

**Gender equality and economic independence:
part-time work and self-employment**

Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform
for Action in the EU Member States

**Main
findings**



The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality.

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Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment

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Main findings



The publication was developed by the research team of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): Ilze Burkevica, Dr Anne Laure Humbert, Nicole Oetke, Merle Paats and Dr Jolanta Reingardė. It is based on a study commissioned by EIGE and carried out by the Institute for Social Research (IRS) in collaboration with the Economic Research Centre on Labour and Industry (CRELI) at the University of Milan. The research was coordinated by Jolanta Reingardė and Maurizio Mosca (EIGE), together with Flavia Pesce (IRS), Manuela Samek Lodovici (IRS) and Claudio Lucifora (CRELI).

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Foreword

Equal access to economic resources is not just a matter of ensuring equal economic independence for women and men, but it has also been recognised as a prerequisite for the achievement of economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Women's labour market participation is thus vital to foster economic growth and promote gender equality.

This publication summarises the report 'Gender equality and economic independence: part time work and self-employment', prepared by EIGE in support of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU (first half of 2014). As such it is part of the ongoing review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU. The report reviewed area F, 'Women in the Economy', and proposed new indicators for strategic objective F1, concerned with women's economic rights and independence, which were endorsed by the Council in June 2014.

It addresses the opportunities and challenges for women and men with regard to part-time work and self-employment. While both forms of employment can constitute important ways of facilitating labour force participation and can enable the reconciliation of a variety of life demands and

interests over the course of life, women's and men's participation in and access to both forms is significantly gendered, having significant negative effects, especially for women.

Overall, the report finds substantial gender gaps in the labour market, indicating that transformative measures are required to address the structural obstacles women face in accessing and/or participating in the labour market.

On behalf of the Institute, I would like to extend our gratitude to the institutions and experts who contributed to this publication, and particularly the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU, the European Commission's DG Justice and consumers and its High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, and EIGE's staff. We hope that the findings and recommendations of this study will give impetus for broader debates on the importance of women's economic independence and will contribute to realising de facto gender equality in the European Union.

Virginija Langbakk,

Director

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)



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Introduction

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union and is vital for economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. The European Commission's strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 highlights the contribution of gender equality to economic growth, sustainable development and personal well-being and identifies equal economic independence of women and men as a priority area.

At the level of the United Nations, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, saw the launch of a groundbreaking worldwide strategy for gender equality and women's empowerment: **the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA)**. It affirms the fundamental principle whereby the human rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. In December 1995, the European Council acknowledged the EU's commitment and requested that progress in the areas of the BPfA be monitored annually. The responsibility for the monitoring processes lies with the respective Presidencies of the Council of the EU and since 2011 has been supported by EIGE.

The Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU has chosen to review the **BPfA's critical area of concern F, 'Women and the economy'**, and to focus on the first out of six strategic objectives concerned with the **promotion of women's economic rights and independence (F1)**, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

This publication summarises the main findings of EIGE's report **'Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment'** (1). It assesses the opportunities and challenges involved in part-time work and self-employment and their potential effects on economic independence and gender equality. Furthermore, it provides a set of three new indicators and nine sub-indicators on full-time equivalent employment, part-time employment and self-employment. The analysis is based on quantitative data obtained from European Union (EU) sources and covers the period between 2008 and 2012.



Economic independence: gender-segregated labour market

Equal economic independence is vital for gender equality, as well as economic growth and prosperity. It can generally be achieved through equal access to, and control over, critical economic resources and opportunities, and through equal access to employment.

Studies show a strong positive correlation between economic growth and gender equality (e.g. Duflo, 2012; Loko and Diouf, 2009). Consistently, EIGE's Gender Equality Index shows a clear positive relationship between gender equality and GDP in the EU Member States in 2010 (EIGE, 2013). Furthermore, women's ability to develop their full labour market potential has been associated with significant macroeconomic gains (IMF, 2013). Conversely, the loss in GDP per capita due to the gender pay gap has been estimated to amount to as much as 27% in parts of the EU (Cuberes and Teignier, 2012). Increasing women's labour market participation could thus lead to tremendous increases in GDP ⁽²⁾. Additionally, increases in labour market participation can reduce poverty among women and will widen the tax base, specifically if the wage gap is effectively addressed ⁽³⁾.

Gender equality and equal economic independence in EU legislation

Both equal economic independence and gender equality are fundamental principles of EU policy, going back to the introduction of the principle of equal pay with the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Since then the EU's approach to economic independence and gender equality in the labour market has expanded significantly in scope, in both soft and hard law ⁽⁴⁾.

