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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OECD GENDER
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Executive Summary

Despite some progress in implementing the OECD Gender Recommendations, policy makers need to face longstanding and new threats to gender equality

1. **Over the past five years, Adherents to the OECD Gender Recommendations¹ have promoted policies to support gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life, but gender gaps remain.** Policy change has given additional impetus to promoting women in leadership positions in business, increasingly supports fathers to take leave to care for children and encourages companies to be more transparent about pay. Yet, in other areas of education, employment and entrepreneurship, policy developments have been more modest. In public life, there has been a visible increase in leadership commitment and the number of legal and/or policy requirements underpinning gender mainstreaming, as indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the greater need for applying a gender lens in policy development. But the pandemic has also exacerbated gender gaps, particularly for women facing multiple disadvantages. Most worryingly, it contributed to increasing violence against women and girls (Leight, 2022^[1]), meaning that this topic remains at top of the policy agenda (Figure 1). Gender biases continue to prevail in many areas and more substantial policy action is needed to address both longstanding and new barriers to gender equality.

Gender equality will not be achieved without eradicating sexual harassment and violence against women

2. **Sexual harassment, and violence against women at large, have gained attention in policymaking.** In recent years, Adherents have increasingly prioritised sexual harassment as a policy issue, for instance taking steps towards the ratification of the [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention](#), 2019 (No. 190). Adherents' efforts to prevent and punish sexual harassment are part of their actions towards eradicating every form of violence against women. In this respect, Adherents have taken steps towards ratifying the [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (Istanbul Convention), and/or addressed violence against women in national action plans. Global social movements and initiatives, like #MeToo and #TimesUp, have increased pressure on policymakers to act. International collaboration and high-level diplomatic commitments have been made to combat gender-based violence, such as the 2019 adoption of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (SEAH) [[OECD/LEGAL/5020](#)].

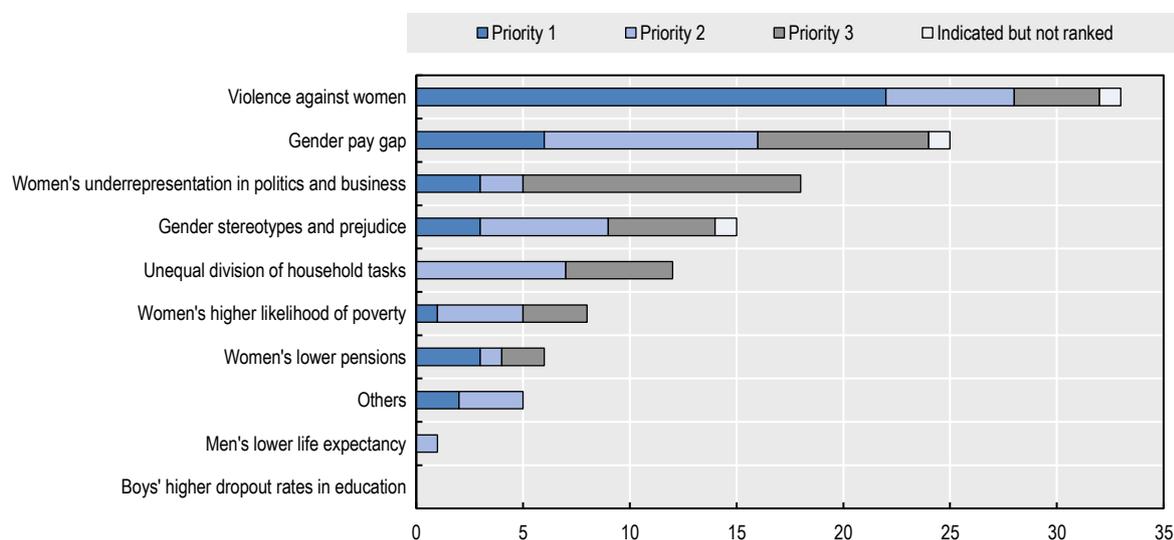
3. **Yet, sexual harassment and violence against women and girls remain “a pandemic within a pandemic” and hinder progress in the implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations,** similarly to what was already highlighted in the 2017 Report. Worldwide, more than one in four women experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2021^[2]; Sardinha et al., 2022^[3]). Despite years of advocacy to protect women's safety, legislative progress, strategic planning, policy coordination, and long-term investment in services have often been uneven across OECD countries, limiting the effectiveness of governmental measures (OECD, 2019^[4]; UN Secretary General, 2019^[5]; 2020^[6]; GREVIO, 2019^[7]).

4. **The COVID-19 crisis has further highlighted the need for major efforts to eradicate violence against women,** which remains the most urgent area of action to advance gender equality, according to 33 out of 41 Respondents to the 2021 Gender Equality Questionnaire. The second most urgent need is tackling the gender wage gap (25 Respondents), followed by women's underrepresentation in high levels of politics

¹ The OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship [[OECD/LEGAL/0398](#)] and the OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life [[OECD/LEGAL/0418](#)].

and business (18 Respondents) and addressing gender stereotypes (15 Respondents) (Figure 1). This list of priorities is very similar to the priority ranking that emerged among Adherents five years ago (OECD, 2017^[8]).

Figure 1. Priority areas in gender equality



Note: The 2021 Gender Equality Questionnaire (2021 GEQ) asked Adherents to select the priority issues in gender equality in their country from a list of topics. This is different from policy priorities that countries may have on work to be undertaken by OECD, OECD committees and their subsidiary bodies (e.g. the Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance). The horizontal axis indicates the number of Respondents that ranked the issues among their top three priorities. Respondents also had the possibility to suggest additional priorities. These are reported in the category 'others', and include 'unequal labour force participation', 'health difference between genders', 'undervaluation of female-dominated jobs', and 'women's safety'. Number of responses: 41, of which 1 did not identify priority 3, and 1 identified two items as priority 3.

Source: 2021 Gender equality questionnaire (2021 GEQ).

Persisting gender stereotypes threaten progress towards gender equality in education

5. **Adherents have promoted actions to break gendered experiences in education that have historically shaped career outcomes.** Adherents have renewed their efforts to improve learning materials, train teachers in gender-sensitive practices and/or involve teachers in efforts to encourage students to follow non-stereotypical career paths, mainly encouraging more girls to study Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Various Adherents have also improved financial literacy training for women and encouraged them to take vocational and adult learning courses, particularly in STEM fields.

6. **This has not put an end to longstanding issues, such as different education outcomes and career expectations for boys and girls, including the feminisation of the teaching profession.** The last five years have seen minor changes in the existing gender differences in education. In terms of outcomes, between 2015 and 2018, girls have further extended their relative advantage in literacy while coming closer to boys in mathematics, and boys' relative weak school performance and high dropout rates require policy attention. Unfortunately, gender stereotypes continue to influence subject choices and career expectations. Women remain less likely than men to study and work in STEM subjects, and more likely to study and work in health and care professions. In addition, more women than men have a tertiary degree, but more advanced degrees are awarded more to men (OECD, 2021^[9]).

Gender gaps in employment have slowly decreased, but are far from being closed

7. **Adherents have adopted policies to enhance women’s employment quality and earnings, with significant progress in pay transparency over the past five years.** Pay transparency policies increase awareness of existing gender pay gaps and can motivate efforts to reduce them. Almost half of Adherents now use job classification systems to encourage standardising pay for workers in job categories, while a similar number of Adherents mandate systematic gender wage gap reporting by private sector firms. Some countries also promote complementary practices, such as equal pay audits.

8. **Despite small improvements, women are still worse off in the labour market.** Gender differences in employment rates, remuneration and work quality cumulate over people’s lives and result in substantial gender gaps in labour income and well-being and greater risk of old-age poverty for women. Gender gaps in labour force participation decreased slightly between 2016 and 2020, but progress came to a halt with COVID-19 and the OECD average still stands at 11.5 p.p. Similarly, the gender wage gap fell slightly, but is still 11.6% ([OECD Gender Portal](#)). Women continue to be overrepresented in part-time employment and in lower-paid jobs in both the public and private sectors.

9. **The heavy burden of unpaid care and non-care work on women’s shoulders is another manifestation of deep-rooted gender inequalities in the labour market.** Governments have advanced in aiming to encourage fathers to take leave to care for children more often and for longer periods. For instance, Adherents have introduced or extended paid paternity leave (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Colombia, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland), introduced non-transferable rights of leave for fathers (e.g. Estonia and the Netherlands), or increased incentives for both parents to take leave (e.g. Canada, Iceland and Norway). Yet, use of such leave by fathers remains limited. Moreover, very few Adherents have made changes to tax-benefit systems that would affect the gendered division of labour in the household - for instance, Luxembourg introduced the option for individual income taxation, and Estonia moved from household-based to individual-based taxation.

10. **Policies need to better support fathers’ leave-taking and ensure that mothers have access to (well-) paid employment-protected leave while avoiding entitlements that discourage mothers’ return to work.** Governments also continue to support the accessibility and affordability of childcare, strengthening financial incentives to work for fathers and mothers. Yet, childcare costs are still a key barrier to (mothers’) employment participation in many countries. Childcare services need to be made more accessible, affordable and of better quality. Some Adherents have broadened rights for all workers to request flexible working arrangements, and advanced regulation on teleworking, especially since the start of the pandemic. Yet, the risk of gendered patterns in the use of parental leave and flexible work remains, such as part-time employment being mainly used by women. It is not enough to promote opportunities for flexible work; policy must support a gender-equal use of such arrangements. Further public investment towards decent work and equal conditions for men and women is needed for a gender-responsive and inclusive economic recovery, especially in sectors such as health and care. Overall, adopting intersectional approaches (i.e. responding to the ways gender intersects with other personal characteristics) in the provision of support will be key to address the multiple disadvantages that many women face when it comes to labour market inclusion.

11. **Adherents have also made some progress in supporting women’s leadership positions in private sector employment and public life².** The tools used to enhance gender diversity on boards and senior management in private and public employment have included mandatory quotas and voluntary targets, as well as complementary measures such as mentorship, networking and capacity-building actions,

² In line with the 2015 Gender Recommendation, the OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability ([OECD/LEGAL/0445](#)) endorses encouraging gender equality in the public service workforce including through addressing biases in people management processes and valuing non-traditional career paths.

and active recruitment of women in leadership positions. For example, France, Germany and Italy have made some of the biggest gains, with the support of both board quotas and disclosure requirements. Women's representation in political decision-making can increase public trust in governments (OECD, Forthcoming^[10]), and diversity in judiciaries is a key governance issue related to the fairness, transparency and the effectiveness of the rule of law (OECD, 2019^[11]).

12. **Despite some progress, the glass ceiling preventing women's greater representation in public and private management and leadership positions largely remains in place.** Female presence on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies increased from around 21% in 2016 to 27% in 2020. In public employment, women represent only 37% of the senior management positions in 2020, up from 32% in 2015 (OECD, 2021^[12]) even though the share of women in public employment across the OECD (58% as of 2019) is larger than total employment in both public and private sectors combined (45%). Across the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of power, key progress has been achieved in women's representation in parliament: in 2020, 13 out of 38 OECD Members have either achieved gender balance or gender parity, a significant improvement with respect to 2012, when only two OECD Members reached 40% share of women or more (OECD, 2021^[12]). Despite this progress, women still make up about only one-third of leadership positions across all three branches of power in the OECD on average, similarly to a decade ago (OECD, 2019^[13]). For instance, as of 2018, out of 24 OECD-Council of Europe (COE) countries³, only 5 had a female president in their Supreme courts. The persistence of gender gaps in parliaments, cabinets, judiciaries and senior public administrations emphasises the need to eradicate stereotypes, change the culture, improve work-life balance arrangements and increase the transparency in recruitment and promotion processes for leadership positions in public institutions.

Gender gaps in entrepreneurship have slightly narrowed, but women experience greater barriers than men to set up and maintain their businesses

13. **Governments have continued to invest in initiatives to help women overcome specific obstacles related to skills, finance and networks in setting up their own businesses, and to address bias in the entrepreneurship framework conditions.** An acceleration in the use of digital platforms has been a key development. New policy trends encompass increased public investment to reinforce women's entrepreneurship ecosystems, for instance in Canada, France and the United States, and to improve access to finance – such as experimentation with fintech (technology to automate financing).

14. **Gender gaps in entrepreneurship have slightly narrowed, but women continue to be less likely than men to create a business, work in a new start-up, or be self-employed.** From 2016 to 2020, the gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship narrowed by about 1 p.p. across OECD countries, to 4 p.p. At the same time, the gender gap in self-employment also narrowed slightly. Yet, in 2020, women were still about 30% less likely than men to be self-employed across OECD countries. Women tend to face higher barriers than men when setting up and maintaining their businesses, including low levels of entrepreneurship skills, limited entrepreneurship networks, difficulties accessing external finance and a lack of government support (OECD, 2021^[14]). Policy should strengthen the frameworks for women's entrepreneurship, for instance by increasing the use of tailored measures to support high-ambition, high-potential women entrepreneurs, via accelerator programmes and growth-oriented finance.

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are gaining momentum in the political agenda, but longstanding gender biases and lack of data hinder progress

15. **In public life, there has been a visible increase in leadership commitments to the gender equality agenda and in the number of legal or policy requirements underpinning gender**

³ This refers to OECD Member countries that are also members of the Council of Europe.

mainstreaming. Effective gender mainstreaming entails embedding a gender lens in governance and across the policy cycle, using government tools strategically to close gender gaps and strengthening institutions and coordination for gender equality, alongside promoting gender-balanced representation in public leadership (OECD, 2021^[15]). Increasingly more OECD countries have adopted strategic frameworks setting objectives and targets for gender equality. The use of gender impact assessments in decision-making is also gaining momentum and steps have been taken to address the gap in the availability of gender-disaggregated data.

16. **However, several roadblocks – including the lack of gender-disaggregated data in many crucial areas – persist in achieving inclusive and gender-sensitive policymaking and better policy outcomes.** It is paramount that governments make progress in measuring, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on gender gaps in all dimensions of the OECD Gender Recommendations, and in collecting gender-disaggregated data across all policy fields. The move towards data-driven, innovative, and digital governments, also accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, offers a window of opportunity to expand the availability of reliable and timely data on gender equality in different policy fields. Governments will also have to anticipate the risks posed by new technologies and artificial intelligence to gender equality, such as the transfer of existing gender biases from the analogue to the digital world and the emergence of new forms of digital divides and algorithmic discrimination against women. The capacity of governments needs to be supported in order to ensure the effective collection and use of gender-sensitive data and improve the quality of gender impact assessments, stakeholder engagement tools, and accountability and transparency mechanisms.

The COVID-19 pandemic curtailed progress in some areas, at least temporarily

17. **The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic risk reversing progress made and further entrenching gender gaps,** particularly for women facing multiple disadvantages. The pandemic and associated lockdowns meant that people spent more time at home, exposing women to higher risks of gender-based and domestic violence, including exploitation and trafficking. School closures have also resulted in a shift to online or distance learning, with bigger pressures placed on lower income groups. The pandemic has also threatened gender equality in the labour market and entrepreneurship, erasing some of the gains made in previous decades. For instance, business closure rates of female-led businesses across the world were higher than those of male-led businesses during the pandemic. The effects on employment and entrepreneurship are in part a sectoral story, because women are overrepresented in many of the industries that have been most affected by the crisis, such as food and beverage services, accommodation services and the retail sector, but they also relate to an important increase in the burden of unpaid work. The increased care burden on women due to the closure of formal care services negatively affected their productivity, number of hours worked, and work-life balance overall. All of the above has exposed women to particularly high psychological strain and risks of poorer mental health.

18. **The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the crucial role of both gender-balanced public decision-making and decision-making processes that incorporate a gender equality perspective.** The pandemic further illustrated gaps in gender-balanced decision-making and revealed the challenges of integrating a gender perspective in emergency decision-making in many countries (OECD, 2021^[16]). Gender equality and gender-sensitive policymaking are integral elements for an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. As stressed in the OECD's 2020 Ministerial Council (MCM) Statement [[C/MIN\(2020\)7/FINAL](#)], it is important to recognise women as key drivers of a broad-based recovery from the pandemic.

The continued relevance of the OECD Gender Recommendations could be further increased with new tools to support implementation

19. **There are a number of areas where new tools could be developed to further increase the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the OECD Gender Recommendations.** Gender equality is integral to ensuring sustainable advancement of cross-cutting policy goals. For instance, cross-country research has found that a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies translates into more ambitious climate goals and policies, such as lower emissions (Mavisakalyan and Tarverdi, 2019^[17]). Accounting for the cross-cutting nature of many priority policy goals requires continued focus on initiatives to promote gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life. On the one hand, such developments need to be framed within international efforts to advance gender equality, including the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), actions promoted by the [UN Human Rights Office](#) in the field of gender, the [Beijing Platform for Action](#), the United Nations Security Council landmark [resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#), the [Action Coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum](#), as well as the actions related to the fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), including Conventions [100](#) and [111](#) on equality and non-discrimination in the workplace, [183](#) on maternity protection, [189](#) on domestic work, and [190](#) on violence and harassment. On the other hand, gender equality deserves deeper consideration also in the future implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – including issues around gender and foreign direct investment, the environment, energy, nuclear energy, trade, and transport.

Table 1. Gender gaps exist in many areas

Key indicators of gender gaps in education, employment and entrepreneurship, and governance (men - women)

	Well above OECD Average			Around OECD Average				Well below OECD Average		
	Education:			Employment & Entrepreneurship:				Governance:		
	Gender gap in mean PISA reading scores (boys - girls)	Gender gap in mean PISA mathematics scores (boys - girls)	Share of women among masters graduates (%)	Gender gap in the labour force participation rate (men - women) (p.p.)	Share of women among managerial employees (%)	Gender wage gap for full-time employees (%)*	Share of women among self-employed with employees (%)	Share of women among parliamentary representatives (%)	Share of women among public sector employment (%)	Share of women among central government senior management (%)
Age group:	15-year-olds	15-year-olds	All ages	15-64 years	All ages	All ages	All ages	All ages	All ages	All ages
Year:	2018	2018	2019	2020	2020	2020	2020	2022	2019	2020
Note:	a	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
OECD average	-29.0	5.5	57.9	11.5	33.6	11.6	26.0	33.1	57.6	37.2
OECD std. dev.	9.3	6.6	5.9	8.1	7.4	6.1	4.7	10.5	10.2	12.1
Australia	-31.4*	6.0*	53.2	9.0	40.0	12.3	..	31.1	62.1	47.0
Austria	-28.1*	13.3*	53.7	8.9	32.8	13.3	25.4	41.5	..	30.4
Belgium	-21.7*	12.1*	55.8	8.1	34.5	3.8	26.3	42.0	57.2	21.1
Canada	-28.9*	4.9*	56.1	7.3	35.8	16.1	27.2	30.5	63.3	44.6
Chile	-19.8*	7.5*	57.2	20.5	27.4	8.6	..	35.5	55.7	..
Colombia	-10.3*	19.5*	57.0	24.6	..	4.0	..	18.6	47.4	39.6
Costa Rica	-14.4*	17.7*	60.5	24.9	40.2	0.0	..	45.6	50.7	38.1
Czech Republic	-33.2*	3.5	60.5	14.1	27.8	12.4	..	25.5	..	33.2
Denmark	-29.3*	3.9	56.5	5.8	27.9	5.1	21.1	39.7	69.6	32.2
Estonia	-30.7*	8.5*	63.7	4.9	37.4	17.3	19.1	25.7	67.8	48.5
Finland	-51.5*	-6.1*	59.6	3.6	37.5	17.2	24.8	45.5	71.0	38.0
France	-24.9*	6.4*	54.7	6.9	35.5	11.8	27.1	39.5	63.8	30.8
Germany	-25.9*	7.1*	53.4	8.6	28.1	13.9	25.2	34.9	55.5	32.5
Greece	-42.1*	0.3	62.2	16.2	29.4	8.9	28.4	21.0	47.9	52.9
Hungary	-26.5*	8.8*	57.6	15.0	39.2	9.9	30.1	13.1	60.0	..
Iceland	-40.6*	-9.8*	68.6	5.4	38.6	12.9	23.3	47.6	..	..
Ireland	-23.2*	5.9	56.3	11.7	36.3	5.2	27.4	23.1	..	35.6
Israel (I)	-48.1*	-9.2	62.0	4.4	34.6	22.7	..	30.0	62.0	44.5
Italy	-24.7*	15.5*	57.5	18.8	27.3	7.6	25.5	36.3	58.2	34.0
Japan	-20.4*	10.1*	34.5	14.0	13.3	22.5	..	9.7	43.3	4.2
Korea	-23.6*	4.0	52.7	18.8	15.6	31.5	..	17.6	45.7	8.6
Latvia	-32.8*	6.8*	66.6	4.9	46.9	20.3	38.3	27.0	67.0	56.2
Lithuania	-38.7*	-2.5	65.1	2.7	37.9	11.7	25.3	28.4	68.0	28.5
Luxembourg	-29.3*	7.5*	50.8	6.6	26.3	..	29.8	33.3	39.6	25.0
Mexico	-11.1*	11.8*	56.0	32.6	38.4	9.6	..	50.0	52.7	23.3
Netherlands	-28.8*	1.4	56.0	7.8	26.2	12.7	24.3	40.7	49.5	35.0
New Zealand	-28.8*	8.9*	59.4	9.1	..	4.6	..	49.2	..	52.8
Norway	-47.0*	-7.0*	57.4	4.6	34.0	4.8	23.6	45.0	69.6	43.4
Poland	-32.8*	1.4	67.1	14.7	43.3	8.7	30.0	28.3	60.6	45.2
Portugal	-24.3*	9.0*	59.2	5.1	35.6	11.7	32.6	40.0	60.7	41.5
Slovak Republic	-34.4*	4.6	61.9	11.9	35.5	11.0	..	21.3	60.9	50.3
Slovenia	-41.7*	0.6	66.2	5.2	40.1	8.2	24.5	28.9	..	49.0
Spain	-20.0*	6.4*	58.3	9.5	35.0	8.6	30.3	43.0	56.1	42.8
Sweden	-34.3*	-1.2	59.6	4.3	42.3	7.4	20.9	46.1	71.8	55.0
Switzerland	-30.6*	7.1*	50.2	8.1	33.3	13.8	25.8	42.5	..	21.7
Turkey	-25.3*	4.9	50.6	39.6	18.2	10.0	12.3	17.4	25.3	..
United Kingdom	-20.1*	12.2*	60.8	7.6	36.8	12.3	28.2	34.4	66.3	42.0
United States	-23.5*	8.6*	60.3	10.5	41.1	17.7	..	27.7	57.5	37.1
Argentina	-16.1*	15.4*	60.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kazakhstan	-26.9*	1.3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Morocco	-25.9*	0.9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Russian Fed.	-25.2*	4.7*	55.2	10.0	..	..	..	..	..	..

Note: Gender gap indicators are expressed as men's outcomes minus women's outcomes. The OECD average and standard deviation are the unweighted average and standard deviation for all OECD member countries with available data on the given measure. Values are shaded according to the size of women's share relative to the OECD average share or according to the size of the gap relative to the OECD average gap. "(p.p.)" denotes measurement in percentage points; "(%)" denotes measurement in percentage terms.

See Appendix I for definitions, notes and reference years.

Source: [OECD Gender Portal](#).

1. Background

20. **The OECD Gender Recommendations provide a comprehensive framework to help Adherents design and implement policies that foster gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life** and deliver stronger growth and greater inclusiveness.

21. **The OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship** [[OECD/LEGAL/0398](#)] (hereafter the “2013 Gender Recommendation”) was adopted by the Council at its Meeting at Ministerial level on 29 May 2013 [[C/M\(2013\)12](#)], on the proposal of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC) in consultation with other competent OECD committees. The total number of Adherents is 42, including all 38 OECD Members and four non-Members⁴.

22. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation sets out measures that Adherents should consider implementing in order to address gender inequalities in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life.** It recommends that Adherents develop appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring, and campaigning, in order to: adopt practices that promote gender equality in education (section I.A); promote family-friendly policies and working conditions which enable fathers and mothers to balance their working hours and their family responsibilities and facilitate women to participate more in private and public sector employment (I.B); increase the representation of women in decision-making positions (I.C); eliminate the discriminatory gender wage gap (I.D); promote measures to end sexual harassment in the workplace (I.E); reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurship activity (I.F); pay attention to the special needs of women from disadvantaged minority groups and migrant women (I.G), reduce the gender gap in financial literacy (I.H), mainstream the gender equality perspective in the design, development and evaluation of relevant policies and budgets (I.I), and strengthen accountability mechanisms (I.J). The 2013 Gender Recommendation also calls on Adherents to elaborate, implement promote, and exchange policy principles, guidelines and best practices to ensure the collection, production and development of gender-sensitive data and to further the Recommendation's objectives through cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, public agencies, trade unions, employers’ organisations and civil society (section II).

23. **The Council adopted the OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life** [[OECD/LEGAL/0418](#)] (hereafter the “2015 Gender Recommendation”) on 14 December 2015 [[C/M\(2015\)22](#)] at the proposal of the Public Governance Committee (PGC) in cooperation with ELSAC. The 2015 Gender Recommendation builds on and complements the 2013 Gender Recommendation with the aim of providing decision-makers with direction and guidance to foster gender diversity in public life namely through designing and mainstreaming gender equality (I); strengthening accountability and oversight mechanisms (II); fostering gender-balanced representation in public leadership (III); improving gender-equality in public employment (IV); and strengthening international cooperation (V). It recognises that gender mainstreaming is a strategy that helps governments make better, more inclusive decisions to achieve gender equality, including as they relate to policy and spending decisions. In doing so, it promotes a whole-of-government strategy for gender equality reform, as well as gender equality in access to public life at all levels (including politics, judiciaries, and public administrations). The 2015 Gender Recommendation has 38 Adherents, namely all OECD Members⁵.

24. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation instructed ELSAC and other competent committees to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Recommendation to assess progress and to report to Council by 2017** and regularly thereafter. The 2015 Gender Recommendation instructed the

⁴ Since the last reporting in 2017, two non-Members have adhered to the 2013 Gender Recommendation: Argentina (11 November 2017) and Morocco (14 September 2018), in addition to the Russian Federation (29 May 2013) and Kazakhstan (15 January 2016).

⁵ Romania and Ukraine have made requests to adhere to the Recommendation but the process has not yet been completed.

PGC to monitor, in co-operation with ELSAC, the implementation of the Recommendation including through the development and use of benchmark indicators and country reviews and, report thereon to Council at the same time as the implementation of the 2013 Recommendation. As a result, the first cycle of reporting (2013-2017) concluded with the Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – Some Progress on Gender Equality but Much Left to Do [C/MIN(2017)7] (hereafter the “2017 Report”), which was noted and declassified by the Council at its 2017 meeting at Ministerial level (MCM).

25. **The 2017 Report stressed the continued relevance of the OECD Gender Recommendations and the importance to continue monitoring policy changes going forward and reporting again to Council after five years [C(2017)44/REV1].** The 2017 Report showed that, while Adherents were increasingly prioritising policies that combat violence against women and sexual harassment in the workplace, the gender wage gap, and the unequal division of unpaid work, gender gaps persisted in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life. It called on the Adherents to build on progress through sustained campaigns, the review and monitoring of policies aimed at gender equality, the introduction and/or expansion of legal measures and public investment, and the exchange of best practice. This includes initiatives related to: STEM, work-life balance and a better sharing of paid and unpaid work among partners, pay transparency, greater representation of women in public and private leadership, access to finance for entrepreneurs, and good governance for gender equality (OECD, 2017_[8]). When considering the first monitoring report, the Council noted the importance of gender mainstreaming in closing existing gender gaps and called for continued efforts to mainstream and improve gender equality in line with the OECD Gender Recommendations.

26. **In 2019, the PGC prepared a report on OECD Members’ standing against the 2015 Gender Recommendation based on baseline data** collected between 2016 and 2018 (hereafter the “2019 Baseline Report”). The 2019 Baseline Report found that government efforts to close gender gaps often fell short due to their limited capacities and resources to implement gender equality objectives, as well as lack of data for policymaking and monitoring of these efforts. As a result, it showed that gender perspective was rarely applied during reforms and decision-making, leading to potential gender bias in baseline policies and regulations often going undetected (OECD, 2019_[11]). Noting these gaps, and in order to support Adherents in implementing the 2015 Gender Recommendation, the PGC has developed – among other tools – the OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality (OECD, 2021_[16]) and the OECD Policy Framework on Gender-Sensitive Public Governance [C/MIN(2021)21] (see Dissemination).

27. **This Report presents the progress made in the implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations.** It includes the results of the second reporting cycle (2017-2022) for these Recommendations, following the 2017 Report. The focus is on policies implemented since then; measures that were already in place and that have not been modified since 2017 are not the focus of this Report.

2. Methodology

28. **In preparation for reporting to Council on progress with the implementation of the Gender Recommendations, various committees sent questionnaires to Adherents regarding their respective focal areas of the OECD Gender Recommendations.** Table 2 presents information on the number of responses per body.

29. **Regarding the 2013 Gender Recommendation, a questionnaire on Gender Pay Transparency and a questionnaire on Progress towards Gender Equality in the area of Employment (hereinafter: “2021 GEQ” – Gender Equality Questionnaire) were shared with ELSAC in 2021.** They were also sent to the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, to consult them on progress made by their members in those fields. The 2021 GEQ is a key source of information on key policy developments. Yet, the information obtained on the

effectiveness of such policies is more limited, since evaluation evidence is scattered and the strength of that evidence varies greatly.

30. **For the reporting of the 2015 Gender Recommendation, the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (“2021 GMG Survey”), was designed to monitor the different areas for each of its pillars.** It was circulated to the delegates of the Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (WP-GMG) in 2021. Other surveys with questions related to gender budgeting and issues on civil services were conducted by the Committee of Senior Budget Officials (SBO) and Working Party on Public Employment and Management (PEM) of the PGC respectively.

Table 2. Overview of questionnaire responses

Bodies	Gender Recommendation	Focal Item OECD Gender Recommendations ¹	Number of responses
ELSAC	2013 Gender Recommendation	Questionnaire on Progress towards Gender Equality in the area of “Employment” (2021 GEQ)	42/42 ²
ELSAC	2013 Gender Recommendation	Questionnaire on Gender Pay Transparency	38/38 ³
PGC	2015 Gender Recommendation	2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey)	35/38 ⁴

Note: 1. Broadly speaking the focal items in the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation concern: A- Education; B- Paid and unpaid work; C- Women in leadership positions; D- the gender wage gap; E- Sexual Harassment; F- Entrepreneurship; G- Women from disadvantaged minority groups and migrant women, and; H- Financial Literacy. Items I (mainstreaming gender equality in policies and budgets) and J (strengthening accountability mechanisms for gender equality) were assessed through the questionnaire on the 2015 Gender Recommendation on Public Life.

2. The maximum number of Respondents to the 2021 GEQ is 42: i.e. 38 OECD Members + 4 non-Member Adherents (Argentina, Kazakhstan, Morocco and the Russian Federation).

3. The maximum number of Respondents to the Gender Pay Transparency questionnaire is 38 (OECD Members). Of the 38 responses collected, 36 were sent from the countries and 2 were filled in by the OECD and validated by the countries (DEN and LUX).

4. The maximum number of Respondents to the 2021 GMG Survey was 35 OECD countries. Poland responded only to the standalone section on Gender Equality in Civil Service. Ireland, Israel, Norway, Slovak Republic, and the United States responded only to the shortened Priority Questionnaire of the 2021 GMG Survey.

31. **The information collected allowed to analyse key policy changes.** All 42 Adherents responded to the questionnaires on the 2013 Gender Recommendation with information on key policy developments over the past five years and related policy priorities and urgent issues in the field of gender equality, although with varying degrees of detail depending on the specific question. The response rate also varies depending on the question. Such information was used to integrate the analysis of policy developments in the key areas of the Recommendation, as well as to obtain comparative indicators. The data on the implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation highlights key findings and trends observed across 38 Adherents (wherever possible). The 2021 GMG Survey was responded to by a majority of the Adherents (i.e. 35). However, the response rate differs across specific questions. Where possible, comparisons have been drawn to trends studied by the OECD in 2012 and 2017. However, the number of respondent countries differed across each year of analysis, making an exact longitudinal comparison challenging while general trends were drawn.

32. **This Report also builds on evidence collected by the OECD through an extensive range of activities on gender.** This includes the [OECD Gender Data Portal](#) which is updated annually on March 8 - International Women’s Day, and includes a range of indicators on Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Public Governance, Development and Health, and which is scheduled to be extended to include information on Energy, Science and Technology and Taxes and Benefits. In addition, over the past five years there has been a wide range of [OECD ongoing work on Gender](#) of direct relevance to the different provisions of the Gender Recommendations. Progress reporting on gender equality in Education,

Employment, Entrepreneurship and Public Life further draws on OECD analysis from a broad range of connected issues, including on competition, corporate governance, development assistance, digital transformation and science, energy and nuclear energy, environment, family-friendly policy and work-life balance, financial literacy, foreign direct investment, health, migration, pensions, governance, social institutions, taxation, trade, transport, well-being, and violence against women. The findings pertaining to the 2015 Gender Recommendation build on the information gathered through OECD country reviews (e.g. OECD reviews of Canada, Colombia, Ireland and Mexico), available data sources, and additional data obtained in coordination within the different OECD policy communities as well as external partners (e.g. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Council of Europe, European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ)).

33. **The Report also draws on work by relevant OECD bodies and informal groups** such as the WP-GMG) – a subsidiary body of the PGC, the GENDERNET – a subsidiary body of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the OECD Global Network of Parliamentarians, the OECD Development Centre’s work on the Social Institutions and Gender Index and its regional reports, as well as regional initiatives on governance and competition (e.g. in Eurasia, Latin America and MENA countries), the gender indicators of the OECD [Going Digital Toolkit](#), and work on the [OECD Better Life Index](#). It also benefitted from policy dialogues on gender equality that were held during the meetings of other relevant subsidiary bodies of the PGC⁶.

3. Implementation

34. **This implementation section is structured around six main sub-sections.** The first sub-section illustrates the key contextual changes since the last reporting exercise, including the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to frame the reporting on the implementation over the 2017-2022 period. The second, third and fourth sub-sections report on the implementation of the 2013 Gender Recommendation – Section I in the fields of education, employment and entrepreneurship, respectively. The fifth sub-section reports on Section II of the 2013 Gender Recommendation. Finally, the sixth sub-section reports on the implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation, as well as on the provisions of the 2013 Gender Recommendation related to public life (I.I and I.J). All sub-sections following the introductory one start with boxes including the relevant provisions of the Gender Recommendations, each of which has a unique reference number. Such reference numbers are indicated in the headers of the different sub-sections, specifying which provision(s) of the Gender Recommendations they report on.

35. **While this Report presents progress focusing on Adherents, some sections also mention non-Adherents.** Such cases refer to information collected through other tools which are not specific to the implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations but provide relevant complementary information. This is the case, for instance, of tools for the collection of information on G20 countries or on developing and emerging countries as regards progress in achieving gender equality.

The OECD Gender Recommendations in times of COVID-19: the pandemic risks hindering progress in their implementation and outcomes

36. **Available evidence indicates that the pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges to gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life although to varying degrees.** With new variants and waves of the virus emerging, uncertainty remains, making it still impossible to have a definite overview of the impact of the pandemic on gender equality. Such challenges, including their

⁶ Namely the Public Employment and Management Network (PEM), the Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government (CoG); the Working Party on the Leading Practitioners on Public Procurement (LPP), the Working Party on Open Government (WPOG), and the Working Party of Senior Digital Leaders (E-Leaders).

large economic impact on public finances, risk hindering progress in the implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations and unravelling some of the hard-won achievements in closing gender gaps.

37. **Sexual harassment, and violence against women at large, have been a pandemic within the pandemic.** Since the onset of the pandemic, women have faced even higher risks of gender-based and domestic violence. There has been an increase in officially reported incidents of domestic violence, of calls to helplines, and of visits to websites offering support and assistance (OECD, 2021^[16]; Leight, 2022^[11]). Respondents to the 2021 GEQ indicated violence against women as the key challenge for gender equality (Figure 1) and many correspondingly adopted extra measures during COVID-19. These range from broad gender-inclusive recovery plans and funds that set the fight against violence against women and girls as one of their objectives (e.g. Australia, Canada, Iceland, Italy and Sweden), to specific (emergency) support for the continuation and adaptation of services for survivors. Examples include new or strengthened emergency helplines, websites and web apps (e.g. Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Hungary and Portugal); increased assistance through resource centres, crisis intervention units, drop-in services and direct support provision (e.g. Canada, Costa Rica and Korea); information, outreach and awareness-raising activities (e.g. Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia and Portugal); as well as capacity building to staff, guidance provision and financial support to organisations operating in the field (e.g. Canada, Costa Rica, Greece, Iceland, Korea, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden). Some also engaged in data collection, the creation of special taskforces and increased inter-governmental cooperation (e.g. Canada, Greece, Luxembourg, Sweden and Switzerland); and strengthened judiciary support through, for instance, the application of more severe criminal punishment for gender-based violence cases (e.g. Costa Rica, the Czech Republic and Korea).

