GRASS CEILING

D1.1

Policy brief on the available data on rural women and women farmers across Europe

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Abstract

This policy brief reports the datasets and leading indicators of women's agricultural and rural activities in a select number of European Countries. The analysis focuses on publicly accessible data that may serve as a basis for evidence-based decision-making. The policies related to women's empowerment are also summarised. These include regulations on parental leave and gender-specific measures included in the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy. The results indicate that mutual learning may be fruitful in adopting the best practices from different European countries as the data, support measures, and paternal leave regulations vary. The policy brief brings valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and women innovators active in agribusiness and rural development.

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01 Introduction

Motivation. The GRASS CEILING project seeks to identify and motivate socio-ecological transitions in rural areas and the agricultural sector, focusing on gender equity. This report identifies relevant datasets that help understand critical relevant trends and developments.
Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in agriculture and rural areas requires evidence of the extent and patterns of the gender gap. Therefore, it is relevant to summarise the datasets publicly available in the EU Member States or the EU agencies that describe gender-related issues in the agricultural sector and rural areas. Such data may guide the policy-making process, including the development of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Objectives. This deliverable aims to summarise the datasets on gender-related issues for agriculture and rural areas across the EU, with specific attention for the nine EU Member States that are represented in the GRASS CEILING consortium. Moreover, it seeks to reveal good practices in reporting gender-related issues in the EU. By identifying the data availability and gaps, we can outline the primary objectives for the data collection in the EU that would ensure promoting gender equality and the support of women's engagement in innovation.
Partners from the nine countries represented in the GRASS CEILING project summarised the publicly available data in their countries. The major topics covered are the position of women in agriculture and rural areas. The former topic includes the number of farms that are led by women and the number of women involved in various (innovative) agricultural activities. The latter topic covers women's activities in businesses that operate in rural areas.
In addition to the description of the datasets, we also discussed the additional topics related to gender roles in agriculture and rural areas. The support measures financed under the CAP and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) are crucial for developing the EU agriculture and rural areas. These measures may include various criteria for prioritisation of projects submitted. Among such measures, the gender dimension may be expressed. Thus, we seek to identify the manifestations of such instances. Note that this contribution does not cover schemes such as the Cohesion Fund.
Another additional topic is the regulations surrounding parental leave and benefits in the EU countries, Norway, and the UK represented in the GRASS CEILING consortium. Indeed, parental leave and benefits are essential for developing equal opportunities for women and men in the rural areas and agricultural sector, as proper social guarantees allow for a more reasonable balance between work and family commitments.

This deliverable focuses on datasets that are readily and easily available to the public. By doing this, we seek to identify the possibilities for increasing awareness of gender-related issues, the development of evidence-based policies and tools, and the monitoring of realised changes. Identifying data gaps will allow to propose the specific areas where data availability needs to increase. This will enhance the effectivity of national and European agricultural and rural policies, and, eventually, reducing the gender gaps in agriculture and rural areas, and is of particular interest for the CAP and related national strategic plans and the rural observatory that supports the long-term vision for rural areas.

Methodology. Statistical information on the situation and activities of women in agriculture and rural areas is presented in the report using Eurostat's database containing the results of statistical studies: surveys of the structure of farms and agricultural census; statistical survey of determining the number and composition of the permanent population; statistical survey of population employment; statistical survey of adult education; statistical survey of income and living conditions. These surveys are carried out in accordance with EU regulations, and the statistical information is comparable at the EU level. As some data on the role of women in agriculture is only collected in certain countries, a list of questions/indicators was drawn up asking partner countries (Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Spain, and Sweden) to check local statistical databases and grey literature sources (reports, studies on women in rural areas or agriculture) and to provide relevant data. Data were requested to be quickly and readily available. The question covered the following questions: women's participation in unions or cooperatives; women's farms applying innovative socio-ecological farming practices; women's farms diversifying their farming activities; women's organic farms; women's start-ups in rural areas; women's participation in local action groups; women's participation in social innovation initiatives in rural areas. Information was also requested on gender mainstreaming in strategic documents, such as the Common Agricultural Policy measures for 2023–2027, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) policy, and the Regulation on maternity/paternity leave and childcare.

Relevance. The results presented in this policy brief will be further used in the activities of the GRASS CEILING project. First, the foresight exercise will be carried out to identify the possible women-led sustainable transitions in agriculture, rural economy, and rural communities in the EU. Second, the findings of this contribution will be used to formulate policy recommendations on ensuring the inclusion of women innovators.

02 Women's legal position and ownership of capital in agriculture

From a gender equality viewpoint, farming remains a male-dominated area in Europe. However, the position of women and men in the agricultural sector differs considerably between European countries. According to the Farm Structure Survey (2016) and the EU Census of Agriculture (2020), the share of female-managed farms in total farms increased in Europe from 28.5% to 31.6%. Still, in absolute figures, the number of female-managed farms declined by 3.6%. Male-managed farms declined by 17.1% over the period in question. The representation of female farm managers varies significantly, with a share of 44.9% female-managed farms in Lithuania to 5.6% in the Netherlands in 2020 (See Table 1). It can be argued that these figures do not necessarily reflect the actual empowerment of farm women in a reliable manner, as in many countries, the registration of farms in the name of women has been fostered through the priority criteria for applications under the Common Agricultural Policy's investment measures (2007–2013). Meanwhile, in the Netherlands it is difficult to identify the number of women-managed farms as the percentage reported in Table 1 only refers to women who manage as single farm head or as the farm head with the biggest share of management rights. It is quite usual for Dutch farm families to formally register both husband and wife as co-farm managers. Dutch statistics, however, only include the primary farm head with the most management rights, who generally are men. This renders female co- farm heads invisible.

Table 1. Number of farms and the proportion of farm managers by gender in 2020

Countries	Number of farms			% of farms	
	Total	Males	Females	Males	Females
European Union	9,067,300	6,199,850	2,867,450	68.4	31.6
Belgium	36,000	30,670	5,320	85.2	14.8
Bulgaria	132,740	95,650	37,100	72.1	27.9
Czechia	28,910	23,670	5,240	81.9	18.1
Denmark	37,090	33,050	4,030	89.1	10.9
Germany	262,560	234,150	28,410	89.2	10.8
Estonia	11,370	8,050	3,320	70.8	29.2
Ireland	130,190	115,320	14,870	88.6	11.4
Greece	530,680	360,020	170,660	67.8	32.2
Spain	914,870	653,300	261,570	71.4	28.6
France	393,030	308,890	84,140	78.6	21.4
Croatia	143,920	106,820	37,100	74.2	25.8
Italy	1,130,530	774,760	355,770	68.5	31.5
Cyprus	34,050	26,840	7,210	78.8	21.2
Latvia	68,980	38,100	30,890	55.2	44.8
Lithuania	132,080	72,740	59,340	55.1	44.9
Luxembourg	1,880	1,550	330	82.4	17.6
Hungary	232,060	165,800	66,260	71.4	28.6
Malta	7,650	6,830	830	89.3	10.8
Netherlands	52,640	49,710	2,930	94.4	5.6
Austria	110,780	71,670	39,120	64.7	35.3
Poland	1,301,490	853,370	448,120	65.6	34.4
Portugal	290,230	199,620	90,610	68.8	31.2

Romania	2,887,070	1,811,300	1,075,770	62.7	37.3
Slovenia	72,470	52,370	20,100	72.3	27.7
Slovakia	19,630	16,190	3,440	82.5	17.5
Finland	45,630	40,660	4,970	89.1	10.9
Sweden	58,790	48,800	9,990	83.0	17.0
Norway	38,710	32,230	6,490	83.3	16.8

Source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region - Note: European Union represents 28 countries (2013–2020)

Surveys on the farm structure are carried out in accordance with EU legislation under a standard methodology. At regional levels (up to NUTS level 3), comparable and representative statistics of countries are provided on farms, land use, number of animals, and farm labour costs (including age, gender, and relationship to agricultural holding). This data is available at national and (sometimes) regional level and for different years. Farm structure surveys (FFS) are conducted every three or four years as a sample survey and once every ten years under census conditions.

Table 2 provides information on standard output per farm by gender in 2016 and 2020. It is noticeable that in 2020 compared to 2016, the standard output of EU countries grew by 23% for male farm holders and 35% for female farm holders.
Standard output is an indicator that is calculated to determine the economic size of the farm, and it shows the production value of each agricultural statistical indicator in the respective region under average conditions. The standard output shows how much the farm creates value for each type of agricultural production. A significant difference remains in the standard output realised on farms managed by male or female. The standard output created by one farm in 2020, the amount on average in analysed European countries for male farm holders – was 49,706 EUR, and for females – 18,816 EUR. In 2020, the standard output of female farm holders was the lowest in Romania, Malta, Cyprus, Lithuania, and Greece. The highest production rates were in the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Iceland, and Denmark. In 2020, on average in the European countries, the standard output of a female farm holders accounted for 38% of that of a male farm holders. The highest gender gaps in standard output are observed in Cyprus, Malta and Lithuania, where female farm holders standard output accounts for only 23%, 26% and 34% of the standard output of men farm holders, respectively, while the lowest gender gaps in standard output are registered in the Czech Republic, Austria, Finland and Iceland (See Table 2).

Table 2. The standard output per farm by sex of the farm holder in 2016 and 2020, EUR

Countries	Standard output per one farm in EUR						Growth (2020 against 2016), %		
	2016			2020					
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Belgium	208,360	217,839	151,764	233,518	242,437	182,539	112	111	120
Bulgaria	18,788	20,180	14,579	30,823	33,361	24,271	164	165	166
Czechia	230,195	241,401	149,252	191,488	195,439	173,639	83	81	116
Denmark	260,968	272,860	114,204	272,314	291,622	114,651	104	107	100
Germany	178,361	184,019	125,064	177,528	185,562	111,314	100	101	89
Estonia	47,997	62,747	18,204	74,135	88,042	40,414	154	140	222
Ireland	45,849	48,702	22,400	52,621	53,939	42,403	115	111	189
Greece	10,845	12,340	6,895	14,592	17,064	9,378	135	138	136
Spain	40,671	45,472	24,249	49,332	56,692	30,948	121	125	128
France	135,085	149,174	83,033	163,665	180,749	100,944	121	121	122
Croatia	15,051	16,920	9,734	14,006	15,408	9,971	93	91	102
Italy	45,115	55,988	21,521	50,079	60,103	28,249	111	107	131
Cyprus	17,650	21,108	5,767	25,749	30,735	7,190	146	146	125
Latvia	17,465	22,801	10,910	19,661	27,646	9,805	113	121	90

Lithuania	14,810	20,628	7,669	17,409	24,810	8,336	118	120	109
Luxembourg	185,283	199,979	114,831	172,314	187,556	100,726	93	94	88
Hungary	15,192	17,475	9,105	30,463	35,487	17,892	201	203	197
Malta	10,528	10,802	6,053	11,241	12,204	3,178	107	113	53
Netherlands	414,638	426,912	190,434	472,527	486,899	228,689	114	114	120
Austria	47,399	50,950	39,728	59,813	62,996	53,965	126	124	136
Poland	17,718	21,204	9,364	20,624	22,529	16,997	116	106	182
Portugal	19,881	23,798	10,762	24,122	28,653	14,142	121	120	131
Romania	3,424	4,154	1,978	4,189	5,093	2,666	122	123	135
Slovenia	16,578	17,844	11,584	15,929	18,286	9,788	96	102	84
Slovakia	75,270	83,994	38,668	101,492	109,843	62,188	135	131	161
Finland	70,702	69,485	79,618	71,360	72,913	58,650	101	105	74
Sweden	81,962	90,411	35,903	96,015	105,852	47,959	117	117	134
Iceland	:	:	:	174,637	181,716	145,457	:	:	:
Norway	:	:	:	98,327	104,246	68,779	:	:	:
United Kingdom	137,891	152,954	53,426	:	:	:	:	:	:
Total	**32,712**	**40,265**	**13,893**	**39,958**	**49,706**	**18,816**	**122**	**123**	**135**

Data source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilized agricultural area and NUTS2 region

On average, the land area owned by farms increased by 3.2% in European countries since 2016. The utilized agricultural land area for farms with male farm holder remained in the same level, and for female farm holders, it increased by 23% in 2020 compared to 2016 (See Table 3).

Table 3. Farm indicators of the utilized agricultural area by male and female farm holders in 2020, %

Countries	Distribution of utilized agricultural area (in ha) by sex of the farm holder in 2020, %			Growth in the utilized agricultural area (in ha) by sex of the farm holders 2020 compared to 2016, %		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Belgium	100	88	12	105	104	108
Bulgaria	100	79	21	120	116	140
Czechia	100	87	13	101	94	206
Denmark	100	94	6	110	108	164
Germany	100	92	8	99	99	107
Estonia	100	86	14	98	96	111
Ireland	100	90	10	92	90	124
Greece	100	76	24	90	84	111
Spain	100	80	20	110	104	143
France	100	87	13	101	101	97
Croatia	100	81	19	96	94	108
Italy	100	77	23	96	94	100
Cyprus	100	90	10	120	120	119
Latvia	100	75	25	102	105	94
Lithuania	100	76	24	100	101	96
Luxembourg	100	88	12	101	101	99
Hungary	100	83	17	105	104	112
Malta	100	92	8	88	85	147
Netherlands	100	97	3	101	101	114
Austria	100	69	31	105	98	125
Poland	100	73	27	103	90	163
Portugal	100	81	19	112	108	134
Romania	100	75	25	116	110	140
Slovenia	100	80	20	99	93	136
Slovakia	100	91	9	99	100	87

Finland	100	92	8	102	103	97
Sweden	100	91	9	100	99	113
Norway	100	87	13	99	98	109
Total	**100**	**83**	**17**	**103**	**99.9**	**123**

Data source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region

The comparison of data for 2020 and 2016 indicates that the use of utilised agricultural area by female farm holders increased twice in Czechia, in Denmark – by 64%, in Poland – by 63%, in Malta – by 47% and in Spain – by 43%. However, the following countries showed a decrease in the utilised agriculture area: Slovakia 12.6%, in Latvia 5.6%, in Lithuania 3.9%, in Finland 2.6%, in France 2.8%, in Luxembourg 1.0%.

