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**Economic Commission for Europe****Beijing +25 Regional Review Meeting**

Geneva, 29 and 30 October 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Key trends on gender equality across the ECE region****Trends in gender equality in the ECE region****Note by the ECE Statistical Division***Summary*

Resolution 2018/8 of the Economic and Social Council encouraged the United Nations Regional Commissions to undertake a regional review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2020 review to be undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-fourth session. The present note addresses trends in gender equality in selected areas over the last 25 years, focusing on the last five years, using data from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Statistical Database. It examines life expectancy, education, employment, pay, power and decision-making, time use, and violence against women. Notwithstanding considerable improvements in most countries, important gender gaps remain. There is also great variation among ECE countries in all the areas examined.

**I. Introduction**

1. As with all policy programmes, the Beijing Platform for Action needs to be monitored with objective statistical indicators. The Platform itself identifies the production and dissemination of sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant data and information for planning and evaluation as one of its strategic objectives. Several international initiatives have aimed to compile the necessary statistics. In 2017 ECE published a comprehensive review of such international initiatives.<sup>1</sup>

2. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its associated targets and indicators have brought additional impetus to the drive for data and statistics to formulate policies and measure progress towards gender equality. Both Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, and the cross-cutting

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see UNECE in-depth review of gaps in gender statistics and related outcome document, ECE/CES/2018/17, available at [www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2018/CES\\_17\\_E\\_Agenda\\_item\\_12.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2018/CES_17_E_Agenda_item_12.pdf).



call for mainstreaming gender concerns throughout the Agenda, have given new thrust to global, regional and national efforts produce and disseminate gender statistics.

3. The ECE Statistical Database<sup>2</sup> provides data for monitoring the situation of women and men in ECE member countries, for designing and evaluating the effectiveness of policies. The database is regularly updated and developed in consultation with gender statistics experts in the national statistical offices of ECE member countries. The database was launched in 2003 in English and Russian. The topics covered include population, fertility, families and households, work and the economy, education, public life and decision-making, health and mortality, crime and violence, science and information and communication technology, and work-life balance. Data are collected from national statistical offices and from international sources.

4. The present paper addresses changes in gender equality in selected areas, relying on data from the ECE Statistical Database. It begins with the examination of gender gaps in life expectancy, cigarette smoking, suicide and intentional self-harm, proceeding further to education, employment, pay, power and decision-making, time use, and violence. The number of ECE countries for which data are available varies. Data coverage is best on life expectancy, education and parliamentarians, whereas data on homicide rates and on employment rates of parents are available for fewer than half of member countries.

5. For most issues, data are presented for the latest year available in the database (usually 2017 or 2018) and compared with the situation five years earlier (2012 or 2013), to focus on recent developments since the previous five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>3</sup> For some indicators, a longer reference period is used: whether because the indicators were not covered in the previous statistical overview (suicides, smoking); because of infrequent measurement (parliamentarians, time use); or because of gradual slow change that can better be shown over a longer period of time (life expectancy).

6. For clarity of presentation, the graphs in this document display the values for the beginning and end of the period. The complete set of available data can be accessed in the ECE Statistical Database, by selecting the data cube indicated under each graph.

## II. Trends in selected aspects of gender equality

### A. Health

#### Box 1. Key messages on health

Across the region, men experience worse health outcomes than women by a range of measures—illustrated here with life expectancy, smoking prevalence and death by suicide or intentional self-harm.

As health outcomes in these measures improve for both sexes, the gender gap is closing, but remains significant, especially in the case of death by suicide or intentional self-harm.

7. This chapter includes three indicators on different aspects of health, for which gender differences are quite significant: life expectancy at birth, which is the most common indicator of health in general terms; the percentage of smokers; and the death rates by suicide and intentional self-harm.

#### 1. Life expectancy

8. Life expectancy at birth is the most commonly used summary measure to describe population health and human development. A well-known characteristic of life expectancy

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.unece.org/data](http://www.unece.org/data).

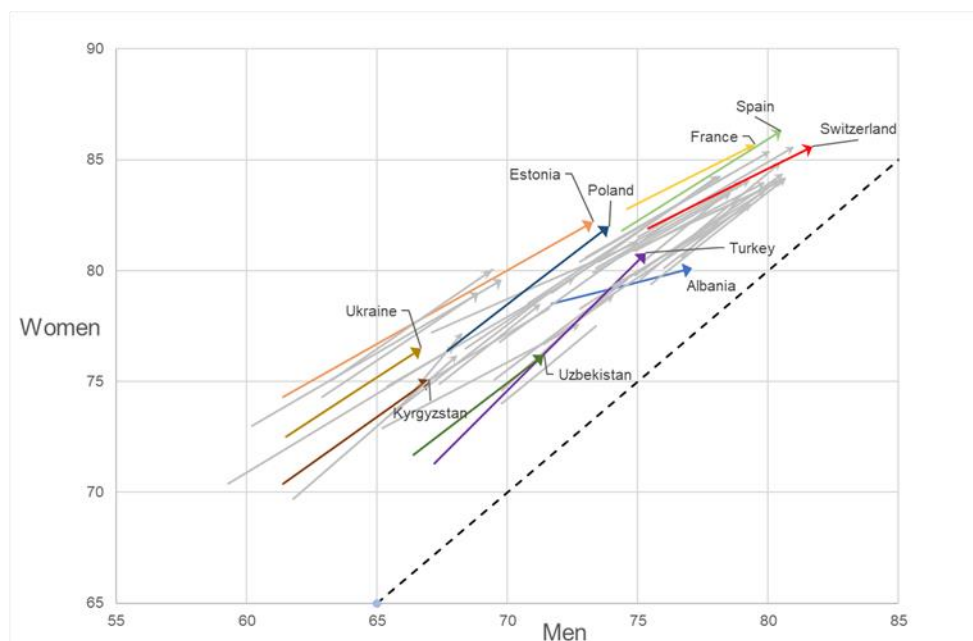
<sup>3</sup> See document ECE/AC.28/2014/6, *Trends in gender equality in the ECE region*, prepared for the Beijing+20 regional review meeting in 2014.

is that it is higher for women than for men, which is determined by a combination of biological and socio-economic factors.

9. Since 1995, life expectancy of women and men has increased in all ECE countries, but its level varies considerably. The arrows in figure 1 represent the change in life expectancy for women and men in ECE countries between 1995 and 2016.

Figure 1

**Life expectancy of women and men at birth (years) – scatter chart (1995-2016)**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataLifeExp](http://bit.ly/ECEdataLifeExp)).

\* Data for Ukraine and Uzbekistan refer to 2017 instead of 2016.

10. The distance between each data point and the line of equality (dotted) reflects the difference between women's and men's life expectancy. A country with equal life expectancy for men and women would lie on the dotted line. However, it can be seen that all of the data points lie above this line, which indicates higher life expectancy for women than men in all countries.

11. For most ECE countries, the arrows point towards the top-right corner of the chart, remaining more-or-less parallel to the line of equality. This means that life expectancy has increased during this period for both men and women, and the difference between the sexes has not changed much in most countries.

12. In the higher part of the chart, the countries with the highest life expectancy in 2016 can be found, including Switzerland (85.6 years for women and 81.7 years for men) and Spain (86.3 and 80.5 years, respectively). The countries with the lowest life expectancy in 2016, represented in the lower part of the chart, include Kyrgyzstan (75.1 years for women and 67.0 years for men) and Ukraine (76.8 and 67.0 years, respectively).

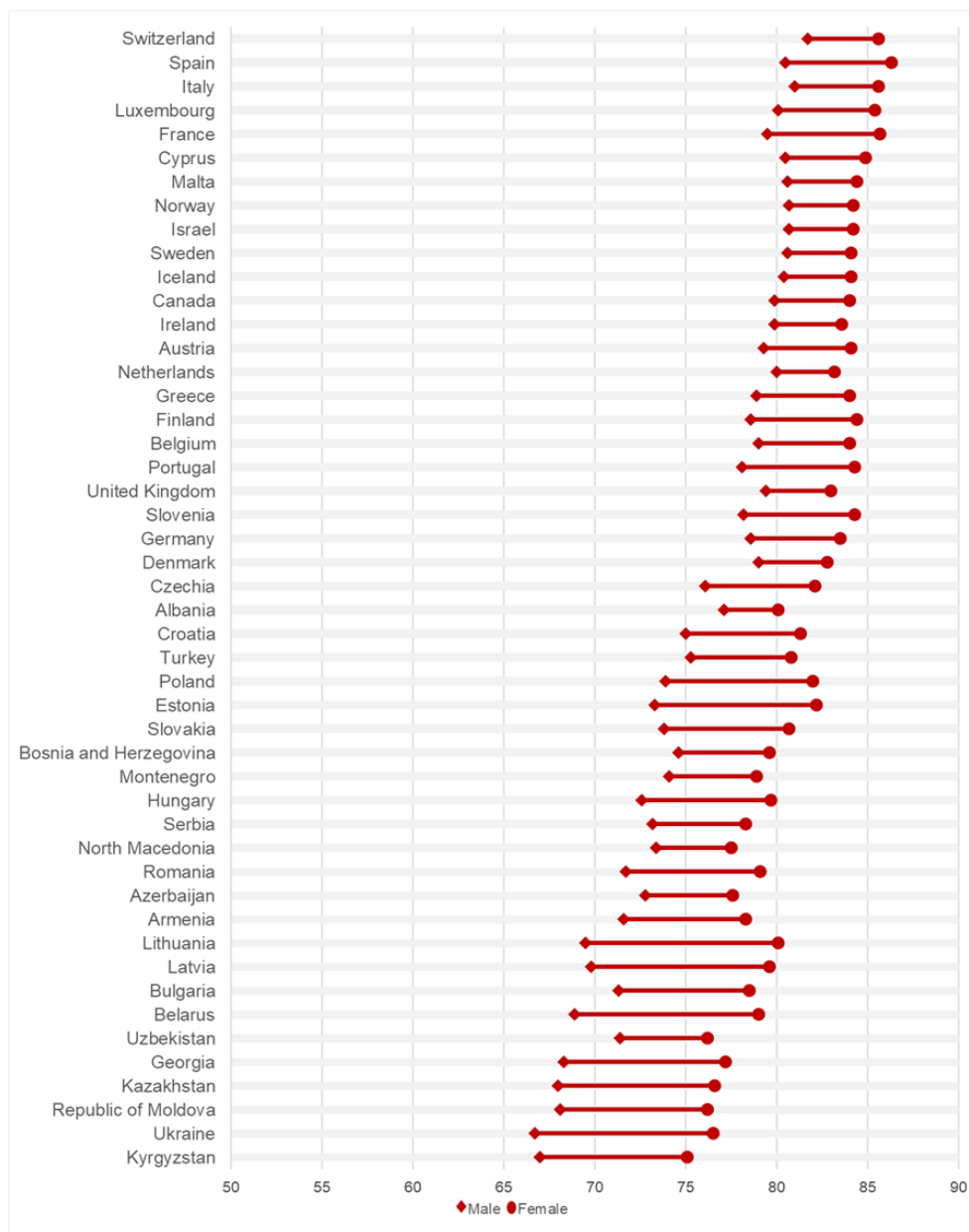
13. Estonia is the country where life expectancy has increased the most between 1995 and 2016: from 74.3 to 82.2 years for women (7.9 years of life gained), and from 61.4 to 73.3 years for men (11.9 years of life gained). Estonia was also the country with the largest difference between female and male life expectancy in 1995 (12.9 years). A very large difference, of more than 11 years, is also found in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

14. Between 1995 and 2016, men have caught up slightly in most countries. The difference between female and male life expectancy has decreased the most in Estonia (from 12.9 to 8.9 years), and in Albania (from 6.8 to 3.0 years). In contrast, the difference between female and male life expectancy has increased between 1995 and 2016 in a few countries, including Turkey (from 4.1 to 5.5 years) and Georgia (from 8.0 to 8.9 years).

15. Figure 2 presents the difference between female and male life expectancy for ECE countries in 2016. In countries with high life expectancy, the difference is relatively small, between 3.5 and 6.0 years. These countries are mostly located in Western and Northern Europe.

16. In the countries with lower life expectancy, mostly located in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the difference between female and male life expectancy on average is higher, with values around 9.0 years or more in the Baltic states, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine.

Figure 2  
**Life expectancy at birth by sex (years), 2016**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataLifeExp](http://bit.ly/ECEdataLifeExp)).

## 2. Smoking

17. It is widely known that cigarette smoking has a serious impact on health. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers that “the tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced”, and estimates that tobacco kills more than 8 million

people each year at the global level.<sup>4</sup> In the SDG framework, this is reflected in indicator 3.a.1: age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older.

