

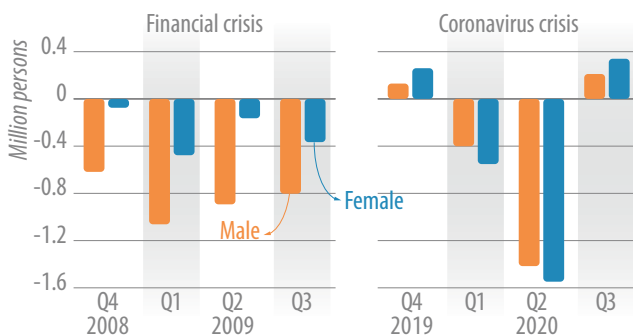
The coronavirus crisis: An emerging gender divide?

The European Union remains severely hit by the coronavirus crisis, whose impact extends far beyond public health. The economic, social and psychological consequences of the pandemic are at the forefront of Member States' and EU institutions' concerns. Employment and working conditions have undergone major upheavals, raising the issue of a possible reversal of progress on gender equality. This infographic aims to shed light on the socioeconomic and psychological impacts of the pandemic on women, through the lens of the transformation of the labour market, work-life balance and well-being. It is based on Eurostat data and a study conducted by Eurofound on living and working in the times of Covid-19.

Employment in the EU

Employment shift compared with previous quarter

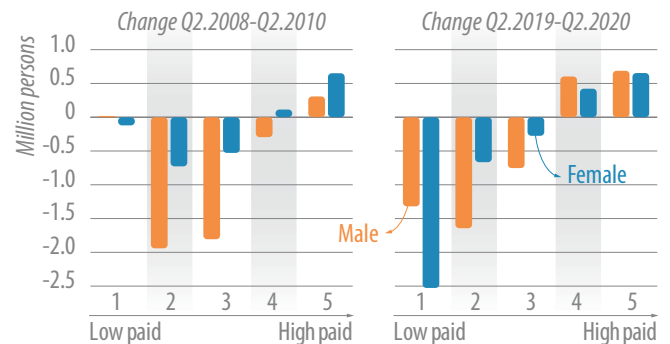
Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis, job losses have been significantly higher and faster than they were at the beginning of the 2008 economic and financial crisis, for both women and men. [Analysis](#) by Eurofound (2020) confirms that this crisis differs from the 'Great Recession' when manufacturing and construction were severely hit and employment losses were higher among men. This time, job losses are higher among women. As women are more likely to be working in the service sector, with frequent physical interactions with clients, consumers or children, at a time of social distancing and lockdowns, they are more at risk of losing their jobs (except in the healthcare sector).



Employment and wages in the EU

Employment shifts and wage quintile

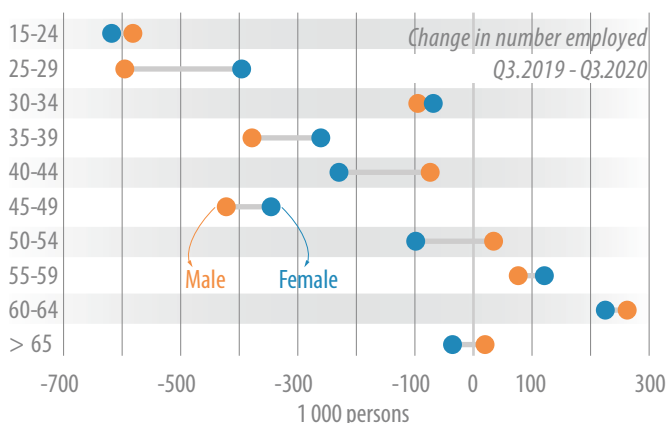
During the 'Great Recession', the largest job losses were among men working in economic sectors paying wages above the low end of the pay spectrum. This time, although the coronavirus crisis seems more gender-balanced in terms of job losses, women working in low-paid service sectors face major job losses, bearing the brunt of the crisis. During the two crises, high-wage earners – both men and women – were only marginally affected.



