

Gender equality in the EU in 2009

Summary

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This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.

The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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INTRODUCTION

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and a common principle of the European Union. The EU can be considered as one of the main actors in this field.

Since the 1970s, the European Union has adopted an extensive body of equal treatment legislation. Thirteen directives have been introduced in areas such as equal pay, equal treatment in employment and occupation, social security and parental leave. This body of law is among the world's most extensive legislation promoting gender equality. Along with this legislation, the European Union has developed other instruments in order to combat gender inequality more generally: gender mainstreaming and specific measures for the advancement of women.¹

Throughout the past decades, significant progress has been made regarding gender equality in the European Union; however gender inequalities persist, predominantly to the disadvantage of women. If gender equality is to be fully realised, and all Europeans are to enjoy equal opportunities, further action is needed to eliminate gender stereotypes, close the gender pay gap, combat gender-based violence and increase the number of women in decision-making.

The European Commission's commitment to gender equality is outlined in the *Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010*, to be renewed in 2010 with the adoption of a follow-up strategy.

This summary report describes Europeans' perceptions of gender equality in the EU in 2009, in general and in several domains, including the workplace, and the role of the European Union to fight gender inequality. A full report is also available which presents a more thorough analysis of the results.

The survey was commissioned by the European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in autumn 2009 as part of the Eurobarometer wave 72.2. It covers all 27 EU Member States. 26,470 European citizens were interviewed face-to-face.

In this summary report, we analyse the main results and changes at two levels: the average for the 27 Member States (EU27) and the national average. We also comment on variations according to respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, and particularly gender. Other indicators have also been used, such as the fact of having been a victim or witness of gender-based discrimination, or the opinion on current perceived efforts.

¹ For more information on gender equality in the European Union, please see: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=418>

The survey was carried out by TNS Opinion & Social network. The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate General for Communication ("Research and Political Analysis" Unit)².

The Eurobarometer web site can be consulted at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across the continent who have given of their time to take part in this survey.

Without their active participation, this study would simply not have been possible.

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

In this summary report, the countries are represented by their official abbreviations. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS

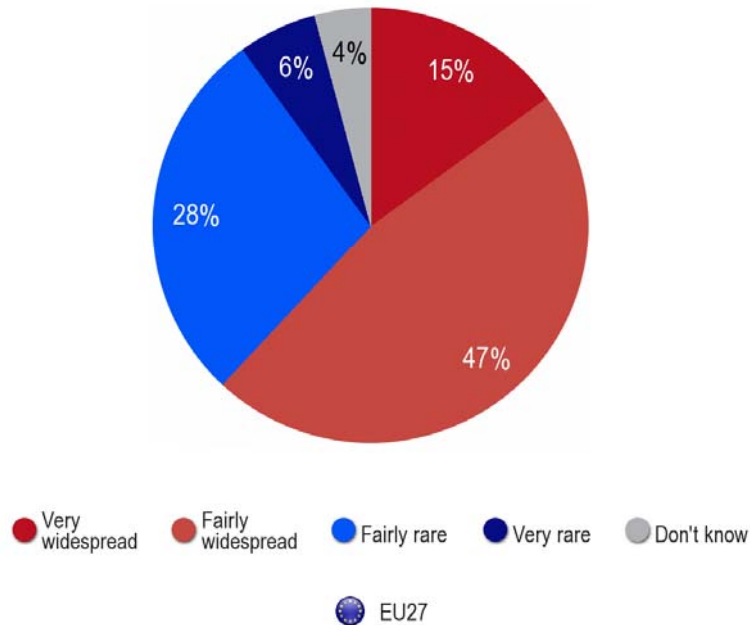
EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
DK/NA	Don't know / No answer
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
<i>D-E</i>	<i>East Germany</i>
DE	Germany
<i>D-W</i>	<i>West Germany</i>
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
CY	Republic of Cyprus
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	The United Kingdom

1. PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

1.1 Europeans think gender inequality is widespread

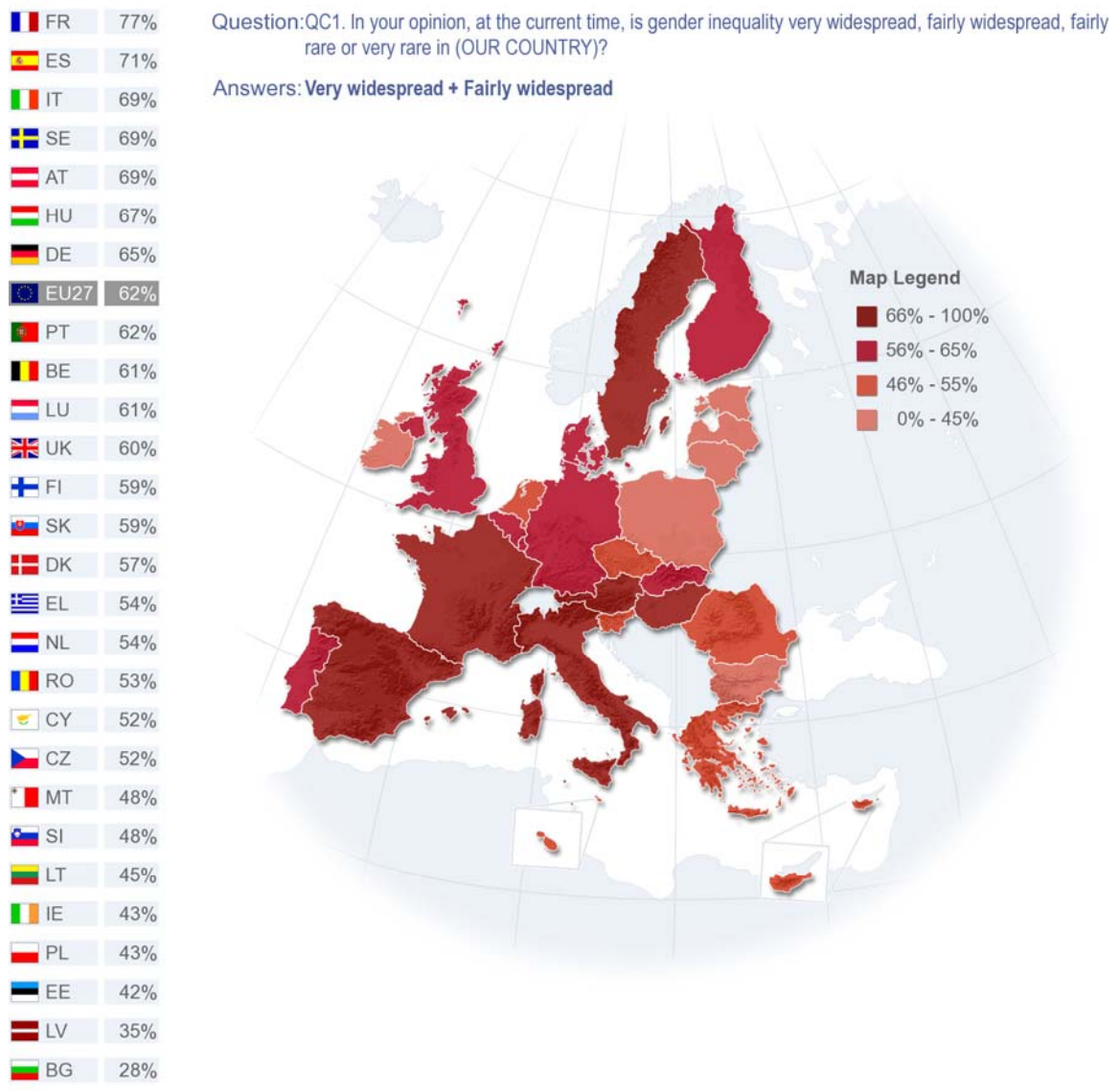
When asked to assess whether gender inequality is "widespread"³, 62% of Europeans agree; some 34% think it is "rare", and 4% are unable to form an opinion. However, their views remain moderate, with almost half (47%) finding gender inequality "fairly widespread", against 15% thinking it is "very widespread". Still, 6% find it "very rare".

