show that less than 1 % of these funds are allocated for this purpose

The European Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* envisaged that around EUR 5.85 billion would be spent on gender equality measures in the 2014-2020 period under ESIF, out of the total allocation of EUR 454 billion for these funds (European Com-

mission, 2015e). This amount represents 1.28 % of the total ESIF allocation. EUR 4.6 billion were to be allocated for gender equality measures under the ESF, which represents 5.3 % of all ESF funding for the programming period. This is an increase compared with the 2007-2013 programming period, when 3.4 % of total ESF resources were allocated to actions directly targeting gender equality. However, it is important to bear in mind that only one investment priority (equality between men and women in all areas, including access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and promotion of equal pay for equal work) directly addresses the promotion of gender equality (European Parliament, 2016k). A further EUR 1.25 billion will be spent through the European Regional Development Fund, whose resources are specifically intended to improve childcare infrastructure.

Beyond the European Commission's strategic engagement estimates, it is difficult to track and monitor the actual resource allocation to specific gender equality actions within ESIF because the publicly available data on budgetary allocations do not include this information. Grouping ESIF categories of intervention according to their relevance to gender equality objectives allows a general estimate of the potential of structural programmes to support gender equality. Using 2018 data, EIGE has estimated that less than 1 % of ESIF has been set aside for the promotion of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is treated as a theme that has little impact on the actual content of funding programmes. These findings suggest that, in order to properly implement the dual approach, it is necessary to reflect the support to gender equality objectives in the budgetary distribution of ESIF interventions (EIGE, 2019a).

The comparison of fund allocations for some other policy areas is instructive. For example, about 25 % of the ESIF budget — or more than EUR 114 billion — has been earmarked for climate- and environment-related investments over the 2014-2020 period. Around 20 % of the ESF budget was earmarked for social inclusion and poverty reduction, which represents about 4.1 % of the total 2014-2020 ESIF budget (EIGE, 2019a).

Examples of funding for gender equality available from other sources

From 2014 to 2020, a budget of EUR 61.75 million has been allocated to promote awareness and implement gender equality in research and innovation under the 'Science with and for society' programme of Horizon 2020. Funding allocated for these initiatives has been generally consistent since 2014, averaging about EUR 10 million per year (slightly less for 2018-2020) (European Commission, 2016i, 2018k).

Some financial resources for gender equality were also allocated under the rights, equality and citizenship programme 2014-2020. The amount allocated to the programme's two objectives that specifically encompass gender equality (equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming; and the prevention of violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk) represents approximately 35 % of the total EUR 440 million available under rights, equality and citizenship funds in 2014-2020.

Gender mainstreaming has limited impact on the content of European Structural and Investment Funds programmes

EIGE conducted a gender assessment of ESIF 2014-2020 programmes in 11 Member States⁽⁵⁴⁾ to analyse how the dual approach to gender equality is reflected in current ESIF implementation.

Gender mainstreaming and references to gender equality objectives are often highlighted only in the chapter on 'horizontal themes', without further impact on the content of programmes (EIGE, 2019a). Information about gender gaps and inequalities, along with means of addressing these gaps, is insufficient. Gender-specific indicators and sex-disaggregated data are largely missing

from many operational programmes (with the exception of the ESF). Within the full project cycle, most focus is put on gender equality in the analysis and planning phase, with less attention paid to gender in the implementation and monitoring phase. Evaluation reports provide little information on gender equality. The findings highlight a clear need for more detailed and systematic requirements on gender mainstreaming and gender equality within ESIF programmes. They also point to the necessity for more detailed mandatory reporting on the mainstreaming of gender in those programmes (ibid.).

1.4.3. Social inclusion and protection

This subsection reflects on how gender has been mainstreamed in recent key EU instruments on social inclusion and social protection: the European Pillar of Social Rights and the social investment package (SIP). It also examines the application of gender mainstreaming in two EU-level strategies aimed at specific groups in potentially vulnerable situations (Roma communities and people with disabilities) and the monitoring of their progress in recent years.

Gender equality is a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights, but is not considered systematically in the monitoring of the pillar

The European Pillar of Social Rights is an ambitious strategy to realise 'new and more effective rights for citizens' (European Commission, 2017e), proclaimed in 2017. The pillar outlines 20 key principles structured around three categories: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and social protection and inclusion. The ways to monitor the pillar, together with a new Social Scoreboard established for this purpose, were outlined in a recent communication from the European Commission (2018n).

Gender equality is considered throughout the pillar policy cycle, yet efforts to prioritise gender have not been systematic. Although one key

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Finland and Sweden.

principle focuses on gender equality and three others (on equal opportunities, work–life balance, and old-age income and pensions) mention it, there is no reference in the pillar itself or the 2018 communication to the need for gender mainstreaming in monitoring efforts (European Commission, 2017e). The Social Scoreboard reveals a promising number of monitoring indicators that can be disaggregated by sex, for example in the areas of education, skills and lifelong learning; living conditions and poverty; and labour force structure (see Annex 3 — Social Scoreboard indicators used to monitor the European Pillar of Social Rights for full analysis). However, for other indicators this disaggregation is still missing.

Gender mainstreaming is sporadic in the social investment package, with stronger gender focus on investing in children

The SIP is a package of recommendations to tackle poverty and social exclusion (Eurofound, 2013), established by a SIP 2013 communication (European Commission, 2013f). It offers guidance to Member States on social investment policies and on the efficient use of ESF to support these.

The SIP 2013 communication suggests in a short section that Member States should address the gender dimension⁽⁵⁵⁾ of social investment policies, but entirely omits gender equality from its guidelines for Member States. Several other documents accompanying the SIP, including staff working documents (European Commission, 2013g, 2013h) and policy roadmaps (European Commission, 2013d, 2015f), vary in the extent to which they incorporate a gender dimension or show evidence of gender mainstreaming. For example, the policy roadmaps include among their priority objectives the need to address the impact of gender pay and activity gaps on

women’s pension entitlements, but the gender focus weakens in the more recent roadmap.

Finally, the SIP was accompanied by a recommendation on ‘Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage’ (European Commission, 2013e). Importantly, this recommendation makes explicit reference to the fact that fighting child poverty and social exclusion must be underpinned by gender mainstreaming. In addition, its ‘indicator-based monitoring framework’ suggests several indicators that should be broken down by sex⁽⁵⁶⁾ and could provide important information not yet reflected in the Social Scoreboard⁽⁵⁷⁾.

Roma women not in the focus of the EU framework for Roma integration

The EU framework for national Roma integration strategies (NRIS) (European Commission, 2011a) includes ‘awareness of the gender dimension’ in the 10 common basic principles of Roma inclusion, but does not otherwise focus on it. This dimension is addressed more thoroughly in the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, which specifically encourages policy measures to protect Roma children and women (Council of the European Union, 2013b).

Despite gender equality featuring as a basic principle, the recent documents that assess the implementation of the EU framework for NRIS (European Commission, 2014h, 2015g, 2016c) do not explicitly integrate a gender perspective in their reporting⁽⁵⁸⁾. The most recent mid-term evaluation of the EU framework for NRIS (European Commission, 2018c) found that ‘the EU framework had limited capacity to deal with diversity among Roma. The gender dimension was found to be

⁽⁵⁵⁾ This mentions, for example, issues relating to women’s labour market activity, women’s over-representation in part-time work, the gender pay gap and the risk of inequality when one comes from a disadvantaged or ethnic minority background.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Those indicators are part-time employment due to care responsibilities; early school education; young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) rate; early leavers from education and training; obesity; regular smokers; mental health; and causes of death of young people — suicide.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ This would allow physical and mental health indicators to accommodate gender differences.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ The 2014 and 2015 reports refer to gender indirectly, while the 2016 document mentions the ‘multiple discrimination of Roma women’ and the 10 Member States that have reported implementing a measure in that area: Czechia, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden.

weak, with only some NRIS taking into account the specific vulnerabilities of women' (European Commission, 2018g, page 10).

Gender equality not visible in the European disability strategy

The European disability strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010d) identifies eight key areas for joint action between the EU and the Member States⁽⁵⁹⁾. It calls for greater awareness-raising, consideration of funding, improvement of statistical data and ensuring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2007).

The strategy makes minimal reference to the intersection between gender and disabilities or to gender equality, except for a brief mention in the areas of health and employment⁽⁶⁰⁾. The 2017 progress report on the European disability strategy (European Commission, 2017i) has no gender focus, nor is there any indication that a gender-mainstreaming approach was applied when collecting evidence on the EU situation. However, the progress report suggests that the EU will mainstream a disability perspective in its forthcoming gender equality strategy (ibid.).

1.4.4. Gender mainstreaming in selected policy areas

This section presents an analysis of gender mainstreaming in a selection of policy areas that have either been highly prominent in recent years or shown interesting initiatives in gender mainstreaming and/or specific gender equality actions, such as the European External Action Service (EEAS) gender action plan.

Inconsistent approach to mainstreaming gender into digitalisation, security and migration policy

The European Commission's efforts to implement a gender-mainstreaming approach in digitalisation, security and migration have been fragmented (European Parliament, 2016e). For security and migration, a 2014 communication on future political priorities for home affairs policies (European Commission, 2014c) highlighted the need to ensure gender balance and address the employment gap for migrant women, particularly among the most vulnerable ones. However, the strategic plan for 2016-2020 of the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs lacks a gender perspective and does not reflect the priorities related to gender equality outlined in the 2014 communication.

The European agenda on security (European Commission, 2015k) outlines the EU's approach to internal security. References to women and gender are altogether missing from this document. It is constructed as entirely gender neutral and overlooks the asymmetrical impact of security policies on different groups of women and men.

In the area of digitalisation, the European Commission's 2010 digital agenda for Europe contains limited considerations of gender, noting a need to promote greater participation in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector among women (European Commission, 2010c). Following up on this commitment, the Commission planned a number of actions to enhance women's participation in the digital sector⁽⁶¹⁾ between 2018 and 2020. It is worth noting that neither the 2015 communication on 'A digital single market strategy for Europe' nor its 2017 mid-term review displays an explicit gender perspective.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Accessibility; participation; equality; employment; education; social protection; health, including recognition of gender-based health needs; and international action.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ A gender perspective is mentioned only in relation to gender-based health needs, and the need to address the situations of women and men with disabilities is referenced in relation to employment.

⁽⁶¹⁾ These focus on challenging stereotypes; promoting digital skills and education; and encouraging a greater number of female entrepreneurs (European Commission, 2018r).

Deeper gender perspective present in EU's policies on research and innovation, external action and sports

EU's research and innovation policy framework and funding programmes adopt a strong gender perspective. A key policy priority of the unified European Research Area is to achieve 'gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research' (European Commission, 2012a), requiring Member States to tackle gender inequality among researchers and calling on organisations and the Commission to do likewise. The European Research Area's 2016 national action plans show significant improvements in fostering gender equality, but the pace of change is still considered slow and scattered across countries, highlighting the need for more joint and systematic efforts (European Commission, 2016g). To encourage these efforts, a tool called Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) was developed and translated into all EU languages to help research and academic institutions assess their status and develop gender equality plans (EIGE, 2016a).

Three key objectives underpin the gender equality strategy of Horizon 2020, the EU's largest research and innovation programme: fostering gender balance in research teams; ensuring gender balance in decision-making; and integrating the gender dimension into the content of research and innovation (European Commission, n.d.-f). Although these are implemented across many areas of the programme ⁽⁶²⁾, the Horizon 2020 interim evaluation does not report on the potential gender impact of this progress (European Commission, 2018f).

The EU focuses heavily on mainstreaming gender throughout its external activities. The strategic plan 2016-2020 for international development and cooperation makes welcome efforts to address multiple policy dimensions of gender equality ⁽⁶³⁾ and suggests that specific budgets be allocated for these activities. The second gender action plan (2016-2020) provides the monitoring and accountability framework used to measure progress on gender equality and the rights and empowerment of girls and women in EU external actions (European Commission, 2015d). Notably, it establishes a target to mainstream gender actions in 85 % of all the EU's new external action initiatives by 2020.

Annual implementation reports monitor, in detail, the progress achieved in the implementation of the second gender action plan. In 2017, the number of initiatives mainstreaming gender continued to rise, from 59 % in 2016 to 66 % in 2017, heading towards the goal of 85 % (European Commission, 2017d).

Significant positive developments are also visible in the area of sports. In contrast to the previous, gender-blind, work plan, the EU's 2014-2017 and 2017-2020 work plans for sports consider the promotion of gender equality in sports one of their guiding principles (Council of the European Union, 2017g). The 2014 Council conclusions on gender equality in sports (Council of the European Union, 2014a; see also Council of the European Union, 2017e) recognise that specific measures and gender mainstreaming are required — alongside legislation — to ensure that gender equality is encouraged in sports, and they outline measures for relevant stakeholders to undertake.

⁽⁶²⁾ For instance by grant beneficiaries committing to promoting equal opportunities and balanced participation of women and men at all levels in research and innovation teams and management structures.

⁽⁶³⁾ Including economy, power and decision-making, conflict and peacebuilding, social inclusion, education and health

2. Policies and developments in the 12 critical areas of concern in the EU since 2013

This chapter provides an overview of the main challenges, EU policy developments and trends in the BPfA's 12 areas of concern since 2013. Each area is analysed as follows:

- the first subsection contextualises the topic in question and briefly describes the main challenges persisting and emerging in the field;
- the second subsection briefly presents the major EU policy developments in the area;
- the third subsection analyses in detail the key challenges and trends outlined in the first.

Further information on the indicators adopted to monitor the progress in the 12 areas of critical concern of the BPfA is integrated in Annexes 5 and 6. Recommendations to address identified challenges are provided in Chapter 3.

2.1. Women and poverty (BPfA Area A)

2.1.1. Setting the scope

The basic concept of poverty refers to a lack of resources to afford everyday necessities and, on

a global scale, it is typically measured in absolute terms⁽⁶⁴⁾. In Europe, definitions of poverty have progressively evolved to take into account the social and relative aspects of poverty as well. They refer to exclusion from a 'minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State concerned'⁽⁶⁵⁾ and clarify that the (lack of) resources that define poverty are not only financial but also 'material, social and cultural' (Council of the European Communities, 1975, 1985).

In line with this definition, the currently preferred indicator to measure poverty in the EU is the at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) rate. It is a composite indicator that measures the number of people affected by one or more of the following three aspects of poverty: low income (monetary poverty), the inability to afford key living expenses (severe material deprivation)⁽⁶⁶⁾ and exclusion from the labour market (i.e. living in a household with low work intensity)⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Although EU Member States are among the most prosperous in the world⁽⁶⁸⁾, more than a fifth of the EU population remains at risk of poverty or social exclusion⁽⁶⁹⁾. On average, women tend to be slightly more at risk than men, although both the rates and gender gaps vary greatly between Member States.

A range of economic gender inequalities increase the risk of exposure to poverty and social exclusion. Women have lower rates of

⁽⁶⁴⁾ In relation to the World Bank's poverty line of USD 1.90 per day, see for example <http://www.worldbank.org/en/understanding-poverty>.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Making poverty relative to the local society rather than absolute.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Severe material deprivation refers to the inability to afford at least four of nine items considered desirable or necessary to lead an adequate life. See <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=tespm030>

⁽⁶⁷⁾ A household with very low work intensity is one in which the members of working age worked less than 20 % of their total work potential in the year. See https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Persons_living_in_households_with_low_work_intensity.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ According to the Legatum Prosperity Index (<https://www.prosperity.com/rankings>), EU Member States account for 13 of the 20 most prosperous countries in the world and all apart from Greece (ranked 52) are in the top 50.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_peps01).

participation in the labour market ⁽⁷⁰⁾ and they tend to work fewer hours ⁽⁷¹⁾, often in occupations that are relatively low-paid and precarious (EIGE, 2017g). As a consequence, they are more often at the bottom of the income distribution, resulting in stubbornly persistent gender pay gaps ⁽⁷²⁾. Such income disadvantages affect the access to resources over the life course. Many older women are forced to survive on inadequate pensions because pension systems assume that contributions will be made throughout a working life and are insufficiently flexible to compensate for interrupted or part-time careers (European Commission, 2018o).

It is also evident that some inequalities are much larger within groups of the same gender (such as pay inequality between low-paid and high-paid women) than between women and men ⁽⁷³⁾. This calls for a better understanding of intersections between gender and other characteristics to understand who the women most at risk of poverty or social exclusion are. Depending on the context, intersections may include ethnicity, age, disability, migration status, socioeconomic status and so on.

Reasons for the above inequalities are numerous, including unequal resource allocation within the household; women's continued role as the primary providers of care and the consequent pressures to reconcile work and family life; and social norms (EIGE, 2016e). They can often be traced back to educational choice and school policies, outlining the cumulative impact of disadvantage and its life-cycle dimension (EIGE, 2017g).

Typically, encouraging more people into work and reducing the barriers to labour market entry (e.g. by providing more childcare facilities) are high on the priority list of anti-poverty strategies. Such strategies often face two challenges. One results from increased work polarisation between households: employment

increases have often been markedly smaller for less-educated women from certain household types, such as lone parents or no-earner couples (Gregg et al., 2010). The other challenge is grounded in the fact that paid work alone may not be sufficient to avoid poverty, if it is poorly paid and of low quality. Especially in the aftermath of the financial crisis, deregulation of working conditions has raised concerns about worsening quality and remuneration of work, and the negative consequences for in-work poverty (EIGE, 2016e; Eurofound, 2017; European Parliament, 2016h).

At the same time, redistribution through the welfare system plays a vital and complementary role in tackling poverty. Importantly, there are still flaws in the design of welfare systems that limit their effectiveness in tackling gender challenges in relation to poverty, and these have become painfully clear in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis (Cantillon et al., 2017; Leventi et al., 2019). Although the crisis was originally described as a 'mancession', in the longer run it has had more profound effects on women in many countries due to the austerity measures adopted as a consequence (Perrons, 2015; Rubery, 2015; see Section 2.6 below for more detailed analysis).

Finally, it must be highlighted that measurement of poverty — and its gender dimension in particular — is complex and requires a more careful examination of the social and economic relations within households. Crucially, the available data on monetary poverty are based on household income; this means that no account is taken of the intra-household distribution of resources, and the income of a household is often considered to be shared equally between its (adult) members. Given that in many families resources are not shared equally and that men still tend to have more paid work and earn more than women, it is likely that current data underestimate the poverty gender gap (see, for example, Piccoli, 2017).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_ergaed).

⁽⁷¹⁾ Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_epgaed).

⁽⁷²⁾ Eurostat (sdg_05_20).

⁽⁷³⁾ Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_di11).

2.1.2. EU policy developments

The EU has limited competence to intervene directly in anti-poverty initiatives but nevertheless has a vital role in guiding and coordinating Member State policies through the open method of coordination ⁽⁷⁴⁾ on social protection and social inclusion. It also provides financial support to help Member States implement agreed social objectives, in particular through the European Social Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

Although the Europe 2020 strategy made poverty reduction a headline target, it did not directly acknowledge the gender dimension of poverty (European Commission, 2010b). To some extent this omission was addressed in 2013 when the Commission launched the SIP, providing Member States with guidance on EU funds available for social policy reforms that could contribute towards reaching the 2020 targets (see Section 1.4 for more details).

Driven at least in part by the negligible progress towards the Europe 2020 strategy's poverty reduction target, both the Council of the EU and the European Parliament focused on poverty in 2015/16 and emphasised the gender perspective from several angles. Specifically, the Council highlighted labour market inequalities as a key driver of poverty risks, and called on the Commission and Member States to ensure adequate social protection and to develop economic and social policies that complement anti-poverty strategies (Council of the European Union, 2016b). Considering the risks of intergenerational transmission of poverty, the Parliament noted the vital importance of tackling women's poverty as a means of reducing child poverty. It recommended enhancing social support for children, and for parents who are unemployed or facing in-work poverty, and strengthening maternity and paternity rights (European Parliament, 2015c).

Considering the impact of increases in household costs on poverty levels, the Parliament reiterated the fact that the gender pay and pension gaps are key contributors to female poverty and are exacerbated by persistent horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market (European Parliament, 2016j). It raised concerns about the (relatively) high rates of unemployment among young women (creating an early risk of poverty) and women's homelessness (driven by rising household/housing costs). It also called for better support for lone parents (most of whom are women), particularly in relation to high childcare and energy costs (European Parliament, 2016i) ⁽⁷⁵⁾. The Parliament commented on the unacceptable levels of in-work poverty and the importance of having an adequate minimum income (European Parliament, 2016i).

More recently, in 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights established a set of equal rights for citizens to establish a framework for future legislation and policy development (European Commission, 2017e). It sets out principles of rights to equal opportunities, gender equality, decent levels of income for people both in and out of work, and access to key life services (education, health, childcare, long-term care, etc.). Crucially, in relation to poverty, it establishes a right to adequate minimum income benefits and states that women and men shall have equal opportunities to acquire pension rights. The pillar puts a renewed focus on social rights at European level but is nevertheless a voluntary rather than obligatory framework — meaning that its implementation remains uncertain (EAPN, 2017; Steinruck, 2017).

Alongside these broader measures, the EU has also recognised the need for more targeted measures for vulnerable groups. For instance, the Commission has noted greater poverty risks for older women and a need to address the pension gap (European Commission, 2018o). However, the latest pensions adequacy report

⁽⁷⁴⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/european-coop_en

⁽⁷⁵⁾ The resolution notes that '17 % of single-parent households, overwhelmingly headed by women, are unable to keep their houses warm, compared with only 10 % of the general population', and that energy poverty (although not formally defined) disproportionately affects women.

(ibid.) warns of projected decreases in pension spending that could put older people at risk of being more dependent on long and full careers and pension top-ups. Pension reforms have therefore been increasingly accompanied by anti-poverty measures, such as minimum income protection (ibid.). Nevertheless, gender differences in old-age poverty and pension entitlements remain staggeringly large (ibid.).

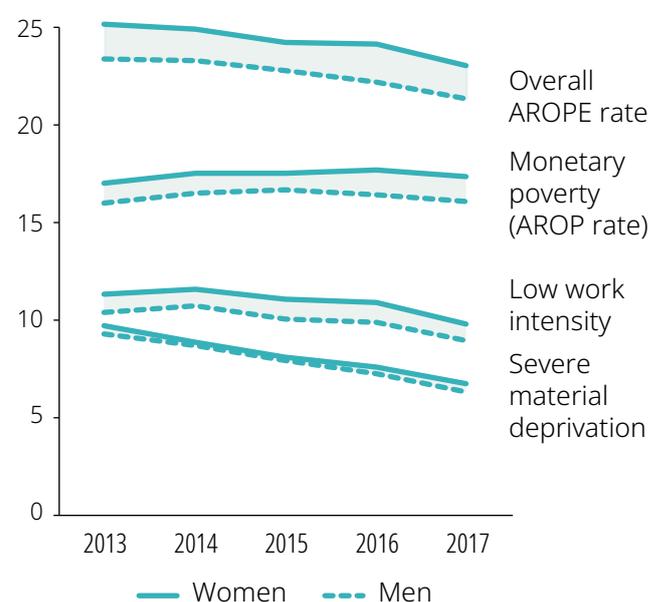
Recent actions to support migrants, refugees and minority groups have generally included a gender dimension, although not necessarily as a priority. The 2016 action plan on the integration of third-country nationals, for example, recognises the need to consider the situation of migrant women, particularly in relation to labour market integration and access to education (European Commission, 2016a). The 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration provides guidance on cross-cutting policies that include the protection of Roma children and women (Council of the European Union, 2013b), although a gender dimension is less apparent in the EU framework for national Roma integration (see Section 1.4 for more detail).

2.1.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Poverty and social exclusion persist across the EU, affecting significantly more women than men

In 2010, the European Commission's flagship Europe 2020 strategy established a 10-year target to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion (European Commission, 2010b), which now seems hardly achievable. Initially, risk of poverty grew as a result of the high levels of unemployment created by the financial crisis and the subsequent combination of austerity-related cuts in public services and welfare benefits, lower job quality (more part-time and temporary jobs) and low wage growth (European Parliament, 2016h). More recently, there has been some improvement, coinciding with a resurgence in employment growth.

Figure 1: At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) rate and its components, EU-28, (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC.

Note: Data cover women and men of all ages, except for low work intensity component, which applies only to those aged under 60.

The total number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU decreased by almost 10 million between 2013 and 2017, but more than one in five EU citizens (22.4 %) remain at risk and significantly more of these are women (59.9 million) than men (53.1 million). Indeed, the gender gap in AROPE rates (1.7 percentage points (p.p.): 23.3 % for women and 21.6 % for men) shows no sign of narrowing (Figure 1).

The risk of poverty or social exclusion ranges from 35 % or more in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania to 16 % or less in Czechia, Finland and Slovakia, with gender gaps particularly pronounced in Latvia (6.2 p.p.), Estonia (4.6 p.p.), Bulgaria, Czechia and Lithuania (all 3-4 p.p.)⁽⁷⁶⁾. This shows considerable variation in poverty and social exclusion risks between EU Member States, highlighting the importance of local circumstances for understanding differences in poverty rates and gaps.

Figure 1 shows that the recent reductions in overall poverty or social exclusion rate derive

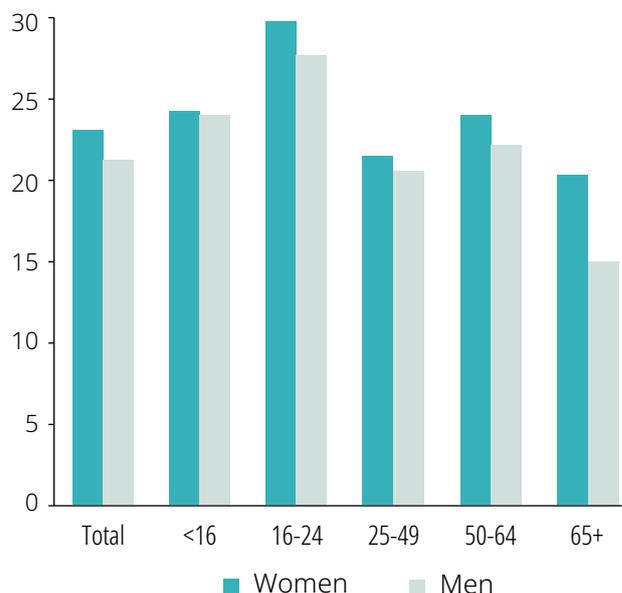
⁽⁷⁶⁾ Eurostat (ilc_peps01).

from lower numbers of people being affected by severe material deprivation and low work intensity, for both of which the gender gaps are relatively small (< 1 p.p.). On the other hand, monetary poverty, which is the major contributing component of both the overall AROPE rate and the poverty gender gap, hardly changed over the period, reflecting persistent income inequalities.

Thus, women are much more likely than men to be at the bottom of the income distribution, resulting in a gender pay gap of around 16 % in the EU ⁽⁷⁷⁾. However, inequality within groups of the same gender is much larger: the lowest-paid 20 % of women received 5.4 times less income than the highest-paid 20 %; for men the corresponding multiplier is 5.3 ⁽⁷⁸⁾. Such inequalities have dire consequences for women at the bottom of the income distribution. For example, throughout the EU-27 ⁽⁷⁹⁾, 26 % of women at risk of poverty report problems with the condition of their dwelling compared with 14 % of women not at risk (European Parliament, 2015e).

This outlines the importance of understanding who are the disadvantaged women, as poverty is likely to be more concentrated among certain groups in society that face multiple vulnerabilities. Figure 2 shows that women of all age groups are more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than men, and particularly so older women. Migrants from outside the EU are much more at risk (50.2 %) than people living in the country of their birth (21.0 %) but in this case the key factor is nationality rather than gender ⁽⁸⁰⁾. Ethnicity can also be associated with heightened vulnerability — for example, it is reported that 80 % of Roma people live below the monetary poverty threshold in their country and that only 16 % of Roma women aged 16

Figure 2: At risk of poverty or social exclusion rate by age group, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data code: ilc_peps01).

and over are in work (FRA, 2016). Finally, women with disabilities ⁽⁸¹⁾ face additional employment challenges that put them at higher risk of poverty or social exclusion; almost a third of those above 16 years old (29 %) are at risk ⁽⁸²⁾ (see Section 2.9 for more detail).

Women more often at risk of poverty because of lower levels of participation in the labour market

Figure 3 shows that economic inactivity and unemployment substantially increase the risk of poverty or social exclusion for both women and men. This is a concern for women in particular, because so many more of them are not active in the EU labour market (60.8 million women compared with 36.9 million men) ⁽⁸³⁾. However, once inactive or unem-

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Eurostat (online data code: sdg_05_20).

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Eurostat (tessi180).

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Excluding Croatia

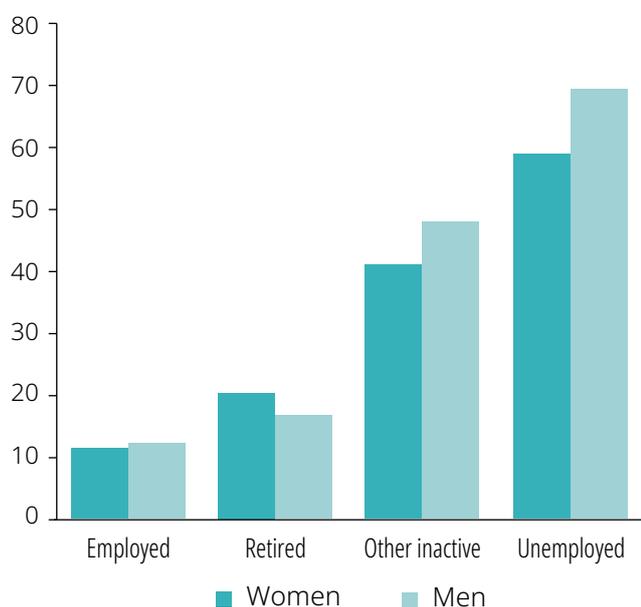
⁽⁸⁰⁾ There is relatively little difference in the at-risk rates of migrant men (49.8 %) and women (50.5 %) (Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_peps05)).

⁽⁸¹⁾ According to the 2019 Gender Equality Index, a persistent gender gap in employment puts the full-time equivalent rate of employment of women with disabilities at just 20.7 %, against 28.6 % of men with disabilities, and sees a third of women with disability economically inactive.

⁽⁸²⁾ Eurostat (hlth_dpe10).

⁽⁸³⁾ Eurostat (lfsa_pgawns). Data refer to people aged 16-64.

Figure 3: At risk of poverty or social exclusion rate by most frequent activity status, persons aged over 18, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data code: ilc_peps02).

employed, men tend to be more at risk of poverty than women ⁽⁸⁴⁾.

Women's lower level of labour market activity often stems from their disproportionate caring and other household responsibilities, as evidenced in Section 2.6 of this report. Such responsibilities are associated with unequal time use patterns, which then result in time poverty (Francavilla et al., 2013). Consideration of time poverty is key for gender-sensitive poverty-reduction strategies. Whereas the income constraints have always been recognised by policymakers in their concern for poverty, the time constraints have not; policies that focus on getting people into work need to recognise and address the greater demands most women have on their time (Goldin, 2014, 2015).

Despite concerns about levels of in-work poverty among women due to working in part-time or low-paid jobs (see Section 2.6 for detail), the gender gap in risk of poverty or social exclusion for employed people is relatively small. This is partly because the reasons behind exposure to in-work poverty differ by gender. Men are slightly more likely to face in-work poverty due to their household situation (e.g. acting as the main earner), whereas women are more likely to face in-work poverty due to the nature of their employment (e.g. part-time/low-paid/precarious work) (EIGE, 2016e). This suggests that gender interacts with other characteristics that may compensate for low-income employment of women. For example, minimum wage policies can counter the disadvantages imposed on women by their concentration in low-paid sectors and occupations (Goraus-Tańska and Lewandowski, 2018).

Lone mothers and women in no-earner households at higher risk of poverty

Adults living alone are roughly at twice the risk of poverty or social exclusion as couples without children (32.5 % versus 16.4 % in 2017) ⁽⁸⁵⁾, with little gender difference ⁽⁸⁶⁾. Having children further increases the risk for single adults but not for couples; across the EU, 47 % of lone parents were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2017 compared with 16.7 % of households with two adults and two children ⁽⁸⁷⁾.

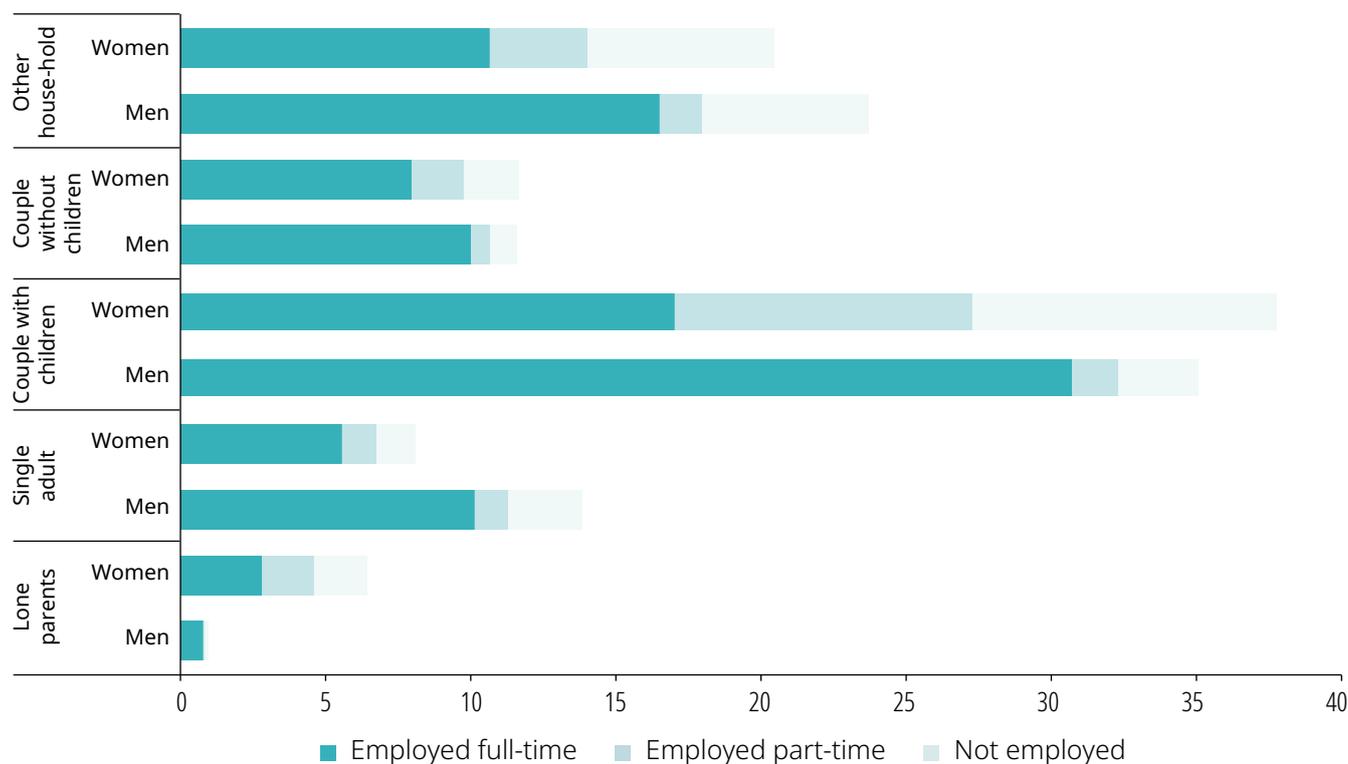
The acute risk of poverty for lone parents predominantly affects women because they more often take on the responsibility for caring for children after the breakdown of a relationship. Of the 7.5 million lone parents aged 25-49 in the EU in 2017, 6.5 million (or 87 %) were women. Furthermore, the majority of lone fathers work: 78 % full-time and 7 % part-time, just 15 % remaining out of employment. In contrast, lone mothers are nearly twice as likely not to work

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Notably, the gender gap in risk is greatest among people who were unemployed for the majority of the reference year, with 70.1 % of unemployed men at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 59.4 % of unemployed women. Since there are more unemployed men than unemployed women, this means that more unemployed men will also be affected by poverty (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (lfsa_pganws)). Data refer to people aged 16-64.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_peps03).

⁽⁸⁶⁾ 32.7 % for single women and 32.2 % for single men (Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_peps03)).

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Although the risk increased to 30.7 % for couples with three or more children (Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_peps03)).

Figure 4: Distribution of women and men aged 25-49 by type of household and work status, EU-28, 2017 (millions)

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data code: lfst_hhindws).

(29 %) and, of those who do work, more than two thirds work only part-time (44 % full-time, 29 % part-time) (see Figure 4). Case studies have shown that lone parents, and particularly women, are more likely to be affected by poor health and domestic violence, and struggle not only with childcare costs but also with transport costs (GCPH, 2014).

The household dimension plays an important role in the context of increasing polarisation of work. Over time, the prevalence of dual-earner and no-earner couples has strongly increased, with an increase in employment noted among well-educated women living with working partners. In contrast, other household types have often lost out on employment opportunities, particularly in cases where they relied solely on the employment of older men with lower educational attainment (Gregg et al., 2010). Thus, it is particularly important to sup-

port less educated women with non-working partners to enter the labour market (Razzu and Singleton, 2018).

Lower pensions result in greater risk of poverty for older women

Through the life course, the risk of poverty or social exclusion is highest among people aged 16-24 (29.0 %) and lowest among people aged 65 or more (18.2 %), who have mostly ended their working careers. Although the overall risk of poverty is lower in the older age group, reflecting accumulated wealth and the reduced costs of supporting dependent children, it is in this group that the gender gap is widest (20.6 % women at risk compared with 15.2 % men; see Figure 2). This largely reflects the income disadvantages that derive from careers punctuated or limited by interruptions and family-related care responsibilities.

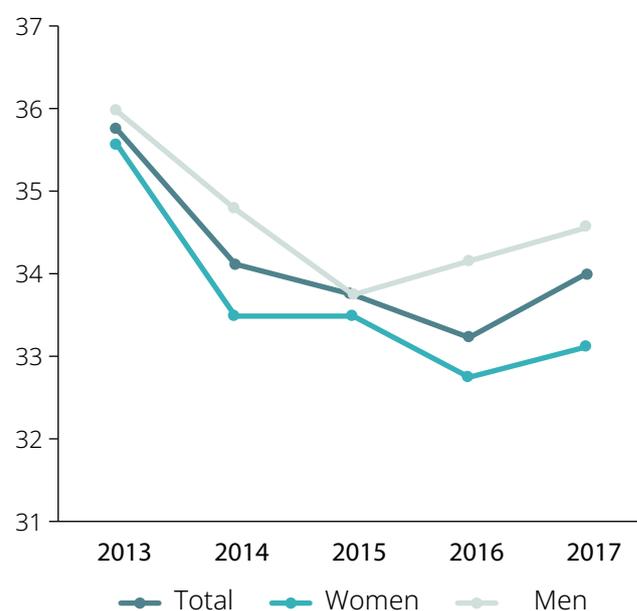
Whereas women tend to live longer than men and make up the majority of pensioners⁽⁸⁸⁾, they tend to have lower pensions (European Commission, 2018o). In 2016, the average pension of a man aged 65-79 was 37.2 % higher than that of a woman of the same age⁽⁸⁹⁾. The gender pension gap has reduced since 2013 (40.1 %) but there is clearly room for further improvement, considerably more so in some countries than others.

Although labour market outcomes (length of career, level of earnings, hours worked) are a key driver of pension gaps, the design of the pension system is also crucial. In countries such as Czechia, Denmark, Estonia and Slovakia, for example, the gender gap in pensions is relatively low despite a significant gender gap in total earnings (European Commission, 2018o). Reforms of pension systems to address the causes of the current imbalances are needed, but reforms aiming to increase pensions can become quite costly, especially in the context of increasing life expectancy. The alternative followed in some countries is to use minimum income schemes to top up pensions (ibid.).

Gender-sensitive design of social transfers would lift more women out of the risk of poverty

Social security systems represent a key tool in the fight against poverty, as social benefits can be used to top up low incomes to reduce or avoid poverty risks. In 2017, 25.6 % of the EU's population was at risk of poverty (AROP)⁽⁹⁰⁾ before social transfers (excluding pensions, the main source of income for people over retirement age). After taking into account social transfers, the AROP rate fell to 16.9 %, meaning that the risk of poverty was removed for about a third of those who had been at risk before transfers. Unfortunately, owing largely to austerity measures and benefit cutbacks, the pro-

Figure 5: Percentage reduction in proportion of people at risk of poverty as a result of social transfers, EU-28 (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data codes: ilc_li02, ilc_li10).

Note: Pensions are excluded from social transfers.

portion of people taken out of poverty by social transfers has declined over recent years (down 1.8 p.p. from 35.8 % in 2013).

Figure 5 shows that the weakening of the impact of social transfers on poverty has been more notable for women than for men. In 2013, it was approximately the same for women and men but by 2017 social transfers led to a larger reduction of poverty among men than among women (34.5 % versus 33.1 %). This could be partly attributed to fiscal measures implemented in many countries in response to the 2008 financial crisis, given recent research findings that suggest that the impact of austerity on social protection has had a more detrimental impact on women than on men (Perrons, 2015; Rubery, 2015).

The criteria by which people qualify for social security transfers, and the grounds for decisions about the recipients of those transfers,

⁽⁸⁸⁾ In 2017, women accounted for 56.5 % of people aged 65 or over in the EU (55.0 million women, 42.3 million men) (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (lfsa_pganws)).

⁽⁸⁹⁾ The age group 65-79 is used because after this point the impact of survivors' pensions provided on the death of a spouse significantly affects results and cannot easily be separated from pensions earned in one's own right.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ The AROP threshold is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income.

can have important implications for the extent of gender gaps in poverty. EU countries have a wide range of social security transfers, some based on contributions (see, for instance, Gornick and Jantti, 2010), others available only to people who can demonstrate that their income and/or resources are below a specified level (means-tested benefits). Men are more likely to qualify for contributory benefits, which are, by definition, strongly related to full-time labour market participation. Women more often tend to receive means-tested benefits or benefits derived from their partners' income. Thus, women are more likely to be dependent on a partner's income and, depending on what kinds of restrictions are imposed, cuts to benefits may be more likely to affect them.

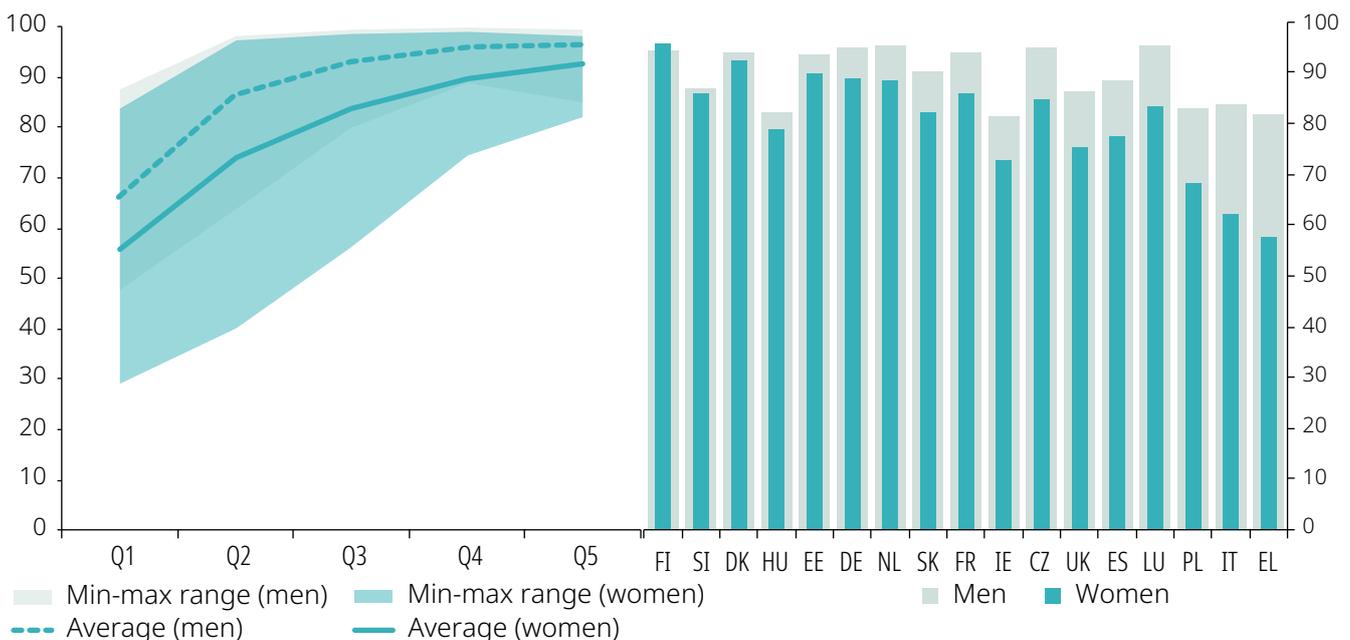
Current measures of poverty may underestimate the risk of poverty for women

The measurements of the gender poverty gap discussed throughout this chapter are liable to be understated, because they are based on household incomes and assume equal sharing of household resources (see, for example, Pic-

coli, 2017). Although there are few data on how resources of households are shared between adult members ⁽⁹¹⁾, information on the extent to which women and men living together have independent incomes (and the relative levels of these) can indicate the potential risk that very limited (or no) resources are being shared.

Data from 2013 show that in most cases, when living as a couple, women are less likely than men to have an independent income (only 80.4 % of women have an independent income compared with 89.2 % of men) ⁽⁹²⁾. Figure 6 shows that the gender gap decreases as household income increases. This is consistent with the household polarisation of paid work reported earlier and reflects the fact that higher household incomes are usually dependent on dual incomes. It implies that there is an increased risk of poverty for women if partners do not share their income or only partly share it, particularly in lower-income households that rely on one earner only. The risk of such poverty is highest in countries such as Greece, Italy and Poland, in which employment rates of women are well below those of men.

Figure 6: Proportions of women and men living in couples who have an independent income, by income quintile and overall, selected EU countries, 2013 (%)



Source: Authors' calculations based on data published by Nieuwenhuis et al. (2018).

⁽⁹¹⁾ Subject of ongoing research by the London School of Economics and Political Science – see http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/Intra-household/

⁽⁹²⁾ Average across the 17 Member States for which data are available.

2.2. Education and training of women (BPfA Area B)

2.2.1. Setting the scope

Universal, high-quality education and training are fundamental to Europe's future prosperity, as the technological revolution and changing work patterns require an increasingly skilled and adaptable workforce. Education is also vital to fight against poverty and social exclusion, as recognised in the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, n.d.-d).

The EU has established a number of key educational targets: to reduce school drop-out rates below 10 %; to increase the proportion of the population (aged 30-34) completing tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40 %; and to guarantee at least 15 % of adults in life-long learning activities (European Commission, 2010b, 2010e). In general, women/girls do better on these overall performance metrics than men/boys: fewer leave school early, more complete tertiary-level education and more participate in lifelong learning ⁽⁹³⁾.

This relative success conceals a range of gender inequalities that persist in education, training and research. Some concern increased vulnerabilities of specific groups; for example, girls (and boys) from certain ethnic and migrant backgrounds can face additional challenges in completing secondary education. Other inequalities affect broader populations in particular ways, as described below.

A key challenge is the segregation of education by gender, which affects both students and the workforce in the education/research sector. Young women are substantially under-represented in hi-tech study fields such as computer science and information and communication technology (ICT), which establish opportunities for higher-paid occupations. Conversely, young women are over-represented in education,

health and welfare (EHW) studies (EIGE, 2018e), which tends to lead to lower-paid employment. Persistent vertical segregation in the education/research workforce contributes to the gender pay gap in the sector (European Commission et al., 2018).

The academic performance of girls and boys at the age of 15 is too similar (OECD, 2016a) to explain the segregation in higher education. Rather, young people's choices are influenced by cultural stereotypes and gendered expectations, possibly reinforced through educational content and curricula (EIGE, 2016b). Often, textbooks and other educational materials continue to convey gender stereotypes of both women and girls, and of men and boys, sometimes even neglecting women altogether (UNESCO, 2017).

Comprehensive gender equality and diversity planning can contribute to improving national curricula generally. It might also help tackle gender-based harassment and bullying, a problem that affects girls and young women disproportionately at all educational levels, particularly those from minority groups (EIGE, 2016b; UNESCO, 2017; see Section 2.12 below for detailed discussion). Providing gender-sensitive career guidance to enable young people to learn and make informed decisions about their future free from gender bias remains a challenge (EIGE, 2018e).

Participation in lifelong learning presents another difficulty. Although women participate more often than men ⁽⁹⁴⁾, they are less likely to take part in continued vocational training that is at least partly financed by their employers ⁽⁹⁵⁾.

Finally, education has recently attracted an increased focus from rising anti-gender movements (see Section 2.9). Although efforts to prevent equality and rights education, including sexual and reproductive health education, in schools on ideological grounds are not new (Kuhar and Zobec, 2017), the focus is widening. Notably, in Hungary the government has

⁽⁹³⁾ Eurostat, Labour Force Survey — see data in section 2.12 of this report.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Eurostat (data code trng_lfse_01).

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Eurostat (edat_lfse_28).

banned gender studies in higher education institutions, a move that has been described as an infringement of the principles of self-governance, academic freedom and scientific excellence (ALLEA, 2018).

2.2.2. EU policy developments

The EU has limited competence to intervene directly in the area of education and training. It can, however, guide, support, coordinate or supplement the education actions of Member States (Lifelong Learning Platform, 2018), chiefly through the European Semester process and the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), and can work to raise awareness of the different gender-related challenges in the area. The EU also fosters the exchange of good practices, promotes principles of equality and non-discrimination, and provides funding (through Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020) to empower and involve women in specific sectors — such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and ICT — and to boost the position of women in research.

In 2015, both the Council of the EU and the European Commission called for action to tackle gender stereotypes within educational systems and structures, and to ensure that teachers are equipped to support learners to have an inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory education experience. The European Parliament (2015b) highlighted that educational materials often perpetuate gender stereotypes, and noted the importance of education and training in combating gender inequalities. The Commission has committed to funding grassroots projects to address stereotypes through Erasmus+ (European Commission, 2017c).

Recently, little attention has been paid to issues of access and participation from a gender perspective specifically. At a more general level, the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights establishes equal access to education, training and lifelong learning as a right (Euro-

pean Commission, n.d.-d). Although ET 2020 aims to promote ‘equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship’ (European Commission, 2010e), gender equality is not a primary objective and is not mainstreamed across the different objectives and benchmarks of the framework (which relate to educational participation and achievement).

Horizontal segregation in education and training has received more attention. Although actions to encourage more women to pursue STEM subjects are not new, the Council of the EU has now called for similar efforts to encourage men and boys to work and study in traditionally female-dominated sectors such as social services, childcare and long-term care (Council of the European Union, 2017a). The European Commission initiative on ‘Opening up education’ highlights the importance of ensuring that girls and women do not lag behind in subjects such as ICT (European Commission, 2013b). The *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* also highlights the need to address gendered choices in study subjects and subsequent careers, in line with the priorities set out in ET 2020 ⁽⁹⁶⁾ (European Commission, 2015i).

In relation to gender challenges within educational structures, the European Commission has pledged to encourage the collection of data on teachers’ wages and to focus on the issue of under-remuneration in the sector (European Commission et al., 2018). In addition, Horizon 2020 (the biggest EU research and innovation programme to date) supports structural changes within research institutions and in the content and design of research activities (European Commission, 2014b). An interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 found it to be successful in integrating gender equality throughout the funding process, although there remains room for improvement in data collection, monitoring and evaluation (European Commission, 2017g). Gender equality is also a key horizontal priority for Erasmus+ (European Commission, 2019c) but there are no detailed or comprehensive indicators to specify what is being done.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ This framework establishes EU objectives to address challenges in education and training by 2020.

Key education and training policies promote inclusion and a sense of belonging (Council of the European Union, 2017c; European Commission, 2017a). However, there is no comprehensive framework for an intersectional approach that considers challenges specific to groups of girls and women particularly at risk of discrimination and other barriers to full and active participation in education (e.g. Roma and other ethnic minorities, migrants, LGBTQI* people, those with disabilities and those from a background of poverty or social exclusion). Gender-based violence in educational contexts has also been largely neglected in recent policy.

2.2.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Women dominate education, health and welfare studies, yet remain severely under-represented in ICT and STEM fields

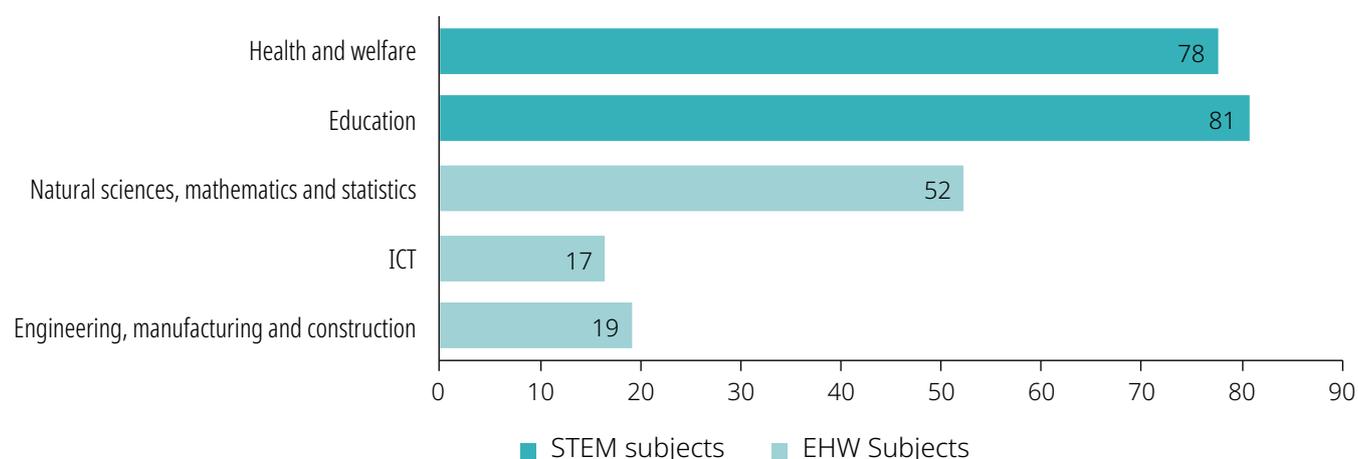
In 2016, women accounted for just over half of graduates from vocational and tertiary education (52 % and 56 % respectively) ⁽⁹⁷⁾. Despite this relatively even gender balance, significant imbalances persist in selected fields of educa-

tion. Women make up fewer than one fifth of engineering and ICT graduates across the EU but around four fifths of EHW graduates (see Figure 7) ⁽⁹⁸⁾. Interestingly, there is almost gender parity among graduates in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (52 % women and 48 % men).

STEM subjects also show a significant difference by type of education, with women more than twice as likely to follow the academic study route (34 % of tertiary education graduates) as the vocational option (14 %). This difference does not apply in EHW subjects ⁽⁹⁹⁾, but needs to be considered in developing strategies to involve more women in STEM subjects.

Horizontal segregation is a key concern for gender equality because it translates into segregation in the labour market. This in turn generates long-term income inequalities, as some of the occupations and sectors currently dominated by women (e.g. teaching) tend to be lower paid than those dominated by men (see Section 2.6). It also reinforces the undervaluing of women's work and limits their economic independence (EIGE, 2018e).

Figure 7: Percentage of women among STEM and EHW graduates by field, EU-28, 2016 (%)



Source: Eurostat, UOE education statistics (data code: educ_uoe_grad02).

Note: Figures exclude tertiary education in the Netherlands (data not available).

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Eurostat, UOE education statistics (educ_uoe_grad02).

⁽⁹⁸⁾ In 2016, women accounted for more than a third of ICT graduates in only Bulgaria and Romania (40 % and 35 %), the latter also being the only country where women also make up at least a third of engineering graduates (33 %). Italy is the only country in which women account for fewer than 70 % of health and welfare graduates (Eurostat, UOE education statistics (educ_uoe_grad02)).

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Women accounted for 76 % of tertiary education graduates and 84 % of vocational graduates in 2016.

Gender segregation of study fields stems from gendered social norms and expectations rather than school performance

Based on the 2015 data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 15-year-old girls and boys had similar levels of underachievement in science (20.4 % and 20.7 % respectively) and maths (23.2 % and 21.2 % respectively) but boys were much more likely to underachieve in reading than girls (23.5 % versus 15.9 %) ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. The fact that girls and boys have similar levels of achievement in science and maths refutes the suggestion that performance differentials in secondary education contribute to subsequent subject choices in higher education (e.g. ICT or engineering).

The persistent gender imbalances across different fields of study are at least partly the result of social norms and gendered expectations — both at home and in wider society — that have an impact on young people's choices and influence them to choose 'appropriate' subjects (EIGE, 2018e). Recent research suggests that gendered expectations tend to be stricter for boys than for girls (Van der Vleuten et al., 2016).

One source of influence that can be directly addressed is the portrayal of women and men in educational content. Textbooks can often reflect historical inequalities and convey the message that men are the main achievers in science, technologies, the arts and humanities, reinforcing stereotypical gender attitudes and perceptions (EIGE, 2016b). Although there are no relevant EU-wide data, various studies — e.g. of computer science textbooks (Papadakis, 2018), children's books about academics (Terras, 2014) and the visuals presented in primary school science education resources (Kerkhoven et al., 2016) — have found clear evidence of women being substantially under-represented and/or portrayed in stereotypical roles (e.g. as teachers rather than as science or other technical professionals). In Hungary, the UN working group on discrimination against women in law and in

practice noted that new textbooks for compulsory religious/ethics education depicted women 'almost exclusively as mothers and wives and, in some cases, ... as less intelligent than fathers' (UN OHCHR, 2016).

One way to overcome such stereotypes is through gender-sensitive career counselling in schools. Such guidance plays a crucial role in helping young people to choose a vocation and associated field of study, and needs to be delivered free of any gender bias (EIGE, 2018e). In 2015 the European Parliament encouraged all Member States to improve the provision of career guidance as a tool to counter gender stereotypes, noting the critical timing of the advice given and its potential long-term impact on personal development and emancipation (European Parliament, 2015b).

Vertical segregation is pervasive in education and research, with knock-on effects for income inequality

The representation of women among teachers and academic staff declines progressively as the level of education rises. In 2015, women accounted for more than four fifths of staff in primary education (84.8 %), but just over two fifths in tertiary education (41.8 %) ⁽¹⁰¹⁾. This disparity contributes to the gender pay gap, as teaching at the lower levels tends to be associated with lower statutory salaries (European Commission et al., 2018).

Vertical segregation also contributes to income inequality, as too few women reach top positions within the education system. Female teachers are less likely to be promoted to school principals than their male peers (OECD, 2016a), and women account for just one in five (20.1 %) heads of institutions in the higher education sector and one in seven (14.3 %) heads of universities or assimilated institutions accredited to deliver PhDs (European Commission, 2019e). Similarly, in the research arena, women held nearly half (46.4 %) of junior research posts

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Eurostat, OECD-PISA Survey (educ_outc_pisa). The gender gap associated with reading holds in all Member States, but is particularly large in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta, where it exceeds 15 p.p.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Eurostat, UOE education statistics (educ_uoe_perp02).

(entry level for newly qualified PhD graduates) in 2016, but fewer than one quarter (23.7 %) of senior positions (full professor or equivalent) (European Commission, 2019e). Perhaps more significantly, there is little evidence of any notable improvement over time.

