

Working conditions  
**Gender equality at work**





# Gender equality at work



European Foundation  
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**Authors:** Jorge Cabrita, Julie Vanderleyden, Isabella Biletta and Barbara Gerstenberger

**Research manager:** Jorge Cabrita

**Project team:** Barbara Gerstenberger, Isabella Biletta, Jorge Cabrita and Julie Vanderleyden

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**European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions**

**Telephone:** (+353 1) 204 31 00

**Email:** [information@eurofound.europa.eu](mailto:information@eurofound.europa.eu)

**Web:** [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu)

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

Despite the attention that has been paid to gender inequalities in labour markets – and the efforts made to tackle them – they still persist. This report aims to contribute to a better understanding of women’s and men’s working conditions in the EU, based on data from Eurofound’s European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). It follows up on previous Eurofound research on the topic and complements other research based on the same data source. The analysis uses Eurofound’s job quality framework to investigate important aspects of working life as experienced by women and men.

## Policy context

From the beginnings of European integration in 1957, the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ (Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) has been a priority, along with the absence of sex discrimination (within and outside the workplace (Article 19)) and equality between men and women (Articles 2 and 3(3)). Key policy documents on the issue include: the 2011–2020 European Pact for Gender Equality, which includes a call for action in the economic sphere; the European Commission’s Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016–2019 (a reference framework for action at all levels); the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in November 2017, which includes the issue of work–life balance and sharing of caring responsibilities; and, in line with this, the Directive on Work–Life Balance for Parents and Carers, from June 2019, which aims to increase the participation of women in the labour market and the take-up of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements.

Despite long standing policy recommendations, progress remains slow, raising concerns over the nature of the steps taken so far. The slowdown in economic growth has increased the risk for gender equality to slip down the agenda of Member States and stakeholders, reducing the efficiency of previous actions and measures.

## Key findings

The main dimensions of job quality do not seem to differ much between men and women. However, significant differences can be seen in various sub-dimensions, putting women in a relatively worse position on many features of job quality.

Men report higher levels of quantitative demands, while women are more likely to report exposure to emotional demands. Men tend to receive less support from colleagues and managers, while women are more exposed to adverse social behaviours. Access to training is relatively limited in less-skilled occupations, especially for women. Career prospects are slightly better overall for men, though the best are enjoyed by female business and science professionals.

Mixed occupations display better job quality and the smallest gender gaps. However, only about one-quarter of the workforce is in mixed occupations.

Male-dominated occupations, such as building and metal workers, and female ones, such as cleaners, display worse job quality. Occupations related to health and care (female-dominated occupations) fare relatively poorly regarding many dimensions of job quality. Men in these occupations score even worse on exposure to physical risks, emotional demands and adverse social behaviour.

The proportion of workers reporting psychosocial risks in sectors related to health and care has been increasing. This trend should continue to be monitored as these sectors will continue to expand due to ageing populations and growing mental health problems and chronic illnesses.

The report goes beyond the gender pay gap by analysing issues such as fair pay, variable forms of pay and whether workers can ‘make ends meet’. Even in senior positions, women are more likely to report being unfairly paid. Forms of pay such as company shares or performance-based payments are becoming more common, but the gender gap is widening to the detriment of women.

The proportion of men and women having a female manager has been increasing since 2005, although the majority of men and half of women still have an immediate manager of the same gender. Individuals with a female manager tend to report better management quality and more social support, but also greater exposure to adverse social behaviours.

Lone mothers report the lowest social environment scores. This reflects the strain of caring for others, which may not be matched by adequate support in the workplace. Lone parents, mothers in particular, are also much more likely to report difficulty making ends meet.

The clustering of jobs according to job quality reveals diverging gender profiles. The greatest difference is in a profile that differs in terms of size – much larger for men – and composition, labelled ‘active manual’ for men and ‘good environment’ for women. Such divergence highlights the gender segregation in the labour market and the importance of a gender perspective when assessing working conditions.

## Policy pointers

**Continuing to fight gender segregation:** Measures aimed at suppressing segregation in labour markets are still needed, from the European level to the workplace.

**Taking steps to ensure job quality for all:** There are important differences in men’s and women’s working conditions and job quality requiring specific attention from policymakers.

**Addressing gender stereotypes:** Increasing parity in the participation of men and women in different sectors and occupations would contribute to gender equality and improved job quality. This calls for addressing the stereotypes that lead to the persistence of gender segregation. European and/or national job quality strategies seeking to mainstream gender equality are needed.

### **Tackling the improvement of working conditions:**

EWCS data show many areas of improvement in the last 5 to 10 years. However, the reduction of gender gaps in those dimensions has been limited; more needs to be done – not least regarding the increase in psychosocial risks.

### **Working to reduce earnings-related gender**

**differences:** Differences go beyond the gender pay gap. Being fairly paid, being able to make ends meet and pay components received also form part of the whole picture. These issues could be addressed through combinations of measures at all levels. Vulnerable groups such as lone parents deserve special attention.

### **Continuing to assess the impact of working conditions on health and well-being for all:**

Research on the impact of working conditions on men’s and women’s health must continue. Data sources like the EWCS, allowing for comparison across EU Member States, must continue to monitor working conditions, occupational risks and job quality profiles, informing policymakers. Stakeholders, including social partners and public authorities, must continue or initiate talks on this subject.



# Introduction

*In 1919, the ILO adopted the first Conventions on women and work. ... While significant advances have taken place for women at work over the past century, there is no room for complacency.*

(ILO, 2019, p. 3)

Commitment to gender equality at work is a key priority across Europe – at a number of levels, from the company level to the European institutions. However, despite the attention paid to the issue of gender equality and the efforts made to realise it, gender inequalities – in particular, in employment and at work – persist across the EU.

Gender inequalities may take the form of labour market segmentation, gender employment gaps and gender pay gaps; these issues have been widely studied. However, they represent only part of the picture. Gender differences are also evident in the working conditions and job quality experienced by women and men once they are employed.

It is not easy to ascertain the extent of the differences, but data from Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) enable in-depth analysis of those aspects that differentiate women and men once they are employed. The main aim of this report is to make use of this data source (primarily EWCS 2015) to better understand women's and men's working conditions in the EU. It follows up on previous Eurofound research on the same topic and complements, and is complemented by, other similar research focused on, for example, working time patterns, work-life balance and workers' health. The analysis of EWCS data from a gender perspective is an important contribution to the already vast research about gender equality in employment and the labour market. Its added value lies in the opportunity to go beyond analysis of the participation of men and women based on variables such as employment status, type of contract, remuneration and working hours.

Taking a gender equality perspective, this analysis uses Eurofound's job quality framework to perform an in-depth investigation of the key aspects experienced by women and men at work. Job quality is central to workers' health and well-being as well as for their work-life balance. Therefore, addressing differences in job quality offers a practical route to improving the situation of women and men at work and moving towards gender equality.

The report starts by addressing the current policy context in terms of gender equality in the EU and underlining the relevance of using job quality as a point of entry for gender equality at work. The most

important considerations regarding the data used in the analysis and the underlying conceptual framework are briefly addressed. A summary of Eurofound's job quality framework is also provided. Throughout this report, the term 'gender' is used, rather than sex. This derives from the coding by interviewers for the EWCS, which reflects the social presentation of gender by the interviewees.

The main part of the report is organised in chapters corresponding to the seven dimensions of the job quality framework: physical environment; work intensity; working time quality; social environment; skills and discretion; prospects; and earnings. Each of these chapters addresses the main differences and similarities between men and women in the dimensions and respective sub-dimensions. Whenever possible, trends are also presented.

The analysis of the various job quality dimensions from a gender perspective is followed by a brief investigation of the job quality profiles of women and men obtained from the EWCS data. The main question is: to what extent do men and women differ in terms of their job quality when all the dimensions and sub-dimensions are considered simultaneously?

Finally, the main conclusions are presented, followed by policy pointers that indicate the main areas of concern, suggest which actors should intervene and how, and highlight considerations for effective policy measures to improve gender equality.

## European-level policy context

Fighting inequalities and guaranteeing equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men in labour markets and at work has been a long-standing policy of European institutions. Since its inception in 1957, the European Union has promoted the 'equal pay for equal work' principle (Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), the absence of sex discrimination, both within and outside the workplace (Article 19) and equality between men and women (Articles 2 and 3(3)).

While gender equality in European labour markets remains a general priority, most of the opinions and proposals in the field address a variety of issues, from combating gender stereotypes to empowering women in society. It has been acknowledged that gender equality is a multifaceted issue that needs to be addressed from various perspectives. Indeed, acting efficiently on labour markets requires that the overall situation of individuals, at both professional and personal levels be addressed. It also requires the involvement of all the relevant parties – public

authorities, social partners, employers and workers themselves – at the various levels of intervention (European, national, sectoral and local).

Key among the many recent policy documents on the issue, the European Commission's Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016–2019 was devised as a 'reference framework for increased effort at all levels, be they European, national, regional or local' (European Commission, 2015, p. 2). It follows on from the 2011–2020 European Pact for Gender Equality, which indicates five key – and still relevant – areas for action:

- equal economic independence for women and men
- equal pay for work of equal value
- equality in decision-making
- dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence
- promoting gender equality beyond the EU

In March, 2020, the European Commission adopts the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2024.

The European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in November 2017, restates the European principles of 'gender equality' and 'equal opportunities'. It also highlights the importance of women and men having 'equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way', ensuring work–life balance for all. Against this background, the Directive 2019/1158/EU on Work–Life Balance for Parents and Carers, adopted in June 2019, aims to undertake a broader approach and delivers part of the 'package ... addressing women's under-representation in employment and [to] support their career progression through improved conditions to reconcile their working and private duties' (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2017, p. 1). Considering several 'gender gaps' – for instance, in employment, pay and pensions – the directive aims at favouring adequate work–life balance policy and allowing provisions for men so that they can assume an equal share of caring responsibilities with women (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2019a).

Following a similar path, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), in its own-initiative opinion on gender equality issues, addresses gender equality across several fields: the economy, education and training, women and poverty, human rights, and women in power, decision-making and the media. It stresses

*that gender equality is a societal issue and that only a gender equal society can be economically and socially strong. It is therefore an economic and social imperative that women and men are treated equally and given equal opportunities.*

(EESC, 2019)

Appropriate measures should be taken in the above-mentioned fields to achieve this goal. The European social partner organisations SMEunited, BusinessEurope and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have also, over the years, recognised the importance of gender equality for fair and well-functioning labour markets, adopting a broad approach (ETUC, 2015; BusinessEurope, undated; SMEunited, undated). Among their main initiatives, the following are worth highlighting: the ETUC annual 8 March survey, monitoring the gender balance in trade union decision-making bodies; the Toolkit for Gender Equality, a joint EU-level initiative by employer organisations and trade unions adopted in 2014; and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for 2019, aiming to help the European Commission prepare and implement activities promoting equal opportunities for women and men (European Commission, 2008).

In addition, several sectoral social partner organisations have developed actions to support gender equality in their field. The variety of actions and issues tackled, some of which are mentioned below, is significant.

First, some sectoral organisations have embarked upon training. With the aim of encouraging 'women at the workplace to participate more in trade union life, to empower them as future union activists and to enable their participation in collective bargaining and negotiation bodies', the European Training Foundation (ETF) has, over several years, developed a gender equality training package with several modules and a training kit on gender equality in the transport sector (ETF, undated).

Second, some organisations have stressed the importance of having access to better knowledge and data to devise more efficient strategies. The European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) has developed a multilayer project, running over two years (2019–2020), which aims to

*address sexual harassment and violence at work in the sectors [of] agriculture, food & drinks, hotels & restaurants (Horeca), contract catering and domestic work, by increasing the knowledge about the scope and the impact of sexual harassment and violence at the workplaces in the EFFAT sectors.*

(EFFAT, 2019, p. 2)

One of the first steps towards achieving this objective is 'collecting information about policies and activities of national member organisations to fight sexual harassment and violence, and about practices in other sectors [and] companies' (EFFAT, 2019, p. 2). Discussions and actions are also foreseen 'in the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees (SSDC), in the cooperation with employers' associations and [in European Works Councils] of transnational companies' (EFFAT, 2019, p. 2).

A third sectoral-level approach involves sharing practices within the field. In the context of the sectoral social dialogue for local and regional government workers, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) – both European social partner organisations in the sector – have discussed and developed a number of joint initiatives on gender equality (EPSU, undated). In December 2018, the members ‘assessed progress of the CEMR-EPSU Guidelines to draw up Gender Equality action plans’ (EPSU, 2018). They shared local- and regional-level implementation practices and discussed ‘how to tackle gender differences in employment contracts based on data that were presented by Eurofound during the meeting’.

Finally, sectoral organisations have used policy debate as an opportunity to support gender equality. The Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff (Eurocadres; affiliated to ETUC), for example, submitted a policy document highlighting its ‘overall stand on pay gap challenges of women in professional and managerial positions’ in the context of the public consultation relating to the implementation of the EU Treaty’s ‘equal pay for equal work or work of equal value’ principle, launched by the European Commission in early 2019 (Eurocadres, 2019).

These numerous positions and strategies suggest that European institutions both have a greater awareness of the gender equality issue and recognise that it must remain on the agenda. This approach is in line with the EESC’s opinion that ‘effective implementation of EU gender equality policies ... is also the best collective response to combat the discriminatory and misogynistic populist movements that are currently challenging democratic societies’ (EESC, 2019).

## Challenges to progress

As 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, ‘it is only relevant to review the progress made across the EU in the quest to achieve gender equality’ (European Commission, 2018c). Indeed, several real improvements have been made, such as the increased participation of women in employment and the reduction of the gender pay gap. However, great concern has been expressed by several actors as to the nature and scope of the steps taken so far, as the following EESC statement illustrates: ‘at the current rate, it will take over 100 years to achieve gender equality in the EU’ (EESC, 2019). Clearly, not enough has been achieved in real terms, and the situation is not changing as fast as it should given the number and variety of policies already implemented.

As early as 2006, the Recast gender equality directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and the Council restated the need to improve the ‘effective implementation of the principle of equal treatment’, asking for ‘appropriate procedures to be put in place’ (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006). Article 1 of the directive contains provisions to implement the principle of equal treatment in relation to the following:

- access to employment, including promotion, and to vocational training
- working conditions, including pay
- occupational social security schemes

Several factors pose potential challenges to the smooth implementation of policies relating to gender equality: first, the complexity of the issue. Indeed, numerous areas are involved, including:

*economic empowerment of women (employment, work-life balance, social rights, care), education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women, women’s NGOs and key areas of the institutional and policy framework within the EU and its Member States.*

(EESC, 2019)

Beyond the gender pay gap, issues such as employment gaps or pension gaps have also been highlighted. Each area must be explored and then addressed in relation to the overall objective of gender equality.

Furthermore, efforts in this area need to be sustained over time in order for gender equality to be achieved. As several examples show, any slowdown in economic growth increases the risk of gender equality slipping down the agenda of Member States and of various stakeholders, including employers and workers. As the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men states, gender equality is still ‘not considered in a systematic manner across the budgetary process’ despite the fact that ‘gender budgeting [is] a transformative tool that strengthens coherence between government budgets and gender equality objectives by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent’ (European Commission, 2018c). Moreover, some Member States are facing the additional obstacle of movements against women’s rights.

Finally, to ensure that gender equality is fully realised, it is crucial to go beyond the macroeconomic level to the individual level – the individual’s actual experience of the job. From research carried out previously as well as through the analysis of successive editions of EWCS data, the hypothesis is that gender matters in terms of working conditions. However, the differences and similarities between men and women at work are neither straightforward nor linear.

The patterns vary according to the dimension studied – for example, access to training, autonomy over working time or exposure to adverse social behaviour. They also depend on other variables, including country, sector and occupation.

In order to have a well-rounded perspective, it is crucial to highlight that gender inequality does not only affect women. Both men and women can be confronted with specific problems linked to their individual characteristics and circumstances, as well as work organisation and working conditions.

Exploring whether gender is or can be a determinant of how individuals experience their activity at work remains complex; however, this step is paramount, especially in ensuring that gender equality applies to the quality of both jobs and working conditions.

## Job quality for all

The issue of whether and to what extent gender impacts the experience of work and working conditions is particularly relevant when considering the importance of job quality for all citizens and workers. It is also a central concept in devising policies, whether at national or company level.

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the EU developed the 2020 strategy for ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’. Also, according to the Council Recommendation on Broad Guidelines for the Economic Policies of the Member States and of the Union, it underlined the need for ‘ensuring effective functioning of the labour markets through investing’ in, among other things, ‘appropriate skills development, rising job quality and fighting segmentation’ (Council of the European Union, 2010). Member States are also advised to ‘take into account the gender perspective in all these policies’.

Eurofound has analysed job quality on the basis of the seven indices mentioned above. These indices reflect the multidimensional nature of the concept of job quality. They also highlight the fact that each dimension – within its respective index – has an independent influence, that may be positive or negative, on workers’ health and well-being (Eurofound, 2012b, 2017c).

It is particularly important to keep in mind that these indices are developed at the level of the job – that is, on the basis of the worker’s direct experience of their working activity. It is also worth noting that various job quality features that are beneficial for workers are also positively associated with organisational performance, productivity and innovation. Research indicates that improving job quality is associated with, for example, reduced level of sickness absence and minimised loss of productivity due to working while sick (presenteeism) (Goetzel et al, 2004; Sainsbury, 2007; EU-OSHA, 2014). It also reports that ‘job quality contributes to developing organisational commitment and motivation among workers, as well as shaping a climate that is supportive of creativity and innovation’ (Eurofound, 2017c, p. 36).

Previous analysis of EWCS 2015 data has underlined key issues for men and women regarding job quality, with reference to the seven indices (Eurofound, 2017c). It found that women and men fare differently in relation to job quality: women score lower in terms of earnings, but have a higher score for physical environment and working time quality. Men score by one index point higher for both prospects, and skills and discretion; however, they also score one point higher for work intensity (higher scores on this index are less favourable for workers). For social environment, men and women have the same scores. The current research aims to deepen the analysis of each index and, in addition, study some of the sub-indices to examine and compare how men and women fare in terms of these measures.

# 1 | Data and methodology

## EWCS: Characteristics and themes

The main data source for this report is the EWCS, one of the main Eurofound tools in place to achieve its objective of ‘shaping and implementing policies concerning the improvement of living and working conditions, devising employment policies, and promoting the dialogue between management and labour’ (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2019b). The EWCS has been carried out every five years since 1991, and its main objectives are to:

- measure working conditions across European countries on a harmonised basis
- analyse relationships between different aspects of working conditions
- identify groups at risk and issues of concern, as well as areas of progress
- monitor trends over time
- contribute to European policy development, in particular on quality of work and employment issues

To date, there have been six editions of the survey, the last of which was carried out in 2015. This edition covered 35 European countries, including the 28 Member States of the EU (the EU28) and the five EU candidate countries – Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey – as well as Norway and Switzerland.

The EWCS sample is representative of individuals aged 15 and over (apart from in Bulgaria, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom – UK – where the sample is representative of those aged 16 and over) living in private households, in employment and who did at least one hour of work for pay or profit during the week preceding the interview. The minimum sample size per country was 1,000, except for Poland (1,200), Italy (1,400), France (1,500), the UK and Slovenia (both 1,600), Germany and Turkey (both 2,000), Belgium (2,500) and Spain (3,300).<sup>1</sup>

In each country, a multistage, stratified random sampling design was used. Individual sampling frames were used in 5 countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway,

Portugal and Switzerland) and address registers in 11 (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK). In the other countries, where no high-quality registers could be accessed, addresses were selected following a random procedure that was separate from the interviewing stage. The survey interviews were carried out face to face using computer-assisted personal interviewing in people’s homes.<sup>2</sup> The average interview duration was 45 minutes. The overall response rate was 42.5%.

The EWCS interviews workers – employees and the self-employed – who are seen as the best-placed respondents to provide information about themselves, as well as a precise description of the key characteristics of their work. The EWCS coverage in terms of themes is very comprehensive and includes: job and worker characteristics, employment conditions, working time duration and organisation, work–life balance, work organisation, exposure to physical and psychosocial risks, the intensity of work and pace determinants, skill use and autonomy, learning and training, worker participation and representation, the social environment at work, remuneration and job (in)security, engagement and motivation, and health and well-being.

The scope and range of the EWCS questions have expanded over time with the support and guidance of Eurofound stakeholders (governments of the EU Member States, national workers’ representative organisations and national employers’ representative organisations) through dedicated advisory committees. This expansion also built on lessons learned from previous editions of the survey, reviews of the research and policy agenda in the fields of working conditions and job quality, and a comparative analysis of national and other working conditions surveys.

The 2015 edition of the EWCS revisited questions around quality of management, circumstances and the heterogeneity of self-employment, place of work, restructuring and change, employee representation in the workplace, working time preferences and sustainability of work. It also explored some new areas by looking for the first time at workers with chronic health problems, sleeping problems, social climate, work–family conflicts and levels of engagement in work.

1 These figures represent the planned sample size for each country. The actual sample size was greater in Belgium, Slovenia and Spain.

2 Some interviews took place in other locations at the request of the correspondent. This arrangement was authorised only in the case of the self-employed. The number of cases in which this occurred was very limited.

In the EWCS, 'gender' is coded by the interviewer at the beginning of each survey interview. In these circumstances, a legitimate question is whether what is being coded is actually 'gender' or 'sex'. Administrative data, associated with official documents and registries, typically record 'sex' or, in other words, biological make-up. On the other hand, 'gender' relates to how people feel about and present themselves. When the interviewers observe the interviewees, they record what they see, which is most likely a social, as opposed to biological, expression. For this reason, the word 'gender' is used throughout this report.

The analysis performed for this report used EWCS data mostly from 2015 but also from previous years when relevant and possible, from the EU28 only. Chapter 2 (which looks at gender patterns in employment) and Chapter 10 (which looks at job quality profiles) refer to workers in general – both employees and self-employed individuals. Chapters 3 to 9 refer solely to employees.

## Conceptual framework

Analysing working conditions and job quality through a gender equality perspective is a complex task. First, it is important to acknowledge that given the uniqueness of each individual, people's experiences at work are, from the start, very different from one person to another. Furthermore, the gender division in labour markets does not refer to homogeneous distinct groups of women on the one hand and men on the other. Several studies (for example, Eurofound, 2013a) point to more significant differences between women across occupations than between men and women in the same occupation. It is well known that the experience of work is different for women and men, the differences being the result of a multiplicity of factors, such as cultural and societal role models, family structures and institutional organisations, as well as education, qualifications, occupational choices and so on. Therefore, the analysis of gender equality at work must take all these aspects into account.

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), gender equality is embodied by 'equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys'. It

*does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.*

(EIGE, undated)

From another perspective, it means that the interests, needs, preferences and priorities of women and men are taken into consideration by recognising the diversity of different groups among women and men.

Gender inequality, on the other hand, is defined by EIGE not as the absence of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities, but as

*[l]egal, social and cultural situation[s] in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.*

(EIGE, undated)

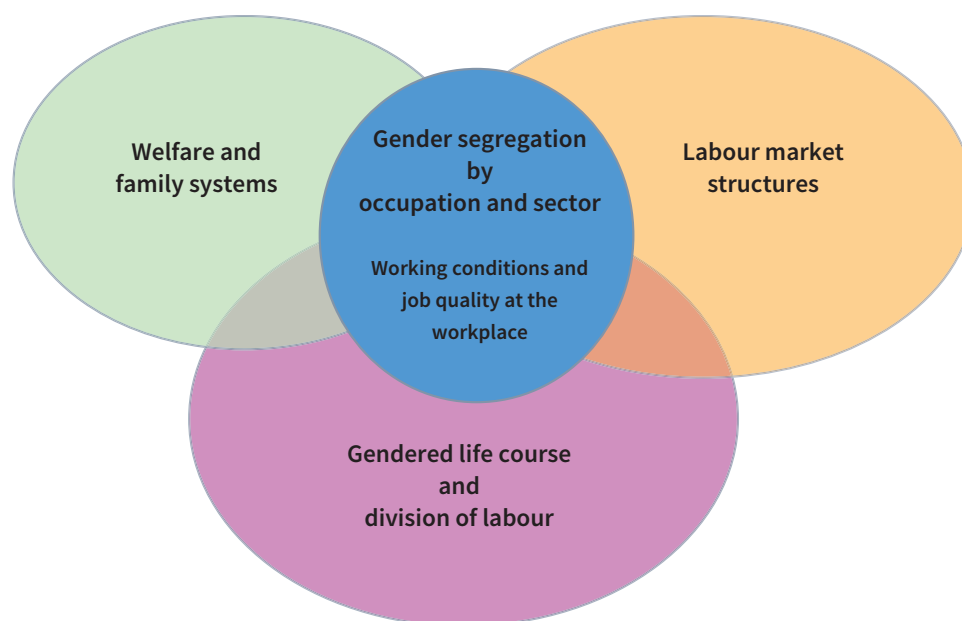
These situations affect status in all areas of life in society, public or private, in the labour market or in the household. Against this backdrop, this study touches upon the gender inequalities found in the workplace by looking at the way people experience work in its varied dimensions.

The reality behind gender differences in the labour market is complex. One must look at the broader social processes behind the gendered division of labour to understand the roots of gender differences in the labour market and how these are shaped and maintained (Steinmetz, 2012). Factors influencing gender segregation are manifold and interact with each other. As suggested in Figure 1, gender segregation is at the intersection of three broad domains: general economic conditions and the organisation of the labour market; welfare state provisions (and also the role of women and men in the private sphere in terms of their domestic work and care activities); and the gendered life course. Given that those factors differ between countries, it is to be expected, as previous studies also conclude, that gender segregation may take on different forms in different countries (Fagan and Rubery, 1999; Steinmetz, 2012).

The division of labour is first and foremost defined by policies regarding the organisation of the welfare state, including, among others, social, family and tax policies (Kreimer, 2004). These policies tend to have a normative outlook on the role of men and women in the labour market and in the household (Strohmeier, 2002). Welfare provisions influence whether and to what degree the responsibilities of paid and unpaid work can be juggled by women and men. Differences in welfare state provisions are an important factor in understanding the differences in women's experience of employment between countries (Fagan and Rubery, 1999).

The configuration of welfare systems and the organisation of the labour markets influence workers' will and ability to take on the burden of both paid and unpaid work. Depending on the view of gender roles, some countries enable men and women to form dual-earner households, while other welfare provisions and labour market conditions tend to push women to take on a carer role with men having the role of main breadwinner (Hook and Pettit, 2016).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Eurofound, 2013a

Labour markets are structured according to wage rules, collective bargaining, working-time arrangements and vocational training opportunities (Grimshaw et al, 2017). However, these regulations may hinder or facilitate equal opportunities for and the equal value of men and women in the labour market (Fagan and Rubery, 1999). In addition, these practices influence work–life balance and, in particular, the degree of support experienced by women and men with families (Crompton et al, 2007).

As previously stated, the position of women and men in the labour market cannot be understood without considering their lives in the private sphere, including domestic work and caring for others (Kreimer, 2004). For this reason, the role of women and men in the private sphere is added as the third influencing factor for gender segregation in the labour market.

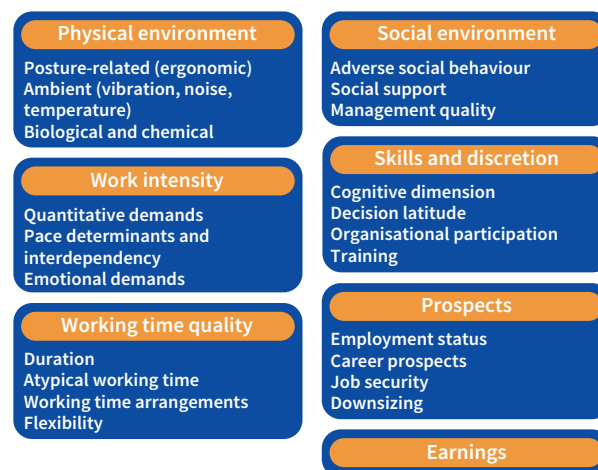
Regardless of how gender segregation is shaped, women and men cannot be considered as a homogenous group with the same conditions and experiences when in employment. Here, the notion of ‘intersectionality’ comes into play. Intersectionality refers to the multidimensionality of an individual’s position in society. Individuals cannot be characterised solely by gender; their social backgrounds, socioeconomic position and demographic characteristics, among other things, shape their life and work experiences. Because of this, studies on gender inequality should look further than the binary men–women divide, and special attention should be given to differential characteristics within gender (Mandel, 2012). This study attempts to show not only

that there are important differences between women and men, but also that there are important differences within each of the two groups in relation to working conditions and job quality, depending on the intersection of the three domains shown in Figure 1.

## Job quality as measured in EWCS

Eurofound has developed an approach to measuring job quality that reflects the multidimensional nature of the concept (Eurofound, 2012c). Each of the different dimensions included has an independent influence on the health and well-being of workers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Overview of job quality indices



Source: Eurofound

Each dimension is represented by an index, and the indices – which draw on data from the EWCS – have several features in common. First, they relate to the level of the job, where the contractual relationship between employer and worker is set and where the policies and regulations governing work are implemented. Second, they include indicators of positive and negative job features reflecting the job resources (physical, psychological, social and organisational) and job demands. Third, the indices cover job features captured objectively, meaning that they refer to specific job quality features that are observable and relate to people's employment needs.

All these features have been proven, through epidemiological studies, to have a causal effect – positive or negative – on the health and well-being of workers. Furthermore, many of the features that are beneficial to workers' health and well-being are also positively associated with company performance, productivity and innovation. Research has shown that improved job quality is associated with a reduced level of sickness absence and minimised loss of productivity due to presenteeism (working while sick) (Goetzel et al, 2004; Sainsbury, 2007; EU-OSHA, 2014; Eurofound, 2017c).



## 2 Gender patterns in employment

*[D]eveloped welfare states facilitate women's access into the labor force but not into powerful and desirable positions. Specifically, nations characterized by progressive and developed welfare policies and by a large public service sector tend to have high levels of female labor force participation, along with a high concentration of women in female-typed occupations and low female representation in managerial occupations.*

(Mandel and Semyonov, 2006, p. 1910)

To analyse and understand the differences between women and men at work, it is crucial to first acknowledge that men and women do not occupy the same 'spaces' in different spheres of life. This fact is usually designated 'gender segregation'. It refers to the 'differences in patterns of representation of women and men in labour market, public and political life, unpaid domestic work and caring, and in young women's and men's choice of education' (EIGE, undated).

This section of the report looks at some important aspects of existing gender segregation so that the EWCS 2015 can be properly analysed and understood. First, it considers segregation in terms of participation in the labour market in general, including recent trends in employment rates and part-time work. It also briefly addresses two of the most visible forms of gender segregation: sectoral and occupational segregation.

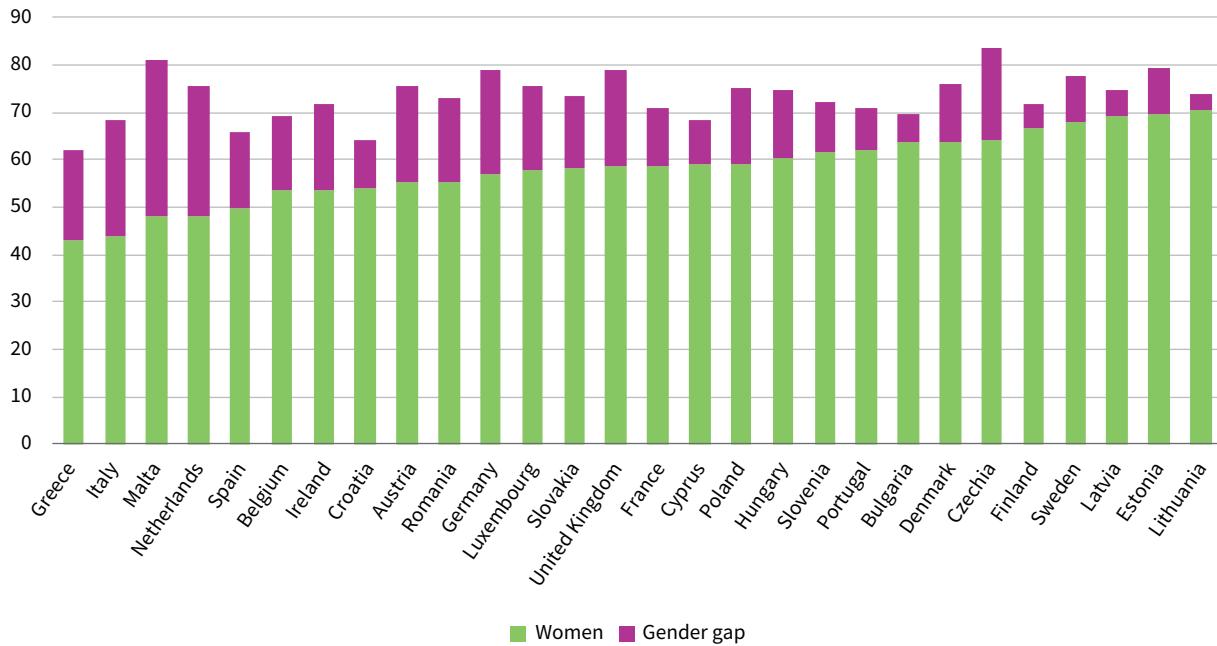
### Gender employment gap

For a number of decades, the participation of women in European labour markets has been increasing. Women's employment rates increased between 2005 and 2015 in most Member States. The exceptions were Denmark, Portugal and Slovenia, where the female employment rates were already above the EU average, and Greece, where female employment was the lowest in the EU. In 2015, only two Member States had female employment rates above 70%, whereas 21 Member States had male employment above 70% (and 75% or above in 10 Member States). To look at it another way, 13 countries registered female employment rates below 60% in 2015, compared to 19 countries in 2005. However, this improvement has not been sufficient to close the gap between female and male employment rates.<sup>3</sup>

The gender gap in employment rates in the EU28 reduced from nearly 20 percentage points in 2010 to 18 percentage points in 2014, where it remained until at least 2017 (European Commission, 2019). Male employment rates are higher than female rates in all Member States, as shown in Figure 3. The figure presents employment rates for women and the gender gap in terms of full-time equivalents, which takes into consideration the number of hours worked and, therefore, accounts for the fact that many more women than men are employed part-time. The gap is relatively large in many Member States and significantly surpasses the overall EU gap in Malta, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. The gap is 5 percentage points or under in Finland and Lithuania only.

<sup>3</sup> Eurofound's research found that the total cost of a lower female employment rate is estimated to have been around €370 billion in 2013, corresponding to 2.8% of the EU's GDP (Eurofound, 2016).

**Figure 3: Female employment rate and gender employment gap in full-time equivalents, ages 20–64, by Member State, 2015 (%)**



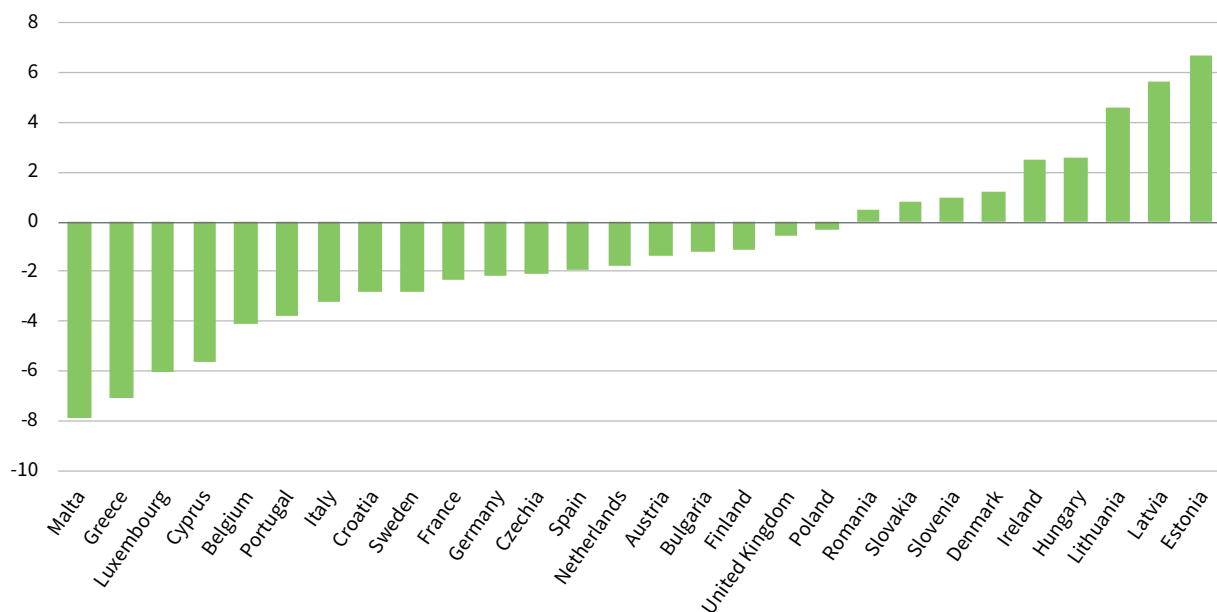
**Notes:** ‘A full-time equivalent, sometimes abbreviated as FTE, is a unit to measure employed persons or students in a way that makes them comparable although they may work or study a different number of hours per week. The unit is obtained by comparing an employee’s or student’s average number of hours worked to the average number of hours of a full-time worker or student. A full-time person is therefore counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker/student gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she works or studies. For example, a part-time worker employed for 20 hours a week where full-time work consists of 40 hours, is counted as 0.5 FTE’ (Eurostat, undated-b).

