



Gender and Employment — The GE Barometer

01/2024

Gender, Work and Power Observatory



OBSERVATORY
Gender, Work and Power

Title

Gender and Employment — The GE Barometer

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OBSERVATORY
Gender, Work and Power



Foreword

The *Gender, Work and Power* Observatory regularly provides insights into the employment situation of women and men, covering issues such as the gender pay gap, disparities in care work, economic power and decision-making in business. Established as part of the ISEG Research / Policy Lab, this infrastructure¹ seeks to contribute to an informed public debate on these topics, as well as to the qualification and assessment of public policies. Its goal is to apply scientific knowledge to drive social change, promoting the full and equal participation of women and men in both public and private life, the realisation of full citizenship, the advancement of social justice and the sustainable development of societies.

Reflecting the inclusive approach underlying its objectives and mission, the Observatory encourages the involvement in its activities of young researchers, including doctoral and master's degree students.

The first Gender and Employment Barometer was created by the following team:

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Gender, Work and Power Observatory

Introduction and Methodological Notes

Data from the Employment Survey (Statistics Portugal – INE) and the Labour Force Survey (Statistical Office of the European Union – Eurostat)² were used in order to analyse the participation of women and men in the labour market in Portugal and compare the results with the broader European Union context³. Microdata from the *2022 Quadros de Pessoal* were used (the most recent data available in 2024) in order to obtain information about the distribution of women across occupations in Portugal (two-digit level)⁴. This database results from an administrative procedure which all entities with employees operating in the country⁵ must comply with on an annual basis. The data are collected by the Office of Strategy and Planning of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (GEP/MTSSS).

In addition to examining the employment rate for women and men, and its evolution in the country, this barometer also looks at other key dimensions of labour participation. These include the impact of workers' educational levels on their employment, as well as the effects of maternity and paternity; the distribution of employment across various occupations; working time arrangements; the prevalence of telework; temporary contracts; and the unemployment rate.

² The information was collected in July 2024. Eurostat may have updated it at a later date (in general, the adjustments made are minor and do not alter the results of the analysis).

³ The time frame under analysis in this document comprises the following EU compositions: EU27, since January 2020; EU28, previously – since 2013; EU27, since 2007; EU25, after 2004.

⁴ [Website of the INE](#).

⁵ The data refer to employees in the private sector. As far as the central, regional and local administrations are concerned, as well as public institutions, the database only includes employees with individual employment contracts. It does not cover entities that employ non-permanent rural workers or domestic workers.

Employment Rates and Occupations

Table 1 presents the employment rates for men and women (aged 20-64) in the EU, also highlighting the gap in percentage points (p.p.). For the 27 countries under analysis, the average rates are 80.4% for men and 70.2% for women, showing a difference of 10.2 p.p. This gap underlines the lower level of participation of women in the labour market and the ongoing asymmetry in this indicator.

In Portugal, however, the gap between men and women is smaller — 5.6 p.p. The employment rate is 81.1% for men and 75.5% for women — both of which are higher than the EU27 average.

— Table 1

Employment rate for men and women (aged 20-64) in the EU27, 2023

	Men	Women	Gap (M-W)
Austria	81.1	73.3	7.8
Belgium	75.9	68.3	7.6
Bulgaria	79.9	72.6	7.3
Croatia	74.6	66.8	7.8
Cyprus	83.6	74.6	9.0
Czechia	88.4	74.5	13.9
Denmark	82.6	77.0	5.6
Estonia	83.3	80.9	2.4
Finland	78.3	78.1	0.2
France	77.2	71.7	5.5
Germany	84.9	77.2	7.7
Greece	77.4	57.6	19.8
Hungary	85.3	76.1	9.2
Ireland	84.2	74.3	9.9
Italy	76.0	56.5	19.5
Latvia	79.1	76.0	3.1
Lithuania	79.2	77.7	1.5
Luxembourg	78.2	71.4	6.8
Malta	88.2	74.0	14.2

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

	Men	Women	Gap (M-W)
Netherlands	87.4	79.6	7.8
Poland	83.8	72.0	11.8
Portugal	81.1	75.5	5.6
Romania	78.2	59.1	19.1
Slovakia	81.3	73.6	7.7
Slovenia	80.4	74.3	6.1
Spain	75.7	65.4	10.3
Sweden	84.9	80.2	4.7
EU27	80.4	70.2	10.2