18. WHO has estimated that worldwide,<sup>5</sup> men smoke nearly five times as much as women, but the ratios of female-to-male smoking prevalence rates vary dramatically across countries. In many low- and middle-income countries women smoke much less than men, while in high-income countries women smoke at nearly the same rate as men.

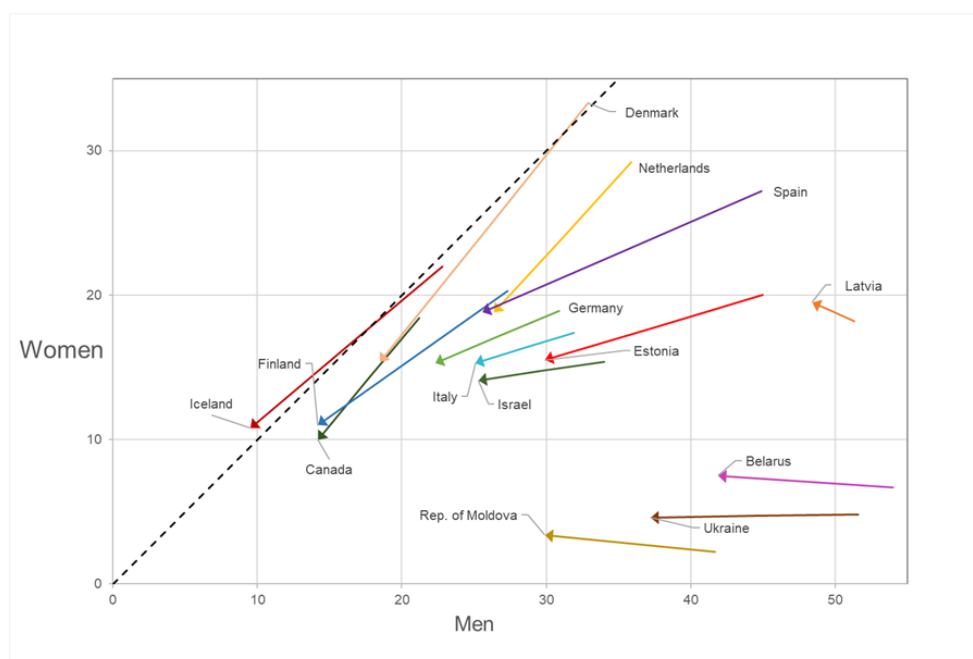
19. The ECE Statistical Database includes data on smokers as a percentage of population by sex and age, with smoking defined as the daily smoking of at least one cigarette.

20. Figure 3 presents the data on the percentage of smokers by sex in the population aged 15 and over, showing the change between 2000 and 2017. It should be noted that, unlike the SDG indicator which calls for age-standardized prevalence rates, the rates presented here are not standardized and are therefore influenced by the age-structure of populations in combination with the different tendencies to smoke among different age-groups. As in figure 1, the distance between each data point and the line of equality (dotted) reflects the difference between women's and men's behaviours, in terms of smoking prevalence.

21. The arrows showing smoking prevalence for Iceland and Denmark are very close to the equality line, indicating that the prevalence is similar for men and women. In Iceland the prevalence for both women and men decreased from about 22 per cent in 2000 to about 10 per cent in 2017.

Figure 3

**Percentage of smokers by sex - scatter chart (1995, 2017)**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataSmokers](http://bit.ly/ECEdataSmokers))

\* Data for Estonia, Latvia and Republic of Moldova refer to 1995 and 2016

22. For the Netherlands, Finland and Canada, the arrows are almost parallel to the equality line, indicating that between 2000 and 2017 the smoking prevalence decreased for both men and women, but the gender gap (ranged between 3 and 7 percentage points) remained more or less constant in the period.

23. On the lower part of the chart some countries in Eastern Europe can be found, where smoking prevalence among men was very high in 2000 but decreased significantly (by 12

<sup>4</sup> Source: [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco).

<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/3/10-079905/en/](http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/3/10-079905/en/).

percentage points or more) in 2017, while among women was very low (less than 8 per cent) both in 2000 and 2017, with slight increases in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova. As a result, the gender gap in smoking prevalence decreased significantly but remained very high. In Belarus, in 2017 the smoking prevalence was 42 per cent for men and 7 per cent for women.

24. In other countries shown in figure 3, including Spain, Germany, Italy, Estonia and Israel, between 2000 and 2017 the smoking prevalence decreased faster for men than for women. As a result, the gender gap decreased but was still significant in 2017 (between seven percentage points in Spain and 14 in Estonia).

### 3. Suicide and intentional self-harm

25. An area of public health where there are significant gender differences is suicide and intentional self-harm. The WHO estimates that every year close to 800,000 people die as a result of suicide, which is the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds worldwide. In high-income countries suicide is closely linked to mental disorders (in particular, depression and alcohol use disorders). In addition, experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour.

26. Suicides are preventable. A number of measures can be taken to prevent suicide and suicide attempts, including: early identification, treatment and care of people with mental and substance use disorders; follow-up care for people who attempted suicide; reducing access to the means of suicide. The suicide mortality rate is an indicator for target 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals: by 2030, to reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being.<sup>6</sup>

27. In virtually all countries women are more likely than men to attempt suicide, but the death rates from suicide are significantly higher (on average three times higher) for men than for women. One of the reasons for this is that men tend to choose violent (more lethal) suicide methods, while women are more likely to use drug poisoning.<sup>7</sup>

28. The age-standardized death rates by suicide and intentional self-harm for ECE countries in 2000 and 2015 are shown in figure 4. As for figures 1 and 3, the distance between each data point and the line of equality (dotted) reflects the difference between women's and men's rates. The different scales of the two axes reflect the difference in magnitude of the rates for males (horizontal axis, with values above 80 per 100,000) and females (vertical axis, with much lower values, under 20 per 100,000).

29. The countries on the right part of the chart experienced a very significant decline of the rates between 2000 and 2015. In Lithuania the rate for men decreased from 83 per 100,000 in 2000 to 50 per 100,000 in 2015, while the rate for women in the same period decreased from 16 to six per 100,000. The death rates for suicide and intentional self-harm also declined significantly between 2000 and 2015 in other countries, including Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Hungary, among those shown in figure 4.

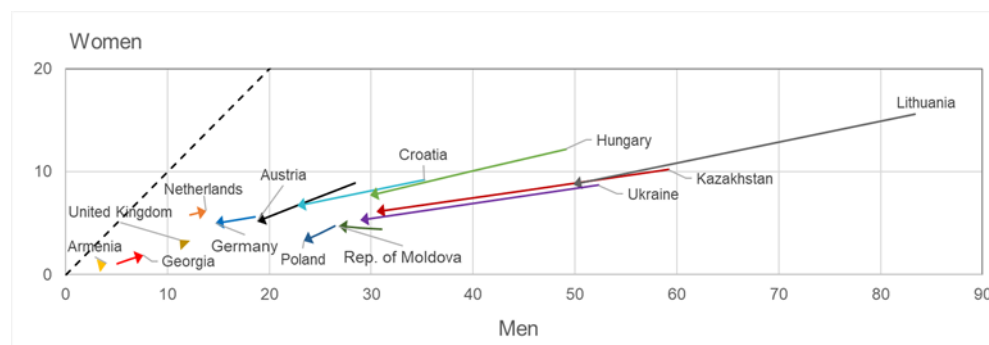
30. In the countries on the left part of the chart, including Armenia, Georgia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, the rates were already very low in 2000 and did not decrease significantly in the period to 2015. The gender difference, indicated by the distance from the equality line (dotted), is also significant in these countries. The 2015 rates for men are several times higher than the rates for women, ranging from 2.2 times higher in the Netherlands, to 7.1 times higher in Poland.

<sup>6</sup> Source: [www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide).

<sup>7</sup> Mergl R, Koburger N, Heinrichs K et al. (2015), *What are reasons for the large gender differences in the lethality of suicidal acts? An epidemiological analysis in four European countries*, PLOS ONE (<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0129062>).

Figure 4

**Age-standardized death rates by sex and cause (per 100,000) – Suicide and intentional self-harm (2000, 2015)**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataDeathCause](http://bit.ly/ECEdataDeathCause))

31. To summarize the evolution of the gender gap between 2000 and 2015, it is helpful to consider the median values of the rates for all ECE countries for which they are available: in 2000 the median value for males (21.4 per 100,000) was 3.8 times higher than the median value for females (5.7 per 100,000). In 2015, the median value for males (17.6 per 100,000) was 3.4 times higher than the median value for females (5.2 per 100,000). Thus, between 2000 and 2015 the gender gap was slightly reduced but remained very significant, and the level of mortality by suicide is still much higher among males than among females in all ECE countries.

## B. Education

### Box 2. Key messages on education

Women outnumber men in tertiary education (university level and beyond) in almost all countries of the region—but for the most advanced programmes such as doctorates the picture is more balanced, with more than half of countries near gender parity.

Women remain in the minority as students of stereotypically “masculine” subjects such as ICT and engineering, although in recent years they have begun slowly gaining ground.

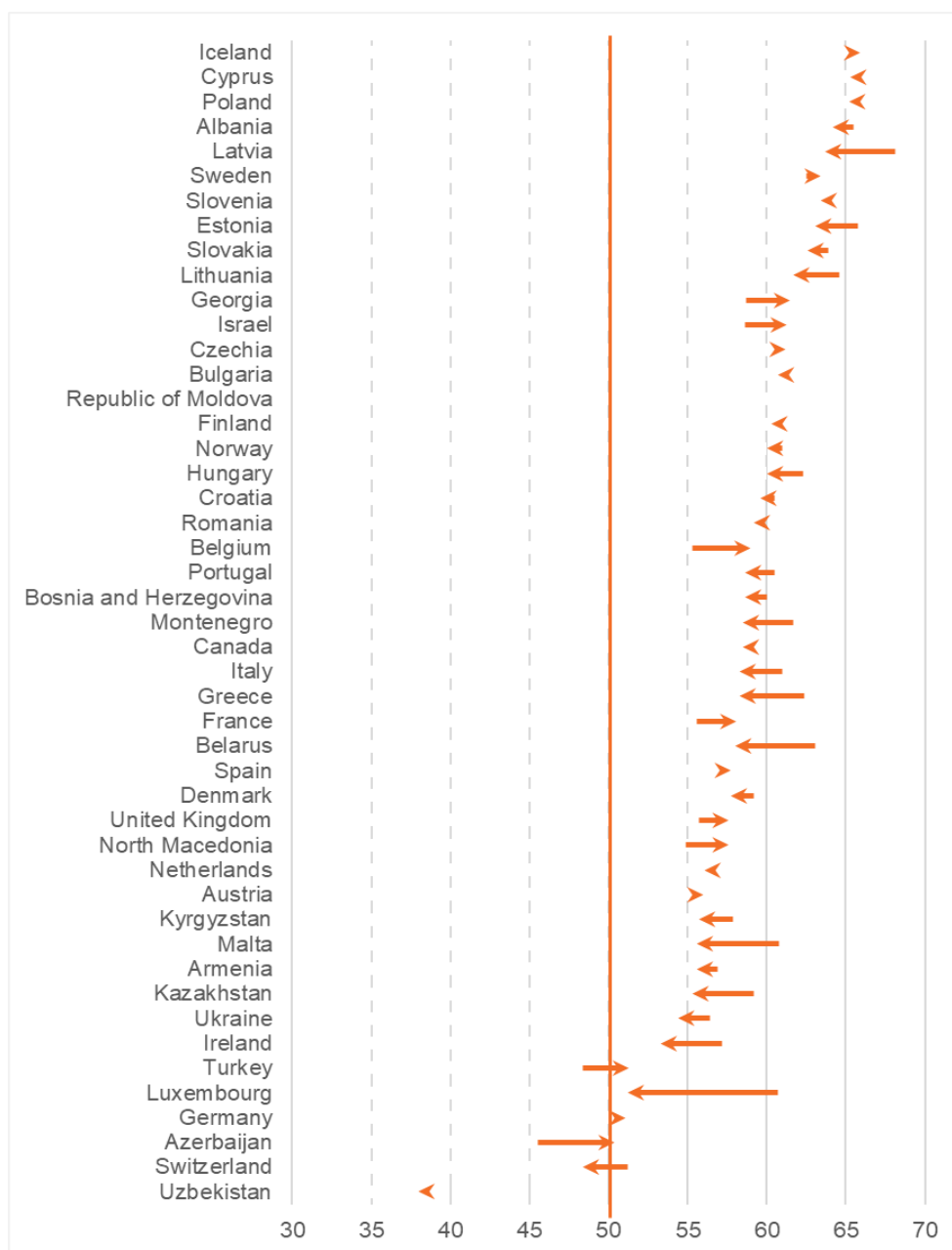
#### 1. Tertiary level graduates

32. Education is a means of ensuring that all people have an equal opportunity in life. The social effects of education concern a variety of dimensions such as health, mortality, public life, decision-making, behaviour in terms of birth control, and violence in society. Policy reforms towards equal chances of education can improve women’s and men’s welfare. In the SDG framework, this is reflected in target 4.5 “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”.

