

# Gender Equality

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2024



Indicator

## Policy Efforts and Commitment to Achieving Gender Equality

Question

How committed is the government to ensuring gender equality in all respects?

30 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The government is clearly committed to the goal of ensuring gender equality.
- 8-6 = The government is largely committed to the goal of ensuring gender equality.
- 5-3 = The government is only somewhat committed to the goal of ensuring gender equality.
- 2-1 = The government is not at all committed to the goal of ensuring gender equality.

### Belgium

Score 9

Belgium has a strong commitment to gender equality, affirmed in its constitution in 2002 and supported by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. While there is no federal strategy for gender equality, the Federal Plan on Gender Mainstreaming promotes equality at both federal and regional levels and is currently in its third edition (2020-2024). Belgium is a global leader in gender quotas, with strict rules for gender parity imposed on political parties (Vandeleene 2014).

Belgium ranks well in several gender equality indexes, including the World Economic Forum's 2023 Gender Gap Report, the UN Gender Inequality Index, and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), where it ranks 10th, 10th, and 5th, respectively. The EIGE notes Belgium's strong performance in the "health" and "money" dimensions but a weaker performance in the "time" dimension.

One issue linked to Belgium's gender norms is labor market segregation. Women are often overrepresented in "care activities" and are more likely to work part-time. They also spend more time on unpaid activities like childcare and housework. De Rock and Périlleux (2023) found that these norms are more deeply rooted for men. Belgium is taking steps to address these inequalities, such as increasing paternity leave from 15 to 20 days in January 2023, but it still lags behind other European countries in this regard.

Belgium performs well in political gender equality due to gender parity at the ministerial level. However, fewer women achieve long-lasting careers compared to men. The forced resignation of the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities, Gender, and Diversity, Sarah Schlitz, revived debates about a potential double standard for women in politics. A gender gap also exists in the economic sphere,

with women underrepresented in decision-making positions in public and private organizations.

A concern is the lack of data on violence against women, including intimate partner violence and sexual harassment at work. Eurostat is currently collecting data, which should be available from 2024 onwards, providing valuable insights into these critical issues.

Citation:

Institute for the equality of women and men: <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/en>

World Economic Forum. 2023. The Global Gender Gap Report 2023. Geneva: The World Economic Forum Publishing.

UN Gender equality index: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

The European Institute for Gender Equality: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/BE>

Some statistics by gender at Belgian federal level : [apercu\\_statistique\\_2023.pdf](apercu_statistique_2023.pdf) (belgium.be)

On maternity and paternity benefits in Belgium: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1102&langId=en&intPageId=4415>

Press article on the resignation of the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities: <https://www.rtf.be/article/demission-de-sarah-schlitz-une-prevalence-du-double-standard-en-politique-11189441>

Vandeleene, A. 2014. "Gender Quotas and 'Women-Friendly' Candidate Selection: Evidence from Belgium." *Representation* 50 (3): 337-349.

## Denmark

### Score 9

Denmark is one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. Gender-based discrimination can take various forms and be perceived differently depending on position, history and social context. Although employment rates for men and women are high, there is a clear gender division both horizontally and vertically. Women are overrepresented in welfare jobs in the public sector, and underrepresented among leaders in various fields.

The debate on gender-based discrimination in the labor market primarily focuses on wages, but it also encompasses hiring and career options. While a significant portion of the pay disparities between genders can be attributed to these factors, a pay difference of 1% – 3% persists, which may be attributed to other factors, including gender. Rules for parental leave have been expanded to extend the right and duty of fathers to take paternity leave. Since 2006, all employers have been required to contribute to the financing of parental leave schemes. A recent law changes how parents can split the leave, in an effort to encourage men to expand their share.

The Ministry of Digital Government and Gender Equality is responsible for proposing policies that enhance gender equality and for monitoring their development.

The share of women parliamentarians has been increasing since 1987; currently, 43% of legislators are women. In the present government, 35% of the ministers are women (Statistics Denmark 2023). At the municipal level, 36% of elected city

counselors are women, and approximately 22% of mayors are women (Statistics Denmark 2021). The private sector lags somewhat behind these numbers. Approximately 15% of companies with more than 50 employees have a woman CEO, according to Danish Industry (2021). There is significant variation across sectors with regard to the share of women CEOs.

Citation:

Statistics Denmark. 2023. "Flere kvinder i Folketinget." <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/nyheder-analyser-publ/bagtal/2023/2023-03-08-flere-kvinder-i-Folketinget>

Statistics Denmark. 2021. "Komunalvalg." <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/borgere/demokrati/kommunalvalg>

Lønstrukturkomiteen. 2023. Lønstrukturkomiteen - hovedrapport. København. <https://www.loenstrukturkomiteen.dk/media/0kulvbhr/loenstrukturkomite-ns-hovedrapport.pdf>

## Finland

### Score 9

In terms of gender equality, the government has embarked on several programs to improve its performance. The Act on Equality Between Women and Men was passed in 1986, and gender discrimination is prohibited under additional legislation. Currently, Finland is considered one of the most woman-friendly countries in the world. For example, in the previous Sanna Marin government, all five leading ministers and party chairs were women. Despite the legislation and changes in attitudes, inequalities between men and women prevail, especially in the labor market, which is strongly segregated. This has resulted in a rather high gender pay gap and a pension gender gap of around one-fifth.

On the other hand, girls are performing much better than boys in schools, resulting in significant gender inequality in higher education, where women occupy more than 60% of the study places.

The Ombudsman for Equality operates as an independent authority with the primary responsibility of overseeing compliance with the Act on Equality Between Women and Men. This role involves closely monitoring adherence to the act, particularly focusing on preventing discriminatory practices. One of the authority's essential functions is to disseminate comprehensive information regarding the Equality Act and its practical application (Ombudsman for Equality n.d.).

Furthermore, the Ombudsman actively works to encourage the implementation of the Equality Act's objectives. This effort includes carrying out initiatives, providing advice and offering guidance to promote equality. The Ombudsman also engages in the crucial task of assessing gender equality across various sectors of society.

In addition to these responsibilities, the Ombudsman plays a proactive role in promoting reconciliation in cases deemed to be discrimination under the terms of the Equality Act. The Ombudsman's authority encompasses matters concerning gender, gender identity and gender expression. This authority extends both to combating discrimination and advancing the cause of equality.

It is important to note that the Ombudsman for Equality operates within the administrative purview of the Ministry of Justice. In fulfilling these duties, the Ombudsman primarily provides guidance and advice in addressing issues related to gender equality.

Citation:

Ombudsman for Equality. n.d. "Tasks of the Ombudsman for Equality." <https://tasa-arvo.fi/en/duties-of-the-ombudsman>

## France

### Score 9

Gender equality has improved over the past decades. The European Institute of Gender Equality ranks France fifth in the EU on this measure; within the OECD, France has average-to-good equality outcomes compared to the other countries. It does well in terms of school performance and the share of women among graduates of master's programs. The labor force participation rate among women is one of the OECD's highest.

During the pandemic period, more women than men took on caring duties. Survey data on the division of household chores show significant patterns of inequality in this area.

The gender wage gap remains above the OECD average, hovering around 15% (see Vie publique 2024). These gaps tend to widen when children arrive. The introduction of a comprehensive gender gap reporting system in 2019, the Professional Equality Index, could help improve the situation over time. Since 2021, market-listed firms have been obliged to achieve gender parity on their boards. This has placed France at the top of all OECD countries on this measure. In the political realm, the 2017 parliament had the most female members in French history, at around 40%. The 2022 parliament lagged behind in this regard. France has never had a female president, but Élisabeth Borne (2022 – 2024) was the second female prime minister in French history. Public rules stipulating gender equality for candidacies have various effects, with the best performance coming in local and regional elections (between 40% and 50% of mandates are held by women). In the 2021 local elections, 12 of the 42 biggest cities elected a woman mayor.

France encourages parental leave to be shared among both parents, but fewer fathers than mothers take advantage of the low flat-rate leave benefit. While substantial public support means that childcare itself is affordable, there is a shortage of public crèche facilities for children under three years of age. Mandatory schooling at the age of three allows mothers to return to the labor market, and the share of women working 30 hours or less is lower than the OECD average (21% compared to 25%).

Since 2013, data on gender violence has been systematically collected by governmental actors. The current executive launched an information campaign on this issue in 2019.

Citation:

OECD. 2023. "Joining Forces for Gender Equality - Country Note: France."

Vie publique. 2024. "Droit des femmes: où en est l'égalité professionnelle?" <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/19602-droits-des-femmes-ou-en-est-legalite-professionnelle>

## Norway

Score 9

Gender equality is pursued as a significant policy objective in all areas of public and private activity. There are no quantitative national policy goals, except for a legal requirement (effective 2023) stipulating that at least 40% of board members in all enterprises must be women. The first comprehensive law promoting gender equality was adopted in 1978 and was later revised and extended in 2016 to cover all forms of discrimination. A separate national institution, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, oversees the implementation of the law and holds the legal authority to handle specific cases of discrimination.