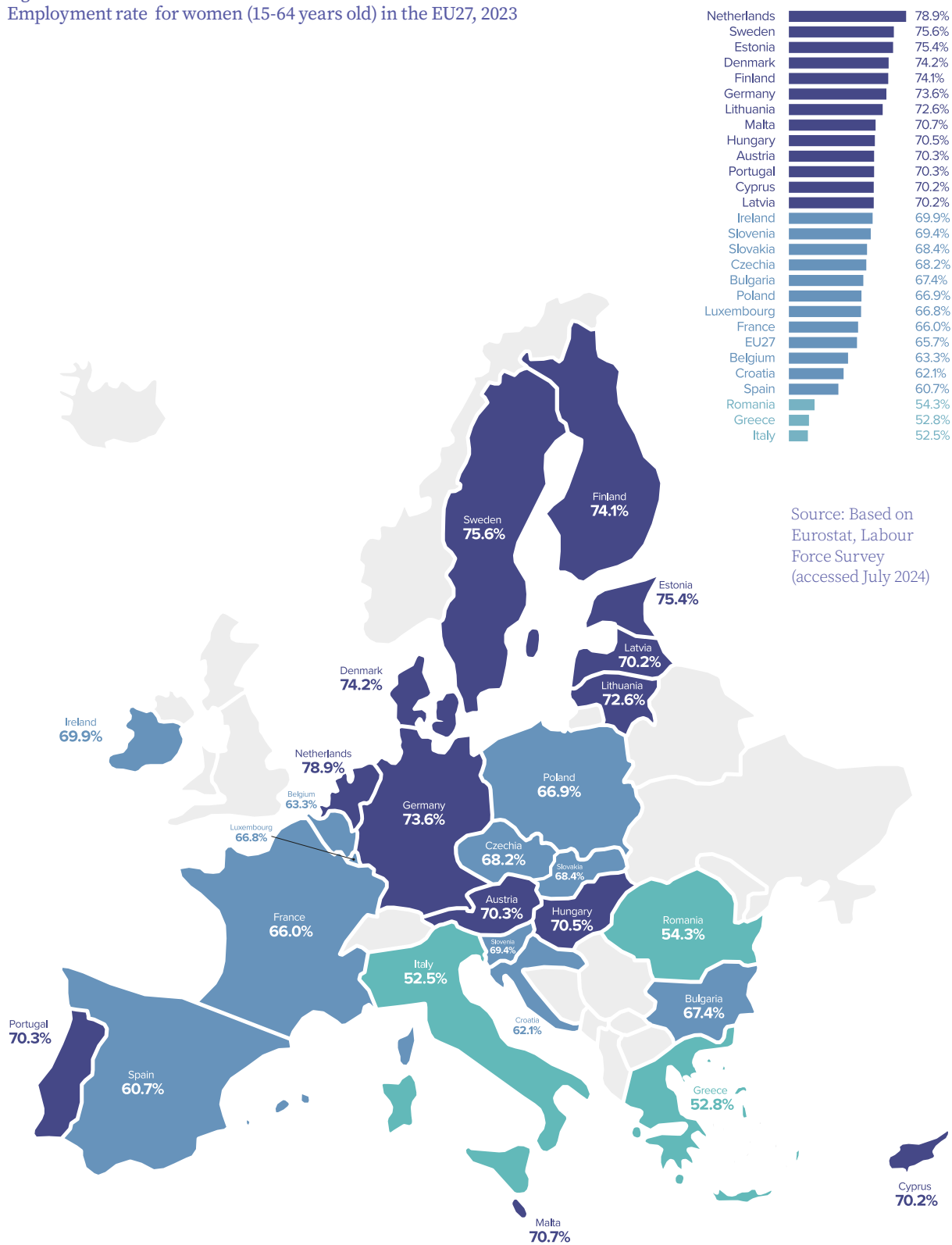
In the case of the employment rate for men and women (aged 20-64), it is important to highlight the European target for 2030, as outlined in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan⁶, namely, to ensure that at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 are employed by 2030.

As far as women in particular are concerned, this goal has not yet been achieved in the EU27 (average of 70.2%), including Portugal (75.5%). The exception can be found in a small number of countries: Estonia (80.9%), Sweden (80.2%), the Netherlands (79.6%) and Finland (78.1%). It should be noted that this target is far from being achieved in Member States such as Italy (56.5%), Greece (57.6%) and Romania (59.1%) (see **Table 1**).

As far as the employment rate for the 15-64 age group is concerned, **Figure 1** shows that, in Portugal, the employment rate for women is higher than in most EU27 countries (70.3% compared to 65.7%, respectively). The following Member States exceed the national figures: the Netherlands (78.9%), Sweden (75.6%), Estonia (75.4%), Denmark (74.2%), Finland (74.1%), Germany (73.6%), Lithuania (72.6%), Malta (70.7%), Hungary (70.5%) and Austria (70.3%).

⁶ [The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#).

Figure 1
 Employment rate for women (15-64 years old) in the EU27, 2023



Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

From a longitudinal perspective aimed at understanding the evolution of labour force participation among women and men in Portugal over the past two decades, **Figure 2** illustrates both the increasing trend in the women’s employment rate and the reduction in the gender gap relative to the men’s employment rate. In 2000, within the age group under analysis (15-64 years), around two-thirds (60.5%) of women were employed, compared to 76.2% of men (a difference of 15.7 percentage points). By 2023, although the gap still exists, it has narrowed to just 4.5 percentage points. During this period, the women’s employment rate increased by 9.8 percentage points.

Figure 2
 Evolution of the employment rate for men and women (15-64 years old) in Portugal (2000-2023)

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed in July 2024)

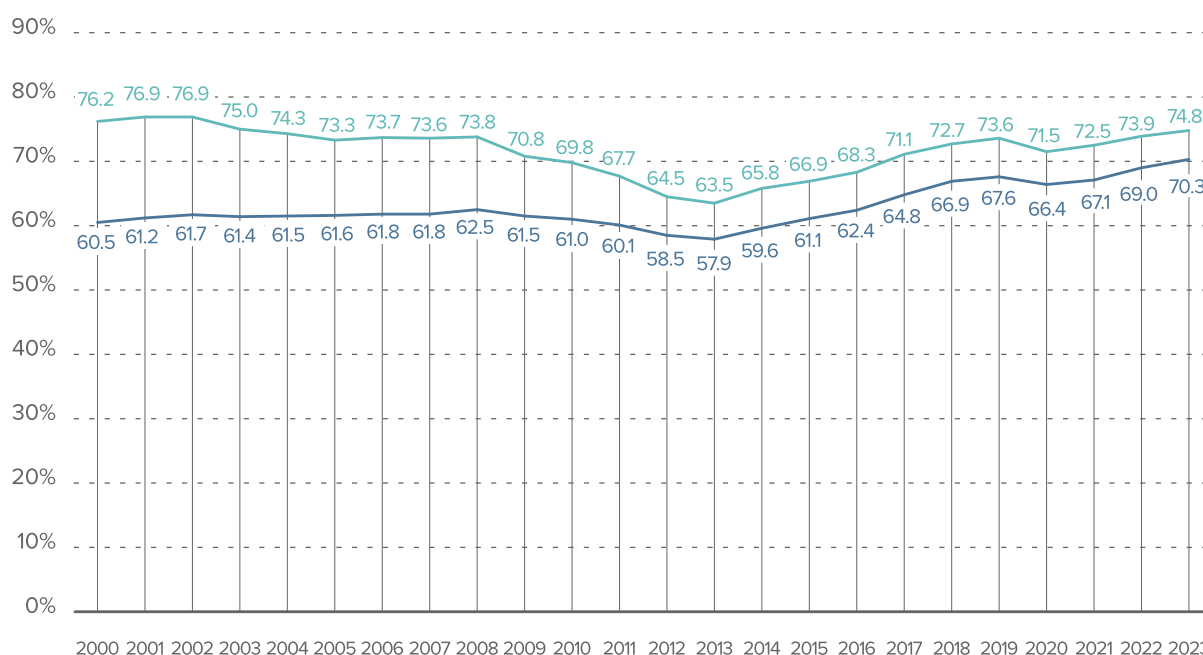


Figure 3 shows the impact of the educational level on labour force participation. Women (aged 20-64) with lower levels of education — specifically, those within the category of “Up to Basic Education” — have a relatively low employment rate, which remains significantly lower than that of men in a comparable situation. Furthermore, this rate has remained stable over the years.