Education systems are struggling between school closures and home schooling

38. **The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns and school closures have meant a shift to online or distance learning with students having to spend more time at home.** There is widespread evidence that this shift contributes to raising inequalities between income groups (OECD, 2020^[18]). Academic progress is slower compared to years before the pandemic, with larger learning losses among students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Engzell, Frey and Verhagen, 2021^[19]).

39. **Initial research on gender differences in COVID-19 related learning outcomes is scattered, but indications of gendered impacts exist.** First, it is likely that the gaps in reading and mathematics between boys and girls have grown since the COVID-19 outbreak. Research based on UK surveys of children aged 8-18 has found that the gender reading gap had increased from just over 2 percentage points (p.p.) in favour of girls at the start of 2020 to 11.5 p.p. after the first lockdown in spring 2020 (Clark and Picton, 2020^[20]). On the other hand, a comparison of learning outcomes among 10- to 15-year-olds in Mexico indicates that the gender mathematics gap, with girls falling behind, has widened among students with low socioeconomic backgrounds (Hevia et al., 2022^[21]). Second, the pandemic has hit vocational education strongly by preventing students from completing their work-based training (OECD, 2021^[22]), and the number of men and women affected likely reflects their proportion in this type of education (see Box 4).

40. **Home schooling and digital learning settings can work differently for boys and girls.** Because schools are places that provide daily structure, social interaction and emotional support, COVID-19 school closures have had adverse effects on child well-being. While both girls and boys reported decreased mental health, girls reported higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression than boys. School closures also meant a higher exposure to the risk of gender-based violence (OECD, 2020^[18]). In addition, there may be gender differences in the access to digital tools, and especially in various non-OECD countries, where girls' use of internet devices is more monitored and restricted due to cultural norms (UNESCO, 2021^[23]). Many girls may also choose to spend less time on the internet due to fear of being harassed. According to a recent

survey, girls who report having experienced online harassment are also more likely to report experiencing difficulties at school (Plan International, 2020^[24]).

The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened gender equality in the labour market, with gender imbalances in the distribution of additional unpaid work

41. **The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened gender equality in the labour market, erasing some of the gains made in previous decades.** The pandemic has illustrated that, even in countries with strong laws and jurisdiction on the equality of women and men, there are still major gender gaps in income, care responsibilities and care work, amongst others. Women are overrepresented in many of the industries that have been most affected by the crisis: women made up about 53% of employment in food and beverage services, 60% in accommodation services and 62% in the retail sector in the OECD in 2020 ([ILOSTAT database](#)). However, one and a half years after the onset of the pandemic, women's labour force participation and employment have caught up more rapidly with previous levels than men's. Women's *labour force participation* (age 15-64, seasonally adjusted) in the OECD area had fallen by 0.2 p.p. in Q3 2021 relative to Q4 2019, somewhat less than the labour force participation of men (0.5 p.p.) ([OECD Short-term Labour Market Database](#)). Women's *employment* almost reached pre-pandemic levels by Q3 2021 (0.01 p.p. relative to Q4 2019), while that of men has recovered less so (-0.07 p.p.) (Figure 2, panel a). Yet, evidence from countries in the European Union shows that women experienced a sharper fall in working hours (European Commission, 2021^[25]). Looking at unemployment rates, the gender unemployment gap increased sharply (from 0.3 to 0.9 p.p.) from March to April 2020, but it has been narrowing steadily since then. In October 2021, across the OECD, the gender gap in the unemployment rate stood at 0.68 p.p. – a slight decrease from the 0.71 p.p. recorded in March 2020 ([OECD Short-term Labour Market Database](#)).

42. **The employment trends in the first and second year of the pandemic are very different.** In the first year of the pandemic (Figure 2, panel b), almost all Adherents experienced a decline in employment for both women and men, with particularly large drops in non-European Union Member States, where the use of job retention schemes was less widespread. In some cases the decrease in employment was particularly marked for women (e.g. in Chile, Colombia and Turkey). In the second year of the pandemic (Figure 2, panel c), all countries but Latvia and Switzerland experienced increases in employment for both men and women, and in many countries such increases were more marked for women than for men (only in France, Iceland and Sweden the recovery was significantly stronger in the case of male employment). Over the whole period (Figure 2, panel a), most Adherents reached pre-recovery levels, often with more marked improvements in the case of female employment, while Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Latvia, among others, still experienced employment declines.

Figure 2. Changes in employment rate since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (panel a), in the first year of the pandemic (panel b) and in the second year (panel c)

Population aged 14-64. Change in percentage points.



Note: Data for EU countries are affected by the implementation of the new [Integrated European Social Statistics Framework Regulation](#) (IESS FR) in 2021, which, among changes in sampling and the structure of the questionnaire, adjusted the definition of employment, particularly in relation to maternity-, paternity- and parental leave.

Source: [OECD Short-term Labour Market Database](#).

43. **Yet, the full impact of the crisis on jobs for both men and women still remains to be seen and it is too early to assess the economic impact of the policy measures taken by Adherents and of their gradual phasing out.** Most Adherents, and especially those in Europe, relied heavily on job retention schemes. Some Respondents to the 2021 GEQ stressed that while such schemes are gender-neutral by design, the sectors that most benefitted were female-dominated (as highlighted by France); and in some cases, the law provided that the reduction of working hours would not apply to pregnant or lactating women (e.g. Costa Rica). Other Adherents, such as the United States, mainly used temporary layoffs and unemployment insurance benefits (OECD, 2021_[26]), which are also gender-neutral. Other measures focused on supporting women's employability, providing labour market and skills support to women (e.g. Canada), assisting unemployed women via extra funding, tax cuts, wage subsidies and employment incentives (e.g. Costa Rica, Hungary, Italy and Korea), and offering specific support for domestic employees (e.g. Korea and Spain). Colombia and Norway also accompanied their policy responses by collecting additional data to identify gender gaps in work-life balance dimensions and the equality consequences of COVID-19.

44. **COVID-19 has also affected how and where people work, bringing about a surge in teleworking.** In the first phases of the pandemic, teleworking increased particularly for female workers, who prior to the crisis used to have less access to teleworking than male workers (OECD, 2021_[27]). Yet, it is still unclear whether gender differences in teleworking reflect gender-related occupational differences or rather gender differences in teleworking behaviours within occupations. OECD countries introduced policies on working time as an adjustment mechanism, allowing people to take more paid leave, and telework more easily in order to contain the spread of the virus. In addition to temporary measures, some Adherents initiated more permanent policy changes either by encouraging social partners to start negotiations on the issue (e.g. Japan), or by encouraging governments to put forward reform proposals that were already in the pipeline (e.g. Chile or Germany) (OECD, 2021_[26]). Respondents to the 2021 GEQ reported having improved the regulation of teleworking through the introduction of a clear definition of telework and of the modalities of access/use in their legal frameworks (e.g. Kazakhstan and Morocco), the recognition of labour rights and benefits (e.g. Mexico and Spain), and clarifications on its voluntary nature and the content of remote work agreements (e.g. Spain). In addition, various Adherents supported digitalisation via vocational training and counselling (e.g. Italy and Germany) and SME assistance (e.g. Japan and Spain) (ILO and OECD, 2021_[28]).

45. **Telework has pros and cons for gender equality.** It seems to have helped protect women, and especially mothers, from completely exiting the labour force during COVID-19, and OECD data show that both mothers and fathers are optimistic that technology will improve work-life balance (OECD, 2021_[29]). Nonetheless, during the pandemic, teleworking mothers suffered negative consequences in terms of productivity (Alon et al., 2021_[30]), interruptions during work hours (Andrew et al., 2020_[31]) and higher childcare burden (Boll and Schüller, 2021_[32]). Gendered changes in work patterns deriving from telework need to be cautiously considered, as they have implications for gender disparities in labour market outcomes, the work-life balance of women and men, and gender equality more broadly (Queisser, 2021_[33]).

46. **The COVID-19 crisis has also imposed an increase in the burden of unpaid work.** The widespread closure of childcare and long-term care facilities has only highlighted the importance of access to affordable care. Women have often been taking on much of the additional unpaid work caused by school and childcare closures (although with large differences across OECD countries). Increased caregiving responsibilities can have immediate and longer-term impacts on gender equality in employment, reducing women's labour market participation and limiting their job prospects (OECD, 2021_[26]). Women's work losses were most likely largely attributable to these impacts on mothers (see Box 1). Men also generally increased their contribution to housework during the pandemic, albeit from an often low base. Even in cases where the additional housework burden was equally shared between men and women, such as in Germany, the starting point was a substantial imbalance in the distribution of housework to the disadvantage of women prior to the pandemic (Queisser, 2021_[33]).

47. **To help parents cope with the issues imposed by the additional unpaid work, governments took measures in the areas of flexible forms of work (see above), leave, childcare and income support.** Many Adherents assisted parents by providing emergency additional paid or unpaid leave, which was crucial to mitigate the impact of childcare and school lockdowns, though the leave periods were often not long enough. Examples reported by Respondents to the 2021 GEQ include the adjustment and extension of parental leave arrangements and/or the provision of care-related leave entitlements and benefits (e.g. Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg and Norway) also in the form of additional part-time parental leave (e.g. Belgium), as well as tax reliefs for SMEs providing paid sick and family leave wages to their employees (e.g. the United States). Other measures supported childcare availability and accessibility by granting financial assistance to childcare providers during the pandemic (e.g. Ontario in Canada, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom), by ensuring the availability of different modes of childcare provision (e.g. Hungary), or by strengthening childcare benefits (e.g. Chile, Latvia and Slovenia). Additional interventions include emergency income support to families through extraordinary allowances, one-off payments or the extension of the disbursement of family benefits (e.g. Argentina, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia and Portugal).

Box 1. Mothers took on the brunt of the additional unpaid care work during the pandemic

The OECD Risks that Matter 2020 survey (RTM2020) reveals that when schools and childcare facilities closed, mothers took on the brunt of the additional unpaid care work - and experienced labour market penalties and stress.

International comparisons of the effects of the crisis on mothers are limited due to a lack of cross-national data by parenthood status. RTM2020 helps to fill this gap by combining self-reported employment and caregiving microdata, disaggregated by parenthood status, across 25 OECD countries, showing that (OECD, 2021^[29]):

- Mothers of children under age 12 were nearly three times as likely as fathers (61.5% versus 22.4%) to report that they took on most or all of the additional unpaid care work related to school or childcare facility closures. They were the group most likely to move from “employed” to “not employed” status between Q42019 and Q32020, on average across OECD countries.
- Gender gaps in a household’s unpaid care were largest, on average, when the father continued to be employed while the mother was not. This relationship was not reciprocated to the same degree in households where the father was out of paid work and the mother was in paid work. Mothers’ participation in paid employment did little to mitigate inequality in unpaid work conditions.

Women entrepreneurs were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to a greater extent than men entrepreneurs

48. **Business closure rates of female-led businesses across the world were about 7 p.p. higher than those of male-led businesses between January and May 2020** (OECD/European Commission, 2021^[34]). Although this gender gap subsequently narrowed, the closure rates for women-led businesses remained 2 p.p. higher than those for men-led businesses in October 2020 (16% vs. 14%). This gap narrowed across all regions between May and October 2020, except in several countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa where it increased slightly (see Figure 3). These gaps in business closure rates are consistent with changes in the business population. For example, the number of women-owned businesses in the United States fell by 10% between February and June 2020, compared with 7% for men-owned businesses (Fairlie, 2020^[35]; 2021^[36]).

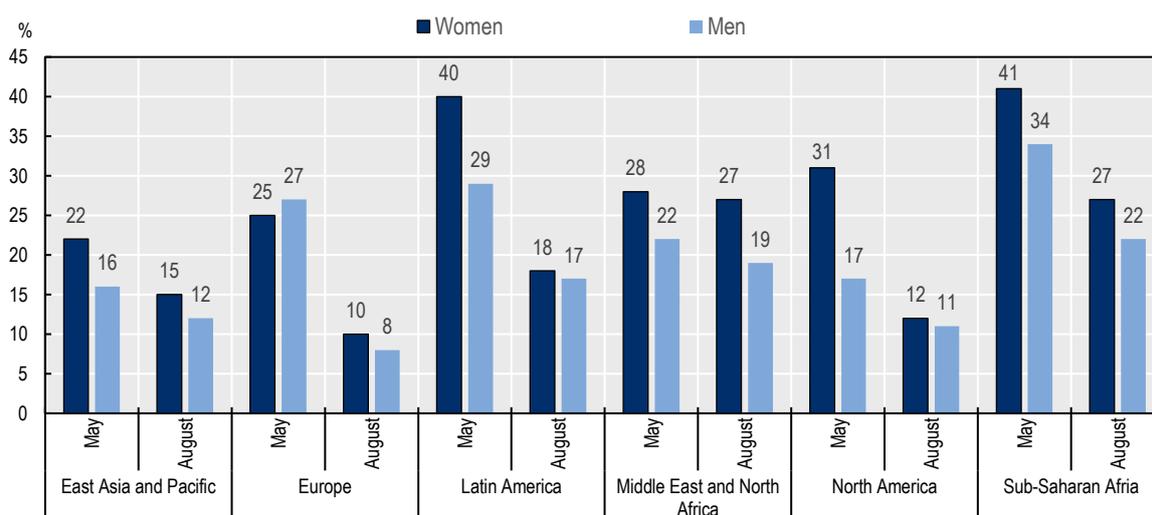
49. **Even among businesses that continued to operate, women entrepreneurs were more likely to be affected adversely.** For example, self-employed women in Germany were more likely to experience an income loss of more than 35% relative to men (Kritikos, Graeber and Seebauer, 2020^[37]), while self-employed women in the United Kingdom were also more likely to experience reductions in hours worked and earnings (Reuschke et al., 2021^[38]).

50. **These greater impacts on women entrepreneurs are largely due to the higher concentration of women entrepreneurs in the hardest hit sectors,** including personal services, accommodation and food services, arts and entertainment, and retail trade. Women entrepreneurs have also been much more likely to take on more household responsibilities during the pandemic, which reduces the amount of time available to spend working on their business. Between May and October 2020, about one-quarter of all women business leaders stated that they spent at least six hours per day on domestic responsibilities such as home-schooling and childcare relative to 11% of male business leaders (Facebook/OECD/World Bank, 2020^[39]). Other important factors that explain the disproportionate impact on women entrepreneurs include lower access to resources (e.g. external finance) and networks, as well as to government COVID-19 support schemes for entrepreneurs, which were gender-blind. As a result, many women entrepreneurs were not supported by “one size fits all” measures, in part because they are less likely to use bank loans (many programmes rely on existing bank products) or because women-owned enterprises are smaller on average than men-owned enterprises (some supports have size thresholds). Differences in financial knowledge also likely played a role.

51. **Most governments introduced a range of measures to support entrepreneurs through the COVID-19 pandemic, including grants, loans, tax deferrals and re-training schemes.** Support measures were implemented quickly but many measures were ineffective at reaching micro businesses and the self-employed during the first half of 2020. Most governments made adjustments to improve eligibility (OECD/European Commission, 2021^[34]); however, support measures tended to be general and were not designed or tailored for women entrepreneurs.

Figure 3. Female-led businesses were more likely to close during the COVID-19 pandemic

Business closure rates, 2020



Source: Facebook/OECD/World Bank (2020^[39]).

Women were particularly exposed to psychological strain and risks of poorer mental health

52. **All the issues mentioned above contributed to women being exposed to particularly high psychological strain and risks of poorer mental health, which inevitably affects their ability to fully participate in various dimensions of life, including the areas covered by the OECD Gender Recommendations.** Data from 16 Adherents collected from April through December 2020 show that women were more likely to be at risk of depression (29.4%) and anxiety (23.9%) than men (26% and 23.7%, respectively), and data on European countries shows that gender gaps in risks for depression have widened during the pandemic (OECD, 2021^[40]). A meta-analysis of 18 studies found that maternal depression and anxiety rose during the pandemic, and that older mothers were more likely to have higher clinically significant symptoms of depression and anxiety (Racine et al., 2021^[41]). Confirming these studies, in RTM2020, women are more likely than men to report the presence of mental health issues within the household (OECD, 2021^[29]).

The gender equality angle in governments' responses has been insufficient

53. **Looking at public life, Adherents reported several challenges in ensuring a gender equality lens in the emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.** For example, in a survey conducted by the OECD in April 2020, only 11 out of the 26 Respondents reported performing gender impact assessments in emergency responses. In addition, many Adherents reported difficulties with emphasising gender equality as a priority area in the overall governmental response to the pandemic (OECD, 2021^[16]).

54. **Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been a stronger recognition of the importance of applying an intersectional lens in gender equality efforts, and that proactive and effective government action is needed to close persisting gender gaps.** Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that helps governments make better decisions to achieve gender equality, especially those related to policy and spending. Actions to improve the design and implementation of gender mainstreaming include increasing leadership commitments to the gender equality agenda; integrating gender equality considerations in recovery and resilience plans; setting up mechanisms for reporting to the Centre of Government; and adopting methodologies and assigning clear roles and responsibilities for embedding quality gender impact assessment (GIA) tools throughout the policymaking cycle. There seems to be recognition that gender equality is essential for an inclusive and sustainable recovery, as a vast majority of the respondents to the 2021 GMG Survey (15 out of 18 Respondents) who reported having a recovery and resilience strategy in place have integrated gender equality considerations in these strategic plans.

55. **While there is a range of institutional tools to promote gender equality, government capacities still fall short of effectively closing gender gaps.** COVID-19 has further revealed that existing gender-mainstreaming infrastructure across governments was ill-prepared for crises. UN analysis shows that most of the budget measures taken by governments in response to the pandemic lacked gender-sensitivity (see an example in Box 2), and only a few of the gender-sensitive measures taken aimed to address women's economic security and unpaid care (just 18% and 11%, respectively) (Zrinski, Raappana and Rame, 2021^[42]).

Box 2. COVID-19 policy responses show the positive potential of the gender-environment nexus

Increasing attention is being paid to ensuring a Green Recovery as countries respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Yet, green recovery measures make up a relatively small component of overall stimulus packages, and green recovery measures that are also gender-responsive make up an even smaller part.

Out of the 803 COVID-19 measures in the OECD Green Recovery Database assessed for their gender-relevance, only 2.9% are considered gender-relevant. These are predominantly concentrated in the buildings and surface

transport sectors, and consist of supporting women's green skills and their inclusion in green jobs. This is consistent with OECD countries having progressively adopted tools to mainstream gender in infrastructure planning, decision-making and delivery over the past five years, recognising that women and men use and benefit from infrastructure differently (OECD, 2021^[43]; OECD, 2021^[44]). More action is needed in sectors where no measures have been found, such as agriculture, forestry, maritime transport, air transport, industry and waste management.

The measures identified as gender-relevant show the potential for green recovery measures to also contribute to reducing gender inequality. Examples include schemes to equip women with green skills for green jobs, infrastructure projects, or childcare facilities' renovations. Two thirds of these gender-relevant policy measures are expected to contribute to supporting women's economic security.

Source: OECD (2021^[45])

Progress in the field of education

56. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation calls on its Adherents to address gender inequalities in education (Box 3).**

Box 3. The 2013 Gender Recommendation: focus on education

- I. The Council RECOMMENDS that through a whole-of-government approach and through means such as appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring and public awareness campaigns, Members:
 - A. Adopt practices that promote gender equality in education by (*hereinafter referred to as: I.A*):
 1. Ensuring that boys and girls have equal access to good-quality education, equal rights and opportunities to successfully complete schooling and in making educational choices (*I.A.1*);
 2. Reviewing and where necessary adapting school and early childhood education curricula, teaching and school practices to eliminate gender discrimination and stereotyping (*I.A.2*);
 3. Making the study of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) financial and entrepreneurship issues, as well as education, arts and the humanities, equally inclusive and attractive for both boys and girls; promoting the development of stronger reading habits among boys and girls (*I.A.3*);
 4. Campaigning and raising awareness among young men and women, parents, teachers and employers about gender-stereotypical attitudes towards academic performances and the likely consequences of overall educational choices for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, career progression and earnings (*I.A.4*);
 5. Encouraging more women who have completed STEM studies to pursue professional careers in these areas, for example by means of career counselling, adult education, internships, apprenticeships and targeted financial support (*I.A.5*).
 - G. Pay attention to the special needs of women from disadvantaged minority groups and migrant women in relation to the aims set out above (*I.G*);
 - H. Reduce the gender gap in financial literacy by developing and implementing initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing women's financial literacy needs, and in particular at fostering their awareness, confidence, competencies and skills when dealing with financial issues (*I.H*).

Source: 2013 Gender Recommendation

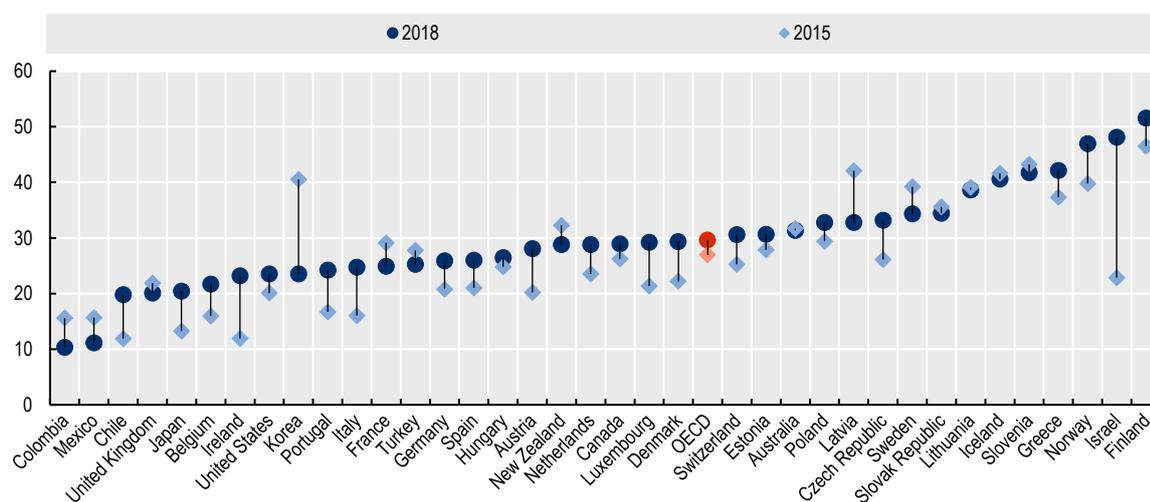
Access to education is high for both boys and girls across most Adherents, but girls and boys still end up with different educational outcomes (I.A.1)

57. **Access to upper secondary education is becoming almost universal in most Adherents, as is pre-primary education** (OECD, 2021^[46]). By contrast, in some OECD partner countries and developing economies, girls face more challenges to access and complete education than boys, due to strong cultural norms, security threats, and social institutions. Although between 2015 and 2018 there were no major changes in the balanced proportions of boys and girls in primary schools across the world, some improvements occurred in girls' secondary school participation in Sub-Saharan- and Northern Africa and West Asia – the regions with relatively fewer girls in secondary school.

58. **Girls tend to perform better than boys in reading and science at school, and their disadvantage in mathematics is narrowing.** In reading, the 2018 PISA score point difference between girls and boys was 30 to girls' advantage, compared to 27 in 2015 (Figure 4). It is therefore unsurprising that boys are overrepresented among children who fall behind in reading. The proportion of underachieving boys in reading was 10 p.p. higher than the proportion of underachieving girls in 2018, compared to 9 p.p. in 2015 (OECD, 2019^[13]). The gender differences in 2018 were particularly large in Iceland, Slovenia, Greece, Norway, Israel and Finland, where girls outperformed boys in reading by at least 40 points in 2018 (Figure 4). In PISA 2018, girls achieved similar point scores as boys in science, outperforming them on average by two points. This is contrasted against the tests in 2015 when boys tended to score 4 points higher than girls. While boys have historically registered better performance in mathematics, girls have advanced in recent years: between 2015 and 2018, the OECD-wide gender gap shrunk slightly (by 3 score points) to 5 points in favour of boys.

Figure 4. The gender gap in reading increased slightly between 2015 and 2018 across the OECD

Point score gender gap in OECD PISA results at age 15, 2015 and 2018



Notes: International Average (OECD) includes all OECD countries for which data are available for the corresponding subject and year.

Source: OECD PISA 2015 and 2018.

59. **The OECD-wide trend that women are more likely than men to attend higher education continued in recent years, with women outnumbering men among graduates in tertiary education.** On average across the OECD, women made up 56% of new graduates from short-cycle tertiary level in

2019 (56% in 2015), 59% at bachelor's level in 2019 (59% in 2015), and 58% at master's level in 2019 (57% in 2015) (OECD, 2021_[47]). The opposite was true for doctoral studies in 2019: only 48% of graduates were female, with no change from 2015 (OECD, 2021_[47]). Among reasons for women outnumbering men at bachelor's and master's level is that men and women tend to choose different fields of study (see below) and men are more likely to have career goals that do not require tertiary education (OECD, 2021_[48]). Men are also more likely to work while studying, and therefore less likely to complete their tertiary education within the expected time required (OECD, 2015_[49]). Much of the remaining gap is likely due to differences in foundation skills (including reading, as discussed above) and in personal traits such as self-regulation, perseverance and motivation, which are important for succeeding in tertiary education where external supervision is limited (OECD, 2021_[48]; 2021_[50]). Looking outside the OECD, existing research shows that the long trend of increasing proportions of women among tertiary education students continued across Asia and Northern Africa and, albeit at a slower rate, in Sub-Saharan Africa (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020_[51]).

There is lingering gender bias and stereotyping in education (I.A.2)

60. **Education is a powerful tool for establishing social norms because it influences values and attitudes of the next generations in the initial education system, and of the current generations in the case of life-long training.** Gender bias, i.e. deeply entrenched and often-internalised social norms, can shape acceptable roles, opportunities and behaviours for women and men in society and the household. Gender-stereotyped norms are passed on to children by families, teachers and communities (OECD, 2017_[52]). It is therefore critical to mainstream gender equality in educational settings.

61. **There is widespread evidence of gender bias in school teaching practices and its influence on students' motivation and performance.** Policy changes have involved building capacity in teachers to become more gender aware. In 2018, Sweden promoted a revision in the preschool curriculum, explicitly stating that preschools have a responsibility to counteract gender patterns that limit children's development, choices and learning. Similarly, since 2021, gender equality has been included in the curriculum of teacher training colleges in Korea (GEQ 2021). Chile initiated the "Education for Gender Equality Plan 2015–18", which introduced teacher education at the national level on gender and inclusivity in the classroom (UNESCO, 2017_[53]).

62. **Textbooks and teaching materials also have illustrated biases and stereotypes.** In many textbooks across subjects, girls and women have traditionally been under-represented or depicted in traditional roles, such as homemakers and carers (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020_[51]). Many Adherents already have older policies in place to promote gender balanced representation in course materials, and in the past few years there have been several developments in OECD partner countries towards the same direction (OECD, 2017_[8]). For example, existing research shows that the Kerala state Government in India announced in 2021 that Kerala's school textbooks will be revised and audited to sieve out words and phrases disparaging women (Rakesh, 2021_[54]).

Subject choices still follow traditional gender stereotypes (I.A.3, I.A.5)

63. **Women are more likely to study education (79% of entrants to tertiary education in 2019) and health and welfare (77%), whereas men are more likely to study STEM subjects, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (79%)** (OECD, 2021_[47]). Gender stereotypes influence men and women's predisposition to follow (and their expectations to succeed thereafter) stereotypical choices. For instance, stereotypes and expectations that mathematics is more important for men than for women, combined with women's lower self-confidence in mathematics, play important roles in young people's subject choices (OECD, 2019_[13]). As an example of strategic commitment, a pillar of the Chilean "National policy for gender equality in STEM" focuses on eradicating gender stereotypes in education from an early age, while in 2022 Ireland published "Recommendations on Gender Balance in

STEM Education”. Several Adherents have actively involved teachers in encouraging more girls to study STEM subjects. In 2019, Luxembourg launched the “Gender4STEM Teaching Assistant” training tool, providing teachers with a self-assessment tool that evaluates their gendered education practices. Depending on each teacher's profile, the tool recommends learning content to better manage gender diversity in the classrooms (Gender4STEM, 2019^[55]). Broader career advice to encourage more girls to study STEM subjects include highlighting female role models in the sector and providing girls with practical experience in the field. In 2017, Portugal launched the “Engineers For One Day” project to show young women students that engineering and technology are not only male domains. GirlsInSTEM, a collaboration of organisations from Belgium, France, Spain and Poland, was launched in 2020 to organise bootcamps for girls to engage with STEM and provide toolkits for educators (GirlsInSTEM, 2020^[56]). Gender gaps across subjects are also mirrored in vocational education (Box 4).

Box 4. Gender gaps in vocational education and training (VET)

Across the OECD, men made up 55% of entrants in upper-secondary vocational education in 2019, up from 54% in 2015. There are also wide gender gaps in the subjects studied. Women made up just 17% of entrants in ICT and 15% of entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction were women (OECD, 2021^[47]). By contrast, they made up 77% of entrants in education and 83% in health and welfare. Women were more likely than men to take vocational courses at the post-secondary level, and made up 56% of graduates from professionally-oriented short-cycle tertiary education in 2019, up from 55% in 2015. The gender imbalances in fields of study were similar in post-secondary vocational study (OECD, 2021^[47]).

Some countries have promoted better gender balance in VET. Austria and the United States have put aside special funding for apprenticeship providers to scale up programmes and promote them to women and other underserved groups (OECD, 2017^[57]). In Ireland, employers who recruit female craft apprentices are eligible for a EUR 2,667 bursary per female apprentice registered. This female craft apprenticeship bursary will be expanded to all programmes with greater than 80% representation of a single gender (Irish Government, 2021^[58]).

Gender gaps in career expectations have not disappeared, especially for STEM occupations (I.A.4)

64. **Gender gaps in career expectations remain.** Evidence from 2018 PISA shows that among 15-year-old high performers in mathematics or science, boys (15%) were much more likely than girls (7%) to want to become science or engineering professionals (Figure 5) (OECD, 2019^[13]). This gap narrowed marginally between 2015 and 2018. Less than 1% of girls and nearly 8% of boys wanted to work in ICT-related occupations. This gap increased slightly between 2015 and 2018 (OECD, 2019^[13]). Gender gaps recently widened among those expecting to work in health and care: 23% of girls in 2018 (17% in 2015), compared to 8% of boys (6% in 2015) (OECD, 2019^[13]; OECD, 2016^[59]).

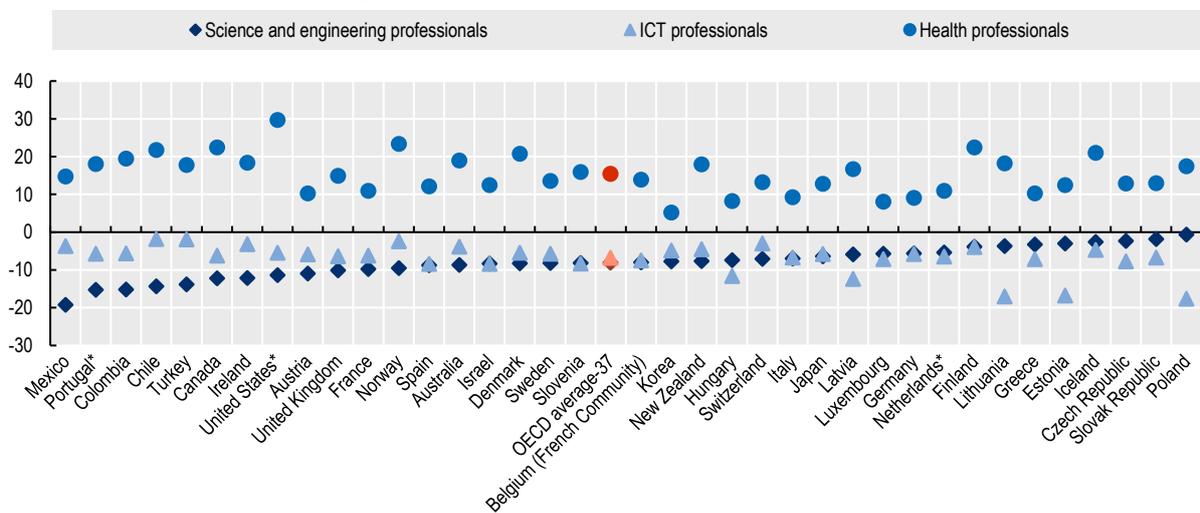
65. **Wide gender gaps continue to exist also in the teaching profession, with a heavy concentration of female teachers for younger students and a better gender balance in teaching for older students,** and little has changed in recent years. In 2019, the share of female teachers was 96% in early education, 82% in primary school, 63% in secondary school, and 44% in tertiary education (OECD, 2021^[60]). A better balance between female and male staff in education could benefit all students, for instance by contributing to students developing positive gender identities and challenging biased views. Moreover, it could contribute to tackle labour shortages. As an example, in order to both retain more females and attract more males in education, health and welfare jobs, Estonia has set an increase in the starting wages for jobs in those sectors, as part of its Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020 (OECD, forthcoming^[61]).

66. **Career expectations in teenage years are an important predictor of future adult jobs and earnings potentials** (Mann et al., 2020^[62]; Phair, 2021^[63]) **and need to be supported via gender-neutral**

career advice. Considering that stereotypical views about what young women and men are thought to value in a job may influence the career advice that young people receive (Gallen, 2021_[64]), it is crucial to ensure access to well-trained and impartial career counsellors (Mann et al., 2020_[62]). Adherents have initiated broad projects to facilitate students to explore and consider all potential career futures by challenging preconceptions – e.g. meeting with workers in non-stereotypical roles, especially in sectors with labour shortages like STEM and education, health and welfare. For instance, New Zealand launched “Inspiring the Future” in 2021 to facilitate interactions between schools and volunteering workers by means of an online platform (Covacevich, 2021_[65]). OECD Career Readiness research finds evidence from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States where students who report having had positive career conversations would experience better employment outcomes later on (OECD, 2021_[66]).

Figure 5. Young people’s career expectations vary by gender

Percentage point gender gap in proportions of 15-year-olds expecting to work in selected occupations



Note: * The Netherlands, Portugal and the United States: Data did not meet the PISA technical standards but were accepted as largely comparable.

Source: PISA Results 2018, table II.B1.8.19.

Gender gaps in skills evolve with age (I.A.5, I.G, I.H)

67. **The nature and implications of gender gaps in skills change over time.** Illustrative examples relate to reading, mathematic and financial skills. Gender gaps in reading skills have shown to shrink with age. The reading advantage that girls have at early age peaks during adolescence, but then quickly disappears by early adulthood. By contrast, in mathematics, the advantage of men increases steadily in an almost linear way (Borgonovi, Choi and Paccagnella, 2021_[67]). A plausible reason is that men tend to specialise in fields that use numeracy skills more intensively. Several factors influence these gender gaps. One explanation for why men are able to close the gender gap could be that literacy is a transversal skill that is necessary to develop in order to succeed in the modern labour market. It is possible that this encourages men to develop and catch up with their female counterparts as they enter the labour market. By contrast, advanced mathematics is less commonly used and not an imperative to succeed, so women in non-STEM sectors have little reason to catch up with their male counterparts (Borgonovi, Choi and Paccagnella, 2021_[67]).

68. **As people age, financial management skills become a key feature in life,** and men were found to have statistically greater financial knowledge and financial well-being scores than women by the OECD/ International Gateway for Financial Education (INFE) international survey of adult financial literacy

(OECD, 2020_[68]). In recent years, Adherents seem to have increased their provision of targeted education and training to enhance women’s financial knowledge, especially among women in financially vulnerable situations (e.g. unemployed or insecure work) (OECD, forthcoming_[69]). For instance, the Bank of Italy has implemented virtual and face-to-face training courses for low-income- and/or low-education women to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic (see The OECD Gender Recommendations in times of COVID-19: the pandemic risks hindering progress in their implementation and outcomes). Other programmes, such as those in Australia and Austria, help (young) women build sustainable financial futures. Working with older women, Sweden has developed a programme to improve knowledge around pensions and personal finance (OECD, forthcoming_[69]). In order to address occupational segregation, several Adherents have also introduced training for women in certain occupational sectors, including entrepreneurs in Chile and Mexico and teachers and/or social care workers in Australia, Poland and Portugal (OECD, forthcoming_[69]). To support progress, the OECD Recommendation on Financial Literacy [[OECD/LEGAL/0461](#)] instructs its Adherents to incorporate financial literacy in policies designed to address gender gaps in financial outcomes; ensure that women have access to appropriate, independent and adequate financial advice, and; ensure that financial literacy programmes aimed at both men and women are checked for possible gender biases in the delivery format and content.