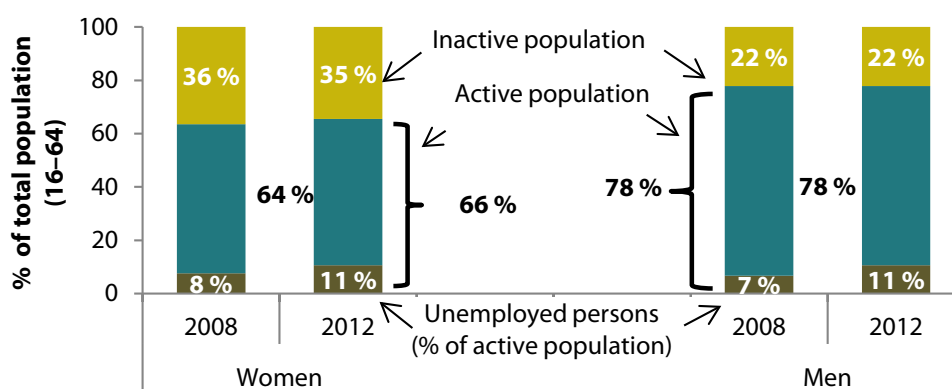
The **1997 European employment strategy (EES)** constituted a significant policy development, as it relied on a greater awareness of women's potential economic contribution and the detrimental effect gender inequality could have on jobs and growth (Villa and Smith, 2009). The introduction, in 2010, of the **Europe 2020 employment strategy**, aiming to achieve smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive economic growth, marked another important turning point in the evolution of European employment policy. In contrast to the 1997 EES, Europe 2020 shows a rather limited consideration of gender as it **sets a headline target for employment of 75% for the population aged 20–64**, which may be difficult to achieve if gendered labour market participation or the impact of gendered norms and attitudes are not specifically taken into consideration.

In addition to the **European Commission's strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15**, acknowledging equal economic independence as 'a prerequisite for enabling both women and men to exercise control over their lives and to make genuine choices' ⁽⁵⁾, the EU has adopted a number of directives relating to equal economic independence. Given that women are generally disadvantaged financially and exposed to greater risks of social exclusion, the elimination of the gender pay gap has long been a priority for the EU in a number of policy areas. The principle of equal pay was first introduced with the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Directive 2006/54/EC (recast) expanded on this and introduced the principle of the equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupations. Other directives have been concerned with the work–life balance of employees (Directive 1992/85/EC) and the safety of employed

mothers (Directive 2010/18/EU). In light of the rising engagement of both women and men in non-traditional forms of employment (e.g. part-time work), the EU has adopted legislation on the equal treatment of part-time and fixed-term workers (Directive 1997/81/EC; Directive

1999/70/EC). Directive 2010/41/EU extended this principle to self-employed workers and aims to improve the protection of self-employed women and their assisting spouses or life partners, for instance by introducing maternity leave and allowances of at least 14 weeks ⁽⁶⁾.

Figure 1: Activity rate for women and men in EU-28 (15–64), 2008 and 2012



Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa_ipga, lfsa_argan, lfsa_ergan, lfsa_urgan), extracted on 3 December 2013.

Note: The economically active population (labour force) comprises employed and unemployed persons and the activity rate represents active persons as a percentage of the same-age total population; the employment rate represents employed persons as a percentage of the same-age total population; the unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the active population

Women's increased activity rates do not translate into greater employment rates, which remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2012. In parallel, there has been a gradual convergence in women's and men's employment rates largely driven by a relative decrease in the employment rates for men (3 percentage points — p.p.), due to the impact of the economic crisis.

Despite the convergence in employment rates, gender-based segregation in employment is still a pervasive phenomenon, with women and men over-/under-represented in various sectors and occupations. In 2012, women accounted for only 9% of workers in the construction sector, in contrast to over 66% of those working in arts, entertainment and recreation-related sectors. As for occupations, in 2012, there were only

11% of women as craft and related trades workers, 17% as plant and machine operators or assemblers and 33% as managers. Gender-based occupational segregation is linked to a number of factors, such as: differences in human capital stemming from education and training; differences in household roles and the distribution of unpaid work; entry barriers and organisational culture and practices; gender identity, norms, attitudes and stereotypes. As a result, women and men have been affected differently by the crisis. While women did not face increases in unemployment during the initial stages of the crisis, due to their engagement in non-tradable and public sectors, recent and more restrictive government fiscal policies and the delayed effects of cuts in public budget have also led to employment losses for women.

Figure 2: Gender gap in income, earnings and pension



Sources: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_di03), SES (earn_gr_gpgr2), extracted on 13 January 2014; report: *The gender gap in pensions in the EU*, European Commission 2013.

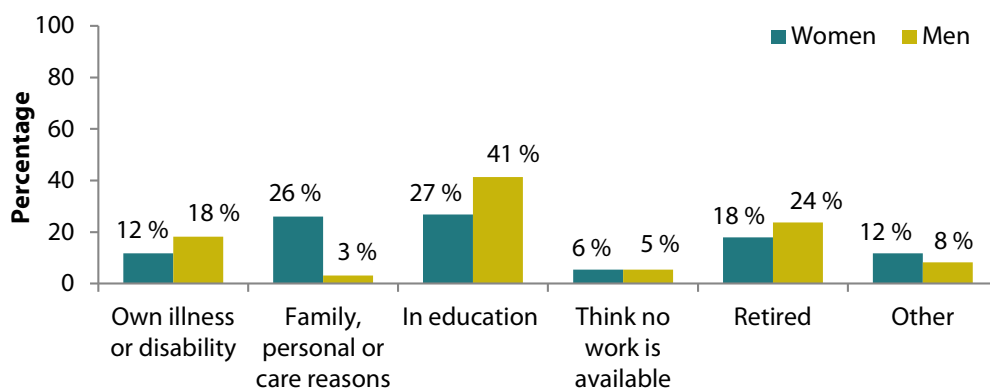
Note: 'Gender gap in mean equivalised net income' is calculated as the difference between women's and men's income as a percentage of men's income. 'Gender pay gap' represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of the average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees. 'Gender gap in pensions' is calculated as the difference in pensions between women and men excluding zero pensions.