Legend
 — Men
 — Women

At intermediate educational levels — “Secondary and Post-Secondary Education” — a growing trend is evident in the women’s employment rate, although it still lags behind that of men. Finally, at the higher educational level, in addition to a growing trend in the women’s employment rate over the years, a near-parity situation between men and women is observed in 2023 (87.8% for men and 87.3% for women)⁷.

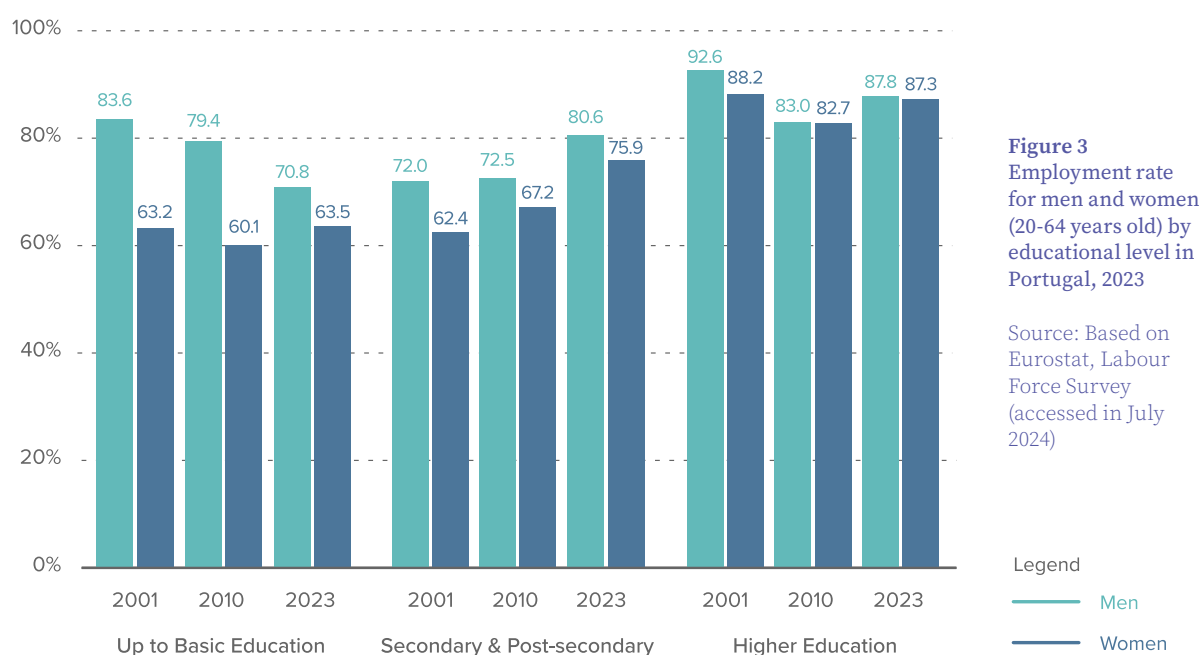


Table 2 displays the impact of maternity and paternity on labour force participation. For all the countries under analysis, paternity tends to increase labour force involvement, with the employment rate of fathers of children under six being 12.5 percentage points higher than that of men without children. In contrast, motherhood is generally associated with a pattern of employment interruption, as the employment rate of women with young children is, on average, 7.3 p.p. lower than that of women without children.

⁷ Additionally, Figure A (Annex) allows for an observation of the educational levels of the active population in Portugal. It is noted that approximately four in ten men (41.3%) have completed basic education, compared to around 30.5% of women. For women, higher education is the most prevalent level of education — a category that conversely represents a minority of men in the active age group (26.1%).

Portugal is one of the few countries (one of only seven) where women’s behaviour demonstrates the opposing trend: mothers of small children (under six years of age) have higher employment rates than women without children. It is also worth noting that Portugal ranks third in the EU for this indicator (see **Tables A.1 and A.2 Annex**).

— Table 2

Employment impact of parenthood for women and men aged 20-49 in the EU27, 2023

	Men	Women
Austria	10.8	-8.4
Belgium	14.2	-0.6
Bulgaria	10.8	-6.8
Croatia	20.4	8.5
Cyprus	11.7	-5.4
Czechia	9.2	-36.7
Denmark	12.7	5.3
Estonia	9.5	-10.6
Finland	15.1	-6.3
France	13.3	-4.9
Germany	7.9	-15.0
Greece	20.9	-9.1
Hungary	10.5	-7.9
Ireland	11.2	-10.5
Italy	19.5	-5.1
Latvia	13.4	2.2
Lithuania	13.2	-3.3
Luxembourg	12.3	3.9
Malta	2.7	-10.8
Netherlands	10.1	-1.3
Poland	11.5	-6.8
Portugal	13.1	6.4
Romania	6.6	-16.3
Slovakia	13.0	-6.5

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024).

Note: Difference in percentage points in employment rates with presence of a child under 6 and without the presence of any children.

	Men	Women
Slovenia	14.0	7.2
Spain	13.2	-5.3
Sweden	12.8	7.5
EU27	12.5	-7.3

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024).

Note: Difference in percentage points in employment rates with presence of a child under 6 and without the presence of any children.

