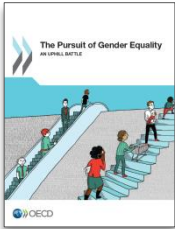


How does ITALY compare?



The 2017 OECD report *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle* explores how gender inequalities persist in social and economic life around the world. Young women in OECD countries have more years of schooling than young men, on average, but women are less still likely to engage in paid work. Gaps widen with age, as motherhood typically has negative effects on women's pay and career advancement. Women are also less likely to be entrepreneurs, and are under-represented in private and public leadership. In the face of these challenges, this report assesses whether (and how) countries are closing gender gaps in education, employment, entrepreneurship, and public life. The report presents a range of statistics on gender gaps, reviews public policies targeting gender inequality, and offers key policy recommendations.

Italy has much room to improve in gender equality

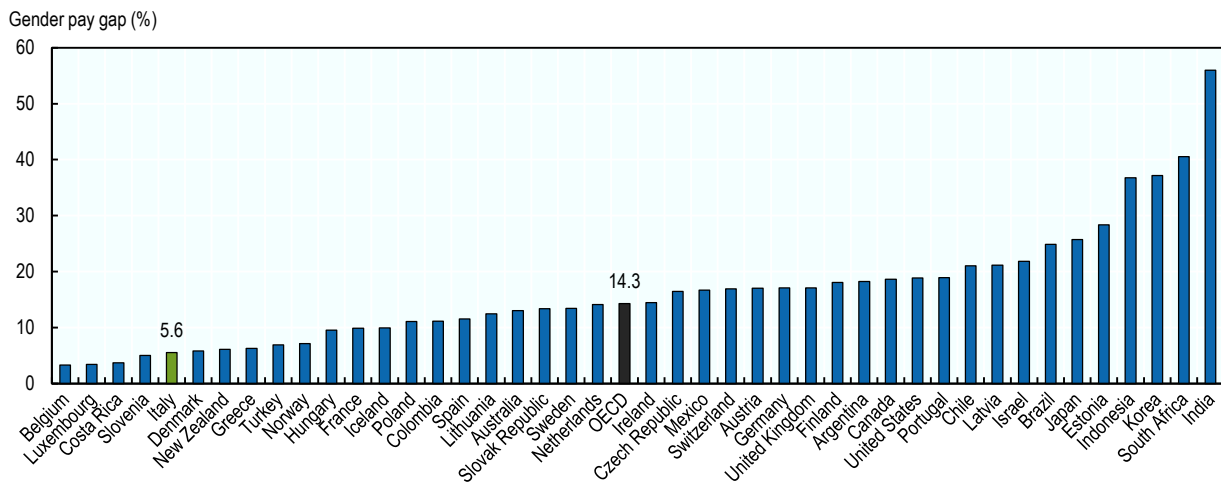
Unemployment rates in Italy have not recovered from earlier economic crises, and Italian women still have one of the lowest labour force participation rates in the OECD. The small number of women in the workforce contributes to Italy having one of the lowest gender pay gaps in the OECD: those women who do engage in paid work are likely to be better-educated and have a higher earnings capacity than women who stay at home. Self-employment is fairly common in Italy, particularly among young women and men, but the gender gap in earnings is high.

One reason for women's low labour force participation and low self-employment income is the lack of access to good-quality and affordable childcare – only one quarter of children (0-2 years) in Italy are in formal childcare.

The government has made efforts to support families with childcare through a voucher system, but regional disparities persist. Improving access to childcare should help more women enter work, given that Italian women do more than three-quarters of all unpaid work (e.g. care for dependents) in the home. Less-educated Italian women with children face especially high barriers to paid work.

Despite these obstacles, there has been some progress in gender equality at the top. In recent years, Italy has significantly increased women's participation on boards of directors. Italy introduced quotas for listed companies to have at least 33% of board members be women, and the percentage of women on boards doubled from 15% in 2013 to 30% in 2016.

Gender pay gap, 2015 or latest available year



Notes: Gender gap in median earnings for full-time employees. The gender gap is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings for full-time employees. Data for Italy refer to 2014. See [\[Figure 1.3\]](#)

Summary indicators of gender equality

	Female share (%) of Bachelor's graduates	Female share (%) of Bachelor's graduates in STEM	Gender gap (p.p.) in the labour force participation rate	Female share (%) of managers	Gender pay gap (median earnings, full-time employees, %)	Gender gap (p.p.) in the share of workers who are employers	Female share (%) of seats in parliament
Italy	58.7	38.4	20.0	26.6	5.6	3.9	31.0
OECD average	58.2	31.1	12.2	31.2	14.3	3.3	28.7
Top performer	69.1 (SWE)	41.4 (POL)	3.0 (FIN)	44.3 (LVA)	3.3 (BEL)	1.7 (NOR)	47.6 (ISL)
Bottom performer	45.4 (JPN)	15.4 (JPN)	42.0 (TUR)	10.5 (KOR)	37.2 (KOR)	4.6 (ISR)	9.5 (JPN)