Equal access to economic and financial resources is very important for a number of economic outcomes, including poverty reduction and social inclusion. On average, women in the EU-28 earn 16% less than men. Sectoral and occupational segregation, women's over-representation in unpaid and part-time work, as well as gender-based discrimination contribute to the

pay gap, which increases in old age, reflected in the gender gap in pensions of 39% in 2009.

Furthermore, due to women's over-representation in unpaid work, they are more likely than men to cite family, personal or care reasons as the main reason for not seeking employment (Figure 3) or for working part-time (Figure 8) as compared to men.

Figure 3: Main reason for not seeking employment in the EU-28 (15–64), 2012

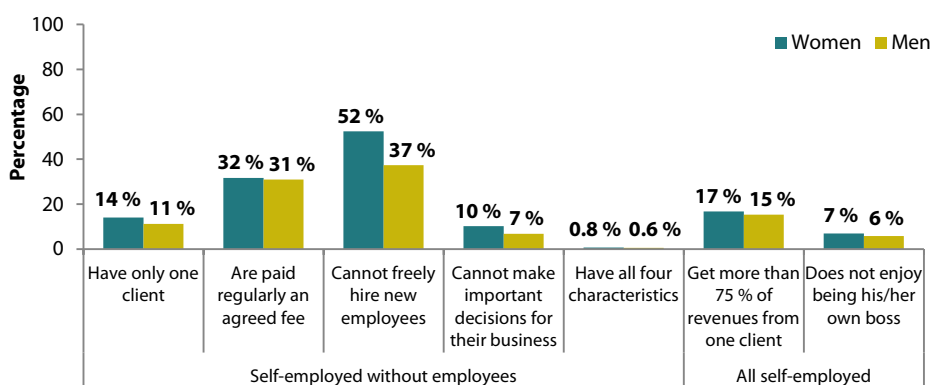


Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa_igar), extracted on 3 December 2013.

While women are under-represented in self-employment, they are more likely to be involved in 'bogus' self-employment (not genuine), which is linked with higher risks of poverty and

defined by the dependency of only one client, the presence of regular payments and the lack of capacity to freely hire new workers and/or make important business decisions (Eurofound, 2010b).

Figure 4: Percentage of women and men at risk of 'bogus' self-employment, EU-28, 2010



Source: Eurofound, EWCS 2010a.

Note: Included who answered yes to question 6_1a: Generally, my firm has more than one client; answered yes to the question 6_1b: I am paid an agreed fee on a regular, for example on a monthly basis; answered yes to question 6_1c: If my workload requires I could hire employees who work for me; answered yes to question 6_1d: I make the most important decisions on how to run my business; answered more than 75% in question EF8: What proportion of revenue do you receive from your most important client?; answered no to question EF12b: I enjoy being my own boss.



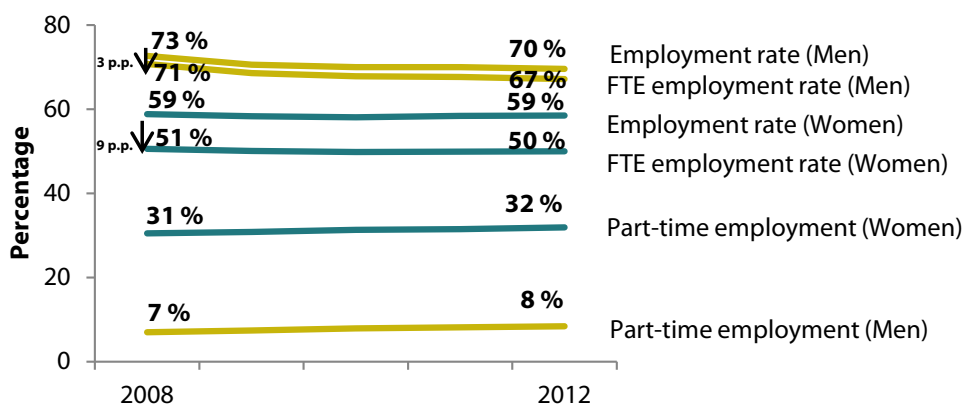
New EU-wide indicators: examining economic independence from the perspective of part-time work and self-employment

EIGE's main report proposes a set of three indicators and a set of sub-indicators to address strategic objective F1 of the BPfA, to enable the monitoring of full-time equivalent employment, part-time employment and self-employment from a gender equality perspective.

Indicator 18: Full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate

Traditional measures of employment usually rely on headcount measures and as such do not reflect the heterogeneity of working hours among employees and tend to overestimate women's employment. The full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate addresses this by accounting for hours worked, which is particularly relevant when addressing gender gaps.