The use of utilised agricultural area by male farm holders decreased in Greece by 15.6%, in Malta – by 15.3%, in Ireland – by 10.4%, in Poland – by 10.0%, in Slovenia – by 7.5%, in Croatia – by 6.4%, in Czechia – by 6.2% and in Italy – by 5.7%. The growth was noted in Cyprus (19.9%), Bulgaria (15.8%), Romania (9.6%), Portugal (8.1%), Denmark (7.8%).

Nevertheless, in European countries in 2020, male farm holders used by far the biggest share of utilised agricultural area (83%), leaving only a small share of utilised agricultural area to female farm holders (17%) (See Table 3). The lowest proportion of land managed by female farm holders may be found in the Netherlands – 3%, in Denmark 6%, in Germany, in Finland and in Malta – 8.0%. The highest proportion was in Austria – 31%, in Poland – 27%, in Latvia and Romania – 25%, in Greece, in Lithuania – 24%.

Many farmers and farmworkers are farming on a part-time basis. Many farms are, moreover, family-run with family members helping on the farm during the year, this is seasonal work in European countries. So, they are converted into full-time work. Table 4 shows the number of persons employed in terms of annual work units (AWU) in European countries by sex of the farm holder and by size of the farm in 2020. There is a marked gender imbalance among farmers by farm size group and female farm holders were relatively rare in all the size of farm groups. In the farm group 100 ha and over, the least female farm holders may be found at 12%. Male farm holders are represented at 88%, whereas female farm holders prevail in the group up to 4.9 ha (68%) compared to – 32%, males.

Table 4. Labour force in AWU by sex of the farm holder and the size of the farm in 2020, %

Sex/farm size	Total	Up to 4.9 ha		From 5 to 9.9 ha		From 10 to 19.9 ha		From 20 to 29.9 ha		From 30 to 49.9 ha		From 50 to 99.9 ha		100 ha or over	
		Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**	Males	**Females**
Belgium	100	84	**16**	85	**14**	85	**15**	88	**12**	89	**11**	90	**10**	92	**8**
Bulgaria	100	70	**30**	72	**28**	73	**27**	73	**27**	73	**27**	75	**25**	81	**19**
Czechia	100	78	**22**	77	**23**	81	**19**	79	**21**	79	**21**	84	**16**	85	**15**
Denmark	100	89	**11**	82	**18**	84	**16**	89	**11**	91	**9**	94	**6**	96	**4**
Germany	100	86	**14**	83	**17**	87	**13**	90	**10**	91	**9**	93	**7**	93	**7**
Estonia	100	68	**32**	59	**41**	63	**37**	75	**25**	71	**29**	83	**17**	86	**14**
Ireland	100	:	:	84	**16**	87	**13**	88	**12**	90	**10**	92	**8**	92	**8**
Greece	100	70	**30**	76	**24**	80	**20**	83	**17**	85	**15**	87	**13**	90	**10**
Spain	100	71	**29**	73	**27**	73	**27**	77	**23**	80	**20**	81	**19**	84	**16**
France	100	68	**32**	77	**23**	76	**24**	76	**24**	80	**20**	84	**16**	88	**12**
Croatia	100	72	**28**	75	**25**	78	**22**	82	**18**	83	**17**	86	**14**	89	**11**
Italy	100	69	**31**	73	**27**	77	**23**	81	**19**	82	**18**	85	**15**	86	**14**
Cyprus	100	80	**20**	90	**10**	93	**7**	89	**11**	98	**2**	98	**2**	93	**7**

Latvia	100	50	**50**	51	**49**	56	**44**	57	**43**	64	**36**	68	**32**	79	**21**
Lithuania	100	57	**43**	53	**47**	63	**37**	62	**38**	69	**31**	72	**28**	86	**14**
Luxembourg	100	74	**23**	78	**22**	78	**19**	58	**42**	74	**22**	86	**14**	91	**9**
Hungary	100	72	**28**	76	**24**	81	**19**	85	**15**	83	**17**	83	**17**	89	**11**
Malta	100	91	**9**	97	**3**	100	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	100	94	**6**	96	**4**	96	**4**	96	**4**	95	**5**	96	**4**	98	**1**
Austria	100	63	**37**	58	**42**	59	**41**	62	**38**	63	**37**	68	**32**	78	**22**
Poland	100	61	**39**	67	**33**	69	**31**	70	**30**	71	**29**	72	**28**	82	**18**
Portugal	100	66	**34**	73	**27**	77	**23**	82	**18**	82	**18**	86	**14**	89	**11**
Romania	100	66	**34**	74	**26**	79	**21**	81	**19**	82	**18**	81	**19**	82	**18**
Slovenia	100	71	**29**	79	**21**	83	**17**	86	**14**	90	**10**	90	**11**	92	**8**
Slovakia	100	82	**18**	78	**22**	84	**16**	84	**16**	85	**15**	88	**12**	91	**9**
Finland	100	87	**13**	80	**20**	82	**18**	90	**10**	87	**13**	91	**9**	94	**6**
Sweden	100	76	**25**	67	**33**	74	**26**	83	**17**	86	**14**	88	**12**	92	**8**
Iceland	100	**:**	**:**	100	:	67	**23**	75	**25**	91	**9**	85	**15**	82	**18**
Norway	100	76	**24**	77	**23**	80	**20**	82	**18**	84	**16**	87	**13**	93	**7**
Total	100	**68**	**32**	**72**	**28**	**75**	**25**	**78**	**22**	**81**	**19**	**84**	**16**	**88**	**12**

Data source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region

When examining the total utilised agricultural area in the European countries by gender of the farm holders in 2020, differences are noticeable. In 2020, the utilised agricultural area in the analysed European countries was 156,079,120 hectares, of which the utilised agricultural area by male farm holders was 128,887,620 hectares, and the utilised agricultural area by female farm holders was 27,191,480 hectares, which is 82.6% and 17.4%, respectively. Table 5 contains information on the distribution of total utilised agricultural area of different sizes managed by male and female farm holders.

Table 5. Utilised agricultural area by sex and the size of the farm in 2020, %

Size of the farm	Total	to 19.9 ha			From 20 to 49.9 ha			From 50 to 99.9 ha			100 ha or over		
Sex		Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**
Belgium	100	10.1	9.5	**14.5**	25.7	25.3	**29.2**	34.7	35.0	**32.2**	29.5	30.2	**24.1**
Bulgaria	100	7.5	6.8	**9.9**	8.7	8.0	**11.3**	8.7	8.3	**10.4**	75.1	76.9	**68.3**
Czechia	100	3.0	2.7	**4.5**	4.5	4.2	**6.2**	6.1	6.1	**6.6**	86.4	87.0	**82.6**
Denmark	100	5.5	5.0	**14.6**	7.7	7.5	**11.2**	11.5	11.3	**13.6**	75.3	76.1	**60.6**
Germany	100	6.9	6.5	**12.0**	12.3	12.0	**15.2**	19.1	19.4	**16.1**	61.7	62.2	**56.7**
Estonia	100	5.7	4.4	**13.9**	6.7	5.7	**12.2**	7.5	7.2	**9.7**	80.0	82.7	**64.3**
Ireland	100	13.3	12.8	**18.2**	36.2	36.1	**37.0**	29.8	30.2	**26.0**	20.7	20.9	**18.7**
Greece	100	58.8	54.8	**71.5**	25.0	26.7	**19.6**	10.9	12.4	**6.4**	5.3	6.2	**2.5**
Spain	100	13.9	12.1	**21.0**	13.4	12.7	**16.4**	14.9	14.8	**15.1**	57.8	60.4	**47.4**
France	100	3.4	2.8	**7.6**	8.0	6.9	**14.9**	20.9	20.2	**25.5**	67.8	70.1	**52.0**
Croatia	100	38.6	35.5	**52.0**	16.8	17.1	**15.7**	14.4	15.1	**11.3**	30.2	32.3	**21.1**
Italy	100	32.6	29.2	**44.0**	22.0	22.2	**21.2**	18.3	19.3	**14.8**	27.1	29.2	**20.0**
Cyprus	100	46.8	43.7	**74.8**	17.2	18.3	**7.5**	15.2	16.3	**5.3**	20.7	21.7	**12.5**
Latvia	100	15.3	11.1	**27.8**	10.9	9.2	**15.9**	10.0	9.5	**11.3**	63.8	70.2	**45.0**
Lithuania	100	20.0	14.5	**37.1**	11.9	10.7	**15.6**	13.2	13.2	**13.2**	54.9	61.5	**34.2**
Luxembourg	100	2.9	2.6	**5.8**	7.1	6.1	**14.2**	26.8	26.1	**31.8**	63.2	65.2	**48.2**
Hungary	100	13.3	11.6	**21.6**	10.3	9.9	**12.7**	11.4	11.2	**12.5**	65.0	67.4	**53.2**
Malta	100	98.8	98.6	**98.8**	:	:	**:**	:	:	**:**	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Netherlands	100	10.5	10.1	**23.0**	27.2	27.1	**31.6**	35.6	35.9	**27.7**	26.7	27.0	**17.8**
Austria	100	21.9	20.2	**25.7**	38.2	36.9	**41.2**	24.7	25.3	**23.3**	15.1	17.6	**9.7**
Poland	100	43.3	40.8	**50.1**	21.4	21.5	**21.4**	12.1	12.2	**11.9**	23.1	25.6	**16.7**

Portugal	100	21.5	18.9	**32.6**	10.2	9.9	**11.5**	10.0	9.8	**10.8**	58.3	61.5	**45.0**
Romania	100	37.4	33.0	**50.5**	8.7	9.2	**7.2**	6.1	6.6	**4.9**	47.8	51.2	**37.5**
Slovenia	100	65.2	61.8	**78.2**	19.9	21.7	**12.8**	7.4	8.1	**4.7**	7.6	8.4	**4.4**
Slovakia	100	4.0	3.6	**7.7**	3.6	3.3	**6.5**	3.8	3.7	**5.2**	88.6	89.4	**80.6**
Finland	100	7.8	7.3	**13.3**	20.3	20.0	**24.1**	28.7	28.6	**29.8**	43.3	44.2	**32.8**
Sweden	100	9.8	8.5	**24.1**	11.9	11.4	**17.1**	15.5	15.5	**16.2**	62.8	64.7	**42.6**
Norway	100	20.5	19.3	**28.7**	38.7	38.1	**42.4**	27.2	27.9	**22.6**	13.7	14.8	**6.4**
Total	100	**18.1**	**15.4**	**30.8**	**14.4**	**13.8**	**17.0**	**15.9**	**16.2**	**14.5**	**51.6**	**54.5**	**37.7**

Data source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager. economic size of the farm. utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region

Analysing the utilised agricultural area according to farm size (Table 5), 30.8% of utilised agricultural area up to 19.9 ha are managed by female farm holders and 15.4% by males, while the utilised agricultural area of 100 ha or over are managed mainly by male farm holders – 54.5% and 37.7% by females; generally, it can be said that women-led farms are small. In Luxembourg, Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Denmark, and Estonia, there are only few utilised agricultural area up to 19.9 ha among women and men-led farms (from 2.4% to 14.6%). In Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, and Croatia, utilised agricultural area up to 19.9 ha represent a large proportion of both male and female farm holders (from 35.5% to 78.2%).

Table 6 provides an overview of the number of farm workers by sex and legal status. According to the status of farm workers, their main groups are distinguished. Farm labour force, directly and regularly employed by the farm are family workers; sole holder directly employed by the farm, refers to the farm holder work on the farm, owned by their family as their only occupation. Members of the sole holders' family, excluding the holder, directly employed by the farm, help their family member to manage the agricultural holding. They are not considered employees but are considered as persons working without payment. Non-family farm labour is directly and regularly employed by the farm. Farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a non-regular basis, is considered as seasonal labour force (seasonal work).
When analysing the structure of the number of farm workers according to the gender and status of farm workers by the main groups, it is observed that in EU –28 countries, males made up 69.0% of the labour force, and females – 30.6% in 2016. According to labour force status, sole holder directly employed by the farm in EU –28 countries on average was – 52.3%, the members of sole holders' family, excluding the holder, directly employed by the farm was – 43.5%, non-family farm labour force, directly employed by the farm regularly was – 4.2%, farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a non-regular basis was – 18.2%.

Table 6. Sole holder directly employed by the farm (in persons) in 2016, %

Sole holder holding (person), %	Total	Males	Females	Sole holder directly employed by the farm	Members of sole holders' family. excluding the holder, directly employed by the farm	Non-family farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a regular basis	Farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a non-regular basis
Belgium	100	85.8	14.2	56.2	36.5	7.4	41.1
Bulgaria	100	75.0	25.0	49.3	46.6	4.2	24.5
Czechia	100	87.4	12.6	42.2	45.3	12.5	30.6
Denmark	100	92.5	7.5	50.1	22.0	27.9	24.6
Germany	100	89.7	10.3	47.9	40.1	12.0	33.1
Estonia	100	62.5	37.5	50.7	45.9	3.4	14.5
Ireland	100	88.4	11.6	51.9	41.6	6.5	41.0
Greece	100	65.2	34.8	57.2	40.2	2.6	17.2

Spain	100	70.8	29.2	46.9	43.6	9.5	16.8
France	100	74.9	25.1	67.1	26.5	6.4	42.9
Croatia	100	71.9	28.1	43.2	56.3	0.6	22.1
Italy	100	66.3	33.7	56.9	34.5	8.7	18.7
Cyprus	100	75.5	24.6	49.0	48.5	2.5	6.3
Latvia	100	54.5	45.5	44.5	46.0	9.5	19.0
Lithuania	100	54.7	45.3	62.5	30.7	6.9	35.1
Luxembourg	100	78.6	20.9	43.9	41.4	14.7	30.8
Hungary	100	72.1	27.9	58.3	39.2	2.5	18.4
Malta	100	92.0	8.0	59.9	38.4	1.7	15.9
Netherlands	100	94.7	5.3	36.8	47.7	15.5	32.8
Austria	100	70.8	29.2	40.4	54.9	4.7	19.6
Poland	100	68.9	31.1	45.6	51.5	3.0	26.1
Portugal	100	66.2	33.8	44.9	51.3	3.8	21.2
Romania	100	66.2	33.8	56.8	43.2	0.0	7.8
Slovenia	100	78.3	21.7	34.1	65.6	0.3	17.4
Slovakia	100	80.1	19.9	53.2	42.3	4.5	18.8
Finland	100	:	:	48.4	48.0	3.6	24.6
Sweden	100	84.3	15.7	50.7	43.4	6.0	16.3
United Kingdom	100	85.1	14.9	43.3	37.5	19.2	25.4
EU–28	**100**	**69.0**	**30.6**	**52.3**	**43.5**	**4.2**	**18.2**

Data source: Eurostat. Labour force by sex. legal status of holding and working time

Analysing the labour force by gender and legal status of the farm, it is observed that farming remains mainly a family activity. It is mainly the sole farm holders (farmers) or their family members who perform regular farm labour in the European countries. To better compare the working hours of employees, the labour force of part-time farm workers is converted into full-time annual work units (AWU). It then becomes clear that men take care of about two third of the annual work units (64.0%), compared to about one third taken care of by women (35.5%). Sole farm managers labour input differs even more with about third quarter performed by men (76.2%) compared to about one quarter by women (23.3%). When it comes to the sole holders' family, excluding the holder, directly employed by the farm, the labour input of men and women is nearly the same (45% for men and 55% for women) (See Table 7). This reflects the fact that most collaborating family members are female.

