

The life of women and men in Europe

2021 INTERACTIVE EDITION



At home, at work, at school...

... there are large differences between the lives of women and men in Europe, but there are also similarities. This interactive publication **The life of women and men in Europe** aims at comparing women and men in their daily lives. It also shows how similar or different the everyday life of women and men is in European countries.

The publication includes three chapters:

Living & ageing : This chapter focuses on demography and health, including for example data on life expectancy, single mothers and fathers and how we perceive our health. This chapter also shows that, despite our differences, both women and men in Europe are similarly satisfied with their lives.

Learning & earning : This chapter includes data on education levels, reconciliation of work and family life, full-time and part-time work, the gender pay gap, female and male managers, etc. It highlights not only structural differences but also inequalities between women and men.

Eating & surfing : This part focuses on nutrition, sport practice and online practices, including for example data on consumption of fruit and vegetables, alcohol consumption, body mass index, use of social networks and online shopping. A final part is dedicated to childcare, housework and cooking

This interactive publication containing short texts, interactive visualisation tools, infographics, photos, etc. has been developed by Eurostat in collaboration with the National Statistical Institutes of the EU Member States and the EFTA countries.

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1. LIVING & AGEING

1.1 Important milestones in life

In almost all Member States, women leave their parental home and get married earlier than men...

Our life is filled with different milestones, such as starting school, entering adulthood by leaving the parental home and starting work, getting married, having children, retiring... and there are large differences between women and men.

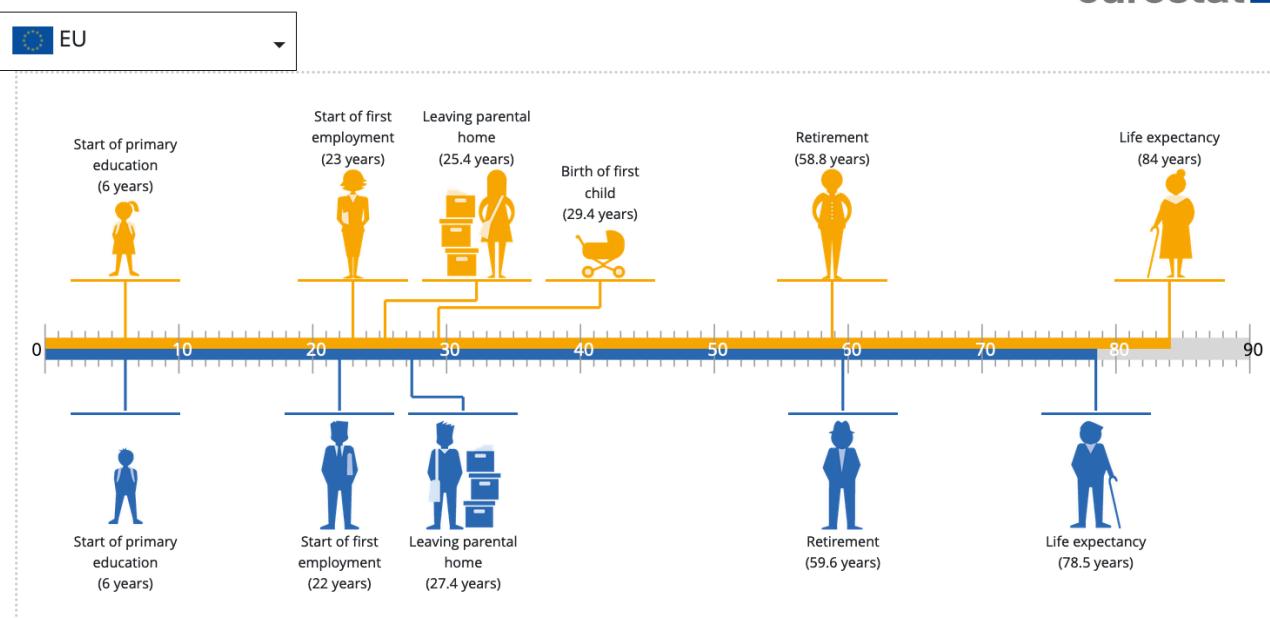
The analyses of these milestones in life show, for example, that on average in the EU in 2020, women left their parental home two years earlier than men (at the age of 25 for women and 27 for men). Women also married earlier in all Member States, with an age difference at first marriage of 3 years and over in Romania, Bulgaria and Greece in 2019, while it was less than 2 years in Ireland (2016) and Portugal. Regarding birth of first child, women in the EU gave birth on average at the age of 29 in 2019, ranging from around 26 years in Bulgaria to 31 years in Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Ireland and Greece.

... and live longer than men

Another significant difference between women and men is life expectancy. In the Member States in 2020, women lived longer than men. The EU average (data for 2019) was 84.0 years for women and 78.5 years for men, a difference of 5.5 years. Among the Member States in 2020, the difference between women and men ranged from almost 10 years in Lithuania and Latvia to below 4 years in the Netherlands, Sweden and Malta.

Lifeline of women and men in EU

eurostat



1.2 Living together

5 % more women than men in the EU

There are more women than men in the EU, with 105 women per 100 men (5 % more) in 2020. There were more women than men in nearly all Member States, with the largest differences in Latvia (17 % more), Lithuania (14 % more), Portugal (12 % more) and Estonia (11 % more), while Malta, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Sweden had more men than women.

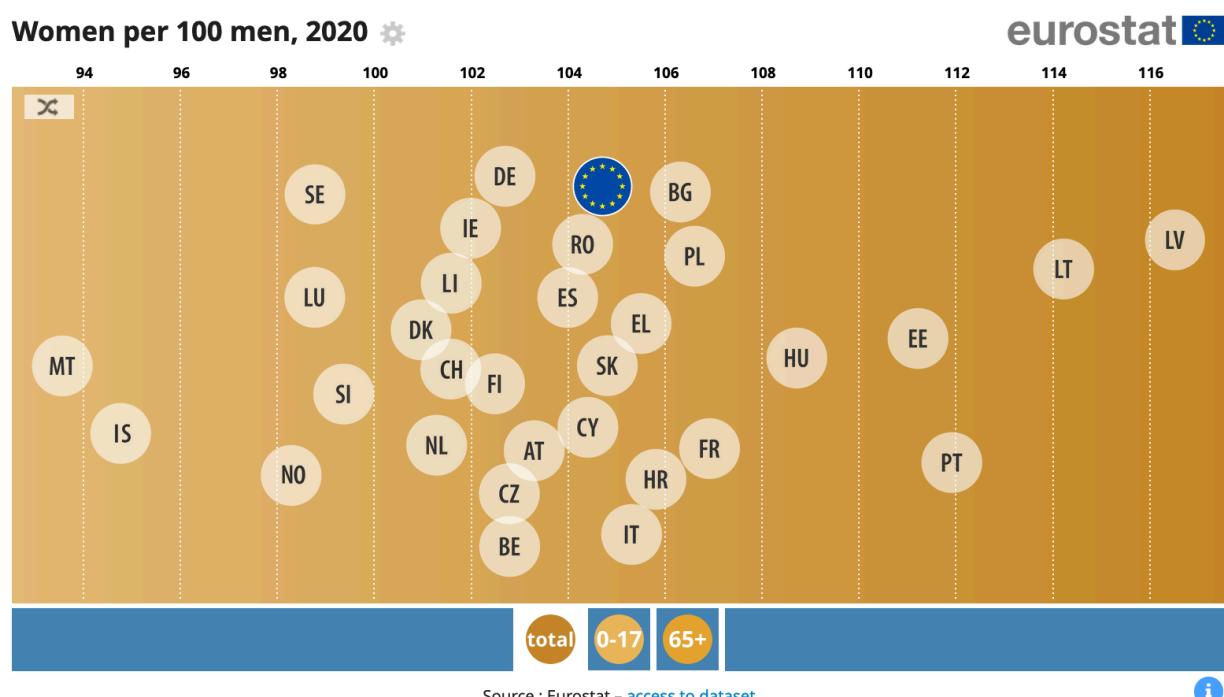
Looking at young people aged up to 18, the opposite pattern applies with 5 % more young men than young women of this age. On the other hand, among the older age group aged 65 and over, there were 33 % more women.