**Source:** Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

The gender gap in employment rates has been receding in most Member States. Though still displaying relatively large gaps, Malta, Greece and Cyprus recorded significant reductions in the gender gap in employment

rates between 2010 and 2015. However, despite growing female employment rates, the gap widened in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and, to a lesser extent, in Hungary and Ireland (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Change in gender employment gap in full-time equivalents, ages 20–64, by Member State, 2010–2015 (percentage points)**



**Source:** Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

## Part-time work

Although female participation has been increasing in terms of the employment rate, participation in terms of hours devoted to paid work also needs to be considered. This too differs both between men and women and across countries. While part of the increased female participation has been through full-time employment, women have always represented – and continue to represent – a larger proportion of part-time workers than men.<sup>4</sup> While the share of men within the part-time worker category has been increasing at a slow pace, women still represent more than three-quarters of part-time workers in the EU in 2015.

In nine Member States, part-time employment represents 10% or less of total female employment. These are all countries that joined the EU in 2004 or later and where, traditionally, part-time work is not particularly significant: Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Czechia, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria. Part-time work makes up one-third or more of female employment in another nine Member States: the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Belgium, the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland and Luxembourg – all countries of the EU15.

According to Eurofound, there are ‘considerable differences between men and women’ in terms of the reasons for taking up part-time work. For women, the key reasons were to look after children or incapacitated adults, and to take care of family or personal responsibilities. For men, the key reasons for choosing

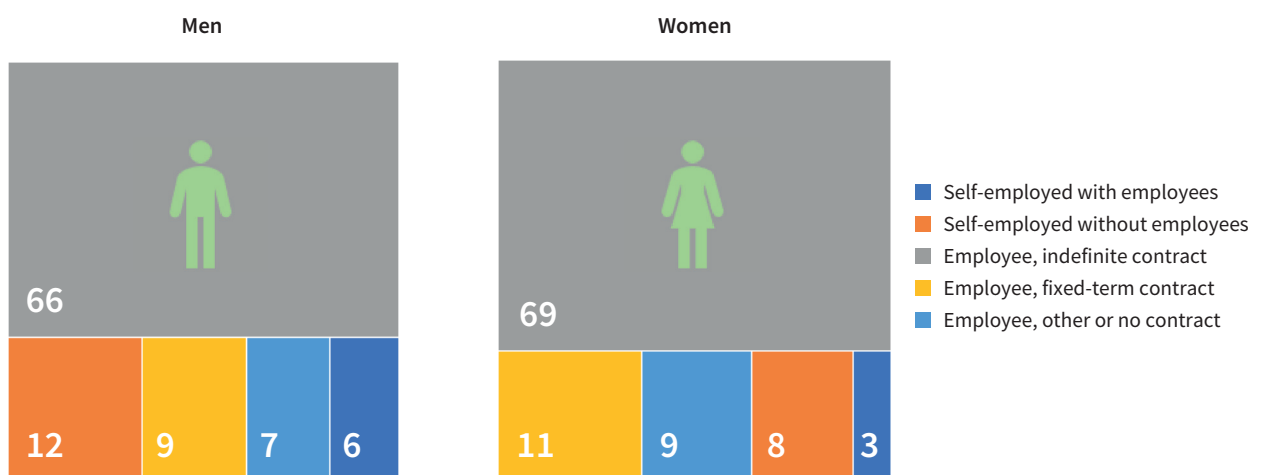
to work part-time were being in education or training and being unable to find a full-time job (Eurofound, 2018b).

Also notable is the fact that for both men and women, the share of those working part-time because they were unable to find full-time work (designated as ‘involuntary part-time’) increased over the period 2006–2016 (Eurofound, 2018b). Furthermore, data from the EWCS show that short part-time work (up to 20 hours of work per week in the main job) is slowly becoming more prevalent than long part-time work (21–34 hours of work). Between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of workers on short part-time work increased from 10% to 15%; for workers on long part-time work, over the same period, it increased from 11% to 13% (Eurofound, 2018b). Short part-time work doubled for men (from 5% to 10%) between 2005 and 2015, but also increased significantly for women (from 17% to 22%) during the same period.

## Employment status and type of employment contract

The vast majority of employed people in the EU have permanent or indefinite contracts (Figure 5). The EWCS 2015 shows that 66% of men and 69% of women are employed with indefinite contracts. The share of self-employment, which remains very stable in the EU, is greater among men, while the share of women with fixed-term contracts or in the ‘other or no contract’ category is slightly larger than that of men (Eurofound, 2017a).

Figure 5: Employment status, by gender, 2015 (%)



Source: EWCS 2015; from here onwards, all tables and figures are based on EWCS 2015 unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>4</sup> According to Article 2(a) of the International Labour Organization’s Part-Time Work Recommendation, 1994 (No. 182), a part-time worker is ‘an employed person whose normal hours of work are less than those of comparable full-time workers’.

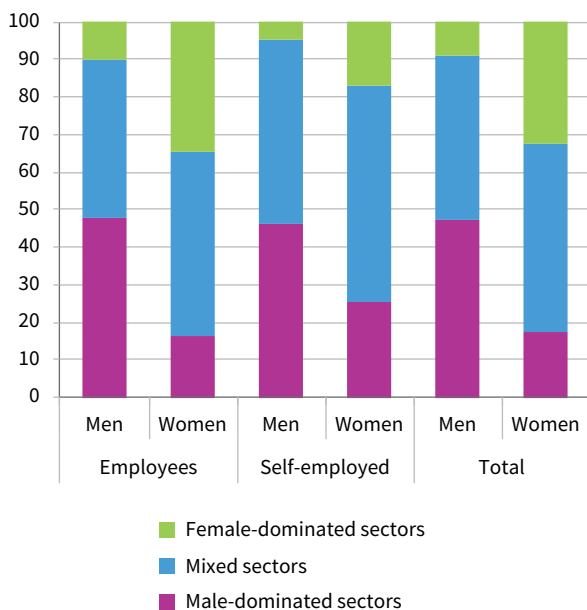
While the share of individuals with more than one job is still relatively small, this has been slowly increasing for both men and women. According to the Labour Force Survey, around 4% of all employed people in the EU in 2015 have more than one job. In the EWCS, 8% of men and women reported having more than one job at the time of the interview.

## Sectoral segregation

In terms of employment, men and women are not necessarily part of the same sectors of economic activity. Some sectors are heavily occupied by men, whereas others are mostly occupied by women; this has not changed much over the 15-year period considered here. Construction, electricity, gas and water, transport, manufacturing and agriculture continue to be male-dominated sectors. In all these sectors, men represent two-thirds or more of the workforce; the only change that can be observed is a decrease in the relative participation of women in construction and agriculture. The ‘other services’ category (which includes health and education) continues to be female-dominated, with women making up more than 70% of the workforce in 2015.

The distribution of men and women according to the predominant gender in each sector has a distinct pattern. The largest share of men work in male-dominated sectors (47%), while the largest share of women work in mixed sectors (50%) and 33% work in female-dominated sectors.

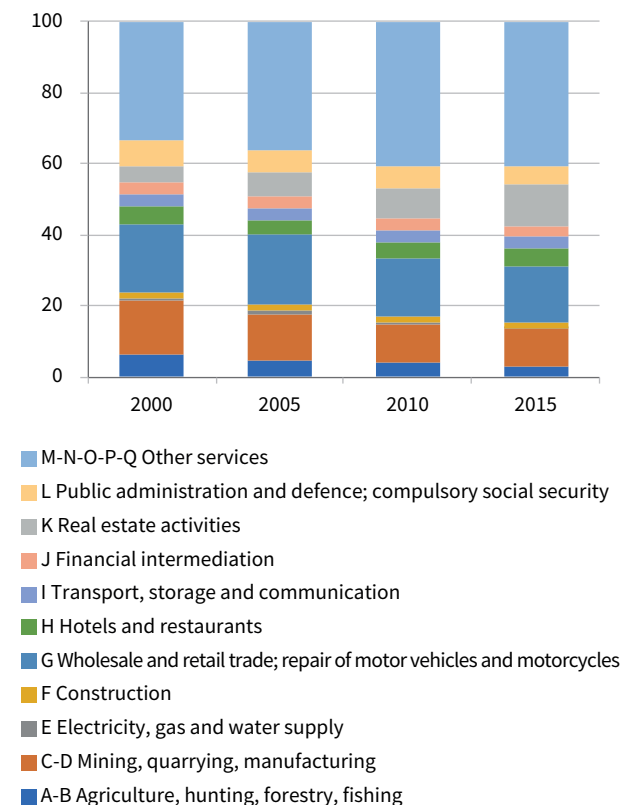
**Figure 6: Distribution of workers according to predominant gender in sector, employees and self-employed, by gender, 2015 (%)**



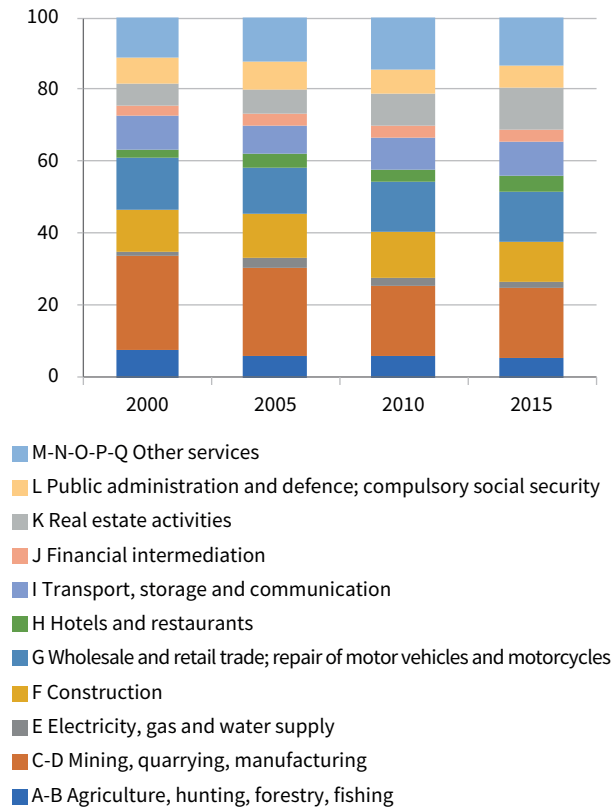
The share of women working in male-dominated sectors (17%) is double that of men working in female-dominated sectors (8.5%). The share of women working in female-dominated sectors is smaller among the self-employed than among employees, while the share of self-employed women working in male-dominated sectors is larger. At the same time, nearly 60% of self-employed women are in mixed sectors, indicating that self-employed women are more likely to join mixed or even male-dominated sectors than men are to join mixed or female-dominated ones (Figure 6).

The evolution of the distribution of women across the different sectors of activity depicts which sectors are becoming more, or less, significant. Figure 7 shows that women are most likely to work in female-dominated or mixed sectors (other services, real estate, hotels and restaurants, etc.), whereas relatively fewer women work in male-dominated sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, and in wholesale and retail trade, which is a mixed sector. Similarly, agriculture and manufacturing are attracting fewer men, while other services, real estate activities and transport are, to some extent, attracting more men (Figure 8).

**Figure 7: Sectoral concentration, women, 2000–2015 (%)**



**Figure 8: Sectoral concentration, men, 2000–2015 (%)**

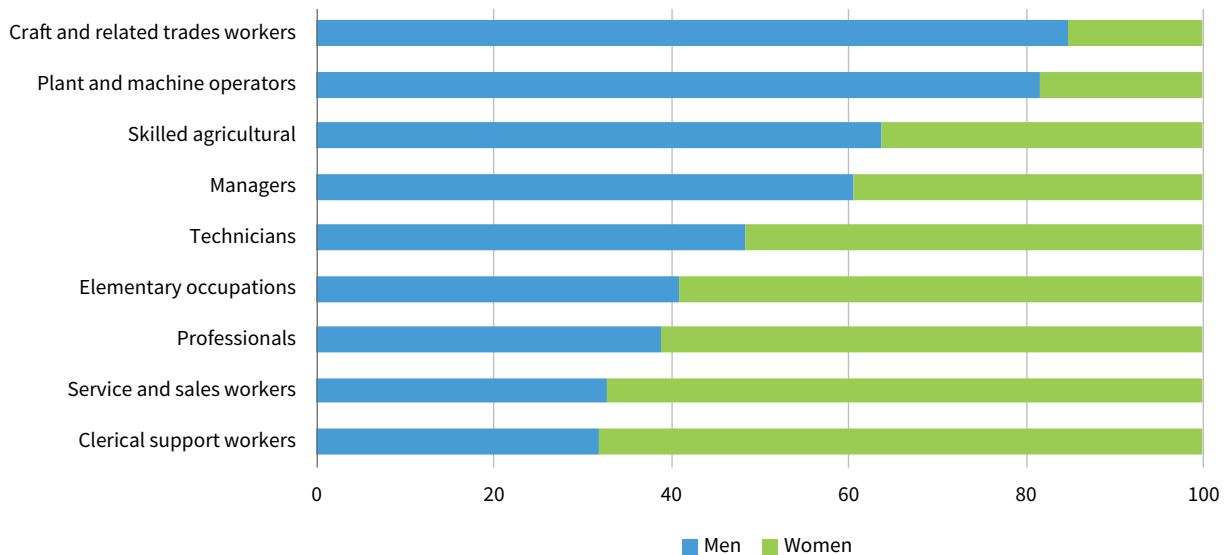


## Occupational segregation

While sectoral segregation is relevant to understanding the situation of men and women in the labour market, occupational segregation is even more important because people’s choices of jobs and their career decisions are more likely to be based on occupation than sector. Furthermore, the same or similar occupations can be present in different sectors, and this cannot be taken into account if only sectors are considered.

Figure 9 presents the distribution of male and female workers in each of the large groups of occupations according to EWCS 2015 data, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (the ISCO-08 at the one-digit level). It presents the occupational groups from the most male-dominated at the top of the chart to the most female-dominated at the bottom. If a threshold of 60% is used to consider an occupation as male- or female-dominated, we can say that technicians and elementary occupations are mixed. Managers and skilled agricultural are male-dominated occupational groups whereas plant and machine operators and craft and related trades workers are very male-dominated, with more than 80% of the workforce made up of men. Likewise, clerical support workers and service and sales workers and, to a lesser extent, professionals and elementary occupations are female-dominated occupations.

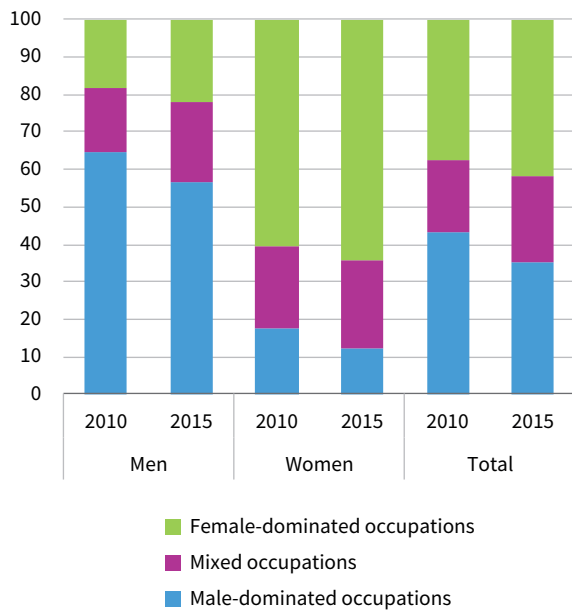
**Figure 9: Shares of men and women by occupational group, 2015 (%)**



Variations between 2010 and 2015 are very small in most occupational groups (around 2 percentage points or fewer). Relevant changes in that period took place among technicians and plant and machine operators, with significant decreases in the shares of women (-3.1 percentage points and -3.4 percentage points, respectively), while the share of female managers increased by 4.5 percentage points.

Overall, the shares of men and women working in occupations composed predominantly of their own gender remain very high. In 2015, 57% of male workers and 64% of female workers worked in male- and female-dominated occupations, respectively. There were relatively more women and men working in mixed occupations in 2015 than in 2010, with an increase from 17% to 22% among men and from 22% to 24% among women. At the same time, there were relatively more men in female-dominated occupations in 2015 (22%) than five years earlier (19%), whereas the share of women in male-dominated occupations had decreased from 18% to 12% (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Predominant gender in occupation, by employee gender, 2010 and 2015 (%)**



If, on the one hand, this shows how segregated many professions still are, it does not tell the full story. Each one of these groups is composed of more specific occupations which, in turn, are often different from one another. It is, then, worthwhile considering ISCO classification at the two-digit level in order to achieve a more detailed analysis of the EWCS data.

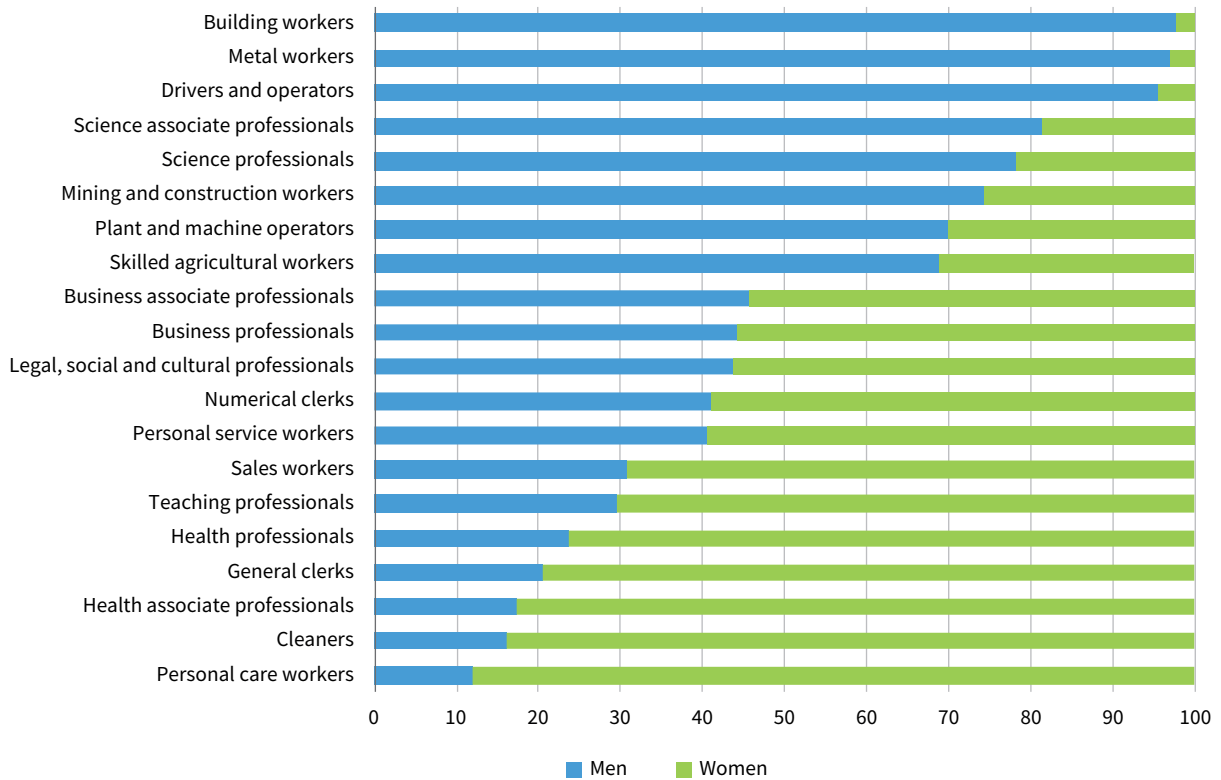
Figure 11 represents the shares of male and female employees in the 20 largest occupations based on ISCO-08 two-digit classifications (examples are given in Table A3 in the Annex). This report will, from now on, use this classification when examining occupations. There are three main reasons behind this approach (see European Commission (2014a) for a full explanation and justification of this method).

- First, all in all, these occupations represent 75% of all employees – 79% of female employees and 70% of male employees – which is a reasonable sub-sample of the EWCS data.
- Second, each occupation contains a high enough number of cases to allow meaningful comparisons between men and women.
- Third, they cover a great variety of professions and skills levels and allow interesting comparisons between male- and female-dominated occupations.

The 20 largest occupations can be grouped according to their respective gender composition.

- Building workers, metal workers, drivers and operators and science associate professionals are very male-dominated occupations: over 80% of employees are male.
- Science professionals, mining and construction workers, plant and machine operators, and skilled agricultural workers are male-dominated occupations: 60–80% of employees are male.
- Business associate professionals, business professionals, legal, social and cultural professionals, numerical clerks and personal service workers are mixed occupations.
- Sales workers, teaching professionals, health professionals and general clerks are female-dominated occupations: 60–80% of employees are women.
- Health associate professionals, cleaners and personal care workers are very female-dominated occupations: over 80% are women.

Figure 11: Share of men and women in the 20 largest occupations, 2015 (%)



**Box 1: Male and female managers**

The vast majority of men have a male manager, but only half of female employees have an immediate manager of the same gender. The shares of men and women with a female manager have been increasing since 2005, but more so for women than for men (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Gender of immediate manager, by employee gender, 2005, 2010, 2015 (%)







# 3 Physical environment

The physical environment index measures the extent to which workers are exposed to physical hazards along three different sub-dimensions: posture-related, biochemical and ambient risks. Posture-related risks (or ergonomic risks), as measured by the EWCS, include exposure to tiring positions, lifting people, carrying heavy loads and repetitive movements. These are the most prevalent risks in Europe, and they include those related to musculoskeletal disorders – a common workplace complaint. Ambient risks comprise exposure to vibrations, noise and high and low temperatures (mostly experienced in industry, construction and agriculture) as well as exposure to noise. Biochemical risks include exposure to inhaling smoke and toxic vapours and handling chemical products and infectious materials.

As the EWCS 2015 overview report mentions, the ‘absence of physical hazards that pose a risk to health and well-being is an acknowledged feature of job quality’ (Eurofound, 2017c, p. 42). Moreover, previous research has shown that physical hazards are significantly related to the specific occupation of workers (Smith et al, 2008). Therefore, when analysing gender differences in the physical environment index, the sector of activity and occupation should be taken into account as determinants.

## Physical environment index

According to data from EWCS 2015, women (with 86 points) score more favourably than men (with 81 points) for the overall physical environment index (which measures the absence of physical hazards).<sup>5</sup> This pattern persists across all three sub-dimensions, which, conversely, measure the presence of the various types of risk.<sup>6</sup> The gender gap is more prominent in ambient risks (vibrations, exposure to noise, low and high temperatures), which are more common in agriculture, industry and construction – all male-dominated occupations.

The physical environment has been surveyed and analysed the same way since the inception of the EWCS, therefore enabling its examination over time. Overall, there seems to be great stability in terms of exposure to physical hazards (Table 1). There was a slight improvement for men, scoring 79 in 2005 and 81 in 2015. This represents a reduction of two index points in the gender gap regarding physical environment.

Geographically, women display more favourable scores than their male counterparts across all Member States. The difference between men and women is particularly large in Central–eastern countries such as Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary and Poland, the Baltic countries and Southern countries such as Cyprus, Greece and Italy, with differences of between 7 and 11 index points (Figure 13).<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1: Physical environment index and sub-dimensions, by gender, 2005, 2010, 2015**

	2005		2010		2015	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Physical environment</b>	79	86	80	87	81	86
<i>Posture-related</i>	27	22	27	22	25	21
<i>Ambient</i>	22	12	21	11	21	11
<i>Biochemical</i>	14	8	12	7	12	7

**Note:** Index in mean scores, 0-100; sub-dimensions in percentage of respondents reporting the risk

<sup>5</sup> The overall physical environment index measures the *absence of physical hazards*; therefore, the higher the score, the better.

<sup>6</sup> Each sub-dimension measures the presence of the risk; therefore, the lower the score, the better.

<sup>7</sup> Please see Table A1 in the Annex for an explanation of the country clusters.

**Figure 13: Men’s physical environment index scores and gender gaps in Member States, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

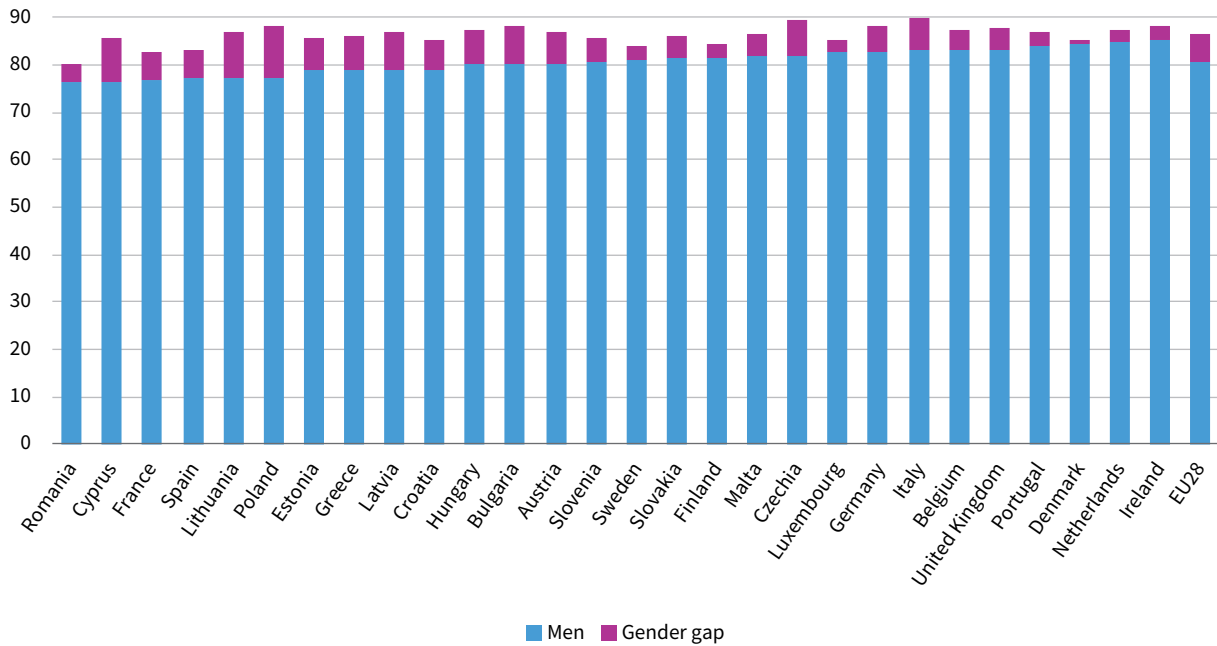
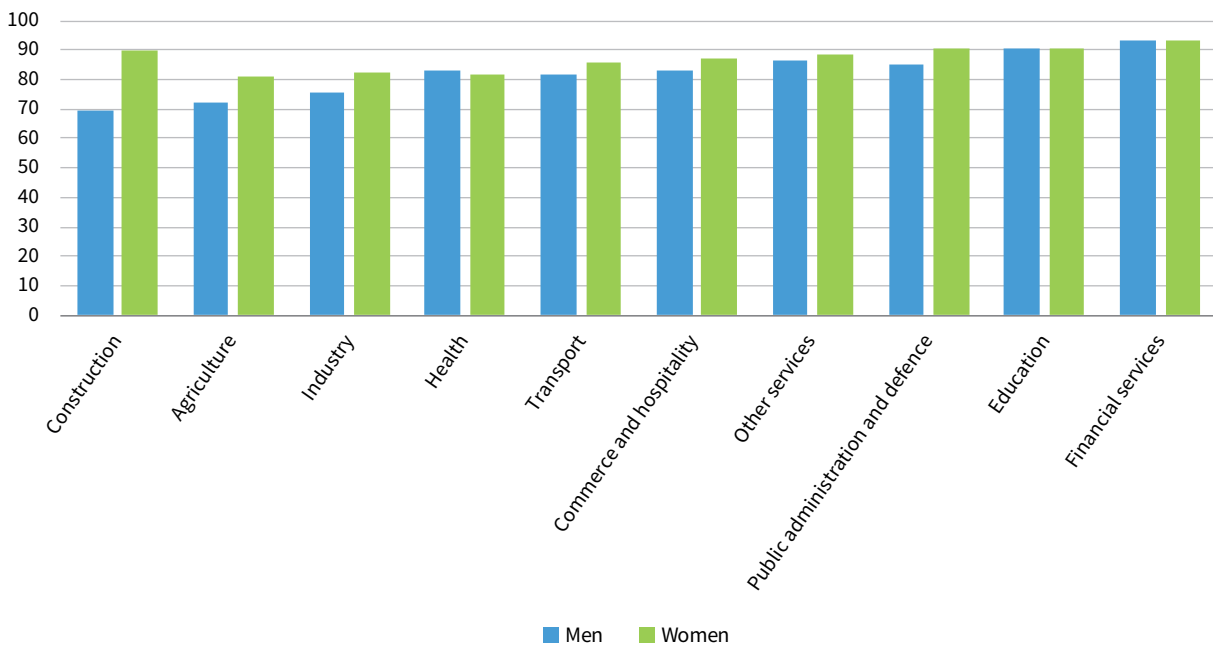


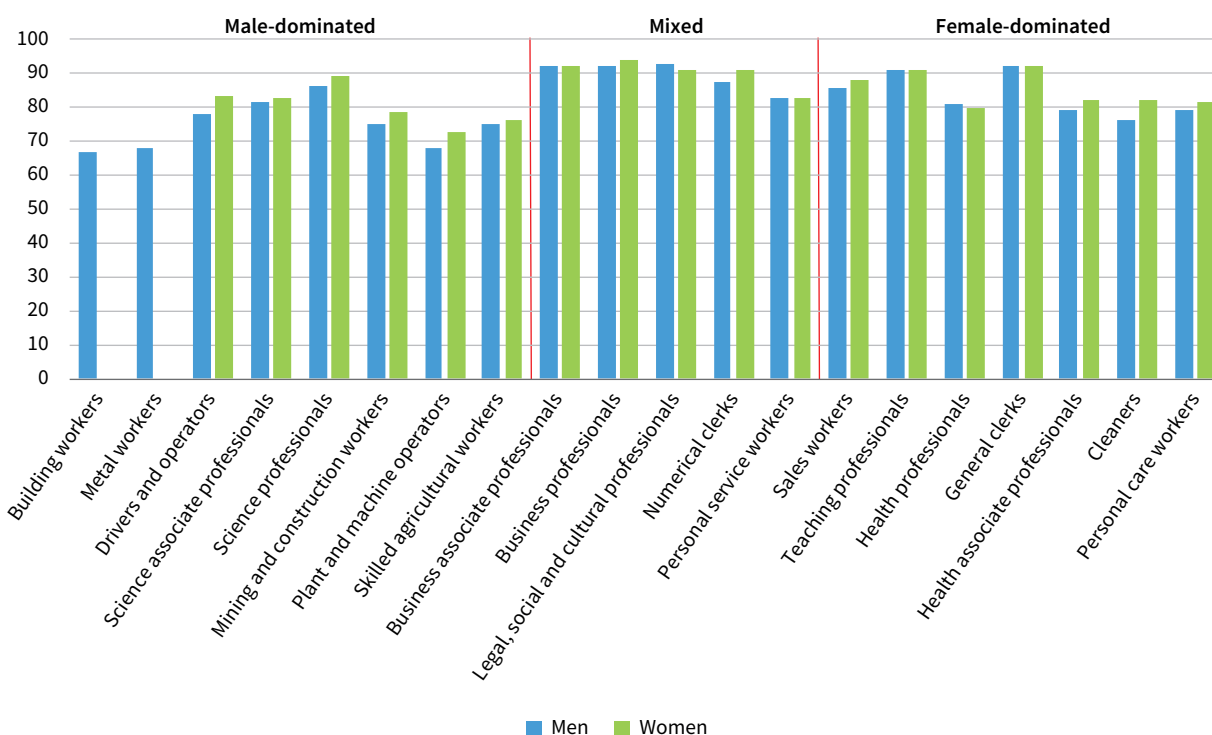
Figure 14 displays the physical environment index scores by sector. In most sectors, men score lower than their female counterparts. The exceptions are education, where they report the same level, and health, where women score worse than men. Construction, agriculture and industry, which are very male-dominated sectors, display the largest gaps between men and women in terms of physical

environment. This is because men tend to work in the operational part of the sectors (for instance, on construction sites, farm fields and factory shop floors), whereas women are much more likely to work in administrative jobs in offices and are, therefore, less exposed to physical risks. In any case, the scores for women in agriculture, industry (but not construction) and health are below the overall EU average.

**Figure 14: Physical environment index scores according to sector, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 15: Physical environment index scores in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



When occupation is considered, the same pattern is confirmed: men tend to be more exposed to physical hazards than women.

Figure 15, which focuses on the 20 largest occupations, shows that in most cases women have a better physical environment index than men. The only noteworthy exception is legal, social and cultural professionals. All in all, there is very high job quality in terms of physical environment.

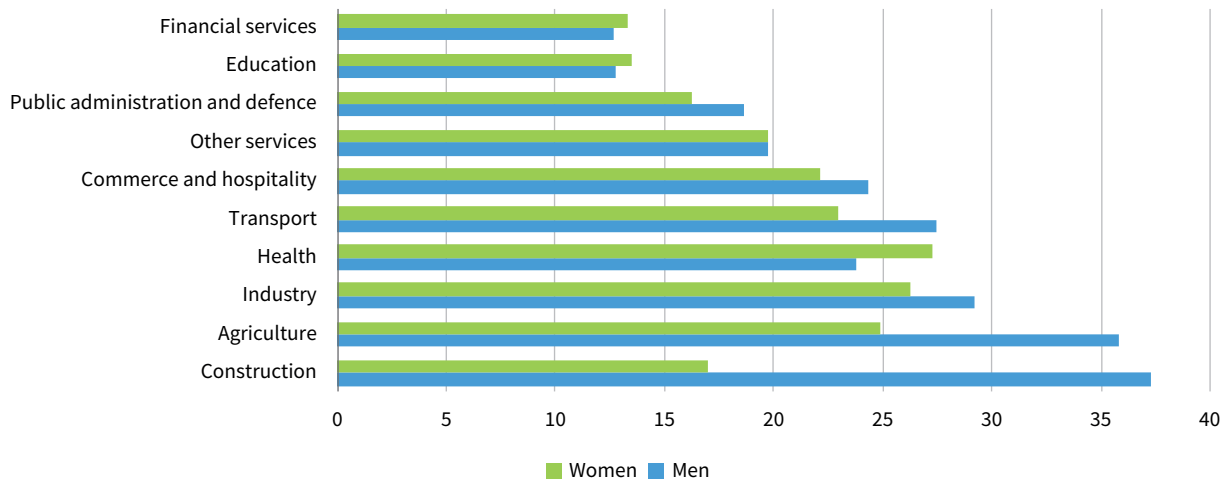
On average, employees in male-dominated occupations have the worst physical environment score, while those in mixed occupations have the highest score. Employees in female-dominated occupations are less exposed to physical hazards, though still more exposed than those in mixed occupations. To discern which groups are more susceptible to which specific hazards, the analysis should consider each risk separately. For instance, although women are less exposed than men to all three types of physical risk, this is not the case for some specific risks (Eurofound, 2017c).

## Posture-related risks

On average, male employees face more posture-related risks than female employees, by a difference of four index points. This pattern holds when observing differences by country clusters. The largest gender gaps are found in the Baltic cluster, with a difference of eight index points, and in the Central–eastern cluster, with a difference of five index points.