Table B (see **Annex**) shows the percentage of women in the total workforce, by occupation. On the one hand, it can be seen that women are to be found concentrated in the following occupations:

- Personal care workers and similar (92.4%);
- Cleaners (88.2%);
- Healthcare professionals (76.8%);
- Teachers (76.2%);
- Mid-level healthcare technicians and professionals (76.6%);
- Office employees, general secretaries and data processing operators (74.8%);
- Specialists in legal, social, artistic and cultural matters (71.5%);
- Assistants in meal preparation (68.3%);
- Other administrative support staff (67.8%);
- Direct customer support staff (64.2%);
- Salespeople (61.8%);
- Personal services workers (60.3%).

On the other hand, women's representation is below 30% in the following occupations:

- Members of the legislative power and executive bodies, senior public administration officials, leaders of specialised organisations and company directors and managers (28.1%);
- Farmers and skilled agricultural and animal production workers, market-oriented (24.1%);
- Information and communication technology technicians (22.4%);

- Information and communication technology (ICT) specialists (22.1%);
- Mid-level technicians and professionals in science and engineering (21.2%);
- Street vendors (excluding food) and street service providers (19.2%);
- Protection and security service staff (16.2%);
- Skilled workers in forestry, fishing and hunting (6.8%);
- Skilled workers in metallurgy, metalworking and similar fields (4.1%);
- Vehicle drivers and mobile equipment operators (3.6%);
- Skilled workers in electricity and electronics (2.4%);
- Skilled workers in construction and similar fields, excluding electricians (1.3%).

Part-Time Work and Paid Working Hours

Figure 4 presents the percentage of part-time workers in the total workforce, showing that women are the majority in this working time regime. The highest proportions of women part-time workers are found in the Netherlands (63.7%), Austria (50.1%), and Germany (47.9%).

In Portugal, while part-time work is relatively less common, the gender gap is not so pronounced as in other EU countries. However, a gender difference does exist: 4.6% of men and 9.8% of women are employed on a part-time basis. When these figures are compared to the EU27 average, there is a clearly visible gap between the Portuguese and the broader European reality — on average, more than a quarter of women (28.5%) in the EU27 are employed on a part-time basis.

It is important to note that in countries where women's employment rates are higher (see **Figure 1**), there tends to be a higher proportion of women working part-time (as is the case in the Netherlands).

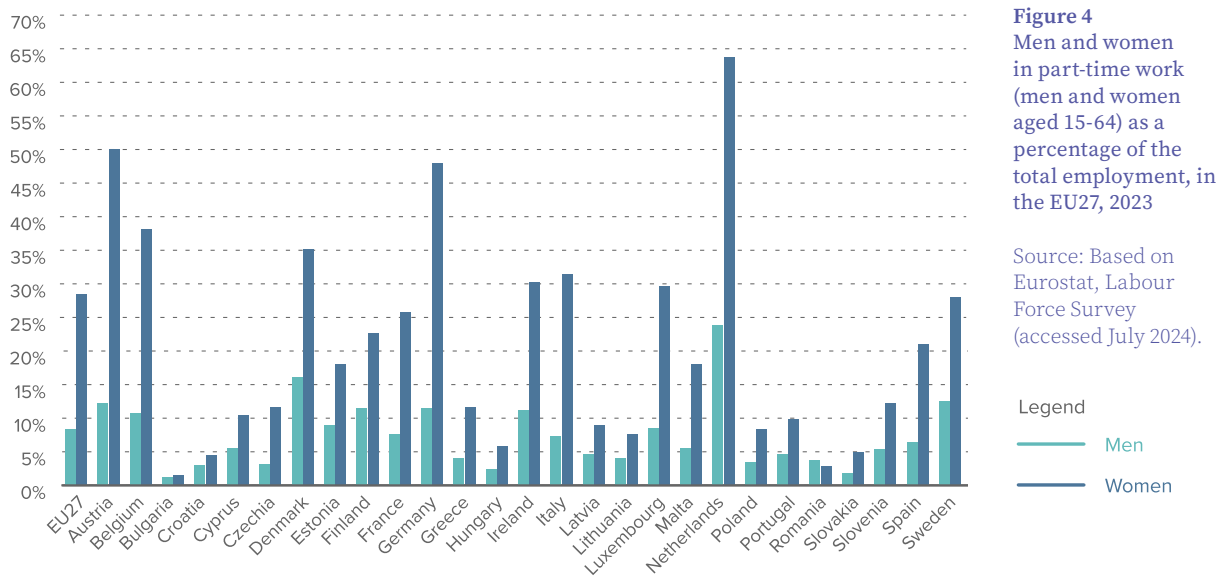


Figure 4
 Men and women in part-time work (men and women aged 15-64) as a percentage of the total employment, in the EU27, 2023

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024).

Legend
 — Men
 — Women

Table 3 summarises the reasons why men and women work on a part-time basis. In the EU, the primary reason mentioned by women is the need to care for others, whether children or incapacitated adults (26.2% of women compared to 6.1% of men). For men, the most common reason is that they are “in education” (25%), a reason much less frequently mentioned by women (10.6%). Additionally, the difficulty of finding a full-time job is a strong reason invoked by both men and women, with 24.3% and 17.8%, respectively, referring to this reason.

It is worth noting that the latter reason is the most important for workers in Portugal – accounting for 39.7% of responses from men and 39.4% from women, respectively. This shows the high level of involuntary part-time work in the country. Also worthy of note is the gender disparity in the reasons stated for involuntary part-time work, especially when it comes to caring for children or incapacitated adults. In line with the broader European trend, the second most cited reason for men is the possibility of combining work with education.

