



# Economic crisis and gender equality in Europe

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London, 20 September 2013

## ENEGE report

- *The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies* (with F. Bettio, C. D'Ippoliti, A. Lyberaki, M. Samek Lodovici and A. Verashchagina), European Commission - DG Justice, December 2012.
- [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130410\\_crisis\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130410_crisis_report_en.pdf)
- It covers EU Member States (including Croatia), EEA-EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and two candidate countries, Turkey and FYROM.
- <http://www.enege.eu/>

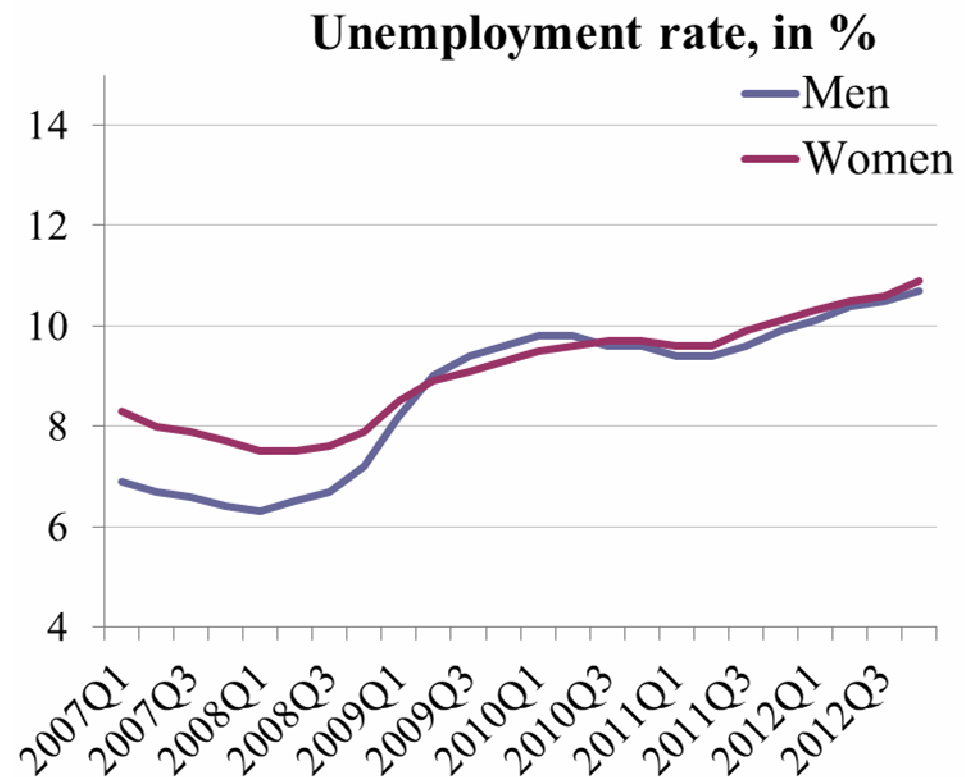
## Main findings (labour perspective)

- Men did bear the brunt of the fall in employment more than women and the main gender employment gaps levelled downward.