When sectoral and occupational differences are considered, the largest gender gaps are in agriculture, construction and, to a lesser extent, in transport and industry. This disparity is due to the different nature of the occupations of men and women within these sectors. For example, more than half of female employees in the construction sector are clerical workers, whereas most male employees are craft workers. This occupational segregation within sectors leads to different rates of exposure among men and women employed within the same sector. At the same time, it should be noted that women in the health sector report higher exposure (by three points) to posture-related risks than men (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Exposure to posture-related risks according to sector, by gender, 2015 (%)



In terms of occupation, it is important to highlight the stark differences between white-collar and blue-collar occupations (Figure 17). High-skilled white-collar employees report the lowest levels of exposure to posture-related risks but, in these occupations, women score worse than men (the same is true for service and sales workers, along with plant and machine operators and assemblers). Overall, regardless of gender, employees in blue-collar occupations score 10 index points higher than their white-collar counterparts on the posture-related risks index.

When considering the 20 largest occupations, the difference in exposure to posture-related risks between men and women is strikingly small (Figure 18). However, the predominant gender in each occupation seems to

be an important determinant of the levels of exposure. Mixed occupations display the lowest levels of exposure to posture-related risks, followed by female-dominated occupations. Male-dominated occupations have the highest levels, with the exception of high-skilled white-collar occupations such as science professionals and science associate professionals. Male building and metal workers as well as male and female mining and construction workers and plant and machine operators have the highest levels of exposure to posture-related risks. In this context, it is also important to highlight that health professionals and health associate professionals, cleaners and personal care workers of both genders report above-average exposure to posture-related risks.

Figure 17: Exposure to posture-related risks according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (%)

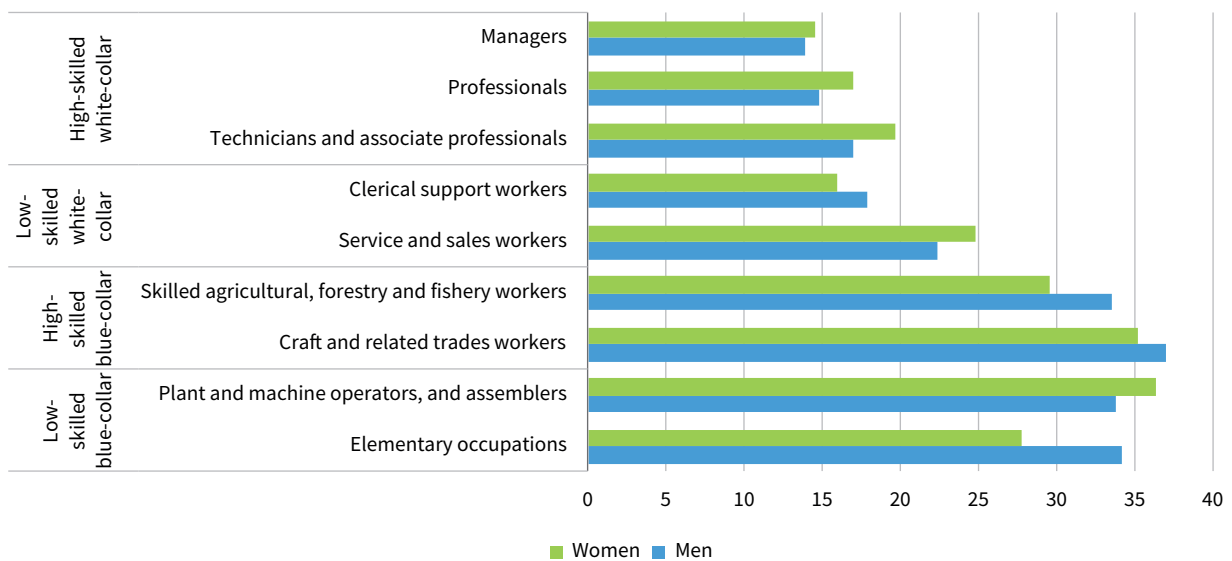
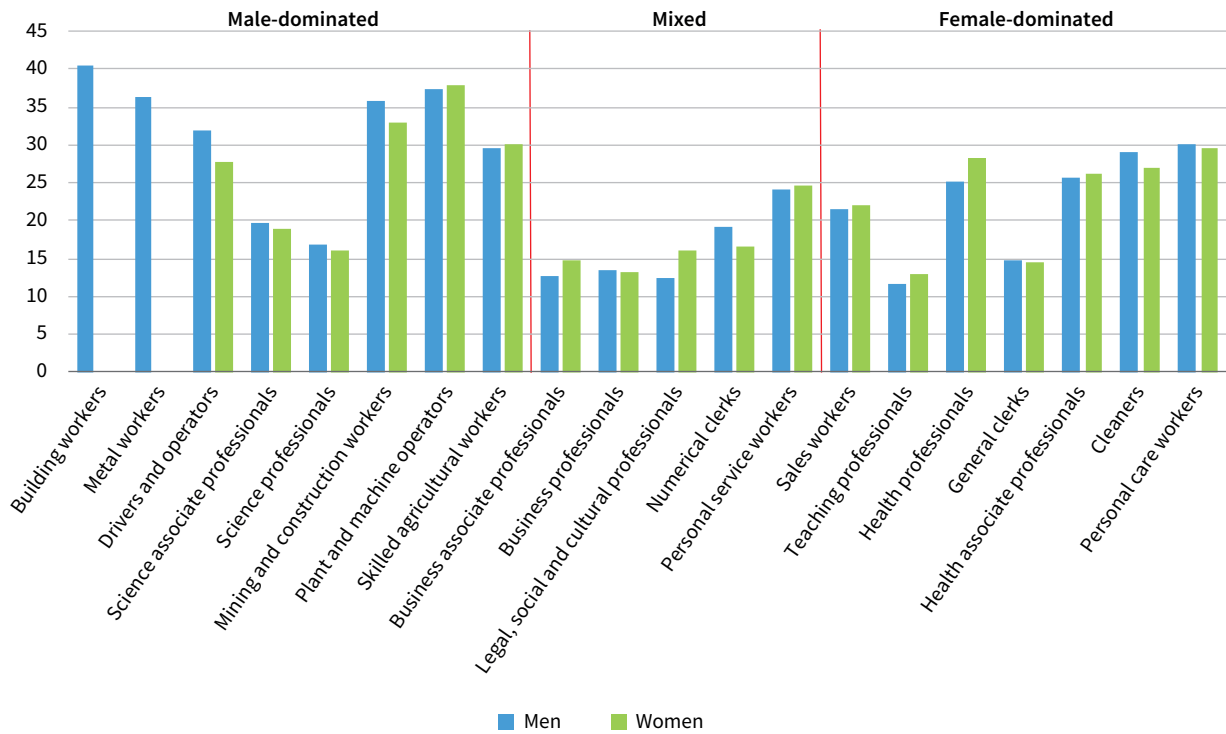


Figure 18: Exposure to posture-related risks in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



### Ambient risks

The index of ambient risks, which includes exposure to vibrations, noise, and low and high temperatures, is the sub-dimension of the physical environment with the largest gender gap.

This specific risk is more prevalent in specific sectors, such as agriculture, industry and construction – activities in which men are overrepresented (Figure 19). In construction, men score 33 index points – 26 more than women – which suggests that men and women

take on different occupations within the sector. Large differences between men and women are also found in agriculture, industry and public administration and defence.

The levels of exposure to ambient risks are highest in the male-dominated occupations and lowest in the mixed occupations (Figure 20). This is because most of the male-dominated occupations are blue-collar jobs, which generally have higher rates of exposure to physical hazards.

Figure 19: Exposure to ambient risks according to sector, by gender, 2015 (%)

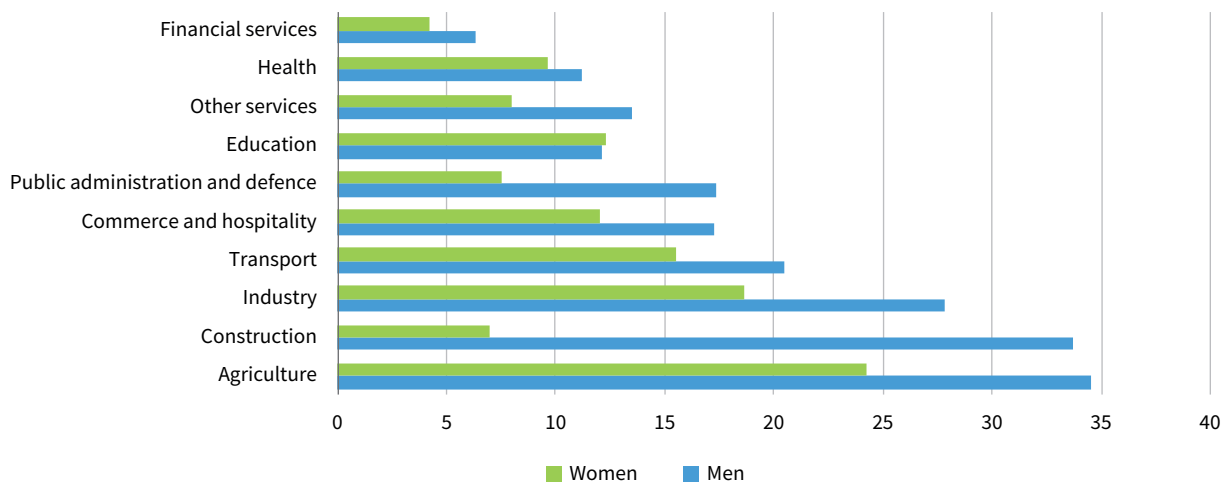
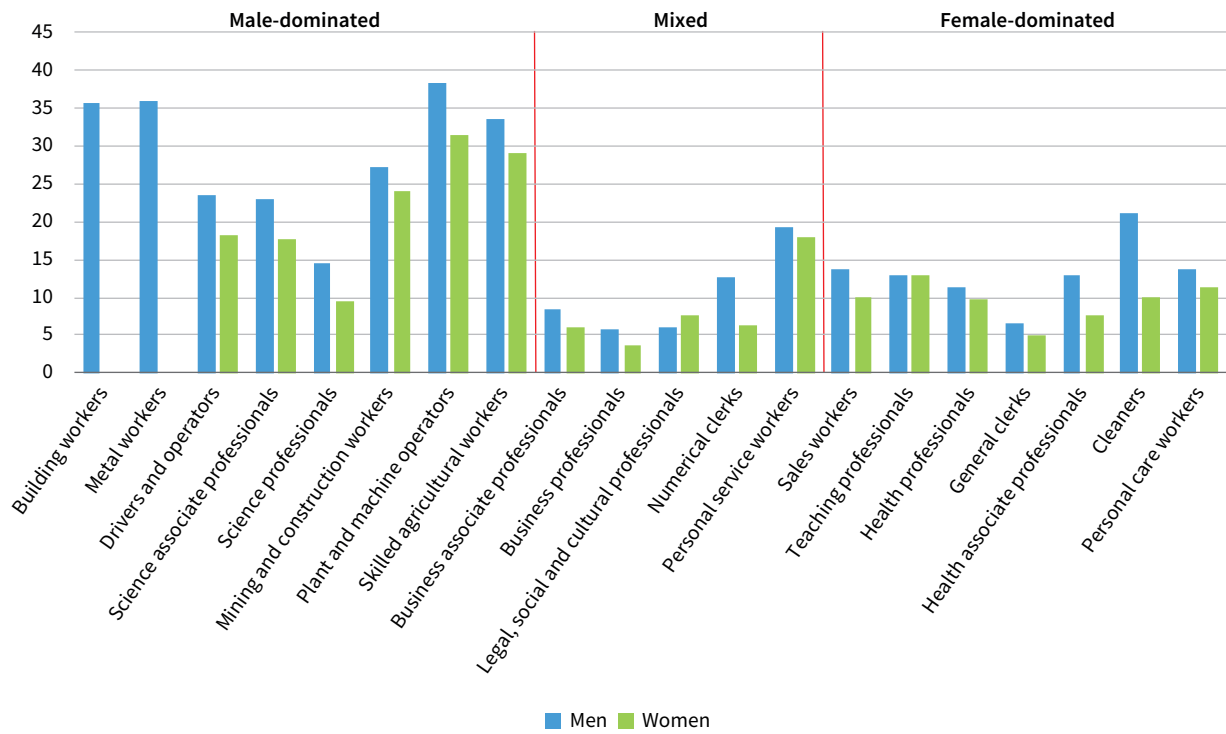


Figure 20: Exposure to ambient risks in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



### Biochemical risks

In general, women report less exposure to biochemical risks than men, but differences become more visible when sector is taken into account. As before, this is related to the fact that men and women often perform different occupational roles within the same sectors and, as such, perform different tasks and work in different environments. Figure 21 shows that biochemical risks are especially relevant for male workers in construction, industry and agriculture.

Mixed occupations have the least exposure to biochemical risks, with smaller gender gaps (Figure 22). Among the male-dominated occupations, building workers, metal workers and plant and machine operators are the most exposed. There are also differences within the female-dominated occupations, with higher exposure to biochemical risks for male health associate professionals, cleaners and personal care workers.

Figure 21: Exposure to biochemical risks according to sector, by gender, 2015 (%)

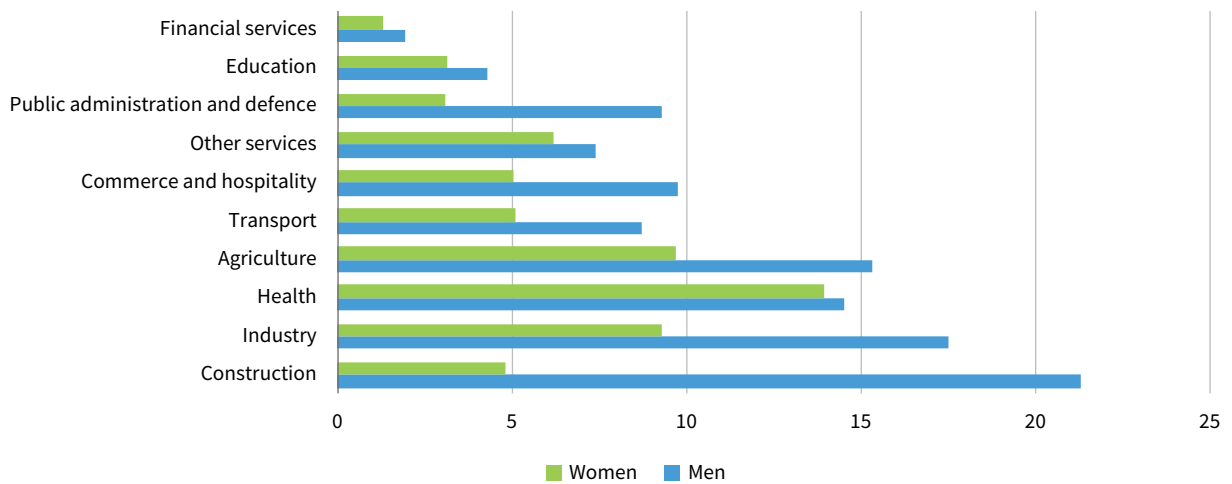
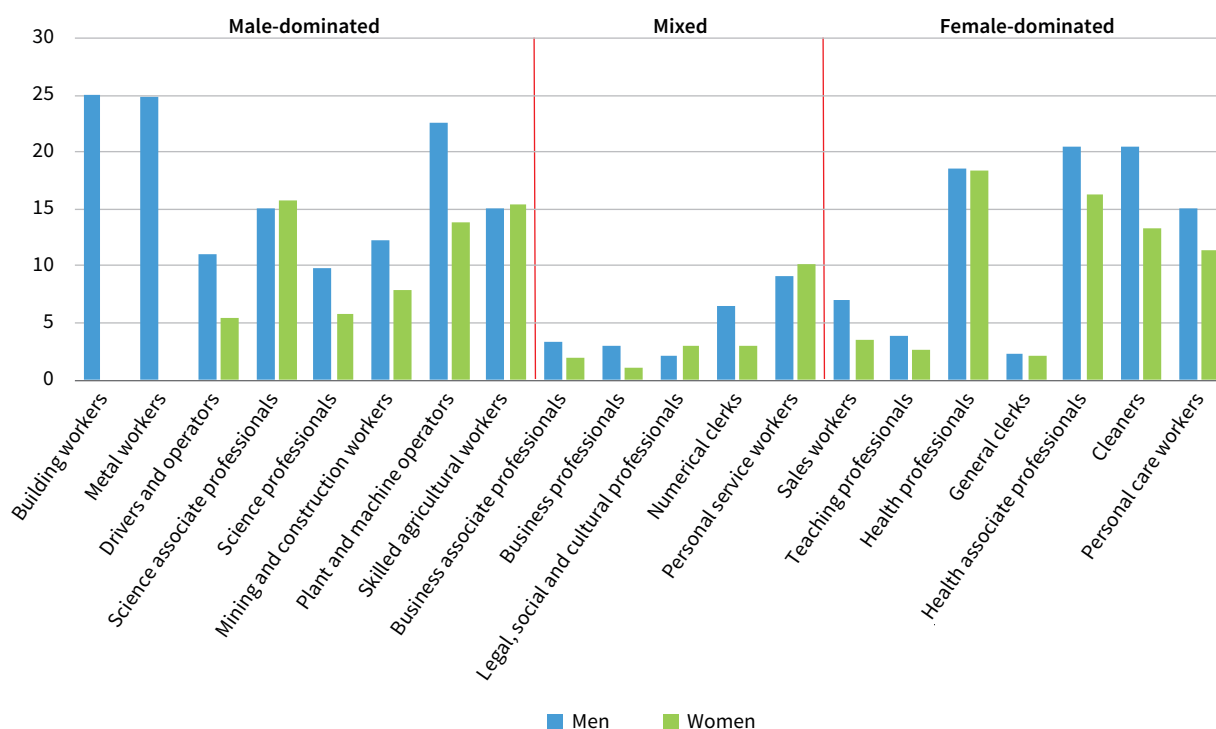


Figure 22: Exposure to biochemical risks in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



## Summary

- Overall, there seems to be great stability in the exposure to physical hazards, with women less exposed to all risks than men. If anything, there was a slight reduction in the gap between men and women between 2005 and 2015 due to a small improvement in physical environment reported by men.
- In most sectors, men have worse physical environment scores than their female counterparts, with the exceptions of education, where they report the same level, and health, where women score worse than men.
- Mixed occupations tend to have better physical environments, given that they are associated with white-collar occupations, and are the least exposed to any of the three types of risks – posture-related, ambient and biochemical. Among these, men and women working as personal service workers (for instance, hairdressers and bartenders) report a worse physical environment.
- Male-dominated occupations show worse physical environments overall because they include low-skilled blue-collar occupations that are more prone to exposure to all types of risk – posture-related, ambient and biochemical. Women in these occupations tend to be exposed to the same risks as men, although to a lesser extent.
- Exposure to physical risks is not an exclusive feature of male-dominated occupations. Men and women working as health professionals, health associate professionals, cleaners and personal care workers are also exposed to physical risks. Among these, men tend to score worse than women for all types of risk, with the important exception of female health professionals, who report above-average exposure to posture-related risks.





## 4 Work intensity

The work intensity index measures work demands in the job, including quantitative demands (such as time pressure, frequent disruptive interruptions), pace determinants and emotional demands.<sup>8</sup> High work intensity has a negative impact on the health and well-being of workers, as demonstrated in epidemiological research. While increasing work intensity may be a way to increase productivity levels, it also has negative consequences for organisations. High work demands are not necessarily conducive to working in an effective way or to delivering quality outputs. As such, work intensity is an important factor in job quality.

### Work intensity index

While men and women report similar levels of overall work intensity, the specific aspects of work intensity reveal differences (Table 2). Men are faced with more quantitative demands and are also subject to more pace determinants and interdependency. On the other hand, emotional demands are more commonly reported by female employees. The EWCS data show a small decrease between 2005 and 2010 but a slight re-intensification of work since 2010 – reflected in a one-point increase in a trend index based on a limited number of indicators.<sup>9</sup>

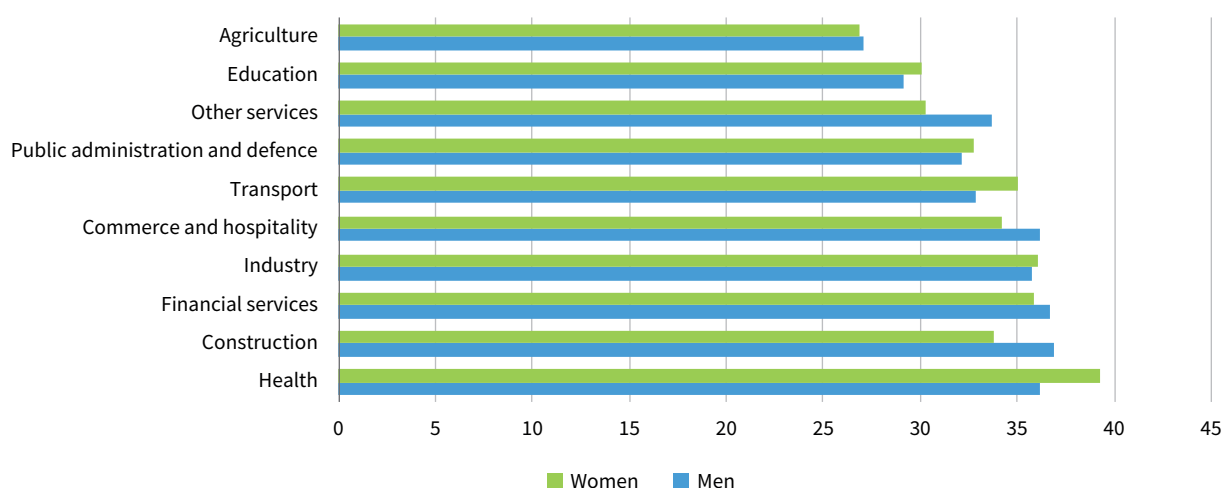
**Table 2: Work intensity index and sub-dimensions, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

	Men	Women
Work intensity index	35	34
Quantitative demands	45	42
Pace determinants and interdependency	40	32
Emotional demands	27	34

Work intensity does not differ much between men and women across countries. Differences are more prominent in some sectors: construction, other services, and commerce and hospitality, where it is higher for men; and health, where it is higher for women (Figure 23).

Differences between men and women are also more pronounced in some of the 20 largest occupations (Figure 24). Workers in mixed occupations report similar levels of work intensity, while there is more variation in male- and female-dominated occupations. Male drivers, cleaners and personal care workers report greater work demands, while female health professionals and health associate professionals experience greater work intensity than their male counterparts.

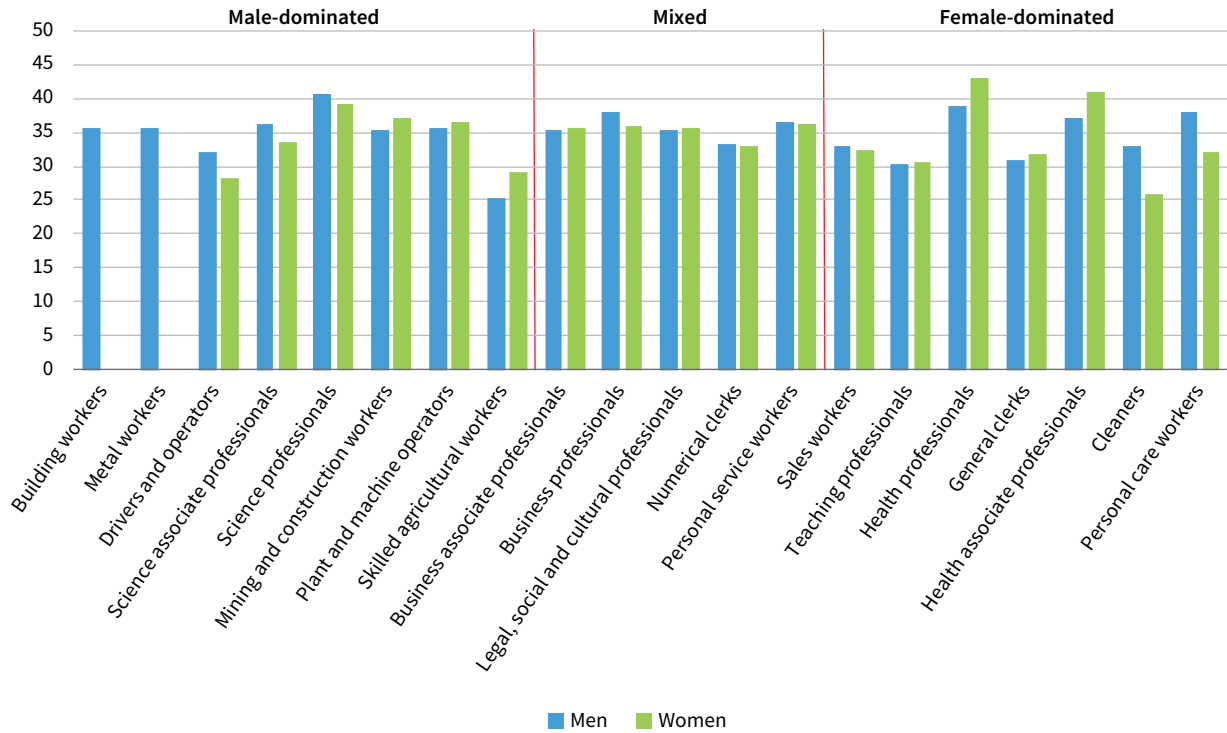
**Figure 23: Work intensity index scores according to sector, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



<sup>8</sup> The overall work intensity index, as well as its sub-dimensions, measures the level of intensity or demands from work: the lower the score, the better.

<sup>9</sup> The trend version of the work intensity index includes a smaller set of indicators, because not all questions were included in previous editions of the EWCS (Eurofound, 2017c).

Figure 24: Work intensity index scores in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



### Quantitative demands

Quantitative demands are assessed through four measures: working at a very high speed (three-quarters of the time or more), working to tight deadlines (three-quarters of the time or more), frequent disruptive

interruptions, and (rarely or never) having enough time to get the job done. Overall, men report higher quantitative demands, by three index points.

Quantitative demands are higher among male-dominated occupations and lower in female-dominated occupations (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Quantitative demands in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

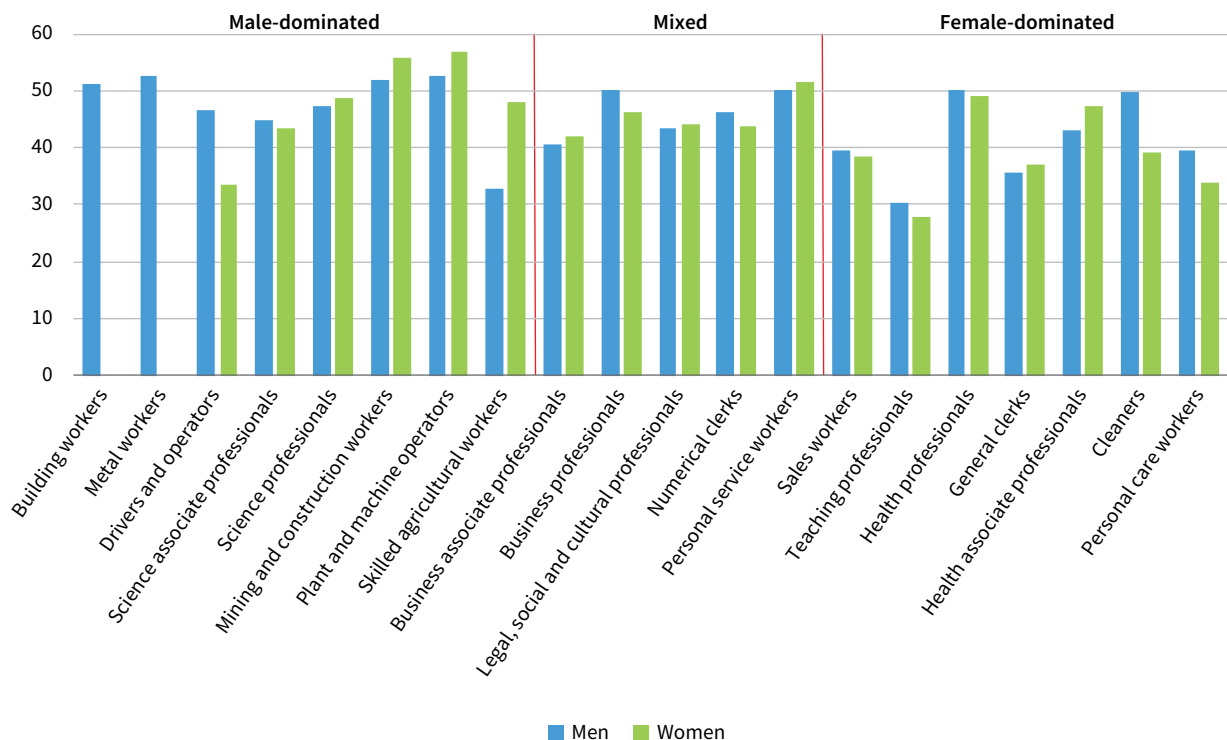
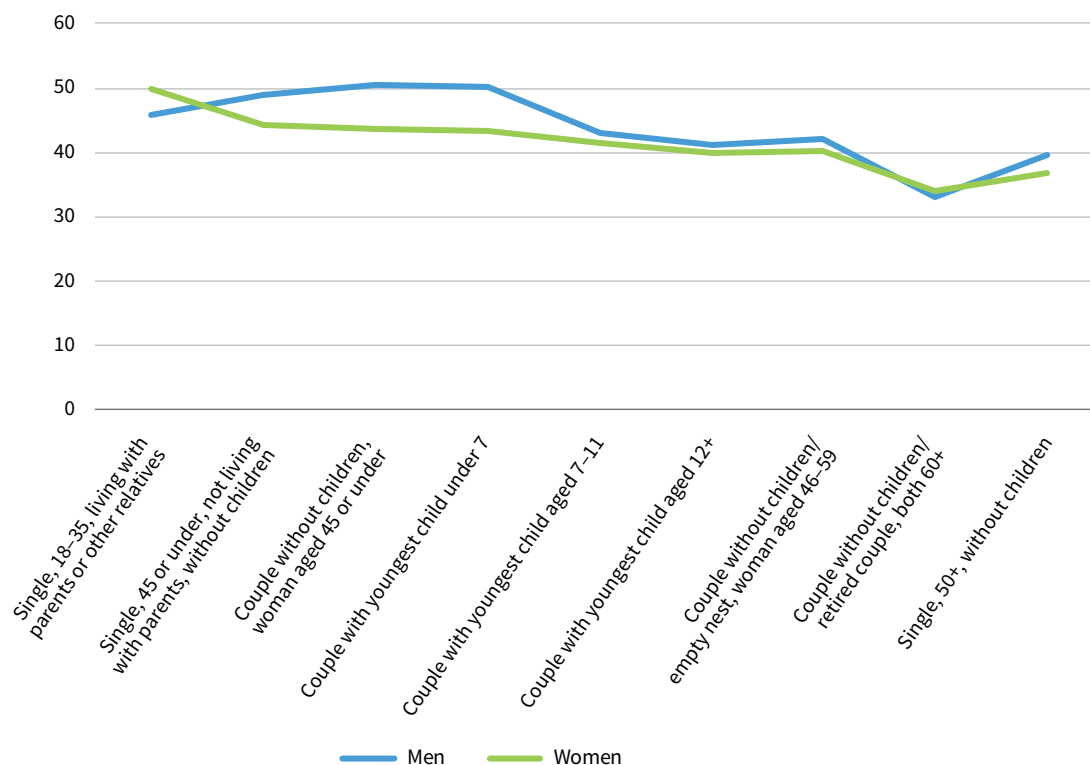


Figure 26: Quantitative demands according to life stage, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



There are some large discrepancies within some occupations: male cleaners and personal care workers score higher by 10 and 6 index points, respectively. On the other hand, female skilled agricultural workers score 15 points higher than their male counterparts.

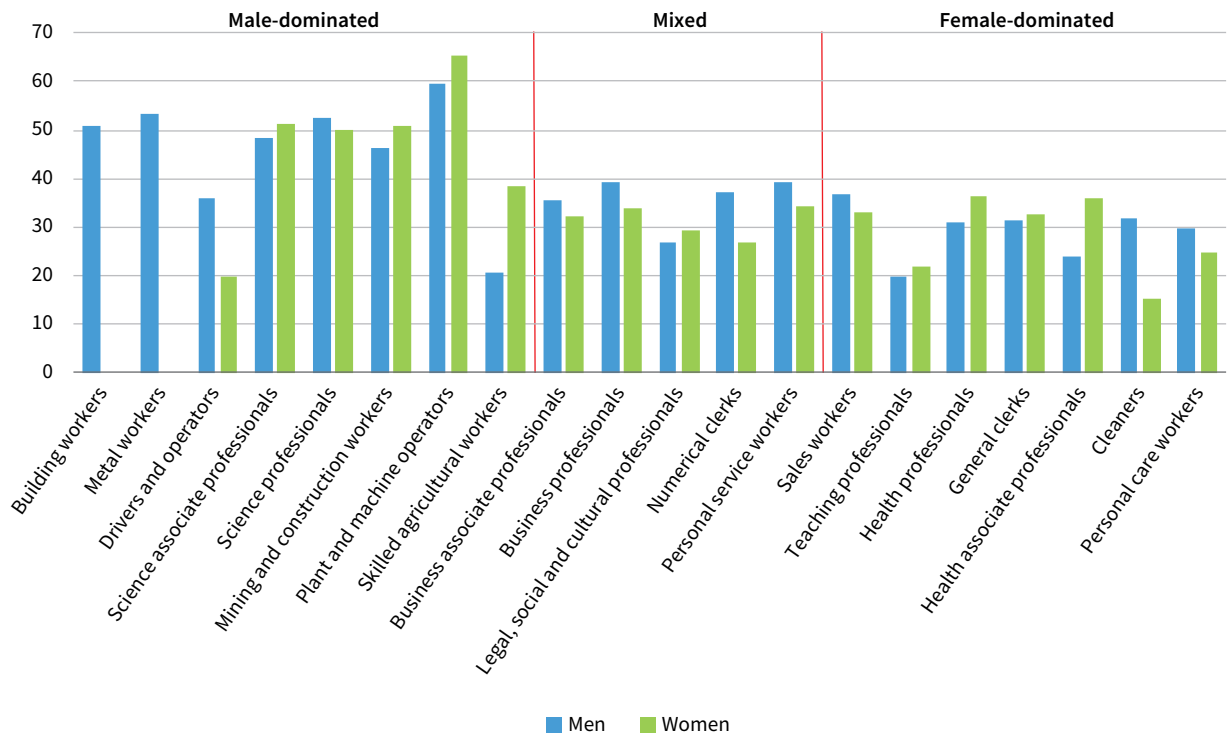
Gender differences in quantitative demands are smaller in older age groups (men still report higher levels of quantitative demands at all ages). For the youngest age group, the difference amounts to five index points, while it is two index points for the oldest group. However, when taking life stage into account, moderate to large gender differences appear (Figure 26). Among young single workers living with parents or other relatives, women report higher quantitative demands than men. In most of the other stages, men are under more pressure from quantitative demands. Among couples with older children, men and women report similar experiences of work pressure.

## Pace determinants and interdependency

The number of pace-of-work determinants and their interdependency are considered an objective indicator of work intensity (Eurofound, 2017c). These include demands from clients, performance targets, the speed of an automated machine or system, or direct demands from a supervisor. Regardless of gender, over one in three employees experience more than three pace determinants at work. This affects up to 40% of male employees, while 32% of women are exposed to this ‘interdependency rate’.

As shown in Figure 27, exposure to more work pace determinants is higher among male-dominated occupations and lower among female-dominated ones. It is worth noting the large gender gaps firstly among drivers and operators, numerical clerks and cleaners, with higher exposure for men, and secondly among skilled agricultural workers, plant and machine operators and health associate professionals, with more exposure for women.