Figure 5: Full-time equivalent and headcount employment rate in EU-28, 15–64, 2008 and 2012



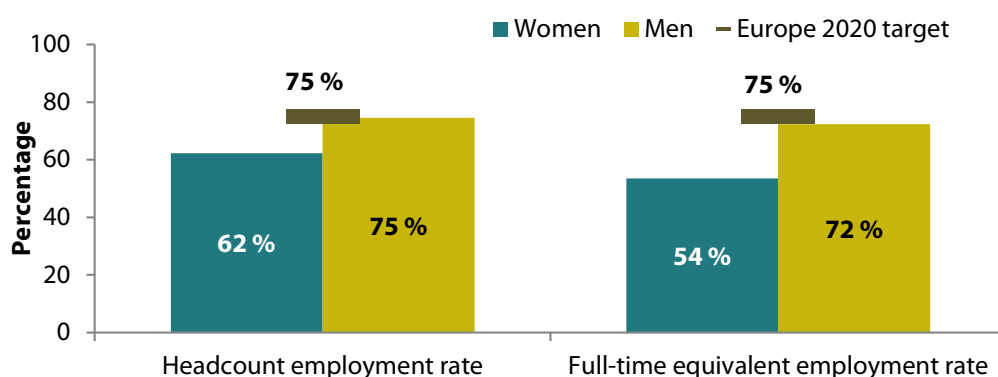
Sources: For full-time equivalent, Eurostat calculation upon EIGE's request; for employment rate and part-time employment rate, Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa_ergan; lfsa_eppgacob), extracted 9 December 2013.

Note: The employment rate represents employed persons as a percentage of the same group of total population; the FTE employment rate is a unit to measure employed persons by average number of hours worked: a full-time person is counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she works; part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment.

The FTE is obtained by comparing each worker's average number of hours worked to the average number of hours worked by a full-time worker, counted as one FTE. As such it takes into account the higher incidence of part-time employment among women.

As emphasised by Figure 6, headcount measures not only overestimate women's labour market participation, but also labour market participation in general. Specifically the lower participation of women in the labour market seriously endangers reaching the headline target of 75 % of employment as set out by Europe 2020.

Figure 6: Headcount employment rate, full-time equivalent employment rate and Europe 2020 targets in EU-28, 20–64, 2012



Sources: Eurostat, EU LFS (lfsa_ergan), extracted on 9 December 2013 and Eurostat calculation upon EIGE's request; for Europe 2020 targets, http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf

Note: The employment rate represents employed persons as a percentage of the same group of total population. FTE employment is a unit to measure employed persons by average number of hours worked: a full-time person is counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker receives a score in proportion to the hours she or he works.

Indicator 19: Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment

Generally, part-time work can be beneficial for all workers, as it allows adjustment of their work schedules to their life-course needs. However, part-time work arrangements — if not equally shared between women and men — can be seen as a way of perpetuating gender roles, resulting in disadvantages for career development (OECD, 2012). Moreover, part-time work can have significant negative effects on women's economic independence.

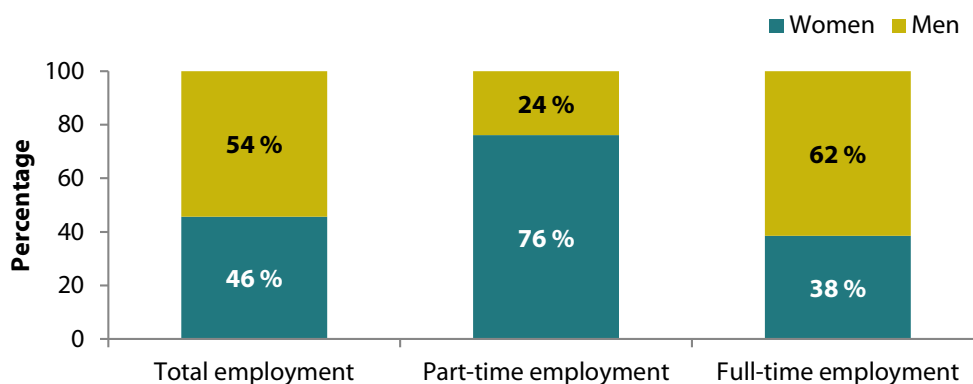
Indicator 19 aims to measure women's engagement in **part-time work** and is complemented by **six sub-indicators**:

- (i) share of women part-time workers out of total part-time workers (A);
- (ii) main reasons for part-time employment (B);
- (iii) usual weekly working hours in part-time jobs (C);
- (iv) low-paid in part-time employment (D);
- (v) sectoral and occupational differences between full-time and part-time employment (E);
- (vi) transitions between part-time and full-time work (F).

In the EU-28, three quarters (76 %) of part-time workers and only about 38 % of full-time workers are women. This emphasises the persistent gendering of labour market participation and can have severe consequences for women's economic independence.



Figure 7: Share of women and men by type of employment in the EU-28, 15–64, 2012



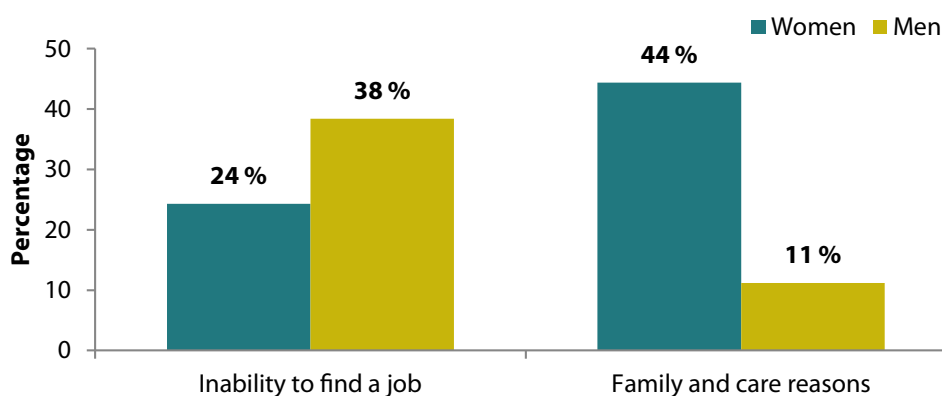
Source: Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_epgaed), extracted on 9 January 2014.