— Table 3

Reasons for part-time work in Portugal and the EU27, 2023

15-64 years			
2023			
		Men	Women
Couldn't find a full time job	EU27	24.3	17.8
	Portugal	39.7	39.4
Family responsibilities	EU27	2.2	6.4
	Portugal	-	7.7
Personal responsibilities	EU27	11.2	11.4
	Portugal	15.5	13.1
In education	EU27	25.0	10.6
	Portugal	18.0	10.5
Looking after children or incapacitated adults	EU27	6.1	26.2
	Portugal	-	11.2
Personal illness or incapacity	EU27	8.4	5.2
	Portugal	6.2	5.8
Other reasons	EU27	22.8	22.3
	Portugal	17.4	12.4

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

In the EU, men generally dedicate more hours per week to paid work, with the largest gaps to be found in the Netherlands (+7.9 hours), Germany (+7.4 hours), and Austria (+7.2 hours) (see **Table 4**). In Portugal, men work an average of 39 hours per week, while women work 36.2 hours, resulting in a relatively small gap of 2.8 hours. However, Portuguese women spend more time on average in paid work than the women in the EU, who work 33.2 hours.

— Table 4

The average number of weekly (paid) working hours in the EU27, 2023

	Men	Women	Gap (M-W)
Austria	36.8	29.6	7.2
Belgium	37.3	31.5	5.8
Bulgaria	39.2	38.8	0.4
Croatia	38.7	37.4	1.3
Cyprus	40.0	36.8	3.2
Czechia	39.1	35.9	3.2
Denmark	35.4	30.8	4.6
Estonia	37.6	34.9	2.7
Finland	36.3	32.0	4.3
France	37.9	33.6	4.3
Germany	37.3	29.9	7.4
Greece	41.7	37.2	4.5
Hungary	38.4	37.1	1.3
Ireland	38.0	31.2	6.8
Italy	38.9	32.1	6.8
Latvia	38.9	37.8	1.1
Lithuania	38.9	37.6	1.3
Luxembourg	37.2	32.9	4.3
Malta	38.6	34.9	3.7
Netherlands	34.6	26.7	7.9
Poland	40.5	37.7	2.8
Portugal	39.0	36.2	2.8
Romania	39.8	39.1	0.7
Slovakia	38.6	36.4	2.2
Slovenia	39.0	36.6	2.4
Spain	38.3	33.8	4.5
Sweden	36.7	33.4	3.3
EU27	38.2	33.2	5.0

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

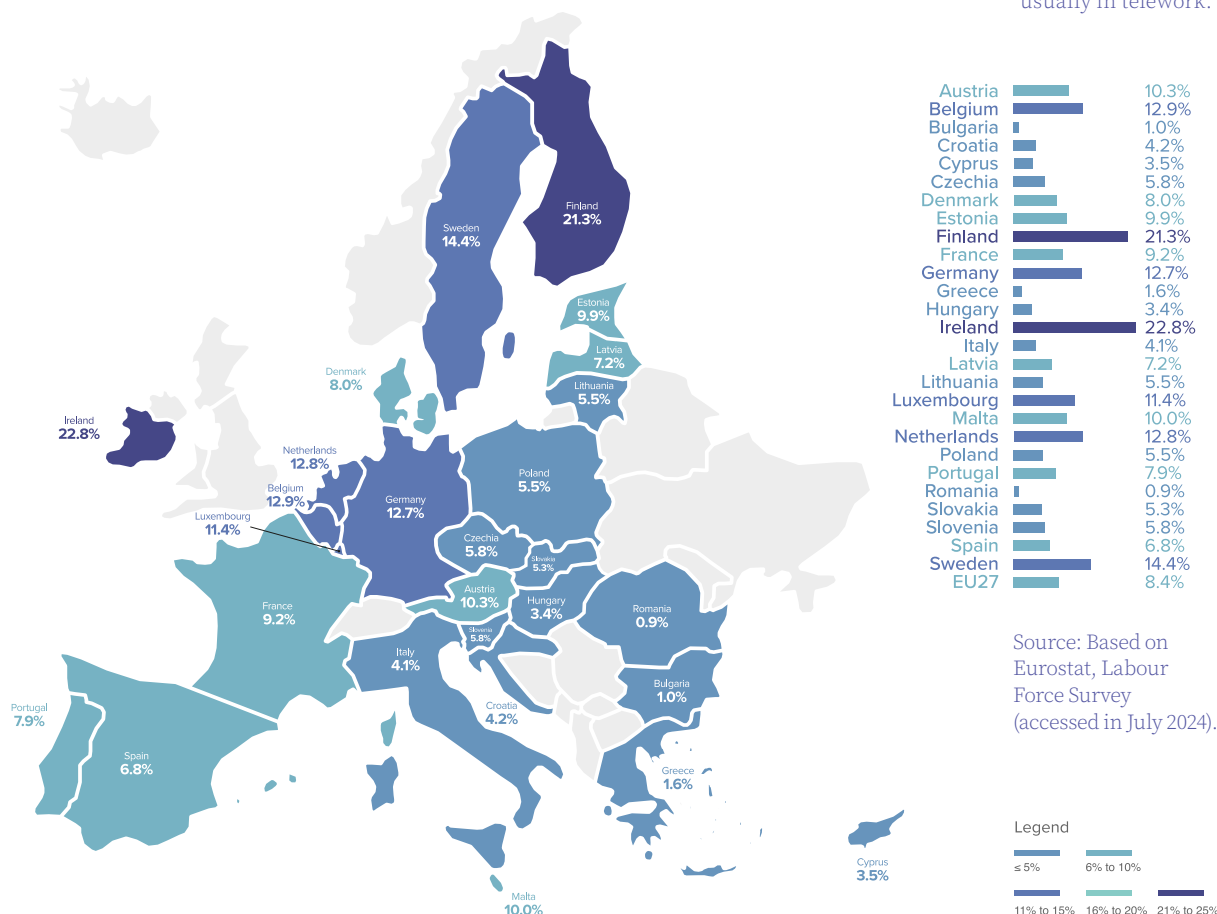
Telework (Usually)

Figures 5 and 6 show the percentage of men and women to be found in telework. In the EU, 8.4% of men and 9.5% of women usually work from home. In Portugal, the gender gap is narrower, with 7.9% of men and 7.1% of women usually in telework.