33. This section looks at women’s share of graduates in tertiary education: this includes theoretical programmes, such as Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes, and advanced programmes, such as doctoral programmes. In most countries, women outnumber men considerably among tertiary level graduates (figure 5). In 39 out of the 47 ECE countries with data, more than 55 per cent of tertiary graduates are women. Iceland has the highest share, with 66 per cent women. Seven countries are close to gender parity, with the share of women ranging from 48 to 55 per cent, and only in Uzbekistan are women in a clear minority, with 38 per cent of tertiary graduates.



Figure 5  
Share of women among tertiary graduates in 2017 and 2012



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEducType](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEducType))

34. After decades of increase in women's participation in higher education, women substantially outnumbered men among tertiary level graduates in most countries in 2012. Since then, women's share has declined in 32 out of the 47 countries with data. Whilst in Azerbaijan and Turkey fewer than half of tertiary graduates were women in 2012, more women have entered tertiary education in these countries since and the 2017 data already show gender parity there.

35. A more varied picture emerges when the advanced (doctoral) programmes are considered separately (figure 6). To a large extent, these programmes prepare students for research careers where women have long been underrepresented.

36. In 2017, 27 countries had approximate gender parity (share of women between 45 and 55 per cent) among advanced programme graduates. In 12 countries the share of women was above 55 per cent and in only six countries below 45 per cent.

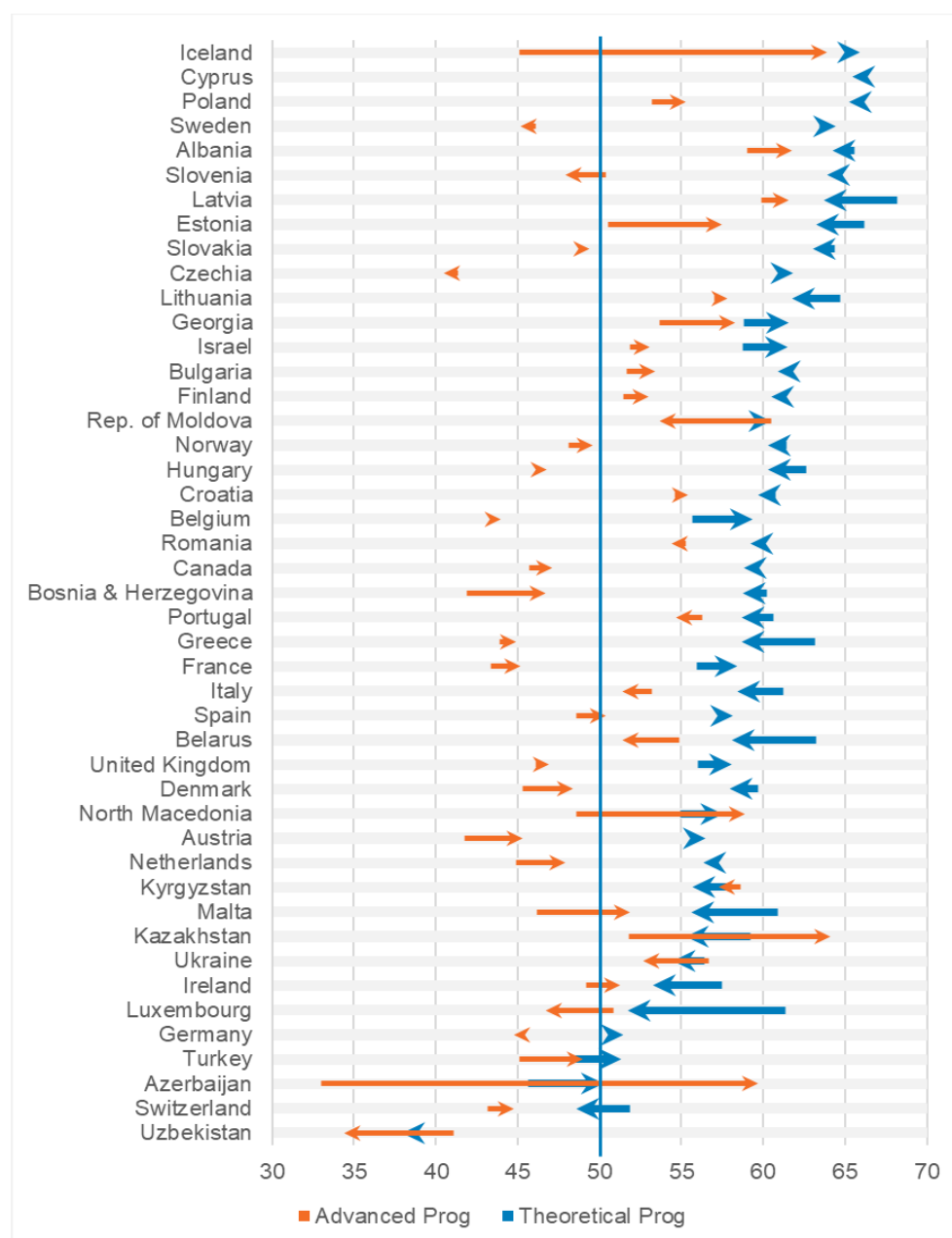


37. From 2012 to 2017, the trend in the gender composition of graduates varies by type of programme. Among advanced programme graduates, the share of women increased in 32 out of the 45 countries, whereas among theoretical programme graduates, a decrease in the share of women predominated in the region (30 countries). With the exception of four countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and North Macedonia), the share of women among graduates of theoretical programmes remained higher than among graduates of advanced programmes.

38. Overall, women's participation in the highest levels of education has reached, and in most cases exceeded, the participation of men years ago. In most ECE countries, moving towards gender balance in tertiary education would require attracting men to this level of studies. On average, after the recent decrease in the share of females among tertiary graduates in many countries, in 2017 ECE countries are slightly closer to gender balance in tertiary education than in 2012.

Figure 6

**Share of women among tertiary graduates from theoretical and advanced programmes in 2017 and 2012**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEducType](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEducType))

## 2. Subject choices of women and men

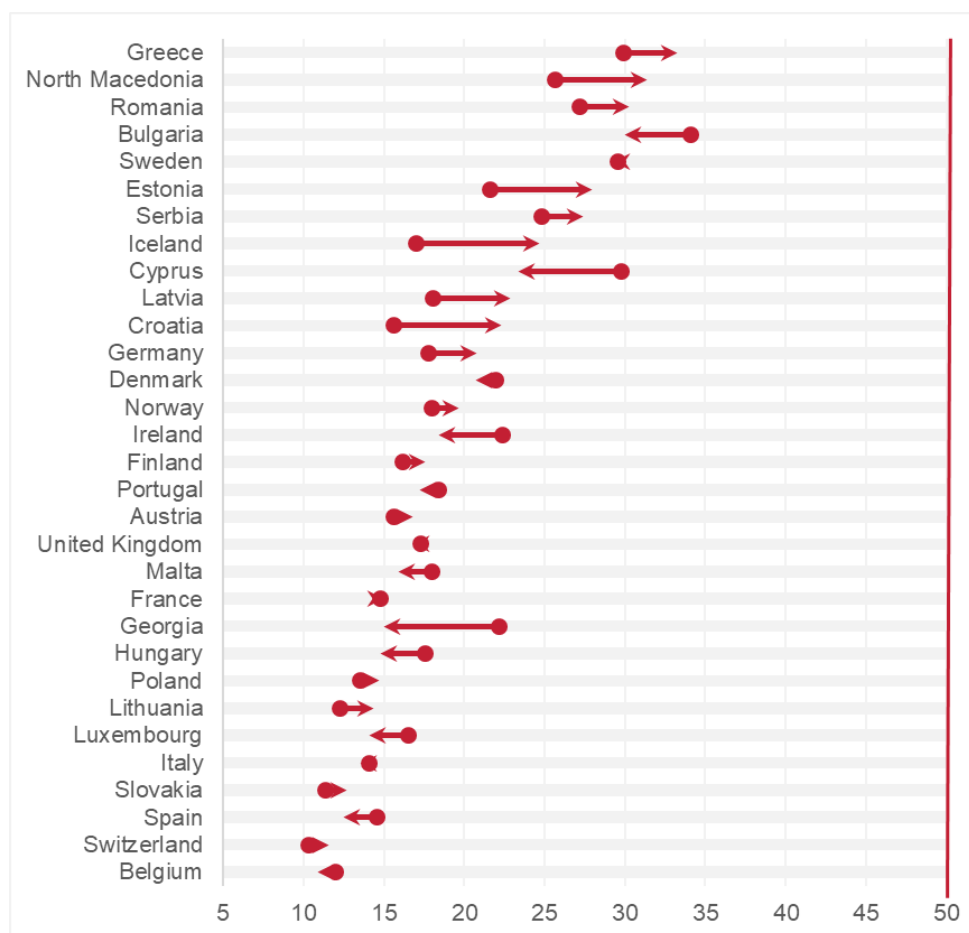
39. Gender analysis in subject choices at tertiary level are of interest because they can reflect stereotypes of “masculine” and “feminine” subject areas. Furthermore, some subjects may be preferred by potential employers, and may affect occupational segregation once graduates enter the labour market. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (EMC) are two broad groups of subjects where male students have predominated and where a higher rate of participation of women has been identified as a desirable goal.

40. This section looks at the share of women among the tertiary level students enrolled in these subject areas. Figures 7 and 8 display the share of women among ICT and EMC students, respectively, in the 31 ECE countries where available data permitted examination of the change over the recent four- to five-year period.

41. Women remain a minority among ICT students, with percentages ranging from 11 in Belgium to 33 in Greece. The four countries with the largest share of women among ICT students are all in the Balkan region. Among students of EMC, the share of women is somewhat higher, but still falls far short of parity, ranging from 14 per cent in Georgia to 44 per cent in North Macedonia.

Figure 7

### Share of women among Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) students in 2017 and 2013



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEducField](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEducField))

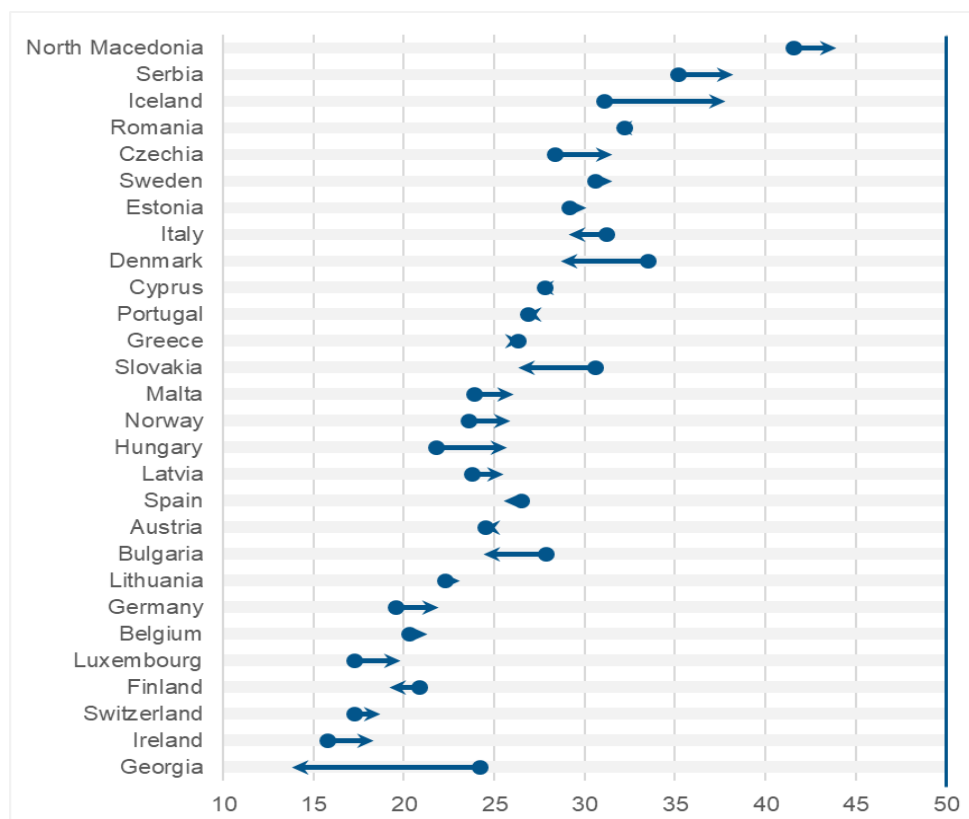
42. The recent trend in the share of women among ICT and EMC students varies across countries. In ICT, since 2013, the share of women among tertiary students has increased in 17 countries and decreased in 14. The changes are in most cases small. Increases of more than five percentage points were observed in Iceland, Croatia, Estonia and North Macedonia.