Table 7. Sole holder holding labour in annual working unit (AWU) by sex in 2016, %

Countries	Farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a regular basis	Sole holder directly employed by the farm	Members of sole holders' family, excluding the holder, directly employed by the farm	Non-family farm labour force, directly employed by the farm on a regular basis	Farm manager, excluding group holding
			Males		
Belgium	71.1	88.2	37.1	70.7	88.0
Bulgaria	62.7	76.0	40.9	82.0	76.0
Czechia	73.7	88.5	53.1	68.3	88.6
Denmark	79.7	94.4	37.4	80.3	94.4
Germany	70.2	91.4	39.7	71.0	91.8
Estonia	61.1	66.4	52.2	64.0	67.1
Ireland	80.7	91.3	55.1	90.7	91.7
Greece	70.1	75.2	58.5	90.4	79.4
Spain	73.8	76.1	65.0	91.2	78.8
France	73.0	78.2	49.6	79.0	78.3
Croatia	59.2	74.0	44.8	82.5	75.5

Italy	73.2	75.7	66.2	78.3	76.6
Cyprus	71.9	86.4	50.9	80.5	86.8
Latvia	54.5	56.4	48.5	66.4	56.9
Lithuania	56.3	56.3	50.2	71.6	56.6
Luxembourg	73.3	81.3	53.8	87.0	83.7
Hungary	62.6	76.1	34.6	72.6	76.4
Malta	85.3	96.5	61.9	92.3	96.7
Netherlands	73.7	95.9	46.8	77.1	95.8
Austria	:	68.0	37.5	62.0	64.6
Poland	60.5	74.0	42.1	71.9	75.1
Portugal	59.4	69.2	45.1	77.4	71.3
Romania	54.2	71.6	32.0	70.1	71.6
Slovenia	58.2	79.3	40.4	63.9	80.3
Slovakia	73.2	83.7	51.6	79.2	83.6
Sweden	68.8	87.5	37.9	71.5	87.2
United Kingdom	77.2	89.0	56.0	82.6	88.4
EU-28	**64.0**	**75.3**	**44.5**	**77.9**	**76.2**
			Females		
Belgium	28.9	11.8	62.8	29.3	12.0
Bulgaria	37.3	24.0	59.1	18.0	24.0
Czechia	26.3	11.6	46.9	31.7	11.4
Denmark	20.3	5.7	62.6	19.6	5.6
Germany	29.8	8.6	60.3	29.1	8.2
Estonia	38.9	33.6	47.8	36.0	32.9
Ireland	19.3	8.7	44.9	9.2	8.3
Greece	29.9	24.8	41.5	9.6	20.6
Spain	26.2	23.9	35.0	8.8	21.2
France	27.0	21.8	50.4	21.0	21.7
Croatia	40.8	26.0	55.2	17.5	24.5
Italy	26.8	24.3	33.8	21.7	23.4
Cyprus	28.1	13.7	49.1	19.5	13.2
Latvia	45.5	43.6	51.5	33.6	43.1
Lithuania	43.7	43.7	49.8	28.4	43.4
Luxembourg	26.7	18.7	46.2	13.0	16.3
Hungary	37.4	23.9	65.4	27.4	23.6
Malta	14.7	3.5	38.1	7.7	3.3
Netherlands	26.3	4.1	53.2	23.0	4.2
Austria	:	32.0	62.5	38.0	35.4
Poland	39.5	26.0	57.9	28.1	24.9
Portugal	40.6	30.8	54.9	22.6	28.7
Romania	45.8	28.4	68.0	29.9	28.4
Slovenia	41.9	20.7	59.6	36.1	19.7
Slovakia	26.8	16.3	48.4	20.8	16.3
Sweden	31.1	12.5	62.0	28.5	12.8
United Kingdom	22.9	11.0	44.0	17.4	11.6
EU–28	**35.5**	**24.1**	**55.0**	**21.6**	**23.3**

Data source: Eurostat. Labour force by sex. legal status of holding and working time

Information on agricultural statistics is provided by the Scottish Government's Rural and Environmental Science and Analysis Service and the Agricultural Census Survey. In the statistical information provided about the number of employees and when analysing the structure of the labour force by regular full-time staff, it consists of hired – 60%, family – 16%, partners – 24%. However, of regular full-time staff when analysed by gender, it is observed that 85% are males, 15%

are females. According to regular part-time staff employees – it consists of males – 64.1% and females – 35.9%. Most of the farm workers were working on a farm regular full-time staff – 62.9 % and regular part-time staff – 37.1%. According to the status of farm workers, the number of casual and seasonal staff was 8238 persons, and the proportion were males – 67.5% and females – 32.5%. When analysing utilised agricultural area by age category (See Table 8), it is observed that a small share of the total European countries utilised agricultural area was managed by farmers less than 25 years of age, with similar shares for both male and female farm holders (1.0%) and from 25 to 34 years (8.5%). These figures are the lowest ones compared to the other age groups. The age groups from 45 to 54 years and from 55 to 64 years, with a similar proportion of both male and female farm holders, had the largest proportion of utilised agricultural area.

Table 8. Distribution of the utilised agricultural area across age groups by sex of the farm holder in 2020, %

Age	Less than 25 years			From 25 to 34 years			From 35 to 44 years			From 45 to 54 years			From 55 to 64 years			65 years or over		
Sex	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**	Total	Males	**Females**
Belgium	0.4	0.3	**0.7**	7.1	7.2	**6.4**	16.3	16.2	**16.7**	28.8	29.0	**26.9**	32.7	33.0	**30.2**	14.7	14.1	**19.0**
Bulgaria	0.7	0.6	**1.1**	7.7	7.1	**10.2**	19.2	18.7	**21.4**	29.6	29.0	**31.8**	24.9	26.3	**19.7**	17.8	18.3	**15.9**
Czechia	0.6	0.6	**0.7**	5.7	5.5	**7.6**	18.7	18.5	**20.0**	26.2	26.1	**26.7**	33.0	33.2	**31.7**	15.7	16.1	**13.2**
Denmark	0.6	0.6	**0.6**	6.6	6.6	**7.6**	13.5	13.4	**16.0**	28.0	28.4	**21.0**	31.9	32.1	**30.0**	19.3	18.9	**24.8**
Germany	0.4	0.4	**0.6**	7.7	7.6	**9.0**	18.8	18.6	**20.8**	29.0	29.1	**27.4**	35.5	35.5	**34.6**	8.7	8.8	**7.5**
Estonia	0.9	0.9	**0.8**	11.7	11.2	**14.4**	19.5	19.7	**18.3**	30.2	30.6	**27.9**	25.0	25.6	**21.4**	12.8	12.0	**17.2**
Ireland	1.1	1.1	**1.2**	7.2	7.0	**8.9**	16.1	16.2	**14.4**	24.0	24.5	**19.8**	24.0	24.2	**22.6**	27.6	27.0	**33.0**
Greece	0.5	0.6	**0.4**	4.6	5.0	**3.5**	15.1	15.4	**14.4**	28.6	29.3	**26.5**	27.3	27.0	**28.0**	23.8	22.7	**27.3**
Spain	1.0	1.0	**0.7**	5.4	5.6	**4.5**	14.3	14.4	**13.9**	24.7	25.4	**21.9**	28.0	28.3	**26.9**	26.6	25.2	**32.2**
France	1.1	1.1	**0.9**	10.7	10.9	**9.0**	22.3	22.8	**19.0**	30.8	31.6	**25.4**	29.3	28.8	**33.0**	5.7	4.7	**12.6**
Croatia	2.6	2.4	**3.4**	10.7	11.1	**9.0**	20.9	21.6	**17.6**	25.8	26.1	**24.9**	23.5	23.5	**23.6**	16.4	15.3	**21.4**
Italy	1.7	1.6	**1.9**	8.0	8.0	**8.1**	14.5	14.6	**14.2**	23.5	23.8	**22.4**	25.2	25.7	**23.4**	27.1	26.3	**30.0**
Cyprus	0.7	0.8	**0.1**	6.0	6.1	**4.6**	13.6	14.4	**6.5**	19.2	19.3	**18.4**	32.0	31.8	**34.3**	28.6	27.7	**36.0**
Latvia	0.6	0.7	**0.5**	9.7	10.8	**6.4**	15.9	17.1	**12.3**	28.4	29.8	**24.2**	29.2	28.4	**31.6**	16.2	13.2	**25.0**
Lithuania	0.9	0.9	**1.1**	12.9	13.4	**11.2**	18.8	19.7	**16.0**	25.2	25.9	**23.0**	26.7	27.0	**25.6**	15.5	13.0	**23.2**
Luxembourg	0.4	0.4	**0.0**	12.7	13.0	**10.5**	22.5	23.1	**17.8**	29.5	28.8	**34.8**	25.0	24.7	**27.1**	9.8	9.8	**9.7**
Hungary	0.3	0.3	**0.2**	4.8	4.5	**6.1**	18.1	18.1	**18.1**	23.9	24.5	**20.7**	26.3	26.3	**26.2**	26.6	26.2	**28.6**
Malta	0.3	0.3	**0.0**	4.2	4.3	**2.5**	12.6	12.3	**13.6**	19.8	20.2	**14.8**	30.2	29.9	**32.1**	33.1	32.8	**35.8**
Netherlands	0.3	0.3	**0.3**	4.7	4.6	**7.0**	14.4	14.2	**19.8**	33.0	33.0	**32.9**	32.5	32.9	**23.7**	15.2	15.1	**16.3**
Austria	1.5	1.9	**0.7**	13.1	14.8	**9.6**	24.0	24.2	**23.5**	34.6	32.2	**39.8**	23.0	23.1	**22.9**	3.7	3.8	**3.5**
Poland	1.8	2.0	**1.2**	13.2	13.9	**11.5**	25.6	25.0	**27.0**	26.3	24.7	**30.5**	23.3	24.2	**21.0**	9.9	10.2	**8.8**
Portugal	0.5	0.4	**0.8**	5.5	5.7	**5.0**	14.9	15.1	**14.1**	21.9	22.8	**18.3**	25.4	26.1	**22.9**	31.8	30.1	**39.0**
Romania	1.2	1.2	**1.4**	9.3	9.2	**9.7**	19.0	18.1	**21.8**	29.9	32.4	**22.5**	18.6	19.2	**16.6**	22.0	20.0	**28.0**
Slovenia	0.7	0.7	**0.5**	7.4	7.9	**5.1**	15.6	16.4	**12.4**	25.6	26.3	**23.1**	26.2	27.1	**22.7**	24.5	21.6	**36.1**
Slovakia	0.4	0.4	**0.5**	6.7	6.6	**7.7**	17.4	17.1	**20.7**	24.3	25.3	**15.1**	34.8	34.0	**42.7**	16.2	16.5	**13.3**
Finland	0.9	0.9	**1.1**	10.2	10.1	**11.0**	22.8	22.5	**26.2**	29.6	29.6	**30.1**	26.6	27.0	**21.7**	9.9	9.9	**9.9**
Sweden	0.6	0.5	**1.1**	7.7	7.5	**9.9**	16.3	16.0	**18.5**	24.9	24.8	**25.3**	29.1	29.2	**27.3**	21.5	21.8	**17.9**
Norway	0.8	0.8	**0.9**	9.2	8.8	**11.6**	20.9	20.0	**27.4**	31.0	30.6	**33.3**	26.7	27.8	**19.7**	11.4	12.0	**7.2**
Total	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**8.5**	**8.6**	**8.3**	**18.7**	**18.6**	**18.9**	**27.4**	**27.9**	**25.2**	**27.5**	**27.9**	**25.2**	**16.9**	**16.0**	**21.3**

Data source: Eurostat. Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region

03 Rural population structure by age in the EU's predominantly rural areas

Fig. 1 presents the rural population by age and gender on 1 January 2022 for all EU–27 countries. As we will explain in the following the composition rural population differs from the population at large in terms of gender and age. When looking at the whole population across EU–27 countries we see that the percentage of women and men aged 20-64 varies between 54% to 64% for men and 52% to 60% for women. In the older age groups, the proportion of the population of women and comprised 16% to 31% for women and 14% to 25% for men, whereas the younger age groups constituted 14% to 26% of all women and 15% to 25% of men.

At first sight the overall situation seems not too different for rural areas. Of all rural women 56% are 20-64 years, 23% above 64 years, and 21% below 20 years; of all rural men 59% is between 20 and 64 years, 20% above 64 years, and 21% younger than 20 years. These percentages do, however, differ.