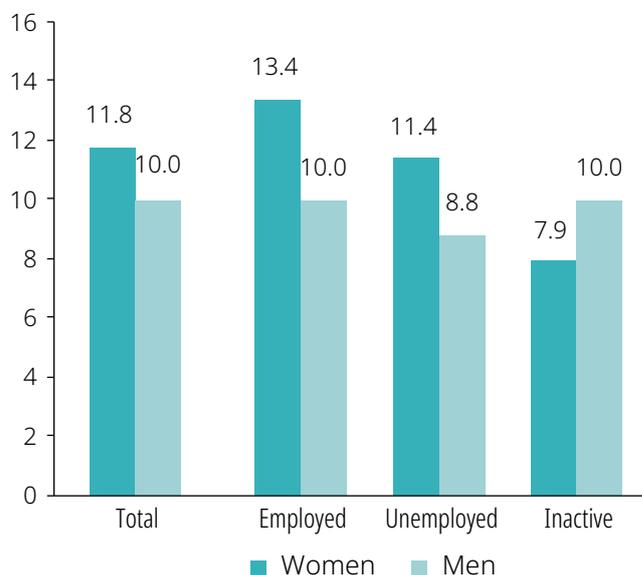
It is worth noting that disparities in job quality add a further dimension of inequality. Data from 2016 show that women are more likely than men to hold part-time research positions (13.0 % versus 8.0 % for men) and/or to be engaged on a precarious working contract ⁽¹⁰²⁾ (8.1 % versus 5.2 %) (Scottish Government, 2017).

The participation of both women and men in lifelong learning is low compared with the needs of the EU economy

Estimates suggest that the European economy loses over 2 % of its potential productivity each year to the mismatch between the supply and demand for skills. If no action is taken, the combination of demographic trends and technological changes is likely to see this situation worsen (European Economic and Social Committee, 2018d). Lifelong learning is seen as a key tool in addressing this mismatch (WEF, 2018), ensuring that women and men — with or without work — have the opportunity to upskill or reskill to achieve their potential and meet the needs of employers. With women's jobs more at risk from technological change (see Section 2.6), it is crucial that they have full and equal access to lifelong learning opportunities.

Compared with the ET 2020 target of having 15 % of adults participating in lifelong learning, women are doing slightly better than men (11.8 % and 10.0 % respectively), although there has been little change since 2013. Among those active in the labour market, more women than men participate in education or training but the situation is reversed for those who

Figure 8: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and working status, aged 25-64, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data code: trng_lfse_01).

are inactive (see Figure 8), reflecting the fact that women are more often restricted by family responsibilities. A total of 39.8 % of women cited family responsibilities as an obstacle to their participation in education or training, compared with 24.2 % of men in 2016 ⁽¹⁰³⁾. Despite their higher participation in education and training, evidence shows that employed women are less likely than employed men to benefit from continuing vocational training at least partly financed by their employers ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ (38.7 % versus 42.0 %). This gender gap is particularly pronounced in larger companies ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. It is linked to the fact that people in lower-quality jobs (part-time, temporary or low-paid), many of whom are women, are less likely to benefit from workplace training than those on full-time permanent contracts (OECD, 2016a). This gender gap implies that more women have to self-fund their training, creating an additional financial barrier.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Researchers on precarious working contracts are defined as those without a contract, with fixed-term contracts of up to 1 year or with other non-fixed-term, non-permanent contracts. This definition differs from that used for precarious working contracts in the Labour Force Survey, which refers to contracts of 3 months or less.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Eurostat, Adult Education Survey (trng_aes_176).

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Partial financing includes the use of work time for the training activity, and the financing of training equipment.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Eurostat, Continuing Vocational Training Survey (trng_cvt_12s).

Young women are less likely than men to leave school early, except for those from vulnerable ethnic and migrant backgrounds

Early exit from the education system limits productivity and competitiveness, and fuels poverty and social exclusion (European Commission, 2017f). In 2017, young men aged 18-24 were more likely to be early leavers from education and training ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ than young women of the same age (12.1 % versus 8.9 %; see Figure 9). This pattern generally holds across the Member States, with four exceptions, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, all of which are countries with relatively large Roma communities, where early drop-out from education remains a problem, particularly for girls (FRA, 2018f).

Reducing early leaving from education among Roma girls

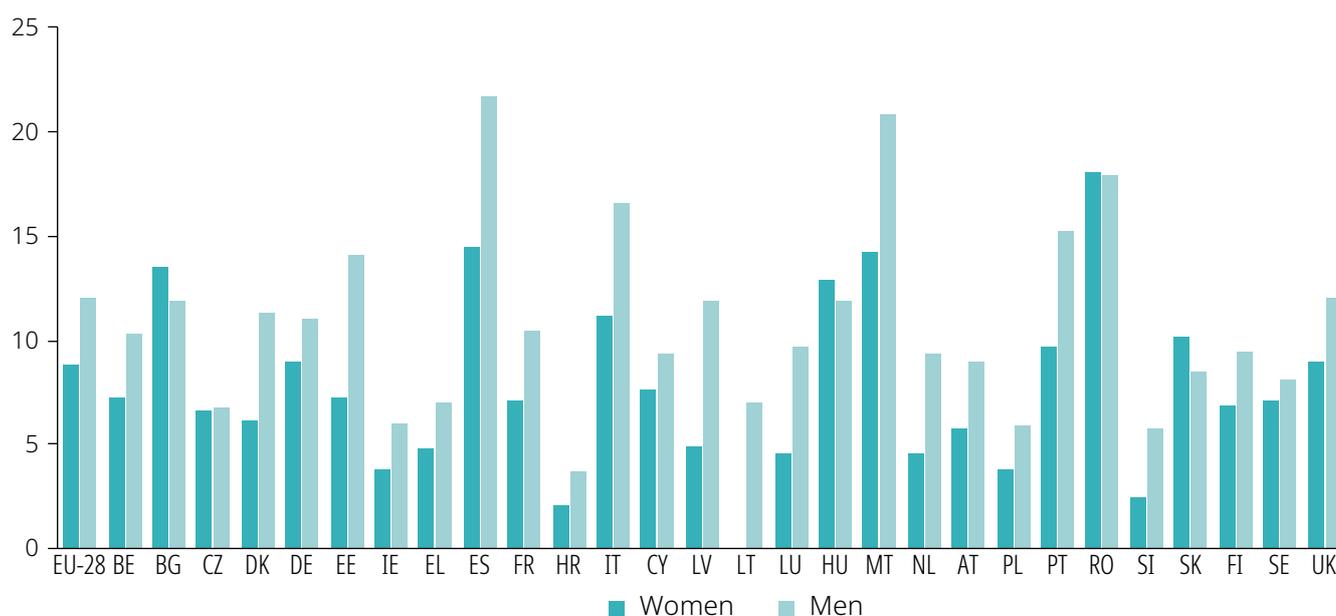
In order to encourage Roma girls to successfully attend school and to keep them there with the aim of finishing education, a new programme was launched in Hun-

gary in 2015, called Bari Shej. Its objective is to reduce early school leaving and to improve chances of further education. The target group comprises mainly Roma girls aged 10-18 attending primary or secondary school who are at risk of dropping out. The programme is still continuing, and has managed to reach 2 000 disadvantaged Roma girls since the start of the 2017/2018 school year. The project elements include mentoring, career guidance, prevention of victimisation, mental health and drug prevention support, healthy lifestyle education and counselling for girls and their families, and introducing successful Roma women as role models.

Note: This box is based on Member State reporting to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) or EIGE.

Young people from a non-EU migrant background also tend to be at higher risk of leaving school early ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, with asylum seekers and refugees facing additional challenges in accessing education in the first place (FRA, 2017b). As

Figure 9: Early leavers from education and training by sex, 18-24 years, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data code : edat_lfse_01).

Note: Data for Croatia, Luxembourg (women only) and Slovenia (women only) are unreliable because of small sample sizes.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Early leavers are people aged 18-24 who have attained at most lower secondary education and are not currently involved in further education or training.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Eurostat (edat_lfse_36).

a consequence, these young people are almost twice as likely as their EU-born peers (19.3 % versus 10.0 %) not to be in employment, education and training (NEET) ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. Young women from a migrant background seem the most vulnerable in this respect, with their NEET rate at 19.8 % compared with 10.2 % for EU-born young women and 14.8 % for young men born outside the EU ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

The reasons for leaving education early are often complex and depend on a range of factors, including family and/or migrant background, socioeconomic circumstances, gender and particular aspects of national educational systems (European Commission, 2014f, 2014j). The over-representation of boys among early leavers has been linked to their poorer performance in school (e.g. in reading, see analysis above), and to different experiences of boys and girls in compulsory education. For example, boys are believed to have more difficulties in adapting to the school environment.

2.3. Women and health (BPfA Area C)

2.3.1. Setting the scope

The attainment of the highest possible level of health ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ is recognised internationally as a human right. The right to health refers to both the provision of timely, appropriate and quality healthcare and ensuring the (social and environmental) conditions for health such as adequate nutrition and housing (WHO, 2017). Access to healthcare is explicitly established as a right within the EU in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 35) ⁽¹¹¹⁾.

When analysing gender-related differences in health, it is important to acknowledge that some of these result from biological factors, but most are socially determined. Gender is an important social determinant of health because gender stereotypes, norms and inequalities can significantly influence behaviour and policies in ways that contribute to health inequalities (Iyer et al., 2008) ⁽¹¹²⁾. Importantly, gender can intersect with other social determinants of health such as ethnicity, educational attainment or place of residence to generate additional inequalities in health outcomes (Loewenson and Simpson, 2018; WHO Europe, 2016b, 2018).

In the EU, health is an important area of inequality between women and men, with many remaining challenges.

- Inequalities in health status. For example, women self-report worse health, despite longer life expectancy than men (European Commission, 2013c). Although this may partly be explained by biological differences between women and men ⁽¹¹³⁾, it is also linked to education inequalities, employment gaps and work-life balance issues (Campos-Serna et al., 2013; Hosseinpoor et al., 2012).
- Availability, accessibility, affordability and high-quality healthcare services. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, austerity policies often led to reductions in the funding of public health and social care services, with concerns about their availability and affordability in many Member States (Karanikolos et al., 2013; Stuckler et al., 2017). Women were likely to be particularly affected by such cuts, since they tend to use such services more often than men (European Women's Lobby, 2012). The austerity cuts also increased women's

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Ibid.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Eurostat (edat_ifse_28).

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Where health is defined as the 'state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (quoted from <https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/constitution>).

⁽¹¹¹⁾ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN>.

⁽¹¹²⁾ In this report, the term 'inequalities' is used to refer to those differences that are avoidable, remediable and unjust. In other literature, 'inequality' often refers to differences in general (including the unavoidable factors such as biology or age) and 'inequity' refers to differences that are assessed as avoidable, remediable and unjust. However, these terms are often used interchangeably, particularly in languages other than English, which may have only one term to describe such differences.

⁽¹¹³⁾ Biological differences between women and men include differences in levels of sex hormones and different proportions of body fat (e.g. Regitz-Zagrosek, 2012).

unpaid work burden at a time when needs for long-term care due to population ageing were rising (European Social Policy Network, 2018; Sepúlveda Carmona, 2014).

- Gender differences in mental health. The mental health needs of women and men differ: there is a greater prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders among women and of externalising mental health disorders (such as drug and alcohol abuse) among men (EAHC, 2008; WHO Europe, 2018). Men are also less likely to seek out help, because of gendered behavioural norms (European Commission, 2011b, p. 303), which has been linked to higher suicide rates among them (Olliffe et al., 2012).
- Ensuring adequate provision of, and access to, sexual and maternal/reproductive health services for both women and men. This is especially important in the light of retrogressive policies in some Member States to reduce access to contraception and abortion (Council of Europe, 2017b; see also Section 2.9 below).
- Additional health vulnerabilities and problems with healthcare access due to intersections of gender with other social determinants of health. This is the case particularly for women with lower income and/or educational attainment⁽¹¹⁴⁾, but also for those from certain migrant and ethnic backgrounds (Doctors of the World, 2016; European Parliament, 2018i), for older women and women with disabilities (Adjei et al., 2017; WHO, 2009), and for LGBTIQI* people (European Parliament, 2017i; FRA, 2012a).
- Limited gender sensitivity in medical research and healthcare services. This includes challenges linked to low representation of women in clinical research⁽¹¹⁵⁾ (Liu and Dipietro Mager, 2016), gender-blind or -biased medical research and healthcare services (WHO Europe, 2016b, 2016c), and gendered use of

healthcare services (European Commission, 2010a, 2011b).

- Under-representation of women in health governance, decision-making and certain occupations. Although women are now well represented among medical students and doctors, they are less well represented among senior doctors and professors (see Kuhlmann et al., 2017), or in executive health sector positions overall (WHO, 2016b).

Overall, there are still considerable limitations in the data available to assess progress related to the above challenges. To improve the monitoring of progress, it is particularly important to improve collection, use and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data on health outcomes cross-linked with other sociodemographic factors, and to carry out assessments of the health equity impacts of wider social policies for both women and men.

2.3.2. EU policy developments

Within health policy, the EU has competence to complement and support national policy. It is unable to determine national policy except in a few areas where the EU and Member States have shared competence, such as research and cross-border threats (European Commission, n.d.-a).

Consistently with a long-term trend, since 2013 the EU has continued to focus on health inequities and the social determinants of health. Its third health programme, 2014-2020, funds projects that recognise the impact of gender on health, such as measures addressing vulnerable third-country nationals and refugees (DG Health and Food Safety, 2018). However, the programme does not explicitly incorporate a gender perspective.

Increased recognition of the impact of social factors on health and well-being is also

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Eurostat, EU-SILC (data code: hlth_silc_10).

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Medical research that is designed to be able to explore the impact of both sex (biological factors) and gender (social factors) on the health differences between women and men.

reflected, for example, in the European Commission's (2017j) proposal for a directive on work-life balance for parents and carers, which highlighted the positive health impacts of an improved work-life balance. Although the social determinants of health are being increasingly recognised within health policy, this recognition is limited by poorly aligned economic policies, such as policies that promote growth over supporting high-quality, secure work, and austerity policies (Donkin et al., 2018).

Since the European Parliament's (2011b) Resolution on reducing health inequalities in the EU, ensuring universal access to appropriate, affordable and good-quality healthcare is a continued policy priority in the EU. This is demonstrated in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which establishes access to timely, affordable and good-quality healthcare as a right (European Commission, 2017e). Universal healthcare coverage⁽¹¹⁶⁾ is also included as a target within SDG 3 (United Nations, 2015). The EU adopted a sustainable development package to implement the SDGs in the EU in 2016 (European Commission, 2016k), whereby it committed to supporting Member States to achieve the third SDG. Although SDG 5 focuses on gender equality, the EU's approach to achieving SDG 3, and ensuring universal healthcare coverage more generally, does not incorporate a gender perspective.

To help address the growing need for health and social care among older adults as a result of population ageing, the EU has implemented policies focused on 'active ageing'⁽¹¹⁷⁾. These aim to improve health among older adults; ensure health and social care systems are sustainable; and contribute to the competitiveness of EU industry (European Commission, 2018e). Progress has been made towards meeting the goal of increasing the average number of healthy life years by 2 years by 2020 (European Commission, 2018e), but the policy approach

has largely been gender blind (Foster and Walker, 2014).

Whereas the EU has done work to increase the access of girls and women living outside Europe to sexual and reproductive health services (e.g. within the EU gender action plan 2016-2020), action to promote access to such services within the EU has been limited. This has led to criticism that the EU has set a 'double standard' in promoting standards in third countries that surpass those in the EU (Redolfi, 2014). Nevertheless, EU institutions have taken some steps to tackle gender-based violence that infringes women's sexual/reproductive health and rights — as shown, for example, by a recent European Parliament resolution against female genital mutilation (FGM) (European Parliament, 2018i).

Access to mental health care has been a priority for the EU for many years. The impact of gender on mental health needs has been recognised since 2008⁽¹¹⁸⁾, which led to the establishment of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2013 and the European framework for action on mental health and wellbeing in 2016. This framework highlighted the challenge of providing services to meet the mental health needs of women, while stressing the need for health services to be gender-sensitive (Joint Action on Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2016). In addition, the European Parliament's (2017i) resolution on promoting gender equality in mental health and clinical research emphasised the gendered aspects of mental health and called for further action from the Commission and Member States. Although recent mental health policy developments appear positive (Harkin, 2018), unmet mental health needs persist as a result of ongoing access issues and stigma (Barbato et al., 2016).

Considering gender equality in research, a notable development is the Clinical Trials Regulation (European Commission, 2014g), which requires

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ This includes financial protection and access to good-quality *essential* healthcare services. Whether or not the latter implies universal access to healthcare has been fiercely debated by countries ever since.

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Defined as helping people stay in charge of their own lives for as long as possible as they age and, where possible, to contribute to the economy and society (see <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1062> for definition).

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ In particular in the European pact for mental health and well-being, as established at the 2008 EU conference 'Together for mental health and wellbeing'.

the consideration of gender in clinical trials. According to the information available at the time of writing of this report, the regulation was expected to enter into application in 2019. Significantly, the European Parliament resolution on promoting gender equality in mental health and clinical research highlighted the importance of clinical trials reflecting the needs of the population who will use the products, and called for the collection of sex-disaggregated data to identify gendered differences in side effects (European Parliament, 2017i). The implementation of the Clinical Trials Regulation may help address such ongoing inequalities (EIWH, 2018).

2.3.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

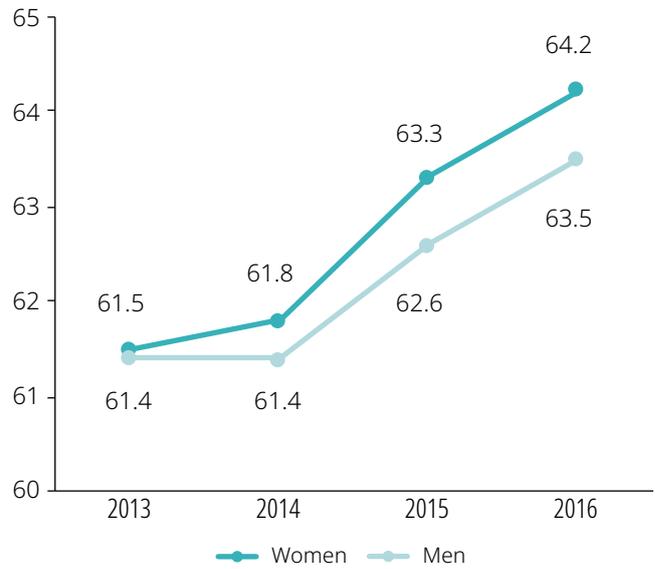
Gendered differences persist in life expectancy, healthy life years and morbidity

Women continue to enjoy longer life expectancy than men on average (described as the mortality advantage), and thus experience a greater number of healthy life years in total. However, women also experience a lower percentage of their lives in (self-reported) good health, which is described as the disability disadvantage (Van Oyen et al., 2013). This translates, on average, to over 19 years of life with a health problem for women in the EU, compared with less than 15 years for men ⁽¹⁹⁾.

As Figure 10 and Figure 11 show, women and men have seen increases in the number of healthy life years from birth since 2013. The proportion of healthy life years has also increased over time — men continue to live a greater proportion of their lives in good health, but the gender gap reduced somewhat between 2013 and 2016.

Current research suggests the average longer life expectancy of women is explained by a complex interaction of biological and social factors, including an inherent biological advantage (Zarulli et al., 2018) and gendered behav-

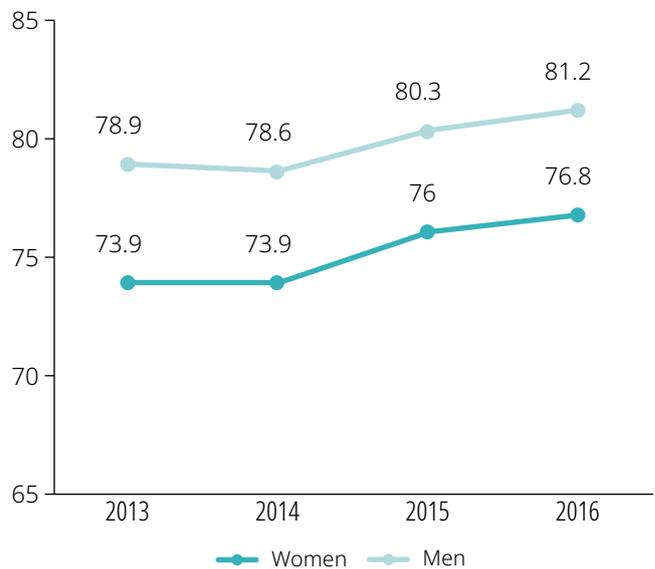
Figure 10: Healthy life years expected at birth, by gender, EU-28



Source: EU-SILC (data code: hlth_hlye).

Note: 2013, estimated; 2015, break in the series; 2017, data not available.

Figure 11: Healthy life years as a percentage of total life expectancy at birth, by gender, EU-28 (%)



Source: EU-SILC (data code: hlth_hlye).

Note: 2013, estimated; 2015, break in the series; 2017, data not available.

ours (SOPHIE Project, 2015), such as the higher prevalence of tobacco and alcohol usage

⁽¹⁹⁾ Eurostat (hlth_hlye).

among men ⁽¹²⁰⁾. Although the extent to which gendered behaviours explain the gender gap varies between countries and over time, the differences in the prevalence of tobacco- and alcohol-related deaths have been estimated to explain 40-60 % and 10-30 % ⁽¹²¹⁾ of the gender gap in mortality respectively (McCartney et al., 2011). Other health behaviours, such as consumption of fruit and vegetables and participation in health-enhancing physical activity, are also gendered. Whereas women tend to eat fruit and vegetables more frequently than men, a higher proportion of men engage in health-enhancing physical activity ⁽¹²²⁾.

The reasons for the disability disadvantage among women are not entirely explained. It probably results from an interplay of biological and social factors. The key causes of ill health among women in the World Health Organization (WHO) European region are mental illness and musculoskeletal conditions (WHO, 2016b). Among both women and men in Europe, non-communicable diseases are responsible for approximately 80 % of ill health (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2017). However, women experience higher levels of morbidity from certain non-communicable diseases, such as certain types of cancer, dementia and depression (OECD and EU, 2018).

For example, in 2014 women were more likely to experience depressive symptoms than men, and significantly more likely to experience major depression (estimated at 3.5 % compared with 2.2 %) ⁽¹²³⁾. Similarly, a higher proportion of women than men reported chronic depression (OECD and EU, 2018). This is at least partly explained by social factors. Having low social status is a predictor of depression (WHO, n.d.-a), and societal inequalities and social

norms mean that women disproportionately occupy low-status jobs. The burden of combining employment and family demands also seems to be harmful for mental health (SOPHIE project, 2015) — particularly for women living in countries with family policy models that rely on women's unpaid work (Campos-Serna et al., 2013).

Likewise, cardiovascular disease (CVD) accounts for a higher proportion of deaths among women than among men. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that there were some improvements in this trend between 2011 ⁽¹²⁴⁾ and 2015 (from 41.8 % for women and 37.4 % for men to 38.9 % and 35.5 % respectively) and the gender gap between the rates of death from CVD has reduced ⁽¹²⁵⁾.

Unmet health needs have substantially reduced among both women and men

Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination have halved since 2013, despite the concerns about austerity cuts negatively affecting the availability and affordability of healthcare services in the aftermath of the financial crisis (see Section 2.3.1) ⁽¹²⁶⁾. Women continue to report slightly higher levels of unmet health needs than men, but the gender gap has reduced (Figure 12).

Despite the reduction in unmet needs for medical examination, both women and men continue to face a number of difficulties when accessing healthcare, including long waiting times, delays in getting appointments, lack of time to access healthcare, long travel distance and excessive costs (Eurofound, 2017) ⁽¹²⁷⁾. The particular difficulties in accessing healthcare often vary substantially by country.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ For prevalence of smoking and alcohol consumption among women and men, see Eurostat (data sets hlth_ehis_al1e and sgd_03_30).

For example, in 2014 about half of men reported that they consumed alcohol daily or weekly, compared with fewer than a third of women. In 2017, 22 % of women aged 15 years or more smoked compared with 30 % of men.

⁽¹²¹⁾ Note that these figures are based on relatively old data, from 2005. The data cover 30 European countries.

⁽¹²²⁾ See Eurostat (ilc_hch11; hlth_ehis_pe9e).

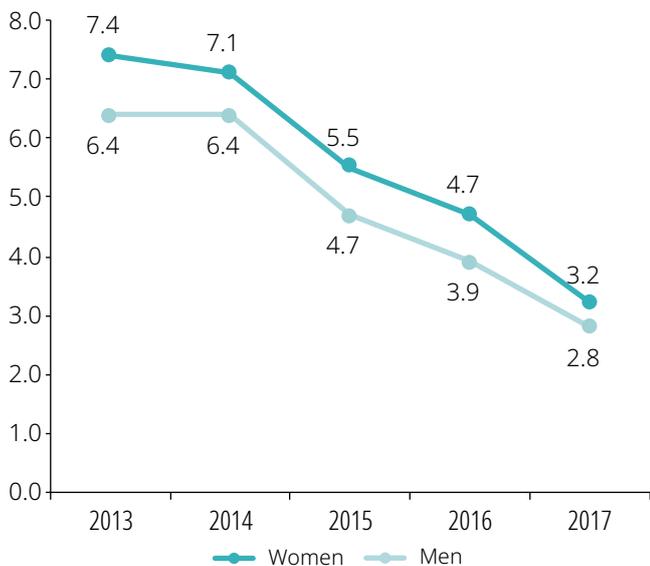
⁽¹²³⁾ Eurostat (hlth_ehis_mh1e).

⁽¹²⁴⁾ The most recent data are from 2015, so the comparator year is 2011 rather than 2013, to show trends over a longer period.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Eurostat (hlth_cd_asdr2).

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Although some apparent reductions from 2015 may be due to differences in survey questions (OECD, 2018).

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Based on Eurostat (hlth_silc_08).

Figure 12: Unmet need for medical examination by gender, EU-28 (%)

Source: EU-SILC (data code : hlth_silc_08).

Note: 2017 figures estimated using EU-SILC data.

Coming from a migrant background and being LGBTQI* further affect access to healthcare. In 2015, 67.5 % of the 9 610 individuals seen through Doctors of the World programmes in 31 European cities (spread across 12 countries) ⁽¹²⁸⁾ reported that they had no healthcare coverage (Doctors of the World, 2016).

Around 94 % of these 9 610 individuals were foreign nationals ⁽¹²⁹⁾. Key barriers included language barriers, financial costs, administrative barriers (such as legal restrictions and difficulties collecting necessary documents) and lack of awareness of available services. Among pregnant women seen by these services, 67.8 % had no health coverage and 43.6 % had no prior access to antenatal services.

According to a 2012 FRA survey, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people report difficulties in accessing healthcare: 30 % of LGBT

women and 23 % of LGBT men ⁽¹³⁰⁾ reported difficulties in using or accessing healthcare services. These were primarily due to inappropriate curiosity from healthcare personnel and other actual or feared negative reactions, as well as their experiences of having their needs ignored (FRA, 2012a).

Financial reasons hinder women's access to mental health care

Recent data on the level of unmet need in relation to mental health care are limited. A 2016 scientific report (Barbato et al., 2016) found estimated treatment gaps in the WHO European region of 45 % for major depression, 40 % for bipolar disorder and 18 % for schizophrenia ⁽¹³¹⁾.

Recent data on access to mental health care disaggregated by sex are even more limited. However, in 2014 it was found that 3.1 % of women reported mental health care needs unmet because of cost, compared with 2.1 % of men ⁽¹³²⁾. In this context, it is important to mention that the use of mental health services is gendered; men may find it more difficult than women to seek help, because of gender norms around recognising and admitting emotional distress (European Commission, 2011b, p. 303).

Women with lower socioeconomic status may be at greater risk of poor mental health (WHO, n.d.-a), and report more mental health needs unmet for financial reasons. For example, women with an income in the bottom 20 % of society are more than twice as likely to report chronic depression as women with an income in the top 20 % ⁽¹³³⁾ (OECD and EU, 2018). Around 3.3 % of women with low educational attainment reported unmet needs compared with 2.7 % of those with high educational attainment ⁽¹³⁴⁾.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Specifically, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Of these 9 610, 41 % were women, and around 50 % had the right to remain.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Based on sex assigned at birth, owing to limitations with data disaggregations. Self-identified gender not available.

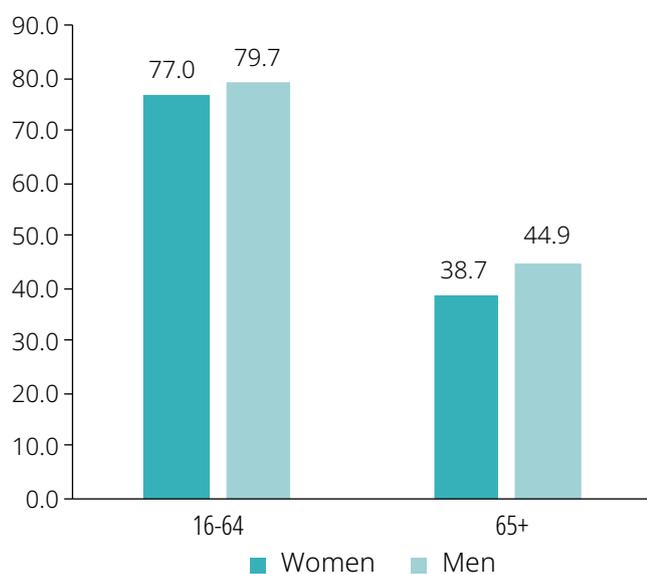
⁽¹³¹⁾ However, this is based on limited data, which date from 2004.

⁽¹³²⁾ Eurostat (hlth_ehis_un2d).

⁽¹³³⁾ Based on 2014 European health interview survey data.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Eurostat (hlth_silc_14).

Figure 13: Women and men self-reporting 'good' or 'very good' health, by age, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: EU-SILC (data code: hlth_silc_10).

Older women are at higher risk of poor mental and physical health

Although older women and men both report worse health than those at younger ages, the gap between self-reported health status of women and men increases at older ages (Figure 13). The poor health of older women can be explained to some extent by cumulative disadvantages in social determinants of health over the life course, including educational attainment (Adjei et al., 2017) and a lack of financial resources. In 2017, 20.6 % of women aged 65 or over were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 15.2 % of men in the same age category ⁽¹³⁵⁾. In addition to the negative impact of low income on health status, poverty may also have additional impacts on older women, such as limiting their ability to adapt their homes to meet their needs (AGE Platform Europe, 2019). Many older women also continue to provide informal care; 80 % of all care provided in Europe is informal, most of which is provided by women aged 45-75 (Ageing Equal, 2018). This may directly contribute to negative health outcomes, including poor mental health.

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Eurostat (ilc_peps01).

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Such as registered partnerships and consensual unions

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Note, however, that availability and quality of up-to-date data are an issue in this case.

Access to sexual and reproductive health services is worsening in several Member States

Accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services varies significantly by Member State, because of differences in the level and quality of service provision, affordability and legislation, as well as cultural and religious factors (European Parliament, 2018j). People with a migrant background, young people, people living on low incomes and people living in rural areas may face additional barriers, including economic, language and geographic ones (ibid.). The sexual and reproductive health needs of women with disabilities often remain unmet as well (WHO, 2009) and, in some countries, the rights of both women with disabilities and Roma women have been violated through forced sterilisation (European Parliament, 2018j; WHO, 2009).

Many women continue to lack access to necessary prenatal and maternal healthcare. Currently around 500 000 women in the EU lack access to health services during pregnancy (European Parliament, 2019a). This is a particular issue among certain groups. For instance, as many as 44 % of pregnant refugees and migrants in Europe may not have access to antenatal care (Doctors of the World, 2016). These access issues may explain the higher risks of maternal mortality among migrant women in Europe; their risk is 25 times greater in some countries (WHO Europe, 2017). Roma women similarly experience greater risks of maternal mortality than non-Roma women in Europe (ibid.) and face access issues (European Parliament, 2019a).

Around 10 % of married or in-union ⁽¹³⁶⁾ women in Europe continued to report unmet need for contraception in 2017. This level of unmet need has changed little since the 1970s and is projected to continue (United Nations, 2018a) ⁽¹³⁷⁾. As these data consider only women who are married or in union, they may be a significant underestimate of actual unmet needs. Unmet contraceptive needs particularly affect vulnerable groups, including adolescents, those with

a low income, those living in rural areas, people with HIV (Ali and Temmerman, 2013), refugees and migrants (WHO, n.d.-b). For example, 28 % of women with HIV in 13 Member States ⁽¹³⁸⁾ reported an unmet family-planning need, compared with the regional average of around 10 % (Ali and Temmerman, 2013).

A concerning trend of retrogressive policy and legislative proposals has been seen in several Member States since 2013, threatening the sexual and reproductive rights of women (Council of Europe, 2017b). Although most of these proposals have been unsuccessful so far, some have led to reduced access of women to sexual and reproductive health services. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.9 of this report.

Improving sexual, reproductive and maternal health for women

In Latvia, the Cabinet of Ministers has approved the mother and child health improvement plan for 2018-2020. The plan aims to improve maternal and child health through better disease prevention, earlier diagnosis and timely treatment (UNECE, 2019c). It includes measures to support vulnerable women: from 2020 onwards, women at risk of social exclusion will receive state-funded contraception services, reaching, for example, women with low incomes, inadequate education, or physical and mental health problems, or who experience sexual and emotional violence, among others (Likumi, 2018).

Finland's action plan (2014-2020) for the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights aims to improve sexual and reproductive health, and reduce health and social inequality (Finland, National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2019). It will increase the provision of comprehensive sex education, together with

services such as good-quality care for newborns. Some cities and municipalities in Finland already provide free contraception to adolescents (UNECE, 2019b). Notably, the plan accounts for increasing multiculturalism within the Finnish population and the associated new health challenges. This includes FGM: the action plan outlines the need for training for healthcare professionals in municipalities on FGM-related issues (Finland, National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2019). In 2016, however, the unit responsible for monitoring this (the National Institute for Health and Welfare's specialised unit for sexual and reproductive health) was closed, highlighting the need for a system to effectively monitor progress in future. The continuity of such activities must also be assured, beyond ESF funding.

Plans are under way in Spain to improve the provision of sexual and reproductive health services. This includes reactivating the sexual and reproductive health strategy of the National Health System and ensuring close collaboration with the education sector to promote sexual health among young people. The National Survey of Sexual Health, last conducted in 2009, will be carried out again, to collect information on different aspects of sexual health in Spain and to identify existing healthcare needs. Plans are in place to develop services for single women and lesbian women to access assisted human reproduction. Legal reforms have been proposed to prevent involuntary sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities, with a parliamentary working group established to assess these possible reforms and to ensure that the rights of all persons with disabilities are respected (UNECE, 2019d).

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

Gender sensitivity of medical research and health services is still limited

Medicine and treatment should be appropriate to the needs of both women and men and provide an accurate understanding of possible risks/side effects. Given this, clinical trials should be representative of the expected target population (i.e. treatments that are expected to be used by both women and men should be tested on both women and men). Yet pharmaceuticals have been primarily tested on males so far (see e.g. Liu and Dipietro Mager, 2016). This means that adverse side effects that are more common in women, or appear only in them, are not identified. For example, little research has been done on the safety of medications during pregnancy (EIWH, 2018).

This has triggered a move towards greater use of female subjects within clinical trials (Lee, 2018) ⁽¹³⁹⁾. Few data are available on the proportion of female clinical trial subjects compared with the proportion of women in the target population. For example, between 22 % and 60 % of European animal immunology studies do not report sex (Thibaut, 2017) and only 16 % of mental health research published between 2012 and 2015 stratified analyses by sex (Howard et al., 2017). The EMA's Clinical Trials Information System will potentially provide a rich data source on gender equality in clinical trials in future, but is not currently available.

There are also some concerns around the gender sensitivity of healthcare and services. For example, women's health services tend to focus on their sexual, reproductive and maternal health, while other health needs are overlooked, particularly in cases of non-communicable diseases. It is also assumed that women experience non-communicable diseases in the same way as men, which can result in misdiagnosis, and ineffective and unequal treatment (WHO Europe, 2016a, 2016b). Conversely, men's health

needs are often presented in terms of non-communicable diseases, with little attention to their sexual, reproductive, family and mental health needs (WHO Europe, 2018).

In this context, it is important to take account of gendered patterns in the use of healthcare and services. For example, men may find it more difficult than women to seek help, because of gender norms around recognising and admitting emotional distress (European Commission, 2011b, p. 303). This has been linked to significantly higher suicide rates among men than women (Olliffe et al., 2012): in the EU, men are almost four times as likely as women to die of suicide (around 17 suicides per 100 000 men compared with 4.5 for women in 2016) ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾. Men across Europe also continue to face stereotypical attitudes that obstruct their access to prevention programmes (European Commission, 2010a).

Women are under-represented in health decision-making

Women constitute the vast majority of the health and care workforce across the EU: 70 % of health professionals, 80 % of health associate professionals and 90 % of personal care workers are women (EIGE, 2018e). Often positions in these sectors are low paid; the high proportion of women in these sectors is a driver of the overall gender pay gap in the EU economy (European Commission, 2018j)

Yet women continue to be under-represented in political health decision-making positions. In 2018 only 30 % of health ministers in the WHO European region were women (WHO, 2018). Furthermore, only 23 % of Member States had a female chief delegate at the 2015 World Health Assembly (ibid.). Women are similarly under-represented in academic leadership positions in healthcare. A study of the gender balance in four Member State academic health centres in

⁽¹³⁹⁾ For example, in 2014 the US National Institute of Health announced a requirement that pre-clinical research funded by it must consider sex, and, as of 2017, the Canadian Institute of Health Research had multiple sex and gender requirements for health research, including a requirement that research applicants incorporate sex and gender into research proposals, research teams include a person with expertise in sex and gender, and grant applicants complete sex and gender training (Lee, 2018).

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Eurostat (tps00122).

2015 found that women accounted for only 31 % and 40 % of senior doctors and 19 % and 28 % of full professors (Kuhlmann et al., 2017). This is despite the fact that improving the participation of women in decision-making may help to ensure that women's needs are reflected in health policy (WHO Europe, 2016c).

2.4. Violence against women (BPfA Area D)

2.4.1. Setting the scope

Violence against women (VAW) is rooted in the unequal balance of power between women and men and is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It is entwined with wider social and cultural structures, norms and values, and is 'often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence' (Council of Europe, 2011). It takes many forms, which often overlap, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, violence within intimate partner relationships and certain emerging types of cyber-violence that have grown exponentially with the rise of digital technology (European Parliament, 2016f).

Prevalence rates of violence against women differ between Member States, although low rates in some countries may at least partly result from high levels of under-reporting and the lack of comprehensive criminal definitions to encompass the reality of repeat victimisation experienced by women (FRA, 2014b). Available data suggest that, overall, gender-based violence⁽¹⁴¹⁾ is widespread in the EU, with one in three women having experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and one in two women having experienced sexual harassment (ibid.). Women and girls also account for the vast majority of victims of trafficking in human beings (European Commission, 2018d, 2018h, 2018p). Certain life circumstances (e.g. living with a disability, being a refugee or asylum seeker, or being economically dependent on a partner) can

increase women's vulnerability to various forms of gender-based violence, and women in such situations may also face barriers and discrimination when accessing necessary support and protection services (European Parliament, 2016f). The recent #MeToo movement has highlighted the pervasiveness of sexual violence and harassment experienced by women from a cross-section of society and across multiple environments (European Parliament, 2018g).

The EU faces several challenges in eliminating all forms of violence against women.

- Enhancing the implementation of legislation and targeted (evidence-based) policies. There is no legislation in place at EU level that comprehensively addresses VAW (European Parliament, 2018k). However, the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU would be decisive in addressing this situation (European Parliament, 2017h). Although most Member States have criminalised some forms of VAW, important differences remain in definitions of violence, with only some countries having a specific criminal offence that addresses violence in intimate relationships (EIGE, 2019d).
- Advancing data collection on VAW. There is a clear need for improvement and harmonisation of data collection practices on VAW across all Member States. This is fundamental for developing and monitoring targeted policies and actions to combat gender-based violence. Common standards of data collection will make better and more comparable data possible, both at Member State level and EU-wide (EIGE, 2019d).
- Applying the due diligence standards to prevent and respond to VAW. Due diligence obligations set out within European and international legal documents for preventing violence against women require the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and provision of specialised training for certain profes-

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ 'Gender-based violence' and 'violence against women' are used interchangeably, as it has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, using the 'gender-based' aspect is important, as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men.

sional groups, including allocating necessary resources (e.g. Council of Europe, 2011). Member States' lack of application of the due diligence principle has been highlighted in European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law (see examples in Council of Europe, 2019c).

- Ensuring the necessary provision of protection and support services for victims of VAW, in line with EU and international regulations. Governments face challenges in providing effective protection and support services for victims, due to significant resource and capacity constraints. Third-sector organisations are often responsible for providing such services, but the shrinking space for civil society detracts from these organisations' ability to provide sufficient support. Issues with referring victims to the relevant support systems, lack of coordinated and robust support, and limited implementation of protection orders have resulted in a serious deficiency in effective protection for victims of VAW (FRA, 2019e). Strong multiagency cooperation is now required to effectively tackle the phenomenon and protect victims.
- Understanding and tackling all forms of VAW. As social, cultural and political contexts change within the EU, new forms of violence have emerged and the prevalence of these different forms has grown. Investing in research and collecting comparable data on all forms of VAW is important in assessing the factors and trends that influence how violence is performed and perpetuated, as well as in creating evidence-based measures that respond to emerging forms of VAW (EIGE, 2017d).

2.4.2. EU policy developments

Since 2013, the EU has taken steps to strengthen the legal framework on VAW. The European Parliament continues to encourage the European Commission to prioritise comprehensive legislation across the EU that tackles gender-based violence (e.g. European Parliament, 2014a). In

both the strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) and the follow-up *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, the Commission has emphasised gender-based violence as a priority area.

The EU has taken steps towards ratifying the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011), with the aim of securing a legislative framework for combating VAW that would apply across the entire EU. In 2017, the Council of the EU adopted two decisions, effectively ensuring the EU's signature of the Istanbul Convention (Council of the European Union, 2017h, Council of the European Union, 2017i). The EU now must accede to the Istanbul Convention for it to become legally binding. Discussions on relevant draft decisions are under way in the Council. As the EU's signature of the convention was limited to areas with exclusive EU competence on judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-*refoulement*, there is some legal uncertainty about the scope of the EU's accession and implementation of the convention (European Women's Lobby, 2018a).

Important steps have been taken at EU level to strengthen laws tackling trafficking in human beings. Trafficking in human beings is explicitly prohibited by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 5.3), and defined by the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU as a particularly serious form of organised crime (Article 83). The EU has in place a comprehensive legal and policy framework to address trafficking, which is centred on human rights and on victims, gender specific and child sensitive, and placed under the horizontal mandate of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator⁽¹⁴²⁾. It is anchored in the EU Anti-trafficking Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011a) and complemented by the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-2016 (European Commission, 2012b) and the 2017 communication (European Commission, 2017l) stepping up EU actions and setting forth targeted priorities: countering the culture of impunity; improving victims' access to their rights; and ensuring that the EU's internal and external actions provide a coor-

⁽¹⁴²⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-anti-trafficking-coordinator_en.

dinated response. The cross-cutting activities are gathering statistical data and ensuring that EU funding matches policy priorities⁽¹⁴³⁾. Taking into account the complexity of the phenomenon and its links, trafficking is also addressed in other relevant instruments, such as the EU's second gender action plan (European Commission, 2015d) and the *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*.

Many activities in this framework concern the gender-specificity of the crime (European Commission, 2016o), including studies developed in cooperation with relevant EU agencies, such as EIGE (2018c) on gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking action or FRA's guide to preventing children from becoming victims and protecting them if they do (FRA, 2019a). The 2017 communication also sets forth the following: working towards achievement of Agenda 2030's targets related to trafficking, with SDG 5.2 being specifically on women and girls; and ensuring that the relevant components of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls are implemented.

Developments towards ending FGM and protecting girls arriving in the EU from FGM-practising countries have also been noted. At EU level, these include the Commission's communication on eliminating FGM (European Commission, 2013a) and the European Parliament (2018i) resolution on zero tolerance for female genital mutilation.

Significant obstacles persist in accessing comparable and high-quality EU data on different forms of VAW. Nonetheless, since 2013, Eurostat and EU agencies (FRA, EIGE, Eurofound) have carried out substantive work in this area, supporting Member States in improving their data collection approaches and advocating for an EU-wide uniform system for mapping data on VAW. In 2014, FRA published the results of the first EU-wide

survey on VAW. Eurofound has continued to monitor levels of sexual harassment in the workplace. Eurostat has further developed its work on the EU-wide survey on gender-based violence⁽¹⁴⁴⁾, together with the collection of crime data from the police and justice systems⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. EIGE has carried out significant work to improve prevalence data on FGM (EIGE, 2018b), trafficking (EIGE, 2018c) and intimate partner violence (EIGE, 2017b). EIGE has also published a study on cyberviolence against women and girls (EIGE, 2017a). This work has contributed to building a clearer picture of emerging trends and issues related to how VAW is perpetrated, tackled and prevented in the EU.

Relevant policy developments outside the EU policy context include the 2017 launch of CEDAW general recommendation No 35, updating general recommendation No 19. This, together with CEDAW itself and regional instruments on VAW, provides 'a legally binding framework on women's rights and violence against women' (UN OHCHR, 2017, page 5) for all EU Member States. CEDAW compels State Parties 'to combat gender-based stereotypes in social and cultural life and to eliminate them in law and public policies, both of which State Parties should fulfil loyally, with due diligence, in good faith and without delay' (European Parliament, 2011a, page 6).

2.4.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Obstacles hinder strengthening the legal framework on violence against women among EU Member States

The process of signing and ratifying the Istanbul Convention by the Member States opened a space for supporters of anti-gender movements to contest the role and significance of this document. This ongoing backlash presents a real threat to women's rights and the

⁽¹⁴³⁾ The approach has been endorsed by Member States, civil society, the European Parliament and international organisations.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Eurostat is currently piloting the survey. This will inform the questionnaire and methodology for collecting data on gender-based violence in the EU. The aim is ultimately for a full-scale survey to cover all Member States in the coming years.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ See Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/crime/data/database>.

mechanisms that support victims of VAW⁽¹⁴⁶⁾. In March 2018, the Council of Europe warned that politicians in public debates were spreading misconceptions about the content and purpose of the convention in order to generate opposition to its ratification⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. Such movements have been strong in some EU countries (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal and Slovakia) and facilitate opposition to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (see Krizsan and Roggeband, 2017a; Zitmane, 2017).

Alongside resistance to ratifying the Istanbul Convention, other challenges are observed in relation to access to justice and the implementation of legislation on gender-based violence (see also Section 2.9.3). These include, to varying degrees in different Member States, the lack of effective protection of women victims of gender-based violence, inadequate responsiveness of the police, under-reporting, and low prosecution and conviction rates (FRA, 2019e). The treatment of domestic violence as subsidiary to more serious offences means that, where a more serious crime has been committed in an intimate relationship, prosecution generally proceeds for the more serious offence, obscuring the gendered dimension of (domestic) violence (e.g. in Portugal, see Council of Europe, 2018b).

Improving the handling of gender-based violence cases

Spain has made considerable efforts to facilitate women's access to justice, strengthen policies to help women suffering from sexual violence, and foster confidence among victims of sex crimes to come forward. In response to controversial court rulings in several sexual violence cases, Spain's government

asked a group of legal experts to revise the sexual assault laws, aiming to unify the different offences under the umbrella term 'rape' (Badcock, 2018). In addition, Organic Law 7/2015 (amending Organic Law 6/1985) expanded the powers of the Courts of Violence against Women, recognising crimes against women's privacy, right to self-image and honour. The legal amendment also introduced a gender variable in judicial statistics, as well as the obligation for judicial staff and forensic doctors to receive training on gender-based violence.

In September 2017, Spain adopted the first State Pact against Gender-based Violence, which sets out the roadmap to follow in the next 5 years (2018-2022), involving an additional financial commitment of EUR 1 000 million. The pact contains a wide range of measures on different sectors, one of them being justice. In order to comply with the pact, Organic Law 5/2018 introduced new aspects of training and specialisation. For instance, the training plan of the General Council of the Judiciary for 2019 includes more than 10 training activities related to gender equality and violence, and highlights the forthcoming completion of the first compulsory training course in gender perspectives for judges. In April 2019, an international congress took place in Spain on the inclusion of a gender perspective in all areas of justice. It was organised by the Women's Institute for the Equality of Opportunities (IMIO), together with the Association of Women Judges of Spain (AMJE) and in collaboration with the General Council of the Judiciary and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). Participants included judges from the ECtHR (UNECE, 2019d).

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ For example, in March 2018, a letter was sent by 333 organisations from eight EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Slovakia) and Ukraine to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, which requested changes to the convention's content regarding 'gender' (<http://www.irs.in.ua/files/publications/Letter-to-Secretary-General-of-CoE-Thorbjorn-Jagland.pdf>).

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ See the Commissioner's video message: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/no-excuse-should-obstruct-the-ratification-and-implementation-of-the-istanbul-convention>.

In Estonia, a pilot project was implemented in 2018 in the city of Pärnu to ensure better protection of victims of domestic violence by enhanced cooperation and improved everyday practices of the police, law enforcement, social and child protection, women's shelters and other relevant bodies. The aim was to provide a coordinated and integrated response to domestic violence by focusing on both victims and perpetrators and to ensure victims' security and empowerment, rapid intervention and case management, and effective needs-based social and psychological support.

Based on the analysis of the results of the project, proposals were made for changes in the organisation, resources and legislation regarding law enforcement and social affairs, local government and victim support organisations that were agreed by the government. From 2019, the new intervention approach will be spread systematically all over Estonia.

A key feature of the piloted intervention logic is the removal of the alleged perpetrator from a particular address and denial of their access to that address for a period of time. This enables victims to remain in their own homes, provided it is considered safe to do so. It makes it possible to provide immediate emergency protection. The piloted approach also provides victims with immediate crisis counselling from the national victim support system and women's shelters. So far, the implementation of this approach has resulted in a visible increase in the number of criminal investigations initiated.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

A comprehensive measurement framework on violence against women is needed for monitoring purposes

There is a significant lack of comprehensive data on VAW. Only 33 % of women who are physically or sexually abused by their partners contact the

authorities and only 20 % of women indicate that the most serious incident of violence by a partner was brought to the attention of the police (FRA, 2014b). Along with under-reporting, data recorded by authorities under-estimate the scale of the phenomenon, as some forms of violence are not considered crimes in all Member States and complaints are not systematically recorded (EIGE, 2019d). Data-recording systems within Member States are rarely operated by specialists in intimate partner violence, so incidents are not always categorised and recorded comparably (EIGE, 2019d).

Services and protection mechanisms do not always meet the relevant legal standards

Protection and support services, such as counselling and shelters for victims and their children, are fundamental in helping women to leave abusive relationships and avoid repeat victimisation (EIGE, 2012b; Htun and Weldon, 2012). To ensure that victims of gender-based violence receive the protection and support services they need, adequate numbers of specialised women's support services (helplines, shelters and advice centres) are required. As yet there is no clear overview of available support and treatment services for victims of violence in the EU. Currently, only Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) collects data and reports on the availability of such services in the EU.

Providing additional support services to victims of gender-based violence

Since the adoption of the Greek national programme on preventing and combating violence against women in 2010, a network of 62 structures was established to support women who are victims of gender-based violence. The network includes a 24/7 bilingual SOS helpline (15900), 40 counselling centres and 21 shelters all over Greece. It provides a range of free services including psychosocial support, legal counselling, emergency accommodation and others.

Since 2016 the target group of this network has been expanded to include, besides women who are victims of gender-based

violence, also women who are victims of multiple discrimination (such as refugees, single parents, Roma and women with disabilities). Notably, in the context of the recent increase in asylum seekers, safe accommodation is now being provided to refugee women who are victims of violence and to refugee women who are at serious risk of gender-based violence. A protocol of cooperation signed by all the competent authorities defines the procedure for identification, referral, provision of support of services and accommodation of women who have refugee status, women who are victims of gender-based violence and their children in the shelters. This was recognised as a good practice by the European Commission (2017k) and by the Council of Europe ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. Since the launch of the programme, approximately 25 000 women have been served in the counselling centres and about 1 500 women and children have been accommodated in the shelters.

In Germany, a nationwide multilingual, free 24/7 helpline for women who are affected by or have experienced violence was intro-

duced in 2013. The specialised staff operating the helpline and giving initial counselling and guidance through the support system include experts on the specific issues of violence suffered in conflict settings. The number of consultations provided rose from about 19 000 in 2013 to about 42 000 in 2018.

In Belgium, in 2017, three sexual assault reference centres have opened. Victims of sexual violence can obtain help from different services (health, police, etc.) in one place, 24 hours a day. After positive evaluation by the victims, it was decided to open three new centres, which will be operational in 2020.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

As part of the Gender Equality Index, EIGE (2017d) selected four indicators to measure state obligations and integrated policies on protection and support for victims of VAW under the Istanbul Convention. Table 2 provides available data for three of the four indicators (EIGE, 2017d) ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ [https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-activities-in-member-states#%2214964719%22:\[3\]](https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-activities-in-member-states#%2214964719%22:[3]).

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Data are lacking for the fourth indicator, support programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence.

Table 2: Overview of support services and protection mechanisms for victims of violence against women

Type of support	Minimum levels of support as outlined in the Istanbul Convention	EU-wide situation and trends
Telephone helplines/hotlines ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾	Availability of at least one 24-hour, free-of-charge hotline, available in different languages.	In 2012, 17 Member States provided a national women's helpline/hotline, with only nine operating on a 24/7 basis and 12 being free of charge (EIGE, 2015a). In 2016, 20 Member States provided a national women's hotline, with 15 operating on a 24/7 basis and 18 being free of charge (WAVE, 2017b). In 2016, only 14 national women's helplines fulfilled all the criteria of the Istanbul Convention (WAVE, 2017b).
Specialist support services for victims ⁽¹⁵¹⁾	Provide or arrange for immediate, short- and long-term specialist support services to any victim subjected to any act of violence in the convention.	In 2012, many Member States did not indicate the exact number of women's centres and services they provided (EIGE, 2012b). In 2016, there were 3 267 women's centres offering various types of services to women victims of gender-based violence (based on data available from 23 out of 28 Member States). The number and types of centres varied greatly between countries (WAVE, 2017b).
Accommodation in specialised women's shelters ⁽¹⁵²⁾	Safe accommodation in specialised women's shelters, available in every region, with one family place per 10 000 head of population. However, the number of shelter places should depend on the need.	In 2013, there were 1 453 women's shelters across the EU-28 with approximately 23 800 beds. In 2016, there were 1 587 women's shelters, with around 20 500 beds available in 26 out of 28 EU Member States (WAVE, 2017a). Based on this estimate, the EU provided about a half of the beds needed in women's shelters in 2016.

Note: The above table is mostly based on concepts and data collections used by WAVE in its 2016 data collection, which was published in 2017 reports. WAVE uses specific methodology to collect data on specialist support services and women's shelters, which is meant to ensure comparability of the data collected across EU Member States but does not always match statistics from official national sources (e.g. because of differences in concepts and definitions, but also other factors). Taking this into consideration, this report presents figures from the WAVE reports only at EU level, as these provide the only estimate available at EU level in this area.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ According to WAVE (2017b, page 7), 'a helpline qualifies as a national women's helpline if it is a service provided specifically for women and if it only, or predominantly, serves women survivors of violence. A women's helpline should operate 24/7, should be free of charge and should serve survivors of all forms of violence against women. It should operate nationally and provide adequate support to women from all regions; this means the staff must be properly trained, have effective communication skills and be knowledgeable about regional situations and all relevant provisions.'

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ WAVE covers specialist support to victims under the term 'women's centre'. According to WAVE (2017b, page 10), this term 'includes all women's services providing non-residential specialist support to victims, serving only or predominantly women survivors of violence and their children. The following services are subsumed under the term: women's counselling and women crises centres, supporting women survivors of all forms of gender-based violence; services focussing on the support of survivors of sexual violence such as rape crisis, sexual assault centres and centres for girls who experienced sexual violence; regional crises centres on domestic violence; pro-active intervention centres serving victims as a follow-up to police interventions; specialist services for black, minority ethnic women, migrant and refugee women victims of violence; outreach services; services providing independent domestic or sexual violence advisors, and other newer types of services.'

⁽¹⁵²⁾ According to WAVE (2017b, page 9), 'A women's shelter is a specialist service for women survivors of violence and their children, if any, providing safe accommodation and empowering support, based on a gendered understanding of violence and focusing on the human rights and safety of victims.'

Sexual harassment is the most widespread form of violence against women in the EU

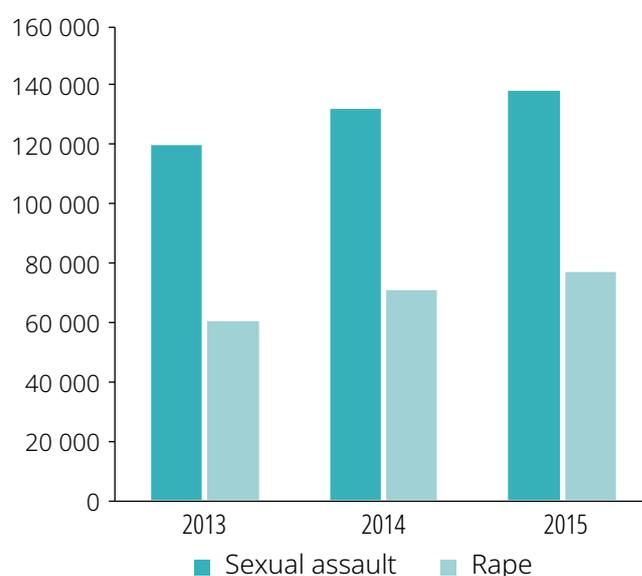
In cases of sexual violence, women are victimised by male perpetrators to a disproportionate degree. In spite of the persisting culture of silence, victim blaming and absence of legislative definitions for specific forms of sexual violence (European Parliament, 2018c), the identification and reporting of rape and sexual assault are steadily increasing across the EU (see Figure 14). One in two women living in the EU have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 (European Parliament, 2018g; FRA, 2014b).

There has been a simultaneous increase in media attention to and public discourse around experiences of sexual harassment and violence, specifically from female victims, most notably in the context of the #MeToo movement. This has provoked a marked rise in public accusations and revelations, and consequently an impetus for Member States to consider how to conceptualise, legislate against and prevent these pandemic forms of violence (European Parliament, 2018b, 2018g).

Sexual harassment in the workplace is widespread across many sectors (see, for instance, Section 2.10) and victims' experiences highlight similarities in how harassment is perpetrated across workplaces (Eurofound, 2015). Over half of EU Member States have committed to preventing sexual violence (chiefly rape and sexual harassment) in workplaces and/or educational settings, and initiatives are being developed to address sexual harassment in public spaces (Eurofound, 2015). For instance, online reporting to the police may make it easier for the victims to report incidents of sexual harassment in public spaces (European Parliament, 2018b).

In 2017, the Dutch cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam made sexual harassment in the street a punishable offence, and The Hague is also considering criminalisation (NOS, 2017). In 2018, the Dutch Labour Party submitted a draft act aimed at criminalising sexual harassment in the street. Whereas sexual assault is already punishable by law, the aim

Figure 14: Total number of recorded offences of rape and sexual assault, across EU-28



Source: Eurostat (data code: crim_off_cat).