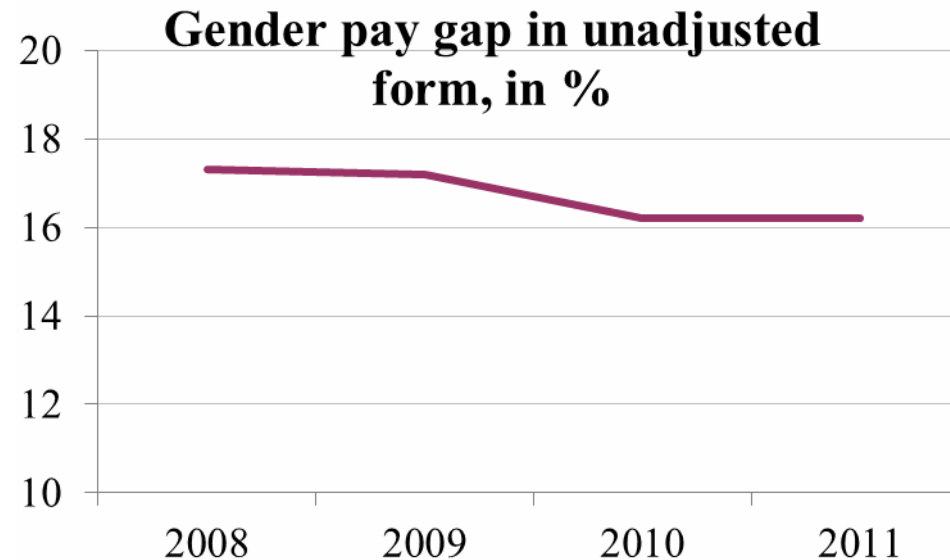
## Main findings

Via fiscal consolidation the tail of this recession may disproportionately affect jobs and employment conditions for women, with the added complication that the countries with the highest needs for consolidation tend to score rather low in female employment.



## Main findings

- ‘Strength in weakness’ is what best summarizes the behaviour of women’s wages relative to men’s during the first years of the current recession. The gender wage gap declined in the majority of countries in the Union.



# Impact of the crisis on paid work

## Employment, unemployment and segregation

- Male employment dropped earlier in the recession and faster. It is also picking up faster where recovery is on sight, but lost ground has not been fully regained yet.
- Female unemployment was stickier with the advantage of a less sharp increase in the downturn compared to male unemployment and the disadvantage of slightly slower re-absorption during recovery.
- Segregation may have protected female employment. Higher concentration of men in traditionally male sector (occupations) made male employment more vulnerable.

# Impact of the crisis on paid work

## Inactivity and discouragement

- Unlike men, women slightly increased labour market participation.
- Dual breadwinners households lost ground in favour of female breadwinners household.
- Women's income role clearly in transition from that of secondary (but in no way marginal) workers and that of primary or co-primary earners. This crisis has emphasized the 'insurance' role of women's earnings.

# Impact of the crisis on paid work

## Working conditions

- Evidence of curtailment of rights of pregnant women to maternity leave & benefits, & the right to resume job after maternity (EL, PT, IT and CZ).

In Italy it has been estimated that 8.7% of mothers currently working or having worked in the past were forced to resign upon pregnancy. The share is up to 13% among younger mothers, The recession may have increased these episodes.

- Deteriorations of working conditions also include: delay in wage payments (BG, EE, EL, LV, LT), occupational downgrading (UK), violations of health and safety regulations (LT, SI) or of (normal) working schedules (PL) and trade union rights (TK), pressure and harassment at work (FI, FR), and downright discrimination (PT).



# Impact of the crisis on paid work

## Vulnerable groups of workers

- Most vulnerable groups of workers: young and migrants.
- Male migrants from outside the EU recorded the highest employment fallout (peak-to-trough % variations) in all the four countries singled out for examination (DE, EE, ES, UK), while outcomes for mobile workers from within the EU appear to differ across countries.
- Female migrants were largely spared. Many of them work in the care sector, a highly feminized labour marked segment where demographic ageing continues to sustain labour demand. Here segregation was a clear protection, even for non national women.

## Fiscal consolidation and gender equality

The most frequent measures in 19 countries: AT, BG, CZ, DE, EL, FR, FYROM, HU, IE, IS, LI, LV, NL, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, UK

### *On the expenditure side:*

- Wage freezes or wage cuts in the public sector (11 countries);
- Staffing freezes or personnel cuts in the public sector (9 countries);
- Pension reforms: postponing retirement and/or bringing the age of retirement for women in line with that for men (8 countries)
- Cuts and restrictions in care related benefits/allowances/facilities (8 countries)
- Reduction of housing benefits or family benefits (6 countries)
- Tightening of eligibility criteria for unemployment and assistance benefits or reductions in replacement rates (5 countries);

### *On the revenue side:*

- Tax measures (6 countries);
- VAT increase: (5 countries);
- Increase in fees for publicly subsidized services (health care fees, transport fees, others) (2 countries).