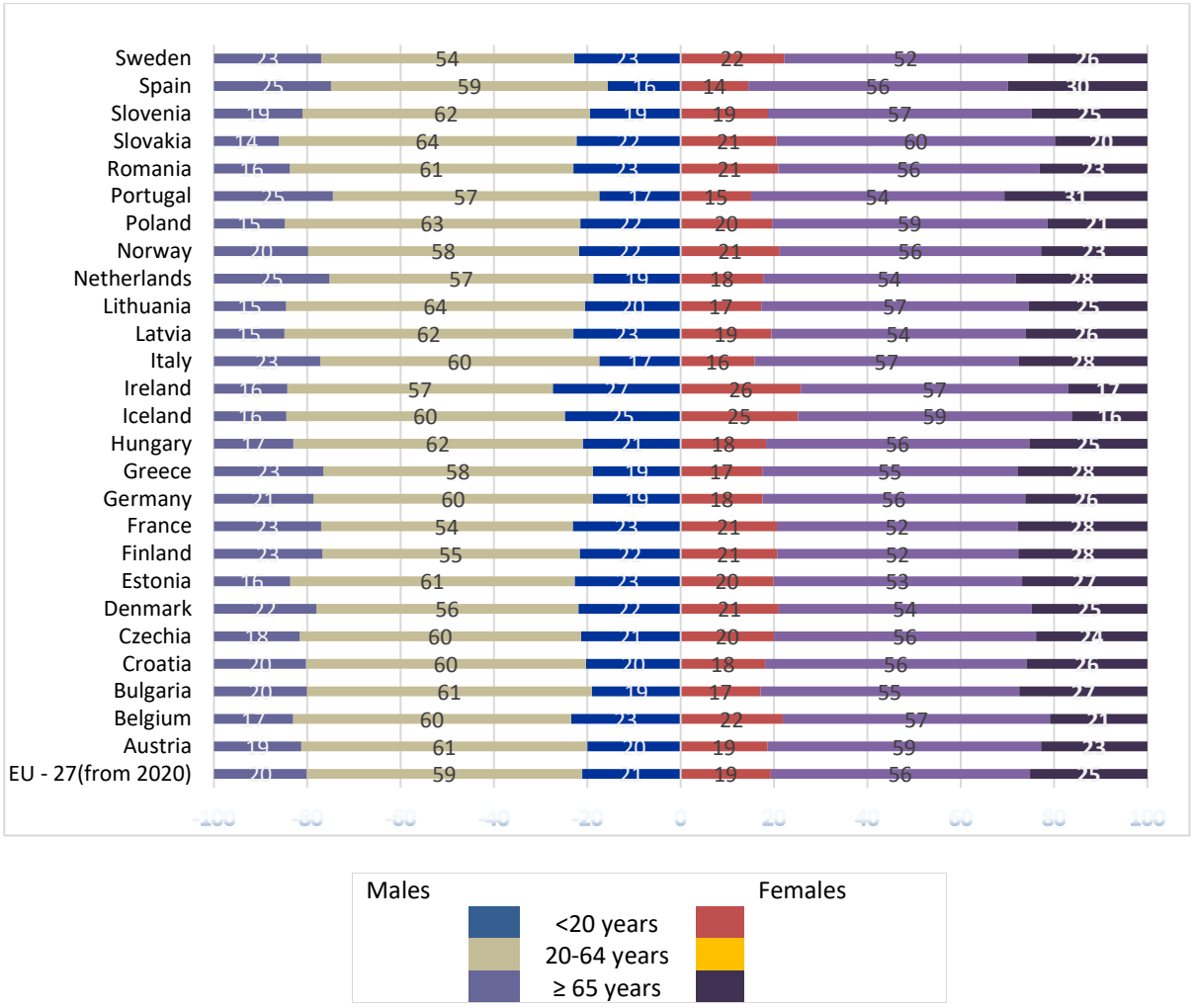

Fig. 1: People living in predominantly rural areas on 1 January 2022 by sex (% share of rural population)

Source: Eurostat. Population on 1 January by five year age group, sex and othertypologies

The population distribution by EU –27 countries in rural areas is uneven. Fig. 1 shows the population's age distribution by age and sex in rural areas. When examining the population according to the main age groups, the distribution was as follows: of all women living in rural areas on January 1st, 2022, 55.8% were in the age 20–64 years, 24.9% were above 64, and 19.3% under the age of 20. The share of men in the total population in rural areas of EU–27 countries is slightly higher than that of women, with 59.3% 20–64 years, 19.9% above 64 and 21.1%, under 20 years.

Changes in the age structure of the rural population differ between men and women. The number of young women leaving rural areas is higher than that of relatively young men. This is due to different employment opportunities in rural areas. These family farms are typically inherited by male heirs or a higher proportion of young women leaving the countryside for further education. For these reasons, the demographic balance is lost between and within regions and hinders some rural areas' social and economic development. The relative share of the working-age population and the country's labour force potential will decrease over time, while the share of older people in the population will increase.

04 Educational attainment of the population in 2014 and 2022

Education is fundamental for the development and progress of society, which increases life opportunities and improves the quality of a person's life. Social returns also depend on education; raising general educational standards will likely create a more productive workforce that can drive economic growth. Lack of educational skills and qualifications can limit employment and career opportunities.

When analysing the share of education by gender and rural areas, there were significant differences between the EU–27 countries (See Table 9 and 10). Comparing 2014 and 2022, the proportion of women with higher education increased more – 5.9 p.p. (by percentage points), and men – 3.7 p.p. in rural areas. This evolution shows that women were slightly more active in pursuing higher education. The proportion of the population having higher secondary education also increased – women by 1.4 p.p., and men by 2.2 p.p. The proportion of men having such education was less for primary education, primary and lower secondary education decreased more than women's (-7.3 p.p.) and (-5.9 p.p.).

Despite the political discourse and practice to promote equality between women and men in all EU countries, there are still significant gender differences in participation in private and public life. Reducing inequality in the labour market addresses issues such as access to basic public services, equal pay and working conditions or promotion of equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels.

Table 9. Men population by educational attainment level in rural areas in 2014 and 2022, %

Countries	Males					
	Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)		Tertiary education (levels 5-8)	
	2014	2022	2014	2022	2014	2022
EU–27 (from 2020)	31.9	26.0	52.9	55.1	15.2	18.9
Belgium	30.1	21.7	43.1	43.7	26.8	34.7
Bulgaria	42.1	31.9	52.6	61.6	5.3	6.5
Czechia	11.1	12.3	77.7	75.0	11.1	12.7
Denmark	35.3	34.7	48.2	46.5	16.5	18.8
Germany	15.3	19.8	62.3	54.7	22.4	25.5
Estonia	29.7	24.2	53.0	57.0	17.3	18.8
Ireland	32.9	23.1	41.7	42.1	25.4	34.8
Greece	48.9	37.5	36.9	47.9	14.2	14.6
Spain	59.3	51.5	20.8	23.8	19.9	24.7
France	25.9	21.7	54.0	53.1	20.1	25.3
Croatia	25.7	19.4	64.9	70.8	9.4	9.8
Italy	48.2	45.2	43.4	44.9	8.4	9.9
Cyprus	37.2	25.0	44.6	49.2	18.2	25.8
Latvia	26.2	22.0	59.9	60.3	14.0	17.6
Lithuania	20.7	16.7	64.7	61.1	14.7	22.2
Luxembourg	24.8	23.0	40.0	37.0	35.3	40.0
Hungary	29.5	25.0	63.1	66.5	7.4	8.5
Malta	57.4	35.1	27.3	30.4	15.3	34.5
Netherlands	32.1	27.4	46.5	45.7	21.5	26.9
Austria	16.1	14.4	60.3	58.5	23.5	27.1
Poland	21.6	16.8	68.0	69.8	10.4	13.4

Portugal	72.9	55.1	19.4	31.6	7.7	13.4
Romania	44.1	30.4	52.5	64.9	3.3	4.7
Slovenia	18.3	15.0	65.8	62.5	15.9	22.5
Slovakia	17.1	14.7	73.7	73.2	9.2	12.2
Finland	26.2	23.3	52.5	56.0	21.2	20.6
Sweden	27.0	22.9	56.1	52.6	17.0	24.5
Iceland	42.1	34.0	43.8	51.8	14.1	14.2
Norway	28.7	29.4	48.0	46.4	23.2	24.1
United Kingdom	19.4	:	45.0	:	35.7	:

Note: Annual, percentage, rural areas, from 15 to 64 years.
Source: Eurostat. Population by educational attainment level, sex, age and degree of urbanization (%)

As shown in Table 10, nearly all European countries show a higher proportion of women living in rural areas with tertiary education than men. However, this has rarely led to better labour market outcomes for women (both in terms of quantity and quality of employment), also because most jobs for higher educated are to be found in cities, which is another reason for women to leave the rural areas. Moreover, it may point to gender specific barriers limiting women's labour market participation.

Table 10. Women population by educational attainment level in rural areas in 2014 and 2022, %

Countries	Females					
	Less than primary. primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)		Tertiary education (levels 5-8)	
	2014	2022	2014	2022	2014	2022
EU–27 (from 2020)	31.9	24.6	48.8	50.2	19.3	25.2
Belgium	25.5	17.6	38.5	37.1	36.0	45.3
Bulgaria	44.2	34.8	45.3	53.2	10.5	12.0
Czechia	15.8	13.6	69.7	66.8	14.5	19.6
Denmark	31.3	28.3	42.3	39.2	26.4	32.4
Germany	18.7	20.1	65.5	59.1	15.8	20.8
Estonia	18.8	17.4	49.2	43.0	32.0	39.6
Ireland	23.0	16.3	40.1	37.6	36.9	46.1
Greece	46.4	36.5	37.4	44.9	16.1	18.6
Spain	52.9	41.7	22.1	25.1	25.0	33.2
France	27.0	21.0	46.5	45.7	26.5	33.3
Croatia	33.5	23.3	53.7	58.9	12.8	17.8
Italy	44.8	38.9	42.2	45.3	12.9	15.8
Cyprus	35.3	21.5	32.6	39.0	32.1	39.5
Latvia	18.1	15.6	53.4	48.9	28.5	35.5
Lithuania	16.6	12.2	58.0	50.4	25.5	37.4
Luxembourg	28.1	23.5	36.7	35.1	35.1	41.4
Hungary	33.7	28.9	53.3	54.9	13.0	16.2
Malta	57.9	36.1	24.9	32.0	17.2	31.9
Netherlands	32.7	22.9	45.2	47.5	22.1	29.6
Austria	24.4	19.4	54.6	54.3	21.0	26.3
Poland	20.1	15.5	61.1	60.3	18.8	24.2
Portugal	62.5	44.5	22.7	32.8	14.9	22.7
Romania	52.6	35.8	43.5	57.8	4.0	6.4
Slovenia	21.8	15.4	52.6	47.3	25.6	37.3
Slovakia	20.8	17.2	64.6	62.2	14.6	20.6
Finland	19.6	17.5	46.4	46.6	34.0	35.8
Sweden	23.7	20.8	45.7	39.5	30.5	39.7
Iceland	44.6	32.2	29.8	35.1	25.6	32.7

Norway	25.4	25.7	42.1	35.5	32.5	38.8
United Kingdom	19.4	:	40.2	:	40.4	:

Source: Eurostat. Population by educational attainment level, sex, age and degree of urbanization (%)

Few farmers in the European countries have completed agricultural education. In total it is only 10.2% of all European countries farm holders, with slightly more among male farm holders (11.9%) compared to female farm holders (6.4%). In 2020, more than two third (72.4%) of European countries farm holders had only practical experience; this was true for 68.3% of male and 81.1% of female farm holders; a small group of European countries farmers (17.5%) has followed only basic training; this is true for 19.8% of male and 12.5% of female farm holders (Table 11).

In Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, and Portugal the percentage of (male and female) farm managers with full agricultural training among farm managers was particularly low ranging from 0.7% to 2.9%. In other countries full agricultural training was much more common. Male and female farm managers in the Netherlands (64.4% and 31.7%), Luxembourg (60.0% and 21.2%), France (42.7% and 22.9%) and Czechia (36.2% and 33.6%) respectively had the highest level of agricultural education.

Most male and female farm managers in the European countries have only practical experience (68.3% and 81.1%, respectively). This is the most common in Romania, Greece, Croatia, Bulgaria, Malta, and Slovakia. In Germany, Portugal, Denmark, Italy, and Finland relatively more farm managers have followed at least basic training.

Table 11. Farm managers by training and sex in 2020, %

	Basic training			Practical experience only			Full agricultural training		
	Total	**Males**	**Females**	**Total**	**Males**	**Females**	**Total**	**Males**	**Females**
Belgium	29.3	31.3	17.7	48.2	44.4	69.7	22.5	24.2	12.6
Bulgaria	7.5	7.3	8.1	83.5	82.5	85.9	9.0	10.2	5.9
Czechia	17.5	18.8	11.5	46.8	45.0	54.8	35.8	36.2	33.6
Denmark	43.8	46.9	18.4	48.8	45.6	74.9	7.4	7.4	6.9
Germany	48.0	50.0	31.4	33.2	30.9	52.4	18.8	19.1	16.2
Estonia	16.5	17.9	13.3	51.2	47.7	59.9	32.3	34.5	26.8
Ireland	19.8	20.0	18.2	57.9	57.1	63.4	22.4	22.9	18.4
Greece	5.2	5.9	3.6	94.1	93.2	96.0	0.7	0.8	0.4
Spain	20.3	23.4	12.7	75.6	71.6	85.5	4.1	5.0	1.8
France	26.2	29.1	15.5	35.4	28.2	61.7	38.4	42.7	22.9
Croatia	5.9	6.5	4.0	91.7	90.9	94.2	2.4	2.6	1.8
Italy	34.4	34.1	35.0	58.8	57.7	61.3	6.8	8.2	3.7
Cyprus	30.5	33.3	19.7	68.5	65.4	79.9	1.1	1.2	0.6
Latvia	20.8	19.7	22.2	49.5	44.7	55.5	29.6	35.6	22.3
Lithuania	30.2	33.8	25.9	56.8	50.4	64.7	13.0	15.8	9.5
Luxembourg	9.6	9.0	12.1	37.2	30.3	69.7	53.2	60.0	21.2
Hungary	29.8	33.8	19.9	61.2	56.0	74.3	9.0	10.3	5.9
Malta	19.1	19.6	14.5	79.3	78.6	84.3	1.4	1.6	:
Netherlands	19.3	20.0	7.5	18.1	15.6	61.1	62.6	64.4	31.7
Austria	30.1	32.6	25.5	45.5	41.1	53.7	24.4	26.3	20.8
Poland	14.2	16.2	10.3	59.4	54.2	69.4	26.4	29.6	20.2
Portugal	46.0	55.1	26.0	51.1	41.4	72.4	2.9	3.6	1.5
Romania	4.8	5.4	3.7	94.5	93.7	95.8	0.7	0.9	0.5
Slovenia	22.8	25.1	17.0	48.5	44.4	59.3	28.7	30.5	23.8
Slovakia	13.0	13.7	9.9	75.9	74.7	81.7	11.1	11.7	8.4
Finland	33.5	34.8	22.9	54.8	54.0	61.6	11.7	11.2	15.5
Sweden	12.1	12.9	8.3	65.2	64.0	71.3	22.7	23.1	20.4
Norway	96.6	96.8	95.7	:	:	:	3.4	3.2	4.3
Total	**17.5**	**19.8**	**12.5**	**72.4**	**68.3**	**81.1**	**10.2**	**11.9**	**6.4**

Data source: Eurostat. Agricultural holdings and utilized agricultural area by training, age and sex of farm managers

05 Differences in labour force by gender

Differences in labour force participation rates of rural population between men and women have persisted**.** During the considered period, the employment rate of rural residents aged 15-64 increased from 63.6% to 69.9%, which is 6.3 p.p. in EU–27 countries in 2022 compared to 2014. The employment rate of men and women is increasing equally. In 2022, the employment rate of men aged 15-64 reached 75.3% (in 2014 – 69.6%), for women – 64.2% (in 2014 – 57.3%). In 2022, compared to 2014, employment for men increased by 4.7 p.p. and for women – by 6.9 p.p. Nevertheless, we still a higher share of employment among men compared to women in rural areas. The same is true for most urban areas but here we focus on the employment situation in rural areas.