Note: Data missing for rape for Italy in all years. Data cover period only until 2015 because statistics for sexual assault in 2016 missing in a number of Member States at the time of writing of the report.

of these measures is to make non-physical sexual intimidation punishable by law, with a fine or even imprisonment. This seeks to protect people, especially women, from being harassed in the streets, whether by hissing, whistling, being followed or being addressed in a hostile, threatening or offensive manner. This is particularly important given the widespread prevalence of such harassment: 84 % of women aged 18-45 experienced sexual intimidation on the street in Rotterdam in 2016 (Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2017). Rotterdam has made greater strides than Amsterdam in addressing this issue (*NL Times*, 2018) thanks to the introduction of an app through which victims can anonymously report incidents of sexual harassment. Victims do not have to file a complaint with the police (NRC, 2018), arguably reducing the pressure on police capacity. Both France and Belgium have also brought in legislation to tackle street harassment and sexist public behaviour, with French law enforcement authorities issuing 713 fines in a year to perpetrators as of August 2019⁽¹⁵³⁾.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Figures communicated by the French State Secretary for gender equality, August 2019. See for example: <https://www.thelocal.fr/20190807/france-fines-more-than-700-men-in-first-year-of-anti-sexual-harassment-law>.

Intimate partner violence continues to receive insufficient focus

Intimate partner violence remains the most prevalent form of VAW worldwide, with an estimated 22 % of women aged 15 and over having experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, and 43 % having experienced psychological intimate partner violence (FRA, 2014b). Despite the high prevalence rate of such violence and its detrimental effects on victims and wider society, only two Member States (Spain and Sweden) define intimate partner violence as a specific offence within their criminal codes (EIGE, 2019d). Where Member States have an offence, act or law ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ related to the broader category of ‘domestic violence’, there can be a tendency for policy and action to frame this form of violence as violence among family members and against children. Consequently, in cases of divorce or separation, violent behaviour of fathers towards their ex-partners and their children’s mothers may not necessarily be considered sufficient basis for restricting their visitation and custodial rights (European Parliament, 2018a).

Cyberviolence primarily affects young women and girls

The increase in social media use and the advancement of digital technology has seen an upsurge in online harassment and abuse against women and girls. Young women are more vulnerable in this context, as they use the internet/social media more than older women (European Parliament, 2016a). Online safety and criminal prosecution of perpetrators remain challenges, given the as yet limited understanding of the specific manifestations of cyberviolence ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾.

Around one in five women living in the EU (20 %) aged 18-29 reported experiencing sexual cyberharassment (FRA, 2014b). Cyberharassment and cyberstalking are elements of the continuum of abuse that women experience, offline and online, from partners, ex-partners or online ‘trolls’ ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. For example, 77 % of women who have experienced cyberharassment have also experienced at least one form of physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner (FRA, 2014b). Many women in public functions, especially those fighting for women’s rights and minority rights (journalists, lawyers, politicians, activists, etc.) are often victims of sexist cyberharassment (European Parliament, 2018c).

Cyberviolence against women is partly addressed through Council of Europe conventions (Budapest, Istanbul and Lanzarote) ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. As yet, however, there is no specific instrument for tackling these forms of violence. The recently adopted General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2016) and the e-Commerce Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2000), as well as directives on victims’ rights (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011a) and on the sexual exploitation of children (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011c), cover some forms of online violence. The European Parliament has called for the recognition of these new forms of VAW (European Parliament, 2018c), and the Commissioners for Digital Economy and Society and for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality have jointly launched an awareness-raising campaign, #DigitalRespect4Her. This campaign promotes existing good practices in addressing these emerging forms of VAW (European Commission, 2019b).

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Eight Member States (Czechia, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia) have a criminal offence reflecting a broader scope, usually termed ‘domestic violence’. In nine Member States (Ireland, Greece, France, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)) there is a domestic violence act or law, or a special provision referring to domestic violence, but no specific offence.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Cyberviolence against women and girls takes many forms, including ‘cyber stalking, non-consensual pornography (or “revenge porn”), gender-based slurs and harassment, “slut-shaming”, unsolicited pornography, “sextortion”, rape and death threats, “doxing”, and electronically enabled trafficking’ (EIGE, 2017a, page 2).

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ ‘Trolling is an act of intentionally provoking and/or antagonising users in an online environment that creates an often desirable, sometimes predictable, outcome for the troll’ (Griffiths, 2014, p. 85).

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ For further details on the conventions, visit <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list>.

Improving safe use of the internet and tackling cyberviolence

As part of its project on domestic and gender-based violence ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾, Czechia undertook a number of analyses (EEA Grants, n.d.). An analysis of gender-based cyberviolence in Czechia provided recommendations to the public sector for decreasing its prevalence, including increasing awareness of the issue, implementing training seminars for professionals working with cases of cyberviolence, and adopting a dedicated strategy to tackle the issue. Czechia's prevention of violence action plan 2019-2022 will aim to address some of these recommendations, through initiatives such as a campaign to raise young people's awareness of cyberviolence and a national strategy to combat cyberviolence.

In Slovenia, a survey was conducted in 2018 on the prevalence and identification of cyberharassment among young people (school children). The survey showed that boys are the most common cyberharassers; that boys are most likely subjected to cyberharassment by persons from their school, whereas girls are harassed by persons outside the school facilities; and that boys are likely to perceive cyberharassment less seriously and to not respond to it, whereas girls are more likely to experience serious consequences of cyberharassment, such as helplessness, depression, stress and fear. Furthermore, training courses for the police, justice, schools, social workers and NGOs were organised. A broad media campaign was launched in 2019 focusing on raising awareness of various forms of cyberviolence, in particular those that frequently affect women and girls.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

Women and girls continue to be the vast majority of victims of trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is a grave human rights violation and a serious crime, which the EU recognises as a form of VAW when committed against women. Women and girls account for more than two thirds of victims. They are overwhelmingly trafficked for sexual exploitation, but also for labour exploitation, forced begging, sham marriages and more. Victims are trafficked within the borders of their own EU Member State, within the EU or to the EU (European Commission, 2018d, 2018h, 2018p).

Perpetrators along the whole trafficking chain take advantage of all structural and contextual vulnerabilities, targeting women and girls, the Roma community and people with disabilities. Trafficking remains a crime driven by the demand for services exacted from the victims and by high financial profits. Europol estimated that globally the annual profit from all forms of trafficking-related exploitation amounts to EUR 29.4 billion, with EUR 25.8 billion being estimated as the global annual profits from trafficking-related sexual exploitation (Europol, 2015). Europol has also reported that based on operational intelligence 'prostitution of minors can be very profitable, as clients are generally prone to pay more to have sex with a child' (Europol, 2018, page 30).

Although criminal networks have taken advantage of the migration challenges, targeting overwhelmingly women and girls, trafficking is not a migration-related phenomenon per se, nor does it require the crossing of borders (European Commission, 2018d, 2018p). In fact, around half of the victims registered in the EU are EU nationals (European Commission, 2018h). Girls are the majority of all registered child victims, mainly EU nationals, and trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Sectors where trafficking for sexual exploitation has been reported include the sex and enter-

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ The project is entitled 'Prevention of domestic and gender-based violence / implementation of gender mainstreaming and the support of work-life balance'.

tainment industries (European Commission, 2018d, pp. 7-8). The online advertisement of sexual services of victims is an increasing concern, including with girls being advertised as adults (European Commission, 2018d, p. 9). In their contribution to the relevant reports by the European Commission, civil society expressed concerns on the normalisation of the crime, with trafficking for sexual exploitation being deprioritised, resulting in victims not being identified and cases not investigated (European Commission, 2018d, p. 32).

Intersecting inequalities increase the risk of violence

Although the phenomenon of violence affects all women, some particularly vulnerable groups face a higher risk. The data presented by EIGE in its Gender Equality Index sub-domain of VAW ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ show that disability substantially increases women's vulnerability to violence, especially violence from a close or intimate partner; 34 % of women with disabilities have suffered intimate partner violence, compared with 19 % of women without disabilities ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾. Yet women with disabilities are rarely explicitly included in strategies for combating VAW. They often are not physically able to access shelters and other facilities, so they remain in violent situations (Mandl et al., 2014).

Other groups are also at increased risk of violence. A study from the region of Catalonia (Spain) highlighted that women heading one-parent households are at high risk of intimate partner violence, in majority of cases from the father of their child(ren). Female-headed households are often subject to higher rates of impoverishment and social exclusion, resulting from a lack of institutional support and, in some cases, economic violence perpetrated by ex-partners (Bosch et al., 2019).

In recent years, Member States have experienced greater flows of migrants and refugees, temporarily increasing the numbers of applicants seeking

asylum (see Section 2.5 for more detail). Women on the move are at grave risk of gender-based and sexual violence in all stages of their journey, even while in Europe (European Parliament, 2016c). Adopting a gender-sensitive asylum system within the EU would allow improved protection of victims at reception structures, gender-sensitive risk assessment upon arrival, and onward referral and care (EIGE, 2018b). In the Common European Asylum System Directives (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2013b and 2013c), Member States are obliged to take gender into consideration in reception conditions for asylum seekers and refugees, and in the refugee status determination process (Freedman, 2016). Ensuring sufficient presence of women among police officers and interpreters can contribute to safeguarding the dignity of women during entry checks (including body search, first registration and other procedures) in migration hotspots, as well as playing an important role in facilitating the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence (FRA, 2019d).

2.5. Women and armed conflict (BPfA Area E)

2.5.1. Setting the scope

In the original 1995 Beijing Declaration, the term 'armed conflict' covers a number of different phenomena (such as interstate wars, colonial or other forms of alien domination and foreign occupation, civil wars and terrorism), which continue to plague many parts of the world (United Nations, 1995). In these contexts, women can act as fundamental forces for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels. At the same time, they are at risk of specific gendered acts of violence, such as killing, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy and forced abortion (United Nations, 1995). Therefore, within the Beijing Platform for Action, the area of armed conflict focuses on the importance of recognising women as

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/violence>.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ EIGE's calculation based on data from FRA's Survey on violence against women in EU (2012), retrieved from <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey?mdq1=theme&mdq2=3506>

actors for peace, as well as addressing the negative impacts of armed conflict on women, such as conflict-related sexual violence and forced displacement. These themes were thereafter incorporated as a basis of UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) on women, peace and security (WPS) (particularly UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820) (United Nations Security Council, 2000, 2008), which have come to constitute the main framework for the EU and its Member States when addressing Area E of the BPfA.

A number of challenges persist in the EU.

- Recognising women's agency and ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations and other conflict resolution activities, such as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) ⁽¹⁶¹⁾ missions and operations. Effectively supporting women's participation requires encouraging women's contributions at all levels in different conflict areas. While women forcefully contribute to peacebuilding at local levels (Cardona et al., 2012; Gizelis, 2011), their access to formal, high-level peace processes remains disproportionately low.
 - Developing and institutionalising effective means to tackle violence, including sexual violence, in conflict and fragile contexts in a gender-aware manner. Efforts to address and prevent these forms of violence have regained attention recently and include a focus on violent extremism, terrorism and migration (particularly as this relates to issues of trafficking for sexual purposes). It is key that VAW is tackled effectively, but without perpetuating the portrayal of women as solely victims. Such an image can undermine women's potential in building and maintaining peace (Cohn et al., 2004; Krause et al., 2018; Martinelli, 2015).
 - Consulting asylum-seeking and displaced women, and providing them with interna-
- tional protection, assistance and training ⁽¹⁶²⁾. Displacement is a clear consequence of armed conflict, in which women experience gendered challenges such as stress and trauma, health complications (particularly for pregnant women), injury, and the risk of exploitation and gender-based violence. In 2014 it was estimated that at least one in five refugees or displaced women had experienced some form of sexual violence (Vu et al., 2014). Women also typically take on caring roles for children and older relatives, which increases their need for support and protection (UN Women, 2015).
 - Continuing to move from words to action. To date, overcoming a lack of political will has presented a key challenge. Political pressure is needed to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective within the security and defence agenda, along with sufficient capacity among practitioners to address such issues (Olsson and Gizelis, 2014). The introduction of recent targets, such as the goal to include gender mainstreaming within 85 % of all new EU initiatives by 2020 under the second gender action plan, suggests some progress in overcoming this challenge (European Commission, 2015d). However, this needs to be maintained.
 - Lack of good-quality and comprehensive EU-wide monitoring data. Although a set of indicators has been developed progressively in the context of the EU's comprehensive approach ⁽¹⁶³⁾ to monitor UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 on WPS (Council of the European Union, 2017f), the issues being measured are complex and difficult to define or monitor, and the data remain incomplete. The EU has highlighted the need for more sex-disaggregated data, alongside improved gender expertise, leadership and resources (Council of the European Union, 2017f). The Council of the EU has also called for the consolidation of monitoring efforts and indica-

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ The CSDP plays a vital role in the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management, through the deployment of civilian and military assets.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ Under strategic objective E5, this includes vocational and professional training, language training and other types.

⁽¹⁶³⁾ This has since been replaced by the strategic approach.

tors (e.g. from UNSCRs on WPS and the BPfA) to harmonise reporting (Council of the European Union, 2018).

2.5.2. EU policy developments

The EU has competence to set and implement a common foreign and security policy under the Treaty on European Union, and shares competence with Member States for areas related to women and armed conflict, including migration and security⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. The EU does not have competence, however, to translate international commitments relating to women and armed conflicts into law at Member State level. However, Member States can adopt national action plans in order to address issues linked to Area E at national level⁽¹⁶⁵⁾, as required under UNSCR 1325. By the end of 2018, 20 EU Member States⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ had implemented such action plans, compared with 17 at the end of 2013.

Important EU-level measures to address issues related to women and armed conflict include incorporating a gender perspective in CSDP missions and operation activities; training relevant staff on gendered aspects of armed conflict; and encouraging women's participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. In relation to women's participation, this work includes both seeking to increase women's participation in EU's own peace and security efforts, and engagement with women's CSOs. In addition, the EU's initiatives focus on ensuring gender-sensitive asylum processes, a topic that has grown in importance in recent years. Significant recent developments relate to functions and policy frameworks guiding gender mainstreaming, and efforts to improve women's participation and protection.

The EU's approach to mainstreaming gender to achieve gender equality in external action is outlined in the second gender action plan, 2016-2020 (European Commission, 2015d). In 2015, the EU created a senior position, the EEAS⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ principal advisor on gender and on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS. The aim is to support the integration of a gender perspective in EU exchanges with other actors focused on policy and action in relevant areas at international, regional and national levels, and to generally foster internal coordination so that the WPS agenda is visible and prioritised (EPLO, n.d.). In addition, the EU continues to make use of expert support functions such as gender advisers and gender focal points (Villellas et al., 2016).

In 2017, the Council of the EU highlighted considerable advances in gender mainstreaming in CSDP missions, mandates and strategic documents. All strategic planning documents now include a commitment to integrating human rights and gender (Council of the European Union, 2017f). Recently, the EU acknowledged the importance of including a gender perspective in programme design in conflict and fragile contexts in both its strategic approach to WPS (Council of the European Union, 2018a) and the EU gender action plan 2016-2020 (European Commission, 2015d). Building on earlier commitments to gender mainstreaming⁽¹⁶⁸⁾, the strategic approach commits to systematically integrating a gender perspective into all peace and security activities⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

The newly adopted EU strategic approach to WPS⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ reinforces the importance of women's participation (Council of the European Union, 2018). Specifically, the EU commits to providing diplomatic and financial support, and to introducing measures to ensure the participation of

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ See <https://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/competences/faq#q1>

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ These can be found at <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ ()Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ The EU's diplomatic service, whose areas of work include security, defence and crisis response.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ The comprehensive approach, which was replaced by the strategic approach, committed to ensuring that European Security and Defence Policy staff were trained in gender awareness and that gender was systematically incorporated into training courses in all relevant sectors.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Including policy and strategy development, research and analysis, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Which replaces the comprehensive approach.

women from diverse backgrounds. The gender action plan 2016-2020 reiterates that commitment, including in the context of peacebuilding (European Commission, 2015d). The EU aims to achieve this by supporting civil society and grassroots women's organisations (Council of the European Union, 2015a). Promoting women's participation in peacebuilding is also a stated aim of the 2016 EU global strategy (Council of the European Union, 2016c).

In response to the UN's focus on addressing sexual violence in armed conflict and violent extremism, in 2016 the Council of the EU developed two new indicators to measure the progress of the comprehensive approach (2016e). These aim to measure the support provided by the EU and Member States to address sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict contexts, as well as promoting gender-sensitive policies that aim to counter violent extremism.

A notable development in supporting and protecting asylum-seeking women is EU Directive 2013/32/EU on international protection, which recognised the need for gender-sensitive asylum processes. In addition, the EU is now taking steps to ratify the Istanbul Convention (see Section 2.4), which requires gender-based persecution to be recognised as a ground for asylum. This is also addressed to some extent by the gender action plan 2016-2020, which aims to provide protection for all women and men, including refugees, against sexual and gender-based violence in crisis situations. Despite these developments, women continue to experience varying reception conditions and varying levels of gender-sensitive support when making asylum claims, primarily because of gaps in EU law and differences in the implementation of EU law at national level (European Parliament Think Tank, 2016).

At the same time, the EU has taken a largely 'securitised' ⁽¹⁷¹⁾ approach to migration, in which migration has often been framed in terms of terrorism, negative impacts on resources and

potential threats to Western culture (Beck, 2017; Gerard and Pickering, 2014). The recent increase in the number of asylum seekers has been described as a 'crisis', with the response focusing chiefly on controlling the EU's external borders (European Council, 2018a, 2018b). The European Agenda on Migration represents the European Commission's initial policy response to the increased numbers of asylum seekers in 2015 (Degani and Ghanem, 2019). Although that document emphasises the importance of saving lives and protecting asylum seekers, it is still 'securitised', given its focus on border management and reducing incentives for irregular migration (European Commission, 2015b). Importantly, this response is also gender-blind, which means that the vulnerabilities and specific needs of female asylum seekers are ignored (Degani and Ghanem, 2019).

Research has highlighted several gaps in the EU's consideration of gender in policy documents and the level of focus this receives in practice (Deiana and McDonagh, 2018; Joachim and Schneiker, 2012; Joachim et al., 2017). Two underlying problems can influence this: a lack of clear objectives in mainstream political processes ⁽¹⁷²⁾; and a need to improve capacity and expertise/training within the EU on gender and conflict.

Yet some promising developments have been seen recently. The second gender action plan, 2016-2020, set a target of ensuring that 85 % of all new programmes will have gender equality as either a 'principal' or a 'significant' objective ⁽¹⁷³⁾. There has been some progress towards this target over recent years. In terms of neighbourhood and enlargement negotiations, 55.5 % of new actions in 2018 had gender equality as a 'principal' or 'significant' objective, compared with 43.1 % in 2017 and 46 % in 2016. The figures for international cooperation and development were 68.4 % in 2018, 65.9 % in 2017, 58.8 % in 2016 and 51.6 % in 2015. The proportion of new programmes by EU Member States that had 'principal' or 'significant' gender equality objec-

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ In which a policy issue is framed as a security issue, and, as such, one that requires a security-based response.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ Although, as explained above, there have recently been new targets and objectives at EU level, suggesting an improvement in this area.

⁽¹⁷³⁾ According to the OECD gender equality policy marker, see OECD (2016c).

tives totalled 50.5 % in 2018, compared with 50.1 % in 2017 and 43.8 % in 2016 (European Commission, 2019d). In addition, the Commission allocated EUR 419 million to actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment, representing a significant increase since 2015 (when EUR 188 million was committed for these purposes).

However, little progress has been made to date in incorporating a gender perspective into EU dialogues with partners, and there is 'much to be done' to ensure the mainstreaming of gender into the entire planning process (Council of the European Union, 2017d, page 4). EU action has also been criticised for insufficient attention to negative gender stereotyping, having focused primarily on women as victims of conflict-related sexual violence (Martinelli, 2015; Muehlenhoff, 2017). Another critique is that the EU excessively focuses on women as individuals and does not sufficiently appreciate the broader social structures that constrain them in the context of armed conflict⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ (Muehlenhoff, 2017). The new strategic approach to WPS plans to address such gaps by, for instance, taking into consideration how discriminatory social structures may prevent women from meaningful engagement (Council of the European Union, 2018).

2.5.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Women's representation falls short in the EU's security and defence sector

The diplomatic sector plays a central role in conflict resolution and ensuring future peace. The full involvement of women in diplomatic processes is necessary to ensure that the different gender perspectives are taken into account throughout all phases of resolution. The value of ensuring women's participation in peace negotiations is supported by a recent study, which found a correlation between peace agreements signed by women and durable peace following civil war (Krause et al., 2018). Furthermore, the involvement of women's groups may help to push forward the negotiation process when

momentum is lost (O'Reilly et al., 2015). To support women's inclusion with credibility, the EU and its Member States need to ensure that their own security and defence institutions and forums practise what they preach, with balanced representation of the genders. However, existing data, while still limited, underline that the EU still fall far short in all personnel categories.

The latest report monitoring EU's implementation of the WPS agenda (Council of the European Union, 2017f), shows that, between 2013 and 2015, women headed 22 % of Member States' diplomatic missions. This proportion is almost unchanged compared with 2010-2012 (21 %) but is slightly higher than in 2008-2010 (18 %). Despite this slow overall progress, countries with specific plans to reduce gender gaps have seen notable improvements in their gender balance across their diplomatic services. In Finland, for instance, women accounted for almost a half of heads of missions and two thirds of staff newly recruited to the diplomatic services, increasing their overall representation to around a half (Council of the European Union, 2017f).

In the EEAS, the EU's diplomatic service, women held 28 % of management positions in 2019, and one in four delegations were led by women. Although women continue to be under-represented in this area, it is nevertheless an increase compared with 2013, when women accounted for 21 % of management positions and 19 % of heads of delegations (European Parliament, 2019d). The EEAS points to the lack of female applicants (just 21 % of all applications in 2017) as the main reason for low female representation among heads of delegations (Council of the European Union, 2017f).

There are some signs of improvement in civilian CSDP missions and operations. Five of the ten civilian missions active in 2016 were headed by women, and the proportion of women deployed in civilian missions and operations rose from 20 % to just over 29 % between 2007 and 2016 (European Parliament, 2017l). However, there are no detailed data on the proportion of

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ And, more broadly, in relation to participation in peacebuilding or diplomacy.

women deployed in military or police CSDP missions since 2015.

These efforts of the EU and Member States need to work in tandem with efforts for local women's participation. Notably, at the Member State level, specific actions have been taken to empower and support women to participate in peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes. Germany launched its second UNSCR 1325 national action plan for the period 2017-2020, updating the provisions of the first national action plan (2013-2016). The ultimate goals of the current plan are to strengthen the WPS agenda at the national, regional and international levels, and to prevent crisis and armed conflict. To realise these goals, the plan encourages the systematic integration of a gender perspective in all phases of conflict (prevention, resolution, stabilisation, peacebuilding, reconstruction and rehabilitation). In Sweden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a national action plan that included a policy to empower women and girls to participate in conflict prevention (Swedish Foreign Service, 2018). In Cyprus, a technical committee on gender equality (established in 2016) has been recognised by the UN Secretary-General as a positive development to improve the level of women's participation within peacebuilding negotiations (CEDAW, 2017a). Member States have also funded programmes that support women's involvement in peacebuilding. For example, in Scotland (UK), the Women in Conflict Fellowship (funded by the Scottish Government) has been renewed every year since 2015 (CEDAW, 2017b). The initiative was established to train women from areas of conflict around the world for them to play an integral role in the peace processes. It is expected that this programme will support at least 250 women by 2021 (Scottish Government, 2017).

Rise in the number of asylum seekers highlighted the need for protection and integration of refugees

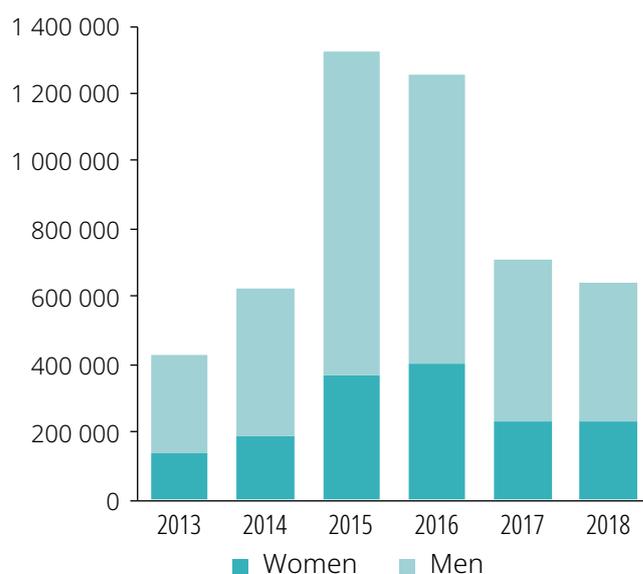
The recent increase in the number of asylum seekers in Europe saw asylum applications in

EU countries reach a peak of 1.3 million in 2015. Although this number halved in 2018, it is still significantly higher than in 2013 (see Figure 15). The reduction in the numbers of asylum seekers since 2015 can be explained by additional border control measures implemented by the EU (European Council, 2018b). Around 40 % of the applications made between 2013 and 2018 came from displaced citizens of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, all countries affected by conflict. In general, most asylum applications are from men ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

Although more than half of asylum applications have gone to several larger Member States (Germany, France, Italy and Spain), there are significant differences between countries in terms of applications per capita of population, as well as the gender balance among applicants (see Figure 16). Notably, smaller island countries (Cyprus and Malta), as well as Greece and Luxembourg, had proportionately much higher rates of applications, while applications were much less frequent in the eastern European Member States.

The proportion of female applicants also varies by age, with more women in the youngest

Figure 15: Asylum applications, EU-28



Source: Eurostat, Asylum statistics (data code: migr_asyappctza).

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ The proportion of women ranged from 27.8 % in 2015 to 35.8 % in 2018.

and oldest age groups ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. For receiving countries, the combination of the age and gender of applicants requires different considerations when it comes to providing protection and assistance. It is crucial that national asylum procedures be sensitive and respond to such differences.

For example, women may face gendered challenges in accessing asylum, including difficulties with travelling (for financial or cultural reasons), lack of awareness of their rights, greater difficulties in establishing the harm they have experienced (e.g. when this took place in the private sphere), the presence of family members during the asylum process, and trauma or shame (European Parliament Think Tank, 2016). Women and girls on the move are also at serious risk of being subjected to gender-based and sexual violence throughout their journeys (see Sections 2.4 and 2.12 for detail).

Individuals who receive refugee status are entitled to be reunited with their partners and children, but their partners (most often women) may lack entitlement to important integration measures, such as language and employment support. This can result in some older individ-

uals remaining ‘in limbo, far from their family for prolonged periods of time’, as occurred in Greece (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Older people may also face additional barriers in accessing asylum processes, such as higher levels of psychological distress and physical health issues (ibid.).

At national level, positive and negative examples were found of identifying and supporting vulnerable asylum seekers, and of the integration of gender considerations within asylum processes. The following are of concern.

- In Hungary, the recent rise in asylum applications in the EU has been used as a means to declare a ‘crisis situation due to mass immigration’ that justified the undermining of the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of recognised refugees, in blatant violation of international human rights obligations. Because of this, the Council of Europe’s commissioner for human rights, Dunja Mijatović, has recently urged the Hungarian government to ‘refrain from using anti-migrant rhetoric and continuous campaigns which fan xenophobic attitudes’ (Council of Europe, 2019b).

Figure 16: Asylum applications per 10 000 population by gender of applicant, EU-28, 2018



Source: Eurostat, Asylum statistics (data code: migr_asyappctza).

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ In 2018, women represented 45 % of applicants aged under 18 and almost 60 % of those aged over 65, but just 28.6 % of the 18-34 age group and 40 % of those aged 35-64.

- In Italy, the new security decree of December 2018 abolishes humanitarian protection status and therefore reduces the number of people eligible for protection. According to FRA, 'the situation of people still holding humanitarian protection status will worsen due to the difficulties they face in changing their status to another kind of residence permit' (FRA, 2019b, p. 19).
- In Greece, international authorities denounced the inadequacy of the living conditions prevailing in reception camps. They observed overcrowded facilities, recurring and widespread allegations of sexual and gender-based violence, and, in several cases, inadequate sanitation facilities, 'which women told the Commissioner they were afraid to [use] for security reasons, especially at night' (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 4).
- In other Member States (e.g. Germany and Poland), no standardised procedures are in place to recognise vulnerable asylum seekers; this means that asylum seekers can have difficulties with accessing special care (e.g. in Bulgaria, Greece and Austria), and with reception facilities that are inadequate for vulnerable persons (e.g. in Germany, Spain, Italy and Finland) (FRA, 2018e).

Providing gender-sensitive services in the reception of asylum seekers

In Belgium, the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers gives special attention to the reception and health of the most vulnerable groups among asylum seekers (e.g. pregnant women, girls and single mothers, victims of gender-based violence). The specific needs of these groups have been taken into account in the minimum standards of reception (including material assistance and social, legal, medical and psychological support, among others). To this end, a large study

was conducted in 2015-2018 on how vulnerable persons with special needs are identified and cared for in reception facilities, to better take their needs into account.

The medical care received by each new international protection applicant upon arrival at the reception centre includes the assessment of vulnerabilities and the development of specific support. For example, there is specific support for women and girls who have suffered or are at risk of female genital mutilation. Reproductive and sexual health services are also available within reception centres. For example, there is pregnancy-related support that includes first- and second-line counselling, and access to contraception and abortion in accordance with the legal framework. A specific website was also developed to facilitate and simplify communication about sexual health with newcomers who speak other languages. It contains easily accessible information on sexual health, available in 14 languages⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

Finally, since 1 October 2018, new internal rules and regulations have been implemented in all the reception facilities of the reception network of the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. They prohibit discrimination, harassment, and sexual and gender-based violence. They are available in 12 languages and explained at the reception of each new beneficiary.

More broadly, it is important to note that Belgium is implementing its third national action plan, 'Women, peace and security' (2017-2021). Different departments ensure its implementation (including gender equality) in close collaboration with civil society. Reporting is done annually to Parliament.

Note: This box is based on Member State reporting to UNECE or EIGE.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ <https://www.zanzu.be/en>.

Incomplete information on gender-sensitive training in common security and defence policy missions and operations

The provision of appropriate gender-sensitive training and the use of gender advisors are key tools in developing the capacity and expertise to ensure that gender is integrated in dealing with armed conflict, and mainstreamed throughout security and defence activities.

The most recent data collected to monitor the comprehensive approach to the EU's implementation of the UNSCRs on WPS (Council of the European Union, 2008) show, despite some serious data limitations, that over 90 % of staff deployed to UN or EU CSDP missions by Member States receive gender-related training. Member States organise, on average, 30 training activities on gender and WPS each year (Council of the European Union, 2017f).

In March 2017, all CSDP civilian missions had full-time gender advisors (44 %), gender advisors who also performed other roles (33 %) or a gender focal point (22 %), while all CSDP military operations had either gender advisors who also performed other roles (50 %) or a gender focal point (50 %) (Council of the European Union, 2017f). NATO (2016) also reports that, in 2015, 74 % of its member countries had trained gender advisors and 42.3 % had gender focal points, and that these figures are rising year on year.

Overall, the data suggest that gender-sensitive training and gender advisors are reasonably widespread among missions, although means of evaluation of their impact remains lacking (Olsson and Sundstrom, 2013).

This development should also be seen in the context of most defence forces having introduced an integrated gender-mainstreaming approach to their training activities and operations. For

example, NATO (2016) reports that 96 % of member nations include gender perspective in their pre-deployment training and exercises, and 78 % in their operational planning. Both figures are said to represent an improvement compared with 2015. However, there is no means of assessing either the quality of the training (content, duration, etc.) or its implementation in practice.

Armed forces are opening up to women, but recruitment is slow

Although the focus of the WPS agenda is on disarmament and preventing conflict and war, the armed forces still have a substantial role to play in maintaining security and peace and in resolving armed conflicts. Although genders should have equal input, women's participation may present challenges within a culture that is built around masculine traits (see King, 2015; Wibben, 2018).

Historically, women have been restricted from accessing parts of the military, particularly close combat roles (involving direct engagement and exposure to enemy forces) (Cawkill et al., 2009). In most Member States, however, that is no longer the case. In the absence of EU data, NATO can provide insights. In 2014, 7 of the (then) 28 NATO member countries ⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ still had some form of restriction governing the access of women to the armed forces, but by 2016 that number had fallen to one (Turkey), with France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom all removing their previous restrictions (NATO, 2016) ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾.

Although the armed forces are now (more or less) fully open to women, in 2016 women accounted for just over 1 in 10 (10.9 %) of the members of the armed forces in NATO member countries ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾, marginally more than in 2013 (10.5 %). Women were least well represented among the highest ranked officers in NATO member countries and best represented

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ In 2014, 22 of the 28 NATO member countries were EU Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ The restrictions remaining in 2014 were mostly related to working on submarines or similar craft where the design of the craft and equipment limited the possibilities of accommodating both sexes (in France, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands). Restrictions in the United Kingdom and the United States related to combat roles.

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Excluding non-EU members gives a similar average, 10.8 %.

among the lowest ranked officers (9.5 % and 14.7 % respectively), explained in part by the relatively recent entry of significant numbers of women to the armed forces. A notable counter-example is the appointment of a female army chief of staff in Slovenia in 2018, the first in a NATO member country ⁽¹⁸¹⁾. Among EU Member States that are NATO members or partners, the proportion of women in the armed forces ranges from 2 % (Austria and Finland) to 20 % (Hungary). Women make up just 6.3 % of personnel deployed by NATO member countries in all operations (African Union, EU, NATO, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), UN), suggesting that women are even less likely to hold roles linked to active deployment (NATO, 2016).

Sexual violence against female military personnel is an increasingly prominent concern in some countries. In the United Kingdom, surveys of personnel within the Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines in 2015 found that 90 % of all personnel had experienced sexualised behaviours in the preceding year (Godier-McBard et al., 2017). Furthermore, allegations of sexual assault have been made by female personnel against male personnel, most recently in April 2019, when six British soldiers were arrested following claims of sexual assault (Rahim, 2019). Similarly, sexual harassment of female personnel has previously been highlighted in the French armed forces (Lichfield, 2014).

2.6. Women and the economy (BPfA Area F)

2.6.1. Setting the scope

Women's economic empowerment is broadly recognised as a prerequisite for fairer and more inclusive economic growth (Cuberes

and Teignier, 2016; EIGE, 2017c; OECD, 2018). A recent study by EIGE (2017c) shows that improving gender equality could lead to substantial long-term gains for the EU economy, increasing its GDP per capita by as much as 9.6 % by 2050.

Research shows that, since the financial crisis, the EU has seen a shift in its priorities, leading to an employment policy largely devoid of gender (Kantola and Lombardo, 2017). Whereas the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis were initially most severe on men's employment in the private sector, the subsequent austerity measures affected public spending and services largely used by women, as well as public sector employment, which is female dominated (Rubery, 2015).

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that there remain persistent gender employment and pay gaps despite the recent recovery of the EU labour market. The employment rate of women rose by about 4 p.p. from 2013 to 66.5 % in 2017 ⁽¹⁸²⁾, but it is still 11.5 p.p. below that of men, despite women outperforming men in education ⁽¹⁸³⁾. Once in employment, women face a gender-segregated labour market and associated disparities in the quality of jobs: women's work remains more concentrated in part-time, temporary ⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ or precarious employment (EIGE, 2017f). This continues to contribute to substantial income inequalities, with the gender pay gap standing at 16.2 % in 2017 ⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ and the gender pension gap reaching almost 40 % (European Commission, 2018a).

Together, these inequalities tend to lead to particularly acute economic disadvantages for vulnerable groups of women, including younger and older women, single women with dependent children, and women from migrant communities or from other minority groups (EIGE, 2016d; FRA, 2016; RAND, 2014).

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ For more detail, see <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-slovenia-army/slovenia-appoints-first-female-army-chief-idUSKCN1NW1JU>

⁽¹⁸²⁾ Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data codes: lfsa_ergaed). In 2017, 66.5 % of women aged 20-64 were in employment, compared with 78 % of men of the same age.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data codes: edat_lfse_03). In 2017, 30 % of women aged 15-64 had completed tertiary education, compared with 26 % of men of the same age.

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data codes: lfsa_ergaed, lfsa_epgaed).

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Source: Eurostat, Structure of Earnings Survey (data code: sdg_05_20).

Many of the obstacles to women's participation in the labour market originate from the unequal distribution of care and other responsibilities within the household (European Commission, 2018a). The disproportionate amount of time spent on caring activities makes it difficult for women to achieve a good work-life balance, especially since access, affordability, availability and quality of care in the EU still present particular challenges (European Commission, 2018a). The design of tax and benefit systems has also been identified as weakening the incentive for a second earner to enter or stay in the labour market (European Parliament, 2017b; Thévenon, 2013). While working flexibly can help balance work with caring activities to some extent, it can also reinforce the traditional division of caring responsibilities within the family (Chung and Van der Lippe, 2018).

Finally, technological advancements and digitalisation are transforming the world of work, which presents both challenges and opportunities for women. On the one hand, women are more likely to hold jobs at risk of future automation (Zitmane, 2017). On the other hand, the vast under-representation of women in the ICT professions is a waste of highly qualified human resources and talent. The same applies to the disproportionately low percentage of women among entrepreneurs. If these human resources remain untapped, it may threaten the EU's innovative and economic potential in the future (EIGE, 2018f).

Overall, there is a broad range of EU-wide data to cover the challenges described above, focusing particularly on labour market outcomes (e.g. gender employment or pay gaps). However, data on the underlying causes of gender inequalities in the labour market are less comprehensive. For example, EU-wide data on the take-up of different types of care related leave are limited and not comparable between countries (see, for example, Eurofound, 2019, on the take-up of parental and paternity leave by fathers). Similarly, the availability of comparable data on different causes of the gender pay gap in different EU Member States remains an issue;

comparable data are available for some potential causes (e.g. labour market segregation) but not others (e.g. career breaks) (European Commission, 2018j).

2.6.2. EU policy developments

The Europe 2020 strategy provides a multi-year plan for the EU economy. Within this agenda, the European Semester process aims to coordinate the economic and social policies of Member States in order to address the challenges faced by the EU and individual Member States. It is worth mentioning that its headline target of 75 % of people aged 20-64 being in work by 2020 does not distinguish between women and men, even though the strategy acknowledges the need of greater involvement of women to meet this target.

The European Semester has tackled women's employment by issuing country-specific recommendations (CSRs). In 2017, a CSR on female labour market participation was addressed to 10 Member States⁽¹⁸⁶⁾. It related in particular to ensuring the availability of high-quality child-care facilities, facilitating the take-up of work for second earners and reducing the gender pay gap (European Commission, 2018a).

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the EU has focused on creating a more social Europe (European Commission, 2016m), marked by the introduction of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017. One of the 20 principles enshrined in the pillar is to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in all areas, including labour market participation, terms and conditions of employment, career progression and equal pay for work of equal value (European Commission, 2017e).

Since 2013, the EU has bolstered initiatives to tackle the gender pay gap. The 2014 Pay Transparency Recommendation (European Commission, 2014k) provided guidance to Member States on how to apply the principle of equal pay and achieve greater transparency to tackle

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

pay inequalities, although, as it is a non-binding measure, implementation is reported to be limited (European Commission, 2017h) ⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. The recommendation was followed in 2017 by the EU action plan (2017-2019) on tackling the gender pay gap (European Commission, 2017c), which called on Member States to apply effective equal pay legislation. The *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* also includes closing the gender pay gap as a priority (European Commission, 2015i). Most recently, the Council of the European Union endorsed the importance of pay inequalities by adopting conclusions on closing the gender pay gap: key policies and measures (Council of the European Union, 2019).

Meanwhile, steps to address occupational and sectoral segregation have been less prominent. The current pay gap action plan identifies combating segregation as an area for action; relevant policy developments tend to focus on education and training (see Section 2.2 of this report) and the future labour supply, rather than on the current workforce and their employers. There have also been some measures (e.g. the 2012 Entrepreneurship Action Plan — European Commission, 2012d) intended to confront the barriers that women face in starting a business ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

A framework for tackling work–life balance and the care penalty — which has a far greater impact on women than on men — is established by both the European Pillar of Social Rights and the pay gap action plan. More specific action is being taken through the Directive on work–life balance for parents and carers (European Commission, 2017j), which entered into force in August 2019. The directive aims to bolster entitlements to family-related leave and flexible working arrangements and increase their take-up by men, thereby facilitating more equal sharing of care responsibilities ⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. Mem-

ber States are required to comply with it within 3 years (European Parliament, 2019c). In the European Commission, the EPSCO Council's advisory committees have established a working group on work–life balance to develop indicators to measure the take-up of paternity and parental leave and potentially carers' leave.

2.6.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Austerity and deregulation of work have lasting negative consequences for the employment prospects of women

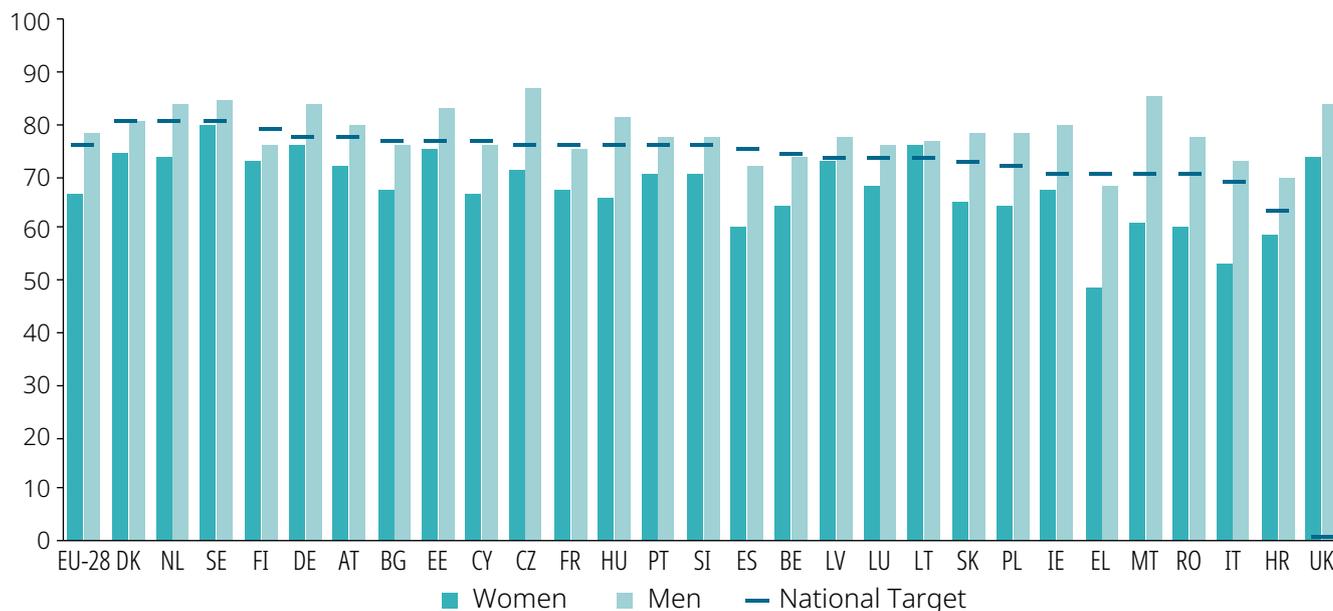
Although the 2008 financial crisis was predominantly seen as a crisis of male employment, the austerity measures adopted in its aftermath had a long-lasting negative effect on women's situation on the labour market. This was particularly due to public sector cuts (European Public Service Union, 2016; Rubery, 2015) and worsening job conditions (see other parts of this section below for details). EU Member States often sought to reduce public spending through wage cuts and reduction of employment in the public sector as a response to the crisis (European Public Service Union, 2016; Rubery, 2015). This was likely to be most harmful to women, who form a majority of public sector employees in the EU. Yet the impact of these measures on women was not usually assessed beforehand (European Public Service Union, 2016; Rubery, 2015).

Although the data available to assess this are limited, it seems this had lasting impacts on women (European Public Service Union, 2016). A study of eight EU Member States shows that, as of 2016, there were fewer public sector jobs for women in at least five of the countries covered and the gender pay gap also seems to have widened in the public sector (European Public Service Union, 2016). Despite some signs of recovery from the

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ The Commission's 2017 assessment of the implementation of the Pay Transparency Recommendation found that two thirds of the countries surveyed (EU-28 plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) had not adopted any pay transparency measures specifically linked to the principle of equal pay between women and men.

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ In 2017, women accounted for just 32.3 % of all people recorded as self-employed (with or without employees) in the EU (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (lfsa_esgan)).

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ The new directive takes the place of proposed changes to the Maternity Leave Directive, which was withdrawn in 2015 following lack of agreement among Member States (Europarl, 2019c), and should ultimately lead to the repeal of the existing Framework Agreement on Parental Leave (Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010).

Figure 17: Employment rate and Europe 2020 targets, persons aged 20-64, 2017

Sources: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data code: Ifsa_ergaed) and national Europe 2020 targets ⁽¹⁹⁰⁾.

Note: Breaks in the series for Belgium, Denmark and Ireland. No national target set for UK.

crisis, in none of the Member States had the situation been restored to the pre-crisis level by 2016.

This shrinking of the public sector, together with worsening job conditions, has wider implications for gender equality in the EU. The austerity measures affected a range of public spending and services that are bound to have particularly negative effects on women, including cuts to various care services, the introduction of means testing of benefits at household level (see Section 2.1) or pension reforms that emphasise longer, more intensive employment spells as a basis for pension contributions (Rubery, 2015). No comprehensive information is available on the impact of such measures on different cohorts of women and on women from different backgrounds and with different abilities (Rafferty, 2014).

Gender employment gap persists as EU economy recovers from crisis

The employment rate in the EU rose from 68.4 % in 2013 to 72.2 % in 2017, with increases

from 62.6 % to 66.5 % for women and from 74.3 % to 78.0 % for men. This means that the Europe 2020 target of having 75 % of the working-age population in employment has already been met for men, but is still some way off for women.

Since the employment rates of women and men have improved at more or less the same rate, the gender employment gap has also remained similar, standing at 11.5 p.p. However, this conceals some variation between countries in the development of employment gap (Figure 17), for example notable improvements in the gender gap since 2013 in Luxembourg (-6.2 p.p.) and Malta (-4.5 p.p.).

The gender employment gap tends to be higher among older and less educated cohorts of the population (see Figure 18), and among some minorities. For instance, employment rates among Roma women aged 20-64 are reported to be less than half of those for women in general (29 % versus 64.3 %) (FRA, 2016) ⁽¹⁹¹⁾. In

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4411192/4411431/Europe_2020_Targets.pdf.

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ In 2015, 29 % of Roma women aged 20-64 were in employment (FRA, 2016), compared with 64.3 % of women in general (Eurostat (data code: Ifsi_emp_a)). Data for Roma cover only Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

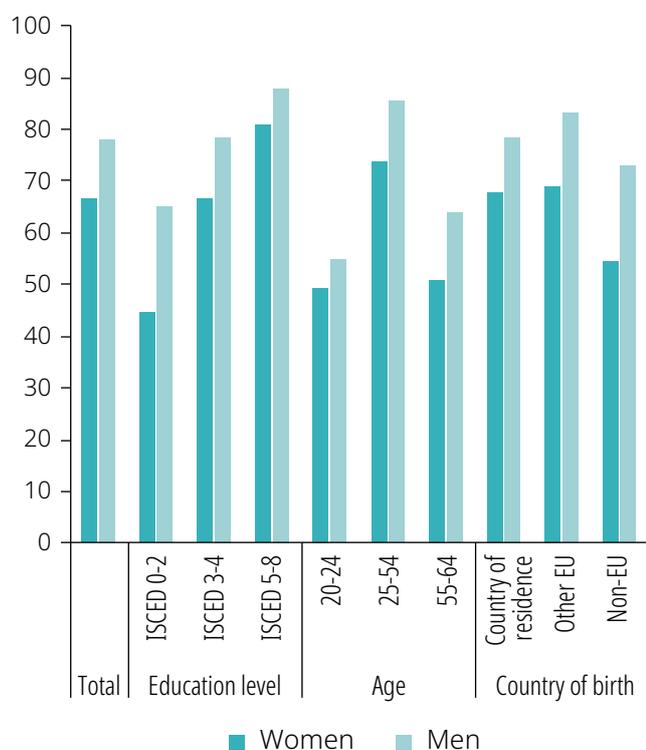
addition, twice as many Roma men aged over 16 (34 %) are in employment as women (16 %) (FRA, 2019c). The disproportionate amount of time spent on care and housework might help explain Roma women's lower level of participation in paid work. In the EU, 28 % of Roma women are engaged in domestic chores compared with only 6 % of Roma men (FRA, 2019c).

The gap is also higher for migrants, especially those from outside the EU (a gap of 18.5 p.p., compared with 10.6 p.p. for those born within the EU) ⁽¹⁹²⁾. Bringing refugee women into employment remains a particular challenge. The employment rate for refugee women is on average 45 %, 17 p.p. lower than that for refugee men and 6 p.p. lower than that for other non-EU-born women. This result is to some extent driven by the fact that nearly half of them have a low level of education, a substantially higher proportion than that for other migrant groups. It also reflects the low activity rates of refugee

women relative to men, 57 % versus 77 % (European Commission, 2016j).

Refugee and migrant women, especially if undocumented, are at high risk of landing in precarious and/or illegal employment. The International Labour Organization found that 'their vulnerabilities are often linked to precarious recruitment processes, the absence of adapted assistance and protection mechanisms, the social and cultural isolation they can face at the destination due to language and cultural differences, lack of accurate information on terms and conditions of employment, absence of labour law coverage and/or enforcement in the country of destination, and restrictions on freedom of movement and association, among other things' (ILO, n.d.). Concerns regarding the working conditions have been expressed by the EU Committee on Employment and Social Affairs in the 2017 report on working conditions and precarious employment (European Parliament, 2017e).

Figure 18: Employment rate by age, education level and country of birth, persons aged 20-64, EU-28, 2017



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data codes: lfsa_ergaed, lfsa_ergacob).

Integrating an intersectional approach into employment policies and social protection to support vulnerable women

The Swedish government has made efforts to increase the employment of foreign-born women. The Swedish Public Employment Service produced an action plan to increase the number of foreign-born women in work or education and training, and subsidised job posts have been introduced and expanded. In addition, between 2018 and 2021, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth will support entrepreneurship among foreign-born women, with initiatives to help them to start and run their own businesses. Efforts are also evident in the education sector: from 2018, the government has allocated funding for educational institutions to conduct outreach work encouraging foreign-born women to study (UNECE, 2019e). Similarly, Finland's project 'Many more — leverage for the professional careers of women with immigrant back-

⁽¹⁹²⁾ For specifics on migrant girls, see <https://www.migrantwomensnetwork.org/tag/european-womens-lobby/>.

grounds' (2019-2022) aims to increase the employment and expertise of highly educated women with a migrant background (UNECE, 2019b). The project is funded by the ESF and led by Finland's National Institute for Health and Welfare, in partnership with the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

Finland has also made efforts to support lone mothers by extending their parental allowance period by an additional 54 working days since 2019. This is available in cases where no parent is entitled to paternity allowance, as well as for sole adoptive mothers. This ensures that lone mothers are entitled to the same period of parental allowance as families with two parents, or lone fathers.

In Spain, targeted initiatives have been implemented at local level to improve the employment and empowerment of women with disabilities. For instance, the women's institutes of the autonomous communities in Aragon and Extremadura promote the adoption of equality plans by companies with fewer than 250 workers, as well as encouraging administrations to expand the quotas established in public employment offers aimed at women with disabilities. Alongside this, information is provided on

job offers and courses available to improve a person's employability. For example, 'Empowerment of women in action' provides women with disabilities with tools and guidance to enter the labour market, as well as providing advice and training for professionals to raise awareness of the social and cultural conditions and needs of women with disabilities (UNECE, 2019d).

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

Women continue to work in more flexible (and precarious) jobs

Women continue to be disproportionately represented in non-standard forms of work, which is concerning given the rise of flexible and insecure forms of work during the financial crisis (Rubery, 2015). In 2017, working women were slightly more likely to be employed on a temporary contract (12.4 % versus 10.5 % of men) and considerably more likely to be employed part-time (31.1 % versus 8.2 %) (Figure 19).

Although this often provides much-needed flexibility, it is also linked to lower pay, weaker legal protection and difficulties in access to social protection. Indeed, female employees are much more likely than men to hold precarious jobs (26.5 % versus 15.1 % for men in 2014) charac-

Figure 19: Proportion of workers in temporary, part-time or self-employment by gender (% of employment by gender), persons aged 20-64, EU-28, 2017



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data codes: lfsa_egaed, lfsa_esgaed, lfsa_etgaed, lfsa_epgaed).

terised by very low pay, very low working hours or very low job security. Levels of precarious work are particularly high among young women, women with low qualifications and migrant women (EIGE, 2017f). CSOs and trade unions⁽¹⁹³⁾ have repeatedly called on policymakers to address such gender-related employment situations, as these reinforce the gender pay gap and contribute to in-work poverty (Oxfam, 2018).

Entrepreneurial talent of women underutilised

Women continue to be under-represented among entrepreneurs. Only 9.8 % of working women are self-employed⁽¹⁹⁴⁾, compared with 17.5 % of men, accounting for fewer than a third of all entrepreneurs in the EU⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. Overall, women entrepreneurs tend to earn less than men entrepreneurs. Women generally operate in less profitable sectors than men, including the health and social sector, services such as washing and cleaning of textile products, hairdressing and physical well-being activities (European Commission and OECD, 2016). Moreover, women are more likely than men to become entrepreneurs or self-employed in order to improve their work-life balance, particularly if they have dependent children (EIGE, 2015b; European Commission and OECD, 2016).

Women who want to start and run a business face a range of additional challenges linked to access to finance, information, training and business networks⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. For example, a 2013 OECD-Eurostat survey found that only 24 % of women in the EU reported having access to the money needed to start a business com-

pared with 32 % of men (OECD, 2016b)⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. The under-representation of women among entrepreneurs represents an under-exploited source of innovation, job creation and economic growth.

Entrenched gender segregation in the labour market hinders economic growth

The gender segregation of the labour market persists across both sectors and occupations, with very little change since 2013. Women remain substantially over-represented in education (72.5 %) and human health and social work activities (78.6 %), and among service, sales and clerical support workers (over 60 %). In contrast, women are severely under-represented in certain STEM occupations; for example, women account for around 17 % of the almost 8 million ICT specialists and for about 22 % of workers in engineering, manufacturing and construction in the EU (EIGE, 2018f).

Addressing gender segregation is likely to help reduce other inequalities in the labour market and promote future growth.

- An EIGE study (2017c) shows that narrowing the gender gap in STEM would lead to economic growth, with more jobs (up to 1.2 million by 2050) and increased GDP over the long term (up to EUR 820 billion by 2050).
- Recent work by the IMF (2018)⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ finds that women are at a higher risk of losing their jobs as a result of automation than men. Women who are less educated, older and employed in low-skilled clerical, services and sales positions are most at risk in this respect.

⁽¹⁹³⁾ Most notably the European Women's Lobby and the European Trade Union Confederation.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ The self-employed include those with employees, who can loosely be called entrepreneurs, and those without employees. The latter tend to be engaged in a wide range of activities from subsistence farming in the lower-income countries and selling from a market stall, to professions such as lawyers or doctors and, increasingly in some countries, high-skilled professionals. They also include, however, people who are most vulnerable to exploitation, to being forced into working on their own account because of a lack of job opportunities and to being deprived of social protection if they do so. (European Commission, 2015I, page 3) For more detailed discussion, see the research on 'Recent changes in self-employment and entrepreneurship across the EU' published in 2015 by the European Commission (ibid).

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Eurostat (lfsa_esgan).

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/we-work-for/women_en.

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Figures shown are averages of the data reported for 21 of the 22 EU Member States that are OECD members (excluding Slovenia).

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Based on data for 30 countries, of which 20 are EU Member States: Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

- The European Commission’s research (European Commission, 2018a) suggests that just over a quarter of the gender pay gap is due to segregation in the labour market and the fact that women are more likely to be employed in low-paid sectors and occupations ⁽¹⁹⁹⁾.

The progress in eliminating the gender pay gap is slow

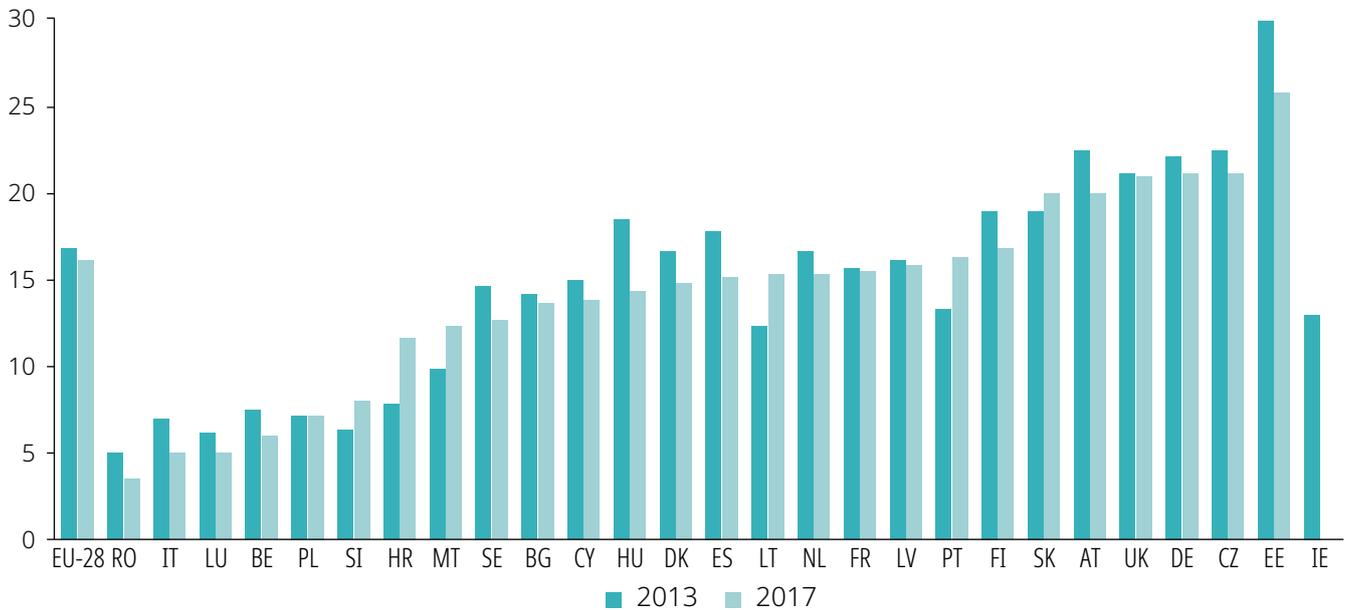
In 2017, the average gross hourly earnings of women employees in the EU were 16 % lower than men’s ⁽²⁰⁰⁾, with little change since 2013 (see Figure 20). This gap is lower when people start work, but increases ‘along the career path and alongside increasing family demands’ (EIGE, 2019c, page 26). It varied considerably between different sectors and occupations, but women tended to earn less in almost all of them.

