

Estonia



Women in decision-making: **0.28/5**
Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**
Violence against women: **2.5/5**

UNDERSTANDING ESTONIA

In both the decision-making and the socio-economic sphere, Estonia ranks towards the bottom of the EU table. In the field of decision-making, the lack of binding legislation results in poor representation of women in both the public and private sphere. Women represent only 8% of senior ministers in government for example.

Estonia has the biggest gender pay gap in the EU at 27.6%. Almost as many women (58%) work full-time as men (60%). Estonia has very generous maternity and parental leave provisions, allowing new parents 18 months of leave with full pay. However, care provisions are lacking for those who wish to return to work, and women disproportionately take the leave. Only 21% of infants under 3 are in formal childcare, and women with children under 12 are 28.1% less likely to be employed as compared to men in the same category. Women also take on the majority of the burden of caring for dependent elderly relatives, only 12% of whom receive formal care.

Gender stereotypes in education persist, leading to gender-stereotyped educational choices, which helps perpetuate gender segregation of the labour market.

39% of people in Estonia know a woman victim of domestic violence within their family or friendship circle. Tolerance for violence against women is however relatively high, with only 72% of people thinking physical violence a "very serious" issue and 21% saying sexual violence is only "fairly serious".¹

TRENDS:



In 2010, a first gender pay gap survey was carried out in Estonia. In 2012, the government announced an action plan to close the gender pay gap, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Running until 2015, the EUR 4 million fund is also intended for actions to combat human trafficking and violence against women, to support the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner's office (currently severely under-funded and under-resourced), and to promote reconciliation of professional and private life. Some of the funding is open to women's associations.

Between 2010 and 2012, a pilot project also worked on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the state budget. This built on a series of gender mainstreaming projects run by the Ministry of Social Affairs since 2004.



Although Estonia adopted a Gender Equality Act in 2004, political will has been lacking to implement these legal provisions, reflecting a widespread lack of knowledge and understanding of human rights. Many of the bodies envisaged in the Act remain inexistent, including the Gender Equality Council, a government advisory body.

In the field of decision-making, there was a drop from 24% to 19.8% of women in parliament following the March 2011 elections. Fewer women were put on the electoral lists. There is only 1 female minister in government.

Highlights

20%
women in parliament

7%
women on boards and women presidents of the largest companies

27.6%
gender pay gap

92%
of children between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare

12% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

20 weeks maternity leave at 100% pay

0.5 places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10000 inhabitants

¹ Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010