69. **Formal adult education and training can also play a valuable role in balancing gender differences in skills among adults.** Some Adherents have focused on filling adult skills gaps to support them moving into “in-demand sectors”, including STEM training. For instance, in francophone Belgium, guidance advisers promote development of high-demand skills in both individual and group sessions through its lifelong learning “OTLAV” programme. In Estonia and Spain, adults are encouraged toward training in high-demand skills after counsellors have taken account of their pre-existing skills and interests (OECD, 2021_[70]). Similarly, several Canadian unions in the industrial sector provide programmes to support and increase the number of women in the skilled trades and STEM occupations (OECD, 2019_[71]). Ireland has launched “Women ReBOOT”, an enterprise-led initiative that supports women to re-enter the technology sector after a career break. Finally, Portugal has promoted actions to address gender equality in higher education institutions and research organisations.

Strengthening the implementation of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in the field of education

70. **Adherents have promoted actions to break gendered experiences in education that have historically shaped career outcomes.** Some Adherents have improved learning materials, trained teachers in gender-sensitive practices and/or involved teachers in efforts to encourage students to follow non-stereotypical career paths, mainly encouraging more girls to study Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Various Adherents have also improved financial literacy training for women and encouraged them to take vocational and adult learning courses, particularly in STEM fields. This has not put an end to longstanding issues, such as different education outcomes and career expectations for boys and girls, including the feminisation of the teaching profession.

- Policy needs to further address imbalances in education outcomes, such as boys’ relative weak school performance and high dropout rates, and more women than men having a tertiary degree, but more advanced degrees being awarded more to men.
- Policy needs to face persisting gender discrimination and stereotyping, which continue to influence teaching practices, subject choices and career expectations. Raising awareness among teachers, parents, employers and the society at large remains key, and the use of innovative approaches should be explored.
- Particular policy attention needs to be placed on ensuring higher gender equality when it comes to the choice of the field of study and work, especially -but not exclusively- in the fields of STEM, health and care and teaching.

- Investing in financial literacy remains key as it sets the bases for women's economic empowerment and their successful participation in economic life and entrepreneurship activities.

Policy needs to address the above issues while facing new challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic is driving rising inequalities in educational outcomes between socio-economic groups and exposing girls to further risks of gender-based violence and online harassment.

Progress in the field of employment

71. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation calls on its Adherents to address gender inequalities in employment (Box 5).**

Box 5. The 2013 Gender Recommendation: focus on employment

I. The Council RECOMMENDS that through a whole-of-government approach and through means such as appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring and public awareness campaigns, Members:

- B. Promote family-friendly policies and working conditions which enable fathers and mothers to balance their working hours and their family responsibilities and facilitate women to participate more in private and public sector employment by (*hereinafter referred to as: I.B*):
1. Designing tax-benefit systems so that both parents have broadly similar financial incentives to work (*I.B.1*);
 2. Securing availability of and access to affordable good-quality early childhood education and care as well as affordable long-term care for other dependants, including for example disabled children or elderly relatives (*I.B.2*);
 3. Providing employment-protected paid maternity and paternity leave to working mothers and fathers (*I.B.3*);
 4. Encouraging working fathers to take available care leave, for example by reserving part of the parental leave entitlement for the exclusive and non-transferable use by fathers (*I.B.4*);
 5. Providing incentives to fathers to use flexible work entitlements, promoting a more temporary use of part-time work among men and women, providing incentives for women to participate more hours in the labour force, and raising awareness of gender stereotypes to encourage a more equal sharing of paid and unpaid work (household responsibilities) between men and women (*I.B.5*);
 6. Ensuring that all parents can participate in the labour market regardless of their partnership status, providing ample employment supports to sole parents (*I.B.6*);
 7. Ensuring that policies that address the problem of unemployment do not discriminate either directly or indirectly against women (*I.B.7*);
 8. Improving employment conditions and access to social support for informal workers, especially those in the most vulnerable categories such as home-based and domestic workers (*I.B.8*);
- C. Increase the representation of women in decision-making positions by (*I.C*):
1. Encouraging measures such as voluntary targets, disclosure requirements and private initiatives that enhance gender diversity on boards and in senior management of listed companies; complementing such efforts with other measures to support effective board participation by women and expand the pool of qualified candidates; continuing to monitor and analyse the costs and benefits of different approaches – including voluntary targets, disclosure requirements or boardroom quotas – to promote gender diversity in leadership positions in private companies (*I.C.1*);
 2. Introducing mechanisms to improve the gender balance in leadership positions in the public sector, such as disclosure requirements, target setting or quotas for women in senior management positions; strengthening the flexibility, transparency and fairness of public sector employment systems and policies; and monitoring progress of female representation in the public sector (*I.C.2*);
 3. Encouraging greater participation and representation of women at all levels of politics, including in government, parliament, local authorities, and the judiciary system (*I.C.3*);

- D. Eliminate the discriminatory gender wage gap by: strengthening the legal framework and its enforcement for combating all forms of discrimination in pay, recruitment, training and promotion; promoting pay transparency; ensuring that the principle of equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value is respected in collective bargaining and/or labour law and practice; tackling stereotypes, segregation and indirect discrimination in the labour market, notably against part-time workers; promoting the reconciliation of work and family life (*I.D*);
- E. Promote all appropriate measures to end sexual harassment in the workplace, including awareness and prevention campaigns and actions by employers and unions (*I.E*);
- G. Pay attention to the special needs of women from disadvantaged minority groups and migrant women in relation to the aims set out above (*I.G*).

Source: 2013 Gender Recommendation

Female labour market participation has continued to improve, but gender gaps remain considerable (I.B)

72. **Since 2016, until the pandemic, women in OECD countries have continued to catch up with men in terms of labour force participation.** On average, in the OECD, the labour force participation of both women and men aged 15-64 years increased between 2016 and 2019 - from 63.5% to 65.0% for women and from 80.1% to 80.7% for men - and decreased in 2020 (to 63.8% for women and 79.4% for men) ([OECD Employment database](#)). The gender gap in labour force participation decreased by 1.1 p.p. between 2016 and 2020 but the OECD average remains high at 11.5 p.p. Men are more likely than women to be employed (81.1% compared to 64.1% in the 25-64 age group). Differences in long-term unemployment are smaller, but still slightly favour men (18.3%, compared to 18.6% for women in the 15+ age group). Young men aged 15-29 are also less likely to be NEET (not in employment, education or training) than young women (11.4% compared to 15.7%) ([OECD Employment database](#), data for 2020).

73. **Despite substantial progress in recent decades, women's labour force attachment is weaker than men's and their employment conditions are not as good as men's either.** In many OECD countries women account for a large share of the identified groups facing labour-market barriers (in relation to, for instance, work-related capabilities, motivation/ incentives and opportunities – see [OECD Faces of joblessness project for more information](#)). In all OECD countries, women are still much more likely than men to be working part-time (25.1% of women versus 9.9% of men in 2020), with little change since 2016 ([OECD Employment Database](#)), highlighting the need to continue to work for an equalisation of paid and unpaid family work between women and men. Indeed, part-time work may be a desired choice for some, but involuntary part-time work affects women more than men (ILO and OECD, 2021_[28]). Women are also less likely than men to transition from part-time to full-time jobs; this gap typically widens with parenthood (OECD, 2019_[72]). On average across the OECD, low-paid work is more common among women than men (14.9% compared to 12.9%), which exposes women to higher earnings insecurity and lower social protection. In addition, in recent years, the earnings penalty associated with motherhood has remained stubbornly stable (OECD, 2021_[26]): estimates from 25 European countries show that it accounts for around 60% of the gender wage gap (Ciminelli, Schwellnus and Stadler, 2021_[73]).

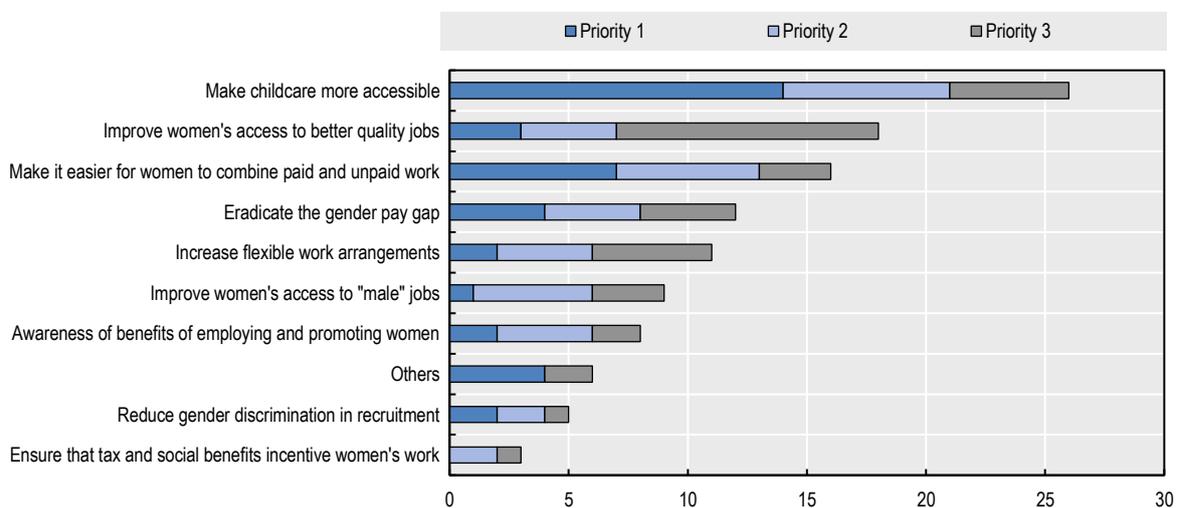
74. **Women are more likely to take on most of the unpaid work in every single OECD country.** At just over four hours per day, women systematically spend around two hours per day more on unpaid work than men. This leaves women with less time available for paid work (OECD average, [OECD Gender Data Portal](#)). Women in employment tend to work fewer paid hours and have shorter job tenure than men. Men are 20% more likely than women to spend long hours in paid employment (OECD, 2020_[74]; ILO and OECD, 2021_[28]). But when both paid and unpaid working time is counted, women in OECD countries work 25 minutes per day longer than men, on average (OECD, 2020_[74]). All of the above can leave women more financially vulnerable and easier to lay off.

75. **Boosting women’s attachment to the labour market and reducing the gender gaps in labour market outcomes could have substantial positive effects on long-term economic growth.** Such growth effects would primarily be driven by an increase in aggregate labour input, but also through a more efficient utilisation of women’s productive potential and talent (see Appendix II. Increasing Female Labour Supply and the Growth Dividend). Across the OECD overall, closing the remaining gender gap in labour force participation by 2060 could increase potential GDP per capita growth by 0.14 p.p. per year. This would result in a 5.7% overall boost to GDP per capita in 2060 relative to the baseline projection, which assumes a continuity of the initial institutional and policy settings over the projection period (Guillemette and Turner, 2018^[75]; 2021^[76]). Similar potential growth paths are projected when closing the gender gap in working hours, which increases the annual potential GDP per capita growth by 0.11 p.p. (or a 4.4% boost to GDP in 2060). Nevertheless, the potential growth effects are very heterogeneous across OECD countries, depending on the baseline gender gaps in labour force participation and working hours (see Table in Appendix II. Increasing Female Labour Supply and the Growth Dividend).

76. **Adherents recognise the need to ease the unpaid work burden and improve job quality to further support women’s employment.** The 2021 GEQ asks about the three most effective ways to tackle barriers to female employment, providing a longlist of options (Figure 6). The most common response by far was "making childcare more accessible," with 26 Respondents out of 40 choosing this as a top-three option response. "Improving women’s access to better quality jobs" (18 Respondents) and "making it easier for women to combine paid and unpaid work" (16 Respondents) were the second and third most common responses.

Figure 6. Childcare accessibility, job quality and a better distribution of paid and unpaid work are recognised as key to increase female employment

Tabulation of countries listing the following as one of the most effective ways to increase female employment.



Note: Number of Respondents that ranked these as priorities 1, 2 and 3 to increase female employment. Respondents also had the possibility to suggest additional priorities areas. These are reported in the category 'others' and include 'more equal sharing of care burden' (identified by 2 Respondents), 'better work-life balance possibilities' (2 Respondents), 'combat labour market gender discrimination' (1 Respondent), and 'stop violence against women' (1 Respondent). Total number of responses: 40 (of which 1 did not identify priority 3, and 1 identified only priority 1).

Source: 2021 Gender equality questionnaire (2021 GEQ).

77. **To increase the time men spend on care activities**, Respondents to the 2021 GEQ highlighted the need to change men’s attitudes towards unpaid work (31 responses out of 38), increase flexible working arrangements (17), support father’s leave around childbirth (16), and make childcare more accessible (14). The European Union supports its Member States to advance in these areas through different policy directives (Box 6).

Box 6. European Union recent directives supporting progress on gender equality

The European Union (EU) has taken legislative actions to advance gender equality by promoting equal responsibilities, leave around childbirth, flexible working arrangements and pay transparency.

The **EU Work-Life Balance directive** (Directive 2019/1158/EU) aims to increase female labour market participation and the take-up of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements, helping parents and carers find a better work-life balance (EU, 2019^[77]). EU member states must adopt the provisions to comply with the directive by August 2022. Fathers (or “second parents”) will be able to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around birth, paid at least at the level of national sick leave benefits; each parent will have an individual right to four months paid parental leave, of which at least two will be non-transferable and whose level of payment will be set by member states; all workers will have the right to at least five working days of carers’ leave per year, and; all parents with children under at least age of eight, and all carers, will have the right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes.

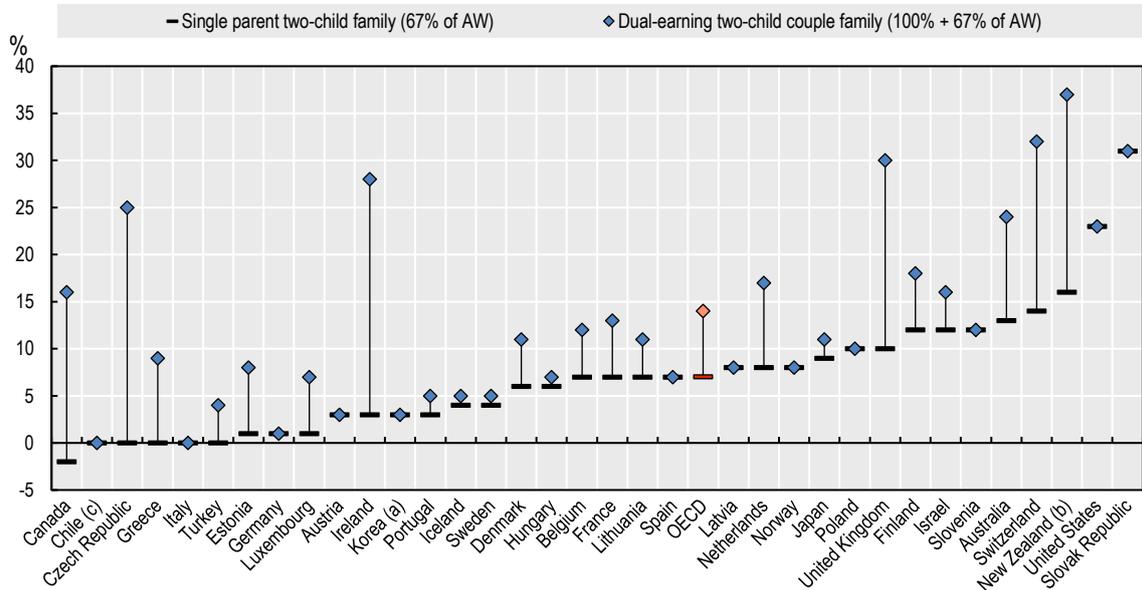
In addition, the European Commission has **proposed a Directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work between men and women** (COM/2021/93 final) (European Commission, 2021^[78]). It focuses on pay transparency, such that employers will be requested to provide information about the initial pay level or its range in the job vacancy notice or before the job interview; workers will have the right to request information from their employer on pay levels, disaggregated by gender, for workers doing the same work or work of equal value; and employers with at least 250 employees will need to report on the gender pay gap, also by categories of workers doing the same work or work of equal value. It also mandates better access to justice for victims of pay discrimination: ensuring compensation for workers, placing burden of proof on employers, imposing sanctions, and strengthening the role of equality bodies and workers' representatives in legal or administrative proceedings.

Childcare remains costly in many Adherent countries, despite increased public support (I.B.2, I.B.6)

78. **On average, OECD countries spend 0.7% of GDP on early childhood education and care ECEC** (from a maximum of 1.8% in Iceland to a minimum of 0.2% in Turkey) (OECD, 2020^[79]), **but the cost of non-parental childcare remains high in many OECD countries**. These high costs act as a barrier to paternal and, especially, maternal employment (OECD, 2021^[26]). High costs also help explain variations in childcare use across income groups, particularly among children under the age of three. Out-of-pocket costs may still amount to a considerable share of earnings for parents with low incomes (OECD, 2021^[26]). On average across OECD countries, a dual-earning two-child family with low to average salary (100%+67% of average wage) spends 14% of their disposable income to cover childcare costs. In countries such as Australia, the Czech Republic, Ireland, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the dual-earning two-child couple spends 25% or more of their disposable income on childcare (Figure 7). In most countries, single parents spend a smaller share of their disposable income on childcare than dual-earner families.

Figure 7. Net childcare costs for parents using childcare

Out-of-pocket childcare costs for a two-child family as a proportion (%) of disposable family income, by family type, 2020 or latest available



Note: Data reflect the net cost (gross fees less childcare benefits/rebates and tax deduction, plus any resulting changes in other benefits received following the use of childcare and/or change in family income) of full-time care in a typical childcare centre for a two-child family, where all parents are in full-time employment and the children are aged 2 and 3. Gross earnings for the two earners in the "dual-earning two-child couple family" are set equal to 100% of average earnings for the first earner and 67% of the average earnings for the second earner. Those for the single earner in the "single-parent two-child family" are set at 67% of average earnings. Data for countries marked with (a), (b), and (c) come from 2019, 2018, and 2015, respectively. Full-time care is defined as care for at least 40 hours per week.

Source: [OECD Tax and Benefits Systems website](#)

79. **Adherents have implemented various childcare support programmes to reduce its costs, especially for low-income earners.** Answers to the 2021 GEQ show that many Adherents have increased financial support and the number of hours of childcare provision as well as reduced childcare fees (e.g. Australia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand and the United Kingdom). Norway has offered free "core hours" in kindergarten for low-income families, which resulted in a 7% increase in these families' disposable income, but had no employment effects (Østbakken, 2019_[80]). Other measures widened the coverage of support programmes. Italy, for example, extended childcare allowances for all children under three or with chronic diseases, while Luxembourg expanded the availability of childcare vouchers to non-resident workers. Other approaches have focused on taxes, either increasing tax deductions for childcare expenses (e.g. Belgium, the Czech Republic and Switzerland) or providing tax-free childcare (e.g. the United Kingdom). However, since low-income individuals already pay little to no tax, these policies risk reverse targeting (see below).

80. **Adherents are also prioritising universal access to ECEC, as availability is as likely to be an issue** (OECD, 2020_[79]). Various Respondents to the 2021 GEQ (e.g. Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Switzerland) have financially supported increasing the supply of childcare – expanding the ECEC system, creating additional places, or making access to nursery care more flexible. Examples of policies addressing the demand side include decreasing mandatory enrolment age or expanding the right to preschool education from a younger age (e.g. Austria, Costa Rica, Greece, France, Lithuania and Norway), providing preschool degree accreditations to motivate early participation

(Mexico), or making preschool education mandatory for children from socially disadvantaged families (Lithuania).

81. **Improving targeting efforts and preserving work incentives is essential**, especially considering the high effective tax rates on entering employment that single earners and second earners face. Similarly, it is important to avoid reverse targeting, where more generous support goes to better-off families, which risks happening when childcare support is provided through tax allowances and non-refundable tax credits (Thevenon, Adema and Clarke, 2016^[81]; OECD, 2020^[79]). The 2021 GEQ responses included a few examples of targeted policies. France has made specific childcare available for unemployed parents with children aged between zero and three. On the other hand, many Adherents have developed policies and strategies to support the employment of single parents (see section on Unemployment policies and policies addressing women from vulnerable groups are key for gender equality in employment and economic growth (I.B.6, I.B.7)).

Further assistance to carers, beyond childcare support, is fundamental for gender equality (I.B.2)

82. **Adherents are working towards improving supports for carers and expanding care provision.** The 2021 GEQ responses show that many Adherents have introduced or increased paid or unpaid leave for carers of family members with disability or long-term illnesses (e.g. Australia, Canada, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Portugal and Switzerland), alongside temporary measures during COVID-19, and more developments are expected in Europe in light of the EU Work-Life Balance Directive (see Box 6). Some Adherents are also supporting these carers financially (e.g. Canada, Hungary, Italy, Norway and the United States). Adherents have also adopted policies to enhance the provision of care services in long-term and elderly care, for instance ensuring or expanding service availability (e.g. Costa Rica, Greece, Korea and Poland), guaranteeing service quality, and mitigating labour shortages (e.g. Canada, Germany and Sweden). Respondents have also reported examples of strategies focused on long-term care and an ageing society (e.g. Austria, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic), care of children and/or young people (Austria and Morocco) and persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses or dementia (e.g. Australia, Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Korea, Latvia and Sweden). Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland also reported examples of supports to the independent living for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Adherents have improved their leave policies, but uptake by fathers remains low (I.B.3, I.B.4)

83. **All OECD countries but the United States have statutory rights that entitle mothers to paid maternity leave around childbirth.** Paid paternity leave is also common, though usually shorter and provided in fewer countries. Moreover, despite widespread availability of family leave options for fathers, and the numerous benefits that fathers' leave has for families, their uptake remains low.

84. **If fathers are given non-transferable rights to family leave, their leave uptake can increase noticeably.** For example, after the introduction of two bonus months for fathers who take at least two months of parental leave in 2007, German fathers almost doubled their uptake of parental leave entitlements; by 2018, 40 fathers for every 100 live births were taking leave (Destatis, 2021^[82]). Extensions of the Swedish fathers' quota over the last 20 years led men to take 30 per cent of all parental allowance days used in 2020, up from 12 per cent in 2000 (Försäkringskassan, 2021^[83]). The length of father's leave taking may also directly relate to the part of overall family leave entitlements that are reserved for their exclusive use. For instance, most Norwegian fathers take parental leave precisely for the time represented by the father's quota, yet not any more of the available sharable leave, regardless of the frequent adjustments of its length over recent years (Bungum and Kvande, 2020^[84]) and similar findings hold for recent extensions of the Estonian paternity leave entitlements (OECD, forthcoming^[85]).

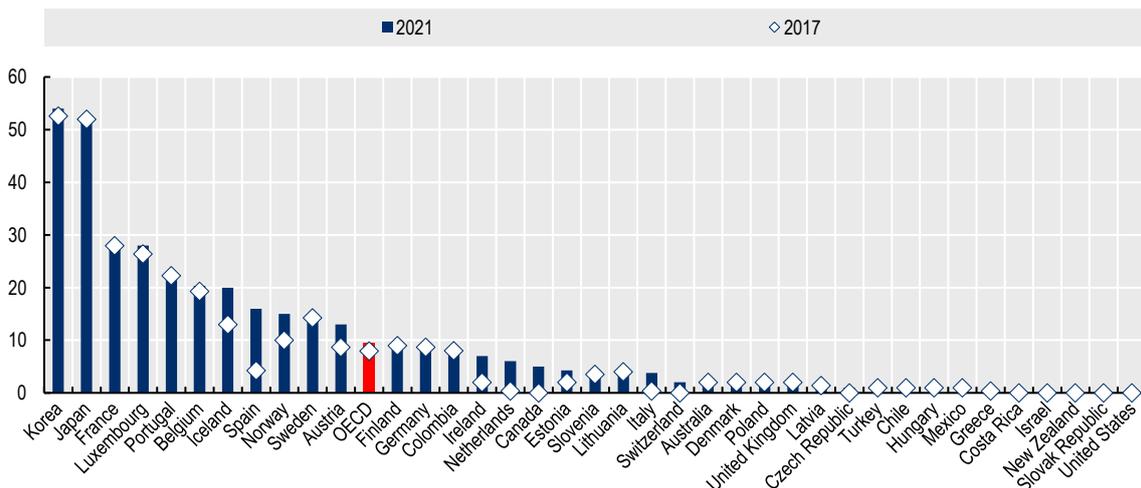
85. **In recent years, many Adherents have improved their paid leave policies and strengthened the incentives for fathers to take more family leave and take a more active role in childcare** (Figure 8). The most significant changes have been spurred by the EU Work-Life Balance Directive (2019/1158/EU;

see Box 6), whose provisions have to be implemented by August 2022 (EU, 2019^[77]). As a result, some EU countries newly introduced paid paternity leave. For example, in 2019 Austria added a one-month job protection for their paid 'family-time bonus', and in 2018, the Czech Republic introduced a one-week paternity leave with similar conditions to their maternity leave entitlements. Other EU countries have noticeably increased the length of paid paternity leave entitlements (e.g. Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain - in Spain, for example, maternity and paternity leave duration and conditions have been equalised). In terms of parental leave, some EU countries (e.g. Denmark, Estonia and the Netherlands) introduced non-transferable rights of leave for fathers, while others extended prevailing fathers' individual entitlements for paid parental or home care leave (e.g. Ireland and Portugal), though many countries still have to make adjustments to align with the EU Work-Life Balance Directive.

86. **Outside of the EU, other Adherents have also adapted their family leave systems to encourage more take-up among men.** For example, Switzerland introduced a two-week paid paternity leave in 2021, granting fathers the same payment as mothers on maternity leave. Colombia extended their paid paternity leave to two weeks at baseline in 2021, though this can be extended up to a total of five weeks, depending on the local unemployment rate, and Korea increased paid paternity leave entitlement from three to ten days in 2019, in addition to the existing paid parental leave entitlement. In Canada, a new employment insurance parental sharing benefit was introduced in 2019, which grants parents additional five or eight weeks of benefits when parental benefits are shared (depending on the duration option chosen by parents). In 2018, Norway extended both mothers' and fathers' quotas in paid parental leave from ten to 15 weeks, with the sharable part of paid parental leave reduced to 16 weeks. After the introduction of the measure, fathers have increased their uptake of parental leave (from 9 weeks taken by fathers on average in 2018, to 10 in 2019 and 12 in 2020) (2021 GEQ). Iceland gradually increased the individual entitlements for mothers and fathers between 2020 and 2021, so that each parent now has six months of available leave, while six weeks of each parent's entitlement can be transferred to the other.

Figure 8. Length of paid paternity leave and paid parental leave reserved for fathers, 2017 and 2021

In weeks



Note: Information refers to entitlements to paid paternity leave, 'father quotas' or periods of paid parental or home care leave that can be used only by the father and cannot be transferred to the mother, and any weeks of sharable paid leave that must be taken by the father for the family to qualify for 'bonus' weeks of parental leave. Data reflect entitlements at the national or federal level only and do not reflect regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments in some countries (e.g. Québec in Canada, or California in the United States).

Source: [OECD Family Database](#), Indicator PF2.5

Tax-benefit systems play a role in encouraging women's employment (I.B.1)

87. **Taxation and income support policies shape the payoff from paid work for women, even before the birth of any children, and once children no longer require childcare services.** Where gender pay gaps are persistent, the incentives for paid work in couples are tilted towards men and the unequal sharing between market and non-market work partly reflects this. Some tax and benefit provisions further exacerbate financial disincentives to work for women, while others help to ease them.

88. **In about two-thirds of OECD countries, tax/benefit systems have incentives for a couple-family to be dual earners.** For instance, a single-earner couple with gross income of 167% of the average wage pays more in overall taxes (about 30% on average across the OECD) than a family earning an identical income with two jobs (about 23%) (OECD, 2021^[86]). However, in a number of countries women who start to work, or who increase their hours, face significant disincentives from additional tax burdens or a reduction in cash benefits.

89. **For instance, in Luxembourg and the Netherlands, women whose partner earns an average wage keep just over 50% of their additional earnings when moving from half-time to full-time work** (<http://oe.cd/TaxBEN>). The other half is “taxed away” through income taxes, social contributions, or reduced cash benefits, which combine to a “marginal effective tax rate” of about 50% in 2021. This measure was also comparatively high in Germany (48%), Ireland (46%) and Slovenia (45%), and highest in Belgium (just over 60%).

90. **Joint income taxation, as in Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and several other countries, can disincentivise work for second earners as the couple's joint tax rate is pushed up by the higher-earning partner.** But financial incentives are sometimes also weakened when incomes are taxed individually. This can be a result of comparatively high income tax rates across the income spectrum (e.g. Denmark), or of significant social contribution burdens which reduce take-home pay (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Slovenia). Specific tax advantages, such as a single-earner credit or allowance, that are lost once both adults are in employment can also reduce the income gains for second earners (e.g. Austria and Slovenia). In-work benefits are an important policy tool for strengthening employment incentives for specific groups, such as low-skilled workers in a targeted manner (e.g. in Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and the United States). However, the withdrawal of these benefits at somewhat higher earnings levels can, in fact, reduce the payoff for second earners from working at all, or from earning more.

91. **Since 2017, very few Adherents have made changes to tax-benefit systems that would affect the gendered division of labour in the household.** Among those who did make changes, Luxembourg introduced the option for individual income taxation in 2018, and Estonia moved from household-based to individual-based taxation in 2017.

Adherents have supported flexible working arrangements, including teleworking, but need to ensure that they are equally available and used by men and women (I.B.5)

92. **Some Respondents to the 2021 GEQ have reported improvements in the regulation and use of part-time work.** Some Adherents strengthened part-time work rights and legal forms, Canada has stipulated equal conditions for full- and part-time workers in the federally regulated private sector, and so has France as regards training rights; Norway has granted preferential rights to extended job posts, or even fractions of posts, for part-time workers; and the Czech Republic has defined a new legal form of flexible work (“Shared job”). Some policies target parents: Hungary and Lithuania extended their part-time employment opportunities, and Korea set an increase of the wage level for shorter working hours during the childcare period. Other measures focused on preventing involuntary part-time work. In 2019, Germany introduced temporary part-time work, allowing workers to reduce their working time for a certain period and to then return to their originally agreed working time. In 2020, Norway strengthened reporting duties for public and large private employers, who must map and account for the use of involuntary part-time

work. Other policies promoted a higher use of full-time work (e.g. Norway and in the public sector in Denmark).

93. **Adherents have increasingly provided support and incentives for fathers and mothers to use flexible workplace measures.** Important advancements have been made in legislations on flexible work, notably in Europe, in light of the EU Work-life Balance Directive (see Box 6). Other legislative developments include the establishment of the right to request flexible working arrangements for work-life balance reasons (e.g. in the federally regulated private sector in Canada), as well as the right to request the reversal of such adaptations (Spain); steps towards ensuring better working hours (Iceland); and setting flexible work as the default in the public service (New Zealand). Ireland conducted a consultation to support the development of a flexible working policy. Concerning care responsibilities, Argentina introduced the right to schedules compatible with care tasks, while Korea offered the possibility to reduce working hours during the childcare period, with remarkable increases in the number of users of such arrangements (2021 GEQ). In other cases, governments supported employers as regards flexible work through the award of “family-friendly employer” labels (Estonia), the promotion of work-life balance practices (Costa Rica and Greece), or financial support to cover the indirect labour costs of flexible working arrangements (Korea). Italy implemented a provision granting a reduction of social security contributions to employers if they sign firm level agreements supporting parenthood and flexible working time. With a life-cycle perspective, discussions are also ongoing in some countries regarding women’s health experience, how it influences their work and productivity, and how government policy and flexible workplace practices can better support them. As an example, the United Kingdom conducted an inquiry to investigate the extent of discrimination faced by menopausal people in the workplace (UK Parliament, 2021^[87]).

94. **Noticeable improvements relate to teleworking regulations, also stimulated by the COVID-19 context** (see section on The OECD Gender Recommendations in times of COVID-19: the pandemic risks hindering progress in their implementation and outcomes for policy examples). However, teleworking had begun to gain higher policy attention also before the start of the pandemic. For instance, following changes in the teleworking regime in Portugal, workers with children up to the age of three (and, in some cases, eight) are entitled to telework when this is compatible with the activity performed. In 2017, Italy launched “Agile work”– the possibility to perform the entire or part of the job activity out of the firm premises, regulated through individual agreements between the employer and the employee. Developments in teleworking patterns highlight the importance of connectivity and effective use of digital technologies for women to keep up with new ways of working and fully participate in the economy and society (Box 7).

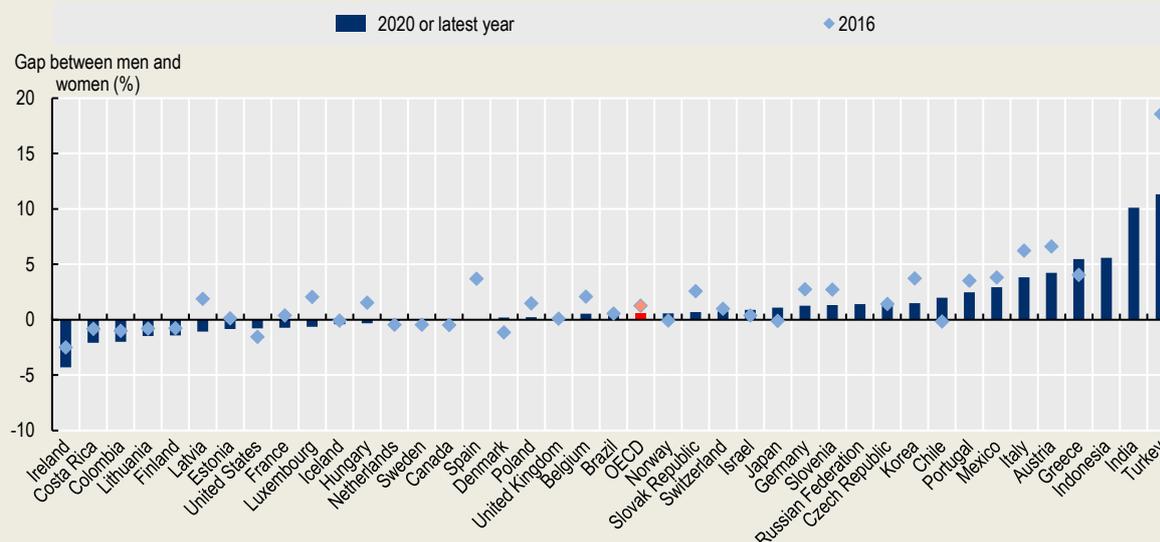
Box 7. Many Adherents have made important strides in closing the digital gender divide, yet women still use the internet less than men in most countries

The gender divide in the set of skills needed to live and work in a digitalised economy and society lessens women’s ability to search for and apply for jobs, secure a job, and thrive in an existing job (IDB, OECD and UNESCO, forthcoming^[88]), as well as engage and succeed in entrepreneurship activities. Connectivity divides also fundamentally impact the extent to which women can participate in a highly digital economy and society.

The OECD-wide gap in Internet use between men and women has shrunk by almost 1 p.p., from 1.70% in 2016 to 0.75% in 2020. Some countries have made significant strides, including Turkey (7.3 p.p. fall) and Spain (3.7 p.p. fall) (Figure 9). Yet, if the digital gender gap is small on average across OECD countries, country differences are considerable. Large gaps exist in Turkey (11 p.p.), Greece (6 p.p.), Austria (4 p.p.) and Italy (4 p.p.), and in non-OECD countries such as India (10 p.p.) and Indonesia (6 p.p.), highlighting significant room to improve Internet uptake by women. In just a few countries (e.g. Ireland, Costa Rica and Colombia) more women than men have access to the internet.

Figure 9. Disparity in Internet use between men and women

Percentage point gender gap in individuals aged 16-74 years accessing the Internet within the past 12 months, 2016 and 2020



Note: This figure shows male and female Internet use across a range of OECD and other economies, with the optimal gap being zero. Negative gaps imply that more women than men use the Internet, and positive gaps imply that more men than women use the Internet. Latest data refer to 2019 for Colombia, the United States, France, Brazil, Switzerland, Israel, Japan, the Russian Federation, Mexico, Indonesia; 2018 for India; and 2017 for Chile. Instead of 2016, data refer to 2017 for the United States, Iceland, Switzerland; and 2018 for Canada. Data for 2016 is missing for the Russian Federation, Indonesia and India. For Canada, Costa Rica, Israel and the United States, data refer to the previous 3 months.

