



## WORKING, YET POOR

### Gender Policy and indicators report

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Author/s	Barbara De Michelli; Marta Capesciotti
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## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Genderisation of the analysis of in-work poverty.....	3
3. Relevant EU principles and legal framework on gender equality .....	7
4. The position of women in the labour market.....	9
5. The household dimension from a gender perspective.....	13
6. Low wage and atypical work.....	16
7. Work-life balance.....	18
7.1 Work-life balance .....	18
7.2 Sexual and reproductive health and rights .....	23
8. Conclusions.....	26
9. References .....	27
Annex: summary of indicators .....	43

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## 1. Introduction

The present document<sup>1</sup> is Deliverable 2.2 of the *Working, Yet Poor* Project. It consists on the gender policy and indicator's report. The aim of this report is to investigate the gender dimension of in-work poverty. According to the description of the Deliverable in Annex 1 (part A) of the grant agreement, the report 'assesses the spread of in-work poverty among women and (studies) the societal impact of being a working poor woman, also considering how it may influence households' incomes and women workers individual careers.'

Section 2 of the report introduces the rationale behind the gender analysis of in-work poverty. Section 3 presents the relevant EU principles and describes the EU legal framework on gender equality. Section 4 describes the position of women in the labour market. Section 5 addresses the central issue of the household dimension to measure in-work poverty and what implications this may have from a gender perspective. Section 6 focuses on the analysis of low wage and atypical work and section 7 explores the implications from a gender perspective of the work-life balance. Finally, section 8 concludes.

## 2. Genderisation of the analysis of in-work poverty

Gender is an integral component of social relations based on perceived and regulated differences between men and women. It represents an axis of power that results into an unequal access to opportunities and resources. Statistics show that the risk of poverty, as well as the risk of in-work poverty, has a gender dimension<sup>2</sup>.

In particular, women living alone or in families are at higher risk compared with men in the same conditions, due to several simultaneous causes: lower employment levels; wage and pension gaps; unequal access to property; career interruptions due to maternity leave and unequal distribution of care duties or segregation in education and later in the labour market, due to which women occupy jobs that are less rewarded, with concentration in some particular sectors (e.g. social or healthcare services). These factors, which are behind women's poverty, are rooted in unequal power relations that are institutionalised in the key organisations of our societies: political institutions, economic organisations, but also in the sphere of private relations within the household.

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<sup>1</sup> This document reflects only the authors' view and the Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

<sup>2</sup> Ponthieux S. (2018), 'Gender and in-work poverty' in Lohmann H and Marx I. (eds), *Handbook on In-work Poverty* pp.70-88.

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These power relations are deeply rooted in norms and values, hinder women's empowerment, and are reproduced through mechanisms of discrimination<sup>3</sup>. Gender shapes the 'expectations about' and the 'actual positions occupied by women' in all societal fields, including the household and the labour market, which are two key dimensions and determinants of poverty. For example, although families have become more diverse, favouring new types of domestic arrangements, still 44% of Europeans think that the most important role for a woman is to take care of her home and family, while 43% think that the most important thing for a man is to earn money<sup>4</sup>. Differently from an analysis focusing on the individual income and level of poverty, the in-work poverty analysis attempts to combine individual and household characteristics, job characteristics, and country-level factors. Yet, even though research demonstrates that women suffer a significantly higher risk of poverty than men<sup>5</sup>, looking at in-work poverty from a gender perspective does not occur frequently enough.

Most of the available literature on this issue researcher the impact of the household composition on the working poor, focusing on income or consumption. However, the role of unpaid domestic and family care activities in the household economic situation, and the economic independence of women are often overlooked and blurred in the overall household balance<sup>6</sup>. This aspect is addressed in more detail in Section 5.

It is therefore necessary to introduce the gender dimension into the analysis. Analysing the drivers of in-work poverty without a gender-sensitive approach does not really grasp the problem in all its complexity. As stressed by Nieuwenhuis et al.<sup>7</sup>, understanding poverty and economic inequalities from a gender perspective is crucial not only for reasons of general social justice, but also in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of poverty, its causes, and its consequences. In this respect, the issue of women's economic independence is key: it allows women to have direct access to specific welfare and social security provisions; it fosters the voluntary participation of women in the household, meaning they are not discouraged to leave a relationship because of the lack of individual economic resources; and it can have a crucial impact on child poverty. Finally, considering inequalities in the distribution of income within the household can provide useful inputs on the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and inequality and on expenditure patterns.

The gender dimension of in-work poverty is rooted in different processes, some of which have affected not only women, but the whole society; however, the analysis needs to consider the disproportionate effects on women and men. For example, the precarisation of labour is one of those aspects. It is a general phenomenon affecting both men and women, but has a disproportionate impact on women. In general, more and more women have incorporated into

<sup>3</sup> EAPN Briefing note, *Women and Poverty* (2017), p. 6. Available at: <https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Briefing-Gender-and-Poverty-final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Special Eurobarometer 465, June 2017, Available at: [https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2154\\_87\\_4\\_465\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2154_87_4_465_ENG).

<sup>5</sup> Eurofound (2017), *In-work poverty in the EU*, p. 8. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2017/in-work-poverty-in-the-eu>.

<sup>6</sup> Liu, J. (2019), 'What Does In-Work Poverty Mean for Women: Comparing the Gender Employment Segregation in Belgium and China', in *Sustainability* 2019, 11(20), 5725, pages 5-7, available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/20/5725>.

<sup>7</sup> UN WOMEN (2019), *Gender equality and poverty are intrinsically linked. A contribution to the continued monitoring of selected sustainable development goals*, p. 1. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/discussion-paper-gender-equality-and-poverty-are-intrinsically-linked-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4100>.

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paid employment under worse conditions than men.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, during the recovery phase following the 2008 financial crisis, the resources spent by governments were mostly channelled via the improvement of men's working conditions. On the opposite, the pay and employment conditions of working women mostly remained unaltered<sup>9</sup>. These dynamics reinforced the weaker and more precarious position of women in the labour market, characterised by low pay and pay discrimination<sup>10</sup>.

The labour market workforce composition has radically changed over the last decades, influenced by the transformations in the economy that Nancy Fraser labelled as 'post-industrial phase of capitalism'<sup>11</sup>, where the family-wage assumption is no longer tenable, either empirically or normatively. The dual-breadwinner model is becoming predominant in the EU<sup>12</sup>, and women's employment is continuously (even though slowly) increasing, with significant variations across the EU countries. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, the level of women at work was higher than ever before<sup>13</sup>, although they were far less paid than men<sup>14</sup>. Although some progresses are visible, women are still experiencing different types of gender-based discrimination, inside and outside the workplace. Unpaid care work is still disproportionately distributed between women and men (see, in more detail, Section 6). Women continue to contribute more than men to domestic tasks and child and elderly care, even though they are breadwinners. The disproportion increases in heterosexual couples<sup>15</sup>. Poverty and gender are related, and the term 'feminisation of poverty' indicates that the share of women among people

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<sup>8</sup> Kanji N. (International Institute for Environment and Development) IIED, UK and Menon-Sen K. UNDP, India (2001), 'What does the Feminisation of Labour Mean for Sustainable Livelihoods?', World Summit on Sustainable Development, available at: [https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/What\\_does\\_the\\_Feminisation\\_of\\_Labour\\_Mean\\_for\\_.htm](https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/What_does_the_Feminisation_of_Labour_Mean_for_.htm).

<sup>9</sup> EU Commission (2012), *The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies*. Synthesis Report, pp. 11-12. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4a10e8f6-d6d6-417e-aef5-4b873d1a4d66>.

<sup>10</sup> Oxfam Italia (2018), 'Raising their voices against precariousness: women's experiences of in-work poverty in Europe', September 2018, p. 3. Available at: [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> See, Fraser N. (1987), Women, Welfare and the Politics of Need Interpretation. *Hypatia*, 2(1), 103-121. Retrieved November 17, 2020, Available at: [http://www.jstor.org/stable/3809862now=1&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3809862now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents); Fraser N. (1994), 'After the family wage. Gender equity and the welfare state', in *Political Theory* vol. 22, n. 4, Sage publications, pp. 591-618. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/192041?read->

<sup>12</sup> Gender equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, p. 86. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>

<sup>13</sup> Eurostat (2019) Gender employment gap. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=sdg\\_05\\_30](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=sdg_05_30) and Eurostat (2019) Employment and activity by sex and age. Annual data. [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsl\\_emp\\_a&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsl_emp_a&lang=en)

<sup>14</sup> Eurostat (2018) Gender pay gap statistics. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics)

<sup>15</sup> Cao, H., Mills-Koonce W. R., Wood C., and Fine M. A. (2016), 'Identity Transformation During the Transition to Parenthood Among Same-Sex Couples: An Ecological, Stress-Strategy-Adaptation Perspective.' Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4957560/>; See also, Kohle et al. (2014) 'Gender equality in the workforce reconciling work, private and family life in Europe.'

Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262223833\\_Gender\\_equality\\_in\\_the\\_workforce\\_Reconciling\\_work\\_private\\_and\\_family\\_life\\_in\\_Europe\\_Justice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262223833_Gender_equality_in_the_workforce_Reconciling_work_private_and_family_life_in_Europe_Justice)

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in poverty increases, and that this is usually linked with the increasing share of households headed by women.

The term ‘gendering the workplace’<sup>16</sup> refers, therefore, to a process of *visibilisation* of how gender influences the individuals’ interaction with the workplace: the assignment of characteristics of masculinity or femininity has an impact on the level of access of each individual to opportunities and resources, due to the privilege recognised to one of the two poles of the gender spectrum. Gendering the in-work poverty model entails adopting a gender-sensitive approach to the conditions and causes leading some individuals to being workers and poor at the same time. In-work poverty is not gender-neutral: women face specific difficulties in engaging with the workplace in the way defined by the labour market and the social system as concerns the formal requirements of eligibility, entitlements, concrete employment conditions, etc. This requires an identification of different ways in which women engage with the workplace differently to men, namely participation, horizontal segregation, and vertical segregation<sup>17</sup>, as well as the balance between work and private life. In what follows, the present report aims to introduce gender into the analysis of in-work poverty as framed in the *Working, Yet Poor* (WorkYP) project.

Finally, a crucial element to consider when addressing the gender peculiarities of in-work poverty concerns intersectionality. The situation worsens when being woman intersects with other vulnerabilities or forms of marginalisation. To achieve a gender-sensitive picture of in-work poverty, the assumption that women are a homogenous group needs to be deconstructed. Gender equality is not a single-issue struggle, since women are not all the same; on the opposite, each woman copes with a specific form of discrimination on grounds of gender but, at the same time, she potentially faces other drivers of discrimination on grounds of, for instance, nationality, ethnic origin, age, or disability. These are not separate components; they rather intersect resulting in the so-called ‘multiple discrimination’<sup>18</sup>.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>19</sup> explicitly recognises that the intersectionality of gender with other grounds of discrimination must be addressed across EU policies. This is because ‘[w]omen are a heterogeneous group and may face intersectional discrimination based on several personal characteristics’ (p. 16). For instance, a migrant woman with a disability may face discrimination on three or more grounds, because of her gender, because of her migration background, and because of her disability. As per the participation in the labour market, the European Commission’s strategy acknowledges that, although women’s employment rate in the EU is higher today than ever before, barriers remain for many women in terms of access and in

<sup>16</sup> Mills, A.J., Durepos, G., Wiebe, E. (2010) eds., *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research: L-Z*, Index. Vol. 1. Sage

<sup>17</sup> Evans, C. (2017) ‘In-work poverty and the search for decent work for women in Wales: A literature review’, Oxfam Cymru, pp.15.16. Available at: <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/management/research/Documents/Decent%20Work%20Report%202018.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) defines multiple discriminations as any combination of forms of discrimination against persons on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics, and to discrimination suffered by those who have, or who are perceived to have, those characteristics. For more information on this issue: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1297>.

<sup>19</sup> European Commission (2020). Gender equality strategy 2020-2025. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en.pdf).

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employment. This structural underrepresentation is the result of the intersection of gender with additional conditions of vulnerability.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) report on racism and discrimination in employment in Europe 2013-2017<sup>20</sup> highlights that migrants and ethnic minorities in general have fewer chances of getting through recruitment processes, and tend to have jobs further down the hierarchy, as well as lower wages. They generally experience a much higher unemployment rate, and are overrepresented in certain job positions or sectors, which may be a result of structural discriminatory inequalities. Migrant women, and black women in particular, face multiple obstacles in the labour market as a result of the intersection of race, gender, and class. This intersection makes them particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and sexual harassment, experiencing high rates of overqualification, as well as segregation in specific sectors, in particular domestic work.

Only 55.3% of women born outside the EU are in employment, compared with 69.7% of women born inside the EU. Only 16% of Roma women are in employment in the EU. Migrant women workers, and especially women born outside of the EU, are often among the most exploited and marginalised female workers. Workers of a young age are also particularly exposed to in-work poverty, with women aged 15-24 facing the highest in-work poverty rate among all age groups<sup>21</sup>. In general terms, gender seems to intensify the disadvantages and discrimination associated with inequalities and social identities that can also affect men. However, the multiplier effect of intersecting forms of discrimination is hard to capture and measure since statistical analysis on this issue is scarce and still marginal, compared with the analysis focusing on single-issue discrimination.

### 3. Relevant EU principles and legal framework on gender equality

Gender equality is enshrined in the European fundamental Treaties. Article 119 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (EEC Treaty), now Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), already included the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, addressing specifically equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in employment. In compliance with Article 157 of the TFEU, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent EU Member States from adopting or maintaining measures providing specific advantages for the underrepresented gender in order to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional career or to make it easier to pursue a vocational activity. Initially, these provisions were enacted mainly for economic reasons. Some EU Member States had already approved national measures on equal pay for men and women, and were concerned that a cheap female workforce in other countries could trigger distortions in

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<sup>20</sup> ENAR (2018). *Shadow report. Racism and discrimination in Employment in Europe 2013-2017*. Available at: [www.enar-eu.org/Shadow-Reports-on-racism-in-Europe-2013-2017](http://www.enar-eu.org/Shadow-Reports-on-racism-in-Europe-2013-2017).

<sup>21</sup> Oxfam Italia (2018). 'Raising their voices against precariousness: women's experiences of in-work poverty in Europe', p. 4. Available at: [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf)

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competition between EU Member States<sup>22</sup>. However, in 1976, the European Court of Justice (ECJ), now the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), decided that Article 119 of the EEC Treaty had not only an economic but also a social aim<sup>23</sup>, which paved the way for today's EU gender equality regulatory framework.

Equality between men and women is also included in the common values of the EU, and Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) stipulate that the EU is to promote equality between women and men.

At present, the Treaty of Lisbon is the legal basis for the EU actions in the field of gender and poverty. Gender equality is also an integral part of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Articles 21 and 23 prohibit discrimination on any grounds, including sex, and require equality between men and women to be ensured in all areas, including employment work and pay, recognising the necessity of positive action for its promotion.

Among the EU equal treatment directives, there are some that are of interest for the issue of this study, namely:

- Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions;
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services;
- Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation;
- Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC;
- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

Directives 2002/73/EC, 2006/54/EC, and (EU) 2019/1158 state that EU Member States shall also designate and make the necessary arrangements for a body or bodies for the promotion of gender equality, and will take adequate measures to enhance social dialogue between the social

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<sup>22</sup> European Commission, *What the EU has done for women - 50 years of EU action*, 7 March 2013 <http://www.genderequality.ie/en/GE/Pages/WP13000060>

<sup>23</sup> Judgment of the Court of 8 April 1976. *Gabrielle Defrenne v Société anonyme belge de navigation aérienne Sabena*. Case C-43/75.

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partners with a view to fostering equal treatment. This includes, for example, the monitoring of practices in the workplace, in the access to employment, vocational training, and promotion, as well as the monitoring of collective agreements, codes of conduct, research, or exchange of experience and good practices. EU Member States shall also work on comparable statistics disaggregated by gender, analysing and making them available at the appropriate levels for the sake of a better understanding of the different treatment men and women are subjected to in employment and occupation, and on the take-up of different types of leave and flexible working arrangements.

#### 4. The position of women in the labour market

The difference between women's and men's employment rate in the EU is 11.4% in the second quarter of 2020<sup>24</sup>, and is likely to increase. The percentage of unemployed women increased from 6.8% in the first quarter of 2020 to 7.9% in the third quarter, while for men it rose from 6.2% to 7.1%<sup>25</sup>. Women continue to experience barriers to paid employment access, and, once in employment, to remain in the labour market or to access high-quality jobs and decision-making positions within key sectors.

There is a significant disproportion in the incidence of temporary work between women and men in the EU: 13.6% of men are employed in a temporary job, as against 14.7% of women<sup>26</sup>, but the latter are much more likely to work in part-time jobs (30.2%) than men (8.5%). Part-time work is particularly common among women in the Netherlands (75.8%), but is also widespread in Germany, Austria, and Belgium, where the workforce employed in part-time jobs is more than 40%<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, according to a research study by the Network of the European Public Employment Services released in 2019, women and men end up in part-time employment for different reasons: on average, in the EU the primary reason for men was that they could not find any full-time position, training and occupational further training ranking as the second reason; on the opposite, women most often reported the obligation to care for children and other relatives, followed by lacking availability of full-time positions<sup>28</sup>. Working part time is in most of

<sup>24</sup> Eurostat (2020), Employment and activity by sex and age, quarterly data, Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi\\_emp\\_q/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_q/default/table?lang=en).

<sup>25</sup> Eurostat (2020), Unemployment by sex and age, quarterly data, Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une\\_rt\\_q/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_rt_q/default/table?lang=en).