This is despite considerable EU attention to pay inequalities (see Section 2.6.2) and a variety of measures adopted to address the gap in some

Member States, such as clear definitions of ‘equal pay for equal work’ (particularly advanced in Ireland, Spain ⁽²⁰¹⁾, the Netherlands and Sweden), a range of pay transparency measures (most comprehensive in Sweden) and an obligation for social partners to address equal pay in collective bargaining (legally established in Belgium, Germany, France, Finland and Sweden) (EIGE, 2019c).

The pay gap stems from a combination of factors, including occupational and sectoral segregation, part-time or temporary work, gender stereotypes and norms, difficulties in reconciling work and private life, discrimination, opaque wage structures and undervaluing of women’s work and skills (European Commission, 2009, 2018a, 2018j). Trends towards greater inequality in wage structures, more individualised pay determination and more variable working hours in higher-level jobs have also been linked to increases in the gender pay gap, offsetting to some extent the more beneficial effects of women’s rising educational attainment and

Figure 20: Unadjusted gender pay gap in average gross hourly earnings, 2013 and 2017



Source: Eurostat, Structure of Earnings Survey (data code: earn_gr_gpgr2).

Note: No data for Greece. 2017 data not available for Ireland; provisional for EU-28, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom; estimated for Romania.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Using data for 2014, 4.2 p.p. of the 16 % wage gap was associated with sectoral segregation.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ The unadjusted gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of men and women expressed as a percentage of the average gross hourly earnings of men.

⁽²⁰¹⁾ In Spain, several measures have been adopted in this regard through the recent approval of Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March on urgent measures to guarantee equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in employment and occupation, including a definition of work of equal value.

more continuous participation in employment (Rubery and Koukiadaki, 2016).

The fact that women are paid less has implications not only for their financial independence and spending but also for their accumulation of wealth and rights to insurance-based social security, particularly pensions (see Section 2.1.3). Yet the progress in eliminating the gender pay gap is slow, with some global estimates stating that it will take more than 70 years before the gender wage gap is closed without targeted action (ILO, 2016). This is despite the fact that gender gaps could be closed without harming overall economic growth (EIGE, 2017c).

Women's employment is still held back by disproportionate care responsibilities

The lower levels of female participation in the labour market and higher incidence of part-time work derive, at least in part, from the unequal distribution of care responsibilities. Women continue to bear more responsibility for caring: 88 % of mothers and 64 % of fathers care for and/or educate their children every day; and, among those involved in care, women spend 39 hours per week on such activities, compared with just 21 hours per week for men ⁽²⁰²⁾. In addition, more women (19.7 %) than men (14.9 %) provide care for older persons and persons with disabilities ⁽²⁰³⁾, particularly among those aged 50-64 ⁽²⁰⁴⁾. This is particularly concerning in the context of current trends in population ageing that could put further pressure on women to fill the gaps in older persons' care provision (Piasna and Drahekoupil, 2017).

Women are therefore more likely than men to report difficulties in combining paid work and care responsibilities (40 % versus 33 % for women and men in work and 44 % versus 33 % for those out of work who were asked about the possibility of combining paid work and care) ⁽²⁰⁵⁾, which has clear consequences for their participation in the labour market. Estimates based on Eurostat data show that care responsibilities are keeping 7.7 million women out of the labour market compared with just 450 000 men ⁽²⁰⁶⁾. Far more women than men also work part-time (8.9 million versus 560 000) because of care responsibilities ⁽²⁰⁷⁾.

There are significant costs to the EU economy associated with the disproportionate care responsibilities of women. It is estimated that the employment lost as a result of women's care responsibilities leads to a loss of about EUR 370 billion per year for the EU (Eurofound, 2016).

In addition, lack of gender sensitivity in the design of tax laws and policies can sometimes deter women from participation in the labour market or reinforce some broader gender inequalities in the society. Tax reforms in recent years have not particularly encouraged women's employment, because gender differences are rarely considered in taxation, despite its 'allocative and distributional impacts on gender equality' (European Parliament, 2017b, page 8). Existing tax provisions still create tax traps for secondary earners — mostly women — caused by joint tax provisions and tax exemptions for marginal employment (see for example the CSRs of 2016 for Belgium, Germany and Italy ⁽²⁰⁸⁾). Moreover, a variety of other tax provisions

⁽²⁰²⁾ Based on the 2016 European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) data. The number of care hours was asked only of those reporting that they gave care.

⁽²⁰³⁾ Based on the 2016 EQLS data. The rates of care for older persons and persons with disabilities are for people who reported caring 'at least once or twice a week'.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Among this age group, 28 % of women and 16.9 % of men are estimated to provide care for older persons and persons with disabilities. Female carers aged 45-64 are also more likely to be involved in care of older people that has an impact on their career, namely going part-time with consequent income reduction and loss of training opportunities (Picard, 2015).

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Based on the 2016 EQLS data.

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Eurostat, EU-LFS (data code: lfsa_igar), data for women aged 20-64.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Note that an additional 15.1 % of women, compared with 8.0 % of men, work part-time because of other family or personal responsibilities, widening this gap further.

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ The full list of country specific recommendations for 2016 can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2016-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en

continue to maintain the existing unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work or increase gender gaps in income, old-age security poverty and wealth. For example, making the tax system less progressive has a negative impact on gender equality, as progressive taxation mitigates existing pre-tax gender inequalities in income and wealth.

Most Member States have introduced measures to improve care services and family-related leave

The recently adopted WLB Directive (COM/2017/0253) aims to modernise the existing EU legal framework for family-related leaves, while achieving a more equal distribution of care responsibilities between women and men. Mostly within this context, at least 20 Member States ⁽²⁰⁹⁾ have introduced changes to their family-related leaves and allowances since 2013. For example, Estonia extended and introduced more flexibility to parental leave and benefits, Spain introduced a leave reform to make the length of paternity leave gradually equal to maternity leave ⁽²¹⁰⁾, Finland extended paternity leave and made it more flexible, and Portugal extended mandatory parental leave for fathers. A recent study by Eurofound also found some progress in fathers' take-up of family-related leave in several Member States (Eurofound, 2019).

Despite these improvements, the level of take-up of family-related leaves among fathers remains low (Blum, 2017; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2017; Pettit and Hook, 2009) and reliable EU-wide data to measure it are limited and not comparable across countries (Eurofound, 2019). This is despite the fact that even short periods of care-related leave taken by fathers may have long-lasting effects on their involvement in childcare and this, in turn, can have a posi-

tive effect on women's labour supply. Indeed, the gender gaps in paid and unpaid work are smaller in EU countries with more generous paternity and parental leave opportunities for fathers (Tamm, 2018).

Ensuring access to affordable, good-quality childcare facilities is also seen as an important way to increase employment of women (European Commission, 2018s). Therefore, it is commendable that more than half of Member States ⁽²¹¹⁾ have introduced changes to childcare and benefit provisions designed to ease the lives of working parents since 2013. These primarily relate to increasing the availability of childcare facilities and allowances, reducing childcare costs and introducing more flexibility in the childcare system. For example, Finland cut daycare fees (Kaleva, 2015), Czechia introduced a programme to create school clubs offering childcare after school (MPSV, 2015) and Germany introduced subsidies for nurseries with longer opening hours (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2015).

However, the Barcelona objectives for Member States to provide childcare to at least 33 % of children under 3 and at least 90 % of children aged between 3 and the mandatory school age by 2010 (European Commission, 2013i) have been met only partly so far. The latest available data show that, in the EU as a whole, the former target has been met (34.2 % of children in the EU in 2017) but the latter target is still some way off (84.8 % in 2017). The picture is even less favourable at country level (Figure 21), as only 11 Member States meet both targets ⁽²¹²⁾, up from just five in 2013.

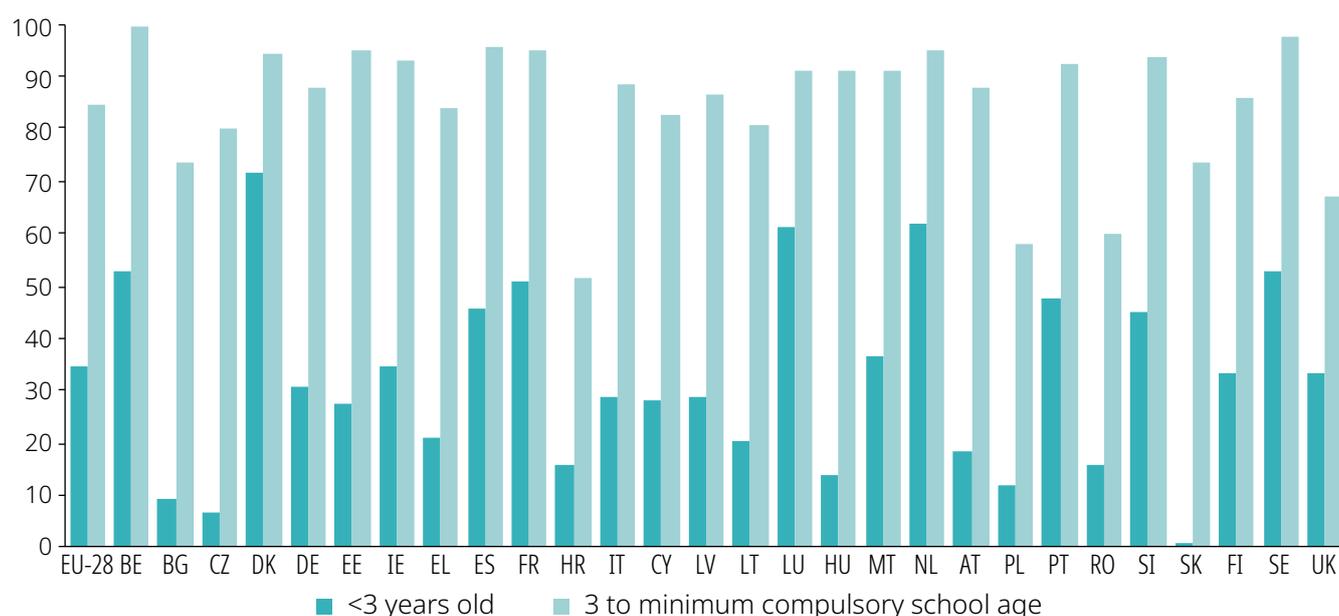
Recent survey data show that in 2016 there was still plenty of opportunity to boost the provisions of formal childcare services. A third of respond-

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Spain, France, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. For up-to-date information, consult <https://www.leavenetwork.org/leave-policies-research/country-reports/>

⁽²¹⁰⁾ Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March has introduced the gradual extension of paternity leave to reach the same length as maternity leave (16 weeks) by 2021, starting at 8 weeks in 2019.

⁽²¹¹⁾ Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

⁽²¹²⁾ Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.

Figure 21: Children in formal childcare or education by age group (%), 2017

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data code: ilc_caindformal).

Note: Data are provisional for all countries.

ing households (31 %) reported some difficulty in affording childcare services ⁽²¹³⁾. Among parents who said that the available services do not meet their needs, 50.2 % cited affordability as the main reason, far more than cited issues such as distance (4.7 %), quality (2.2 %), a lack of available spaces (12.1 %) or a lack of suitable opening hours (7.8 %).

Finally, the ways in which Member States provide long-term care vary greatly. Commonalities include the centrality of the family as an institution and the main provider of unpaid care, the increasing need for provision of formal care and services, the over-representation of women among the carers and the fact that a large part of this type of work is unregulated (European Parliament, 2016b).

Flexible working arrangements can reinforce traditional gender division of unpaid work

Flexible working arrangements can play an important role in helping to improve work–life balance (EIGE, 2016d). They are known to mit-

igate the negative impact of care responsibilities on employment, notably among women. In principle, they allow mothers to maintain their working hours after childbirth (Chung and Van der Horst, 2018) and to remain in human-capital-intensive jobs in times of high family demand.

However, some recent research from Germany (Lott and Eulgem, 2019) shows that flexible working arrangements make little difference to men’s contribution to childcare. In fact men working flexibly spend less time on childcare than those doing office hours, whereas home workers spend the same amount of time on childcare as office-based colleagues. Both women and men interviewed for the study report that flexible working leaves them with less free time than working conventional hours.

This links to the fact that men use, and are expected to use, flexible working for performance-enhancing purposes. They often increase their work intensity/working hours and receive additional rewards through income premiums (Lott and Chung, 2016). The increased workload can then increase their work–family conflict.

⁽²¹³⁾ Eurostat, EU-SILC ad hoc module on access to services (ilc_ats03). The levels of use are based on use of formal childcare that excludes education provision, which is included in Figure 22.

In contrast, women often work flexibly when there is an increase in family responsibilities that creates work–life balance problems. Unlike men, they do not receive additional rewards for this (Chung and Van der Lippe, 2018). Thus ‘work flexibility helps make job and family more compatible, but it can simultaneously cement the classic role divisions between women and men, or even make them stronger’⁽²¹⁴⁾ (Lott and Eulgem, 2019).

2.7. Women in power and decision-making (BPfA Area G)

2.7.1. Setting the scope

Women in the EU make up around a half of the population and of the electorate, yet women continue to be under-represented in top positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, corporate boardrooms or academia. Equal participation of women and men in decision-making is a matter of justice, respect for human rights and better reflection of the interests of different groups in society. In politics, equal participation has proven to be an important condition for effective democracy and good governance (EIGE, 2018d). In the economy, more balanced representation of women and men in decision-making can boost innovation, competitiveness and productivity, and contribute to the future prosperity of the EU (European Commission, 2012c).

The reasons for the persistent under-representation of women are very broad and multifaceted, including traditional gender roles and stereotypes; the unequal sharing of household and care responsibilities that limit women’s ability to fully participate in an active life; and a working culture that expects and rewards long and anti-social working hours and practices (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2017). The reasons often vary depend-

ing on the area of decision-making (i.e. political or economic), and a range of factors particular to these areas can hinder gender equality. For example, in politics, there is increasing concern about online harassment, which can discourage women from participating in political debate or running for office (IPU, 2016).

When considering the under-representation of women, the focus of attention is often on descriptive representation, focusing on the relative numbers of women and men participating in decision-making bodies. Far less attention is paid to substantive representation — that is, whether or not the rules and policies that result from decision-making processes actually reflect women’s views, perspectives and needs. However, ensuring parity of presence may not be insufficient (Childs and Lovenduski, 2013) and further research is needed on substantive representation, notably on what constitutes good representation of women’s interests; if women’s interests are well represented by those elected; and, finally, on ways elected representatives are made accountable.

Although gender parity (50:50) is often the ultimate aim, particularly in politics, decision-making bodies are considered to be gender balanced when there are at least 40 % of each gender. Yet, apart from a few exceptions in a number of Member States, decision-making processes across all life domains remain largely in the hands of men⁽²¹⁵⁾. In political decision-making (which has the most direct impact on the population of both sexes), men still outnumber women by at least two to one. In economic decision-making, the balance is three to one, at best. However, the situation varies significantly between EU Member States.

Binding legislative measures can help to bring about rapid change if well designed and enforced. Whether in politics or business, the effectiveness of such measures depends on the implementation of rules that take into account the idiosyncrasies of selection/elec-

⁽²¹⁴⁾ Quoted from an article about the study published on weforum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/flexible-working-can-make-work-life-worse-germany/>

⁽²¹⁵⁾ EIGE Statistics Database, Women and Men in Decision Making. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

tion processes to ensure that women and men are given an equal chance of being elected/selected. Where relevant, suitably strong sanctions must be imposed in cases of non-compliance (International IDEA, 2013). However, in many countries there remains considerable opposition to the use of binding legislation, and that opposition slows the rate of change. Together with ensuring that the issue remains high on the political agenda, promoting equality in decision-making is a key area of action for the European Commission ⁽²¹⁶⁾.

2.7.2. EU policy developments

The EU's competence to promote gender balance in key decision-making positions in Member States varies by policy area. There is a legal basis to propose EU-level laws on equal treatment in the area of employment (e.g. gender balance on company boards), but no such competence exists in the area of politics. The EU can take a range of non-legislative actions as well, such as raising awareness of the imbalances that exist, ensuring that the issue is kept high on the policy agenda, supporting the exchange of good practices between Member States and stakeholders, and setting an example through good practices within its own institutions.

In 2017, the European Parliament called on Member States to guarantee gender parity in leadership positions in the government, in public institutions and on electoral lists (European Parliament, 2017f), emphasising the use of quotas, legislation and sanctions. Meanwhile, the European Commission has continued to promote gender balance in decision-making positions through its *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* (European Commission, 2015i) and its own target to achieve 40 % of senior and middle management posts within its own administration filled by women by 2019 ⁽²¹⁷⁾.

The Council of the EU called on Member States and the European Commission to promote balanced representation of women and men in political, economic and social decision-making through a range of measures in its 2015 conclusions (Council of the European Union, 2015b). These conclusions also called for improving 'the collection, the analysis and the dissemination at both national and EU level of comprehensive, comparable and reliable and regularly updated data on the subject of equality between women and men in the field of decision-making' (Council of the European Union, 2015b, page 9; see also European Parliament, 2017g). To support this process, in 2018 EIGE developed an online Gender-Sensitive Parliament Toolkit ⁽²¹⁸⁾, which allows national and regional parliaments to assess their gender sensitivity.

The European Commission has actively promoted greater gender balance in economic leadership positions, not least through a proposed directive (European Commission, 2012e) urging Member States to achieve at least 40 % representation of each sex among non-executive directors of listed companies or 33 % for all types of directors. (To date, however, the directive has been blocked in the Council of the EU (European Parliament, 2018e). The *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* (European Commission, 2015i) emphasised the need to achieve progress on gender equality in corporate management and leadership positions and to support the adoption and implementation of the proposed 2012 directive. Member States were encouraged to introduce binding legislation on quotas for corporate boards (European Parliament, 2017g).

Compared with political and economic decision-making, less focus has been placed on achieving gender balance in the judiciary or in social (e.g. research, media or sports) decision-making positions. Within academia, science and research, the Horizon 2020 programme has

⁽²¹⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-balance-decision-making-positions_en#tacklingthedivide.

⁽²¹⁷⁾ At the start of February 2019, it had achieved 39.6 % representation of women. See https://ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/news/commission-track-reach-its-target-least-40-female-managers-within-commission_fr.

⁽²¹⁸⁾ See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments>.

mainstreamed gender in its decision-making processes. For instance, all its advisory groups aim for 50 % of both sexes among participants in expert groups and evaluation panels, and applicants are encouraged to promote gender balance at all levels in their teams (EIGE, 2015c). According to the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 (European Commission, 2018f) 'gender balance in decision-making is close to being achieved with 53 % [women] in advisory groups and 36.7 % in evaluation panels'.

The Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* envisaged providing guidance to Member States on implementing quantitative targets for decision-making positions in research. Following up on this, EIGE and the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation developed the GEAR tool⁽²¹⁹⁾, to help research and academic institutions to develop plans to achieve gender equality.

Since 2013, increasing focus has been placed on gender-balanced decision-making in sports. The 2014 Conclusions on Gender Equality in Sport highlighted the value of gender balance in sports administration, encouraging improvements in gender balance on executive boards and committees, and in management and coaching, as well as steps to remove obstacles to women taking up such functions (Council of the European Union, 2014a). Similarly, the integrity of sport, including gender equality, is a key theme in the EU's recent work plans for sport (2014-2017 and 2017-2020).

Notable efforts have been observed since 2013 to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of EU-wide data on women and men in decision-making. Currently, the data on women and men in decision-making are presented in EIGE's Gender Statistics Database⁽²²⁰⁾ and cover more than 100 indicators in several areas — these are used as a basis of monitoring of progress under BPfA area G (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). This includes a number of new indicators added since 2013, including but not lim-

ited to data on representation of women and men in parliamentary bureaux and committees, national social partners, research-funding organisations, academies of science, and media and sports organisations. This data collection is accompanied by detailed metadata and covers the 28 EU Member States, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance beneficiaries and the remaining three EEA countries.

Despite these developments, the preference of some Member States for nationally determined measures or non-binding measures hinders meaningful EU legislative action in this area (European Parliament, 2018e). This is exemplified by the abovementioned EU directive on gender balance (2012/0299) being blocked. Moreover, the discretion of Member States over the timescales for achieving set targets contributes to the slow progress of policy implementation (Council of Europe, 2016). Progress has been particularly slow in political and public decision-making, largely because of a lack of effort by Member States to put appropriate measures in place (ibid.); the marginalisation of gender equality in national government structures; the complex nature of national-level mandates; and inadequate support from political leadership (European Parliament, 2017g). It is important to note that progress made and measures taken to achieve it vary significantly between Member States (see Annex 7 — Overview of legislative quotas and other national measures related to women and men in decision-making for examples of measures undertaken).

2.7.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Women's representation in bodies of public power is slowly improving

The proportions of women and men elected to deliberative assemblies remain imbalanced compared with the populations they represent. Women are under-represented in national, regional and local parliaments/assemblies in most Member States, with one third (or fewer)

⁽²¹⁹⁾ See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>.

⁽²²⁰⁾ See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

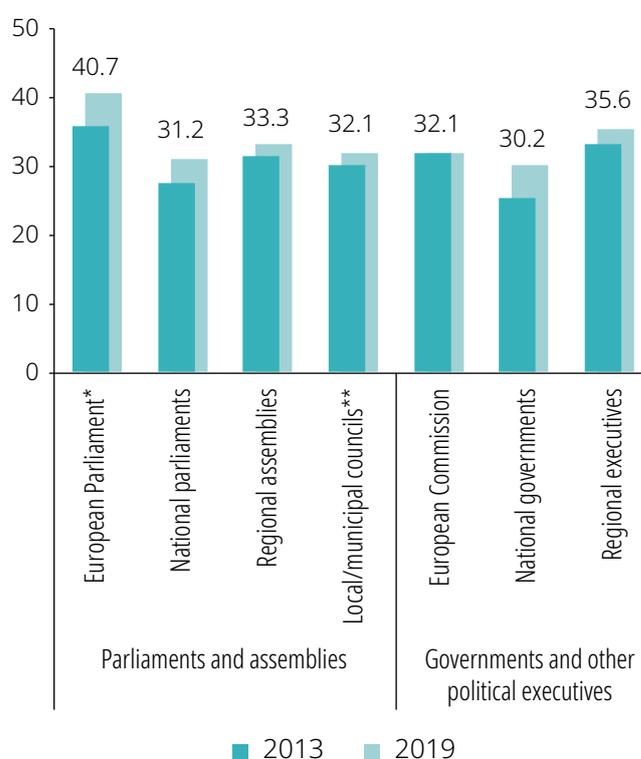
women members at all levels (Figure 22). Notable exceptions are Finland, France, Spain, and Sweden, all of which have at least 40 % of women among the members of both national and regional parliaments. Similarly, these same four are the top four performers at local level, although Sweden is as yet the only one to break the 40 % barrier ⁽²²¹⁾. At the same time, men still account for at least four in five elected members of national parliaments in Greece, Cyprus, Hungary and Malta, of regional assemblies in Italy, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia and of local assemblies in Greece, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania. Despite some encouraging progress over the past 5 years, the rate of change remains slow and uneven. The prospect of achieving gender-balanced parliaments in the EU still seems a long way off.

More positively, the recent elections in May 2019 to the European Parliament led to an increase in the proportion of women members, which has for the first time exceeded 40 %. This compares with about 36 % of women members in 2013.

Women are still under-represented in the executive arm of politics, accounting for fewer than one third of European Commissioners and members of national governments ⁽²²²⁾ across the EU (32.1 % and 30.2 % respectively, see Figure 22) and only slightly more among leaders of regional executives (35.6 %). The proportion of women among European Commissioners increased significantly (to almost 45 %) when the new college of Commissioners took office on 1 December 2019 ⁽²²³⁾.

Improving the representation of women in politics depends largely on the actions of political parties, which determine the selection of candidates for election and their position on candidate lists or their adoption for constituencies. Although many parties adopt and apply voluntary gender quotas for candidates, the visibility

Figure 22: Proportion of women among members of political bodies, 2013-2018, EU-28 (%)



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

Note: National parliaments refers to single/lower house.

* The data cover the period up to Q3 2019 to account for the latest European Parliament elections.

** Local assemblies data refer to 2013 and 2017.

of women on candidate lists (e.g. being among first candidates on the list) is not guaranteed unless there is relevant legislation. In terms of role models and incentives to drive change, the leadership of major political parties (i.e. those with at least 5 % of seats in the national parliament) is still largely in male hands. In 2018, women accounted for just 18.4 % of party leaders and 33.8 % of deputy leaders ⁽²²⁴⁾.

Women account for a somewhat higher share of decision-makers in national public administrations. In 2018, almost 42 % of all national senior administrators ⁽²²⁵⁾ were women, compared

⁽²²¹⁾ Percentages of women in local assemblies, 2017: Sweden 43.0 %, Finland 39.1 %, France 38.7 %, Spain 35.6 %.

⁽²²²⁾ Covers both junior and senior ministers in the government.

⁽²²³⁾ For list of Commissioners, see https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024_en.

⁽²²⁴⁾ EIGE's Gender Statistics Database: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_part_wmid_polpart/bar.

⁽²²⁵⁾ Including level 1 and level 2 administrators – see https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_adm_nat_wmid_natadmin/metadata for more detail.

with 37 % in 2013 ⁽²²⁶⁾. A higher proportion of women can be found among the highest-ranking civil servants in sociocultural functions (51 % in 2018) than in economic, infrastructure (each around 42 %) and basic functions (around 36 %) ⁽²²⁷⁾.

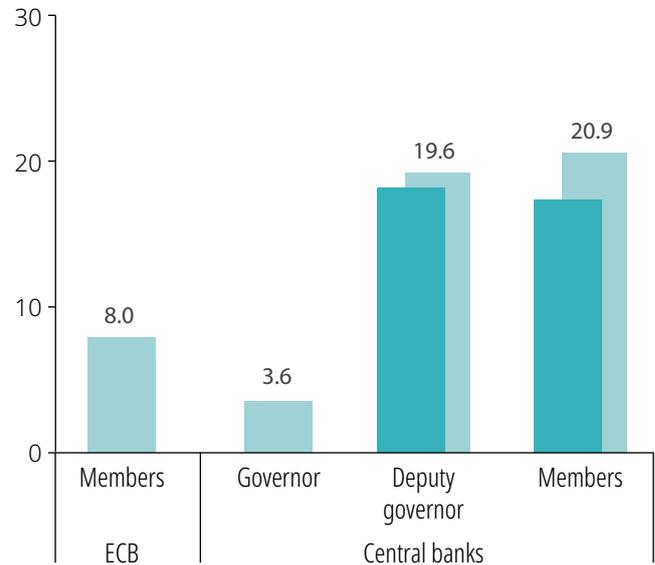
In the judiciary, women are better represented in the national supreme courts, with the proportion of women among judges in these courts rising from around 35 % in 2013 to 42 % in 2018 ⁽²²⁸⁾. The situation in EU courts is much less balanced: around 32 % of judges in the ECtHR are women, and only 18.5 % in the European Court of Justice ⁽²²⁹⁾.

Economic decisions are still largely in the hands of men

In the EU, economic decision-making remains largely driven by men. The European Central Bank currently has just two women among the 25 members of its governing council (8.0 %), although the new president (as of 1 November) is a woman. Central banks of the 28 EU Member States have just one female governor (Cyprus), and women account for just one in five (20.9 %) members of key decision-making bodies. There have been only marginal improvements since 2013 (see Figure 23). Recent research has shown that this is likely to have an impact on the approach to monetary policy in the EU: the more gender balanced the monetary policy, the more proactive it will be in fighting inflation with higher interest rates (Masciandaro et al., 2018).

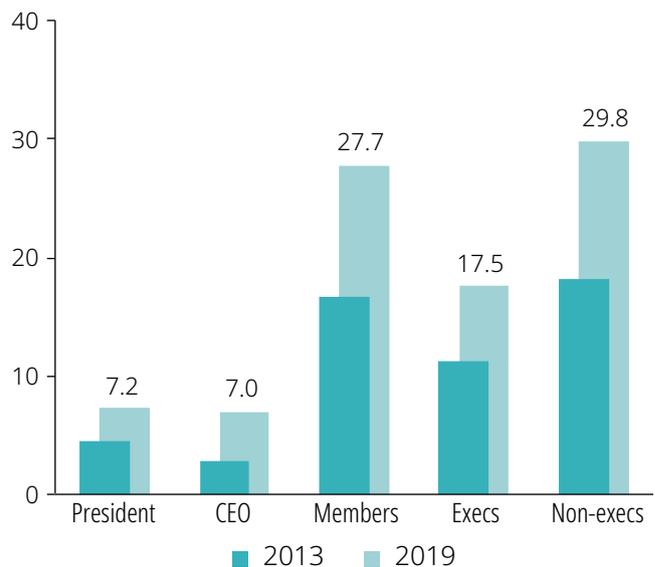
Similarly, as of April 2019, the boards of the largest publicly listed companies ⁽²³⁰⁾ registered in the Member States comprised only 27.7 % women (see Figure 24). France is the only Member State in which the largest companies have at least 40 % of each gender at board level (specifically, 44.0 %), whereas in Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and Malta women account for 10 % or fewer of board members. This is

Figure 23: Proportion of women in the highest decision-making bodies of the European Central Bank and national central banks, 2013-2018, EU-28 (%)



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

Figure 24: Proportions of women among presidents, chief executives, board members, executives and non-executives of largest listed companies in the EU-28, 2013-2019 (%)



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

⁽²²⁶⁾ See https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_adm_nat_wmid_natadmin/bar.

⁽²²⁷⁾ See mapping tables by functions: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wmid_mapping_natadmin_1.pdf.

⁽²²⁸⁾ See https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_jud_natcrct_wmid_natcrct_supcrct/line.

⁽²²⁹⁾ See https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_jud_eucrct_wmid_eucrct/hbar.

⁽²³⁰⁾ Data on the largest listed companies cover the decision-making positions of the highest ranked nationally registered constituents (max. 50) of the blue-chip index of the national stock exchange in each country.

despite the large body of evidence showing that lack of gender diversity at board level is correlated with lower company performance and capacity to innovate — although only in countries or regions that culturally accept the importance of gender equality (Turban et al., 2019). Although there has been encouraging progress in the representation of women at board level in recent years (see other sub-sections below), this improvement has not filtered through to executive positions, of which women still hold only 17.5 %, or to the top positions of chair/president (7.2 %) or chief executive officer (7.0 %).

Notably, the lack of women in decision-making positions within companies is mirrored in social partner organisations representing employers and employees at national and European levels ⁽²³¹⁾. In 2018, women accounted for fewer than one fifth of the members of the top decision-making bodies of employers' organisations convened at both national and EU levels (16.4 % and 19.1 % respectively). The situation is better in employee organisations (28.4 % and 29.9 %) but women are still significantly under-represented, bearing in mind

that women account for 45.3 % of trade union members (ETUC, 2018).

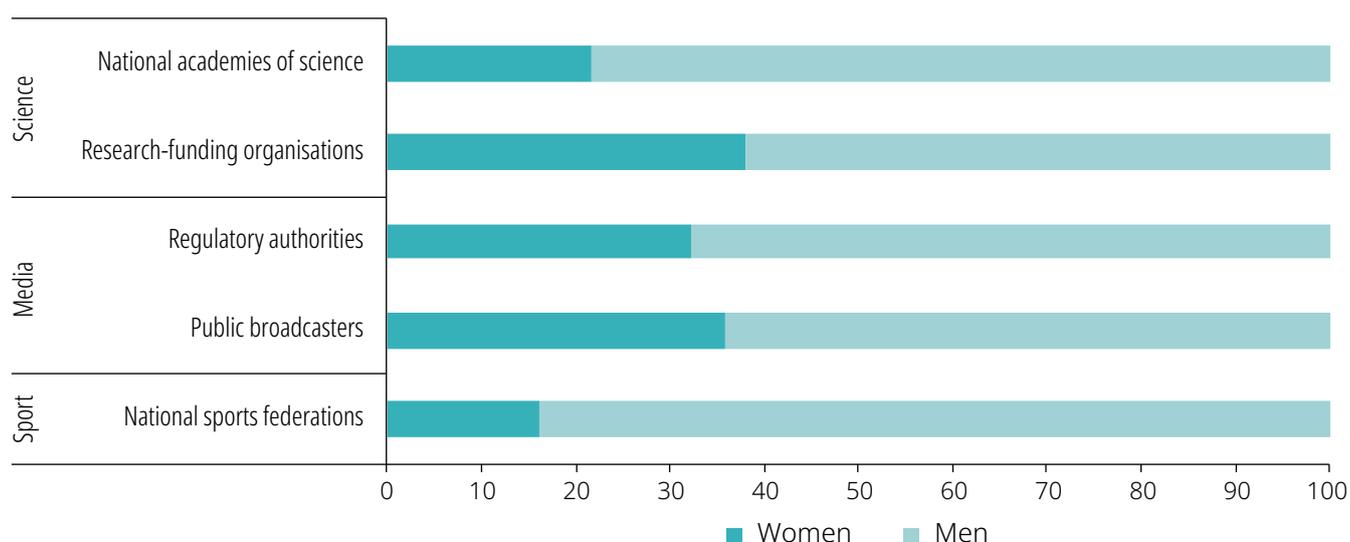
Few women in decision-making positions in media, research and sports

Besides political and economic decision-making, women are under-represented in key decision-making positions in other 'institutions that have a particular influence on social norms, attitudes and values in society' (EIGE, 2017e, page 77).

In science, women account for 38.0 % of the members of the key decision-making bodies of the funding organisations that determine the allocation of public funds provided by Member States to support research and innovation ⁽²³²⁾. In the national academies of science, which bring together some of the most highly respected scientists in each country, just 21.6 % of members of governing boards (or similar bodies) are women (Figure 25).

In the media, only 35.8 % of members of the boards of public authorities that broadcast

Figure 25: Gender balance in social power: sports, media and science, EU-28, 2018 (%)



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

Note: Data on national academies of science refer to 2017.

⁽²³¹⁾ For data, see https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/wmidm/wmidm_socp/wmidm_socp_socp.

⁽²³²⁾ In terms of both the types of projects that get support and which research groups will benefit from funding.

TV, radio and other media ⁽²³³⁾ to citizens are women. The regulatory authorities responsible for monitoring and controlling the content that is broadcast by both public and private organisations are also governed by boards made up mostly of men (67.7 %). There has been some limited progress since 2014, with the proportion of women up by 5.3 p.p. in public broadcasting organisations, but by only 1.9 p.p. in regulatory authorities.

The greatest imbalance in social power is observed in sports. Although interest in sports such as women's football, rugby, cricket and cycling is growing rapidly worldwide, the reality is that most sports continue to be controlled by men. Based on a sample of the 10 most popular sports in each country, in 2018 the boards of national sports federations consisted of 83.9 % men and just 16.1 % women. Although the proportion of women has risen from 13.6 % in 2015, more needs to be done to integrate women into the decision-making processes that govern how sports are run.

Structural barriers still prevent women from accessing positions of power

The persistent under-representation of women in positions of power is a result of a combination of barriers to entry and progression within a career path. These include challenges in balancing work and life commitments, gender stereotypes, a lack of development opportunities and gender bias in promotions (OECD, 2017).

The combination of barriers faced by women can vary substantially by area of activity. In the judiciary, for example, women account for more than half of professional judges (54 % in OECD countries), but persistent flaws in appointment and recruitment procedures ⁽²³⁴⁾ tend to restrict their progression to senior appointments (ibid.). In politics, on the other hand, there can be

important initial barriers to entry, such as a lack of access to financing and candidate selection procedures (European Women's Lobby, n.d.; Slaughter and Binda, 2018). In both cases, a culture of long working hours represents a further disincentive to entry, as well as an ongoing barrier to continued participation.

Even when women are represented among decision-makers, research suggests that their contributions will not be assessed equally to those of men. For example, traits that are stereotypically associated with men (e.g. confidence and aggression) are often seen as necessary for leadership. Thus, women may face the double bind of needing to demonstrate such 'leader qualities' while simultaneously conforming to the characteristics expected of women, such as being warm and communal (for more on this, see Gipson et al., 2017). Newer concerns relate to online harassment discouraging women from participating in policymaking. A global survey of women parliamentarians found that over 80 % had been subject to some form of psychological violence, while two thirds had experienced humiliating sexual or sexist remarks (IPU, 2016).

Against the backdrop of these challenges, there is a long-standing debate on whether or not the number of women in a decision-making body needs to reach a critical mass before women are in a position to successfully advocate women-friendly policy change (Childs and Krook, 2008) ⁽²³⁵⁾. Although this debate is still ongoing, existing research points to a wide range of other positive consequences of having greater gender diversity within decision-making. In addition to supporting good governance and democracy, there can be improvements to corporate financial performance (Hunt, V. et al., 2015), support for the career progression of other women at lower levels of the same organisation (Kunze et al., 2016) and lower levels of corruption (Beaman et al., 2009; Torgler and Valev, 2010) ⁽²³⁶⁾. In

⁽²³³⁾ Publicly owned TV, radio and news agencies operating at the national level. In cases where no national-level public broadcasters exist, the highest sub-national (regional) organisations are included instead. In all other cases, regional and local organisations are excluded.

⁽²³⁴⁾ Often results of informal consultation processes rather than public advertising of vacancies.

⁽²³⁵⁾ This article provides a summary (and critique) of the critical mass theory.

⁽²³⁶⁾ For an evidence round-up, see 'Evidence of economic benefits of gender equality in other policy areas' section of <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/economic-and-financial-affairs/economic-benefits-gender-equality>.

the area of environmental decision-making specifically, recent research suggests that companies with more gender-equal boards tend to be more mindful of protecting the environment, in that they experience significantly fewer lawsuits related to environmental infractions (Liu, 2018). Lastly, companies with the best track records for diversity in their top management are found to be the most persistent in implementing gender diversity programmes, incorporating gender diversity at leadership level and implementing holistic change programmes (Hunt, V. et al, 2015).

Legislative actions proved critical in speeding up progress towards gender-balanced decision-making

The improvements in the level of female representation in political and economic decision-making over the past 5 years did not happen by chance. In both cases, legislation and other government actions have helped to stimulate change. The scope of both binding legislative quotas and other non-binding measures varies between Member States, as can be seen from an overview presented in Annex 7 of this report.

Increasing women's representation in economic decision-making positions

Austria has taken another important step to achieve balanced and equal representation of women and men in economic decision-making positions. In 2017, the Act on Equality between Women and Men in Supervisory Boards ⁽²³⁷⁾ was adopted to raise the proportion of women in leadership positions. Since 1 January 2018, there must be at least 30 % women and 30 % men on the supervisory boards of publicly traded companies and companies with more than 1 000 employees.

The 30 % target applies to new appointments after 31 December 2017. If the required quota of women among mem-

bers of the supervisory board is not reached, the appointment becomes invalid owing to the infringement of the gender quota, and the position remains vacant (the 'empty chair' rule). The effect of this quota so far is very positive: the proportion of women among members of the supervisory boards of the publicly traded companies affected by the new quota increased within a year from 22 % (January 2018) to 27.5 % (January 2019) (Wieser and Fischeneder, 2019).

In Portugal, a law was adopted in 2017 that defines minimum percentages of women and men on boards of public companies (33 % as of 1 January 2018) and listed companies (20 % as of 1 January 2018; 33 % as of 1 January 2020). Since the adoption of the law, an increase in the proportion of women on the boards of listed companies from 12 % to 18 % has been observed (similar increases were seen in state companies, from 28 % to 32 %, and in local public companies, from 20 % to 32 %).

Portugal also adopted a new law relating to political participation in March 2019. This raises from (the previously established) 33 % to 40 % the minimum percentage of women and men in the electoral lists to the national and European parliaments, elected bodies of municipalities and parish councils. Finally, another law adopted in March 2019 defines a minimum 40 % level of women and men among top civil servants in public administration, and in public higher education institutions and associations.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

The proportion of women on the boards of large companies across the EU has visibly increased since April 2013 (from 16.6 % to 27.7 % in April 2019). This follows previous increases since 2010, when the European Commission brought the issue to the fore by announcing that it was

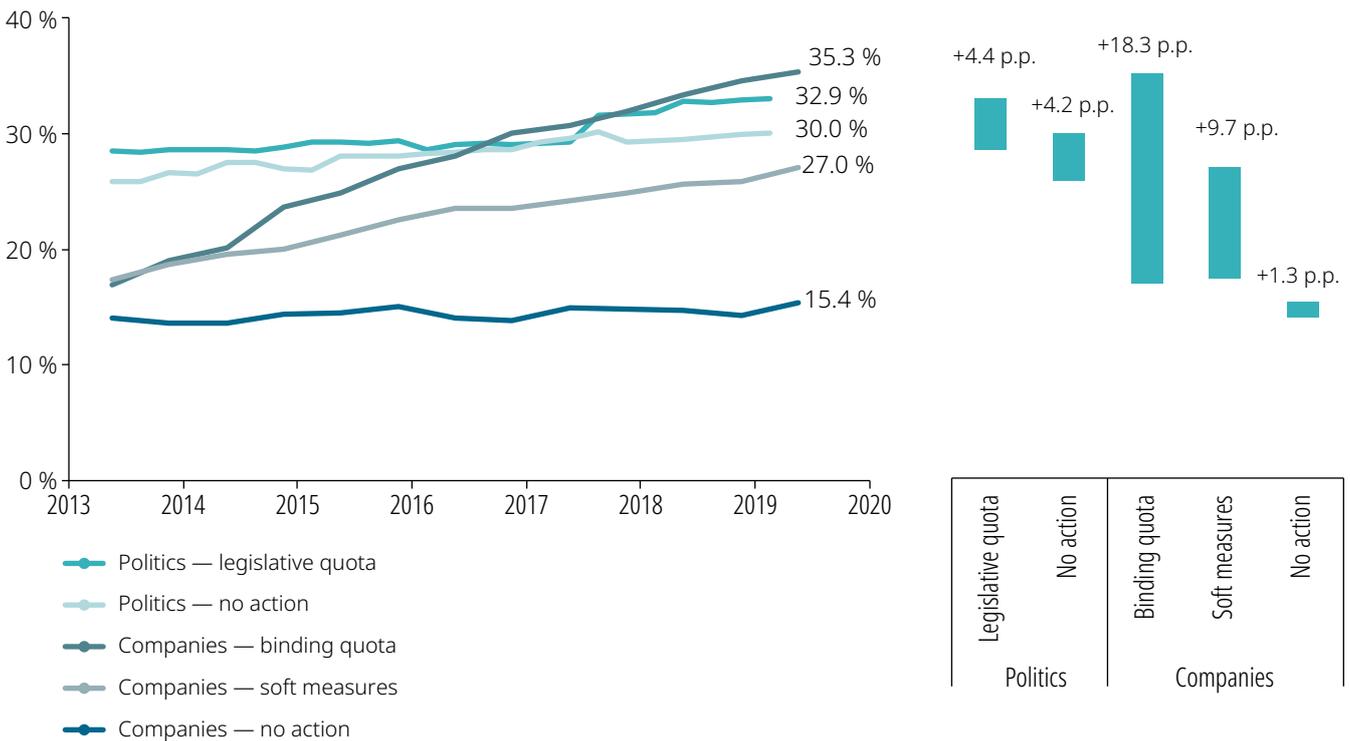
⁽²³⁷⁾ See https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_104/BGBLA_2017_I_104.html.

considering using targeted initiatives to get more women into top decision-making jobs. As progress was very slow, the Commission proposed legislative action in 2012. Although a European directive has yet to be adopted by the EU legislators, evidence at Member State level clearly shows that legislative action can accelerate progress. Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, and — more recently — Austria and Portugal have all adopted binding quotas and now have an average of 35.3 % women on boards, an increase of 18.3 p.p. since 2013. Countries that have implemented soft measures ⁽²³⁸⁾ have seen half as much progress (up 9.7 p.p. to 27.0 %). In contrast, in the remaining 11 Mem-

ber States, where no substantial action has been taken ⁽²³⁹⁾, women make up just 15.4 % of board members and there has been little progress since 2013 (see Figure 26). It is clear that stronger action is needed in these countries to bring about change.

Legislative quotas can also drive progress in political elections, although not always as quickly or as dramatically as might be expected. Since 2013, the proportion of women in parliament in the Member States that (now) have a legislative electoral quota has risen from 28.5 % to 32.9 %, while countries without quotas have seen a similar level of improvement (from 25.9 % to

Figure 26: Percentages of women among members of single/lower houses of parliaments and board members of the largest listed companies by legislative/soft actions in place, EU-28, 2013-2019



Sources: EIGE’s Gender Statistics Database and desk research.

Note: Legislative quotas for parliamentary elections: Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia. Binding quotas for companies: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal. Soft measures for companies: Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom.

⁽²³⁸⁾For example where governments have actively encouraged companies to self-regulate or adopted unlegislated quotas without sanctions. These are Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁽²³⁹⁾Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.

30.0 %). However, in the longer run, countries with political quotas ⁽²⁴⁰⁾ have achieved almost twice as much improvement in the proportion of women in parliaments as countries without quotas (+ 9.3 p.p. versus + 4.8 p.p. in the period 2010-2019).

The success of electoral quotas varies between Member States, partly reflecting the national differences in design and enforceability of the quotas. Croatia, for example, introduced a 40 % quota in 2008 but the proportion of women in parliament now (20.5 %) is more or less the same as it was at the end of 2007 (20.9 %). Although the law allows the State Electoral Commission to reject non-compliant candidate lists, attempts to do so have been overturned by the Constitutional Court (Nacevska and Lokar, 2017). For quotas to work, therefore, it is vital that sound legal grounds exist and are enforced (International IDEA, 2013).

The design of the electoral system also affects how quotas can be applied. Quotas are easier to implement in proportional representation systems with large multiple-member districts than in majority/plurality systems with single-member districts, where it is easier for parties to influence who is selected to stand in winnable constituencies (ibid.). The key is to ensure that the design of the quota system has rules (e.g. in relation to the placement or ranking of women and men on candidate lists) that match the electoral system (ibid.).

2.8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H)

2.8.1. Setting the scope

Under the BPfA, national governments have committed to promoting institutional mechanisms ⁽²⁴¹⁾ that support gender equality, including establishing a gender equality body, mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy and producing sex-disaggregated statistics. Advances in these areas help to ensure that progress in the other areas of the BPfA is possible (EIGE, 2014), and accordingly they are of critical importance. Gender mainstreaming can also safeguard the consideration of women's representation, interests and needs in decision-making. This is one important aspect of parity democracy, which is 'the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society, by means of multidisciplinary strategies' (Council of Europe, 2003, page 28) ⁽²⁴²⁾.

Chapter 1 highlighted a range of challenges at EU level in relation to Area H, including the lack of a gender perspective in EU economic, employment and social inclusion policies, insufficient mechanisms and indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and the absence of an intersectional perspective. Several additional challenges persist in relation to Area H at national level.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Legislative quotas for parliamentary elections are in place in Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. Note that in 2016 'a majority of the government of Luxembourg voted to constitute a gender quota in the electoral act. A new law adopted on 15 December 2016 ensures that political parties meet a minimum 40-per-cent quota for women in their lists for national elections and a 50-per-cent quota for European elections. However, the law is predicted to be implemented in 2019 and hence was not implemented in the parliamentary elections of 2018' (see <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/176/35>). Therefore, Luxembourg has not been included among countries with legislative electoral quotas in analysis of developments since 2013.

⁽²⁴¹⁾ Within the BPfA, the term 'institutional mechanisms' encompasses government bodies and other national machineries; national policies, legislation, programmes and projects; and monitoring and evaluation of these bodies and their actions.

⁽²⁴²⁾ Parity democracy also involves balanced numerical representation of women and men, which is not necessarily addressed by strong institutional mechanisms (e.g. gender equality bodies may have a high proportion of male personnel).

- Inadequate government commitment to gender equality. Government support for gender equality has been identified as one of the key factors for the development and sustainability of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (EIGE, 2014). Yet government commitment continues to be insufficient at national level, and in some cases has weakened since 2013 (see below).
- Merging of independent gender equality bodies with other anti-discrimination organisations. A trend seen from 2005 to 2012 was the merging of independent gender equality bodies with others. Although not inherently negative, the consequences of this trend have not yet been fully assessed (EIGE, 2014). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no new data were available to analyse more recent developments.
- Insufficient gender mainstreaming at national level. Gender mainstreaming at Member State level has often weakened, rather than strengthened, since 2013. This has occurred despite EU calls for Member States to strengthen their gender-mainstreaming efforts (e.g. Council of the European Union, 2013c).
- Little or no commitment by Member States to collecting and disseminating sex-disaggregated data. The availability of high quality sex-disaggregated data is 'a major precondition for effective gender equality policies and legislation' (ibid., page 11). In 2012 the laws of 13 Member States included an obligation to produce statistics disaggregated by sex, and those of nine Member States included an obligation to disseminate statistics disaggregated by sex (EIGE, 2014). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no new data were available to analyse more recent developments.

This chapter reviews the indicators in Area H, which were endorsed by the Council of the EU in 2013 during the Lithuanian Presidency. The

analysis is based on ad hoc survey data collected by EIGE in 2018. When possible, it is compared with the next most recent data of 2012, presented in EIGE's BPfA report on *Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality* (2014).

2.8.2. EU policy developments

The EU has the specific duty of mainstreaming gender equality within its activities as prioritised in the *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*. UN Member States, including the EU's Member States, have also committed to adopting and strengthening policies and legislation to promote gender equality and empower women and girls in 2015 under SDG 5. The progress on integration of a gender perspective in EU policies is described in Chapter 1. The EU also works with Member States to support gender mainstreaming at national level, for example through the High Level Group on gender mainstreaming, which brings together national representatives and the Commission. Since 2013, the EU has encouraged Member States to implement gender mainstreaming through recommendations, guidelines, mutual learning programmes and regulations. For example, the EU has:

- introduced recommendations and guidelines to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming at national level (see EIGE's gender-mainstreaming platform) ⁽²⁴³⁾;
- supported gender mainstreaming through mutual learning events, such as the mutual learning programme in gender equality, which organises around three seminars each year (European Commission, n.d.-e);
- emphasised the need for sex-disaggregated data within the regulations of the European statistical programme 2013-2017, although there are no guidelines to support Member States in collecting and disseminating these data (EIGE, 2014).

⁽²⁴³⁾ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>.

2.8.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU ⁽²⁴⁴⁾

Government commitment to promote gender equality declined in some Member States

The status of governmental responsibility is measured by a composite indicator, H1, 'Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality', comprising five sub-indicators, each scored from 0 to 2 ⁽²⁴⁵⁾. Scores on this indicator for each Member State range from 0 to 10, with a higher score indicating a stronger position for the country's gender equality body.

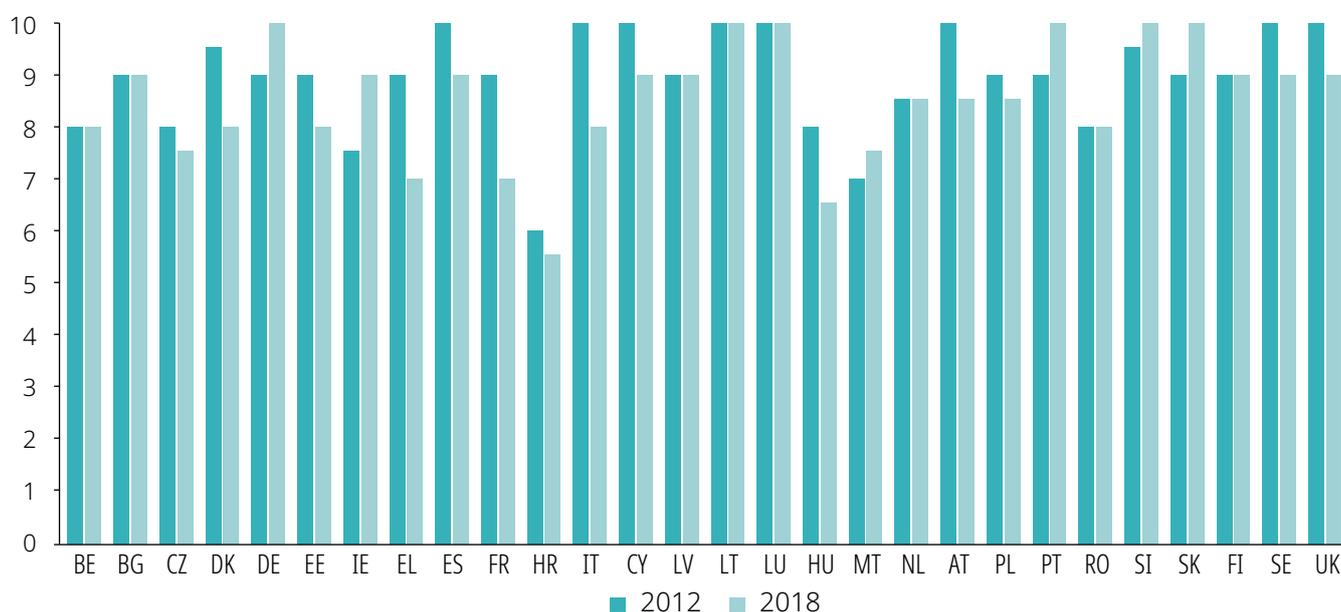
Figure 27 shows that only six Member States have increased their score since 2012, while eight have stayed the same. The remaining 14 Member States have a lower score now than

in 2012. This development is driven by small reductions across different aspects of government efforts to promote gender equality, such as the location of the government gender equality body within the government hierarchy or its function.

The most noticeable decline in scores for this indicator relates to the lowering of the level at which governmental gender equality bodies are positioned within the government hierarchy compared with 2012. This is mostly because the governmental body was positioned at the highest level in a ministry or formed an entire ministry itself, in only ten Member States in 2018, compared with 16 Member States in 2012.

This negative trend may be explained by a reduced focus on gender equality at EU and Member State levels. Some authors (Hubert and

Figure 27: Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality by Member State, total score out of 10



Source: EIGE 2018 and 2012 survey data.

Note: Compared to the report annexed to the Council of the EU conclusions on Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward (14254/19), the figure for Finland in 2018 has been revised from 7 to 9 points during final data quality checks.

⁽²⁴⁴⁾In figures 27, 28, 29, the results for 2012 and 2018 are comparable only to a limited degree over time. This is because the methodology to collect data has changed slightly over time, putting more weight on assessment by independent experts rather than self-assessment by the government where possible. The values should be interpreted with caution, as they present the situation at different points in time, and the specific reasons for changes between these years are not reviewed in detail.

⁽²⁴⁵⁾These measure the level of highest responsibility for promoting gender equality at the governmental level, the existence of a (permanent) governmental gender equality body, the location of the governmental gender equality body within the government hierarchy, the functions of the gender equality body and the accountability of the government for promoting gender equality.

Stratigaki, 2016) highlight a general shift within the EU from gender equality to broader human rights issues, with a particular focus on gender-based violence, caused in part by administrative reform related to the EU enlargement.

In this context, some of the new Member States may not have the same understanding of gender equality as some of the older Member States, leading to reduced progress on gender equality as relevant proposals (e.g. the directive to improve gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges) are blocked (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016). The financial crisis also saw social policies, such as gender equality, delayed in favour of economic and fiscal measures.

A rise in anti-gender movements (see Section 2.9 for more detail) has negatively affected the institutional and policy framework for gender equality in some Member States. This is particularly the case in Member States without a long history of democratic governance, strong women's movements and a tradition of civil society organisation. Similarly, gender equality mechanisms at national level have been weakened in some cases by restructuring and budget cuts (European Parliament, 2018a).

Implementing gender audits, gender focal points and dedicated working groups to improve gender mainstreaming

In 2018 a number of ministries within Czechia's government undertook gender audits, with more planned for 2019. This stemmed from the balanced representation action plan 2016-2018, which set out the need for gender audits of central state bodies. In addition, all ministries have

established gender focal points, which are responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming within the ministries, in line with the Gender Focal Point Standard. Compliance is recommended rather than mandatory, which has led to varying work arrangements and powers of focal points in different ministries (UNECE, 2019a). Similarly, each ministry within the Finnish government has a gender equality working group and a dedicated person responsible for coordination. Each year these working groups assess the gender impact of over 10 % of bills (UNECE, 2019b).

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

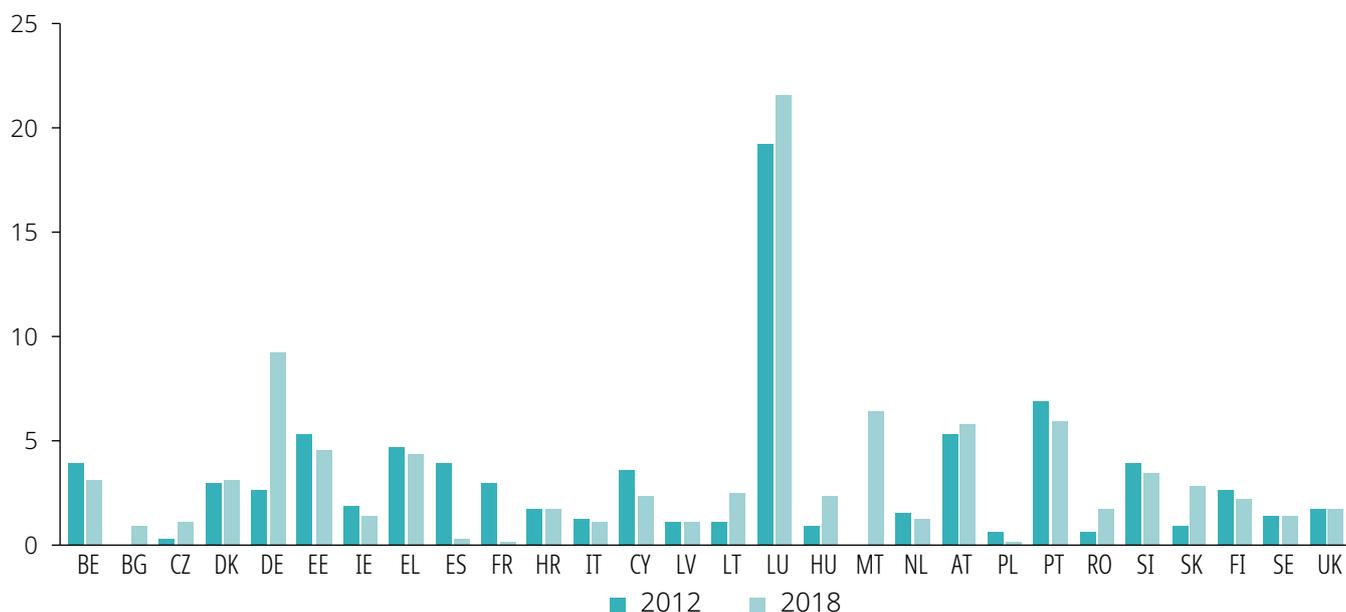
Change in the number of personnel in gender equality bodies varies across Member States

The change in the number of employees within governments' gender equality bodies (relative to population size) has varied between Member States since 2012, as displayed in Figure 28. As highlighted in Annex 5 — Overview of strategic objectives and indicators, Member States with smaller populations are likely to score higher on this indicator, as there is a minimum number of employees that gender equality bodies need to function. This may serve to explain why Luxembourg, which had the second smallest population in the EU in 2018, scores so highly⁽²⁴⁶⁾.

Data on the changes in the numbers of employees of independent gender equality bodies are more limited and more difficult to compare because of shifts in the mandates of these bodies from the promotion of gender equality to addressing multiple grounds of discrimination. Such shifts were impossible to identify based on the data available at the time of the writing of the report.

