EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE EU AND BEYOND

Female empowerment is a cornerstone of EU gender policy. Progress towards gender equality within the Member States involves aspects of society. A variety of political, economic, social and cultural elements that can empower women are at stake.

Data on education and reproductive health points to the basis of female empowerment, that is, the development of women's intellectual capacities and physical potential to play a full part in working life and the importance of social policies in enabling them to do so. Information on women's economic and financial power devotes aspects of female empowerment through financial inclusion, such as equal access to and control over financial and economic resources. Lastly, data on women in leadership and conflict reflects on the emergence of female leaders in politics and business and informs about the involvement of women in political violence and conflict resolution.

Political leadership

Presidents and prime ministers in the EU

Women's participation in political leadership in the EU was above the world average in 2015.

At the end of 2015, 7 out of 42 presidents and prime ministers in the EU-28 were women, compared to 4 out of 42 in today's EU-28 at the end of 2000.

Heads of State and Government

Women worldwide are still under-represented in leadership positions. Female Heads of State or Government remain a minority, although the number has increased (from 12 to 22) over the past 20 years.

Similarly, only 18 per cent of appointed ministers are women, and are usually assigned portfolios related to social issues.

Employment

(2015)

Discontinuous employment, together with gender segregation of the labour market, contributes to women's lower earnings and the persistence of a gender pay gap, with implications into age. Social policies, including paid parental leave for men and women, provision of accessible, high quality childcare and work-life balance measures, can have a positive influence on women's labour market participation and experience of work.

Life expectancy at birth

Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality were to stay the same throughout its life. While life expectancy in the EU increased by 11 years from 1960 to 2014, that in South Asia rose by 28 years over the same period, despite still being relatively low at under 70 years.

Life expectancy at birth

EU-28 average 79 years (2014)

Women: 80 years

Men: 77 years

Life expectancy

at birth

EU-28 average 79 years (2014)

Women: 80 years

Men: 77 years

Infant mortality

(2015)

The infant mortality rate describes the number of infants dying before reaching one year of age per 1,000 female live births. Female infant mortality rates have declined across the world since 1990, but on a much different scale outside the EU.

Infant mortality

Infant mortality rates per 1,000 female live births

2015

2005

2000

1990

India

Indonesia

Ukraine

Turkey

Sri Lanka

Russia

Estonia

Croatia

Germany

Italy

United Kingdom

Spain

Poland

Portugal

Lithuania

Malta

Life expectancy

90% of population aged 20-64 years

Life expectancy at birth

EU-28 average 79 years (2014)

Women: 80 years

Men: 77 years

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