# Fiscal consolidation and gender equality

## Assessment of selected fiscal consolidation measures from a gender equality perspective: a sample

Countries and measures	Expected repercussions on gender equality/ labour market gaps	Share of GDP affected					
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Greece</b>							
Rationalization of public wage sector bill	Disproportionate impact on men, unfavourable		0.9				
Public sector downsizing	Unfavourable to women, among others		2.4				
Rationalization of social benefits	Unfavourable to women, among others		1.9				
Pension reform	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable						
<b>Netherlands</b>							
Less government subsidies	Unfavourable to women, among others		0.3	0.08	0.12	0.19	0.24
Cuts in childcare subsidies	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable			0.03	0.05	0.05	0.24
<b>Portugal</b>							
Wage cuts and recruitment freeze	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable	0.11	0.36	0.58	0.84		
Cuts in family allowances and social benefits	Unfavourable to women, among others		0.03	0.05	0.06		
VAT increase	Unfavourable to women, among others	0.63	1.5	1.56	1.61		
<b>United Kingdom</b>							
Reduction in operational budgets	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable						n.a.
Wage and staff freeze in public sector	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable				0.19*		
Contributory employment and support allowance				0.07	0.09	0.12	
Housing benefits capping	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable				0.01	0.02	
Restrictions in Disability Living Allowance	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable				0.01	0.01	
Child benefits freeze	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable		0.03	0.11	0.22	0.24	
Increased public pension contributions	Disproportionate impact on women, unfavourable			0.01	0.08	0.1	
VAT increase	Unfavourable to women, among others					0.79	

Source: **European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE), "THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND MEN AND ON GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES".**

## Recommendations: labour market perspective

- To increase surveillance and heighten public awareness of cases of violations of maternity and leave rights.
- To address the issue of poor integration of mobile and migrant workers, especially men.
- To closely monitor the risk that fiscal consolidation significantly erodes welfare provisions and public services (look at SIP).
- Strong need of collecting gender sensitive data, e.g. time-use data, in order to monitor progress in the rebalancing of unpaid work between men and women.

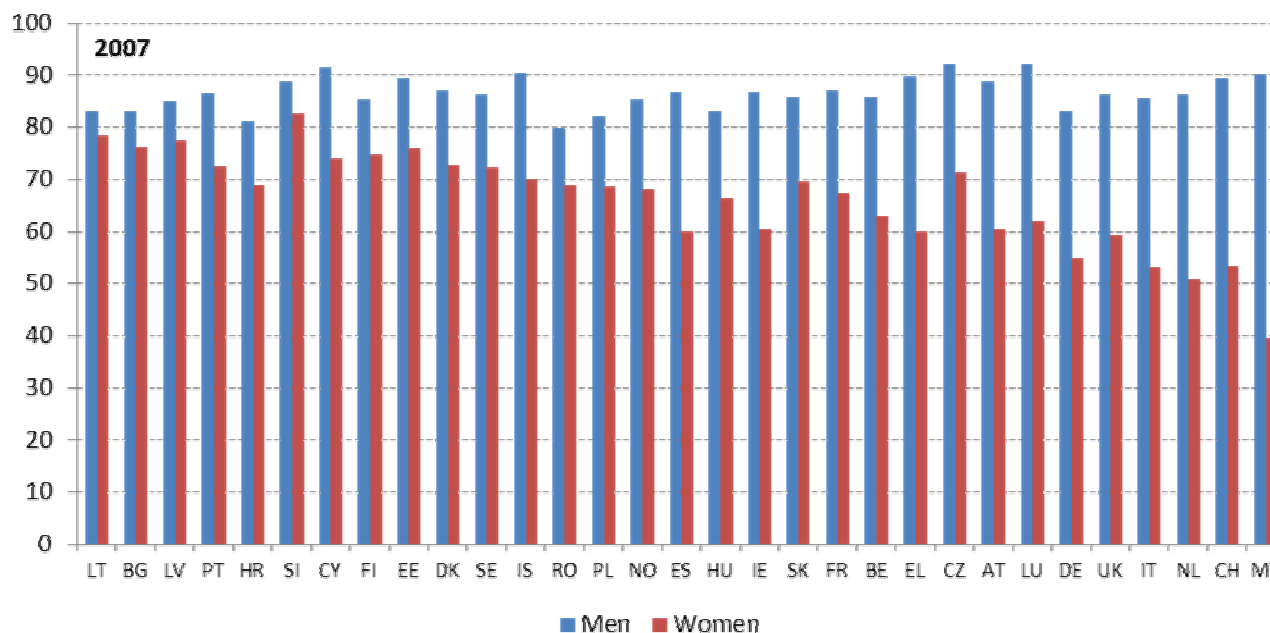
**Above all, to pursue gender equality also as a way to push the economy out of the crisis rather than viewing it as a cost to be reduced in times of restraint**