Ireland has the highest level, with 22.8% of men and 19.7% of women working under this arrangement, followed by Finland, where 21.3% of men and 22.1% of women are in similar roles. In contrast, telework is less common in countries like Bulgaria and Romania, with participation rates below 2%.

Figure 5
 Percentage of men in telework (usually) in the EU27, 2023

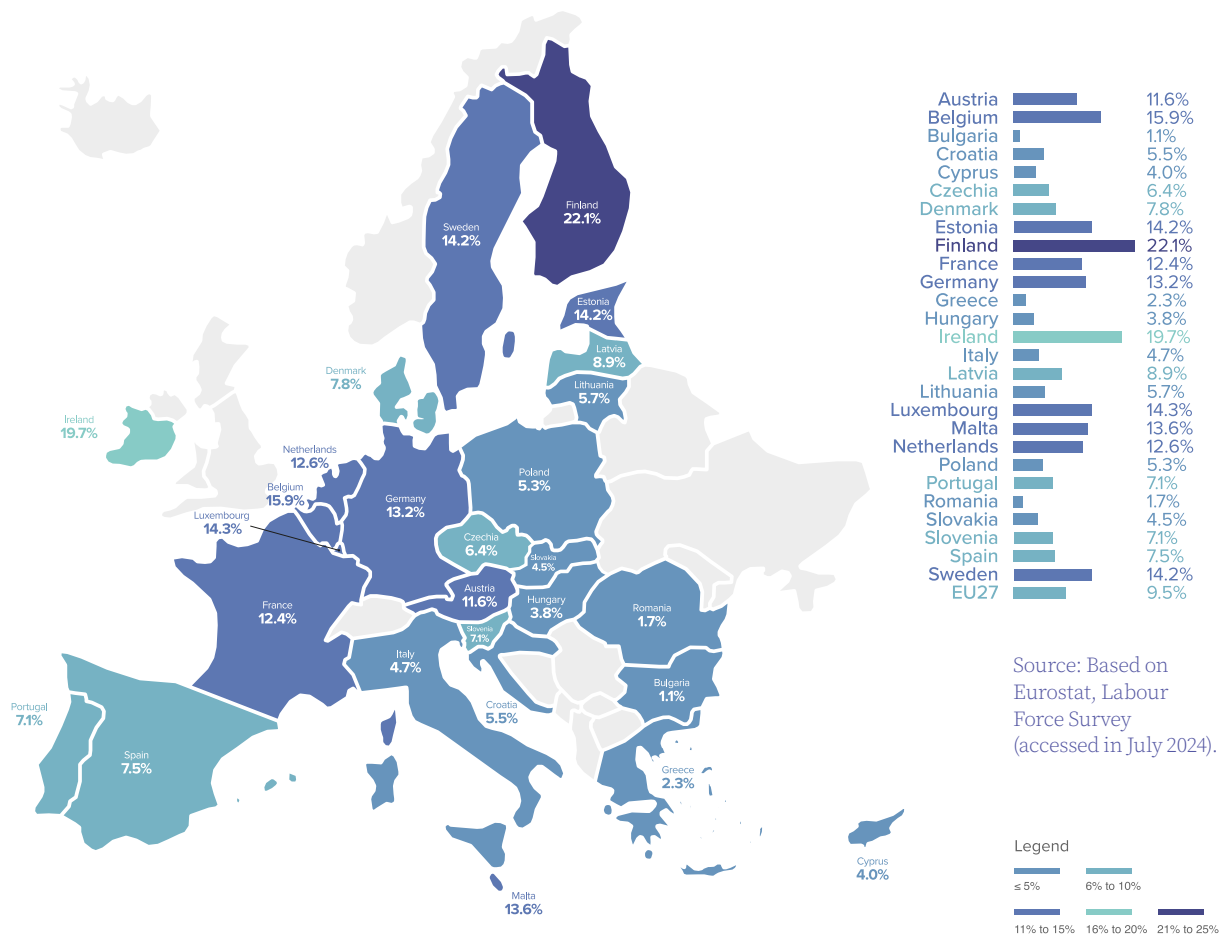
Note: The data only include responses to "usually in telework."



Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed in July 2024).

Figure 6
 Percentage of women in telework (usually) in the EU27, 2023

Note: The data only include responses to "usually in telework."



Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed in July 2024).

Vulnerabilities: Temporary Employment and Unemployment

In the EU27, temporary contracts tend to affect slightly more women than men (+1.7 percentage points). In Portugal, a similar trend is observed: 17.8% of women are employed under fixed-term contracts, compared to 17.0% of men (see **Table 5**).

— Table 5

Men and women in temporary employment as a percentage of the total employment (15-64 years old) in the EU27, in 2023