QC1. In your opinion, at the current time, is gender inequality very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)?



A country-by-country analysis reveals important differences: respondents in France are the most likely to say that gender inequality is widespread (77%), followed by Spain, Italy, Austria and Sweden. Views that gender inequality is "very widespread" are strongest in France and Germany, whereas the majority view is that it is "fairly widespread". However, in Bulgaria (59%), Latvia (59%), Estonia (52%), Malta, Slovenia and Poland (all 49%), Lithuania (48%) and Ireland (46%), the majority view is that gender inequality is "rare". One fifth of respondents in Latvia and Bulgaria think inequality is "very rare".

³ QC1 In your opinion, at the current time, is gender inequality very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)?



A socio-demographic analysis reveals that women (68%) and the oldest age group, aged 55 and older (64%), are more likely to think it "widespread" than men (57%) and the youngest respondents, aged 15-24 (55%). Personal experiences of gender-based discrimination also affect their views, 69% of those who have experienced or witnessed gender inequality consider it "widespread".

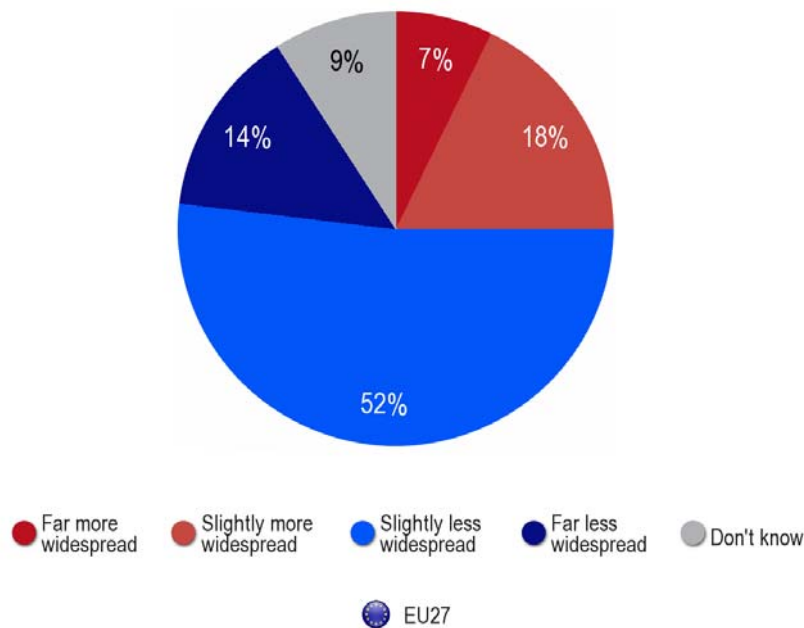
Interviewees who consider that the actions taken in the EU to counter gender inequality are "sufficient" are far less likely (56%) to recognise widespread inequality than those who think efforts in the EU are "insufficient" (72%).

1.2 Gender inequality is felt to be less widespread than 10 years ago

Two thirds of Europeans (66%) believe that gender inequality is less widespread than it was ten years ago⁴, with only a small proportion seeing a strong improvement (14% believing it "far less widespread"). However, one quarter (25%) think it is more widespread.

In one country, Hungary, the majority of respondents think that gender inequality is "more widespread" now than it was ten years ago (49%). In all other countries, the majority of respondents think it is "less widespread". Respondents in Greece (31%), Cyprus (31%) and Ireland (28%) perceive the greatest change, with significant proportions considering gender inequality to be "far less widespread" than ten years ago.

QC2. And compared with 10 years ago, would you say that gender inequality is more widespread or less widespread in (OUR COUNTRY)?



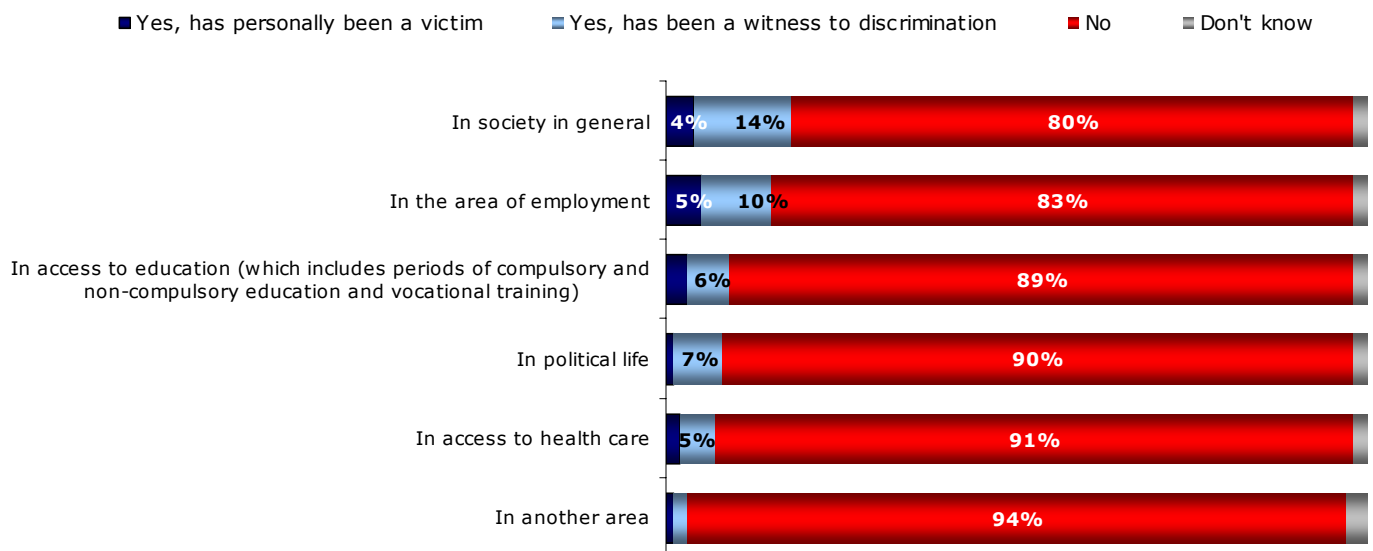
In terms of **socio-demographics**, improvements tend to be noticed more amongst managers than amongst unemployed or retired people.

⁴ QC2 And compared with 10 years ago, would you say that gender inequality is more widespread or less widespread in (OUR COUNTRY)?

1.3 Experiences of gender inequality tend to occur at a society level

The majority of Europeans report that they have not been a victim of gender-based discrimination in the past 3 years⁵. The most gender-based discrimination is perceived to be "in society in general", where a total of 18% have either experienced or witnessed it, and also "in the area of employment" where 15% of Europeans have experienced it in some form.

QC25 During the last 3 years, have you been a victim of gender-based discrimination or a witness to such discrimination? -% EU27



Differences between countries are relatively low, except for Sweden, with 32% of respondents claiming to have witnessed gender-based discrimination in "society in general", compared to 14% at EU level.

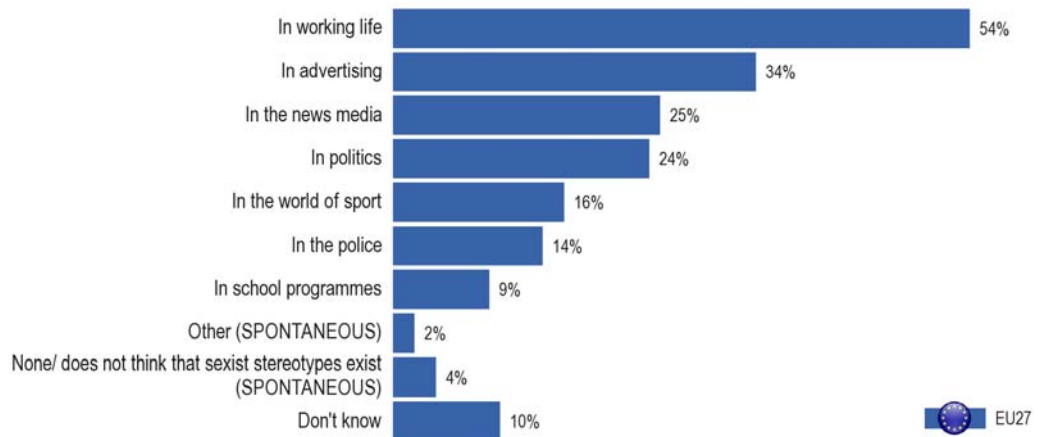
From a **socio-demographic** point of view, only slight score differences appear between women and men. More significantly, 10% of the unemployed have personally experienced a gender-based discrimination in the area of employment, compared to 5% of all EU respondents.