Note: The full-time/part-time distinction in the main job is made on the basis of a spontaneous answer given by the respondent in all countries (except for the Netherlands).

The impact of gender stereotypes and norms on women's labour market participation becomes visible when assessing the reasons provided by workers for their decision to work part-time. Commonly a distinction is made only between voluntary and involuntary part-time

work. As shown in Figure 8, family and caring responsibilities can constitute an important source of involuntary part-time work, for example where childcare facilities are insufficient, or relating to availability or costs.

Figure 8: Inability to find a full-time job and family and care reasons as the main reason for working part-time as a percentage of total part-time employment in the EU-28, 15–64, 2012



Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa_eggai), extracted on 8 January 2014 and calculated by Eurostat upon EIGE's request on 30 January 2014.

Note: The full-time/part-time distinction in the main job is made on the basis of a spontaneous answer given by the respondent in all countries (except for the Netherlands); the main reason for part-time employment is collected and the reasons 'Could not find a full-time job', 'Looking after children or incapacitated adults' and 'Other family or personal responsibilities' are included in the graph; Slovakia: data are not available for men and the latter two reasons.

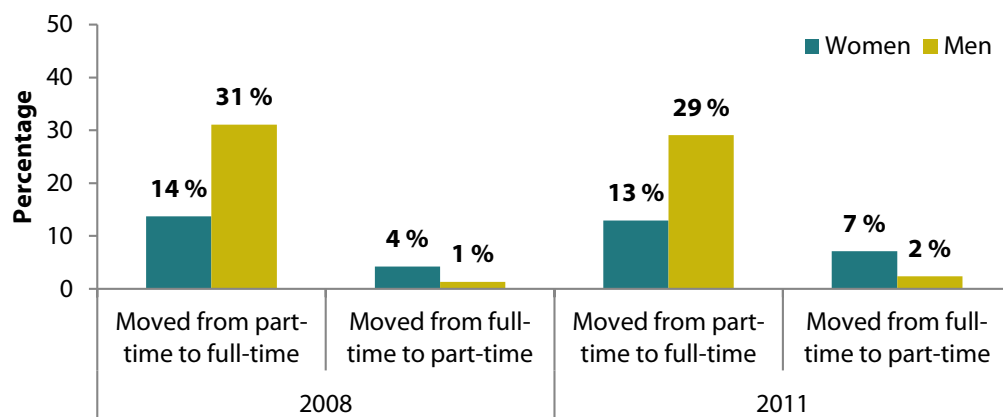
It is important to assess the number of hours worked in part-time positions, as part-time jobs that provide employees with less than 20 hours of work per week are associated with lower earnings, employment instability and limited access to social security benefits (Leschke, 2007). **Women** part-time workers work about 1 hour more per week than men part-time workers. Of all women who work part-time, 12% work fewer than 10 hours compared with 17% of men. However, due to their over-representation in part-time work, they **make up 68% of those part-time workers working in 'micro' jobs** (working less than 10 hours).

Consistent with recent evidence of a negative pay gap for women who decide to work part-time, when job characteristics are controlled for (7), women's low pay share in part-time employment has been higher than men's across the EU. This can be detrimental to women's economic independence currently and in old age. Due to their lower

earnings their pension contributions might be too low to guarantee economic independence.

Gender segregation in employment is also reflected in part-time work and is even more pronounced. Sectoral and occupational segregation can be measured using the Index of Dissimilarity (ID), which measures how different the sectors (or occupations) are between those that work full-time and part-time. For women, sectors of full-time and part-time employment are relatively similar, since only 10% of women would need to change sectors in order to make the two sectoral distributions equal, indicating few obstacles to transitioning between full- and part-time work. For men, however, the ID is much higher, showing that 25% of them would need to change sector. This suggests that sectors in which men are employed may be less supportive of part-time work, indicating that men might not have access to part-time work in their sector.

Figure 9: Labour transition between full-time and part-time work by sex at EU level, 2008 and 2011



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvh130), extracted on 13 January 2014.

Note: EU average: for year 2011, EU-28; for year 2008, EU-27.

Another aspect of part-time work is the possibility of transitioning between full- and part-time work and the potential risk of being trapped in low-paid work with a lower career perspective, affecting lifelong income and pension levels (OECD 2012).

Consistently, EU data show that women are more likely to move from full- to part-time employment than vice versa, with the opposite being the case for men (Figure 9). The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) indicates that women's



over-representation in part-time work largely reflects gender inequalities in transitions from part-time to full-time work (Eurofound, 2009b).

Indicator 20: Self-employment as a percentage of total employment

While research finds that motives for engaging in self-employment are similar between women and men, evidence suggests that women are more likely to engage in self-employment, aiming to obtain a better work–life balance, particularly if they have dependent children (Blackburn, 2001) ⁽⁸⁾. Self-employment is associated with a higher risk of poverty and limited access to economic resources, while some types of self-employment involve higher risks than others. As the lines between different forms are blurred (Eurofound, 2009a), the report ⁽⁹⁾ makes a distinction between the self-employed with employees (employers) and without (own-account workers). The former may be considered a better proxy for entrepreneurship than the share of overall self-employed. It should be noted that the latter can also include a number of ‘bogus’ self-employed persons.