Almost six times more women than men live alone with children

When looking at the way women and men live – in a couple, single, with or without children – quite some differences can be seen. In the EU in 2020, 7.0 % of women aged 25-49 lived alone with children, compared with 1.2 % of men of the same age. For singles without children in this age group, the share was 10.3 % for women and 17.3 % for men.

Another group where there are large differences between women and men is for singles aged 65 and over: the share of elderly women living alone (40.3 %) was twice the share for men (20.0 %).

For other groups, there are smaller differences. Among young people aged 15 to 24, 8.9 % of women and 8.8 % of young men lived alone. The same applies for those living in a couple: 44.9 % of women and 48.1 % of men aged 15 or over in the EU lived in a couple.



Household types, 2020

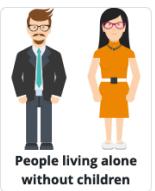
(Single adults aged 15 to 24, in % of population same age)



Young people
living alone



People living alone
with children



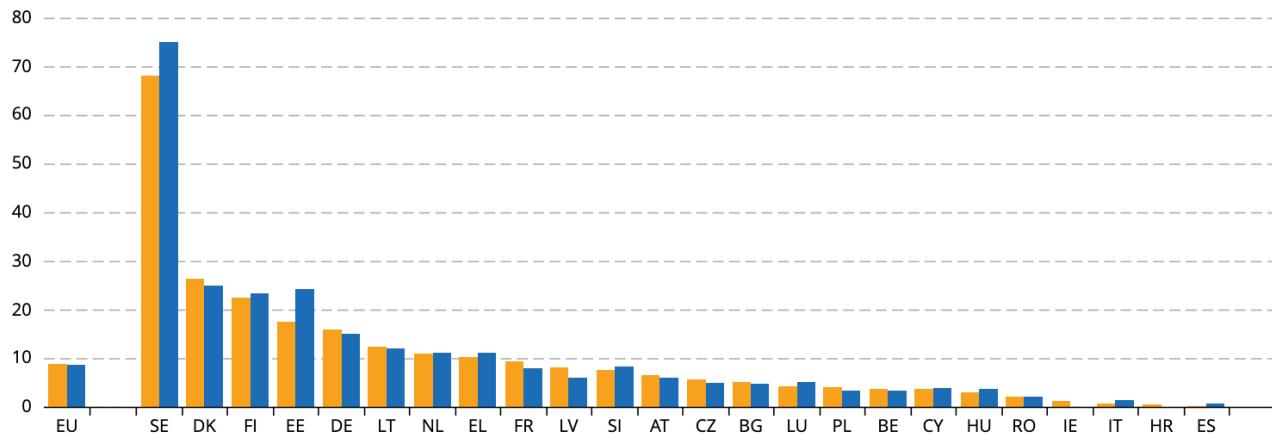
People living alone
without children



Elderly people
living alone



People living
in couples



Data for Malta, Portugal and Slovakia and data for men for Ireland and Croatia are not published due to small sample size.

Women Men

Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)



1.3 Health perception

Men are more likely than women to perceive their health as good

The way people perceive their health is influenced by a complex set of factors, among others environmental, cultural and socioeconomic conditions. Not surprisingly, the older you get, the lower is the perception of being in good health — this is the same for both women and men.

Looking at different age groups, it can be seen that for those aged 16 to 44, 87.5 % of women in the EU in 2020 felt they were in good health and 89.2 % of men. This decreased to 66.8 % of women and 69.4 % of men for those aged 45 to 64, and for those aged 65 and over to 38.2 % and 44.0 % respectively. In almost all Member States, a larger share of men than women had a perception of being in good health and the difference increased with age. It is also interesting to note that the difference between Member States also increased with age.

Self-perceived health: good or very good, 2020

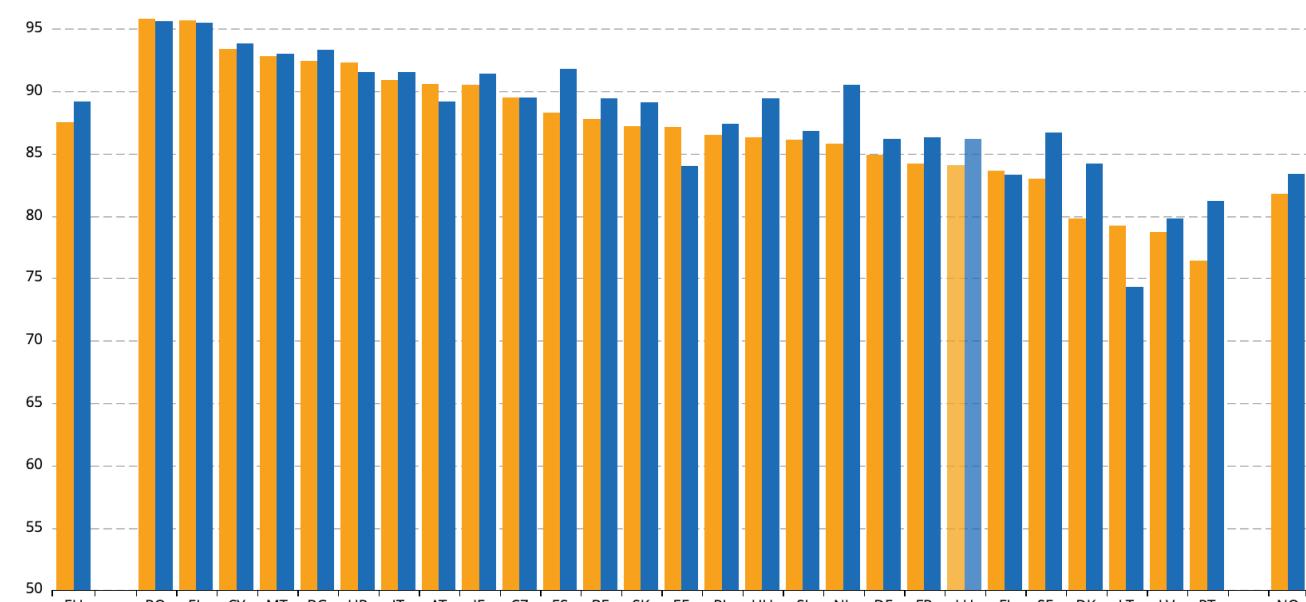
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(% of persons aged 16-44 feeling they are in good or very good health)

16-44 years

45-64 years

65 and over



Data refer to 2019 for Italy.

[Expand to full scale](#)