⁵ QC25 During the last 3 years, have you been a victim of gender-based discrimination or a witness to such discrimination? In access to education (which includes periods of compulsory and non-compulsory education and vocational training), In the area of employment, In society in general, In political life, In access to health care, In another area

1.4 Sexist stereotypes occur mostly in the workplace

A majority of Europeans (54%) mention sexist stereotyping taking place mostly "in working life"⁶. They also mention "in advertising" (34%), "in the news media" (25%) and "in politics" (24%). Only 4% spontaneously say that sexist stereotypes "do not exist". Finally, an important 10% "don't know" (amongst these, a significant proportion in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania).

QC15. Sexist stereotypes, that is to say the phrases/ clichés that are sometimes banded about men and women, are the cause of many inequalities. In your experience, where are such sexist stereotypes most frequently found?



A country-by-country breakdown shows that respondents in France (69%) and Greece (67%) are most likely to believe that sexist stereotyping occurs in the workplace. Overall, this item ranked first in 23 out of the 27 Member States. Respondents in Estonia (27%) are least likely to select this option, choosing "in the news media" (53%) and "in advertising" (44%) more often. In Sweden (64%), Denmark (60%) and the Netherlands (56%), the largest proportion of respondents cite "in advertising".

In terms of **socio-demographics**, we note some differences according to the age, and the level of education of respondents: the longer-educated and managers are more likely to notice stereotyping in the workplace and advertising than those with less education and manual workers. Interestingly, the youngest age group (15-24) tends to be more aware of sexist stereotyping than older people, particularly in school programmes and in the world of sports.

Finally, it should be noted that there are few differences between women's and men's perceptions of the areas where sexist stereotypes are most prevalent.

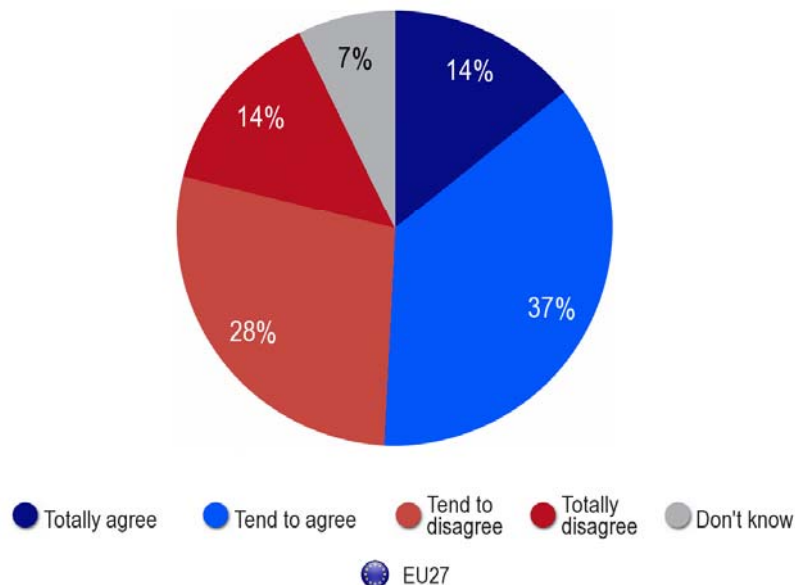
⁶ QC15 Sexist stereotypes, that is to say the phrases/ clichés that are sometimes banded about men and women, are the cause of many inequalities. In your experience, where are such sexist stereotypes most frequently found?

1.4.1 Opinion is divided on the issue of men working in child care sectors, such as day nurseries

We have seen that Europeans are most likely to report the presence of sexist stereotypes in the workplace. The next question examines one of the 'work-related stereotypes': the existence of 'female' or 'male' types of work, for which the other gender is considered less suitable. Opinion among Europeans is divided on the issue of men working in child care sectors, such as day nurseries⁷. 51% of European respondents think that men should work more in child care sectors but 42% disagree.

QC7.6. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the employment of women.

Men should work more in child care sectors, such as day nurseries



A country-by-country analysis reveals large differences. In Nordic countries agreement is strongest: Sweden (88%), Denmark (85%) and Finland (79%). Least likely to agree are respondents in Romania (23%), the Czech Republic and Latvia (both 29%). In total, a majority of respondents think that men should work more in child care sectors in 13 countries, for 14 countries where a majority do not agree.

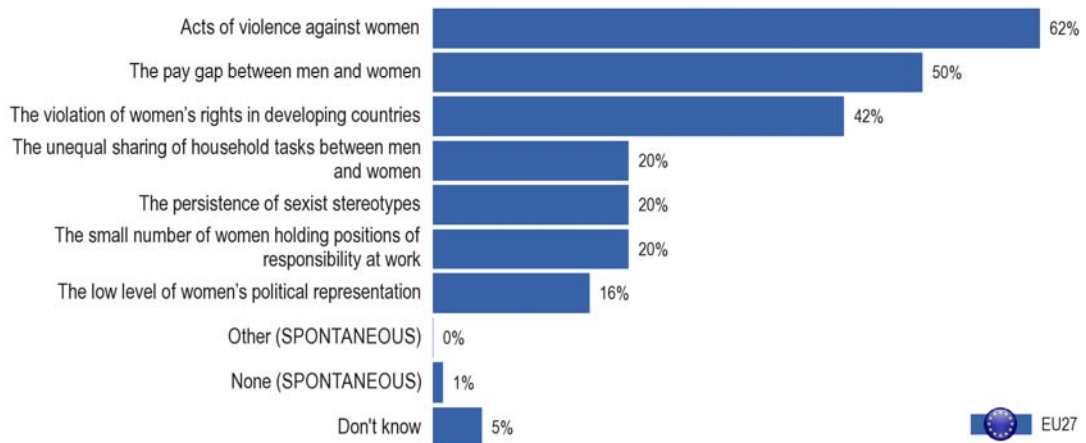
A socio-demographic analysis shows small differences between women and men. Women and men are also divided on this issue. Strong minorities of men (46%), but also of women (40%) disagree with the statement.

⁷ QC7.6 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the employment of women. Men should work more in child care sectors, such as day nurseries

1.5 Implementing changes: areas for prioritisation

In a list of options for prioritisation in the field of gender equality, Europeans choose "acts of violence against women" (62%) and "the pay gap between men and women" (50%) above all other options⁸. "The violation of women's rights in developing countries" (42%) follows in third place. Other items are cited by one European out of four, or less.





























QC16. Here is a list of the areas where gender inequalities are apparent. In your opinion, in which of these areas should action be taken as a matter of priority?



Fighting "acts of violence against women" is a priority in almost every Member State, particularly in France (75%), Greece (69%), Denmark and Austria (both 67%), and Germany (66%); respondents in Romania (43%) and Portugal (46%) are the least inclined to cite this option. In Sweden (66%) and Portugal (48%), "the pay gap between men and women" is prioritised over "acts of violence". Finally, "the violation of women's rights in developing countries" is given priority in the Nordic and Benelux countries - the Netherlands (65%), Belgium (56%), Sweden (55%), Finland (54%), Luxembourg (53%), and Denmark (49%).

⁸ QC16 Here is a list of the areas where gender inequalities are apparent. In your opinion, in which of these areas should action be taken as a matter of priority?