Indicator 20 aims to measure women’s engagement in self-employment and is comprised

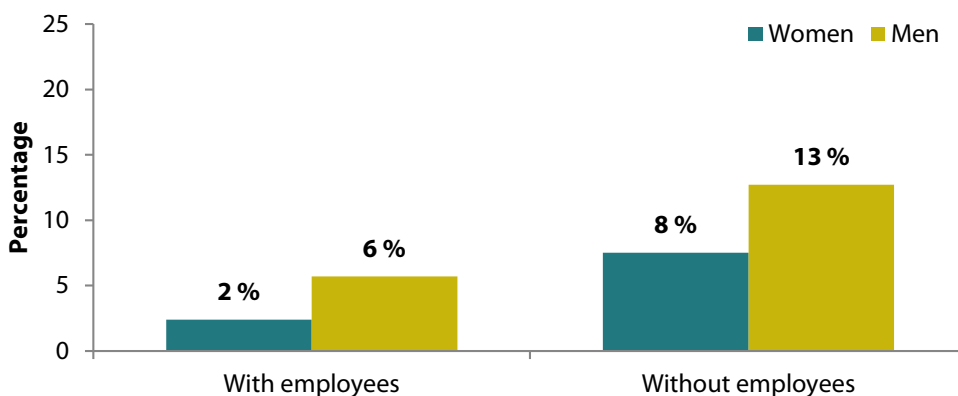
of **three sub-indicators** measuring relevant features of self-employment that have to be monitored from a gender equality perspective:

- (i) share of self-employed women and men with and without employees (15–64) (A);
- (ii) median income in euros from self-employment for women and men (15+) (B);
- (iii) fit of working hours with family or social commitments for self-employed women and men (15+) (C).

The percentage of women employers in the EU-28 represents only 2% of women in total employment; well below the percentage of men employers (6%). The proportion of women employers is low across the EU-28, ranging from 0.8% in Romania to 4% in Greece.

In contrast, the percentage of own-account workers (self-employed without employees) of total employment for women amounts to 8% in the EU-28 on average, representing a lower percentage than the corresponding value for men (13%) (see Figure 10). Overall, the data show that women are less likely to be in self-employment than men, but when they do enter self-employment they are more likely to become own-account workers. Given the risk of ‘bogus’ self-employment, this is an important indicator from a gender equality perspective.

Figure 10: Share of self-employed women and men with and without employees (15–64)

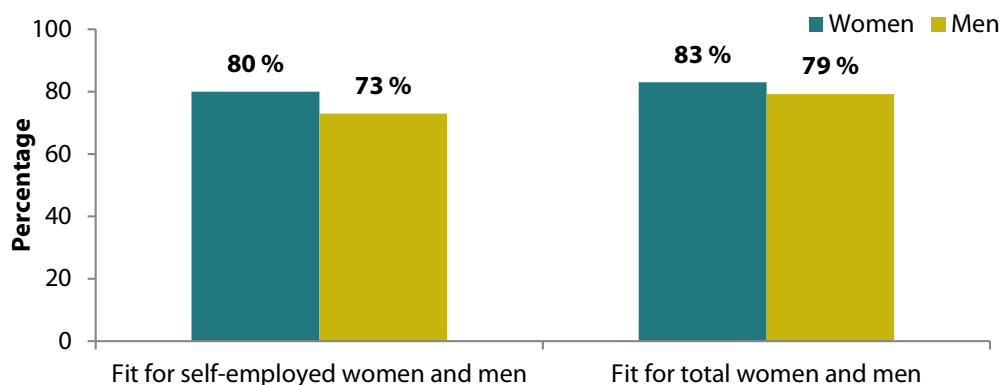


Sources: Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_egaps); calculated from EU-SILC micro data; Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_di03); EWCS, 2010.

Income from self-employment is generally higher for men as compared to women and shows large variations across countries. The biggest difference in median income from

self-employment between women and men is in Greece, where the median is more than two times smaller for women than for men (13 410 for men and 5 414 for women).

Figure 11: Fit of working hours with family or social commitments for self-employed women and men (15+), 2010



Sources: Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_egaps); calculated from EU-SILC micro data; Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_di03); EWCS, 2010.

In terms of work–life balance, the data indicate a good fit between family and work obligations. On average at EU-28 level, 80% of self-employed women report a very good/

good fit between working time and family or social commitments, while for men the percentage is 73%.



Good practices

Women's economic independence can be supported by better and greater access to the labour market as well as by more effective reconciliation policies and practices.

Specific initiatives to promote and support women's entrepreneurship have proven to be effective in EU Member States. Gender mainstreaming strategies have been implemented to strengthen networking among women entrepreneurs, to build and enhance entrepreneurial skills and competences and to develop positive actions to fund women's access to the labour market through entrepreneurship.

In 2014, EIGE collected and assessed 25 good practices in the area of reconciliation of work, family and private life (13) and on women's entrepreneurship (12). The process covered all EU Member States and the good practices selected covered 15 EU Member States. Around 120 experts and stakeholders from all EU Member States have been involved in the assessment process. Several of those good practices are presented below.