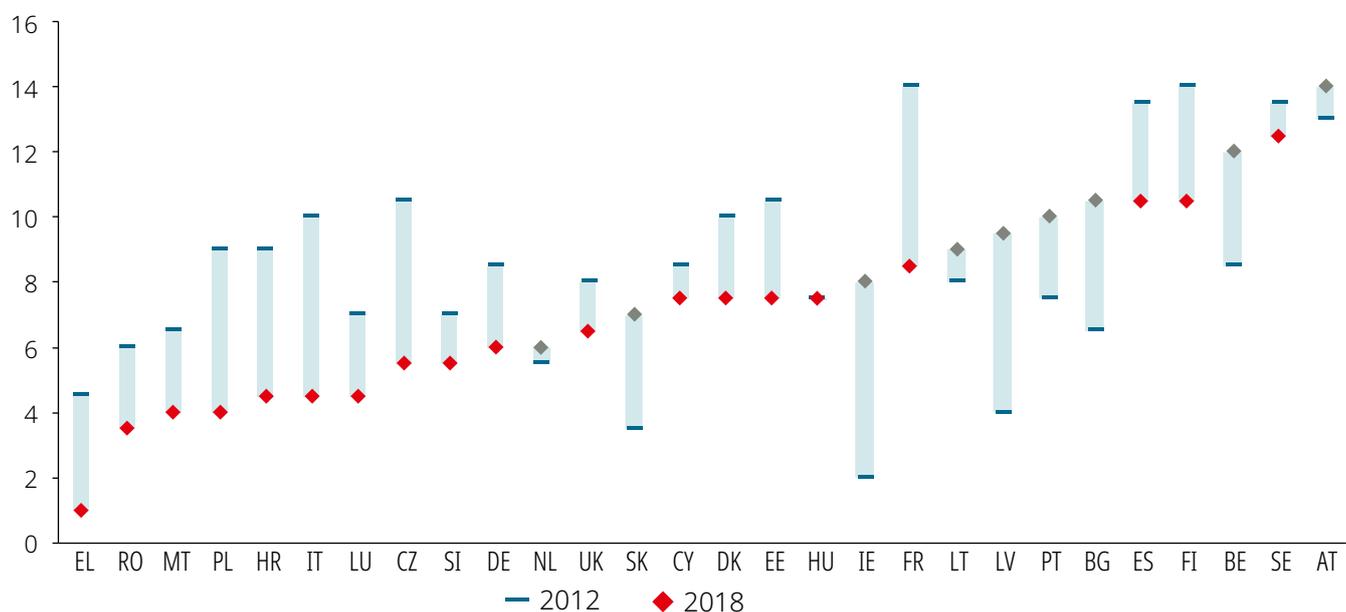
⁽²⁴⁶⁾The total number of full-time employees in person years (i.e. full-time equivalent of employees for a given year) for Luxembourg in 2018 was 25.

Figure 28: Employees of the governmental gender equality body by Member State (per million population)



Sources: EIGE 2018 and 2012 survey data. 2012 data unavailable for Bulgaria and Malta. Population data cover 2018 and are from Eurostat (data code: demo_pjan).

Figure 29: Change in gender-mainstreaming efforts from 2012 to 2018, total score out of 16



Sources: EIGE 2012 and 2018 Survey data.

Gender-mainstreaming efforts have weakened

Indicator H3, on 'Gender mainstreaming', meas-

ures the extent to which governments have committed to gender mainstreaming and implemented tools to facilitate this. This includes the status of governments' commitment to gender

mainstreaming in public administration ⁽²⁴⁷⁾; the structures of gender mainstreaming ⁽²⁴⁸⁾; and the extent to which Member States have committed to using various methods and tools for gender mainstreaming ⁽²⁴⁹⁾. The average score for Member States in 2012 was 8.4 (out of a total possible score of 16), representing a poor level of achievement. Perhaps more disappointingly, this fell to 7.4 in 2018. Figure 29 shows the change in score by Member State between 2012 and 2018, highlighting this negative trend in 18 Member States.

The low scores are largely driven by limited use of various methods and tools for gender mainstreaming, and limitations in the structures of gender mainstreaming resulting from the absence of interministerial gender-mainstreaming structures, focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in ministries and/or consultations with the governmental gender equality body. In part, this reduced focus on gender mainstreaming can be explained by the emergence of a family mainstreaming approach in some Member States, implemented instead of gender mainstreaming (European Parliament, 2018a). This approach entails considering the impacts of actions on families and ensuring that family concerns are considered throughout the policy process. In practice, this may involve a focus on demographic increase and fertility. Although not inherently negative, in some Member States the trend towards family mainstreaming has become a tool by which to entrench traditional values and oppose women's rights (ibid.).

Improving gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting by national governments

Positive efforts to implement a gender-mainstreaming approach within budget processes are evident in Finland, Latvia and Sweden.

In Finland, every ministry is required to provide an assessment of budget-related activities with significant gender impacts within its draft budgets (UNECE, 2019b). A research project carried out in 2017-2018 identified best practices in gender impact assessment in budgets and gender budgeting across countries, as well as assessing the gender impacts of the Finnish government's policies (Elomäki et al., 2018). Recommendations were developed to integrate gender-budgeting tools and practices into the government's budgetary processes, with gender budgeting reportedly set to be developed further in the coming years.

A similar study was carried out in Latvia to assess the gender impact of two budget programmes, one at state level and one at local level (Oxford Research AB, 2017). It found that gender budgeting has not been incorporated into budget processes and that the lack of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data limits budget impact analysis. The study produced a set of recommendations, which led to changes in how the Cabinet of Ministers analyses the state budget. Ministries and central state institutions are now required to report on performance indicators by sex (in numbers of individuals) in their annual reporting on the state budget in order to show improvements in their specific priority areas (UNECE, 2019c).

The Swedish government has already established official gender-mainstreaming processes in its work, through a decision on gender mainstreaming in the Swedish government offices for the period 2016-2020. This identified the budget process as one of the key areas for gender mainstreaming, with work currently being undertaken by the government

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ Ranging from no commitment to an enforced legal obligation.

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Which measures whether Member States have an interministerial structure, a contact person in the ministries, and the extent to which the gender equality body is involved in policy consultations.

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ Including gender impact assessments for legislation, policy and evaluation, awareness raising and training on gender equality, gender budgeting and the availability of evaluation reports.

offices to integrate gender equality in the development of the national budget. This will ensure that a gender equality perspective is considered when introducing new reforms and policy initiatives, as well as when reporting on their impact. Accordingly, in 2017, the Swedish National Financial Management Authority published methods to enable monitoring and reporting of the gender equality impacts of (proposed) reforms included in the national budget (UNECE, 2019e).

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

2.9. Human rights of women (BPfA Area I)

2.9.1. Setting the scope

Human rights are founded upon the inherent dignity of all human beings. They encompass a wide range of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, including reproductive rights. They are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible (UN OHCHR, 1993). As recognised at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (United Nations, 1995), ‘the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights’. All EU Member States have obligations to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure that they fully enjoy all human rights. Their responsibility is outlined in CEDAW, whose universal ratification by 2000 was one of the main goals of the original 1995 platform for action. To date, however, some of the EU Member States’ reservations are still in force (United Nations, 2019a) ⁽²⁵⁰⁾ and considered incompatible with the purpose of CEDAW (European Parliament, 2011a). Importantly, governments must tackle not only discriminatory laws and policies but also practices and customs within society that hinder the fulfilment of women’s human rights, including those carried out by private persons and organisations (see UN OHCHR, 2014).

In practice, the EU continues to face challenges in this area, including the following.

- Ensuring that international human rights instruments (including optional protocols where they exist) are ratified at EU and Member State levels, without reservations. These currently include CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention. This challenge is further echoed by a ‘global pushback on women’s rights. This pushback is deep, pervasive and relentless’ (United Nations, 2019b).
- Responding to new challenges that threaten human rights today, in particular the shrinking space for CSOs. Women’s CSOs have played a crucial role in implementing and monitoring international women’s rights instruments, although they have always faced underfinancing even in comparison with other, similar, organisations (European Women’s Lobby, 2018b). However, the environment in which they operate today is increasingly threatened, posing a serious challenge to human rights and civil liberties. This is taking place in the context of rising illiberalism in central and eastern European countries (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2018; Laurent and Scheppele, 2017) and accompanying anti-gender movements.
- Overcoming the barriers that prevent women from accessing their fundamental rights in practice. Women continue to face challenges in accessing their human rights, due to structural obstacles such as gender discrimination and/or inequalities in different areas of life, as evidenced throughout this report (Council of Europe, 2011; Council of the European Union, 2017g; see also FRA, 2017a, and Section 2.4).
- Additional difficulties that particular groups, including LGBTQI* women, women with disabilities, older women, Roma women, and refugee and migrant women, face in accessing their rights, due to intersecting characteristics that create multiple disadvantages. Some of these groups are treated in more detail in sub-section 2.9.3, and the situation of migrant and refugee women is assessed in more detail

⁽²⁵⁰⁾Those of Germany, France, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom.

in Sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.12, and highlighted in other chapters as well where relevant.

- Ensuring the protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Since 2013, some EU Member States have taken steps to reduce access to essential sexual and reproductive health and services, such as contraception, family planning and abortion (European Commission, 2017n; European Parliament, 2018a). For minority groups, these rights can be especially open to violation; for example, in some countries, women with disabilities and Roma women have experienced forced sterilisation (EESC, 2018a).
- Promoting gender equality and women's rights beyond the EU. Globally, most countries continue to have laws that directly discriminate against women, for example in the areas of work, travel and inheritance (World Bank, 2019). Although not explored in detail in this report, it is worth bearing in mind that the EU also has a critical role to play in promoting the human rights of women in countries outside the EU ⁽²⁵¹⁾.
- A range of other challenges that threaten the human rights of women. They include violence against women, issues arising from digitalisation (e.g. sharing and disclosure of sexualised images or cyberviolence) and changing work patterns (such as the expansion of atypical and precarious work). These are treated in more detail under their respective areas of concern.

It is important to highlight the difficulties in assessing the scale of the human rights challenges in the EU, due to the absence of monitoring indicators in the Beijing framework, as well as the limited availability/comparability of EU-wide data. Therefore, this chapter relies

more often on qualitative and geographically restricted sources of information than most other chapters in this report.

2.9.2. EU policy developments

Since 2013, there have been many EU policy developments relating to the human rights of women. The Istanbul Convention marked an important development in the creation of a comprehensive and legally binding instrument in Europe in this field. In terms of scope, it represents the most far-reaching international treaty to address VAW. Adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011 and in force since 2014, it has been signed by all EU Member States, and by the EU itself in 2017. Notwithstanding this, the EU and seven Member States ⁽²⁵²⁾ have not yet proceeded with its ratification (Council of Europe, 2019a). Criticism has been raised in this respect, as negotiations continue 2 years after the convention was signed (European Coalition to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2018; European Parliament, 2017h). As described in Section 2.9.3, in some EU Member States the challenges to the instrument's ratification are connected to the gender ideology debate and are part of the general backlash against women's and girls' rights (European Parliament, 2018a).

Regarding access to justice, the Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) came into force in November 2015 and aims to ensure that victims of crime receive sufficient support and protection and are able to participate in legal proceedings. It outlines a number of rights for victims, including the right to understand and be understood, the right to information, and the right to protection and individual assessment ⁽²⁵³⁾. An assessment from 2018 found that 23 out of 27 ⁽²⁵⁴⁾ Member States had officially incorpo-

⁽²⁵¹⁾ For example, the European Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* commits to focusing on collaborative work between the EEAS and Member States to implement policies with relevance to the human rights of women. It also offers funding for gender equality work in third countries and commits to monitoring/supporting candidate Member States to comply with the human rights aspects of the Copenhagen criteria for membership.

⁽²⁵²⁾ Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

⁽²⁵³⁾ For instance, it highlights the potential additional needs of victims of gender-based violence, including specialist support, additional protection and the option to be interviewed by a member of the same sex.

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ Denmark opted out of the directive, so it was not covered.

rated the directive into national law, but that key reporting obligations had not been met at the EU level by the European Commission (European Parliament, 2018h). The assessment highlighted differences in the protections offered by Member State under the directive, which are partly due to variation in national definitions and concepts (especially in the definition of the term ‘victim’). The European Parliament noted differences between countries in the implementation of the Victims’ Rights Directive and argued that further assessment is needed (European Parliament, 2017k).

Ensuring that the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women are protected is a strategic objective of the Council of Europe’s gender equality strategy 2018-2023 (Council of Europe, 2018a) ⁽²⁵⁵⁾. This strategy focuses on the right to physical security of migrant and refugee women and highlights the importance of identifying victims of trafficking and gender-based violence among migrants and asylum seekers and providing gender-sensitive support. However, xenophobia has been increasing in many Member States, as has opposition to protecting refugees’ and asylum seekers’ rights. For instance, Italy has restricted irregular migration through the central Mediterranean, resulting in refugees being left behind in Libya, where individuals faced human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2018). This raises concerns about compliance with the principle of non-*refoulement* laid down in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights ⁽²⁵⁶⁾ (FRA, 2018d; Trevisanut, 2014). Similar worries have been expressed with regard to Poland, where the Commissioner for Human Rights and NGOs have reported a continual refusal to allow the entrance of asylum seekers at the land-border crossing points of Terespol (FRA, 2019b). Hungary has set up a fence on its

southern border and keeps refugees in closed ‘transit zones’ ⁽²⁵⁷⁾, where some detainees waiting for a decision were starved (Council of Europe, 2019b; Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2019). More generally, the western Balkan route has seen allegations of severe mistreatment of migrants ⁽²⁵⁸⁾.

There have been some positive EU policy developments linked to the rights of LGBTIQ* people. In 2016, the Council of the EU released its first conclusions on LGBTI equality. Since then, the European Commission has committed to — and reported annually on — a range of actions to improve the rights of LGBTI people in the EU in areas of EU jurisdiction and to monitor/enforce their existing rights under EU law (European Commission, 2016b). As an example of the positive consequences of such work, since November 2018, lesbian, gay and bisexual people have been better protected against discrimination within media content: audiovisual commercial communications are now prohibited from including or promoting discrimination based on sexual orientation (Audiovisual Media Services Directive — European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2018; see also European Commission, 2018b).

Although the EU’s actions in the area of LGBTIQ* equality are open to criticism — for example, the Council conclusions do not highlight the intersectional barriers faced by LGBTIQ* women, and the European Commission has failed to pursue an ambitious LGBTI equality strategy (ILGA, 2015) — they nonetheless signal that in recent years the EU has taken a more active role to promote LGBTI rights within the EU. Considering legal changes, there have also been key developments in case law since 2013. For example, EU countries are now required

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ Although the Council of Europe is technically speaking a non-EU institution, it is one of Europe’s leading human rights organisations and includes all 28 EU Member States among its members. Therefore, it is important to cover within this chapter.

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ The fundamental principle of non-*refoulement* in international law forbids a country receiving asylum seekers to return them to a country in which they would be in likely danger of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Trevisanut, 2014).

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ For detailed information regarding the transit zones, see https://search.coe.int/commissioner/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680942f0d#_Toc6306512.

⁽²⁵⁸⁾ This included heavy beatings, taking photos or videos of injured migrants, and attacks by police dogs. The UN Refugee Agency and various NGOs reported several instances of ill-treatment of migrants in Croatia and Hungary, and Oxfam publicly denounced mistreatment by police or border guards in the same EU Member States and Bulgaria.

to recognise the residency rights of same-sex marriage partners, following a ruling by the European Court of Justice (Court of Justice of the European Union, 2018). Despite these positive changes, in some Member States LGBTQI* rights have experienced a backlash, including in Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary (Karsay, 2018).

Considering the rights of other particularly vulnerable groups, the EU has developed comprehensive strategies to improve the lives of people with disabilities and of Roma people, even if gender is not always effectively mainstreamed in these documents (see Section 1.4. for details).

2.9.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

The space for civil society is shrinking as anti-gender movements gain momentum

In recent years, there have been extremely worrying movements against gender equality and improving women's human rights across Member States. In several Member States, the backlash against women's human rights has undermined the discourse on this topic or has developed into measures to prevent progress with women's human rights. Furthermore, there has been increasing opposition in some Member States to what is called gender ideology (European Parliament, 2018a) — in itself a problematic term often used for political ends. In fact, anti-gender movements resist the use of the English word 'gender' (which does not exist in many languages) for unjustified fear that this definition denies the natural differences between women and men and thus might lead to the destruction of traditional family values (ibid.).

A prime example of the negative consequences of such movements has been seen in relation to the Istanbul Convention, as seven Member

States (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom) have not ratified it. In some cases, this resistance to ratification was linked to the inclusion of the concept of 'gender' within the treaty (European Parliament, 2018a, p. 57) and to provisions of the convention aiming to remove gender stereotypes (Article 12), rather than reluctance to lessen violence against women.

- In Poland, the convention was signed in 2012, but there was some backlash within the Roman Catholic Church and among some politicians. Similarly, in Hungary, despite the state signing the convention, there were several opponents to this and there was a shift within the government against the convention (European Parliament, 2018a, p. 32).
- In Bulgaria, the Constitutional Court ruled in 2018 that the convention was unconstitutional because the term 'gender' relativises the biologically determined two sexes ⁽²⁵⁹⁾. Similarly, in Latvia a joint letter from bishops in 2016 noted that the convention might be unconstitutional ⁽²⁶⁰⁾.
- In Czechia and Slovakia, petitions were initiated against ratification ⁽²⁶¹⁾. The Lithuanian parliament also stalled ratification in 2018 ⁽²⁶²⁾.

Overall, ratification has become a highly politicised issue, not only because of the theoretical debate over the concept of gender but because it is seen as paving the way, for example, for same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples. A survey on the acceptance of same-sex marriage shows that the countries that have rejected the Istanbul Convention have much lower rates of acceptance, with rates of acceptance being particularly low in Lithuania (12 %), Latvia (16 %), Bulgaria (18 %), Hungary (27 %) and Poland (32 %) (Diamant, J., and Gardner, S., 2018).

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ See <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/07/27/bulgaria-s-constitutional-court-says-istanbul-convention-not-in-line-with-basic-law-07-27-2018/>.

⁽²⁶⁰⁾ See <https://eng.ism.lv/article/politics/politics/latvia-unlikely-to-ratify-istanbul-convention-any-time-soon.a265133/>.

⁽²⁶¹⁾ See <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22088961/istanbul-convention-ratification-refusal-parliament.htm> and <https://czlobby.cz/en/news/istanbul-convention-and-development-situation-czech-republic>.

⁽²⁶²⁾ See <https://bnn-news.com/lithuania-procrastinates-ratification-of-istanbul-convention-185695>.

The backlash against gender equality has also contributed to the shrinking of the space for civil society, which has deepened and accelerated in recent years (European Parliament, 2017j). Democratic spaces and financial resources are decreasing, especially for women's movements and organisations (European Women's Lobby, 2018b). The attempts to reduce the importance of women's rights CSOs and NGOs has been observed in several Member States ⁽²⁶³⁾, where they have led to measures and initiatives hostile to women's rights NGOs, including smear campaigns and restrictive legislative measures (European Parliament, 2018a). This complicated the sustainable operation of these organisations, for example by creating additional barriers to accessing funding through restrictive criteria and administrative burdens (ibid.) For example, in Romania, CSOs faced blacklists from nationalist media outlets and in 2017 two MPs proposed a draft law requiring NGOs to report all of their income and expenditure twice a year (Ibid., p. 43). Similarly, in Hungary there has been a backlash against NGOs from the government-friendly media and the state (Eötvös Károly Institute et al, 2017), with Parliament adopting the foreign funding law of 2017 (European Parliament, 2018a) and 'new legislation which criminalises activities that support asylum and residence applications and further restricts the right to request asylum' ⁽²⁶⁴⁾. Such legislation is likely to affect women's human rights CSOs (European Women's Lobby, 2018b), which play an essential role in advancing women's rights and supporting vulnerable women. In May 2019, the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, Dunja Mijatović, called for the Hungarian authorities to repeal the harmful legislation and 'to reverse its alarming course in relation to human rights defenders and NGOs which seriously affects the protection of human rights in the country' (Council of Europe, 2019b, page 5).

Another particularly worrying development has been registered concerning the criminalisation of the NGOs involved in search and rescue operations at sea. Specifically in Italy, the approval of the Decree Law No 53 of 14 June 2019 on urgent

provisions on public order and security has negated the authorisation of several NGOs' ships carrying refugees from Libya to enter Italian ports. This might infringe the UN Convention on the Law at Sea (United Nations, 1982) principle that prescribes that 'the state of the territorial waters in which the boat is located must authorise passage to a ship to provide assistance' (Article 18). In several instances, the Italian government has seized NGOs' boats and indicted their captains, although in the most recent case, Carola Rackete of the *Sea Watch 3* was then cleared of all charges (FRA, 2018d, 2019b).

Structural obstacles prevent women from accessing justice when their rights are violated

Women face a range of challenges in accessing justice, particularly when it comes to bringing legal claims when their rights are violated. The CEDAW 2015 recommendation on women's access to justice provides legal grounds for six fundamental components necessary to ensure this right: justiciability, availability, accessibility, good quality, accountability of justice systems and the provision of remedies for victims (CEDAW, 2015).

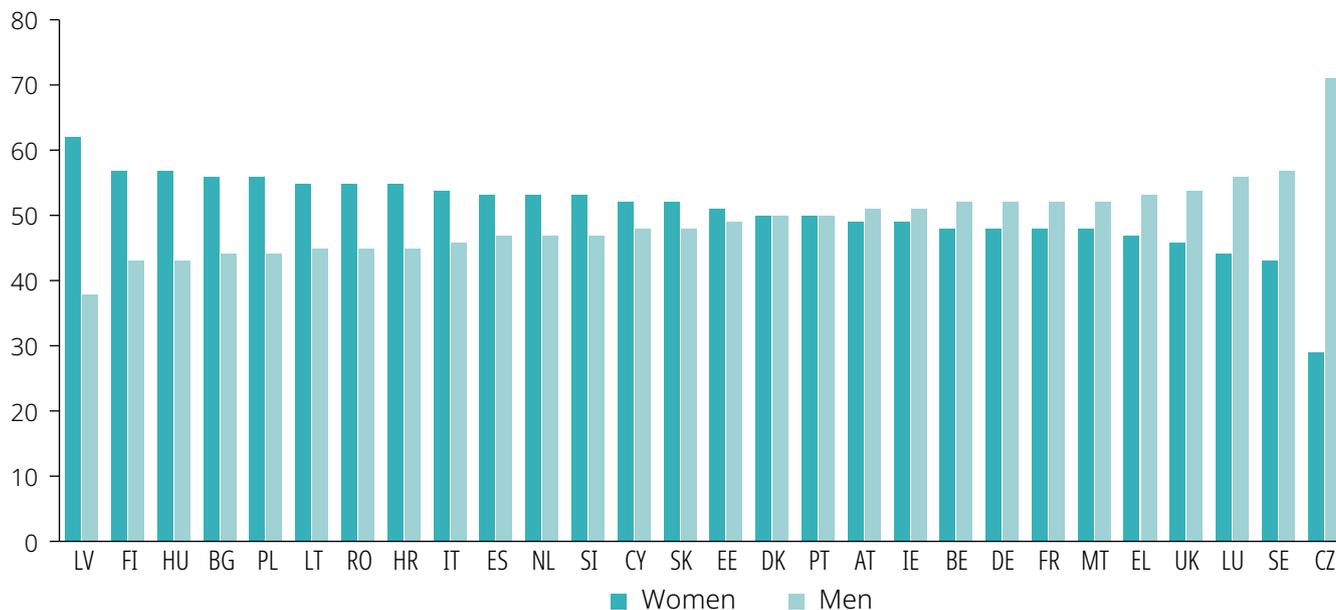
Gender challenges that relate to wider biases within society remain. For example:

- more than 20 % of Europeans believe that women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape (European Commission, 2016h);
- hidden stereotypes can influence the wider system of justice when a woman is seeking divorce and files for custody of her child(ren) in an abusive relationship, in some cases from an abusive father (Platt et al., 2009).

Women may also face various legal and procedural barriers, such as challenges to the application of legislation on gender-based violence (see Section 2.4) and, more broadly, discrimination through legislation that is not gender-sensitive (Council of Europe, n.d.).

⁽²⁶³⁾ Most notably in Italy, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

⁽²⁶⁴⁾ Quoted from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_4522

Figure 30: Percentage of women and men in the total number of persons who declare they do not have confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country, 2017 (%)

Source: OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB) 2019.

This is reflected, for example, in the historically low proportion of cases brought to the ECtHR by women ⁽²⁶⁵⁾. In this context, the 2017 PACE Resolutions denounced the excessive length of judicial proceedings (Council of Europe, 2017a) and a lack of effective remedies resulting from judgments of the ECtHR in cases involving Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Poland and Romania (FRA, 2018d). Equally significantly, the costs of the proceedings may deter women from seeking justice (European Commission, 2007). Although these costs can affect both men and women, women's globally lower level of resources makes them more exposed to financial risk and its negative consequences (Council of Europe, 2015a).

Lastly, judicial stereotyping relating to gender represents one of the most significant barriers to women's access to justice. It operates by enforcing and perpetuating stereotypes, for instance by compromising the impartiality of judges' decisions, their opinions about witness credibility and, most importantly, their ability to understand the nature of the crime (Cusack, 2015). In turn, this might lead women to have low levels of trust in the judicial system, as they perceive existing bias and observe the historically low priority afforded

to the defence of women's rights (Council of Europe, 2015a). Figure 30 illustrates that in many Member States (Latvia, Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Cyprus, Slovakia and Estonia) more than a half of those who do not have confidence in the judicial system and courts in their country are women.

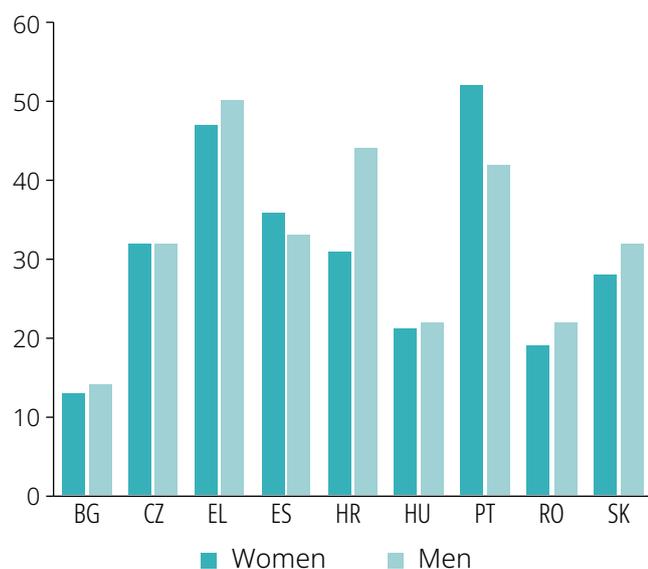
Roma women face high levels of intersectional discrimination in many Member States

A FRA survey of nine Member States found that an average of 26 % of Roma women and men had experienced discrimination in at least one area of life (these covered employment, education, health, housing, and public or private services including public administration, public transport, restaurants and bars, and shops), due to their Roma background in the previous 12 months (Figure 31; see also FRA, 2016).

Despite the high prevalence of discrimination, the proportion of incidents of discrimination that are reported is low, and in many of the countries women tend to report incidents

⁽²⁶⁵⁾ See [https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/equal-access-of-women-to-justice#{%2214965347%22:\[\]}\]](https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/equal-access-of-women-to-justice#{%2214965347%22:[]}]) for more details and studies on this.

Figure 31: Percentage of Roma discrimination in the previous 12 months, 2016 (%)



Source: FRA database on survey on minorities and discrimination in EU (2016)

Note: Based on a small sample size.

less than men ⁽²⁶⁶⁾. In Portugal, where over half of Roma women (52 %) reported discrimination, only 4 % said they had reported the latest incident of discrimination. Similarly, low numbers of Roma women in the remaining EU Member States reported incidents of discrimination. This may be explained by a belief that reporting would have no impact (FRA, 2019c) or by low levels of awareness of support organisations and anti-discrimination laws (FRA, 2016).

As highlighted in Section 2.3, Roma women may experience particular discrimination in accessing healthcare, and particularly sexual and reproductive healthcare. This directly infringes their rights to health and reproductive autonomy. The practice of removing Roma children from the family to state care (on grounds of poverty) also threatens Roma women and girls, who

often become vulnerable to trafficking while in these institutions (Vidra et al., 2015) ⁽²⁶⁷⁾.

Racism against women and men of colour and of minority ethnic origin is widespread and rising, especially in employment

In the EU, people of African descent face 'widespread and entrenched prejudice and exclusion' (FRA, 2018a, page 3). Furthermore, perceived tension between racial and ethnic groups in society is high, and increased between 2011 and 2016, from 86.3 % to 87.2 % ⁽²⁶⁸⁾. In a 2016 survey of people of African descent, 24 % reported experiences of discrimination in the previous 12 months. Primarily this discrimination was perceived to be due to the colour of their skin (24 % of women and 30 % of men reported this type of discrimination in the previous 5 years) or their ethnic origin (19 % of respondents). It took place most commonly in relation to looking for work (25 %), in the workplace (24 %), in the context of other public or private services (22 %) or in relation to housing (21 %). Only a small number reported discrimination in relation to education (9 % in the previous 5 years and 4 % in the previous 12 months) and health (no data available for the previous 5 years, 3 % in the previous 12 months) (FRA, 2018a).

The 2016 survey suggests that men of African descent may face discrimination more frequently than women of African descent; however, women of colour face particular forms of discrimination. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR, 2017) highlights that women of colour, and particularly migrant women of colour, face challenges in accessing employment. In some Member States this has created gaps in employment rates. For example, women with an African background had the lowest employment rates in France in 2016. Furthermore, women

⁽²⁶⁶⁾ The gender differences in reporting were especially big in Croatia and Romania. In seven out of the nine Member States covered by the survey, women were less likely than men to report the latest incident of discrimination. This applied in Czechia (13 % of Roma women versus 18 % of Roma men), Greece (6 % versus 7 %), Spain (4 % versus 7 %), Croatia (15 % versus 21 %), Hungary (5 % versus 6 %), Portugal (4 % versus 6 %) and Romania (8 % versus 14 %). It is important to note that many of these figures are based on a small sample size.

⁽²⁶⁷⁾ See various joint submissions of the European Roma Rights Centre to e.g. UN Human Rights Committee about several European countries with a Roma/Sinti/Gypsy/Traveller population (<http://www.errc.org/what-we-do/advocacy-research/reports-and-submissions?page=3&keyword=>).

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ Authors' calculations using EU Quality of Life Survey micro-data, Q34. Groups together the two highest levels of tension.

(and men) of colour experience a racial pay gap (ENAR, 2017). The European Network of Migrant Women, a platform led by migrant women, calls attention to dangers facing refugee and migrant women (ENOMW, 2015; see also Section 2.4).

Religious minorities report increasing discrimination, particularly among those who wear traditional or religious clothing

In a 2016 FRA survey, 17 % of Muslims reported discrimination based on religious identity: a significant increase from a 2009 survey (10 % of respondents) (FRA, 2017c). In a 2018 FRA survey on antisemitism and hate crimes carried out in 12 EU countries, 39 % of Jews reported an experience of antisemitic harassment in the 5 years before the survey (FRA, 2018c). Relatedly, perceived tension in society between religious groups has risen from 76.3 % in 2011 to 81.6 % in 2016 ⁽²⁶⁹⁾. Notably, respondents in the FRA survey were more likely to feel discriminated against on the basis of their perceived ethnic background or migrant status than their religious identity (27 % compared with 17 %) (FRA, 2017c). Levels of discrimination differ between those who wear traditional or religious clothing and those who do not: 28 % of men and 27 % of women who wear such clothing reported feeling discriminated against in the previous 12 months, compared with 22 % and 23 % respectively who do not (ibid.).

Muslim women may experience particularly high discrimination rates in the context of employment, which has been described in a UK report as a 'triple penalty' (based on being women, having an ethnic minority background and being Muslim) (UK, House of Commons, 2016, page 15). This report found that Muslim women are the most economically disadvantaged group in the UK. Respondents to the FRA survey highlighted the greater discrimination against Muslim women than men based on clothing in relation to employment and healthcare. For example, this was viewed more frequently as the reason for discrimination when looking for work (35 % compared with 4 % respectively) (FRA, 2017c).

Furthermore, women who wore a headscarf or niqab reported greater levels of harassment than those who did not (31 % compared with 23 %), while 2 % reported being physically attacked.

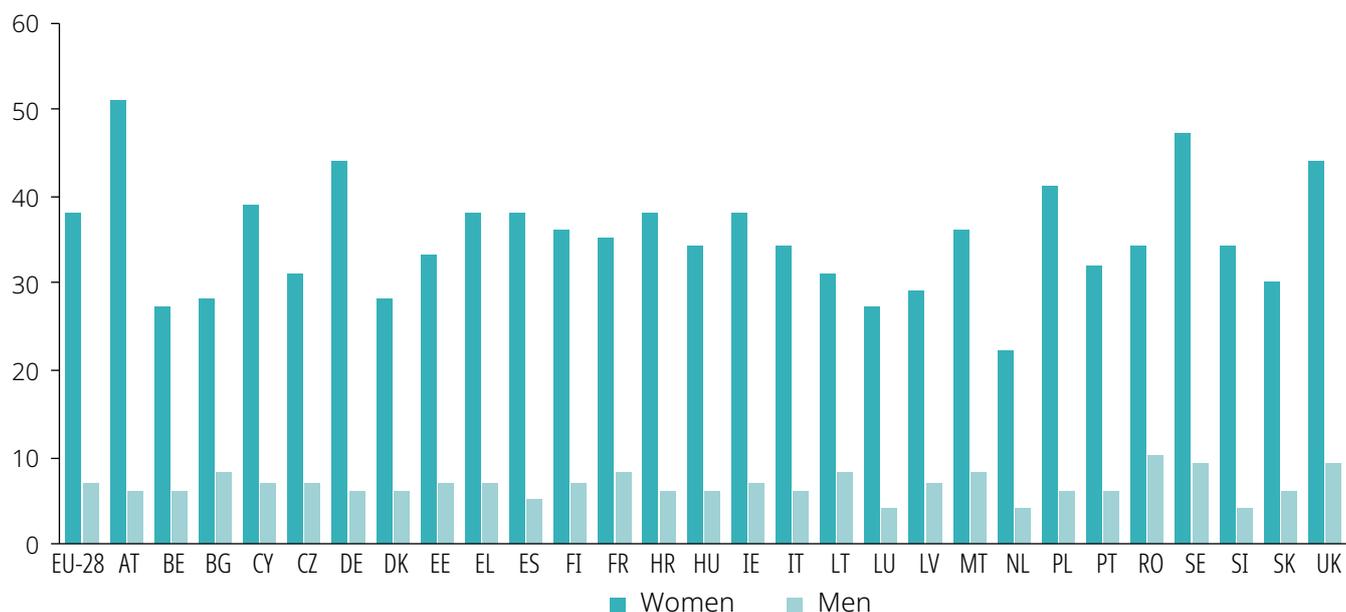
Being LGBTQI* still means facing everyday discrimination

Despite legal protections, in several Member States LGBTQI* individuals face discrimination and harassment, including hate speech and hate crimes. A survey of the LGBT community revealed that, out of all the hate-motivated violent incidents that had happened within the 12 months prior to the survey, the most common recent incident was a threat of violence (63 %), specifically a threat of physical violence (50 %). The group most at risk is transgender women; in the 12 months prior to the survey, 44 % of them have suffered three or more physical/sexual attacks or threats of violence in the EU (FRA, 2014a). A 2015 Eurobarometer survey found that LGBT discrimination is considered to be more widespread than discrimination on the grounds of religion, age, disability and gender, although discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origins continues to be regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination (European Commission, 2015a). Perceived tension between people of different sexual orientations rose between 2011 and 2016 from 71.2 % to 74 % ⁽²⁷⁰⁾.

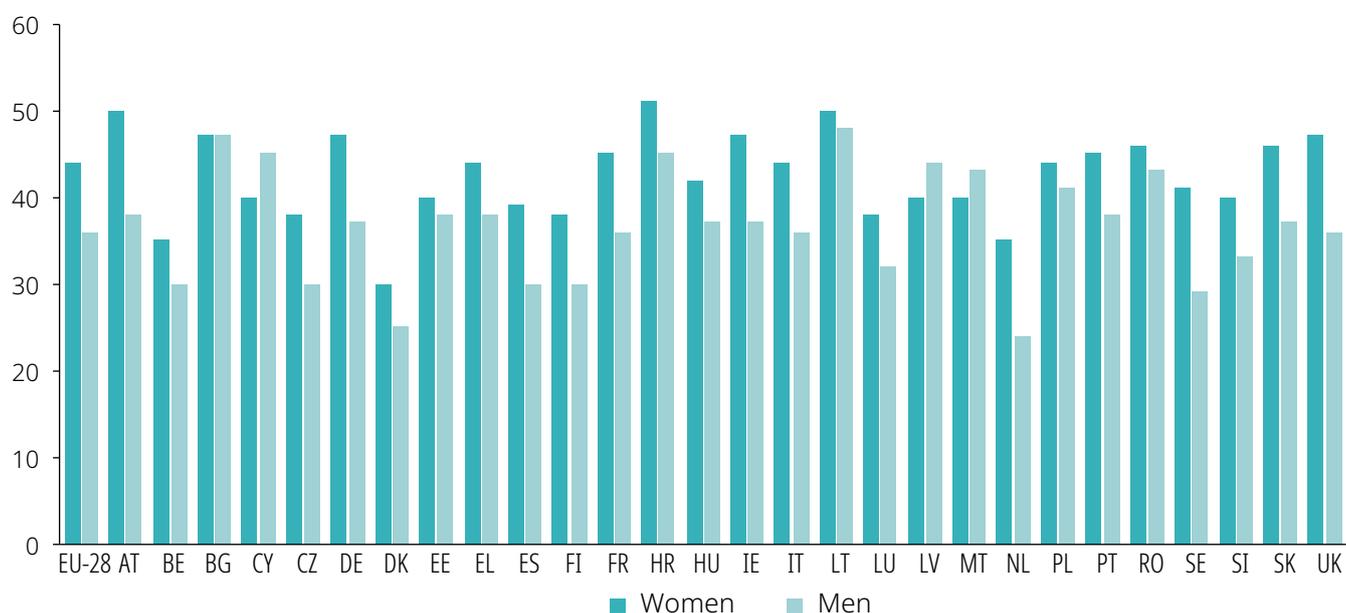
The FRA survey of LGBT individuals found that in the previous 12 months many individuals had experienced discrimination or harassment on the grounds of their gender (FRA, 2012a). LGBT women were disproportionately more likely than LGBT men to have experienced discrimination or harassment on the ground of gender in the previous 12 months (see Figure 32). In Austria, there was a 45 p.p. difference between women and men (51 % women versus 6 % men). In Germany, there was also a high percentage of individuals who experienced discrimination or harassment on the ground of gender (6 % of men and 44 % of women). Despite several Member States' attempts to improve conditions for LGBTQI* groups, discrimination against

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ EU Quality of Life Survey data, Q34.

⁽²⁷⁰⁾ EU Quality of Life Survey data, Q34.

Figure 32: LGBT: felt discriminated against or harassed on the ground of gender in the previous 12 months, 2012 (%)

Source: FRA (2012a).

Figure 33: LGBT: felt discriminated against because of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans in the previous 12 months (%)

Source: FRA (2012a).

them persists. FRA data from 2012 found that, in many Member States, respondents said they had felt discriminated against because of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans during the previous 12 months (see Figure 33).

Importantly, the FRA survey (2012) did not include intersex people as an explicit target group (although some such individuals may have been included). Intersex people ⁽²⁷¹⁾ also experience severe violations of their funda-

⁽²⁷¹⁾'Intersex' is a term to denote a number of different natural variations in a person's bodily characteristics that do not match strict medical definitions of male or female.

mental rights (FRA, 2015a), related to harassment, stigmatisation and access to services. A key violation relates to certain medical practices that affect their fundamental rights; for instance, many Member States legally require births to be certified and registered as male or female (ibid.). However, EU action has often addressed the unequal treatment of intersex people as part of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as opposed to being addressed as discrimination on the ground of sex (ibid.). Many intersex people do not necessarily identify as being part of the LGBTQI* community (ILGA, n.d.), given the diversity of their experiences (Council of Europe, 2015b). The European Parliament's backing of a resolution focused specifically on protecting the fundamental rights of intersex people is an encouraging development that recognises the specific type of discrimination faced by intersex individuals (European Parliament, 2019e).

Only a few Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, France and Malta) have abolished medical requirements in the process of gender recognition and replaced them with procedures based on self-determination. For example, the Maltese Parliament adopted the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act in 2015. This law introduces the right to recognition of gender identity for all persons, abolishes unnecessary and non-consensual medical treatment in the process of gender recognition and allows parents the right to postpone the registering of a gender marker on their child's birth certificate (Malta, Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, 2015). The Act ensures that trans and intersex persons are not required to provide proof of psychiatric, psychological or medical treatment in order to avail themselves of the right to recognition of gender identity (Maltese Parliament, 2015).

Women with disabilities still cannot fully enjoy their human rights

According to the European Economic and Social Committee, 'The situation of women with disabilities is not only worse than that of women without disabilities, it is also worse than that of their male peers' (European Economic and Social Committee, 2018b, page 4). The problem partly stems from the misconception regarding women with disabilities, whose choices are often ignored or even replaced by those of 'third parties, including legal representatives, service providers, guardians and family members, in violation of their rights under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (European Economic and Social Committee, 2018b, page 9).

Thus women with disabilities face a number of additional challenges and vulnerabilities.

- In terms of reproductive rights and autonomy, 'forced sterilisation and abortion as well as other forms of control on their fertility still remain a reality for many [women with disabilities]' (European Commission, 2018r).
- Harmful gender and disability stereotypes are also perpetuated in the education field. Gender- and disability-blind educational materials and curricula and the lack of accessible sanitation facilities at schools affect the lives of girls with disabilities. The financial crisis has also negatively affected attempts at developing inclusive education (European Economic and Social Committee, 2018c).
- Segregation and stereotypes in school translate to lower employment rates for women with disabilities ⁽²⁷²⁾, putting them at higher risk of poverty or social exclusion — almost a third of those above 16 years old (29 %) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2017 ⁽²⁷³⁾.

⁽²⁷²⁾ According to the 2019 Gender Equality Index, a persistent gender gap in employment puts the full-time equivalent rate of employment of women with disabilities at just 20.7 %, against the 28.6 % of men with disabilities and sees a third of women with disability economically inactive.

⁽²⁷³⁾ Eurostat (hlth_dpe10).

- Women with disabilities either are absent from media coverage or appear only in a token or asexual medical perspective. They are under-represented in public decision-making, with their right to vote often denied in the majority of EU Member States by deprivation of their legal capacity or inaccessible voting procedures (European Economic and Social Committee, 2018c).

Several Member States restrict women's access to abortion and contraception

In the context of rising fundamentalisms and backlashes against women's human rights, the discourse on the termination of pregnancy is being challenged. In view of this, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has recently recalled that 'the right of a woman or girl to make autonomous decisions about her own body and reproductive functions is at the very core of her fundamental right to equality and privacy, concerning intimate matters of physical and psychological integrity. Equality in reproductive health includes access, without discrimination, to affordable, quality contraception, including emergency contraception' (United Nations, 2017, page 1).

Yet some Member States ⁽²⁷⁴⁾ have seen a concerning trend of retrogressive policy and legislative proposals that could 'roll back existing protection for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights' (Council of Europe, 2017b, page 5). Although these proposals have mostly been rejected so far, in some cases they have led to tangible restrictions to women's rights.

Thus, abortion is permitted only under certain restricted circumstances in a few EU Member States ⁽²⁷⁵⁾ (and completely forbidden in Malta). In other countries, with less restrictive laws, women's access to legal and safe abortions has been undermined in other ways. For example, in Poland there have been moves towards restricting legal access to abortion,

and parliament is debating a draft bill entitled 'Stop Abortion'. If passed, this bill would ban abortion in cases of severe foetal impairments (Hussein et al., 2018). Recent legislative changes in Poland also require women to obtain a prescription to access certain forms of emergency contraception, which could previously be obtained without a prescription (Council of Europe, 2017b).

There were a number of other concerning policy and legal developments.

- Slovakia has introduced new laws and policies that establish new preconditions for women to access legal abortion services (Council of Europe, 2017b).
- Conscientious objections by gynaecologists to performing abortions in some regions within Member States (e.g. in Italy, Poland and Slovakia) make it difficult for women to access abortion (European Parliament, 2018j; Tamma, 2018).
- In 2012, the abortion pill was banned in Hungary, which means that surgical procedures remain the only way to terminate a pregnancy there (European Parliament, 2018j; United Nations, 2017; Vida, 2019).
- Finally, the Ministry of Health in Croatia is expected to make changes to the country's long-standing law that currently allows access to abortion. In 2017, the Croatian Constitutional Court gave the government 2 years to make these changes, but confirmed that the new law should not abolish the right to abortion. The new law has not yet been drafted, leaving the future legal situation on access to abortion in Croatia unclear ⁽²⁷⁶⁾.

There are also several Member States where positive developments have been seen. Since 2013, at least four Member States (Ireland, France, Portugal and Sweden) have taken

⁽²⁷⁴⁾ Including Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ E.g. Poland.

⁽²⁷⁶⁾ See <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/33874-abortion-in-croatia>

measures to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services ⁽²⁷⁷⁾, focusing on access to assisted reproduction, abortion, contraception and sexual health education. Notably, in 2018 Ireland repealed its previous law on abortion, which allowed a woman to terminate pregnancy only when her life was at risk, but not in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormality (BBC, 2018). This was replaced by a new law that provides termination services without charge within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, if the mother's life or health is at risk or if the foetus is affected by a fatal condition ⁽²⁷⁸⁾.

Although in 2017 only half of EU countries allowed single women to use assisted reproductive technologies and even fewer granted access to lesbian women, there were some positive developments observed in this area. For example, in Sweden the law on the right to reproductive aid entered into force in April 2016. The law allows single women to receive insemination with donated sperm if they are deemed to be medically, psychologically and socially capable of bearing a child (Library of Congress, 2016). The law gives single women the same rights as had previously been reserved for women in relationships. Similarly, in Portugal, legislation has been amended to extend medically assisted procreation to all women, whereas previously only heterosexual couples were allowed to receive assisted procreation (Amendment to ART regulation (Law No 32/2006)) ⁽²⁷⁹⁾. In practice, this allows single and lesbian women to benefit from the legislation. Such developments therefore represent positive steps in the right direction (Präg and Mills, 2017).

2.10. Women and the media (BfPA Area J)

2.10.1. Setting the scope

As a source of entertainment, education and information, the media ⁽²⁸⁰⁾ have enormous potential to reflect, produce and reinforce social patterns, norms and stereotypes (EIGE, 2013), thereby acting as a form of social power. The gender sensitivity of media output is, therefore, of the utmost concern, yet gender inequalities and stereotypes persist.

These are driven — at least in part — by gender imbalances among those developing, producing and regulating media content. The contribution of women to decision-making within the sector remains low, which potentially affects the content of the media and contributes to the gender pay gap (European Parliament, 2018d). Horizontal segregation within the industry is another major issue. In some countries, women not only are under-represented and occupy lower job positions than men, but also are rarely involved in the creative process (European Parliament, 2018d). Instead, women predominate in public relations, marketing and production roles ⁽²⁸¹⁾.

Equally important is the portrayal of women in the media. This has long been a concern in EU policy. For example, it is recognised that women are frequently portrayed in stereotypical roles in advertising (Matthes et al., 2016) and film (Smith et al., 2018), with long-term social consequences (European Parliament, 2013b). The objectification of women in the media can also manifest in

⁽²⁷⁷⁾ For instance, see <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/40th-anniversary-of-the-veil-law>.

⁽²⁷⁸⁾ See <https://www.abortionrightscampaign.ie/2019/01/24/need-an-abortion/>.

⁽²⁷⁹⁾ Retrieved from https://dre.pt/web/guest/legislacao-consolidada/-/lc/75185175/201704051407/exportPdf/normal/1/cacheLevel-Page?_LegislacaoConsolidada_WAR_drefrontofficeportlet_rp=indice.

⁽²⁸⁰⁾ The BfPA framework identifies media as electronic, print, visual and audio media communications, including new technologies of communication. For this review, media includes the following: news; advertisements; commercial audiovisual materials; entertainment industry; social media (including user-generated content); and pornography.

⁽²⁸¹⁾ See, for example, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2015) or European Parliament (2018a).

hyper-sexualised and one-dimensional portrayals of women and girls (European Parliament, 2018d), as is often the case for instance in the (video) gaming industry (Burnay et al., 2019). Notably, the discretion of media organisations over whether or not to adopt equality policies leads to a wide variation in practices, ranging from comprehensive policy frameworks, covering media content and gender balance, to a complete absence of equality policies (European Parliament, 2018f).

Harassment in the workplace also warrants attention (see also Section 2.4). The recent rise of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements demonstrates the prevalence of harassment within the media and entertainment industries. In addition, women journalists face the risk of physical and sexual assault, harassment, rape and even murder (UNESCO, 2018), as well as higher risks of online harassment due to their heightened public presence and exposure online (IFJ, 2018).

As a final emerging issue, social media pose specific challenges to gender equality, not just for journalists but for all women. Although social media can have positive effects by providing a platform for discussion and mobilisation, they can also manifest social injustices and gender stereotypes, and even specific forms of online gender-based violence. These include cyberviolence, which is committed particularly against women and girls, cyberstalking, cyberbullying and cyberharassment, as well as non-consensual pornography — 'revenge porn' ⁽²⁸²⁾ (EIGE, 2017a).

Women do not need to use the internet to experience cyberviolence (European Parliament, 2018c), as they can be the object of depiction (in revenge porn) or the product sold (trafficking, prostitution). In this respect, the internet

plays an important role in enabling trafficking in human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation ⁽²⁸³⁾. The sale of sex robots online, including at least certain types of sex dolls ⁽²⁸⁴⁾, is also a potentially concerning trend.

Overall, more research and data collection are needed to better understand the effects of (new social) media on women's participation and representation within the media and to support the development of methods to prevent gender-based violence and harassment through social media (European Parliament, 2018f). Indeed, assessing the current situation for many gender-related issues in the media is hampered by a lack of comparable EU-wide data. There are some sources of partial or related information ⁽²⁸⁵⁾, but most material specifically addressing the media sector uses one-off studies and/or covers non-EU countries (European Commission, 2018q; European Parliament, 2018d).

2.10.2. EU policy developments

Traditionally, media fell under the remit of 'culture'. However, the fluid nature of media, the mixing of traditional forms with digital and online platforms, and the resulting multifaceted issues (e.g. online violence towards women journalists) are blurring the boundaries of where media fit. In the EU, there is some shared jurisdiction on aspects of women and media that may fall under consumer protection (e.g. advertising), but the media themselves tend to be fragmented (not under a specific label), with knock-on effects on EU-level policy. This reflects the fact that the policy area of media is handled and regulated in different ways in the Member States; for example, the regulation of advertising and of news media are included under different policy fields in different Member States.

⁽²⁸²⁾ Defined in this report as non-consensual pornography, it involves the online distribution of sexually graphic photographs or videos without the consent of the individual in the images. The perpetrator is often an ex-partner who obtains images or videos in the course of a prior relationship, and aims to publicly shame and humiliate the victim in retaliation for ending a relationship. However, perpetrators are not necessarily partners or ex-partners and the motive is not always revenge.

⁽²⁸³⁾ See, for example, <https://www.caclapeer.org/lapeercacblog/human-trafficking-the-internet>.

⁽²⁸⁴⁾ See for example <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/sex-robots-that-let-men-simulate-rape-should-be-outlawed-says-campaigner-a7959071.html>

⁽²⁸⁵⁾ For example, annual data on decision-making collected by EIGE and data on employment by occupation and sector from the EU Labour Force Survey (although this is not specific to media).

The media have only rarely been directly addressed within the EU's overarching gender equality commitments and measures. Neither the European Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* nor the Council of the EU's pact for equality between women and men 2011-2020 specifically mentions the media. This has left the discourse of gender equality in the media separate from frontline EU policy and thus less visible ⁽²⁸⁶⁾.

The European Parliament has been active in relation to the portrayal of women in stereotypical roles. In 2015, it called on Member States and media regulators to promote non-stereotyped, respectful and non-discriminatory treatment of women, particularly in relation to internet-based media (European Parliament, 2015d). In 2018, it called on the Commission to eliminate stereotyped images of women in commercial audiovisual media (European Parliament, 2018d).

In relation to balanced representation of women in decision-making in the sector, in 2013 the European Parliament called for measures to increase the participation of women in management positions in the media (European Parliament, 2013b). In the same year, the Council of the EU recommended non-biased, transparent recruitment practices and promotion criteria, and called for greater cooperation between NGOs and professional media organisations to enhance media bodies' awareness of the need for gender equality within the sector (Council of the European Union, 2013a). More recently, the European Parliament has urged regulatory and advisory bodies in the sector, as well as national and EU bodies, to assume greater responsibility for enhancing women's presence in decision-making and for counteracting the effect of gender imbalance on media content and focus (European Parliament, 2018f).

The revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2018), adopted in November 2018,

marked a significant development in updating the EU legal framework on the media to meet the needs of the 21st century. It called on Member States to eliminate discrimination based on sex in audiovisual commercial communications provided by all media service providers under their jurisdiction ⁽²⁸⁷⁾.

The Council of the EU also included social media services within the scope of the previous directive (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2013d) in order to protect all citizens from incitement to hatred and violence. Yet the increasing prevalence of social media poses a challenge for regulators, as new and appropriate rules for these channels need to be established, including possible sanctions on media organisations to deal with the increasing levels of harassment that women suffer (European Parliament, 2018f).

The EU has limited competence to tackle heterogeneous gender equality policies within media organisations themselves. However, the European Parliament has called for an update of their internal policies. Among other suggestions, it called for codes of conduct and anti-harassment measures in its motion for a resolution on gender equality in the media sector in the EU (ibid.).

2.10.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Gender stereotypes persist in advertising and film industries

The media play a key role in influencing gender norms and in the formation and evolution of social representations associated with both women and men. The portrayal of gender-based stereotypes in the media thus perpetuates gender norms that reinforce inequalities across society (European Parliament, 2018d). Seemingly 'minor' stereotypes can be highly damaging, as they can serve as the basis for escalating

⁽²⁸⁶⁾In contrast, the Council of Europe has made media-related issues a core thread running through its latest gender equality strategy, 2018-2023.

⁽²⁸⁷⁾The full text can be found at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/audiovisual-media-services-directive-avmsd>.

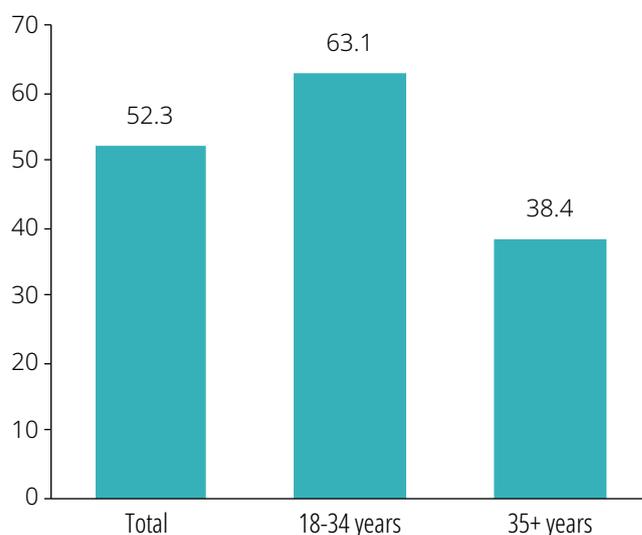
acts of bias and discrimination and ultimately lead to bias-motivated violence ⁽²⁸⁸⁾.

Despite long-standing calls to eliminate gender-based stereotypes from the media, current evidence clearly shows that the problem persists and is of widespread concern. In a 2017 EU-wide survey (European Commission, 2017o), more than half (54 %) of respondents recognised a problem with the way that women are presented in the media and advertising in their country, with nearly two fifths (39 %) believing that that the issue should be actively addressed. Perhaps not surprisingly, women were more likely than men to recognise the issue (59 % versus 48 %) and to support action to tackle it (45 % versus 33 %).

A study looking at gender stereotypes in television adverts found broadly pervasive stereotypes that appear to be independent of the underlying level of gender equality in the country concerned (Matthes et al., 2016). Aggregated data for the eight EU Member States included in the study show balanced representation among the primary (adult) characters of adverts (48 % men versus 52 % women), but substantial imbalances when broken down by age (see Figure 34) ⁽²⁸⁹⁾. The focus on younger women is connected with concerns about the objectification and sexualisation of women in advertising. In terms of stereotypical representation, female primary characters were more often associated with adverts for body and cleaning products than male characters (38 % versus 10 %), but rarely with technology and car products (5 % versus 20 %) ⁽²⁹⁰⁾.

Concerns about gender stereotypes in advertising have led to policy actions in some Member States. In France, for example, the 2017 Equality and Citizenship Act expanded the remit of the High Audiovisual Council (*Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* — CSA) to tackle sexism in audiovisual advertising. The CSA is now obliged to

Figure 34: Percentage of women among primary characters of television adverts in eight Member States, May 2014 (%)



Source: Matthes et al. (2016).

Note: Covers Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

ensure that advertising adheres to a standard that respects the dignity of women and does not propagate gender stereotypes (CSA, 2018a). After commissioning a study on images of women in television commercials (CSA, 2018b), the CSA met industry stakeholders and has now co-signed a 'Charter of voluntary commitments to combat sex, sexual and gender stereotypes in advertising' with the Union of Advertisers (CSA, 2018c).

Similarly, gender inequalities and stereotypes persist in the film industry. Although the available data tend to relate to films produced in the United States, these account for 62 % of the EU film market (EPRS, 2018) and are thus directly relevant to EU audiences. A study of the annual top 100 fictional films over a decade revealed a strong gender bias among speaking characters, with male characters outnumbering female characters by two to one and virtually no progress through time (32 % in 2017 compared with 30 % in 2007) (Smith et al., 2018). Like in adver-

⁽²⁸⁸⁾ For more on this, see the Pyramid of Hate (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/pyramid-of-hate-definition-examples.html>).

⁽²⁸⁹⁾ EU Member States covered included Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. The percentages shown are calculated from aggregates of country-level data reported in the original study.

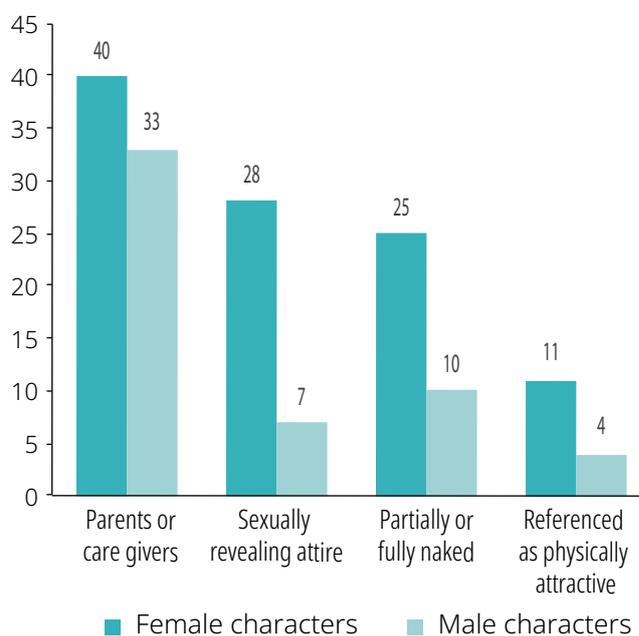
⁽²⁹⁰⁾ Body and cleaning products included body care, toiletries, cosmetics, beauty products, household cleaning products and kitchenware. Technical products and cars included home entertainment, mobile phones/providers, computer/information/communications, and automotive goods, vehicles, transport and accessories.

tising, the gender gap is concentrated among older age groups, with women accounting for 45-47 % of characters aged under 20 but just 25 % of those aged 40 years or over (Smith et al., 2018). Crucially, the study showed clear stereotyping of roles, with women more likely than men to be shown as parents or care givers, and much more likely to be shown in sexually revealing attire or partly or fully naked, or referenced as physically attractive (Figure 35).