In statistics, rural and urban areas are distinguished based population density. This degree of urbanisation creates a three-way classification of Local Administrative Units as follows: cities (densely populated areas), towns and suburbs (intermediate density areas), rural areas (thinly populated areas).

Table 12. Employment rates by sex in rural areas in 2014 and 2022, %

Rural areas	2014			2022		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
EU - 27 (from 2020)	63.6	69.6	57.3	69.9	75.3	64.2
Belgium	64.6	67.8	61.4	69.6	71.6	67.5
Bulgaria	51.4	55.9	46.5	62.4	68.2	55.8
Czechia	68.0	76.5	59.0	74.5	81.2	67.0
Denmark	71.0	74.5	67.3	76.5	80.3	72.5
Germany	76.9	81.4	72.2	80.4	83.9	76.9
Estonia	66.7	69.3	64.0	75.7	76.7	74.7
Ireland	62.4	68.7	56.0	73.2	78.9	67.7
Greece	51.7	62.1	41.1	60.2	71.7	47.7
Spain	52.3	58.8	45.2	63.7	70.0	56.9
France	67.3	70.6	64.0	70.5	72.9	68.1
Croatia	52.2	58.9	45.2	62.3	69.1	55.4
Italy	55.1	65.3	44.9	60.3	69.8	50.4
Cyprus	60.0	64.3	55.9	70.6	79.1	62.9
Latvia	63.0	65.3	60.5	69.6	70.0	69.2
Lithuania	59.8	60.7	58.9	69.7	70.2	69.2
Luxembourg	65.4	70.7	60.0	69.5	73.5	65.4
Hungary	57.7	63.9	51.3	71.3	76.9	65.4
Malta	58.2	66.8	48.2	81.5	85.3	76.9
Netherlands	75.9	81.1	70.4	83.9	87.6	80.2
Austria	74.4	79.8	68.9	76.9	80.9	72.7
Poland	60.0	67.4	52.1	68.7	76.5	60.5
Portugal	63.0	68.7	57.3	70.6	73.4	67.9
Romania	61.0	69.2	51.8	55.6	67.2	42.2
Slovenia	64.9	68.9	60.5	72.5	76.2	68.4
Slovakia	58.6	65.3	51.4	67.4	72.3	62.1
Finland	69.1	70.3	67.8	75.5	76.0	74.9
Sweden	75.8	77.3	74.2	77.7	80.3	74.8
Iceland	87.5	90.3	84.2	84.4	87.1	81.5

Norway	74.7	76.5	72.9	78.0	80.0	75.8
United Kingdom	74.4	79.4	69.5	:	:	:

Note: Annual, percentage, from 15 to 64 years.
Source: Eurostat. Employment rates by sex, age, and degree of urbanization

As explained in the following, there are notable differences between European countries. How the employment situation is in rural areas, varies a lot between countries – for women but also for men. In 2022, (See Table 12), the highest employment rate for men and women (15-64 years) may be found in the Netherlands, Iceland, Malta, and Germany. The lowest employment rates may be found in Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Croatia for men and for women in Romania, Greece, Italy, and Croatia.

There is also a clear difference in income between men and women. In 2021, the EU–27 median equivalized net income was 18,372 EUR on average, males 18,774 EUR had a higher level of income than females 17,972 EUR. Table 13 shows the developments between 2014 and 2021 in European countries. In total, the median net income increased by 21.7% with hardly any difference in the increase of income of men (+21.5%) and (+21.6%) in the given period.

Table 13. Median income by sex in 2014 and 2021, EUR

Countries	2014			2021		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
EU–27 (from 2020)	15,101	15,451	14,779	18,372	18,774	17,972
Belgium	21,705	22,148	21,189	25,855	26,434	25,356
Bulgaria	3,311	3,372	3,260	5,157	5,336	5,012
Czechia	7,622	7,813	7,419	10,518	10,778	10,195
Denmark	27,861	28,351	27,399	32,088	32,735	31,425
Germany	19,733	20,228	19,319	24,946	25,366	24,458
Estonia	7,217	7,505	6,929	12,623	12,948	12,208
Ireland	20,171	20,390	19,874	28,130	28,600	27,730
Greece	7,680	7,705	7,638	8,752	8,948	8,601
Spain	13,269	13,428	13,091	15,892	16,118	15,719
France	21,199	21,561	20,875	22,732	23,215	22,265
Croatia	5,225	5,360	5,070	8,061	8,258	7,871
Italy	15,759	16,201	15,369	17,532	17,929	17,123
Cyprus	14,400	14,720	14,186	16,686	17,068	16,291
Latvia	5,203	5,384	5,016	9,437	9,951	8,925
Lithuania	4,823	5,013	4,703	9,669	9,936	9,361
Luxembourg	34,320	34,656	33,781	42,482	42,524	42,482
Hungary	4,512	4,570	4,450	6,619	6,824	6,452
Malta	12,808	13,015	12,573	17,036	17,161	16,986
Netherlands	20,891	21,199	20,583	28,441	28,847	27,869
Austria	23,211	23,741	22,712	27,428	27,863	27,048
Poland	5,336	5,375	5,284	8,297	8,423	8,172
Portugal	8,229	8,392	8,109	11,089	11,223	10,989
Romania	2,155	2,205	2,114	4,816	4,914	4,708
Slovenia	11,909	12,075	11,762	15,415	15,621	15,161
Slovakia	6,809	6,928	6,660	8,473	8,580	8,432
Finland	23,702	24,287	23,150	25,456	26,088	24,844
Sweden	25,838	26,556	25,215	25,498	26,138	24,861
Iceland	22,487	22,780	22,161	:	:	:
Norway	43,775	44,807	42,913	:	:	:
United Kingdom	20,528	21,087	20,069	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat. Mean and median income by age and sex - EU-SILC and ECHP surveys

Although the effects of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis and COVID-19 led to the incomes in

rural areas falling in 2013 and 2021, there was a noticeable recovery and there was an increase in incomes throughout the economy. Also, income levels in rural areas continued to increase at a similar pace as in previous years.

Women's median equivalent net income levels were lower than men's in both the economy and in rural areas. Table 14 shows information for median equivalised net incomes in rural areas. In 2021, the median equivalised net income of males in the EU–27 was 4.2% higher than for females.

When examining European countries, the average level of income for males living in rural areas was, except for Malta, is consistently higher than the average observed for females. The largest relative differences in income levels among those living in rural areas – with the median equivalised net income of males at least 9.5% higher than for females – were recorded in Latvia, Bulgaria, Italy, and Sweden. In most European countries, the gender gap for median equivalised net income was lower in rural areas than it was on average in the EU–27, and this gap was particularly notably low in Poland, Luxembourg, France, and Lithuania.

Table 14. Median income by sex in rural areas in 2014 and 2021, EUR

Countries	2014			2021		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
EU–27 (from 2020)	13,038	13,255	12,842	16,609	16,933	16,257
Belgium	21,452	21,721	21,281	26,085	26,852	25,552
Bulgaria	2,575	2,608	2,541	4,203	4,394	4,054
Czechia	7,308	7,505	7,150	10,205	10,446	10,050
Denmark	27,450	28,195	26,773	31,355	31,993	30,513
Germany	19,336	19,581	19,176	25,067	25,493	24,647
Estonia	6,784	7,009	6,565	12,165	12,479	11,820
Ireland	18,385	18,524	18,299	25,266	25,801	24,893
Greece	6,633	6,691	6,600	7,670	7,758	7,487
Spain	11,218	11,400	11,093	14,852	15,046	14,535
France	20,487	20,639	20,391	22,636	22,917	22,370
Croatia	4,669	4,750	4,539	7,296	7,479	7,063
Italy	13,596	13,771	13,339	16,681	17,205	15,794
Cyprus	13,215	13,459	13,045	14,536	14,975	14,042
Latvia	4,564	4,622	4,513	8,006	8,466	7,733
Lithuania	4,161	4,232	4,093	8,752	8,856	8,674
Luxembourg	36,433	36,751	36,194	43,921	44,420	43,706
Hungary	4,034	4,054	3,999	5,834	6,015	5,663
Malta	11,255	:	:	17,319	17,079	17,838
Netherlands	20,055	20,560	19,712	28,517	28,941	27,785
Austria	23,563	23,818	22,932	28,199	28,885	27,847
Poland	4,479	4,480	4,479	7,410	7,477	7,357
Portugal	7,093	7,240	7,039	9,371	9,515	9,225
Romania	1,613	1,639	1,574	3,362	3,456	3,266
Slovenia	11,542	11,725	11,360	15,152	15,371	14,993
Slovakia	6,364	6,477	6,256	8,160	8,272	8,019
Finland	22,432	22,724	22,051	24,640	25,120	24,277
Sweden	25,154	25,838	24,544	24,142	24,952	23,080
Iceland	22,111	22,623	21,715	:	:	:
United Kingdom	22,263	22,849	21,665	:	:	:

Note: Annual, median equivalized net income, total.

Source: Eurostat. Mean and median income by degree of rural areas

Women's median equivalent net income levels were lower than that of men in both the total economy and in urban areas. The median equivalized net income of males in the EU–27 was 5.0% higher than for females in 2021 and amounted to 19,578 EUR for men and 18,640 EUR for women.

Men and women have lower net incomes in rural compared to urban areas, with rural men earning 13.5% less compared to urban men and rural women earning 12.8% less compared to urban women (See Table 15).

Table 15. Median income by sex in cities in 2014 and 2021, EUR

Countries	2014			2021		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
EU–27 (from 2020)	15,972	16,391	15,594	19,094	19,578	18,640
Belgium	19,610	20,150	18,967	23,396	23,914	22,827
Bulgaria	4,051	4,113	3,992	6,081	6,298	5,842
Czechia	8,135	8,350	7,935	11,504	11,817	11,177
Denmark	27,550	27,461	27,599	32,213	33,306	31,366
Germany	19,476	20,113	18,963	24,360	24,776	24,051
Estonia	8,089	8,477	7,727	13,377	13,830	12,868
Ireland	22,891	23,086	22,480	30,693	31,529	30,360
Greece	8,404	8,482	8,384	9,667	9,827	9,489
Spain	14,914	15,166	14,602	17,210	17,513	16,981
France	21,795	22,155	21,452	23,005	23,767	22,296
Croatia	6,016	6,327	5,805	9,254	9,449	9,119
Italy	16,537	16,982	16,149	18,247	18,573	17,840
Cyprus	15,602	15,955	15,292	18,211	18,975	17,748
Latvia	5,959	6,325	5,610	10,092	11,105	9,483
Lithuania	5,804	6,167	5,568	11,365	12,005	10,767
Luxembourg	37,447	37,697	36,803	51,678	51,822	51,678
Hungary	5,368	5,576	5,215	7,554	7,717	7,424
Malta	12,859	13,087	12,610	15,914	16,156	15,686
Netherlands	20,968	21,256	20,712	28,102	28,609	27,521
Austria	22,184	22,265	21,976	25,640	25,373	25,812
Poland	6,345	6,495	6,233	9,448	9,711	9,189
Portugal	9,056	9,153	8,957	12,114	12,119	12,044
Romania	2,980	3,011	2,953	6,835	6,893	6,774
Slovenia	12,595	13,056	12,300	16,165	16,488	15,762
Slovakia	7,519	7,795	7,397	9,430	9,560	9,305
Finland	24,989	26,037	24,328	26,439	27,362	25,424
Sweden	26,374	27,348	25,601	26,621	27,198	25,821
Iceland	23,217	23,580	22,884			
Norway	:	:	:	:	:	:
United Kingdom	19,723	20,240	19,217	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat. Mean and median income by degree of rural areas

Women's (unpaid) farm labour. It is difficult to profile the farm labour force in the EU because agriculture is still dominated by family farms, with family members providing their labour at irregular times of the year. The family members who contribute to the farm work are not always salaried but share in the farm's profits. Many farmers and farm workers strive for part-time employment. What is more, agriculture is characterised by seasonal peaks in work, when large numbers of workers may be employed for relatively short periods. The most widely used sources of statistics on labour in EU agriculture are the national Census of Agriculture, the farm structure survey, and the labour force survey (Eurostat, 2020). Above, we have used such statistics to analyse the gender specificity of farm labour.

For what regards unpaid labour, the statistics on the informal economy provide additional insights. The statistical profile of the informal economy at the global level (by country) and the results presented disaggregated by sex, age, level of education, status in employment and other socio-

economic characteristics are carried out by International Labour Office (ILO). In their report "Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture" (ILO, 2018), it was purported that "more than 60 per cent of the world's employed population earn their livelihoods in the informal economy. <…> Evidenced showed that most people enter the informal economy not by choice, but because of a lack of opportunities in the formal economy and in the absence of other means of earning a livelihood" (ILO, 2018, p.3).