<sup>26</sup> Eurostat, Temporary employment, Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190524-1#:~:text=The%20proportion%20of%20female%20employees,source%20data%20are%20accessible%20here.>

<sup>27</sup> Part-time employment as percentage of the total employment, by sex and age (%), <https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/TfgjUubhKGofk3lI8l14LA>. See also, European Commission, Flexible working time arrangements and gender equality, Report 2009, available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/13a65488-9cd7-46f5-b9f4-d60e3dd09592>.

<sup>28</sup> PES Network (2019), '43 million people across the EU are in part-time employment, this being 4.8 million more than ten years ago. Who, where and why?', <https://www.pesnetwork.eu/2019/11/05/lmb5-part>

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the cases a voluntary choice for women (76.5% being the EU average), but still it is not a free choice. Besides the introjection of gender stereotypes on care roles, other more concrete constraints may influence the choice.

Women's earnings are on average lower than men's, and in most of the cases women are second earners in the household<sup>29</sup>. If there is the need to renounce part of the family income for caring reasons, it is more likely that the lower contribution will be sacrificed. It is a choice based on an opportunity-cost approach. The same rationale applies to the choice of women to leave the labour market after the birth of a child. The opportunity cost for a woman to continue working when her salary is lower than the cost of formal childcare will likely result in the woman's exit from the labour market.

Being in part-time work – both voluntarily and involuntarily – represents a risk factor for in-work poverty: this is because it often entails marginalisation in the organisation, and the segmentation of part-time workers into specific jobs that are underpaid and undervalued and insofar only provide a lower income, less advantageous employment conditions, and reduced extra-legal benefits and/or coverage by social protection schemes.

Women are still mainly working in a reduced number of sectors and jobs. This concentration reinforces gender stereotypes relating to the perception of women as primary caregivers, as well as the under-evaluation of women's professional skills and talents. Women are consequently more at risk of being employed on atypical contracts, which often do not entitle to full parental rights (such as maternity leave, maternity pay and/or allowance, flexible working arrangements, etc.) and variable working schedule compromising their ability to reconcile work with private life and family responsibilities. Women's horizontal and vertical segregation is directly connected with the biases that influence women's participation in the formal labour market, and their possibilities to balance private and work life.

Horizontal segregation is widespread: 28% of construction, engineering, and manufacturing workers are women, compared with 72% of men, while 18% of men work in the education sector, compared with 82% of women, and 24% of men work in health and welfare, as against 82% of women<sup>30</sup>.

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employment/#:~:text=Across%20the%20European%20average%20the,%25%20and%20women%20at%2031.3%25.

<sup>29</sup> Kohle et al. (2014): 'Gender equality in the workforce reconciling work, private and family life in Europe,' p. 23, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR400/RR462/RAND\\_RR462.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR462/RAND_RR462.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Council of the European Union (2017). *Gender segregation in education, training and the labour market Report by EIGE*, p. 18, Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12709-2017-ADD-2/en/pdf>

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Women represent only 17% of people in information and communication technology (ICT) studies and careers in the EU<sup>31</sup> and only 36% of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates<sup>32</sup>, despite the fact that girls perform significantly better than boys, bucking a bias that has historically seen boys dominating technology subjects<sup>33</sup>. Workplaces in which the use of ICT has increased the most between 2009 and 2014 belong to the 'education and health' and 'information and communication' macro-sectors, where there is a higher incidence of women employees and of employees holding a university degree<sup>34</sup>. Despite the larger presence of women employed in these sectors, the biases about women's talents in STEM and ICT are still effective, and determine the fact that most of women remain outside higher-level occupations.

The digital transition is of utmost importance in this context. Today, 90% of jobs require e-skills, and this is due to the rapid transformation and digitisation of the labour market<sup>35</sup>.

Finally, according to the COLLEEM survey findings<sup>36</sup>, in terms of gender distribution, women's representation among platform workers is progressively decreasing as the intensity of platform work increases.

When it comes to the care sector, 76% of informal carers in Europe (80% of care in the EU is provided by informal carers) are women, and many of them have a migrant background. As already stressed above, intersection with other vulnerabilities further worsens the situation, particularly on grounds of ethnicity, nationality, and age. Ageing could be another barrier: 20% of women employed in the EU are older than 50 years of age<sup>37</sup>. Women at this age, who are facing these labour market digital demands, increased by the new needs triggered by the Covid-19 crisis, could be excluded from the labour market.

Once in the labour market, women benefit from different opportunities compared with their male colleagues. In fact, women and men, working in the same organisation, have different

<sup>31</sup> Eurostat, Girls and women under-represented in ICT, Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180425-1>.

<sup>32</sup> Publications Office of the EU (2018). She figures, p. 115, Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>33</sup> IEA, ICILS 2018 RESULTS, Press release, p. 3, Available at: [https://www.iea.nl/news-events/news/icils-2018-results#:~:text=The%20second%20cycle%20of%20IEA's,critically%20assess%20information%20found%20online.&text=This%20cycle%20\(ICILS%202018\)%20has,and%2026%2C000%20teachers%20take%20part](https://www.iea.nl/news-events/news/icils-2018-results#:~:text=The%20second%20cycle%20of%20IEA's,critically%20assess%20information%20found%20online.&text=This%20cycle%20(ICILS%202018)%20has,and%2026%2C000%20teachers%20take%20part).

<sup>34</sup> European Commission (2014). *ICT for work: Digital skills in the workplace*, p.35. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ict-work-digital-skills-workplace>.

<sup>35</sup> Idem, p. 60. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ict-work-digital-skills-workplace>.

<sup>36</sup> European Commission (2018). Platform workers in Europe, p. 22, Available at: [https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC112157/jrc112157\\_pubsy\\_platform\\_workers\\_in\\_europe\\_science\\_for\\_policy.pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC112157/jrc112157_pubsy_platform_workers_in_europe_science_for_policy.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> European Commission (2014), *ICT for work*. Op cit., p.6. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ict-work-digital-skills-workplace>

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opportunities to progress in their careers and to reach the top positions of the hierarchy: women are far less represented in leadership and decision-making positions compared with men. This inequality is often referred to as vertical segregation<sup>38</sup>. A closely related concept is the ‘glass ceiling’, which refers to artificial impediments and invisible barriers that militate against women’s access to top decision-making and managerial positions in an organisation, whether public or private and in whatever domain<sup>39</sup>. According to the European Commission 2019 report on equality between women and men in the EU<sup>40</sup>, the underrepresentation of women on corporate boards and in management positions remains an important challenge for all EU Member States. Despite the recommendations and encouragements, the European boardrooms continue to be predominantly filled by men: the proportion of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies is 28% in 2019<sup>41</sup>, and only 32.2% of the members of National Parliaments in the EU are women<sup>42</sup>. According to the Glass-Ceiling Index developed by *The Economist* in 2019<sup>43</sup> - based on performance across 10 indicators including educational attainment, labour-market attachment, pay, and representation in senior jobs in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) –, the share of women on company boards, at 23%, has slightly increased, but the proportion of women in management has barely budged.

Organisations suffer a financial loss due to the lack of diversity. As reported by different authorities<sup>44</sup>, a broad range of talents and skills contributes to better decision making and corporate governance, and drives economic growth, because it can benefit capacity from a wider economic perspective. The discontinuous nature of participation of women in the labour market, linked to difficulties in balancing paid work and private life, as well as the underlying biases that influence this economic situation, also determines the lack of presence of women in decision-making positions.

The underrepresentation of women is also reflected in the Covid-19 task forces created to face the crisis<sup>45</sup>, the gender perspective of the Covid-19 crisis has barely entered the EU guidelines, and Next Generation EU makes no specific mention of it. These figures impact directly on the

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<sup>38</sup> See the definition available at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) website: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1423>.

<sup>39</sup> See the definition available at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) website: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1228>.

<sup>40</sup> European Commission (2019). *2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU*, p. 25. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/annual\\_report\\_ge\\_2019\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/annual_report_ge_2019_en.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> EIGE, Gender Statistics Database. Legislative quotas, Available at : <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/data-talks/legislative-quotas-can-be-strong-drivers-gender-balance-boardrooms>

<sup>42</sup> EIGE, Gender Statistics Database, Women and men in decision-making, 2019, Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/wmidm>

<sup>43</sup> The Economist, ‘The glass-ceiling index (2018).’ Available at: <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/03/08/the-glass-ceiling-index>.

<sup>44</sup> See ILO, (2019), *The business case for change*; McKinsey, (2017) *Women Matters Report*.

<sup>45</sup> EIGE (2020), Coronavirus puts women in the frontline. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/news/coronavirus-puts-women-frontline>

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capacity to develop a gender-sensitive response to the Covid-19 crisis, and thus effective recovery measures.