Cyprus — The Cyprus Women's Cooperative Bank Ltd (WCB) was founded in 2011 by 350 business-minded women, as a non-profit lending institution focused on supporting women's entrepreneurial activities. The bank's aim is to boost women's entrepreneurship by providing specialised programmes and easy access to finance. Thanks to the WCB's contribution, the **proportion of women entrepreneurs in Cyprus has increased** from around 12% to around 30% in 2012.

Ireland — Going for Growth provides structured peer support to women entrepreneurs. Funded by the ESF, the Irish Department of Justice and Equality and Enterprise Ireland; it has been implemented in Ireland since 2008. Over 350

women entrepreneurs have taken part. Training has **frequently resulted in revenue growth, additional employment** and increased numbers of first-time exporters.

Germany — The Women's Start-up Centre (Gründerinnenzentrale) was set up in 2006 in Berlin in order to strengthen networking among women who want to set up their own businesses, women entrepreneurs and business experts. Founded in 1989 by 17 unemployed university graduates, it now has 1 750 members. More than 10 000 women have made contact, 3 700 have attended meetings and the website receives 30 000 visits a year. **Around 80% of women who contact the centre go on to set up their own businesses.**

In order to allow women access to adequate income and jobs and at the same time in order to raise men's participation in family and care activities, positive actions and gender mainstreaming can play a key role. The necessary societal and legislative transformation needed to achieve greater gender equality in the economic sphere can be supported by the learning value of good practices. A wide range of stakeholders are involved in this process, including social partners, national and local authorities, gender equality infrastructure and media. EIGE has collected examples of effective approaches aiming to enhance women's participation in the labour market, to increase men's participation in family non-paid activities and at the same time to raise social and political awareness on reconciliation challenges and gaps.

Malta — Nista was a EUR 1.3 million media awareness-raising campaign run between 2010 and 2012 to promote women's participation in the labour market in Malta. The campaign aimed to challenge traditional stereotypes, reduce the care gap and promote

men's active role in the family, with a view to enhancing women's employment participation. Eurostat statistics ('Employment rate by sex', 2013) show that there was a **not-able increase in female participation** during and after the media campaign: 2009, 39.8%; 2010, 41.5%; 2011, 43.4%; 2012, 46.8%.

Denmark — Project Børnepasning (The Childcare Project), a community of interest between trade unions, employers and businesses, aims to exchange experiences across companies, in order to persuade municipalities to provide childcare outside standard working times,

so that parents can work flexible hours. There are only five institutions in Denmark where children are cared for after 23:00 or on Saturdays and Sundays, although the vast majority of grocery stores are open until 21:00 or 22:00 as well as on Saturday and Sunday. Within the last 2 years, two private childcare institutions have been established which are also open at weekends, perhaps reflecting a new trend in solving childcare problems outside so-called normal opening hours. Project Børnepasning has made it possible **for single mothers and fathers to have a job, a career and children** — without having to rely on their families to care for their children.



Conclusions

EIGE's main report examines the **BPfA's strategic objective F1, 'Women in the Economy'**, spanning the two complementary areas of gender equality and economic independence. By examining women's and men's labour market participation in the EU-28 from a gender equality perspective, it provides an assessment of the key issues of women's and men's economic independence. This section presents the report's main conclusions and policy recommendations. Additionally, more detailed information on **good practices in relation to women and the economy** can be found on **EIGE's website** ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Access to economic and financial resources is more limited for women

While considerable progress has been made in relation to women's labour market participation over the past decades, deeply entrenched inequalities persist as a result of discriminatory norms and attitudes and the unequal distribution of care responsibilities in the household. While women's activity rate has increased, men's activity rate has remained largely stable. This convergence of women towards the masculine norm of labour market participation — without changes in the sharing of unpaid work — represents a serious constraint for women's equal access to the labour market and, conversely, their equal control over economic resources.

Equal access to the labour market and to economic resources can increase the economic independence of women

Realising both women's and men's full labour market potential can lead to significant macro-economic gains. However, despite the progress

made in women's economic empowerment through increases in educational attainment and the share of paid work, the unequal distribution of unpaid work and the **gender segregation in employment and education hinder equal access to economic resources for women and men**. Employed women are over-represented in the services sectors and in occupations that are characterised by lower status, career opportunities and pay, as well as in part-time work.

Gender norms are linked to different patterns of labour force participation for women and men over the life-course

In order to assess the impact of gender norms and women's and men's labour force participation with regard to part-time work and self-employment, three indicators and a subset of sub-indicators have been proposed for monitoring strategic objective F1 from a gender perspective. The indicators focus on full-time equivalent employment, part-time employment and self-employment.

Lower participation of women in the labour market seriously endangers reaching the national targets of Europe 2020

As traditional measures of employment, including one of the indicators of the Europe 2020 strategy, rely on headcount measures for employment, they fail to account for women's over-representation in part-time work. The full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate is introduced by **Indicator 18**, and addresses this issue. **It offers a more accurate measure of labour market participation**, as it accounts

for the prevalence of part-time work. The data show that when accounting for part-time work, employment rates for both men (67%) and women (50%) are well below the Europe 2020 target of 75%. It is therefore important that future targets are disaggregated by sex in order to monitor the progress made in closing the gender gap in access to the labour market.