QC16 Here is a list of the areas where gender inequalities are apparent. In your opinion, in which of these areas should action be taken as a matter of priority? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

		Acts of violence against women	The pay gap between men and women	The violation of women's rights in developing countries	The persistence of sexist stereotypes	The unequal sharing of household tasks between men and women	The small number of women holding positions of responsibility at work	The low level of women's political representation	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	DK
 EU27		62%	50%	42%	20%	20%	20%	16%	0%	1%	5%
 BE	65%	56%	56%	23%	18%	21%	14%	0%	1%	0%	
 BG	57%	40%	29%	11%	29%	26%	16%	0%	1%	16%	
 CZ	65%	56%	44%	11%	20%	24%	22%	0%	1%	2%	
 DK	67%	55%	49%	35%	19%	19%	16%	1%	1%	1%	
 DE	66%	62%	49%	18%	14%	21%	11%	0%	1%	5%	
 EE	57%	47%	41%	14%	20%	13%	16%	0%	2%	9%	
 IE	52%	45%	37%	22%	22%	30%	31%	1%	1%	8%	
 EL	69%	46%	37%	20%	24%	30%	20%	0%	1%	2%	
 ES	61%	49%	36%	21%	30%	17%	12%	1%	0%	3%	
 FR	75%	61%	49%	21%	16%	20%	20%	-	0%	2%	
 IT	53%	33%	43%	22%	22%	24%	19%	0%	2%	4%	
 CY	60%	49%	46%	18%	23%	29%	27%	0%	0%	4%	
 LV	56%	41%	19%	19%	21%	15%	14%	0%	4%	5%	
 LT	63%	47%	25%	11%	29%	17%	13%	1%	2%	8%	
 LU	64%	49%	51%	20%	22%	18%	15%	0%	-	3%	
 HU	62%	58%	28%	10%	26%	24%	19%	0%	1%	4%	
 MT	63%	44%	41%	15%	29%	19%	18%	0%	-	4%	
 NL	64%	45%	65%	28%	16%	21%	12%	0%	0%	2%	
 AT	67%	63%	41%	27%	22%	24%	20%	0%	1%	1%	
 PL	53%	39%	25%	19%	21%	19%	15%	1%	1%	7%	
 PT	46%	48%	34%	13%	26%	21%	20%	0%	1%	7%	
 RO	43%	33%	19%	14%	33%	23%	20%	0%	2%	17%	
 SI	65%	51%	45%	12%	23%	25%	20%	1%	1%	4%	
 SK	54%	54%	36%	14%	23%	33%	19%	0%	1%	2%	
 FI	63%	59%	54%	21%	15%	24%	13%	0%	0%	1%	
 SE	62%	66%	55%	22%	16%	27%	25%	0%	0%	1%	
 UK	65%	49%	45%	22%	12%	13%	15%	0%	1%	6%	
		Highest percentage per item in the EU27				Lowest percentage per item in the EU27					
		Highest percentage per country				<i>Lowest percentage per country</i>					

Socio-demographic criteria show that, whilst gender has little influence when it comes to prioritising "acts of violence against women", (62% for women and 61% for men), women are more likely to cite "the pay gap between men and women" as a priority (52%) than men (47%).

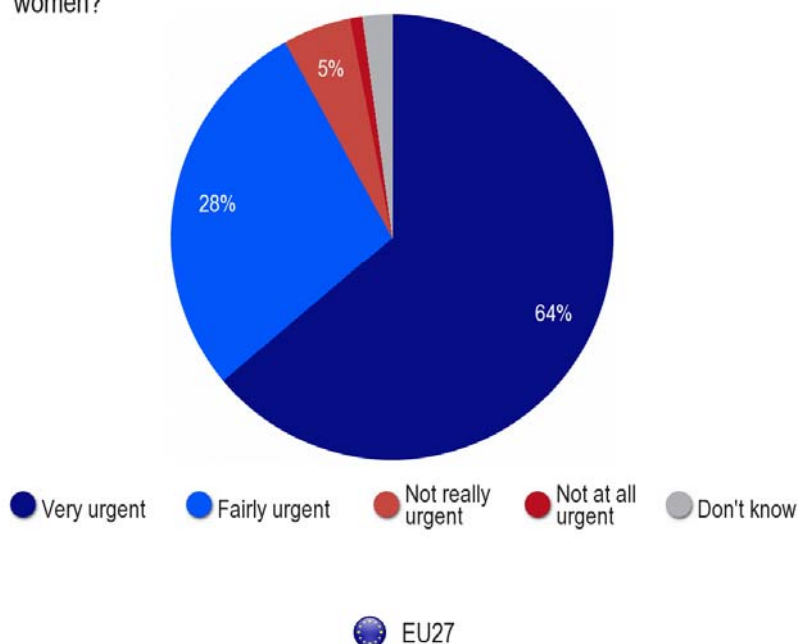
Level of education influences the choice of "violation of women's rights in developing countries" as a key priority. Those who finished education earlier (38%) are less likely to select this answer than those who studied to age 20 and beyond (50%). Managers are also more likely to select this answer (54%).

2. GENDER EQUALITY IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF LIFE

2.1 Reducing gender-based violence

For a large majority of Europeans (92%), it is "urgent"⁹ to tackle the violence suffered by some women in the European Union; 64% think it is "very urgent" while 28% consider it is "fairly urgent". A minority of people questioned (6%) think it is "not urgent" and only 1% of them rate it as "not urgent at all".

QC13. In the European Union, almost one in four women is a victim of physical violence, at least once in her adult life. Do you think that it is urgent or not urgent to take action against the violence suffered by women?



Across the Member States of the European Union, Sweden tops the list, with 99% of respondents thinking that violence against women should be "urgently" addressed, followed by Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia (all 98%), Spain and France (both 97%).

The strength of opinion varies by country. Respondents in Sweden (91%) and Cyprus (89%) say that violence against women should be tackled "very urgently". However, in Portugal (45%), Latvia (48%) and Bulgaria (49%) fewer than half of those questioned think that this issue needs to be addressed "very urgently". Latvia, Portugal and Italy (just above 10%) contain the highest proportion of respondents who consider that the issue is "not urgent".

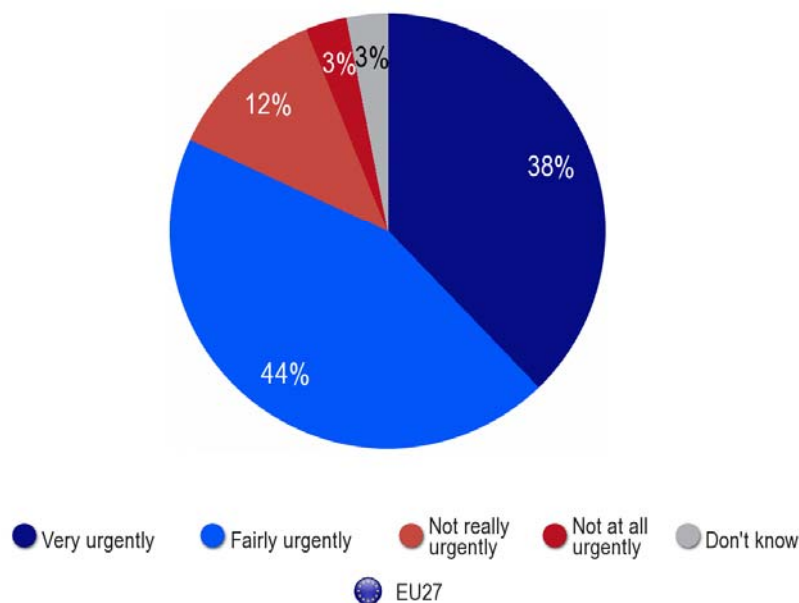
⁹ QC13 In the European Union, almost one in four women is a victim of physical violence, at least once in her adult life. Do you think that it is urgent or not urgent to take action against the violence suffered by women?