Source: OECD Going Digital Toolkit, <https://goingdigital.oecd.org/indicator/57>, accessed 15 December 2021, based on the OECD ICT Access and Usage by Households and Individuals Database and ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database.

Ensuring job quality for men and women requires supporting all sectors (I.B)

95. **Job quality and working conditions need to be enhanced for both women and men in all sectors and occupations, but some require particular attention in terms of gender equality.** A key example is lower-skilled occupations in the health and care sectors. Across the OECD, around 3/4 of people working in health and social care are women, i.e. 20 million women compared with 6.3 million men, and women working in the health and social care sector are often in lower-paid jobs than men. Women even more heavily dominate the long-term care (LTC) sector, where they hold about 90% of the jobs, on average across countries. This sector suffers from shortages; staff retention is low, notably because of poor, difficult and demanding working conditions (high physical and mental pressure, high part-time rates, temporary nature of jobs, poor pay in comparison to similar jobs in hospitals, and inadequate or poorly enforced safety standards) (Rocard, Sillitti and Llena-Nozal, 2021^[89]; OECD, 2020^[90]). One in six LTC workers across EU countries report suffering from at least one health problem that was caused or amplified by their work (OECD, 2019^[91]). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential role of women in the healthcare sector and the risks they are exposed to.

Adherents have introduced policies to reduce informal work (I.B.8)

96. **Informal workers are subject to substantial risks** of exploitation, sub-standard working conditions, and hardship in accessing social benefits, which leave them in vulnerable employment, social and health conditions (OECD, 2021^[92]; ILO, 2021^[93]).

97. **Such risks and vulnerabilities disproportionately affect women** (OECD/ILO, 2019^[94]). The already higher risks of old-age income poverty for women may be further elevated for women in informal work, as informal workers are less often covered by pension schemes that are mandatory for other employees and do not make regular pension contributions (OECD, 2021^[95]; 2021^[96]). In addition, although the gender gap in this informal employment is relatively small (ILO and OECD, 2021^[28]), women are more often found working in the most vulnerable segments of the informal economy, with serious challenges of job quality (e.g. domestic workers and home-based workers) (OECD/ILO, 2019^[94]). As an example, across the OECD, 60% of informal carers over 50 are women. Informal carers providing many hours of care per week are less likely to engage in paid work, and if they do, it is more likely to be part-time. They are also more likely to suffer from mental health problems. In most countries, caregiving is associated with a higher probability of experiencing poverty (OECD, 2019^[91]). Beyond care, non-care household services are also characterised by high rates of informality (see Box 8).

Box 8. Formalising non-care household services supports women's labour force participation and job quality, but can be costly

To face increased time stress and combine their labour and family commitments, many OECD households use non-care household services. Yet, informality in the sector is high and formalising it can be costly.

On average 1.3% of the registered labour force in OECD countries are employed as formal non-care household service workers (providing cleaning, laundry, gardening and cooking services) - more than 90% of whom are women. However, high prices and a considerable tax burden for low-income workers have contributed to the development of the large informal non-care household service sector in many OECD countries (e.g. almost 90% of all household services in Germany are estimated to be provided by informal domestic workers (Enste, 2019^[97]), while it is only about 20% in France (CRÉDOC, 2017^[98]), showing important cross-country differences). Female workers make up the vast majority of the informal non-care household service sector, while many informal workers are also immigrants without work or residence permits (OECD, 2021^[92]; ILO, 2021^[93]). Such workers operate without formal employment contracts and outside of national regulatory frameworks (OECD, 2021^[92]).

98. **Several Adherents have introduced policies to formalise employment.** Key developments reported by Respondents to the 2021 GEQ relate to better employment protection of domestic workers. Measures include ratifying the ILO Convention on Domestic workers (Mexico), improving wages for domestic workers (Costa Rica and Mexico), and ensuring equal worker rights for domestic workers (Mexico, Morocco and Switzerland). Adherents are also strengthening social protection of domestic workers by covering the costs of the social security contributions of non-professional carers (Spain), allowing employers of domestic workers to register with the social security fund and reducing the health and pension insurance contributions for low-paid workers (Costa Rica), allowing low-income self-employed who already receive support in formalising their activity to join the social security system for a period of 5 years (France), and setting employment standards to be followed by agencies hiring domestic workers (e.g. Korea). Common policy approaches in the field of non-care household services focus on reducing their price. They typically consist of social vouchers, which recipients can buy at low prices (in Belgium) or receive as a non-pecuniary benefit from their employers (in France) to pay for non-care household services, or tax credits offering favourable tax treatment to the consumer of such services (Finland, France, Germany and Sweden). Many policy measures had success in formalising employment

in non-care household services, particularly where the subsidies reduced service prices by 50% or more (Belgium, France and Sweden) and offered easy un-bureaucratic access to non-care household services (OECD, 2021^[92]). Complementary initiatives beyond domestic work include laws on minimum income, support for the self-employed, and strengthened capacities of public administration to fight undeclared work.

Unemployment policies and policies addressing women from vulnerable groups are key for gender equality in employment and economic growth (I.B.6, I.B.7)

99. **Adherents have launched various initiatives to directly support women’s, and mothers’, labour market integration.** Although men and women have equal access to active labour market policies across OECD countries, responses to the 2021 GEQ provide examples that are particularly relevant from a gender perspective.

100. **Governments have promoted gender equality approaches in labour market policy strategies.** Since 2016, several initiatives have been launched, such as the Institutional Strategy for the Employability of Women as well as the development of Specific Guidelines for the Attention of Women within the Framework of the National Employment System in Costa Rica, the Interministerial Plan as well as the Public Employment Service (PES) Agreement on Gender Equality in Work in France, the Executive Programme of the National Employment Promotion Plan in Morocco, or the Women’s Employment Action Plan in New Zealand (expected for 2022). In Sweden, the PES must report on the direction of continued work on gender mainstreaming. Adherents have also supported the gender-relevance of employment initiatives through policy research and gender-specific monitoring.

101. **Specific policies have focused on empowerment, training and job creation for women.** Examples reported by the Respondents include female businesses and entrepreneurship assistance (e.g. priority funding for innovation projects promoted by women in Canada, the provision of mentorship and programmes to build enterprising skills for senior women who are unemployed or underemployed to become financially self-sufficient in Australia, a framework agreement on female entrepreneurship in France, female entrepreneurship programmes in Morocco, as well as financial literacy and women’s economic empowerment seminars in Turkey; see section Progress in the field of entrepreneurship for more examples). Some Adherents have encouraged female employment in male-dominated sectors and trades, such as automotive transport, STEM, construction and green growth, through specific programmes and training (e.g. Argentina, Austria, Canada, Greece and Turkey). Training and apprenticeship support has continued to be a key approach to assist priority groups, including women (e.g. a specific apprenticeship incentive grant for women in Canada, PES provision of training, educational and counselling services specifically to women in Austria, and other support programmes in Israel, New Zealand, Poland, and the United Kingdom). Adherents have encouraged women’s employment also by assisting employers, mainly through additional incentives for those who hire people from priority groups. Examples include the reduction of employers’ contributions for private sector employers in Argentina (reductions are larger in the case of hiring women), hiring and retention bonuses in Chile, and the extension of social security rebates when new jobs in the IT and manufacturing sectors employ women in Turkey.

102. **The way gender intersects with other personal characteristics – such as age, country of origin, disability, level of education, etc. - influences a person’s exposure to difficulties to access and remain in the labour market.** Adherents are increasingly integrating an intersectionality perspective in policies supporting women’s employment. For instance, the United States’ “National Strategy On Gender Equity And Equality” launched in 2021 follows an intersectional approach in order to address multiple vulnerabilities and advance equity and equality while, in Canada, a Task Force will review the Employment Equity Act from an intersectionality perspective, in order to help in removing employment barriers for designated groups. Other interventions support the employability of specific vulnerable groups of women, such as low-skilled mothers of young children (e.g. Hungary) or women with a migrant background (see

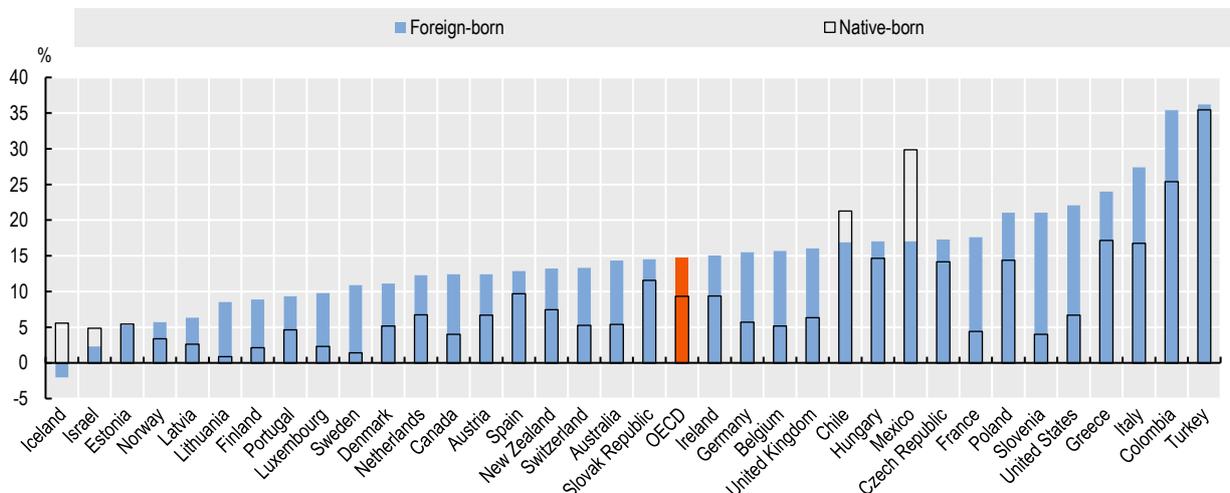
More actions are needed to reduce the double disadvantage faced by migrant women (I.G) below). As an example of a highly targeted intervention, Croatia runs a programme providing employment opportunities to long-term unemployed women in rural areas who are providing care to the elderly and people with disabilities (European Parliament, 2020_[99]).

103. **Some initiatives promoted by Adherents specifically focus on the labour market integration of (single) parents.** Various initiatives provide support for childcare during training and apprenticeship activities through financial allowances (e.g. in Costa Rica, Germany, New Zealand and Turkey), childcare provision (e.g. in the United States) and granting the possibility of part-time apprenticeships (e.g. in Germany). Beyond targeted childcare support (see the section on childcare above). Adherents have influenced single parents' labour market participation in different ways. Since 2016, Ireland has encouraged single parents to participate in the labour market by, for instance, increasing the amount of money that a single parent can receive from employment without reducing social welfare payments. Other approaches include promoting training for single parents (Japan) and providing specialised advice and information services. The Netherlands, for example, is exploring the feasibility of a digital national platform, where single parents can access information, advice, and a network.

More actions are needed to reduce the double disadvantage faced by migrant women (I.G)

104. **Gender equality targets can hardly be achieved if immigrant women are not well integrated.** While most new arrivals to OECD countries are men, women account for the majority of settled immigrants in most countries (OECD, 2021_[100]). This is due to their overrepresentation among family migrants, who tend to stay longer in the host countries. Family migrants generally have less attachment to the labour market and often benefit from fewer integration offers (OECD, 2017_[101]). Better labour market inclusion of migrant mothers has important benefits for their children, especially girls (OECD, 2017_[102]). However, gender employment gaps tend to be much larger for immigrants than for the native-born in the vast majority of OECD countries (Figure 10) (OECD/European Union, 2018_[103]; OECD, 2021_[100]). What is more, progress in the employment of immigrant women over the past decade has been smaller than that seen for native-born women. This results in a “double disadvantage” for immigrant women, due to both their migrant status and their gender (OECD, 2021_[104]). In light of the recent events in Ukraine, with high numbers of Ukrainian women being forced to flee their origin country, the issue of integration of immigrant women will gain further importance.

Figure 10. Gender gaps in employment rates, by country of birth, 2020



Source: OECD (2021_[100])

105. **Gaps in labour market outcomes are particularly large for immigrant women with small children**, showing a much stronger decrease in employment compared to their native peers (OECD, 2020^[105]). Progress over the past decade in the labour market inclusion of mothers with young children has been more marked among the native-born. Moreover, despite having more children on average, foreign-born women are 6 p.p. less likely to use childcare services than native-born women (OECD, 2021^[104]).

106. **Adherents are increasingly recognising the need to better consider the migrant angle in gender policies, and the gender angle in integration policies, but more needs to be done.** A positive example is this issue being at the core of the [Canada-EU migration platform](#), which was established in 2016 by the EU–Canada Leaders’ Summit to share good practices and technical expertise on migration and which has organised a series of events to look at the integration of migrant women on both sides of the Atlantic. There is also an increasing gender equality and women’s empowerment focus in aid to developing and emerging economies (Box 9).

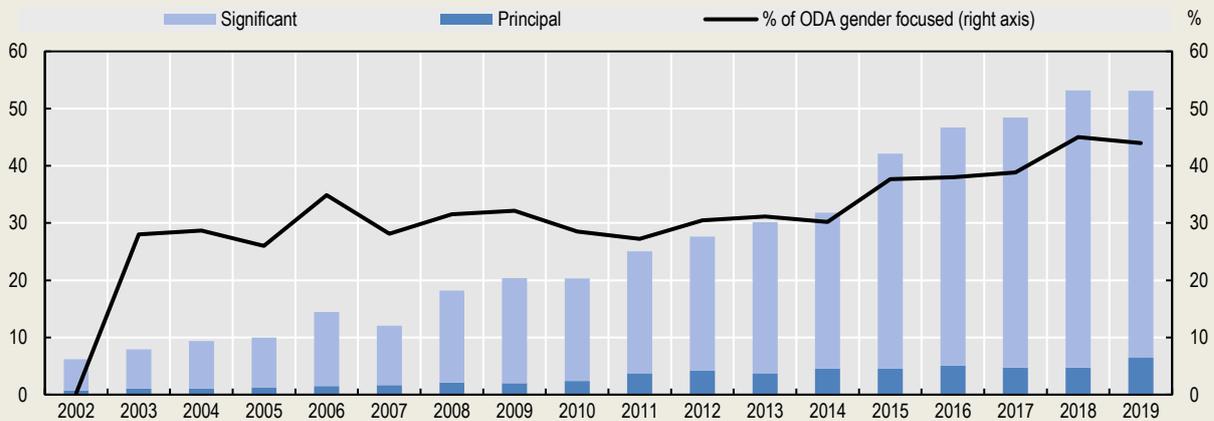
Box 9. Bilateral official development assistance for gender equality and women’s economic empowerment is at its highest level

The 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation invites Adherents to cooperate with developing and emerging countries to increase “the gender equality and women’s empowerment focus of aid, especially in the economic and productive sectors”, to better tackle the gender equality dimensions of poverty.

In total, DAC members committed USD 53 billion Official Development Assistance (ODA) on average per year in 2018-19 that integrated or were dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment. This marks an important increase compared to the 8 billion in 2002, or even the 35.5 billion in 2014, and represents 44.5% of bilateral allocable ODA. Around 90% of DAC members’ aid towards gender equality was committed to programmes that integrate gender equality as a significant, or mainstreamed, policy objective (USD 47.4 billion, representing 40% of total aid). Support to programmes whose principal objective is gender equality and women’s empowerment remains relatively stable over time. In 2018-2019, it amounted to around 10% of DAC members’ aid towards gender equality (USD 5.6 billion per year, representing 5% of total aid), a slight rise from the prior period. Canada, Iceland, Sweden and Ireland rank first among DAC members in 2018-19 in terms of the shares of bilateral allocable ODA integrating or dedicated to gender equality. The sectors with the highest shares of bilateral aid integrating gender equality are social infrastructure and services (including employment policies, housing, social protection), agriculture and rural development, and economic infrastructures and services, including transport. Conversely, focus on gender equality is particularly low in the sectors of energy and humanitarian aid (OECD DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET), 2021^[106]).

Figure 11. Aid supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment is at an historical high level

DAC members, 2018 USD Billion



Source: OECD DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET) (2021_[106]).

A sizeable gender wage gap persists in most Adherents (I.D)

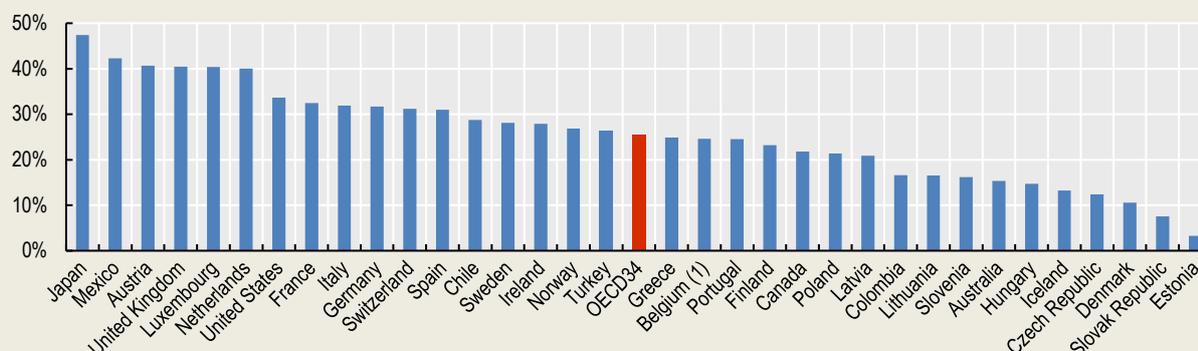
107. **The OECD average gender wage gap stood at 11.6% in 2020 – i.e. a woman working full-time makes 87 cents, on average, for every dollar or euro a full-time working man makes at median earnings.** The gap gets even larger when looking at the average yearly pay of working women and men (OECD, 2017_[107]; 2019_[72]). There have only been small improvements in the gender wage gap since 2016, when it stood at 13.0%, but more significant progress has been made over the last 15 years, as in 1996 the gap stood at nearly 19% (OECD Employment database). Unequal wages during the working years have compounding effects on gender inequality throughout the life course. Lower earnings reduce women’s economic independence throughout life, including in old age (OECD, 2021_[108]) (see Box 10).

Box 10. Gender gaps in pensions mainly derive from labour market gender inequalities

A sizeable gender gap in retirement income, wealth and pensions arises after a lifetime of unequal earnings. The gender pension gap (calculated as the difference between the average total retirement income of men and women, expressed as a percentage of men’s average retirement income, taking into account both public and private sources of income) ranges from 3% of men’s average retirement income in Estonia to 47% in Japan (Figure 12). On average in the OECD, women aged 65 or more receive around 74% of the retirement income of men. Related to this, and to women’s longer life expectancy leading to often living alone at older ages, nearly every OECD country has higher poverty rates for women than for men. The average old-age poverty rate for women in OECD countries is 15.7%, while for men it is 10.3% (OECD, 2021_[95]).

Figure 12. Gender pension gap in selected OECD countries, latest year available

Relative difference between men and women aged 65+ (among pension beneficiaries)



Note: The gender pension gap is calculated as the difference between the average retirement income of men and women (aged 65+) over the average retirement income of men (aged 65+), among pension beneficiaries. Calculations are based on the LIS, except for France, Latvia and Portugal where the HFCS (Wave 3) was used; and Iceland, Sweden and Turkey where results come from the EU-SILC. Data come from the latest available survey, conducted in: 2013 for Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and the Slovak Republic; 2014 for Australia; 2015 for Hungary and Slovenia; and after 2015 for all the other countries. Data refer to 2017 for Iceland and 2018 for Turkey. (1) In Belgium, when partner A's pension rights are less than 25% of those of partner B, the pension of A is not paid out and B receives a family pension (calculated at 75% of wages instead of 60%).

Source: OECD (2021), *Towards Improved Retirement Savings Outcomes for Women*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Labour market differences between men and women are the main drivers of the gender pension gap. First, the lower proportion of women participating in the formal labour market compared to men implies that fewer women can accrue earnings-related pensions. One reason is that pension systems in many countries only partially cushion the impact of child-care related career breaks (OECD, 2021^[96]). Second, women's lower participation in the labour market also means that women will contribute fewer years towards pensions compared to men, thereby reducing their retirement benefit entitlements. Third, women are overrepresented among part-time workers, partially due to combining paid employment with care responsibilities. Working part-time instead of full-time implies lower wages and therefore reduced retirement benefit entitlements, and in some countries it means that the worker is not eligible to participate in retirement savings plans. Furthermore, the existing gender pay gap means that women will accrue less earnings-related pension entitlements due to contributing less to pension schemes and retirement savings plans than men (OECD, 2021^[95]).

Secondary factors beyond labour market differences may affect individual decisions linked to retirement saving and retirement outcomes. Behavioural and cultural aspects relate to gender stereotyping (recognised as one of the key issues in gender equality, see Figure 1), women's higher risk aversion and lower financial literacy, lower engagement in retirement planning and decision-making processes among couples for financial matters. The design of the retirement savings arrangement itself may also bear some responsibility in the gender pension gap (OECD, 2021^[95]).

Policy makers can take actions to reduce the gender gap in pensions. The design of pensions alone cannot address and correct for all the drivers of the gender pension gap, particularly those stemming from the labour market. Nevertheless, pension policies should strive to reduce gender inequality in retirement incomes or, at the very least, ensure that inequalities are not exacerbated. As such, pension arrangements should aim to be gender-neutral. Key policy actions to advance gender equality in pensions include encouraging women's access to and participation in retirement saving arrangements; improving the level and frequency of women's contributions to retirement saving arrangements; adapting the design of such arrangements to the career patterns of women, and; improving investment returns on women's retirement savings (OECD, 2021^[95]). Pension systems in most OECD countries partially cushion the impact of care-related career breaks on pension outcomes through different measures (OECD, 2021^[96]).

Expanding such measures could reduce gender pension gaps given the existing gender imbalances in care responsibilities.

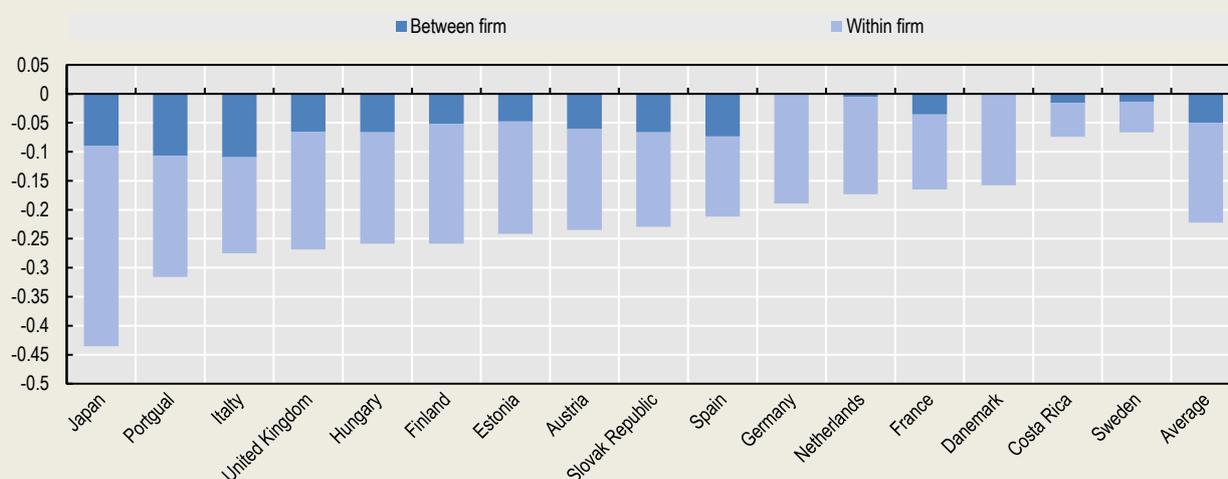
Another major development relates to equalising the retirement ages of men and women. In 2020, gender differences in the normal retirement age existed in nine OECD countries. However, for the generation entering the labour market in 2020, gender gaps were phased out in all OECD countries except Colombia, Hungary, Israel, Poland, Switzerland and Turkey. In Turkey, it will be phased out for those entering the labour market in 2028 (OECD, 2021^[96]).

108. **Many factors drive the gender wage gap.** One is horizontal segregation, whereby women and men are concentrated in different sectors and occupations, and women tend to be overrepresented in fields that pay relatively lower wages (e.g. the caregiving and service sector jobs) and underrepresented in fields with relatively higher wages (e.g. science and technology jobs). The same applies within fields across firms with different wage-setting practices. This also relates to gender stereotypes and their impact on career choices and expectations (see Subject choices still follow traditional gender stereotypes (I.A.3, I.A.5)). Another issue is vertical segregation, whereby men and women are concentrated in different job levels: across OECD countries women are underrepresented in management roles (see section Jurisdictions have achieved progress in gender diversity on boards and in senior management, but much remains to be done (I.C.1, I.C.2)). Another barrier is the unequal distribution of unpaid work hours, which limits women's possibilities to advance in the labour market and to improve their earnings. And importantly, firms' wage setting practices (see Box 11) as well as discrimination (e.g. in the hiring process for higher-paid jobs and in the starting salaries) also contribute to determine the gender wage gap.

Box 11. Firms' wage setting practices play a role in determining the gender wage gap

Recent research using matched employer-employee data suggests that about three-quarters of the wage gap between similarly-qualified women and men, across a sample of 16 OECD countries, is attributable to pay inequity within firms. This is mainly due to differences in tasks and responsibilities but also, to a lesser extent, to differences in pay for work of equal value (for instance as a result of bargaining or discrimination). One-quarter of the gender wage gap is explained by differences in pay between firms due to higher employment shares of women in low-wage firms (see Figure 13). The concentration of women in low-wage firms is associated with the tendency of such firms to offer more flexible working-time arrangements (e.g. part-time). The gender wage gap within and between firms tends to increase over the life course, particularly during the initial phase of women's professional careers due to motherhood. The above reflects to an important extent gender differences in mobility between and within firms and the effect of career breaks at the age of childbirth on women's career progression (OECD, 2021^[109]).

Figure 13. Differences in pay policies between firms account for about one quarter of the gender wage gap



Note: Decomposition of gender wage gap between similarly-qualified women and men within firms and between firms. The wage gap between-similarly qualified women and men is obtained from a regression of log wages on a gender dummy and flexible earnings-experience profiles as well as education (education is not available for Austria and Estonia) and decade-of-birth dummies to control for cohort effects.

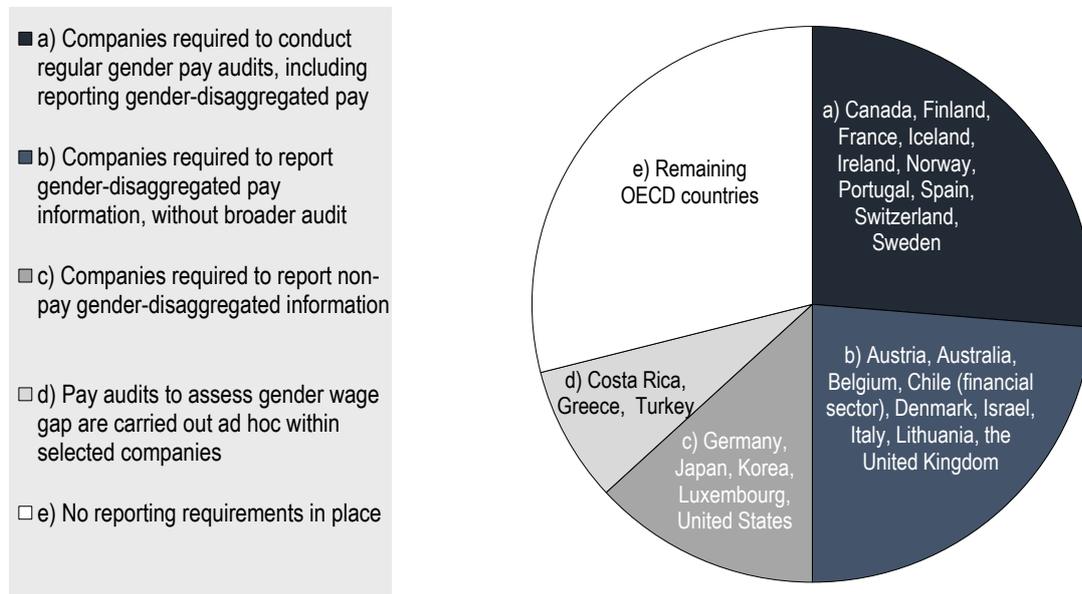
Source: OECD (2021_[109]).

109. **To tackle the gender wage gap, segregation needs to be addressed and good jobs in all sectors need to be made more accessible to women, while ensuring that women are paid the same as men for work of equal value**, for instance via anti-discrimination laws, social dialogue and pay transparency measures (OECD, 2021_[109]). Most Adherents have clarified the concept of equal pay for equal work and/or work of equal value in national legislation. Those who have not clarified the concept in national legislation have clarified equal pay principles through the courts and case law (OECD, 2021_[108]).

110. **Major policy developments took place in the past decade in Adherent countries**, and mainly in Europe, reflecting the 2014 European Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (European Commission, 2014_[110]). Further developments can be expected in light of the 2021 European Commission proposal for a Directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms (European Commission, 2021_[78]). At present, just under half of OECD countries use job classification systems in the public and/or private sector, attempting to standardise pay and make it transparent across men and women within specific job categories. Only a handful of OECD countries direct or encourage social partners to discuss equal pay considerations during collective bargaining processes. Yet workers' representatives play an important role in pay transparency processes. 19 out of the 38 OECD countries mandate systematic, regular gender wage gap reporting by private sector firms (Figure 14). This can entail calculating and reporting various wage gap statistics, or the overall wage gap. Penalties for non-reporting include e.g. restrictions on government tenders and the possibility of fines – but many countries do not closely monitor compliance. Nine OECD countries have implemented comprehensive equal pay auditing processes, requiring additional gender data analysis and follow-up strategies to address inequalities. Many of these reporting rules cover the public sector as well. Each of the above policies has the potential to narrow the gender wage gap, but strengthening reforms, greater stakeholder engagement, and more and better evaluations are needed (OECD, 2021_[108]).

Figure 14. About half of OECD countries require pay gap reporting and/or auditing by private sector firms

Distribution of countries by the presence of regulations requiring private sector pay reporting, pay auditing, or related measures, OECD countries, 2021



Source: OECD Gender Pay Transparency Questionnaire (OECD, 2021^[108]).

111. **Developments in minimum wage legislations also hold promise for a reduction in the gender wage gap, especially among low earners** (OECD, 2012^[111]). In Spain, successive increases in the minimum wage have progressively reduced the gender wage gap (2021 GEQ). In Germany, the government has defined a draft law to raise the statutory minimum wage to 12 euros per hour in 2022. This measure is expected to benefit women particularly (as they often earn less than that hourly amount) and to reduce the gender wage gap (2021 GEQ).

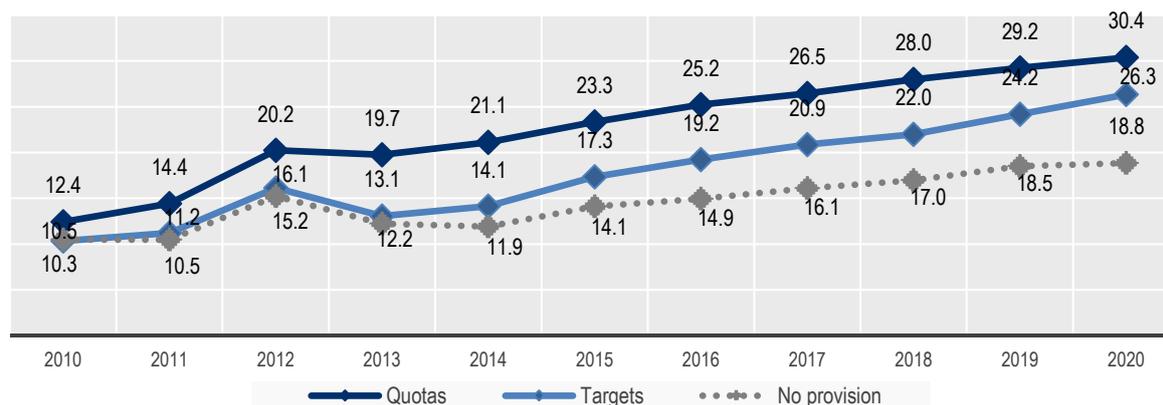
Jurisdictions have achieved progress in gender diversity on boards and in senior management, but much remains to be done (I.C.1, I.C.2)

112. **A wide range of initiatives have been undertaken to promote gender diversity on the boards and in senior management of listed companies.** A review of the experience of 50 jurisdictions (including all Adherents to the 2013 Gender Recommendation with the exception of Kazakhstan and Morocco plus 10 additional jurisdictions that participate in the Corporate Governance Committee) showed that these initiatives have contributed to increasing women's presence on company boards of listed enterprises, growing from an average of 14.5% in 2013 to 23.3% in 2020 (OECD, 2021^[112]; forthcoming^[113]). Progress in the share of women in management positions has been much more modest, rising from an average of 30% in 2013 to 32.7% in 2020 (OECD, forthcoming^[113]). The female share of senior leadership positions remains far lower: in 2020, women accounted for 8.7% of board chairs of large listed companies in EU countries on average (from 6.4% in 2013), and 7.3% of CEOs (up from 2.4% in 2013) (EIGE, 2021^[114]). Similar trends are observed in the United States, as among Fortune 500 companies, 7.4% of CEOs were female in 2020, up from 4% in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2021^[115]).

113. **Progress with women in leadership positions varies across countries.** On average, jurisdictions that have initiated mandatory quotas or voluntary targets for board composition in listed companies - that is, 26 of the 50 jurisdictions analysed - have achieved a greater level of gender diversity on boards than

other jurisdictions over the last decade (see Figure 15). For example, France, Germany and Italy have made some of the biggest gains, with the support of both board quotas and disclosure requirements. At the same time, evidence suggests that quotas and targets may not be sufficient in and of themselves (EMPOWER: OECD, 2020^[116]): in some cases, such initiatives at least initially have led to a “golden skirts” effect with a small group of women serving on multiple boards, or an increase in family-related appointments (Rigolini and Huse, 2019^[117]; University of Copenhagen, 2021^[118]).

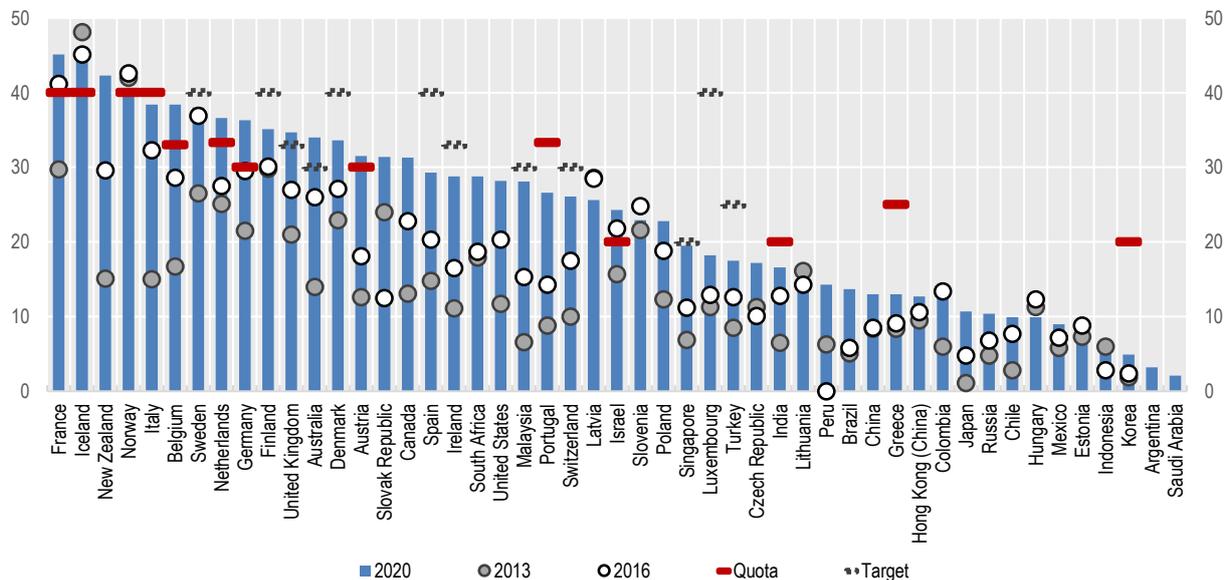
Figure 15. Aggregate change in the share of women on boards of largest listed companies 2010-2020, per policy option (%)



Note: Based on 47 jurisdictions, including all 2013 Gender Recommendation Adherents (except Argentina, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan and Morocco), plus nine additional jurisdictions that participate in the OECD Corporate Governance Committee. Source: OECD (forthcoming) based on data from EIGE (2021^[114]), MSCI (2020^[119]) and MSCI (2015^[120]).