Among EMC students, small increases were observed in 17 and decreases in 11 countries. Iceland had the largest increase, from 31 to 38 per cent.

43. Overall, the available data indicate that in many countries, women are very slowly gaining ground in the two prominently male-dominated subject areas of ICT and EMC.

Figure 8

**Share of women among Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (EMC) students in 2017 and 2013**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEducField](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEducField))

## C. Employment

### Box 3. Key messages on employment

Women's employment rates are lower than men's in almost all countries of the region, but the gap has become smaller since 2012. In most cases this is due to increased rates of women's employment.

When there are young children in a household, women's employment rates are lower than in households without young children.

44. Promoting gender equality in employment is widely recognized as an essential component of economic and social development. It is also an important factor contributing to the economic empowerment of women in their families and communities, and in society at large. Women's employment increases their contribution to household resources and their control over the allocation of those resources. This leads to greater economic independence and self-determination, both of which are important for women's empowerment.

45. This section examines employment rates in the age-group of people aged 25 to 49. This puts the focus on the stage of life when most people have completed their education and when childrearing responsibilities become a major contributing factor to gender gaps in employment. The relationship between childrearing and employment is illustrated by

comparing the employment rates of women with children aged three to five, with women without children living in the household. To show recent change, the rates in 2012 are compared with the most recent data from 2017.

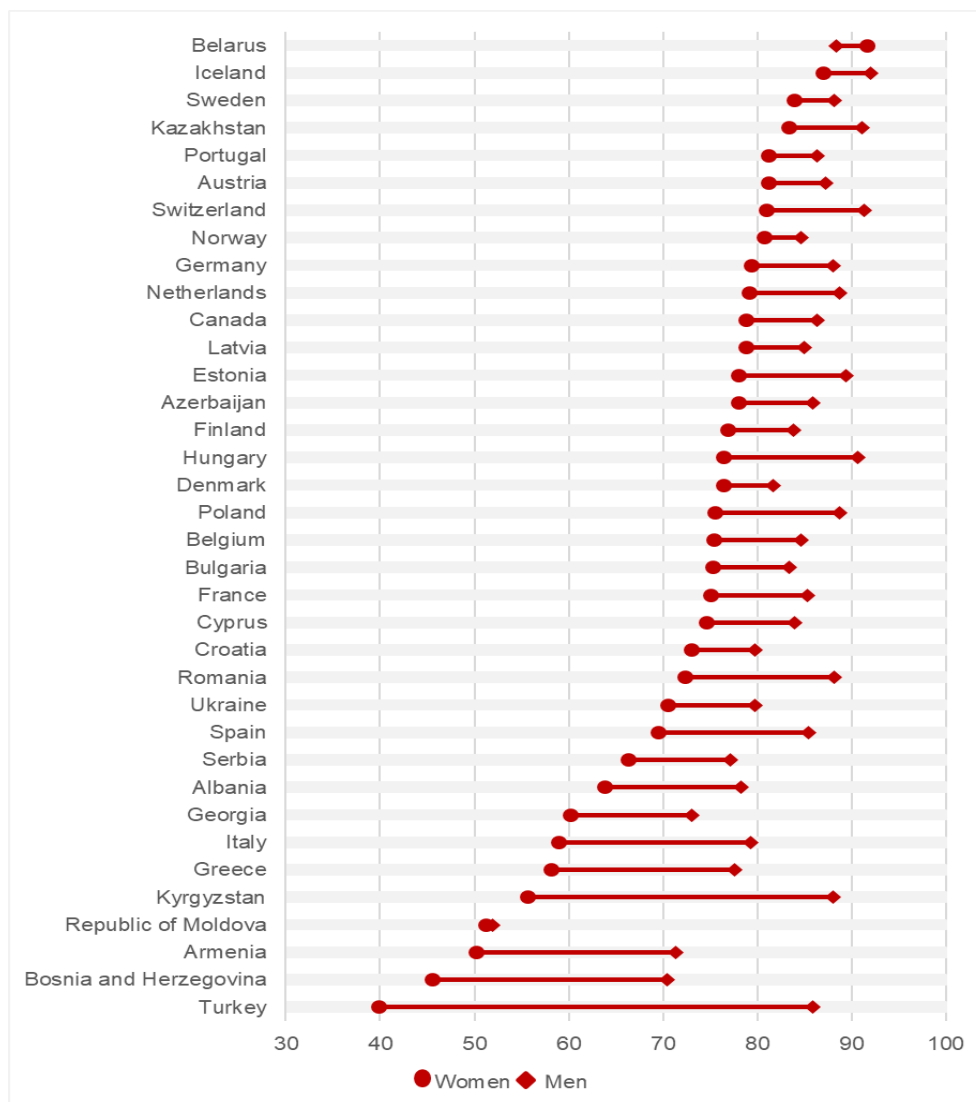
### 1. Employment rate of 25-49-year-old women and men

46. Employment rates of 25–49-year-old women are lower than those of men of the same age-group (figure 9). Among the 38 countries with data, women in Belarus have the highest rate, 92 per cent. Rates above 80 per cent for women were observed in seven other countries from various parts of the ECE region — Iceland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Austria, Switzerland and Norway. These are almost double the rates observed in the countries with lowest female employment, namely Turkey (40 per cent) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (46 per cent).

47. Variation among countries in men’s employment rates is smaller than among women’s employment rates, and a lower rate for women is generally associated with a larger gap between women and men. Israel and Belarus are the two countries where women at age 25-49 are more likely to be employed than men. In Iceland, Portugal, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, women’s employment is short of the men’s level by less than six percentage points only. The largest gaps are observed in Turkey (46 percentage points), Kyrgyzstan (32) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (25).

Figure 9

#### Employment rates of women and men aged 25-49 in 2017 (per cent)

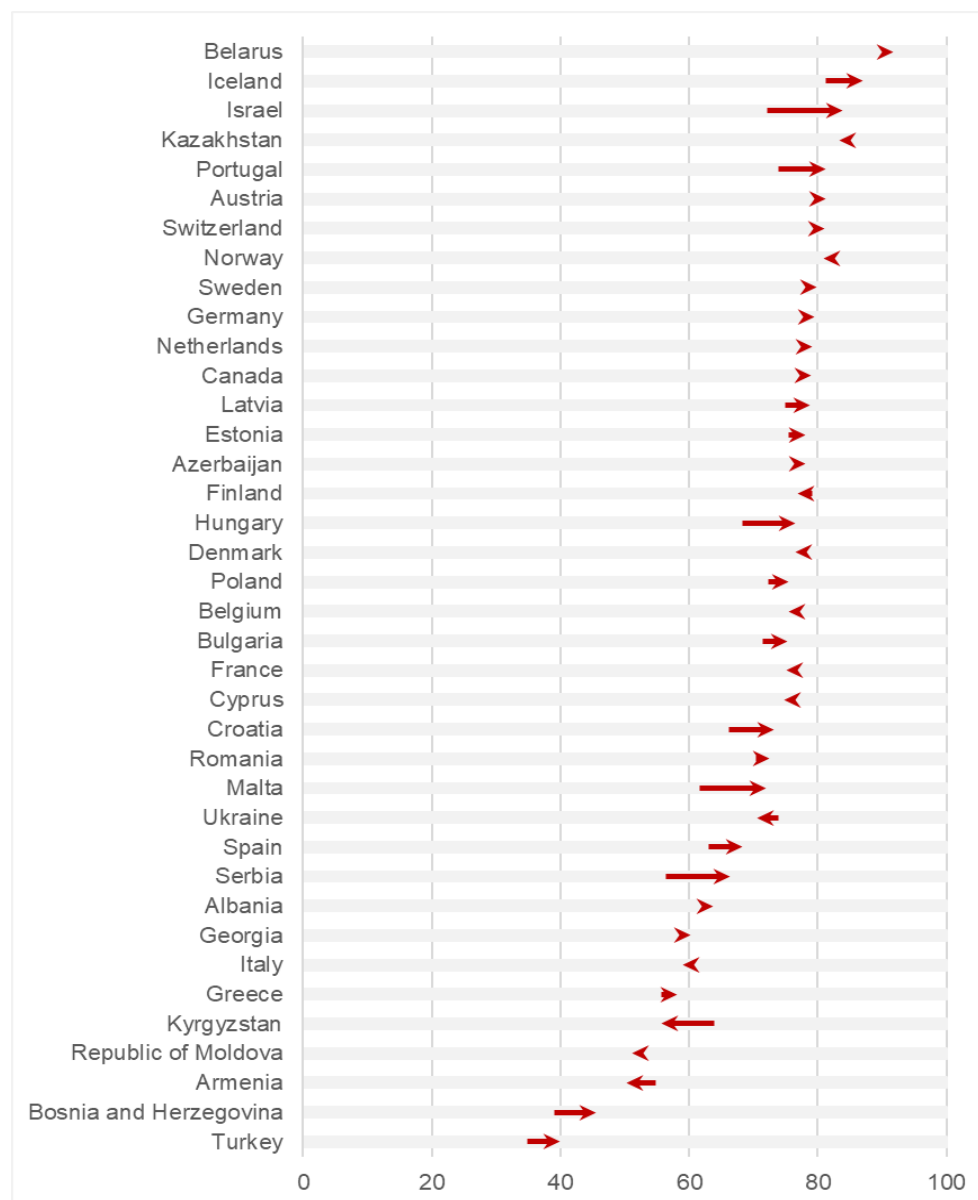


Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild))

48. Out of the 38 countries with data, 26 recorded an increase in the employment rate of 25-49-year-old women since 2012 (figure 10). In nine countries the increase was larger than five percentage points. The biggest rises were observed in Israel (from 72 to 84 per cent), Malta (from 62 to 72 per cent) and Serbia (from 56 to 66 per cent). In 10 countries where women's employment fell since 2012, this was in the range of three percentage points or less. Only Armenia and Kyrgyzstan saw somewhat larger decreases.

Figure 10

**Change in the employment rate of 25-49-year-old women from 2012 to 2017 (per cent)**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild))

Note: France: change since 2013. Belarus: change since 2014.

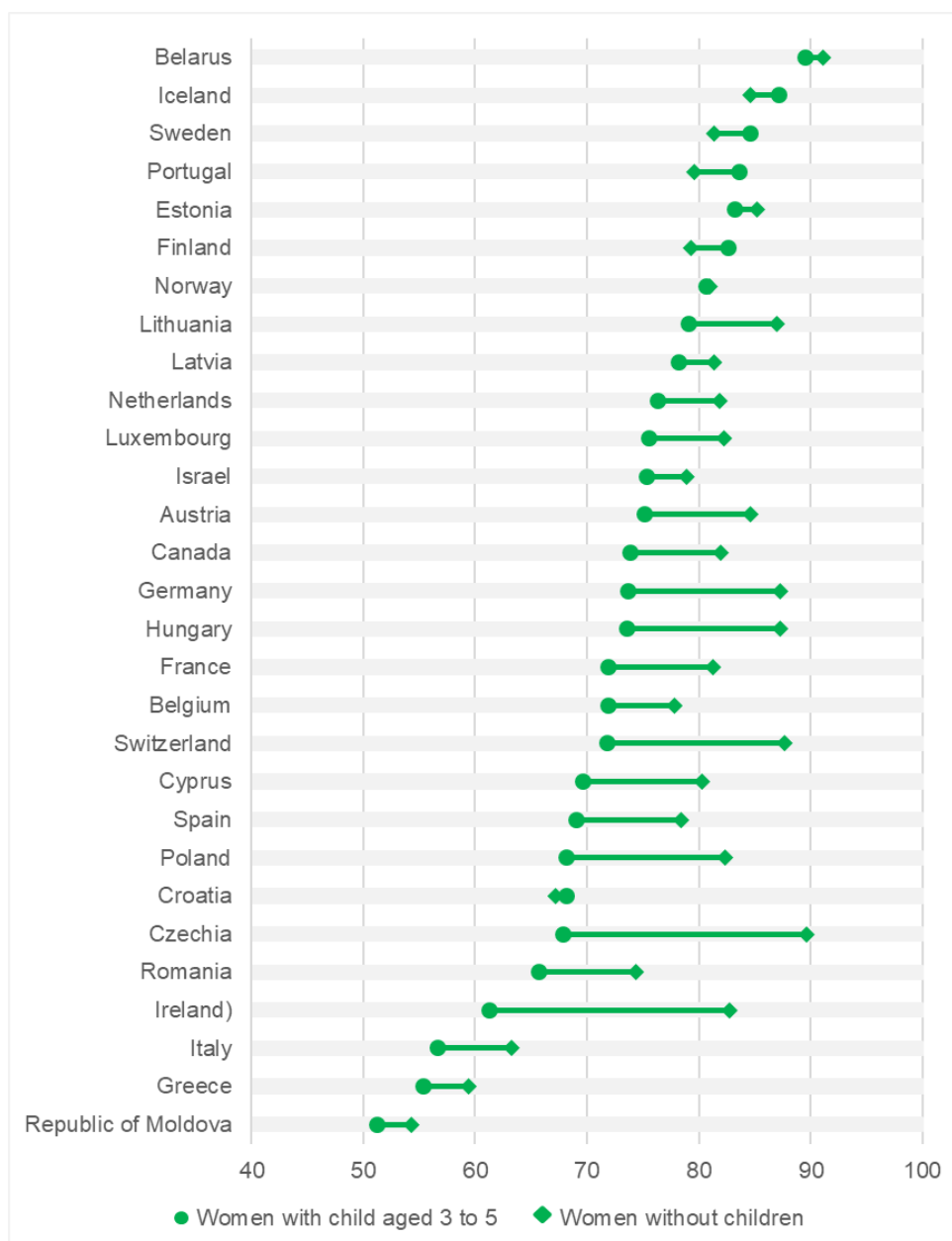
49. From 2012 to 2017, the gender gap in employment of 25-49-year-olds narrowed in 19 countries (half of the countries observed). In 16 of them, this was due to an increase in women's employment.