A socio-demographic analysis shows that both women (68%) and men (60%) agree that it is "very urgent" to address the issue of violence against women. House persons (69%) also agree, to a slightly higher degree than women. Those who believe that the current efforts in the EU to counter inequality are 'insufficient' are far more likely to consider this issue very urgent (72%) than those who are satisfied with the actions in the EU (57%).

2.2 Reducing the gender pay gap

Women want greater opportunities to work equally alongside men. As we saw previously¹⁰, half of Europeans state that reducing the gender pay gap is a top priority (in a list of propositions) in the fight against gender inequality. This emphasises the importance of understanding how best the gender pay gap might be addressed.

QC5. In the European Union women earn on average 17% less than men (that is what is known as the pay gap between men and women). In general, do you think that this issue should be dealt with by the European Union ...?



The great majority of Europeans (82%) state this issue should be addressed "urgently"¹¹ – meaning "fairly urgently" for 44% and "very urgently" for 38% of respondents. Some 15% think "not urgently". Only 3% are unable to form an opinion, which shows respondents' interest in that subject.

There are some significant differences between the Member States in terms of the *intensity* of the answers. For example, in Sweden the greater proportion think the gender pay gap should be addressed "very urgently" (66% "very urgently", 26% "fairly urgently") whereas in Italy the larger group think the issue needs tackling "fairly urgently" (24% "very urgently", 53% "fairly urgently").

¹⁰ QC16 Here is a list of the areas where gender inequalities are apparent. In your opinion, in which of these areas should action be taken as a matter of priority?

¹¹ QC5 In the European Union women earn on average 17% less than men (that is what is known as the pay gap between men and women). In general, do you think that this issue should be dealt with by the European Union ...?

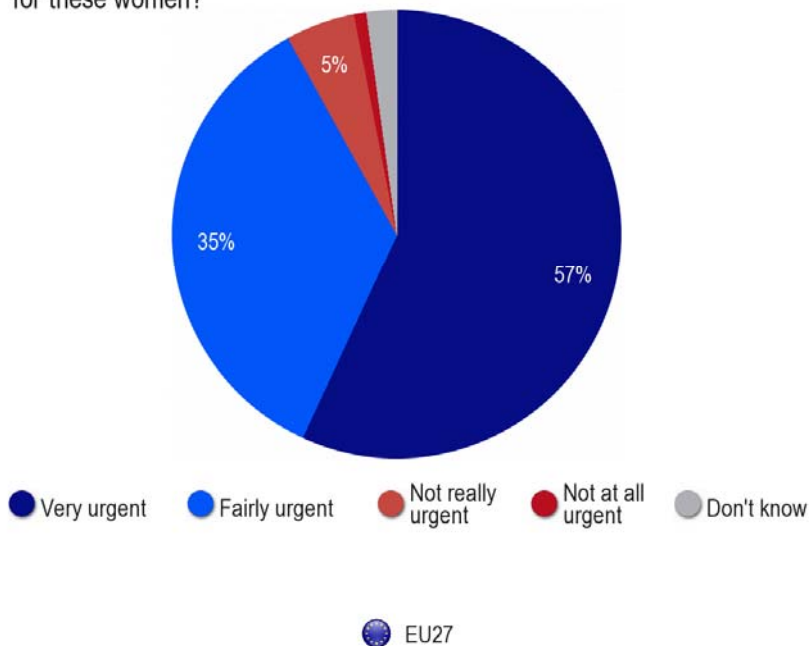
In some countries less priority is given to this issue: in Latvia (28%), Cyprus (24%), Estonia (22%), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland (all 21%) more than a fifth of respondents think this issue is "not urgent".

A socio-demographic analysis shows that women (86%) are more likely than men (76%) to think the gender pay gap should be addressed "urgently". Those who think gender inequality is "widespread" (88%) rather than "rare" (71%), those who think the efforts in the EU are "insufficient" (88%) rather than "sufficient" (80%) and those who have heard of the EU's actions to combat gender inequality (83%) - compared to those who have not (78%) - are all more likely to agree that the gender pay gap should be addressed urgently. This is also true for respondents who believe the "ideal level of decision-making" on gender equality is the EU (85%), compared to those who cite the national level (79%).

2.3 Reducing poverty amongst women

When asked to rate the urgency of addressing poverty among women in the European Union, 92% of Europeans believe this to be "urgent", with 57% considering this a "very urgent" issue¹². Just 6% of those polled think it is "not urgent".

QC14. In the European Union, women (in particular elderly women and single mothers) are more at risk than men of falling into poverty. Do you think that it is urgent or not to take action to reduce the risk of poverty for these women?



In all the 27 Member States of the European Union, the majority of respondents agree that the problem of poverty among women should be addressed "urgently". However it appears that this is felt more strongly in some countries than in others. In Greece (84%), Cyprus (82%) and Sweden (79%) in particular, a large proportion of respondents believe this issue needs to be addressed very urgently. However, in Portugal (41%), Italy (44%), Slovakia (45%), the Czech Republic (46%), Bulgaria and Poland (both 47%), Latvia and Romania (both 49%) fewer than half of respondents feel as strongly.

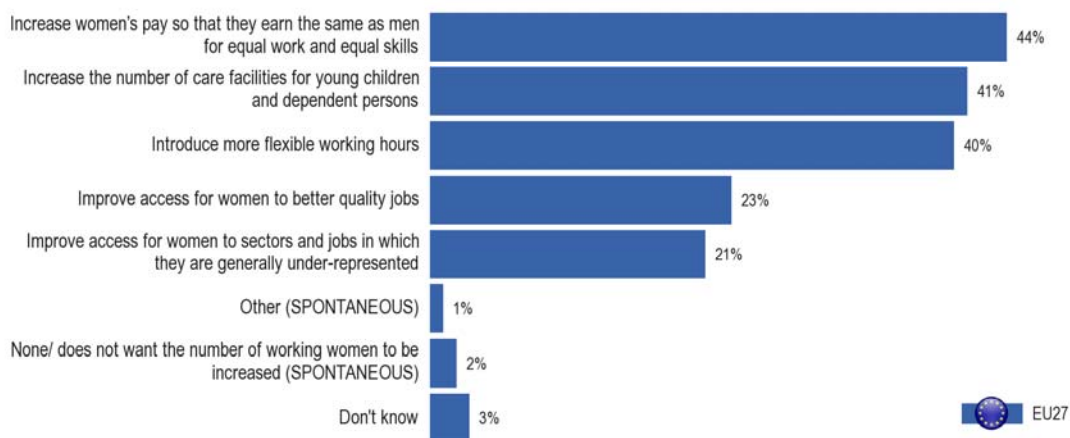
The socio-demographic analysis shows that women (62%) are more inclined than men (50%) to think it is "very urgent" to address the issue of women and poverty. Likewise, those who "have difficulty paying bills most of the time" (65%) are more likely to agree that this issue is very urgent than those who "almost never" have problems paying the bills (56%). This may be because financial difficulty tends to put women in a more vulnerable position.

¹² QC14 In the European Union, women (in particular elderly women and single mothers) are more at risk than men of falling into poverty. Do you think that it is urgent or not to take action to reduce the risk of poverty for these women?

2.4 Taking priority measures to increase the number of working women

When asked what measures should be given priority in order to increase the number of working women¹³, 44% of Europeans mentioned "increasing women's pay so that they earn the same as men for equal work and equal skills". "Child care" and "flexible working hours" were also given priority; 41% said "increase the number of care facilities for young children and dependent persons" and 40% cited "introduce more flexible working hours".

QC4. One of the European Union's objectives is to increase the participation of women in the labour market to make the European Union a more competitive economy. In your opinion, which of the following measures should be given priority to increase the number of working women?



Generally speaking, the Member States have very different views on this question, reflecting perhaps their national characteristics in this respect.

"Increase women's pay so they earn the same as men for equal work and equal skills" was seen as particularly important in Sweden, Finland, France, Belgium, Slovakia, Czech Republic and the Netherlands. In Cyprus, Greece, and Denmark, over half of respondents were keen "to increase the number of care facilities for young children". Respondents in Malta, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Ireland and the Netherlands, Lithuania and Spain favour "the introduction of more flexible working hours".