The proportional representation of men and women in all societal arenas and activities is monitored through general statistical compilations and reports, although it is not the responsibility of any single national unit. While women are now quite well represented in politics and organizations, and increasingly so in business, the labor market and education system remain heavily gendered. Care work in the public sector – and the professional education leading to these occupations – is dominated by women, who typically occupy between 70% and 80% of both study places and jobs. Girls consistently achieve better grades in the school system, leading to high-prestige professions such as medicine, law, and psychology seeing the proportion of female workers increase to well over half. Universities regularly propose quotas for male students; however, there is currently no legal foundation for implementing such measures.

Citation:

Nærings – og fiskeridepartementet. 2023. "Historisk enighet om krav til kjønnsbalanse i norske styrever." <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/historisk-enighet-om-krav-til-kjonnsbalanse-i-norske-styrever/id2985631/>

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud. <https://www.ldo.no/en/ldo-english-page/>

Barne – og likestillingsdepartementet. 1978. Likestillingsloven. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLO/lov/1978-06-09-45>

## Spain

Score 9

In recent years, the Spanish government has enacted various laws to enhance gender equality in the workplace, including the Equal Pay Decree. In March 2022, the government endorsed the III Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and

Men 2022–2025, with a projected investment of €21.3 billion. Aligned with Agenda 2030, relevant Council of Europe conventions, and the European Strategy for Gender Equality 2020–2025, the plan is organized around four key action areas and builds upon assessments of previous plans.

At the strategic level, 14 indicators measure the plan's impact, and at the specific level, 64 result indicators have been established. The monitoring system includes at least one performance indicator for each operational objective. For example, impact indicators for the first action plan include increasing the integration of gender equality in public policy management and the number of public employees trained in gender equality approaches.

The strategic plan serves as a guiding document for the central government administration, providing a framework for other administrations to design their action plans.

Guaranteeing the inclusion of a gender perspective has led to various laws mandating ex ante gender assessments and gender budgeting practices.

The Ministry of Equality and the Interministerial Commission for Equality between Women and Men are the primary entities responsible for implementing gender equality policies. Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, are also involved in specific actions. The plans build upon existing infrastructure, including the Women's Institutes and Equality Units in ministerial departments, and establish new interdepartmental working groups for gender mainstreaming. The Sectoral Conference on Equality ensures cooperation between the Central State Administration, autonomous communities, and local entities. Civil society is also involved in monitoring the strategic plan 2022–2025.

Autonomous communities have established joint anti-discrimination protections based on gender identity and sexual orientation. However, the extreme right-wing party Vox, in coalition with or supporting the PP in several autonomous communities, is attempting to overturn laws on anti-discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation and reduce funding for women's institutes.

Citation:

Government of Spain. 2022. "III Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men 2022-2025." <https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/publicacioneselectronicas/documentacion/Documentos/DE1824.pdf>

## Sweden

Score 9

The goal of gender equality efforts in Sweden is for men and women to have equal power and the ability to shape their own lives and influence society at large. Gender mainstreaming has been a core strategy since 1994. Sweden's work toward equality is divided into several objectives: an equal division of power and influence,

economic gender equality, equal education, equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care, equal health, and an end to men's violence against women (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023a). The Swedish Gender Equality Agency is the lead coordinating unit for equality efforts, but gender equality is mainstreamed across all agencies, social institutions, county boards, regions, municipalities, and universities (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023b). Statistics Sweden has developed several indicators to evaluate six equality targets (SCB, 2021).

Men's violence against women is a poignant equality issue. Men's violence against women refers to "all kinds of physical, mental, sexual violence, digital violence as well as threats of violence in personal relationships; honor-based violence and oppression, including child marriage, forced marriage and genital mutilation of girls and women; prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes and sexual exploitation of children and the commercialization and exploitation of women's bodies in commercials, media and pornography" (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023a).

A ten-year national strategy to end men's violence against women was implemented in 2017 with four targets: extended and effective preventive work against violence, improved detection of violence and stronger protection for women and children who experience violence, efficient crime prevention, and better knowledge and methodologies. Further, the strategy aims to challenge former ideas concerning power and masculinity that justify violence and the buying of sexual services. It also focuses on combating prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation of children, and honor-based violence and oppression (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023a).

After the 2022 election, the Riksdag consisted of 46% women, and the government and its administration have nearly achieved the 50-50 target. In municipalities, men are overrepresented on municipal boards, which are often led by men. About 22% of women in politics avoid certain issues due to exposure or anxiety, compared to 14% of men.

There is an increasing difference in young men and women's attitudes toward equality. Young men are more likely to assert that society is equal and that women exaggerate inequality. Additionally, they are less likely to disagree with the statement that men are better political leaders and managers than women. Meanwhile, income disparities between men and women are widening. Between 2020 and 2021, the gap grew more significantly than it has for a long time. Women's disposable income is generally 20% lower than men's. This discrepancy is attributed to men owning more capital than women. Furthermore, women are more likely to be outside the labor market, work part-time and in low-wage occupations, use more parental leave, study longer, and have higher sickness absence rates than men (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2024).

Parental leave and paid parental leave are regulated by the Parental Leave Act (SFS 1995:584). In 2022, 54% of women and 46% of men received paid parental leave.



There were 48.9 million paid parental leave days, with men using 30% of the days (Försäkringskassan, 2023).

During 2022, the cost of living and inflation increased significantly, raising food prices and disproportionately affecting women's finances more than men's. Single women with children and elderly women on a low fixed income were particularly impacted (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023c).

There are prevailing differences between girls and boys concerning school results, mental health, and the choice of education. Girls generally have better grades than boys but experience more anxiety (see section 9.3 on equal education). Women have worse health than men in several areas, including mental health. In 2022, 22% of women and 9% of men between the ages of 16 and 29 experienced anxiety. Women live longer than men but report worse health. The average life expectancy is steadily increasing for both men and women, but not at the same pace for women with low education. The goal for equal health targets physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and includes preventive public health work, inputs to social services, support for people with disabilities, and healthcare and publicly financed care (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2023d).

Citation:

Försäkringskassan. 2023. "Delas föräldrapennindagarna jämställt?" <https://www.forsakringskassan.se/statistik-och-analys/barn-och-familj/statistik-inom-området-barn-och-familj—foraldrapenning/delas-foraldrapenningdagarna-jamstallt>

Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. 2023a. "Mäns våld mot kvinnor." <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/mans-vald-mot-kvinnor/>

Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. 2023b. "Stöd och samordning av jämställdhetsarbete." <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/om-jamstalldhetsmyndigheten/stod-och-samordning/>

Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. 2023c. "Delmål 2: Ekonomisk jämställdhet." <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/jamstalldhet-i-sverige/delmål-2-ekonomisk-jamstalldhet/>

Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. 2023d. "Delmål 5: Jämställd hälsa." <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/jamstalldhet-i-sverige/delmål-5-jamstalld-halsa/>

Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. 2024. "Delmål 1: Jämn fördelning av makt och inflytande." <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/jamstalldhet-i-sverige/delmål-1-jamn-fordelning-av-makt-och-inflytande/>

SFS. 1995. Föräldraledighetslag. [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/foraldraledighetslag-1995584\\_sfs-1995-584](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/foraldraledighetslag-1995584_sfs-1995-584)

SCB. 2021. "Metadatadokumentation: Indikatorer för uppföljning av jämställdhet." <https://www.scb.se/globalassets/temaomraden/jamstalldhet/indikatorernas-framstallning-och-kvalitet—jamstalldhet.pdf>

## Germany

Score 8

According to the United Nations Development Program's Gender Equality Index (GII), Germany had a relatively low and thereby favorable score of 0.073 for 2021. A lower score indicates lower inequality on a scale from 0 to 1. The GII measures

gender-based inequality across three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The dimensions of empowerment and the labor market include women with at least a secondary education, women's participation in the labor market, and their share of parliamentary seats. For context, Denmark had the lowest score at 0.013, while the world average was 0.465 (UNDP, 2023).

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) is generally responsible for gender equality policies. Equality is a central topic for the ministry, and it is divided into multiple sub-categories, such as equality in the labor market, violence against women, and equality policies for boys and men. Some initiatives result from interdepartmental policy coordination. An example of this is policies on equality in education, for which the BMFSFJ and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) cooperate.

Germany is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As a control mechanism for the convention, countries must regularly submit reports outlining newly adopted equality and women's policy measures. Germany's most recent report, adopted by the federal cabinet in 2021, addressed 80 questions posed by the CEDAW committee (BMFSFJ, 2021a).