## 2. Employment rate of mothers of three-to-five-year-olds

50. The impact of the childrearing commitment to employment rate can clearly be seen when comparing the employment rates of mothers of three-to-five-year-old children with those of women without children living in the household (figure 11). On average, in the 29 countries with data, the employment rate is eight percentage points lower when there are three-to-five-year-olds are in the household, than when there are not; however, variation across countries is large.

Figure 11

**Employment rates of women aged 25-49, with children aged 3-5 and without children, 2017 (per cent)**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEmpChild)).

Note: Czechia, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova: data refers to 2012. Croatia, Ireland: data refers to 2015.

51. In Czechia and Ireland, where the employment of women at age 25-49 without children is well above 80 per cent, employment is lower by more than 20 percentage points when three-to-five-year-olds are present. The presence of young children has also a large impact on women's employment rates in Switzerland, Poland, Hungary and Germany, where the difference between women without children and mothers of young children is more than 13 percentage points.

52. In many countries, it appears to be becoming easier to reconcile employment and childrearing. In seven countries, the employment rate of mothers of young children is above 80 per cent. In Iceland, Sweden, Portugal and Finland it even exceeds the rate of women without children, whilst in Belarus, Estonia and Norway the difference is within the range of just two percentage points.

## D. Gender pay gap

### Box 4. Key messages on the gender pay gap

The size of the gender pay gap varies widely across the region—whether the gap in monthly earnings or in hourly wages is considered (the former incorporating gender differences in quantity of employment, and the latter controlling for this to reflect differences in type of work).

The gender pay gap as measured by both of these indicators has reduced in most countries since 2012.

Despite these reductions, the gap remains significant in some countries, especially for monthly earnings—a result of women's greater use of part-time employment to permit them to balance paid employment with unpaid care work.

53. The gender pay gap can be defined in general terms as a measure of gender inequality in total pay for employment. It is calculated as the difference between average earnings of men and women as a percentage of average earnings of men. In order to highlight different aspects of inequality, various indicators of gender pay gap can be calculated, differing by type of wages considered, data source, calculation method, or other factors.

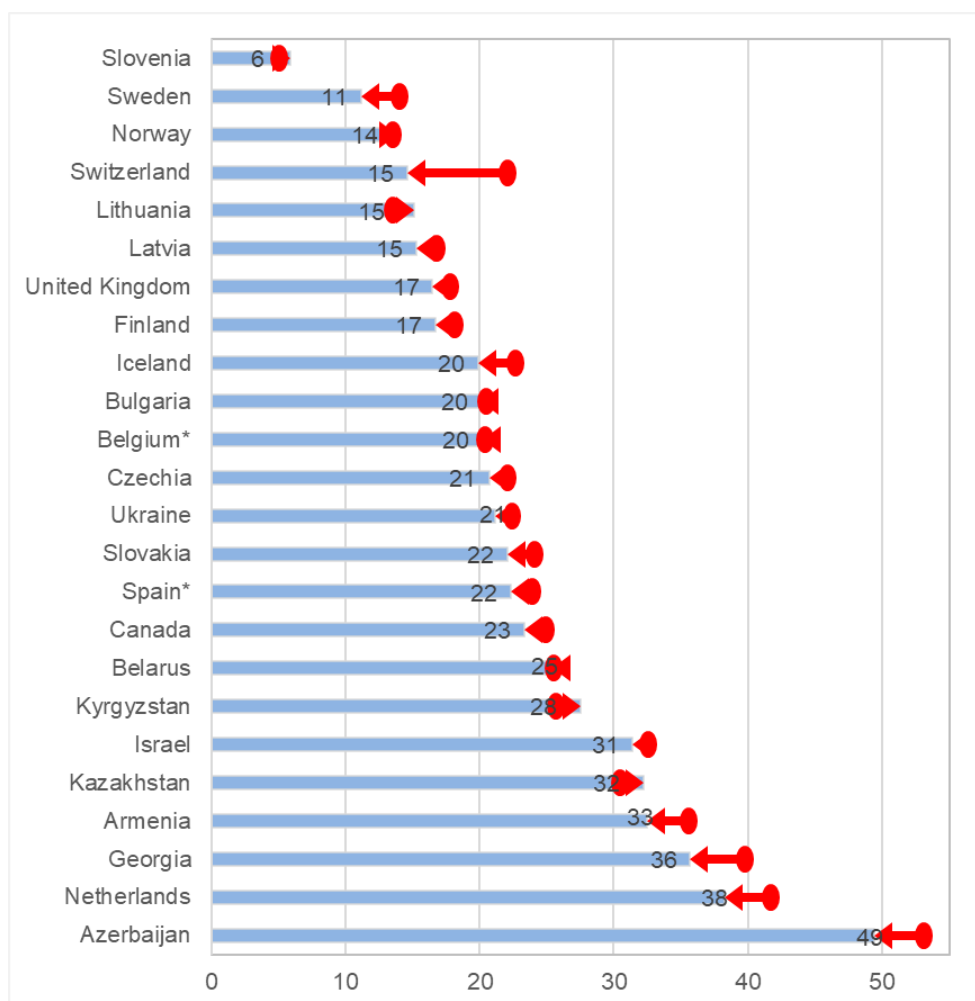
54. The ECE Statistical Database contains data on the gender pay gap in monthly earnings and in hourly wage rates. The monthly earnings figures pertain to employees and self-employed people regardless of the number of hours they worked in a month. They also take into account overtime payments, bonuses and other payments, which are not included in the hourly wage rate calculated for employees. Since on average, women work fewer hours than men, the gender gap in monthly earnings usually exceeds that in hourly wage rates.

55. Variation across ECE countries is large according to both of these measures of the gender pay gap. The gap in monthly earnings in 2017 was highest in Azerbaijan (49 per cent, see figure 12). The Netherlands also has a large gender gap in monthly earnings, which is related to the high prevalence of women's part-time work in that country. The lowest level was recorded in Slovenia (six per cent). Out of the seven countries where the gender gap in monthly earnings exceeded 25 per cent in 2017, five are from the region of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

56. In almost all countries with available data, there was a decrease of the gender gap in monthly earnings between 2012 and 2017. There were limited increases (under two percentage points) in Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and marginal increases in Slovenia and Norway, which are among the countries with the smallest pay gap.



Figure 12  
**Gender pay gap (per cent) in monthly earnings, in 2017 with changes from 2012**



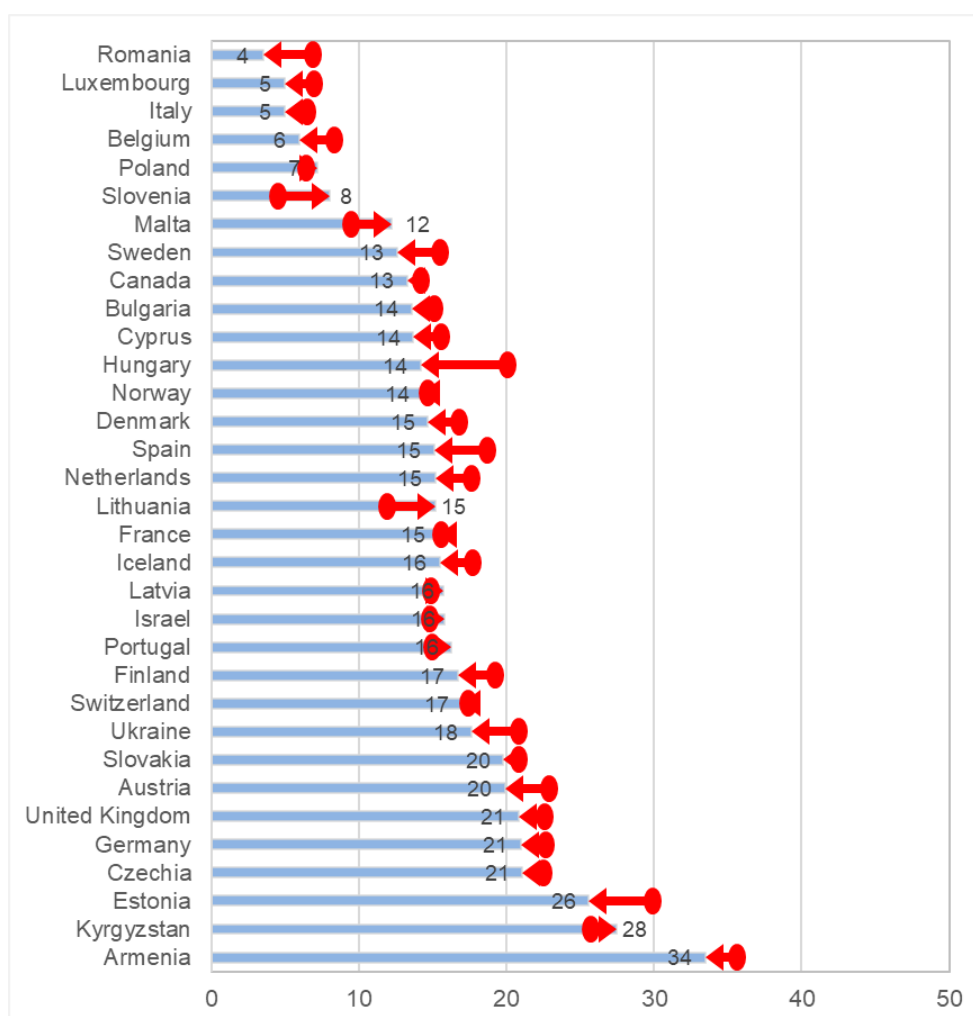
Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataGenderPayGap](http://bit.ly/ECEdataGenderPayGap))

\* Data for Switzerland, Belgium and Spain refer to 2016 instead of 2017

57. The gender gap in hourly wage rates varied in 2017 from four per cent in Romania to 34 per cent in Armenia (figure 13). The variation in the gender gap in wage rates does not show any particular pattern by geographical region or by level of economic development. However, comparable data on the gap in wage rates are not available for many countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

58. In most countries with data, the gender gap in wage rates decreased from 2012 to 2017. The largest decreases were recorded in Hungary (-5.9 percentage points) and Estonia (-4.3). The largest increased were observed in Slovenia (+3.5 percentage points), Lithuania (+3.3) and Malta (+2.7).

Figure 13  
**Gender pay gap (per cent) in hourly wage rates, in 2017 with changes from 2012**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataGenderPayGap](http://bit.ly/ECEdataGenderPayGap))

59. The gender pay gap reflects complex interactions of factors that affect pay levels and the different ways in which women and men respond to those factors. Studies have found that factors such as education level, sector of activity, occupations, seniority and hours worked have a direct influence on pay levels and help understand the mechanisms behind the levels and trends in the gender pay gap.<sup>8</sup>

60. The influence of part-time work, for example, operates not only on monthly earnings though the fact that the number of hours worked is smaller. It is also seen to be associated with lower hourly earnings.<sup>9</sup> Concerning education levels and occupational categories, returns from investments in human capital, namely through education and work experience, increase earnings. However, in spite of the higher proportions of women obtaining higher education degrees than men, the gender pay gap remains. Another factor is the choice of occupations. Women, including the highly educated, tend to work in occupations where the pay levels are lower compared to occupations generally held by men.

<sup>8</sup> Nopo H, Daza N, Ramos J, 2012. *Gender earning gaps around the world: a study of 64 countries*. International Journal of Manpower, Vol. 33 No. 5, 2012 pp. 464-513; and Jingyo S, 2010. *Decomposition of the change in the gender wage gap*. Research in Business and Economics Journal, Vol 1.