**Figure 27: Pace determinants and interdependency in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

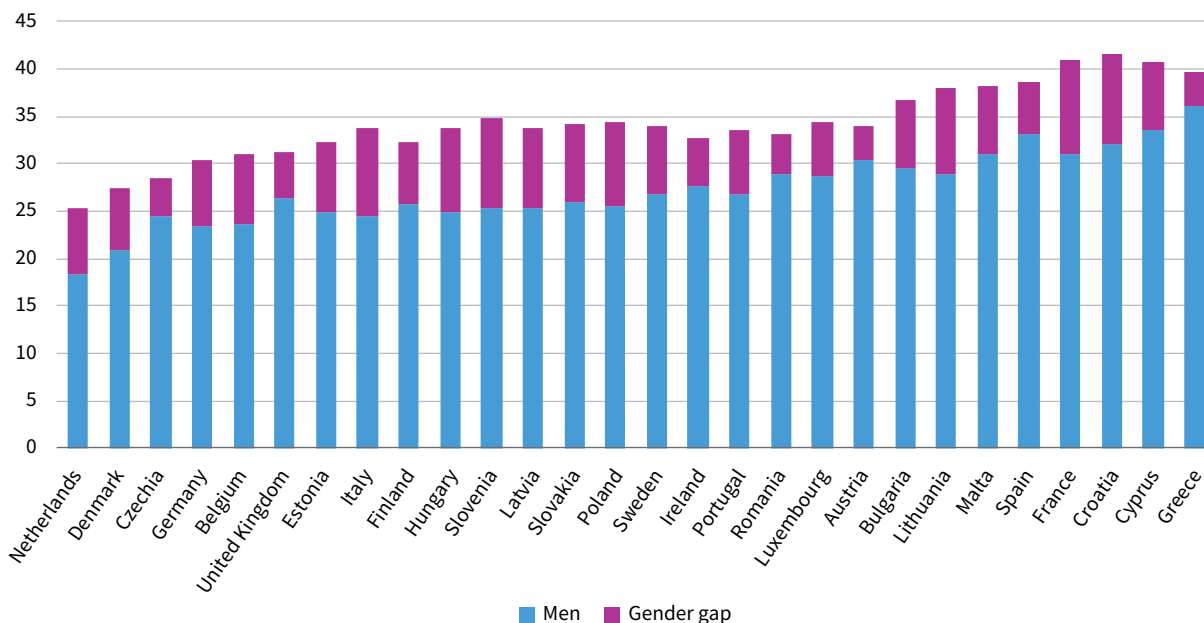


## Emotional demands

The sub-dimension of emotional demands includes handling angry clients, customers, patients, or pupils, hiding one’s feelings and being in situations that are emotionally disturbing. Naturally, these demands are more frequently experienced by those in direct contact with third parties due to the nature of their work. Working with third parties is very common in sectors such as education, health and care, commerce and hospitality, but it is also present in transport, financial services, public administration and other services. Furthermore, within these sectors, specific – mostly white-collar – occupations are affected.

Overall, there is quite a large difference between men and women when it comes to emotional demands: women score seven index points higher than men. This pattern is present in every EU Member State and reaches differences of 9 points in Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Poland and 10 points in France and Slovenia (Figure 28). In the EU as a whole, exposure to emotional demands is much higher for young women under 35 years than for men of the same age (34 points as against 25 points); this is the result of the (traditionally) much larger share of young women in jobs that involve contact with third parties.

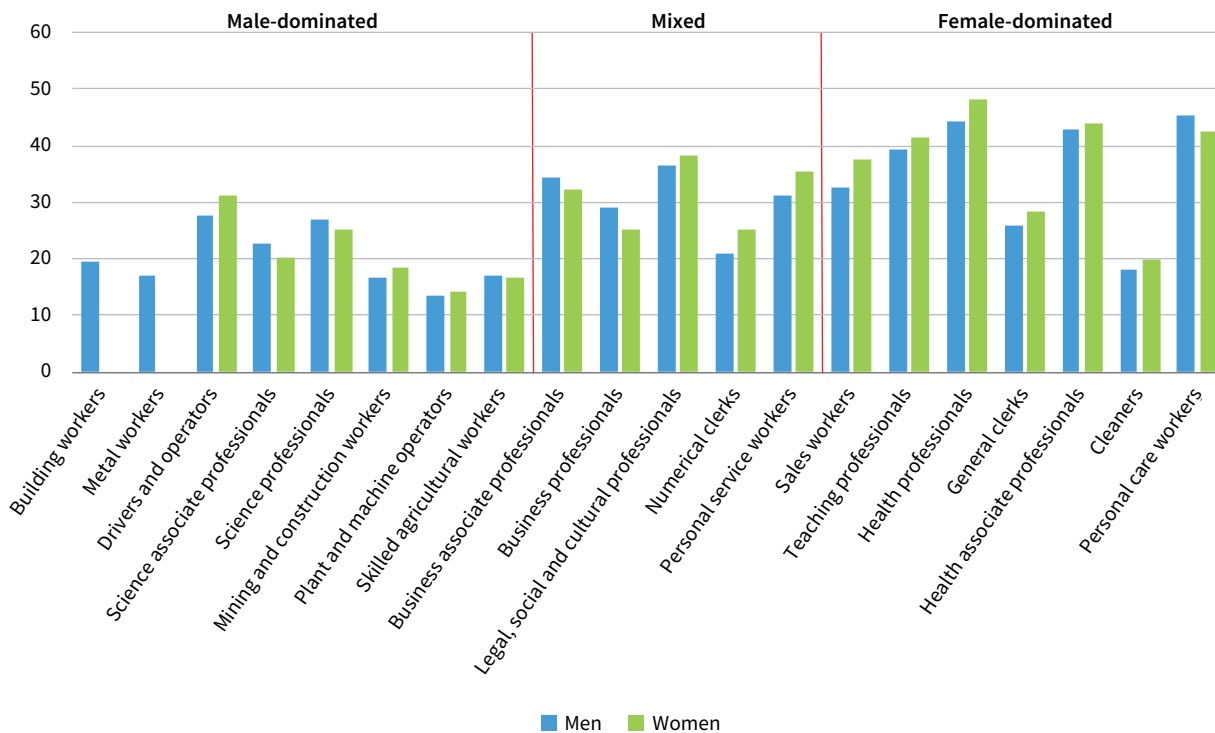
**Figure 28: Men’s exposure to emotional demands and gender gaps, by Member State, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



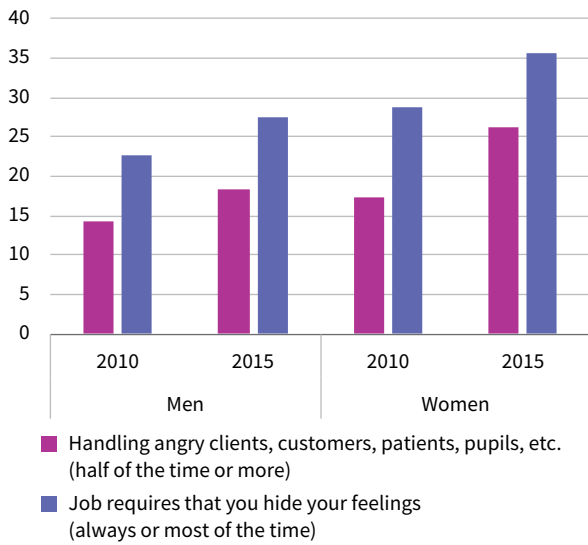
When considering the 20 largest occupations, the female-dominated occupations have the highest levels of emotional demands, both for men and women – this is with the exception of cleaners, whose work does not

usually require much interaction with third parties, and general clerks (Figure 29). However, not all occupations show higher levels of emotional demands for women.

**Figure 29: Exposure to emotional demands in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 30: Exposure to selected emotional demands, by gender, 2010 and 2015 (%)**



As shown by Eurofound’s research on working conditions and workers’ health and well-being (Eurofound, 2019), emotional demands are strongly associated with exhaustion, which in turn may have a serious negative impact on an individual’s health and well-being. This is significant because, as shown in Figure 30, emotional demands have increased over time, especially for women.

### Summary

- Men and women score similarly on the work intensity index, and gender gaps remain essentially the same across age groups and education levels. However, significant differences emerge when the different sub-dimensions of the index are examined.
- Men report higher levels of quantitative demands and pace determinants and interdependency, while emotional demands are more frequently reported by female employees. Gender gaps are much larger both in pace determinants and interdependency and in emotional demands than they are in quantitative demands.
- Exposure to emotional demands varies across countries and is higher for women in every Member State, particularly in the Southern countries, where 38% of women report being exposed to emotional demands.
- In general, quantitative demands and pace determinants and interdependency are more prevalent in male-dominated occupations, whereas exposure to emotional demands is more common among employees in female-dominated occupations.

## 5 Working time quality

The quality of working time is crucial both to ensuring the sustainability of work over a worker's life and to safeguarding workers' health. The length, scheduling and adaptability of working hours are the main issues when assessing working time quality. The working time quality index encompasses four main dimensions: duration, atypical hours, working time arrangements and flexibility.<sup>10</sup>

Duration refers mainly to long working weeks (48 hours or more a week), long working days (10 hours or more a day) and the extent to which individuals observe an 11-hour recovery period between two working days.<sup>11</sup> Atypical working hours include weekend, night and shift work. Working time arrangements refers to the way working hours are decided and can also be interpreted as an employee's discretion over their working time organisation. Flexibility includes the possibility of taking an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters, as well as the issue of working in free time to meet work demands.<sup>12</sup>

### Working time quality index

Overall, and consistent with previous research, EWCS 2015 data show that the working time quality index is higher for female employees than for their male counterparts (73 points compared to 70 points) (Table 3). The main reasons for this are to be found in the duration and atypical working hours sub-dimensions. Men are more likely to work long hours (more than 10 hours a day and more than 48 hours per week), have no 11-hour recovery period between two working days, work atypical hours (nights, shifts, weekends) and work irregular hours. On the other hand, there is very little difference between men and women in terms of working time arrangements and flexibility.

The working time quality index is higher for women than for men in every Member State, although Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg display very small gender gaps. The differences are much larger in Greece and the UK and in some of the newest Member States, namely Czechia, Hungary, Malta, Poland and Slovakia (Figure 31).

**Table 3: Working time quality index and sub-dimensions, by gender, 2005–2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

	2005		2010		2015	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Working time quality	-	-	-	-	70	73
Working time quality (trend index*)	83	89	85	89	84	89
Duration	-	-	-	-	74	85
Atypical working hours	15	13	14	14	15	12
Working time arrangements	86	90	88	84	87	86
Flexibility	-	-	51	52	51	51

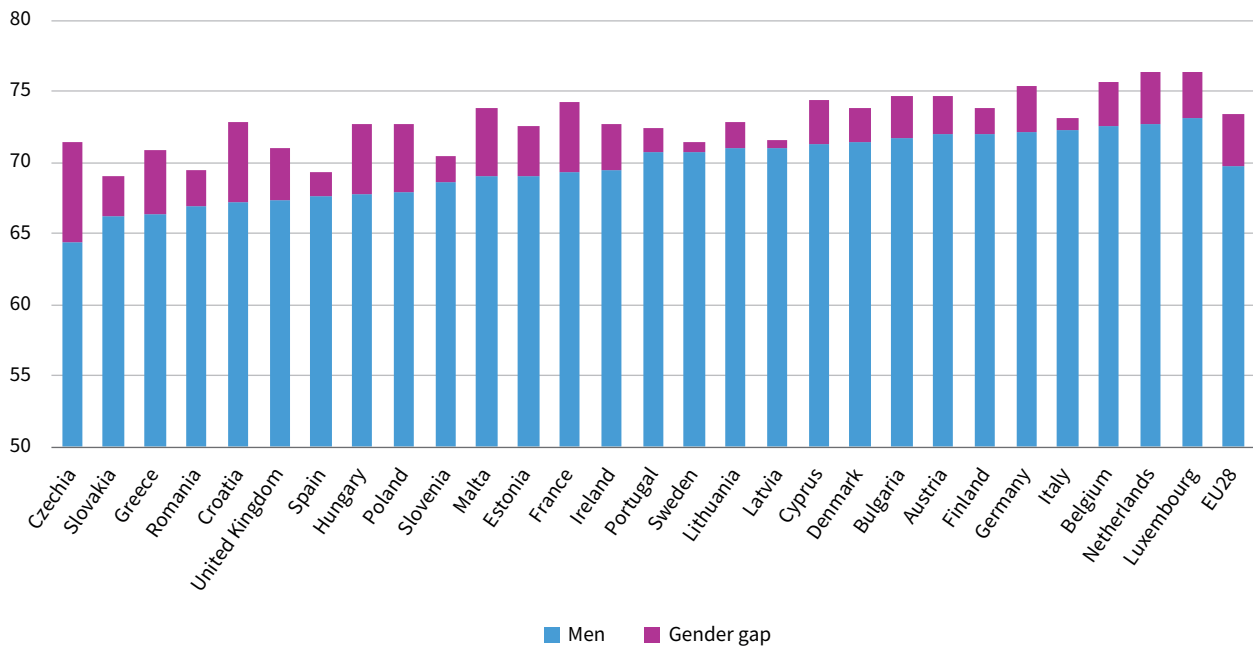
**Note:** \* The working time quality trend index is based on a more limited number of indicators but allows the observation of its evolution over time.

<sup>10</sup> The working time quality index measures the quality of working time according to its sub-dimensions; the higher the score, the better.

<sup>11</sup> The Working Time Directive establishes that all workers are 'entitled to a minimum daily rest period of 11 consecutive hours per 24-hour period'.

<sup>12</sup> The sub-dimensions of duration, working time arrangements and flexibility express the absence of adverse situations, such as long working hours and long working weeks, as well as the level of autonomy over working time arrangements and the level of flexibility over working hours; therefore the higher the score, the better. The sub-dimension of atypical working hours measures the exposure to atypical working hours, such as working nights or weekends; therefore, the lower the score, the better.

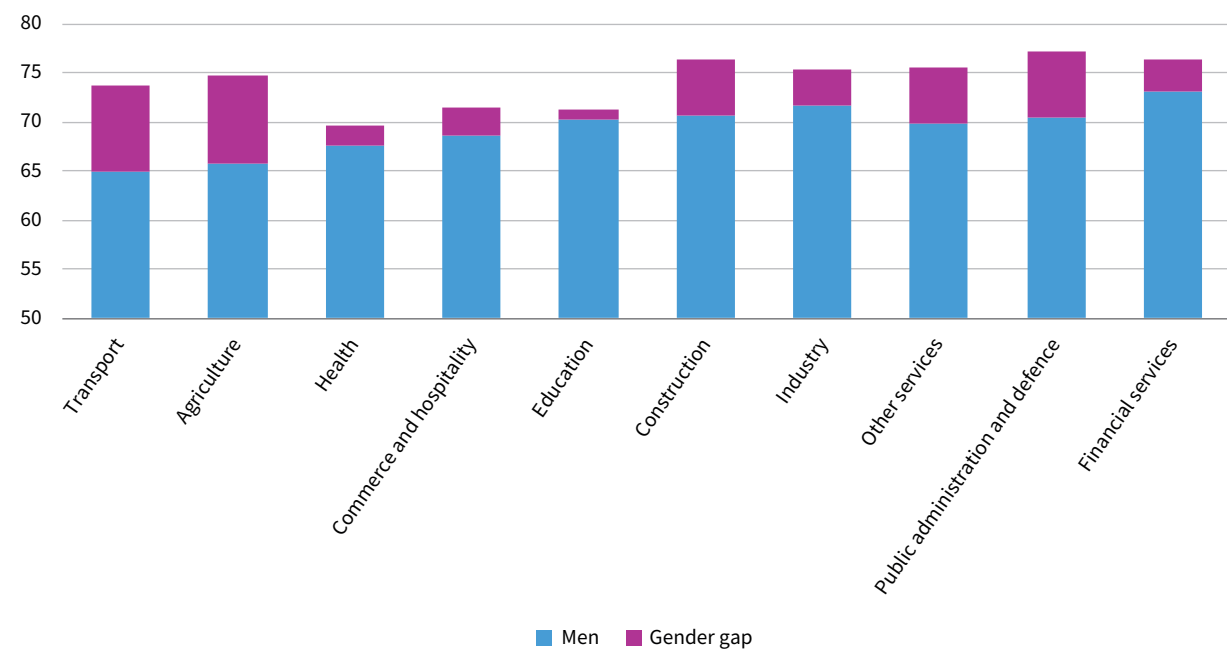
Figure 31: Men’s working time quality index scores and gender gaps, by Member State, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



Working time quality varies across sectors, as does the gender gap (Figure 32). Transport and agriculture have, on average, the worst working time quality, but female employees fare much better than their male counterparts.

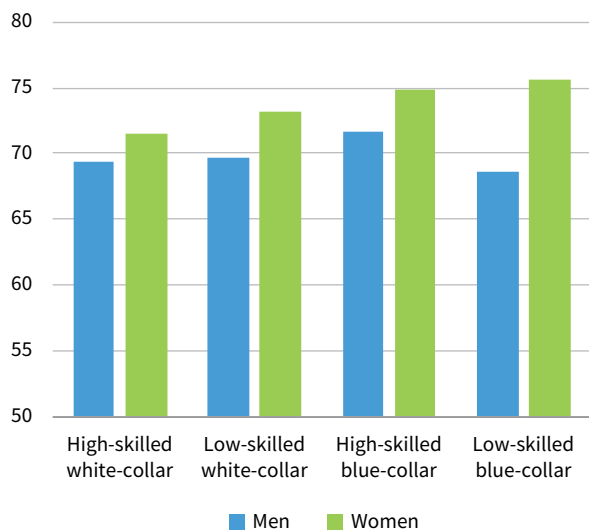
Notably, women report the worst working time quality in the health sector, despite the sector having one of the smallest gender gaps.

Figure 32: Men’s working time quality index scores and gender gaps, by sector, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)





**Figure 33: Working time quality according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 34: Working time quality according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

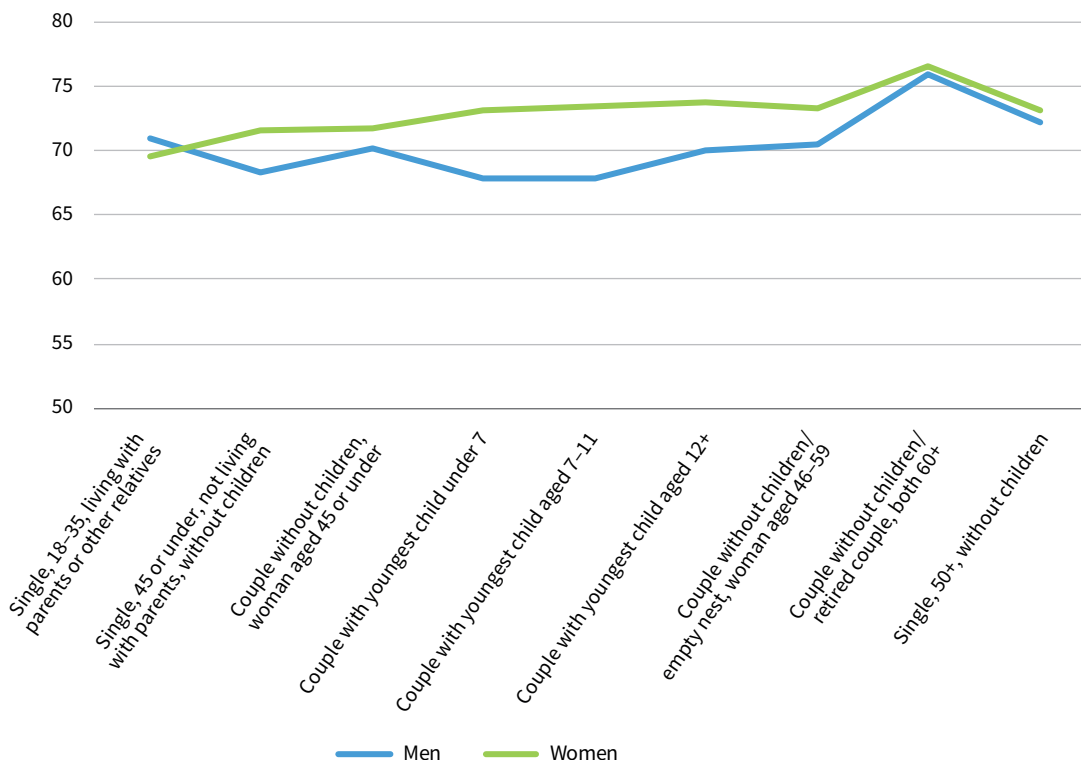


When the type of occupation is considered, men and women present different patterns in terms of working time quality. For women, there is a deterioration as skills levels increase, while for men, the level peaks in high-skilled blue-collar occupations and is lowest in low-skilled blue-collar occupations (Figure 33). Working time quality is the same for male employees regardless of the predominant gender in the occupation, but it is slightly worse for women in female-dominated

occupations compared to male-dominated or mixed occupations (Figure 34).

Figure 35 shows how working time quality varies over the course of life for men and women: while it tends to improve for women throughout the life course stages, it seems to worsen for men if they have children, especially young children. Men and women in the later stages of life enjoy the best working time quality.

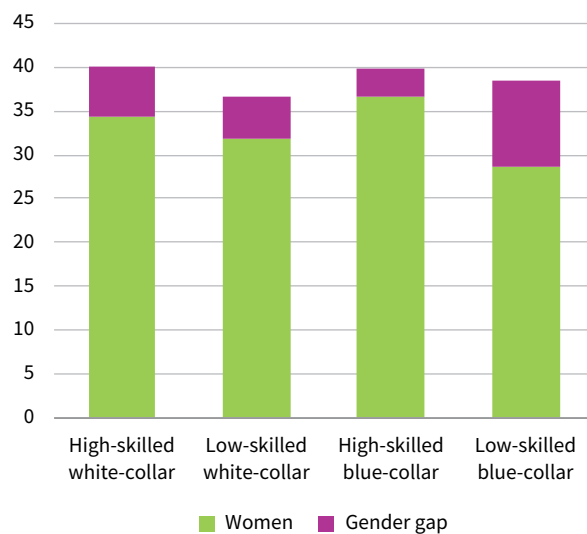
**Figure 35: Working time quality over life course, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 36: Women’s average weekly hours in main job and gender gaps, by predominant gender in occupation, 2015**



**Figure 37: Women’s average weekly hours in main job and gender gaps, by occupation type, 2015**



## Duration

Traditionally, men tend to work longer hours; it is therefore not surprising that working hours are longer for those working in male-dominated occupations and shorter for those working in female-dominated occupations. This pattern is similar for both men and women. Mixed occupations have the largest gap, with men working, on average, five hours more per week than their female counterparts (Figure 36).

It is important to highlight the very large gender gap between men and women in low-skilled blue-collar occupations: male employees, on average, work nearly 10 hours per week more than their female counterparts (Figure 37). This stems from the very large share of female employees in this group working 20 hours or fewer per week (including for any additional jobs): 33% compared with 16% of their male counterparts. However, two additional features can be noted for women in this group: they are more likely to report

difficulties in making ends meet (58% compared with 46% of men) and more likely to state that they would like to work more hours than they were working at the time of the survey (27% compared with 15% of men).

The 20 largest occupations confirm this trend of longer hours among male employees in male-dominated occupations. In addition, the gender gap varies across all the occupations (Figure 38). It is smallest among science professionals, followed by mining and construction workers and plant and machine operators. Female drivers, science associate professionals and skilled agricultural workers report much shorter weekly hours than their male counterparts. Among the female-dominated occupations, the gender gap is smallest for teaching professionals and personal care workers and very large among cleaners (who also work shorter weeks overall) and health professionals: male cleaners and health professionals work, on average, around seven hours more per week than their female counterparts.

Figure 38: Average weekly hours in main job in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015

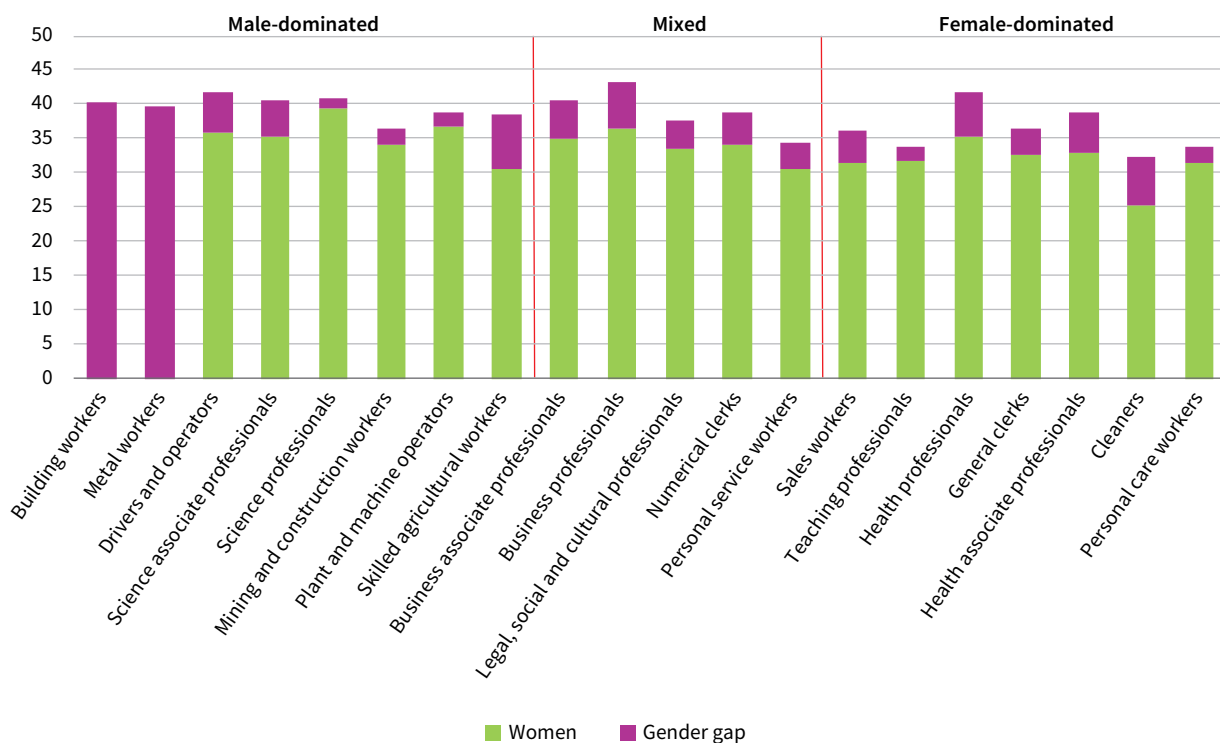


Figure 39 and Figure 40 display the long hours index, which comprises three elements: long working weeks (48 hours or more), long working days (10 hours or more) and having fewer than 11 hours between two working days at least once during the month prior to the survey. The more of these situations reported by individuals, the lower the score.

The figures confirm that men tend to work longer hours independently of predominant gender in the occupation or the type and level of skill required. Men

are much more likely to work long days, long weeks and not have recovery time between two working days. However, female workers also work long hours: women in female-dominated occupations are more likely to report that they do not have an 11-hour recovery period between two working days than those in mixed or male-dominated occupations. At the same time, women in white-collar occupations and, within those, the high skilled, are more prone to report this situation than those working in blue-collar occupations.

Figure 39: Long hours according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

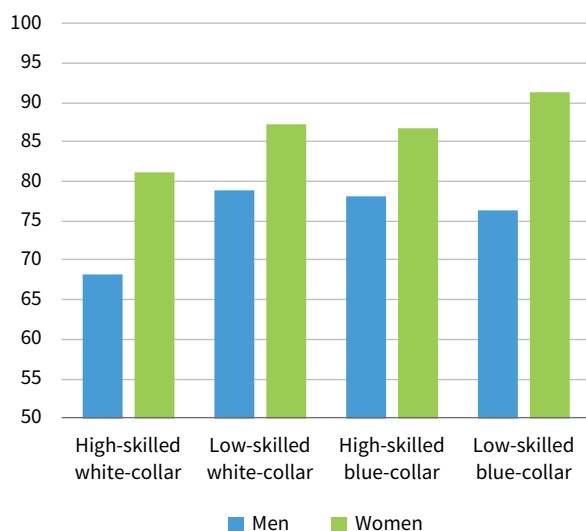


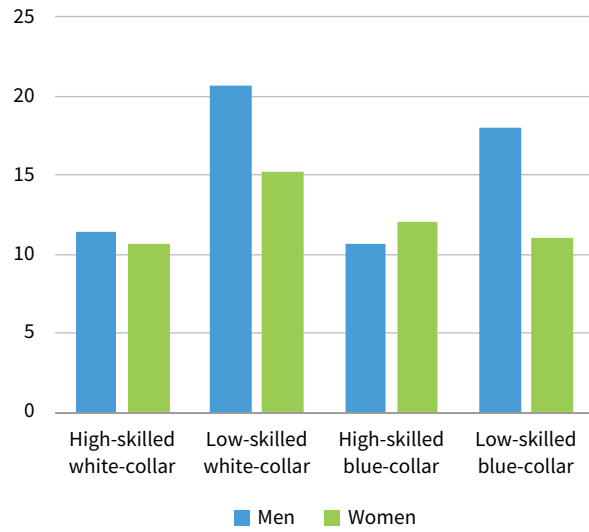
Figure 40: Long hours according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



**Figure 41: Atypical hours according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 42: Atypical hours according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



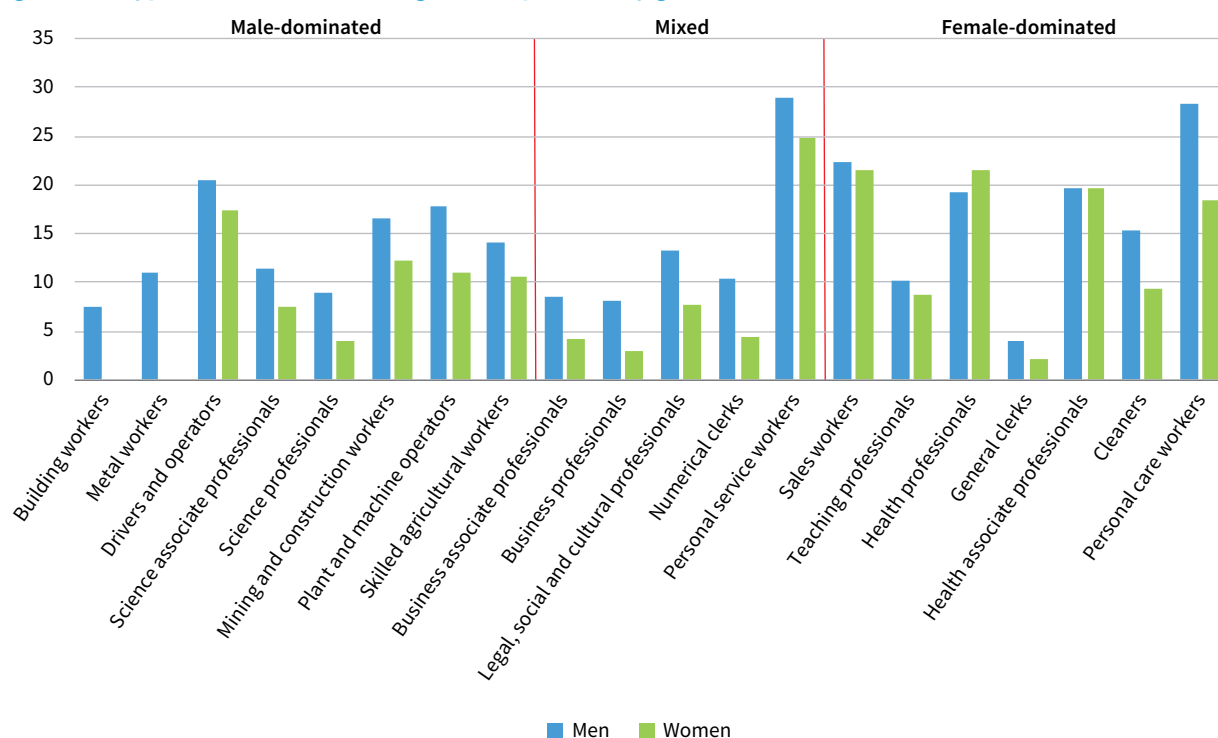
## Atypical working times

In certain circumstances, work is performed at times usually reserved for other spheres of life, such as evenings, nights or weekends. Working during these hours – ‘atypical’ work – limits individuals’ opportunities to interact socially; as such, atypical working times may cause difficulties in terms of work–life balance or have a negative impact on health and well-being. Shift work and night work, in particular, are associated with poor health, examples of which include: increased risk of cardiovascular disease, fatigue, reduction in the quantity and quality of sleep, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, increased risk of miscarriage, low birth weight and premature birth, and cancer (Harrington, 2001).

In general, men are more likely to report atypical working hours than women. Moreover, such working hours are more common among men and women in female-dominated occupations, low-skilled white-collar and, to some extent, low-skilled blue-collar occupations (Figures 41 and 42). However, within low-skilled occupations (blue-collar or white-collar), more men than women bear the brunt of working atypical hours (Figure 41).

Figure 43 indicates that atypical working hours are a feature of some occupations. They are more common among personal service workers and personal care workers, particularly men. Atypical hours are also common among sales workers, health professionals, health associate professionals, and drivers and operators; this affects both men and women to a similar extent. In all other occupations, atypical hours are less significant, and men almost always report them more commonly than women.

Figure 43: Atypical hours in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



## Working time arrangements

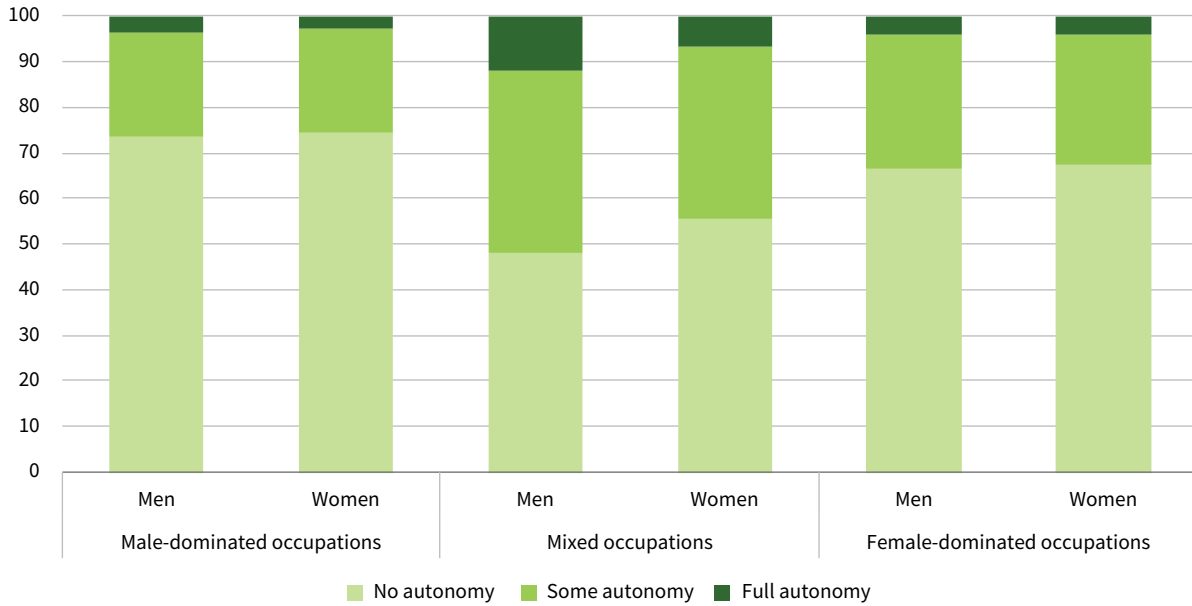
As shown by previous Eurofound research, a number of elements characterise those working time arrangements that increase the likelihood of better work–life balance: fixed and regular working hours, high predictability and the possibility to take time off if needed (Eurofound, 2017c).

Requests for adaptable working hours have become more common in line with, on the one hand, changes in methods of work and production and, on the other, societal changes. Faced with different demands as a result of market globalisation and, consequently, increased competition, businesses have developed new forms of work organisation, adapting working hours to their needs and requirements. Similarly, general changes in lifestyle have meant that workers also seek greater freedom to adjust their working time to better respond to their personal, family and social commitments.

In the EU, most employees have their working hours set by their employer, with no scope for change (64% in 2015, down from 68% in 2010). Only relatively few employees (6%) have the sole autonomy to determine their working hours. However, although the proportion of employees that had some flexibility in the determination of their working hours fell between 2005 and 2010, this increased again to reach 30% of the total in 2015: 20% declared that they could adapt their working hours within certain limits (flexitime) and 10% reported that they had a choice between fixed schedules determined by their employer. Overall, there are no significant differences between men and women in this regard (Eurofound, 2017c).

Figure 44 indicates that, when occupations are grouped by the predominant gender, mixed occupations display most flexibility, especially for men. In contrast, workers in male-dominated occupations report less autonomy over working time than those in female-dominated occupations. There is, it seems, some scope for increasing workers' autonomy over working time, especially within male- and female-dominated occupations.