Wealth is a source of economic power and/or independence, and allows for the continuation of consumption in times of income fluctuation, as is the case during an economic crisis. Women are socially expected to sacrifice their careers and aspirations to accomplish their caregiving mission and to contribute with bigger shares of household work. Moreover, they are often trapped in underpaid jobs, thus wasting their skills and education, and more often interrupt their career for parenting. Furthermore, they are often encouraged to choose an educational path that would lead them to specific sectors and occupations considered more suitable for them as women and potential mothers, and offering lower remuneration.

These bias drives employers and workers alike (women and men). While there are more women university graduates in the EU than men, women remain underrepresented in higher- paid professions<sup>46</sup>.

## 5. The household dimension from a gender perspective

When attempting a genderisation of in-work poverty, a paradox must be addressed<sup>47</sup>. On the one hand, female workers are more at risk of underpaid and underqualified jobs, and are more likely (with a high statistically significant probability) to be employed on non-standard work contracts; on the other hand, they do not appear to be more at risk of in-work poverty compared with their male counterparts. The reason for this paradox is that in-work poverty is based on the household dimension and on the assumption that the differences among family members – in terms of economic independence and care burden – can be neglected when assessing the level of in-work poverty according to the assumption of resource pooling, and their equal share among household members<sup>48</sup>. Measuring in-work poverty at household level rather than at individual level, indicators are not able to gauge the extent to which each individual contributes to the family income and also the actual possibilities to make use of the available resources. The

<sup>46</sup> PISA report (2018), p.31. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf>; see also European Commission,(2018), *Women in the Digital Age – Final Report*, available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/84bd6dea-2351-11e8-ac73-01aa75ed71a1>; and World Economic Forum Global (2020), *Gender Gap Report 2020*, p. 17, available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Barbieri, P., Cutuli, G., (2016), 'Determinants and trends of in-work poverty risks in Italy. An analysis of the 2002-2012 years', in Lohmann, H. & Marx, I. (2016), *Handbook of Research on In-Work Poverty*, Chapter 21, available at: [http://www.sisec.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ch\\_21\\_In-work-poverty-in-Italy.pdf](http://www.sisec.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ch_21_In-work-poverty-in-Italy.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> European Commission, McKnight, A., Stewart, K., et al. (2016), *Low pay and in-work poverty: preventative measures and preventative approaches. Evidence review*, p. 105. Available at: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business-and-consultancy/consulting/assets/documents/Low-Pay-and-In-Work-Poverty.pdf>.

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gender division of duties within households (with women still considered as the ones bearing responsibility for caring) corresponds to a gendered access to resources and opportunities<sup>49</sup>. In addition, the bulk of work that caring implies remains invisible in the calculation of family income, while it contributes significantly to family resources.

If the working situation of women is analysed at individual level – in terms of earned income and gender pay gap –, the specific issues and challenges affecting female work are visible. On the opposite, these might become invisible when the household dimension is introduced: in this respect, women are more exposed to the risk of being poor in terms of earned income than to the risk of work-in poverty; men face the opposite situation. Ponthieux<sup>50</sup> describes this situation as gender asymmetry between poverty in earned income and poverty risk (see Table 14.6 of her study). An additional consequence of this asymmetry is that women's poverty risk is more likely to be associated with individual employment and earnings characteristics; on the opposite, men's poverty risk is more often associated with the household's characteristics. This paradox is further sharpened by the fact that in-work poverty surveys often account men as the head of the households.

The ongoing transformation of the prevalent family model from a male breadwinner model into a dual-earner model, with an increasing magnitude of the share of single-headed families as more women access employment, and many families are single-parent ones, was expected to lead to a more equal distribution of resources within the household<sup>51</sup>. In 2010 (EU-SILC), 21% of the European households relied solely on the male partner's income, and in another 37% women contributed less than men. Only 29% of couples present a relatively equal share of household income, and in the rest of couples the female partner is the main provider (9%) or the sole provider of the household income (5%)<sup>52</sup>. When a choice must be made in a household as to which partner will be in charge of care work, the choice inevitably falls on whom contributes the least to the family income. Women's participation in the labour market is also influenced by the types of household women belong to. Men tend to have high labour force participation rates regardless of the type of household they come from. For women, on the opposite, labour force participation rates vary significantly depending on the household type<sup>53</sup>. When the household type allows girls and women to have high expectations for educational and training qualifications and a well-paid career, this often implies that other women will replace them in care work.

<sup>49</sup> See, Nancy Folbre, 'Cleaning house. New perspective on households and economic development,' *Journal of Development Economics*, 22, 1986, n. 1, pp. 5-40.

<sup>50</sup> Ponthieux, S. (2010). 'Assessing and analysing in-work poverty risk.' In: Atkinson, A. and Marlier, E. (Eds.). *Income and living conditions in Europe*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 307-328

<sup>51</sup> Gender equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, p. 47. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>

<sup>52</sup> Kohle et al. (2014): *Gender equality in the workforce reconciling work, private and family life in Europe*, p. 14, available at: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR400/RR462/RAND\\_RR462.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR462/RAND_RR462.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> ILO Labour statistics on women (2000-2019). Available at: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/women/>

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In any case, due to the enduring phenomenon of gender pay differentials, the limited access to full-time open-ended, standard work contracts, women are still prevalently the second earners within the household, i.e. the second source of family income in terms of wage level: women's wages are thus considered more dispensable, and female workers are those who more likely opt for non-standard jobs or part-time jobs as a way to 'complement' the family's financial resources. In some cases, even taxation, as well as the means-tested distribution of benefits and allowances, contributes to lowering the contribution of women to the household income. There are countries where the differentiated taxation on second earners is even able to discourage women's participation in full-time employment (see, for instance, the case of the Netherlands)<sup>54</sup>, since first and second earners within a household result in a higher taxation basis for second earners, thus discouraging women's participation in paid employment. If men are not in practice sharing their earnings evenly, there are likely to be many poor women living in households that are not considered poor if we only look at the 'official' statistics.

This situation determines that, in most of the households with heterosexual couples, the male partner has a higher income.

People more at risk of in-work poverty are those living in a household with children. More specifically, poor workers are often single parents – according to the most recent data from Eurostat, they represent 14% of all EU-27 households on average<sup>55</sup> – or coupled parents with three or more children – representing 13% of all EU-27 couples with children<sup>56</sup>. The risk of in-work poverty is directly connected with the number of adults working in the household, with the household's overall work intensity, as well as with the ratio between the number of working adults, and the number of dependants in the household<sup>57</sup>. The growing number of single-parent households impacts the average of the ability of all types of households to cope with in-work poverty when the average is calculated at aggregate level. These households (which are increasing in numbers), in fact, can rely on just one income. In the households with three children or more, even when they might rely on two adults' earnings (but this is not granted, inasmuch as, often, in these families, the woman abandons the labour market due to the difficulties in balancing family and work), they will likely have an insufficient level of resources, given the household size, in the absence of appropriate measures against children's poverty.

Previous research<sup>58</sup> suggests that the delivery of household services might replicate traditional patterns whereby middle-class two-earner households employ poorer workers, often migrant

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<sup>54</sup> Rastrigina O. and Verashchagina A. (2015), *Secondary earners and fiscal policies in Europe*, p. 30. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/150511\\_secondary\\_earners\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/150511_secondary_earners_en.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> One third of households with children also include two adults not in a couple or more adults. At European level, these households accounted for 17.6%.

<sup>56</sup> Eurostat (June 2020). Household composition statistics, p.7. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/29071.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Eurofound (2017), *In-work poverty in the EU*, p. 10. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2017/in-work-poverty-in-the-eu>.

<sup>58</sup> See Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2001), *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Ehrenreich, B. and Hochschild, A. R. (2004), *Global*

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women, to carry out their household tasks. However, the evidence from the surveys is that most of the customers are not high earners but people on average earnings or below those of the ones working full time. Furthermore, across the seven countries, on average no fewer than 84.9% of people providing these household services were also customers for them<sup>59</sup>. A high proportion of the population purchase and offer services from online platforms<sup>60</sup>. Considering only services in private homes such as cleaning, babysitting, gardening, or household repairs, between 2.4% (in Sweden) and 8.9% (in Italy) of the adult population was found to be providing such services at least weekly. Between 10% (in Germany) and 23.8% (in the United Kingdom) of working-age adults were purchasing these services.

## 6. Low wage and atypical work

According to the European Commission 2020 edition of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review, in the EU as a whole in 2018, the average gross hourly earnings of women were almost 15% lower than those of men. In terms of gender pay gap, in November 2020 the European Commission<sup>61</sup> confirmed that this indicator stands at 14.1% in the EU as a whole – with a significant difference across countries, ranging from 1.4 in Luxembourg to 21.8 in Estonia –, meaning that women earn EUR 0.86 for every euro men earn and that women work almost two months for free every year, compared with men. Some countries, such as Italy and Romania, feature a narrow gender gap but it is important to consider that these figures do not consider other crucial factors, such as the female paid employment rate, different professional qualifications, and the specificities of the country public and private sector. Higher levels of educational qualifications do not necessarily protect women from earning less. For women with a tertiary level of education, the gender pay gap rises to 25%, and the higher they move up the career ladder, the more the pay gap widens<sup>62</sup>. Research on the EU situation reveals that these trends are mostly driven by two explanatory factors, namely, economic activity and

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*Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, New York: Henry Holt; Young, B. (2001), *The 'Mistress' and the 'Maid' in the Globalized Economy*, *Socialist Register*, (37): 315–327.