Women Men

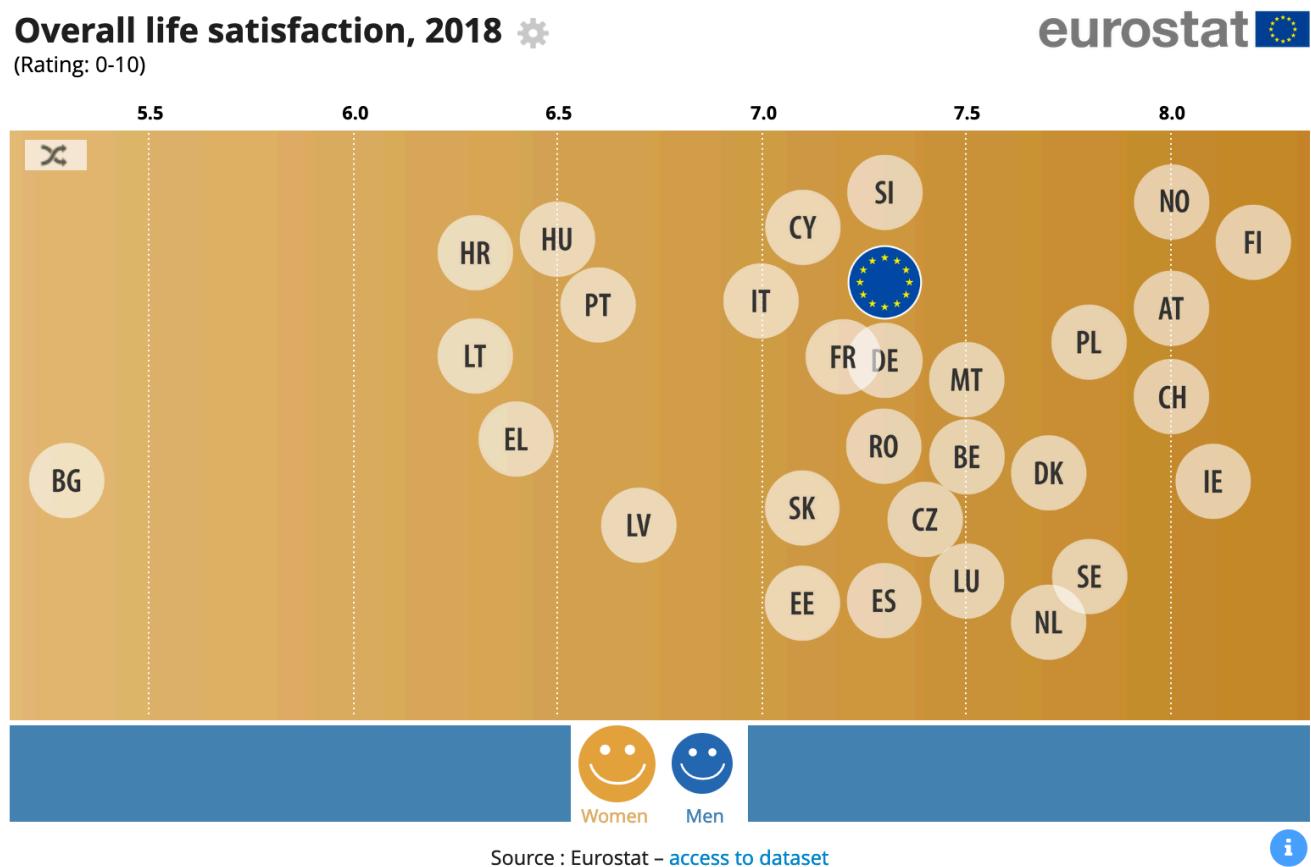


Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)

1.4 Life satisfaction

Women and men are almost equally happy with their lives

As mentioned in this chapter, there are large differences in the lives of women and men, however, when measuring life satisfaction, the perception is almost equal. On average in the EU, women aged 16 and over rated their life satisfaction as 7.3 on a scale from 0 to 10 and men 7.4 in 2018. In most of the Member States, the ratings were either equal or there was a difference of 0.1.





2. LEARNING & EARNING

2.1 Education

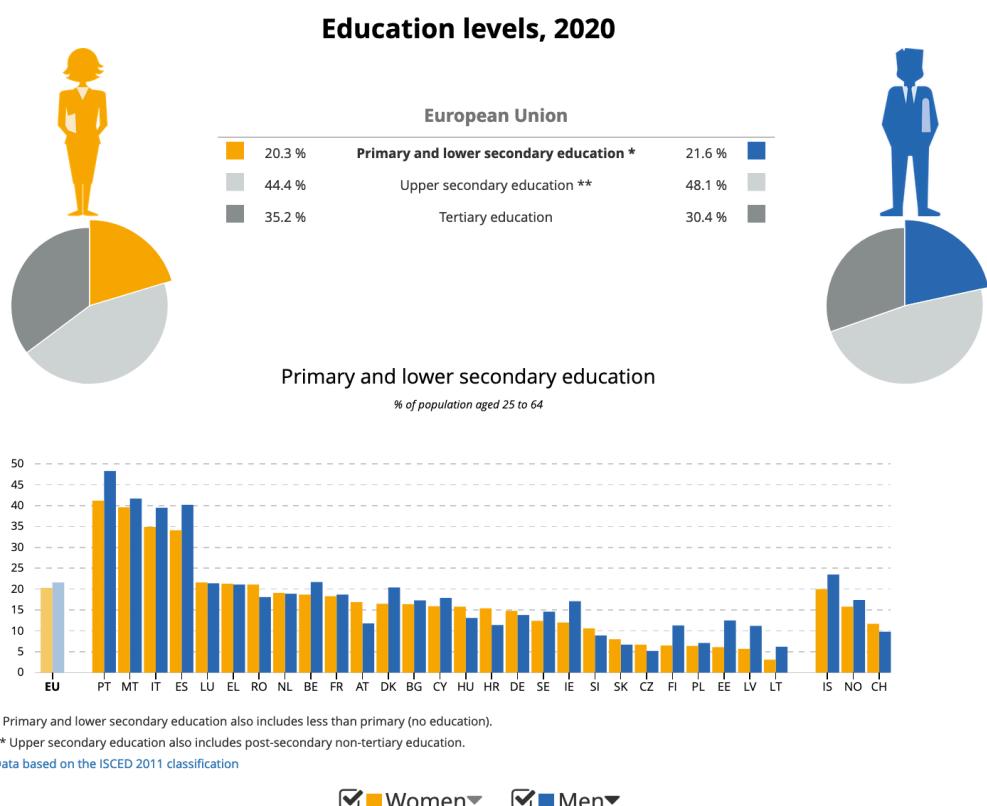
Higher proportion of women than men with a high education level

When looking at the level of education completed, there are hardly any differences between women and men in the EU with lower education level. However, for the higher levels different patterns can be seen.

Almost equal shares of women and men aged 25 to 64 in the EU (20 % of women and 22 % of men) had at most completed the low education level (lower secondary education at most) in 2020.

A smaller share of women (44 %) than men (48 %) in the EU had successfully completed at most the medium level of education (upper secondary education or post-secondary non-tertiary education). This pattern could be observed in almost all Member States.

When it comes to tertiary education, 35 % of women in the EU had completed this level, compared with 30 % of men. The share of women with tertiary education was higher than the corresponding share of men in almost all Member States, with the largest differences between women and men observed in the Baltic Member States as well as Finland, Sweden and Slovenia.



Source : Eurostat – [access to dataset](#)

2.2 Employment patterns

The more children, the larger the difference between the employment rates of women and men

On average, the employment rate of men is higher than that of women (73 % compared with 63 % in the EU in 2020). However, it is interesting to note that the difference between employment rates of women and men increases with the number of children. In the EU in 2020, the employment rate for women without children was 66 %, while it was 74 % for men. For women with one child, the rates increased and were 72 % for women and 85 % for men. For women with two children, the rate remained almost the same at 73 %, while the one for men increased to 91 %. For those with three or more children, the employment rate decreased and was 59 % for women, compared with 85 % for men. This pattern is observed in a large majority of Member States.

Almost a third of women in employment work part-time

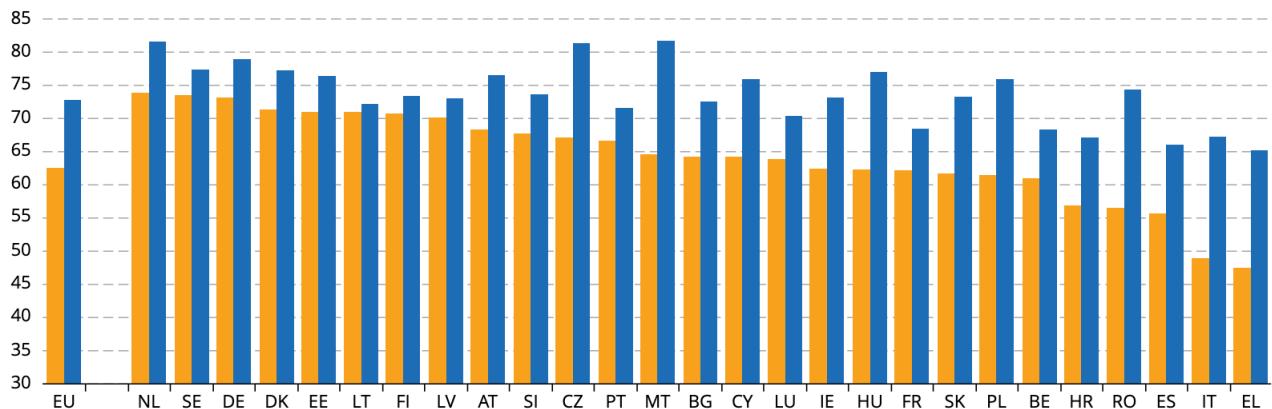
An important aspect of the reconciliation between work and family life is part-time work. This is, however, not equally spread between women and men: in the EU in 2020, 30 % of women in employment worked part-time, compared with 8 % of men. This differed among the Member States, with the highest shares of women working part-time in the Netherlands (76 %), Germany (48 %), Austria (47 %) and Belgium (40 %), and of men in the Netherlands (29 %), Denmark (15 %) and Sweden (14 %). The lowest share of both women and men working part-time was observed in Bulgaria (2 % for both women and men).

Larger share of women than men are unemployed

In the EU in 2020, the unemployment rate was 7.4 % for women and 6.8 % for men. In fifteen Member States, the unemployment rate was higher for women, in ten it was higher for men and in Cyprus and Sweden it was even. The largest differences between female and male unemployment rates, where the rate was higher for women than for men, were observed in Greece (19.8 % for women and 13.6 % for men) and Spain (17.4 % and 13.9 %). The largest differences for the opposite pattern, lower rates for women than for men, were observed in Latvia (7.1 % for women and 9.1 % for men) and Lithuania (7.7 % for women and 9.3 % for men).

Employment rate for working age population, 2020

(Employment rate of women/men aged 15 to 64, total)



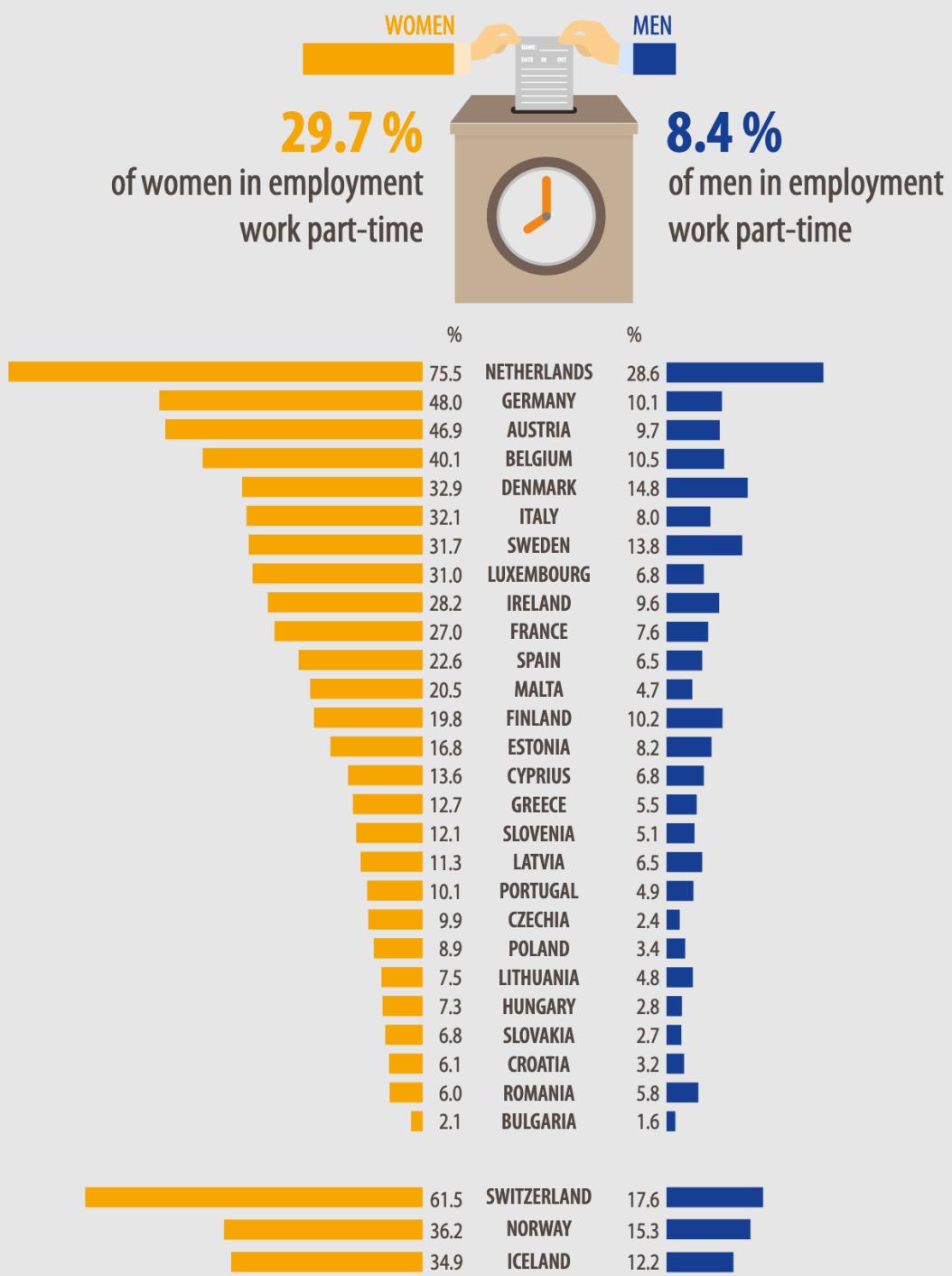
Expand to full scale

Women Men

Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)



Part-time workers



Data refer to 2020.
Source: Eurostat



Unemployment

Who has a higher rate?



Member States in which
women
have a higher unemployment rate

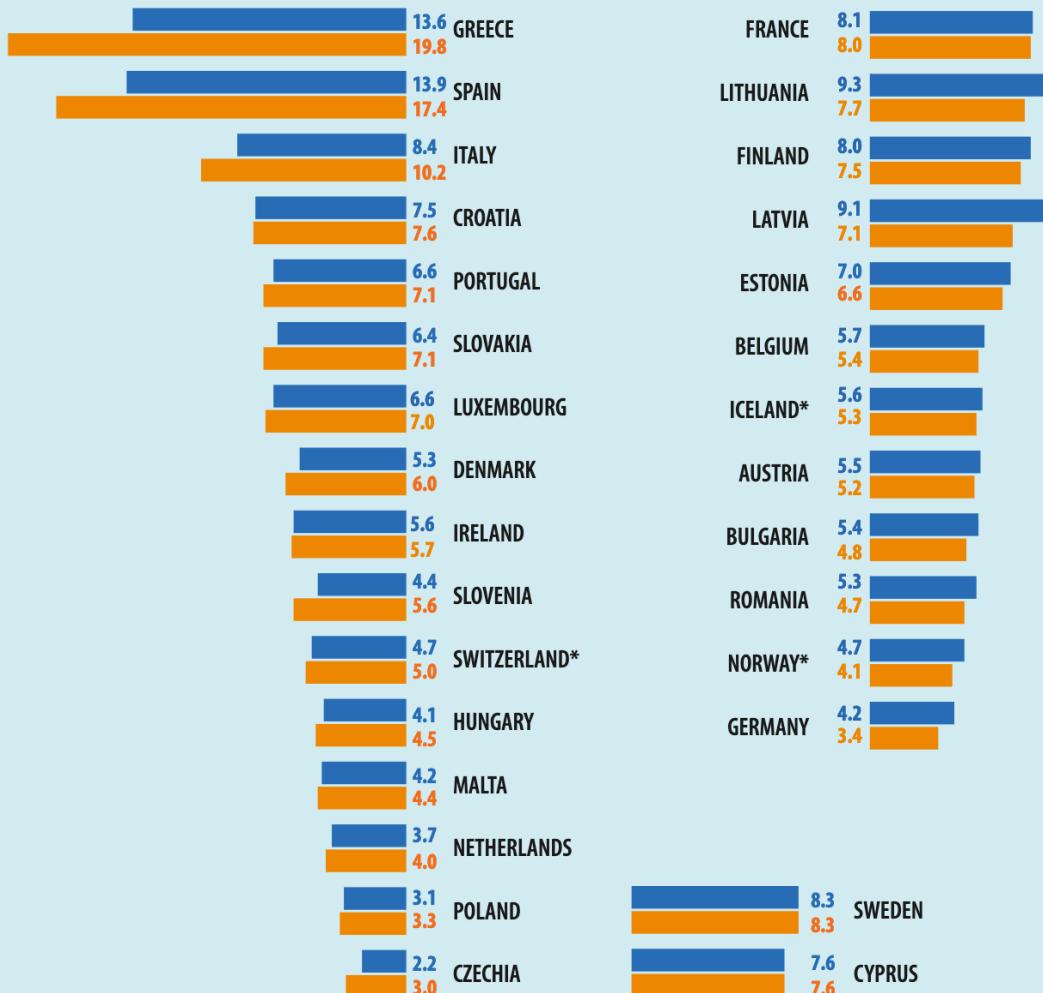
7.4 %



Member States in which
men
have a higher unemployment rate

6.8 %

% of active population



*Non-EU country.

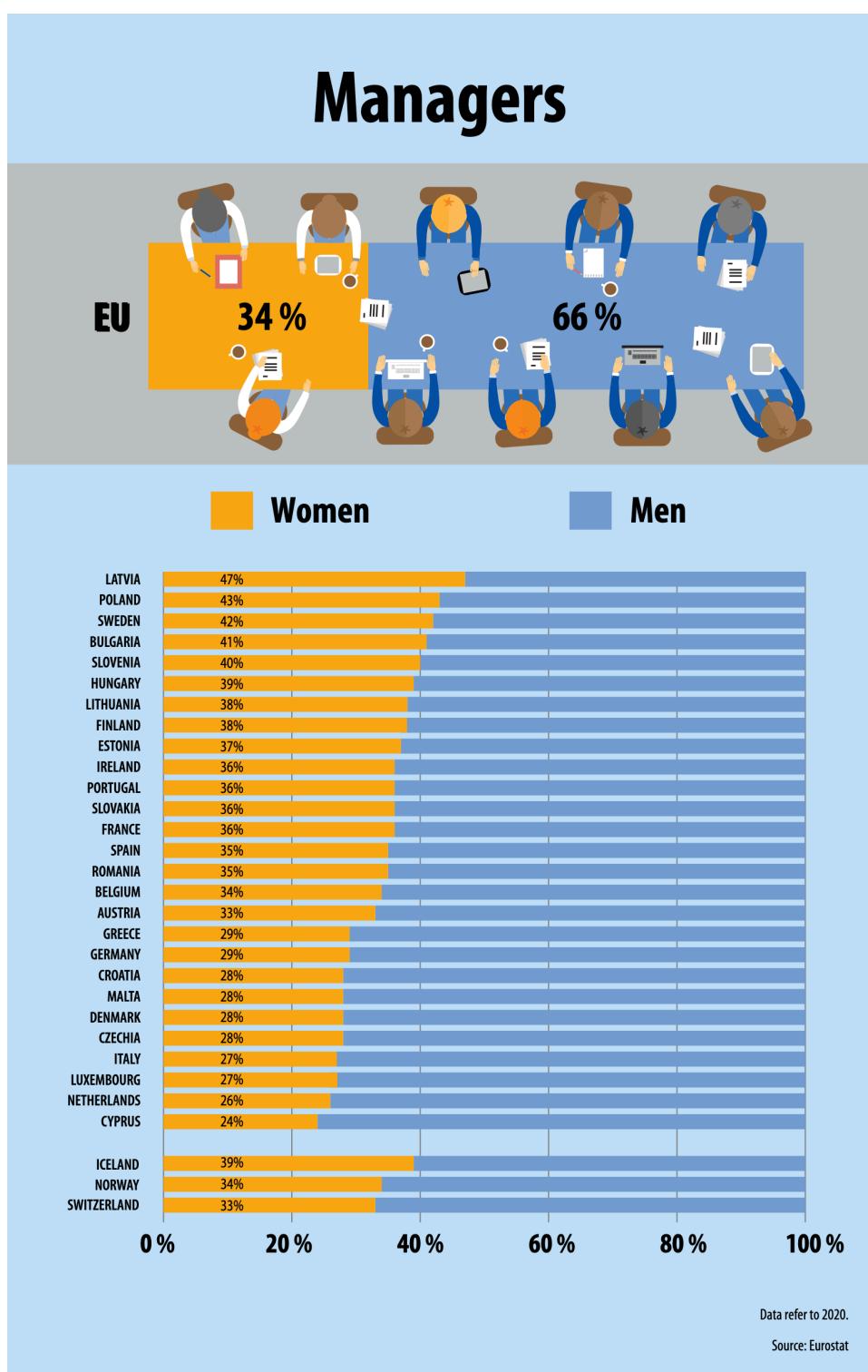
Data refer to 2020.

Source: Eurostat

2.3 Careers

Around a third of managers in the EU are women

When working, men generally occupy higher positions than women. For example, one can see that a third (34 %) of managers in the EU in 2020 were women. The share of women in this position was not over 50 % in any of the Member States: the largest proportions were observed in Latvia (47 %), Poland (43 %), Sweden (42 %), Bulgaria (41 %) and Slovenia (40 %). On the other hand, the smallest shares were found in Cyprus (24 %), the Netherlands (26 %), Luxembourg and Italy (both 27 %).



2.4 Earnings

Women earn on average 14 % less than men

In the EU in 2019, women earned 14.1 % less than men when comparing their average gross hourly earnings. On average, women earned less than men in all Member States, however this gender pay gap varies. The largest differences were observed in Estonia (21.7 %), Latvia (21.2 %), Austria (19.9 %), and Germany (19.2 %). On the other hand, the smallest differences in earnings between women and men were found in Luxembourg (1.3 %), Romania (3.3 %), Italy (4.7 %) and Belgium (5.8 %).

Largest differences in hourly earnings for managers

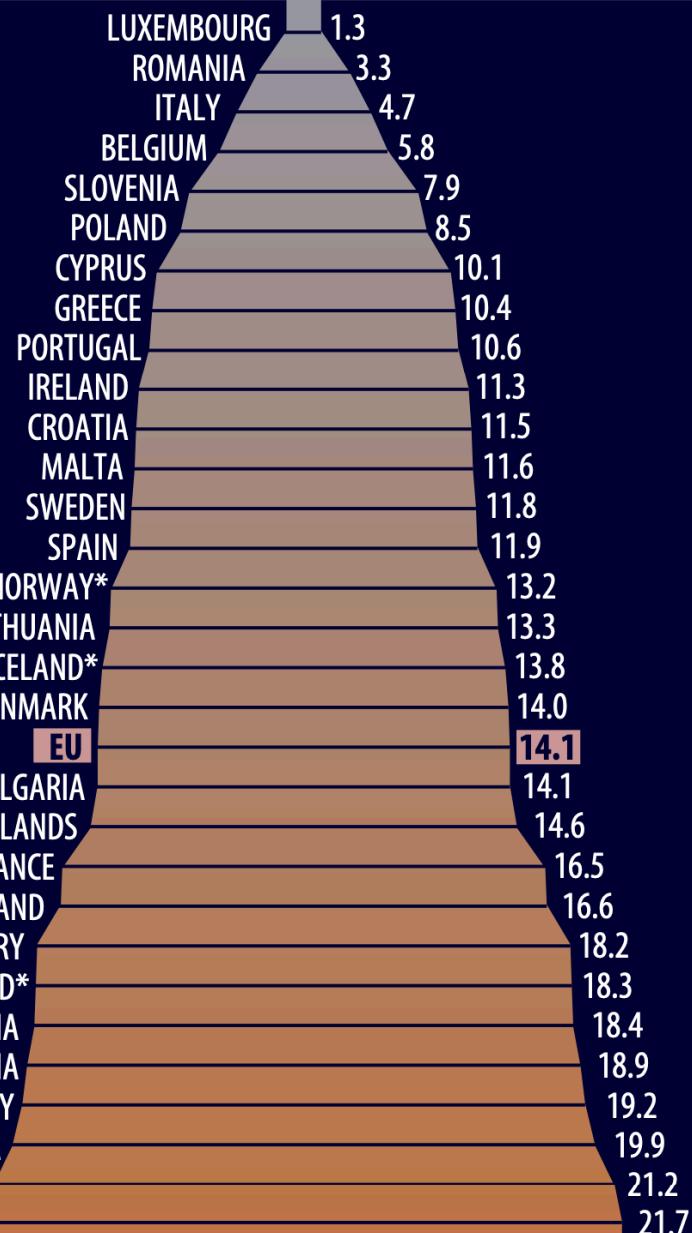
When comparing hourly earnings for different professions, in all nine groups of professions listed women earned less than men on average in the EU in 2018. This was also the case in all Member States, with very few exceptions. The profession with the largest differences in hourly earnings were managers. The smallest differences were observed for clerical support workers (office clerks, secretaries etc.) and service and sales workers, two of the professions with the lowest salaries.