As of 2020, Germany has implemented a strategy to ensure gender equality, developed interdepartmentally and published by the BMFSFJ, which formulates nine goals. These goals primarily focus on ensuring equal career opportunities, income, and participation in politics, business, and science. This is achieved, for instance, through the promotion of an equal distribution of paid work and unpaid care work between women and men. Although these goals are based on current key figures, the measures proposed by the strategy do not include specific target values. Nevertheless, the strategy outlines multiple comprehensive key measures in the form of initiatives or policies to achieve the individual goals. Additionally, the strategy identifies an indicator to measure progress for each action, such as data from the Federal Statistical Office (BMFSFJ, 2020).

In line with its strategy, Germany has implemented or planned several policies to support gender equality. The paragraphs below outline a few exemplary policies in relevant areas.

Regarding education, Germany has a gender-equitable school system, and more girls than boys complete school with an upper-secondary education. However, gender stereotypes still need to be addressed to promote career diversification and equal opportunities. In recent years, several initiatives, such as "YouCodeGirls," "Boy's Day," and "Girl's Day," were launched, and the BMBF introduced the "National Pact for Women in STEM Professions" to increase the number of women in STEM occupations (BMFSFJ, 2023a).

For the year 2022, 46.7% of the total labor force were women, which is above the global share of 39.5% (World Bank, 2023). However, unequal treatment still

becomes apparent in issues such as the gender pay gap. There are policies in place to promote women's participation and equal treatment in the labor market. For instance, as of 2021, executive boards with more than two members must include at least one woman. Nonetheless, this policy affects only 66 companies, of which 21 do not have women on their executive boards (BMFSFJ, 2021).

While a goal of the 2020 strategy is to promote parity in politics, especially in all parliaments, a corresponding parity act (Paritätsgesetz) in Thuringia was declared null and void by the Thuringian Constitutional Court. The act required that candidate lists for state parliamentary elections be filled alternately by women and men, but it was ruled unconstitutional (Bundesverfassungsgericht, 2021).

Lastly, Germany ratified the Istanbul Convention, the most comprehensive international human rights treaty on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, in 2017. The convention entered into force in 2018 (EIGE, 2023). Based on this convention, the BMFSFJ launched the federal funding program "United against violence against women" ("Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt an Frauen"). The program aims to expand the network of support services, improve access to many nationwide help services, and educate about the various forms of violence (BMFSFJ, 2023a). In November 2023, the Federal Minister for Family Affairs proposed a new violence aid act set to enter into force in the current legislative period. The draft law plans the creation of the legal right to protection and counseling in cases of gender-specific and domestic violence (Zeit, 2023). Additionally, as of November 2023, the federal government is working on a national strategy for protection against violence to implement a measure from the Istanbul Convention (BMFSFJ, 2023b).

Citation:  
 BMFSFJ. 2020. "Gleichstellungsstrategie der Bundesregierung." <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/158356/b500f2b30b7bac2fc1446d223d0a3e19/gleichstellungsstrategie-der-bundesregierung-data.pdf>  
 BMFSFJ. 2021. "Neunter Bericht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zum Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen zur Beseitigung jeder Form von Diskriminierung der Frau (CEDAW)." <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/181362/684a2a98e6aa2486657e25923d60ca47/neunter-staatenbericht-cedaw-data.pdf>  
 BMFSFJ. 2021. "Zweites Führungspositionen-Gesetz – FüPoG II." <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/gesetze/zweites-fuehrungspositionengesetz-fuepog-2-164226>  
 BMFSFJ. 2023a. "Frauen vor Gewalt schützen." <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen>  
 BMFSFJ. 2023. "Bundesregierung beginnt Arbeit an Gewaltschutzstrategie." <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/bundesregierung-beginnt-arbeit-an-gewaltschutzstrategie-232658>  
 Bundesverfassungsgericht. 2021. "Unzulässige Verfassungsbeschwerde gegen Urteil betreffend die Einführung paritätischer Listen bei der Landtagswahl in Thüringen." Pressemitteilung Nr. 3/2022. <https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2022/bvg22-003.html>  
 EIGE. 2023. "Gender Equality Index, Violence in Germany in 2023 edition." <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/domain/violence/DE>  
 UNDP. 2023. "Gender Inequality Index (GII)." <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>  
 World Bank. 2023. "Labor Force, Female (% of Total Labor Force)." <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>  
 Zeit. 2023. "Lisa Paus fordert mehr Schutz für Frauen." <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2023-11/gewalt-frauen-lisa-paus-frauenrat>

## Latvia

### Score 8

As of early 2023, Latvia's population stood at 1.883 million, with women constituting 53.7% of the total. Men outnumber women until age 43; however, among those older than 65, the number of women doubles that of men. In the reproductive age group (15 – 49 years), the gender ratio is nearly balanced.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) rated Latvia's gender equality at 61.5 in 2023, lower than the EU average (70.2) and Lithuania's (64.1) but higher than Estonia's (60.2). Since 2010, Latvia's score has improved by 6.3 points, mainly due to advancements in power and finance.

In 2022, 40.6% of women and 25.4% of men aged 15 – 74 in Latvia had higher education, while more men had vocational training (33.7% of men vs. 26.6% of women). Despite EU and Latvian laws ensuring equal rights for men and women, gender disparities in the labor market persist. Men's employment rate was 5.4 percentage points higher than women's in 2022 (66.8% vs. 61.4%), with the most significant gap in the 35 – 44 age group. Post-retirement, women remain more active in the labor market.

Women are often employed in lower-paid sectors and public sector jobs. While they frequently hold leadership positions compared to the EU average, they are underrepresented on the boards of major companies, holding just 23.3% of these positions. Men dominate in industrial and transport sectors, while women are more prevalent in trade and education. In 2022, women's average gross hourly earnings were 17.1% lower than men's, with the smallest wage gap among youth (up to 25 years) and seniors (over 65).

Latvia has adopted an integrated approach to gender equality, incorporating it as a horizontal principle across all state-defined sectoral policies. This strategy ensures that every member of society benefits from the state's economic growth and that decisions and priorities in various domains respect the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The Concept for Implementing Gender Equality, approved in 2001, serves as the foundation for this approach, aiming to foster effective and coordinated solutions to gender equality issues in Latvia. The Concept identifies vital areas needing improvement, including macroeconomic policy, equal participation and representation, social life equality (especially in education, welfare, health, and addressing violence and sexual harassment), participation in civic society, changing gender roles and stereotypes, and improving the information base for gender equality analysis (Ministru Kabinets, 2021).

Despite policy developments, challenges remain, such as persistent gender pay gaps and stereotypes about gender roles. Efforts to harmonize work and private life, particularly in promoting fatherhood roles, have been significant. However, a comprehensive understanding of gender equality principles across various policy areas is still developing due to limited financial and human resources.

In 2022, the ombudsman noted that sexism in advertising persists and that the current legal framework does not explicitly categorize sexism as discrimination, therefore failing to prohibit it effectively (Tiesībsargs 2023). Latvia has recognized the need to promote discussions about banning sexism in advertising, especially since self-regulation does not always function.

Citation:

Centrālā statistikas pārvalde. 2023. "Dzimumu līdztiesība." [https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2023-12/Dzimumu\\_lidztiesiba\\_%2823\\_00%29\\_LV.pdf](https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2023-12/Dzimumu_lidztiesiba_%2823_00%29_LV.pdf)

European Institute for Gender Equality. 2023. "Gender Equality Index 2023 - Latvia." <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/LV>

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## Lithuania

Score 8

The government is clearly committed to ensuring gender equality. Equal opportunity and equal treatment are mandated by Article 28 of the Lithuanian Constitution. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, the process of accession to the European Union "played a crucial role in fostering gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Lithuania's national policy and body of legislation."

Lithuania has two key laws that ensure the consistent and systematic implementation of programs, measures and projects to promote gender equality: the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1998) and the Law on Equal Treatment (adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2005). These laws cover discrimination based on 14 grounds, including gender.

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men forbids any discrimination – whether direct or indirect – on the ground of sex, including sexual harassment. The Law on Equal Treatment has been reformed several times and, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality, is now fully in line with the EU acquis and other international instruments.

In addition to these legislative norms, Lithuania has compiled several key strategic documents since 2012. The National Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men – the first version of which was in place from 2010 to 2014, and the second from 2015 through 2021 – aimed to ensure a consistent, sophisticated and systematic

approach to gender equality issues in all fields. The National Program pursued four main priorities: equal opportunities for women and men in the labor market; gender balance in decision-making; gender mainstreaming, especially in culture, education and science, national defense, and international obligations; and increased management effectiveness.

Gender equality activities have been implemented in the priority areas of employment, science and education, healthcare, environmental protection, national defense, decision-making, EU and international cooperation, and the development of mechanisms and methods to implement equal opportunities for women and men. Every year, progress on the implementation of the National Program is reported to the government, while an independent external comparative assessment of the overall impact of the National Program is carried out every five years.