In the conference of European Statisticians (2021), it was stated that informal work has a negative impact on the agricultural sector, as informal enterprises often operate inefficiently, as they seek to avoid detection and the administrative burdens of the formal sector. Such behaviour leads enterprises to remain sub-optimally small and divert resources to disguise their activities. The lower costs of avoiding tax and regulatory compliance allow firms to stay in business despite low productivity. This may hamper investments in innovation and new technologies and eventually lower economic productivity, following the European statisticians (2022).

Employment in the informal economy includes workers who work in the informal sector and are in informal employment. The informal sector can be described as enterprises that are not officially registered and do not maintain a complete set of accounts. Informal employment also concerns jobs that lack basic social or legal protection and employment benefits (ILO, 2018). The statistics presented in Table B.7 of the ILO (2018) report provide data on the distribution of workers in informal and formal employment across a broad sector of activities (agriculture, industry, and services) by sex. The participation of women workers in informal employment in agriculture ranges from over 77% (in Romania) to around 0.8% (in both Sweden and Malta) (See Fig. 2).

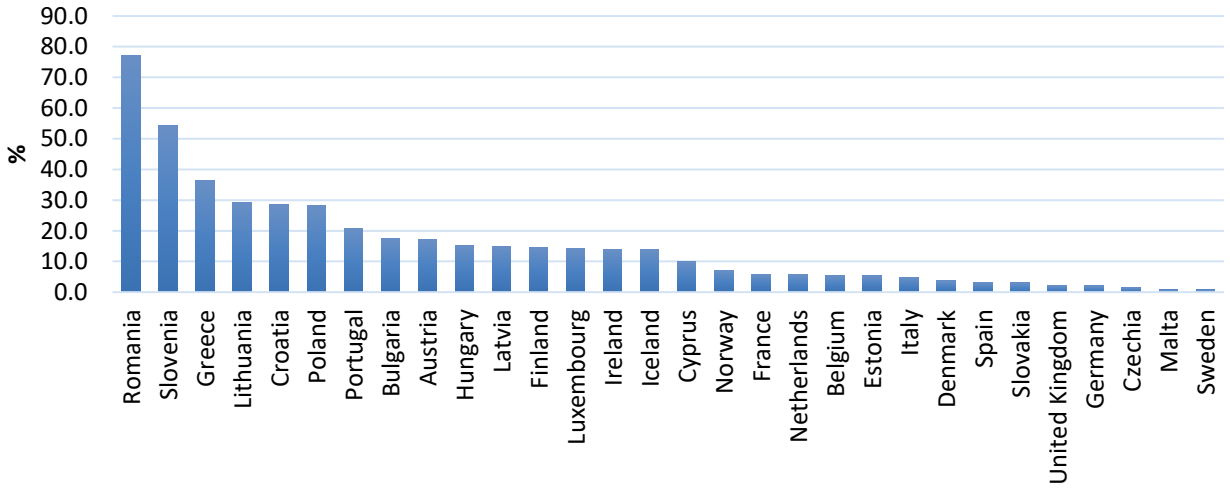

Fig. 2. Participation of women workers in informal employment, agriculture, %
Source: ILO, International labour office, 2018, Table B.7, p.120-125.

06 Women engaged in cooperatives, unions and in economic-socio-ecological practices

6.1. Women's participation in unions or cooperatives

According to national statistics from Ireland, Scotland, Croatia and Spain, women's participation in cooperatives and unions is insufficient, as they comprise a minority of members. The case of Scotland and Spain also highlights the shortcomings of women's leadership in these organisations. In Lithuania, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy, data on women's participation in cooperatives or unions (or data disaggregated by gender) are not available at all, while in Norway, data is available but not publicly accessible. As a result, we miss insight in women's representation in such organisations as ordinary or board members.

Ireland. In the *Irish Farmers Association Diversity Strategy Towards 2025* (2019), the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) sets out that of the 137,500 farms in Ireland, 12% are in female ownership while 4% have joint male/female owners (p.9). Furthermore, a 2021 *Report* from the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) included figures on Registered Farm Partnerships (RFP), understood as "the coming together of two or more farmers to operate the farm business as a single entity". Of the reported 3,362 active RFPs in Ireland in 2021, DAFM notes that 43% (or 1,441) had at least one female partner. Of the 2,584 RFPs set up since 2016, 44% (or 1,127) are noted to have a female partner.
The historical issue of women's low participation in the IFA is also addressed in its 2019 Diversity Report. It is noted that since the establishment of the IFA Diversity Committee in 2017, the representation of women on the IFA's 56-member National Council has increased from 1 to 8 (2019 figures). Of the total membership of the IFA in 2019, 72,000, 81% are reported as male, 15% as female (with 4% gender undefined).
The results of a survey conducted by the IFA to identify barriers to men's and women's engagement with the IFA are also included in the *Diversity Report.* Over 1,000 people responded to the survey (52% men, 48% women). 71% of male respondents and 61% of female respondents reported a lack of time. Not feeling welcome was reported by 15% of women and 6% of men. Lack of confidence in skills (25%), lack of training (22%) and feeling too self-conscious (20%) were also reported as barriers but no gender breakdown was given in these final statistics.
While gender-disaggregated data have not yet been published by the Irish Cooperative Organisation Society (ICOS), significant commitments to promoting gender equality were set out in its *2023 Charter for the Participation of Women in Cooperatives*. This commitment includes promoting women's participation in cooperative structures. Key to its future priorities is encouraging male members to include female partners as joint shareholders on cooperative share registers.

Scotland. The Scottish Government commissioned research in 2016 to address their need for more evidence about women in agriculture (Scottish Government, 2017). This landmark report specifically examined the lack of information about women in the agriculture industry. This report aimed to provide a baseline of data about women in the agriculture sector in Scotland, which could then

influence future policies. The data set in this report consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data analysing data from thirty interviews, 9 focus groups of men and women in the industry and a survey of 1,543 people involved in agriculture in Scotland. The report found that women encounter several barriers in the industry. These include women being rarely considered for succession and thus finding it difficult to access land; the under-representation of women in leadership positions in agricultural organisations; a reluctance to attend agricultural training provisions because of the lack of other women attending; women have to prove themselves as farmers in a way that is not expected of men; and women have other multiples roles on the farms such as caring, off-farm work and housework. Over half of the women surveyed say they have a role in both day-to-day and significant decision-making, 20% say this is not the case, and over half would like the opportunity to play a more significant part in decision-making.

When the First Minister launched the research report in 2016, she established a Task Force to consider how to implement the recommendations to make Scottish agriculture more gender equal. The Task Force published its report in 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019). This report detailed the policy actions the Government would undertake. The Scottish Government has committed £400K per year to advance the position of women in food systems. They have provided unconscious gender bias training to predominantly male organisations. The Government has provided women with leadership and business training, and research has found that this has helped women innovators. They have provided women-only training programmes, which are controversial, but they were over-subscribed. The Scottish Government has taken a multi-pronged approach, addressing gender bias in the industry, training, and leadership skill development, and ensuring access to land for young women entrants to farming. They have also provided training and incentives for women to develop and market food produce. Progress reports are available on the Scottish government website.

An essential data set which can be used to examine the proportion of women in the agriculture industry in Scotland is the Annual Scottish Agriculture Census. This data is sourced from a yearly census coordinated and analysed by the Scottish Government. The purpose of the census is to gather data on the number of animals kept in Scotland, crops grown and the demographic breakdown of those working on farms. This overview of the Scottish Agriculture industry allows the Government to monitor Scotland's shifting agricultural business landscape. The latest analysis published stated that the number of female working occupiers in Scotland in 2021 was 11,800 – representing 40% of the total number of working occupiers.

However, this differs from the proportion of women who owned land in Scotland. The Women in Agriculture Research report found that 7% of women own farms. This finding was contrary to the census data, so the previous census' were re-examined. It was found that the term 'working occupier' also includes the farmer's spouse. This was altered in the Scottish 2016 Agriculture Census, which stated in a footnote on page 29: On our forms and previous publications, we have distinguished between occupiers and spouses. In this publication, we have combined these categories under the title of "occupier". It is still unclear why this change came about, and it may have been motivated by a desire to make women more visible. However, it obscures the persistent inequality in land ownership.

Crofting is a practice which follows a traditional system of landholding in Scotland which comprises regulated smallholdings in the crofting areas of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The gender split of crofters has become more equal over time. The proportion of female crofters increased from 13% in 2014 to 26% in 2018 to 30% in 2022. This data is sourced from a Scottish Government Report, which examined the economic conditions of crofting in Scotland from 2019–2022. In this report, the

Government gathered various statistics relating to the economics of crofting and the breakdown of the demographic of those who croft in Scotland.

Regarding leadership positions in Agriculture Unions, the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) has never had a female president. The Women in Agriculture Taskforce 2017 report noted that there were no female national board members, national office holders, regional board chairpersons or committee chairpersons, whilst about half of NFUS staff are women. The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) (formerly known as the Scottish Crofters Union) has had three chairs since it was founded in 1985. The report provided a detailed breakdown of the number of women in leadership positions in agriculture organisations, which highlighted the following: at the National Farmers Union of Scotland, 0/3 office holders were women, 0/9 regional board chairpersons were women, and 0/8 committee chairpersons were women. Of the Scottish Land and Estates Board members, 2/9 were women. Of the Scottish Crofting Federation Board members: 3/9 were women. National Sheep Association Board of Trustees: 2/12 were women. Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland Senior office bearers 2016/2017: 4/60 were women. The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs 2016/2017 National Council bucked the trend and showed that 4/7 were women. This data demonstrated that there was a lack of women in leadership positions in agriculture organisations in Scotland. There are signs that reality is changing somewhat. There are now two women elected to Regional Board Chairs, as per the NFUS website.

Croatia. There is no single register of cooperatives from which data would be available for all cooperatives in Croatia. What further complicates the availability of data is the fact that cooperatives do not report changes regularly. According to the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, there are plans to merge the various data sets into a single register to make the data compatible and easily accessible.

The Centre for Cooperative Entrepreneurship kept records on cooperatives until 2015. According to the Croatian Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, the number of cooperative members in agricultural cooperatives in 2015 was 21.462, of which 8% were women. However, 66% of cooperatives did not submit complete documentation, and it is not known how many female cooperative members they have. In 2015, cooperatives had 2.744 employees, 25% of whom were women, and 44% of employees could not be classified by gender because some cooperatives did not submit complete records. The data is not publicly available; however, such data can be made available upon request.

Spain. The female members of agri-food cooperatives operating in the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors of Spain constitute 28.5% of the social base of these cooperatives. However, they only make up 9.6% of the composition of the executive board, with a mere 4.5% holding the presidency and only 13.5% occupying a management position (See Table 16).

Table 16. Women's participation in agri-food cooperatives in Spain in 2021

	Members	Executive board members	Presidency executive board	Cooperative direction or management
Women	277,093	1,784	108	326
Men	694,949	16,862	2,302	2,084

Source: Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias de España (Agri-food Cooperatives of Spain). https://www.agro-alimentarias.coop/datos-cooperativismo

Regarding data sourced exclusively from the primary sector (agriculture and livestock), 58% of men belong to a cooperative, compared to only 48% of women. Additionally, there are noteworthy gender

disparities in occupying representative and leadership positions in associations and cooperatives, with only 18% of such positions held by women as opposed to 29% by men (See Table 17).

Table 17. Women's participation in agrarian cooperatives in Spain in 2022

	Cooperative members	Decision-making positions in associations or cooperatives
Women	48 %	18 %
Men	58 %	29 %

Source: McDonald´s (2023). https://mcdqr.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/MACDONALDS_COMPLETO.pdf

In **Norway**, public data on farmers' membership in various cooperatives and other relevant organizations do not differentiate between men and women farmers (Ruralis' bi-annual survey Trends in Norwegian Agriculture, from 2014–2022); to receive gender-specific data, additional analysis must be commissioned.

6.2. Women-led farms with innovative socio-ecological farming practices

The primary funding stream to reach the objectives of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). For the period 2023–2027, the EU CAP carries 10 specific objectives; the 8th objective considers gender equality: "promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, as well as the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry". Member States submitted their National Strategic Plans presenting their country's needs and the interventions they plan to implement to address them against each specific objective. However, most statistics provided exclude references to gender. Therefore, statistics on measures implemented in the EU countries could be gathered through the CAP paying agencies' data, but the data is gender disaggregated. Of the nine case study countries, only Spain provides sex-disaggregated information on rural women entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable activities.

The support for rural development through sex statistics under several schemes is available in Eurostat. It provides statistics about such schemes related to agricultural activity: quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs; investment in physical assets; agri-environment-climate; organic farming; Natura 2000 and water framework directive payments; animal welfare; and risk management.

Agri-environment and climate scheme statistics show that in 2016, in all EU countries except Finland, men led the way regarding the number of farms and hectares covered by the scheme (See Table 18). Under Natura 2000 and water framework directive payments, statistics are only reported for some countries, but it can also be concluded that men are the leaders in this measure, both in terms of area and number of farms.

Table 18. Support under the Agri-Environment Climate scheme in 2016 for men and women led farms.

Countries	Share of number of farms, %		Share of ha, %	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Belgium	74.4	10.6	73.9	8.0
Bulgaria	57.1	20.1	31.0	5.3
Czechia	71.2	11.8	21.0	2.6
Denmark	83.7	7.5	79.7	5.1
Germany	89.4	8.8	75.9	5.4
Estonia	42.5	17.0	22.2	3.2
Greece	67.4	32.5	79.5	19.5
Spain	66.5	23.0	58.9	14.5
Croatia	75.4	19.9	78.1	8.1

Cyprus	100.0	-	63.5	-
Latvia	61.4	38.1	75.9	22.9
Lithuania	64.4	33.6	64.2	16.6
Hungary	64.9	18.7	25.9	5.7
Malta	92.0	7.5	94.0	5.1
Netherlands	93.5	3.7	94.5	2.2
Austria	69.2	28.1	70.1	20.7
Poland	80.6	19.3	85.2	14.1
Portugal	61.5	30.6	43.3	13.1
Romania	73.9	24.9	46.6	11.9
Slovenia	81.8	17.6	76.8	13.0
Slovakia	31.0	7.0	6.5	1.6
Finland	10.8	87.0	7.2	88.5
Sweden	78.2	13.9	69.8	6.3
United Kingdom	86.7	10.8	84.7	6.9

Source: Eurostat. Support for rural development by sex and age of the holder

There is a shortage of gender-disaggregated data on socio-ecological innovative farming practices in **Ireland.** DAFM Annual Reports on its GLAS (Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Schemes), offering annual payments for actions that enhance the environment of €5,000 (GLAS) with top-ups of €2,000 (GLAS+), include no gender breakdown of applications nor recipients. Instead, the dataset breaks down payments on a location-based, county-by-county basis.