The Bechdel test is a simple approach for gauging the representation of women in films. To pass the test, a movie must fulfil three criteria: (a) have at least two women in it, who (b) talk to each other about (c) something besides a man. In an online database populated by users ⁽²⁹¹⁾, fewer than two thirds (64.8 %) of the 108 movies covered from 2018 (year of release) passed the full test, and 4.6 % failed to meet any of the criteria. The data may not be scientifically robust, but the results imply little improvement compared with movies released in 2008 (60.4 % passed in full; 7.1 % failed the Bechdel test entirely).

The Bechdel test has been criticised as overly simplistic, suggesting the need for a broader measure of the pervasive inequalities in the film industry. A series of alternative tests looking at issues such as the off-screen presence of women (e.g. on-set crew, director), the composition of the supporting cast, the storyline around female protagonists, and intersections of race and colour found significant failings against most criteria (including among films that passed the Bechdel test). Notably, in relation to the gender balance behind the scenes, all of the 50 films tested failed when the composition of the production teams and on-set crew was observed ⁽²⁹²⁾. A study of European films (Femmes De Cinema, 2018) noted that women accounted for only one fifth of film directors in Europe and had half the budget of their male counterparts.

Figure 35: Portrayal and sexualisation of speaking characters in the top 100 films of 2017 (%)



Source: Smith et al. (2018).

Interestingly, streaming services appear to be having a positive impact in terms of the portrayal of gender and the visibility of the LGBTQI* community through influential programmes such as *Orange Is the New Black*, *GLOW* and *Luke Cage*. Recent research found 112 regular and recurring LGBTQI* characters (GLAAD, 2019), over 50 % more than in 2017-2018. The increasing use of such services gives them significant power to shape public perceptions.

Gender stereotypes pervade the gaming sector

In 2018 there were an estimated 2.3 billion (video) gamers around the world, of whom over 350 million are European (Newzoo, 2018). Recent data (2018) for Germany, Spain, France, Poland and the United Kingdom show that 41 % to 51 % are female, suggesting that there are no major differences in prevalence between genders ⁽²⁹³⁾. Even with both women and men

⁽²⁹¹⁾ <https://bechdeltest.com/>.

⁽²⁹²⁾ <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/next-bechdel/>;

<https://lifelifehacker.com/the-bechdel-test-and-other-media-representation-tests-1819324045>

⁽²⁹³⁾ Data for Germany, Spain, France and the United Kingdom from Interactive Software Federation of Europe Gametrack (<https://www.isfe.eu/>). Data for Poland from the Polish Gamers Observatory (<https://polishgamers.com/>).

playing video games, the games themselves still lack diversity. Only half of the 118 games showcased at the 2018 E3 annual industry convention allowed users to choose the gender of their character in role play, and three times as many offered exclusively male rather than female protagonists (Petit and Sarkeesian, 2018).

Despite some evidence of a longer-term increase in video games featuring playable female characters, they are still more often depicted in sexualised, secondary roles (Burnay et al., 2019). The impact of such depictions is uncertain, although some studies suggest a link between exposure to video games and sexist attitudes (e.g. Bègue et al., 2017), but — as in other areas of the media — other research found different results and criticised the media attention given to such findings (Ferguson, 2017).

This sexist representation is thought to derive — at least in part — from the under-representation of women in video game production. This also serves to reinforce a masculine gaming culture, limiting innovation and creativity (European Parliament, 2018d). Possible explanations for gender inequality in the sector include perceptions of women's interest (or lack of interest) in gaming, structural inequalities in educational and corporate institutions, a lack of women role models and mentors, and hostile working environments (Cunningham, 2016).

Creative and technical roles in the media sector are more often held by men

The media sector is diverse and evolving, requiring a workforce with a variety of skills (journalists, photographers, writers, producers, programmers, etc.). Yet there is significant gender segregation between sub-sectors and occupations. Although data cannot be mapped precisely⁽²⁹⁴⁾, there is an abundance of relevant examples.

Notably, people employed in computer programming, consultancy and related activities are largely men (77.5 %, EU-28, 2017). Women are also noticeably under-represented in motion picture, video and television programme production, sound-recording, music-publishing and information service activities (Figure 36), bearing in mind that women account for 46.1 % of all employment in the EU (2017). Only programming and broadcasting activities, and advertising and market research have a gender balance close to the overall norm. Outside programming and broadcasting activities, there has been no clear progress since 2013.

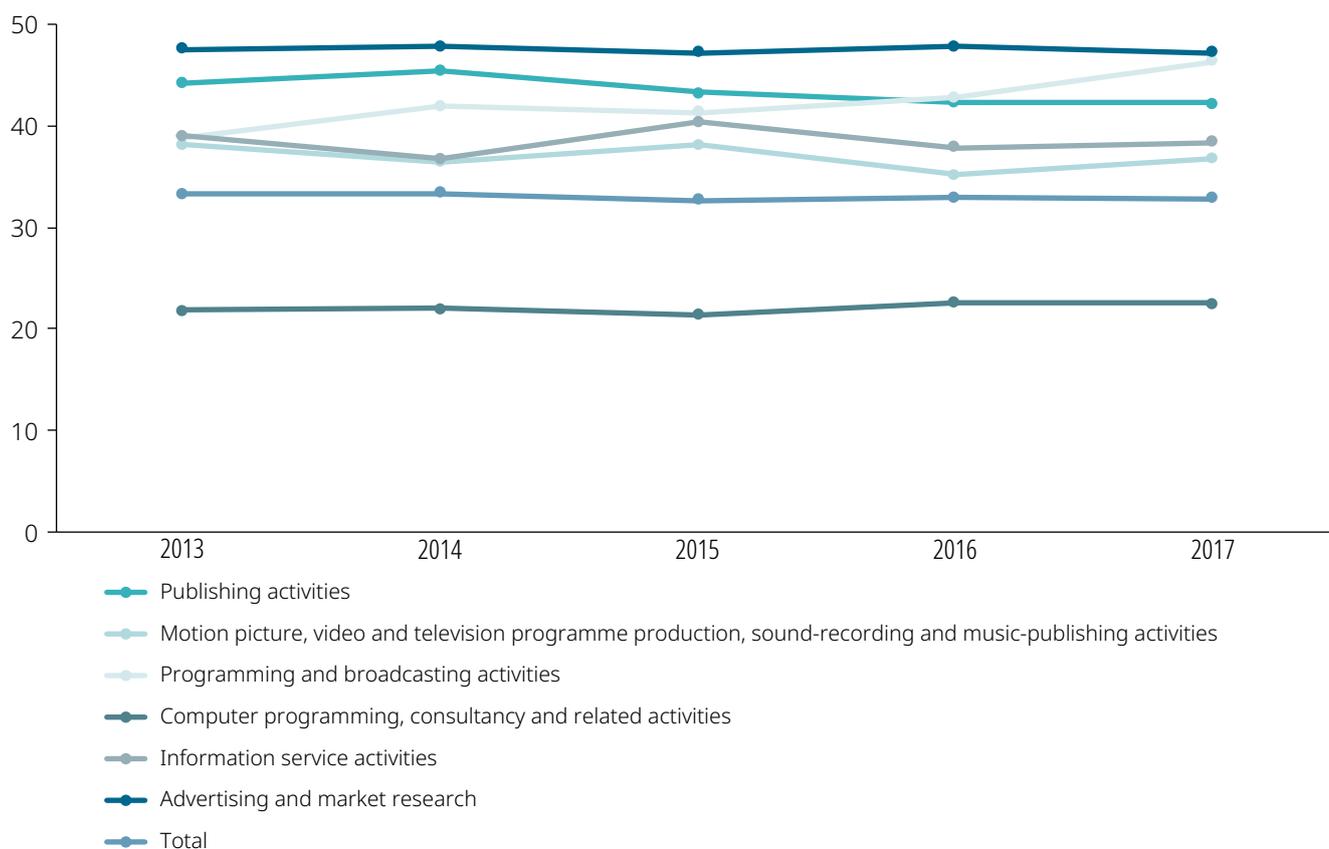
Similarly, women made up two fifths (41 %) of reporters and presenters in Europe in 2015⁽²⁹⁵⁾, but with notable differences between different media types (48 % women in television, 40 % in radio and 34 % in print media) and roles (37 % of reporters versus 47 % of presenters): a pattern more or less unchanged since 2000.

These results support earlier research findings that women tend to predominate in public relations and marketing roles, while creative and technical roles are more often held by men (EPRA, 2018; European Parliament, 2018c; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015). This gender segregation between different roles in media production has important implications for the portrayals of women and men in media output. Women writers and directors tend to tell more stories about women than men do (Edström and Mølster, 2014) and most European film industry professionals agree that women directors represent women differently⁽²⁹⁶⁾ (European Women's Audiovisual Network, 2015). Tackling the gender imbalance within the sector — particularly in creative and production-related roles — could therefore generate significant benefits in terms of the gender sensitivity of outputs and contribute to eliminating gender stereotypes in society as a whole.

⁽²⁹⁴⁾The issue of defining the media sector and mapping it to NACE rev. 2 classifications is reviewed in Komorowski and Ranaivoson (2018).

⁽²⁹⁵⁾According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (see <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-2020/media-monitoring/methodology-guides-and-coding-tools>).

⁽²⁹⁶⁾Based on a sample of 900 European film industry professionals in Germany, France, Italy, Croatia, Austria, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Figure 36: Percentage of women employed in media-related sectors of activity, EU-28 (%)

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (data code: lfsa_egan22d).

Women journalists are increasingly subject to online harassment

Although today's digital environment provides new ways of uncovering harassment, such as the #MeToo movement, it can also make journalists more exposed and vulnerable. Women journalists are increasingly subject to online harassment (OSCE, 2015), to such an extent that it can lead some to opt out of the profession or avoid reporting on certain issues. The International Federation of Journalists has noted that 38 % of women journalists admitted self-censorship following online abuse (IFJ, 2018), and the Mapping Media Freedom project reports 101 incidents of online harassment of journalists in EU Member States (May 2014 to September 2018). This is unlikely to reflect the true magnitude of the problem, owing to under-reporting. Nevertheless, information on the nature of the incidents suggests that women journalists are more likely to be subject to defamation/discreditation and sexual harass-

ment, whereas men journalists are more often subject to psychological abuse. In other words, female journalists tend to be subjected to an extra layer of harassment that invokes their gender in a sexually threatening/degrading way. As press freedom is a pillar of democracy, there is a clear need to ensure all journalists are protected and free to report.

Online abuse is facilitated by the lack of social media regulation

Social media has brought considerable benefits for women in terms of power and visibility and in terms of access and opportunities. Yet the unregulated nature of social media has heightened the risks of victimisation for women (European Parliament, 2018c), as shown by persistent patterns of online abuse and harassment. A 2017 online survey of women aged 18-55 in six Member States (Denmark, Spain, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) found that 20 % of respondents had experienced online abuse

or harassment, with 72 % of those experiences taking place on a social network (Ipsos MORI, 2017). Similarly, around 20 % of women living in the EU aged 18-29 have experienced sexual cyberharassment (FRA, 2014b) (see Section 2.4 for more detail). Online harassment can have serious long-term health effects (European Parliament, 2018c) and strongly dissuade women from participating in public life. Evidence shows that ‘more young women than young men hesitate to debate online after witnessing or experiencing expressions of hate speech because of the potential abuse that could follow’ (EIGE, 2019b, page 3).

Women face such harassment and abuse in various circumstances, including in key decision-making positions. For example, a world-wide⁽²⁹⁷⁾ study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2016) found that two fifths (41.8 %) of women parliamentarians had extremely humiliating or sexually charged images of themselves spread through social media. In addition, one quarter (27.3 %) reported that their images or highly disrespectful comments about them with sexual connotations appeared in the traditional media. Such harassment is effectively an attempt to silence women and is, therefore, an attack on democracy and an affront to basic human rights (Lehr and Bechrakis, 2018; Zeid, 2018).

To address this, in 2016 the European Commission, together with major ICT companies, launched a code of conduct to combat hate speech online⁽²⁹⁸⁾. Data show that 3-4 % of notifications referred to the ICT provider related to gender and a further 13-16 % to sexual orientation⁽²⁹⁹⁾. There were important improvements in the handling of such notifications as a result of this effort.

2.11. Women and the environment (BPfA Area K)

2.11.1. Setting the scope

Clean air, water and soil are prerequisites for the health of humans, flora and fauna. Therefore, protection of nature and biodiversity, efficient resource use and proper management of materials and products during their whole life cycles are key elements of environmental policies. The rapid progress of climate change, responsible for the increasing number and intensity of heatwaves, storms and floods, is already having an impact on our daily lives, our economies and our societies as a whole.

To mitigate this phenomenon, a leading forum for negotiating binding targets was established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992⁽³⁰⁰⁾. The EU and its Member States are Parties to the convention and to the subsequent Paris Agreement from 2015 and are responsible for implementing the agreements in their territories. In 2014 the UNFCCC also adopted the Lima work programme on gender⁽³⁰¹⁾ and in 2017 the gender action plan (UNFCCC 2017). Both decisions include mandates for the EU and its Member States for a gender-responsive climate policy, which extends to sectors such as energy, transport and agriculture.

The EU is facing a number of challenges to achieve its goals in this area in a socially fair and gender-just way.

- Climate change, responses to climate change and environment policy in all their aspects affect people differently, depending on var-

⁽²⁹⁷⁾Based on quantitative and qualitative data from 55 women parliamentarians from 39 countries spread over five regions of the world: 18 in Africa, 15 in Europe, 10 in Asia-Pacific, 8 in the Americas and 4 in Arab countries.

⁽²⁹⁸⁾The code of conduct and its results can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en.

⁽²⁹⁹⁾Figures from the first four waves of monitoring (December 2016; June 2017; January 2018; February 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2016-50/factsheet-code-conduct-8_40573.pdf; https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=71674; http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?doc_id=49286; https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/code_of_conduct_factsheet_6_web.pdf.

⁽³⁰⁰⁾For more details, see <https://unfccc.int/>.

⁽³⁰¹⁾https://gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/dokumente/6_UNFCCC/COPs/Lima_Work_Programme_on_Gender.pdf (2014) and https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/pages_17-20_from_10a02.pdf (2016 extension).

- ious intersecting factors, including gender, age, income, education, ethnicity and religion. The people most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change tend often to be women, because of their persisting unequal position in society (EIGE, 2016c; European Parliament, 2017d). For instance, energy poverty disproportionately affects single women (especially older women with low pensions), lone mothers and female-headed households (European Parliament, 2017c), and can be aggravated by climate policy interventions.
- Even though gender differences in the perceptions of environmental problems and attitudes towards policies and strategies to tackle these problems are constantly reported (European Commission, 2017m), they are not reflected in corresponding policies so far. Different gender roles and responsibilities are not taken into account, with environmental policies often blind to their impact on the gender division of labour and care work, on the social organisation of human reproduction and health, and on the accessibility of public goods and services (EIGE, 2012a).
 - New technologies, in particular ICT in the energy and transport sectors, such as smart homes, smart cities, autonomous driving and electric mobility, are currently in development and expected to contribute to reaching EU's climate change and energy targets⁽³⁰²⁾. These technologies could also provide opportunities to lessen gender disparities, if differentiated gender needs and perspectives and their intersecting social aspects were taken into account at the earliest stage. At the same time, ICT might contribute to higher electricity consumption and a growing amount of e-waste⁽³⁰³⁾ comprising a wide range of chemicals that need to be assessed from a gender perspective⁽³⁰⁴⁾ (Du et al., 2016; WECF, 2016).
 - Currently, women remain under-represented in environmental policymaking, planning and implementation (European Parliament, 2017d). They are also substantially under-represented in key sectors such as energy; transport; water and waste; and agriculture, forestry and fishery. The low level of gender diversity in the energy sector is considered to affect innovation and restrict efforts to address climate change (Vaughan, 2018). Yet there are some new opportunities for women to get more involved in this sector, for example through decentralised energy production (Fraune, 2015).

2.11.2. EU policy developments

EU environment, climate change and energy policy is based on shared competence, with both the EU and Member States guiding policy. Since 2013, despite some progress in climate change policy, key areas of EU environmental policy still provide little or no gender perspective.

In the EU, the climate change policy agenda is driven by the EU's 2020 climate and energy package, which sets out the broad targets to be achieved by 2020⁽³⁰⁵⁾. The package is based on the UNFCCC Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), which commits to keeping global warming 'well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius'⁽³⁰⁶⁾. Consequently, the EU has set binding climate and energy targets up to 2020 and 2030 in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions by respectively 20 % and 40 % of 1990 levels⁽³⁰⁷⁾. Key to reaching these goals are both

⁽³⁰²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/markets-and-consumers/smart-grids-and-meters>; https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/vehicles/road/electric_en.

⁽³⁰³⁾ For broad definition of e-waste see for example <https://www.britannica.com/technology/electronic-waste>

⁽³⁰⁴⁾ For example for the negative impacts they have on the reproductive health of women and men.

⁽³⁰⁵⁾ See https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en. Note that this will eventually be replaced by the 2030 climate and energy framework (https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en).

⁽³⁰⁶⁾ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

⁽³⁰⁷⁾ See the 2020 and 2030 climate and energy packages: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en and https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en.

a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and a drastic improvement of energy efficiency, with the energy, transport and agriculture sectors being the most prominent in terms of further emission reductions ⁽³⁰⁸⁾.

In response to the Lima work programme on gender ⁽³⁰⁹⁾ and the 2017 gender action plan ⁽³¹⁰⁾, the European Parliament has called on the Commission and the Directorates-General to include gender equality in a structured and systematic manner in their climate change and energy policies for the EU. It also stressed the need for the Directorate-General for Climate Action to allocate resources to hire a gender focal point (European Parliament, 2015a, 2017d).

Furthermore, the Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* envisages the issuing of 'a report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission that will complete the key actions ... by presenting sectorial aspects, such as gender equality in transport, energy, education, health, taxation, agriculture, trade, regional policy, maritime affairs and the environment' (European Commission, 2015i, page 18). Consequently, the Commission's reports on gender equality for 2018 and 2019 address activities undertaken in the field of transport and fisheries, in order to improve gender equality in employment and to promote the participation of women in these sectors (European Commission, 2018a, 2019a).

Yet the current environment action programme, which guides EU environmental policy until 2020 (European Commission, 2016f), does not incorporate a gender perspective. Instead, there have been some more fragmented efforts. For example, a 2015 European Parliament resolution called for the Commission to collect sex-disaggregated data to conduct an impact

assessment for women in the areas of climate, environment and energy policy (European Parliament, 2015d). In addition, impact assessments in 2016 explored potential impacts of various trade initiatives, including the Environmental Goods Agreement ⁽³¹¹⁾, on gender equality (European Commission, 2017k).

EU energy policy also lacks a gender-sensitive approach. Neither the 2015 Energy Union strategy nor the 2016 clean energy for all Europeans policy framework — both of which aim to facilitate the transition towards clean and efficient energy in Europe — incorporates a gender perspective (European Parliament, 2017c).

2.11.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Women show more concern for the climate in their behaviour, which calls for their increased involvement in climate change policy

Gender-differentiated data on attitudes to and behaviour in response to climate change show that there are small but persistent gender differences, with women expressing greater concern about, and taking more action on, climate change and the environment, in particular by green consumption (see Figure 37) ⁽³¹²⁾. Consumption is a field highly dominated by gendered practices and associated symbolic meanings based on masculine or feminine identities. In that sense, masculinity is often linked to practices that involve high levels of carbon emissions, while femininity is linked to more caring and thus green behaviour (Brough et al., 2016).

The fact that consistent differences in attitude and behaviour can be observed might serve as a rationale for equal engagement and involvement of women and men in actions to address

⁽³⁰⁸⁾ See <https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/air-pollution-agriculture-and-transport>.

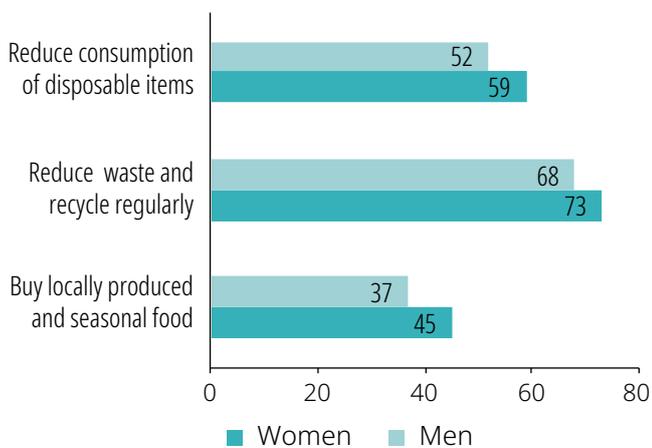
⁽³⁰⁹⁾ https://gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/dokumente/6_UNFCCC/COPs/Lima_Work_Programme_on_Gender.pdf (2014) and https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/pages_17-20_from_10a02.pdf (2016 extension).

⁽³¹⁰⁾ Recognising the need not to focus exclusively on the external dimension of gender and climate justice.

⁽³¹¹⁾ This aims to remove tariffs on important environment related products: <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1116>.

⁽³¹²⁾ Comparing the results of Special Eurobarometers 459 and 372 shows that, while the proportion of people taking the actions listed in the figure have increased for both women and men between 2011 and 2017, gender gaps have remained more or less unchanged.

Figure 37: Selected personal actions taken to fight climate change, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: European Commission (2017m).

environmental issues ⁽³¹³⁾. Indeed, the link between gender justice and decarbonisation, as well as the added value of integrating gender into climate change policy, is demonstrated by various studies: in societies with a high level of gender equality the average per capita carbon footprint is smaller, so there is a significant correlation between gender equality and carbon dioxide emissions (Dymén et al., 2013; Ergas and York, 2012; Fernström Nåtby and Rönnerfalk, 2018).

Despite this, the EU climate change policy remains largely gender-blind

Despite these behavioural and attitudinal differences, and the growing evidence of gendered impacts of climate change (Roehr et al., 2018), EU climate change policy has largely remained ‘gender-blind’. This is because its solutions focus on market, technological and security measures (Allwood, 2014), thereby excluding a people-focused approach that could enable gender-sensitive policy. Furthermore, ‘masculine norms and power are ostensibly so deeply institutionalised in the existing climate institutions that policy-makers, regardless of their sex, accept and adapt their views to the masculinized institutional environment in which

EU climate policies are formulated’ (Magnusdottir and Kronsell, 2016, page 73). Hence, the evidence of progress in mainstreaming gender into EU environmental policy is limited ⁽³¹⁴⁾.

Similarly, gender is rarely mentioned in the draft national energy and climate plans that Member States submitted to the European Commission ⁽³¹⁵⁾. Finland reports that an open workshop on gender effects of the climate change plan was organised. Spain’s plan feels firmly committed to a gender perspective and mentions that a higher proportion of women in the renewable energy sector is not only an opportunity but also a necessity. Other countries (Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Finland) encourage women to participate in the energy sector and provide data such as the proportion of women in research or the number of female-headed households (own review of the national energy and climate plans).

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in environmental policy and research, and in the energy sector

Sweden has introduced a number of initiatives to mainstream a gender perspective within environmental research and policy. Formas, the government research council for sustainable development, has integrated a gender equality perspective into its own operations and for awarding research funding ⁽³¹⁶⁾. Formas is also part of the Swedish government’s programme for gender mainstreaming in government agencies, under which, in 2016, it developed a plan for its gender-mainstreaming work. Its annual reporting looks at the representation of women and men in working groups, and the distribution of funding applications received and granted to women and men (UNECE, 2019e).

⁽³¹³⁾ However, there is a need to gain more insight into the underlying causes of the differences and to use sex-disaggregated data very carefully in policymaking, in order to avoid unintended reinforcement of traditional gender roles.

⁽³¹⁴⁾ Even though the EU’s *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* promotes gender mainstreaming across all policy areas.

⁽³¹⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/governance-energy-union/national-energy-climate-plans>.

⁽³¹⁶⁾ Formas funding application process. Retrieved from <https://formas.se/en/start-page/applying-for-funding/how-it-works/the-application-assessment-process.html>.

At the policy level, both Finland and Sweden have made efforts to integrate an equality perspective when assessing the impact of environmental measures. In Finland, the Ministry of Environment adopted an equality plan for the period 2018-2021 to ensure equality in the ministry's key functions and services. The plan includes measures to mainstream an equality perspective in all major strategies, including implementation of the SDGs, as well as to increase monitoring and assessment of a project's impact on equality, including the government's 2030 midterm climate policy plan (UNECE, 2019b). In 2018, Sweden introduced new provisions on environmental assessments within the Environmental Code, which specify that such assessments must look at the distribution of effects within the population, including from a gender equality perspective (UNECE, 2019e).

Within the energy sector, Finland joined the 'Equal by 30' campaign, which aims to promote equal pay, leadership, education and career opportunities for women in the clean energy sector by 2030 (Finland, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2018). This campaign urges companies and governments to endorse equality principles and to then take concrete action to increase the participation of women in the clean energy sector, and close the gender gap (Clean Energy Ministerial, n.d.). This is an important development, given that women represent only 25 % of the energy sector workforce in Finland. The campaign is part of the Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) Initiative, which aims to enable greater gender diversity in the clean energy sector and thus ensure that the transition to a clean economy is inclusive and that benefits are shared⁽³¹⁷⁾.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

Energy efficiency and provision struggles to incorporate gendered needs and consumption patterns

Decarbonisation of society in order to fulfil the commitments of the Paris Agreement⁽³¹⁸⁾ has to include a transition towards a clean, highly efficient and renewable energy sector. To reach the 2030 goals, EU policy commits to at least 32 % of energy being renewable and an improvement in energy efficiency of at least 32.5 %⁽³¹⁹⁾.

In this context, smart home technologies are expected both to improve comfort, convenience and safety, and to make the use of household energy more efficient and economic (Balta-Ozkan et al., 2013). They can affect care work positively or negatively, for example by providing ambient assistant systems or by requiring a change in daily household routines (Tjørring et al., 2018).

Households are still one of the most gendered fields of society, with significant differences in division of labour in household chores. The new technological developments will necessarily co-evolve with broader and long-term societal changes that may include indirect and unintended consequences. Because of these potentially transformative effects, it is important to investigate smart homes from a gender perspective (Wilson et al., 2015).

However, smart energy technologies often embody a rational, individual and masculine image of the energy consumer (Strengers, 2014), which does not take into account gender-differentiated use and user needs of the new technical equipment and devices. These are often based on traditional gender roles, which partly accounts for women's lower levels of interest in, and knowledge of, smart technologies than men's (Shelton Group, 2015).

Therefore, the gender advisory group for the EU's research and innovation programme Hori-

⁽³¹⁷⁾ Equal by 30. Retrieved from <https://www.equalby30.org/en/content/about-campaign>.

⁽³¹⁸⁾ Namely, to keep global warming well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 °C (UNFCCC, 2015).

⁽³¹⁹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en.

zon 2020 advises that including the gender dimension in smart home innovation might be the answer to tapping the potential of energy efficiency from smart homes (Advisory Group for Gender, 2016).

Decentralisation of energy supply is another potential development to help combat climate change and ensure energy efficiency. It aims to replace the traditional model, centred on large-scale plants providing energy for an entire region, with a large number of small-capacity units constructed around renewable energy. This method has the double advantage of being more eco-friendly while better addressing local demands for energy.

Decentralisation of energy supply offers opportunities for women to get involved in renewable energy production in communities. However, data on the involvement and investments of women in renewable energy citizen installations indicate that the patterns and structures in these models are not egalitarian: women invest less and participate less in decision-making bodies than men. Besides individual preferences and investment decisions, this can be partly explained by cultural, social and political factors that negatively influence the participation opportunities of women (Fraune, 2015).

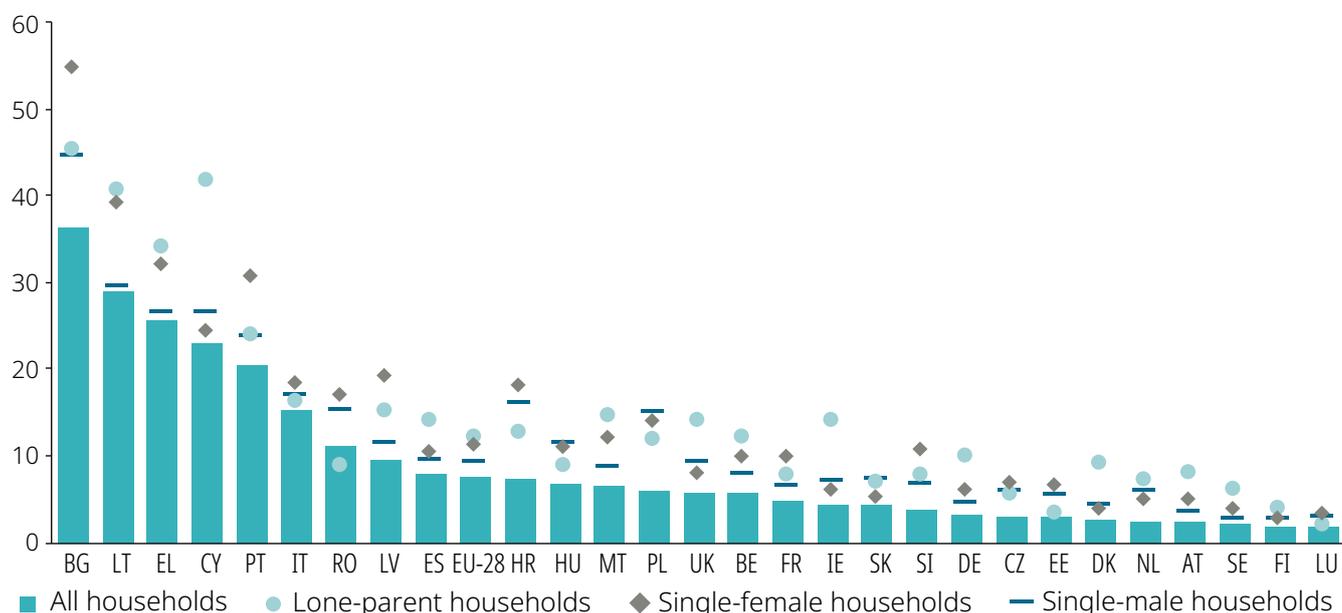
Energy poverty disproportionately affects certain vulnerable groups, such as lone parents and single women

Energy efficiency can also contribute to reducing the level of energy poverty. ‘Energy poverty’ refers to a set of conditions whereby ‘individuals or households are not able to adequately heat or provide other required energy services in their homes at affordable cost’ and is currently estimated to affect almost 50 million people across the EU (EU Energy Poverty Observatory, 2018, page 4).

Energy prices differ enormously between EU Member States (Clancy and Feenstra, 2019), with energy poverty remaining a problem within many EU Member States. In 2017, 7.8 % of households across the EU reported difficulties in keeping their homes adequately warm (see Figure 38): an improvement on 2013, when 10.7 % of households were affected. Notably, single-parent households — mainly women-headed households — are worst affected (12.1 % at EU level), followed by single-female households (11.3 % compared with 9.4 % for single-male households).

It is likely that the gender gap observed for single households is linked to income and, at least

Figure 38: Households affected by inability to keep warm, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data code: ilc_mdcs).

to some extent, to old age, as evidenced by the higher risk of poverty generally among older women (see Section 2.1).

In cases where gender intersects with certain other individual characteristics (such as low education, low income, non-EU migrant background or old age), vulnerabilities can add up and exacerbate energy poverty. However, the interaction of these characteristics has not been thoroughly investigated. For example, the lack of energy efficiency of residential buildings is given a lot of attention in research addressing energy poverty, whereas discriminatory mechanisms of housing markets that prevent low-income households from accessing high-quality housing remain under-investigated. Other discriminatory factors, for example number of children, ethnicity and sexual orientation, are also relevant in this context. Thus, energy poverty must be seen as multiple deprivation, which has to be analysed against the background of discriminatory systems (Großmann, 2017).

New transport technologies may provide opportunities to challenge gendered behaviours

Mobility and transport have been studied from a women's perspective for many years, and gender aspects are well documented: women own fewer cars, so are less likely to use a car (49 % versus 59 %); travel shorter distances, but have more complex trip patterns; use public transport more frequently (22 % versus 15 % for men); and cycle or walk (17 % versus 11 %) more often than men (European Commission, 2014; Roberts, 2016). However, there is a lack of recognition of these gendered patterns. The resistance to implementing gender-responsive transport policies may be related to the strong masculinity embedded in this sector at all levels and to the small share of women in decision-making.

New technologies in the field of transport may provide opportunities if they are developed in

a socially and gender-fair way from the very beginning. Autonomous driving is promoted with arguments such as increased traffic safety, efficiency, convenience and contributing to reduction in congestion (Salonen, 2018). It also promises benefits for ageing societies (with an increasing proportion of women in older age groups because of their higher life expectancy) and for people with disabilities.

Moreover, autonomous driving might challenge the symbolic connection between automobility and masculinity: The 'passion for the automobile often follows heterosexual patterns of desire' (Buchmüller et al., 2018, page 166). For male and young drivers in particular, driving is a crucial part of their identity. From their point of view, automated driving implies a loss of power and control, and a reduction in driving pleasure. Through this perceived attack on the masculine identity, the vision of driverless driving could offer the opportunity to redefine the gendered human-car relationship and contribute to less car use and to resource-friendly and environmentally friendly mobility (ibid.)⁽³²⁰⁾.

Electromobility is also discussed with regard to decarbonisation and reduction of air pollution. A study carried out in the five Nordic countries⁽³²¹⁾ on the demographics of electric mobility confirms that gender is a constant and significant factor in the use of electric cars. This is apparent, for example, in fewer women having driving experience with electric cars (15.4 % versus 28.7 % of men) and also significantly fewer women owning electric cars (3 % versus 6.9 % of men). There are also differences in almost all other attributes: women rate speed or acceleration less highly than men, but rate the costs, environmental aspects and, above all, safety issues significantly more highly (Sovacool et al., 2018). Still, electric cars are less attractive to women because of their innovative technical features, which often do not meet the practical everyday needs of women's mobility in the urban space (Kawgan-Kagan and Popp, 2018). It is striking that all studies on the acceptance and use of electric vehicles confirm typical stere-

⁽³²⁰⁾ Preconditions are that public transport systems be adapted to the needs of the different societal groups and funding be made available to make them more convenient, punctual and safe.

⁽³²¹⁾ Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

otypes of women and men, suggesting that more gender-responsive and intersectional research is needed.

Important gender differences are observed in waste-related behaviours

With the increasing use of information communication technologies in the energy and transport sectors, there is a need for more research on the impacts of electronic waste (e-waste). This is because many attractive technological solutions to climate change, such as solar energy and electric car batteries, are likely to add to the rapidly growing stream of e-waste (McAllister et al., 2014).

Globally, about 80 % of this e-waste is shipped to developing countries such as China (until 2018), India, Malaysia and Nigeria for recycling, and so are the health impacts linked to these troublesome substances. For instance, ‘the batteries that power hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in vehicles, and fuel-cell vehicles vary in toxicity according to the type of battery in use, but include ... some of the most hazardous toxins found in e-products, and each toxin comes with a long list of health implications’ (McAllister et al., 2014, page 170). Although specific numbers and estimates of e-waste in the EU are hard to find and often divergent⁽³²²⁾, a recent study found that 77 % of the e-waste shipped to Nigeria originated from EU Member States (Odeyingbo et al, 2017). This e-waste burdens women in developing countries unfairly and disproportionately, affecting their mortality/morbidity and fertility, and the development of their children (McAllister et al., 2014). Still, there is insufficient research exploring such exposures from a gender perspective (Wahlang, 2018).

Consumption is closely linked to gender roles and responsibilities, and so is waste management. In Europe, women are more willing than

men to sort and recycle (e-)waste (European Commission, 2014a, 2017m). However, recycling activities add to the unpaid work done in households, which is still provided disproportionately by women (see Section 2.6.3). A move to a zero waste lifestyle creates even more pressure on women and leads to a further feminisation of responsibility in the domestic environment and resource management. Responsibility tends to be assigned to women as consumers, in particular for the rapidly growing amount of plastic waste (WECE, 2017).

At national level, men hold most of the key decision-making positions in the environmental sector

EU Member States respect the objective of gender-balanced participation in the UNFCCC process. At the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24), in Katowice in 2018, 46.6 % of members of delegations from EU Member States were women. The technical experts sent by Member States to support the subsidiary bodies of the COP were also well balanced, 53.8 % of them being women. In both cases, the gender balance has been consistently maintained over recent years (see Figure 39).

The situation is different in EU Member States, where, in 2018, women accounted for only a fifth (21.6 %) of all government ministers dealing with environment, climate change, energy and transport, compared with 30.2 % of all ministers⁽³²³⁾. There is a much better gender balance among senior civil servants working in environment-related ministries in the EU, where the proportion of women among employees increased to 41.6 % in 2018 (from 34.1 % in 2013). This is roughly the same as in all ministries (41.9 %, up from 37.0 % in 2013)⁽³²⁴⁾.

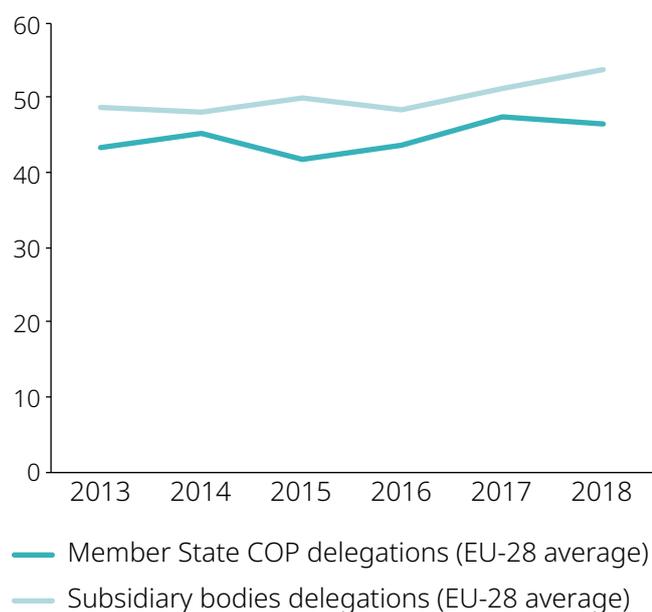
Recent research suggests that companies with more gender-equal boards tend to be more

⁽³²²⁾ This is because ‘today more than 50 % of the WEEE [waste electrical and electronic equipment] generated in Europe follows unofficial collection routes, sometimes leading to illegal export and improper treatments’ (<https://zerowasteurope.eu/2011/02/the-need-for-zero-electric-and-electronic-waste-in-europe/>).

⁽³²³⁾ EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_env_nat__wmid_env_nat_envmin/bar and https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_gov__wmid_natgov_minis/bar).

⁽³²⁴⁾ EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_env_nat__wmid_env_nat_envadm/bar and https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_adm_nat__wmid_natadmin/bar).

Figure 39: UNFCCC: delegations from EU Member States to the COP (% of women members)



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

mindful of protecting the environment in the sense that they experience significantly fewer lawsuits related to environmental infractions (Liu, 2018). Although there are no comprehensive EU-wide data on environment-related sectors, women are substantially under-represented in corporate decision-making overall (see Section 2.7).

Women are under-represented in key sectors related to the environment, including the energy sector and agriculture

Although the renewable energy sector is of significant interest in relation to the environment and climate change mitigation, no employment data broken down by sex are available for the sector at EU level ⁽³²⁵⁾. On a global basis, the International Renewa-

ble Energy Agency reports ⁽³²⁶⁾ that women accounted for 32 % of people employed full-time in the renewable energy sector in 2018 (IRENA, 2019).

In the conventional energy sector, the situation seems considerably worse. For example, in the United Kingdom, in 2018 half of the top 80 energy companies had no women on their board. On average, women accounted for 13 % of board members and just 6 % of board-level executives ⁽³²⁷⁾. A growing number of networks of women in energy, such as Women in Energy ⁽³²⁸⁾ for central and eastern European countries, the Nordic Energy Equality Network ⁽³²⁹⁾ for the Nordic and Baltic countries or Women.Energy.Network ⁽³³⁰⁾ in Germany, were set up recently in order to improve women's participation in decision-making positions in energy utilities or in the energy sector in general.

Agricultural land accounts for around half of the land area of the EU ⁽³³¹⁾, and farm managers play a crucial role in combating climate change by reducing emissions ⁽³³²⁾. More generally, farm managers can help protect the environment by adopting agricultural practices that preserve and enhance valuable habitat and biodiversity and minimise adverse impacts on our natural resources.

Eurostat's Farm Structure Survey shows that the large majority of the EU's 10.5 million farms are managed by men (71.5 % in 2016). Moreover, these farms account for an even larger proportion of the total farm area, implying that the farms run by women are usually smaller and employ fewer people: in 2016, women managed 28.4 % of farms, 13.4 % of farm land area and 21.0 % of farm workers. There has been virtually no change since 2013 (European Commission, 2014e).

⁽³²⁵⁾ Although EurObserv'ER, a body that has been monitoring trends in the sector in Europe since 1998, collects relevant employment data, there is no breakdown by sex. See <https://www.eurobserv-er.org/>.

⁽³²⁶⁾ Based on a sample of 1 115 individuals and 285 organisations in 144 countries.

⁽³²⁷⁾ <http://powerfulwomen.org.uk/board-statistics-by-company/>.

⁽³²⁸⁾ <https://www.womeninenergy.eu/>.

⁽³²⁹⁾ <https://www.nordicenergy.org/project/need/>.

⁽³³⁰⁾ <https://www.wom-e-n.de/>.

⁽³³¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir_en.

⁽³³²⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/air-pollution-agriculture-and-transport>.

2.12. The girl child (BPfA Area L)

2.12.1. Setting the scope

There is no universal definition of 'girl child'. The UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995, page 49) poignantly observes that 'girls are simply human beings who should be seen as individuals and not just as daughters, sisters, wives or mothers and who should fully enjoy the fundamental rights inherent to their human dignity'. Although definitions may vary slightly, this report builds on the definition of 'child' by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and defines 'girl child' as a girl or young woman up to the age of 18 ⁽³³³⁾.

Before proceeding with analysis, it is important to note that key issues covered in this section often overlap with other areas of concern of the BPfA. However, this section provides more in-depth analysis from the perspective of the girl child, which goes beyond the scope of other sections.

Child poverty is a major challenge for the EU. In 2017, children in the EU faced the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion of any age group (24.9 % of all children) ⁽³³⁴⁾, with little difference in poverty for girls and boys. Children are more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion when they live in lone parent households, particularly if the lone parent is a woman (see Section 2.1) (EIGE, 2016d), when they have a migrant background ⁽³³⁵⁾ and when they have parents with low levels of educational attainment ⁽³³⁶⁾.

Gender inequalities in childhood take root within the household and take many forms, including the time children spend on household work (Bruckauf and Rees, 2017). This instils harmful stereotypes on the gender division of labour in the home at an early age that can have negative

knock-on effects on girls' educational attainments and labour force participation.

Outside the home, girls face a web of gender stereotypes and sexism within education systems at large. The transformative potential of education is lost when, 'instead of challenging entrenched discriminatory gender norms and practices, schooling reinforces stereotypes and maintains the gender order of society expressed through the reproduction of the female/male, subordination/domination hierarchies' (CEDAW, 2017c, page 4). This applies particularly to sexuality and relationship education, where heteronormative curricula fail to challenge harmful gender norms; to provide knowledge on gender-based violence and consent to sexual activity; and to include pluralistic and diverse perspectives on sex and sexual relationships. This can lead to long-term physically, mentally and psychologically damaging effects for adolescents, and particularly girls, belonging to sexual minorities and those with disabilities (Campbell, 2016).

Key challenges relating to girls' health and well-being include negative body image, childhood obesity, high-risk sexual behaviour and consequences of gender-based violence. Such challenges are aggravated by other axes of marginalisation including ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status and migration status. Strategies to address these challenges must also pay attention to empowering girls to navigate the digital world, because certain aspects of the digital world have a particularly negative impact on girls (EIGE, 2019b; Faith and Fraser, 2018; McGlynn and Rackley, 2017; McGlynn et al., 2017). Among these, child sexual abuse materials, cyberbullying and pornography raise particular gendered concerns.

A further challenge is tackling gender-based violence and exploitation affecting girls, and supporting its victims. These include intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, female

⁽³³³⁾ This is in line with the definition of 'child' given in Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1990).

⁽³³⁴⁾ EU-SILC (data code: ilc_peps01)

⁽³³⁵⁾ EU-SILC (data code: ilc_li34).

⁽³³⁶⁾ EU-SILC (data code: ilc_li60).

genital mutilation and some forms of human trafficking (EIGE, 2019b).

An overarching challenge in assessing the current situation and trends for many of the gender-related issues associated with the girl child is the difficulty in obtaining recent data disaggregated by age and gender. There are some sources of up-to-date information, but most material focusing on children, specifically girls, is based on surveys with limited periodicity or one-off studies without any time series and with limited coverage of EU countries.

2.12.2. EU policy developments

The EU's competence in issues related to the girl child is limited to supporting Member States in some key areas including poverty, education, health and migration law. In recent years, the EU has made several commitments towards the realisation of children's rights. Although not consistently mainstreaming the girl child perspective, these do address areas of relevance to the human rights of girls.

Although not specifically targeting the girl child, the latest developments to combat child poverty and social exclusion include the 2013 Recommendation on Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage (European Commission, 2013e). It aimed to tackle the issues of child poverty and well-being, highlighting relevant EU financial instruments. However, the recommendation has not been considered in a systematic way in relation to the European Semester, and Member States do not view it as a significant policy tool (FRA, 2018b). Furthermore, the impact of austerity policies on child poverty has been highlighted by the European Parliament in its Resolution on reducing inequalities (European Parliament, 2015c). In 2015, in an effort to ensure free access to basic social services for children, the European Parliament also called for a child guarantee to protect vulnerable children (European Commission, n.d.-b).

Regarding education, EU policy has centred on addressing gender stereotypes, sexism within education and school-related gender-based violence (European Parliament, 2015b, 2016d). Moreover, the European Parliament encouraged Member States to make age-appropriate sex and relationship education mandatory for all primary and secondary school children (2015b). Finally, the 2014 EU Roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity calls for sex and relationship education throughout education curricula in Europe to include non-heteronormative perspectives (European Parliament, 2014b).

Key policy developments regarding the health of the girl child relate to obesity, body image, and healthy, safe sexuality and sexual relations. The EU action plan on childhood obesity (European Commission, 2014d) highlights gendered aspects of overweight and obesity, and calls for the creation of healthier environments and restrictions on marketing to children. However, the plan did not include efforts towards the promotion of a positive body image among girls.

The impact that women's portrayal in media has on young people is highlighted in the European Parliament's resolution on eliminating gender stereotypes (2013b). The resolution calls on the EU to develop awareness-raising measures to promote zero tolerance of degrading images of girls and women not only in pornography but in the media more generally.

Key developments regarding violence against girls focused on FGM, trafficking and cyberbullying. To protect girls at risk of FGM, the European Commission adopted an action plan, 'Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation', which aimed to ensure effective coordination of actions to combat FGM (European Commission, 2013a). However, laws in the majority of Member States do not include specific protection measures against FGM (EIGE, 2019b). The upcoming ratification of the Istanbul Convention (see Section 2.4) may help to overcome this (European Parliament, 2018i) ⁽³³⁷⁾.

⁽³³⁷⁾In particular, through Article 26, referring to protection and support of child witnesses, Article 38, relating to the criminalisation of FGM, and Article 37, relating to forced marriage.

The EU legal and policy framework to address trafficking in human beings is gender specific and child sensitive. Several provisions of the EU Anti-trafficking Directive establish additional protection measures (including for children of victims), deliverables have been implemented concerning children and funding has been allocated to projects addressing child trafficking (23 % of all funding allocated in 2004-2015) (European Commission, 2015j, 2016l, 2016n; FRA, 2015b, 2019a). However, it should be taken into consideration that the special needs of children accompanying mothers who are victims of trafficking are often disregarded and they are often identified as secondary victims (EIGE, 2018b).

There has also been a lack of state-level actions to fulfil obligations on child victim identification and protection under the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA, 2018). Notably, the use of ambiguous wording undermines service provision (EIGE, 2018b, 2018c), and a lack of specialised child victim centres impedes the rehabilitation process (Women's Link Worldwide, 2018).

The European Commission's *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* partly addressed the issue of cyberbullying, by financing helplines in Member States for young victims. The resolution on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age called on Member States to identify and enforce legislation against digital crimes, including cyberbullying (European Parliament, 2016a).

Most recently, the Austrian Presidency's conclusions on gender equality, youth and digitalisation (Council of the European Union, 2018b) drew attention to benefits of digitalisation for the empowerment of women and girls, but also to newly emerging risks, such as gender-based online violence, including cyberbullying and cyberharassment⁽³³⁸⁾.

More generally, the rights, equality and citizenship programme (2014-2020) aims to promote and finance children's rights and protect them from harm and violence⁽³³⁹⁾. However, further steps are needed to mainstream children's rights and address intersectional needs such as those of girl children (European Commission, 2018l).

2.12.3. Key challenges and trends in the EU

Children living with lone, poorly educated or foreign-born parents are at high risk of poverty or social exclusion

In 2017, almost a quarter (24.9 %) of people under the age of 18 in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, varying from fewer than 15 % in Czechia and Denmark to over 40 % in Bulgaria and Romania. Although similar proportions of girls and boys (around 25 %) live in households at risk (see Figure 40), this does not necessarily mean that girls have the same living standards as boys. Individual-level poverty measures would be necessary to ascertain this. However, EU-wide data on child poverty are collected only at household level at the moment.

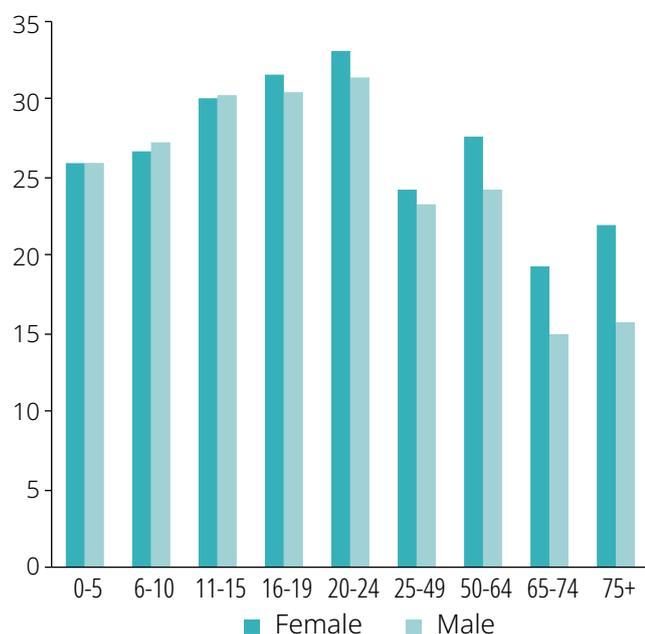
The lack of individual poverty measures also makes it difficult to assess the degree of exposure of children to poverty within the household, as it is impossible to analyse intra-household distribution of resources. These intra-household dynamics are important; research shows that, where women have more control over household finances, a greater proportion is spent on children than when men have such control (Main and Bradshaw, 2016).

Nevertheless, analysis of data at household level shows that the nature of the household in which children live has an impact on their risk of poverty or social exclusion. Lone parent households with dependent children are significantly and disproportionately at risk of pov-

⁽³³⁸⁾ The conference 'Gender equality and you. Young voices. Joint initiative' provided very important inputs into these conclusions. The conference was dedicated to the future priorities for work on gender equality in the EU. It created a space where young people and youth representatives, ministers for gender equality, political representatives from EU organisations, and experts from NGOs and public institutions met and held face-to-face discussions.

⁽³³⁹⁾ A compilation of projects financed on this topic since 2013 is available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/20190401_compilation.pdf.

Figure 40: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by sex and age, EU-28, 2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS (data code: ilc_peps01).

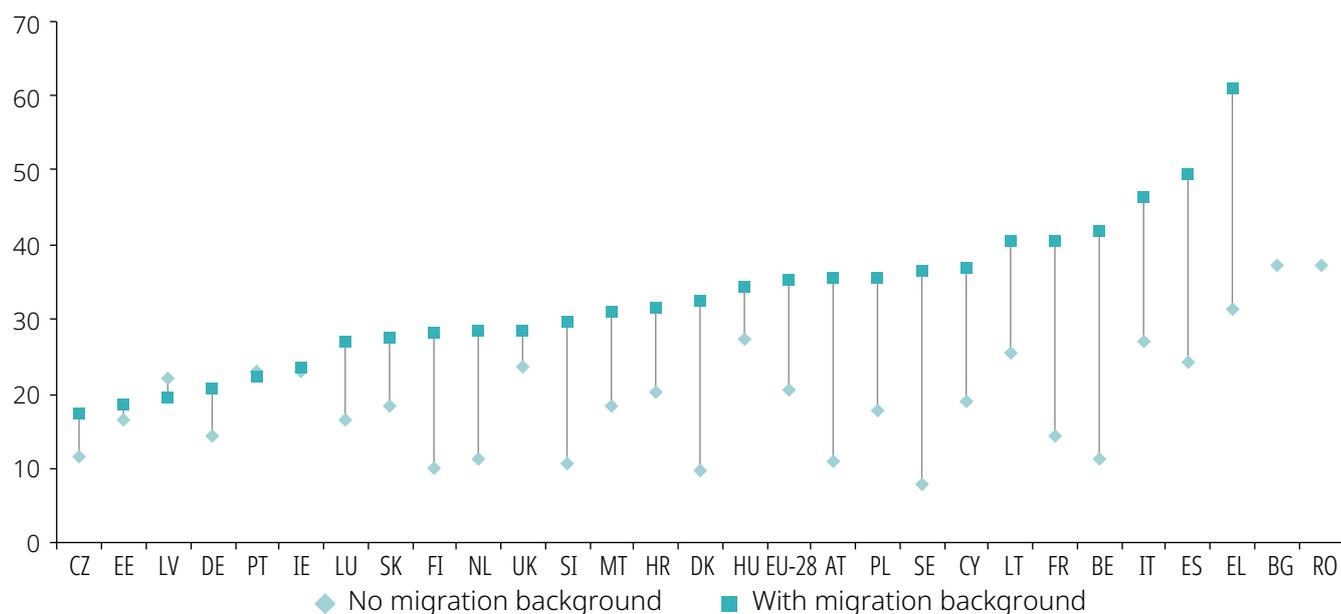
erty or social exclusion: 47.0 % of lone parent households in 2017 compared with 22.4 % of all

households. In this case, the gender of the parent matters: previous research shows that the majority of lone parents are lone mothers and these are at a much higher risk of poverty or exclusion than lone fathers (48 % versus 32 %) (EIGE, 2016d).

Children of parents with low education levels⁽³⁴⁰⁾ are also at much higher risk (62.8 %) of poverty and social exclusion than those whose parents have upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (28.8 %) or tertiary education (9.4 %) (341).

Finally, having at least one parent of a migrant background is also associated with additional vulnerabilities for children. EU-wide research (Save the Children, 2014) found that children with at least one foreign-born parent were almost twice as likely as children with parents of a non-migrant background to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion. EU-wide survey data from 2017 (see Figure 41) show that this situation still applies, but to a lesser extent. On average, people (all ages) living in households

Figure 41: Percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion living in households with dependent children, by migrant background, 2017 (%)



Source: EU-SILC data, 2017. Having a migrant background refers to households of which one or more parent was born outside the country of residence, including both EU and non-EU countries. Data unavailable for households with dependent children and a migrant background for Bulgaria and Romania, and data unreliable for Czechia and Slovakia. EU weighted average, although no data available for Bulgaria and Romania for households with a migrant background.

⁽³⁴⁰⁾No more than lower primary education, International Standard Classification of Education level 0-2.

⁽³⁴¹⁾Eurostat, EU-LFS (ilc_peps03 and ilc_peps60). Figures refer to children aged under 18.

with dependent children and a migrant background⁽³⁴²⁾ are around 14 p.p. more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than those in households with dependent children but with no migrant background (35 % versus 21 %). The extent of this pattern varies between Member States, although in the vast majority of cases having a migrant background increases people's poverty risk. In some Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Sweden), children living with a foreign-born parent are more than three times as likely to live in a household at risk of poverty or social exclusion as children in households with no migrant background.

Gender stereotyping in household activities fosters gender inequalities later in life

Recent research published by UNICEF (Bruckauf and Rees, 2017) covering eight EU Member States⁽³⁴³⁾ found a consistent gender gap across countries and age groups in household chores. More girls than boys report helping with housework on a daily basis and more boys than girls report never or rarely helping (*ibid.*). This could potentially play a role in explaining inequalities later in life, as it leaves girls with less time to invest in other activities and perpetuates cultural norms that housework within the home should be performed by women and girls.

Overall, there is a wealth of empirical evidence on the gender division of labour in the home between adults, but there is little information on the performance of household chores by boys and girls, particularly in the EU. This makes it difficult to assess the consequences of unequal distribution of housework between boys and girls.

Fewer girls expect to pursue science as an occupation than boys, despite similar performance in maths and science

The transformative potential of education is not consistently being realised, as 'the stratification

of students and knowledge can lead girls being propelled into what is socially regarded as low status occupations' (CEDAW, 2017c, page 14). The 2015 PISA results for EU-based 15-year-olds show a small, narrowing difference in the average performance of girls and boys in mathematics⁽³⁴⁴⁾ and no significant difference in science. This conceals some gender gaps at national level, which go both ways: boys outperformed girls in mathematics by 20 points or more in Italy and Austria, whereas girls outperformed boys in science by a similar margin in Finland.

Despite the limited gender differences in achievement, fewer girls expect to pursue careers in STEM. In 2015, 21.1 % of female students aged 15 expected to work in a science-related job by the age of 30, compared with 24 % of their male counterparts (see Figure 42). This difference holds in two thirds of Member States but there are particularly large gender gaps (≥ 8 p.p.) in five countries (Estonia, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Portugal and Slovenia). Such large gaps imply at least 30 % fewer girls than boys wanting to work in science. This gender stratification is a problem, as careers in STEM are among the key occupations expected to grow in the future (CEDEFOP, 2016).