Lithuania has also implemented an accompanying action plan for the National Program (the first version was in place from 2015 – 2017 and the second from 2018 – 2021). The action plan outlines concrete actions, implementation deadlines, responsible institutions and state budget allocations needed for each step, and additionally specifies evaluation criteria. It also sets out 20 specific targets, including reducing the pay gap between women and men; encouraging girls and boys to choose “nontraditional professions or studies for women and men”; guaranteeing access to services and information for the prevention of cervical, breast and prostate cancer; and encouraging women’s activity in the field of environmental protection.

Among the most recently adopted documents, the National Progress Plan (an institutional plan that provides policy direction for the future) includes equal opportunities for all as a horizontal principle. This principle covers the commitment to respect human rights regardless of any identity factors such as gender, age or race. It also underscores the necessity of ensuring equal access to services, and of implementing strategic programs that consider the specific needs of women and men, different age groups, ethnic minorities, and other groups vulnerable to discrimination. At the ministerial level, each ministry has committed to implementing gender equality as a horizontal principle. However, no gender mainstreaming measures have been officially adopted.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labor is responsible for gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming, as well as for implementing, monitoring and following up on central strategies and measures. In 2021, the ministry became responsible for coordinating the implementation of gender equality as a horizontal principle in the work of the central government. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson is the independent gender equality body in Lithuania.

Citation:

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## New Zealand

### Score 8

New Zealand has demonstrated a commitment to gender equality across various domains. Although there is no standalone strategy document specifically labeled as a "gender equality strategy," the New Zealand government has implemented policies and initiatives across different sectors to promote gender equality and address gender disparities. These initiatives cover areas such as employment, education, health and violence prevention.

The Ministry for Women is the lead government agency responsible for implementing gender equality strategies and initiatives. Its functions include coordinating gender equality efforts across government agencies and working collaboratively with stakeholders to implement initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality.

First, New Zealand has laws and regulations aimed at preventing and addressing various forms of violence against women and girls, the most important being the Domestic Violence Act. The government also supports a network of services, including shelters, helplines, counseling and advocacy services, to assist victims of violence. Nevertheless, domestic violence remains a serious issue, with police attending a family harm episode every three minutes. Māori women are more likely to be affected by family and sexual violence than any other ethnicity; nearly 50% experience partner abuse in their lifetime (Rankin 2023).

Second, the government has demonstrated a commitment to promoting equal opportunities in the labor market and education. For instance, efforts focus on addressing gender disparities in STEM fields, gender pay gaps and the unequal sharing of caregiving responsibilities. Challenges persist, however. The gender pay gap continues to sit at 8.6% (Gabel 2023), and women remain underrepresented in certain sectors of the labor market (Armah 2022) – to name just two examples.

New Zealand has made strides in promoting women's participation and equal opportunities at various levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. In 2022, female lawmakers became the majority in Parliament for the first time. In April 2023, the government cabinet reached gender equity for the first time in its history (McClure 2023). Additionally, more than half of senior leadership positions within the public service are held by women (Deguara 2020). At the same time, however, female leaders make up only 36.5% of directors across NZX-listed companies (NZX 2020).

## Citation:

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NZX. 2022. “Gender diversity statistics.” [https://www.nzx.com/rails/active\\_storage/blobs/eyJfcmFpbHMiOnsibWVzc2FnZSI6IkJBaHBBaTBYYiwiZXhwIjpu dWxsLCJwdXliOiJibG9iX2lkIn19-d43f12ed46ad4def5af48e8c38cc295165bf352d/Gender%20Diversity%20Statistics%20-%20year%20ended%2031%20July.pdf](https://www.nzx.com/rails/active_storage/blobs/eyJfcmFpbHMiOnsibWVzc2FnZSI6IkJBaHBBaTBYYiwiZXhwIjpu dWxsLCJwdXliOiJibG9iX2lkIn19-d43f12ed46ad4def5af48e8c38cc295165bf352d/Gender%20Diversity%20Statistics%20-%20year%20ended%2031%20July.pdf)

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## Slovenia

### Score 8

The Slovenian constitution prohibits gender discrimination and assigns responsibility for promoting gender equality at the ministerial level. The Department for Equal Opportunities, established in 2012, oversees gender equality initiatives, succeeding the Government Office for Equal Opportunities. In 2016, an independent body, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, was formed to champion equal treatment, supported by the Commission for Petitions, Human Rights, and Equal Opportunities.

A pivotal legal instrument for gender equality is the 2002 Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which mandates gender mainstreaming in government planning. Ministries appoint coordinators for equal opportunities who are tasked with implementation. In 2023, a resolution on the National Program for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030 was enacted, with a ministry working group launched under the motto “Instead of flowers – action!”

Slovenia ranked below the EU average in the Gender Equality Index for 2021 and 2022, with the decline attributed to disparities in health, knowledge, and economic strength. Gender segregation persists in education and the labor market, with fewer women in management roles and disparities in caregiving responsibilities. Alarmingly, up to 13 women were murdered by partners in 2022, around 200,000 lacked a chosen gynecologist, and there was a 25% pay gap in health and social care.



The new resolution aims for equal participation of women and men across public and private spheres, targeting employment, education, health, and social status. It addresses femicide prevention and violence against women and supports vulnerable groups like older women, disabled women, and Roma women. Measures include promoting female entrepreneurship, encouraging women in military and police roles, and implementing family-friendly policies to balance professional and personal lives.

Citation:

European Institute for Gender Equality. 2022. "Slovenia." <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/slovenia>

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## United Kingdom

Score 8

Gender equality and non-discrimination on other "protected characteristics" are provided for in the 2010 Equality Act. The legal framework, including the "public sector equality duty," is robust in countering discrimination and contributing to changing social attitudes. However, the UK is often seen as taking a minimalist approach to "gender mainstreaming" compared to countries like Sweden (with some scope for additional action in devolved governments, as noted by Cairney et al. 2022).

High-profile incidents often highlight broad anti-discriminatory trends. For example, sports commentators mocking a female referee's assistant have faced rapid dismissal. Cases involving trans-identified individuals have sparked public discourse on the extent of anti-discrimination measures. Recent egregious incidents of gender discrimination and misogyny in the Metropolitan Police and the South Wales Fire Service have been widely condemned, highlighting persistent issues (e.g., the Casey review 2023 describes "overt acts of homophobia, misogyny, and racism by serving officers and staff in the Met").

The Westminster government has a minister responsible for women and equalities, currently Kemi Badenoch, who has held the post since 2022 and has also been the Secretary of State for Business and Trade since 2023. There are equivalent ministers in the devolved administrations. Badenoch oversees the Government Equalities Office (GEO), which leads policy on women, sexual orientation, and transgender equality, and works with the Cabinet Office and the Equality Hub. The Equality Hub is responsible for the gender pay gap service and related guidance for employers and

has been working with employers and professional bodies to identify good practices for supporting women experiencing menopause in the workplace. In 2019, the GEO published “Gender Equality at Every Stage: A Roadmap for Change,” outlining goals and actions to advance gender equality.

Ministries and public bodies regularly update equality and diversity strategies, as do companies and other entities outside the public sector. In 2017, the government introduced legislation requiring organizations with 250 or more employees to report annually on their gender pay gap. The Office for National Statistics revealed in April 2023 that the pay gap had narrowed to 7.7%, declining by a quarter over the last decade. However, the gap is more pronounced among high earners, and the proportion of women in their 40s and 50s in senior roles is lower. Scotland has made more progress in reducing the pay gap compared to England.

Tangible progress on gender equality has been made, and policy is supportive, with the World Economic Forum index placing the UK toward the top of its league table (though still behind the Nordic countries and the Netherlands). However, research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests that the pandemic and associated policy responses negatively affected gender equality in the workplace. The representation of women in top management and on boards also remains low.

Citation:

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<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/covid-19-impacts-pandemic-inequality>

Paul Cairney, Emily St Denny, and Sean Kippin. 2021. “Policy Learning to Reduce Inequalities: The Search for a Coherent Scottish Gender Mainstreaming Policy in a Multi-level UK.” *Territory, Politics, Governance* 9 (3): 412-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1837661>

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## Australia

Score 7

Australian governments have made strong statements supporting gender equality, involving several agencies, including the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Fair Work Commission, in promoting this cause. Key government departments have developed strategies to advance gender equality, foremost among them being the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality. Sponsored by the prime minister and Cabinet and developed by the Office for Women, this strategy adopts a ‘whole-of-community’ perspective, incorporating the perspectives of women and girls from diverse communities. Currently in its consultation phase, the strategy has engaged with First Nations people, people living with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals,

culturally and linguistically diverse people, migrant and refugee women, women in regional and remote areas, older women, and young women and girls (PMC 2023a).

Another significant initiative is the Women’s Economic Equality Taskforce, established in September 2022 to guide the government on prioritizing actions to achieve gender equality in the economy. The Taskforce’s 10-Year Plan recommends greater government leadership and accountability in embedding gender equity into policy design, implementation, and evaluation; investing in policies that highlight the social value of care work and support families with caring responsibilities; and using regulatory and spending powers to create and maintain safe, secure, flexible, and equitable workplaces to enable women’s economic participation (PMC 2023b).

