

PRESS STATEMENT:

Gender Inequality – At What Cost?

Improving gender equality has many positive impacts on individuals and also on society at large. A more gender equal EU could have strong, positive Gross Domestic Product (GDP) impacts growing over time, higher level of employment and productivity and could respond to challenges related to the ageing population in the EU. A new study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on the economic benefits of gender equality in the EU puts forward robust new evidence in this regard.

In fact, EIGE's report demonstrates that improvements to gender equality would generate up to 10.5 million additional jobs in the EU by 2050, with the employment rate reaching almost 80%. If more women join the labour force and/or get education in fields with skill shortages that have good future employment prospects, e.g. in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, they are likely to find employment and make substantial contributions to the economy. It is estimated that Malta can register a reduction of 5% in the gender gap in activity rates by 2030, from 36% in 2014 to 31%.

The strong, positive impacts of gender equality on GDP grow over time and can exceed impacts of other labour market and education interventions. As estimated by EIGE, by 2050, improving gender equality would lead to an increase in EU GDP per capita by 6.1 to 9.6%.

Demographic changes for the EU, such as the ageing population, could also improve through gender equality measures. Previous research suggests that gender equality is linked to higher fertility rates, which would lead to a larger population and an increase in long-term labour supply. This is important in the light of current EU demographic projections, which predict a rise in the number of older people out of the labour force.

This EIGE report proves that gender equality is a long-standing policy commitment of the EU. However, combating persisting gender inequalities has to be a consistent endeavour in order to foster economic growth and to address related challenges. EIGE's report confirms that gender equality is not only beneficial to individuals, but it also boosts economic growth for the benefit of everyone.

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