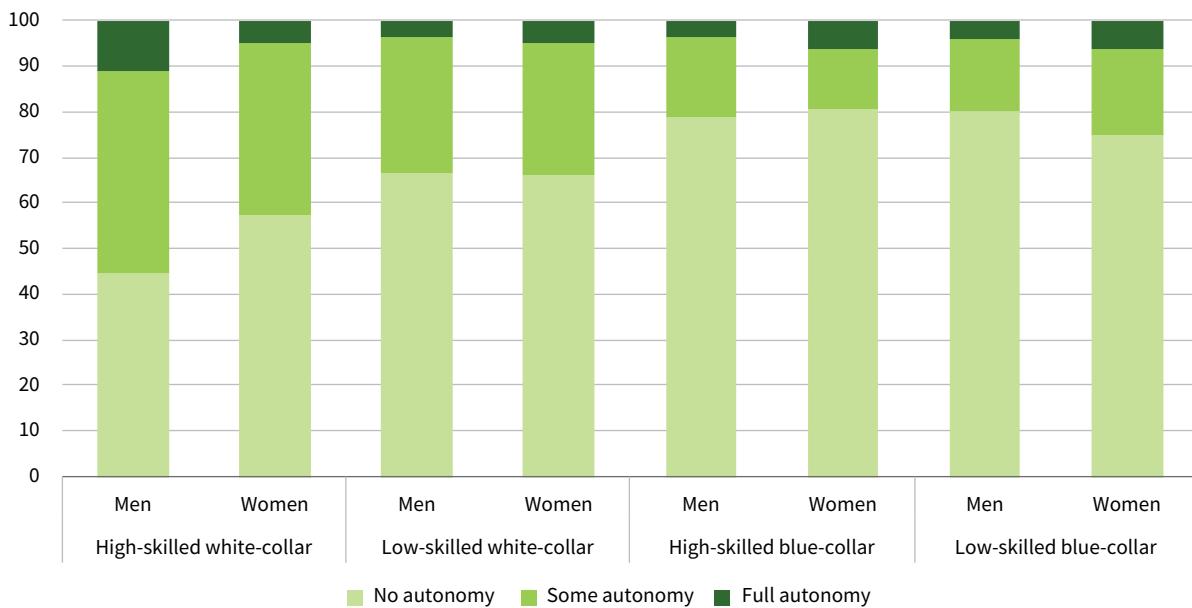
**Figure 44: Autonomy over working time arrangements according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (%)**



As shown in Figure 45, gender differences also emerge when considering the type of occupation: white-collar employees have more autonomy over their working hours than blue-collar employees. High-skilled white-collar employees, and men in particular, have the most autonomy. Even when women are in high-skilled

white-collar occupations (such as professionals or technicians), they do not seem to enjoy the same type of autonomy over working time as men. At the same time, women in low-skilled blue-collar work report slightly more autonomy than their male counterparts.

**Figure 45: Autonomy over working time arrangements according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (%)**



## Flexibility

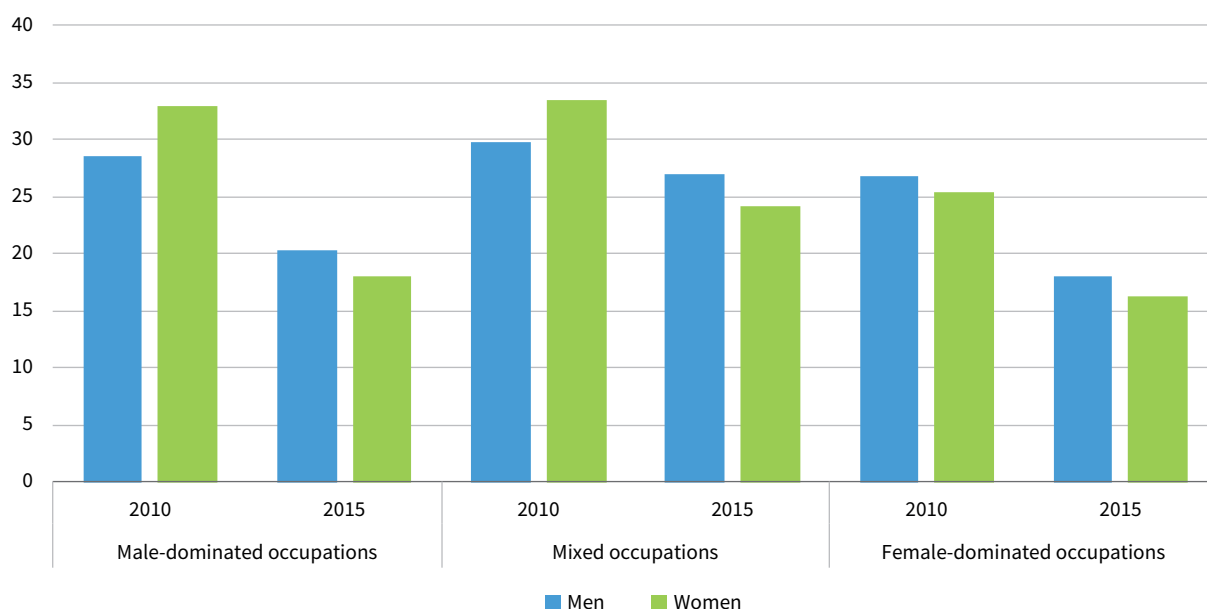
The last sub-dimension of working time quality is flexibility, which represents two important aspects of work–life balance (Eurofound, 2017c, 2018b). It first assesses to what extent employees can take off an hour or two of their working time to deal with family or other personal matters and, second, how often employees work in their free time to meet work demands.

The share of employees reporting overall that it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters remained unchanged between 2010 and 2015 (at 61%). At the same time, the specific share of those reporting that it was ‘very easy’ decreased significantly in that period, from 28% (29% for men and 28% for women) to less than 20% (21% for men and 19% for women). As shown in Figure 46, this share decreased in all sets of occupations, independent of predominant gender. It remains the lowest in female-dominated occupations.

However, the largest decrease took place among female employees in male-dominated occupations (–15 percentage points), while men in mixed occupations recorded the smallest decrease (–3 percentage points). It is also important to point out that, in 2010, more women than men in male-dominated and mixed occupations reported that it was ‘very easy’ to take time off; however, the situation reversed in 2015. In fact, in 2015, more men than women reported that it was ‘very easy’ to take time off, regardless of the predominant gender in the occupation.

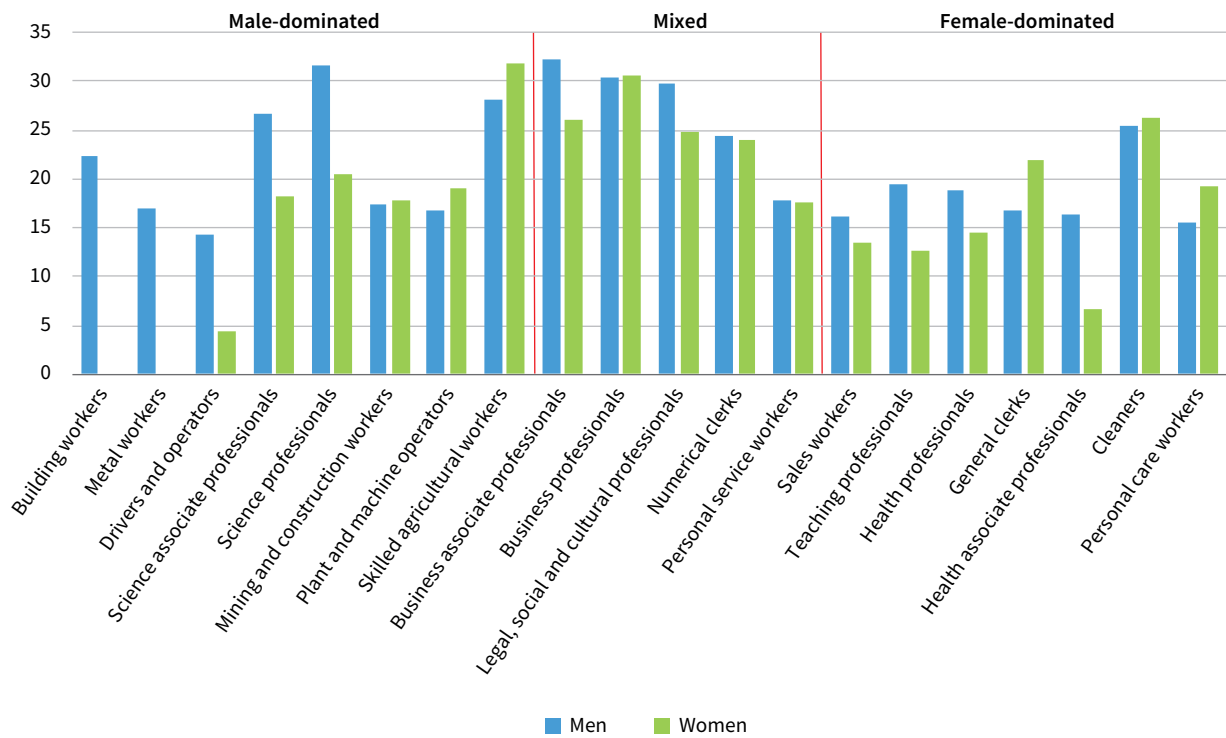
Taking time off from work to take care of personal or family issues is easier in some of the 20 largest occupations than others (Figure 47). On the one hand, both male and female business professionals, business associate professionals, skilled agricultural workers and cleaners, as well as male science associate professionals and science professionals, are more likely to report that it is ‘very easy’ to take time off. On the other hand, female drivers and operators, health associate professionals and, to some extent, teaching professionals, sales workers and health professionals are much less likely to report the same.

**Figure 46: Flexibility to take time off in working hours, by predominant gender in occupation and gender, 2015 (%)**



**Note:** Figures are the share of employees who stated it is ‘very easy’ to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters.

Figure 47: Flexibility to take time off in working hours, in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



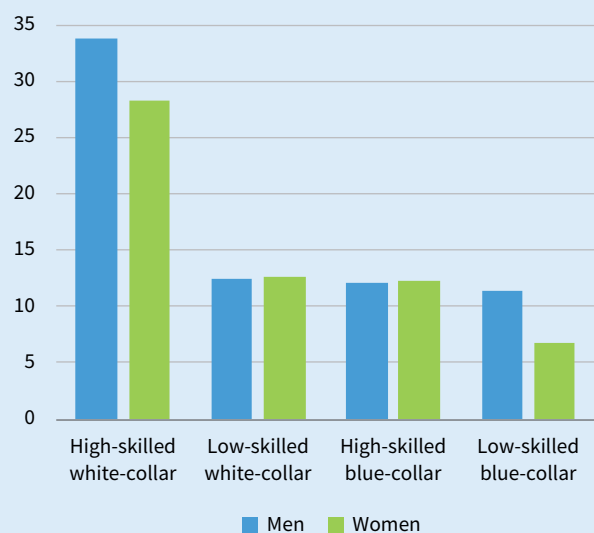
Note: Figures are the share of employees who stated it is 'very easy' to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters.

### Box 2: Blurring boundaries

Working in one's free time to meet work demands is the other side of working time flexibility, and it can impinge on workers' health and well-being. Nearly 20% of men and 19% of women reported that, in the year prior to the survey, they worked in their free time several times a month or more. Only a very small percentage of male and female employees declared doing so daily (about 2%). Most employees (close to 60%) had not done this in the period of time considered.

As expected, because of their associated level of responsibility, high-skilled white-collar employees – particularly men – are much more likely to work in their free time than employees in other types of occupation. Male low-skilled blue-collar employees are also more likely to work in their free time than their female counterparts (Figure 48).

Figure 48: Work in free time to meet work demands, according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (%)

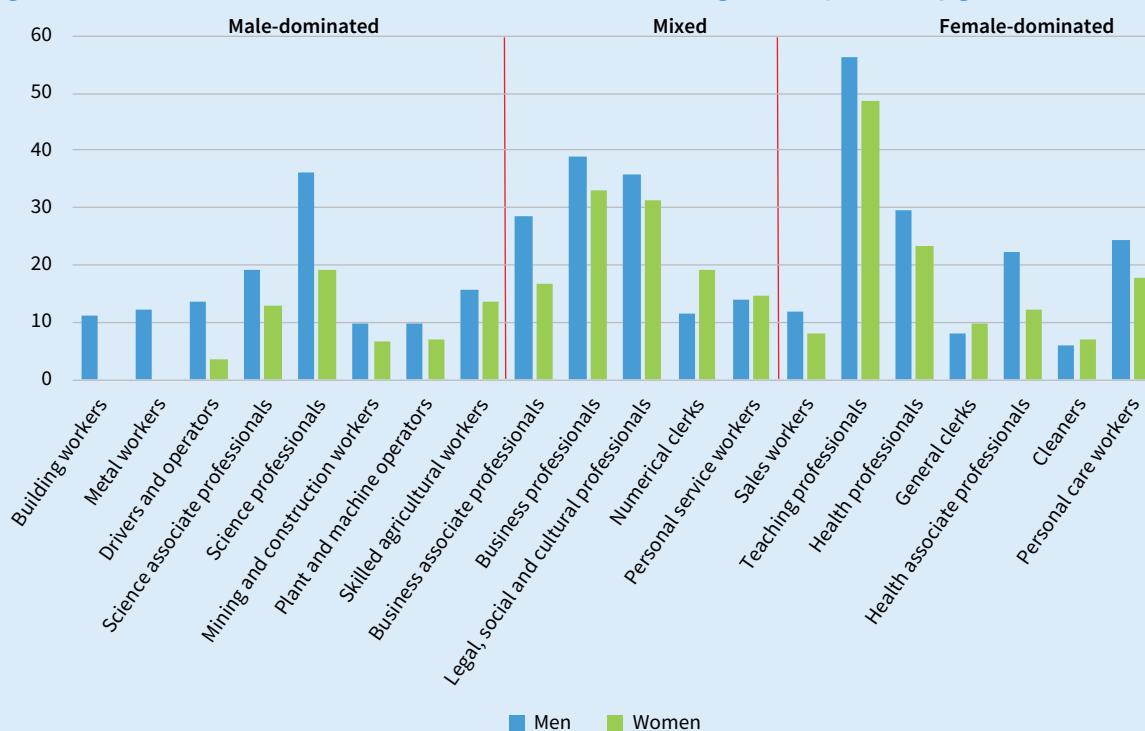


Note: Figures are for employees working in free time daily to several times a month.



As shown in Figure 49, in terms of occupation, teaching professionals clearly stand out, with around half of male and female employees working in their free time. This practice is also common among business professionals, legal, social and cultural professionals and science professionals, but more so among men than women. For example, nearly 20% of female science professionals report working in their free time, while the share goes up to 36% for their male counterparts. Conversely, among numerical clerks, 19% of women report working in their free time – almost twice the share of men (11%) in this occupation.

**Figure 49: Work in free time to meet work demands, in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)**



**Note:** Figures are for employees working in free time daily to several times a month.

## Summary

- Overall, female workers report better working time quality than their male counterparts. This situation results mostly from the fact that female workers assume a greater share of the burden associated with domestic work and care and are, therefore, more likely to work shorter and more predictable hours.
- In their main paid job, men are more likely to work long hours (more than 10 hours per day and more than 48 hours per week), report no 11-hour recovery period between two working days, work atypical hours (nights, shifts, weekends) and work irregular hours.
- Moreover, the organisation of work varies depending on the predominant gender in the occupation. For instance, longer working days and weeks are more likely to be found in male-dominated occupations. Even women in male-dominated occupations, who tend not to work this way, are more likely to report working longer days or weeks. Accordingly, men in female-dominated occupations are less likely to report long days and weeks of work than those in mixed or male-dominated occupations, though they are still more likely to do so than their female counterparts.
- While, in general, atypical hours are more common among men than women, atypical work is performed by both genders in female-dominated occupations, men in low-skilled occupations (white-collar and blue-collar) and women in low-skilled white-collar jobs. Atypical hours are more prevalent among personal service workers, personal care workers, sales workers, health professionals, health associate professionals, and drivers and operators.

- Overall, there is very little difference between men and women in terms of autonomy over their working time arrangements. However, there is more autonomy in mixed occupations and much less in male-dominated ones. Not surprisingly, autonomy over working hours is also reported more extensively by high-skilled white-collar employees and, among these, relatively more by men than women.
- The share of employees reporting that it was ‘easy’ to take an hour or two off work to take care of personal or family issues remained steady between 2010 and 2015 (61%). The share of those stating it was ‘very easy’, however, decreased significantly – particularly for women working in male-dominated occupations (from 33% in 2010 to 18% in 2015). Female drivers and operators and health associate professionals displayed the smallest shares of individuals reporting that it was ‘very easy’ to take time off to take care of personal or family matters.
- Working during one’s free time to meet work demands may vary according to different cultures: it is more common in Anglophone and Northern countries and less so in Southern countries. More women than men report this activity in Northern and Continental country clusters.
- When it comes to working in their free time, the main differences between women and men appear when the type of occupation is taken into consideration: the largest share is among high-skilled white-collar male employees, and the smallest among low-skilled blue-collar female employees. There is a higher prevalence among teaching professionals, and the largest differences between men and women are among science professionals and business associate professionals.

# 6 Social environment

The social environment index measures the extent to which workers, on the one hand, experience supportive social relationships at work and, on the other hand, are exposed to adverse social behaviour such as bullying or harassment and violence in the workplace.<sup>13</sup> The index covers two main sub-dimensions: the incidence of adverse social behaviour; and the presence of support (which includes quality of management and social support from colleagues and/or supervisors). Comparison over time is not possible on the full index, as some of the components of adverse social behaviour and management quality were available only in 2015.

As previous research has already shown, social environment indices – especially for adverse social behaviour – depend on an individual’s degree of awareness regarding these behaviours and the tolerance society displays in relation to them.

## Social environment index

Overall, the difference between the scores for men and women in the social environment index is not noteworthy (Table 4). However, men and women do score differently in the various sub-dimensions of the

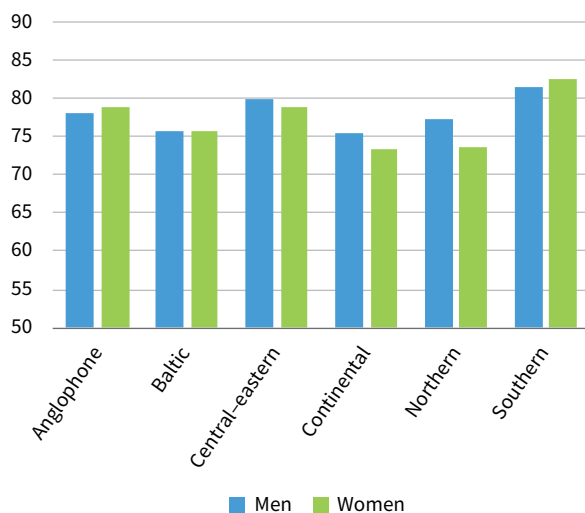
**Table 4: Social environment index and sub-dimensions, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

	Men	Women
<b>Social environment</b>	77	76
<i>Not exposed to ‘adverse social behaviour’ (%)</i>	84	82
<i>Support from colleagues (% always or most of the time)</i>	71	73
<i>Support from manager (% always or most of the time)</i>	57	60
<i>Management quality (unstandardised items)</i>	72	73

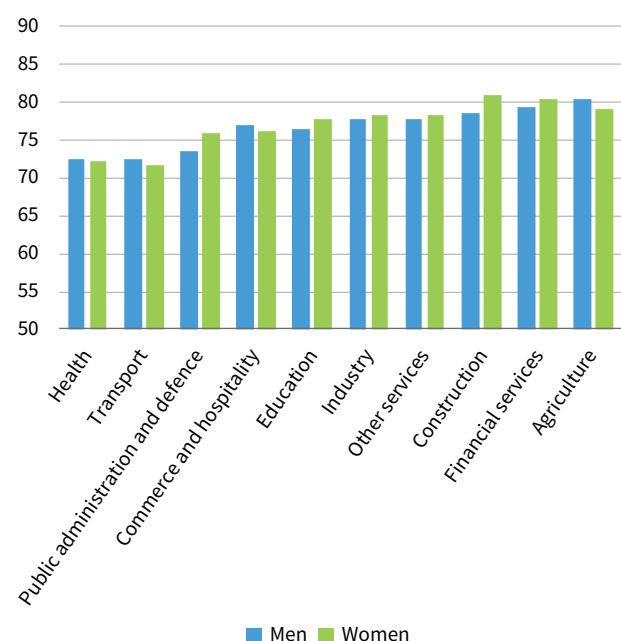
index: while women report greater exposure to adverse social behaviour than men, they benefit from more support from colleagues and managers than their male counterparts.

Consistent with previous research, including the EWCS 2015 overview report (Eurofound, 2017c), the current analysis shows that social environment index scores are lower across the Baltic, Continental and Northern country clusters (Figure 50). There are notable

**Figure 50: Social environment index scores according to country cluster, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 51: Social environment index scores according to sector, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



<sup>13</sup> As with the other job quality indices, this index measures the specific properties of the job, excluding aspects related to the overall organisation or the individual. The higher the score, the better.

**Figure 52: Social environment index according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender (mean scores, 0–100)**

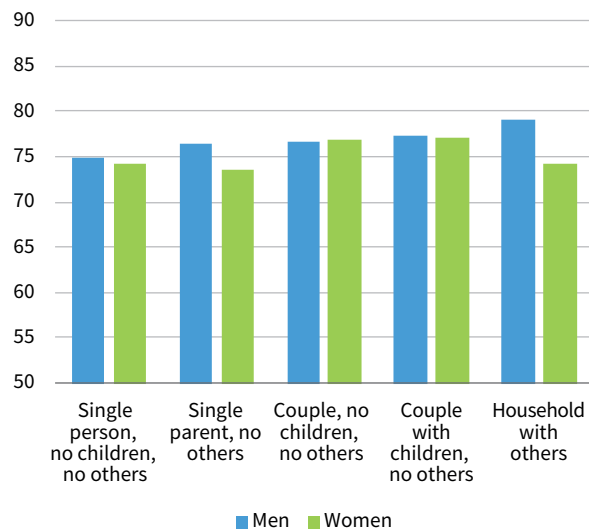


differences between men and women in the Northern and Continental countries, where men score better than women.

Differences between sectors are larger than those between men and women within each sector (Figure 51). The highest scores for social environment are reported in agriculture (81) and financial services (80), while transport and health report the lowest (both 72). When the 20 largest occupations are looked at, differences regarding social environment between men and women are quite small. However, when occupations are aggregated according to predominant gender, social environment scores are slightly worse for both men and women working in female-dominated occupations than those in male-dominated or mixed occupations (Figure 52).

It is also interesting to assess whether women’s and men’s experiences of social environment differ according to household composition, because this can correspond to some stages of life during which extra support may be required at home. As can be seen in Figure 53, when in couples without children, men and women assess their social environment at work similarly. However, single mothers and women in households with other relatives report the lowest scores in social environment. This outcome could be linked with the additional strain put on individuals with caring responsibilities. Interestingly, men in the same situations report much higher scores than women. These results are consistent with the now long standing

**Figure 53: Social environment index according to household composition, by gender (mean scores, 0–100)**



observation that men tend to receive more support than women in these circumstances: men are not expected to deal with these issues – traditionally seen as part of ‘natural’ female duty – and are sometimes not even expected to be able to cope.

## Social support index

The social environment index as measured through the EWCS includes two main components: quality of management and support provided by colleagues and managers.

### Quality of management

Managers play an important role in an organisation: they are responsible for achieving the objectives and goals of the firm, mainly through organising the collective performance of staff. While managers can help improve job quality, they can also have a negative effect on worker motivation, engagement and even health. Managers therefore have a central role in determining the social climate at work.

Men and women assess the quality of managers very similarly, especially in mixed occupations (Figure 54).<sup>14</sup> In female-dominated occupations, workers report slightly higher management quality when the manager is of the same gender. Overall, the gender of the manager makes a difference: quality of management is rated higher for female managers in all types of occupation.

<sup>14</sup> The management quality index is the mean average of the responses ‘strongly agree’ and ‘tend to agree’ in answer to the following statements: ‘Your immediate boss ... respects you as a person; gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job; is successful in getting people to work together; is helpful in getting the job done; provides useful feedback on your work; and encourages and supports your development’. The higher the score, the better.

Figure 54: Management quality, by predominant gender in occupation and gender of manager, 2015 (%)



### Social support

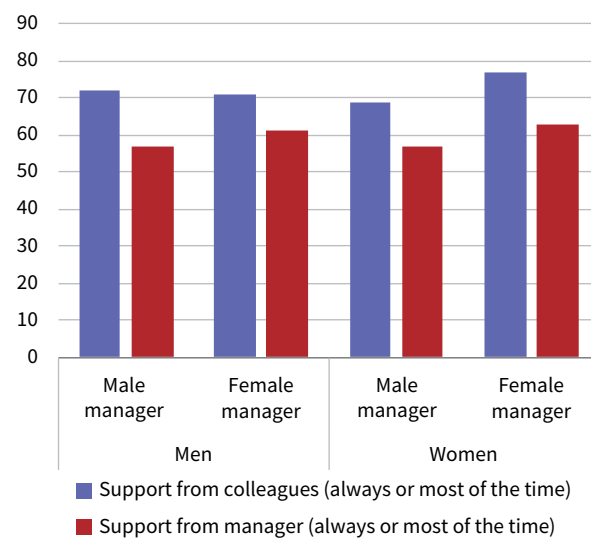
Eurofound’s research on the relationships between working conditions and worker’s health (Eurofound, 2019) confirmed that social support from colleagues and/or supervisors is one of the most important resources contributing positively to workers’ health and well-being. Such support is motivational and therefore increases workers’ engagement (measured by vigour, dedication and absorption), which, in turn, is positively associated with workers’ health and well-being.

In general, the shares of employees stating that they receive support from their colleagues (71% of men and 73% of women) are higher than those reporting support from their managers (57% of men and 60% of women). The shares of female workers that receive support from colleagues and managers are slightly larger than those of men (Figure 55).

The gender of a worker’s manager makes a difference in terms of the social support received: the shares of workers of both genders reporting that they receive support are larger when their manager is female. Having a male manager does not seem to make a difference for male workers in comparison with their overall average, but it does make a difference for female workers: the likelihood of reporting that they get support is smaller when they have a male manager.

Figure 56 shows a large variation in social support according to occupation, but support from colleagues is always higher than support from managers. Within the male-dominated occupations of science professionals, science associate professionals and skilled agricultural

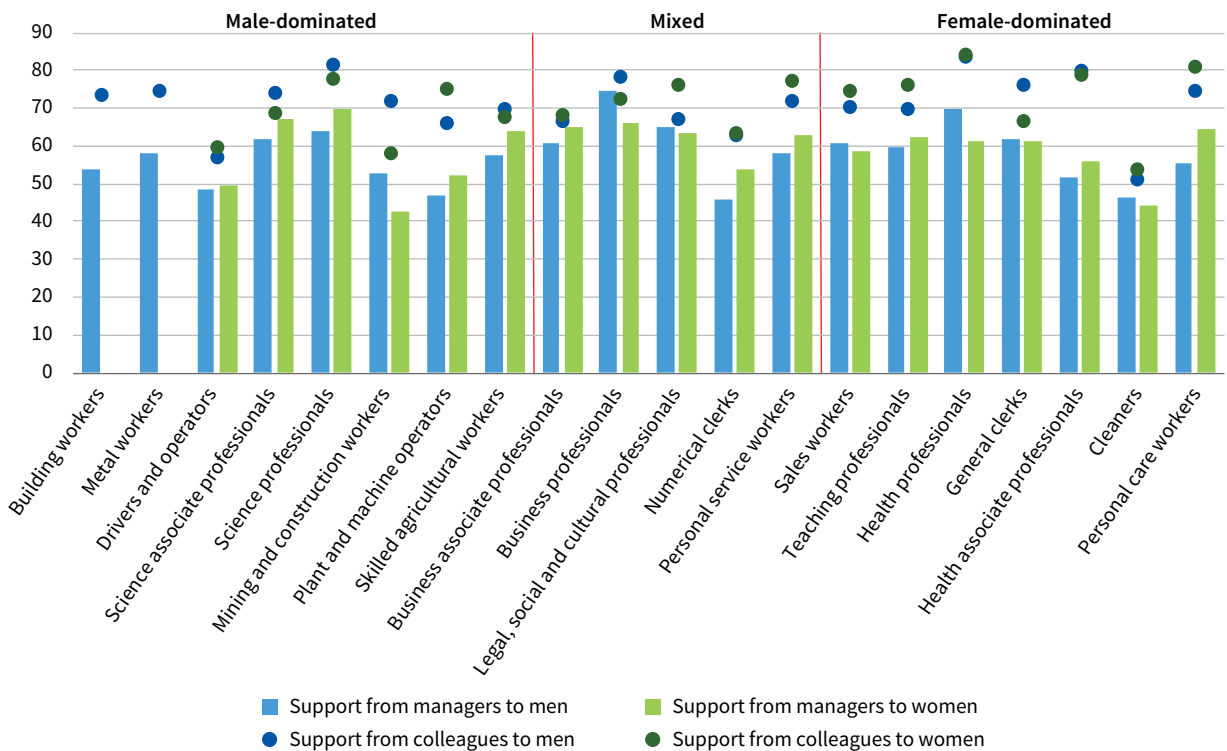
Figure 55: Social support, by gender of manager, male and female employees, 2015 (%)



Note: Figures are the share of employees receiving support from colleagues and managers.

workers, the share of employees receiving support from colleagues is higher for men than women, while the share of those receiving support from managers is larger for women than men. The inverse happens with cleaners and sales workers, which are female-dominated occupations. Cleaners, mining and construction workers, plant and machine operators and numerical clerks stand out as those occupations where support is lower overall for both male and female employees.

Figure 56: Social support in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



Note: Figures are the share of employees receiving support from colleagues and managers (always or most of the time).

## Adverse social behaviour

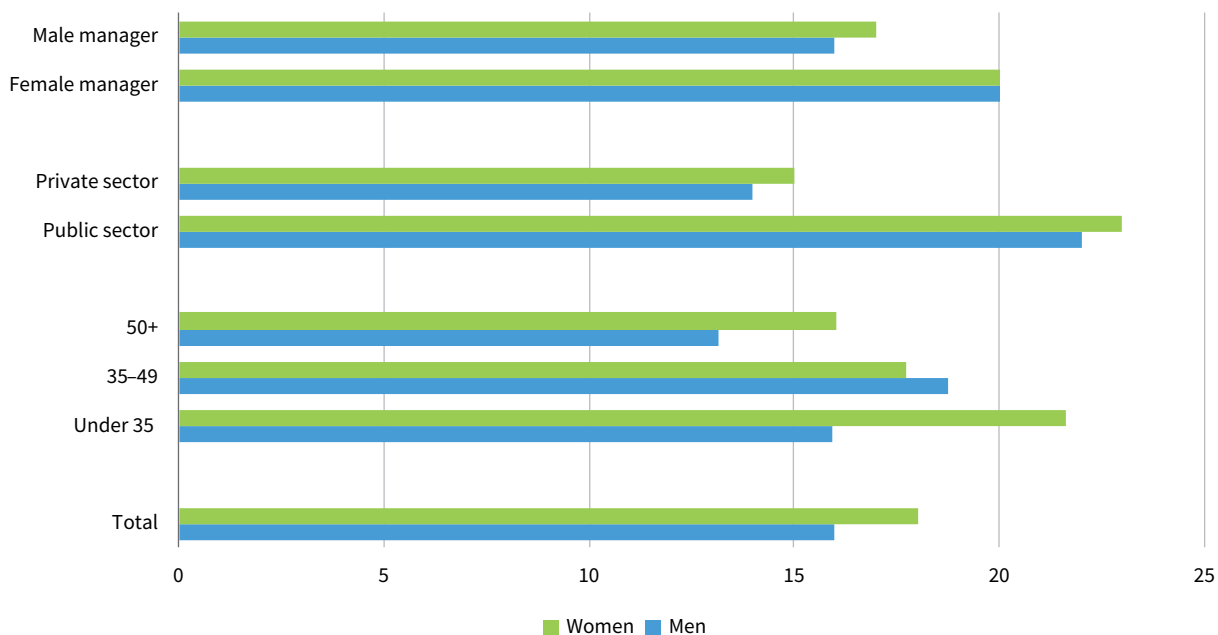
According to Eurofound research on the relationships between working conditions and worker’s health, social demands (defined as being exposed to harassment and/or discrimination) are strongly and directly associated with several health and well-being indicators. Social demands are linked to the number of health problems reported by employees, such as sickness absence, presenteeism (working while sick), and poorer sleep quality and subjective well-being (Eurofound, 2019).

In the context of the social environment index, adverse social behaviour is defined as exposure to verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats and humiliating behaviours in the month prior to the survey, and exposure to physical violence, sexual harassment or bullying/harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey (Eurofound, 2017c).

Adverse social behaviour is, in general, reported relatively more commonly by women than men (18% compared with 16%), particularly by young women (22% of women under 35). Adverse social behaviour is also more frequently reported in the public sector (22% of men and 23% of women) than in the private sector (14% and 15%, respectively). Exposure to adverse social behaviour is particularly high in the health sector (reported by 26% of men and 28% of women), the transport sector (particularly for women – 23% compared with 19% of men) and in public administration (particularly for men – 26% compared with 20% of women).

Also noteworthy is the fact that the share of employees reporting exposure to adverse social behaviour is higher when the manager is female (Figure 57), which raises the question: does the gender of the manager make a difference? It could be hypothesised that female managers are relatively more aware of adverse social behaviour and its damaging consequences for workers and for the organisation. If that is the case, it is reasonable to believe that employees with female managers could also be more aware of the issue and feel more inclined to speak out on the matter.

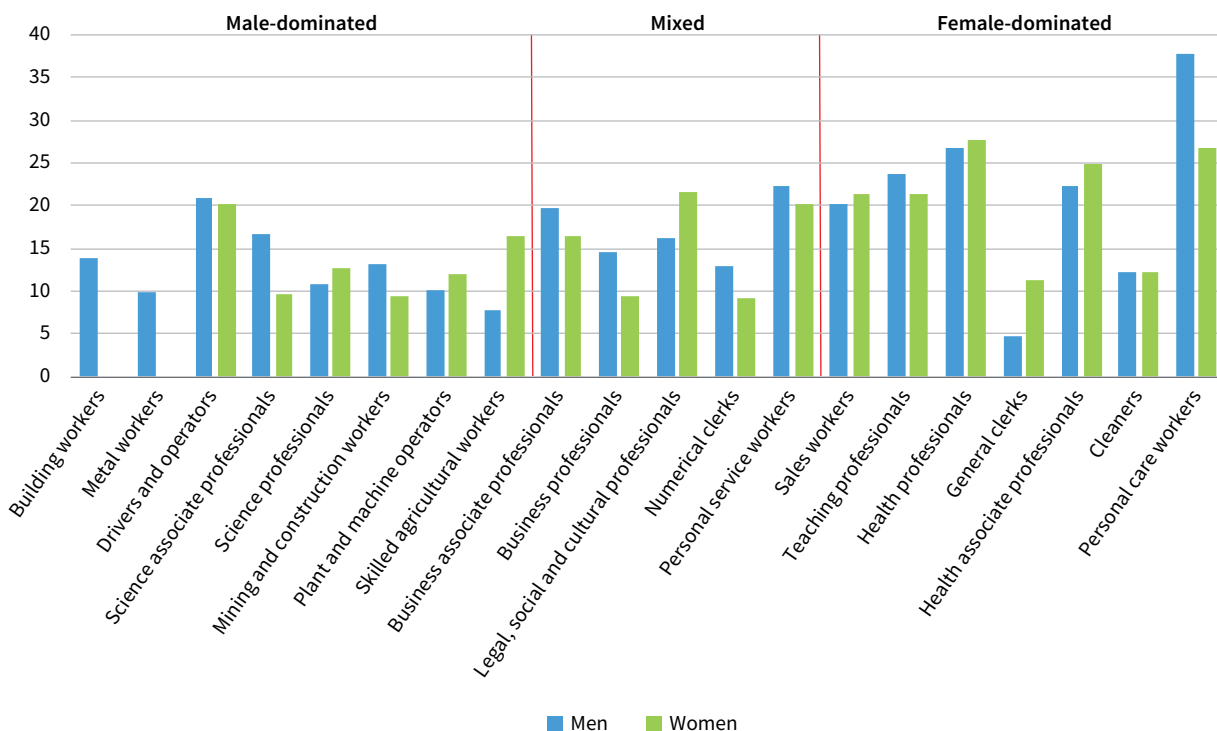
Figure 57: Share of employees exposed to adverse social behaviour, by gender (%)



Occupations are also important determinants in relation to exposure to adverse social behaviour. Figure 58 shows the shares of employees reporting exposure to adverse social behaviour in the 20 largest occupations. The largest shares of exposure to such behaviour (of 20% or more) are seen in occupations that, in principle, require contact with third parties

(customers, patients or pupils): these are drivers and operators, personal service workers, sales workers, teaching professionals, health professionals, health associate professionals and personal care workers. Notably, five of these seven are female-dominated occupations.

