



Boosting equality between women and men in the EU

> key actions and figures

March 2014

The European Union promotes equality between women and men, since five decades. With the help of focused policies at EU level, in the form of legislation, recommendations, co-funding and awareness-raising activities, major progress has been achieved in the following areas.

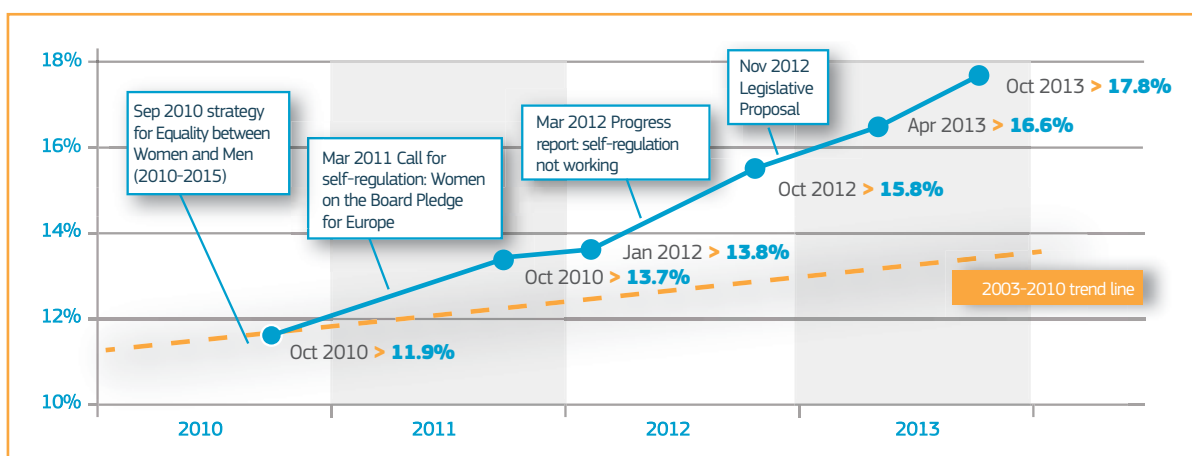
Equality in decision-making

Top senior positions, particularly at the highest levels, are still predominantly held by men, whether in business, politics or other fields. Women in European member states only account for an average of 18% of the members of boards of directors in the largest publicly-listed companies, 3% of the CEOs. Even if numbers have been improving the rate of progress is not enough to reach the target of 40% by 2020.

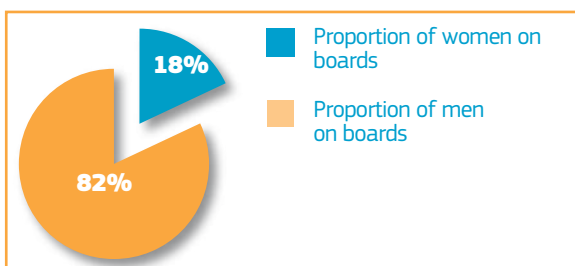
Key actions:

A directive with an objective of reaching 40% of the under-represented sex among non-executive directors in publicly listed companies by 2020, was proposed by the European Commission in 2012 and backed by the European Parliament. A race for talents began with companies hiring more women since 2010, when the European Commission first announced that it would consider targeted initiatives to improve gender diversity on company boards, stimulating debate and action across Europe.

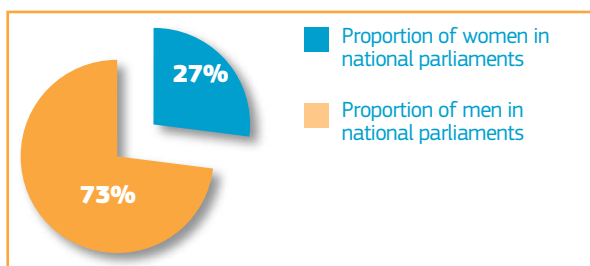
The evolution of the proportion of women on boards of large listed companies in the EU since 2010



Representation of women and men on the boards of large listed companies in the EU



Representation of women and men in national parliaments in the EU



Source: European Commission, Database on women and men in decision-making (2013 data)