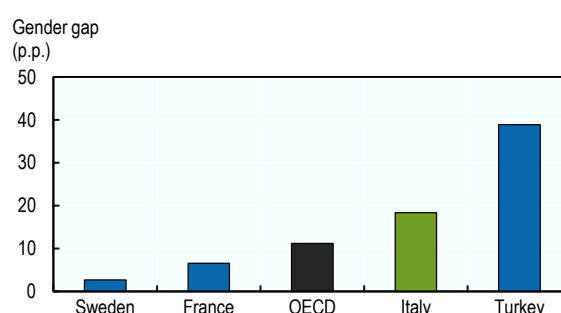
Notes: BEL = Belgium, FIN = Finland, ISL = Iceland, ISR = Israel, JPN = Japan, KOR = Korea, LVA = Latvia, NOR = Norway, POL = Poland, SWE = Sweden, TUR = Turkey

In a survey carried out for *The Pursuit of Gender Equality*, governments identified the three most important gender inequality issues in their country as violence against women, the gender wage gap, and the unequal sharing of unpaid work. Many OECD countries are now prioritizing these issues in policy, and many are also pushing to get more women into public and private sector leadership.

Getting low-skilled women into paid work is key

In Italy more than in many other OECD countries, one of the key challenges remains getting and keeping women in the labour market. Fewer than half of working-age Italian women are in employment and, at 18 percentage points (p.p.), the gender employment gap in Italy is one of the largest in the OECD. Gender employment gaps are particularly large among low-skilled men and women, especially after they become parents – less educated mothers are well over 40 p.p. less likely to be in paid work than similarly-educated fathers [Chapter 11]. Italy must do more to ensure work is attractive for less-educated women, as encouraging these women to work is key to closing the Italian gender employment gap.

Gender employment gap, 2016

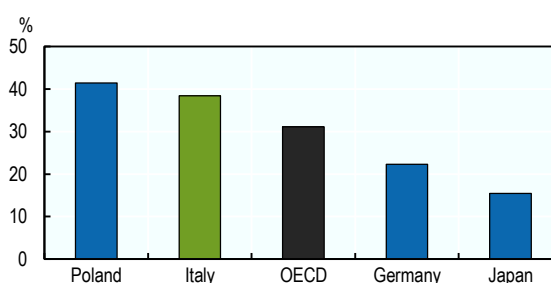


Notes: Male minus female difference in employment rates for 15-64 year-olds. See [Figure 11.1](#)

STEM studies: Italian women are successful

In Italy, almost 40% of graduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects are women, compared to the OECD average of 31%. While men do continue to dominate employment in fields like ICT, with more and more female graduates, women could be advancing substantially in this area in coming years [Chapter 23]. Italian policy makers and employers could capitalise on women's advancement in STEM to spur innovation and business development. There may also be opportunities to promote flexible working using new technologies that could help both men and women reconcile work and family life and potentially have a positive impact on the balance of unpaid work and caregiving in households.

Female graduates in STEM, 2015 or latest

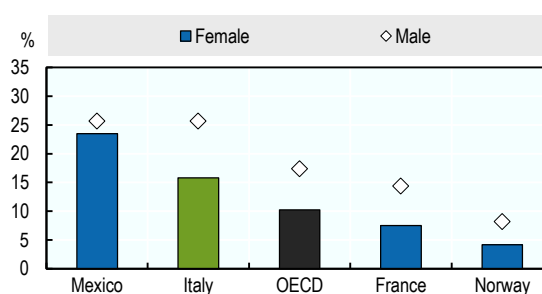


Notes: Female share (%) of Bachelor's graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Self-employed workers face challenges

Self-employment rates in Italy are some of the highest in the OECD (16% for women and 26% for men). However, the gender gap in self-employment earnings is very large, with self-employed women earning 54% less than self-employed men [Chapter 24]. Several factors lie behind this gap, including women working in sectors that are less profitable and working fewer hours. In the context of the large gender gap in unpaid work, self-employed women in Italy may also struggle to balance paid and unpaid work responsibilities. Greater policy supports for female entrepreneurs in the areas of entrepreneurial skills and access to finance could help more women-owned businesses thrive and grow.

Self-employment rates, 2016 or latest



Notes: Self-employed as a percent of all employed, by gender, 15-64 year-olds. Data for Mexico and the OECD average refer to 2015. See [Figure 24.1](#).