



Factsheet on Youth Unemployment among Women

General figures on youth unemployment

Figures do not show a big difference between women and men when it comes to youth unemployment. We can even see that women's rate is slightly lower than men's rate. However, it seems that this difference narrows when age increases.

- Unemployment rate for women and men between 15 and 24 is 22.4% in EU27 according to the last figures from January 2012.¹
- Unemployment rate for young men is slightly higher than for young women: 23.1% against 21.4%.²
- According to OECD statistics on EU 21 countries³, if we consider the group of young people between 25 and 29, the average unemployment rate drops to 12.6%. Women's rate is still slightly lower, but the difference is narrower: unemployment rate for men is 12.8% and for women is 12.3%.⁴

National figures

Even if on average figures are not very different, it is interesting to underline that in some EU countries already harshly hit by the crisis, women are more affected by youth unemployment than men.

- In Greece, for the age class 15-24, men's unemployment rate is 41.9% whereas women's unemployment rate is 55.9%, according to the latest figures from November 2011.⁵

¹ See Eurostat latest figures

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

² See Eurostat latest figures

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

³ Data is only available for the EU21 for 2010, excluding Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania.

⁴ SEE OECD figures http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=LFS_SEXAGE_I_R

⁵ See Eurostat latest figures

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

- In Italy, for the same age class, women's unemployment rate is 31.8% and men's rate 27.2%, according to the latest figures from September 2011.⁶
- In France, young women's unemployment rate is 24.1% and young men's unemployment rate is 22.6%.
- If we consider the age class 25-29 in Portugal, women are also more unemployed than men: the rate for women is 16% against 12.9% for men.

The need for underlining that women count when it comes to youth unemployment

- Women have been hit harder by the crisis if we take into consideration its long term effects. As pointed out in a Eurostat report in 2009,⁷ in the first place crisis has affected men more than women, because the construction, financial services and automotive sectors, all of which traditionally employ more men, have been hit especially hard.
- But the austerity measures taken by most of the European governments to address the crisis are affecting women more than men. As explained in a report by the British think-tank Fawcett Society⁸ women face "triple jeopardy", namely wage freezes and job cuts in the public sector where they are mainly employed, but also that women need the most (health and care services, care facilities, family support services, etc.) and because of the traditional roles in family, they often have to leave their jobs to take care of dependent persons when Welfare State is withdrawn.
- Moreover, in this time of crisis, when jobs are limited, men tend to be considered as the legitimate breadwinners.⁹
- Consequently, if the equal access to the labour is not addressed properly and immediately from young age, Europe risks creating an even bigger gap between women and men on the labour market.

Addressing specific causes of youth unemployment among women

Gender segregation in education and on the labour market

Even if 60% of university graduates are women, they tend to be concentrated on a limited number of academic fields. This segregation has an impact on the labour market, since women are de facto overrepresented in lower paid jobs, jobs which require fewer qualifications and have less possibilities of evolution.

⁶ See Eurostat latest figures

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

⁷ See Eurostat report from 2009

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Impact_of_the_economic_crisis_on_unemployment

⁸ See a summary of this study in the Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2012/mar/18/public-sector-cuts-hit-prudent-houseife>

⁹ The World Global Survey in 2005 found that almost 40% of those interviewed agreed that in such a situation, men have more right to a job than women.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article184&lang=en>

- Women make up a large majority of those graduating in health and welfare and teacher training and education programmes, but men outnumber women in engineering, manufacturing and construction.¹⁰
- Men accounted for over 65 % of students graduating in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes in all the countries in 2004 (Bulgaria and Greece having slightly a lower rate). In Germany, Ireland, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK, men accounted for over 80 % of the students in these fields.¹¹
- In 2006, women represented 41% of the PHD graduates in sciences, mathematics and computing. The rate is even lower in the field of engineering, manufacturing and construction, where women were 25% of the PHD graduates. On the other hand, women are 64% of PHD graduates in the field of education¹²
- Women make up almost 80 % of those employed in health and social work, over 70 % of those employed in education and over 60 % of those working in retailing.¹³
- Across the EU, in 2005, almost 3 % of men aged 25–64 in work were employed as physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals (which include, for example, computer analysts, chemists and architects), around five times the proportion of women.¹⁴

The need for reconciling professional and private life and sharing unpaid work

Another cause of youth unemployment among women is the lack of balance between professional and private life. Achieving reconciliation for both women and men is still a big challenge in Europe today.

- Women count for two thirds of the inactive population (63 million persons between 25-64 years) which includes involuntary part-time employed that are not registered as unemployed.¹⁵
- In the EU, around 30 % of women with care responsibilities say they are inactive or work part-time because of the lack of care services for children and other dependent persons.¹⁶

¹⁰ The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2008

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-80-07-135/EN/KS-80-07-135-EN.PDF

¹¹ The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2008

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-80-07-135/EN/KS-80-07-135-EN.PDF

¹² Women in green economy, background notes, Citizen's rights and constitutional affairs, European Parliament.

¹³ The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2008

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-80-07-135/EN/KS-80-07-135-EN.PDF

¹⁴ The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2008

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-80-07-135/EN/KS-80-07-135-EN.PDF

¹⁵ Report on the face of female poverty in the European Union, Rovana Plumb, European Parliament, February 2011.

¹⁶ European Commission 2011 *Report on the progress on equality between women and men in 2010*

- The employment rate of women (between 25 and 49 yrs) with children under the age of 12 drops by 11.4 percentage points whereas it increases by 8.5 percentage points for men in the same situation.¹⁷
- In contrast to the shorter time spent in paid work, women spend much longer in unpaid work of various kinds than men. The difference is particularly marked in the time spent preparing food, washing dishes and cleaning the house.¹⁸

PES Women proposals

In order to efficiently combat youth unemployment at European level, PES Women calls

- The European Commission on establishing youth employment as a sub-target of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- The member states on implementing gender budgeting.

In order to combat gender segregation in education, PES Women suggests to:

- Calling on the European Commission to collect and present data on women's participation in non-traditional curricula and jobs in order for member states to identify the sectors that need to tackle gender segregation.
- Calling on the Member States to implement and evaluate equal access for women to all curricula, including research and IT-oriented studies that are often needed for the new green economy.
- Encouraging Member States to promote and implement capacity-building for young women and men and breaking stereotypes as part of the educational curricula.

In order to create more jobs for both young women and men, PES Women suggests to:

- Allocating a specific number of jobs for women, especially in the new jobs such as in the green economy.
- Investing in the health sector and developing professional careers and opportunities in this sector for women and men.
- Earmarking specific trainings for women, especially in new skills that are essential for development of our society.

In order to achieve reconciliation for both women and men, PES Women suggests to:

- Calling on the Council to find a common position with the European Parliament on the Maternity Leave Directive in order to allow women and men to balance family life and professional responsibilities.
- Encouraging the European institutions to reinforce the parental leave.
- Encouraging every member states to provide accessible, affordable and good quality care facilities and services for children and dependent adults through a reinforced Welfare State's role.

¹⁷ European Commission 2011 *Report on the progress on equality between women and men in 2010*

¹⁸ The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2008

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-80-07-135/EN/KS-80-07-135-EN.PDF