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Citation:

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Parliament of Australia. 2023. Workplace Gender Equality Amendment 2023. Parliament of Australia. [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Bills\\_LEGislation/Bills\\_Search\\_Results/Result?bId=s1363](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_LEGislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=s1363)

## Austria

Score 7

Generally, the issue of gender equality has figured prominently in Austrian public discourse. This has come to be symbolized by ongoing discussions about formal rules for adequately gendered language, which may be considered an evasion strategy.

Many agencies are designed to support women and provide emergency shelter. There are also several programs, such as scholarships, exclusively for women. Women’s

issues are specifically acknowledged at the level of ministerial departments; however, there is no particular department for women's affairs. Instead, in the current Nehammer government, the responsibilities for women, family, integration, and media have been merged into one department, which does not prioritize gender equality.

The representation of women in the Austrian national parliament (Nationalrat) has increased significantly in recent years, reaching an all-time high of slightly above 40% after the 2019 national election, up from just 34.4% after the 2017 election. With this increase, Austria currently ranks 9th among 30 OECD countries covered in a recent study (World Bank 2022).

Similar dynamics can be observed at the level of female ministers. Between January 2020 and January 2021, the ÖVP-Green government (Kurz II) was the first federal government to include more female than male members. However, much like the representation of women in parliament, this trend has not been self-reinforcing and has faced setbacks. In late 2023, the current ÖVP-Green government, led by Chancellor Nehammer, included eight male ministers and only five female ministers.

Other indicators, such as the percentage of women in leading corporate positions, demonstrate that gender equality continues to be a major challenge. In 2023, women made up only 7.6% of directors on the boards of major Austrian companies listed in the Austrian Traded Index (ATX). This gives Austria the second-highest proportion of male directors on the boards of major companies in Europe, after Luxembourg (6%). Similarly, the gender pay gap across various occupations has been significant. According to recent OECD figures, Austria ranks 27th out of 30 OECD countries in terms of gender pay equity. Another closely related bias concerns average pension entitlements, with women receiving about 40% less than their male counterparts. These figures are all the more remarkable considering that, overall, women in Austria now lead in higher educational achievements, including academic qualifications.

The disproportionate burden borne by women within Austrian families can be seen as an aspect of *de facto* gender discrimination. Additionally, Austrian welfare transfers for mothers are designed in a way that keeps mothers out of the labor market. In numerous cases, legal provisions for the protection of parents, such as job protection for those switching to part-time work, are not respected by employers. Recent developments in this area include an increase in the employment rate of mothers in Austria from just over 64% in 2010 to nearly 68% in 2020, although this rate remains considerably lower than that for employed fathers at slightly above 90%. The – often involuntarily chosen – part-time occupation of women has also been significantly higher than for men (Schipfer and Wernhart 2022).

Recent Austrian governments have acknowledged and targeted some of these issues by introducing quotas for women in the civil service and semi-public companies or by exempting women, particularly mothers, from certain demanding jobs. However,

progress has remained slow and patchy in many areas, especially regarding child care facilities for very young children.

Citation:

[https://www.demokratiezentrum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/heitzmann\\_armut\\_weibl.pdf](https://www.demokratiezentrum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/heitzmann_armut_weibl.pdf)

<https://www.momentum-institut.at/news/bildungsreport-bildung-gender-und-einkommen-oesterreich>

[https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/dokumente\\_und\\_recht/frauenfoerderung/Frauenfoerderung\\_in-Unternehmen.html](https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/dokumente_und_recht/frauenfoerderung/Frauenfoerderung_in-Unternehmen.html)

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Schipfer, Rudolf K., and Georg Wernhart. 2022. "Bildung, Erwerbstätigkeit, Arbeitsmarkt – und Familie: Entwicklungen und Veränderungen." Beziehungweise: Informationsdienst des Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung, April.

## Canada

### Score 7

Canada has been actively working toward gender equality through various policies and initiatives. The federal government has committed to advancing gender equality and addressing issues such as pay equity, violence against women, and women's representation in leadership roles. Responsibility for gender equality initiatives is distributed across various government departments and agencies. Status of Women Canada, a federal department, has historically played a key role. The government emphasizes collaboration and coordination across different departments to ensure a comprehensive approach (Hankivsky 2013).

One key development has been the inclusion of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in government policy assessment. GBA+ is a tool used by the Canadian government to evaluate how different groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives. It aims to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making but is often ignored or given only lip service (Cameron and Tedds 2023).

Canada also has a National Action Plan to implement the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This plan includes efforts to address gender-based violence and promote women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

The government has introduced legislation to address the gender wage gap by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value in federally regulated workplaces. It has made some progress in reducing disparities, often through significant payouts to discriminated workers.

There is also a Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) designed to help women start and grow their businesses. This strategy includes funding, support for women entrepreneurs, and initiatives to increase the number of women-owned businesses.

Canada uses various indicators to measure progress toward gender equality, including data on income, workforce participation, representation in leadership roles, and other relevant metrics. The government regularly updates and refines these indicators to improve measurement accuracy and comprehensiveness.

While Canada has made strides in promoting gender equality, challenges persist. Critics argue that progress is slow and more needs to be done to address systemic barriers and disparities. The effectiveness of policies can vary, and ongoing evaluation and adjustments are often necessary.

Citation:

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en>

Cameron, Anna I., and Lindsay M. Tedds. 2023. "Canada's GBA+ Framework in a (Post)Pandemic World: Issues, Tensions and Paths Forward." *Canadian Public Administration* 66 (1): 7–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12508>

Hankivsky, Olena. 2013. "Gender Mainstreaming: A Five-Country Examination." *Politics & Policy* 41 (5): 629-55.

## Portugal

### Score 7

The Portuguese government's commitment to ensuring gender equality is evidenced by the launch of the "Portugal + Igual (ENIND)" National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018 – 2030. Initiated in 2018, this strategy signifies a dedicated effort to address sex-based discrimination, prevent domestic violence, and foster equality between women and men in both policies and actions. It comprises three detailed action plans outlining specific objectives to be achieved by 2030 and the measures required to attain these goals. The implementation of these objectives is structured through defined indicators and the involvement of responsible entities, reflecting a systematic and committed approach to achieving gender equality in all respects.

In 2022, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), tasked with implementing gender equality policies, released a report on the first four years (2018 – 2021) of the strategy's implementation. The report revealed that 85% of the measures in the action plan for equality between women and men and 79% of the measures in the action plan for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence were executed (CIG, 2022). Currently, there is no available data for the years 2022 and 2023.

Following this evaluation, new action plans for the 2023 – 2026 cycle were developed based on public consultations and independent assessments. These plans aim to enhance reporting mechanisms, restructure governance, and strengthen the monitoring Technical Commissions for improved efficiency and operational effectiveness (DRE, 2023). The State Secretariat for Equality and Migrations oversees political coordination, while the CIG is responsible for technical

coordination, supported by a Technical Committee to streamline the action plan monitoring process.

However, ongoing concerns persist. First, the tangible impact of these measures on societal attitudes and behaviors may take time to manifest. Second, despite a high rate of female workforce participation, Portugal continues to struggle with a widening gender pay gap, which increased to 11.4% in 2021 (PORDATA, 2023). This indicates persistent challenges in achieving full gender equality in the workplace.

Citation:

INE. 2023. “Indicadores da Saúde.”  
[https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_indicadores&userLoadSave=Load&userTableOrder=11485&tipoSelecao=1&contexto=pq&selTab=tab1&submitLoad=true](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&userLoadSave=Load&userTableOrder=11485&tipoSelecao=1&contexto=pq&selTab=tab1&submitLoad=true)

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<https://www.sns.gov.pt/noticias/2023/05/31/governo-cria-programa-de-acesso-universal-a-bombas-de-insulina-de-nova-geracao/>

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[https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-12/2021\\_chp\\_pt\\_english.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-12/2021_chp_pt_english.pdf)

DRE. 2023. Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 92/2023 – Aprova os Planos de Ação no âmbito da Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação – Portugal + Igual, para o período de 2023-2026.  
<https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/1s/2023/08/15700/0001200092.pdf>

## Czechia

### Score 6

Czechia is formally committed to gender equality, with references to equality found in the constitution and the labor code. The Council for Equality of Men and Women, consisting of 42 members from ministries, other public bodies, and outside interests, exists within the Government Office. In March 2021, the government adopted the Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men for 2021-2030. This strategy provides a clear framework for gender equality over the medium term and sets government priorities each year.

Despite these commitments, Czechia does not compare favorably with other EU or OECD members regarding gender equality. The primary issues include labor market disparities, such as significant income differences between women and men, and higher rates of poverty among women. Additional problems include the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions, horizontal gender segregation in education, and stereotypical role distribution in household and family care, which negatively affects the balance of work and family responsibilities.