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*. See [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now\\_9789264179370-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en), p162.

## E. Time use

### Box 5. Key messages on time use

In all the countries with available data, women do more domestic and care work than men—and in countries where women do a lot of such work, there is usually also a large gender gap.

In most countries, the gender gap in domestic and care work has been narrowing—yet it remains large, including for employed women and men.

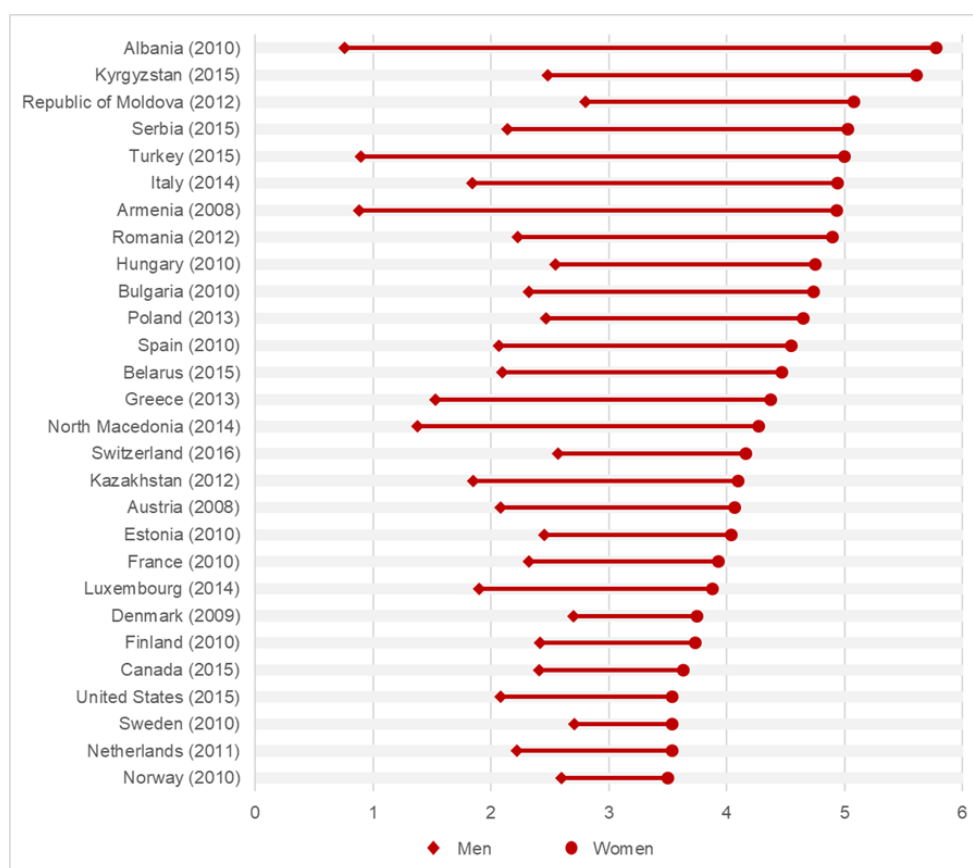
61. Because of the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men, data on time spent in household and caring work are an essential component of gender analysis. Since women make key contributions to unpaid work that both maintains the household and generates household income, understanding women's and men's range of activities is an essential element in understanding gender equality. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses on recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work in its target 5.4, to be measured by indicator 5.4.1, proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location.

62. This section first presents the hours women and men spend on domestic and care work on an average day. It then examines change over time by focusing on employed women and men. This focus allows to control for the effect of changing employment rates of women and men on the change in time use. The data come from time-use surveys that are typically conducted with a ten-year interval.

63. Whilst ECE countries vary greatly in the amount of time women and men spend in domestic and care work, in all the 29 countries presented, women spend more time in domestic and care work than men (figure 14). In Albania and Kyrgyzstan, this amounts to 5.8 and 5.6 hours per day, whereas in Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States and Canada women spend only 3.5 hours on these activities. Other countries are rather evenly distributed in the range from 3.5 to 5.1 hours.

64. The gap between women and men is larger in countries where women are heavily involved in domestic and care work. The largest differences are observed in Albania, where women spend 5.8 and men 0.8 hours on these activities; Turkey (5.0 and 0.9 hours); and Armenia (4.9 and 0.9 hours). The gap between women and men is smallest in the Nordic countries – Norway (3.5 hours for women and 2.6 for men), Sweden (3.5 and 2.7) and Denmark (3.8 and 2.7).

Figure 14  
Time spent on domestic and care work by women and men, hours per day



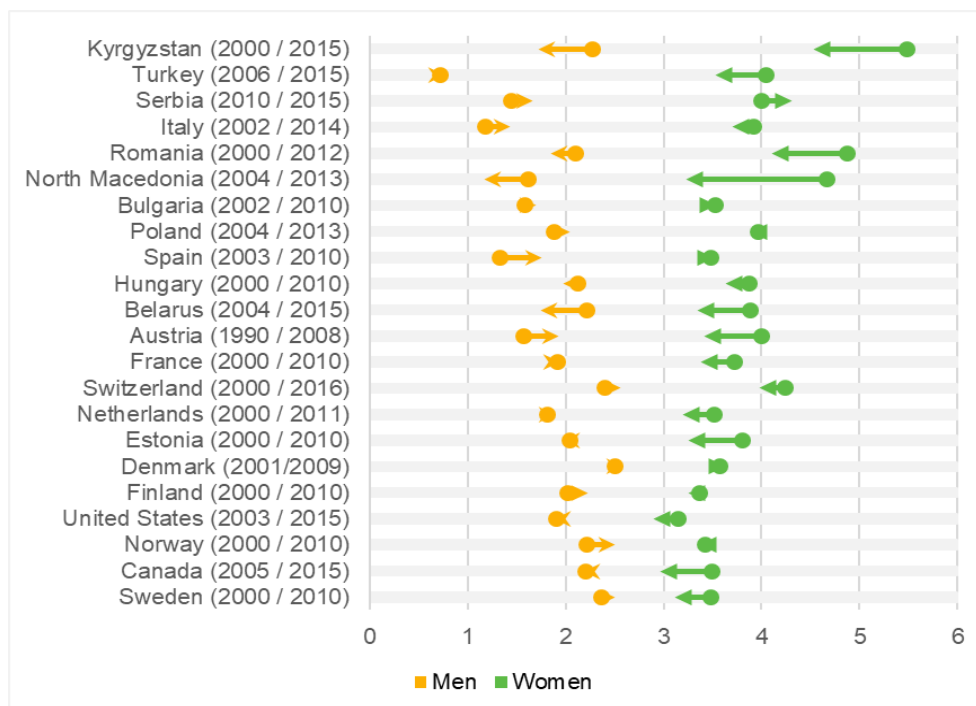
Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataTimeUse](http://bit.ly/ECEdataTimeUse))

Note: The graphs include countries with at least one measurement available after 2007. Data refer to the latest available year.

65. Data from the 22 countries for which more than one measurement was available show that the gender gap in domestic and care work also remains large when observation is restricted to the employed population only (figure 15). Employed women in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey spend 2.8 hours more on domestic and care work than men do. The gender gap is smallest in Sweden (0.6 hours), followed by Canada (0.8) and Norway (0.9).

66. The direction of change is clearly towards the reduction of the gender gap. In 18 out of the 22 countries, the time that employed women spend on domestic and care work decreased between the two points of measurement, whilst in 14 countries employed men increased their engagement. The gap between women and men narrowed in 17 countries (by more than 0.1 hours) and changed within the margin of 0.1 hours in five countries. The biggest reductions of the gender gap were observed in North Macedonia, from 3.1 hours in 2004 to 2.2 hours in 2013, and in Austria, from 2.4 hours in 1990 to 1.5 in 2008.

Figure 15  
**Change in the time spent on domestic and care work by employed women and men, hours per day**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataTimeUseEmp](http://bit.ly/ECEdataTimeUseEmp))

Note: Data refer to the latest available year and to the closest available year to 2000. Countries are sorted by the difference between women and men in the latest available year.

## F. Power and decision-making

### Box 6. Key messages on power and decision-making

The proportion of women among managers has increased since 2012 in three-quarters of countries, but very few countries are approaching gender parity.

Women are in a minority in local governments, with only four countries reaching the threshold of 40 per cent, considered as “gender parity”.

The representation of women in national parliaments has increased over the past five years, with legislative measures contributing to some of the largest increases.

67. The Beijing Platform for Action identified “inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels” as one of twelve critical areas of concern, arguing that the empowerment and autonomy of women in all spheres—social, economic and political—is essential for strengthening democracy and achieving peace and sustainable development.

68. The distribution of power and decision-making between women and men can be measured at many different levels and in many different arenas. These include, among others, power relations in private households; decision-making positions in culture, media, sport, education, religion and the law; representation in policymaking and law-making positions in governments; diplomats; and managerial positions in private companies. Each of these reflects different aspects of the distribution of power and each gives rise to different proposals as to how the observed inequalities could and should be addressed and reduced. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for a variety of measures to be taken both to ensure *equal access* to decision-making roles, and to foster women’s *capacity to take on* such roles.

69. Building upon the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a target (5.5) to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”. Within this target, indicator 5.5.1 is “proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments”, while indicator 5.5.2 is “Proportion of women in managerial positions”. The analyses presented hereafter therefore focus on these three measures of decision-making, highlighting the unequal sex distribution of managers, of local government representatives, and of national parliamentarians.

## 1. Managers

70. The sex distribution of managers is a reflection of a variety of interlinked influences: different subject-choices between girls and boys and between women and men in education; differential levels of educational attainment and career success; competing demands upon the time of women and men, such as child care, elder care and domestic work; and, in some instances, discrimination, whether explicit or institutionalized.

71. In 2017, approximately one-third of all managerial positions across the ECE region were held by women, with the proportion ranging from 15.0 per cent (in Turkey) to 47.6 per cent (in Belarus).

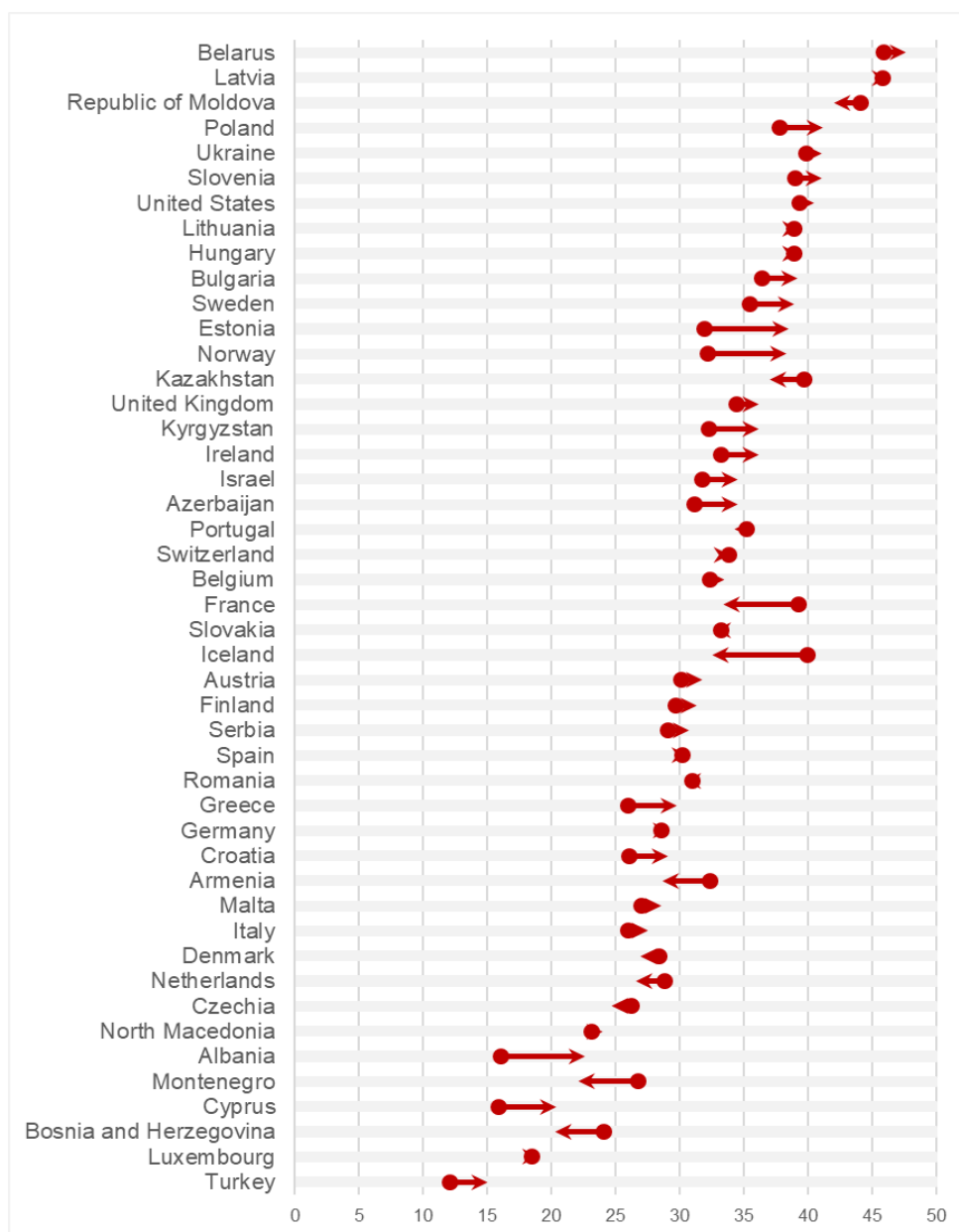
72. The proportion of women among managers increased over the five-year period 2012-2017 in 32 of the 43 countries with data (figure 16). In 11 of these countries the increase was of three percentage points or more, and in three of these (Norway, Albania and Estonia) the increase was of more than six percentage points.