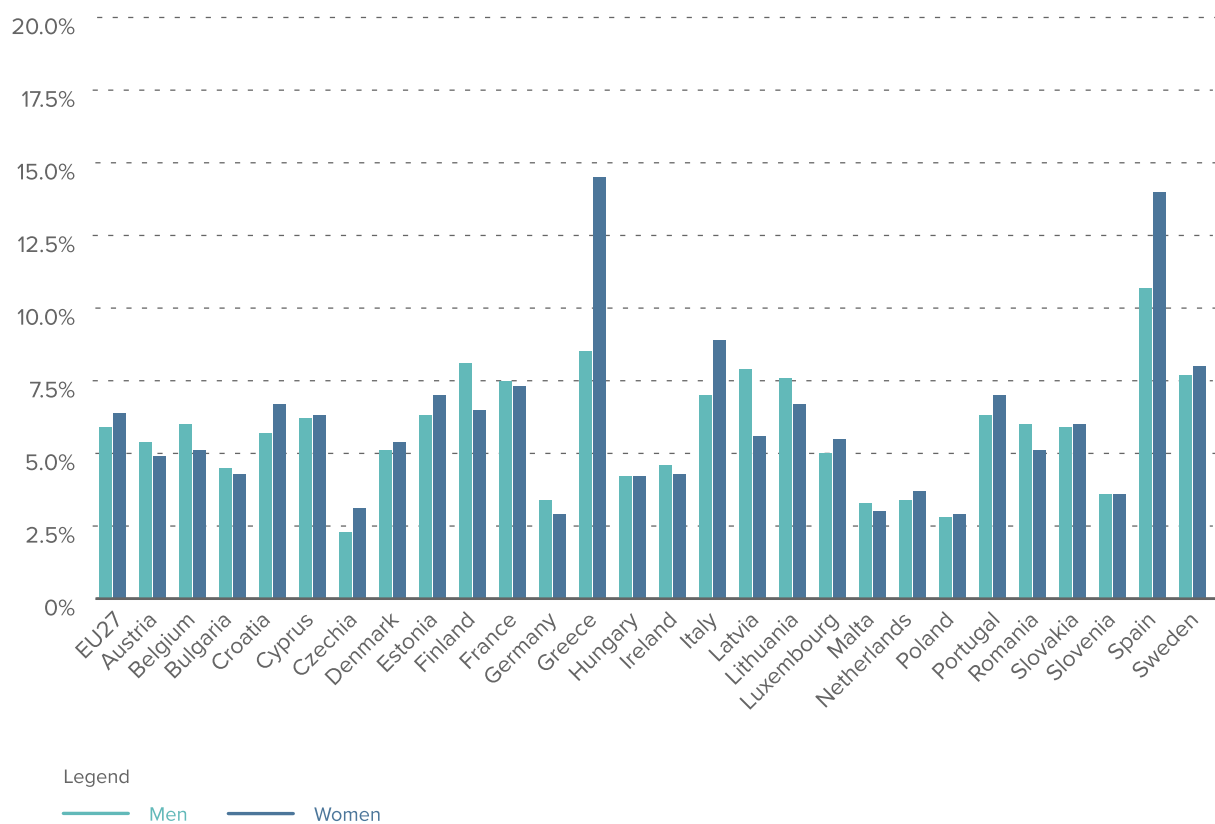
	Men	Women
Austria	9.2	8.8
Belgium	8.3	10.4
Bulgaria	3.2	2.8
Croatia	9.4	12.8
Cyprus	10.4	16.0
Czechia	5.5	8.8
Denmark	9.0	11.5
Estonia	3.3	3.1
Finland	13.2	17.5
France	14.8	16.3
Germany	12.3	11.6
Greece	8.8	13.1
Hungary	5.0	5.0
Ireland	7.5	9.2
Italy	14.8	17.7
Latvia	3.1	2.2
Lithuania	1.9	1.9
Luxembourg	6.8	8.2
Malta	8.3	9.6
Netherlands	25.3	29.4
Poland	14.2	16.3
Portugal	17.0	17.8
Romania	3.4	1.3
Slovakia	3.8	4.7
Slovenia	9.5	13.2
Spain	15.1	19.6
Sweden	12.4	15.5
EU27	12.6	14.3

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

Figure 7 shows the unemployment rates for men and women aged 15 to 64. It can be seen that, in general, the rates are higher for women, particularly in Greece (14.5%) and Spain (14.0%). Portugal (7.0%) shows values close to the European average (6.4%), with the unemployment rate being higher for women compared to men (6.3% for men).

Figure 7
 Unemployment rate for women and men (aged 15-64) in the EU27, in 2023

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)



Annexes

Annexes

— Figure A

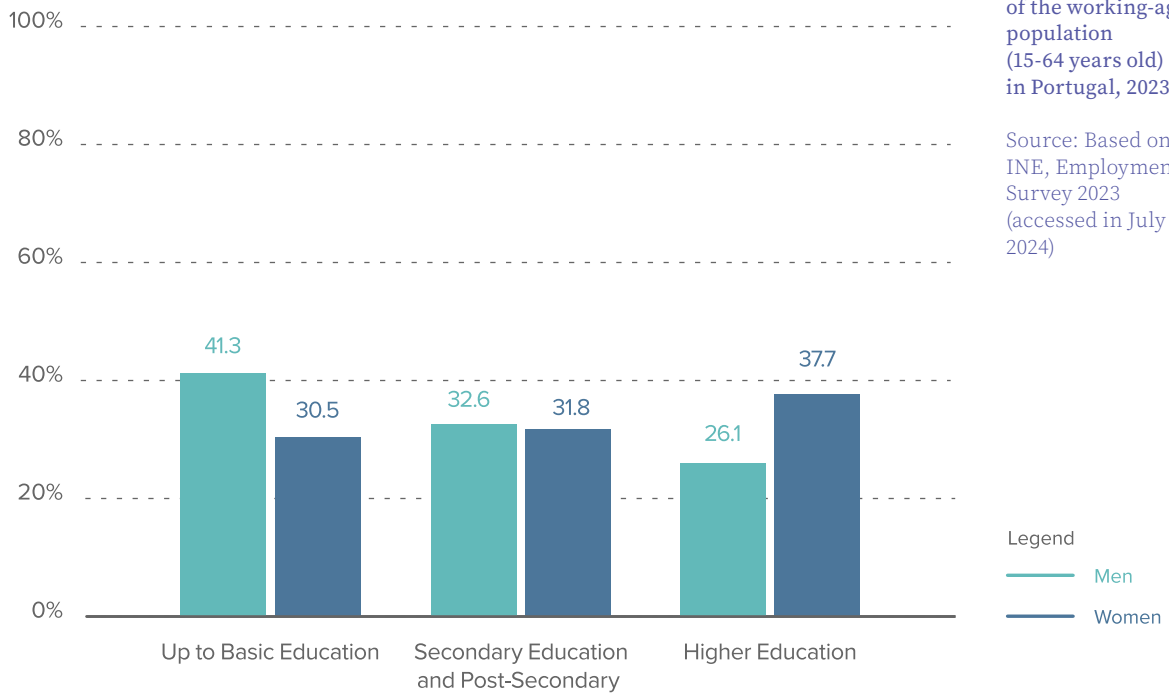


Figure A
Educational level of the working-age population (15-64 years old) in Portugal, 2023