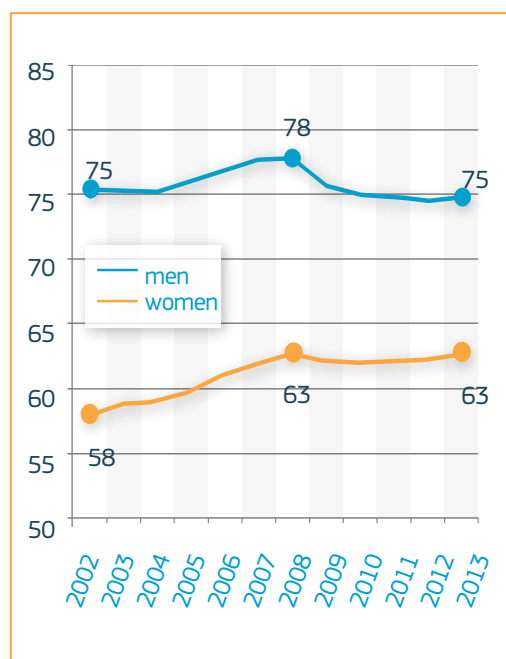
Economic independence of women

Women's employment rate in the EU stands at 63% - that of men at 75%. This gap between employment levels gradually shrank thanks to targeted policies, which have led women to increase their participation in the economy and their contribution to family finances, with an employment rate increasing from 58% in 2002 to 63% in 2008. The gap also shrank as a direct consequence of the financial and economic crisis which affected particularly the male-dominated sectors in the labour market. Over the past 10 years, the employment gap diminished by almost a third.

Key actions:

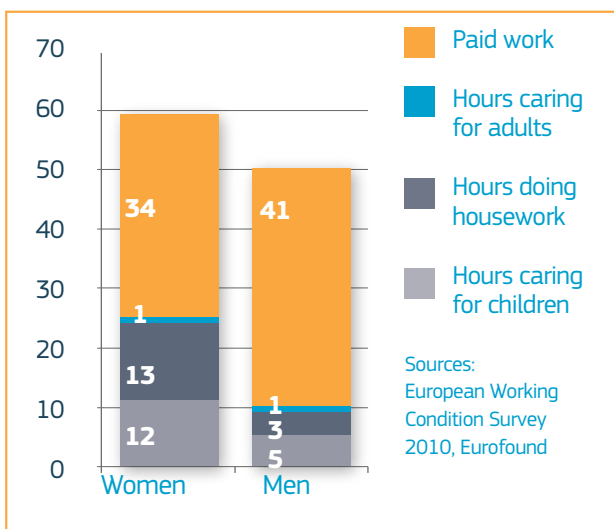
Promoting the employment of women is an integral part of the European Union's strategy for economic growth (Europe 2020). To achieve this, significant funding is offered to the European Union member states. Over the past 7 years, an estimated EUR 3.2 billion from the Structural Funds was allocated to invest in childcare facilities and promote women's participation in the labour market. Since 2007, the proportion of children cared for in formal childcare facilities significantly increased (from 26% in 2007 to 30% in 2011 for children under the age of three, and from 81% to 86% for children between three and compulsory school age).

Female and male employment rates (in %) people aged 20-64



Source: Eurostat, LFS (data from 3rd quarter of 2013)

Average time spent by workers on paid and unpaid work



Almost a third of employed women work part-time, this compares to a mere 8% of men working part-time. Even though men devote more time to paid work, **women work in total 60 hours a week, 10 hours more than men**, spending on average 26 hours on caring activities, compared with 9 hours spent by men.

Key actions:

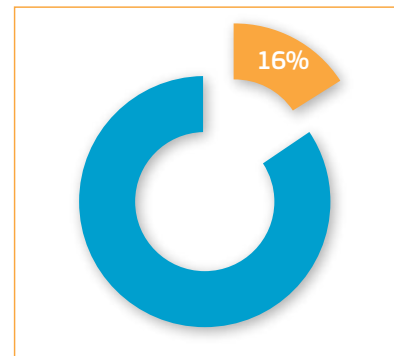
Thanks to the directive on parental leave, each working parent now has the right to at least four months leave after the birth or adoption of a child. At least one of the four months cannot be transferred to the other parent, which gives an incentive for fathers to take the leave.

Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value

Women are still paid on average around 16% less than men per hour of work across the entire economy (down from 17% three years ago). This gender pay gap is attributed to direct and indirect discrimination, but also to the concentration of women in low-paid jobs. Even if younger generations of women are making inroads into some of the higher-earning professional occupations that were male-dominated in the past, segregation remains: **only 16% of all employees work in mixed occupations** (i.e. where the proportions of men and women are between 40% and 60%).