The over-representation of women in part-time work represents one of the strongest gender differences in labour market participation

While part-time work can facilitate labour force participation and can contribute to a more gender equal society by allowing both women and men to work part-time to meet life-course demands, women's over-representation in part-time work can be detrimental to their economic independence. **Indicator 19** and its six sub-indicators capture this by addressing relevant gender differences in part-time work. In the EU-28, women account for 76% of those working part-time. Due to the lower income associated with part-time work, as well as women's likely inability to move out of part-time work, **part-time work can have significant negative effects on women's economic independence**. Moreover, **women's greater responsibilities for**

care can represent an important source of involuntary part-time work.

Indicator 20 provides information regarding women and men on the share of self-employed workers among all employed persons by age groups and includes three sub-indicators measuring relevant features of self-employment from a gender perspective.

Self-employment is not only linked to economic growth, but can also provide more flexibility in terms of work-life balance issues, while maintaining the same hours. However, **a clearer differentiation between entrepreneurship and self-employment can aid the implementation and monitoring of policies promoting women's entrepreneurship.**

Overall, women are substantially under-represented among self-employed workers, while simultaneously being more likely to be self-employed on their own account. Moreover, **self-employment leads to much lower earnings and income for women and can lead to a greater risk of poverty over the life-course, as women are more likely to work in more labour-intensive and less profitable sectors than men.** The gender pay gap between women and men in self-employment vividly illustrates the disparities; standing at 45% at EU level.



Recommendations

Support work–life balance for women and men

- Provide accessible, affordable and high-quality services for care of dependants (children, the elderly, etc.).
- Introduce non-transferable paternity leave and incentives for men.
- Promote organisational cultures that embrace work–life balance needs, by providing incentives for flexible working arrangements and by promoting equal sharing of part-time work between women and men.

Implement targeted financial incentives and awareness-raising programmes for employers/social partners and public institutions

- Reduce gender segregation in education and employment.
- Review curricula, particularly aiming to challenge gender stereotypes early on.
- Address educational segregation through vocational guidance and counselling to encourage women and men into a wider choice of educational paths and occupations.
- Set targets in key strategic documents for gender balance in political and economic decision-making.
- Support media campaigns tackling gender stereotyping in education and employment.

Support and improve conditions for women in self-employment and entrepreneurship

- Define and analyse self-employment appropriately.
- Develop specific measures supporting working conditions and access to social protection (e.g. childcare provisions).
- Strengthen women's presence in entrepreneurship through new role models.

Account for the impact of norms, attitudes and stereotypes of women's aspirations and intentions when developing training and funding programmes

- Invest in data gathering, research and gender impact assessment.
- Improve the quality and quantity of sex-disaggregated data.
- Support the implementation of surveys and studies to further explore the cultural factors influencing women and men in the labour market.

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Endnotes

- (1) 'Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment — Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States', available for download at <http://www.eige.europa.eu>
- (2) See for instance: Aguirre, De, A., Hoteit, L., Rupp, C. and Sabbagh, K. (2012), 'Empowering the third billion women and the world of work in 2012', Booz and Company.
- (3) See for instance: European Parliament (EP) (2011), 'Gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis' (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201110/20111020AT-T29944/20111020ATT29944EN.pdf>).
- (4) For a full overview of EU policy, please consult the main publication, available at <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-equality-and-economic-independence-part-time-work-and-self-employment-report>
- Soft law** means commitments made by negotiating parties that are not legally binding.
- Hard law** means binding laws. To constitute law, a rule, instrument or decision must be authoritative and prescriptive. In international law, hard law includes self-executing treaties or international agreements, as well as customary laws. These instruments result in legally enforceable commitments for countries (states) and other international subjects.
- (5) European Commission (EC) (2010a), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15, COM(2010) 491 final (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0491>)
or in EN:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0491&from=EN>
- (6) A thorough assessment of current EU policy on equal economic independence and full references can be found in the main publication, available at <http://www.eige.europa.eu> (for the full text of the directives please consult <http://eur-lex.eu>).
- (7) See for instance:
Bardasi, E. and Gornick, J. C. (2008), 'Working for less? Women's part-time wage penalties across Countries', *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 14, No 1, pp. 37–72. (<http://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:taf:fe-meco:v:14:y:2008:i:1:p:37-72>).
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- (8) See also Davidsson, P. (1995), 'Determinants of entrepreneurial intentions', paper presented at RENT IX, Piacenza, November.
- (9) *Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment-Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States* (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-equality-and-economic-independence-part-time-work-and-self-employment-report>).
- (10) For a collection of good practices regarding entrepreneurship see: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/factsheet-good-practices-in-womens-entrepreneurship>

For good practices regarding the reconciliation of work, family and private life relating to an earlier study concerned with area F conducted by EIGE (*Reconciliation of work and family life as a condition of equal participation in the labour market*) please refer to: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/study-on-good-practices-on-reconciliation-of-work-family-and-private->

[life-in-eu-mem](http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/study-on-good-practices-on-reconciliation-of-work-family-and-private-life-in-eu-mem); <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/study-on-good-practices-on-reconciliation-of-work-family-and-private-life-in-eu-m-0> or <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/study-on-good-practices-on-reconciliation-of-work-family-and-private-life-in-eu-m-1>



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