73. Conversely, the proportion of women among managers fell over the same time period in 11 countries. France and Iceland saw the greatest falls (-5.9 percentage points and -7.5 percentage points, respectively).

74. These observations are in contrast to those reported in the previous review report, in which it was found that only two countries demonstrated a noticeable reduction in the share of women among managers over the period from 2000 to 2013.

75. Across the region there is no clear relationship between the share of women managers and the rate of change in this share: some of those with the greatest increase over the period in question started from a relatively low share in 2012 (Cyprus, Albania), whereas others started from a relatively high share in 2012 (Norway, Estonia).

Figure 16  
**Proportion of women among managers, 2017 with changes from 2012**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataEmpOccup](http://bit.ly/ECEdataEmpOccup))

Note: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia and Belarus: change since 2014.

## 2. Women in local government

76. In cooperation with UN Women, in 2018 ECE replaced its previous indicator, *members of municipal councils or other local area governing bodies* with the newly-developed indicator *seats held by women in local government*, defined according to the methodology developed by UN Women<sup>10</sup> for the purposes of producing SDG indicator 5.5.1(b).

77. Since data collection for this indicator in the ECE region began only in 2018, there is no time series yet available to monitor progress. Future rounds of data collection as part of the biennial ECE gender data compilation will permit analysis of progress in this important SDG indicator.

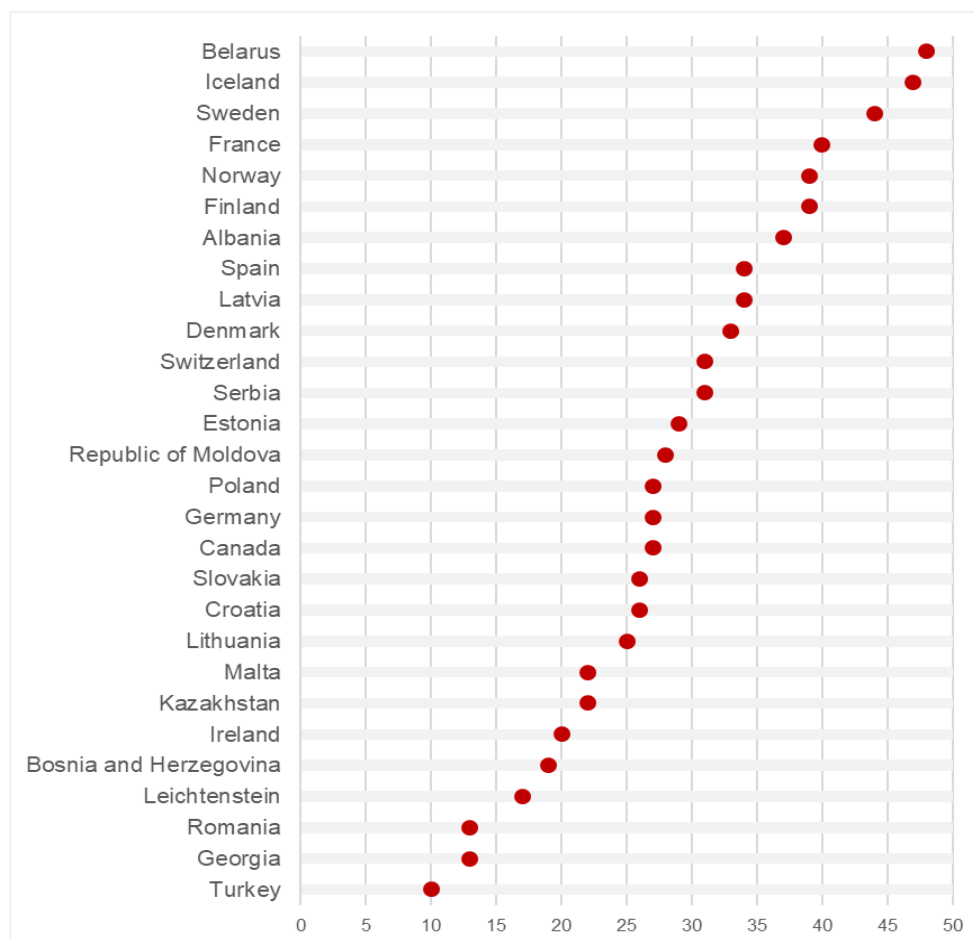
<sup>10</sup> A detailed description of the indicator, including definitions and methodology, can be found on the UNECE Statistical glossary, at <https://statswiki.unece.org/x/TABqDQ>.



78. Belarus, Iceland, Sweden and France have reached or exceeded the threshold of 40 per cent women among seats held in local government (figure 17), a threshold sometimes considered as ‘gender parity’ (since chance departures from exactly 50 per cent can be expected among a relatively small group). With 48 per cent women, the local government of Belarus has the largest proportion female. Turkey, Romania and Georgia have the smallest proportions, with 10, 13 and 13 per cent, respectively.

Figure 17

**Proportion of seats held by women in local governments, 1 January 2019\***



Source: ECE Statistical database.

\* Data represent values as at 1 January 2019: most recent local elections vary from 2014 to 2018.

79. Importantly, considering the recent introduction of new methodology and the associated challenges of data gathering and compilation, 29 countries have so far provided ECE with full data for this indicator, and this is expected to improve in subsequent rounds of data collection.

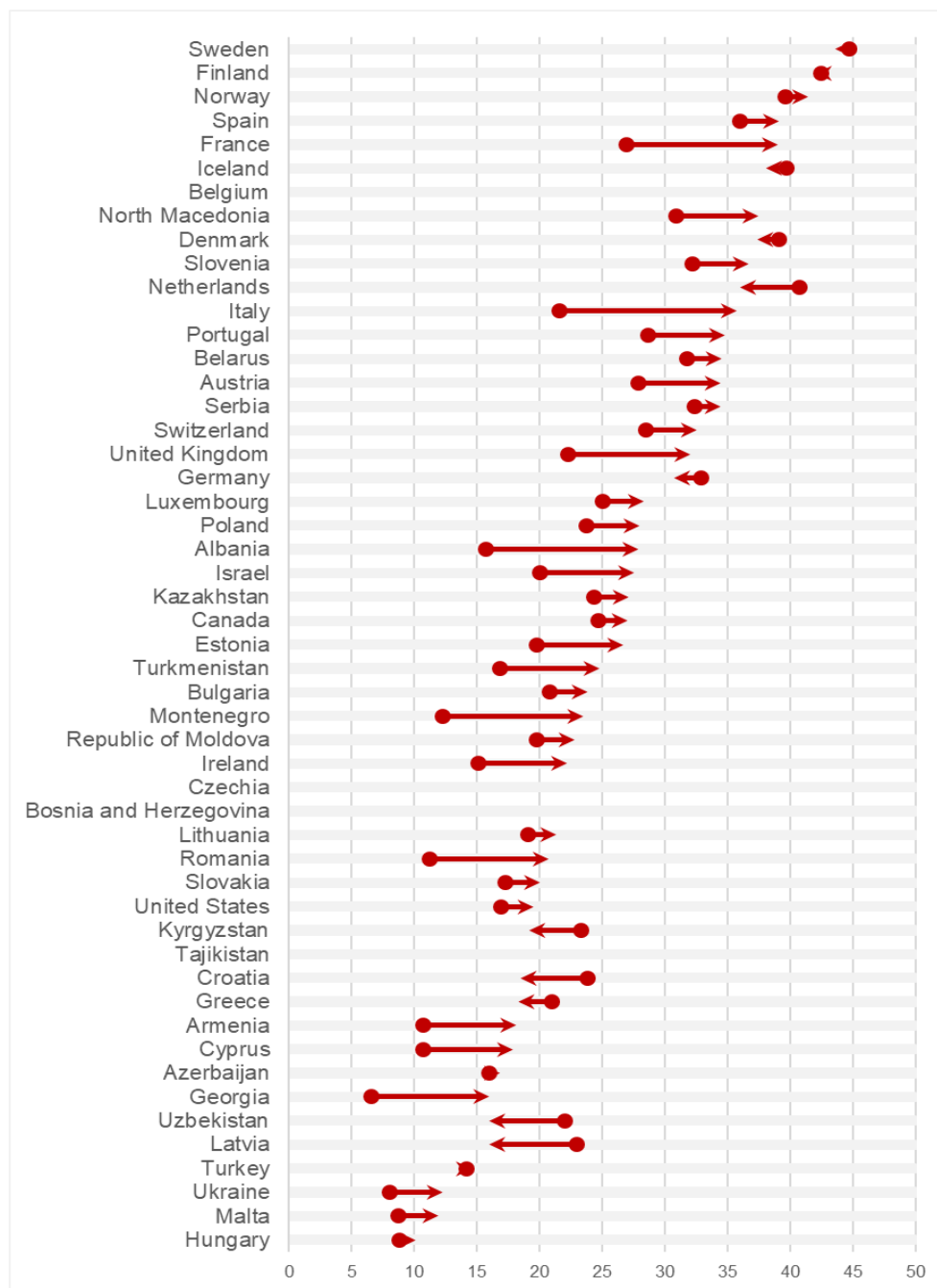
### 3. Members of national parliaments

80. Complementing the measurement of women in local government, the sex distribution of national parliamentarians is an important indication of how these relatively prestigious positions of power are shared between women and men. The sex distribution of parliamentarians in a democratic society reflects the combination of women’s and men’s access to run for office (for example, being placed on lists of candidates where such lists are used), and the likelihood of female and male candidates being elected by voters.

81. There is a noticeable geographical pattern in the proportions of female parliamentarians across countries, with the greatest shares being seen in the Scandinavian countries, followed by Western Europe (figure 18). Sweden, Finland and Norway each have more than 40 per cent women among members of parliament, and a further 16 countries have more than 30 per cent women.

82. In 36 countries across the region the share of women parliamentarians increased over the period 2012-2018. Among these, four showed a marked increase of more than ten percentage points (Italy, Albania, France and Montenegro). In the cases of Italy, Albania and Montenegro the large increases over this time period may be in part attributable to changes in legislation which came into effect during the period in question.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, three countries (Croatia, Uzbekistan and Latvia) saw reductions of more than 5 per cent (-5.3, -6.0 and -7.0 per cent, respectively).

Figure 18  
**Proportion of women among members of national parliaments, 2018, with changes from 2012**



Source: ECE Statistical database ([bit.ly/ECEdataParliament](http://bit.ly/ECEdataParliament))

<sup>11</sup> According to information obtained from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ([www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/database.](http://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/database.))

#### 4. Relationship between indicators of women in power and decision-making

83. Three different indicators of women's representation in decision-making positions in the public sphere have been presented here, and, as stated earlier, there are many more that can be produced. It is worthwhile to ask whether there is any relationship between these different indicators. From the point of view of statistical production, a clear correlation between indicators might suggest a reduced need to produce them all, while from a policymaking perspective a close interlinkage between the various aspects of public decision-making could affect the approaches taken to reduce observed inequalities.

84. Among the three indicators shown here, women's representation in local government and in national parliaments are somewhat closely correlated ( $R^2=0.61$ ) but neither of these shows a relationship with the share of women among managers. Some of those countries with the highest shares of female managers have among the lowest shares of female members of parliament (e.g. Latvia), or vice versa, whereas others have high values of both (e.g. Belarus) or low values of both (e.g. Turkey).

85. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that decision-making power in any given area of public life is indicative of the situation of women's empowerment overall: each area merits separate consideration and motivates different policy responses.

### G. Violence against women

#### Box 7. Key messages on violence against women

Reliable and comparable data on the incidence of violence against women are rare, but data on recorded homicides provide the best means of gauging trends.