Figure 58: Share of employees exposed to adverse social behaviour in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



## Summary

- While men and women report very similar levels of social environment at work, they differ in the various sub-dimensions. Men tend to receive less support from colleagues and managers, while women report greater exposure to adverse social behaviour.
- Social environment is slightly worse for men and women working in female-dominated occupations than for those in male-dominated or mixed occupations. This is mostly due to the greater exposure of female-dominated occupations to adverse social behaviour, which is not surprising given that the nature of many of these occupations requires direct interaction with third parties most or all of the time.
- In terms of household composition, lone mothers and women in households with other relatives report the lowest scores in social environment. This must be considered in a very likely context of high strain suffered by individuals with caring responsibilities.
- For management quality, the gender of the manager makes a difference: quality is rated higher with female managers in all types of occupation. This also makes a difference in relation to social support: the shares of both male and female workers reporting that they receive support are larger when their manager is female.
- Adverse social behaviour is reported by slightly more women than men, and more so by young women (under 35). Adverse social behaviour is also more prominently reported in the public sector than in the private sector. It is more likely to be reported by individuals in female-dominated occupations, such as personal care workers (in which it is very high for men), health professionals, health associate professionals, teaching professionals, sales workers and personal service workers.
- Exposure to adverse social behaviour tends to be reported more when the manager is female, which could suggest that employees with female managers may feel more at ease or be more inclined to speak out.



# 7 Skills and discretion

The skills and discretion index measures the skills required in the job. It also looks at opportunities workers may have to understand and influence the way they perform their work, and at options available to develop their job-related skills through training (Eurofound, 2017c). It is composed of four main sub-dimensions: cognitive demands, decision latitude, organisational participation and training.<sup>15</sup>

## Skills and discretion index

Overall, men and women report similar levels of skills and discretion at work; this is the case for each of the sub-dimensions of this index. The level of skills and discretion increased for both men and women between 2010 and 2015, but slightly more for women (Table 5).

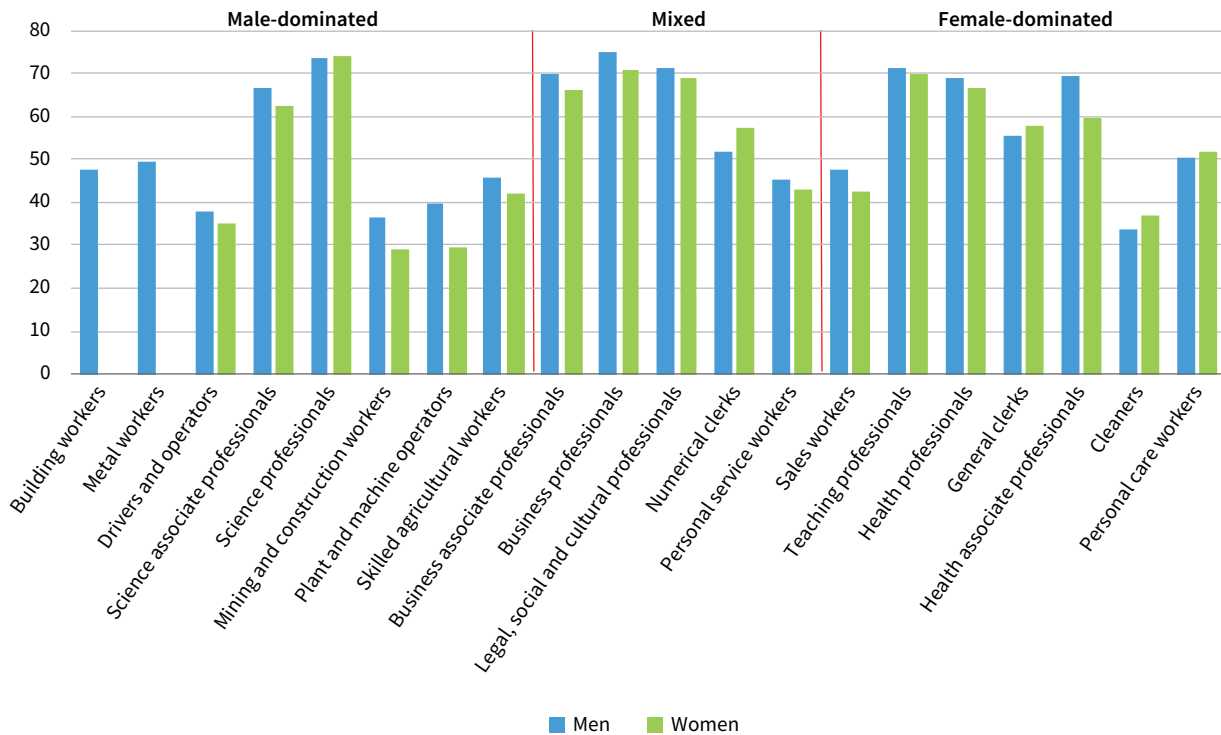
Skills and discretion levels are highest among mixed occupations and lowest among male-dominated ones. In most occupations, the use of skills and discretion is higher for men, but women score higher among science professionals (a male-dominated occupation), numerical clerks (a mixed occupation), general clerks, cleaners and personal care workers (female-dominated occupations) (Figure 59).

**Table 5: Skills and discretion index, by gender, 2005, 2010, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

	2005		2010		2015	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Skills and discretion index</b>	-	-	53	52	54	54
<i>Cognitive demands</i>	62	60	62	60	65	64
<i>Decision latitude</i>	53	53	54	55	57	57
<i>Organisational participation</i>	-	-	50	49	53	52
<i>Training</i>	29	29	36	35	39	40

<sup>15</sup> The index is developed from 14 indicators, including the skills content of the job (cognitive dimension), decision latitude, worker participation in the organisation, and training. The level of education, as measured by the International Standard Classification of Education, and the occupational group, according to the ISCO, are also integrated into the index as external measures of the skills content of jobs (Eurofound, 2017c, p. 79). The higher the score, the better.

Figure 59: Skills and discretion in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

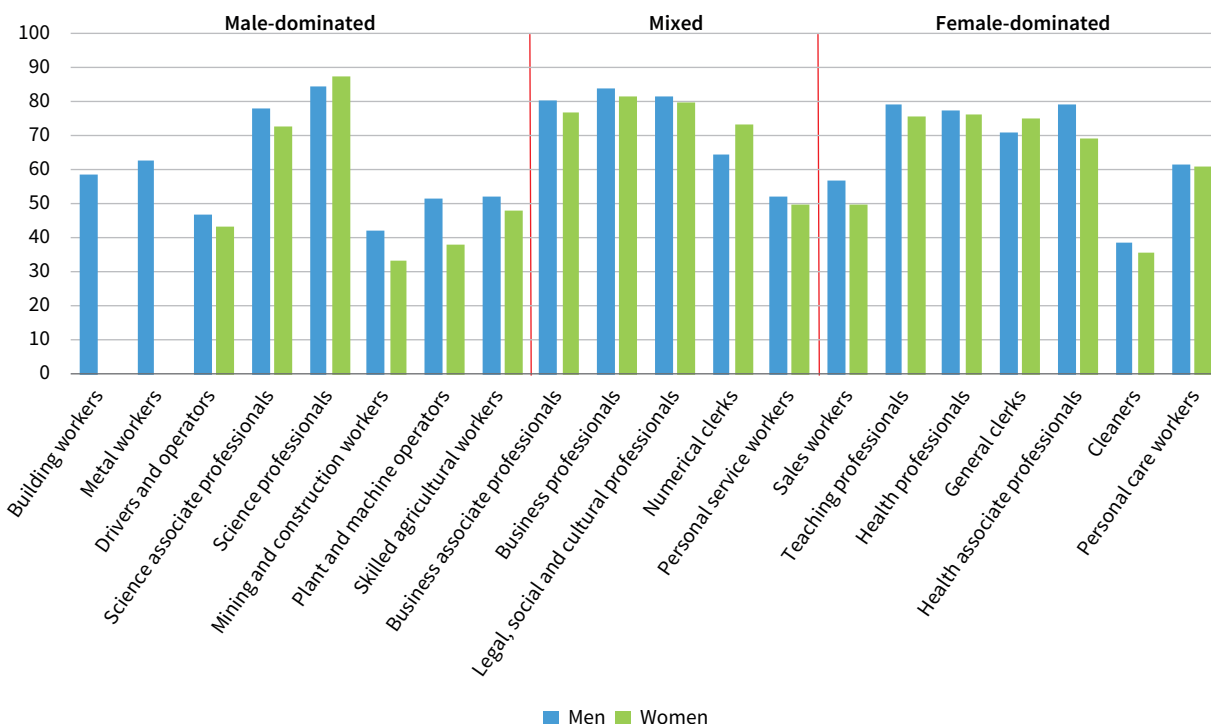


## Cognitive dimension

The cognitive dimension of the skills and discretion index captures the creative variation in work and task that can contribute to self-development at work and to work motivation (Eurofound, 2017c). As the analysis of EWCS 2015 has already shown, across Europe, a large proportion of workers indicate that their job involves solving unforeseen problems on their own or applying their own ideas in their work; in addition, a considerable proportion state that their job involves learning new things and the performing of complex tasks (Eurofound, 2017c). However, the EWCS data also show that nearly half of all workers report that their job involves monotonous and/or repetitive tasks – in other words, their jobs have little task variation.

Overall, men and women report similar cognitive demands at work. These are higher in the Northern countries and lower in the Baltic and Southern countries, with few differences between men and women. The absence of difference between men and women remains regardless of age or level of education. Creative work and task variation, which is characteristic of high-skilled white-collar jobs and less so of low-skilled blue-collar occupations, is also similar for men and women in the 20 largest occupations. As can be seen in Figure 60, lower levels of cognitive demands are found among cleaners, mining and construction workers, plant and machine operators and skilled agricultural workers; among these, women have the lowest levels.

Figure 60: Cognitive dimension in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



## Decision latitude

Decision latitude is an important feature of work, as it assesses to what extent workers can ‘work in the way that best suits them and is safest for them’ (Eurofound, 2017c, p. 81). Lacking such autonomy could endanger workers’ health and well-being. In the context of the job quality framework, decision latitude includes:

- ability to choose or change the order of tasks
- ability to choose or change the speed or rate of work

- ability to choose or change methods of work
- having a say in the choice of work colleagues

Reported levels of discretion are very similar for men and women. Differences between men and women become much more apparent when looking at occupational status and the predominant gender in the occupation. Decision latitude is low for blue-collar employees but even lower for female employees in this group. High-skilled white-collar employees have the highest levels of discretion and, among these workers, male employees have the most discretion (Figure 61).

Figure 61: Decision latitude according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

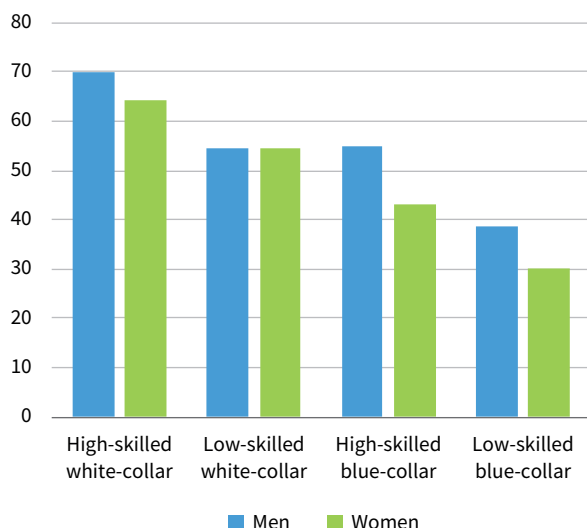
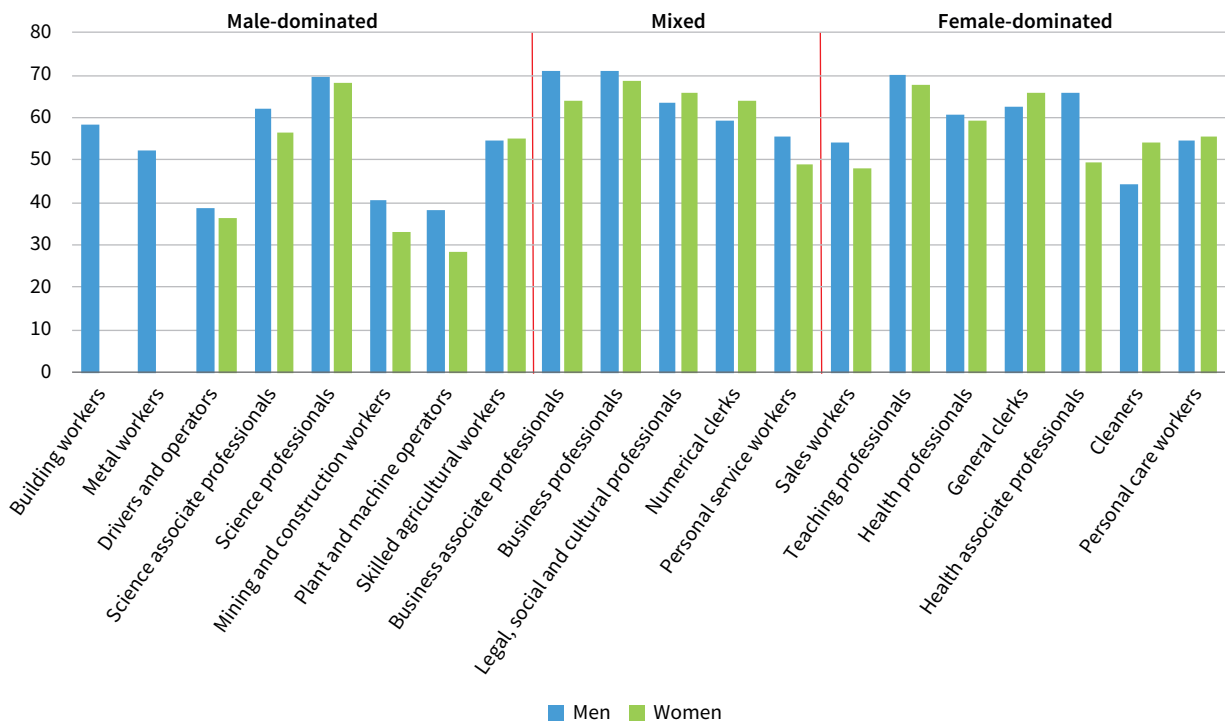


Figure 62: Decision latitude according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



Figure 63: Decision latitude in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



Decision latitude tends to be higher for those in mixed occupations and lower for those in male-dominated occupations. Furthermore, it is lowest for female employees within male-dominated occupations (Figure 62). This is particularly visible in Figure 63, which shows that women in the male-dominated occupations of drivers and operators, mining and construction workers and plant and machine operators experience the lowest levels of discretion in their jobs.

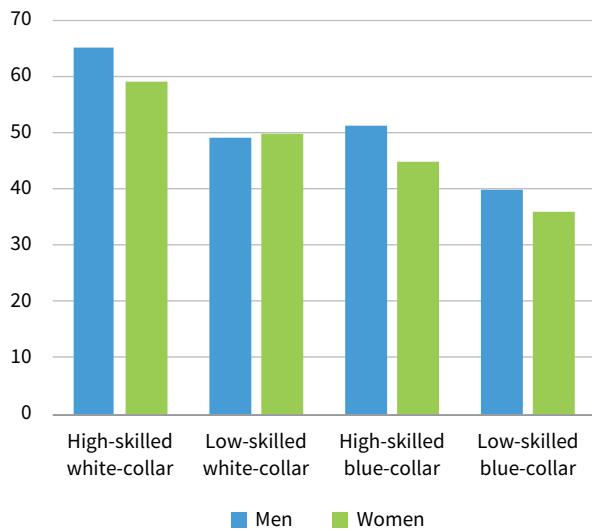
## Organisational participation

Organisational participation refers to workers’ involvement in changes that affect their jobs and the overall organisation of their work (Eurofound, 2017c). It includes the following aspects:

- being consulted before objectives are set for their work
- being involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of their department or organisation
- having the ability to influence decisions that are important for their work

Organisational participation is lower for low-skilled blue-collar employees and for those in male-dominated occupations; among these, women report even lower levels. High-skilled white-collar employees enjoy the highest levels of organisational participation, but again, among these, women lag behind (Figure 64 and Figure 65).

**Figure 64: Organisational participation according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



**Figure 65: Organisational participation according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**



Some noteworthy gender gaps also appear in specific occupations, as shown in Figure 66. Mining and construction workers, plant and machine operators, and cleaners experience the least organisational participation. In mining and construction

(male-dominated occupations), women report lower levels of participation than their male counterparts; in contrast, among cleaners and personal care workers (both female-dominated occupations), men report a lower level of participation.

**Figure 66: Organisational participation in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)**

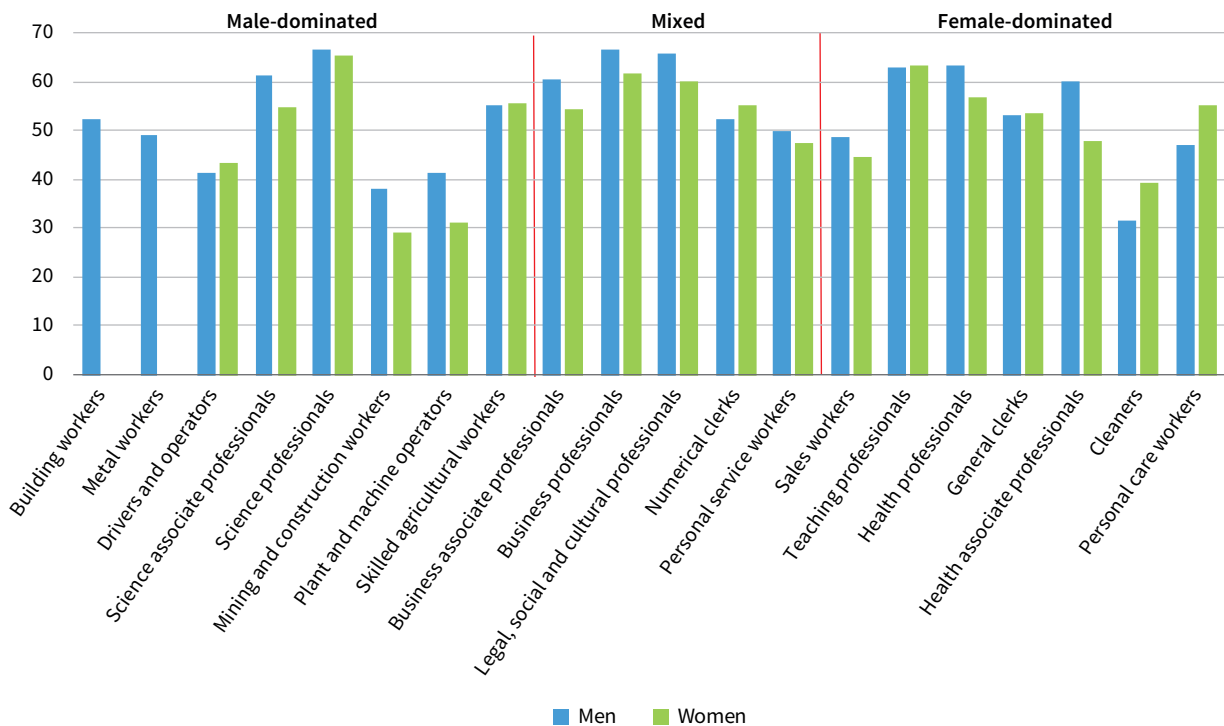
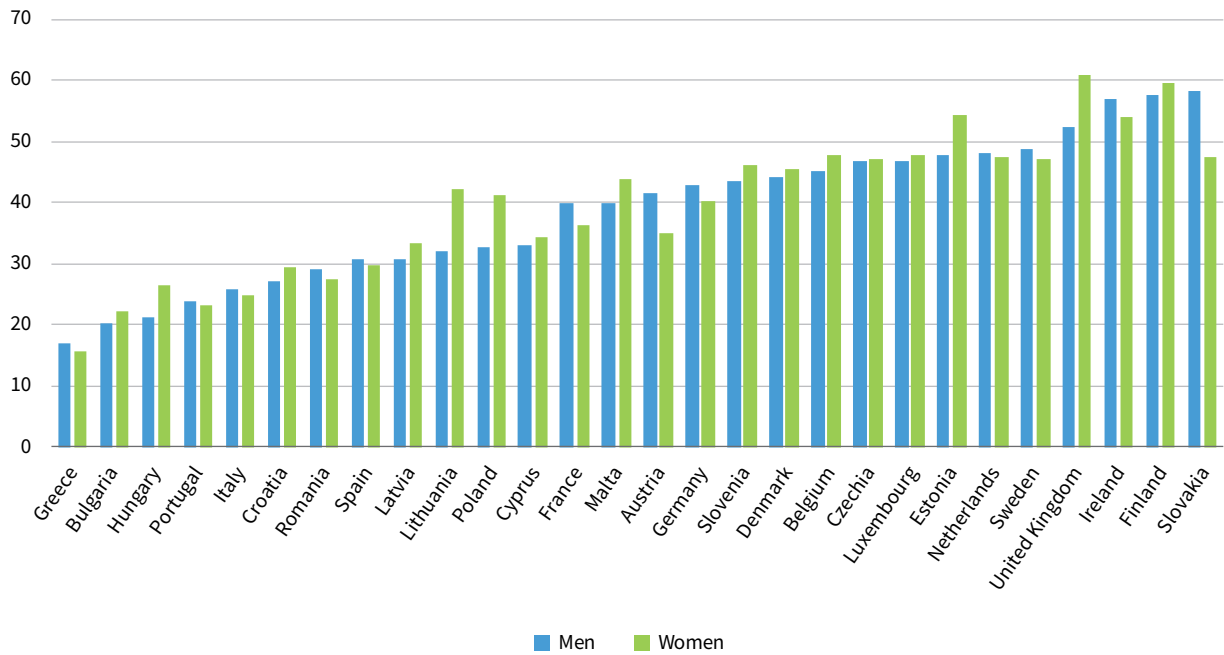


Figure 67: Training index scores in Member States, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



## Training

Access to training is a fundamental element in the improving of workers’ skills. In the context of the job quality index, two elements are considered here: training provided or paid for by the employer in the 12 months prior to the survey; and on-the-job training in the past 12 months. Overall, men and women score the same but, as Figure 67 shows, there is significant variation across the EU28 in terms of access to training; this is sometimes very different for women and men. The training index ranges from 16 points for female employees in Greece to 61 points for female employees

in the UK. The largest differences between men and women can be seen in Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and the UK, where women score much higher than men, and also in Austria and Slovakia, where access to training is available to a larger share of men.

White-collar employees display higher training index scores, and almost no difference is evident between men and women in this category. However, blue-collar employees indicate both lower levels of access to training and very large gender gaps: women score lower than men among low-skilled and particularly among high-skilled blue-collar employees (Figure 68).

Figure 68: Training index scores according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

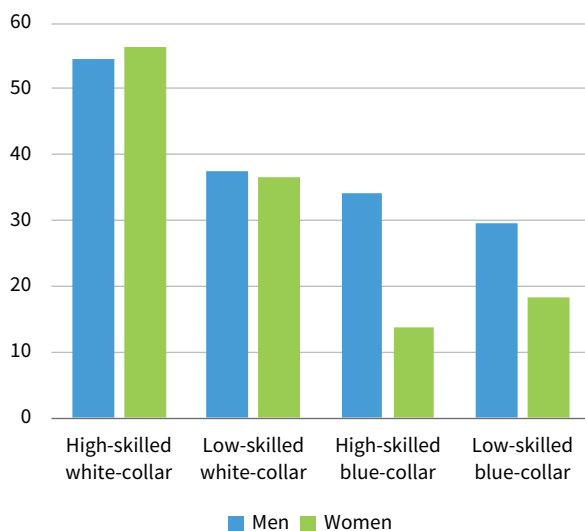


Figure 69: Training index scores according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)

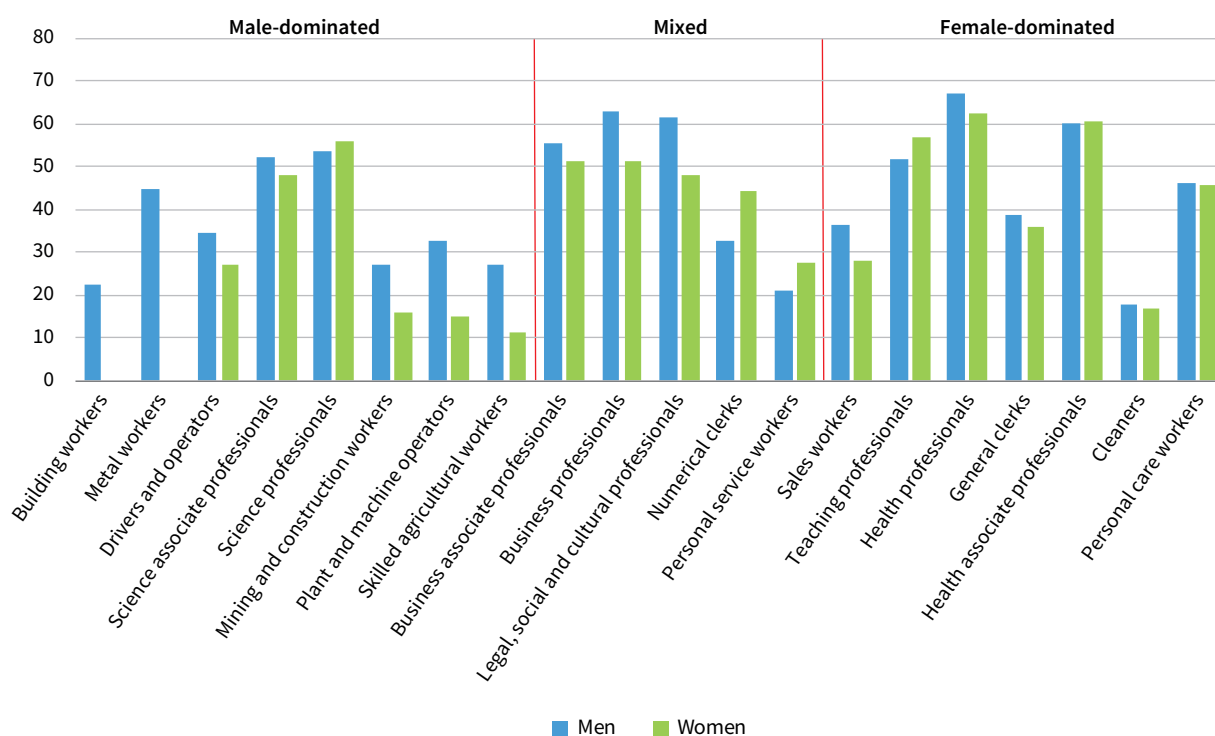


This pattern is mirrored somewhat by the fact that employees in male-dominated occupations tend to have less access to training, especially women (Figure 69).

The same patterns are also visible when the 20 largest occupations are taken into consideration: women

always score worse than men in the occupations with the lowest access to training, whether in male-dominated occupations (skilled agricultural workers, mining and construction workers or plant and machine operators) or in female-dominated occupations (such as cleaners, which has the lowest scores overall – Figure 70).

Figure 70: Training index scores in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



## Summary

- In general, men and women show very similar levels of use of skills and discretion at work. At this aggregate level, gender differences by country cluster, age and educational level are minimal.
- Creative work and task variation – the cognitive dimension of job quality – is characteristic of high-skilled white-collar jobs and less so of low-skilled blue-collar occupations. In most occupations, men and women report similar cognitive demands. The exception is plant and machine operators, a male-dominated occupation, where women display lower levels.
- Decision latitude is lower in blue-collar and male-dominated jobs; within these, women have lower decision latitude than men.
- Organisational participation – that is workers' involvement in changes affecting their jobs and the overall organisation of their work – is lower in blue-collar and male-dominated jobs. Moreover, within these groups, women report a lower level of participation than their male counterparts.
- Access to training is also weaker among groups of employees in blue-collar and male-dominated occupations. Again, within these, women are at a greater disadvantage than men. For example, access to training is lowest among female cleaners, plant and machine operators, and agricultural workers.





# 8 Prospects

The prospects index measures the potential continuity of employment as assessed through a person’s employment status and type of contract, job security, career prospects and exposure to downsizing (reduction of employment) in the organisation in which they work. Job prospects differ from employment security: the latter depends not only on the features of one’s current job but also on the individual’s own qualities and the labour market environment. This index is only available for 2015 but, whenever possible and relevant, trends in each of the different sub-dimensions are considered.

## Prospects index

In general, prospects are better for male employees, independent of the predominant gender in the occupation (Figure 71). Women in male-dominated occupations score the lowest on the overall prospects index.

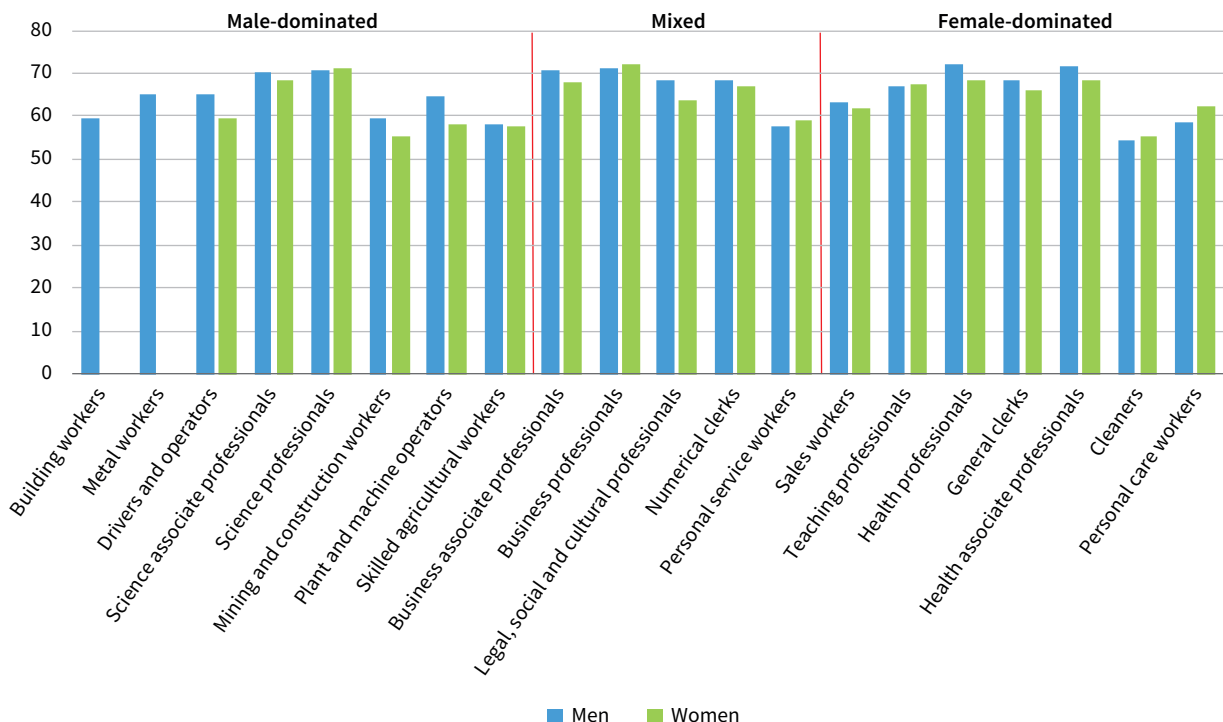
Prospects scores are highest for male health professionals and health associate professionals as well as female business professionals (all 72 points). The lowest levels of prospects are reported by male and female cleaners (54 and 55 points, respectively). The largest differences are among plant and machine operators, drivers and operators (male-dominated occupations) and legal, social and cultural professionals

Figure 71: Prospects index scores according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



(a mixed occupation) – the average scores of men in these occupations are five points higher than those of women. The only occupations in which women clearly report better prospects are personal service workers (a mixed occupation) and personal care workers (the most female-dominated of all occupations analysed here) (Figure 72).

Figure 72: Prospects index scores in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (mean scores, 0–100)



## Career prospects

The share of male employees reporting that their job offers good prospects for career advancement is larger than that of female employees; this has been the case since 2005, as shown in Figure 73. This barely changed between 2005 and 2010, but there was a notable increase between 2010 and 2015, particularly for women, thus reducing the gender gap. As shown in Figure 74, good prospects for career advancement increased between 2005 and 2010 within all age groups, though particularly among young employees. However, prospects clearly diminish significantly with age. As pointed out in previous Eurofound research, the very low level of prospects reported by men – and especially women – aged over 50 is of great concern given that lengthening working lives is high on the agenda of policymakers (Eurofound, 2017c).

As shown in Figure 75, in terms of occupation, the largest shares of employees reporting good career prospects are found among female business professionals and science professionals (62% and 59%, respectively). The largest share among male employees

is found among science professionals, business professionals and health professionals.

At the other end of the spectrum are women working as plant and machine operators, with only 15% reporting good career prospects. Beyond this group, cleaners – both male (22%) and female (16%) – and female mining and construction workers (18%) display the lowest shares of individuals reporting good career opportunities.

The greatest disparity between men and women are among plant and machine operators, a male-dominated occupation: men’s reporting of good prospects is dramatically better than women’s. Among the female-dominated occupations, it is only female teaching professionals and personal care workers who report better opportunities than their male counterparts. In all other female-dominated occupations, men appear better off, the largest gender gaps being found for health professionals and health associate professionals (both 11 points). It is also interesting to see that female skilled agricultural workers and science professionals display better prospects than their male counterparts.

**Figure 73: Share of women reporting good prospects for career advancement, and gender gaps, 2005–2015 (%)**



**Figure 74: Good prospects for career advancement, by age and gender, 2005–2015 (%)**

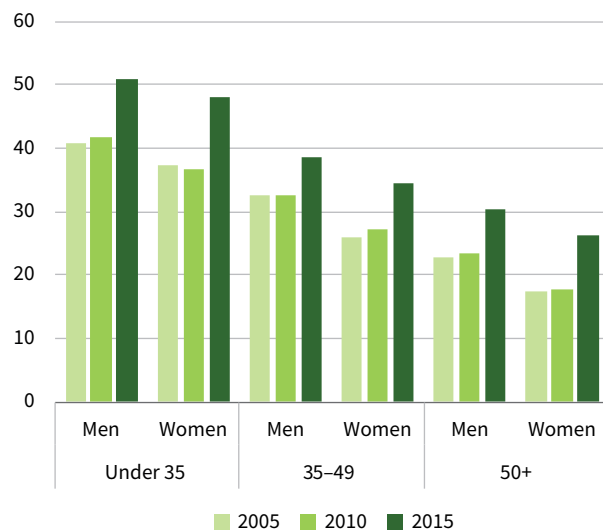
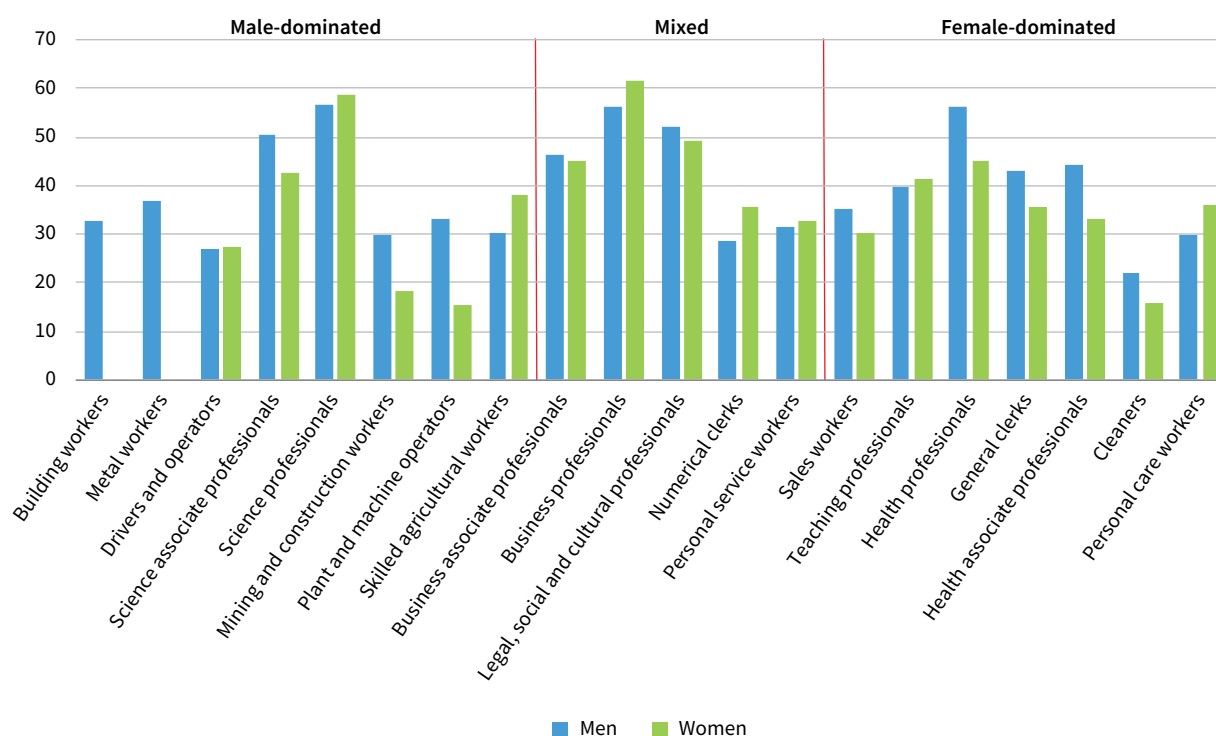


Figure 75: Good prospects for career advancement in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



## Job security and employability

As mentioned in the EWCS 2015 overview report, self-reported job insecurity has been identified as a good predictor of future unemployment (see Eurofound, 2017c and, for example, Stephens, 2004; Campbell et al, 2007; Dickerson and Green, 2012; Green, 2015). Indeed, those who report job insecurity and a low degree of employability are most at risk of (long-term) unemployment and need the most support to remain in employment. While employability is not part of the prospects index, it is worth examining in conjunction with job (in)security.