114. **It is important to have complementary initiatives to develop the female talent pipeline and to expand the pool of qualified candidates.** While disclosure requirements for listed companies in a majority of jurisdictions are focused on board composition (60% as of the end of 2020, up from 49% in 2018), a growing number of jurisdictions have also established reporting requirements on gender diversity policies, women in management and executive positions, as well as gender pay differentials (see above). A number of jurisdictions, such as New Zealand and the United States, have achieved substantial progress without the use of quotas or targets, generally relying upon disclosure and pressure from the market (see Figure 16 for an overview of all jurisdictions’ progress since 2013 and indication of whether quotas or targets were involved). Other initiatives have involved public-private awareness-raising and advocacy, government-led incentive programmes, as well as private sector-led networks, training and skills development. There is also some evidence that different jurisdictions at different stages of progress may need to adopt differing measures, for example, where more emphasis may be required to achieve a cultural shift and receptiveness to women in leadership positions before other measures may be fully successful. Looking ahead, the OECD Corporate Governance Committee plans to consider revisions to the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance to strengthen its recommendation on gender diversity to take better account of the above-mentioned complementary measures available to promote progress.

Figure 16. Share of women on boards of largest listed companies (in 2013, 2016 and 2020) according to implemented quotas and targets (%)



Note: Covers 49 jurisdictions, including all Adherents except Costa Rica, Kazakhstan and Morocco plus 10 additional jurisdictions. Data for 2013 unavailable for Latvia, and data for 2016 unavailable for Argentina and Saudi Arabia). India, Israel and Korea have introduced a quota mandating “at least one” woman on boards of listed companies, which is indicated at 20% in this Figure, but may differ across companies depending on the size of the board.

Source: OECD analysis based on data from EIGE (2021_[114]), MSCI (2020_[119]) and MSCI (2015_[120]), covering a subset of the largest listed companies in each jurisdiction, supplemented by desk research.

Persisting gender stereotypes and discrimination hinder progress in gender equality (I.B.5, I.D)

115. Discriminatory social institutions – including laws, social norms and commonly accepted practices - constitute powerful driving forces behind both the unequal outcomes and the slow progress in gender equality (OECD, 2019_[121]). Social norms function as unspoken “rules of the game” governing societies’ expectations and beliefs about what is and is not acceptable. Gender-related social norms guide stereotypes of men and women’s roles in society. Among these, restrictive masculinities are social constructs relating to rigid and inflexible notions, shared by both men and women, about how men should behave to be considered “real” men – an example being the idea that “men should have more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce”. These norms are correlated with gender gaps in labour market outcomes, including lower female labour force participation and employment rates (especially in male-dominated sectors) as well as higher rates of informal labour and vulnerability of women’s employment, lower female earnings, both vertical and horizontal gender segregation at work, and limited opportunities for women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2019_[122]; 2021_[123]).

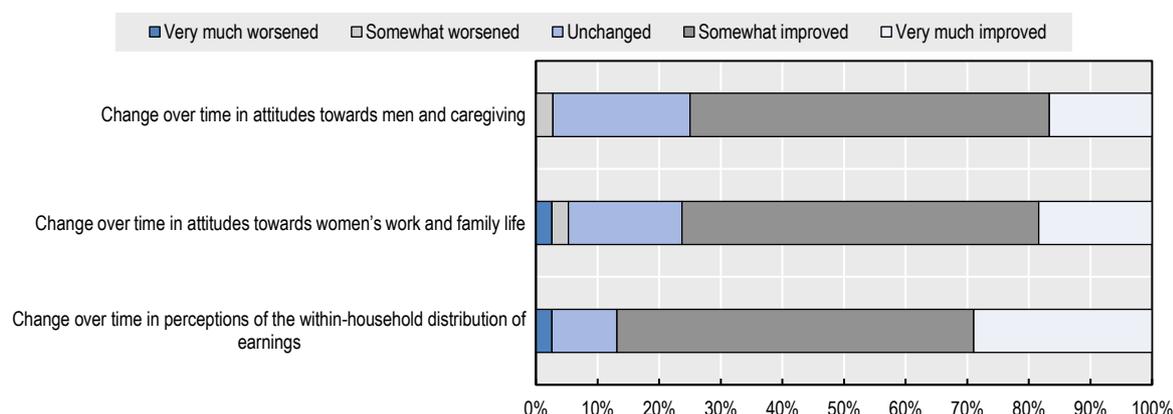
116. According to a third of Respondents to the 2021 GEQ⁷, traditional views on within-household distribution of earnings, women’s work and family life, as well as men and caregiving are still prevalent in their countries. More specifically, “the idea of a father being the primary caregiver” is opposed in 28% of responding countries, “the idea that family life suffers when a woman works full-time” is supported in 34%, and “the idea of a woman earning more income than her husband” is unacceptable in

⁷ 36 responses to the question about ‘men and caregiving’, 37 about ‘women’s work and family life’ and 35 about ‘within-household distribution of earnings’.

25%. Nonetheless, Respondents also stressed important progress in these attitudes over time, especially in the perceptions of the within-household distribution of earnings (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Progress in gender equality attitudes over time

Share of Respondents reporting that gender equality attitudes regarding these issues have worsened, remained unchanged, or improved over time (%)



Note: Out of 42 countries, 36 responded to the questions regarding 'attitudes towards men and caregiving', and 38 to the questions on and 'women's work and family life' and 37 to the question regarding 'within-household distribution of earnings'.

Source: 2021 Gender Equality Questionnaire (2021 GEQ).

117. **To curb restrictive gender norms and their effect on women's inclusion in the labour market,** Adherents to the 2013 Gender Recommendation have promoted initiatives addressing gender stereotypes and the unequal sharing of household responsibilities and supporting the right mind-set to advance gender equality. Policy examples provided by Respondents to the 2021 GEQ include supporting a more gender-equal availability and use of parental leave (see above), but also including non-discrimination as a pillar in comprehensive plans for gender equality, as it has been done, for example, in Costa Rica and in Portugal. In 2018, Portugal also launched a programme supporting work-life balance through a range of cross-sectoral activities. Respondents also engaged in awareness raising actions with the aim to combat gender stereotypes. For instance, the Netherlands conducted awareness campaigns on work-life balance and equal sharing of household responsibilities; the "Break Free from Gender Stereotypes" project in Iceland targeted young people to eliminate traditional gender stereotypes and gender-based choices in education and work; and the "For women in the media" Charter in France promoted actions to deconstruct sexist stereotypes in the media. Other campaigns focused on fighting discrimination based on pregnancy and motherhood; examples include the National Campaign of Caring in Equality in Argentina, the "Mummy on board" campaign in Belgium and information campaigns to promote the use of flexible workplace measures by fathers in Latvia.

118. **These actions need to be supported through the collection of gender-disaggregated and attitudinal data** informing on the prevalence of discriminatory social practices, as well as the analysis of the messages that legal frameworks send about men's roles in societies (OECD, 2021_[123]). In Greece, the "Diversity awareness project" developed concrete mechanisms to monitor and assess data on gender equality, and in Argentina, Costa Rica, Norway, Portugal and the Slovak Republic, data collection processes were improved to strengthen awareness on gender issues. Norway also conducted specific surveys on gender equality, including questions on attitudes towards gender equality, and Morocco conducted a review focusing on gender equality in the public service. For more information, see also section *Bottlenecks in generating and using data remain a significant barrier to implementing gender equality policies (II.2)*.

119. **In parallel, Adherents promote gender-equal company practices.** In terms of legislative developments, some countries ratified the [ILO Convention 156](#) on equal opportunities and treatment between male and female workers: workers with family responsibilities (e.g. Costa Rica). Various Adherents have sponsored positive workplace experiences through the recognition of good practices (e.g. Costa Rica), gender equality and work-life balance certifications (e.g. in Austria, Chile and Colombia), and the provision of guidance and support. In Colombia, for instance, the “Gender Equality Recognition Programme” (*PRIG Equipares Rural*) is a cultural transformation tool promoting organisational practices that reduce the existing gaps between women and men in rural cooperatives. Other examples include: the “Affirmative Action programme” in Luxembourg, supporting companies to develop an action plan focused on equal treatment of women and men, equality in decision-making, and equality in work-life balance; and the guide “Equality between women and men, my company is committed” in France. Argentina, France and Korea have offered gender-sensitivity training for civil servants.

Zero tolerance towards workplace sexual harassment, a form of violence against women (I.E)

120. **A key policy development to combat sexual harassment at the workplace, a form of violence against women (see Box 12), relates to steps towards the ratification of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)’s Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190),** for instance in Argentina, Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Spain and South Africa. At the European Union level, the European Commission adopted, in January 2020, a proposal for a Council of the European Union’s decision to enable European Union Member States to ratify Convention No. 190 (ILO and OECD, 2021^[28]).

121. **Many Adherents introduced new or improved existing laws on workplace sexual harassment.** More specifically, laws were introduced to protect from all forms harassment and violence in the workplace (e.g. Canada) as well as amended to widen their scope of application (e.g. Australia, France and Greece). Notably, in Japan, the “Law on Securing Equal Opportunity and Treatment Between Men and Women in Employment” was amended to prohibit unfavourable treatment of workers who come forward with sexual harassment claims. In April 2022, the Government of Japan extended the obligation to take measures to prevent abuse of authority at work to all SMEs. In Costa Rica, an amendment established the obligation of employers to keep a register of sexual harassment penalties in force. In Denmark, the amendment of the Act on Equal Treatment of Women and Men strengthened focus on the tone of conversation in the workplace in cases of sexual harassment. Some Adherents, such as Australia, have opted to develop national roadmaps for the prevention of sexual harassment in employment. In addition, regulation and policies about online harassment are one way to tackle the problem and several Adherents are beginning to take action. Some governments currently have legislative efforts to tackle online harms such as cyber-bullying, sexual abuse and deepfake abuse, such as the Office of eSafety Commissioner (Australia), the Online Safety Bill (the United Kingdom) and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, 2021 (the United States) (IDB, OECD and UNESCO, forthcoming^[88]). Adherents have also made progress in combating workplace sexual harassment in public employment (see section Gender Equality in Public Employment (IV) below for examples of measures).

122. **Legislative policy changes also address the enforcement of clauses against sexual harassment.** In France, new legislation that implements sexual harassment provisions in internal regulations of companies is accompanied by controls and sanctions. A similar action has been taken in Korea. In the name of enforceability, some Adherents have aimed either to introduce or to clarify employers’ obligations in combatting sexual harassment in the workplace (Australia, Japan, Korea, Lithuania and the United Kingdom). Furthermore, procedural barriers have been reduced to streamline access to justice (Australia). For example, Norway has implemented low-threshold enforcement by giving the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal authority to enforce in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace.

123. **Adherents are working towards collecting information, raising awareness among the public, as well as educating employers and employees on the topic.** For instance, the Norwegian government is

preparing a white paper that will map the extent of sexual harassment in working life (as well as education, and in cultural and leisure arenas) and will propose measures and efforts to combat it. Information to companies is also provided through toolkits, conceptual frameworks and protocols to prevent sexual harassment. In New Zealand, an issues paper on bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) at work will inform future policy direction.

Box 12. Violence against women and girls remains a longstanding pandemic

Worldwide, more than one in four women experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2021^[2]; Sardinha et al., 2022^[3]). Despite years of advocacy to protect women's physical integrity, legislative progress has been uneven across OECD countries (OECD, 2019^[4]). Some Respondents to the 2021 GEQ reported examples of progress in combatting gender-based violence. For instance, gender-based violence is addressed by several countries in national action plans (e.g. Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Iceland and Portugal). Ireland has developed a framework to end sexual violence and harassment in higher education institutions. Greece has ratified the Istanbul Convention, while the Czech Republic has taken steps in that direction. Portugal has adapted the definitions of the crimes of sexual coercion, rape and sexual abuse to the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. Many countries have implemented laws to prevent violence against women (e.g. Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Korea and Morocco). Notably, Denmark and Korea have implemented laws against offenses, including stalking, psychological violence, and digital sex crimes. Furthermore, many governments are providing capacity building and methodological support in prevention of gender-based violence (e.g. the Czech Republic and Morocco) as well as introducing new support programmes, such as leaves for victims of gender violence (e.g. Australia and Argentina). Other important actions relate to the collection of data and information. Morocco, for example, aims to develop knowledge through a national survey and by means of monitoring. Complementarily, awareness raising campaigns have been promoted in various countries (e.g. Australia, the Czech Republic, Colombia, Ireland and Morocco). In Norway, campaigns have been conducted on the duty to avert violence and abuse with a focus on health personnel, employees at schools and day care centres, and the general population. Further developments are expected in the coming years in Europe, where the European Commission has announced that it will table a directive on violence against women and domestic violence in early 2022 (European Parliament, 2021^[124]).

International collaboration and high-level diplomatic commitments have been made in recent years to combat gender-based violence, such as the 2019 adoption of the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (SEAH) [OECD/LEGAL/5020]. The DAC Recommendation provides an important framework that supports ending sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the international system. DAC Members have made progress on implementing the DAC Recommendation, including improvements in their own internal policies and mechanisms, as well as in their co-operation with other stakeholders including international organisations and civil society organisations. A number of areas remain key challenges: including around improving support and services for victims and survivors, and working towards organisational culture to support gender equality and reduce power imbalances to enable an environment to better prevent, respond to, and end SEAH. Focusing on bilateral official development assistance (ODA), the amount dedicated to the aim of ending violence against women and girls in 2019 by DAC members amounted to USD 439 million. This is less than 1% of bilateral ODA reported in 2019. As an example of the interventions implemented, a Spanish programme in Bolivia seeks to improve the comprehensive response to gender-based violence through women's economic empowerment and autonomy, and by strengthening public institutions. The largest single programme towards ending gender-based violence remains the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative (OECD, 2021^[125]).

Strengthening the implementation of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in the field of employment

124. **Adherents have adopted policies to enhance women’s employment quality and earnings, with important progress in pay transparency**, advancements in combating informal work and progress in their unemployment and tax policies. Yet, despite small improvements, women are still worse off in the labour market. Women continue to be overrepresented in lower-paid jobs, and gender differences in labour force participation, remuneration and work quality result in substantial gender gaps in labour income and well-being and greater risk of old-age poverty for women.

- Further policy efforts are needed towards increasing women’s labour market participation, ensuring job quality, equal pay for work of equal value and equal opportunities for career progression.
- Further public investment towards decent work and equal conditions for men and women is needed, and even more so for a gender responsive and inclusive economic recovery, especially in sectors such as health and care.
- Further policy action is needed to eliminate the discriminatory gender wage gap via strong pay transparency practices, including expanding their coverage and ensuring their enforcement, and awareness-raising actions to tackle gender stereotypes.
- Policy attention is required to make employment policies inclusive, ensuring that women facing multiple disadvantages can also access and use the supports available.

125. **A heavy burden of unpaid care and non-care work on women’s shoulders is another manifestation of deep-rooted gender inequalities in the labour market.** Adherents have advanced in encouraging fathers to take leave to care for children more often and for longer periods. Yet, use of such leave by fathers remains limited. Adherents also continue to support the accessibility and affordability of childcare, strengthening financial incentives to work for fathers and mothers. Yet, childcare costs are still a key barrier to (mothers’) employment participation in many countries. Some Adherents have broadened rights for all workers to request flexible working arrangements, and advanced the regulation of teleworking, especially since the start of the pandemic. Yet, the risk of gendered patterns in the use of parental leave and flexible work remains, such as part-time employment being mainly used by women.

- Policies need to better support fathers’ leave-taking and ensure that mothers have access to (well) paid employment-protected leave, while avoiding entitlements that discourage mothers’ return to work.
- Childcare services need to be made more accessible, affordable and of better quality.
- While promoting opportunities for flexible work; policy must support a gender-equal access to and use of such arrangements.

126. **Adherents have also made some progress in supporting women’s leadership positions in private sector employment and public life.** Despite some progress, the glass ceiling preventing women’s greater representation in public and private management and leadership positions largely remains in place, which requires policy attention.

- In order to enhance gender diversity on boards and senior management in private and public employment, Adherents should consider the adoption of mandatory quotas and voluntary targets, as well as complementary measures such as mentorship, networking and capacity-building actions, and active recruitment of women in leadership positions.

127. **Workplace sexual harassment, and violence against women at large, remain major barriers to gender equality and have been exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- Adherents should devote important policy actions towards preventing and ending workplace sexual harassment as part of major efforts towards eradicating any form of violence against women.

Progress in the field of entrepreneurship

128. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation calls on its Adherents to address gender inequalities in entrepreneurship (Box 13).**

Box 13. The 2013 Gender Recommendation: focus on entrepreneurship

I. The Council RECOMMENDS that through a whole-of-government approach and through means such as appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring and public awareness campaigns, Members:

F. Reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurship activity by (*hereinafter referred to as: I.F*):

1. Designing appropriate responses to gaps and market failures, including: policies to reduce barriers to women entrepreneurship, administrative burdens on firms and excessive regulatory restrictions; policies to support firm growth, internationalisation and innovation; support for the development and implementation of awareness campaigns, training programmes, mentoring, coaching, and support networks, including professional advice on legal and fiscal matters (*I.F.1*);
2. Ensuring equal access to finance for female and male entrepreneurs through actions that influence both the supply of and demand for finance by: easing access to finance for viable businesses owned by men and women; taking steps to improve the knowledge and attitudes of financial institutions; increasing awareness of finance sources and tools among women entrepreneurs; and, encouraging more women to join business angel networks or venture capital firms (*I.F.2*).

G. Pay attention to the special needs of women from disadvantaged minority groups and migrant women in relation to the aims set out above (*I.G*).

Source: 2013 Gender Recommendation

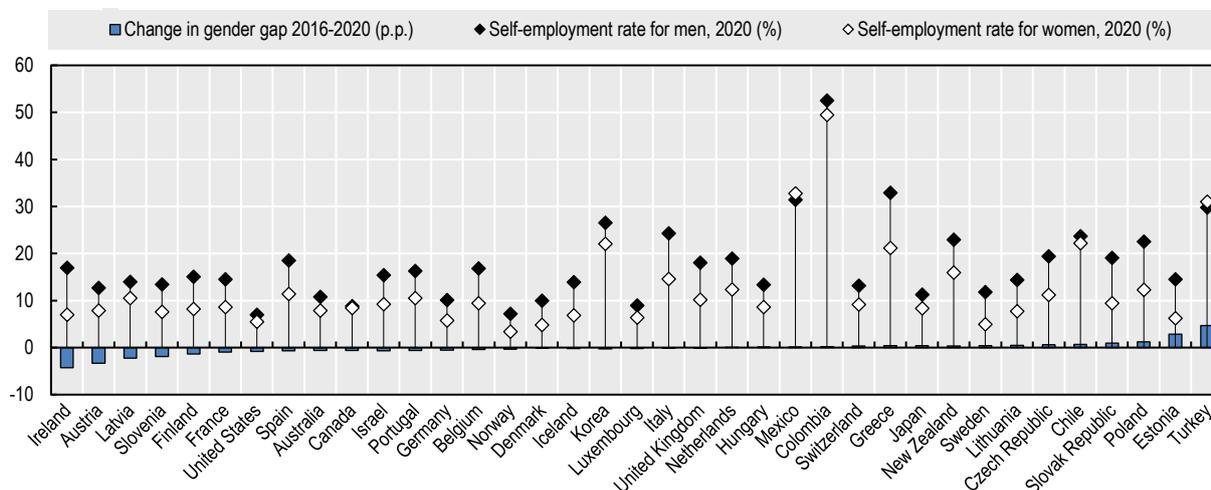
The gender gap in entrepreneurship closed modestly since 2016 (I.F.1, I.F.2)

129. **Despite some progress over the past five years, a gender gap remains throughout the entire entrepreneurship pipeline.** Women continue to be less likely than men to create a business or to be working on a new start-up, but the gap in the proportion of women and men involved in business creation and the management of new businesses has narrowed slightly. From 2016, the gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship narrowed by about 1 p.p. across OECD countries, to 4 p.p. in 2020.

130. **Women are also less likely to operate an established business or be self-employed.** In 2020, women were about 30% less likely than men to be self-employed across OECD countries. Yet, this gap closed slightly in more than half of OECD countries between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 18). The most significant change occurred in Ireland where the gender gap closed by 4 p.p. This was primarily due to a large influx of self-employed women over the age of 50 years old who pursue more flexible career pathways after starting a family, coupled with a decrease in the number of self-employed men (OECD, 2020_[126]). Similarly, the gender gap in the proportion of self-employed workers who employed others also closed slightly in about two-thirds of OECD countries since 2016. This gap closed the most in Latvia and Ireland.

Figure 18. The gender gap in self-employment slightly closed across OECD countries

Self-employment rates (%) by gender, 15-64 years old, 2020 or latest available data, and changes in the self-employment gender gap, p.p., 2016-2020



Note: Latest available data for Korea, the United Kingdom and Mexico (women only) are from 2019.

Source: (OECD, 2021_[127]; Eurostat, 2021_[128])

131. **These gender gaps in entrepreneurship are due to a range of factors.** All entrepreneurs face a range of challenges in setting up and maintaining their businesses, including low levels of entrepreneurship skills, difficulties accessing external finance and small and ineffective entrepreneurship networks but overall, these barriers tend to be greater for women entrepreneurs (OECD/European Commission, 2021_[34]). These obstacles were further underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic (see The OECD Gender Recommendations in times of COVID-19: the pandemic risks hindering progress in their implementation and outcomes). Many women choose entrepreneurship as a way to reconcile work and care commitments as it is thought to provide flexibility in working hours. To meet care commitment they may also aim to limit the growth of their enterprise, but they may find that the demands of running a business may result in longer hours than full-time employment as an employee. Other important barriers for women entrepreneurs are social attitudes towards entrepreneurship (e.g. gender differences in risk aversion and “fear of failure”) and gender bias in the framework conditions for entrepreneurship (e.g. difficulties accessing government support schemes due to selection criteria such as sector, revenue and growth potential, or lack of relevance of support offered) (OECD, 2021_[14]). While some of these issues are related to decisions about participation in the labour market (e.g. income taxation), many influence the decision to work as an entrepreneur or an employee (e.g. access to maternity and family supports).

Governments are using a wide range of policies and instruments to encourage and support women’s entrepreneurship (I.F.1, I.F.2, I.G)

132. **Governments continue to invest in women’s entrepreneurship policies and initiatives to help women overcome specific obstacles related to skills, finance and networks and address bias in the entrepreneurship framework conditions.** Two broader policy trends are emerging, namely increased public investments in reinforcing women’s entrepreneurship ecosystems and diversifying approaches to increase access to finance, including experimentation with fintech. In addition, some innovations have occurred in the way the support is delivered in recent years, notably an acceleration in the use of digital platforms to deliver training and coaching since face-to-face interactions were restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic. While there were examples of online entrepreneurship supports prior to COVID-

19, the vast majority of support schemes adapted to restrictions on face-to-face interactions by delivery support online.

Public investment in entrepreneurial ecosystems has increased...

133. **Several Adherents increased investments to build cohesive ecosystem of support for women entrepreneurs rather than investing solely in stand-alone initiatives that directly target women entrepreneurs.** In many instances, the approach used was to set up a strategic framework for women's entrepreneurship support and to engage and support non-government actors in working towards policy objectives. For example, the Government of Canada launched the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) in 2018 with an initial investment of more than CAD 6 billion (EUR 4 billion). The WES operates through three pillars: Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund (i.e. loans to women entrepreneurs); WES Ecosystem Fund (i.e. support to women's business organisations and networks); and the Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (i.e. investments in researching and measuring women's entrepreneurship activities). Funding for the WES was increased as part of the package of COVID-19 measures for entrepreneurs (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 2021_[129]) and the 2021 Federal Budget allocated an additional CAD 55 million (EUR 38 million) to the Knowledge Hub and Ecosystem Fund (Government of Canada, 2021_[130]; 2021_[131]).

134. **Other Adherents boosted investment in women's entrepreneurship ecosystems, with greater involvement from regional and local governments.** Since 2016, the Government of France continued to invest at the national and regional levels in the Women's Entrepreneurship Plan (*Le plan national Entreprenuriat au féminin*), which aims to improve specific conditions of entrepreneurship for women such as improving access to finance for women entrepreneurs and combatting harmful gender stereotypes surrounding entrepreneurship. It also seeks to strengthen investment in the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem and increase engagement with regional governments. National investment in the ecosystem increased from about EUR 2.2 million in 2018 to EUR 3.9 million in 2022 (Government of France, 2017_[132]; 2018_[133]; Rauch, 2021_[134]). In the United States, in addition to investments from the Small Business Administration, there are also examples of local governments taking action. The City of Atlanta (Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative – WEI Atlanta) and the City of New York (Women Entrepreneurs NYC – WE NYC) have increased investments in the women's entrepreneurial ecosystems between 2016 and 2021 through municipal funding and private-public partnerships (Shamma, 2017_[135]; ESPN, 2021_[136]; Invest Atlanta, 2021_[137]; NYC Small Business Services, 2021_[138]).

135. **Another more targeted approach has been to increase support for specific actors in entrepreneurship ecosystems, notably in financial markets.** One large-scale example has been the European Union-supported Women Business Angels for Europe's Entrepreneurs, which has sought to build national and international networks of female business angels in Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. The programme generated more than EUR 20 million in additional angel financing by women, funding 115 projects in 2017 and 2018 (Business Angels Europe, 2018_[139]). It also offered training, mentoring and networking for women entrepreneurs and investors. Other actions consist of supports to financial literacy (see section Gender gaps in skills evolve with age (I.A.5, I.G, I.H)).

...and digital innovations have led to new and alternative financial instruments

136. **Policy measures to facilitate access to finance for women entrepreneurs continue to evolve, including further investments in dedicated risk capital initiatives and experiments with fintech.** Governments continue to increase the use of tailored financial products and services to meet the needs of different profiles of women entrepreneurs. Most notably, this includes increasing the supply of risk capital for women entrepreneurs in STEM and other innovative fields. For example, Enterprise Ireland doubled investment from EUR 500 000 in 2016 to EUR 1 million in 2021 for the Competitive Start Fund (CSF) for women entrepreneurs, which provides up to EUR 50 000 in equity funding for high potential women-led

start-ups (Armstrong, 2016^[140]; Enterprise Ireland, 2021^[141]). The 2021 CSF Women Entrepreneurs Call provided funding specifically to women entrepreneurs in Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services with special attention to start-ups addressing challenges and opportunities regarding Climate Action. Other Adherents that have introduced similar initiatives include Canada, Italy, and the United States (OECD, 2021^[14]).

137. **A second trend in financing new start-ups is innovation in financial products and services that is increasing the availability of financial products and markets for entrepreneurs.** Fintech, including crowdfunding platforms, hold potential for closing gender gaps in finance because research to date suggests that women entrepreneurs are more successful than men in many of these alternative markets (OECD/European Commission, Forthcoming^[142]). The private sector has long been active in supporting women entrepreneurs with fintech initiatives and governments are also recognising this potential – as well as the risks that fintech will increase barriers to finance because algorithms may concentrate funding on growth-oriented projects. As a result, governments are starting to experiment with leveraging the potential of fintech, notably through the use of crowdfunding platforms for women entrepreneurs. Different models are used by governments where they can take on different roles such as a *sponsor* (i.e. public authority runs a campaign on an existing platform); *manager* (i.e. public authority could create its own crowdfunding platform); *facilitator* (i.e. public authority could partner with an existing platform to top-up funding for projects that meet specific criteria); or as a *matching funder* (i.e. public authority provides matching funding for projects according to pre-determined criteria). Examples of public crowdfunding platforms are emerging in many countries including Austria, Canada, France, Italy, Korea and the United Kingdom as well as women-dedicated platforms in the United States, including for specific populations for women, e.g. black women entrepreneurs.

138. **Furthermore, there are examples of government schemes to support women fintech entrepreneurs.** These schemes are typically delivered in partnership with the private sector, where there are also many initiatives to support women entrepreneurs in fintech. One new example is WILLA in France, which is an accelerator programme for women fintech entrepreneurs delivered by a consortium of public and private actors including Banque de France, Ile-de-France and Rothschild & Co (OECD/European Commission, Forthcoming^[142]).

Strengthening the implementation of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in the field of entrepreneurship

139. **Adherents have continued to invest in initiatives to help women overcome specific obstacles related to skills, finance and networks and to address bias in the entrepreneurship framework conditions.** An acceleration in the use of digital platforms has been a key development. New policy trends encompass increased public investment to reinforce women’s entrepreneurship ecosystems and to improve access to finance – such as experimentation with fintech. Gender gaps in entrepreneurship have slightly narrowed, but women continue to be less likely than men to create a business, work in a new start-up, or be self-employed (OECD, 2021^[14]).

140. **Policy frameworks for women’s entrepreneurship vary considerably across Adherents.** Some Adherents have well-developed policy, such as Canada, France, Ireland and the United States, where policy makers have been experimenting and introducing new strategies and initiatives to support and encourage women in entrepreneurship. Other Adherents are addressing gender gaps through designing and introducing tailored support for women in entrepreneurship, while others still lag behind with sparse policy development and few initiatives for women entrepreneurs (OECD, 2021^[14]).

- Priorities for Adherents as they develop the next generation of women entrepreneurship policy include strengthening the overarching policy frameworks for women’s entrepreneurship to ensure that initiatives link together into a cohesive system that is sufficiently resourced and sustainable.

- Adopting ecosystem approaches to policy making holds promise for being an effective model to building comprehensive entrepreneurship support systems that go beyond the traditional “fix the women” approach.
- Other priority actions for Adherents are to increase the use of tailored measures to support high-ambition, high-potential women entrepreneurs, including accelerator programmes and growth-oriented finance.
- Adherents still need to go further in measuring, evaluating and reporting on women’s entrepreneurship.

Progress in furthering the objectives of the 2013 Gender Recommendation

141. **The 2013 Gender Recommendation also calls on its Adherents to further its objectives, in co-operation with all relevant stakeholders (Box 14).**

Box 14. The 2013 Gender Recommendation: furthering its objectives

II. The Council RECOMMENDS that Members further the objectives set out in this Recommendation through co-operation with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, public agencies, trade unions, employers’ organisations and civil society, and maintain the relevance of these objectives by taking the following measures:

A. Where necessary further elaborate, implement and promote policy principles, guidelines, best practices and other instruments to achieve gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship; exchange policy experiences and good practices among Members and Partners in order to achieve their objectives in a timely and efficient manner (*hereinafter referred to as II.A*);

B. Ensure the collection, production and development of timely and internationally comparable gender-sensitive data and indicators; ensure that adequate resources are allocated to this important activity; and regularly provide available data for the OECD Gender Data Portal with indicators on Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, while encouraging the full coverage of the indicators in the Portal (*II.B*);

C. Ensure that the information collected is used to adequately monitor the progress made on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship in national statistics and reports (*II.C*).

Source: 2013 Gender Recommendation

142. **Adherents have advanced in implementing Section II of the 2013 Gender Recommendation.** The information provided in the questionnaires to assess progress on policy developments demonstrates that all Adherents have made progress towards sections II.A and II.C. Complementarily, Adherents have renewed their efforts for the production and update of comparable indicators reported in the OECD [Gender Data Portal](#). This portal is updated regularly and continues to represent a fundamental source of information for the production of cross-country comparative analysis on gender equality. Further examples are reported in the section below on Dissemination. Yet, there are still limitations when it comes to the collection and availability of detailed gender-disaggregated data in the areas of the Recommendation (see also Bottlenecks in generating and using data remain a significant barrier to implementing gender equality policies (*II.2*) for complementary information on the 2015 Gender Recommendation).

- Adherents should continue to strengthen policy actions to support policy learning and the exchange of best practices on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship.
- Adherents should devote major efforts towards the collection, production and development of timely and internationally comparable gender-sensitive data and indicators.

- Adherents should use the information collected effectively to monitor progress and support evidence-based policymaking.

Progress in the field of gender equality in public life

143. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation calls on its Adherents to address gender inequalities in public life.** It builds on the 2013 Gender Recommendation, namely provisions I.I and I.J, and has five pillars (see Box 15) which are outlined in greater detail in the following sub-sections.

Box 15. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: core pillars and links to 2013 Gender Recommendation

The five core pillars of the 2015 Gender Recommendation

The Council RECOMMENDS Adherents to:

- I. Mainstream gender equality in design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies, and budgets (*hereinafter referred to as I*)
- II. Strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms (*II*)
- III. Consider measures to achieve gender balanced representation in decision making positions in public life (*III*)
- IV. Take adequate measures to improve gender-equality in public employment (*IV*)
- V. Strengthen international cooperation for gender equality and mainstreaming (*V*)

Relevant provisions from the 2013 Gender Recommendation

- I. The Council RECOMMENDS that through a whole-of-government approach and through means such as appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring and public awareness campaigns, Members:
 - I. Mainstream the gender equality perspective in the design, development and evaluation of relevant policies and budgets, for example by conducting systematic gender-impact assessments and generating appropriate data and evidence to build a benchmark for future assessments as well as a compilation of best practices for governments and government agencies (*2013- I.I*); and
 - J. Strengthen accountability mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies (*2013- I.J*).

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation and 2013 Gender Recommendation

Designing and Implementing Gender Mainstreaming (I, 2013-I.I)

144. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation calls on its Adherents to design and implement Gender Mainstreaming (Box 16).**

Box 16. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: focus on gender mainstreaming

I. The Council RECOMMENDS that Members and non-Members having adhered to the Recommendation (hereafter the “Adherents”) mainstream gender equality in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies and budgets. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Secure leadership and commit at the highest political level, at the appropriate level of government, to the development and implementation of a whole-of government strategy for effective gender equality and mainstreaming, which would enable (*hereinafter referred to as: I.I*):

- i) Setting a rationale, action plans, priorities, timelines, objectives, expected outcomes and/or targets, and effective policy planning across public institutions for promoting gender equality. These measures should be accompanied by information and awareness campaigns, media strategies and regular reviews (*I.1.i*);
 - ii) Engaging relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with a view to ensuring an inclusive and comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues; and (*I.2.ii*)
 - iii) Adopting a dual approach to narrowing equality gaps through both gender mainstreaming and specific targeted actions to promote gender equality (*I.1.iii*).
2. Establish an institutional framework to ensure the effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of the gender equality and mainstreaming strategy, by (*I.2*):
 - i) Establishing clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives (*I.2.i*);
 - ii) Bolstering the capacities and resources of gender equality institutions to facilitate a consistent response at appropriate levels of government and to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive programmes and policies throughout the government, based on gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators. Effectiveness of gender equality institutions can also be strengthened by placing them at the highest possible level in the government (see also recommendations II.2 and III.2) (*I.2.ii*);
 - iii) Ensuring the capacity and resources of public institutions to integrate gender equality perspectives in their activities, for example, by identifying gender equality focal points across governmental bodies, by investing resources in training and promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to produce gender-sensitive knowledge, leadership and communication, by ensuring the collection of gender and gender-disaggregated statistics in their areas of responsibility and by providing clear guidelines, tools, communication and expectations to public institutions in this area (see also recommendations II.2 and III.2); and (*I.2.iii*)
 - iv) Strengthening vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence across governmental bodies and levels of government that involve relevant non-governmental stakeholders to ensure synergies and effective implementation of gender equality initiatives (*I.2.iv*)
 3. Integrate evidence-based assessments of gender impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance (for example, public procurement, public consultation and service delivery management) and at early stages of all phases of the policy cycle (for example, by aligning ex ante assessments of gender impacts with broader government-wide policy development processes, such as regulatory impact assessment), as appropriate (*I.3*).
 4. Consider integration of the gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle, as appropriate, so that transparency regarding gender-relevant resource allocation decisions is maximised (*I.4*).

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation

145. Targeted policy actions to tackle identified gender inequalities are fundamental in closing gender gaps.⁸ However, given the cross-cutting and pervasive nature of structural gender inequalities, particular attention should be brought to the baseline of structural policies, laws, regulations, and other decision-making instruments to address their root causes.⁹ Gender mainstreaming helps governments make more inclusive decisions to achieve better outcomes for all, including as they relate to policy and spending decisions. The following sub-sections provide key highlights of country progress in mainstreaming gender equality in design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies, and budgets.