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*Thank you for your attention*

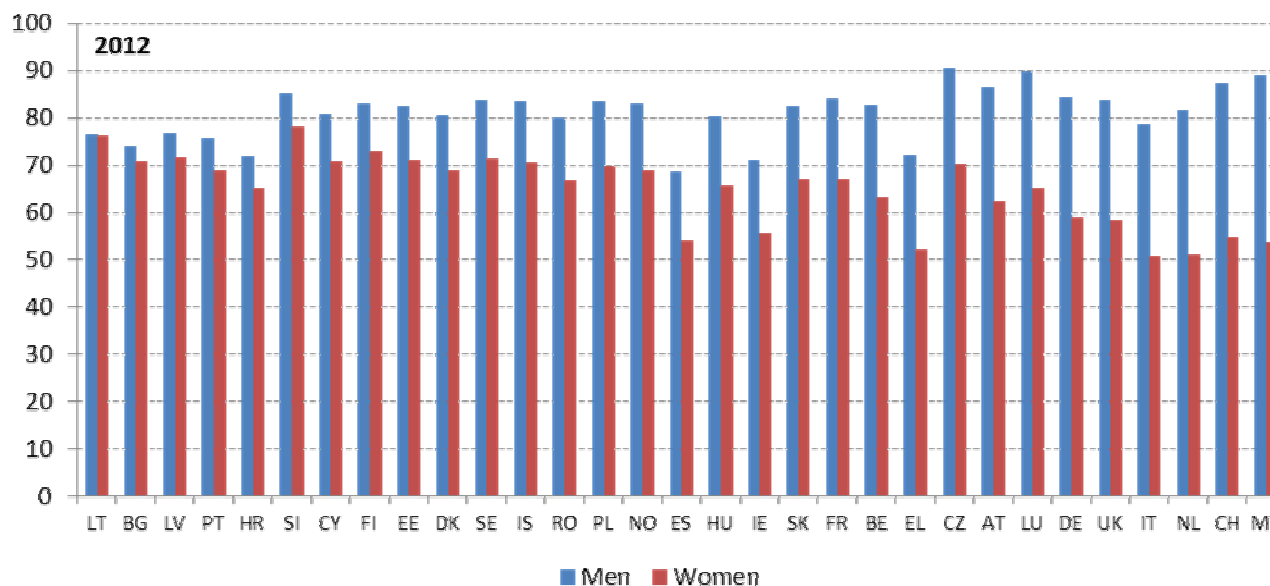
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## Full-time equivalent employment rates of men and women (25-49y)



Men: all >80% (24 countries >85%)  
 Women: 12 countries >70% (6 countries <60%)

Gap = 25%  
 (14 countries > 20%)



Men: 21 >80% (ES <70%)  
 Women: 10 >70% (9 countries <60%)

Gap = 20%  
 (10 countries > 20%)

[back](#)

Source: Eurostat