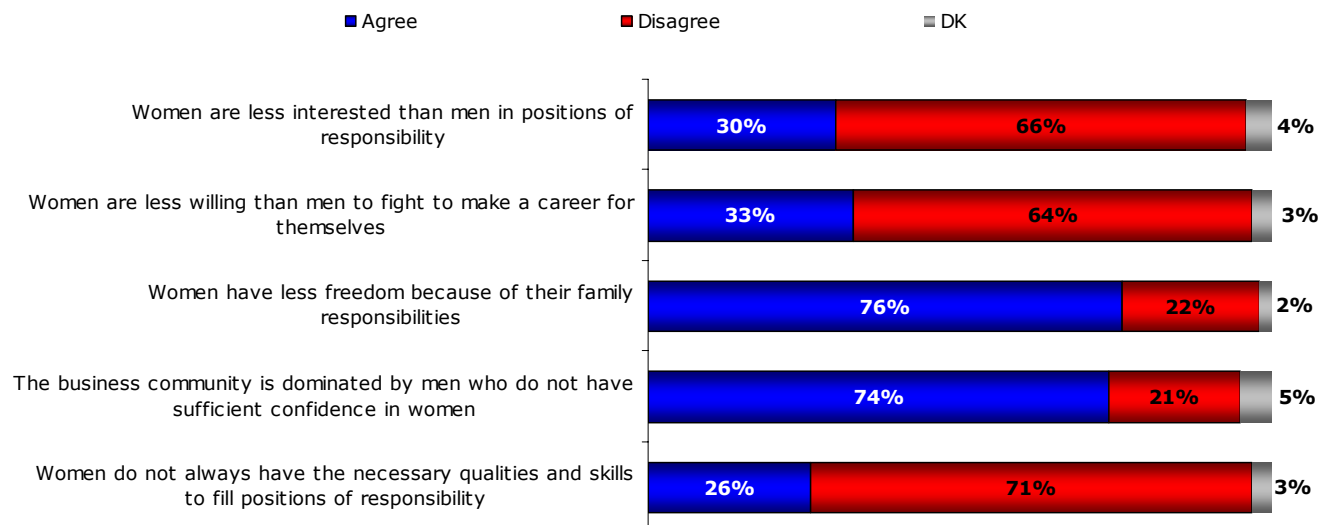
¹³ QC4 One of the European Union's objectives is to increase the participation of women in the labour market to make the European Union a more competitive economy. In your opinion, which of the following measures should be given priority to increase the number of working women? (ROTATE – MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

A socio-demographic analysis shows that women are more inclined to agree (47%) that there should be an "increase in women's pay so they earn the same as men for equal work and equal skills" (against 41% of men). Of those who feel that 'current efforts in the EU are sufficient' and 'gender inequality is rare in (their) country', a sizeable 41% opt for the ability to "work flexible hours" as a means of increasing the number of working women. This is also popular amongst 42% of people aged 25-54, who are also those likely to have young children.

2.5 Positions of responsibility: why they are less accessible to women

If the gender pay gap is a major aspect of gender equality in the workplace, the lower number of women in positions of responsibility is also a crucial issue. Europeans reactions show they believe that this situation is not chosen by women, but that women's responsibilities and lack of help at home are what keeps them away from positions of responsibilities at work.

QC12. At the present time, in the European Union, women are less likely than men to hold positions of responsibility. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on this subject.



2.5.1 Women are not less interested than men in holding responsibility positions

Two-thirds of Europeans (66%) disagree with the statement that "women are less interested than men in positions of responsibility"¹⁴. European opinion on this subject is quite strong: 29% "totally disagree" and 37% "tend to disagree". 30% do feel that women are less interested in positions of responsibility.

Overall, Europeans do not believe women's choices or preferences are to blame for the situation.

Spain tops the list with 81% of respondents disagreeing. Only in Denmark do the majority of respondents (51%) agree that women are less interested than men in positions of responsibility.

A socio-demographic analysis shows that women (69%) and younger people aged 25-34 (70%) are more inclined to disagree with the statement that "women are less interested in positions of responsibility" than men (64%) and older respondents (62%).

¹⁴ QC12.1 Women are less interested than men in positions of responsibility

2.5.2 Women have less freedom because of their family responsibilities

Women still assume a high proportion of responsibility for the care of children and dependents, and this is seen as impacting on their freedom to seek high status work.

Three-quarters (76%) of Europeans agree that women have less freedom because of their family responsibilities,¹⁵ and some 26% of them "totally agree" that this is the case. Relatively few European respondents (22%) disagree with this statement. As we have seen previously in this summary report, it seems that Europeans' general view is that an increase in services, such as "Increase the number of care facilities for young children and dependent persons" would reduce the gap between men and women: 41% cited this item as a measure that should be given priority to increase the number of working women¹⁶.

There is strong agreement across Europe: in all countries, more than two-thirds of respondents agree with the statement. However, the intensity of agreement varies by country: 52% of respondents in Hungary "totally agree", but only 13% in Portugal, 19% in Finland, and 20% in France, the Netherlands and Belgium "totally agree".

A socio-demographic analysis shows that women feel the burden of family responsibility more than men; 79% of women agree that women have less freedom because of their responsibilities compared to 72% of men. Otherwise few differences exist, showing overall agreement to the idea that more child care facilities would help women access to more work responsibilities.

¹⁵ QC12.3 Women have less freedom because of their family responsibilities

¹⁶ See part 2.4 of this summary: Taking priority measures to increase the number of working women

2.5.3 The business community is dominated by men who do not have sufficient confidence in women

It appears that men themselves would have an impact in keeping women away from more work responsibilities. 74% of Europeans believe that "the business community is dominated by men who do not have sufficient confidence in women"; a significant proportion (27%) "totally agree" with this statement¹⁷. Only 21% disagree.

Again, agreement is strong across Europe; respondents in France (84%), Hungary (82%) and Sweden (80%) are the most likely to agree. Latvia and Malta (both 60%) are least likely to agree but there is still a significant majority in these countries.

A socio-demographic breakdown shows that women (78%) are more likely than men (68%) to agree with that statement, but European opinion overall is quite convinced in this respect.

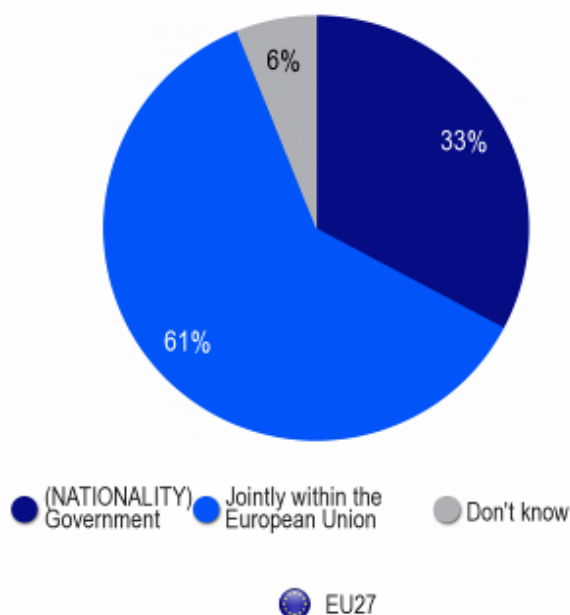
¹⁷ QC12.4 The business community is dominated by men who do not have sufficient confidence in women

3. FIGHTING GENDER INEQUALITY: THE ROLE OF THE EU

3.1 Joint decisions between national government and EU are preferred

When asked about how gender equality should be achieved, 61% of respondents would prefer joint decision-making within the EU¹⁸ over decision-making by their national government alone. This is a majority decision in most countries. A third of interviewees believe it should be a matter for national government, while 6% have no opinion.