⁸ Here, targeted policy actions refer to those designed to address specific forms of gender-based discrimination and enable progress in affected areas such as measures to enable parents to balance their work hours and family responsibilities; make it easier for women to participate in private and public sector employment, etc. (OECD, 2021^[15]).

⁹ For example, promoting women's business ownership requires a smart policy mix which, among others, takes into consideration the gender impacts of regulatory policies and frameworks, while removing potential barriers in access to public procurement and finance. These efforts must be coupled with an enabling social infrastructure (including but not limited to paid parental leave for mothers and fathers, and more accessible and affordable child/elderly care).

There is growing leadership commitment to gender equality by governments (I.I)

146. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation recognises that commitment at the highest political level, at the appropriate level of government, to the gender equality agenda helps accelerate its implementation.** While it can be difficult to measure “leadership for gender equality”, these signals can be gleaned through the strategic documents and formal commitments of the government. Several Adherents have introduced specific requirements to advance gender equality priorities in government programmes (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) or national development plans (e.g. Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Mexico). Other strategic avenues for integrating such considerations could include budget statements, vision statements, etc. The establishment of cabinet committees – composed of Ministers – mandated with the gender equality agenda (see Box 17 illustrating Iceland’s approach), and the level of the office with the responsibility to promote gender equality (e.g. a Minister on Gender Equality) are also possible indicators of the priority that is assigned to the gender equality agenda. More specifically, 19 out of 34 Respondents to the 2021 GMG Survey have a ministerial portfolio vested with the responsibility of achieving gender equality¹⁰.

147. **In the COVID-19 context, the integration of gender equality considerations in strategic planning documents such as recovery and resilience plans has also been an indicator of the level of commitment to gender equality for inclusive economic recovery.** Of the 27 Adherents that reported developing a strategic plan in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including for recovery and resilience, 22 (81%) have reported integrating gender equality considerations namely through the inclusion of targeted actions, and/or stating gender equality as cross-cutting pillar. However, the effectiveness of such measures or commitments remains to be seen through further analysis, as only 8 Adherents reported conducting a gender impact assessment of the plans. Other countries¹¹ have integrated dedicated sections in their national gender strategies, outlining actions to consider to uphold gender equality in emergency and crisis situations.

Box 17. Examples of Leadership Commitment For Gender Equality

Canada

In Canada, the Prime Minister issues mandate letters to outline the policy priorities for ministers to accomplish, as well as the pressing challenges they will address in their role. In recent years, the Government has publicly released ministerial mandate letters, as part of its plan for open and transparent government for Canadians. In January 2021, supplementary mandate letters were issued, which outlined further responsibilities and prioritised key areas of focus for the Government to fight COVID-19 and ensure a strong economic recovery in the country. In January 2021, and later in December, the letters included commitments for all Ministers to apply Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) in their decisions and consider public policies through an intersectional lens in order to address systemic inequities.

Iceland

Established in December 2017, the Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality coordinates the work of the Prime Minister’s Office and the government in the field of gender equality in Iceland. The Committee brings together the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International and Development Cooperation, the Minister of Social Affairs and Children, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education,

¹⁰ For the purposes of this Report, only Respondents with dedicated ministerial portfolios on gender equality and equality/equal opportunities are considered. Respondents where the responsibility for gender equality falls under other portfolios or under the direct responsibility of the Head of State/Government have not been included.

¹¹ For example, Japan.

Science and Culture. Other ministries take part in the meetings of the Committee based on the needs and in accordance with the decision of the Prime Minister, who chairs the meetings.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

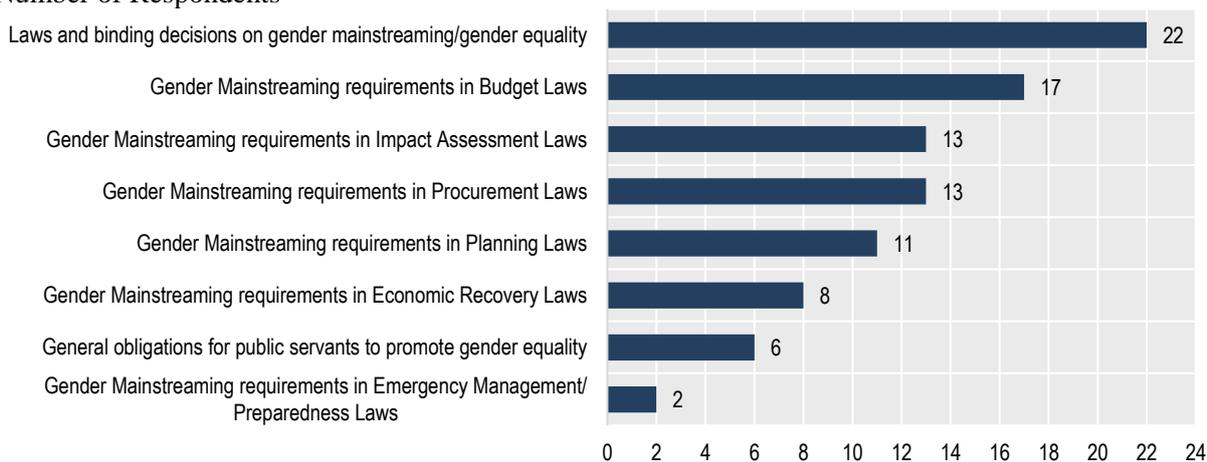
More Adherents have legal frameworks and statutory obligations for gender mainstreaming (I.1.iii)

148. **Leadership commitment to the gender equality agenda can also be expressed in the extent to which gender equality and mainstreaming requirements are integrated in legal frameworks (or other statutory obligations) as well as their robustness.** 29 out of 33 (88%) Respondents to the 2021 GMG Survey have reported having some form of legal basis or a binding decision in place that underpins gender mainstreaming. This points to an increase since 2017 as at least 9 Adherents have enacted new legislation, regulation or directive in the past five years (including to complement existing policies) to underpin gender mainstreaming in one or more policy areas.¹² The diverse forms of legal bases underpinning gender mainstreaming across the OECD include (a) laws/binding decisions focused on gender mainstreaming; (b) general obligations for public servants to promote gender equality in all actions; and (c) gender mainstreaming requirements enshrined in other key laws (e.g. planning, budgeting, or procurement laws) (see Figure 19). Furthermore, while systematic data on this topic is lacking, some countries have set gender mainstreaming requirements within sector-specific laws. For example, Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act has provisions for including GBA Plus analysis in the reporting to Parliament on immigration.

149. **The enactment of laws alone is not a sufficient indicator of their effectiveness on the ground.** In accordance with stakeholder discussions and information collected through OECD Gender Reviews, their implementation has been relatively uneven in the absence of a clear allocation of responsibilities, resources and accountability mechanisms.

Figure 19. Gender mainstreaming-related requirements in all or some government processes

Number of Respondents



Note: Total number of Respondents is 33.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

¹² Canada, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

Most Respondents have strategic frameworks for gender equality but challenges remain in the implementation (I.1.i, I.1.ii)

150. **Strategic planning is a powerful tool to implement a government’s gender equality policy by providing a systematic, structured and coordinated approach to its aims.** An increasing number of OECD countries have adopted strategic frameworks to set clear objectives, outcomes and targets for gender equality. All 30 Respondents reported having an active strategic framework in place, dedicated to gender equality – either in the form of an overarching strategy (27 Respondents) or that of a strategy targeted to specific gender equality issues (3). At least 5 Respondents¹³ have adopted a whole-of-government strategic framework for the first time while at least 19 Respondents have introduced renewed/expanded commitments since 2017.

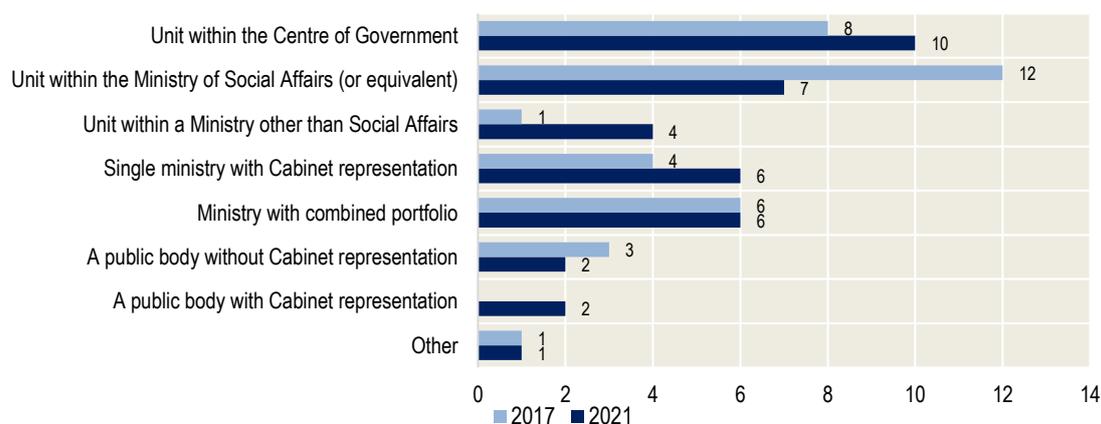
151. **Yet, challenges remain when it comes to their implementation.** Findings from the 2021 GMG Survey suggest that the most common obstacles include limited enforceability of the strategic framework (10 out of 34 Respondents), absence of resources and data to support the strategic framework (9 Respondents), limited involvement from the line ministries (7 Respondents), and funding shortfalls against the approved action plan/strategy (7 Respondents).

The adequacy of the institutional design and capacities still remains uneven (I.2.i, I.2.ii, I.2.iii)

152. **Sound institutional set up and adequate capacities are needed to facilitate the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to advance the gender equality agenda across the government.** Across the OECD, there is no standardised blueprint for institutional set-up to implement, coordinate and advance gender equality. Conventionally, a Central Gender Institution (CGI) or body is delegated the responsibility for coordination and implementation of gender equality in a country at the central or federal level. Figure 20 shows the commonly used institutional arrangements in OECD countries. Since the first collection of data on this topic in 2011, units located within the Centre-of-Government (CoG) have become progressively commonplace (10 Adherents) in the OECD area, while units on gender equality in ministries of social affairs (or equivalent) continue to be one of the more common arrangements (7 Adherents).

Figure 20. Central Gender Equality Institutions in OECD Countries (2021)

Number of Respondents



Note: 2021 data provided by 38 Respondents, 2017 data provided by 36 Respondents.

¹³ France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the United States.

Source: Information collected by OECD based on desk research and data from the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

153. **OECD baseline assessment (2016-18) found that the CGIs often lack the resources, mandate and capacity for facilitating gender mainstreaming across the government** (OECD, 2019^[111]), **challenges that were reemphasised during the COVID-19 crisis** (OECD, 2020^[143]). These challenges have prompted some governments to allocate increased resources to gender equality institutions. Particularly, findings from the 2021 GMG Survey point to an increase in the budgetary allocation for CGIs or gender equality measures in 21 out of 26 Respondents who reported any changes in the past five years (although it is difficult to assess the adequacy of this increase). Notably, in 33% of these Respondents (7), the increased allocation came in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and was earmarked for measures and programmes to prevent and address violence against women, among other measures. However, 16% of Respondents (4) reported a decrease in the resource allocations. In addition, noting the drop in the resources and capacities for gender institutions post the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (Villa and Smith, 2010^[144]), further analysis is needed in the coming years to understand the long-term trends in budgetary allocations post-COVID.

154. **As gender mainstreaming is a whole-of-government effort, it calls for effective coordination across various government entities (horizontal) and levels (vertical), while ensuring adequate skills and capacities of public officials for gender mainstreaming.** Notably, 88% of Respondents (21) reported having mechanisms for coordination across the central/federal government, while 50% of them (12) declared having in place mechanisms for coordination with sub-national governments. Box 18 highlights some of the reported examples on coordination mechanisms. Yet, several gaps were reported by Respondents: competing priorities at the central level (10 out of 29 Respondents, 34%), insufficient funding (10 out of 29 Respondents, 34%), lack of interest at the central level (7 out of 29 Respondents, 24%), and insufficient capacities and expertise of policy makers (7 out of 29 Respondents, 24%) were the most commonly reported challenges for horizontal coordination. The lack of appropriate structures (7 out of 21 Respondents, 33%) and lack of frameworks for the engagement of subnational governments (5 out of 21 Respondents, 24%), as well as insufficient funding (5 out of 21 Respondents, 24%) were the most commonly reported vertical challenges.

Box 18. Examples of coordination of gender equality

Austria

In Austria, the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming/Gender Budgeting (IMAG GMB) supports and facilitates the implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all federal ministries and at all political levels. Chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and composed of ministry experts in gender mainstreaming, the group is tasked to exchange information on initiatives and experiences, engage with federal provinces offer evaluation support in ongoing projects and measures. Another important mechanism to coordinate gender equality is the dialogue among all ministries and supreme organs which is called the inter-ministerial coordination of the equality between women and men within the instrument of performance informed budgeting. The Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport is responsible for this coordination and monitors, supports and develops the methods, processes and results of the gender equality objectives and activities. The efforts undertaken and the progress in respect of the inter-ministerial coordination are evaluated and reported annually to the parliament and the public.

Czech Republic

In Czech Republic, the Government Council for Gender Equality coordinates the main directions of ministerial policies in the area of gender equality, identifies current problems and evaluates effectiveness of measures taken

towards achievement of gender equality. According to its mandate, the Council currently has 31 members who represent the central organs of public administration, especially ministries (at the level of deputy ministers), non-governmental sector and academia, and is chaired by a member of the government who is responsible for the agenda of gender equality.

Switzerland

Led by the Federal office for the equality between women and men (BFEG), the Inter-departmental committee for the 2030 Equality Strategy coordinates the implementation of Switzerland's 2030 Equality Strategy within the federal administration of the country. The committee, which has meetings twice a year, is made of representatives of the offices concerned.

Source: Information provided by Government of Austria, Government of Czech Republic and Government of Switzerland in 2021.

Use of Gender Impact Assessments in decision-making is gaining momentum although further integration in the policy cycle is needed (I.3)

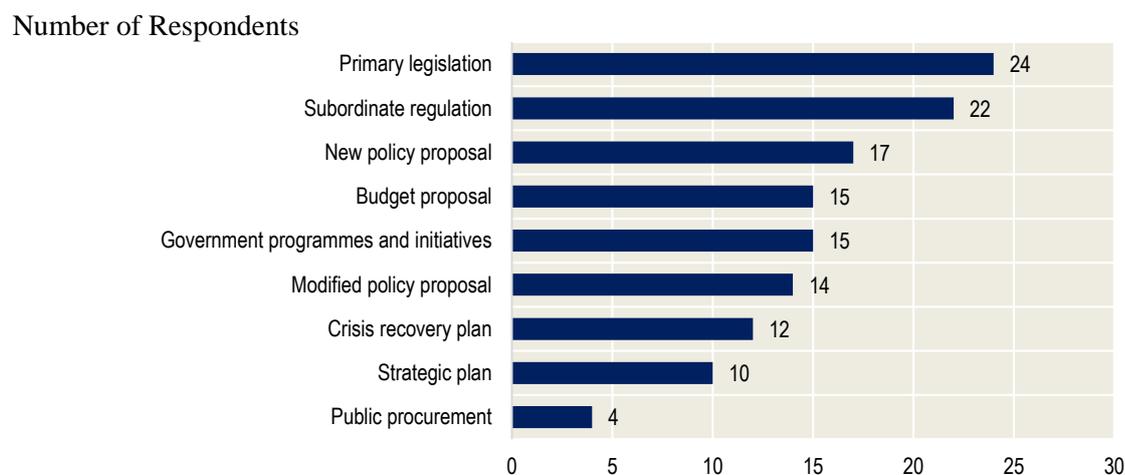
155. **Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) are a tool to help analyse any given policy or funding decision throughout its lifecycle, in order to identify and assess its (potential or actual) gender-specific impacts.** GIA is one of the most widely used tools for gender mainstreaming in Adherents, with 26 out of 34 Respondents reporting having a formal requirement for GIAs in place as of 2021, and at least 6 Adherents introducing/revising the scope of GIA requirements since 2017.¹⁴ There is a diversity of practices when it comes to GIA requirements, and there is no single blueprint for the process or the methodology it entails. In some countries, GIA is undertaken as a part of a broader regulatory impact assessment (see section *Gender-sensitive regulatory cycle*), while it exists as a standalone exercise in others. Box 19 highlights different practices in GIA across the OECD.

156. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation calls upon Adherents to conduct GIAs in various governance dimensions and across the policy cycle.** Data from the 2021 GMG Survey suggests that 20 out of 26 (77%) Respondents have requirements to conduct *ex-ante* GIA¹⁵ while just 4 (15%) to conduct *ex-post* GIA. Moreover, only 4 Respondents (15%) reported having requirements to conduct continuous GIAs. GIAs can be conducted for a range of decision-making instruments, including those pertaining to policies, budgets and programmes. Figure 21 shows the types of decisions that are subject to GIA across the OECD.

157. **GIAs are only as effective as the quality of the data, evidence and analysis that goes into them.** In the absence of mechanisms to check their quality, GIAs can become merely a tick-box exercise, potentially weighing on the finite resources of the government without meaningful outcomes. Adherents have introduced several measures to strengthen the robustness of GIAs. For 25 Respondents, most commonly reported among such measures include regular, optional training for civil servants (38%), verification of the application of GIAs by the CGIs (21%) and central government institutions (17%) respectively.

¹⁴ Canada, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

¹⁵ While not included here, in the U.S., the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) requires gender analysis for its projects and programming.

Figure 21. Types of documents for which the GIA requirement exists

Note: Total number of Respondents is 27.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

158. **Despite recent progress, the integration of GIAs in routine policymaking across Adherents remains limited.** Among 32 Respondents, the most commonly reported challenges were the perception of gender impact assessments as a tick-box exercise (44%), absence of binding requirements (38%) and lack of gender expertise of policymakers (34%). Notably, the lack of readily available gender-disaggregated data was also reported as a key barrier by 28% of Respondents (9). These persisting barriers were further illustrated in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2020_[143]). For instance, only 32% of Respondents (11 out of 34) reported having rapid gender impact assessments in place for emergencies and other urgent policymaking situations, of which 6 reported conducting rapid GIAs during COVID-19. It is worth highlighting that the availability of data disaggregated by gender was noted as a key enabler for this by almost all of these Respondents.

Box 19. GIA practices in some Adherents

In 2016, **Canada** put in place requirements for programme officials and evaluators to include government-wide policy considerations, such as Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus), in performance information profiles and evaluation processes. GBA Plus was introduced in 1995 but had never been applied to policy evaluation before. Following this, in 2019, the Government of Canada launched a primer for integrating GBA Plus into evaluation, which considers a range of intersectional factors, into policy, programme and service delivery continuum highlighting that the body of knowledge developed through numerous evaluations indicates GBA Plus should be applied at each point on the continuum. **Finland's** Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has developed comprehensive guidelines "How to incorporate the gender perspective in your own work" to inform and encourage civil servants to do GIA as part of their preparation process and, if necessary, acquire help outside the process. While the actual methodology varies per the function of the authority in concern, these Guidelines outline the first steps as follows: i) examination of each matter at every stage of preparation from the gender perspective; ii) assessment of the gender impact; iii) consideration of the results to include the gender perspective when drawing up the final presentation. In **New Zealand**, the Ministry for Women has co-developed with the policy community an online gender analysis tool called "Bringing Gender In" to assist policymakers across Government to consider the gender implications of their work. The tool invites users to reflect on key questions and provides examples of good practices and links to databases and other useful material.

Source: Government of Canada (2019), [Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation – A Primer](#); Ministry of

Social Affairs and Health (n.d.), [How to incorporate the gender perspective in your own work](#); Information provided by Government of New Zealand as part of the 2021 GMG Survey.

Spotlight: Gender-sensitive Infrastructure

159. **Infrastructure – central to every country’s pursuit of economic growth, wellbeing and sustainable development – is used and benefitted from by different groups.** By incorporating gender considerations into infrastructure governance frameworks, it is easier for governments to identify the gender impact of infrastructure decisions and prevent one group from disproportionately benefitting at the expense of disadvantaging others. Adherents have progressively adopted tools to mainstream gender in infrastructure planning, decision-making and delivery over the past five years, including through advancing long-term infrastructure visions for gender-responsive infrastructure; female voice and agency in infrastructure decision-making; gender considerations in project appraisal, selection, risk assessment and design; gender-sensitive infrastructure, procurement and delivery (OECD, 2021_[12]).

160. **More efforts are still needed to support a whole-of-government and life-cycle approach, which are key to ensure that emerging policies and reforms on gender-sensitive infrastructure are not disassociated and siloed, negatively affecting their efficiency and effectiveness.** Some of the challenges when mainstreaming gender considerations throughout the infrastructure public investment are: lack of full alignment between long-term infrastructure plans and gender equality objectives; weak diversity in the infrastructure sector; absence of tools to assess gender impacts (see section Use of Gender Impact Assessments in decision-making is gaining momentum although further integration in the policy cycle is needed (I.3)); lack of adequate capacity and capabilities of procurement officials; unavailability of gender equality targets or indicators causing weak oversight.

Using government tools to advance gender equality (I.3, I.4)

161. **In addition to policies, gender norms and stereotypes can be hidden in the baseline of government tools such as regulations, budgets and public procurement, thereby risking a worsening of existing gender inequalities if they are used in a gender-blind manner.** Since budgets, regulations and procurement are critical instruments in the hands of governments to act and influence behaviours, they could become important tools for the advancement of gender equality (including during COVID-19 recovery). The 2015 Gender Recommendation calls upon Adherents to integrate assessments of gender impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance such as public procurement, regulations and budgets.

Gender-sensitive regulatory cycle

162. **Regulations and rules are an important tool used by Adherents to influence norms and change behaviours, providing scope for governments to harness their potential to impact systemic inequalities such as gender inequality.** Furthermore, integrating gender considerations into the regulatory cycle can help governments to ensure that new rules do not perpetuate such inequalities or negatively impact gains made in gender equality. Since 2014, more and more Adherents have reported considering the impact on gender equality in the formulation of new regulations. As of 2021, 24 out of 26 Adherents reported having a formal requirement for primary legislation, while 22 out of 26 Adherents for subordinate regulation.

Gender budgeting

163. **In order to systematically reflect gender perspectives in public spending decisions, governments can use gender budgeting as a means to inform gender impacts of budgetary decisions and to better understand how tax and expenditure decisions contribute to gender equality.** Public

expenditure amounts to a significant proportion of economic activity – thus, government tax and spending decisions can have powerful impact on the achievement of gender equality goals. In 2018, nearly half of the Adherents reported using some form of gender budgeting (OECD, 2019_[111]). Since then, several other OECD countries have introduced gender budgeting or are looking into ways to strengthen the gender budgeting framework.

164. **The OECD Gender Budgeting Framework** (OECD, 2019_[145]) **highlights the three key pillars of an effective approach to gender budgeting.** These include a strong strategic framework (including gender equality goals, legislative underpinning and clear leadership by the central budget authority), effective tools of implementation (suited to the budget framework of each country) and a supportive enabling environment (including guidance, training, and availability of gender-disaggregated data).

165. **Adherents have utilised varying sets of tools and approaches to achieve their goals** (see Box 20 for the examples of Iceland and Italy). The most common tools include ex-ante gender impact assessments (76%), ex-post gender impact assessments (59%), a gender dimension in performance setting (59%), a gender dimension in resource allocation (53%) and a gender needs assessment (53%) (OECD, 2020_[146]).

166. **In the COVID-19 recovery context, integrating gender perspectives into spending reviews can ensure that gender is a routine part of the budget reprioritisation.** In this way, the reprioritisation of expenditure has a positive impact on gender equality goals and does not increase gender gaps. Nearly all Adherents use spending reviews as a routine part of the budget process, with some Adherents beginning to include gender considerations into the spending review process.

167. **Adherents have identified certain common challenges that hinder effective implementation of gender budgeting,** such as: lack of availability of gender-specific data, difficulty sustaining political commitment, lack of engagement from line ministries, the need for greater training and capacity development, and the lack of impact on budget decision-making¹⁶ (OECD, 2019_[111]; OECD, Forthcoming_[147]).

Gender-sensitive public procurement

168. **As public procurement represents a significant portion of GDP across Adherents (12.9% of GDP in 2019), it is often used as a strategic lever/tool to achieve broader policy objectives including gender equality and mainstreaming** (OECD, 2021_[12]; 2020_[148]; 2019_[149]). Gender-inclusive public procurement involves the introduction of gender requirements and considerations into public procurement policies and practices, to advance gender equality (OECD, Forthcoming_[150]). In this context, governments can use different mechanisms ranging from needs assessment to ex-post evaluation of the contract to integrate women's needs as well as requirements for contractors to uphold gender equality (OECD, Forthcoming_[150]). This is particularly relevant in the recovery context, noting the role that public procurement would play in investments and spending for COVID-19 recovery.

169. **As the OECD progress report on the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement showed, Adherents to the Recommendation specifically consider social inclusiveness (such as gender considerations) in the tendering process itself** (OECD, 2019_[149]). In 2020, 57% of respondent countries to an OECD survey on integrating responsible business conduct (RBC)

¹⁶ These challenges have been taken from (OECD, 2019_[111]), *Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Leadership*, OECD Publishing, <https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa5-en>. Latest data is expected to be available by end-2021.

standards into public procurement¹⁷ have developed a strategic or regulatory framework¹⁸ that includes gender-related considerations in public procurement. Box 20 highlights some country examples on gender-sensitive public procurement.

170. **However, when strategic or regulatory frameworks include gender-related considerations or requirements on public procurement, the provisions are unlikely to apply to sub-contractors or the full supply chain in a mandatory way** (OECD, 2020_[148]) **stressing the need for more policy coherence.** Other challenges to advance gender equality through public procurement include the lack of data with key gender-based information, the lack of capacity of the procurement workforce and balancing multiple strategic objectives (e.g. economic efficiency, environmental benefits, fostering innovation or support to SMEs). Indeed, 38% of respondent countries to the “OECD Survey on Integrating Responsible Business Conduct into Public Procurement highlighted the lack of clear understanding of how to implement gender-related considerations into public procurement policies and practices as a significant challenge (OECD, 2020_[148]). The use of public procurement as a strategic lever to advance with gender equality requires the reinforcement of the capacity of the procurement workforce through capacity building activities, supporting tools and clear examples/case studies on how to incorporate gender considerations into procurement. Furthermore, depending on specific product categories and market characteristics, public procurement officers have to decide on trade-offs between multiple policy objectives.

Box 20. Country examples of strategic use of government tools to advance gender equality

Iceland introduced gender budgeting gradually through the budget process. In 2016, Iceland passed a new Organic Budget Law requiring budget bills to outline their effect on gender and gender equality targets. Over time, gender dimension has become a key factor in budget considerations. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the gender impact of the budget was published for the first time in 2021, and a baseline report on gender was updated, where gender perspectives and data availability were mapped, and future needs of gender-disaggregated data identified, providing a solid source for gender mainstreaming.

In **Italy**, gender budgeting was introduced as a pilot project by the Public Finance and Accounting Law (196/2009) and performed for the first time on the 2016 State final accounts. The gender budget report is drafted to provide end-of-year data, looking at both expenditures and revenues, with the aim to assess the different impact of budgetary policy on women and men, in terms of money, services, time, and unpaid work.

In **Portugal**, since 2018, the State Budget Law includes a specific article on gender budgeting for the budget of public bodies by identifying the programmes, activities or measures to be analysed in terms of their impact on gender equality in each relevant budget year. Since 2021, public bodies must promote the publication of administrative sex-disaggregated data on programmes and measures that are subject to a gender impact analysis. In 2021, the State Budget included a set of gender equality indicators across key policy areas with the aim of promoting an annual analysis of the gender impact of budget policies. The Budget General Directorate annually

¹⁷ Data reflect the responses of 26 OECD countries and one partner (Brazil) to the 2020 OECD Survey on Leveraging Responsible Business Conduct through Public Procurement. The RBC objectives included in the Survey were: environment, human rights, labour rights, minority considerations, people with disabilities, long-term unemployed people, gender considerations and integrity. For the purpose of the Survey, gender considerations refer to incorporating gender elements in the public procurement policymaking cycle and in the procurement processes.

¹⁸ For the purpose of the survey, a regulatory framework is defined as a system of rules such as laws, decrees, cabinet directions or any other legal documents that governs and regulates specific policies. A strategic framework is defined as a high-level document approved by national authorities, such as parliament and government that sets out a country’s policy goals and ambitions for a specific sector or area of public policy such as health care or the environment. Strategic frameworks can also include targets, roadmaps and action plans.

issues a circular, with instructions including a specific section and annex on gender budgeting.

In Spain, according to the Public Procurement Law (Act № 9/2017), and in conjunction with article 45 of Equality Law (Organic Act № 3/ 2007) after amendments introduced by Royal Decree-Law 6/2019, contracting authorities shall not carry out any tender procedure with companies with 50 or more employees that do not comply with the obligation to have an equality plan.

In Switzerland, the federal government awards contracts for services only to companies guaranteeing compliance with the Federal Act on Public Procurement, which covers working conditions, industrial safety regulations, as well as equal pay for men and women. To ensure equal pay is respected by tendering companies, the Swiss Confederation's procurement offices can conduct equal pay audits themselves or enlist external assistance.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Iceland in 2020; Information provided by the Government of Italy in 2021; (OECD, Forthcoming^[150]), *Public procurement and Gender, Challenges and good practice*; (OECD, 2020^[148]), *Integrating Responsible Business Conduct in Public Procurement*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/02682b01-en>; Information provided by the Government of Switzerland in 2021.

Monitoring and Accountability for Gender Equality (II and 2013- I.J)

171. The 2015 Gender Recommendation also focuses on monitoring and accountability for gender equality (see Box 21).

Box 21. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: focus on accountability

II. The Council RECOMMENDS that Adherents strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Consider establishing or strengthening capacity of independent institutions (such as Independent Commissions, Supreme Audit Institutions, Ombuds Offices), and advisory bodies (e.g. Government councils) to monitor the implementation of gender equality strategies, integrate gender issues in policy-making, and facilitate regular reporting, audits and measurement. To be effective, such oversight should be undertaken in a balanced manner and avoid prescriptive approaches to foster continuous improvement while enabling to track progress in gender equality (*hereinafter referred to as II.1*).
2. Strengthen the evidence base and systematically measure progress towards gender equality performance, based on gender impact indicators and measurable outcomes, by (*II.2*):
 - i) Developing and implementing evaluation, measurement and accountability frameworks and indicators and collecting data to regularly assess and report on performance of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies, initiatives, public policies and programmes at appropriate levels of government. Consider building capacity of public institutions based on these evaluations;
 - ii) Actively promoting data dissemination and ensuring affordable, effective and timely access to performance information on gender equality and mainstreaming, that allows for tracking results against targets, monitoring progress towards socio-economic development and for comparison with international and other benchmarks; and
 - iii) Increasing co-ordination among data collecting and producing bodies and collaboration with relevant stakeholders with a view to developing better gender impact indicators.
3. Encourage greater role of parliaments and parliamentary committees to support progress in gender equality, for example, by integrating gender perspectives in parliamentary practices, legislation and budgets, by promoting legislative initiatives focusing on gender equality and by providing oversight of the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and initiatives (*II.3*).
4. Establish or maintain effective, independent, impartial and efficient complaint and appeal mechanisms to protect rights for gender equality and consider complaints in an efficient, competent and impartial manner (*II.4*).

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation

Accountability and oversight for gender equality is improving slowly yet steadily (II.1, II.3, II.4)

172. **Accountability and oversight mechanisms can support Adherents to effectively uphold their gender equality objectives in order to successfully meet gender-related goals.** For the purposes of this section, various levels of accountability refer to those enabled by independent institutions such as parliaments, or independent oversight institutions like independent commissions, equality bodies, Ombud’s offices, supreme audit institutions (SAIs). Such mechanisms can help identify needs, gaps and challenges in fulfilling the gender equality goals of a country, while evaluating the impact of efforts taken by various government actors in this regard. In particular, Ombud’s offices, independent commissions or judicial commissions that adjudicate claims are critical in upholding gender equality principles by serving as “corrective” institutions (institutions of recourse) and addressing gender equality and grievances (OECD, 2014^[151]).

173. **In recent years, SAIs have been taking on a more active role in monitoring the fulfilment of gender equality objectives** (see Box 22). In the last five years, SAIs in 10 Adherents (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) have reported undertaking (or being in the process of undertaking) an audit of gender-related initiatives (fully or partially) of the government, including gender mainstreaming. In order to effectively implement existing equality laws and frameworks, justice institutions need to be effective, accountable, and gender-responsive. Common pitfalls such as limited institutional capacities, accessibility issues, length of proceedings, and lack of remedies might hinder the efficiency of justice institutions and deter victims from turning to justice at all. To this extent, developing and implementing effective recourse and redressal mechanisms is paramount to upholding gender equality. For instance, cases related to gender pay gaps require targeted remedies as well as oversight mechanisms to ensure due implementation.

Box 22. Mechanisms for oversight and accountability for gender equality

In **Austria**, the Court of Audit (ACA) has the responsibility to monitor the implementation of federally mandated gender-responsive budgeting. For example, in 2017, the ACA pointed out pronounced gender differences in earned income as part of its audit on gender aspects of income tax law. In 2020, the ACA’s follow-up audit showed that the Federal Ministry of Finance had fully implemented 2 of the 11 assessed recommendations fully, and 7 in part (2 remained unheeded). It recommended the ministry to pursue the implementation of adequate measures to reduce the gender pay gap.

In **Canada**, the Office of the Auditor General, undertook focussed audits of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) in both 2009 and 2015. These helped shed light on its application across government and helped mobilise action on the part of key stakeholders to drive improvements. A third audit of GBA Plus has been undertaken with results planned, to be released in spring 2022.

In 2018, the Comptroller General of the Republic (CGR) in **Costa Rica** carried out an operational audit on the effectiveness of the preparation for the implementation of the SDGs, with a special emphasis on SDG 5. The audit report recommended that the High Level Council of the SDGs issues guidelines for the Ministries and central-level institutions to define and implement specific actions on gender matters. Likewise, it suggested defining country goals associated with national policies and SDG 5.

In December 2021, the Parliament of **Ireland** (Oireachtas) established a Joint Committee on Gender Equality consisting of members from both Houses of the Parliament. The Joint Committee is tasked to consider the recommendations contained in the Report of the Citizens’ Assembly on Gender Equality, and is to report back

to the Parliament within nine months of its first public meeting.

The **European Court of Auditors** conducted an audit of European Commission's efforts in gender mainstreaming, offering insights into the need to reinforce the Commission's strategy and institutional framework for gender mainstreaming.

In June 2015, the **United Kingdom** established the Women and Equalities Committee to oversee the work of the Government Equalities Office. Their work focuses on holding the department accountable for progress being made to close the gender gap, as well as to tackle other forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Austria in July 2021; ACA (2017), [Report of the Court of Audit: Gender aspects in income tax law with the focus on wage tax](#); ACA (n.d.), [Equality and Diversity](#); ACA (2020) [Follow-up audits by the ACA](#); Houses of the Oireachtas (2022), [Committee on Gender Equality](#); ECA (2021), [Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action](#); Information provided by Government of Costa Rica and Government of the United Kingdom as part of the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

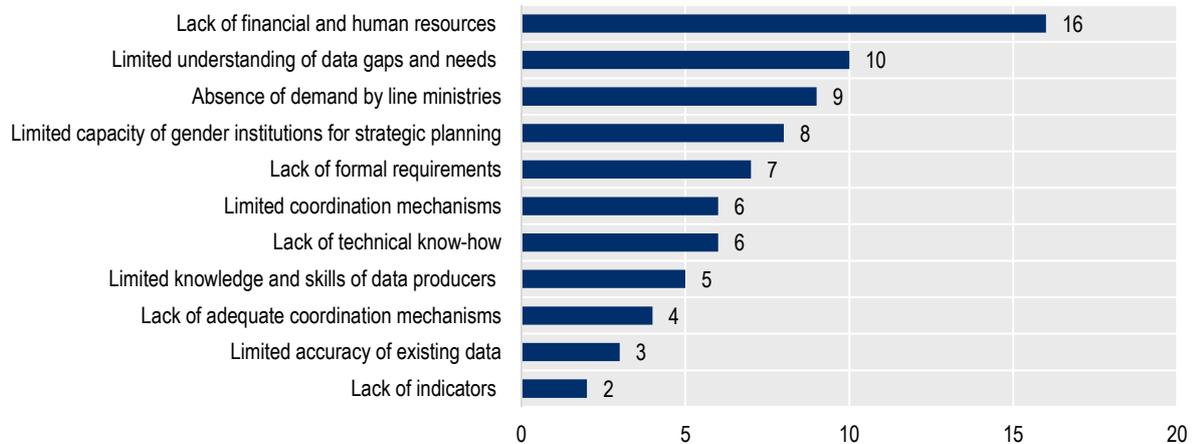
Bottlenecks in generating and using data remain a significant barrier to implementing gender equality policies (II.2)

174. **Data is a strategic asset for policy-makers to identify gender biases and inequalities and proactively make inclusive policy choices.** Findings from the 2021 GMG Survey suggest Adherents are taking steps to address the gap in the availability of data. 19 out of 33 Respondents (58%) reported having legal or binding requirements for collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data (to at least a certain extent). Of 17 Respondents with a strategic framework for data and statistics at the central/federal level, less than half (7) have reported that these frameworks include explicit commitments/actions on data disaggregated by gender and/or other protected characteristics (Box 23).