Employment in the EU by age group

Variation Q3.2019 with Q3.2020, unadjusted data

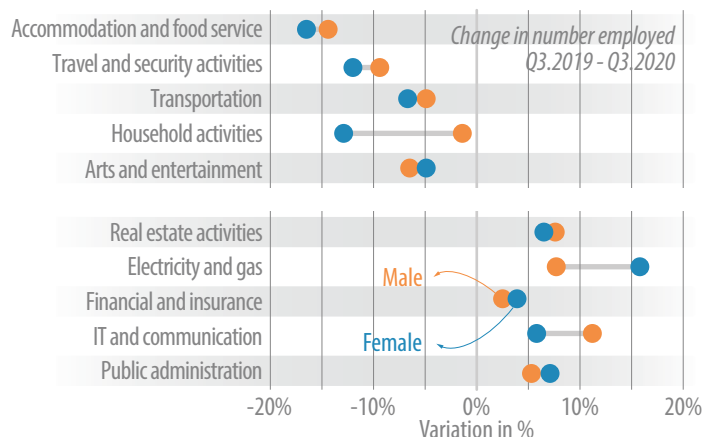
The downturn has affected employment in all sectors but in very different ways. From Q3 2019 to Q3 2020, the number of people on the EU labour market decreased by 5.5 million (data non-seasonally adjusted). This fall in employment is mainly due to transitions to inactivity rather than unemployment; women are, in particular, more likely than men to drop out of the labour market even when they are also engaged in paid work. Job losses have been extremely high among the youngest (aged 15-24). For this age group, women and men are equally hit by the crisis, which could cause a new 'lost generation'.



Employment in the EU by selected NACE activities

Variation Q3.2019 with Q3.2020, unadjusted data

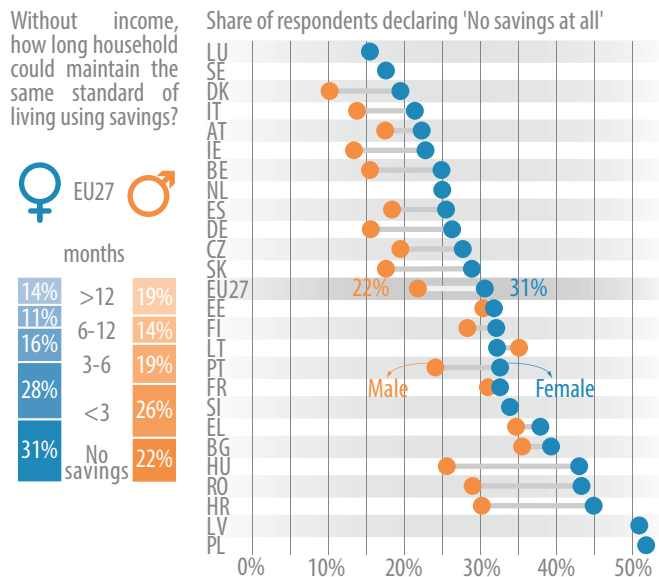
The five most/least affected economic sectors are plotted below. The data presented are not seasonally adjusted. The most affected are all tertiary activities, with the accommodation sector the worst hit. Job losses in relative terms were higher for women in four of the five sectors with the exception of the arts and entertainment sector. The fall was particularly significant in the household sectors (-12% for women versus -1% for men), where jobs are overwhelmingly occupied by women (9 out of 10 jobs).



Maintaining standard of living

% , Eurofound survey, April 2020

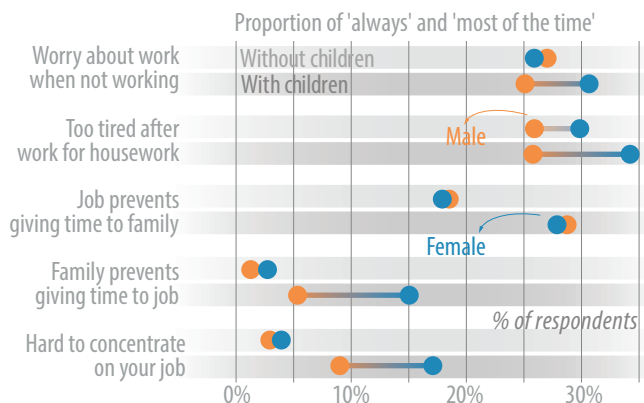
As women are more at risk of working in low-paid jobs or not having paid work, their financial situation is more precarious than men's. In the long run, women consider that it will be more difficult to maintain their standard of living. Almost one-third of women respondents (30.6 %) declared that they have 'no savings at all' compared to one-fifth of men (21.8 %). Women in Lithuania are the only exception.