Gender pay gap:

*How much less
do women earn
than men?*



*Difference between average gross hourly
earnings of male and female employees
(as % of male gross earnings)***



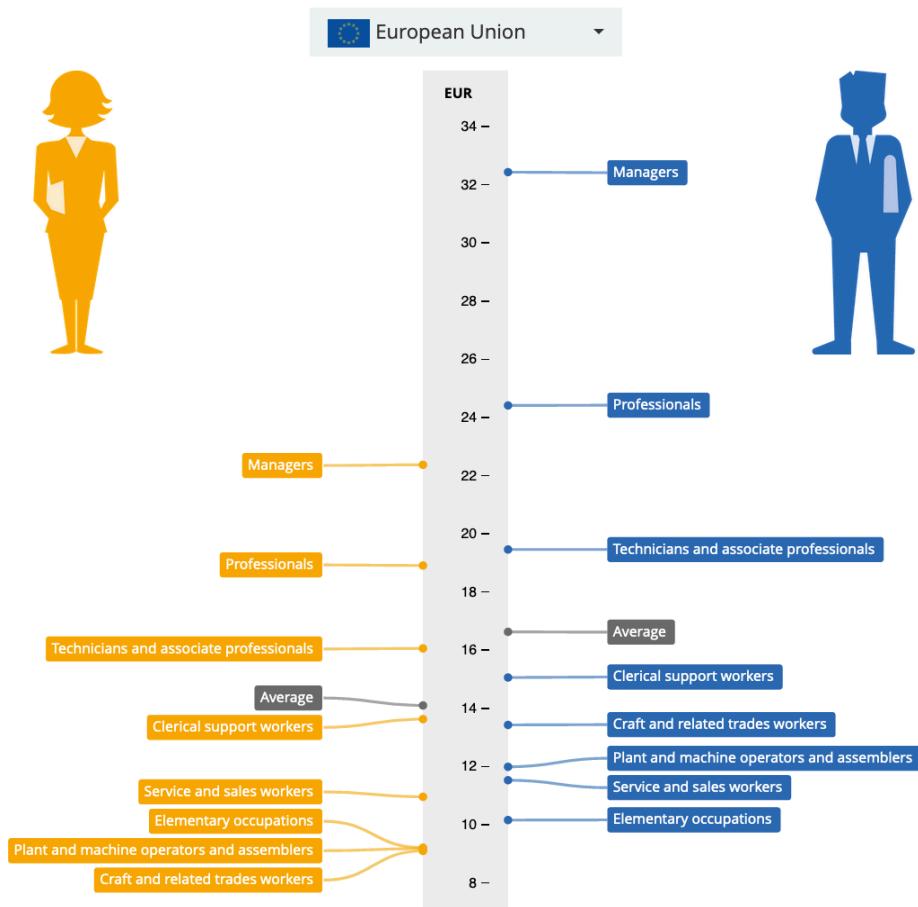
*Non-EU countries

**Whole economy: industry, construction and services except
public administration and defence as well as compulsory social security.
Data for enterprises with 10 employees or more for all countries except
Czechia and Iceland (enterprises with 1 employee or more).

Data refer to 2019.
Ireland, Greece, Iceland,
Norway, Switzerland:
data from 2018.

Source: Eurostat

Mean hourly wages by profession, 2018



Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)

Mean hourly earnings of men and women in the EU are calculated as the average of the earnings of each country weighted by the total (males + females) number of employees in that country.
[Further details about the professions](#)



3. EATING & SURFING

3.1 Nutrition habits and sports practice

Larger share of men than women in the EU drink alcohol and smoke...

When looking at consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or fruit and vegetables, there are large differences between women and men and also between Member States.

A larger share of men than women in the EU drink alcohol on a weekly (but not daily) basis (37 % of men aged 18 and over, compared with 22 % of women in 2019). Among the Member States, the shares for men ranged from 20 % in Lithuania and 21 % in Latvia to 57 % in the Netherlands, and for women from 6 % in Latvia and Lithuania to 41 % in the Netherlands.

A larger share of men than women in the EU are smokers (24 % of men aged 18 and over are daily smokers, compared with 16 % of women). The proportions varied for men from 8 % in Sweden to 39 % in Bulgaria and for women from 7 % in Sweden to 23 % in Hungary.

Unlike alcohol consumption and smoking, regular consumption of fruit and vegetables is considered an important element of a healthy and balanced diet. In the EU in 2019, 51 % of men ate one to four portions of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis, compared with 58 % of women. The shares for men varied from 21 % in Romania to 67 % in Belgium and for women from 27 % in Romania to 68 % in Spain.

... and even though they do sports more regularly...

Another component of a healthy life is regular physical activity. In the EU in 2014, 35 % of men spent 150 minutes or more per week on sports and non-work-related physical activities, compared with 25 % of women. The proportions ranged for men from 14 % in Romania to 55 % in Finland and for women from 4 % in Romania to 57 % in Denmark.

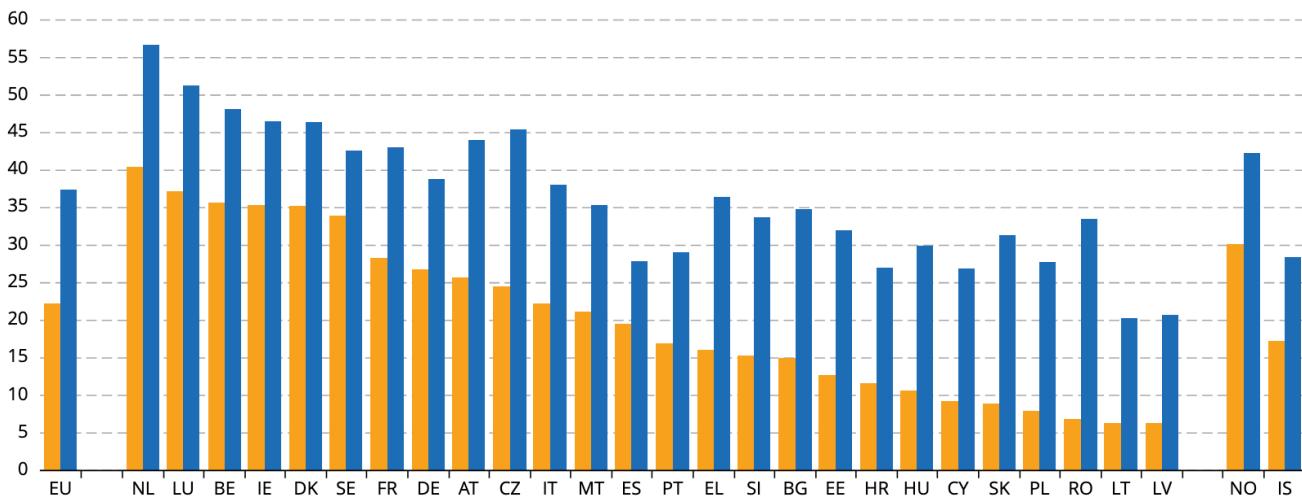
... a larger share are still overweight

All the factors mentioned above have an impact on weight. In the EU in 2019, 58 % of men were considered to be overweight (having a body mass index of 25 or over), compared with 45 % of women. The proportions among the Member States varied for men from 53 % in the Netherlands and 51 % in France to 72 % in Croatia, and for women from 36 % in Italy to 58 % in Croatia and 57 % in Malta.

