



Press release

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Gender equality: pocket statistics 2019 and international conference in Neuchâtel

Gender equality – improvements made but still a work in progress

Young women today are just as or even better educated than their male counterparts. Compared with the start of the 1990s, women are employed far more often and part-time work has increased among both genders. A more equal participation in the labour force is seen in families. These are some of the results published by the Federal Statistical Office in the 5th edition of the Pocket Statistics on Gender Equality.

In the case of wage equality and in political office, however, a stagnation or even a decline in the progress of gender equality has been observed. The distribution of domestic work is also uneven.

Gender-specific study choices have become less rigid

Increasing numbers of both women and men are completing tertiary level education. In 1999, 9.8% of 25 to 34 year old women and 14.4% of men of the same age held a degree from a higher education institution. In 2018, 42.3% of women and 34.7% of men did so. In the same age group, 11.4% of women and 14.1% of men had completed higher vocational training. Overall, women have caught up.

Nowadays women are also more likely to choose subject areas in which men have been or still are in the majority such as natural sciences, mathematics and statistics or engineering, manufacturing and construction. Gender-specific career and study choices have thus grown less rigid over the past two decades.

Employment and part-time work among women have increased

The majority of women and men are employed. The employment rate of women aged between 15 and 64 years increased from 68.2% in 1991 to 79.9% in 2018. In comparison, the employment rate of men changed slightly during the same period, falling from 91.1% to 88.5%.

Among employed women, 59.0% worked part-time. Among men, this figure was 17.6%. In 1991, the respective shares were 49.1% and 7.8%. Full-time employment thus fell by 10 percentage points for both genders, mainly to the benefit of part-time work with an activity rate of 50 to 89%. 24.4% of employed women and 6.6% of employed men had an activity rate of less than 50%. Women were more often affected by underemployment: 11.4% compared with 3.6% of men in 2018.

Wage equality not yet achieved

The wage gap between women and men has narrowed over the years and was 19.6% in the private sector in 2016 (arithmetic mean). 42.9% of this wage gap cannot be explained by objective factors such as educational level, number of years of service or exercising a management position. In the public sector, the unexplained share of the wage gap was lower at 34.8%.

A clear difference between women and men was also seen in the monthly net wages of full-time employees: in 2016, 16.5% of women received a monthly net wage of a maximum of CHF 4000 compared with 5.3% of men. By contrast, 26.1% of men received a net wage of over CHF 8000 while 13.8% of women earned this much.

The lower wages and greater frequency of part-time work among women have an effect by retirement age as women face poorer provision due to lower savings. For the 2nd and 3rd pillars, the beneficiary rates of female pensioners in 2015 were far lower than those of male pensioners. 63.7% of women and 78.6% of men up to 5 years beyond the legal retirement age received benefits from occupational pension plans, while 28.3% of women and 42.1% of men received benefits from the 3a pillar.

Domestic work is mainly carried out by women

Progress in gender equality can be achieved due to better balancing of work and family and more even distribution of domestic and family work and employment. In couple households with a youngest child aged under 4, the employment model in which the man works full-time and the woman does not work decreased from 59.2% to 23.3% between 1992 and 2017. Families with a more balanced participation in the labour market are more common than previously: in 11.4% of families, both partners worked full-time and in 9.0%, both partners worked part-time (1992: 5.6% and 1.7%). The most common model is that in which the father works full-time and the mother part-time: during the same period this model increased from a quarter to around half of these families.

Responsibility for domestic work continues to be unevenly distributed. In 70.8% of families with young children, domestic work in 2013 was mainly carried out by the woman. Housework was carried out by both partners in 25.0% of these households. Women also spend more time than men on most household and family activities, particularly on time-consuming tasks such as child care, meal preparation and cleaning.

Women continue to be under-represented in politics

Following a clear increase in female representation in political institutions since the 1980s, there has been no major movements over the past few years. This can be seen at cantonal and communal level, in the Legislative and in the Executive branches. At Federal level, the share of women in the Council of States has fallen by 9 percentage points since 2003 from 23.9% to 15.2%. By contrast, in the National Council it increased by 6 percentage points from 26.0% to 32.0% during the same period.

FSO information on gender equality

The FSO has published statistical information on gender equality for over 30 years. The first edition of the pocket statistics – like the online offering of the gender equality indicators – is over 20 years' old and has been available since 1998. The publication is intended for a wide audience and for use in schools. It offers an overview of the current situation of gender equality in various areas of life and shows the developments over time. A digital version with two interactive maps and graphics is also available. A new product – an infographic on gender equality – will also be published at the same time.

International workshop and work session on gender statistics in Neuchâtel

The workshop and work session on gender statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) will be held in Neuchâtel from 13th to 17th May 2019. The FSO is organising the event together with the UNECE. The conference, which takes place around every 18 months, is held in a host country or at the European headquarters of the UN in Geneva. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) contributes financially to facilitate the participation of countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The **workshop** aims to develop capacity and train participants from countries of the specified regions in the areas of production, analysis, dissemination and communication of gender equality statistics.

[Workshop programme](#)

The **work session** offers UNECE member countries a platform to exchange experience on the production and use of gender equality statistics and for the discussion of methodological aspects with an aim to further develop these statistics. The target audience comprises experts from both national statistical offices and international organisations as well as users of these statistics.

[Work session programme](#)

Switzerland has been represented by a specialist from the FSO at the UNECE workshops for many years and is actively involved in international work to further develop statistics on gender equality.

Information

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New Publication

On the way to gender equality – Current situation and developments

FSO number: 619-1900, price: for free

Publication order: tel.: +41 58 463 60 60, email: order@bfs.admin.ch

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Access to results

This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE), the Swiss Conference of Gender Equality Delegates (SKG) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) were granted access to statistical information from this press release three working days prior to publication.