175. **Only 29% of Respondents (7 out of 24) have reported conducting an audit or analysis mapping the availability of gender-disaggregated data across official statistics.** In other cases, administrations do not seem to have a holistic picture of the data available to support gender mainstreaming. According to the 2021 GMG Survey, the most prevalent barriers faced by Adherents to ensuring systematic production, availability, accessibility, quality and use of gender-disaggregated data include: (a) lack of financial and human resources; (b) limited understanding of data gaps and needs in different sectors and areas of governance; and, (c) absence of demand by line ministries. Notably, even in 2017, line ministries reported limited skills, capacities, resources and time constraints as a key barrier in advancing the use of such data in policy making (OECD, 2019_[11]). Figure 22 illustrates the key barriers reported by Adherents in 2021 in detail.

Figure 22. Barriers reported in statistics disaggregated by gender

Number of Respondents



Note: Total number of Respondents is 33.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

176. **Taking note of these challenges, Adherents have undertaken various measures to boost the collection, accessibility, and availability of statistics disaggregated by gender.** Box 23 describes some examples of country efforts to improve collection and use of gender-disaggregated data, while Box 24 describes some promising avenues for the inclusion of intersectional approaches. The three most commonly reported measures by Respondents include putting in place: (a) online portal (or equivalent) to facilitate easy public access to all gender statistics; (b) dedicated teams/units/centers on gender statistics located in the National Statistics Offices; and (c) Advisory Committees/Councils/Task Forces to determine data gaps and needs. In addition, digital transformation offers opportunities to leverage digital tools for expanding the availability, accessibility and use of gender-disaggregated data, while securing data privacy. More specifically in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Adherents opted for innovative mechanisms to produce gender-disaggregated data rapidly to inform policymaking, like expanding the use of experimental statistics by Switzerland’s Federal Statistics Office or the introduction of gender equality indicators within the State Budget across policy areas in Portugal. In particular, the development of indicators (process and/or impact) can allow the measurement of progress towards gender equality in a consistent manner throughout the government.

Box 23. Country examples of practices to improve availability and use of gender disaggregated data

Iceland has developed an interactive dashboard, which shows the progress made on individual indicators of its Gender Equality Action Programme 2020-2023 based on data. In 2019, Statistics **Portugal** launched the National Statistics System on Gender Equality project to review, update and enhance the content and coverage of the Gender Database (GDB), so that a more comprehensive system of gender statistics and information on various dimensions of (in)equality between women and men can be made available for policy users and for society in general. In **Switzerland**, as part of the Federal Council's Open Government Data Strategy 2019-2023, a roundtable on gender statistics was organised by the Swiss National Statistical Office and the Federal Office for Gender Equality (September 2021). The roundtable allowed to foster dialogue amongst the various sectors on the use of data and statistics in the public sphere in the field of gender equality. It also provided a platform to exchange on the use and analysis of existing data and possible improvements to suit the needs of all end users, leading to

tailored measures by the Swiss government to meet this objective. In late 2017, **United Kingdom**'s Office for National Statistics (ONS) initiated an audit of data sources and publications that are available to understand inequalities in the country, including outcomes for all nine of the protected characteristic groups (age; sex; race and ethnicity; religion or belief; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity) covered by the Equality Act 2010. The audit highlighted the need to improve transparency and accessibility, coverage, granularity, harmonisation and comparability of data, as well as the inclusiveness of the collection and reporting processes.

Source: Government of Iceland (n.d.), [Dashboard](#); Government of Switzerland (n.d.), [Open Government Data Round Table](#). Information for Portugal was provided by the Government of Portugal in 2021; Office for National Statistics (2018), [Equalities Data Audit: Final Report](#)

Box 24. Intersectional analysis

The 2015 Gender Recommendation also recognises that individuals can face multiple, discrimination, as a result of being exposed to different, often intersecting forms of exclusions or disadvantages (provision III.4). There is a growing recognition across countries, in particular since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, that implementing an intersectional approach allows for an enhanced awareness of the significant diversity between individuals that make up any given population or group in policymaking towards holistic gender equality. As of 2021, 9 out of 26 Respondents reported having developed practices for intersectional impact assessment, highlighting that the application of an intersectional lens in gender equality efforts is at a nascent stage. In this regard, more research and evidence is needed to understand what works.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

Gender Equality in Public Leadership (III)

177. The 2015 Gender Recommendation also focuses on gender equality in public leadership (see Box 25).

Box 25. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: focus on public leadership

III. The Council RECOMMENDS that Adherents consider measures to achieve gender balanced representation in decision making positions in public life by encouraging greater participation of women in government at all levels, as well as in parliaments, judiciaries and other public institutions. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Embed a political commitment at the highest level to promote gender equality in public life, as appropriate, by developing a comprehensive framework to encourage balanced representation of women and men in public decision making positions by (*hereinafter referred to as III.1*):
 - i) Considering comprehensive (transitional or correctional) regulatory or voluntary measures to promote gender diversity in parliamentary and executive bodies, including in parliamentary committees and leadership posts. For example, based on good practices and as appropriate, these measures can include disclosure requirements, quotas, voluntary targets, parity laws, alternating the sexes on the party list and linking gender ratios in political parties to their access to public funding. Considering penalties for non-compliance can be important to ensure the effectiveness of such measures (*iii.1.i*);
 - ii) Introducing measures, as appropriate, to enable equal access to opportunities in senior public service and judicial appointments such as disclosure requirements, target setting or quotas, while ensuring a transparent and merit-based approach in judicial and senior public sector appointments through open competition, clear recruitment standards and wide vacancy advertisement (*iii.1.ii*);

- iii) Mainstreaming work-life balance and family-friendly work practices at the top level in public institutions and promoting gender-sensitive working conditions, for example, by reviewing internal procedures of public institutions, reconsidering traditional working hours, developing schemes to support the reconciliation of family and professional obligations, providing incentives to men to take available care leave and flexible work entitlements; and (III.1.iii)
 - iv) Facilitating capacity and leadership development opportunities, mentoring, networking and other training programmes in public institutions, promoting female role models in public life and encouraging active engagement of men in promoting gender equality (III.1.iv).
2. Systematically monitor gender balance in public institutions, including in leadership positions and different occupational groups, through regular data collection, such as the use of employee surveys, and reassess its alignment with overall gender equality objectives and priorities, taking into account the results of evaluations (see also recommendation II.2) (III.2).
 3. Consider measures to tackle the root causes of barriers to women's access to decision-making positions, and to improve women's image in society by developing information campaigns and awareness-raising programmes about gender stereotypes, conscious and unconscious biases and social and economic benefits of gender equality while addressing double or multiple discrimination (III.3).

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation

178. OECD evidence suggests that the fairness of institutions, as well as government's responsiveness and reliability in delivering public services and anticipating new needs, are strong predictors of people's trust in government (OECD, 2017_[152]). Ensuring that public administrations and parliaments reflect the population they serve – including its gender composition – can contribute to this fairness and responsiveness, thereby contributing to improving of public trust in government and democracy (see Box 26). Furthermore, with more gender-diverse decision-making, evidence also points to higher attention given to issues such as gender-based violence (OECD, 2014_[151]) (Delaporte and Pino, 2021_[153]).

Box 26. Gender-balanced representation can improve trust and satisfaction in democracy

Analyses from a forthcoming OECD paper point to evidence on the association of women's representation with increased satisfaction with the state of public health services and the state of democracy, as well as higher political efficacy levels (stronger in women), reflecting four of the five drivers of public trust as identified by the OECD Trust Framework. Furthermore, beyond associations, data from this study found causal evidence on higher levels of citizen trust in government decision-making with an equal representation of women, as well as a preference for gender-balanced institutions over those represented homogeneously.

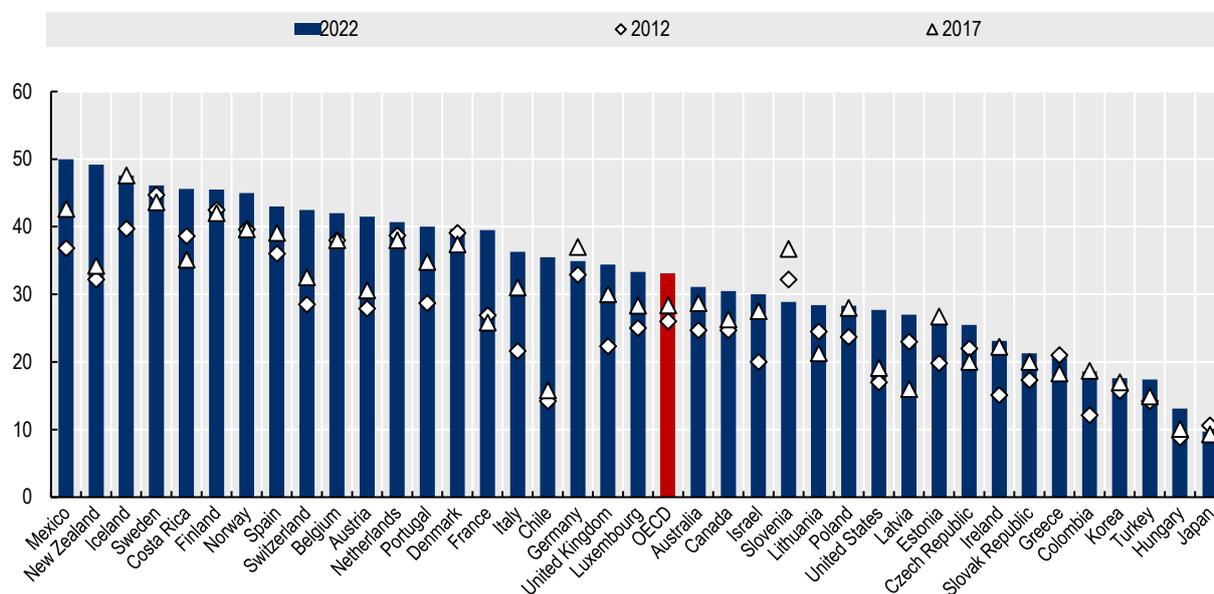
Source: (OECD, Forthcoming_[10]), *OECD Working Paper: Women's Representation Increases Trust in Public Institutions*.

179. Since 2017, across the OECD, there has been an increase in women's representation in decision-making roles. At the parliamentary level, the average share of women in the lower/single house of parliaments in OECD countries increased from 28% to 33% between 2017 and 2022 (see Figure 23) while at the ministerial level, women's average representation increased by 6 p.p. between 2017 and 2021 (see Figure 24). The average share of women judges in the Supreme Courts (36%) in OECD-COE¹⁹ countries increased by 3 p.p. between 2016 and 2018 (see Figure 25). However, as of 2018, only five out of 24 OECD-COE countries had a female president in their Supreme courts (CEPEJ, n.d._[154]).

¹⁹ This refers to OECD Member countries that are also members of the Council of Europe.

Figure 23. Gender equality in parliament, 2017 and 2022

Lower or single house, share of women (%)



Note: Data for 2022 represents the share of women in lower or single house of Parliaments as of 1 January 2022.

Source: OECD (2021_[12]) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) PARLINE database.**Figure 24. Gender equality in ministerial positions, 2017 and 2021**

Share of women (%)

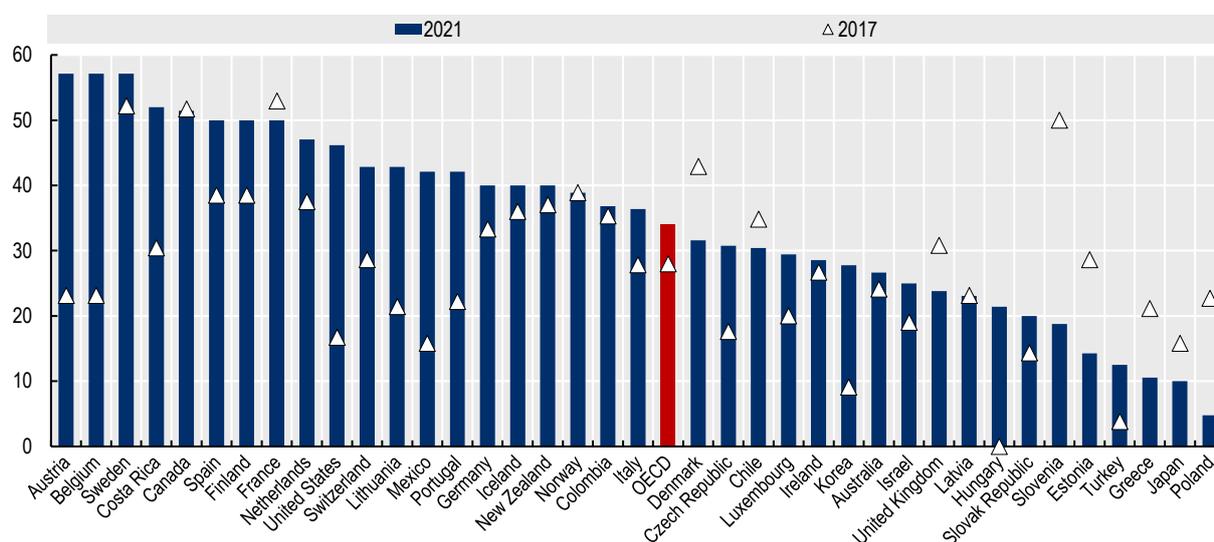
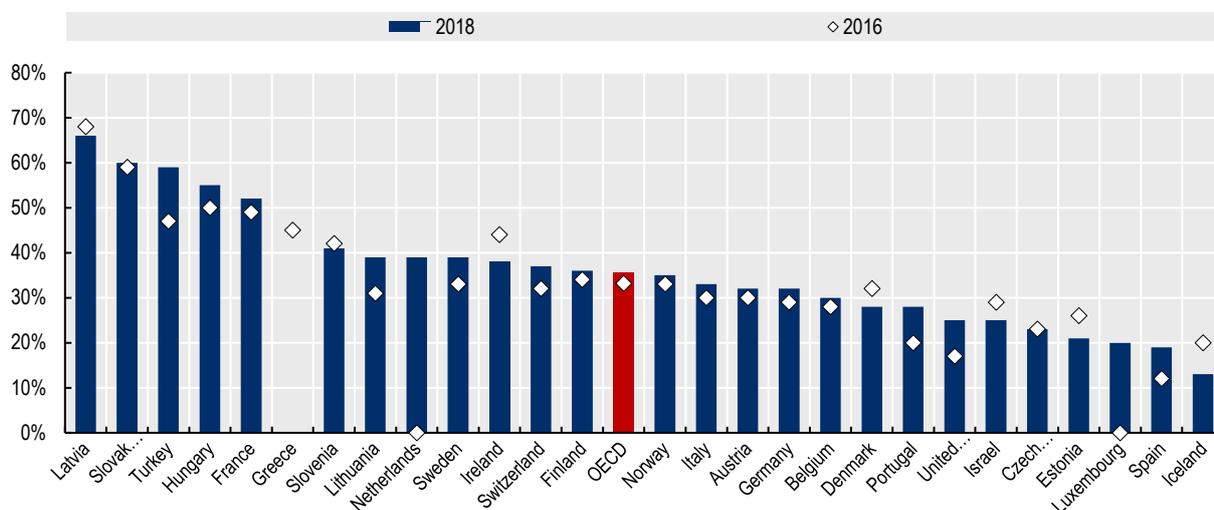
Source: OECD (2021_[12])

Figure 25. Gender equality in Supreme courts, 2016 and 2018

Share of women (%)



Note: Data on 24 OECD-COE countries. The Netherlands has not been included in the 2016 average because of missing data. Greece has not been included in the 2018 average because of missing data. The 2016 data for the United Kingdom is of the share of female judges in England and Wales. The 2018 data for the United Kingdom calculated as a simple average of the share of female judges in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Source: Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), CEPEJ-STAT (database).

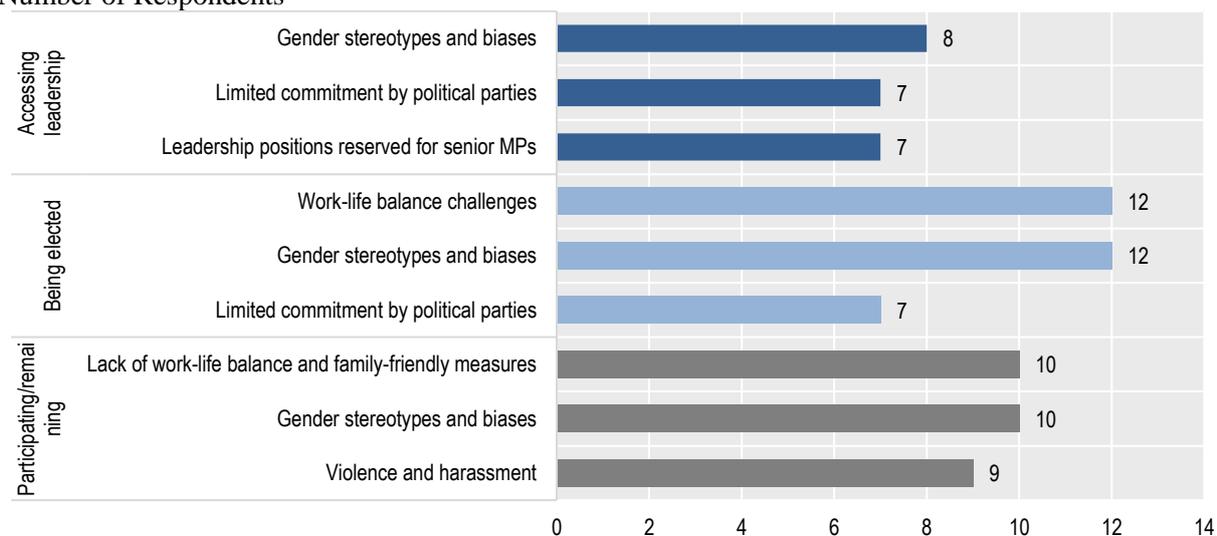
180. **Despite progress, on average across the OECD, women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions in the public sector, with significant variation among Adherents.** For example, the share of women parliamentarians fell by up to 10 p.p. in some Adherent countries (OECD, 2021_[12]). More recently, the COVID-19 crisis bore a stark reminder of the gender imbalance in decision-making, as women made up only 24% of the members of ad-hoc decision-making structures to deal with the pandemic globally (UNDP and UN Women, 2021_[155]). Barriers for women in accessing public leadership positions persist. Figure 26 indicates challenges reported by Respondents preventing women from a) being elected (e.g. work-life balance challenges, gender stereotypes, limited commitment by political parties to run women candidates); b) participating/remaining (e.g. lack of work-life balance and family-friendly measures, gender stereotypes, violence and harassment against women parliamentarians); and c) accessing leadership positions (e.g. gender stereotypes, limited commitment by political parties to nominate women, leadership positions reserved for senior MPs) in parliaments. These slide backs and barriers emphasise that women's political participation must continue to be strengthened by ensuring equal access to politics and promoting gender-sensitive working conditions.

181. **Adherents have steadily taken efforts to enhance gender equality in public leadership,** including by introducing leadership targets and quotas, mentorship, networking and capacity-building programmes, as well as active recruitment of women in leadership positions. More specifically, to support women's access to politics, Adherents have introduced measures to address barriers in the pipeline to elected office. For example, Portugal's Law 1/2019 of March 29, raised the minimum threshold for women and men in the electoral lists to national and European Parliament, elective bodies of municipalities, and members of the Parish Councils from 33% to 40%. Recent analysis also suggests that more and more countries in the OECD-EU area have been introducing measures to encourage gender parity in recruitment and promotion procedures for judges (European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, 2020_[156]). Data from the 2021 GMG Survey shows that 36% of 28 Respondents have undertaken measures to promote gender equality in the national Parliament, while 28% of 29 Respondents reported measures with regard

to judiciary in the past five years. Box 27 highlights some examples of promising practices in this regard. Yet, more significant and sustained efforts are needed in this regard to attain gender balance at the top, notably through reducing stereotypes and changing the culture, improving the availability and uptake of work-life balance arrangements and improving transparency in selection/recruitment/promotion processes in leadership positions in public institutions.

Figure 26. Barriers reported in women’s election, participation, and access to leadership positions in parliaments

Number of Respondents



Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

Box 27. Examples of practices to promote gender equality in public leadership

Chile

In order to ensure gender-balanced decision-making, the Law 21216 passed in 2020 to create the Convención Constitucional (the body tasked with drafting Chile’s new constitution), mandated that its composition had to meet gender parity. As a result, half of the elected members of this important body are women.

Iceland

In May 2021 the Icelandic parliament, the Althingi, passed into law (42/2021) a bill requiring that the men to women ratio in the Presidium of the Althingi, in its standing committees, and in the other committees and councils appointed by the parliament shall reflect the results of the parliamentary elections in terms of gender balance. Furthermore, in committees with more than three delegates, the women to men ratio shall be as equal as possible and not fall below 40 per cent. The bill aims at making it compulsory to consider gender when electing deputy speakers, distributing seats in committees and choosing or electing delegates in committees, councils and governing bodies in the country.

United Kingdom

In December 2018, the UK’s parliament published a new Gender-Sensitive Audit carried out by a panel consisting of four MPs, four members of the House of Lords, and two staff members from each House. The audit revealed the significant progress made in increasing the representation of women in both Houses, but also the remaining

barriers that make it harder for women to become MPs or members of the Lords. The report also set out recommendations to address these challenges.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Chile in 2022 and the Government of Iceland in 2021; UK Parliament (2018), [UK Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit 2018](#).

Gender Equality in Public Employment (IV)

182. The 2015 Gender Recommendation also focuses on gender equality in public employment (see Box 28).

Box 28. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: focus on public administration

IV. The Council RECOMMENDS that Adherents take adequate measures to improve the gender equality in public employment. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Promote the flexibility, transparency, and fairness of public employment systems and policies to ensure fair pay and equal opportunities for women and men with a mix of backgrounds and experience (*hereinafter referred to as IV.1*).
2. Develop both comprehensive and more cause-specific measures to address any gender pay gap in the public sector and horizontal occupational segregation, as appropriate through (*IV.2*):
 - i) Enacting pay equality and equity laws and regulations, tools and regular pay assessments in public sector institutions, including the identification of the predominantly female and male job classes in the public sector, and the evaluation of compensation differences among them and of the need for adjustments (*IV.2.i*);
 - ii) Performing regular and objective desk audits, targeting low-paid and/or female-dominated sectors to ensure pay equality and equity, and implementing policy recommendations based on their results; and (*IV.2.ii*)
 - iii) Ensuring effective channels of recourse for challenging the gender wage gap in the public sector as appropriate, for example by considering independent complaint and legal recourse mechanisms for non-compliance (*IV.2.iii*).
3. Promote merit-based recruitment; consider positive policies and practices to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in each occupational group in public sector employment; and, develop concrete measures to ensure the effective removal of the implicit barriers within hiring and staffing processes, where appropriate and necessary (*IV.3*).
4. Establish clear institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting gender balance in the public sector, including independent recourse and appeal mechanisms, which should be adequately funded, resourced, and linked to executive teams to ensure their effectiveness (*IV.4*).
5. Raise awareness of gender equality considerations among public sector managers and enhance management and executive accountability to ensure gender balance at all levels and occupational groups, and deal with gender equality issues in workplaces, including through performance management frameworks (*IV.5*).

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation

183. A diverse public sector workforce, as highlighted in the OECD Policy Framework on Gender-sensitive Public Governance, can underpin strong democracies by formulating effective policy response that understand the origin and depth of issues, improving responsiveness of public actions, and enhancing policy outcomes for these groups (OECD, 2021_[15]; 2021_[12]). With an average of 58%, the share of women in public sector employment across the OECD as of 2019 was larger than total employment in both public and private sectors combined (45%). However, the overall share of women in public employment has decreased slightly by 3 p.p. since 2017. Furthermore, the problem of the leaky pipeline – i.e. many women leaving the workforce throughout their career paths, leading to women being

underrepresented in management and executive positions – stubbornly persists, with women composing only 37% of senior management positions in the public sector in OECD in 2020 (despite an increase of 5 p.p. since 2015) (OECD, 2021^[12]). Figure 27 shows the level of gender equality in senior management positions in the OECD.

184. **Women’s employment in the public sector workforce continues to be hindered by other prevailing barriers to women’s employment in general** (OECD, 2019^[11]). Such barriers have likely been worsened by the pandemic (see The OECD Gender Recommendations in times of COVID-19: the pandemic risks hindering progress in their implementation and outcomes). It will therefore be important to monitor trends to mitigate impacts on gender equality in the workplace and promote men’s responsibility for care work, going forward from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as more broadly. However, only 11 out of 30 Respondents (37%) reported having conducted studies to better understand the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality in the workplace; and 5 Respondents reported carrying it out more specifically in the civil service at the national/federal level.

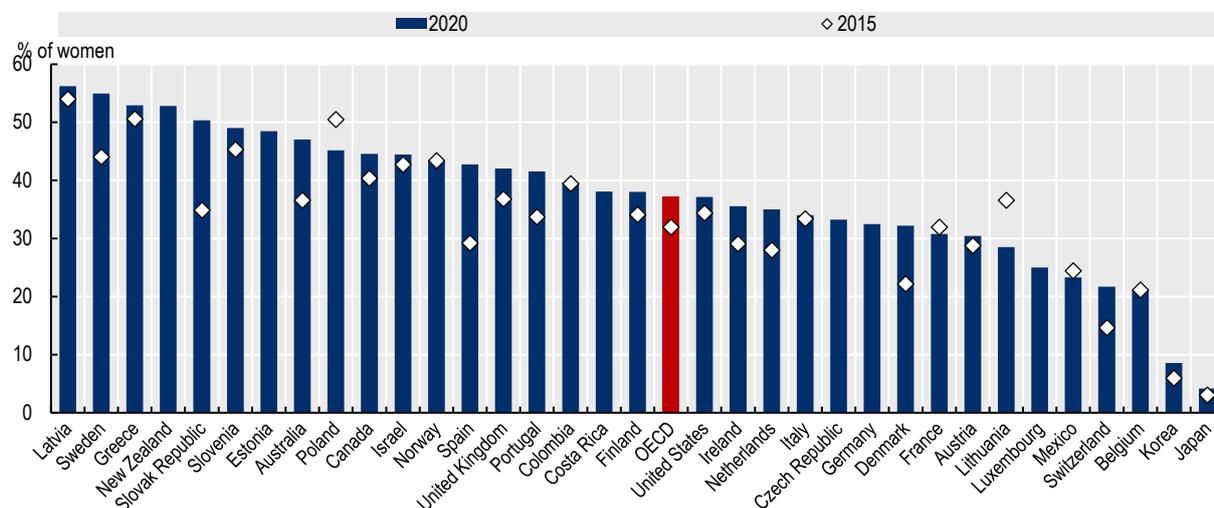
185. **In recent years, several Adherents have taken important steps to address gender inequality in public employment, including at the top.** According to the findings of the 2021 GMG Survey, 74% of Respondents (14 out of 19) have reported putting in place either targets (8 Respondents) or quotas (7 Respondents) for gender equality in recruitment in the civil service.

186. **To tackle sexual harassment in the workplace in public employment,** the most commonly reported measures by 26 Respondents include putting in place standardised, confidential complaints procedures (54%); voluntary in-service trainings for staff on sexual harassment (46%); measures to foster openness and transparency in the workplace culture (38%); and sexual harassment policy (38%). In this respect, in the past years, the #MeToo movement has significantly contributed to raising awareness of persisting gender inequalities among policy makers and to increasing pressure to act (see also Zero tolerance towards workplace sexual harassment, a form of violence against women (I.E) above). Adherents have also taken efforts to enhance gender-balance in care work (see Adherents have improved their leave policies, but uptake by fathers remains low). Box 29 presents some promising practices in improving gender equality in public employment.

187. **Emerging trends such as the automation and digital transformation of the workplace, as well as the shift to flexible working arrangements present the potential to recalibrate the workplace in a gender-equal manner.** Given the high representation of women in the public sector, and since market forces do not necessarily put the same pressure on this sector (as in the case of private sector), there is a window of time for the public sector to anticipate the opportunities and challenges of these emerging trends for gender equality and lead the way.

Figure 27. Gender equality in senior management positions in central governments, 2015 and 2020

Share of women (%)



Source: OECD (2021^[12])

Box 29. Examples of practices to promote gender equality in public employment

Israel

The Gender Equality Division at the Civil Service Commission of Israel works to promote and implement gender equality in the public service - Government Ministries, the Defense and the Health systems of approximately 80,000 employees. To support this initiative, the Gender Equality Index has been developed to measure gender equality in various areas in every government ministry and in the civil service in general. An interactive dashboard presents data and gender equality projects of each ministry such as the number of women within tender candidates and on boarding employees, salary components, organisational climate, percentage of women within the senior ranks and more.

New Zealand

Recently, New Zealand has adopted Public Service Act 2020, which replaced the State Sector Act 1988 and provides a legislative framework to enable an “adaptive, agile and collaborative public service”. In order to do so, the legislation draws upon four key enablers: public service culture and behaviour; an updated framework for employment; effective leadership; and a greater range of options for configuring fit-for-purpose public service organisations. More specifically, it recognises the principle that a given cohort of public service officials should reflect the makeup of the society. In this regard, it creates a responsibility for the Chief Executives of departments and Boards of interdepartmental initiatives to foster inclusiveness and diversity in the public administration.

Portugal

In 2019, Portugal adopted the Law 26/2019, of March 28, that defines a 40% quota for women and men in senior leadership positions in public employment. This includes not only civil servants in public administration but also public sector employees in public higher education institutions and associations.

Source: Information provided by Government of Israel in 2021 and Government of Portugal in 2022. Government of New Zealand (2020), *Public Service Act 2020*, <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0040/latest/LMS356915.html>;

Government of New Zealand (2020), *Public Service Act 2020 Factsheets*, <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/reforms/public-service-reforms-factsheets/?e5920=5923-factsheet-1-an-overview-of-the-changes>.

Strengthening International Cooperation (V)

188. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation also focuses on strengthening international cooperation** (see Box 30).

Box 30. The 2015 Gender Recommendation: focus on international cooperation

V. The Council RECOMMENDS that Adherents strengthen international co-operation through continuously sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices on gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives in public institutions.

Source: 2015 Gender Recommendation

189. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation calls upon Adherents to work towards enhancing international co-operation in the area of gender equality and gender mainstreaming through knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning.** This recognises the global and universal nature of systemic gender inequalities, emphasising the necessity for concerted efforts to identify what works and, what the pitfalls to be avoided are, in order to create conditions facilitating the empowerment of women to be agents of change towards gender equality. To this end, fostering partnerships at the international, national and subnational levels enables experience-sharing and knowledge-building, which can lead to important progress toward shared goals. This is particularly relevant in the current context where countries are faced with not only preexisting but also emerging barriers to women's empowerment and gender equality, including the climate transition, rise in GBV, etc. (see Background). Box 31 highlights some examples of efforts taken by Adherents to strengthen international cooperation towards the common goals of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Box 31. Examples of Country Efforts to Strengthen International Cooperation

Generation Equality Forum

In July 2021, France and Mexico co-hosted the Generation Equality Forum, convened by UN Women, and in partnership with civil society and youth. The Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is a civil society-centred, multistakeholder global gathering for gender equality. Through the co-creation of diverse and inclusive consultations, the Forum brings together feminist advocates from across the globe to foster action and renew movements for gender equality, in addition to launching a set of innovative and multistakeholder Action Coalitions. These innovative global partnerships, established with governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector, are designed to catalyse collective action, drive greater public, and private investment, towards delivering results that can make a difference for women and girls across the world; and as mechanisms that help accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) 26 years after its creation. For example, the Global Alliance for Care a multi-stakeholder initiative launched by the National Institute of Women in Mexico (INMUJERES) and UN Women is one such collective commitment.

Triangular Cooperation Programme Costa Rica-Spain

Under the scope of the Triangular Cooperation Programme Costa Rica-Spain, technical cooperation has been undertaken between authorities in Costa Rica, Argentina and Paraguay. This has entailed an exchange of best practices, between the Secretary of the State for Equality and Gender of the Province of Santa Fé, Argentina

(recipient institution), and the Technical Secretariat of the Costa Rican National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men, of INAMU Costa Rica (technical expertise provider) on the formulation, execution, monitoring and accountability of public policies for gender equality. Similar exchanges on best practices have also taken place between the Ministry of Women from Paraguay (recipient institution), and the Department of Violence, of INAMU Costa Rica (technical expertise provider) to support the National Policy for the Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women of all ages, Paraguay 2021-2030. The Triangular Cooperation Program is funded by the Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID).

Source: Information provided by the Governments of France, Mexico and Costa Rica in 2021 and 2022.

Strengthening the implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation

190. In order to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the 2015 Gender Recommendation, Adherents could consider the following priority actions:

Designing and Implementing Gender Mainstreaming (I.1, I.2)

1. **Foster leadership on the gender equality agenda**, for example, through the introduction of specific requirements to advance gender equality in government programmes, national development plans, vision statements, budget statements; establishment of cabinet committees mandated with the gender equality agenda; and assigning the responsibility to promote gender equality in the highest level of office (e.g. a Minister on Gender Equality).
2. **Integrate gender equality considerations in strategic frameworks for recovery and resilience**, for example by assessing the potential impacts of social and economic recovery policies on different population groups using gender-disaggregated data; identifying targets and performance indicators with clear linkages to national gender equality objectives. In parallel, continue efforts to monitor and address the gender-specific impacts of COVID-19, as well as to improve gender-responsive planning, appraisal, budgeting, procurement and implementation of infrastructure programmes.
3. **Boost institutional coordination through mechanisms for reporting to the Centre of Government across the government, as appropriate**, on the implementation of gender equality objectives, including those identified in gender equality strategies as well as other horizontal policy or sectoral strategies.
4. **Strengthen the participation of citizens and stakeholders in the decision-making processes and service delivery** to ensure a comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues.

Using impact assessments and government tools to advance gender equality (I.3, I.4)

1. **Enhance the use of government tools to remove barriers to empowerment and inclusion**, and eliminate biases with the objective of achieving gender equality, notably where salient gaps persist such as tackling gender pay gap, and gender based violence. In doing so:
 - a. **Adopt methodologies and assign clear roles and responsibilities for embedding quality gender impact assessment (GIA) tools** throughout the policymaking cycle. Integrate assessments of gender impacts at the problem identification stage in order to meaningfully consider different policy options and trade-offs of policy decisions. Integrate the use of ex-post GIA in policy evaluation to better understand gender-specific impacts of government policies, programmes and projects.
 - b. **Build up capacities and carrying out gender budgeting** across administrations, along with a strong strategic framework to institutionalise these practices backed with a wide variety of tools to deepen the understanding of gender impacts of budgetary decisions;

- c. **Consider enhancing the use of public procurement as a strategic tool for gender equality** through building dialogue between policymakers and procurement practitioners, exploring opportunities for more coherence amongst different policy areas and reducing data gaps on gender-inclusive public procurement;
 - d. **Encourage the formulation of rules and regulations** which integrate the **impact** assessments on gender equality.
2. **Consider strengthening strategic capacities of governments** to use other relevant decision making levers and measures across a range of sectors to remove any overt and implicit gender biases and barriers to achieve gender equality objectives, namely in areas where salient gaps persist.