QC17. With regards to gender equality, do you think that decisions should be made by the (NATIONALITY) Government or made jointly within the European Union?



In Sweden and the UK, opinion is equally divided between choosing national government or joint decision-making within the EU. In all other countries there is a preference for joint decision-making. This view is particularly widespread in Cyprus (86%) and Greece (77%), Latvia (75%), Belgium and the Netherlands (both 74%).

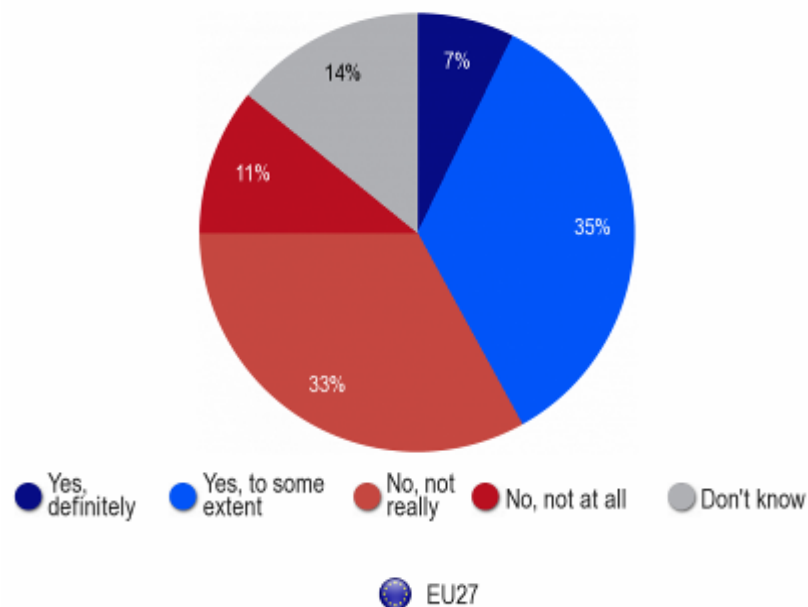
From a socio-demographic viewpoint, opinions tend to slightly vary according to age groups and level of education – with the youngest and those with longer education being more open to joint decision making with the EU.

¹⁸ QC17 With regards to gender equality, do you think that decisions should be made by the (NATIONALITY) Government or made jointly within the European Union?

3.2 More efforts could probably be made to combat gender inequality

When asked if enough is being done in the European Union to combat gender inequality, Europeans appear somewhat divided. While 42% think this is the case, another 44% disagree and 14% have no opinion¹⁹. Responses tend to be rather moderate; only 7% think "yes, definitely" and 11% think "no, not at all". The greatest number of respondents think either "yes, to some extent" (35%) or "no, not really" (33%).

QC18. In general, would you say that enough effort is being made in the European Union to combat gender inequality?

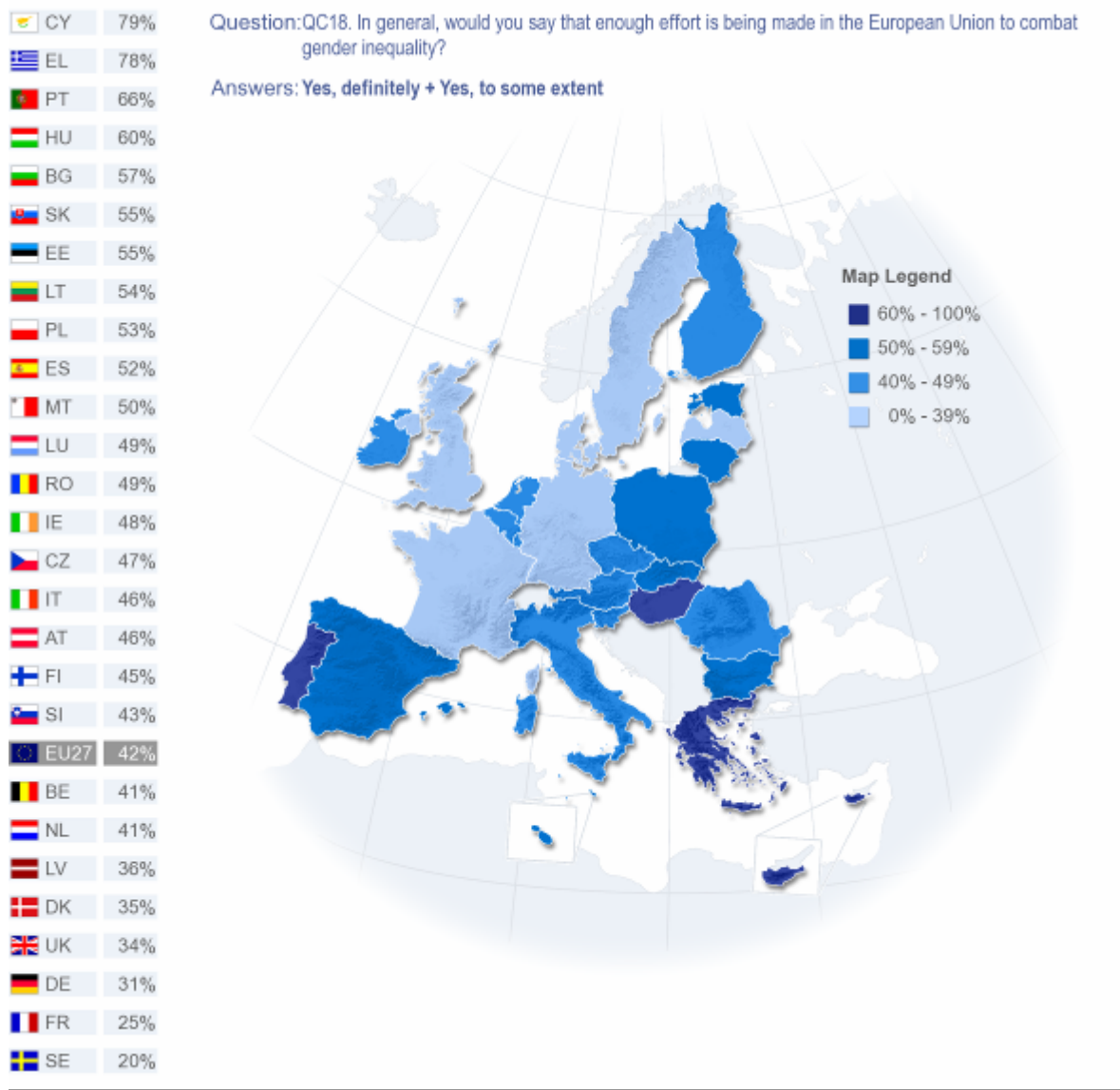


Public opinion is divided at the European level, with great differences between individual countries. 16 Member States agree that enough is being done, while 11 Member States believe there is still progress to be made.

Respondents from Cyprus (79%) and Greece (78%) are most likely to think that enough is being done to combat gender inequality, while respondents from Sweden are the least likely to agree (20%).

¹⁹ QC18 In general, would you say that enough effort is being made in the European Union to combat gender inequality?

At the other end of the scale, respondents from Sweden (30%), Germany (23%), Denmark (18%) and France (17%) are the most likely to give strong negative views, responding "no, not at all" when asked if enough effort is going into fighting gender inequality.



A socio-demographic analysis uncovers very significant differences: a majority of women feel not enough efforts are being made (47%), whereas a majority of men (45%) think enough efforts are being made. Reactions also vary according to age: while the majority of the young (aged 15-24) think enough is being done (46%), the majority in the oldest group (55+) believe that too little effort is made (45%). Finally, we observe differences according to respondents' social levels: 45% of those who place themselves low on the scale think that these efforts are not sufficient, while 46% of those who position themselves high on the scale believe that efforts to promote gender equality are adequate.

3.3 Most Europeans agree that progress has already been made

Looking at the past, most Europeans agree that progress has been made in the last decade to combat gender inequality (64%) – and this despite the fact that urgent action is still called for in different areas. However 23% disagree that progress has been made, and 13% are undecided²⁰. The majority of respondents (52%) give a somewhat muted positive response, while relatively few have very positive ("yes definitely", 12%) or very negative ("no, not at all", 4%) views.