The 2022 Overview of the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme ('ACRES'), co-funded by the National Exchequer and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) of the European Union under Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan 2023–2027, excludes references to gender. Called Ireland's "flagship" agri-environmental scheme, it is worth €1.5 billion and aimed at addressing biodiversity decline with income support for 50,000 family farmers. It should also be noted that gender-neutral language is used throughout this document.

DAFM's 2020 Roadmap to Climate Neutrality (Ag Climatise), which includes 29 actions to achieve climate neutrality in agriculture in Ireland by 2050, also excludes references to gender, gender equality and any gender-disaggregated data or targets.

In terms of biodiversity activities on crofts **in Scotland**, in the Scottish Government's Economic Condition of Crofting: 2019–2022 report, there was a new question added to the survey research which asked crofters about Peatland restoration, biodiversity activities, and forestry and woodland creation on their holding or planned in the future. It found that 12% had biodiversity activities, 18% had woodland or forestry creation, and 34% of crofters were planning to carry out these activities in 2023–2026. This data was not split by gender, and therefore there is no information about women's role in socio-ecological innovative farming practices.

In **Spain**, data has been provided concerning rural women entrepreneurs who are engaged in sustainable activities, also known as green entrepreneurship (the activities include some: sustainable forestry; renewable energies; sustainable water management; management of protected natural areas; circular economy, waste management and decontamination; sustainable construction; sustainable transport and environmental services to companies and organizations). In 2022, out of the 190,698 registered rural women entrepreneurs in Spain, only 6,333 (3%) were found to be involved in green activities, with the remaining majority being engaged in other economic pursuits. In comparison, the percentage of men involved in green entrepreneurship rises to 27% (See Table 19).

Table 19. Rural women entrepreneurs in green activities in Spain in 2022

	Rural entrepreneurs' green activities	Rural total Entrepreneurs
Women	6,333	190,955
Men	102,043	382,061

Source: Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico (Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge), https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/prensa/230310informeemprendimientoverdedelasmujeresyemprendimientodelasmujeresenelambitorural_tcm30-560334.pdf

6.3. Women-led farms with diversifying farm activities

The Census of Agriculture in EU countries provides information on other gainful activities (OGA) on farms. However, only a few countries provide a gender breakdown of these statistics (as in Spain, Italy). In the case of Norway, national statistics publish OGA data by gender and activity. On the other hand, Scottish data on OGA are available but not very comprehensive. There is no data at all on OGA (e.g., accommodation, recreation, craft, energy production, direct marketing, on-farm processing of farm produce) disaggregated by gender in Croatia, Sweden, Lithuania, Ireland, and the Netherlands. In addition to farm work, farmers can be involved in OGA. OGA are directly related to the holding activities where farm resources (land, buildings, machinery, etc.) or its products are used. The 2016 data on OGA show (See Table 20) that farms performing OGA vary considerably between European countries. Farmers with OGA as their primary activity are leading in countries such as Bulgaria (with 68.2%) and Hungary (with 60.8%), while at the other end of the spectrum is Poland (with 1.1%) and Belgium (with 8.4%). Regarding farms having OGA as a secondary activity, Finland (36.3%) and Sweden (34.9%) have the highest share. In contrast, Poland and Cyprus have the lowest rates, with only 0.4% and 0.5%, respectively.

Table 20. Farms performing other gainful activities in EU in 2016, %

Countries	Holder having other gainful activities as main activity	Holder having other gainful activities as secondary activity
Belgium	8.4	8.2
Bulgaria	68.2	3.1
Czechia	12.7	9.5
Denmark	44.0	34.0
Germany	33.8	26.1
Estonia	31.4	10.2
Ireland	23.3	25.2
Greece	15.6	3.2
Spain	13.8	6.9
France	17.8	7.1
Croatia	19.0	5.1
Italy	22.0	11.9
Cyprus	37.0	0.5
Latvia	33.5	5.1
Lithuania	23.7	13.8
Luxembourg	8.6	24.4
Hungary	60.8	3.4
Malta	41.0	6.7
Netherlands	11.1	31.3
Austria	35.3	32.8
Poland	1.1	0.4
Portugal	20.7	5.5
Romania	20.2	9.4

Slovenia	28.2	13.2
Slovakia	33.0	11.1
Finland	40.1	36.3
Sweden	49.3	34.9
United Kingdom	20.1	12.6

Source. Eurostat. Other gainful activities main table

In **Norway**, according to Ruralis (2017), in 2016, female farmers had income from additional business activities related to their farms (60%) just as often as their male colleagues. It is also worth noting that the data on farms with various farm-based diversified activities are available at Statistics Norway from 2014–2020. Again, these statistics do not differentiate between men and women led farms. Gender-specific data would require the commissioning of additional analysis. The numbers received from Statistics Norway show that, for 2020, there were 20,917 one-person businesses within agriculture registered with farm-based diversified activities. 17,529 of these businesses were managed by men, while women managed the remaining 3,388 businesses. Various types of diversified activities distributed on gender in Norway in 2020 are listed in Table 21.

Table 21. Diversified activities distributed by gender of the farm manager in Norway in 2020

Activity	Total	Men	Women
Rented driving, agriculture	5,046	4,616	430
Rented driving outside agriculture	5,248	4,881	367
Hiring out hunting- and fishing rights	8,147	6,852	1,295
Hiring out buildings	5,197	4,389	808
Hiring out cultivated land	3,067	2,433	634
Leasing out property	2,239	1,871	368
Production and sale based on Wood	3,217	2,789	428
Tourism	1,368	1,015	353
Stabling of horses, riding+	1,440	943	497
Processing of produce for food products for sale	1,355	1,033	322
Sale of own products not further processed	2,304	1,753	551
Sale of Christmas trees	381	326	55
Arts and crafts and small industry	327	208	119
Education and activities supply, Green care	655	384	271
Sale of renewable energy	531	453	78
Other diversified activities	453	390	63

Statistics Norway, 2020. (It also worth noting, that the data on farms with various farm-based diversified activities are available at Statistics Norway from 2014–2020, and so are the number of women farmers, but these data are not linked. It can be done, but this such operations normally require payment).

In **Spain**, the percentage of female farm managers who pursue other gainful activities as their primary occupation (6.4%) exceeds that of male farm managers (4.6%). However, when comparing the percentages of female and male farm managers who engage in other gainful activities as a secondary occupation, the values are equivalent, with both groups representing 2.7% and 2.8%, respectively (See Table 22).

Table 22. women and men led Farms performing other gainful activities in Spain in 2020, %

	Carrying out another gainful activity as main activity	Carrying out another gainful activity as secondary activity	Not carrying out another gainful activity
Women	6.4%	2.8%	90.7%
Men	4.6%	2.7%	92.7%

Source: Agrarian Census 2020. (In Spanish, Censo Agrario 2020). Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Agrarian Census 2020. National Statistical Institute), https://www.ine.es/censoagrario2020/presentacion/index.htm

60% of rural tourism enterprises in Spain are owned and operated by women. However, most respondents (60.8%) stated that their rural tourism business does not constitute their primary source of income but rather serves as a complementary source. Amongst women owners, 13% supplement their rural tourism business with administrative work, another 13% with activities in the agricultural sector, and almost 6% with other tourism-related jobs. Only 33% of female owners consider their rural accommodation as their primary source of income, which is six percentage points higher than men and two points above the national average (Escapadarural, 2021).

According to the 7th **Italian** Agricultural Census by ISTAT (2020 data), women-managed farms account for 40.8% of the total educational farms. As for agritourist activities, the share of women-managed holiday farms is 35%. Previous studies have often highlighted diversification and multifunctionality as specific features of many women-managed farms (CREA, 2013; CREA, 2016). In 2017, women-managed holiday farms were 8,483 out of 23,406, slightly higher by 36.2% compared to 2020.

In **Scotland**, women on crofts were found to be more likely to run bed and breakfast or holiday let facilities (16%) than men (11%) in 2022 (Scottish Government, 2023). This likelihood of women wanting to diversify the farm businesses is echoed in other reports, such as the Women in Agriculture Research Report 2017, which the Scottish Government commissioned. This report found that 29% of survey participants expressed an interest in developing farm diversification activities in the next five years. 38% of Crofting respondents expressed interest in developing diversification activities. Furthermore, women born on a farm were more interested in starting a diversification activity, 28%, compared to 21% of women not born on a farm.

There is a lack of gender-disaggregated data on engagement with diversified farm activities in **Ireland.** Teagasc confirmed that it does not capture this data as part of its annual Farm Surveys. These surveys present data regarding farm size, system, and location. There is no gender data available. The 2021 Farm Survey Data on spouses' "off-farm" work shows that it is increasingly necessary to make farming sustainable in Ireland. The survey reports that spouses are engaged with "off-farm" work at a rate of 50% for dairy farms, 41% for cattle farms, 36% for sheep farms, 48% for tillage farms and at a rate of 40% for farms overall.

In the **Netherlands**, CBS provides a dataset on the number of farms with certain diversifying activities and their output throughout 2008–2020. However, this dataset does not include a gender dimension. The dataset contains variables on the total number of farms, direct sale, direct sale via a shop, hosting goods or animals, agrotourism, the processing of products, care farming, aquaculture, paid work for others, nature- and landscape management, child care, education, energy production, those who earn less than 10% of income from diversifications, those earning 10-50% through diversifications, and those earning more than 50% from diversification (see: Centraal bureau voor de statistiek, 2021). Previous research shows that women play a leading role in on-farm diversification, formally and in practice, regarding direct sales and processing, care farming and education, and agri-tourism. Men usually run the hosting of goods and animals, nature and landscape management, aquaculture, and energy production.

6.4. Organic farms run by women

The data collected from the nine countries considered in the GRASS CEILING project showed that the number of organic farms managed by women is a relevant issue in the countries concerned. In some countries, data on organic farming is collected as an Agricultural Census indicator (Ireland, Spain). In others, it is collected by the National Statistics Office (Norway) or by the Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (Croatia). In Italy a pilot study provided some insight into the situation among organic farmers in 2017. On the other hand, there is no data on women-managed organic farms in Lithuania, the Netherlands, Scotland, and Sweden. However, the statistics

on organic farms disaggregated by gender are already available in the preliminary data of the Integrated Farm Statistics project on the modernisation of agricultural statistics (Eurostat, 2023), indicating that these data sets will be available soon.

The number of organic farms in the EU, and the proportion of total farms, differ across countries (See Table 23). Still, the increasing political support for organic farming, as outlined in the Farm to Fork Strategy (European Commission, 2020), where organic farming is one of the critical factors in achieving the ambitions of the European Green Deal, is positively impacting the development of organic farms. The Farm to Fork Strategy sets the target that by 2030 at least 25% of EU agricultural land will be used for organic farming. Organic aquaculture will increase significantly as well. Austria (with 24.1%) and Estonia (with 18.0%) are the leaders in terms of the share of organic farms in the EU, while the lowest shares are recorded in Malta (with 0.3%) and Romania (with 0.4%).

Table 23. European organic agricultural producers, registered at the end of the year, in 2014 and 2021 and the share of total farms

Countries	2014	2021	% in 2021 of total Holdings (2020)
European Union - 28 countries (2013-2020)	257,641	:	:
Belgium	1,602	2,638	7.3
Bulgaria	3,893	4,352	3.3
Czechia	3,866	4,797	16.6
Denmark	2,538	:	:
Germany	23,717	36,236	13.8
Estonia	1,542	2,043	18.0
Ireland	1,275	1,914	1.5
Greece	20,186	35,813	6.7
Spain	30,602	52,861	5.8
France	26,466	:	:
Croatia	2,043	6,024	4.2
Italy	48,662	75,874	6.7
Cyprus	743	1,292	3.8
Latvia	3,475	:	:
Lithuania	2,445	2,529	1.9
Luxembourg	79	123	6.5
Hungary	1,672	5,129	2.2
Malta	10	25	0.3
Netherlands	1,457	1,985	3.8
Austria	22,184	26,720	24.1
Poland	24,829	19,986	1.5
Portugal	3,329	13,263	4.6
Romania	14,151	11,562	0.4
Slovenia	3,293	3,718	5.1
Slovakia	403	:	:
Finland	4,247	5,007	11.0
Sweden	5,406	5,360	9.1
Iceland	33	:	:
Norway	2,232	1,957	5.1
Switzerland	6,195	7,670	15.5
United Kingdom	3,526	:	:

Source: Eurostat. Organic operators by status of the registration process; Farm indicators by legal status of the holding, utilised agricultural area, type and economic size of the farm and NUTS2 region

Austria (with 25.7%) and Estonia (with 22.4%) are also leading EU countries in terms of organic crop area share of total utilized agricultural area (See Fig. 2).