Nutrition habits and sports practice, 2019

eurostat 

(% of women/men aged 18 and over consuming alcohol every week (but not daily))



Data not available for Finland.

 Women ▾  Men ▾



Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)

3.2 Internet habits

Women use the internet more for social networks and men more for reading the news

In 2020, women in the EU use the internet somewhat less than men (85 % of women aged 16 to 74 used the internet at least once a week in the last three months prior to the survey, compared with 87 % of men — see table for all Member States).

When looking at what the internet is used for, there was a smaller share of women than men in the EU reading the news online (73 % of women and 76 % of men who used the internet in the last three months prior to the survey) and who used internet banking (65 % of women and 67 % of men).

On the other hand, a higher share of women used the internet than men for telephone calls (73 % of women and 70 % of men), participating in social networks (67 % of women and 64 % of men) and seeking health information (71 % of women and 57 % of men).

For sending and receiving e-mails there were smaller differences (85 % of women and 86 % of men).

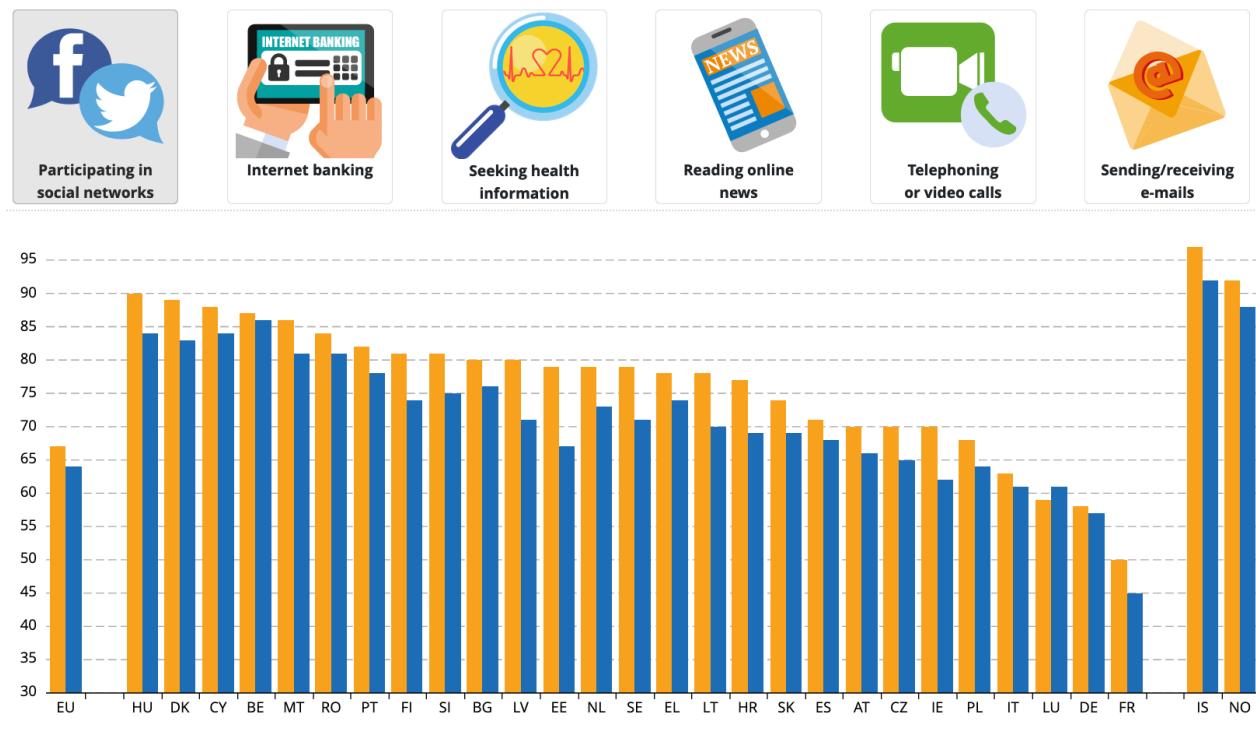
Larger share of women buying clothes online and men buying electronic goods online

Using the internet to shop online is just slightly less frequent among women than among men in 2020 (72 % of female internet users shopped online in the last twelve months prior to the survey, compared with 73 % of male — see table for all Member States). However, what is being bought differs between women and men. Among the internet users of the last twelve months prior to the survey, a much larger share of women than men bought clothes over the internet in the last three months (43 % of female internet users, compared with 32 % of male), while a much larger share of men bought electronic equipment or household appliances (8 % of female internet users and 14 % of male) and streamed films (17 % of female internet users and 21 % of male).

There were smaller differences for online purchases of rented accommodation (12 % of female internet users and 13 % of male) and for purchasing tickets for cultural and other events (14 % for both) there was no difference.

Internet activities, 2020

(Share of women/men aged 16 to 74 who used the internet for participating in social networks, in % of all women/men the same age who used the internet within the last three months prior to the survey)



Data refer to 2019 for France

[Expand to full scale](#)

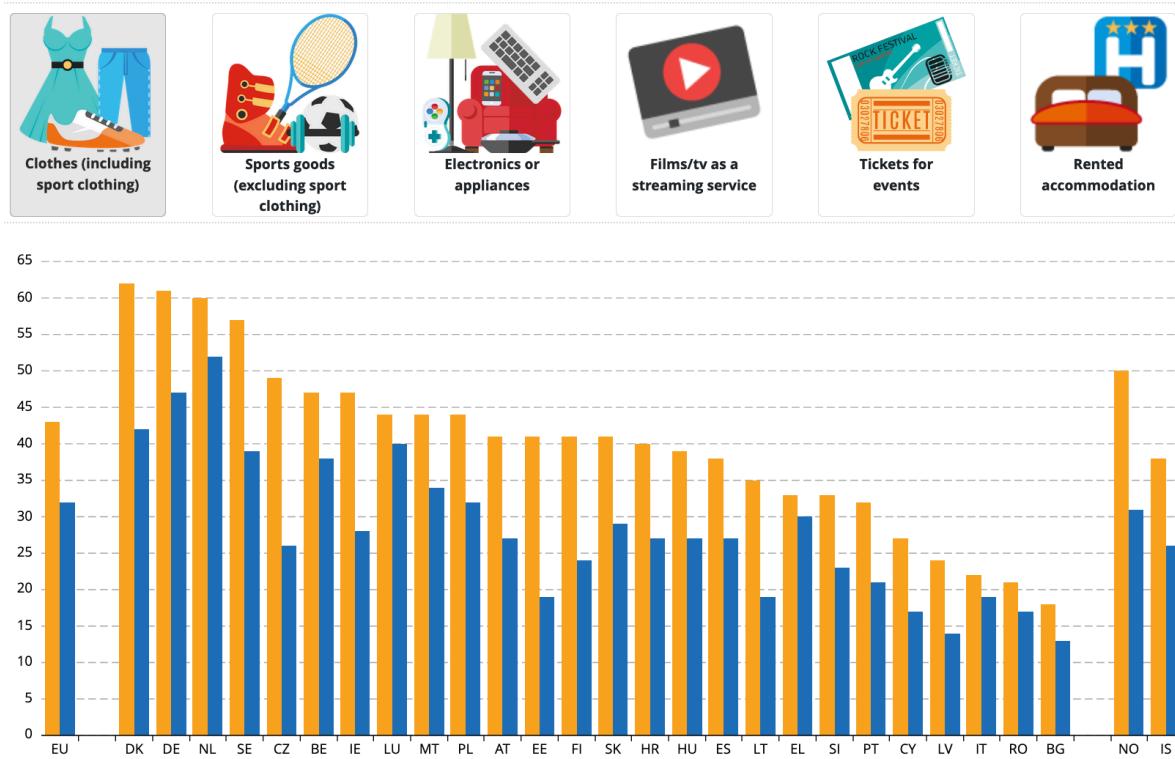
 Women  Men

Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)



Online shopping, 2020

(Share of women/men aged 16 to 74 who ordered clothes (including sport clothing), shoes or accessories online within the last three months prior to the survey, in % of all women/men the same age who used the internet within the last year)



Data for France not available

 Women  Men

Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)