Respondents most likely to agree that progress has been made are found in Greece (89%) and Cyprus (86%), followed by Portugal (79%) and Spain (77%). Relatively more dissatisfaction is seen in Germany (34%), Austria (31%), Italy and Latvia (30%).

Finally, a high proportion of "don't know" answers are recorded in Bulgaria (37%), and also in Latvia, Romania and Estonia (all 27%).

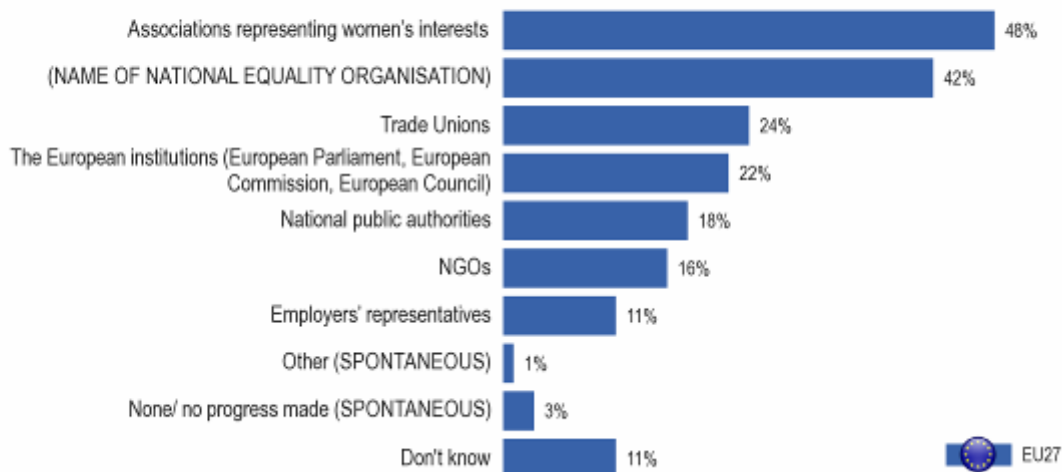
Analysis by socio-demographic groups shows some variations in the strength of opinion: women (62%), the 55+ group (60%), people who finished their education earliest (61%) and those who position themselves lower on the social scale (58%) are less likely to agree that progress has been made, compared with men (65%), the young aged 15-24 (66%), people who studied longest (67%) and those who position themselves higher on the social scale (70%).

²⁰ QC19 And if you compare the current situation with the situation 10 years ago, would you say that progress has been achieved as regards the efforts made in the European Union to combat gender inequality?

3.4 Actors that have contributed most to gender equality

When asked which stakeholders or organisations have contributed most to progress in the area of gender equality, more Europeans name "associations representing women's interests" (48%) than any other organisation²¹, closely followed by the "national equality organisation" (also named as equality body)²² in the country in question (42%). This is followed at some distance by "trade unions" (24%). The European institutions come in fourth place (22%). This is an interesting result as it appears that Europeans believe that those who have contributed most to progress in gender equality are "specialists" in the field.

QC21. In your opinion, which stakeholders/ organisations have contributed most to progress in the area of gender equality?



Respondents in Denmark (71%) and Greece (70%) place greatest emphasis on the "associations representing women's interests", while those in Sweden (69%) and Cyprus (62%) are most likely to cite the "equality body". Respondents in Cyprus (46%), Slovakia (44%) and Greece (41%) are the most likely to mention the European Institutions, while those in the UK (10%) are the least likely to do so.

²¹ QC21 In your opinion, which stakeholders/ organisations have contributed most to progress in the area of gender equality?

²² The exact name of the national equality organisation(s) was given to the respondent in each country.

CONCLUSION

In 2009, European citizens believe that gender inequality still exists in several areas of the society in the European Union, even though the situation has improved in the last ten years. Broadly speaking Europeans believe that gender inequality is still common in their lives today – this being felt more strongly by women than men. A slight majority finds not enough efforts are being made in the EU to combat gender inequality. This dissatisfaction was mainly recorded among women, the older age group (55+) and those who position themselves low on the social scale.

Europeans citizens believe that all sectors of society are impacted by gender inequality, and sexist stereotypes, primarily present in working life and advertising, reinforce the situation. One of the 'work-related stereotypes': the existence of 'female' or 'male' types of work is still present in European citizens' answers, in 2009. Strong minorities of men, but also of women are not in favour of men working more in child care sectors, such as day nurseries.

Combating gender inequality is not an easy task, and a majority of Europeans believe that the European Union has an important role to play, and that decisions in this field should be taken jointly within the European Union. The European Union has also an important role to play alongside the other actors which have contributed most to progress in the area of gender equality: associations representing women's interests, the national equality bodies, and trade unions.

Europeans citizens consider that the two top priorities for action are "Combating violence against women" and "Closing the gender pay gap". Moreover, more than four-fifths of respondents said that these issues should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

It is also felt that women are under-represented in top positions not because they are less interested in positions of responsibility than men, but because of heavy family responsibilities. And most Europeans feel that the best measures to increase the number of working women are an increase in women's pay so they earn the same as men for equal work and equal skills, and more care facilities for children and other dependents.

Overall, it appears that most Europeans desire more equality in the future, but, compared to men, women desire greater change and do not consider there has been sufficient progress to date.

SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER N°326

“Gender equality in the EU in 2009”

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 11th of September and the 5th of October 2009, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between TNS plc and TNS opinion, carried out wave 72.2 of the EUROBAROMETER, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Communication, “Research and Political Analysis”.

The SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER N°326 is part of wave 72.2 and covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the Member States and aged 15 years and over. The basic sample design applied in all states is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

In order to do so, the sampling points were drawn systematically from each of the “administrative regional units”, after stratification by individual unit and type of area. They thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard “random route” procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random (following the “closest birthday rule”). All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people’s homes and in the appropriate national language. As far as the data capture is concerned, CAPI (*Computer Assisted Personal Interview*) was used in those countries where this technique was available.

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.015	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	8.866.411
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.000	11/09/2009	24/09/2009	6.584.957
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	1.073	12/09/2009	25/09/2009	8.987.535
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1.007	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	4.503.365
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.537	11/09/2009	28/09/2009	64.545.601
EE	Estonia	Emor	1.003	11/09/2009	28/09/2009	916.000
IE	Ireland	TNS MRBI	976	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	3.375.399
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1.004	13/09/2009	27/09/2009	39.059.211
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.017	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	47.620.942
IT	Italy	TNS Infratest	1.040	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	51.252.247
CY	Cyprus	Synovate	505	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	651.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.006	11/09/2009	29/09/2009	1.448.719
LT	Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1.026	12/09/2009	27/09/2009	2.849.359
LU	Luxembourg	TNS ILReS	500	15/09/2009	05/10/2009	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hungary	1.000	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO	500	11/09/2009	26/09/2009	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.006	11/09/2009	29/09/2009	13.017.690
AT	Austria	Österreichisches Gallup-Institut	1.001	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	6.973.277
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	12/09/2009	28/09/2009	32.306.436
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.009	17/09/2009	27/09/2009	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.007	11/09/2009	21/09/2009	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.026	11/09/2009	30/09/2009	1.748.308
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA SK	1.029	12/09/2009	27/09/2009	4.549.954
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.026	14/09/2009	01/10/2009	4.412.321
SE	Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1.005	13/09/2009	30/09/2009	7.723.931
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.345	11/09/2009	27/09/2009	51.081.866
TOTAL			26.663	11/09/2009	05/10/2009	406.557.138

For each country a comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics offices. For all countries surveyed, a national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. In all countries, gender, age, region and size of locality were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), TNS Opinion & Social applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT or national statistic offices. The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Observed percentages	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Confidence limits	± 1.9 points	± 2.5 points	± 2.7 points	± 3.0 points	± 3.1 points