<sup>59</sup> Huws, U. (2019). 'The Hassle of Housework: Digitalisation and the Commodification of Domestic Labour'. *Feminist Review*, 123. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0141778919879725>

<sup>60</sup> Huws U., Spencer N. H., Syrdal D. S., Holts K. (2017), *Work in the European Gig Economy*, FEPS, UNI Europa and University of Hertfordshire, p. 12. Available at: [https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/19922/Huws\\_U.\\_Spencer\\_N.H.\\_Syrdal\\_D.S.\\_Holt\\_K.\\_2017\\_.pdf?sequence=2](https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/19922/Huws_U._Spencer_N.H._Syrdal_D.S._Holt_K._2017_.pdf?sequence=2)

<sup>61</sup> European Commission (2020), *2020 factsheet on the gender pay gap*, 4 November 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/2020\\_factsheet\\_on\\_the\\_gender\\_pay\\_gap.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/2020_factsheet_on_the_gender_pay_gap.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> PISA report 2018, p. 30. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf>; European Commission, 'Women in the Digital Age – Final Report', 2018; and World Economic Forum Global 'Gender Gap Report 2020.'

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working time, which attribute 32% and 13%, respectively, to the difference between average hourly earnings of men and women<sup>63</sup>. These disparities in wealth accumulation grow with age.

The largest wealth gap is found at around the age of retirement, 30% being the EU average<sup>64</sup>. The crisis of the welfare state is bound up with the labour market changes, and the current welfare state retrenchment determines the individuals' increasing need to rely on private wealth at older ages. For women, this is particularly important because they tend to live longer than men and to have lower pensions, due to lower salaries and shorter working lives, connected to the possibility of balancing paid work and private life<sup>65</sup>.

The overrepresentation of women in poor sectors – such as social care, elderly care, childcare, catering, cleaning and other household services, sales, and customer services – can be described as horizontal segregation, and is the direct result of the social norms shaping gender roles in western societies. Women are considered more inclined and apt to provide care and services to and with persons, both inside and outside of the household.

However, women's domestic care and work is unpaid (and therefore not protected by labour law or covered by social protection regulations) and not monetarised, meaning it is not recognised as an economic and financial value. The invisibility of care and domestic work is reinforced by workplace policies and the inadequacy of State-provided services and infrastructure, which often do not allow women to participate in the labour market under the same conditions as men. According to data provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in its 2019 Gender Equality Index<sup>66</sup>, despite a significant increase in the public provision of childcare services in recent years, in 2017 women with children under seven years of age in the EU on average spent 20 hours per week more than men on unpaid work. The gender fixed-term employment gap (18 percentage points, p.p., to the detriment of women) is closely related to care responsibilities. EU and national policy makers have acknowledged that implementing effective work-life balance policies is pivotal to fostering women's participation in the labour market and to achieving gender equality.

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<sup>63</sup> Eurostat (2018). 'A decomposition of the unadjusted gender pay gap using Structure of Earnings Survey data', Statistical working paper, p. 13. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-working-papers/-/KS-TC-18-003?inheritRedirect=true>.

<sup>64</sup> Eurostat (2018), 'Closing the gender pension gap?' Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200207-1#:~:text=Print%20Closing%20the%20gender%20pension%20gap%3F&text=In%202018%2C%20women%20in%20the,compared%20with%202010%20\(34%25\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200207-1#:~:text=Print%20Closing%20the%20gender%20pension%20gap%3F&text=In%202018%2C%20women%20in%20the,compared%20with%202010%20(34%25)).

See also, Publication Office of the European Union (2014). Wealth and gender in Europe. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c02def1c-92ae-11e7-b92d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>65</sup> European Commission (2018). Pension Adequacy Report 2018, p. 202. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/62f83ed2-7821-11e8-ac6a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>66</sup> EIGE (2019), Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-report/informal-care-children-and-childcare-services>.

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Closely connected with the traditional gender norms and expectations described above, women are more at risk of sacrificing their jobs and careers to combine them with their care responsibilities towards children and other dependent family members (see Section 7 below). This uneven distribution of the family burden might be one of the causes leading many women to end up in involuntary part-time or non-standard jobs. Today, workers with the highest chance of becoming an involuntary part-time worker are domestic workers, the considerable majority of whom are women<sup>67</sup>. As a consequence, the high representation of women among part-time and flexibly employed workers can also cause a sort of ‘dead-end’ employment, which contributes to vertical segregation: employers might perceive women as less suitable for career advancements, and might be discouraged from investing in offering them training opportunities.

## 7. Work-life balance

### 7.1 Work-life balance

Women often experience a fall in pay with childbirth, and this penalty rises in line with the number of children. Moreover, this wage penalty due to motherhood seems to result into a persistent wage inequality over the whole duration of the woman’s working life/career. On the opposite, men’s earnings seem not to be affected by parenthood. Consistently, the share of women working part-time is connected to their decision to have children; on the opposite, the same does not apply to men making the same decision. Work-life balance policies should contribute to the achievement of gender equality by promoting the participation of women in the formal labour market, the equal sharing of caring responsibilities between men and women, and the closing of the gender gaps in earnings, pay, and pensions. Such policies should consider demographic changes including the effects of population ageing. Specifically, Directive (EU) 2019/1158 on work-life balance lays down minimum requirements designed to achieve equality between men and women, especially with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work, by facilitating reconciliation of work and family life for workers who are parents or carers. To that end, the directive (Article 1) provides for individual rights related to paternity leave, parental leave, and carers’ leave, as well as for flexible working arrangements.

To increase incentives for workers who are parents, and for men in particular, to take the periods of leave guaranteed by this directive, workers should be provided with a right to an adequate allowance while on leave. EU Member States should therefore set a level for the payment or allowance with respect to the minimum period of paternity leave that is at least equivalent to the level of national sick pay. Since granting rights to paternity and maternity leave pursue similar objectives, namely creating a bond between the parent and the child, EU Member States

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<sup>67</sup> Oxfam Italia (2018), ‘Raising their voices against precariousness: women’s experiences of in-work poverty in Europe’, p. 4. Available at: [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf).

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are encouraged to provide for a payment or an allowance for paternity leave that is equal to the payment or allowance provided for maternity leave at national level, in order to support fathers to look after their children and to be in charge of care work. EU Member States should take into account that the take-up of parental leave often results in a loss of income for the family and that first earners in a family are able to make use of their right to parental leave only if it is sufficiently well-remunerated.

It is appropriate to make express provision for the protection of the employment rights of women on maternity leave and in particular their right to return to the same or an equivalent post, without detriment to the terms and conditions of employment as a result of taking such leave, as well as ensuring that they benefit from any improvement in working conditions to which they would have been entitled during their absence. Workers should be also able to adapt their working schedules to their personal needs and preferences. They have the right to request flexible working arrangements for the purpose of adjusting their working patterns, including, where possible, using remote working arrangements, flexible working schedules, or a reduction in working hours.

In nearly half of the EU Member States, women spend at least twice as much time caring for their children as men do. The range of weekly hours spent on care unpaid work by women varies between a maximum of 50 hours in Austria, and a minimum of 24 hours in Greece. This is in comparison with men, with a range between 29 hours in Sweden, and 10 in Czechia, so that women dedicate 45% more time than men to looking after children. In Slovakia and the Netherlands, the share is above 40%, followed by Italy and Croatia with 35% more time<sup>68</sup>. Similarly, housework also remains a predominantly female duty in Europe. As reported, and with significant variations across the EU countries, as well as among working parents and types of households, women reported significantly more hours spent on family, house, and childcare and education in almost all EU countries (except Latvia), and, when the household type permits girls and women to yearn for career, this implies that other women will replace them in care work.

There is a range of options people have to reconcile personal and work life. The balance comes from a complex interaction between individual preferences, the provision of supporting services, labour market characteristics, or the social protection system as a whole<sup>69</sup>. Different entitlements to job-protected leave after childbirth have become important policy measures to support parents in balancing parenthood and career, and afterwards to return to work with the same employer, usually to the same job. These leave policies have been established to support gender equality, but also child, maternal, and paternal health and well-being, as well as birth rates. They are also an important instrument for achieving different labour market outcomes, such as women's (meaning talents') increased participation in the labour market, and reduced

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<sup>68</sup> Eurofound, 'European Quality of Life Survey 2016.' Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-quality-of-life-survey>. Notes: Respondents 'report the number of „Hours spent caring for and/or educating your children” among those employed and with children.