Source: Based on INE, Employment Survey 2023 (accessed in July 2024)

— Table A.1

Employment rates of men (aged 20-49) with and without children (under 6 years of age) in the EU27, 2023

	Men with no children	Men with children (under 6 years of age)	GAP (With-Without)
Austria	82.2	93.0	10.8
Belgium	73.9	88.1	14.2
Bulgaria	77.5	88.3	10.8
Croatia	73.8	94.2	20.4
Cyprus	81.3	93.0	11.7
Czechia	86.6	95.8	9.2
Denmark	77.6	90.3	12.7
Estonia	82.7	92.2	9.5
Finland	75.1	90.2	15.1
France	77.4	90.7	13.3
Germany	84.5	92.4	7.9
Greece	71.0	91.9	20.9
Hungary	83.5	94.0	10.5
Ireland	81.9	93.1	11.2
Italy	71.2	90.7	19.5
Latvia	77.0	90.4	13.4
Lithuania	78.9	92.1	13.2
Luxembourg	81.5	93.8	12.3
Malta	92.0	94.7	2.7
Netherlands	85.8	95.9	10.1
Poland	83.6	95.1	11.5
Portugal	78.2	91.3	13.1
Romania	77.6	84.2	6.6
Slovakia	79.1	92.1	13.0
Slovenia	82.0	96.0	14.0
Spain	74.3	87.5	13.2
Sweden	80.4	93.2	12.8
EU27	79.0	91.5	12.5

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

— Table A.2

Employment rates of women (aged 20-49) with and without children (under 6 years of age) in the EU27, 2023

	Women with no children	Women with children (under 6 years of age)	GAP (With-Without)
Austria	83.2	74.8	-8.4
Belgium	72.1	71.5	-0.6
Bulgaria	73.0	66.2	-6.8
Croatia	67.5	76.0	8.5
Cyprus	80.0	74.6	-5.4
Czechia	81.2	44.5	-36.7
Denmark	73.3	78.6	5.3
Estonia	82.1	71.5	-10.6
Finland	76.9	70.6	-6.3
France	75.7	70.8	-4.9
Germany	83.1	68.1	-15.0
Greece	63.9	54.8	-9.1
Hungary	80.5	72.6	-7.9
Ireland	82.7	72.2	-10.5
Italy	60.4	55.3	-5.1
Latvia	74.3	76.5	2.2
Lithuania	79.7	76.4	-3.3
Luxembourg	77.1	81.0	3.9
Malta	87.5	76.7	-10.8
Netherlands	83.5	82.2	-1.3
Poland	80.1	73.3	-6.8
Portugal	75.8	82.2	6.4
Romania	66.6	50.3	-16.3
Slovakia	75.3	68.8	-6.5
Slovenia	76.5	83.7	7.2
Spain	70.7	65.4	-5.3
Sweden	76.7	84.2	7.5
EU27	75.1	67.8	-7.3

Source: Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (accessed July 2024)

— Table B

Percentage of women in the total workforce, by occupation (%)

	Percentage of women in the total workforce, by occupation (%)
Members of the legislative power and executive bodies, leaders, directors, and executive managers	
11 Members of the legislative power and executive bodies, senior public administration officials, leaders of specialized organizations, directors, and company managers	28.1
12 Directors of administrative and commercial services	39.6
13 Directors of production and specialized services	35.4
14 Directors of hospitality, catering, retail, and other services	35.3
Specialists in intellectual and scientific activities	
21 Specialists in physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, and related technical fields	33.9
22 Healthcare professionals	76.8
23 Teachers	76.2
24 Specialists in finance, accounting, administrative organization, public relations, and commercial affairs	58.9
25 Specialists in information and communication technology (ICT)	22.1
26 Specialists in legal, social, artistic, and cultural matters	71.5
Technicians and mid-level professionals	
31 Technicians and professionals in science and engineering, at the intermediate level	21.2
32 Technicians and mid-level professionals in healthcare	76.6
33 Mid-level technicians in finance, administration, and business	55.5
34 Mid-level technicians in legal, social, sports, cultural, and related services	49
35 Information and communication technology (ICT) technicians	22.4

	Percentage of women in the total workforce, by occupation (%)
Administrative staff	
41 Office clerks, general secretaries, and data processing operators	74.8
42 Customer support staff	64.2
43 Data operators, accounting, statistics, financial services operators, and those related to record-keeping	35.4
44 Other administrative support staff	67.8
Workers in personal services, protection and security services, and salespeople	
51 Personal services workers	60.3
52 Salespeople	61.8
53 Personal care workers and similar roles	92.4
54 Protection and security services staff	16.2
Farmers and skilled workers in agriculture, fishing, and forestry	
61 Farmers and skilled workers in agriculture and animal production, market-oriented	24.1
62 Skilled workers in forestry, fishing, and hunting, market-oriented	6.8
Skilled workers in industry, construction, and artisans	
71 Skilled workers in construction and similar fields, except electricians	1.3
72 Skilled workers in metallurgy, metalworking, and related fields	4.1
73 Skilled workers in printing, precision instrument manufacturing, jewelers, artisans, and related fields	40.3
74 Skilled workers in electricity and electronics	2.4
75 Workers in food processing, wood, clothing, and other industries and crafts	46.5
Operators of facilities and machinery, and assembly workers	
81 Operators of fixed installations and machinery	46.6
82 Assembly workers	35.6
83 Drivers of vehicles and operators of mobile equipment	3.6

	Percentage of women in the total workforce, by occupation (%)
Unskilled workers	
91 Cleaners	88.2
92 Unskilled workers in agriculture, animal production, fishing, and forestry	27.4
93 Unskilled workers in extractive industries, construction, manufacturing, and transportation	29.5
94 Assistants in meal preparation	68.3
95 Street vendors (excluding food) and street service providers	19.2
96 Waste workers and other essential services workers	34.7

Source: Based on *Quadros de Pessoal 2022/GEF/MTSSS* (accessed in October 2024)



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