Although two-thirds of the ECE countries analyzed show low and unchanging levels of homicide of women, there are exceptions where high levels and/or large increases are seen in the past five years.

A large proportion of homicides of women still occur at the hands of current or former partners or relatives.

86. Safety and security is an area of concern for human rights and for well-being where the Beijing Platform for Action called for improving the situation of women. Violence against women is a hindrance to achieving the objectives of equality, development and peace. The fear of violence is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities.<sup>12</sup> The Platform for Action stressed the need for policies to eliminate all forms of violence inflicted on women and the need to produce relevant data to track progress being made in this regard.

87. In the SDG framework, this is reflected in target 16.1, "significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere", and indicator 16.1.1 "number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age".

88. The ECE Statistical Database contains administrative data on assaults, which depend heavily on national laws and practices of registering different types of crimes by the authorities, as well as on the possibility and willingness of victims to report. These data do not give a guide to the actual level of violence against women and an increase in rates of registered offences can be a sign of increased engagement with the issue. However, concerning the most serious form of violence, homicide, administrative data can be regarded as more reliable for the purpose of international comparison. Due to its seriousness, the killing of a person tends to be recorded more effectively and the definitions vary less than they do for other crimes.

<sup>12</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action available at: [http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf#page=82](http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf#page=82)

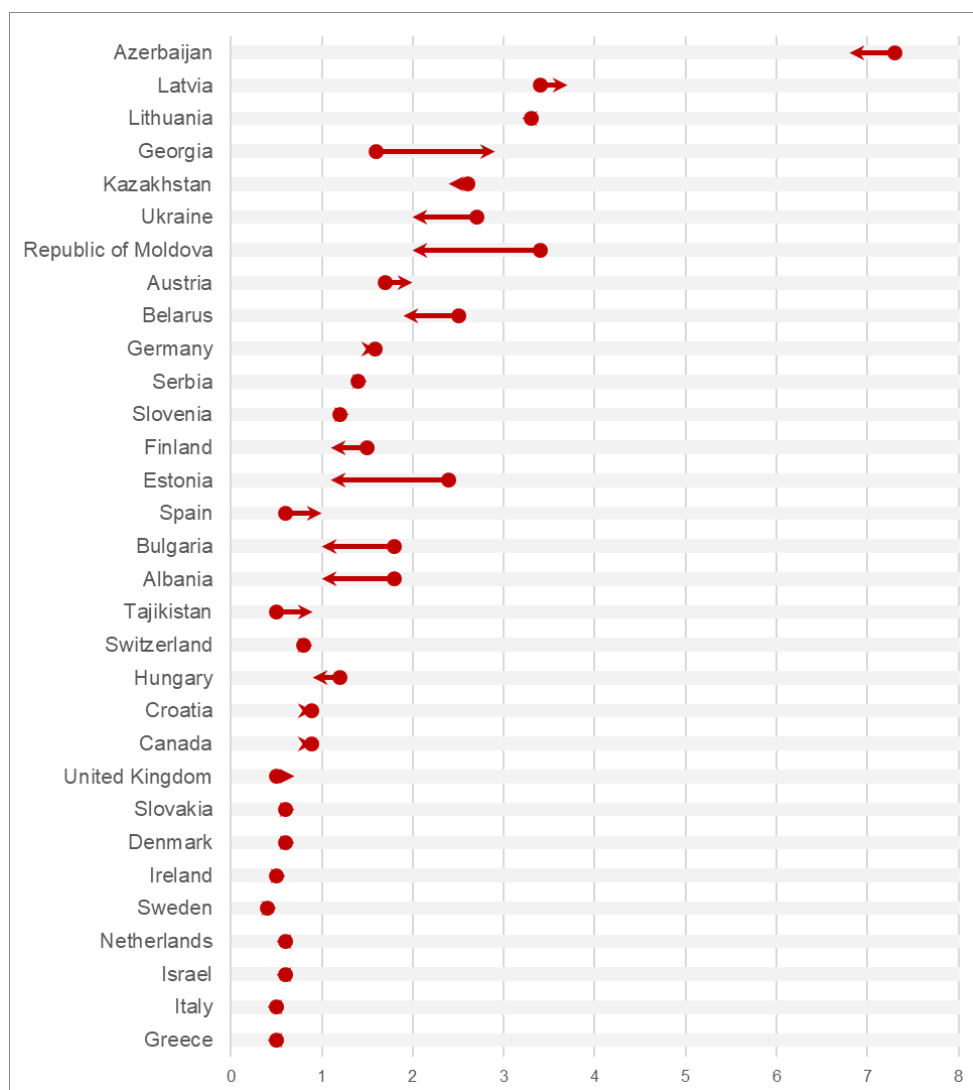
## 1. Female homicides

89. Among the 32 countries with available data, Azerbaijan had by far the highest female homicide rate in 2017, at 6.8 per 100,000, slightly down from 7.3 in 2012. Latvia and Lithuania also had high rates in 2017 (3.7 and 3.2 respectively). Fourteen countries had rates of less than 1 per 100,000 with very little change since 2012.

90. Among the countries with medium to high homicide rates for women (between 1 and 3 per 100,000), significant declines were observed in the Republic of Moldova (from 3.4 to 2.0), Ukraine (from 2.7 to 2.0), Belarus (from 2.5 to 1.9), Estonia (from 2.4 to 1.1), Bulgaria and Albania (from 1.8 to 1.0 in both countries). In contrast, in the same period the rate increased significantly in Georgia (from 1.6 to 2.9), Spain, (from 0.6 to 1.0), and Tajikistan (from 0.5 to 0.9).

Figure 19

### Female homicide rate (per 100,000), 2017 with changes from 2012



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataHomicide](http://bit.ly/ECEdataHomicide))

Notes: Crude (not standardized) death rate for all homicides, including intentional and unintentional. Germany: the latest data refer to 2015. Greece: the latest data refer to 2014. Israel: the latest data refer to 2016. Kazakhstan: change since 2015.

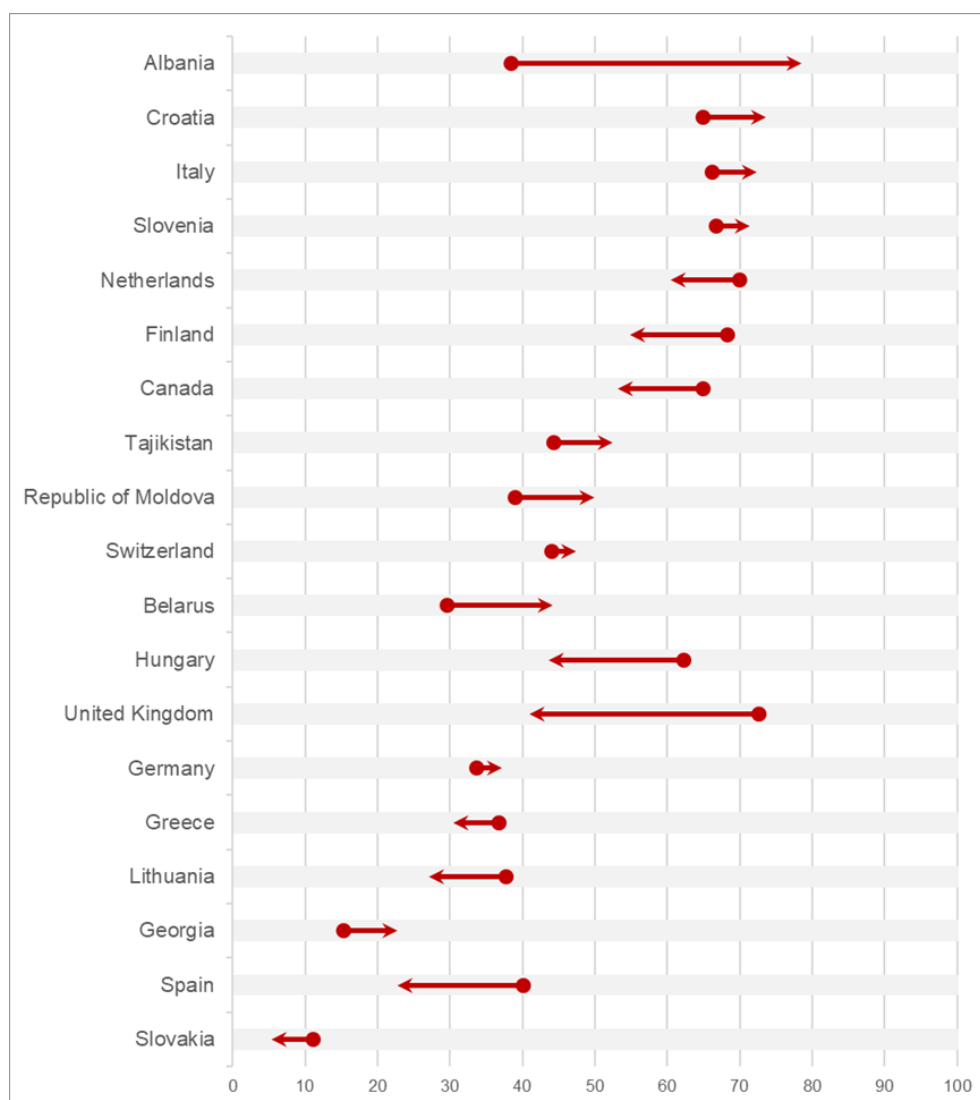
## 2. Female homicides in a family context

91. The ECE Statistical Database also contains data on victims of homicide by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim. In many cases, violence against women occurs in the family or within the home. Figure 20 illustrates the percentage of homicides in which

the perpetrators have been identified as spouse, ex-spouse or another relative of the victim, among all homicides of women.

Figure 20

**Percentage of homicides in a family context among all homicides of women, 2017 with change since 2012**



Source: ECE Statistical Database ([bit.ly/ECEdataHomicide](http://bit.ly/ECEdataHomicide))

Notes: Georgia: change since 2011. Germany: the latest data refer to 2015. Greece: change since 2015. Netherlands: change since 2014. Republic of Moldova: change since 2013.

92. In 2017, over 70 per cent of homicides of women were perpetrated by a relative in Albania (79 per cent), Croatia (74 per cent), Italy (72 per cent) and Slovenia (71 per cent). In all these countries, this percentage increased since 2012. The increase was particularly significant in Albania, where the percentage doubled in five years. Between 2012 and 2017 the percentage of homicides of women in a family context also increased significantly in Belarus (from 30 to 44 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (from 39 to 50 per cent), Tajikistan (44 to 53 per cent) and Georgia (from 15 to 23 per cent).

93. At the other end of the range, the percentage of female victims of homicides that occurred in a family context decreased between 2012 and 2017 in nine out of the 19 countries for which data are available. The decrease was particularly significant in the United Kingdom (from 73 to 41 per cent), Hungary (from 62 to 44 per cent), Spain (from 40 to 23 per cent) and Finland (from 68 to 55 per cent).

### III. Conclusions

94. Overall, for the past 25 years, development in the ECE region has been towards more gender equality in most domains. The gender gaps in employment rates, pay, occupation of managerial positions and parliamentary representation narrowed in most countries.

95. In almost all countries, women now outnumber men among tertiary level graduates, indicating that women do not suffer from gender-specific barriers to entering higher education. The gap in life expectancy, where men are at a disadvantage, has also narrowed in most countries and the life expectancy of women has continuously increased in all countries. Homicide rates against women have gone down in most countries, sometimes with rapid declines over recent years.

96. Notwithstanding all these positive developments, important gaps remain, reflecting women's disadvantage. Women's employment rates remain much lower than men's, especially when there are small children in the family, and women's wage rates are lower. Related to this is the continuing differentiation of women and men in subjects of study, which translates into occupational segregation. Women do more domestic and care work than men, and in countries where women do a lot of such work, there is usually also a large gender gap.

97. Women remain under-represented among managers and parliamentarians. Whilst the bulk of reported violent crimes are against male victims, women suffer considerable levels of partner violence and sexual violence.

98. In selected areas, men appear to be disadvantaged compared to women. Suicides are much more common among men than among women, and the same is true for cigarette smoking, contributing to the lower life expectancy for men.

99. Improvement of statistics over recent years is another trend documented in the ECE Statistical Database. Nonetheless, not all ECE countries can produce all the indicators that are necessary for a good understanding of their situation with respect to gender equality. For example, survey data on violence against women, which are indispensable for understanding the prevalence of such violence, remain missing in a great part of the region and even the most developed statistical systems have only recently started to collect them. Country coverage also remains weak on time use and employment rates of population groups targeted by gender equality policies. It is therefore necessary to continue building national capacity in gender statistics in countries in need of support, and to emphasize the importance of the evidence base and monitoring of policy initiatives on gender equality.

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