In 2022, the gender pay gap stood at 16.4%, while the EU average was 13%. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Czechia ranked 101 out of 146 countries in 2022. Although more women than men have tertiary education, and this trend is increasing, the representation of women in leadership positions does not reflect this. Women's representation in parliament has long been between 15% and 22%, leaving Czechia behind the OECD average. The situation improved after the last elections to the Chamber of Deputies (Lower House) when the proportion of women reached 25%.

The low level of commitment to gender issues from some leading politicians was demonstrated in the controversy over the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention of 2011, which aims to prevent and combat violence against women and sets out requirements for legal protections and their monitoring. Czechia continually postponed ratification, and Senate committees through 2023 argued for rejection. Despite government support, the convention was narrowly rejected by a Senate vote in January 2024, making Czechia one of five EU members yet to ratify the convention.

Opponents from all political groups represented in the Senate, apart from the Pirate Party, argued against the convention. Concerns included fears that it was introducing "gender ideology" (the word "gender" is used in the convention) and attacking the "traditional form of the family." Some also argued that existing laws were sufficient and that no additional measures were necessary, despite Czech police in 2022 reporting 76 domestic-related murders, 880 rapes, and 430 cases of domestic abuse, with the clear likelihood that many more of the latter two went unreported. Regardless, the convention will still apply in Czechia as it was approved by the EU for all member states in 2023.

Citation:

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## Estonia

### Score 6

The legal framework for gender equality is enshrined in the Estonian constitution, which states that everyone is equal before the law and that no one may be discriminated against on the basis of sex. The legal framework includes the Gender Equality Act (2004) and the Equal Treatment Act (2009). There is also a National Strategy for Gender Equality, which is included in the Welfare Development Plan and implemented through the Gender Equality Programs.



In the Welfare Development Plan for 2023 – 2030, the core indicators of the sub-goal of gender equality and equal treatment are related to different groups' perceptions of discrimination, the gender pay gap and accessibility.

The Ministry of Social Affairs oversees equal treatment and promotes equality between women and men, with the Department of Equality Policy tasked with this responsibility. The department, led by the Commissioner for Gender Equality and Equal Treatment (GEETC), is mandated to advance gender equality as well as other equality concerns. However, the majority of complaints – more than 60% – pertain to gender equality, primarily focusing on the gender gap in unpaid work and rights during and after pregnancy and maternity leave (GEETC 2023).

Gender equality has been a long-standing challenge in Estonia, reflected in one of the largest gender pay gaps in Europe. While the government's commitment to promoting gender equality is relatively high (EIGE 2022), its effectiveness in combating gender pay gaps and labor market inequalities has been limited. According to the latest EIGE statistics, Estonia has fallen in the gender equality index rankings.

In addition to the gender pay gap, Estonia experiences a relatively high motherhood penalty and fatherhood premium (REGE), with inequalities in time-related behaviors that intersect with socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., gaps are larger among lower socioeconomic groups). In health behavior and education, the gap favors women, which is also reflected in life expectancy statistics, with women having significantly higher life expectancies than men. Given the low pension levels, this often results in long periods of widowhood and a very high risk of poverty for women.

The higher level of tertiary education among women is not mirrored in their wages or power relations. In terms of power, women are particularly disadvantaged and significantly underrepresented on the boards of the most important decision-making bodies in Estonia across all spheres – social, economic and political.

However, there has been a gradual improvement in political representation. The number of female members of parliament and ministers has increased over time, and Estonia has had a female prime minister for more than three years.

Nevertheless, 2023 was an important year for equality, as same-sex marriage became legal in Estonia. The government elected in the March 2023 elections – led by Prime Minister Kaja Kallas and consisting of the Reform Party, the Social Democrats and Estonia 200 – pledged to legalize same-sex marriage, a policy that was to take effect on 1 January 2024. The Registered Partnership Act (2016) has allowed same-sex couples to register their partnerships, but secondary legislation has long been lacking due to strong opposition from conservative parties.

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## Greece

### Score 6

The constitution of Greece enshrines gender equality as a fundamental principle and mandates that the state eliminate any barriers to its realization (Article 4 of the Constitution). Greece has a national action plan for gender equality, which is tied to specific goals such as reducing violence against women, increasing female labor participation, enhancing women's roles in decision-making positions, and integrating gender equality into sectoral public policies (General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights 2021; formerly the General Secretariat for Gender Equality). These broad objectives are translated into concrete action plans within the strategy.

Existing policies reflect a society deeply rooted in traditional culture – a culture historically dominated by men and centered around the traditional family structure. However, this cultural landscape is evolving rapidly, as evidenced by the government's decision to legalize same-sex marriage, an initiative introduced in early 2024. While this move has garnered widespread approval across Greek society, it has faced opposition from traditional institutions, such as the Greek Orthodox Church.

Despite these cultural shifts, Greece's traditional, male-dominated culture continues to influence its performance on certain indicators. For instance, Greece ranks among the lowest countries for women's participation in the national parliament (World Bank 2022). Additionally, women in Greece are significantly more at risk than men of falling into poverty (Eurostat 2022a) or social exclusion (Eurostat 2022b).

On the positive side, Greece performs well in areas such as the gender pay gap (OECD 2022a), the pension pay gap (Eurostat 2022c), and women's participation in tertiary education (OECD 2022b). However, challenges remain, as women are more likely than men to drop out of school (Eurostat 2022d), and their medical needs are often less adequately met compared to those of men (Eurostat 2022e). In summary, while Greece has made progress in promoting gender equality, the results are still mixed.

The Greek state has shown signs of pursuing gender equality more systematically than in the past. The General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, the lead government unit promoting gender equality, uses numerous indicators from the "Beijing Platform for Action," which are also employed by the EU and other international organizations, to monitor institutional compliance with gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021). This Secretariat operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family. Meanwhile, the General

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The website of the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights is <https://isotita.gr/en/home/>

The website of the General Secretariat of Government Coordination in which this unit collects, makes publicly available and coordinates all national strategies and plans is <https://gsco.gov.gr/esd/>

## Ireland

Score 6

The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020: Creating a Better Society for All had clearly defined goals but lacked specific target values, binding legislation and costing. It has not been updated, reflecting an inconsistent approach to gender equality, with data sometimes showing both decreases in progress and advancements. On a positive note, the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency (DSGBV) Bill (2023) established a national unit called "Cuan" (harbor or

haven) to coordinate government actions against DSGBV, including delivering services to victims and providing emergency accommodation. The agency's remit includes psychological violence, with successful prosecutions under coercive control legislation.

The 2021 Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality recommended a constitutional referendum to reframe Article 41.2 of the 1937 Irish constitution, which ascribes to women a special role in providing care in the home. This recommendation was reinforced by the Oireachtas (Parliamentary) Committee on Gender Equality. Care equality was identified as the greatest obstacle to gender equality. The over-marketization of care results in 70% of childcare and 85% of elder care being delivered through the private for-profit market. The absence of affordable public childcare leans heavily on reciprocity within households, with women, grandparents, and informal community networks performing largely unpaid care work. While policy has advanced in recent years, serious access and affordability issues remain, especially in infant care.

The progressive structure of the income tax code implies that at relatively modest income levels, the second partner entering paid employment faces high marginal income tax rates. Ireland's male breadwinner-gendered welfare and tax system assigns many women dependent status. Lone parents (with children over 7) are pushed to seek full-time work with little exception for care responsibilities in the context of poor public childcare provision.

There are partially successful measures to promote women's and girls' participation, equal opportunities, and empowerment in education and labor markets, such as in STEM, apprenticeships, and professorial positions in sectors lacking gender balance (e.g., SALI professors). A gender candidate quota is in place to address women's participation in political life, with only voluntary measures to address obstacles to women's participation in senior business positions. This contrasts with a statutory 40% requirement for either gender on state boards. Policies including paid paternity leave and access to remote working could enhance men's participation and equal opportunities in caregiving. A constitutional amendment valuing care and family diversity is scheduled for March 8, 2024, and is championed as crucial to gender equality by the National Women's Council in Ireland. However, other tax and welfare policies perpetuate male breadwinner gendered inequalities. The lead unit for gender equality policy is the Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, which coordinates efforts across up to eight government departments and multiple agencies and units. Structures include high-level oversight boards and cabinet subcommittees on social inclusion for interministerial policy coordination. A lack of disaggregated data limits the capacity to measure progress effectively.

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## Italy

### Score 6

Gender policy in Italy has seen improvements in legislation and some outcomes, but significant issues remain, particularly regarding the number of women in the workforce. In 2023, the employment rate for women aged 15-64 was 52.6%, the lowest among EU countries. There is a substantial regional divide: Northern Italian regions have rates around 60% and above, while southern regions fall below 50%, with three regions below 30%. Italy dropped from 66th to 79th out of 146 countries in the 2023 Global Gender Gap report.

