

Stagnating gender employment gap costs Europe €360 billion per year



New calculations from Eurofound show that the difference in female and male employment rates cost the EU, including the United Kingdom, over €360 billion in 2018. This updated aggregate figure builds upon previous research done by Eurofound on the gender employment gap in 2013. Eurofound researchers have noted that reductions in the cost of the gender employment gap in the EU stagnated between 2015 and 2018, and there are indications that it may be starting to grow again; partially driven by recovery in employment in male-dominated industries.

Upward convergence was recorded between 2008 and 2015, with an overall reduction of the gender employment gap and of Member State disparities. Since 2015 it has stagnated at 11.6 percentage points. At national level, the largest reductions in the gap between female and male employment between 2015 and 2018 were recorded in Malta (4.9 percentage points) and Luxembourg (3.7 percentage points). However, the gap increased in several Member States, such as Greece (increase of 3 percentage points) and Cyprus (increase of 2.1 percentage points) – this is despite them each having seen significant reductions in employment between women and men over the previous 10 years. In 2018, Malta recorded the largest gender employment gap in the EU (22 percentage points), and Lithuania recorded the smallest (2.3 percentage points).

Eurofound's new calculations on the cost of the gender employment gap come as the European Commission launches an ambitious new strategy to deal with gender inequality in Europe – including proposals on improving women's access to the labour market and strengthening gender equality at work.

Commenting on findings on the impact of sectoral employment recovery, Martina Bisello, Eurofound Research Officer, said 'European labour markets are still characterised by a high level of sectoral segregation. The recovery in employment in male-dominated industries such as manufacturing, construction and transportation has to some extent contributed to the stagnation of the gender employment gap in recent years. These positive trends in male employment are to be welcomed and we should now seek to further improve the employment rates of women in Europe.'

Speaking about the overall implications of these findings for policy in Europe, Massimiliano Mascherini, Eurofound Head of Unit for Social Policies, said 'The stagnation of the gender employment gap between 2015 and 2018, and its associated costs, ended a decade-long trend in comprehensive reductions in the employment gap between women and men – now is the right time for innovative new policies to improve women's access to the labour market.'

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Article – Coming up: Coronavirus, Greta Thunberg, International Women's Day



Coronavirus

The [environment and public health committee](#) will discuss the coronavirus and how the EU and member states are dealing with the situation on Thursday.

On Thursday the committee members will also vote on the financing of the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism, which helps EU countries deal with crises, including those that are health-related.

Greta Thunberg

Climate activist Greta Thunberg will visit Parliament on Wednesday to discuss climate laws and targets with MEPs.

International Women's Day

Ahead of International Women's Day on 8 March, the women's rights committee will mark the occasion with a [conference](#) on Thursday. Participants will take stock of the progress made since the Beijing Declaration on gender equality 25 years ago during panel discussions on women in the economy and women's role in the fight against climate change.

Climate change

Parliament President David Sassoli will open a meeting of [Mayors from across Europe](#) in Parliament on Wednesday. They will debate how to move towards climate neutral cities –

cities that don't emit more gases than they can naturally absorb, clean or compensate.

Statement by the President of the European Council

The President of the European Council has been closely following the situation in Syria and Turkey in cooperation with the European Commission.

He held a phone call with President Erdoğan today, in which he expressed his condolences over the loss of life of Turkish soldiers and his deep concern over the untold human suffering the ongoing fighting has caused in Idlib.

He called on all actors to deescalate and commit to a sustainable and long lasting ceasefire and a political solution in line with UNSC Resolutions.

Providing humanitarian aid and access to populations in need is a key priority; the EU is ready to further strengthen its support.

Over the last days President Michel has also been in close contact with PM Mitsotakis and PM Borissov to follow the migration situation.

The EU is actively engaged to uphold the EU-Turkey Statement and to support Greece and Bulgaria to protect the EU's external borders.

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on current political developments in Afghanistan and the prospects for peace

The European Union considers today's conclusion of the Afghanistan-U.S. Joint Statement for Peace and the settlement between the U.S and the Taliban as

important first steps towards a comprehensive peace process, with intra-Afghan negotiations at its core. The current opportunity to move towards peace should not be missed. The European Union expects these Afghan-owned and Afghan-led negotiations to start without delay in an inclusive manner and aiming at a lasting peace that could create an environment of security and stability for all Afghans. The continuation of a reduction in violence and its expansion into a ceasefire constitute a necessary condition for trust between the negotiating parties.

The European Union stands ready to facilitate and support the peace process with the aim of preserving and building upon the political, economic and social achievements of the people of Afghanistan since 2001, which should be irreversible. The conflict needs a political solution in which human rights, including women's rights, are respected and common grievances are addressed. The European Union stresses the importance of an inclusive peace process with all political factions, where notably Afghan women and minorities as well as the civil society, are represented in a meaningful manner. Respect for the constitutional order and rule of law is paramount during the process.

In this crucial time, unity is essential to master the challenging tasks ahead and for the long-term future of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The European Union calls upon all actors to unite forces for the coming period. It is vital that all people of Afghanistan feel represented in the next government and in peace negotiations. This would help address grievances, including in the context of the recent electoral process, and promote reconciliation. The EU calls on all stakeholders to put the interests of the nation above all other considerations, as the collective responsibility of all Afghan political forces.