Monitoring and Accountability for Gender Equality (II)

1. **Establish clear performance goals, targets and indicators** for the advancement of gender equality objectives. Adopt clear and relevant gender equality criteria for monitoring of, and progress reporting on, all strategies, policies and programmes, not only those specifically focused on gender equality to contribute to improved accountability.
2. **Conduct regular assessments to determine capacity and resource needs** as well as gaps in skills across the public administration for gender mainstreaming and taking steps to bridge existing gaps based on these findings. Bolster the capacity of national gender equality institutions, as required, to facilitate and support gender-sensitive policy implementation across the public administration.
3. **Continue improving the collection, accessibility and use of data** disaggregated by gender and other identity factors where possible as well as qualitative evidence to tackle multiple discrimination and support gender-sensitive policymaking, including through audits to understand gaps in skills, capacities and processes, notably in sectors where such data is lacking (e.g. environment). **Strengthen governments' capacities for generating and using gender data and evidence**, including through advancing coordination among different government units and agencies while ensuring its quality, interoperability and securing privacy to create a sound data governance ecosystem.
4. **Assign responsibilities, as appropriate, to independent oversight institutions** to monitor government's performance on gender mainstreaming (e.g. through performance audits or periodic reporting to the Parliament on efforts undertaken towards gender equality goals).
5. **Strengthen the accessibility of justice institutions** to be able to play a transformative role in implementing gender equality, and providing redressal and recourse mechanisms to uphold provisions for gender equality, towards closing gender gaps (e.g. gender pay gap).
6. **Undertake efforts to document the policy impact of gender mainstreaming** practices as well as lessons learned in order to facilitate experience-sharing and knowledge-building across ministries, agencies and departments.

Gender Equality in Public Leadership and Public Administration (III, IV)

1. **Take active measures to bridge gender imbalances in leadership positions across public institutions**, including through improving pay equity; the availability and use of coaching, leadership programmes, and work-life balance measures (especially at the top levels); collection of evidence through gender-disaggregated data on what works to support peer-learning and knowledge sharing; and enhancing the use of innovative methods such as behavioural insights. Draw upon the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to create mechanisms to ensure gender balance in decision-making during crises and emergencies.
2. **Identify persisting and emerging barriers, including cultural barriers, in attaining gender equality in the workplace in public administration** in order to deepen the understanding of how the public sector workplace can become more gender-sensitive. Anticipate the gender-specific

impacts of trends in the future of work to map potential opportunities and challenges to gender equality in public administration, while improving the collection of data, including on flexible working arrangements and their potential impact on gender equality in the workplace (e.g. on women's career paths, gender pay gap, etc.).

3. **Facilitate progress towards gender equality in leadership positions in politics and inclusiveness within elected bodies at all levels, to strengthen democratic representation and trust in public institutions.** The measures can include for example, parity requirements; undertaking gender audits of parliamentary practices and procedures from a gender perspective; developing measures for rooting out gender-based violence in politics; continuing proactive awareness-raising efforts among legislators and society at large on the benefits of gender equality in politics and policy making; assessing the gender-differentiated impact of political financing regulations; providing incentives to political parties to encourage gender balance in membership and leadership posts; and addressing structural barriers that impede women's participation in political life.

4. Dissemination

Dissemination of the 2013 Gender Recommendation

191. **The Secretariat has implemented a number of actions to disseminate the 2013 Gender Recommendation.** A primary means of dissemination has been the preparation of the report "[The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle](#)" (OECD, 2017^[52]), the OECD's stocktaking of how well – or not – countries were doing in implementing policy measures aimed at reaching gender equality goals back in 2017. In addition, the Secretariat conducted various projects and data collection exercises across a range of areas that underpins the dissemination of the OECD Gender Recommendations.

192. **In the employment field:**

- The [OECD Gender Data Portal](#) includes selected indicators shedding light on gender inequalities in education, employment, entrepreneurship, governance, among other fields.
- The [OECD Family Database](#) provides gender-relevant data on families, children, employment and work-life balance, including on the [Distribution of working hours for couples with children](#) and policy supports such as [Parental leave systems](#).
- Important dissemination and visibility efforts are conducted in the framework of the [Equal Pay International Coalition \(EPIC\)](#), established by the OECD, ILO and UN Women towards achieving SDG target 8.5 on equal pay between men and women for work of equal value.
- Other publications that apply a gender lens and support the principles of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in employment since 2017 include: [Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries](#) (2017) on the contribution of gender equality in employment to economic growth; [Dare to Share: Germany's Experience Promoting Equal Partnership in Families \(2017\)](#) on promoting equal sharing in couple families; [Rejuvenating Korea: Policies for a Changing Society](#) (2019) on work-life balance; [Part-time and Partly Equal: Gender and Work in the Netherlands](#) (2019) on gender differences in part-time work; [Good Practice for Good Jobs in Early Childhood Education](#) (2019) on childcare quality; [Women at the core of the fight against the COVID-19 crisis](#) (2021); a joint [OECD and ILO paper on Women at Work in G20 countries](#); a report on [The Role of Firms in Wage Inequality](#) (2021); an OECD-wide stocktaking of [Pay Transparency Tools to Close the Gender Wage Gap](#) (2021); a report on [Bringing Household Services Out of the Shadows, Formalising Non-Care Work in and Around the House \(2021\)](#); and a project on [Reducing gender gaps in employment in Hungary](#) (ongoing); among others.

193. **In the education field:**

- [Education at a Glance 2020](#) and its previous editions contain indicators on gender differences in education;
- [PISA 2018](#) includes data on learning outcomes and attitudes for boys and girls, and;
- Other publications that apply a gender lens and support the principles of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in education since 2017 include: [Gender imbalances in the teaching profession](#) (2017) and [What are the gender differences and the labour market outcomes across the different fields of study?](#) (2017); [What kind of careers in science do 15-year-old boys and girls expect for themselves?](#) (2017) on students' job expectations; [How does access to early childhood education services affect the participation of women in the labour market?](#) (2018); [Why don't more girls choose to pursue a science career?](#) (2019); [How have women's participation and fields of study choice in higher education evolved over time?](#) (2020), [Do gender gaps in reading and mathematics evolve between childhood and adulthood?](#) (2020); and [Why do gender gaps in education and work persist?](#) (2020); among others.

194. **In the entrepreneurship field:**

- The [Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative](#) reflects OECD entrepreneurship work with a gender lens;
- The OECD, with the European Commission, has produced [The Missing Entrepreneurs](#), a series of reports on how to address obstacles to business creation for groups that are under-represented in entrepreneurship, including women.
- The [OECD/EU Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool](#) supports policy makers in designing and implementing tailored entrepreneurship schemes for women and other groups and is regularly updated.
- The [Future of Business Survey](#) (a joint product of Facebook, the OECD and the World Bank) presents findings on gender differences in entrepreneurial attitude and performance.
- Other publications which apply a gender lens and support the principles of the 2013 Gender Recommendation in entrepreneurship since 2017 include: a [Policy brief on incubators and accelerators that support inclusive entrepreneurship](#) (2019); [the OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook 2019](#), and a tracker of the various [SME policy responses to COVID-19](#), among others.

195. **The 2021 GEQ includes questions to Adherents regarding the promotion and dissemination 2013 Gender Recommendation.** Out of 33 Respondents, 17 report having promoted the 2013 Recommendation (and/or its principles) among relevant ministries, different levels of government, and other countries. Examples include publishing the Recommendation on a government website (e.g. France, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain), distributing and informing about the Recommendation with relevant ministries (Japan) or in meetings with sub-national governments (Germany) and referring to the Recommendation in relation to international cooperation (Sweden). Many Respondents confirm that policy reforms and ambitions in the government and various ministries are in line with the principles of the Recommendation (e.g. Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Korea, Morocco, Norway, Spain and the United States). 10 Respondents report having promoted the 2013 Recommendation (and/or its principles) to businesses, consumer representatives, and other civil society organisations, for instance through awareness raising activities and information material (e.g. Austria), but also financing projects that are in line with the Recommendation's principles (e.g. Turkey) and developing national strategies (e.g. Mexico). 27 Respondents report finding the Recommendation to provide useful principles for the pursuit of gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship. More specifically, some Respondents believe the Recommendation provides strong background support and a general guideline for their pursuit for gender equality (e.g. Finland and the United States), and in many Adherent countries, the Recommendation has

led to the implementation of important legislative reforms and corresponding programmes, strategies and actions (e.g. Costa Rica, Iceland, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco and Portugal).

Dissemination of the 2015 Gender Recommendation

196. **Since the 2017 Report, the Secretariat and the Adherents have continued their efforts in widely communicating and disseminating the 2015 Gender Recommendation.** These steps have aimed to ensure continued, high-level political support for the implementation of its provisions and support technical level discussions and exchange of good practices among Adherents to advance implementation at a more practical level, and at all levels of government. Some examples are outlined below:

- The WP-GMG was created in 2019 to guide and support government stakeholders to actively communicate and disseminate the 2015 Gender Recommendation across public institutions at all levels of government and monitor the impact of these dissemination and outreach activities.
- Policy dialogues in PGC meetings since 2017; dedicated discussions on gender mainstreaming at relevant sessions of other subsidiary bodies of the PGC, PEM, SBO, and CoG; and high-level policy dialogues (e.g. 2020 OECD High-level Conference on Ending Violence Against Women, the 2019 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum, 2018 Expert groups on Gender Budgeting; and 2021 Forum on the Governance of Infrastructure).
- Dissemination activities and workshops with the European Commission in 2021 and European Court of Auditors in 2019.
- Presentation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation in OECD regional events and networks (e.g. OECD Asian Public Governance Forum on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming; OECD-MENA Women in Government Platform).
- Dedicated sessions in the Ambassadors' Group of Friends of Gender Equality Plus (FOGE+).

197. **The 2015 Gender Recommendation constitutes the key reference to raise awareness and promote Gender Equality in Public Life among Adherents.** It has contributed to shaping policy debates at national and supranational levels guiding many Adherents, who since 2017 have indicated progress in adopting regulations or policies on gender equality. For example, it was reportedly used as a reference document when developing gender mainstreaming procedures in Iceland, while strategic frameworks in Czech Republic, Italy and Luxembourg have built on the 2015 Gender Recommendation. Its methodology, as elaborated further in the [OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#) (2018), also informed the European Court of Auditors' Special Report [Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action](#) (2021).

198. **Since the adoption of the 2015 Gender Recommendation, a number of outputs have been developed to ensure its implementation,** in particular:

Various reports and other publications:

- An [OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#) (2018).
- The Report [Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Governance](#) (2019).
- [The OECD Gender Budgeting Framework](#) (2019).
- The Policy Framework for Gender-sensitive Public Governance (2021) [[C\(2021\)97](#)].
- A Framework on Strengthening Governance and Survivor/Victim-centred Approaches to Eliminating Gender-based Violence (2021) [[GOV/PGC/GMG\(2020\)2/REV3](#)].
- Thematic work, including policy responses compounded in the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement context and gender mainstreaming in crisis situations and supporting recovery:
- [Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis](#) (2020).

- [Towards gender-inclusive recovery \(2021\)](#).
- [Promoting gender equality through public procurement \(2021\)](#).
- [Women in infrastructure: Selected stocktaking of good practices for inclusion of women in infrastructure \(2021\)](#).
- [Gender and Capital Budgeting \(2021\)](#).
- Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A Path to Action (2020).

On-going work with WP-GMG, PGC and relevant PGC subsidiary bodies:

- Core indicators to monitor the implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation.
- Tool on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming.
- A working paper, “Future of Work in Public Service: What is in Store for Gender Equality?”
- Forthcoming report on gender lens in spending reviews.

199. **The implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation has also been promoted through in-depth country or regional reviews and capacity building activities** with both Adherents²⁰ and non-Adherents²¹.

5. Summary and conclusions

Implementation

200. **Significant progress has been made in some areas such as offer and take-up of paternity leave, equal pay, access to flexible work opportunities, access to leadership positions and requirements to use gender impact assessments in policymaking, but gender gaps remain large in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life.** In education, young girls have extended their advantage over young men in literacy skills and school dropout, but challenges remain in reaching a more balanced choice of fields of study, and in reducing the feminisation of the teaching profession. In employment, further progress is needed to support gender equality in labour market participation, address vertical and horizontal labour market segregation and support job quality and access to flexible work opportunities, career progression, career-enhancing positions and leadership positions. This will also contribute to a further reduction of the gender pay gap. To support the above, Adherents could for example consider an increased adoption of intersectional approaches in support provision (i.e. responding to the ways gender intersects with other personal characteristics), as well as stimulating fathers to take more child-related leave, encouraging mothers to return to work after leave, and enhancing the accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare and long-term care services. Governments should also strengthen the policy frameworks for women’s entrepreneurship including through an increased use of

²⁰ For example: Mexico: Building an Inclusive Mexico - Policies and Good Governance for Gender Equality (2017), Canada: Gender Equality in Canada - Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting (2018), Iceland: OECD Workshop with Council of Ministers for Gender Equality on the integration of gender and equality perspectives in policy-making (2018), Ireland: OECD Scan - Equality Budgeting in Ireland (2019), Colombia: Gender Equality in Colombia - Access to Justice and Politics at the Local Level (2020), Colombia: Strengthening public governance approaches and capacities to advance gender equality (Forthcoming), Czech Republic: Strengthening the government capacity for gender-sensitive and inclusive recovery (Forthcoming).

²¹ For example; Thailand: Gender Budgeting Action Plan (2019), Tunisia: Preliminary Report on Women’s Political Participation at the National level in Tunisia (2019), Kazakhstan: Review of Gender Policy Delivery in Kazakhstan (2017) and a workshop for the Astana Civil Service Hub in collaboration with UNDP (2020), Georgia: E-workshop on gender-sensitive public employment - “Working towards equality for women in the civil service” targeted for Civil Service Bureau of Georgia (2020), Regional work in MENA: Changing Laws and Breaking Barriers for Women’s Economic Empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (2020).

tailored measures, such as accelerator programmes and growth-oriented finance. Policy should also focus on promoting the right mind-set to advance gender equality.

201. **Importantly, there has been an increase in leadership commitment and adoption of statutory or strategic frameworks for gender mainstreaming in OECD countries**, with an expansion of the gender lens in strategic government tools (e.g. regulations, budgets, procurement and tools related to infrastructure governance), and use of practices such as gender impact assessments. However, the progress remains uneven across Adherents. For example, despite becoming more commonplace, requirements for gender impact assessment largely target the development stage of the policy cycle while missing other key stages, and wide implementation gaps remain. While there is a range of institutional frameworks to promote gender equality, government capacities among Adherents still fall short of effectively closing gender gaps. Limited availability of gender-disaggregated data remains one of the most significant barriers to effective gender mainstreaming and closing gender gaps in some areas. Finally, Adherents have been undertaking steady efforts to advance gender equality in public leadership as well as making public institutions more gender equal (including through measures to improve work-life balance, tackle sexual harassment and improve women's representation at the top). Yet, many women leave the workforce throughout their career paths, which leads to attrition in the number of women who access leadership and management positions.

Dissemination

202. **Half of the Respondents to the 2021 GEQ and the 2021 GMG Survey indicate they have explicitly disseminated the OECD Gender Recommendations on occasion over the past five years.** Perhaps less explicit, but at least as important is the exchange of best gender practice across Adherents. Adherents are keen to exchange and learn from other countries' experiences with regard to the principles on gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life embodied in the OECD Gender Recommendations. There is a wide body of OECD work to support across a range of areas that underpins the dissemination of the principles of the OECD Gender Recommendations, and the WP-GMG serves as an important platform to facilitate policy exchanges and experiences among Adherents.

Continued relevance

203. **This Report shows that the Gender Recommendations remain relevant, with a heightened relevance amidst the COVID-19 crisis; and that no revisions are needed.** Nevertheless, challenges remain in their implementation and in increasing the awareness about the Recommendations among relevant stakeholders.

Next steps

Adherents are advised to strengthen their policy efforts in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life...

204. **In education, particular attention will need to be paid to facing the issues related to boy's lagging behind in reading skills and higher dropout rates, while strengthening the efforts to fight gender stereotypes in career expectations, especially in the STEM fields.** In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, further efforts will need to be devoted to preventing raising inequalities in education outcomes between income groups, taking into account specific risks to which girls may be particularly exposed, such as gender-based violence and online harassment.

205. **In employment, further policy developments for the improvement of leave around childbirth, affordable quality childcare services, flexible working arrangements, equal pay, and representation of women in leadership are necessary.** First, they require supporting fathers' leave-

taking, and ensuring that mothers have access to (well-) paid employment-protected leave, while avoiding that these entitlements discourage mothers' return to work. There is also a need to further support accessible and affordable childcare, as well as to increase efforts to develop the quality of childcare services. While increasingly promoting opportunities for flexible work, policy also needs to support a gender equal use of flexible working arrangements, including part-time and telework. Further public investment towards better job quality and equal conditions for men and women is needed to support a gender responsive and inclusive economic recovery, especially in sectors such as health and care, and making sure that no one is left behind. Priorities also include advancing in pay transparency practices, namely by strengthening reforms and ensuring greater stakeholder engagement and compliance. Similarly, further actions are needed to support women in leadership positions, especially in management and senior leadership positions, requiring complementary initiatives to develop the female talent pipeline and the conditions for women in the workforce more generally.

206. In entrepreneurship, policy priorities include strengthening the overarching policy frameworks for women's entrepreneurship to ensure that initiatives link together into a cohesive system that is sufficiently resourced and sustainable. Other priority actions for government are to increase the use of tailored measures to support high-ambition, high-potential women entrepreneurs, including accelerator programmes and growth-oriented finance.

207. In public life, a priority action to strengthen the implementation of the 2015 Gender Recommendation includes enhancing the strategic capacities of governments to a) generate and use gender-sensitive data and evidence, including through citizen engagement, and b) use tools and decision making levers to remove any overt and implicit biases and barriers to achieve gender equality objectives, namely in areas where salient gaps persist. Furthermore, other key actions focus on strengthening accountability for gender equality by improving gender-sensitive evidence, as well as facilitating progress towards gender equality in leadership positions in politics and inclusiveness of elected bodies at all levels, in view of reinforcing democratic representation and trust in public institutions.

208. Overall, it is fundamental to integrate gender equality considerations in recovery and resilience plans, for example by assessing the potential impacts of social and economic recovery policies on different population groups using gender-disaggregated data; identifying targets and performance indicators with clear linkages to national gender equality objectives. In parallel, continue efforts to fighting gender discrimination and stereotypes in all policy areas, monitor and address the gender-specific impacts of COVID-19 including GBV, as well as to improve gender-responsive planning, appraisal, budgeting, procurement and implementation of infrastructure programmes.

209. The Gender Recommendations call for the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data. The 2013 Gender Recommendation calls for generating data and evidence as part of gender-sensitive policymaking, while the 2015 Gender Recommendation further calls for strengthening the capacities of public institutions to systematically generate and use gender-disaggregated data and measure progress towards gender equality performance. Yet, there is still a lack of gender-disaggregated data and robust, well-established evaluation and reporting practices in all the above areas. In turn, this poses a significant barrier to identify gender biases and inequalities to ensure inclusive policymaking. Governments still need to make progress in measuring, evaluating and reporting on gender equality in all dimensions of the Gender Recommendations. The most prevalent barriers to ensuring systematic generation and use of gender-disaggregated data include lack of resources, limited understanding of data gaps and needs, and absence of demand by line ministries. In this regard, the policy priority is to continue strengthening the capacity of government at large to a) the collect, access and use data disaggregated by gender; and b) qualitative evidence to support gender-sensitive policymaking, including through audits to understand gaps in skills, capacities and processes, notably in sectors where such data is lacking. In addition, digital transformation offers opportunities to leverage digital tools for expanding the availability, accessibility and use of gender-disaggregated data, while posing new risks such as privacy, security and enhanced threat of gender biases.

...and to consider the development of tools to strengthen their implementation in cross-cutting policy areas

210. The OECD Gender Recommendations cover a whole spectrum of issues. They are also relevant to sector-specific areas. That being said, **further tools to support the implementation and dissemination of the OECD Gender Recommendations could be developed in various policy areas to further increase the relevance of the Gender Recommendations.** This requires taking into account the crosscutting nature of policy goals, not least the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), when progressing gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life. Various policy areas, and their intersection with gender equality objectives, deserve deeper consideration in the future implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – including issues around foreign direct investment, the environment, energy, nuclear energy, trade, and transport.

The contribution of foreign direct investment to gender equality

211. **Foreign direct investment (FDI) can have an impact on gender outcomes in host countries, mainly through the activities of foreign affiliates of multinational enterprises (MNEs).** Foreign affiliates can hire, remunerate, train and promote local workers, including women. Depending on the sector of the investment, type of FDI (e.g. whether FDI comes from more or less gender equal countries) and host country conditions, these activities can influence men and women differently and may improve or decrease gender equality. FDI can also have an impact on women employed by domestic companies, for example through supply-chain linkages and other market interactions (e.g. labour mobility).

212. **Under the guidance of the Investment Committee (IC), the OECD is seeking to shed light on the contribution of FDI to gender equality, as part of a broader effort to understand the role of FDI for sustainable development.** In 2019, the OECD launched the [FDI Qualities Initiative](#), which contains two pillars. The first pillar develops indicators - [FDI Qualities Indicators](#) - to measure the contribution of FDI on sustainable development, including gender equality. The second pillar provides a [Policy Toolkit](#), which helps countries identify policies and institutional arrangements that maximise the positive impact of FDI on sustainable development, including gender equality. The IC is developing an OECD Recommendation on FDI Qualities comprising a gender dimension to be adopted at the 2022 OECD Ministerial Council as a higher-level output to complement the more detailed FDI Qualities Policy Toolkit, which supports the implementation of the 2013 Gender Recommendation.

The gender-environment nexus

213. **Biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change and related extreme weather events threaten economic opportunities and increase health and well-being risks. While often overlooked, these environmental impacts affect men and women differently,** exposing underlying discrimination, resource access inequalities and physiological factors that determine vulnerability. As countries recover from the pandemic, addressing the gender and environment nexus will be essential to deliver on Agenda 2030. Gender mainstreaming involves ensuring that policies address differentiated environmental impacts across genders while creating economic opportunities for both men and women in the transition to a more sustainable economy.

214. **Under the supervision of the Environmental Policy Committee (EPOC), the OECD has been advancing for the last two years new work on the gender-environment nexus,** including an assessment of policy approaches and actions necessary to bring about a virtuous circle of improvements in gender equality, environmental sustainability, economic opportunities and well-being. Building on the OECD's *first comprehensive report on* [Gender and the Environment: Building Evidence and Policies to Achieve the SDGs](#) (2021), the OECD intends to develop a policy toolkit to support the mainstreaming of gender in the environmental sphere. Regarding ongoing and future work, key priorities are: a) to address major data

gaps regarding the nexus of gender and environment, and b) cover gender equality issues as part of EPOC's work to review policies and stakeholder actions to strengthen environmental justice.

Promoting gender diversity in the energy sector

215. **Promoting gender diversity in the energy sector is a growing priority for many governments, since diversity in the workforce as well as in management spurs productivity, innovation and economic growth.** Based on OECD data from almost 2 500 publicly listed energy companies, the IEA assesses that women make up just under 14% of senior managers. However, disaggregated gender data for the energy sector remains rare. In light of this data gap, the IEA, with the support from its members and in collaboration with '[C3E International](#)', has elevated its efforts in recent years to develop new indicators of gender diversity in energy in four distinct areas: *Management, Employment, Entrepreneurship* and *Innovation*. Several analytical outputs on these topics have been released on the IEA's gender and energy [webpage](#).

216. **The 2019 IEA Ministerial Meeting adopted the very first communiqué that included a “gender mandate” under which Ministers supported the IEA's work on gathering information and data.** The IEA's Gender Diversity Initiative manages all of the IEA's gender related activities under the leadership of a task force. The Initiative has the dual goals of offering support to IEA member governments on gender policies and data as well as reviewing internal processes to ensure the Secretariat achieves the highest equity standards of inclusivity. To further guide and strengthen the IEA's work on gender, the IEA Governing Board established the [IEA Gender Advisory Council](#) in June 2021. The Council consists of senior officials from IEA members that will advise the IEA Secretariat and its members on gender mainstreaming in energy policy-making and activities. Suggested prioritised activities for 2022 include the creation of a data portal for 'gender and energy indicators' on the IEA's website; the creation of a tool that helps facilitate the exchange of gender mainstreaming policy best practices and success stories from IEA member countries; as well as the development of policy recommendations to energy ministries on gender mainstreaming in energy policy-making and activities.

Improving gender balance in the nuclear energy sector

217. **Women scientists and engineers pioneered the nuclear and radiological fields, and continue to make vital contributions, but female representation in the nuclear energy sector remains limited.** This is especially the case in science and engineering positions and leadership roles. Science and engineering benefit from diverse teams to spur collaboration and development and to drive productivity. The lack of gender diversity represents a loss of potential innovation and growth and a critical threat to the future viability of the field. In addition, as the older generation leaves the nuclear workforce, the professional pipeline to replace them is much thinner than in the past. The sector must recruit, retain and promote significantly more women as part of the diverse new cohorts of creative innovators to address society's energy needs and environmental challenges.

218. **The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) is [collecting data](#) on gender balance in the nuclear sector, including leadership positions, and developing a policy framework to support countries working to enhance the contribution of women.** In 2021, the NEA gathered human resources data from 96 nuclear organisations and polled 8,000 women working in the nuclear energy sector in 32 countries. In addition, a survey is currently underway to collect gender-disaggregated data on university graduates in nuclear science and engineering in NEA countries. The data indicates that women are significantly underrepresented in science and engineering positions, are underpaid compared to their male peers, and regard their opportunities for career advancement as unequal, including career impediments due to parenthood and gendered perceptions of leadership characteristics. Based on such evidence, the NEA Steering Committee will consider the next step to strengthen gender balance in the nuclear sector. The NEA also plans to continue and strengthen its educational activities such as the [international mentoring](#)

[workshops](#), the [Nuclear Education, Skills and Technology Framework](#) (NEST) and the [Global Forum on Nuclear Education, Science, Technology and Policy](#), focusing on women and girls as integral to the goal to build a robust and diverse nuclear energy sector.

Gender equality in trade

219. **Trade lowers consumer prices and increases firms' productivity and workers' wages.** Firms that trade are more productive and pay better wages than firms that do not trade. However, women are less engaged in trade, both as salaried workers and as entrepreneurs and business leaders. On average in the OECD, 26% of women and 33% of men are engaged in export-oriented jobs (Korinek, Moisé and Tange, 2021^[157]). Women-owned and women-led firms trade less than those owned and led by men. Women are therefore less likely to take advantage of the gains from trade, whether in terms of higher wages and salaries, or productivity gains for their businesses. Increasing women's participation in trade can contribute to closing gender gaps.

220. **The Trade Committee has approved a [Framework of Analysis](#) for better apprehending the impacts of trade on women.** That framework has been applied to a pilot Trade and Gender Review of New Zealand, which examines how trade affects New Zealand women in three of their economic roles - as workers, entrepreneurs and business leaders, and consumers. Moreover, New Zealand's trade agreements have been reviewed to ascertain their gender sensitivity. The Review recommends policy changes to ensure trade benefits women as well as men. Further work is planned in order to better understand the many ways in which trade affects women in OECD countries and beyond, and to work with OECD Members to mainstream gender in their trade policies.

Gender equality in the transport sector

221. **Improving gender equality both for women as transport users and in the transport workforce remains a challenge in many countries.** Both areas are interconnected: an increase in gender equality in the workforce will improve the inclusiveness of transport services. Even though gender is a significant determinant for the choice of transport modes (Ng and Acker, 2018^[158]) transport infrastructure and services often do not take into account the mobility needs of women. As a result, this hampers women's access to education, jobs, and other opportunities. More participation of women in transport planning is needed to address this challenge. However, women remain underrepresented in most transport-related industries (Ng and Acker, 2020^[159]). The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the existing gender inequalities in the transport sector. Going forward, the long-term recovery towards more sustainable, resilient, gender-sensitive and inclusive transport will depend on measures that address the priorities of both women and men.

222. **For the past few years, the International Transport Forum (ITF) has been advancing the [work on integrating a gender perspective in transport policies](#),** including through a stakeholders' policy dialogue and the assessment of policy approaches to enhance equality in transport. A recent ITF survey on integrating gender in transport policies shows that more than 70% of ITF member countries who responded to the survey are undertaking policy efforts in this regard, but more urgency to combat labour market inequalities and to integrate a gender perspective into transport planning is required (ITF/TMB, 2022^[160]). Currently, ITF is finalising a gender analysis for transport policies toolkit to support its member countries to mainstream gender in transport policies. Key priorities for ongoing and future work are: a) to improve gender disaggregated data collection and integrate them into ITF's regular statistics surveys; b) mainstream gender equality issues as part of ITF's work to review policies and stakeholder actions to promote a more gender-sensitive, inclusive and sustainable transport; and c) enhance a policy dialogue with all transport shareholders, including governments, international organisations, business and academia.

Appendix I. Definitions, notes and reference years of Table 1

a) Where marked with an *, the gender gap in the mean PISA score is statistically significant. Data for Spain refer to PISA 2015.

b) See [OECD \(2021\), Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators](#).

c) Data for Germany refer to 2019.

d) See [ILO \(2021\), Indicator 5.5.2 Metadata](#). Data for Australia refer to 2019, data for Israel refer to 2017 and data for Canada refer to 2014.

e) The gender wage gap is defined as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men. See [OECD \(2022\), Gender wage gap \(indicator\)](#). Data for Belgium, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland and Italy refer to 2019. Data for Estonia, France, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey refer to 2018.

f) Data for the United Kingdom refer to 2019.

g), h) & i) See [OECD \(2021\), Government at a Glance 2021](#).

l) The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: [OECD Gender Portal](#).

Appendix II. Increasing Female Labour Supply and the Growth Dividend

Efforts to increase women's engagement in paid work promise an additional boost to economic growth. To illustrate this, this report uses a simplified version of the OECD Long-Term Model and the OECD's in-house labour force projections (Guillemette and Turner, 2018^[75]; 2021^[76]). In particular, it takes baseline projections until 2060 for both the size of the labour force (aged 15-74) and potential economic output and then adjust estimates following scenarios about future labour market development. More details on the projection methods can be found in OECD (forthcoming^[161]).

The scenarios are based on a set of assumptions regarding changes in the gender gaps in labour force participation (LFP) and working hours. These are slightly adapted and extended prescriptions of the G20 Brisbane declaration of closing the gender gap in employment 25% by 2025 – a benchmark target for progress on gender equality in LFP established by the G20 in 2014 (OECD, ILO, IMF and the World Bank Group, 2014^[162]). In the adapted target for this projection exercise, starting from the year 2020, this goal is pushed to 2040 and complemented with an additional target in 2060:

- *Baseline*: LFP rates of men and women are estimated based on current rates of labour market entry and exit. Male and female working hours are fixed at the 2019 level. This scenario services as the reference or business-as-usual scenario.
- *Scenario A*: gender LFP gaps reduced by 50% by 2040 and by 100% in 2060.
- *Scenario B*: gender working hour gaps reduced by 50% by 2040 and by 100% in 2060.
- *Scenario C*: gender LFP and working hour gaps reduced by 50% by 2040 and by 100% in 2060.

The resulting labour market projections are then fed back into a simplified version of the OECD Long-Term Model, taking as input the productive capital stock, labour productivity, the size of the labour force and the total hours worked per employed person. The calculations then produce estimates of potential economic output in terms of potential GDP per capita for each year until 2060.

The effects of the different scenarios on potential output growth by 2060 are very heterogeneous across the OECD (Table A), depending strongly on the baseline gender gaps in LFP and working hours. Naturally, countries with larger gender gaps at baseline tend to benefit more from closing these gaps than those with smaller gender differences in LFP and working hours. For example, Costa Rica, Mexico and Turkey - the three OECD countries with the highest gender employment gap in 2019 - would all benefit strongly from closing gender LFP gaps - between 0.29 and 0.34 p.p. of additional annual growth until 2060. On the other hand, countries with particularly small gender gaps in labour force participation, such as Latvia and Lithuania, would only see a very limited effect on potential output (0.04 and 0.03 p.p. of additional annual growth until 2060, respectively).

Countries with large working hour gaps at baseline would also benefit more from convergence in male and female working time than those with smaller gaps. For example, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, where part-time employment is common among women and the gender gaps in working hours relatively high, could expect between 0.17 and 0.22 p.p. of additional annual growth in potential GDP per capita if their working hours gap closed fully by 2060. In Hungary, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia, gender gaps in working hours are comparatively small, thus these countries would only see a boost between 0.02 and 0.04 p.p. to the annual growth of their potential output.

However, a convergence of male and female working hours would not make a big difference if there is also a big gender gap in labour force participation. For example, Costa Rica and Mexico both have one of the largest gender gaps in working hours, but as mentioned above, also some of the highest LFP gender gaps in the OECD. Closing the working hours gap alone would thus only increase the output for those women that are already in the labour force. If women's LFP is low, potential output thus only increases to a much lower extent than for countries with higher LFP (0.12 and 0.11 p.p. of additional annual growth in Costa Rica and Mexico, respectively). Nevertheless, when both LFP and working hours gaps are closed simultaneously, as modelled in Scenario C, both countries would be the biggest benefactor of improved labour market outcomes among women across the OECD, raising annual growth in potential GDP by 0.45 p.p. in Costa Rica and 0.49 p.p. in Mexico.

Table A. Potential output projections under different employment scenarios

Scenario:	Difference in average annual rate of growth in potential GDP per capita, 2020-2060, scenario vs. baseline, percentage points			Difference in potential GDP per capita, 2060, scenario vs. baseline, percent		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
	50x40, 100x60 Baseline	Baseline 50x40, 100x60	50x40, 100x60 50x40, 100x60	50x40, 100x60 Baseline	Baseline 50x40, 100x60	50x40, 100x60 50x40, 100x60
Australia	0.05	0.18	0.24	2.2%	7.5%	10.1%
Austria	0.08	0.17	0.26	3.1%	7.1%	11.0%
Belgium	0.08	0.13	0.22	3.2%	5.6%	9.3%
Canada	0.07	0.11	0.19	2.9%	4.5%	7.9%
Chile	0.15	0.08	0.24	6.5%	3.2%	10.3%
Colombia	0.26	0.11	0.39	11.0%	4.4%	17.3%
Costa Rica	0.29	0.12	0.45	12.4%	5.1%	20.1%
Czech Republic	0.13	0.05	0.19	5.3%	2.2%	7.8%
Denmark	0.09	0.09	0.19	3.9%	3.8%	8.2%
Estonia	0.06	0.05	0.11	2.3%	1.9%	4.4%
Finland	0.05	0.07	0.12	1.9%	3.0%	5.1%
France	0.05	0.10	0.16	2.2%	4.3%	6.8%
Germany	0.04	0.17	0.22	1.8%	7.4%	9.5%
Greece	0.13	0.08	0.22	5.4%	3.3%	9.3%
Hungary	0.17	0.02	0.20	6.9%	1.0%	8.2%
Iceland	0.08	0.12	0.21	3.4%	5.1%	8.7%
Ireland	0.10	0.17	0.29	4.3%	6.9%	12.3%
Israel	0.03	0.13	0.17	1.3%	5.4%	7.0%
Italy	0.18	0.12	0.33	7.7%	5.1%	14.1%
Japan	0.04	0.19	0.24	1.7%	8.2%	10.3%
Korea	0.13	0.09	0.23	5.3%	3.9%	9.8%
Latvia	0.04	0.03	0.06	1.5%	1.1%	2.6%
Lithuania	0.03	0.02	0.06	1.4%	1.0%	2.4%
Luxembourg	0.01	0.10	0.12	0.6%	4.3%	5.0%
Mexico	0.34	0.11	0.49	15.0%	4.5%	22.0%
Netherlands	0.06	0.22	0.29	2.6%	9.2%	12.6%
New Zealand	0.06	0.15	0.22	2.4%	6.5%	9.3%
Norway	0.07	0.09	0.17	2.7%	3.9%	6.9%
Poland	0.19	0.05	0.25	7.8%	2.2%	10.7%
Portugal	0.05	0.07	0.12	2.2%	2.8%	5.2%
Slovak Republic	0.11	0.04	0.16	4.7%	1.7%	6.7%
Slovenia	0.04	0.04	0.08	1.6%	1.6%	3.3%
Spain	0.09	0.10	0.20	3.9%	4.1%	8.5%
Sweden	0.04	0.07	0.11	1.8%	2.7%	4.6%
Switzerland	0.04	0.21	0.26	1.7%	8.9%	11.1%
Turkey	0.30	0.08	0.41	13.0%	3.4%	18.0%
United Kingdom	0.04	0.16	0.20	1.7%	6.6%	8.6%
United States	0.08	0.07	0.15	3.5%	2.7%	6.4%
OECD Total	0.14	0.11	0.26	5.7%	4.4%	10.9%

Note: Data based on Labour Force Surveys and OECD in-house labour force projections. These may differ from National Accounts estimates on employment outcomes as presented above estimates - for various coverage, definitional and methodological reasons (see e.g. Ward, Zinni and Marianna (2018_[163])). The OECD total is a weighted total across all member countries. LFP: Labour force participation; HRS: Working hours. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: OECD estimates based on [OECD population data](#), the [OECD Employment Database](#) and Employment Projections and the [OECD Long-Term Growth Model](#)

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