Italy has a very low gender pay gap, according to Eurostat. In 2020, the country had approximately 149,000 public managers with near-equal gender distribution: 52% were women and 48% men. However, there was a notable decrease in the number of top positions in ministries from 41% in 2019 to 30% in 2022. These top positions, totaling 120, are filled by government appointments, meaning that both the Draghi and Meloni governments contributed to this decline. This reduction in high-level positions may influence the gender gap in leadership, as fewer women hold top roles despite the overall gender balance in public management.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026, adopted in 2012 and inspired by the European Union's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, outlines values, policy directions, and goals to achieve gender equality. It serves as a cross-cutting priority of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and as a reference for implementing the Family Code reform. It outlines five priorities: Work, Earnings, Qualifications, Time, and Power, with detailed, measurable objectives and targets to be achieved by 2026.

A national governance level for gender equality policies, to be approved by 2021, is composed of an Intragovernmental Steering Committee with the technical support of a National Observatory for Gender Integration Policies. The NRRP includes several tools for women's empowerment, such as developing a system to certify gender parity in small and medium enterprises. However, the most significant efforts for gender parity in the NRRP involve family policies.

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## Netherlands

### Score 6

Dutch gender policies currently focus on the gender pay gap, violence against women and sexual harassment at work. These measures aim to increase labor market participation rates, address imbalances in unpaid labor, and ensure safety in organizational and public spaces.

Despite these initiatives, the Global Gender Gap Index consistently ranks the Netherlands at 28th place, behind countries including Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. Emancipation policies, once effective, have slowed in progress. A significant number of women hold part-time jobs (77.7%), and women are underrepresented in top managerial positions (13.7% in companies and 38% among supervisory board members at listed companies). The gender pay gap, highlighted by CBS's Wage Gap Monitor for 2022, remains pronounced, particularly in the business sector.

Discussions on women's representation in top organizational positions have led to government interventions, such as quotas for market-listed companies. Contrary to international trends, the Netherlands experiences less outflow of female managers, challenging the notion that this is a cause for underrepresentation. The persistence of part-time work for women, even as children grow older, reflects societal norms and expectations. Research by the Netherlands Institute of Social Research (SCP) reveals challenges in breaking away from this norm, impacting women at all life stages.

Female journalists face workplace challenges, with eight in 10 reporting intimidation or aggression, according to a Persveilig poll. Recent scandals about sexual harassment at television broadcasting organizations and educational institutions prompted the minister of education to propose a new national program and creation of a legal duty of care, emphasizing a commitment to a secure learning and working environment.

Rates of partner violence remain concerning, with women more often becoming victims than men. A gender-sensitive approach is crucial, and most municipalities recognize the value of such policies. Organizations like Sterk Huis and Fier have reported an increase in support requests from Syrian girls and women, linked to the growing independence of women in this community. Safety concerns also extend to the LGBTQ+ community, despite their achieving equal positions in work and housing, necessitating continued awareness and advocacy.

The government's response includes the National Action Program on Sexual Transgressive Behavior and Sexual Violence, set to take effect in 2024. Justice and Security Minister Dilan Yeşilgöz sent the Sexual Offenses Act to the House of Representatives on 11 October 2022, aligning rape laws with international human rights standards. However, in 2023, the parliament failed to reach a majority in favor

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## Switzerland

Score 6

Passed in 1981, Article 8 of the constitution expressly states that women and men have equal rights and that gender discrimination is prohibited. A Federal Act on Gender Equality (1996) implements the constitutional mandate for gender equality in the workplace. Gender equality came late to Switzerland. It was only in 1971 that women were given suffrage on the national level. The last canton that – following pressure by the Federal Court – implemented female suffrage was Appenzell Innerrhoden in 1990.

Formally, gender equality is respected in law and politics with a Federal Office for Gender Equality and a Conference of Cantonal Delegates for Gender Equality supervising the implementation of the constitutional rules. There is no doubt that federal and cantonal governments are committed to the constitution and willing to implement rules of equality. It is much less clear whether these governments actively

pursue the objective of gender equality. As in many other countries, gender equality is not reached in practice (Engeli 2022; 2023).

In 2021, a survey revealed that 82% of respondents think that women tend to do more unpaid domestic and caring work. Female employees find it particularly difficult to reconcile work and family. But equality is also an accepted goal in society: For example, only 10% of men and 11% of women prefer the traditional male-breadwinner model (Equality.CH 2021).

One of the major elements of gender inequality – the gender wage gap – occurs in the private sector of the economy. Public policy has done little to ease this situation. In 2022, the OECD found: “The sizable gender income gap and disproportionately high incidence of part-time work among women call for measures to address women’s disincentives to work full time. The high cost of childcare, and low supply of early childhood education as well as an organization of the school day that is not well aligned with working hours have long been reported as major reasons for difficulties of mothers to join the labor force full time... Moreover, the income tax system leads to high marginal taxation of second-earner incomes, adding further disincentives to work” (OECD 2022: 88f.).

Due to the difficulties in reconciling work and family typically experienced by women, female workers suffer from disadvantages in the area of pension funds. Frequently, they cannot contribute to these funds to the same extent as male workers do – mainly due to part-time employment or interrupted careers due to child-rearing – which means they receive lower pension payments during retirement. Therefore, old-age poverty rates are higher among women (Pro Senecute 2022). At least in this regard, an element of a recent reform of the pension system tried to improve the position of women (FSIO 2023). However, the political left considers this reform to be insufficient and not well targeted, and it triggered a popular vote that will be held in 2024.

Given the decentralized structure of Swiss politics in the field of gender equality, as well as the role of private firms in creating gender wage gaps and engaging in discrimination in career patterns, it is hard to evaluate the overall effect of equality-promoting policies. Starting from indicators of outcomes, the position of females seems to correspond at least to the continental European pattern. There is a noticeable gap in the share of women in high managerial positions, as only one woman serves as head of one of the 50 biggest Swiss companies. That woman is Magdalena Martullo-Blocher, the daughter of Christoph Blocher, the former leader of the SVP party (rts.ch 2020).

Regarding violence against women, sexual harassment is defined in the Labor Act and the Code of Obligations (private law), but it lacks a comprehensive definition in the Penal Code (see SECO), which limits opportunities for legal action. After many debates between the two chambers of the Federal Assembly, an extended definition of rape was adopted in 2023. While the majority of the National Council advocated



an “only a yes is a yes” option, the Council of States won with a “no is no” option.

A major obstacle to realizing gender equality is the lack of policies helping to reconcile work and family. Family policy is clearly underdeveloped in Switzerland, and the lack of affordable public services for childcare may be a major impediment to gender equality in working life (Bürgisser and Häusermann 2022; 2023). Reforms fostering such policies have frequently lacked support in the political system, which is dominated by liberal-conservative forces. Moreover, these reforms have typically not been successful in popular votes. A major argument in these votes has been the consequences in terms of taxes needed to finance these goals. A related argument concerned the consequences for the tax wedge – that is, the increased labor costs – and its implication for the international competitiveness of Swiss industries.

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## United States

### Score 6

The federal government’s commitment to gender equality depends to some extent on the particular presidential administration in office at any given moment. For example, the current administration has a White House Gender Policy Council. Under Barack Obama, there was the White House Council on Women and Girls.

However, during the Trump administration, there was no such policy.

There are more durable elements of gender equality promoted by the federal government in both law and practice. For example, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires substantial support for equal higher educational opportunities for women, including extracurricular activities and, crucially, sports. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 provides funding to support women who experience domestic violence, including housing support, crisis hotlines, and legal aid. It also funds community prevention programs designed to educate, inform, and prevent violence against women.

Efforts to incorporate gender equality into the U.S. Constitution have failed. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was a significant national initiative aimed at enshrining women's rights into the Constitution. Although it garnered two-thirds support from both houses of Congress, it did not secure the necessary approval from three-quarters of state legislatures in the 1980s.

## Japan

### Score 5

Japan is a socially conservative society where traditional gender roles are still highly relevant. A gendered division of labor is still deeply entrenched, with domestic care work predominantly remaining in the hands of women and take-up rates of parental leave by men still very low, though growing. However, due to population aging among other things, the role of women has changed significantly over the last few decades. Today, employment rates of women are high in international comparison and double-income households have become the norm.

Japanese politics, and especially its many conservative governments, have been slow to adapt to this changing reality. However, since the mid-2000s, they have increasingly sought to promote change through policy. Prime Minister Abe received international attention for his so-called womenomics strategy, which promised to open the labor market for women beyond marginal and part-time employment. One key element is the expansion of childcare facilities and the current administration has announced it will significantly increase spending in this area. Furthermore, Japan has built a large and encompassing institutional structure to report on the status of gender equality and to develop initiatives.

Gender equality in Japan is regulated by the Basic Act for a Gender-Equal Society from 1999, which obliges national and local governments to develop and implement measures to redress disparities between men and women in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. The government submits an annual report on the implementation of the Basic Act to the Diet. Every few years, basic plans for gender equality are formulated, which contain specific numerical targets. The Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality from March 2021 is broken into various action plans

covering fields, such as the expansion of women's participation in decision-making; securing equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, and work-life balance; gender equality in academia, science and technology; and elimination of all forms of violence against women. Targets are relatively detailed and include goals such as increasing the proportion of women section chiefs in national administration to 30% by the end of FY2025.