<sup>69</sup> EIGE (2019). Work-life balance, p. 67. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>

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gender pay gaps<sup>70</sup>. On the other hand, leave policies also respond to children's rights to spend time with, and to receive care from both their parents<sup>71</sup>.

EU Member States are working on leave policy and work-life balance patterns<sup>72</sup> that not only support better gender balance in the use of parental leave and family care for each worker, and enhance fertility rates and family (parents' and children's) physical and mental health, but also highlight and increase general well-being in balancing private and work life.

Although all EU Member States fulfil a minimum parental leave of four months (Directive 2010/18/EU), the overall duration of available leaves varies significantly across the EU. The range of parental leave duration stands between a maximum of 36 months in Slovakia, Czechia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, France, Spain, and Sweden, with a variation in terms of earnings, and a minimum of six months in Portugal<sup>73</sup>. In many of these cases, the entitlement is unpaid. This is the case of Spain, where, while the maximum period of post-natal leave available is three years, most of this period is unpaid; leave paid at a high rate ends after 'birth and childcare leave' (around five months after childbirth, including the consolidation of reduced working hours related to breastfeeding leave – 'permiso de cuidado del lactante' – if both parents use their leaves simultaneously, or seven months if they use them consecutively)<sup>74</sup>.

Both types of leave (very short or very long duration) are associated with reduced female labour market participation<sup>75</sup>.

The parental leave could be either an individual non-transferable entitlement, a transferable entitlement, or a family entitlement. In these two last cases, the right can be transferred from one to the other partner. That is not true for types of couples or individuals. Parental leave is often unavailable as eligibility might be dependent on criteria such as whether a person is in paid work, whether they are in employee or self-employed status, the sector in which they work,

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<sup>70</sup> Andersen, S. H, (2018), 'Paternity Leave and the Motherhood Penalty: New Causal Evidence. *Journal of Marriage and Family*', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12507>

<sup>71</sup> COE (2004), 'Parental Leave in Council of Europe member States', § 4.5; see also, Haas, L., & Hwang, P., 'Parental leave in Sweden', In P. Moss & F. e. Deven (Eds.), *Parental leave: Progress or Pitfall*, NIDI/CBGS Publications, 1999

<sup>72</sup> The Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU will be brought into force the laws by 2 August 2022 by all Member States.

<sup>73</sup> EIGE, Gender equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, p.167. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>. The methodological approach was to calculate eligibility for parental leave for a random sample of men and women within each EU Member State using high-quality survey data — the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) and the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC).

<sup>74</sup> International Network on Leave Policies and Research (2020). Country report – Spain, p. 546. Available at: [PMedited.Spain.with.supplement.1sept2020.pdf \(leavenetwork.org\)](https://leavenetwork.org/PMedited.Spain.with.supplement.1sept2020.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> See Akgunduz, Y. E., & Plantenga, J., 'Labour market effects of parental leave in Europe.' *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 37(4), 2012, 845–862.

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or the length of service. Moreover, leave might not be accessible to same-sex couples or migrants<sup>76</sup>. Where it is available, parental leave has a positive effect on family health, but cannot prevent the negative effects caused by a long-term leave, i.e. a long break in terms of career.

Childcare services are not at the same level EU-wide, and limited childcare prevents many mothers from returning earlier to the labour market, and increases the opportunity costs of having children. Only one third of children under three years is enrolled in a formal childcare institution, and 13 EU Member States have reached the Barcelona target of 33%, with considerable progress made in certain EU Member States such as Malta (+20 p.p.), the Netherlands (+16 p.p.), Portugal (+14 p.p.), Lithuania (+12 p.p.), France (+11 p.p.), and Spain (+10 p.p.). While enrolment rates have remained similar in Greece, Romania, Sweden, and Bulgaria (+1 p.p.), only one EU Member State, Slovakia, has seen a decline over five years (-4 p.p.). In 2017, it only had 1% of children below three years in formal childcare. Fourteen EU Member States have a share of children attending full-time childcare higher than the EU average. In Denmark, the majority of children attend full-time childcare (66%), followed by Portugal (46%) and Slovenia (41%). Slovakia, Romania, and Czechia are notable for having the lowest percentages of children in full-time childcare, 1%, 2%, and 3%, respectively.

Planning childcare or elderly care occupations is much more difficult if women cannot count on welfare provisions, childcare services, fixed working shifts, and a secure professional position. Moreover, if women work in professional sectors that offer lower pay and more precarious employment conditions, the household's income will most probably rely on men's wages, thus making women's careers more disposable, and women less independent. The 'traditional' male breadwinner model is thus re-affirmed.

The EU is facing a consistent demographic change. The population over 65 years old is likely to increase from 19% in 2016 to 29% by 2080<sup>77</sup>, and this drives to a growth of long-term and informal care.

In 2017, one in four people in the EU had a long-term disability (27% for women, and 22% for men)<sup>78</sup>. Again, despite a variety of formal long-term care (LTC) systems, the disproportionate distribution of informal care duties to the detriment of women is a persistent pattern across the EU-28. The percentage of women caring for older people and/or people with disabilities at least several times a week is 15%, while for men it stands at 10%, and the gap occurs also in relation to working women (13%) and working men 9%<sup>79</sup>. Belgium has the highest gender gap in care, with 26% of women, and 12% of men providing care.

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<sup>76</sup> EIGE (2019). Gender equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, p.72. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>.

<sup>77</sup> Eurostat (2015). Population projections.

<sup>78</sup> Eurostat (2017). Health variables of EU-SILC.

<sup>79</sup> EIGE calculation, Eurofound, EQLS.

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One in three households in the EU (29%) reported unmet needs for professional home-care services in 2016<sup>80</sup>.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns, while, in the EU, 9,7% of employed people were temporarily absent from work in the last quarter of 2019, more than one fifth (21.8%) of employed people were absent from their jobs in the second quarter of 2020. Women were absent from work to a larger extent than men at EU level: 24.6% of women were absent, as against 19.4% of men<sup>81</sup>.

Reducing working hours or temporary quitting work to be available for home activities can impose long-term adverse effects on women's labour market outcomes and on their work-life balance, and it may even lead to some wage penalties. This wage gap between women with children and women without children is mostly due to the loss of human capital that women suffer from when on maternal leave<sup>82</sup> - an effect that will eventually occur for any career break caused by the Covid-19 outbreak situation as well<sup>83</sup>.

The pressure to respond to the increased care duties by reducing commitment in employment can be especially severe for single mothers. Across the EU-27 in 2018, 15% of all households with children were single-parent households<sup>84</sup>. In Denmark, Estonia, and Ireland (EU-SILC 2016), 85% of these households were headed by a woman<sup>85</sup>. Across the EU-27, in 2018 42.8% of them were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (15.6% of households with two adults and one dependent child).

Extended lockdowns have increased women's exposure to domestic and sexual violence. The curtailment of abortion services during the outbreak put women and girls in danger of unplanned pregnancies, including those resulting from sexual violence<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> 27 EU MS, data for Denmark is not available.

<sup>81</sup> Eurostat (2020), Absence from work – quarterly statistics. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Absences\\_from\\_work\\_-\\_quarterly\\_statistics#Higher\\_share\\_of\\_absences\\_from\\_work\\_among\\_women\\_than\\_men](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Absences_from_work_-_quarterly_statistics#Higher_share_of_absences_from_work_among_women_than_men)

<sup>82</sup> Cukrowska-Torzewska, E., Matysiak, A., 'The Motherhood Wage Penalty: a Meta-Analysis', *Social Science Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2020.102416> and Cukrowska-Torzewska, E., Lovasz A: 'The role of parenthood in shaping the gender wage gap – A comparative analysis of 26 European countries', *Social Science Research*, Volume 85, January 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.102355>.

<sup>83</sup> Joint Research Center of the European Commission Report (2020), 'How will the COVID-19 crisis affect existing gender divides in Europe?' p. 17. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/euro-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/how-will-covid-19-crisis-affect-existing-gender-divides-europe>.

<sup>84</sup> Joint research center of the European Commission calculation, based on <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

<sup>85</sup> EIGE (2016). Poverty, gender and lone parents in the EU. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/poverty-gender-and-lone-parents-eu>.

<sup>86</sup> EEAS, COVID-19: Impact on Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights. Available at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mauritius/82969/covid-19-impact-sexual-and-reproductive-health-rights\\_my](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mauritius/82969/covid-19-impact-sexual-and-reproductive-health-rights_my).

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## 7.2 Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Making sexual and reproductive services safe and available is not only a women's right, but is also a tool to meet the needs of the labour market, which risks losing talents and capacities in a critical time because of unplanned maternities<sup>87</sup>.

In no place in the world today are women fully empowered to attain their own fertility goals and to exercise their reproductive rights. However, barriers are larger in some places than in others, and harder to overcome in some situations than in others<sup>88</sup>. Under international and EU human rights law, EU Member States have the duty to take effective steps to respect and protect women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. States should provide all women with accessible, affordable, and good-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services<sup>89</sup>.