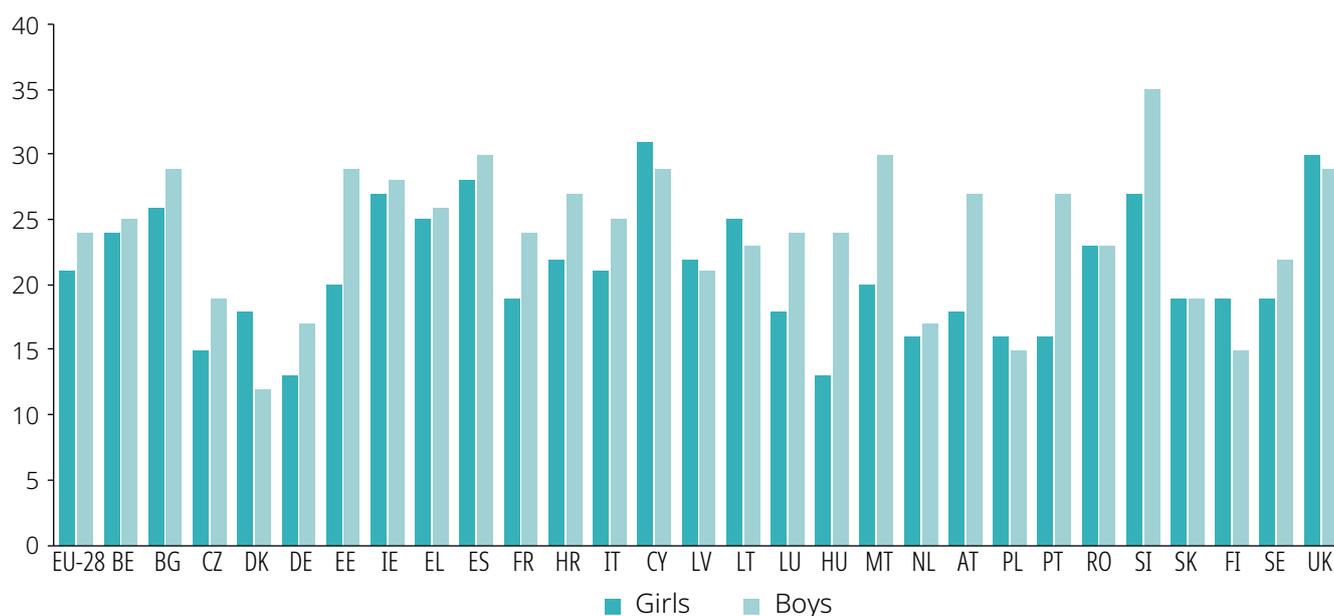
Access to human rights-based sexuality and relationship education varies between Member States

Access to age-appropriate, human rights-based sexuality and relationship education plays a significant role in ensuring the health and well-being of young people, particularly girls (United Nations, 2010). A review of EU-wide sex and relationship education provision in 2013 found that, although sexuality education is compulsory in the majority of Member States (the exceptions are Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom) (European Parliament, 2013a; International Planned Parenthood, 2018), there can be moral and faith-based

⁽³⁴²⁾ This refers to households of which one or more parent was born outside the country of residence, including both EU and non-EU countries.

⁽³⁴³⁾ Based on 2013/14 data from the International Survey of Children's Well-Being for children aged 8, 10 and 12 in developed countries, including eight Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Malta, Poland, Romania, Finland and the United Kingdom).

⁽³⁴⁴⁾ Girls scored 484 points compared with 490 points scored by boys. This difference has narrowed since 2012.

Figure 42: Students aged 15 expecting to work in science-related occupations by gender, 2015 (%)

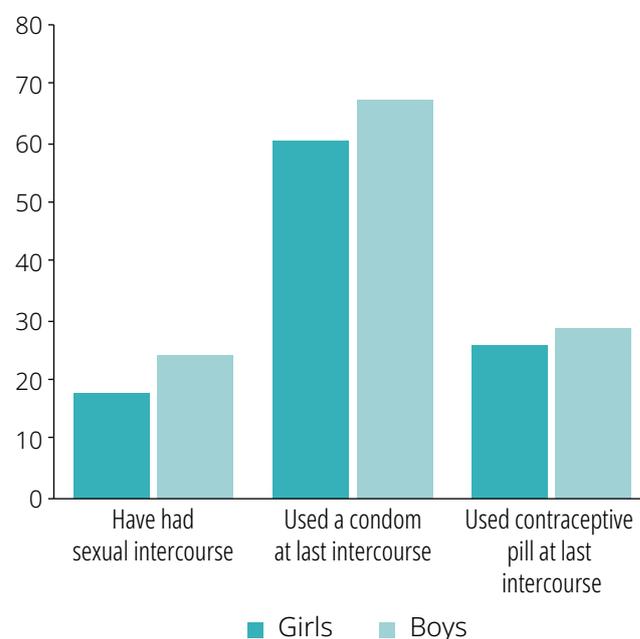
Source: Computed by EIGE using data from OECD.

Note: Data for EU-28 are averages of the country data.

exemptions (International Planned Parenthood, 2014). Curriculum design and the implementation of sex and relationship education can vary considerably between Member States, often because of conservative religious and cultural movements (United Nations, 2010). The lack of age-appropriate, human rights-based sex and relationship education can result in retrenching gender roles and a 'lack of knowledge on the laws and age of consent to sexual activity, violence against women and their rights to access and use sexual and reproductive health service' (Campbell, 2016, page 8).

The overall sexual activity of girls and boys have decreased and so have their pregnancy and abortion rates

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey data for 2013/14 show that, across the EU, boys aged 15 were more likely to report having had sexual intercourse than girls of the same age. Although these proportions have reduced noticeably since 2009/10 (when they were 28 % for boys and 22 % for girls; see Figure 43), the gender gap remains unchanged ⁽³⁴⁵⁾. However, among those who were sexually active, notably fewer boys and girls report using a condom during their last sex-

Figure 43: Children aged 15 who have had sexual intercourse and who used contraception at last intercourse, EU-28, 2013/14 (%)

Source: WHO (2016a)

Note: Data shown are averages of published data for all EU Member States except Cyprus.

ual intercourse than in 2009/10, with only two thirds of them engaging in safe sex. Although it

⁽³⁴⁵⁾Figures for 2009/10 omit Bulgaria and Malta, which are included in the 2013/14 data.

is possible that reduced use of condoms could be linked to increased, and often free, availability of other forms of contraception, such as the contraceptive pill ⁽³⁴⁶⁾, it means that considerable numbers of young people are still putting themselves at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections.

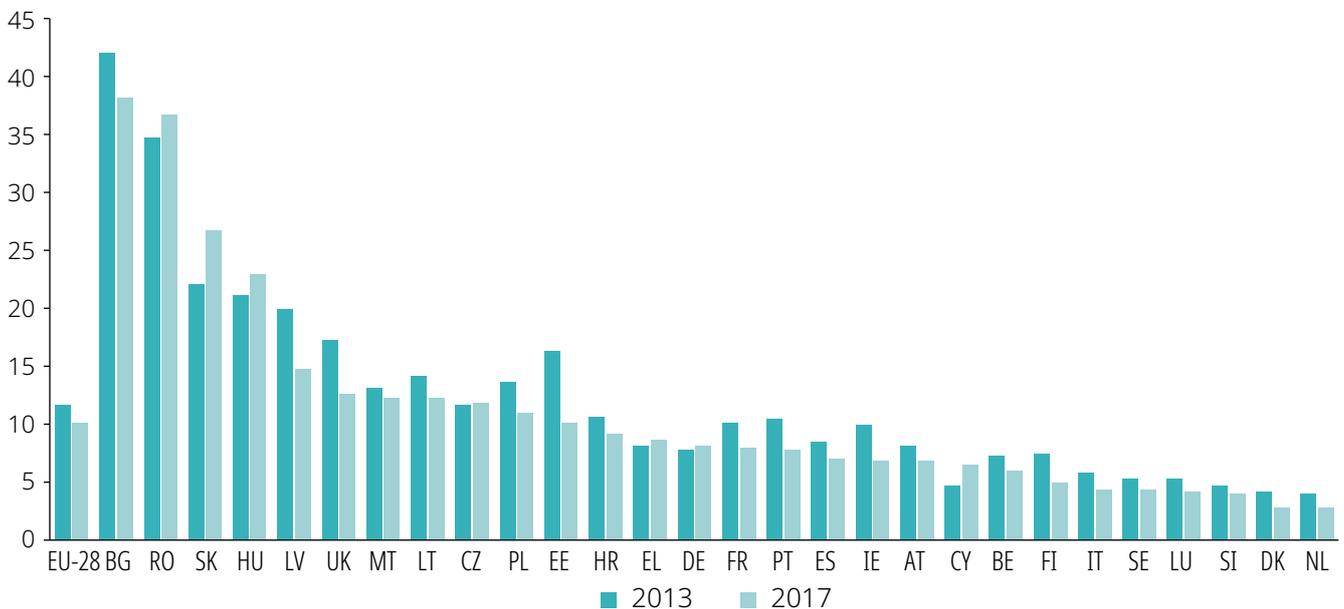
The incidence of sexual activity and use of contraception among young people vary between countries, ultimately contributing to varying rates of adolescent pregnancy. The adolescent fertility rate ⁽³⁴⁷⁾ in the EU declined between 2013 and 2017, even though a huge variation persists between Member States (see Figure 44). While the majority of Member States have seen a decline in the adolescent birth rate since 2013, there were a few notable exceptions — Slovakia (+ 4.6), Hungary and Romania (+ 1.9 each) — where the trend was opposite. As for the abortion rate, WHO data show that it also fell by about 100 abortions per 1 000 live births from 2013 to 2015 ⁽³⁴⁸⁾ among women aged under 20 (WHO, 2016a). Although it

is relatively rare for girls in the EU to marry, with the mean age of first marriage for women ranging from 27 to 33 ⁽³⁴⁹⁾, a recent FRA report on Roma women showed that 17 % of Roma women aged 16-24 were first married before the age of 18 (FRA, 2019c).

Girls’ negative body image is linked to harmful behavioural and health consequences

Overweight and obesity among children pose an important risk not only to their physical health but also — through poor body image and low self-esteem — to their mental health. Data for EU countries from the 2013/14 HBSC survey show that, whereas girls aged 15 were less likely to be overweight or obese than boys, nearly half of them thought they were too fat — almost twice the proportion of boys (see Figure 45). The gender difference becomes even more pronounced when considering the proportion of healthy or underweight children who consider themselves to be too fat: 38 % of girls but only

Figure 44: Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1 000 women aged 15-19), 2013 and 2017



Source: Eurostat, demographic statistics (data code: demo_rate).

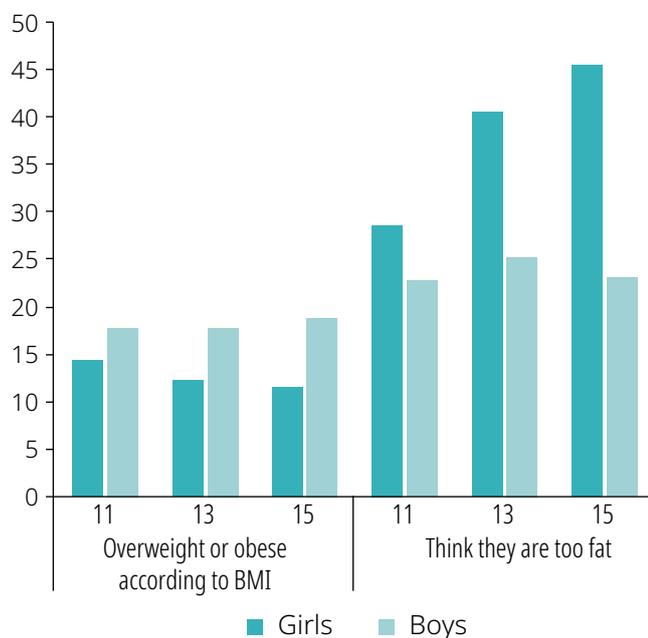
⁽³⁴⁶⁾Fewer 15-year-old girls than boys reported that their last intercourse involved the use of the contraceptive pill (26 % and 29 %).

⁽³⁴⁷⁾The number of births per 1 000 women aged 15 to 19.

⁽³⁴⁸⁾<https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/hfa-explorer/#FRVGExdn5G>.

⁽³⁴⁹⁾Eurostat (datacode: demo_nind).

Figure 45: Children who are overweight or obese according to body mass index, and who think they are too fat, by age and gender, EU, 2013/14 (%)



Source: WHO (2016a).

Note: Data shown are averages of published data for all EU Member States except Cyprus.

4 % of boys ⁽³⁵⁰⁾. A growing body of research suggests a connection between the use of social media and negative body image in young people (Holland and Tiggemann, 2016), particularly girls.

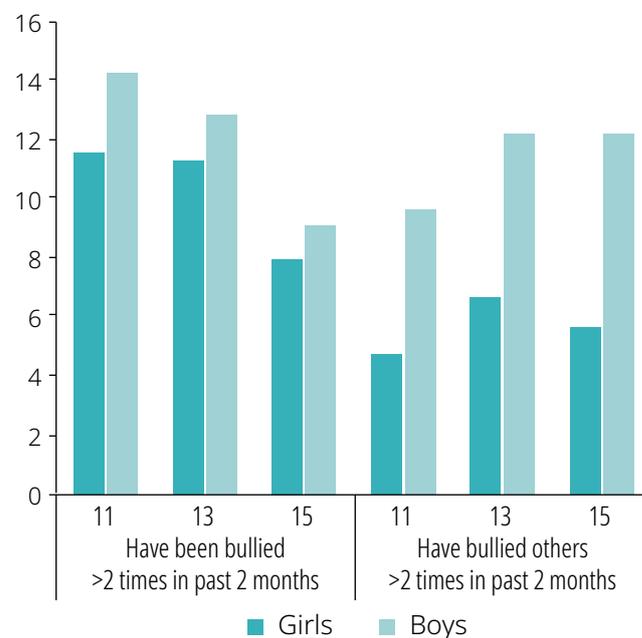
The higher rates of body dissatisfaction among girls correspond to a higher prevalence of weight-reduction behaviours among girls than among boys, especially for those aged 13 to 15 (WHO, 2016a, p. 103). Poor self-esteem, anxiety, disordered eating, nutritional deficiency, growth retardation, delayed sexual maturation, menstrual irregularities and osteoporosis are all consequences of inappropriate and unsupervised weight reduction behaviours. Notably, the WHO warns that 'eating disorders commonly emerge during adolescence and young adulthood' ⁽³⁵¹⁾ and that they mostly affect girls.

⁽³⁵⁰⁾The calculation assumes that all children recorded as being overweight or obese recognise this and are also recorded as thinking that they are too fat, which may not be the case.

⁽³⁵¹⁾ Quoted from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>

⁽³⁵²⁾The incidence of bullying varies considerably among Member States, but two (Latvia and Lithuania) stand out in relation to both victims and perpetrators across all age groups.

Figure 46: Children who have been bullied or have bullied others at school more than two times in the past 2 months by age and gender, EU, 2013/14 (%)



Source: WHO. (2016a).

Note: EU data shown are averages of published data for all EU Member States except Cyprus.

Increasing concerns about cyberbullying of adolescent girls in some Member States

Involvement in bullying, as either victim or perpetrator, can affect young people's psychological and physical health to the detriment of not only their school experience but their lives generally. The 2013/14 HBSC survey shows that in EU countries boys are more likely than girls to be bullies and to be bullied, although the difference in the rates of being bullied between girls and boys is small. In contrast, a significant gender difference emerges in the rate of being a bully, with twice as many boys as girls admitting to being bullies in the previous 2 months (see Figure 46) ⁽³⁵²⁾.

As mobile technology, social media and online messaging have proliferated, so too have con-

cerns about cyberbullying. However, estimates of the actual incidence of cyberbullying vary. In 2013/2014, the HBSC survey found that 3-4 % of both boys and girls aged 11-15 had been affected by cyberbullying. Gender and age intersect to increase risks for adolescent girls, with 12 % of 15-year-old girls having experienced cyberbullying by messages at least once, compared with 7 % of boys the same age ⁽³⁵³⁾. The Net Children Go Mobile project ⁽³⁵⁴⁾ found that 15 % of girls aged 9-16 had been bullied online, compared with 8 % of boys (Livingstone et al, 2014). Comparison of the latter results with previous data shows evidence of a general increase in cyberbullying, but notably more so among girls (from 8 % to 15 %) than boys (from 6 % to 8 %).

The differences in estimates of cyberbullying prevalence reflect varying coverage of age groups and countries, as well as differences in methodological approaches. This highlights the need for better monitoring and common definitions to better quantify the situation and assess trends. It is also vital to understand the format and content of cyberbullying to more fully grasp the gender dimensions.

Exposure to sexual content online has grown among girls

The progress in digital technology has raised pressing concerns about the sexualisation of children at earlier ages. In particular, the ease of accessing and being exposed to internet pornography can have adverse ramifications for young people. The EU Online Kids network identifies three types of sexual risks to children: content risks (seeing mass-produced sexual content), contact risks (adult-initiated online interaction) and conduct risks (children interacting within a peer-to-peer or networked interaction) (Livingstone and Smith, 2014).

Studies have linked the use of pornography among adolescents with more permissive sexual attitudes as well as stronger gender stereotypes in their sexual beliefs (Peter and Valkenburg, 2016). However, experts warn of the lack of real evidence of causality in some of these findings; relaxed sexual attitudes among young people may contribute to greater access to pornography rather than the other way around.

The Net Children Go Mobile project found that 28 % of all children aged 9-16 had seen sexual images and 17 % had seen such images online in 2014: in both cases a slight increase compared with 2010 (see Figure 47). There is, however, considerable variation between the seven countries covered, with the highest rates in Denmark, where 34 % had seen sexual images online, and the lowest in the United Kingdom (12 %). In 2014, girls were more likely than boys to have encountered sexual images online (19 % versus 15 %), a reversal of the situation in 2010 (12 % versus 18 %). This is possibly a reflection of the different ways that girls and boys use the internet and the different content to which girls are inescapably exposed.

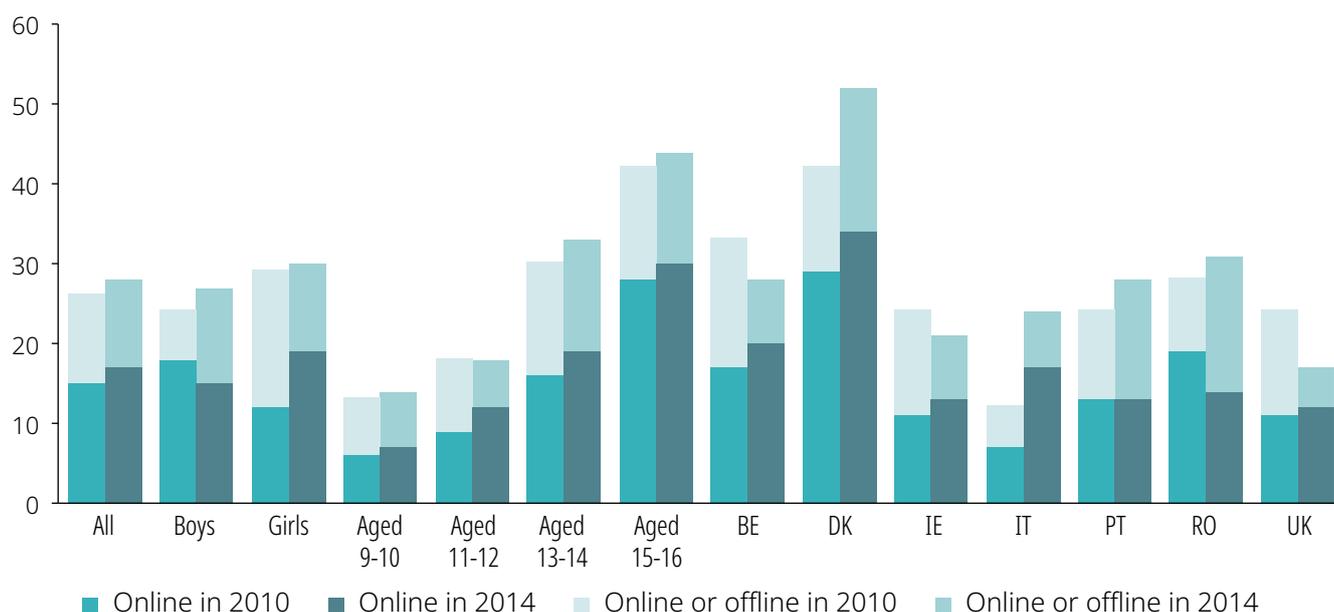
Higher risk of violence against girls in the context of digitalisation and migration

Gender-based violence affects children and adolescents in a range of situations to the detriment of their physical and psychological well-being. Girls are usually much more exposed to such violence than boys.

- Gender-based violence in adolescent relationships is often overlooked, since jealousy, control, and possessiveness in intimate peer relationships are often not recognised as forms of violence. Although there are no EU-wide data on this, national studies provide some useful insight. For example, a study

⁽³⁵³⁾ Young people were asked if they had experienced anyone sending mean instant messages, wall postings, emails and text messages. Data for the EU-27 (data for Cyprus and Northern Ireland are not available). Source: EIGE's calculations from HBSC 2013/2014 (WHO, 2016a).

⁽³⁵⁴⁾ The Net Children Go Mobile project (<http://netchildrengomobile.eu/>) produced a partial update (covering a selection of countries) to the EU Kids Online survey, which is periodically undertaken by the EU Kids Online project (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online>), a multinational research network gathering knowledge on European children's online activities. It covered only seven countries (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom).

Figure 47: Percentage of children who have seen sexual images by where they have seen them, 2010 and 2014 (%)

Sources: Figures retrieved from Livingstone et al. (2014).

focusing on students in England and Wales aged 16-19 found that in 2015 more than half of the girls and boys interviewed reported having experienced some form of dating and relationship violence. Whereas more male students have experienced controlling behaviours than their female counterparts (49.9 % versus 46.1 %), more female students have experienced threatening behaviours (31.6 % versus 27.1 %) (Young et al., 2017).

- The internet and social media appear to be spaces for intense socialisation. Young people are the most active users of the internet, social media and online content, which in turn 'greatly facilitate active involvement in public life and active citizenship' (EIGE, 2019b, page 71). However, there is a strong potential for technology to be used to perpetrate gender-based violence against girls through cyberstalking, hacking, impersonation, cyberbullying, sexual harassment and image-based sexual abuse (Faith and Fraser, 2018). Each of these can take a myriad of forms; for example, image-based sexual abuse can include revenge porn, upskirting (taking secret, sex-

ually intrusive photographs), sexualised Photoshopping, sextortion (sexual extortion) or voyeurism (McGlynn et al., 2017).

New initiatives to address sexual abuse online ⁽³⁵⁵⁾

In 2017, the Danish government launched a package of initiatives to combat digital sexual abuse. The package included prevention measures, awareness-raising activities, help for victims and increased punishments for offenders. The maximum penalty for sharing intimate photographs or videos of others without consent has been increased from 6 months to a term not exceeding 3 years under aggravating circumstances. The government has taken action to educate police personnel to better handle reports of digital sexual violations. The police has recently launched a digital platform to make it easier to report digital sexual assaults and for the police to handle these cases. As a result, the first 3 months of 2018 showed a rise

⁽³⁵⁵⁾ For detailed description of the initiatives, see: <http://um.dk/~media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Ligestilling/Digitale%20sexkrænkelser/Engelsk%20version%20digitale%20sexkrænkelser%20endelig.pdf?a=da>.

of 31 % in the number of preliminary charges for sex offences compared with the same period of 2017.

Note: This box is based on reporting to UNECE or EIGE by Member States.

- Migrant and refugee girl children are particularly exposed to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence (FRA, 2018d; IFRC, 2018). For instance, unaccompanied and separated girls recently arrived in Italy ⁽³⁵⁶⁾ registered widespread occurrence of gender-based violence throughout their entire journey. The study also revealed that the girls seem to be aware of the high risk of sexual assault and of exploitation, and resort to preventative measure such as birth control pills to avoid getting pregnant from a rape (IFRC, 2018). In Ireland, a study on separated migrant girl children found 60 % of them to be victims of sexual or other form of violence. Alarming, their arrival in a second or third country did not put an end to violence: 'in fact, new forms of exploitation and abuse manifest where protective services are overstretched or non-existent in places where migrant children land' (ibid., page16). Similar concerns were identified in France and Greece as well — in Greece the increased risk of sexual abuse extends even to boys, who are exploited by older men for money (ibid.).
- The collection and analysis of data on trafficking in human beings are developing. Significant efforts have been made to improve EU-wide data collection, which is now widely regarded as world-leading in its quality (European Commission, 2018h). Nevertheless, there are grounds indicating that actual

numbers of victims of trafficking, including child victims of trafficking, in the EU are substantially higher than indicated in the data. Bearing this in mind, consistent patterns indicate that children are trafficked into and within the EU, and often within their own Member States. Girls are overwhelmingly targeted, mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Registered EU child victims are twice the number of non-EU child victims, and 80 % are girls (European Commission, 2018d, 2018h; FRA, 2019a). The UN Global Trafficking Report (United Nations, 2018b) found that in western and southern Europe 19 % of all detected victims of trafficking were girls, compared with 6 % who were boys. Furthermore, in western and southern Europe girls (18 %) were more likely to be trafficked for sexual exploitation than boys (3 %). The numbers are higher for central and south-eastern Europe. Of all of the victims detected in the region, 29 % were girls and 5 % were boys, the vast majority for sexual exploitation.

- FGM is another violation of girls' and women's human rights, which is almost always inflicted on minors. The risk of FGM largely affects migrant populations originating from countries where it is practised. EIGE's research estimated that in 2016 a considerable number of girls originating from countries where FGM is practised were at risk of the practice in the countries covered: Belgium (16-27 %), Greece (25-42 %), France (12-21 %), Italy (15-24 %), Cyprus (12-17 %) and Malta (39-57 %) (EIGE, 2018b). Further efforts are needed to protect girls from this practice, taking care to avoid re-victimising girls or their families, as this response to eliminate FGM can vilify and punish migrants (Berer, 2015).

⁽³⁵⁶⁾From countries in north and sub-Saharan Africa (IFRC, 2018, p. 12).

3. Beyond Beijing + 25: recommendations for action

The Beijing + 25 review shows that there has been some progress towards gender equality in the EU in recent years, manifested in higher employment rates and lower poverty risks for both women and men; improved gender balance in political and economic decision-making; new initiatives to support reconciliation of work and care responsibilities; and important steps taken towards ratifying the Istanbul Convention.

Despite this, it is clear that substantial gender inequalities persist across all 12 areas of the platform within the EU. Many of the challenges, goals and commitments set out in the BPfA in 1995 remain relevant today. Compared with men, women continue to experience lower levels of employment, pay, pensions and economic independence, disproportionate caring responsibilities, a higher proportion of life in poor health and under-representation in decision-making. Labour markets and education systems are still characterised by persistent gender segregation. Gender-based violence remains widespread.

Some new challenges have emerged as well. Women face new forms of gender-based violence linked to the rise of digitalisation in society, such as cyberbullying, online hate speech and revenge porn. The recent migration flows to the EU highlighted the gendered challenges that migrant and asylum-seeking women experience in their journeys and in accessing national integration and asylum processes. Worsening climate change typically affects women to a greater extent than men, by exacerbating existing social inequalities and imposing different socioeconomic impacts on women and men. CSOs that promote women's rights and interests have come under increased threat in some Member States.

These challenges constrain the efforts to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the SDGs relating to poverty, health, education, affordability of energy, decent work, reducing inequality, and achieving peaceful and inclusive societies.

Bearing these challenges in mind, the recommendations below are structured around five themes, capturing important elements of the BPfA and the SDGs:

- addressing gender inequalities in the economy;
- ensuring gender-responsive public infrastructure, social protection and services;
- guaranteeing freedom from gender-based violence, stigma and stereotypes;
- fostering parity democracy, accountability and gender-responsive institutions;
- achieving peaceful and inclusive societies.

The recommendations should be viewed as broad guiding principles, accompanied by some good examples of effective actions and measures that would help implement them in practice. Given the broad scope of this review and the high-level nature of the analysis carried out, this report aims to present recommendations only for key EU bodies and Member States, even though there are also other actors who can support gender equality at both EU and national levels.

In each case, the relevance of the recommendation to particular critical areas of the BPfA is highlighted by the use of icons, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sustainable development goals in the context of the Beijing Platform

Critical area of the BPfA		The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ⁽³⁵⁷⁾
Area A: Women and poverty		G.1; G.10
Area B: Education and training of women		G.2; G.4
Area C: Women and health		G.2; G.3
Area D: Violence against women		G.16
Area E: Women and armed conflict		G.16
Area F: Women and the economy		G.8; G.9; G.10; G.12
Area G: Women in power and decision-making		G.17
Area H: Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women		G.17
Area I: Human rights of women		No SDG links
Area J: Women and the media		No SDG links
Area K: Women and the environment		G.6; G.7; G.11; G.13; G.14; G.15
Area L: The girl child		G.3; G.4; G.6

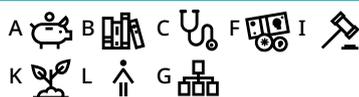
Note: SDG 5, 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', cuts across all BPfA areas.

⁽³⁵⁷⁾The rationale for the linking is available at <https://www.ngocsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NGO-Main-Guide-2019-Supplement-5.pdf>.

3.1. Addressing gender inequalities in the economy

Increase availability, affordability and quality of care services, while tackling gender stereotypes in care

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Women continue to bear most of the responsibility for informal care and domestic work in the EU, which significantly undermines their ability to participate in paid work. This situation contributes to other gender inequalities in the economy, such as gender gaps in pay and pensions, segregation in the labour market and the under-representation of women in senior positions. Although unpaid care work is an important economic activity and is indispensable to the well-being of individuals and wider society⁽³⁵⁸⁾, its contribution to economic growth is largely invisible (i.e. it is omitted from key economic indicators of growth, such as GDP). Particularly in the context of an ageing population, the visibility and value of unpaid care work within society are of fundamental importance.

Despite this, some EU Member States are not yet meeting the Barcelona objectives on childcare provision (agreed in 2002) and there are gaps in the availability of long-term care services for older people and people with disabilities. Even where such services exist, affordability can be a serious obstacle to access, reflecting a social gradient⁽³⁵⁹⁾ in access to good-quality childcare places. The quality of services provided and working conditions within the sector are of concern as well. Finally, the low take-up of existing care entitlements by men continues to contribute to the unequal distribution of unpaid care work.

Intended audience. Member State governments (in particular, ministries with responsibil-

ities for care services and employment) and the European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Consider developing a European strategy on social care and social protection. This would guide the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and complement the new start initiative to support work-life balance for parents and carers.
- Establish a framework to regulate minimum levels of care for older people, similar to the Barcelona objectives set by the European Council in 2002 to regulate the provision of formal childcare.

Example actions at Member State level

- Guarantee high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) places for young children (up to mandatory school age) at request of parents, in ensuring their right to access childcare (as protected under the European Pillar of Social Rights). The quality of childcare should follow the Council Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems⁽³⁶⁰⁾.
- Consider the provision of affordable ECEC places, especially for children from low-income families. Measures to enhance affordable, good-quality and accessible ECEC services for lone parent families, migrant families, low-income households and students with childcare responsibilities should be designed and implemented in line with the European Parliament's 2015 call for a child guarantee.
- Further develop care services for older people, dependent family members and relatives, people with disabilities and informal carers themselves, to support increasing needs in the light of population ageing, and

⁽³⁵⁸⁾ For example, see Stiglitz et al. (2009).

⁽³⁵⁹⁾ This concept refers to the fact that inequalities in population health status are related to inequalities in social status.

⁽³⁶⁰⁾ Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/proposal-for-a-council-recommendation-on-high-quality-early-childhood-education-and-care-systems_en.

help ensure that women’s disproportionate burden of long-term care responsibilities is addressed.

- Consider measures to strengthen the existing legal framework on work–life balance that go beyond the minimum standards set in the EU Work–Life Balance Directive. These could include higher levels of compensation for paternity, parental and carers’ leave, and a longer period of non-transferable parental leave for men to further encourage them to share responsibility for the upbringing of children. It could also provide entitlements to breastfeeding breaks and facilities for working mothers, to facilitate their return to work.
- Building on the Work–Life Balance Directive, consider introducing ‘care days’ or carers’ benefit for those with care responsibilities to promote better reconciliation between personal and professional duties. This is particularly important in light of the ageing population and the extended working life stemming from the increased retirement age.
- Adopt a broader and more inclusive definition of ‘parent’ or ‘partner’ when defining parental leave to ensure that same-sex and/or adoptive parents can also benefit. Likewise, adopting a wider definition of ‘dependents’ (e.g. to encompass both direct family and other relatives) may support those in same-sex relationships to access carers’ leave/benefits more easily for their partners ⁽³⁶¹⁾.
- Develop policies to monitor and regulate the wider market for (formal) care and domestic services, including the working conditions, pay and work–life balance needs of employees. This may be of particular benefit to migrant women, who are over-represented in these sectors (including within the hidden economy).

Broaden social policies to ensure protection of workers in non-standard forms of employment

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Employment alone is not a guarantee against poverty or social exclusion, as shown by concerning levels of in-work poverty in the EU. This points to individual pay and the total take-home earnings from employment failing to keep pace with living costs. Evidence suggests that there are, overall, more women than men in non-standard forms of employment, such as (but not limited to) part-time and temporary employment. Such roles may be more exposed to poverty and social exclusion, not only because of their lower or unreliable rates of pay but also because of their long-term effects on employment prospects. For example, part-time roles may yield fewer opportunities for career advancement and participation in higher-skilled occupations (see, for example, IPPR, 2015, pp. 9-10). Similarly, there are signs that women’s employment has become more precarious since the financial crisis.

Intended audience. Member States (in particular, ministries with responsibility for welfare, social security and/or employment).

Example actions at Member State level

- Encourage all employers to value and invest in part-time employees, for example providing equal access to training and opportunities for career progression. This encouragement could take the form of employer incentives or subsidies.
- Consider schemes to encourage both partners within a couple to adapt temporarily their working hours to their private needs (possibly with a temporary reduction of working hours), as opposed to one individual working full-time and the other not working

⁽³⁶¹⁾ In some Member States, same-sex partners may not have access to marriage, meaning that there is a risk they are excluded from ‘direct family’.

(e.g. income top-ups or lower-cost childcare services for parents working part-time).

- Increase the financial literacy of part-time employees about the current and long-term consequences of working part-time in the EU, not only for wages but also for access to social security (including, but not restricted to, pensions).
- Ensure the existence and enforcement of adequate minimum wages indexed to living costs, so that these provide a decent standard of living, tackle rising levels of in-work poverty and support the fulfilment of the European Pillar of Social Rights (principle 6).
- Extend minimum wages and at least some forms of employment protection to those in non-standard employment contracts, in line with the draft Council Conclusions on 'Future of Work: A Lifecycle Approach'⁽³⁶²⁾. In extending protection, it is important to consider not only hourly pay but also security of hours, total earnings and access to social protection.

Strengthen the legislative framework to ensure greater transparency in pay and workforce diversity

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. A substantial gender pay gap persists in the EU labour market, partly due to gender segregation of certain sectors and occupations associated with high (men dominate) or low (women dominate) pay. To address this, the European Commission adopted the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan (2017-2019), the Pay Transparency Recommendation (2014/124/EU) and Directive 2014/95/EU on non-financial and diversity information. Yet the progress in the implementation of the pay transparency recommendation was limited as of 2017, with only about a third of EU Member States adopting some of the measures to strengthen pay transparency proposed in the recommendation.

Intended audience. The European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States.

Example actions at EU level

- Consider amending the Gender Equality Directive (recast) (2006/54/EC) in order to make measures laid down in the Pay Transparency Recommendation (2014/124/EU) binding; improve sanctions and compensations for victims of breaches of the principle of equal pay; ensure gender equality in occupational pension schemes; and enhance the enforcement role of equality bodies. This follows recommendations made in the EU's gender pay gap action plan 2017-2019.

Example actions at Member State level

- Implement the concrete measures to improve pay transparency proposed in the Pay Transparency Recommendation (2014/124/EU). These include allowing employees to request information on pay levels; regular employer reporting on wage structures by employee category or position; pay audits in large companies; and including equal pay issues in collective bargaining.
- Monitor the degree to which businesses are focusing on gender aspects within their pay and diversity reporting and to what extent Member States comply with the adopted directives and recommendations.

Ensure policy coherence to support the fulfilment of gender equality goals stated in the European Pillar of Social Rights and in the Sustainable Development Goals

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Women's economic empowerment is considered to be a prerequisite for fairer, more inclusive economic growth. It is also closely linked to women's individual well-being and

⁽³⁶²⁾These can be found here: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10134-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

directly related to human rights protection. By promoting an economy of well-being, policymakers can improve and reinforce both the economy and overall levels of well-being. Policy coherence is a strategy for integrating the economic, environmental and social dimensions at all stages of policymaking to achieve the common goals of building an inclusive economy of well-being and supporting a range of social rights (as outlined in the European Pillar of Social Rights and the SDGs). The approach emphasises the need to establish long-term cooperation among diverse actors on key societal issues and to ensure that different policy measures do not conflict with one another. In particular, policies should provide everyone with a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential, given that the ‘conditions in which people are born, live, work and age’ (Marmot, 2010, page 37) affect an individual’s health status and can reinforce health inequalities. Currently, the effects of macroeconomic and structural policies at EU/national level can undermine the achievement of more socially oriented policies.

Intended audience. Member State governments (in particular, ministries with responsibility for economic, employment, environmental, social and health policy) and the European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Comprehensively link the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights to the European Semester process.

Example actions at Member State level

- Ensure that workers can request or use flexible work arrangements, such as flexible working hours, remote working, care giving and taking leave, to ensure work–life balance.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- Establish governance mechanisms that ensure policy coherence at Member State and EU levels for building an inclusive economy and supporting more effective social

rights. The social partners have a particularly important role to play in this process.

- Make mental and physical health a visible aspect of employment and social policy at EU and Member State levels, bearing in mind the fact that health inequality mirrors (gender) inequality in material conditions and in the wider social and political structures of societies.
- Work to ensure that the transition to a greener economy is of equal benefit to women and men.

3.2. Ensuring gender-responsive public infrastructures, social protection and services

Design social protection and taxation systems to foster women’s economic independence and tackle forms of poverty that particularly affect them

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. The austerity measures taken after 2008 have had a lingering adverse impact on women through public sector cuts (a sector dominated by women), and social protection systems have become less effective at protecting women from poverty and social exclusion. Austerity policies also contributed to increases in child poverty.

In this context, it is important to note that in some Member States (1) tax systems discriminate against the partner who earns less (most often women), which can create disincentives to enter the labour market; (2) means-tested benefits are delivered at the household level, linking women’s entitlement to their partner’s status/income and possibly undermining their economic independence; (3) certain pensions systems disadvantage those in non-standard forms of employment and those who take career breaks because of caring responsibilities.

ties (with women the majority in each of these groups).

Intended audience. Member State governments (in particular, ministries with responsibility for social protection and finance, including pensions and taxation) and the European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Expand research on closing the gender pension gap, as the topic of pensions and the gendered effects of their design remains under-studied. Further monitoring of the gender pension gap should be established as part of the European Semester process.
- The European Parliament resolution on gender equality in taxation should be rolled out as a roadmap and monitored by the European Commission.

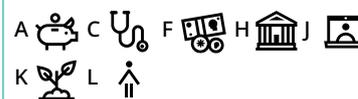
Example actions at Member State level

- Design social protection systems to ensure that all adults within a household have access to their own source of income, through work or individualised forms of social protection.
- Raise minimum levels of social protection (social assistance, minimum guaranteed pensions, housing benefits, child benefits) to at least the level of AROP, as this will effectively lift many women and their children out of poverty. Social partner organisations can play an important consultative role in determining these levels.
- Provide universal child benefits at adequate levels to all (families with) children, as these are proven to be effective in reducing poverty among groups that include (but are not limited to) children, lone mothers and those experiencing in-work poverty.
- Abolish joint taxation of couples (married and otherwise) in favour of individualised taxation to promote a more gender-equal division of labour within households and equal control over economic resources.

- Building on existing evidence of the scale of the gender pension gap, provide pension credits to compensate for time spent in caring roles, with a view to reducing gender pension gaps (and, by association, the gender gap in old-age poverty).
- Guarantee an adequate minimum pension for all, especially for workers in non-standard employment (self-employment, part-time and temporary employment).

Ensure safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable public infrastructure that benefits women and men equally

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Public infrastructure is often designed without consideration for gender (and other characteristics), which can disadvantage women, older people, migrant women, people with disabilities, people from LGBTQI* communities and others. This is true of both social infrastructure, such as childcare, and physical infrastructure, such as transport, ICT and energy provision. For example, women are less likely than men to own cars, meaning that public transport plays an especially important role in facilitating their access to the labour market, care and other services. However, such gendered patterns are seldom considered when implementing transport policies.

Although women show more concern about environmental issues such as climate change, their voices and needs are often ignored in the area of energy efficiency/provision and they (particularly lone mothers) are more vulnerable to energy poverty. In future years, it will become important to ensure that digital technologies — crucial to the economy and transforming the delivery of a range of public services — are equally accessible to women and men.

Intended audience. Member State governments (all ministries with responsibility for designing public infrastructure including those

responsible for transport, ICT and energy policy) and the European Commission.

Example actions

- Consult diverse groups of users, including the most vulnerable groups of women and girls (such as migrant women and girls, women with low incomes, older women, and women and girls with disabilities), during the design process of public infrastructure to take their different needs into account.
- Conduct impact evaluations from a gender perspective when designing and introducing new public infrastructure.
- Share both successful and unsuccessful practices to improve the evidence base on gender-sensitive public infrastructure. This would usefully raise awareness of the importance of such infrastructure for gender equality, going beyond the usual considerations of public services and social protection.

Provide access to quality, appropriate and universal healthcare services for all women and girls, in particular those from minority groups

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Health services and medical research do not always reflect gender health needs of the EU population. Unmet health needs are particularly acute for some groups of women and girls, including migrant, asylum-seeking and Roma women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, and women from the LGBTQI* community. In some countries, for instance, the rights of Roma women have been violated through forced sterilisation. Foreign nationals can face certain barriers to accessing healthcare, such as language barriers, financial costs, legal restrictions and lack of awareness of available services. Pregnant refugees and migrants in Europe may

not have access to antenatal care, which may explain the higher risks of maternal mortality among migrant women in Europe. People from the LGBTQI* community can face difficulties in using or accessing healthcare services, primarily because their needs are being ignored or they (justifiably) fear negative reactions.

Intended audience. EU Institutions and Member State governments (in particular, health ministries).

Example actions at EU level

- Ensure that implementation of the Clinical Trials Regulation (EU No 536/2014, 2018) contributes to balanced representation of both women and men in clinical trials.

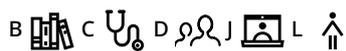
Example actions at Member State level

- Ensure access to medicines and services that reflect gendered health needs, for example prenatal and maternity services, hormonal contraception and abortion.
- Promote greater physical accessibility of healthcare services, for example for those with physical disabilities and for transgender people (who may require safe access to gender-neutral bathrooms, for example).
- Consider targeted initiatives to increase access to healthcare services among vulnerable groups, such as providing multilingual information on the availability of healthcare services (including at asylum reception centres) and having interpreters to accompany migrants to healthcare appointments where there may be language barriers.
- Provide relevant training to healthcare professionals to ensure adequate and gender-sensitive responses to the healthcare needs of vulnerable groups, including LGBTQI* individuals, Roma women and girls, and girls at risk of FGM (or who have undergone the practice).

3.3. Freedom from gender-based violence, stereotypes and stigma

Ensure that national education systems adopt gender-sensitive curricula, materials and teaching practices

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Girls continue to encounter gender stereotypes, stigma and gender-based violence in school settings and beyond. Educational content still too often reflects stereotypical portrayals of women and men. For instance, women are typically portrayed in certain roles such as teaching, whereas men are seen as the main achievers in science and technology. Such stereotypes directly limit enjoyment of women's and girls' rights and lead to a broad range of negative consequences. To name a few, they can be precursors to gender-based violence, they are one of the main causes of gender segregation in the labour market and they limit women's progression into decision-making positions.

Intended audience. Member State governments (in particular, education and labour ministries).

Example actions

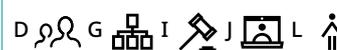
- Revise education curricula to eliminate gender stereotyping, to increase gender awareness and promote cultural change. Education ministries and other public agencies should develop guidance for schools, colleges and other educational settings on taking a gender-sensitive approach in curricula and teaching practices.
- Develop awareness campaigns and material to educate young people on gender stereotypes, stigma and gender-based violence.
- Increase access to age-appropriate sex and relationship education in school settings to

ensure the health and well-being of young people and to prevent gender-based violence. This should focus on topics such as negative body image, a variety of relationships (including LGBTQI* issues), adolescent pregnancy and gender-based violence in intimate partnerships.

- Consider gender-sensitive career counselling and awareness-raising initiatives to promote greater participation of women in STEM careers, and of men in the health, welfare and education sectors.
- Include explicit gender education in the curricula of, for instance, educators, healthcare professionals and public servants.

Ensure up-to-date regulation to address gender-based stereotypes and online abuse in the media and its effective implementation and monitoring

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. The portrayal of gender-based stereotypes and the objectification of women and girls in the media can perpetuate gender norms that reinforce gender inequalities across society. What can appear 'minor' stereotypes can be highly damaging, as they can serve as the basis for escalating acts of bias and discrimination and ultimately lead to bias-motivated violence⁽³⁶³⁾. The unregulated nature of new technology such as social media has heightened the risk of women being victimised through hate speech. More broadly, cyberviolence often amplifies other forms of victimisation and can be a precursor to violence in the real world. It can also disproportionately affect women, especially those in public positions.

The regulation of such content — especially where it is harmful but not illegal — is challenging, as it must be balanced against the need to protect freedom of speech. Some cases of online abuse are not recognised as bullying

⁽³⁶³⁾ For more on this, see the Pyramid of Hate (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/pyramid-of-hate-definition-examples.html>).

or harassment and go unpunished. For example, online platforms' definitions of online harm rarely includes violence against women, despite this being one of the most common forms. To date, the EU and Member States have directly addressed monitoring and regulation of media content only on an occasional basis.

Intended audience. Member States (in particular, ministries with responsibility for education and media) and the European Commission.

Example action at EU level

- In the longer term, consider if further regulation of cyberviolence is necessary, for example by means of an EU-level instrument.

Example actions at Member State level

- Develop and provide gender-sensitive education and training for media, communication, journalism and ICT students and professionals.
- Enhance the monitoring role, scope and powers of broadcasting and press councils with regards to gender equality in the media. Independent regulatory authorities can also play a role in monitoring and promoting gender equality in media content.
- Implement the Council of Europe Recommendations on Preventing and Combating Sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1), which define sexism and call for an end to gender stereotypes in education, the media and other areas of life.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- In collaboration with media regulatory authorities, develop and release guidance for online platforms about the level at which harmful content linked to cyberviolence passes the threshold of acceptability and is likely to require regulation/removal.
- Develop awareness campaigns and material to educate young people on cyberviolence

so they can navigate the internet safely and reap the benefit of technological advances.

- Support regular monitoring of media to raise awareness of the need to tackle gender stereotypes and sexism in media content, and keep this issue on policy agendas. One way of doing this is to ensure initiatives such as the Global Media Monitoring Project receive sufficient and consistent funding and participation from EU Member States, to ensure regular, comparable monitoring of media across the EU and beyond.
- Promote the adoption of comprehensive gender equality policies by media organisations, encompassing content, access and participation in decision-making.

Support Member States to tackle all forms of gender-based violence

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Gender-based violence continues to be widespread, affecting the daily lives of women in the EU. This was recently shown by the #MeToo movement, which demonstrated that women continue to face high levels of gender-based harassment in the workplace. Other forms of violence continue to be of grave concern, such as rape and other forms of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, trafficking in human beings, FGM and forced marriage. This calls for improvement in both preventative measures and in protection and support services, such as counselling and shelters for victims. Despite 21 Member States ratifying the Istanbul Convention (March 2019) and its requirements on the provision of certain support services, the overall number of bed spaces in women's shelters is only about half as many as necessary to satisfy these requirements. Generally, many countries are not fulfilling the minimum levels of support outlined in the convention (e.g. national hotlines, specialist support services).

Intended audience. Member State governments (in particular, home affairs, security, justice, education and employment ministries) and the European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Facilitate access to sources of EU funding for support services (such as telephone help-lines/hotlines, specialist support services for victims and accommodation in specialised women's shelters). This could occur, for example, through a dedicated stream within the new funding mechanism that will replace the rights, equality and citizenship programme after 2020.
- Identify and exchange Member States' good practices on models for service provision and commissioning, for example through peer review meetings and online platforms.
- Review procurement regulation to better support the provision of specialist services covered under the Istanbul Convention (such as specialist support services for victims and accommodation in specialised women's shelters).
- Step up efforts to prevent trafficking of women and girls, including by countering the culture of impunity for all perpetrators involved in the crime. The actions at EU level should be guided by EU law, combined with robust enforcement mechanisms and a comprehensive policy framework, under the horizontal mandate of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator, strong cooperation within and outside the EU, and solid international legal instruments, as well as funding support.
- Continue upholding the principles and standards of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, as the primary international legal instruments to address the crime, and of Article 6 of CEDAW, on traf-

ficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Example actions at Member State level

- Ratify the Istanbul Convention to strengthen the legal framework for tackling all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Ratify International Labour Organization Convention No 190 concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work ⁽³⁶⁴⁾.
- Improve the capacity of professionals in the education, health, justice and other sectors to identify the signs of violence and to undertake safe referrals of survivors to relevant support services.
- Develop programmes, materials and instruments to raise awareness among educational institutions and workplaces on the benefits of having an anti-harassment policy in place and the expected minimum elements (e.g. clearly defined reporting mechanisms and sanctions for non-compliance).
- Campaign to increase awareness of the legislation and measures on domestic violence perpetrated against women and children.
- Establish regular monitoring processes at national level to assess whether or not schools, businesses and other places of work have policies, programmes and procedures to address sexual harassment and bullying.
- Improve the identification of women and girls who are victims of trafficking in human beings, ensuring victims have access to assistance and protection appropriate for their sex and age, and for the consequences of the specific form of exploitation they have been subjected to, and taking into account their particular needs.
- Ensure the criminalisation of the use of services exacted from victims of trafficking of

⁽³⁶⁴⁾ See https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190.

all forms of exploitation, to support effective prevention.

- Take targeted steps to tackle violence directed against women in political positions and other public functions.

Ensure adequate implementation of law enforcement measures and access to justice for victims of gender-based discrimination and violence

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Women face a range of challenges in accessing justice, particularly in bringing legal claims for violation of their rights. Although relevant laws and enforcement measures may exist, these are not always adequately implemented in practice, resulting in some perpetrators going unpunished or receiving lenient sentences.

Intended audience. Member State governments and the European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Further assess the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive across countries, as argued for by the European Parliament, and of the European Protection Order Directive (which has had limited use to date)
- Use the tools available at EU level, such as international conventions and the ECtHR, to ensure the rule of law.

Example actions at Member State level

- Member State governments should provide training for law enforcement personnel and judges to ensure adequate implementation of legal instruments and to overcome existing instances of impunity.
- Member State governments should strengthen the competence of national gender equality bodies to assist victims of gender-based discrimination and violence, and

to help them access remedies through the courts or other bodies.

- Member States should promote policies to ensure access to work and legal advice for women subjected to violence, especially those who are living with the perpetrators of that violence.

3.4. Fostering parity democracy, gender-responsive institutions and a strong civil society

Ensure that gender is comprehensively mainstreamed into key EU and national initiatives

Based on key findings from areas:

all areas

Rationale. Area H of the Beijing Platform requires a clear commitment to gender equality within public decision-making, including by means of dedicated institutional mechanisms, funding and personnel. Despite this, the EU's efforts to mainstream gender within its policies and processes have been neither systematic nor reflected in all policymaking stages. Gender is not mainstreamed in key Europe 2020 targets, and the gender perspective in the European Semester is also limited. The EU budget largely remains gender blind. Instead of a full-fledged EU strategy for gender equality, the *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019* was adopted as a staff working document, seriously limiting the weight of gender equality in the EU policy agenda. The EU's approach to gender mainstreaming into different policy areas is fragmented, with certain policy areas (such as climate change policy) remaining gender blind.

The efforts to promote and mainstream gender equality have worsened in many EU Member States since 2012.

Intended audience. Member State governments (all ministries, with support from institutional mechanisms for the advancement of

women, such as interministerial units, cross-departmental working groups, equality and non-discrimination bodies), the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Example actions at EU level

- Incorporate gender-specific targets and indicators in the in-depth analysis of country-specific challenges identified by the Social Scoreboard and strengthen the analytical basis for the Commission's proposals for CSRs in the European Semester.
- Ensure that every aspect of the post-2020 EU strategy for implementing the SDGs mainstreams gender. In addition to this general post-2020 EU strategy, a stand-alone gender equality strategy should be adopted at EU level.
- Integrate gender equality as a distinct policy objective into the new post-2020 MFF and monitor more effectively the share of EU funding used to promote gender equality.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- Ensure that gender mainstreaming is undertaken in all policy areas and not only those seen as linked to social inclusion. This could involve, for example, promoting the inclusion of gender-sensitive goals, targets and indicators in national energy and climate plans and undertaking systematic gender mainstreaming in EU environmental and climate change policies.
- Promote the use of gender-mainstreaming tools and methods at EU and Member State levels, for example gender and participatory budgeting⁽³⁶⁵⁾, gender audits, public sector equality duties, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (such as gender impact evaluation), and sex-disaggregated indicators.

Introduce targeted measures to promote gender balance in decision-making

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Despite some progress, women in all walks of life remain under-represented in all fields of decision-making. The prospect of achieving gender-balanced parliaments and governments throughout the EU remains a long way off, undermining the quality and representativeness of the EU's democracy. Beyond politics and public life, the absence of women is particularly stark in many high-level decision-making positions in the areas of economy and business, sports and diplomacy, where women often account for 20 % or fewer of decision-makers. Achieving gender balance in decision-making supports, among other things, fulfilment of women's rights, better governance and democracy, greater competitiveness and productivity of the economy, career progression of all women and more environmentally conscious behaviour by companies.

To achieve the full participation of women in public, social and economic life requires fundamental changes, including policies, measures and targeted actions to remove both societal and structural obstacles. Past experience shows that targeted, binding measures and legislation can substantially speed up progress towards gender-balanced decision-making. Given the cross-cutting nature of the issue, wider measures are also necessary to address the broader challenges women face when progressing in their careers, including challenges in balancing work-life commitments, gender stereotypes, gender bias in promotions and gender-based violence (note that these are covered under other recommendations in this report). Finally, more research is needed to ensure comprehensive coverage of key gender gaps in decision-making and to identify effective measures to eliminate them. It is also important to further research ways to ensure that balance in num-

⁽³⁶⁵⁾ Participatory budgeting is a process through which citizens are given responsibility for deciding how to spend part of a public budget. See, for example, European Parliament (2016).

bers of women and men in decision-making bodies translates into gender-sensitive decisions.

Intended audience. Member State governments (all ministries) and the European Union.

Example actions at EU level

- Actively pursue gender balance at all levels of decision-making within the ranks of the European Commission. This should include encouraging Member States to propose one woman and one man as candidates during the process of selecting European commissioners. From these candidates, a gender-balanced commission should be formed.
- Encourage regular use of EIGE’s Gender-Sensitive Parliaments toolkit in Member States and the European Parliament to support the assessment and monitoring of gender sensitivity in parliaments, in terms of their organisation and working procedures.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- Consider a broad range of legislative and non-legislative measures to improve gender balance in decision-making (such as binding gender quotas or voluntary softer measures), especially in sectors where women are typically under-represented in decision-making positions. These measures should set ambitious targets with the aim of achieving gender balance, with clearly defined timelines and adequate sanctions for non-compliance. They should cover especially those sectors/positions where women are most under-represented, including in economic and business decision-making positions, politics and public life, sports and the diplomatic sector.
- Conduct further research on (1) how to ensure that gender balance in numbers of decision-makers translates into good representation of the interests of each gender and (2) gender gaps in decision-making and effective measures to eliminate them, espe-

cially in sectors where information is scarce (such as the media and non-profit sectors).

- Promote the exchange of good practice on how to close the gender gap in decision-making at all levels and in all fields. For example, in the area of politics, good practice could be shared on how to use certain tools in the electoral systems (e.g. zipper systems, where candidates alternate between women and men on candidate lists).
- Enhance capacity-building measures for women (such as mentoring, training and leadership programmes) to support their career progression.

Reinforce the role of civil society organisations at EU and Member State levels

Based on key findings from areas:	
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Rationale. CSOs play an important role in cooperating and consulting with governments in the design and implementation of strategies and action plans that contribute to the objectives of the BPfA. In recent years, some Member States have weakened the role of CSOs, a move that undermines the ability of such organisations to hold those in power to account or to play a role in promoting parity, gender equality and the human rights of people in vulnerable situations, including asylum seekers and LGBTIQI* people. In addition, there are challenges for smaller and medium-sized CSOs in accessing available EU funds.

Intended audience. European Commission and gender equality mechanisms of Member States.

Example actions at EU level

- Proactively challenge Member State actions that threaten the human rights of women and minority groups, for example by introducing conditionalities that require recipients

of EU funding to demonstrate their respect for these rights before gaining access.

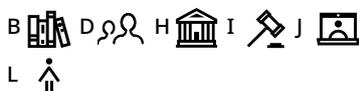
- Monitor the share of EU funding for NGOs that goes towards advancing and promoting women's rights, for example via dedicated women's rights NGOs and other CSOs whose work is relevant to gender equality.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- Ensure that CSOs are supported through the provision of adequate, sustainable funding and the removal of restrictions that impede their ability to operate and to hold power to account.
- Foster cooperation between governmental/ EU bodies responsible for gender equality and CSOs promoting women's rights.

Robustly challenge anti-gender movements

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Anti-gender movements, which often misinterpret the concept of gender to justify their opposition to certain fundamental rights of women and LGBTQI* people, have gained greater followings in some countries in recent years. These movements present a serious challenge to overcoming gender-based stereotypes, discrimination, stigma and violence. The resistance to ratification of the Istanbul Convention in some Member States is one worrying example of this. Misconceptions spread by politicians, as well as similar attempts by religious groups, have generated opposition based on arguments that the inclusion of the word 'gender' in the convention is a threat to traditional family values. The movement's focus on restricting women's reproductive rights and obstructing public education in some Member States (e.g. by banning gender studies in higher education institutions in Hungary) is of particular concern.

Intended audience. European Commission.

Example actions at EU level

- Require Member States to have an established and functioning gender equality strategy, coordinated by the government's gender equality body, placed at the highest level of government and sufficiently funded, before they can qualify for EU funds. The implementation of such funds should then be monitored to ensure their effective and appropriate use.
- Encourage EU Member States to ratify — without reservations — important international mechanisms for the protection of women's rights, such as the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW (including the CEDAW Optional Protocol). Challenge the misinformation and misconceptions associated with the anti-gender movement.
- Encourage the use of gender statistics to develop strong arguments based on robust evidence (from sources such as EIGE's Gender Statistics Database) to counter statements made by such movements. This should include using EIGE's Gender Equality Index to regularly monitor gender inequalities at Member State level.

Continue to improve data collection to shed light on gender inequalities

Based on key findings from: all areas

Rationale. Although recent years have seen important improvements in data availability on violence against women, shortcomings persist in the quality, relevance, comparability and comprehensiveness of the monitoring framework used to measure progress against the BPfA. Further steps must be taken to improve data collection across the 12 critical areas of the platform to improve gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

Intended audience. Eurostat, EIGE, FRA and other EU agencies, in cooperation with the national statistical agencies and other organisations that collect administrative data.