Coronavirus crisis on work-life balance

EU level – Eurofound survey, April 2020

The pandemic has brought significant changes to working and home lives. The concentration of activities at home, including professional activities, during lockdowns has exacerbated conflicts between work and home life. Survey data from Eurofound shows that this is having significant impacts on women's work-life balance and wellbeing, women with children being disproportionately affected. Women with children under 18 years old are more likely to report that they are finding it hard to concentrate on their job because of family (17 %, compared to 9 % of men). They are also more likely to be worrying about work when not working (31 %, compared to 25 % of men) while being too tired after work for housework (35 %, compared to 25 %, of men). Conversely, women are less likely to declare that their job is preventing them from giving time to family (28 %, compared to 29 % of men).

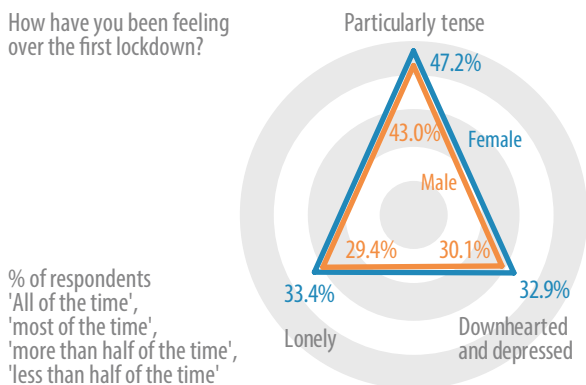


Feeling tense, lonely, depressed; EU level

% of respondents, Eurofound survey, April 2020

The difficult reconciliation of work and family life is having a dramatic impact on women's mental health. According to Eurofound data, women are more likely to be feeling tense (47 %, compared to 43 % of men), lonely (33 % of women compared to 29 % of men) or depressed (33 % of women compared to 30 % of men). A post-crisis 'return to normality' could reduce women's confidence in their professional future to a greater extent than that of men.

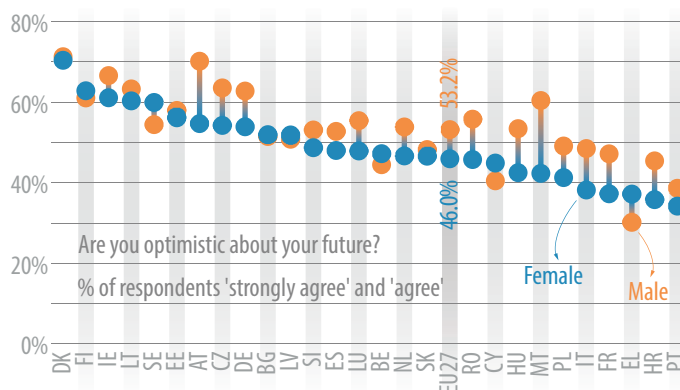
How have you been feeling over the first lockdown?



Optimism, by EU Member State

% of respondents, Eurofound survey, April 2020

The high level of pressure endured by women during this crisis, associated with financial uncertainty and lack of professional confidence, might explain their lack of optimism. On average, women in the EU were less likely to declare that they are optimistic about their future (46 %, compared to 53 % of men). Women were more likely to declare that they are more optimistic than men in only six Member States (Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Latvia and Sweden) but the differences are small. It is worth noting that optimism varies widely between Member States, ranging from 71 % in Denmark to 34 % in Greece.



Notes

Eurofound's Living, working and COVID-19 online survey aims to capture the far-reaching implications of the pandemic for the way people live and work across Europe. Respondents (population aged 18 and over) are recruited using online 'snowball sampling' methods and social media advertisements. This method consists of a primary data source nominating other potential data sources eligible to participate. Two rounds of the online survey have been carried out to date: one in April 2020, when most Member States were in lockdown, and one in July, when society and economies were slowly re-opening. The third round is now under way, running from 15 February to 29 March 2021. This third round contains new questions, for instance on views about the vaccination programmes and the quality and use of public services during the pandemic.

Data sources for page 1: Employment in the EU (lfsi_emp_g), Employment in the EU by age group (lfsq_egan) and Employment in the EU by selected NACE activities (lfsq_egan2) are from Eurostat. Employment and wages in the EU data are extracted from the article 'COVID-19: A tale of two service sectors', published by Eurofound. Data sources for page 2: Maintaining standard of living, Covid-19 crisis on work-life balance, Tense, loneliness and depression and Optimism, Eurofound survey: Living, working and Covid-19. Extraction date: February 2020.

Country codes: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czechia (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE).