

# **Other gender issues**

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## An overview

INDICATORS	2025		2022 (a)		2024		2023		2023 (b)	
	Prevalence of current tobacco use, females (% of female adults)	Prevalence of current tobacco use, males (% of male adults)	Gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary general education, female (%)		Gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary general education, male (%)		Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	Women Business and the Law Index (scale 1-100)	Gender Development Index (min=0, max=1)	Gender Inequality Index (min=0, max=1)
			2025	2022 (a)	2024	2023				
PRT	21,8	29,7	104,4	101,9	36,5	100,0	1,00	0,08		
ESP	27,5	28,0	93,6	89,8	44,3	100,0	1,00	0,04		
FRA	34,0	35,2	100,3	99,9	37,3	100,0	0,99	0,03		
ITA	19,1	25,0	95,8	96,0	32,3	97,5	0,98	0,04		
SVN	18,0	21,1	95,2	93,6	37,8	96,9	1,00	0,04		
HRV	38,9	36,3	102,0	101,3	33,8	93,8	1,00	0,07		
GRC	29,0	32,2	95,4	95,1	23,0	100,0	0,96	0,10		
MLT	23,0	24,8	97,5	98,2	27,9	91,3	0,98	0,11		
CYP	24,4	24,4	104,0	105,0	14,3	96,9	1,00	0,25		
SRB	39,2	38,9	97,7	96,5	38,0	93,8	0,99	0,12		
XXK	..	..	..	..	..	91,9	..	..		
BIH	30,5	39,9	91,4	89,5	19,1	85,0	0,97	0,16		
BOS	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
MNE	33,1	29,9	99,8	97,9	27,2	85,0	0,98	0,12		
MKD	..	..	91,9	94,2	42,5	85,0	0,96	0,11		
ALB	5,6	35,9	94,9	99,2	35,7	91,3	0,96	0,11		
TUR	20,6	39,7	92,4	92,4	19,9	82,5	0,94	0,11		
SYR	..	..	48,2	41,0	10,4	40,0	0,79	0,49		
LBN	25,0	43,3	58,0	48,1	6,3	58,8	0,99	0,36		
JOR	14,1	58,4	94,8	85,7	13,1	59,4	0,86	0,43		
ISR	12,9	25,5	93,8	93,7	25,0	80,6	0,99	0,08		
PSE	..	..	94,6	91,2	..	26,3	0,94	..		
EGY	0,3	51,2	85,5	82,4	..	50,6	0,90	0,40		
LYB	..	..	..	..	16,5	50,0	0,96	0,25		
TUN	1,4	37,6	..	..	15,7	64,4	0,93	0,24		
DZA	0,6	41,6	90,4	59,8	7,9	57,5	0,89	0,44		
MAR	0,9	23,6	76,1	64,7	24,3	75,6	0,86	0,44		

(..) Data not available.

(a) 2023 for Lebanon, Egypt Arab Republic.

(b) 2022 for Portugal.

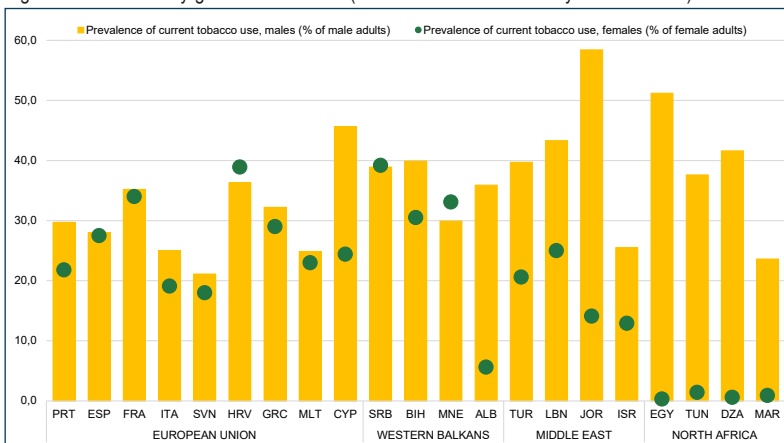
Source: World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), World Bank (WB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

## Some highlighted topics

*Lifestyles.* The state of health of countries is generally influenced by the lifestyle of their respective populations. In particular, tobacco consumption is considered one of the main factors contributing to death from non-communicable diseases among the population; this indicator is also valued in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among the EU countries in the Mediterranean area, gender gaps in the tobacco consumption indicator are smaller than in countries in other macro-regions. In particular, Cyprus is the European Union country with the largest gap (24.4% for women and 45.6% for men), followed by Portugal (21.8% and 29.7% respectively) and Italy (19.1% and 25.0%, Figure 1). However, the highest levels of the indicator are found in Croatia, France and Greece, where they exceed 30%

for both sexes. A situation of substantial equivalence in smoking habits also applies to some countries in the Western Balkans: Serbia and Montenegro (where the indicator values are even higher for women). The most polarised situation, on the other hand, occurs in the Middle East (with the exception of Israel and Lebanon) and North Africa, where smoking affects more than four out of ten men in many cases, with the highest values in Jordan (58.4%) and Egypt (51.2%), while tobacco consumption among women is much less widespread, especially in North African countries (with rates not exceeding 2%).

Fig. 1. Tobacco use by gender. Year 2025 (% of women and men 15 years and over).



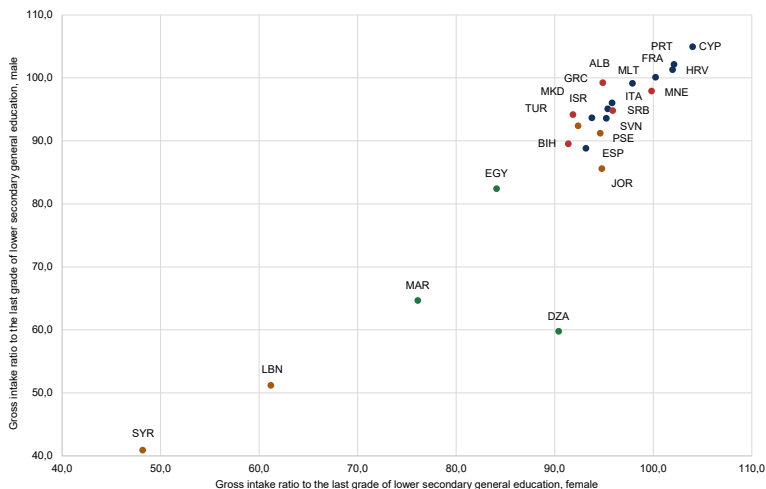
Source: World Health Organization (WHO).

*Schooling.* Gender gaps in education vary considerably across macro-regions and countries. A high ratio of the indicator for admission to the final year of lower secondary education (as a percentage of the population of the expected age for entry) also indicates a high level of completion of current primary education (Figure 2). This is a gross measure and can therefore exceed 100% if there are large numbers of pupils who started school early or late and/or who repeated previous years. It reflects how policies on access to and progression through the early grades of primary or lower secondary education affect the final attainment level for that particular level.

Among EU countries, there is a substantial gender balance at levels close to full enrolment; however, in Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, the ratio is more

favourable for women (104.4% vs 101.9%, 95.2% vs 93.6% and 93.6% vs 89.8% respectively). In the Western Balkans, Albania lags behind in female enrolment (94.9% vs. 99.2%), while in the Middle East, it should be noted that in all countries except Turkey, the figures are more favourable for women than for men. This advantage for women is also particularly noteworthy in two North African countries: Algeria and Morocco.

Fig. 2. Gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower education by gender. Year 2022 (%).

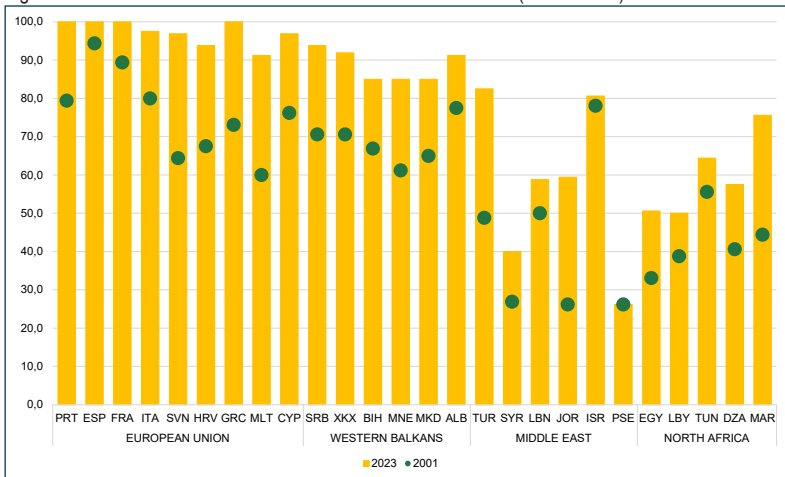


Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

*Political participation and women's empowerment.* Political participation reveals a smaller gender gap in most European Union countries. In particular, Spain has a relatively high indicator for the number of seats held by women in national parliaments (44.3%, Figure 3). Slovenia, France and Portugal also have quotas close to 40%. Similar levels are found in the Western Balkans, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania. In the two European macro-regions as a whole, however, the presence of women in parliament is more modest, especially in Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Greece. Among the countries of the Middle East, Israel has the highest value for this indicator (25%), while in all other countries it is below 20%. In North Africa, Egypt and Morocco have around a quarter of parliamentary seats occupied by women.

The Women, Business and the Law Index is a composite index that measures the effect of laws and regulations on women's economic opportunities (mobility, employment, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets and pensions). The best performers in the areas measured by the Women, Business and the Law Index are associated with a higher number of women in the workforce, higher incomes and better development outcomes. Given the economic importance of women's empowerment, one of the objectives of the Women, Business and the Law Index is to encourage governments to reform laws that hinder women's access to the labour market. On a scale of 1 to 100, the indicator shows higher average values in European Union countries. In particular, in 2023, the maximum values of the indicator

Fig. 2. Women Business and Law Index. Years 2001 and 2023 (scale 1-100).



Source: World Bank (WB).

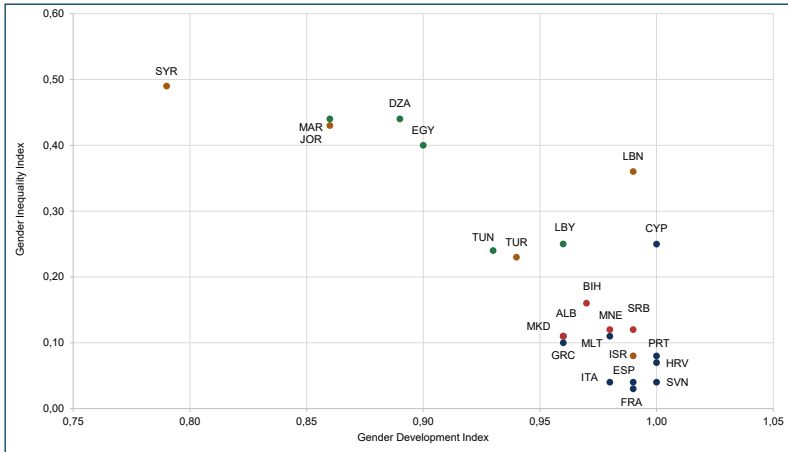
achieved by four countries (Portugal, Spain, France and Greece) are the result of strong growth over more than two decades (Figure 3). The indicator levels in the Western Balkans are higher on average (with a minimum value of 85) than those recorded in the Middle East (which vary between a value of 26 in Palestine and over 82 in Turkey) and North Africa (where the index varies between approximately 50 and 76, with Morocco recording the highest value). Overall, compared to 2001, the countries with the largest increase in the index value (by more than 30 points), in the direction of a reduction in gender discrimination, were Turkey, Jordan, Slovenia and Morocco.

*Development and gender inequality.*

In the Human Development Reports published by the United Nations, among other measures updated annually in addition to the overall human development indices (see page "Population and society/Other social issues"), there are two specifically dedicated to the status of women. In particular, the gender development index, calculated as the ratio between the human development index for women and that for men, measures the achievement of equal human development for women and men in terms of health, education and income; the gender inequality index, on the other hand, measures gender disadvantage based on indicators relating to reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market (see Methodology on Metadata on the thematic page).

The scatter plot of the two indicators places most European Union countries in the lower right quadrant (together with Israel), corresponding to the highest values of gender development and the lowest values of inequality. Among these countries, Portugal, Croatia, Slovenia and Cyprus stand out with a value of 1 in gender development, which also differs in terms of more marked gender inequality (Figure 4). In the Western Balkans, gender development is close to that of EU countries, with slightly higher levels of gender inequality. In contrast, several countries in the Middle East and North Africa occupy the upper left quadrant, with the least favourable values for both indicators: this is particularly the case for Syria, Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and Egypt.

Fig. 4. Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index. Year 2023 (min=0, max=1).



Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).