Example actions

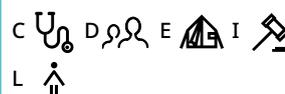
- Ensure more systematic efforts to collect and disaggregate data by sex in certain BPfA areas, most notably Areas D, E, I, K, H and L. The gaps in regular collection, quality and comparability of data pose a serious difficulty in monitoring progress towards gender equality in these areas.
- Continue to explore individualised (as opposed to household-level) methods of poverty measurement to better understand poverty among women and girls, in addition to collecting data at household level.
- Develop surveys or special survey modules (e.g. for EU-SILC) to examine the degree to which adults and children share time, care and resources. This should include collecting data on individual and household characteristics to allow for research on the determinants of differing allocations by gender.
- Take steps to harmonise administrative data collection by the police, the courts and other organisations on violence against women and girls, with a view to compiling comparable and quality EU-wide statistics on different forms of gender-based violence.
- Develop indicators to measure challenges linked to human rights (Area I), in particular considering forms of intersectional discrimination and disadvantage.
- Develop more comprehensive indicators in Area L, the girl child, building on wider work to develop a stronger monitoring framework for children’s rights.
- Improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive, comparable and

reliable and regularly updated data on equality of women and men in decision-making positions, especially in certain sectors (such as the media or the non-profit sector).

3.5. Ensuring peaceful and inclusive societies

Monitor and promote gender sensitivity within Member State asylum processes

Based on key findings from areas:



Rationale. Between 2014 and 2016, more than 3 million people applied for asylum in the EU. Women and girls (particularly unaccompanied ones) experience gendered challenges during displacement, including stress and trauma, health complications (particularly for pregnant women), injury and harm, exploitation and gender-based violence. Despite this, asylum processes can be gender blind, failing to reflect the different types of risks and challenges faced by women and men. Thus, women asylum seekers can have difficulties with accessing gender-sensitive assistance and reception facilities. In addition, although existing international conventions allow gender-based persecution to be considered grounds for asylum, this is not necessarily always applied in practice ⁽³⁶⁶⁾.

Intended audience. Member State governments (especially ministries for home affairs, justice and security), the European Commission and relevant EU agencies (European Asylum Support Office, European Border and Coast Guard Agency).

Example actions at EU level

- Promote more harmonised efforts in Member States to achieve the minimum expected standards for gender sensitivity within the asylum sector, including matching applicants

⁽³⁶⁶⁾For an exploration of the legal and practical situation of asylum-seeking women and girls in the EU, see, for example, UN Women (2017) and European Parliament (2012).

and interviewers by sex, separating women and men into different spaces in reception centres and adequately training interviewers to handle gender-based claims appropriately. These should include procedures to be followed by frontline officials at border agencies, reception centres and health services. Girls, in particular, would benefit from wider efforts to improve the protection of children deprived of parental care.

- Support cross-border cooperation among agencies at EU and national levels, for instance through better data sharing between Member States in the context of identifying and preventing FGM.

Example actions at Member State level

- Ensure sufficient presence of women police staff and interpreters in reception centres to contribute to safeguarding the dignity of women during entry checks, including body search, first registration and other procedures in the hotspots, as well as to facilitate the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Provide multidisciplinary support services to asylum seekers (and their arriving partners), including domestic and sexual assault support services, gynaecologists, midwives, psychologists and interpreters, and ensure an adequate referral system for women and girls to receive the appropriate and necessary support.

Ensure that rights of minority groups are adequately protected

Based on key findings from:	all areas
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Rationale. Women (and men) from certain minority groups struggle to fully enjoy their rights because of challenges arising from societal prejudices and stereotypes related to their gender and minority status. These women are therefore subject to intersectional discrimination in various areas of their lives, including but not limited to employment, education

and health. Women with disabilities, from certain ethnic backgrounds (such as Roma), from non-EU migrant backgrounds, from certain religious communities (such as Muslims or Jews) and from LGBTQI* communities are among the groups most at risk of having their rights not recognised or even having them denied.

Intended audience. Member State governments, the European Commission and relevant EU agencies (EIGE, FRA), Equinet.

Example actions at EU level

- Adopt the proposal for the anti-discrimination directive of 2008 (COM/2008/0426 FIN) to implement, in a gender-sensitive way, the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Example actions at EU and Member State levels

- Foster cooperation between governmental/EU bodies responsible for policies related to discrimination and other stakeholders (such as CSOs) that promote the rights of minority groups.
- Mainstream an intersectional perspective into EU and national gender equality strategies, and ensure that this perspective is applied in the monitoring of their progress as well.
- Consistently mainstream gender into national and EU-level plans/strategies aimed at minority groups (such as Roma and disability strategies). Ensure that monitoring of progress of these strategies/plans is gender sensitive.
- Gather and analyse further data disaggregated by sex on these groups. Identify gaps in current research on intersectional challenges facing these groups and promote further gender-sensitive research to address these.
- Provide funding for projects addressing the needs of women from these groups and support CSOs that promote their rights.

Annex 1. Beijing Platform objectives and Sustainable Development Goals' targets

Relevant theme in the executive summary	BPfA critical areas covered within our themes	SDGs
Gender inequalities in the economy	A, B, F, I, L	<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.</p> <p>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p> <p>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p> <p>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</p> <p>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p> <p>Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.</p> <p>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p> <p>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p>
Gender-responsive public infrastructure, social protection and services	A, C, F, H, I, L, K	<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.</p> <p>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p> <p>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p> <p>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</p> <p>Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.</p> <p>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p> <p>Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.</p> <p>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p> <p>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.</p> <p>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p> <p>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.</p> <p>Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.</p> <p>Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.</p> <p>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.</p>

Relevant theme in the executive summary	BPfA critical areas covered within our themes	SDGs
Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	B, D, I, J, L	Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
Parity democracy, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	G, H, I, J	Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
Peaceful and inclusive societies	E, I, L	Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Note: SDG 5, 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', cuts across all BPfA areas.

The link between the themes of this report and the goal of the SDGs follows the 2019 NGO Guidance for National Parallel Reports prepared by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

Annex 2. Structures for gender equality at the EU level

Structure	Mandate	Key priorities and activities since 2013
EU institutional mechanisms for gender equality		
European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee)	Responsible for advancing gender equality and women's rights in the EU.	As established by the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the FEMM Committee focuses on a number of areas, including definition, promotion and protection of women's rights in the EU and their promotion in third countries; equal opportunities policy; the removal of all forms of violence; gender mainstreaming; implementation and follow-up of international agreements; and encouragement of awareness of women's rights. In 2017 it issued opinions/reports on climate justice, women's economic empowerment, the gender pension gap, EU funds for gender equality and violence against women.
European Parliament's High Level Group on gender equality and diversity	Aims to promote and implement gender mainstreaming in the Parliament's activities, structures and bodies, working closely with the FEMM Committee.	For the eighth parliamentary term (2014-2019), the group's work includes promoting values of equal opportunity, non-discrimination and diversity in the Parliament's administration, and in relation to other EU institutions and national parliaments. The HLG's 2016 report outlined the state of play and made recommendations for 2017-2019.
Council of the European Union Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO Council)	Adopts legislation with the European Parliament, aimed at improving working conditions, social inclusion and gender equality.	Important activities include the adoption of conclusions on the indicators and benchmarks of the BPfA, e.g. on horizontal segregation and women's role in the media sector. The EPSCO Council also agrees the Council's negotiating position on legislative proposals relevant to gender equality, such as the already adopted Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers.
European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Gender Equality Unit	Has primary responsibility for gender equality and gender-mainstreaming activities in the European Commission.	The unit's work includes the promotion of equal economic independence, the gender pay gap, advancing women's participation in decision-making, ending gender-based violence and promoting gender equality beyond the EU. The Commission delivers legislative and policy proposals that are negotiated in the Council and the European Parliament.
European Commission's Inter-Service Group on equality between women and men	Ensures information exchange and policy coordination within the Commission.	Among other things, the group considers the implementation of the <i>Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019</i> and provides a means for exchanging information and best practice on gender equality, as well as enabling policy coordination.

Structure	Mandate	Key priorities and activities since 2013
European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE)	Advises and supports the European Commission in analysis of gender equality policy and reforms, and of their European/national implications. The Gender Equality Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers finances ENEGE. Managed by the core experts group, ENEGE has a network of associated experts in gender equality, composed of academics from Europe's leading universities, think tanks and consultancies.	Between 2013 and 2015, ENEGE mainly published reviews on FGM in Europe and on attitudes towards violence against women in the EU. The network has also published thematic reports on gender gaps in subjective well-being; men, women and pensions; and secondary earners and fiscal policy in Europe.
European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men	Provides expert advice to help the Commission to prepare and implement activities to promote equal opportunities. The advisory committee is composed of 70 members, including representatives of EU Member States and EU-level employer and trade unions. Other EU-level organisations (such as NGOs) are admitted as observers.	Since 2013, the Committee has delivered 11 opinions to the European Commission, on topics such as occupational segregation, work-life balance and the gender pay gap. Other opinions issued focused on FGM and violence against women.
European Commission's High Level Group on gender mainstreaming	Brings together high-level Member State representatives responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level.	Since 2013, the group has promoted gender equality within key EU strategies and policy documents. Topics tackled by the group include violence against women, gender equality in decision-making, economic independence of women and men, and monitoring gender equality within the UN 2030 Agenda.
EU agencies		
European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)	Contributes to and strengthens the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies; fights against discrimination based on sex; and raises EU citizens' awareness of gender equality.	Since 2013, EIGE has continued to provide technical support to the Council of the EU and to its presidencies in the follow-up of the BPfA by systematically reviewing the areas of concern and developing indicators to measure progress against the BPfA. To aid effective policy implementation, EIGE makes available tools, methods and good practices used for gender mainstreaming at EU and Member State levels. To monitor progress in gender equality, the Institute develops the Gender Equality Index and collects data in the Gender Statistics Database. Furthermore, EIGE support the institutions and experts engaged in preventing and combating gender-based violence by carrying out relevant research and collecting statistical data.
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)	Collects information on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU, in cooperation with Member States, the Council of Europe and CSOs.	Since 2013, gender equality has been explored in various research projects, including the annual fundamental rights reports, as well as investigations into forced marriage in the EU (FRA, 2014a) and discrimination against Roma women (FRA, 2014b) and the EU-wide survey on violence against women ⁽³⁶⁷⁾ .

⁽³⁶⁷⁾ See <https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/violence-against-women-survey/survey-information> for more detail.

Structure	Mandate	Key priorities and activities since 2013
Other European networks and structures		
European Network of Legal Experts in gender equality and non-discrimination	Informs the European Commission on legal developments at national level in both the fields of gender equality and non-discrimination.	Since 2013, the network has published a number of reports focusing on gender equality in employment and the economy ⁽³⁶⁸⁾ . Other reports have explored intersectional discrimination in EU gender equality, and non-discrimination law.
European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (GenderCoP)	Dedicated to integrating a gender perspective into the ESF through the development of a guiding tool (European Standard on Gender Mainstreaming within the ESF).	The tool was piloted in four Member States: Belgium, Czechia, Finland and Sweden (European Commission, 2014a). GenderCoP is no longer active.
European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet)	Builds capacity and peer support among equality bodies through its Working Group on Gender Equality, launched in 2014.	Since 2013, its activities have included an ongoing project addressing violence against women. In recent years, Equinet seminars have tackled topics such as gender equality in education (2016) and breaking the glass ceiling for women (2017).
EU-level civil society organisations		
European Women's Lobby (EWL)	Engages with EU institutions and women's organisations to promote the integration of gender equality into policies and laws.	The EWL focuses on a number of different areas, including violence against women, women in decision-making, women's economic independence, and migrant and refugee women ⁽³⁶⁹⁾ . In 2014, the EWL published its own Beijing + 20 report, which looked at the situation of women and girls in the EU based on the collective assessment of its member organisations (European Women's Lobby, 2014). The EWL acts as a link between women's organisations and institutions. More specifically, it promotes participation of women's rights NGOs at EU level and acts as a source of knowledge for these institutions. Together with member organisations, the EWL engages with EU institutions to achieve legislative and policy change in the field of gender equality.
European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe)	Advocates for human rights and equality for LGBTIQI* people at EU level and strengthens the LGBTIQI* movement in Europe and Central Asia.	ILGA-Europe facilitates contacts between NGOs and governments to ensure the exchange of good practices and to influence and inform inclusive policies. It produces reports on a number of different topics intersecting with LGBTIQI* rights, guidelines and Rainbow Europe, its annual benchmarking tool, which ranks 49 countries in Europe on their LGBTIQI* equality laws and policies.
Transgender Europe	Campaigns for change at EU level and the improvement of the situation of trans people at local level.	Transgender Europe has been an important player in encouraging the development of trans-inclusive policies at EU level. Alongside research and advocacy, in 2014 it launched its biggest campaign, 'Access all areas! Recognition opens doors', to raise awareness about the importance of legal gender recognition and make progress towards better national gender recognition legislation ⁽³⁷⁰⁾ .

³⁶⁸ ()See <http://www.enege.eu/reports/>

⁽³⁶⁹⁾ Retrieved from <https://womenlobby.org/-Our-work-lang-en-?lang=en>.

⁽³⁷⁰⁾ Retrieved from <https://tgeu.org/our-work/creating-change/campaigns/>.

Annex 3. Social Scoreboard indicators used to monitor the European Pillar of Social Rights

Theme	Sub-theme covered by indicator	Main indicator	Available disaggregated by sex? (Y/N)
Equal opportunities and access to labour market	1. Education, skills and lifelong learning	Early leavers from education and training	Y
		Adult participation in learning	Y
		Underachievement in education	N
		Tertiary educational attainment, age group 30-34	Y
	2. Gender equality in the labour market	Gender employment gap	Y
		Gender gap in part-time employment	Y
		Gender pay gap in unadjusted form	Y
	3. Inequality and upward mobility	Income inequality	N
		Variation in performance explained by students' socioeconomic status	N
	4. Living conditions and poverty	AROPE rate	Y
		AROP rate	Y
		Severe material deprivation rate	Y
		Persons living in a household with very low work intensity	Y
		Severe housing deprivation	N
	5. Youth	NEET rate, age group 15-24	Y
Dynamic labour markets and fair working conditions	6. Labour force structure	Employment rate	Y
		Unemployment rate	Y
		Activity rate	Y
		Youth unemployment rate	Y
	7. Labour market dynamics	Share of long-term unemployment	Y
		Employment in current job by duration	N
		Transition rates from temporary to permanent contracts (3-year average)	Y
	8. Income, including employment-related	Real unadjusted gross disposable income of households per capita: index 2008 = 100	N
		Net earnings of a full-time single worker without children earning an average wage (levels in purchasing power standards, 3-year average)	N
		Net earnings of a full-time single worker without children earning an average wage (percentage change in national currency and real terms, 3-year average)	N
In-work AROP rate		Y	

Theme	Sub-theme covered by indicator	Main indicator	Available disaggregated by sex? (Y/N)
Public support/ social protection and inclusion	9. Impact of public policy on reducing poverty	Impact of social transfers (other than pensions) on poverty reduction	Y
		General government expenditure on social protection	N
		General government expenditure on health	N
		General government expenditure on education	N
		Aggregate replacement ratio for pensions	N
	10. Early childhood care	Children aged less than 3 years in formal childcare	N
	11. Healthcare	Self-reported unmet need for medical care	Y
		Healthy life years at age 65	Y
		Out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare	N
	12. Digital access	Digital skills (% of individuals with basic or above basic overall digital skills)	Y
		Connectivity dimension of the Digital Economy and Society Index	N

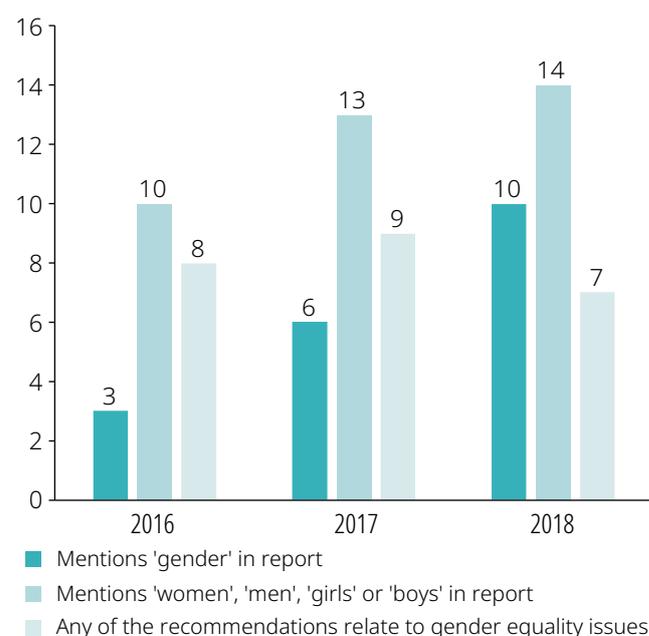
Annex 4. Country-specific recommendations of the European Semester

An analysis of changes in the European Semester CSRs provides further information on the integration of gender into EU policy over time. A total of 81 CSRs from 2016 to 2018 (inclusive) covering 27 Member States were assessed for gender equality issues and themes (where relevant).

Figure 48 shows that the number of CSRs mentioning gender increased from three (11 %) in 2016 to 10 (52 %) in 2018. Similarly, the number of CSRs using gender-specific terms (women, men, girls, boys) increased from 10 (37 %) in 2016 to 14 (52 %) in 2018, showing an increase in considerations of gender-specific issues between 2016 and 2018. However, when looking at the content of the CSRs themselves, a slight decline is evident in relation to gender equality issues. Despite an increase in discussion of gender issues within the reports, this has not translated into concrete recommendations for Member States.

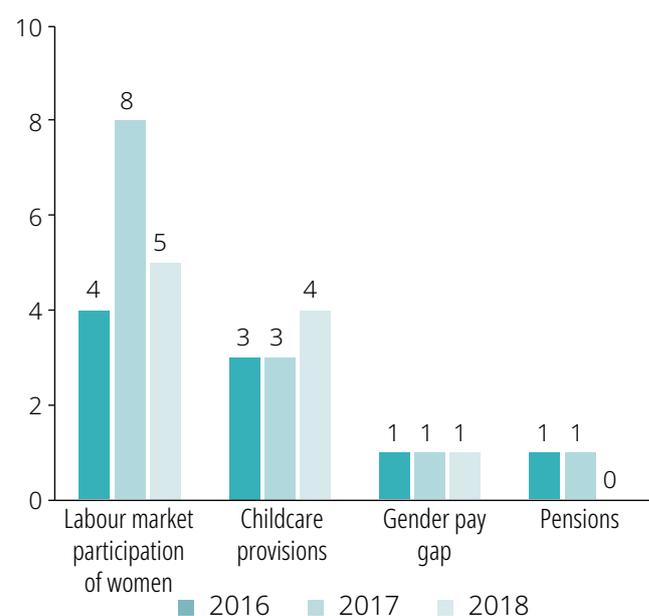
Looking at the themes within the gender-relevant CSRs, the labour market participation of women appears most frequently, followed by recommendations on improving childcare provisions (see Figure 49). This reflects the adoption of Employment Guideline 6, which explicitly refers to childcare as part of the reconciliation of work and family life needed to increase women's labour market participation. Addressing the gender pay gap is covered in one CSR each year, while equalising the pension age for women and men was addressed in a single CSR in each of 2016 and 2017. This relates to Employment Guideline 8 on addressing inequalities and securing the sustainability and adequacy of pension systems for women and men.

Figure 48: Coverage of gender-related terms in CSRs, 2016-2018



Note: Base = 27 Member States (Greece excluded).

Figure 49: Theme covered by gender-relevant CSRs, 2016-2018



Note: Base = eight recommendations in 2016, nine in 2017 and seven in 2018.

Annex 5. Overview of strategic objectives and indicators

Area A — Women and poverty

Area A of the BPfA (women and poverty) has four strategic objectives:

1. review, adapt and maintain macroeconomic policies and develop strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty;
2. revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources;
3. provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions;
4. develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.

These objectives are monitored at EU level through five indicators, all of which relate to strategic objective A.1 and the overall goal of eradicating poverty (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). The indicators measure levels of poverty among women and men, together with one contributing cause (level of economic inactivity). Although the indicators cover the important intersections of age, household type and migrant status, they are defined using the AROP rate, which covers only monetary poverty and thus fails to take into account the other facets of poverty (material deprivation and social exclusion) covered by the now preferred AROPE rate. The indicator set could usefully be updated to address this point and expanded to cover the issue of in-work poverty, which is not currently addressed.

More could also be done to give information about factors affecting levels of poverty, such as levels of unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment), the extent to which the welfare

system alleviates risks of poverty (e.g. by measuring risks before and after social transfers), gender gaps in pensions (in terms of amounts received and coverage) and the incidence of low wages among employees with different contracts.

Area B — Education and training of women

Area B of the BPfA (education and training of women) has six strategic objectives:

1. ensure equal access to education;
2. eradicate illiteracy among women;
3. improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education;
4. develop non-discriminatory education and training;
5. allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reform;
6. promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

For the purposes of monitoring the implementation of these objectives in the EU, three indicators have so far been adopted (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). Two relate to the key challenges of segregation, one horizontal and one vertical. The former covers participation in study fields traditionally dominated by one or other sex: STEM and EHW. However, this level of aggregation conceals significant variation. In STEM subjects, for example, women are now well represented in mathematics and biology in some countries, but remain significantly under-represented in ICT

and physics. Disaggregation by detailed field of study is therefore necessary. The third indicator measures the employment rates of women and men by level of education in order to determine how educational achievements translate to labour market outcomes.

In short, the current indicator set is somewhat limited in the extent to which it addresses the key challenges facing the EU. Although it partly addresses horizontal and vertical segregation, it fails to address key issues such as access to life-long learning, performance gaps, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence in educational settings, and the impact of intersections between gender and other characteristics in education issues.

Area C — Women and health

Area C of the BPfA (women and health) has five strategic objectives:

1. increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and good-quality healthcare, information and related services;
2. strengthen preventative programmes that promote women's health;
3. undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues;
4. promote research and disseminate information on women's health;
5. increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

Three indicators monitor the implementation of these objectives within the EU, two of which describe differences in the health status of women and men by measuring healthy life years (in total and as a percentage of life expectancy)

and one measuring the incidence of death from CVD⁽³⁷¹⁾. These indicators present several issues. Inherent biological differences between the sexes present a challenge for assessing differences in the health status of women and men. For the CVD indicator, the focus on gender differences in a single cause of death may not be the most appropriate way to identify gender bias within investment in preventative action, research or access to healthcare. It may be preferable to focus on more general health measures (such as the healthy life years indicator) and to consider how sex differences are affected by other socioeconomic factors. The final indicator addresses the challenge of equal access to healthcare only in a generalised way and does not consider access to services for gendered health (e.g. sexual health and mental health). The indicators do not address women's role in health governance and decision-making (vertical segregation).

Assessments of the key challenges related to gender and health will require going beyond the current indicator set. This could include issues such as health determinants, use of (gender-specific or non-gender-specific) preventative services, unmet needs in particular areas (such as sexual and reproductive health or mental health), the gender balance in health governance and among health professionals, and the gender balance within medical research.

Area D — Violence against women

Area D of the BPfA (violence against women) has three strategic objectives:

1. take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
2. study the causes and the effectiveness of preventative measures;
3. eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

⁽³⁷¹⁾This was introduced because CVD was then the main cause of death of women in the EU, particularly among post-menopausal women.

These objectives are monitored at EU level through 10 qualitative and quantitative indicators, composed of sub-indicators (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). The qualitative indicators assess the measures to counter VAW, whereas the quantitative measures focus on the incidence of violence perpetrated by men against women in the domestic setting and in the workplace.

These indicators contain significant shortcomings. Firstly, in terms of conceptualisation, the current indicators assess domestic violence⁽³⁷²⁾ rather than intimate partner violence specifically. Secondly, not all forms of VAW are assessed. Thirdly, the only form of violence other than domestic violence covered is sexual harassment at work, meaning that other types of VAW — including cyberviolence, FGM, human trafficking for sexual exploitation and even sexual harassment in other environments — are overlooked.

The qualitative indicators cover a broad range of pertinent issues, from national-level actions covering legislation, policy, awareness-raising and preventative measures to the provision of adequate training for professionals or victim support services and in-company measures to counter harassment. However, the relevant data are not collected systematically. The quantitative indicators, on the other hand, are monitored more regularly (at least at national level) but have inherent quality and comparability issues, due to the diverse legal definitions that apply in each country and the fact that countries tend to use legal rather than statistical definitions when recording incidents of VAW.

Area E — Women and armed conflict

Area E of the BPfA (women and armed conflict) has six strategic objectives:

1. increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation;
2. reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments;
3. promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;
4. promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace;
5. provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women;
6. provide assistance to the women of colonies and non-self-governing territories.

Four indicators have been adopted within the BPfA framework to monitor these objectives, which are part of the EU's original efforts to track progress on WPS. These relate primarily to the participation of women in peace operations and conflict resolution activities, and the extent to which EU personnel are equipped to work in a gender-sensitive manner. The latter is measured through participation in gender equality training. Although this indicator captures efforts to raise capacity (the lack of which is a key problem for realising the objectives of this area), it cannot reflect whether or not the training has any impact. Although it would be costly and difficult to measure the effect of training, the existing indicator could be developed by considering the choice of participants (e.g. whether or not those in power are targeted) and recording whether or not the training has been adapted for the target group. A further indicator looks at how those affected by conflict are protected by EU countries, by measur-

⁽³⁷²⁾All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim (Council of Europe, 2011).

ing gender differences in outcomes of asylum applications. A final indicator aims to measure the proportion of funding dedicated to gender equality, as provided by Member States and the EU to countries affected by conflict. A wider set of WPS indicators exists at EU level, which may be drawn upon to enhance the BPfA indicators. However, issues with data collection persist.

Area F — Women and the economy

Area F of the BPfA (women and the economy) has six strategic objectives:

1. promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources;
2. facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
3. provide business services, training, and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women;
4. strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks;
5. eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
6. promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and the Social Scoreboard aim to detect key employment and social problems in the EU. The 12 indicators of the scoreboard measure (among other things) equal opportunities and access to the labour market, including the employment rate for women, the gender pay gap and the impact of social protection measures.

The indicators help to identify the challenges and barriers preventing women's greater participation and eliminating gender inequalities in the labour market. As they are focused on outcomes, they are perhaps less useful in analys-

ing the underlying causes and their interactions (type of contract, vertical and horizontal segregation, etc.).

Work-life balance issues are also covered by indicators of time use, parental leave, childcare and related policies.

In addition, the EIGE Gender Equality Index is a composite indicator that measures the complex concept of gender equality and assists in monitoring gender equality across the EU over time (EIGE, 2017e).

Area G — Women in power and decision-making

Area G of the BPfA (women in power and decision-making) has two strategic objectives:

1. take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making;
2. increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

For the purposes of monitoring the implementation of these objectives within the EU, 19 indicators have been defined (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). Apart from a single indicator dealing with the implementation of policies to promote balanced participation in politics, the remainder measure gender balance in decision-making positions. Because of the cross-cutting nature of the issue, further indicators on participation in decision-making appear in the indicator sets for Areas B, E, J and K. Together, these provide good coverage of gender-based inequalities in power and decision-making. There are, however, further areas that could usefully be covered (e.g. health-related decision-making, sports, law enforcement).

Gaps remain in terms of information on whether or not representation is substantive (i.e. if roles held by women and men are of equal importance) and on measures used to promote gender balance, such as quotas (including informa-

tion about the level of the quota, the timescale for application and any sanctions in the event of non-compliance), programmes to support women's career progression (e.g. mentoring and leadership programmes) and other tools in electoral systems (e.g. zipper systems in candidate lists).

Area H — Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Area H of the BPfA (institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women) has three strategic objectives:

1. create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies;
2. integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects;
3. generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Four indicators have been developed to monitor progress towards these objectives, one of which is split into two sub-indicators. These focus on the level of government responsibility for promoting gender equality, the existence and resources of national gender equality bodies, the extent to which gender mainstreaming is implemented and whether or the government produces and disseminates sex-disaggregated statistics. These were produced in response to the challenges identified as limiting the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms, such as unclear mandates, insufficient resources and a lack of understanding. Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern outlines the indicators in greater detail.

Although the indicators are, on the whole, meaningful and relevant, there are several limitations nevertheless. Firstly, the indicators are monitored using ad hoc, rather than regular, survey data. This makes it difficult to map trends over time, and the data are challenging and expensive to collect. Secondly, differences in scoring may not always indicate actual differences in

national practices. For example, Member States are scored differently under indicator H4 if there is a national legal obligation to produce statistics disaggregated by sex on regular basis, compared with other forms of agreement. In practice, however, there might be no difference in terms of data availability between countries following different practices.

Some limitations are specific to individual indicators, particularly H2, which measures the ratio of personnel resources available to the government gender equality body to the size of the Member State population. This indicator is limited in that it may not include all relevant personnel (e.g. personnel of all gender equality bodies in the Member States working in government administration), nor does it reflect outsourced work. As there is likely to be a minimum number of employees required in each Member State, regardless of the size of the population, it is easier for smaller countries to achieve higher scores. Indicator H1 measures the level of government responsibility in promoting gender equality, including (among other things) whether or not Member States have implemented a national gender action plan for gender equality. One limitation noted here is that the survey questions do not allow an assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of action plans for gender equality (EIGE, 2014).

Area I — Human rights of women

Area I of the BPfA (human rights of women) has three strategic objectives:

1. promote and protect the human rights of women through the implementation of all human rights instruments, especially CEDAW;
2. ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice;
3. achieve legal literacy (i.e. empowerment of women regarding issues involving the law).

CEDAW is not among the 50 international UN agreements the EU has signed as a non-state participant. To date, no indicators have been

adopted to monitor these strategic objectives within the EU — an omission that needs to be addressed to give the area higher priority. Indeed, ensuring equal rights for women is a fundamental issue that cuts across all other BPfA areas of concern. Although some human rights-related issues are dealt with in other areas (e.g. Section 2.4 dealing with violence), the rights of minority women (e.g. Roma women) deserve particular focus here.

The monitoring of Area I could start with qualitative indicators measuring the ratification of key human rights legislation, such as the Istanbul Convention, the Victims' Rights Directive and CEDAW. Qualitative indicators looking at the implementation of equality and non-discrimination legislation at national level and the existence (or not) of appropriate institutional mechanisms to support these (e.g. ombudsperson, equality bodies) could also be considered.

More quantitative, contextual indicators could also be developed to describe the incidence of the different types of (legal) human rights violations in the EU, in terms of the number of relevant cases heard in European/national-level courts, as well as in the context of other complaints mechanisms (e.g. those of equality ombudspersons). This could include a breakdown by the plaintiff's sex. Data might usefully be broken down into the different areas covered by the articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. The ECtHR, for example, publishes annual data on the number of violations by article, which could be filtered to cover articles with particular relevance to gender equality. Unfortunately, sex-disaggregated data are not readily accessible. Obtaining access to comparable and up-to-date data for the 28 EU Member States in this area is likely to prove challenging.

Alternatively, more indirect, contextual indicators could be used to obtain data on the wider human rights environment (e.g. macro-level indicators on the rule of law, levels of public corruption, etc.), information about key organisations with a role to play in protecting/promoting human rights (such as women's rights NGOs and CSOs) or self-reported levels of discrimination experienced by women (and specific groups of women) in different areas of life

(micro-level indicators). Such indicators would have the advantage of being more readily available across the Member States. However, there is no straightforward connection between macro-level factors (e.g. levels of corruption, stability) and the scale of human rights violations. Likewise, (self-reported) data on discrimination may underestimate the scale of the issue (because of under-reporting and perceptions of discrimination due to different levels of empowerment) and may often lack complementary information about the structural causes of such discrimination, its consequences, the perpetrator(s) and the nature/severity of the cases reported.

Area J — Women and the media

Area J of the BPfA (women and the media) has two strategic objectives:

1. increase the participation of women, and their access to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
2. promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

To date, three indicators have been established to monitor the implementation of these objectives within the EU (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). One is qualitative, looking at policies to promote gender equality within media organisations (e.g. in the form of codes of conduct, or policies on diversity, parental leave, harassment, etc.). The other two are quantitative, focusing on vertical segregation and the level of female representation at different levels of decision-making authority within media organisations. There are no indicators dealing with the portrayal of women and men in the media, horizontal segregation or sexual harassment.

Data are lacking for the current indicators; systematic collection has taken place only once, in 2012, as part of the EIGE study that recommended the indicators subsequently adopted by the Council of the EU (EIGE, 2013). Although relevant, the indicators are detailed and complex and their collection requires the coopera-

tion of media organisations. Simpler monitoring data with more restricted coverage (public broadcasters and regulatory authorities with responsibility for media) are collected annually by EIGE (since 2014). For a more complete picture, it may be necessary to put pressure on media organisations to self-report or to reconsider regulatory requirements.

Elsewhere, examples of potentially useful indicators have been developed by Unesco, whose Gender Sensitive Indicators for the Media (GSIM) cover issues such as working conditions, gender equality in media associations and the portrayal of women in news and advertising. The Global Media Monitoring Project also collects data on the numbers of women and men in world news, broken down by role, type of story, etc. ⁽³⁷³⁾

Area K — Women and the environment

Area K of the BPfA (women and the environment) has three strategic objectives:

1. involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels;
2. integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development;
3. strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to access the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

Objective 1 is currently monitored within the EU through a set of four indicators (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). Three of them measure the gender balance in environmental decision-making bodies at different levels (international, European and national), whereas the last

one looks at the relative numbers of women and men graduating in natural sciences and technologies ⁽³⁷⁴⁾, which gives an indication of the gender balance in the pipeline of potential workers in environmental sectors.

Strategic objectives 2 and 3 lack a similar set of indicators on the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated into environmental and climate change policies, or the instruments and mechanisms implemented, and if and how they are monitored. In order to demonstrate the added value of integrating a gender perspective, a particular indicator should measure the benefits to the environment and climate change policy.

In general, assessment of the current situation and trends in key issues related to the environment and gender is hindered by the lack of comparable national and EU-wide data. Too often, potentially interesting data cannot be used because they are not sex disaggregated. The correlation of intersecting social factors, such as income, age, ethnicity or sexuality, with gender is missing. One of the main challenges for gender-relevant data in environment and climate change is to go beyond data about women and men, to collect data related to gender rather than sex and to include data on LGBTQI* people. This would be extremely useful in broadening the perspective in an intersectional way.

Area L — The girl child

Area L of the BPfA (the girl child) has nine strategic objectives:

1. eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
2. eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;

⁽³⁷³⁾ <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-2020/media-monitoring/methodology-guides-and-coding-tools>.

⁽³⁷⁴⁾ The indicator specifies the following fields of education based on the International Standard Classification of Education *Fields of Education and Training 2013* classification: Natural sciences: life sciences (EF42) and physical sciences (EF44); Technologies: engineering and engineering trades (EF52), manufacturing and processing (EF54), architecture and building (EF58), transport services (EF84) and environmental protection (EF85).

3. promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential;
4. eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
5. eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
6. eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work;
7. eradicate violence against the girl child;
8. promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life;
9. strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

In general, each BPfA area of concern addresses a single set of issues that are applicable to all women. Area L, on the other hand, deals with multiple issues from the specific perspective of girls. Related issues that might be monitored with indicators are already covered in other areas (although not necessarily with a breakdown by age) and only four indicators have so far been adopted to monitor the nine strategic objectives (see Annex 6 — Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern). The first indicator, which deals with the delivery of sex and relationship education, is not suitable for quantifying. Rather, a loosely

structured monitoring framework is employed, which needs further work to produce well-defined and measurable indicators⁽³⁷⁵⁾. Two of the remaining indicators deal with horizontal segregation, and relate to the performance of girls and boys in STEM and entry into STEM careers. This is intended to provide an indication of the extent to which gender-based cultural expectations influence education and career choices. The final indicator also deals with cultural attitudes and societal ideals/norms, by measuring the proportions of girls and boys dissatisfied with their body image. This links to the mental health of children, cyberbullying, gender-based violence and suicide.

Ideally, indicators for children or women's rights would develop and mainstream an overarching girl child perspective⁽³⁷⁶⁾. Alongside a more fine-grained girl child rights-based framework, overlaps with other areas could be explored, paying closer attention on the issues most relevant to girl children. This might include health (childhood obesity, eating disorders, body dysmorphia, mental health, adolescent pregnancies, drug- and alcohol-related deaths, smoking); violence (sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, FGM, human trafficking, cyberbullying, sexual assault, image-based sexual assault, psychological abuse); education (covering a broader spectrum of subjects in relation to horizontal segregation of knowledge and career training, including gender-based violence within school curricula); and participation rights in social, economic, cultural and political life (and if their realisation is gendered).

⁽³⁷⁵⁾ Various UN agencies have developed detailed guidance for age-appropriate, human rights-based comprehensive sexuality education. See Unesco et al. (2018).

⁽³⁷⁶⁾ See, for example, FRA (<https://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/rights-child>); Child Protection Index (<http://www.childprotectionindex.org/>); KidsRights Index (<https://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>); Humanium (<https://www.humanium.org/en/europe-caucasus/>).

Annex 6. Full list of indicators for each Beijing Platform area of concern

Indicator	Objective	Data source
Area A — Women and poverty		
A1. At-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex	A.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC
A2. At-risk-of-poverty rate by type of household and sex, including at-risk-of-poverty rate of single parents with dependent children	A.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC
A3a. Inactivity by age and sex: share of women and men who are inactive by age	A.1	Eurostat, EU-LFS
A3b. Inactivity by age and sex: share of inactive women and men who are not looking for a job for family care reasons	A.1	Eurostat, EU-LFS
A4. At-risk-of-poverty rate by sex and migrant background (18+ population)	A.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC
A5. Share of women and men who are inactive by age and migrant background	A.1	Eurostat, EU-LFS
Area B — Education and training of women		
Indicator	Objective	Data source
B1. Proportion of women and men graduates in tertiary (ISCED levels 5-8) and vocational (ISCED levels 3-4) education and training in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and in the field of education, health and welfare (EHW) – of all graduates in the study field	B.3	UNESCO OECD Eurostat (UOE) joint data collection on education
B2. Employment rate of women and men (aged between 25 and 39 years; and aged between 40 and 64) by highest level of education attained		Eurostat, EU-LFS
B3. Proportion of female and male academic staff differentiated by level of seniority and in total	B.4	National administrative data
Area C — Women and health		
C1. Healthy life years C1a. Healthy life years in absolute value at birth by sex C1b. Healthy life years at birth in percentage of the total life expectancy by sex	C.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC and Mortality (joint collection with United Nations Statistics Division)
C2. Access to healthcare (unmet demand)	C.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC
C3. Cardiovascular diseases as percentage of all deaths	C.1	Eurostat, Health — causes of death
Area D — Violence against women		
D1. Profile of female victims of violence D1a. Number of victims (various measures) D1b. Background of victims (various characteristics)	D.1	National administrative sources and prevalence surveys
D2. Profile of male perpetrators D2a. Number of perpetrators (various measures) D2b. Background of perpetrators (various characteristics)	D.1	National administrative sources and prevalence surveys
D3. Victim support D3a. Qualitative (range of support services) D3b. Quantitative (number of support services and use by victims)	D.1	
D4. Measures addressing the male perpetrator to end the circle of violence	D.1	
D5. Training of professionals D5a. Type of training D5b. Target groups	D.1	

Indicator	Objective	Data source
D6. State measures to eliminate domestic violence against women D6a. Legislation and justice D6b. Surveys and projects D6c. Policy D6d. Awareness-raising/preventative measures D6e. Budget	D.1	
D7. Evaluation D7a. Progress made D7b. Lessons learned	D.2	
D8. The number of employees who report incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total workforce	D.1	
D9. The number of private and public enterprises which have a preventative policy regarding sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total number of employers	D.1	
D10. The number of private and public enterprises which have procedures for sanctions in place for perpetrators of sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total number of employers	D.1	
Area E — Women and armed conflict		
E1. Proportion (number and percentage) of men and women trained specifically in gender equality among: diplomatic staff and civilian and military defence staff employed by the Member States and Community institutions; and staff participating in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and ESDP missions, including military and police staff.	E.1	Periodic questionnaire to Member States
E2a. Proportion (number and percentage) of women and men among: heads of diplomatic missions and EC delegations.	E.1	Periodic questionnaire to Member States
E2b. Proportion (number and percentage) of women and men among: staff participating in UN peacekeeping operations and ESDP missions, including military and police staff	E.1	Periodic questionnaire to Member States
E3. Funding (as a total amount and as a percentage of cooperation programmes) allocated by the Member States and the European Commission, in countries affected by armed conflict or in post-conflict situations, to support gender equality, broken down, where possible, to reflect funding to support: female victims of violence; and the participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction	E.4	Periodic questionnaire to Member States
E4. Proportion (number and percentage) and country of origin of female and male asylum seekers who have obtained the status of refugee, or benefit from subsidiary protection	E.5	
Area F — Women and the economy		
F1. Employed men and women on parental leave (paid and unpaid) within the meaning of Directive 96/34/EC on the framework agreement between the social partners on parental leave, as a proportion of all employed parents	F.6	LFS
F2. Allocation of parental leave between employed women and men as a proportion of all parental leave	F.6	LFS
F3. Children cared for (other than by the family) as a proportion of all children of the same age group: before entry into the non-compulsory pre-school system (during the day); in the non-compulsory or equivalent pre-school system (outside pre-school hours); in compulsory primary education (outside school hours)	F.6	Eurostat
F4. Comprehensive and integrated policies, particularly employment policies, aimed at promoting a balance between work and family life for both men and women	F.6	MISSOC, database ESSPROS

Indicator	Objective	Data source
F5. Dependent older men and women (unable to look after themselves on a daily basis) over 75	F.6	Possibly SHARE survey
F6. Total 'tied' time per day for each employed parent living with a partner, having one or more children under 12 years old or a dependent: paid working time; travelling time; basic time spent on domestic work; other time devoted to the family (upbringing and care of children and care of dependent adults)	F.6	Eurostat — Harmonised European Time Use Surveys
F7. Total 'tied' time per day for each employed parent living alone, having one or more children under 12 years old or a dependent: paid working time; travelling time; basic time spent on domestic work; other time devoted to the family (upbringing and care of children and care of dependent adults)	F.6	Eurostat — Harmonised European Time Use Surveys
F8. Ratio for all employees, with several sub-indicators by gender: F8a. Pay gap F8b. Employment F8c. Pay gap hourly wages F8d. Pay gap annual wages F8e. Pay gap monthly wages F8f. Pay gap monthly wages full-time and part-time	F.1	Eurostat, LFS, EU Structure of Earnings Survey (SES) data
F9. Ratio for the total sum of wage, with sub-indicators by gender: F9a. Share of all wages F9b. Repartition of the total number of wage earners F9c. Repartition of total number of working days	F.1	Eurostat, SES data, LFS
F10. Ratio for part-time work, with sub-indicators on wages and pay gap: F10a. Female part-time to male part-time, and female part-time to female full-time F10b. Part-time employment rate by sex	F.1	Eurostat, LFS
F11. Ratio by age and education F11a. Employment rate by age and sex F11b. Pay gap by age F11c. Employment rate by education F11d. Pay gap by education	F.1	LFS, Eurostat, SES
F12. Segregation in the labour market F12a. Male and female wages in industry occupations with highest over- and under-representation of women F12b. Male and female wages in professional occupations with highest over- and under-representation of women F12c. Pay gap in management	F.1	SES
F13. Ratio according to personal characteristics F13a. Employment by family situation and civil status F13b. Gender pay gap by family situation and civil status F13c. Gender pay gap by country of birth	F.1	LFS and SILC
F14. Breakdown of the hourly wage gap between men and women using the Oaxaca technique	F.1	Calculated using data from SES
F15. Measures to promote equal pay and combat the gender pay gap	F.1	
F16. Influence of collective bargaining on the promotion of equal pay and the elimination of the gender pay gap	F.1	
F17. Effect of part-time work, parental leave, time credit systems and career breaks on the gender pay gap	F.1	
F18. Full-time equivalent employment rate for women and men by age groups (15-64, 20-64, 15-24, 25-54, 55-64)	F.1	LFS

Indicator	Objective	Data source
F19. Part-time employment as percentage of total employment for women and men by age groups F19a. Share of women part-time workers out of total part-time workers, main reason for part-time employment F19c1. Usual weekly working hours F19c2. Part-time workers working less than 10 hours per week F19d. Low pay share in part-time work F19e. Sectoral and occupational differences between full-time and part-time employment F19f. Transition between part-time and full-time work	F.1	LFS, SILC
F20. Self-employment as percentage of total employment for women and men by age groups F20a. Share of self-employed women and men with and without employees F20b. Median income from self-employment for women and men F20c. Fit of working hours with family or social commitments for self-employed women and men	F.1	Eurostat, EU-SILC, EWCS
F21. Share of women and share of men employed in occupations in STEM and EHW employment fields	F.5	
Area G — Women in power and decision-making		
Indicator	Objective	Data source
G1. The proportion of women in the single/lower houses of the national/federal parliaments of the Member States and in the European Parliament	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G2. The proportion of women in the regional parliaments of the Member States, where appropriate	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G3. The proportion of women in local assemblies in the Member States	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G4. Policies to promote balanced participation in political elections	G.1	
G5. The proportion and number of women among the members of the national/federal governments of the Member States and the proportion of women among members of the European Commission	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G6. The proportion and number of women and men among senior/junior ministers in the different fields of action (portfolios/ministries by BEIS type) of the national/federal governments of the Member States	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G7. The proportion and number of women and men among the leaders and deputy leaders of major political parties in Member States	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G8. The proportion of the highest ranking civil servants who are women	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G9. The distribution of the highest ranking women and men civil servants in different fields of action (portfolios/ministries by BEIS type) in the Member States	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G10. The proportion and number of women among the members of the Supreme Courts of the Member States and the proportion and number of women among the members of the European Court of Justice and the General Court	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G11. The proportion and number of women and men among governors and deputy/vice-governors of the Central Banks of the Member States and the President of the European Central Bank.	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G12. The proportion and number of women and men among members of the decision-making bodies of the Central Banks of the Member States and of the European Central Bank	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database

Indicator	Objective	Data source
G13. The proportion and number of women and men among presidents and vice-presidents of social partner organisations representing workers at national level and at European level	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G14. The proportion and number of women and men among members of the highest decision-making bodies of social partner organisations representing workers at national level and at European level.	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G15. The proportion and number of women and men among presidents and vice-presidents of social partner organisations representing employers at national level and at European level	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G16. The proportion and number of women and men among members of the highest decision-making bodies of social partner organisations representing employers at national level and at European level.	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G17. The proportion and number of women and men among presidents and chief executive officers (CEO) of the largest nationally registered companies listed on the national stock exchange	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G18. The proportion and number of women and men among members of the highest decision-making body of the largest nationally registered companies listed on the national stock exchange	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
G19. The proportion and number of women and men among executive and non-executive members of the two highest decision-making bodies of the largest nationally registered companies listed on the national stock exchange	G.1	EIGE gender statistics database
Area H — Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women		
Indicator	Objective	Data source
H1. Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality	H.1	EIGE
H2. Human resources for the promotion of gender equality H2a. Personnel resources of the governmental gender equality body H2b. Personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men	H.1	EIGE
H3. Gender mainstreaming	H.2	EIGE
H4. Production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex	H.3	EIGE
Area J — Women and the media		
Indicator	Objective	Data source
J1. The proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations in the EU Sub-indicators J1a-d cover the breakdown by level of seniority (levels 1-4)	J.1	EIGE
J2. The proportion of women and men on the boards of media organisations in the EU	J.1	EIGE
J3. Policies to promote gender equality in media organisations	J.1	EIGE
Area K — Women and the environment		
Indicator	Objective	Data source
K1. Proportion of women and men in climate change decision-making bodies at the national level in the EU Member States Breakdown into three levels	K.1	EIGE
K2. Proportion of women and men in climate change decision-making in the European Parliament and the Commission Breakdown into three levels	K.1	EIGE

Indicator	Objective	Data source
K3. Proportion of women and men in climate change decision-making bodies at the international level (average over the past 5 years) Breakdown by participation in different bodies and position	K.1	EIGE
K4. Proportion of women and men among tertiary graduates of all graduates (ISCED levels 5 and 6) in natural sciences and technologies at the EU and Member State level	K.1	UNESCO OECD Eurostat (UOE) joint data collection on education
Area L — The girl child		
L1. Sex and relationship education: parameters of sexuality-related education in schooling (primary and secondary)	L.5	International planned parenthood federation and WHO
L2. Body self-image: dissatisfaction of girls and boys with their bodies	L.2	HBSC, WHO
L3. Educational accomplishments: comparison of 15-year-old students' performance in mathematics and science	L.4	OECD PISA Survey
L.4 Proportion of all and top performers girls and boys in science aged 15 expecting to work in science-related occupations at age 30	L.4	OECD PISA Survey

Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database.

Annex 7. Overview of legislative quotas and other national measures related to women and men in decision-making

Gender quotas and other measures in place to promote gender balance in corporate boardrooms (as of January 2019)

Member State	Quotas in place	Other national measures in place ('soft measures')	Type of action
Belgium	Yes: a law adopted in 2011 required 33 % of executives and non-executives in state-owned and listed companies to be women by 2017. Listed small and medium-sized enterprises were required to reach the target by 2019.	Self-regulation: the Corporate Governance Code of 2009 recommends that the composition of a board be determined on the basis of gender diversity.	Binding quota
Bulgaria	No	No	No action
Czechia	No	No	No action
Denmark	No	Boards in state-owned companies should as far as possible have an equal gender balance; a man and a woman nominated for every vacancy (executives and non-executives). From 2013, all companies (listed and non-listed) are legally obliged to self-regulate and set their own targets. A company can be fined if it has not set any targets or not submitted any reporting.	Soft measure
Germany	Yes: a law passed in 2015 and adopted in 2016 set a target for 30 % of members of supervisory boards of large joint stock companies or enterprises with more than 2 000 workers (private companies as well as publicly owned companies) to be women.	Other companies that either are listed or fall under parity co-determination have to set individual quantitative targets for numbers of women on boards with regard to non-executive and executive board members and senior managers below board level, and deadlines to achieve them.	Binding quota
Estonia	No	No	No action
Ireland	No	A policy target of 40 % female participation on all state boards and committees with no sanctions or reporting requirements. Soft positive action measures in public sector employment.	Soft measure
Greece	Yes: according to the Gender Equality Act (2000), each sex should represent at least 33 % of executives and non-executives in companies wholly or partly owned by the state.	Soft positive action measures in public sector.	Soft measure

Member State	Quotas in place	Other national measures in place ('soft measures')	Type of action
Spain	Yes: in 2007, the Spanish parliament approved the Law of Equality, which recommended that companies appoint up to 40 % women (executives and non-executives) by 2015 in state-owned companies with 250 or more employees (but has no sanctions, so it is rather a recommendation in nature). The regulation passed in 2019 extends the obligation to other companies (to be implemented progressively over 3 years: in the first year, the plan must be adopted by companies with 150 or more employees, in the second year by companies with 100 or more employees and in the third year by those with 50 or more).	Soft positive action measures in public sector employment.	Soft measure
France	Yes: a law adopted in January 2011 required 40 % of non-executive directors in large listed and non-listed companies to be women by 2017. The quota has strong sanctions, i.e. suspension of benefits of directors and nullification of board elections.	Previously, the AFEP-MEDEF ⁽³⁷⁷⁾ Corporate Code included a recommendation containing the same quota as in the 2011 law. The revised version of the code (June 2018) does not refer to the quota but includes a recommendation for companies to consider a good balance of their members (including gender representation).	Binding quota
Croatia	No	No	No action
Italy	Yes: a law adopted in 2011 required 33 % representation of women by 2015 for listed companies and state-owned companies (with financial sanctions in the event of non-compliance). Applicable to management boards and supervisory boards (i.e. executives and non-executives).	Yes	Binding quota
Cyprus	No	No	No action
Latvia	No	Soft positive action measures in public sector.	No action
Lithuania	No	No	No action
Luxembourg	No	Soft positive action measures. The Corporate Code of 2009 recommends that the board have appropriate representation of both women and men. The rule is applicable to all board members. The aim was to achieve 40 % representation of the under-represented sex in companies in which the government was a shareholder by 2019.	Soft measure
Hungary	No	Soft positive action measures in public sector.	No action
Malta	No	No	No action

⁽³⁷⁷⁾Association Française des Entreprises Privées (AFEP) and Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF).

Member State	Quotas in place	Other national measures in place ('soft measures')	Type of action
Netherlands	Yes: a legislative amendment approved in 2009 and implemented since 2013 required 30 % of women on the executive boards and supervisory boards of large companies, with no sanctions but applying the comply or explain mechanism. The measure expired in 2016 but was reinstated in 2017 with a new target date of 2020.	Self-regulation: diversity clauses in the Dutch Corporate Governance Code of 2009, applicable to both executives and non-executives; voluntary charter with targets for more women in management.	Soft measure
Austria	Yes: a law passed in 2017 requires all state-owned companies and companies with more than 1 000 employees to have at least 30 % of each gender on supervisory boards. In cases of non-compliance, the appointment becomes invalid.	Self-regulation: the Corporate Governance Code of 2009 recommends representation of each gender in appointments to supervisory boards. A government recommendation targeted 35 % of each gender on supervisory boards of state-owned companies by 2018.	Binding quota
Poland	No	The executive ordinance of the Minister of State Treasury obliges state-owned companies to take into account the balanced participation of women and men when choosing members of supervisory boards. The code of good practice attached to that ordinance establishes a target of 30 % of women for 2015 and a priority rule for equally qualified women. No sanctions are envisaged.	Soft measure
Portugal	Yes: a law passed in 2017 requires at least 33 % of the under-represented sex on supervisory boards of listed companies by 2020.	A government resolution of 2015 encouraged listed companies to attain 30 % of the under-represented sex on their administrative bodies by 2018.	Binding quota
Romania	No	Soft positive action measures in public sector employment	No action
Slovenia	No	Regulation on state- and municipality-owned companies: a principle of 40 % representation of each sex applies to the nomination or appointment of government or municipal representatives to management and supervisory boards of state- and municipality-owned enterprises (executives and non-executives). No sanctions apply if the principle is not respected. In 2017, the Companies Act was amended. Companies subject to the amendment are obliged to include in annual reports statements on the diversity policy that is being implemented in executive and non-executive positions. Among others, a gender-balanced representation perspective has to be included. Goals, details of implementation and results achieved have to be explained. If no diversity policy is being implemented, an explanation is needed.	Soft measure

Member State	Quotas in place	Other national measures in place ('soft measures')	Type of action
Slovakia	No	No	No action
Finland	No	State-owned companies are required to have an equitable proportion of women and men. The corporate governance code for listed companies contains a recommendation that 'boards shall consist of both sexes'.	Soft measure
Sweden	No	Self-regulation: the Corporate Governance Code of 2016 has a voluntary goal of gender balance for listed companies and uses the comply or explain mechanism.	Soft measure
United Kingdom	No	Self-regulation: from 2012, on the basis of principles of the UK corporate governance code (following Lord Davies's recommendation). The recommended target for listed companies in the FTSE 100 is for 25% of all board members to be women by 2015. FTSE 350 companies were recommended to set their own aspirational targets to be achieved by 2013 and 2015. Since 2016, the United Kingdom has been supporting the Hampton-Alexander Review, which follows the Davies Review and aims to achieve 33 % women on boards, and 33 % women in executive committees and positions reporting directly to the executive committee in FTSE 350 companies by 2020.	Soft measure

Legislative candidate quotas applied to the single/lower house of parliament (as of January 2019)

Member State	Year	Provisions	Required % of under-represented sex	Sanctions
BE	2002	On electoral lists, the difference between the number of candidates of each sex should not be more than 1. This also applies to the list of alternates. The top two candidates on candidate lists and on the lists of alternates cannot be of the same sex (Electoral Code, Article 117bis).	50	Yes: candidate list will not be admitted by the electoral authorities if it does not meet the requirement.

Member State	Year	Provisions	Required % of under-represented sex	Sanctions
IE	2012	At least 30 % of candidates nominated by parties should be women. The required gender quota of candidates is to rise to at least 40 % women and at least 40 % men within 7 years from the date of the first election held in line with this new rule, and the penalty will apply during those 7 years.	30 (rising to 40 in the next election)	Yes: the political parties in the first national elections after the implementation of the law will lose 50 % of their state funding unless at least 30 % of their candidates are women and at least 30 % are men. After a period of 7 years the political parties should have a 40 % gender quota in their candidate lists in order to receive full state funding.
EL	2008	At least one third of the candidates on political parties' candidate lists, for both national and constituency elections, must be of each sex.	33	Yes: the party list is not accepted by the Supreme Court if it does not meet the requirement.
ES	2007	Lists of candidates put forward should have at least 40 % of each sex.	40	Yes: political parties are given a short period to adjust lists that do not meet the quota requirement. If they fail to do so, the lists will not be approved by the Electoral Commission.
FR	2000	The difference between the number of candidates of each sex that a party or group of parties presents for a single-member constituency elections cannot be greater than 2 %.	50	Yes: non-compliance with 50 % parity rule (only 2 % difference allowed between the number of female and male candidates) will result in a financial penalty. The public funding provided to parties based on the number of votes they receive in the first round of elections will be decreased 'by a percentage equivalent to three quarters of the difference between the total number of candidates of each sex, out of the total number of candidates'.
HR	2008	A sex is seen as substantially under-represented if it accounts for fewer than 40 % of representatives in political and public decision-making bodies. When drawing up and proposing lists of candidates for election of representatives to the Croatian parliament, political parties and other authorised entities submitting such lists must observe the principle of gender equality and seek to achieve balance in terms of the representation of women and men on such election lists.	40	Yes: political parties and other entities authorised to propose lists of candidates that do not comply and do not seek to achieve a gender balance will be punished for a violation with a fine of HRK 50 000.00 if any of their members are elected to the Croatian parliament.

Member State	Year	Provisions	Required % of under-represented sex	Sanctions
IT	2017	In multi-member districts, candidates must be listed alternately by gender. The first place on the candidate list cannot be assigned to the same gender in more than 60 % of the districts. Single or coalition lists cannot have more than 60 % of the same gender.	40	No information on sanctions is provided in the law but it notes that the National Electoral Commission ensures compliance with the provisions.
PL	2011	The proportion of women and men among candidates cannot be fewer than 35 % of all candidates on the list.	35	Yes: if the list does not meet the requirement, the Electoral Commission will require that the list be adjusted within 3 days. If defects are not removed within the specified time, the commission will refuse to register the list in its entirety.
PT	2006	Candidate lists for the elections to the National Assembly must be composed in such a way as to promote a minimum representation of 33 % of each sex.	33	Yes: if a list does not comply with the quota requirement, the error is to be made public and there will be financial sanctions in the form of reduction of the public funding provided for the conduct of the electoral campaign, corresponding to the level of inequality on lists. The financial sanction does not apply to lists with fewer than three names.
SI	2006	No gender shall be represented by fewer than 35 % of the actual total number of female and male candidates on the list. This shall not apply to a list of candidates containing three male or three female candidates, since a list of candidates containing three candidates must contain at least one representative of the opposite sex.	35	Yes: if the lists do not comply with the law, the electoral commission will reject the list.

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