According to a Council of Europe report from 2017, obstacles to the access to free and legal abortion in Europe are different. Some countries have introduced laws, policies, and practices that limit women's autonomy and decision making in particular through retrogressive restrictions on access to contraception and abortion care. Financial, social, and practical barriers still endanger women's ability to enjoy safe sexual and reproductive health, free from coercion. Reproductive decisions may also be influenced or constrained by social, institutional, and legal obstacles, such as stigma about single-parent families, discrimination against children born to unmarried or same-sex couples, the legality of abortion, and the availability of assisted reproductive technology. Inequalities in work and pay in most parts of the world mirror – and are reinforced by – inequalities in sexual and reproductive health and rights. The poorest women have the least access to sexual and reproductive health, are least able to exercise their reproductive rights, are most likely to be unemployed or underemployed, and earn less than men. Inequalities in sexual and reproductive health and rights are intertwined with gender inequality<sup>90</sup>.

Harmful gender stereotypes, social norms, and stigma regarding women's sexuality and reproductive capacities continue to apply to many aspects of women's lives. There has been violence, threats, hate speech, and smear campaigns against people and organisations

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<sup>87</sup> The right to plan families has been recognised explicitly or implicitly in at least 20 international conventions or agreements, ranging from the 1974 World Population Plan of Action to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

<sup>88</sup> UNFPA, Annual Report 2018. The power of choice, p. 10. Available at: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA\\_PUB\\_2018\\_EN\\_SWP.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_PUB_2018_EN_SWP.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> CoE, Women's Sexual And Reproductive Health and Rights, 2017, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/women-s-sexual-and-reproductive-rights-in-europe>.

<sup>90</sup> UNFPA, Annual Report 2017. Worlds Apart, p. 36. Available at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNFPA\\_PUB\\_2017\\_EN\\_SWOP.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNFPA_PUB_2017_EN_SWOP.pdf).

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defending women's rights, for example from pro-life organisations. Many of the sexuality education programmes throughout Europe fall short of international human rights requirements and the standards of the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding comprehensive sexuality education. Family planning services can help girls avoid pregnancy and complete their education, and women get good jobs. Comprehensive sexuality education is not offered in schools. Education of girls contributed to raising the status of women in society and in households. It also provided girls and women with more autonomy and decision-making power, including power over household budgets. And because women oversaw spending, they understood the additional costs associated with having an additional child. Awareness of these costs may have contributed to a desire to have fewer children<sup>91</sup>. Obstacles to starting or expanding families include financial, housing, and labour market constraints, as well as inadequate options to combine career and family life.

Moreover, women's access to effective methods of modern contraception continues to be impeded by a range of deficits in affordability and availability, including lack of subsidisation or reimbursement, poor-quality information and misconceptions, and requirements for third-party authorisation.

Although it is a small number, still few jurisdictions retain highly restrictive laws prohibiting abortion except in strictly defined circumstances, and often also criminalising abortion for women and those who assist them. Malta, Poland, and Finland are in this range<sup>92</sup>. Most women in these countries who decide to end a pregnancy must travel to another EU country to access safe and legal abortion there, or undergo illegal clandestine abortion in their own country. Although some of those EU countries have legalised abortion upon women's request, women still face barriers in accessing safe and legal abortion care, due to the State's failure to ensure that women can still access abortion services in practice when medical professionals refuse care on grounds of conscience or religion. Under these cases fall Italy and Hungary in particular. In some countries, procedural barriers include mandatory counselling and waiting periods, where women in some cases experience coercive and discriminatory practices in maternal healthcare.

The concerns and deficits mentioned above are particularly pressing for marginalised groups of women, including poor women, Roma women, undocumented migrant women, and women with disabilities.

Finally, inadequate access to effective remedies and reparation for victims of sexual and reproductive coercion, including past human rights abuse such as forced sterilisation of Roma women in some countries, is observed.

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<sup>91</sup> See McDonald, Peter, and Helen Moyle (2018), 'Women as agents in fertility decision-making: Australia, 1870–1910', *Population Development Review*, vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 203–30.

<sup>92</sup> For all relevant laws and policies see Center for Reproductive Rights: the World's Abortion Laws Map, at <http://worldabortionlaws.com/map> and WHO's Global Abortion Policies Database, at <http://srhr.org/abortion-policies>, both accessed 17 October 2017. See also, Abort Report EU, <https://abort-report.eu/>.

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In the EU, the share of births outside marriage reaches 42% in 2014<sup>93</sup>. Around 2010, one in 10 European children up to the age of two lived with a single mother, compared with four in 10 children, who lived with an unmarried couple<sup>94</sup>. In 2015 in the EU, more than 40% of children were born outside wedlock<sup>95</sup>. The percentage of unintended births has increased in northern Europe between 2010 and 2014 reaching 11%, and decreased in eastern Europe, but is still above 14%, while in southern Europe it decreased but is still higher than the rest of the continent (almost 19%)<sup>96</sup>. The abortion rates have decreased in all of three European areas<sup>97</sup>.

In reason of the data reported, free access to abortion and family planning is not just a matter of women's right to decide on their body, but it has also an impact on women's access to education, as well as on their access to career development. A non-planned pregnancy or maternity could influence women's empowerment in socio-economic background. In particular, in a period of crisis, where discrimination supported by biases increases, family planning is crucial especially for those women who are in danger of experiencing harassment in the workplace, or exclusion from the labour market. This not only from a gender equality perspective, but also from the perspective of the needs of the labour market, which risks losing talents in a critical time. While, in general, European societies were becoming more secular, compared with developing countries, resulting in diminished influence of religious institutions in decisions about contraception use and childbearing<sup>98</sup>, this does not hold for all EU Member States. In Italy, for example, only 64.5% of hospitals have an obstetrics and gynaecology department or a gynaecology department that could carry out abortions. In 2017, the percentage of conscientious objectors in the country reached 68.4% among gynaecologists, and 45.6% among anaesthesiologists<sup>99</sup>. While the suspension of abortions – even temporarily – is a human rights violation, a 'non-planned' baby can affect the prospects of women and men unevenly, to the detriment of women – as demonstrated in the scenario described in the paragraphs above.

<sup>93</sup> Eurostat (2014). Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200717-1>

<sup>94</sup> Wittgenstein Centre, European fertility 2015, <http://www.fertilitydatasheet.org>.

<sup>95</sup> Eurostat (2018). Eurostat database, Population and Social Conditions, Fertility indicators. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/DEMO\\_FIND](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/DEMO_FIND). Council of Europe (2006). Recent Demographic Developments in Europe 2005. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

<sup>96</sup> Bearak, Jonathan, et al. (2018), 'Global, regional, and subregional trends in unintended pregnancy and its outcomes from 1990 to 2014: estimates from a Bayesian hierarchical model', *The Lancet Global Health*, vol. 6, No. 4, 380–389, available at: <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2214-109X%2818%2930029-9>.

<sup>97</sup> See Sedgh, Gilda et al. (2016a), 'Abortion incidence between 1990 and 2014: global, regional, and subregional levels and trends', *The Lancet*, vol. 388, No. 10041, pp. 258–67.

<sup>98</sup> See Lesthaeghe, Ron, and Chris Wilson (1986), 'Modes of production, secularization, and the pace of fertility decline in Western Europe, 1870–1930', in *The Decline of Fertility in Europe*, A. Coale and S. Watkins, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 261–92.

<sup>99</sup> Ministero della salute (2017). Relazione del ministro della salute sulla attuazione della legge contenente norme per la tutela sociale della maternità e per l'interruzione volontaria di gravidanza (Legge 194/78), p. 6. Available at: [http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_2807\\_allegato.pdf](http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2807_allegato.pdf).

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The Council of Europe lists some recommendations that can help to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights:

- to eliminate discrimination in laws, policies, and practices, and to reform the restrictive laws;
- to design a health system able to advance women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- to guarantee the affordability, availability, and accessibility of modern contraception, and to remove the procedural requirements;
- to ensure all women’s access to safe and legal abortion care; and
- to provide mainstream and mandatory comprehensive sexuality education<sup>100</sup>.

There is also the need to establish effective human rights-compliant systems for the collection of disaggregated data on women’s sexual and reproductive health, not only on grounds of sex, but also, at a minimum, on grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, and socio-economic status.

## 8. Conclusions

In order for public labour policies to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to in-work poverty, research must previously increase its efforts to carry out a genderisation of its analysis focus.

A preliminary issue concerns the insufficient availability of gender-disaggregated data, thus making female issues often disappear in the wider picture of the workforce as a homogeneous social group. Data on working conditions, poverty, access to services, care, and decision making should be systematically broken down not only by gender, but also considering all the other drivers of discrimination, such as nationality, migrant background, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity, in order to provide a full picture of the barriers potentially hindering each individual’s successful and effective integration into the labour market.