Women do not only face lower wages, but they are also more likely to work part-time and interrupt their careers to care for others. **As a direct consequence, women receive on average 39% less in pensions than men.**

Gender pay gap (%), 2011



Source: Structure of Earnings Survey, Eurostat

Key actions:

To make equal pay between women and men a reality, the European Commission monitors closely the application of legislation on equal treatment of women and men, supports employers to eliminate the gender pay gap and raises awareness about the remaining gender pay gap. For instance, it organises an annual European Equal Pay Day recommendation. Moreover, the European Commission published in March 2014 a recommendation for the Member States to facilitate wage transparency in companies. It will recommend to Member States to allow employees to obtain information on pay, establish pay reporting by employers and ensure gender neutral job classification systems.

Dignity, integrity and an end to violence against women

Violence against women is a brutal manifestation of gender inequality and a violation of human rights. **One in five women in the EU has suffered physical violence at least once in her life, and one in 10 has suffered sexual violence.** With regard to female genital mutilation, it is estimated that currently 500,000 women and girls in the EU alone have suffered from this harmful practice.

Key actions:

The **EU protects victims from gender-based violence** through legislation and practical measures for victims' rights. As an example the **European Protection Order** ensures that victims of violence can still rely on restraint or protection orders issued against the offender in their home country if they travel or move abroad. The EU co-funded 14 national governments' campaigns against gender-based violence (with EUR 3.7 million), as well as projects led by non-governmental organisations (with EUR 11.4 million). **Eliminating female genital mutilation** is another priority for the European Commission.

Gender equality in external actions

Even though gender gaps remain at EU level, they are generally much smaller than in other parts of the world. Women and girls are major drivers of development. Yet in some countries, girls are still denied their right to primary education. In both the public and private spheres, women continue to be denied opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives. Looking at parliaments worldwide, the average share of women members in parliaments accounts for just over 20%.

Key actions:

To promote gender equality all around the world, the EU plays a crucial role in international fora, with its development plans and humanitarian actions, and its neighbourhood and enlargement policies.

Statistical annex: Key indicators per Member State

	Employment rate (in %) for people aged 20-64		Difference between male and female employment rates in full-time equivalent * and in percentage points (pp)	Gender Pay Gap (in %)	Proportion of women (in %)	
	Women	Men			On boards	In national parliaments
	data from 3 rd quarter of 2013		2012	2012**		
EU28	63%	75%	19 pp	16%	18%	27%
Austria	71%	81%	23 pp	23%	13%	33%
Belgium	63%	72%	19 pp	10%	17%	40%
Bulgaria	62%	68%	6 pp	15%	17%	25%
Cyprus	62%	73%	14 pp	16%	7%	14%
Czech Republic	64%	82%	19 pp	22%	11%	20%
Germany	73%	82%	23 pp	22%	21%	36%
Denmark	73%	79%	11 pp	15%	23%	38%
Estonia	70%	78%	8 pp	30%	7%	18%
Greece	44%	63%	22 pp	15%	8%	21%
Spain	53%	64%	15 pp	18%	15%	40%
Finland	72%	76%	6 pp	19%	30%	43%
France	66%	74%	14 pp	15%	30%	26%
Croatia	51%	60%	11 pp	18%	15%	24%
Hungary	57%	71%	13 pp	20%	11%	9%
Ireland	61%	72%	15 pp	14%	11%	16%
Italy	50%	70%	26 pp	7%	15%	31%
Lithuania	69%	73%	2 pp	13%	16%	24%
Luxembourg	64%	79%	22 pp	9%	11%	23%
Latvia	68%	73%	4 pp	14%	29%	25%
Malta	50%	80%	36 pp	6%	2%	14%
Netherlands	72%	81%	28 pp	17%	25%	38%
Poland	58%	73%	17 pp	6%	12%	24%
Portugal	63%	69%	9 pp	16%	9%	31%
Romania	57%	73%	16 pp	10%	8%	14%
Sweden	78%	83%	10 pp	16%	26%	44%
Slovenia	64%	73%	9 pp	3%	22%	33%
Slovakia	58%	72%	16 pp	22%	24%	19%
UK	69%	81%	21 pp	19%	21%	23%

Source: Eurostat and European Commission's data base on women and men in decision-making

Note: ■ The best five performing countries are marked in orange. ■ The five least performing countries are marked in grey.

* The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) rate measures employed persons in a way that makes them comparable although they may work a different number of hours per week. A full-time person is therefore counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she works. For example, a part-time worker employed for 20 hours a week where full-time work consists of 40 hours, is counted as 0.5 FTE

** except for Greece (2010)