Since the establishment of the post of ministers of state for special missions in 2001, there has always been one tasked with coordinating governmental efforts regarding gender equality. The Cabinet Office also maintains the Council for Gender Equality, composed of ministers and private-sector experts, as well as the Gender Equality Bureau, which typically use indicators for measuring progress and setting tasks.

Despite all these formal efforts, women remain severely underrepresented in Japanese politics, both on the national and local level. Only about 10% of members of parliament in the lower house are female and even in the current cabinet – which features a record number of female ministers – their share does not exceed 20%. In addition, not a single woman was appointed to one of the 54 vice-ministerial or parliamentary vice-ministerial posts, down from 11. Similar patterns are visible in elite universities, where only 20% to 30% of graduates in executive positions and in most elite occupations are women. In 2018, it emerged that some medical schools deliberately downgraded entrance tests of women compared to men. This practice has been stopped since and in newer tests female applicants appear to have outperformed their male peers (McCurry 2022).

Critics have pointed out that Japan's governments seem not genuinely interested in improving the position of women in society but rather look at their economic contribution as workers that can help mitigate the impact of labor shortages. Prime Minister Kishida's comment that women ministers would bring "sense and empathy which are unique to women" was widely criticized as sexist and as an indication of how little has changed in attitudes.

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## Hungary

### Score 3

Hungary's approach to gender equality has been complex and contentious. Despite some progress, Hungary continues to face significant challenges and criticisms regarding gender equality. One of the primary concerns is the underrepresentation of women in politics and, to a lesser extent, corporate leadership circles. In Hungary, women's representation in political leadership positions remains notably low compared to other European Union countries, even though the country had a female president until she was forced to step down in February 2024 and was replaced by a male. None of the 16 government members in the Orbán V cabinet is female.

Hungary ranks next to last among OECD countries regarding the number of female members of parliament. This disparity is also evident in the corporate sector, where female leadership is limited. Reports indicate that women hold a significantly smaller percentage of managerial and decision-making roles than men. However, the gender disparity in the corporate sector is not as pronounced as in politics. Hungary's society appears to be more modern than its government. In terms of wage equality, Hungary shows a pronounced gender pay gap, which is strongest in higher-paying sectors and senior positions. The government's efforts to address wage inequality are inadequate and lack effective enforcement mechanisms. Women earn substantially less than their male counterparts for equivalent work, with Hungary ranking 17th among all 30 SGI countries in terms of gender pay gaps, as measured by the OECD. However, this gender pay gap does not extend to a pension gap. The Hungarian pension system supports mothers and protects them to a certain extent from poverty induced by low pensions.

Hungary performs relatively well in other indicators such as differences in the poverty rate between women and men, the unmet need for medical help, early leavers from education or training, and the social exclusion rate. Societal attitudes in Hungary often emphasize traditional gender roles, and government policies have been reinforcing these norms rather than challenging them. For example, certain family policies and public narratives emphasize women's roles as mothers and caregivers (Fodor 2022), contributing to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and limiting women's opportunities in other spheres. Hungary needs more robust legal and policy frameworks to combat gender-based violence and discrimination. Although laws are in place, their implementation and the support systems for victims are often insufficient. While there are policies aimed at improving gender equality, Hungary's approach is often inconsistent with international standards and fails to address the systemic nature of gender inequality fully. If there is policy action, it is generally driven by factors stemming from global or European commitments.

The regulatory framework is based on Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities. Gender mainstreaming efforts in Hungary are promoted through the National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Empowering Women in the Family and Society Action Plan. Sectoral efforts are

also underway. In the National Strategy for Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) (2021 – 2030) (Government Decree 1456/2021 VII. 13.), for instance, gender equality is targeted as one of six horizontal objectives. The country receives a score of 54.2 out of 100 in the Gender Equality Index, but with significant differences between the 24.8 points awarded in the category of power and the 87.3 points in health (European Institute for Gender Equality 2022).

Compared to other nations, Hungary ranks 25th out of 27 in the index (26th place out of 27 countries in 2023), showing only minimal improvement over the last decade. Highlighting these deficiencies, the Hungarian parliament’s refusal to ratify the Istanbul Convention (Nagy 2020) – a legally binding international instrument for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – further emphasizes the issue. The parliament cited existing Hungarian legal protections for women in its refusal. This move represents another attempt by the government to diminish the influence of international organizations on domestic politics.

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## Israel

### Score 3

There is no comprehensive strategy to achieve gender equality. Gender equality has not been declared one of the government’s official goals, nor has the government set any goals or measurable targets. Moreover, gender equality and the commitment to promote it have decreased since the current government came to power. The number of women in senior positions has significantly declined. Of the 34 government ministries, only one has a female general director, compared to 10 under the previous government. Additionally, senior politicians consistently attack gender equality in the army and the opening of more positions for women. However, despite these attacks, the inclusion of women in more senior army positions continues.

The current government established a special ministry to promote the status of women. However, this ministry was closed after less than a year, although this had little impact on the status of women, as the ministry lacked both funding and authority.

In the civil service, there is an affirmative action directive to increase women’s representation. A taskforce is also examining the barriers facing women in academia.

## Poland

### Score 3

Gender inequalities in Poland are diminishing, as reflected by numerous socioeconomic indicators. However, this progress is primarily due to broader societal shifts and increasing economic prosperity rather than deliberate public policies or strategies. As early as the 1990s, studies indicated that Polish women faced discrimination despite constitutional guarantees of equality. Between 2001 and 2005, the new leftist coalition government appointed the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men, with the status of a secretary of state. A decade later, changes to the electoral system mandated that electoral committees include at least 35% female candidates on their lists.

The Polish Economic Institute (2023) reports that women have experienced significant improvements in their living conditions in recent years, including better health and longer life expectancies. Women also have a higher average level of educational attainment than men, although through different educational paths. In 2021, women held 43% of managerial positions, the second-highest percentage in the EU, and the wage gap had decreased to 4.5%.

Despite the conservative PiS government's adherence to traditional gender roles and its failure to implement gender equality policies, minor changes supporting equal opportunities have occurred mainly due to the implementation of EU laws. However, on January 27, 2021, amendments to Poland's abortion law made the country one of the most restrictive in Europe, sparking widespread protests against the government. Documented cases of harassment and reported deaths of pregnant women due to the chilling effect on doctors followed.

According to a Kantar poll for "Fakty" TVN and TVN24 in September 2023, 49% of Poles believed that the situation of women in Poland had worsened during the eight years of Law and Justice rule, while 27% believed it had improved (TVN 2023). In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report, Poland was ranked 60th out of 146 countries, an increase of 17 places compared to 2022. The country held the top position in terms of the percentage of women covered by healthcare but was ranked 73rd in terms of women's political empowerment (World Economic Forum 2023).

In the 2023 parliamentary elections, women obtained a record 29.6% of Sejm seats. In the new liberal government sworn in December 2023, female leaders of women's strikes, including Agnieszka Ewa Dziemianowicz-Bąk and Barbara Anna Nowacka, were appointed as ministers, respectively leading the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of National Education. Additionally, a new minister for equality was appointed to oversee the government's policy on equality issues, including combating discrimination based on various factors.

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## Slovakia

### Score 3

Formally, Slovakia has established institutions and strategies related to gender equality. The constitution guarantees equality among all individuals regarding dignity and rights and prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including sex (Article 12). Law 365/2004 on anti-discrimination further prohibits discrimination based on sex, religion or belief, race, nationality or ethnic group, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, color, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, lineage or other status, or for reporting a crime or other anti-social activity. The Department for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and the Family is responsible for coordinating Slovakia’s gender equality policy.

The National Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities in the Slovak Republic for 2021–2027 was developed by the Ministry of Labor and focuses on eight strategic areas. While the strategy outlines several concrete goals, it does not define progress indicators.

Despite these formal measures, the reality remains challenging due to the dominance of parties with very traditional understandings of gender values. Under pressure from the Slovak National Party (SNS), Slovakia withdrew its signature from the Istanbul Convention (IC) in 2019. In the same year, the SNS pushed for a parliamentary resolution that rejected any EU decisions and measures based on the IC after the European Union joined the convention. Consequently, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) stated that there is insufficient comparable data to assess violence against women in Slovakia.

According to the EIGE (2022), Slovakia underperforms in all evaluated indicators, including commitment to promoting gender equality, personnel resources of the national gender equality bodies, gender mainstreaming, and the production and dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics. Slovakia’s latest Gender Equality Index (2023) confirmed that the country particularly struggles with equality in the domain of power, where it has the lowest score, 31.1 points out of 100, ranking 22nd in the EU. In the 2023 elections, Progressive Slovakia was the first party to apply a voluntary quota for women (a zip system)

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