A pivotal issue also concerns the need to foster and increase gender-sensitive research on in-work poverty. As stressed above, the in-work poverty analysis does not focus on the individual level, but rather on the household’s level of income and risk factors exposing it to the risk of poverty. For this reason, the in-work poverty approach – if not properly accompanied with a solid analysis of how this issue impacts differently the members of the family, and more specifically, female and male workers – might reinforce the invisibilisation of the specific

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<sup>100</sup> CoE, Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/women-s-sexual-and-reproductive-rights-in-europe>.

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discrimination and challenges working women must face on a daily basis. Moreover, specific attention must be paid to the different types of households, also considering the increasing statistical incidence of households formed by single parents or non-heterosexual couples, and by heterosexual couples due to their higher risk of reproducing the traditional gender models. The number of children and the disparities between female and male income levels are pivotal factors too, contributing to the explanation of the reasons why the risk of in-work poverty might affect some households differently from others. The standard EU ‘in-work at-risk-of-poverty indicator’, while contributing to enriching individual-based analysis of poverty and of workforce trends, might hide the specific difficulties encountered by women in accessing and remaining in the labour market, as well as their efforts to combine their jobs and career ambitions with care duties, which – according to the stereotypical construction of gender roles – are still too often considered a female task.

Finally, the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to in-work poverty analysis might have a relevant impact on the adoption of more effective public policies that are needed, at all levels of governance, to address the issues and challenges female workers must cope with. Female workers – due to the barriers hindering their full and successful participation in the labour market, and causing horizontal and vertical segregation – are particularly at risk of becoming parts of VUP Group 1 (low or unskilled employees with standard employment contracts employed in poor sectors) and VUP Group 3 (flexibly employed workers), as defined in this research project. In order for this risk to be reduced, welfare and labour market policies must be tailored to consider the needs of female workers, in terms of, for instance, affordable childcare services, reproductive health, parental leave policies, gender-based violence services, gender pay gap reduction, and extensive investment in gender equality in the workplace. These policies not only contribute to social justice in general, but are also crucial to fuel the productivity of the general economic system, allowing everyone to invest and pursue their career ambitions.

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## Annex: summary of indicators

Indicator	Definition
Employment and activity by sex and age	The definition of employment follows the definitions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Employed persons are women and men who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week.
Employment rates by sex, age, and citizenship	Employed persons are women and men who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week, and are counted by citizenship.
Employment by sex, age and professional status	Employed persons are women and men who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week, and are counted by professional status.
Unemployment rates by sex, age, and NUTS 2 regions	The definition of unemployment is further detailed in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1897/2000 of 7 September 2000 implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community concerning the operational definition of unemployment. Unemployed persons are all persons who were not employed during the reference week, had actively sought work during the past four weeks, and were ready to begin working immediately or within two weeks.
Unemployment (ILO)	It reflects the inability of an economy to generate employment for those persons who want to work but are not doing so, even though they are available for employment and are actively seeking work. The unemployment rate is calculated by expressing the number of unemployed women and men as a percentage of the total number of persons in the labour force.
Underemployed part-time workers	Underemployed part-time workers are persons working part time who wish to work additional hours, and are available to do so. Part-time work is recorded as self-reported by individuals.

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Temporary employment by sex	It reflects the proportion of female and male employees in temporary employment. Temporary employment includes work under a fixed-term contract, as against permanent work, where there is no end date. A job may be considered temporary employment (and the worker a temporary employee) if both employer and employee agree that its end is decided by objective rules (usually written down in a work contract of limited duration).
Full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate (% population aged 20-64)	The FTE employment rate is the ratio between the number of jobs converted into full-time working arrangements, and the total population. The number of people in FTE is obtained with the part-time rate recalculated in the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).
Part-time employment and temporary contracts	Part-time workers are employed persons not working full time. The distinction between full-time and part-time work is generally based on a spontaneous response by the respondent.
Persons seeking work but not immediately available	Persons available to work but not seeking a job are persons neither employed nor unemployed who want to work, and are available for work in the next two weeks, but are not seeking work.
Persons available to work but not seeking	<p>Persons available to work but not seeking are persons aged 15-74 neither employed nor unemployed who want to work, and are available for work in the next two weeks, but do not seek work. This indicator covers jobless people who do not qualify for recording as unemployed because they are not actively looking for a job. It includes, among others, discouraged jobseekers and persons prevented from seeking a job due to personal or family circumstances.</p> <p>The sum of the two groups of persons seeking work but not immediately available, and persons available for work but not seeking it is called 'potential additional labour force' (PAF). Persons in PAF are not part of the standard labour force, which is the sum of employed and unemployment persons. However, persons in PAF have a stronger attachment to the labour market than other economically inactive persons.</p>



Working time – EU LFS series by sex	It reflects the average number of usual weekly hours of work in the main job, by sex, professional status, type of working arrangement (full time or part time), and economic activity.
Time spent in unpaid care work per week	It reflects the participation rate in household and family care as main activity, expressed as a percentage, by gender (from 2008 to 2015)
Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by NACE Rev. 2 activity – structure of earnings survey methodology	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 and women in the same job position.
Gender segregation in occupations	The index of dissimilarity (ID) is based on the understanding that segregation means a different distribution of women and men across occupational categories – the more equal the distribution, the less the segregation.
Gender segregation in economic sectors	It reflects the share of women's and men's employment in typically one gender-dominated economic sectors.
Gender gap in pensions (percentage) of persons aged 65-74	The gender pension gap is defined as the percentage difference in the average individual retirement pension of all women counted in the statics compared with men.
Early leavers from education and training by gender and labour status	It reflects the proportion of male and female early leavers also selected by labour status.
Population by educational attainment level, sex, and age (%) – main indicators	Educational attainment level ISCED <sup>101</sup> 0-2, 3-4, and 5+: the educational attainment level of an individual is the highest ISCED level successfully completed, the successful completion of an educational programme being validated by a recognised qualification (or credential), i.e. a qualification officially recognised by the relevant national education authorities.



Severe material deprivation rate by gender	Severely materially deprived persons have living conditions constrained by a lack of resources, and experience at least four out of the following nine deprivation items: they cannot afford 1) to pay rent/mortgage or utility bills on time; 2) to keep home adequately warm; 3) to face unexpected expenses; 4) to eat meat, fish, or a protein equivalent every second day; 5) to enjoy a one-week holiday away from home; 6) to have a car; 7) to have a washing machine; and 8) to have a colour TV set or 9) a telephone (including a mobile phone). The indicator is based on EU-SILC.
Material and social deprivation rate by age and gender	Share of the population living in households lacking at least five out of the following 13 items: 1) to face unexpected expenses; 2) to enjoy one-week annual holiday away from home; 3) to avoid arrears (in mortgage, rent, utility bills, and/or hire purchase instalments); 4) to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian equivalent every second day; 5) to keep their home adequately warm; 6) to have a car/van for personal use; 7) to replace worn-out furniture; 8) to replace worn-out clothes with some new ones; 9) to have two pairs of properly fitting shoes; 10) to spend a small amount of money every week on him/herself ('pocket money'); 11) to have regular leisure activities; and 12) to get together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month; and 13) to have an internet connection.
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and gender [ilc_peps01] [Ylesse than 16; 16-24; 25-54; 55 or over]	Share of women and men aged 0+ with an equivalised disposable income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold in the current year and in at least two of the preceding three years
Risk of poverty and exclusion of single parent households	Share of single parent households with an equivalised disposable income below 60% of the national equivalised median income
Persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate by gender	The indicator shows the percentage of the population whose equivalised disposable income was below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold' for the current year and at least two out of the previous three years.
In-work at risk of poverty by gender	Individuals who are classified as employed and who are at risk of poverty



Low wage earners by gender	Low-wage earners are defined as those employees earning two thirds or less of the national median gross hourly earnings. Hence, the threshold that determines low-wage earners is relative and specific to each EUMember State.
Take-up of leaves – maternity leave	Frequency in use of the leave among persons with the entitlement
Take-up of leaves – paternity leave	Frequency in use of the leave among persons with the entitlement
Take-up of leaves – parental leave	Frequency in use of the leave among persons with the entitlement
Children aged less than three years in formal childcare (percentage of the population in the age group)	Children cared for as a percentage of all children in the same age group
Children between three years to compulsory school age (percentage of the population in the age group)	Children cared for as a percentage of all children in the same age group
Labour market slack by gender and age	Labour market slack is the unmet demand for paid labour within a given population. The term describes the shortfall between the workers' desired amount of work, and the amount of paid work available. Labour market slack exists when there are more workers willing to work a given number of hours than available jobs providing those hours of work. As a result, some workers remain involuntarily unemployed; alternatively, they work fewer hours than they wish.
Gender Equality Index	The Gender Equality Index is a tool to measure the progress of gender equality in the EU, developed by EIGE. It gives more visibility to areas that need improvement, and ultimately supports policy makers to design more effective gender equality measures. It develops through the following dimensions: work; time; money; knowledge; power; health; violence; and intersecting inequalities.



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