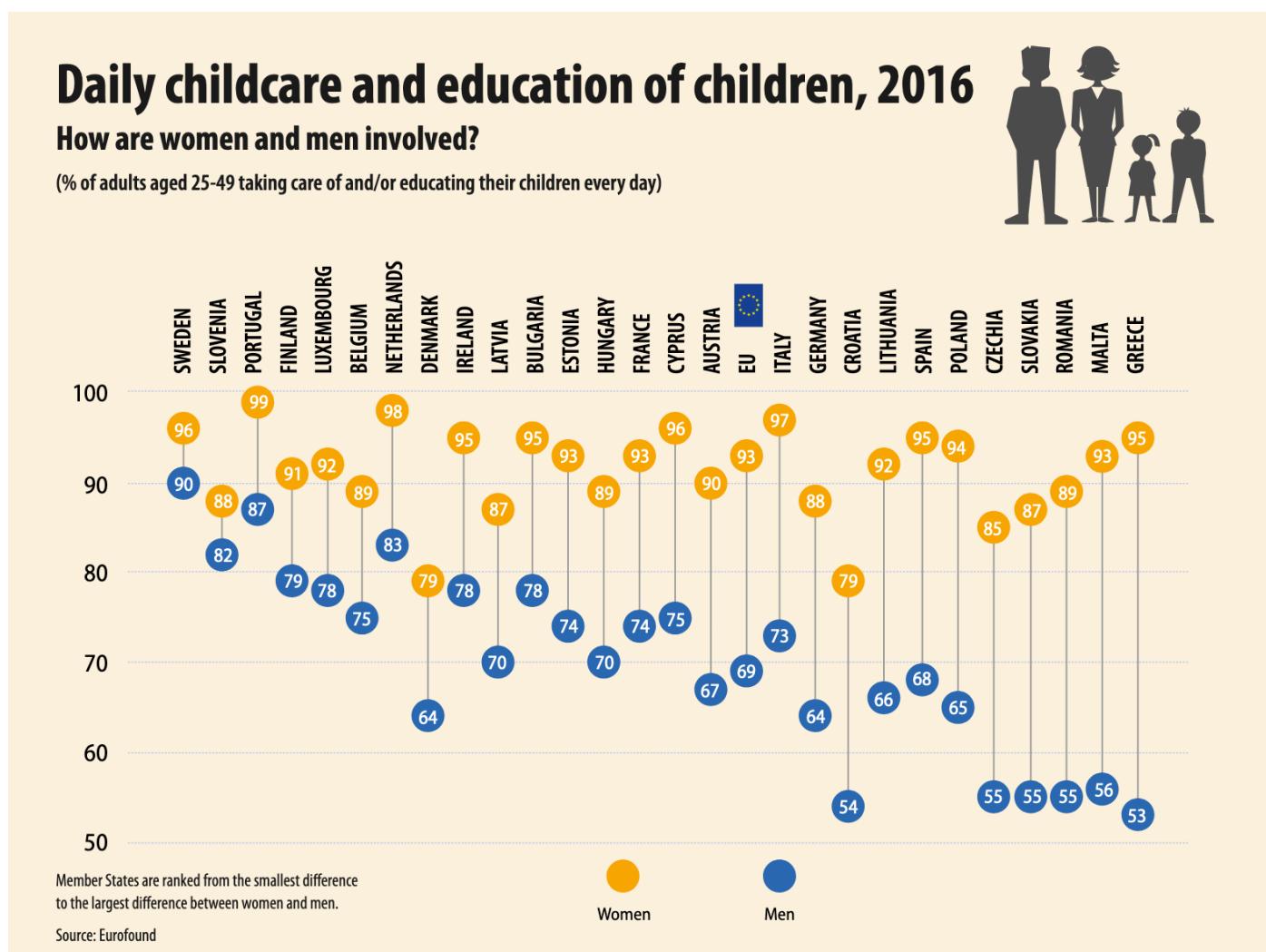


3.3 Childcare and housework

A much larger share of women than men do child care, housework and cooking

For all Member States, there is a much larger share of women doing child care, housework and cooking than men. In the EU in 2016, 93 % of women aged 25 to 49 (with children under 18) took care of their children on a daily basis, compared with 69 % of men. Among the Member States, the largest differences between women and men were observed in Greece (95 % of women and 53 % of men) and Malta (93 % and 56 %), while the smallest were found in Sweden (96 % of women and 90 % of men) and Slovenia (88 % and 82 %).

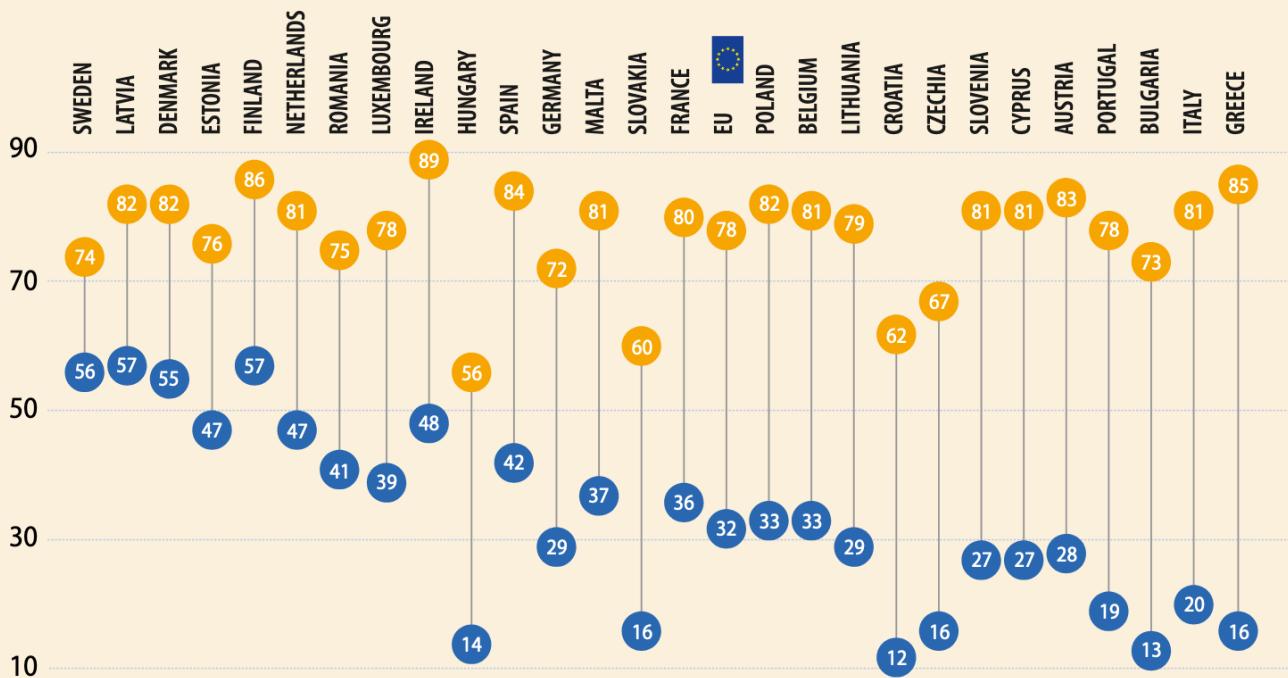
For housework and cooking, the differences are even larger. In the EU in 2016, 78 % of women cooked and/or did housework on a daily basis, compared with 32 % of men. The largest differences between women and men were found in Greece (85 % of women and 16 % of men) and Italy (81 % and 20 %), and the smallest in Sweden (74 % women and 56 % of men) and Latvia (82 % and 57 %).



Daily cooking and housework, 2016

How are women and men involved?

(% of adults aged 18 and over cooking and/or doing housework every day)



Member States are ranked from the smallest difference to the largest difference between women and men.
Source: Eurofound

Women

Men

FURTHER INFORMATION

The life of women and men in Europe is an interactive publication released by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, in collaboration with the National Statistical Institutes of the EU Member States and the EFTA countries.

Information on data

The European Union (EU) includes 27 EU Member States.

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Contact

If you have questions on the data, please contact the Eurostat User Support.

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