According to the EWCS 2015 data, the share of employees reporting job insecurity (those who agree with the statement 'I might lose my job in the next six months') is the same for men and women (16%).

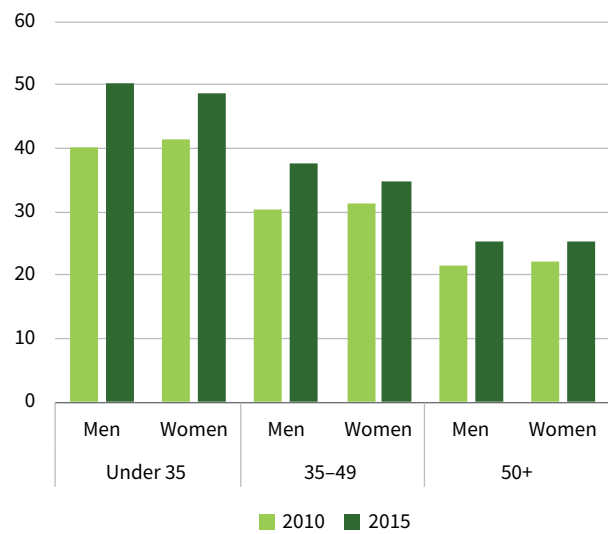
Men reported slightly higher job insecurity than women in 2005, and the difference between genders increased between 2005 and 2010; however, it then decreased by 2015 (see Figure 76), eliminating the gap. In any case, more men and women overall reported job insecurity in 2015 than 10 years earlier.

The share of employees reporting some degree of employability (those who agreed with the statement 'if I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary') was higher for men than women (38% and 36%, respectively) in 2015 (Figure 77). However, five years earlier, the situation was the reverse with women faring slightly better than their male colleagues. Overall, employability has increased, although more so for men (+6 points) than for women (+4.4 points).

**Figure 76: Job insecurity, by age and gender, 2005–2015 (%)**



**Figure 77: Employability, by age and gender, 2010, 2015 (%)**



Overall, job insecurity decreased between 2010 and 2015. The largest drops for both men and women were in male-dominated occupations, the biggest reduction being found among men in this category (-6 percentage points compared to -4 percentage points for women) (Figure 78). Over the same period, the drop was less marked for those in mixed occupations and female-dominated occupations, the smallest difference being for men in female-dominated occupations.

In terms of gender gaps, the largest gap is found in male-dominated occupations: one-quarter of the female employees in these occupations reported job insecurity compared with only one-fifth of men in 2015.

Between 2010 and 2015, employability increased in male-dominated and mixed occupations, more so among men. Employability remained stable for men and women in female-dominated occupations (Figure 79).

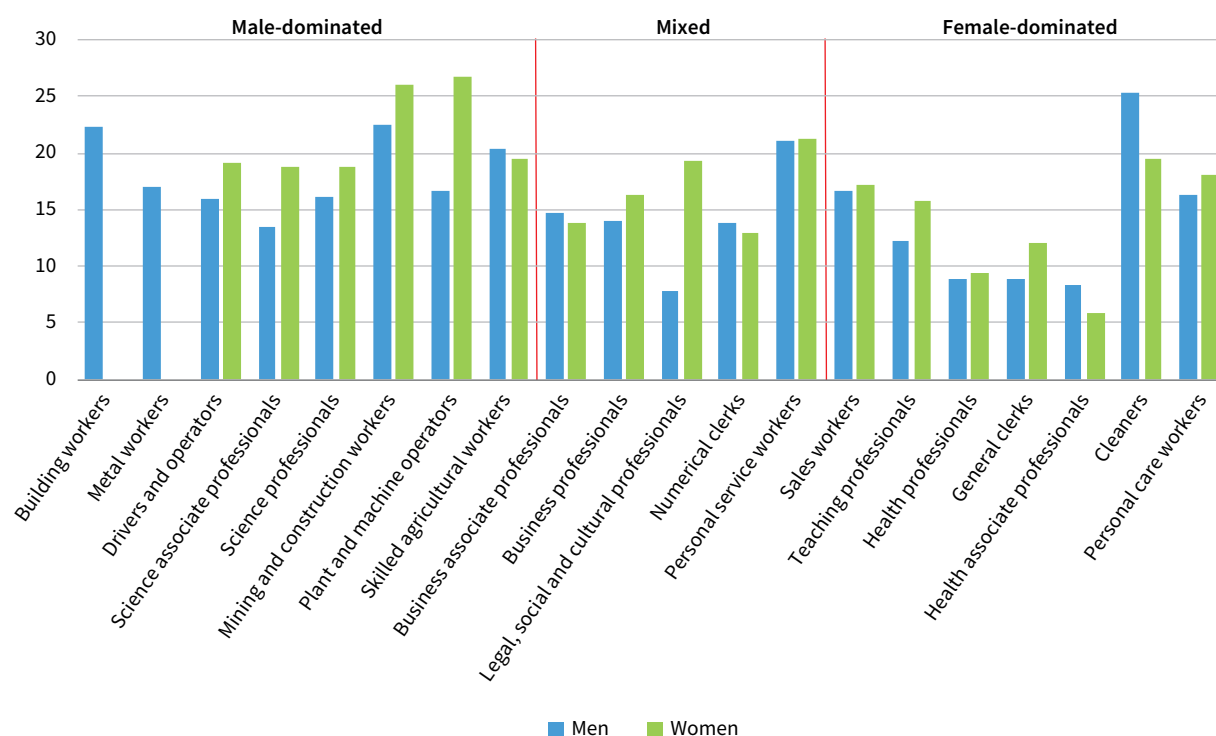
**Figure 78: Job insecurity according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2010, 2015 (%)**



**Figure 79: Employability according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2010, 2015 (%)**



Figure 80: Job insecurity in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



Looking at specific occupations, it is important to note that, among the female-dominated occupations, levels of job insecurity are relatively high for personal care workers and very high for cleaners, particularly male cleaners (Figure 80). At the same time, job insecurity is higher for women than men in all male-dominated occupations apart from skilled agricultural workers. Job insecurity is reported by 26% of female workers in mining and construction (compared to 23% of men in this occupation) and 27% of female plant and machine operators (compared to 17% of their male counterparts). The gender gap is greatest among legal, social and cultural professionals, with 19% of women and only 8% of men reporting job insecurity. This disparity suggests that men and women do not have the same types of job in this occupational group.

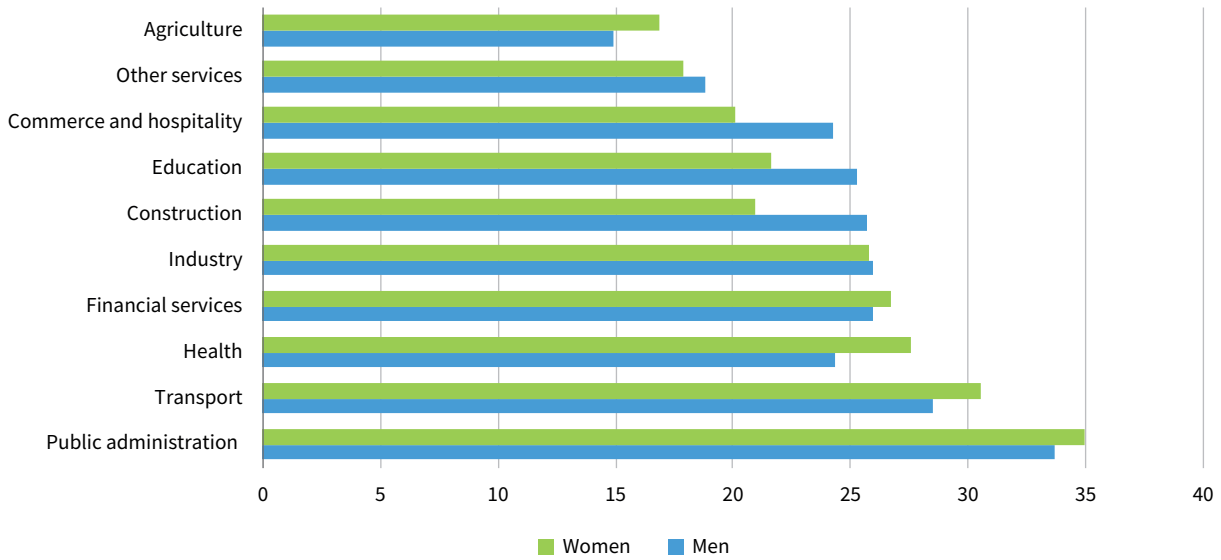
## Exposure to downsizing

It is well established in the literature – and confirmed by Eurofound’s research on the relationship between working conditions and workers’ health – that exposure to substantial restructuring or reorganisation in the workplace, including downsizing (employment cuts), poses higher risks to the health and well-being of the remaining workers.

In 2015, approximately one-quarter of employees in the EU reported being exposed to downsizing at their workplace (25% of men and 23% of women). According to EWCS 2015 data, workers who have experienced downsizing at their workplace – but kept their own jobs – are more likely than other workers to report presenteeism, sickness absence, greater work intensity and exposure to adverse social behaviour. They are also less likely to report feeling engaged, being treated fairly at work and having enough time to do their jobs. Individuals exposed to downsizing tend to be more subject to job demands, which may not only impact negatively on their health but also leave them with less access to resources that improve their levels of motivation and thus contribute positively to health and well-being (Eurofound, 2019).

Exposure to downsizing varies across different sectors (Figure 81). Public administration has the largest share of employees, both men (34%) and women (35%), reporting downsizing at the workplace. Transport, financial services and health also stand out because of the relatively large shares of employees reporting downsizing; within these, higher shares of women are affected.

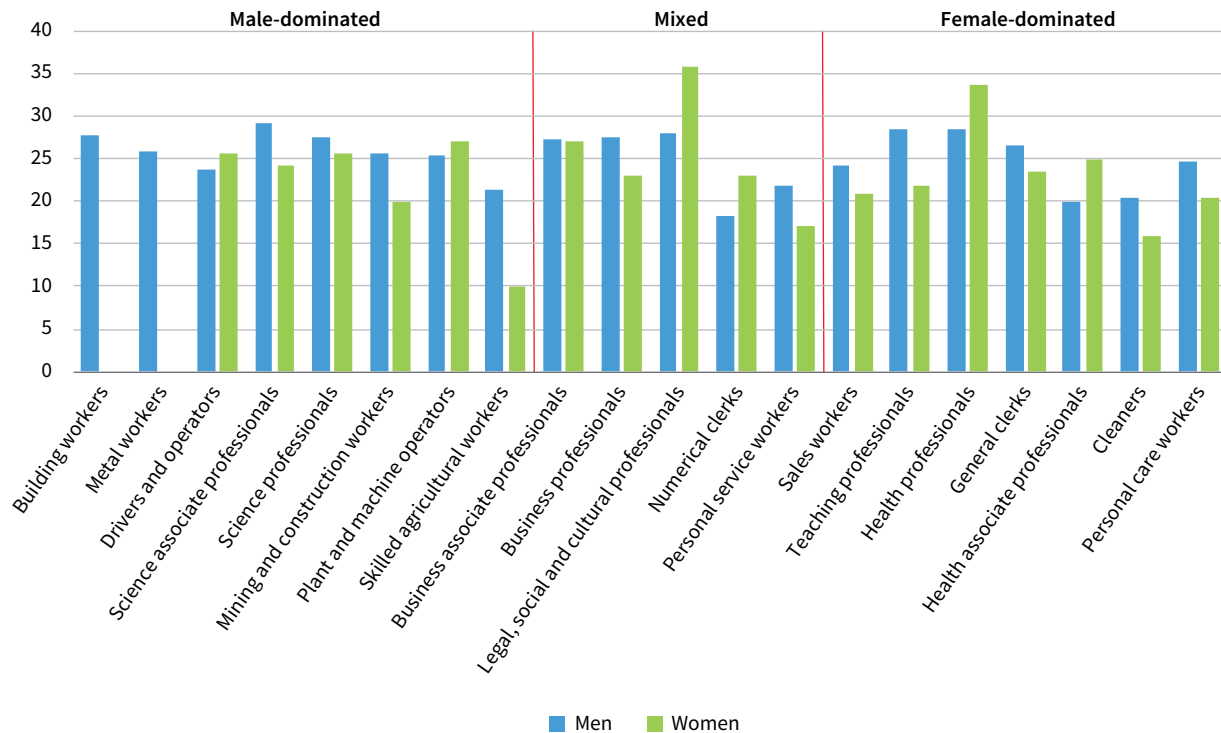
Figure 81: Exposure to downsizing according to sector, by gender, 2015 (%)



Although a pattern cannot be observed according to the predominant gender in the occupation, gaps between men and women become more marked in certain occupations (Figure 82). This is the case for legal, social and cultural professionals (a mixed occupation), health professionals and, to some extent, health associate

professionals (both female-dominated occupations) – all of which have larger shares of women reporting exposure to downsizing – and for teaching professionals, where exposure to downsizing is more prevalent among men.

Figure 82: Exposure to downsizing in the 20 largest occupations, by gender, 2015 (%)



## Summary

- As a whole, prospects are slightly better for men across all occupational groups. Personal service workers and personal care workers are the only occupations in which women do slightly better than men (the latter is the most female-dominated occupation analysed).
- The sub-dimension of career prospects is improving for both men and women, and the gap between them is diminishing. Even so, in 2015, prospects still appeared better for men.
- In terms of occupation, female business professionals and science professionals seem to have the best career prospects; the worst-off are cleaners, both male and female.
- Good career prospects are reported by larger shares of men in female-dominated occupations, except teaching professionals and personal care workers.
- There was a reduction in job insecurity between 2010 and 2015 for both men and women.
- Job insecurity is highest in male-dominated occupations, though this cluster also saw the largest improvement between 2010 and 2015, especially for male employees.
- Employability scores are better for men than women. While they have risen for both genders, improvements are higher among men. As a result, the gender gap increased between 2010 and 2015.
- The EWCS 2015 data reveal that downsizing processes are more prominent in public administration, transport, health and financial services; in all of these sectors, larger shares of women are affected.





## 9 Earnings

Money received in exchange for work – that is, earnings – is a core element of job quality, because it provides the means to support a worker’s lifestyle and household. As the EWCS 2015 overview report stresses, although the absolute level of earnings is important, the extent to which monetary rewards are fairly determined is also significant: the perception of being fairly rewarded for one’s work may be associated with the experience of stress and certain health outcomes (Eurofound, 2017c).

The gender pay gap – the average difference in the remuneration of men and women in work – has been the most studied aspect of earnings from a gender perspective. Indeed, it is one of the most acknowledged persistent gaps between men and women in relation to work (European Commission, 2018b).

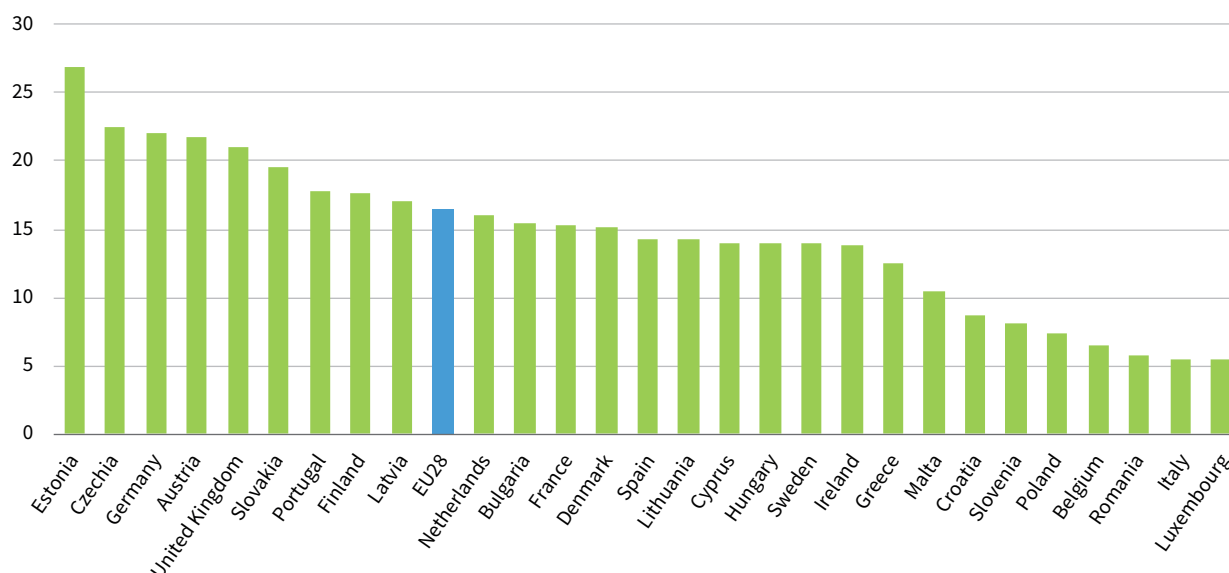
Eurostat, offering harmonised data across Member States, remains the best source for calculating the gender pay gap in the EU. However, the EWCS sheds some light on key features of earnings in the context of job quality. It provides a broader understanding of the

nature of earnings through the examination of the following: pay components other than the fixed basic salary; the role earnings play in the recognition of workers’ performance; and the extent to which workers can make ends meet.

### The gender pay gap and related issues

As mentioned, the gender pay gap is the most studied gender-based difference between men and women in labour markets. Eurofound has conducted several pieces of research in this area (see Eurofound 2006a, 2010a and 2018a, for example). The gender pay gap in unadjusted form was 16.5% in 2015 (16% in 2017) (Eurostat, undated-a).<sup>16</sup> Across Member States in 2015, the gender pay gap varied by 21 percentage points, ranging from under 6% in Luxembourg, Italy and Romania to 27% in Estonia, Czechia, Germany, Austria and the UK (Figure 83).

Figure 83: Gender pay gap in unadjusted form, by Member State, 2015 (%)



**Note:** For all the countries except Czechia and Ireland: data are for enterprises employing 10 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 sections B to S (-0); Czechia: data are for enterprises employing 1 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 sections B to S; Ireland: NACE Rev. 2 sections C to H, J, K, P, Q; EU, Germany: provisional data; Croatia, Greece and Ireland: 2014; Romania: estimate.

**Source:** Eurostat

<sup>16</sup> ‘The [gender pay gap] indicator measures the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees. The indicator has been defined as unadjusted, because it gives an overall picture of gender inequalities in terms of pay and measures a concept which is broader than the concept of equal pay for equal work. All employees working in firms with ten or more employees, without restrictions for age and hours worked, are included’ (Eurostat, undated-a).

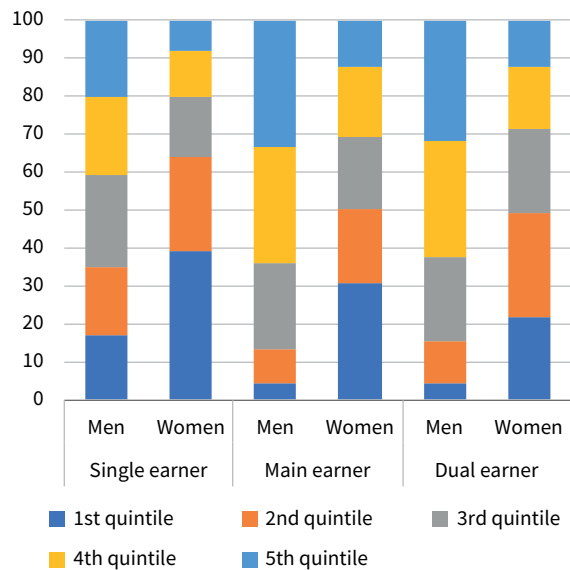
According to the European Commission, the ‘gender pay gap must be looked at along with other indicators linked to the labour market, in particular those that reflect the different working patterns of women’ (European Commission, undated-b). In countries where the female employment rate is low, the pay gap is lower than average, which may be a reflection of the small proportion of low-skilled or unskilled women in employment. Larger pay gaps are usually associated with highly segregated labour markets, meaning that women are more concentrated in a restricted number of sectors and/or occupations (as is the case in Czechia, Estonia and Finland), or where a significant proportion of women work part-time (as in Austria and Germany). In addition, the institutional mechanisms and systems of wage-setting can influence the pay gap (European Commission, 2018b).

The EWCS data indicate that no matter women’s situations as earners, they are always more likely to fall into lower income quintiles than their male counterparts (Figure 84). It is also notable that nearly two-thirds (64%) of female single earners are in the two lowest income quintiles, while this is the case for only around one-third (35%) of men. The differences between men and women are very large even when women are the main earners in the household: nearly two-thirds (63%) of male main earners are in the top two income quintiles, more than double the share for their female counterparts (30%).

### Fair pay

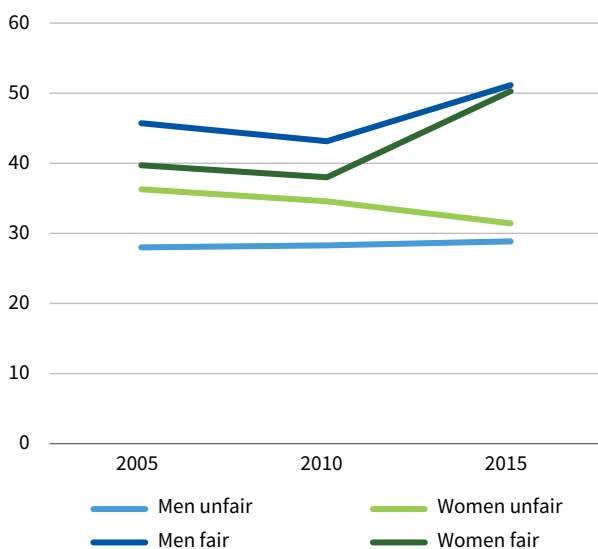
The EWCS asks workers to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘Considering all my efforts and achievements in my job, I feel I get paid

**Figure 84: Distribution of men and women according to income quintile, by type of household, 2015 (%)**



appropriately’. In 2015, almost one-third of the workforce in Europe felt they were not appropriately remunerated: 32% of female employees and 29% of male employees. Between 2005 and 2015, as shown in Figure 85, this share declined for women but remained at the same level for men. At the same time, the shares of male and female employees who thought they were paid appropriately increased, indicating an overall improvement of the situation for both men and women. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the share of women stating they were unfairly paid was still higher than for men.

**Figure 85: Share of employees reporting fair/unfair pay, 2005–2015 (%)**



**Figure 86: Gender gap in share of employees reporting unfair pay, by country cluster (W–M), 2005–2015 (percentage points)**

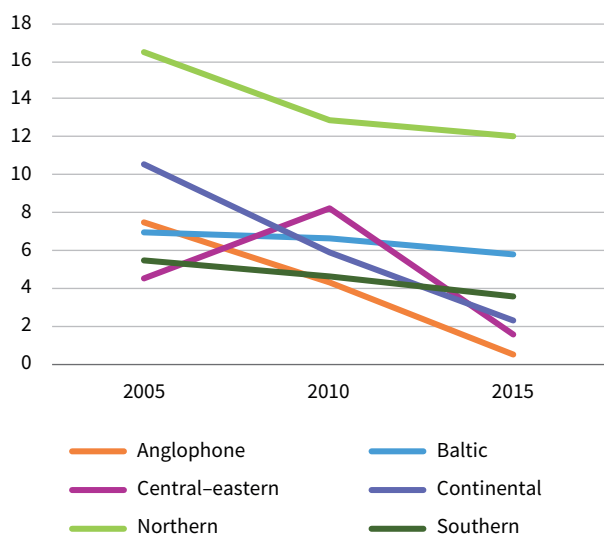
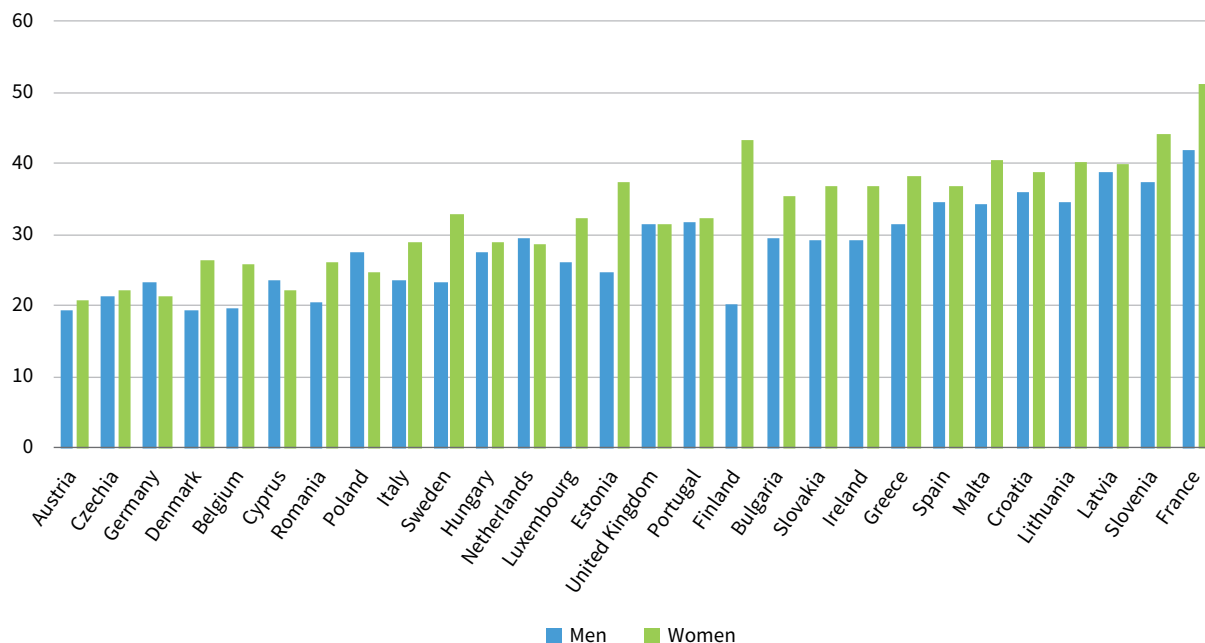


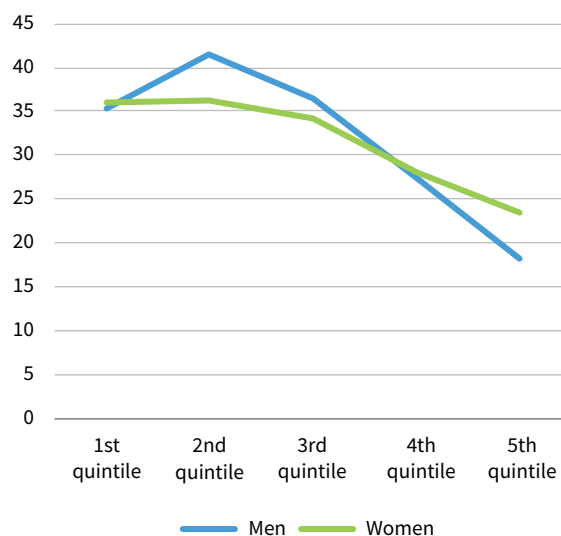
Figure 87: Share of employees reporting unfair pay in Member States, by gender, 2015 (%)



The gender gap in the share of employees stating they were not fairly paid – the less advantaged position being among women – fell in each of the country clusters between 2005 and 2015, though the Central–eastern cluster stands out in terms of a peak in 2010 (Figure 86). The differences between men and women are much larger at Member State level: the proportions reporting unfair pay varies from 19% of men in Austria and Denmark to 51% of women in France (Figure 87). It is only in Poland, Germany, Cyprus and the Netherlands that the share of men saying they are unfairly paid surpasses that of women, though the differences are small (all under 5 percentage points). The gender gap reflecting higher shares of women stating they are unfairly paid is very small in six Member States – Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia and Spain (all under 3 percentage points) – relatively large in thirteen – Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (between 5 and 9 percentage points) – and very large in Estonia, Finland and Sweden (10 percentage points or more). In Finland, the share of women reporting being unfairly paid (43%) is more than double that of their male counterparts (20%). There are no gender gaps in Portugal or the UK.

Figure 88 shows that the perception of being unfairly paid tends to decrease with the level of income: employees in the top income quintiles are less likely to report being unfairly paid than those in the bottom income quintiles. In addition, whereas men are more likely to report being unfairly paid in the second and third income quintiles, the situation is reversed in the fifth income quintile, with women more likely than their male counterparts to report being unfairly paid.

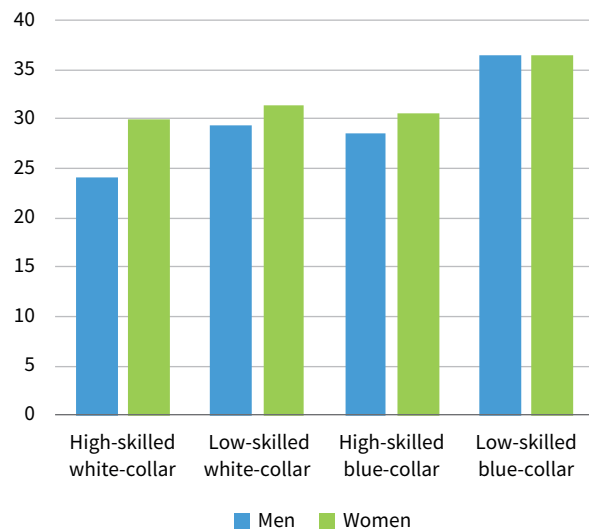
Figure 88: Share of employees reporting unfair pay according to income quintile, by gender, 2015 (%)



**Figure 89: Share of employees reporting unfair pay according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (%)**



**Figure 90: Share of employees reporting unfair pay according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (%)**



As shown in Figure 89 and Figure 90, the reporting of unfair pay varies according to both the predominant gender in the occupation and the type of occupation. In terms of predominant gender, women are more likely than their male counterparts to report being unfairly paid in all occupation clusters, the largest gap being found in female-dominated occupations.

When it comes to occupation type, men and women in low-skilled blue-collar occupations are most likely to report being unfairly paid. Men in high-skilled white-collar occupations are least likely to report unfair pay. Among white-collar workers (high- and low-skilled) and high-skilled blue-collar workers, women do not appear to benefit from the same fairness enjoyed by their male colleagues: women in these occupation types are more likely to report being unfairly paid than their male counterparts.

## Different pay components

EWCS data also enable the examination of the different components of respondents' earnings, from the basic fixed salary to variable payments based on the performance of the company or the individual, as well as other types of benefit.<sup>17</sup> These additional pay components vary in terms of their proportion in relation to an individual's take-home income, sometimes representing a (very) large share.

The vast majority of employees earn a basic fixed salary or wage: about 95% of men and women, a share that has remained steady since 2005. Many employees also receive one or more additional components, which might be of a variable nature. Figure 91 shows the shares of employees that reported some variable forms of earnings between 2005 and 2015.

<sup>17</sup> The EWCS 2015 covers basic fixed salary/wage, productivity (piece rate) payments, extra payments for additional hours of work/overtime, for bad or dangerous working conditions and for Sunday work, payments based on individual, team, department or company performance, income from shares in the company, and other benefits (medical services, shopping discounts, etc.).

Figure 91: Additional components of earnings from main job, by gender, 2005–2015 (%)



The first striking observation is that, regardless of the type of pay component and the year, the shares of male employees reporting these forms of payment are always significantly larger than those of their female counterparts. Furthermore, the gaps between men and women do not appear to be diminishing; if anything, they appear to be growing. The second important assertion is that incidence of payments related to company performance, shares in the company and other advantages have been increasing, suggesting that uptake will continue. An exception is productivity (piece rate), which has been declining. It is not possible to assess changes over time for individual performance payments.

## Making ends meet

Simply having an income is not always enough for individuals to make a living, particularly when considering household composition. Eurofound has been reporting for some years that a significant part of the workforce is considered to be ‘working poor’; that is, despite having a job, one’s earnings are not enough to keep the household above the poverty line (Eurofound, 2004, 2010b, 2017b). When the main breadwinner’s earnings are insufficient, secondary earners – often women – can help lift the household above the poverty line. On the other hand, because of their weaker labour market position, and all other things being equal, single women typically face an increased risk of poverty compared with single men (Peña-Casas and Ghailani, 2011).

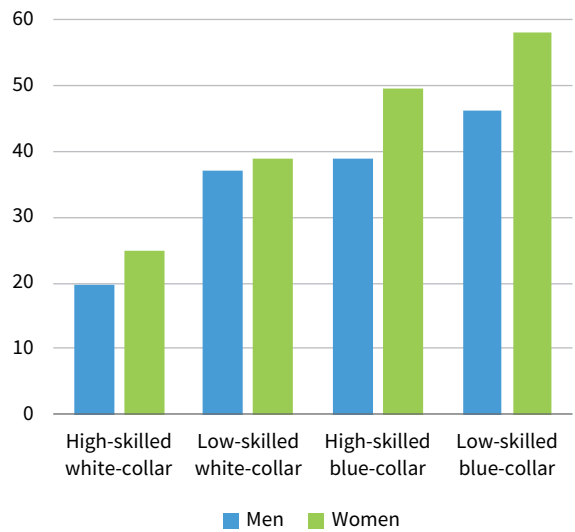
The EWCS asks respondents how easy it is for their household to make ends meet, taking into consideration the household’s monthly income. The share of employees reporting that they had difficulty in making ends meet decreased between 2010 and 2015 for both men and women, but the gap between them remained at around 2.5 percentage points. Overall, 33% of men and 36% of women report having some degree of difficulty in making ends meet.

**Figure 92: Share of employees reporting difficulty in making ends meet according to predominant gender in occupation, by gender, 2015 (%)**



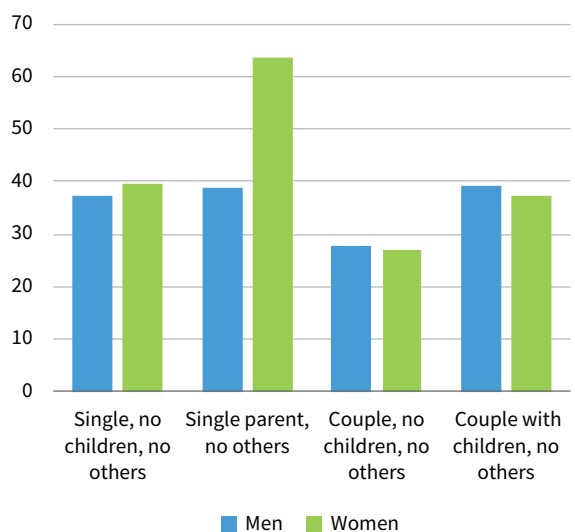
Turning to the predominant gender in the occupation, women are more likely to report difficulty in making ends meet regardless of occupation cluster. It is important to note, however, that making ends meet seems more difficult for workers in male-dominated occupations, particularly women (Figure 92). The type of occupation reveals even greater disparities, both in terms of the level of difficulty in making ends meet and the gap between women and men. Those in blue-collar jobs are more likely to face difficulty making ends meet, while more women than men report difficulty across all occupation types – especially those in blue-collar occupations (Figure 93).

**Figure 93: Share of employees reporting difficulty in making ends meet according to occupation type, by gender, 2015 (%)**



Difficulty in making ends meet varies according to type of household. The share of those reporting some degree of difficulty is lowest for male and female employees living as part of a couple without children and highest for lone parents, particularly women: 63% of female employees who are single mothers report difficulty making ends meet (Figure 94). In fact, one out of every 10 female employees who are lone mothers report ‘great difficulty’ in making ends meet.

**Figure 94: Share of employees reporting difficulty in making ends meet according to household type, by gender, 2015 (%)**



## Summary

- In 2015, the gender pay gap remained stubbornly at around 16% in the EU, but this does not show the full picture. The EWCS data show that, no matter their earning situation in the household, women are always more likely to be in the lower income quintiles. Even among main household earners, the share of men in the top income quintiles is more than double that of women.
- Around 3 out of 10 employees think that, considering their efforts and achievements in their job, they are not paid appropriately. This varies greatly across the EU, from 19% of male employees in Austria and Denmark to 51% of female employees in France. The differences between genders are very large in Sweden, Estonia and Finland, with women more likely to report that they are not paid properly. It is only in Germany, Cyprus, Poland and the Netherlands that men are more likely to report this, though the gaps are small.
- Being unfairly paid is most common among men and women in low-skilled blue-collar occupations and least common among men in high-skilled white-collar occupations. Women do not seem to benefit from the same level of fairness enjoyed by their male colleagues in high-skilled blue-collar and white-collar occupations.
- The shares of male employees reporting payments of a variable nature – such as shares in the company and payments based on company performance or on individual performance – are significantly larger than those of their female counterparts. Although more workers appear to be receiving most of these types of pay components, the gender gap seems to be increasing at the same time.
- The shares of employees reporting that they had some difficulty in making ends meet decreased between 2010 and 2015 for both men and women, though the level was still notable at 33% and 36%, respectively.
- Making ends meet is more difficult for those in male-dominated occupations, particularly women. Also, making ends meet is more difficult for women in blue-collar occupations, especially if they are low-skilled. Lone mothers are of particular concern: 63% report difficulty in making ends meet compared with 39% of lone fathers.





# 10 Women's and men's job quality profiles

Assessing patterns in job quality through its first analysis of the EWCS 2015 data, Eurofound in 2017 identified five different job quality profiles: 'active manual', 'smooth running', 'high flying', 'poor quality' and 'under pressure' jobs (Eurofound, 2017c). Each profile clusters workers with similar scores in the various job quality dimensions. This analysis also helped to build a picture of the composition of the job quality profiles (by gender, age, occupation, economic sector, etc.), enabling the 'prediction' of a worker's job quality profile based on their own particular characteristics.

However, this exercise did not examine the extent to which the composition of the job quality profiles, based on job quality indices, differs for men and women. The question remains as to whether the job quality profiles identified using the full EWCS 2015 sample still hold when male and female samples are analysed separately. As previous chapters have shown, men and

women score differently on job quality indices and their various sub-dimensions, depending mostly on the occupation or economic sector in which they are employed. This reflects findings in the literature that indicate that sectoral and occupational gender segregation lead to different experiences of men and of women regarding working conditions. There is, therefore, good reason to expect that the job quality profiles for men and women would be different from the profiles based on the analysis of the full EWCS 2015 sample.

The main objective of this chapter is to explore the extent to which the original job quality profiles, which are based on the various job quality dimensions, differ between men and women. In addition, the composition of those profiles is compared – based on characteristics such as age, education, sector and occupation – to assess whether they reflect the same nature and size of the original profiles.

## Box 3: Latent class analysis (LCA) of the EWCS 2015

The LCA technique makes it possible to classify a large group of heterogeneous workers into a few groups with distinct job quality profiles. This technique was used in Eurofound's analysis of 2015 EWCS data to classify workers based on similarities in patterns of job quality, with similar jobs being assigned to the same type and substantially different jobs assigned to different types.

LCA postulates a categorical variable that is not observed to explain associations between several observed variables. Because it is model-based, LCA has several advantages over standard cluster analysis: the choice in the number of clusters is less arbitrary because relying on statistical modelling allows the use of statistical information criteria and the inclusion of variables without any rescaling, as the models can take on different functional forms. Therefore, continuous variables (with different distributions) as well as (bi)nominal variables (including ordinal data) can be included (Vermunt and Magidson, 2002).

For more information on the methodology, see Eurofound (2017c).

The previous analysis used the full sample (workers, including employees and the self-employed), applying the ‘gender’ variable as an active covariate (Eurofound, 2017c). Here, the sample is split in two – female and

male – and the LCA performed separately. Figure 95 displays the results of the original analysis, while Figure 96 and Figure 97 display the results of the separate analyses for men and women.

Figure 95: Original job quality profiles, by job quality indices, 2015 (z-scores)

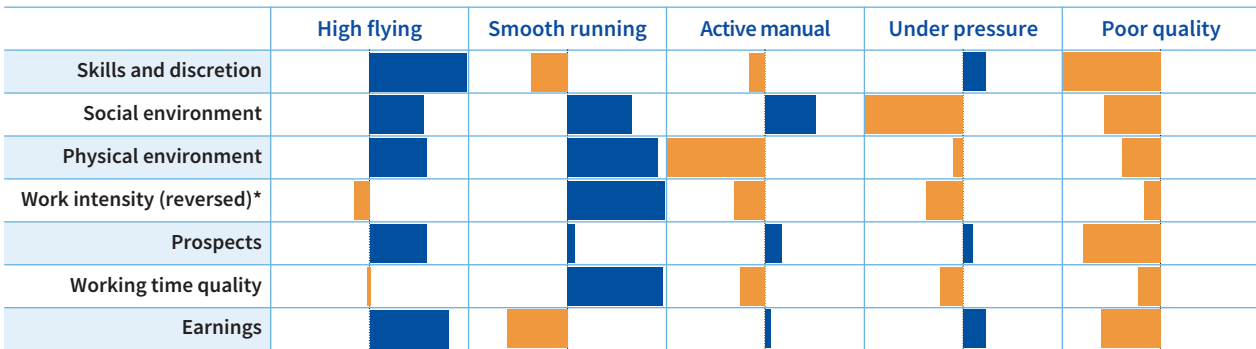


Figure 96: Job quality profiles for men, by job quality indices, 2015 (z-scores)

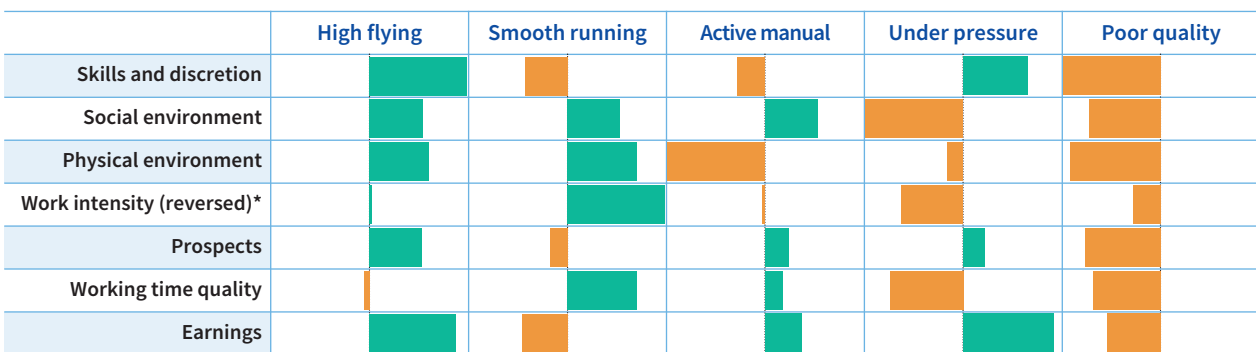


Figure 97: Job quality profiles for women, by job quality indices, 2015 (z-scores)



Notes: \* A higher level of work intensity lowers job quality. The bars in the charts show the z-scores of each cluster (in columns) for each of the job quality indices (in rows). The ‘active manual’ category applies only to men. The corresponding women’s group is labelled as ‘good environment’.

Figure 98: Job quality profiles, 2015 (% of workers)

	High flying	Smooth running	Active manual	Under pressure	Poor quality
<b>Original cluster size</b>					
Total	21	25	21	13	20
<b>Original cluster size by sex</b>					
Men	23	16	30	13	18
Women	20	34	11	13	21
<b>Separate samples cluster size</b>					
Men	20	17	23	17	23
Women	23	25	9	22	22

**Notes:** 'Active manual' in the 'separate samples cluster size' category applies only to men. The corresponding women's group is labelled as 'good environment'.

The data show that the job quality profiles for male workers are very similar to the original global job quality profiles, with few differences in specific indices. The female job quality profiles, on the other hand, display more pronounced differences from the overall profiles, confirming the importance of performing separate analyses for the male and female samples.

Furthermore, the shares of women and men in each category depend on the analysis performed: the original LCA, first performed on the whole sample of workers and then broken down by gender, displays different shares of women and men in each category compared to the separate samples cluster analysis (Figure 98). Four out of the five job quality profiles display similar sizes to the original breakdowns. The original 'active manual' profile shows greater differentiation when the analysis is conducted across split samples.

## 'High flying' jobs

The job quality profile designated as 'high flying' presents the highest scores in almost all indicators. It scores higher in skills and discretion, earnings and prospects than the other four. These jobs tend to be complex, and workers can often learn new things and receive higher than average on-the-job training. They can apply their own ideas in their work and decide on the order of tasks, methods and speed of work. They also tend to be more involved in work organisation and management decisions (many are managers themselves). They also have better than average opportunities for career progression and high job security.

In the original analysis, this profile was held by 21% of the workers – 23% of men and 20% of women. The split analysis shows men and women displaying a generally similar profile, although with reversed sizes (20% for men and 23% for women) and some other very important differences. The most striking difference is in terms of working time quality and work intensity: when in 'high flying' jobs, women seem to enjoy better working time quality and lower work intensity than men. Consistent with previous findings on working conditions for women and men in general, women in 'high flying' jobs also report relatively lower earnings and use of skills and discretion, but a better physical environment.

Differences between men and women in this profile seem to indicate that high earnings, high use of skills and discretion and good prospects come at the price of poorer working time quality (longer hours, etc.), higher work intensity and, to some extent, exposure to relatively worse physical environments.

Women and men in 'high flying' jobs differ in terms of sectors and occupations. Men are spread, more or less evenly, across sectors of activity, the largest share being in industry (20%), while women are a bit more concentrated in fewer sectors, mainly other services (20%), health (16%) and education (15%). Most men and women in this profile are professionals (46% and 31%, respectively) or technicians (27% and 26%, respectively). However, 16% of men in this profile are managers (compared with 7% of women), while 28% of women are clerical support workers (compared with 5% of men).

## ‘Smooth running’ jobs

Overall, ‘smooth running’ jobs are the largest group, comprising 25% of all workers in the EU. It stands out as having low work intensity, high working time quality and a good social environment. Its downsides are an average level of prospects and low levels of both earnings and use of skills and discretion.

The separate analyses of male and female samples shows similar profiles, with a good social environment, a good physical environment, lower than average work intensity and good working time quality. About 25% of female workers fall within this profile (34% in the original analysis – see Figure 98), whereas it applies to 17% of male workers (16% originally). The major difference between the male and female profiles is that women experience increased disadvantages: women with this profile score relatively worse in prospects and use of skills and discretion, and they also have the lowest score across all job quality profiles in terms of earnings.

The largest shares of men and of women in the ‘smooth running’ profile are to be found in commerce and hospitality (23% and 30%, respectively) and other services (24% and 19%, respectively). The remaining female workers within this profile are spread across the other sectors, and there is a large share of male workers in industry (19%). In terms of occupation, most men and women in this profile are sales workers (22% of men and 39% of women). Clerical support workers are also important, with 18% of men and 16% of women. Some 22% of women in ‘smooth running’ jobs are in elementary occupations, whereas the next largest occupational group among men is technicians (13%).

## ‘Under pressure’ jobs

The smallest profile resulting from the analysis of the entire EWCS sample is the ‘under pressure’ profile, representing 13% of workers in the EU. In this profile, social environment stands out negatively due to high levels of exposure to adverse social behaviour: significant shares of these workers report being exposed to verbal abuse, threats, humiliating behaviours and bullying and harassment. At the same time, they report little support from managers or colleagues. Work intensity is also quite unfavourable, with very high levels of exposure to emotionally disturbing situations combined with working at high speed to tight deadlines and not having enough time to get the job done. Working time quality is relatively poor, with above average atypical work, limited flexibility and longer working weeks. Despite all those negative aspects, this profile exhibits above average levels of earnings and use of skills and discretion.

Similar profiles result from the separate analyses of male and female samples, although with different sizes: some 22% of female workers are ‘under pressure’, whereas the same profile comprises only 17% of men (13% of men and women in the original analysis). Both men and women in this profile experience the worst prospects and conditions of social environment compared with the other job quality profiles. Female workers are just above average when it comes to physical environment, while the male workers follow the original pattern of the profile. In terms of work intensity, while both female and male workers experience high levels, women in this profile score even worse than men. On the other hand, in this profile, women enjoy the highest earnings and use of skills and discretion across all job quality profiles, whereas men ‘under pressure’ still have slightly worse skills and discretion and earnings than those in ‘high flying’ jobs.

The male and female ‘under pressure’ profiles are very different from each other in terms of occupation and sector of activity. Most women in ‘under pressure’ jobs are professionals (44% compared with only 25% of men) and technicians (25% compared with 24% of men). While most work in health (41%) or education (21%), men in ‘under pressure’ jobs can be found across many more sectors, the largest shares being in industry (16%), commerce and hospitality (14%) and other services (18%).

## ‘Poor quality’ jobs

Comprising one-fifth of workers, the ‘poor quality’ profile has the lowest job quality. It combines below average scores in all job quality indices and the lowest in skills and discretion, prospects and earnings. One-third of these workers fear they might lose their jobs and more than 40% strongly disagree that their job offers good prospects for career advancement. Work intensity, however, is slightly better than for those in the ‘under pressure’ profile.

Similar profiles also resulted from the separate analysis of the male and female samples of the EWCS. The ‘poor quality’ profile comprises 22% of female workers and 23% of male workers (21% and 18%, respectively, in the full sample analysis). However, there are some important differences between those profiles, consistent with the overall gender analysis. While both score poorly on all dimensions, men and women show some differences: working time quality is slightly better in the case of women but their work intensity is worse than for men; physical environment is slightly better for women, while social environment is slightly better for men. However, following the overall pattern, women continue to be worse off in terms of earnings, the level being much lower for them – although it does not reach the level of the ‘smooth running’ job quality profile.

There are other substantial and important differences between the male and female 'poor quality' profiles: men and women within this profile are not necessarily found in the same sectors or occupations. One-third of women in this profile work in commerce and hospitality (24% of men) and more than one-fifth in health (only 3% of men), whereas more than one-fifth of men work in industry (16% of women). About 45% of women in 'poor quality' jobs are service and sales workers (21% of men) and 20% have elementary occupations while 25% of men with 'poor quality' jobs are plant and machine operators.

## 'Good environment' – 'active manual' for women

The four job quality profiles discussed above loosely follow the original pattern when broken down by gender, though they show some important specifics namely in terms of sectors and occupations. The fifth job quality profile, however, reveals much more complex differentiations when the analysis is performed on two distinct samples, one for men and one for women.

Reflecting 21% of workers from the whole EU28 sample, the 'active manual' profile is mainly characterised by the experience of more risks in terms of physical environment than in any other profile. Working time quality is also lower than average, mostly because of the incidence of atypical work. The social environment is good due to the low level of exposure to adverse social behaviour and above-average quality of management and help and support from colleagues. The other job quality indices are about average.

When the analysis was performed on the two separate samples, male and female, the analysis resulted in two very different profiles. The male 'active manual' profile, comprising 23% of male workers, is similar to the one stemming from the original analysis with poor physical environment and relatively good social environment. The main differences are a slightly better working time quality and an average work intensity. In the earnings dimension, men in this profile score higher than average.

The equivalent profile obtained within the female sample, however, is very different from the original one and from the corresponding male profile. First, it is smaller: only 9% of women are in this profile (in the original analysis 11% of female workers were classified under 'active manual'). It also differs in all job quality indices scores, except in social environment and in prospects. This profile actually scores better in social environment than the female 'high flying' profile. Skills and discretion, physical environment, work intensity and working time quality are all better than average (and certainly better when compared with the

equivalent male group). Overall, this profile is better than average in most job quality dimensions, except in earnings.

These two profiles are also very different in terms of predominant sectors and occupations. Men in 'active manual' jobs work mostly in the sectors of industry (38%) and construction (23%), and by occupation are in craft and related trades (50%) or are plant and machine operators (19%). Women in this profile, in contrast, mostly work in the sectors of commerce and hospitality (24%), other services (18%), education (16%) and health (17%); by occupation, they are mostly professionals (25%), service and sales workers (25%) and technicians (15%).

Given these differences in size and nature, it makes sense to consider renaming this profile for the women's sample. Despite scoring below average in terms of earnings, this profile has good scores in many job quality indices – especially in terms of social environment. As such, it is appropriate to rename this profile 'good environment'.

## Gender analysis of job quality profiles

Performing the LCA on two distinct samples, female and male workers, has revealed how the original analysis failed to capture the full richness of the EWCS data on job quality from a gender perspective.

Overall, male job quality profiles clearly follow the original patterns, accentuating some negative scores in less than a handful of indices, especially in the 'under pressure' and 'poor quality' profiles. Consistent with the literature and research findings on gender issues, across all job quality profiles, men score higher than women on earnings.

Women's job quality profiles present some clear specificities too. In the 'high flying' job quality profile, women score more positively than men in all indices, except in earnings, presenting a more positive profile than average. In the 'good environment' profile, again, women score more positively than men in the corresponding cluster of 'active manual' in almost all indices except earnings. Women's below average score in terms of earnings in this profile is clearly worse than for the 'high flying' profile, but not as bad as in the 'smooth running' profile. Moreover, in the 'poor quality' profile, women score heavily below average in all indices, except in working time quality which is even worse for women in the 'under pressure' profile: it is particularly worth noting their exceptionally bad scores on social environment, work intensity and physical environment. Compared with men, women score worse in all indices, with the 'traditional' exceptions of physical environment and working time quality.

In the original LCA, Eurofound intended to provide policymakers with a comprehensive input for targeted policies that aim to address and improve job quality (Eurofound, 2017c). Performing the analysis on a split sample has helped to reveal significant specificities that

need to be addressed via a gendered approach. While all low indices call for action, the low scores across all women's profiles in terms of earnings and men's in terms of physical environment (especially in the 'active manual' profile) need to be specifically addressed.

# 11 | Conclusions

Two decades into the 21st century, gender inequalities in labour markets, employment and at work stubbornly persist. Be it sectoral or occupational, vertical or horizontal, gender segregation in the EU appears pervasive despite the attention it has received so far and the efforts made to tackle the issue.

Differences stretch well beyond labour market segmentation and gender pay gaps, and lie also within the working conditions and job quality that women and men experience in their jobs across countries, sectors and occupations. Job quality is key for workers' health and well-being, as well as for their work-life balance. Addressing differences in job quality therefore helps improve the situation of both women and men at work.

Most research, policy measures and initiatives concerning gender equality have focused on the disadvantages and discrimination experienced by women. The analysis in this report demonstrates that gender inequalities do not exclusively affect women. Women and men face many similar problems at the workplace, but many other issues affect men and women differently.

Using data from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), this study performs in-depth analysis of those aspects that distinguish women and men once they are employed. Eurofound's job quality framework has been used to structure this analysis of gender equality at work.

A first glance at each of the seven job quality dimensions suggests that women and men do not seem to differ greatly. Men are more likely to work in more demanding physical environments and have relatively worse working time quality than women while, at the same time, being more likely to enjoy better pay. In all the other job quality dimensions, though – work intensity, social environment, skills and discretion, and prospects – the differences between men and women are very small, and in fact almost non-existent. This could lead to the conclusion that these dimensions do not require attention and that the only gender differences or inequalities worth considering are related to working time, pay or the fact that some jobs involve more exposure to physical risks than others. However, further analysis of the various job quality sub-dimensions clearly refutes that assertion. There are indeed many important differences between men and women which, if unaccounted for, may render the gender equality discussion incomplete – even useless.

To take work intensity as an example, men report higher levels of quantitative demands, whereas women are much more likely to report exposure to emotional demands, such as handling angry clients, patients or

pupils, or being in situations that are emotionally disturbing. In terms of social environment, men tend to receive less support from colleagues and managers, while women are much more likely to be exposed to adverse social behaviours, such as threats, verbal abuse or harassment. Access to training, which plays a crucial role in terms of use of skills and discretion at work, is lower among the less-skilled occupations and, within those, even weaker for women. Career prospects, on the other hand, are in general only very slightly better for men. The highest scores in terms of career prospects are, in fact, shown by female business professionals and science professionals.

By addressing issues such as fair pay, variable forms of pay and the extent to which workers can make ends meet, the EWCS contributes to a more comprehensive picture of gender equality in terms of earnings, which is beneficial within the renewed debate on the gender pay gap. For example, feeling that one is being paid unfairly is much less common among men in high-skilled white-collar occupations, indicating that women do not seem to enjoy a similar feeling of fairness even if they make it to the top.

At the same time, EWCS data indicate that variable forms of pay, such as shares in the company or payments based on company performance, are becoming more common. These pay components are increasing more rapidly among men than women and the gender gap is therefore widening. This is a trend that should be investigated further.

The results also show that the shares of employees reporting that they have some difficulty in making ends meet decreased between 2010 and 2015. However, this still constitutes a problem for more than one-third of employees, both male and female, and is particularly visible among those in male-dominated occupations and even more so among women. This disparity can be interpreted as a consequence of the gender pay gap and highlights the critical need to address the issue of the value of work from a gender point of view, in particular the undervaluation of (paid and unpaid) work performed by women.

This study also confirms the importance of a gender mix in occupations. As in Eurofound's previous research on gender equality, based on EWCS data, this analysis looked at the 20 largest occupations according to the predominant gender of the respective employees. In that context, it is important to highlight that mixed occupations – those with the most balanced shares of men and women – not only differ from the male-dominated and the female-dominated occupations but also show better job quality in most,

if not all, its dimensions, while also displaying the smallest differences between men and women. This seems to indicate that women and men are more likely to be treated well and equally in mixed occupations. These occupations can, therefore, be considered as examples of how to better achieve and improve upon both job quality and gender equality in working conditions.

But mixed occupations account for under 25% of employees. What, then, does the analysis show regarding those who work in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations? First, it indicates that poor job quality is not a specific quality of male- or female-dominated occupations. Very male-dominated occupations, such as building workers and metal workers, are characterised by high physical demands, poor working time quality and poor access to training. At the same time, the category of cleaners – a very female-dominated occupation – stands out because of its higher-than-average exposure to physical risks, with female employees reporting the poorest access to training across all occupations, and male employees being among those reporting the highest job insecurity.

Second, the analysis shows that there is a whole set of occupations related to care – health professionals, health associate professionals, personal care workers (all female-dominated occupations) – that stand out because of their relatively poor position in many job quality dimensions. They also have higher-than-average exposure to physical risks. While men score worse than women in all types of risks, female health professionals are an exception: they report above average posture-related risks, such as working in tiring positions or carrying people. These care-related occupations also entail greater-than-average exposure to emotional demands and a higher likelihood of reporting exposure to adverse social behaviour (this is especially true for male personal care workers – for example, male childcare workers, teaching assistants and home-based personal care workers).

The significance of the above-mentioned psychosocial risks – exposure to emotional demands and adverse social behaviours – in sectors related to health and care cannot be overemphasised. These sectors will continue to grow in the medium-to-long term given the rising demand for health and care services resulting from ageing populations and growing demands for services to cope with mental health problems and chronic illnesses. Moreover, the EWCS data show that the shares of people reporting exposure to emotional demands and adverse social behaviours are increasing, highlighting even further the need to monitor these types of risk in health and care sectors, as well as in other sectors.

The shares of workers that have a female manager have been increasing since 2005. However, gender shares in managerial positions are still a long way from parity, as a worker's immediate manager continues to be of the same gender for the vast majority of male employees but just half of female employees. Does having a male or female manager make a difference in terms of job quality? It would appear to, particularly in areas such as social support received from colleagues and managers: both genders are more likely to report that they receive support if their manager is a woman. Another significant area is exposure to adverse social behaviour. Relatively more workers with a female manager report having been exposed to adverse social behaviour, suggesting that employees with female managers are more aware of the issue and feel more at ease speaking about this with a female manager.

But workers are more than their jobs. The current discussion around intersectionality – that is, the idea that discrimination is not based exclusively on one single characteristic (gender, for example), but rather over various characteristics (for example, young migrant women) – emphasises the importance of considering individuals in all their dimensions, with all their interrelations, as children, partners, parents, citizens, students and workers, among other roles.

The composition of a worker's household can also play a part in determining their working conditions and job quality. In that regard, lone parents – and lone mothers in particular – stand out. Lone mothers report the lowest scores for social environment (along with women in households with other relatives). This may reflect the likely high strain suffered by individuals with caring responsibilities, which may not be matched by adequate support at the workplace. Lone parents, particularly lone mothers, are also more likely to report difficulties in making ends meet: 1 in every 10 single working mothers report 'great difficulty' in making ends meet – that is three times the overall average of 3.5%. Moreover, the goal of balancing work with non-work activities and responsibilities, such as domestic work and care, remains challenging for working parents, especially single parents and carers.

Finally, what does the analysis of the trends show? Apart from the above-mentioned growing shares of individuals reporting emotional demands or exposure to adverse social behaviours at work, there are several other trends worth noting. Overall, there seems to be great stability in exposure to physical hazards, although a slight improvement since 2005 is found for men. Although this has reduced the existing gender gap, the gap remains unfavourable for men. The data also indicate a slight re-intensification of work between 2010 and 2015, with the gender gap remaining very small.



Within work intensity sub-dimensions, emotional demands are increasing, especially for women. At the same time, the level of use of skills and discretion increased for men and women between 2010 and 2015, but slightly more for women, who reported larger improvements in all sub-dimensions – cognitive demands, decision latitude, organisational participation and training.

Good prospects for career advancement increased across all age groups, but are still very low for men, and especially women, aged over 50. This should be of particular interest as the sustainability of work is becoming an urgent issue for policymakers. Finally, the shares of men and women reporting job insecurity increased between 2005 and 2015, but employability also increased over the same period, especially for men.

Finally, Eurofound has explored whether jobs can be clustered according to the different dimensions of job quality; the aim is to create 'job quality profiles' that share similar scores for the seven indices covered in this report. Are such job quality profiles the same for men and women? While the shares of men and women in 'high flying' and 'poor quality' jobs are quite similar, relevant gender gaps emerge for the other job quality profiles. There are relatively more women than men in 'smooth running' jobs and also in 'under pressure' jobs. The greatest difference, however, occurs in the fifth profile – 'active manual'. First, the share of men in this profile is much higher than for women, with 23% of men compared with 9% of women in this category. Second, within this profile, there are disparities in terms of how the different elements of job quality are combined for men and women; moreover, the two genders within this category fall within different occupations and sectors. As a result, separate labels have been applied for men and women within the fifth profile: it was renamed 'good environment' for women, whereas the label 'active manual' was retained for men. This finding confirms the existence of gender segregation in the labour market by highlighting the fact that a large share of men and women experience rather different aspects of job quality in their daily work. As such, the importance of a gender perspective when assessing working conditions cannot be overstated.

## Policy pointers

**Continuing to fight gender segregation:** Measures aiming to suppress segregation in labour markets are still needed at all levels of intervention from the European level to the company level – through, for example, the renewal of the gender equality strategy of the EU in the near future, or by promoting practices that incentivise the recruitment of individuals of the gender least represented in the profession or workplace they are joining.

**Taking steps to ensure job quality for all:** Apart from the more general differences between men and women in the labour market, there are many important differences in men's and women's working conditions and job quality which, if unaccounted for, may render the whole gender equality discussion analysis incomplete or even useless. Men and women do not share the same job quality profiles, and for that reason it is crucial to pay attention to the potential consequences in terms of job quality deriving from any employment or labour market policy or measure.

**Addressing gender stereotypes:** Mixed occupations have better job quality and present smaller gender gaps in several dimensions of working conditions. Increasing parity in the participation of men and women in different sectors and occupations would therefore contribute to gender equality and also result in improved job quality. This calls for the continuation of interventions aiming to break stereotypes that lead to the persistence of gender segregation in labour markets (for example, reducing gender gaps in educational choices). It may also require the definition and establishment of European and/or national strategies for job quality that favour a gender mainstreaming approach.

**Tackling the improvement of working conditions:** Trends based on EWCS data show many areas of improvement in the last 5 to 10 years, including reduction of physical risks and increased employability for men as well as increased use of skills and discretion at work for women. While these changes have contributed to reducing gender gaps in those dimensions, the reductions have been rather small, which means that more can and must be done in those areas. Psychosocial risks, such as adverse social behaviours or work-related emotional demands, are increasing and must be addressed. These are more prominent in female-dominated occupations, but impact women and men equally.

**Looking at the range of inequalities associated with gender and pay:** Earnings-related gender differences go beyond the widely acknowledged gender pay gap. Gender differences in the feeling of being fairly paid, being able to make ends meet, or the type of pay components received also contribute to the full picture. These issues can be addressed through a combination of company-level practices, social dialogue, collective bargaining (for example at sectoral level) and legislation. Vulnerable groups such as lone parents deserve special attention and may require extra support.

**Continuing to monitor working conditions with a ‘gender lens’:** In order for policymakers to be able to understand and interpret trends and developments, comparable data across EU Member States are needed. European-level analysis is indispensable for devising a European strategy for job quality that would benefit all workers, regardless of their gender, age, citizenship and status of employment. Data sources such as the EWCS must therefore continue to capture developments

related to working conditions, occupational risks and job quality profiles, bringing data and information to policymakers at European, national and local levels. Men and women at work have different job quality profiles, and a gender analysis of working conditions is essential for a good understanding of the different issues that male and female workers face in their jobs and in their workplaces and to help define appropriate measures to improve working conditions without causing undesirable effects.

**Continuing to assess the impact of working conditions on health and well-being for all:** More research on the impact of working conditions on men’s and women’s health should be promoted. Data sources allowing for comparison across EU Member States, like the EWCS, must continue to analyse developments in working conditions, occupational risks and job quality profiles, informing policymakers at European, national and local levels. Stakeholders, including social partners and public authorities, must continue or initiate talks on this subject.

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# Annex

# Classifications used in this report

**Table A1: Country groups**

Country group	Countries
Anglophone	Ireland, United Kingdom
Baltic	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
Central-eastern	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
Continental	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands
Northern	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
Southern	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

**Table A2: Sectors of economic activity**

Sector	Corresponding NACE Rev. 2 sectors
Agriculture	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing 01–03
Industry	B Mining and quarrying 05–09 C Manufacturing 10–33 D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply 35 E Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities 36–39
Construction	F Construction 41–43
Commerce and hospitality	G Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles 45–47 I Accommodation and food service activities 55–56
Transport	H Transportation and storage 49–53
Financial services	K Financial and insurance activities 64–66 L Real estate activities 68
Public administration	O Public administration and defence, compulsory social security 84
Education	P Education 85
Health	Q Human health and social work activities 86–88
Other services	J Information and communication 58–63 M Professional, scientific and technical activities 69–75 N Administrative and support service activities 77–82 R Arts, entertainment and recreation 90–93 S Other service activities 94–96 T Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use 97–98 U Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies 99

**Table A3: Designations of the 20 largest occupations (International Standard Classification of Occupations – ISCO-08, two digits)**

Short name	Full name
<b>Building workers</b>	Building and related trades workers, excluding electricians E.g. housebuilders; painters; plumbers; carpenters
<b>Metal workers</b>	Metal, machinery and related trades workers E.g. mechanics; welders; blacksmiths
<b>Drivers and operators</b>	Drivers and mobile plant operators E.g. train drivers; ambulance drivers; taxi drivers; crane operators; sailors
<b>Science associate professionals</b>	Science and engineering associate professionals E.g. mining, manufacturing and construction supervisors; engineering technicians; ship and aircraft controllers
<b>Science professionals</b>	Science and engineering professionals E.g. mathematicians; engineering professionals; statisticians; architects
<b>Mining and construction workers</b>	Labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport E.g. demolition labourers; bricklayers' assistants; bicycle couriers; baggage handlers; stock fillers; quarry labourers
<b>Plant and machine operators</b>	Stationary plant and machine operators E.g. miners; machine operators; photograph developers
<b>Skilled agricultural workers</b>	Market-oriented skilled agricultural workers E.g. farmers; breeders; horticulturalists
<b>Business associate professionals</b>	Business and administration associate professionals E.g. stockbrokers; loans officers; accounting assistants; statistical assistants; insurance agents; real estate agents
<b>Business professionals</b>	Business and administration professionals E.g. accountants; financial analysts; administration professionals; public relations professionals; marketing professionals
<b>Legal, social and cultural professionals</b>	Legal, social and cultural professionals E.g. lawyers; librarians; economists; psychologists; social workers; priests; authors; journalists; artists; archaeologists
<b>Numerical clerks</b>	Numerical and material recording clerks E.g. accounts, bookkeeping, insurance, payroll, finance, freight and production clerks
<b>Personal service workers</b>	Personal service workers E.g. travel attendants; bartenders; hairdressers; janitors
<b>Sales workers</b>	Sales workers E.g. shopkeepers; street food vendors; cashiers
<b>Teaching professionals</b>	Teaching professionals E.g. schoolteachers; driving instructors; university professors
<b>Health professionals</b>	Health professionals E.g. medical doctors; nurses; veterinarians; pharmacists; dentists
<b>General clerks</b>	General and keyboard clerks E.g. office clerks; secretaries; typists; data entry operators
<b>Health associate professionals</b>	Health associate professionals E.g. radiographers; pharmaceutical technicians; assistant nurses; veterinary assistants; ambulance workers; health information clerks
<b>Cleaners</b>	Cleaners and helpers E.g. domestic cleaners; hotel cleaners; window cleaners
<b>Personal care workers</b>	Personal care workers E.g. childcare workers; teaching assistants; home-based personal care workers

## Stylised household life course typology

In assessing the extent to which job quality varies across the different stages of our lives, this report uses a variant of the family life cycle approach (Eurofound, 2006b, 2012c; Anxo et al, 2011), as applied in the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2015. As a basis for comparative analysis in the EWCS 2015, a range of household types was identified that reflects the widely experienced transitions and phases over the life course. This typology acknowledges that in

contemporary societies the sequencing of life stages is not uniform. An important consequence of this stylised life course is that some household categories are excluded from analysis (for example, single parents). However, the typology covers nearly 80% of employee households in the EU Member States in 2015. Furthermore, it has been useful in the analysis of working time patterns and, thus, may be useful for the analysis in this report as well. The usual caveats associated with a cross-sectional analysis must be considered, such as the difficulty in separating the effects of age, cohort and period.

**Table A4: Household types by share of employees, 2015 (%)**

Household type		Share of employees
Single and childless young people	Single people (18–35 years) living with their parents or relatives	2.3
	Single people (under 46 years) living on their own without children	8.9
Childless couple	Younger cohabiting couples (woman under 46 years) without children	9.0
Couple with resident children*	Cohabiting couples with youngest children (children <7 years)	14.2
	Cohabiting couples with young children (children 7–12 years)	7.8
	Cohabiting couples with teenage children (children 13–18 years)	16.8
Older couples without children living at home	Midlife ‘empty nest’ couples without resident children (woman aged 46–59)	10.0
	Older cohabiting couples without resident children (woman aged 60 or older)	2.4
Older singles	Single people (aged 50 or older) without resident children	5.2

**Note:** Households not classified (20.7%) include single mothers and fathers as well as other types of household category such as couples with resident children older than 18 years, siblings living together, and so on.

\*The age of the youngest child is used to indicate the nature of parental responsibilities across the life course from the time-intensive preschool period through to the different needs and demands of children as they grow up and become more independent.)

**Source:** Eurofound, 2006b, 2013b; EWCS 2015



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Gender inequality at work persists across Europe, despite the long standing attention paid and efforts made to tackle it. This Eurofound report presents a closer look at women's and men's working conditions, using data from Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) and complementing previous Eurofound research on, among other things, working time patterns, work-life balance and workers' health. Beyond the general differences in the labour market, it highlights many important gaps in men's and women's working conditions and job quality which require specific attention. According to the EWCS data, the reduction of gender gaps in those areas showing improvement over the last 5 to 10 years remains limited. European and national strategies aimed at achieving job quality for all, that seek to mainstream gender equality, could help address persistent inequalities between men and women.

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**The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.**