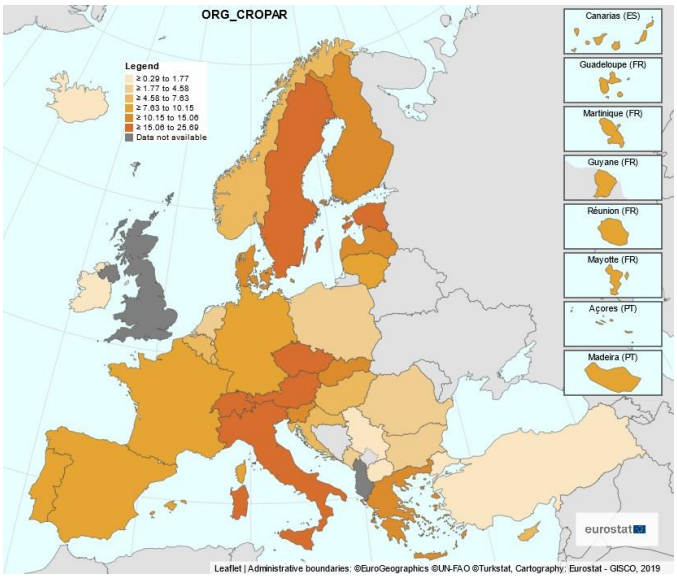

Fig. 2. The share of organic crop area of total utilized agricultural area in 2020

**Note: Total fully converted and under conversion to organic farming*

Source: Eurostat. Data Browser. Organic crop area by agricultural production methods and crops

Based on the preliminary data of the Integrated Farm Statistics, "the share of organic farms run by women was lower than that of conventional farms run by women at EU level (26% versus 32%) in 2020. However, in eight countries, the share of farms run by women was (slightly) higher in organic farming than in conventional farming: Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, France, and Austria" (European Commission, 2023, p.18).

Data on organic farming in **Ireland** is available in the 2020 Agricultural Census, compiled by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). This dataset shows 1,686 organic farm holders in Ireland, representing 1.3% of the overall number of farms in the country. Of the total organic farm holders, 1,393 (or 82.6%) are male, while women hold 293 (or 17.4%) of these farms. This dataset sets out the number of farms that are fully converted to organic (1,540) and under conversion to organic (146). Gender disaggregated data is not presented in this section. Further statistics provided omitting the gender dimension include organic farms by farm type, size, and economic value along with the median age of organic farm holders. No gender-disaggregated data is provided for the number of organic livestock holders in the country.

A further caveat to this data highlighted to GRASS Ceiling by the Head of Policy at the Irish Organic Association (ICO) is that these statistics are based on administrative data reported by the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM), which may not take into account organic female farmers who are not registered with the Department (e.g., via a herd number).

There are a total of 371 organic farms in **Scotland**. Data on organic farming is available from the Organic Farming in Scotland 2017 report the Scottish Government commissioned. This report gave an overview of the trend of organic farming in Scotland and how it is used, for example, the proportion used for rough grazing for animals. However, there is no data available on the gender split for organic farming, so no data sets specify the number of women-managed farms in Scotland. Individual examples of women who manage farms can be found; however, there is no data available on the overall total of women-managed organic farms in Scotland.

Organic Utilized Agricultural Area in **Spain** by gender of the farm manager is provided in the 2020 Agricultural Census. Although the area dedicated to organic farming in Spain is much smaller

compared to other European countries, the relative percentage of women responsible for cultivating organic farmland (8.2%) exceeds that of men (7.7%) (See Table 24).

Table 24. Utilized Agricultural and organic area in Spain by gender of the farm manager in 2020, in ha

	Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) (ha)	Organic UAA (ha)
Women	4,658,788	381,104
Men	19,221,471	1,490,332

Source: Agrarian Census 2020. (in Spanish, Censo Agrario 2020). Instituto Nacional de Estadística National Statistical Institute, https://www.ine.es/censoagrario2020/presentacion/index.htm

Italy's statistics on organic farming are produced by SINAB (2023), funded by their Ministry of Agriculture and are not sex disaggregated. In 2017, sex-disaggregated organic statistics were produced as part of a pilot study for the Apulia Region, relying on the 2016 regional data, showing that 32.6% of all organic farms in this region were managed by women. In the **Netherlands**, there has been a 3.6% increase in organic farming since 2021, with the total area under organic farming covering over 80 thousand hectares. This means that the total of all Dutch agricultural holdings that are registered organic is 3.8% (Statistics Netherlands, 2022). In **Norway,** according to Ruralis (2017), in 2016, the share of female farmers running their farms wholly or partly organically was close to 15%, while the share of men doing the same was 6%. **Croatia's** Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (PAAFRD) reported that in 2022 there were 7,132 organic farms in Croatia, of which 26% were managed by women (1,835). Throughout 2015–2022, 26% of organic farms were managed by women, as presented in Table 25.

Table 25. Women managed organic farms in Croatia in 2022

Year	Number of organic agricultural holding	Number of women-managed farms which are organic	% women-managed farms which are organic
2015	3,406	866	25
2016	4,020	1,056	26
2017	4,641	1,240	27
2018	5,117	1,376	27
2019	5,877	1,553	26
2020	6,577	1,690	26
2021	6,980	1,790	26
2022	7,132	1,835	26

Source: PAAFRD.

07 Women's participation in innovation initiatives

7.1. Women's start-up businesses

Although, at first glance, some countries can boast considerable achievements in terms of gender equality, the extent of the problem remains quite large in agriculture and rural areas in all the project partner countries for what concerns women's engagement in businesses of different kinds. Finding publicly available data about rural women's start-up businesses is usually challenging, or it is not even collected. Usually, the data regarding the amount or nature of start-ups can be found by gender but without differentiating between rural and urban locations. Therefore, only the fragmented information about the rural women start-up businesses in project partner countries can be presented.

The Survey of Entrepreneurship in **Ireland** (GEM) shows that early-stage entrepreneurship increased overall in Ireland, with 3,000 people starting new businesses each month in 2019 (Fitzsimons & O'Gorman, 2020). Increases were noted for both men and women. The report states that "in Ireland, there are 1.8 men for every woman who is an early-stage entrepreneur. This is well above the average across the OECD". However, the study does not include statistical information on rural Ireland and the number of men's or women's start-ups in rural areas. The Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups (ACORNS) Programme, funded under the Rural Innovation and Development Fund through the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, aimed to support women entrepreneurs in rural Ireland, has been running since 2015. Three hundred thirty-seven start-ups led by women in rural areas have participated in the programme. Furthermore, an average of 240 applications for each of the previous seven calls have been reported, totalling 1680 applications from women in rural areas engaged in entrepreneurship. Reports on the progress of the programme also highlight the rate at which profits have increased in these start-ups as a result of participation in the programme, the number of these start-ups that are involved in exportation and the number of employees hired by them, thereby underlining the extent of their contribution to the economies of rural communities (ACORNS, 2023).

Data on owners of start-up businesses divided on gender are available at Statistics **Norway** from 2014-2019. However, these data are not linked to any urban-rural classification of the owners' place of residence. It is possible to differentiate according to a so-called centrality level classification, but these data sets are closed access, and such access requires payment.

In **Italy,** according to Unioncamere Observatory for Women's Entrepreneurship (Unioncamere, 2023), women's start-up businesses in agriculture were 18 in 2022, accounting for 0.9% of the total start-ups. They were 9 in 2019, showing a positive trend in the past two years. However, there is no data about Italian women's start-ups in rural areas.

A lack of gender-disaggregated statistical data in the entrepreneurial domain is also identified in **Scotland**. The current situation in the country is presented in a report, 'The Pathways: A New Approach for Women in Entrepreneurship,' commissioned by the Scottish Government and published in 2023 (Stewart & Logan, 2023). The rationale for this report was to understand women's entrepreneurial needs better. One in five of Scotland's entrepreneurs are women, yet only 2% of the institutional investment goes to women-led companies in Scotland. This report seeks to provide recommendations to the Government on how best to increase the number of women entrepreneurs

in Scotland. To do this, the authors developed a recommendations framework to identify causes of the under-participation of women in entrepreneurship. Two hundred interviews were carried out with organisations and individuals, roundtable events, focus groups, and online surveys. It was found that women feel they do not belong; they are expected to be the primary carers in families, and they do not receive as much investment as men during their entrepreneurial journey. The report states that in 2022 of the companies which received external investment, 12% were female-led, and 73% were male-led.

The Observatory of Entrepreneurship in **Spain** (2022) provided data on innovation, technology, and internationalisation in rural women's enterprises. According to the data, 13% of rural women entrepreneurs offer products or services with a certain degree of novelty (See Fig. 3), 12% use modern technologies or processes, and 23% target foreign clients to sell their products or services. When comparing these percentages according to the degree of rurality of the territory, it can be observed that urban women entrepreneurs outnumber rural women by 6 to 7 per cent in all the aspects analysed. Regarding the comparison between rural entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurs, the latter outstrip women in selling new products and modern technologies/processes. In contrast, rural women entrepreneurs surpass male entrepreneurs in foreign sales.

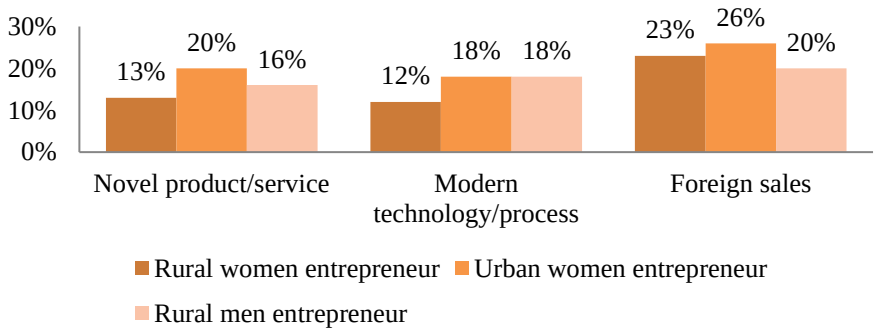

Fig. 3. Innovation, technology and internationalisation in urban and rural women's enterprises in Spain in 2022

Source: Observatory of Entrepreneurship in Spain (2022)

The scarcity of statistical data about rural women start-ups is also identified in Croatia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden. The publicly available sources provide only information about separate initiatives mainly supported or carried out by EU programmes.

7.2. Women's participation in Local Action Groups

None of the project partner countries regularly collects and analyses the representation of Local Action Groups (LAG) members and their leaders by gender. The data regarding women's participation in LAGs can only be found by manually reviewing the composition of each singular l LAG. That is a pity as publicly available data regarding women's participation in LAGs would allow us to monitor women's involvement in the development and implementation of rural development projects. Besides it would be important to monitor the gender-specificity of projects funded through LEADER in terms of beneficiary, content, or recipient of individual LEADER aid. None of this is currently possible in any systematic and comparable manner.

A desk analysis of **Italian** women's involvement in LAG political and technical management showed

significant disparities among genders. The overall women participation in LAGs reaches only 27.7 %. The analysis was based on information published on 151 LAGs websites out of 200 (Di Napoli & Reda, 2021). Table 26 presents information on men's and women's participation in LAGs based on their activity in 2021. It is also interesting to highlight that only a few regional authorities established specific selection and premium criteria to support gender equality in LAGs management—a low number of women in the positions of president or vice-president, respectively 14% and 12%. Also, women board members account for only 18.87%. The most prominent participation of women is in technical staff positions.

Table 26. Participation in Italian LAGs among genders in 2021

Activity	Total*	Men*	Women*	Women, %*
Board member	959	778	181	18.87
President	151	137	14	14.15
Vice-President	151	133	18	11.92
Technical Director/ Coordinator	119	77	43	36.13
Other technical staff	785	440	345	43.95
Total	2,166	1,565	601	27.75

**data collected from 151 LAGs (out of 200)*
Source: Di Napoli and Reda, 2021

Similar data can be found regarding the balance among genders in **Spanish** LAGs. Table 27 shows the participation of women in the technical teams and boards of LAGs in Spain in 2020. The proportion of women in the technical teams of LAGs is considerably higher. However, the share of women is significantly lower in LAGs' boards (44.5%), with a very low percentage of women serving as board chairmen (23.5%).

Table 27. The balance among genders in Spanish LAGs in 2020

	LAG Technical team member	LAG board member	LAG board Chairman
Women	68.0%	44.50%	23.5%
Men	32.0%	55.50%	76.5%

Source: Spanish Network of Rural Development, 2023

Spanish Network of Rural Development (2023) also provides data about women receiving LEADER's aid between 2014 and 2020. Of all individuals who received LEADER funding in 2014–2020, men received 58% of the aid, compared to the remaining 42% directed towards women. By age, young women have received a higher proportion of aid than men: 31% of aid granted to men has been directed to those under 35, while in the case of women, that percentage increases to 44%.

There are 49 LAGs in **Lithuania**, of which 3 are bi-sectorial. Although LAG Network, as an association uniting 49 Lithuanian rural LAGs, provides information about the number and specific projects implemented, investments received, and new jobs created for rural communities, there is no information regarding the participation in LAGs regarding gender. Some LAGs provide detailed information about their council and organization members. The publicly available data in LAGs sites show a balance among genders in the council and LAG members (LAG Network, 2023).

Croatia has 56 LAGs, of which 2 are inactive. Out of 54 active LAGs, only 17 provided data about the members' genders. In these 17 LAGs, there are 1078 members, of which 461 are women (39.98%) in 2022. The number of members in these 17 LAGs differs from 23.38 in LAG Mentorides to 65.59 in LAG Virovitički prsten. Huge disparities among men and women participants are also in LAG Papuk (26.67%), LAG Slavonska ravnica (29.27%), LAG Bilogora-Papuk (30%), LAG Krka (30.91%), LAG Una (31.58%), and others.

Figures noted in 2021 by **Ireland's** National Women's Council report on the participation of men and women in LAGs in Ireland and in Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) tasked with the distribution of LEADER funds highlight that women are underrepresented (National Women's Council, 2021). This report notes that of the 31 LCDCs in the country, only 18 have achieved female representation of the proposed EU rate of 40%. It is worth noting that while Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan 2021 Report (Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, 2022) asserts that the Monitoring Committee for the Plan will have a gender balance, there is no specific mention of gender balance in LAGs.

There is no specific data for women's participation in LAGs in **Scotland**. In the Ex-Post Evaluation of the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, the only mention of gender is regarding the Programme Monitoring Committee, where it is stated that: there was no differentiation made between members concerning gender, although it was seen by some that there was a greater dominance of men, which may reflect the industry in Scotland as a whole (Scottish Government, 2017).

The Netherlands has 19 existing LAGs, of which women manage 10. There is no data on how many women participants belong to each group of the LAG or in all LAGs (LAG database, 2023). Also, there are no data regarding women's participation in LAGs in Sweden and Norway. Norway did not participate in the LEADER programme.

7.3. Women's participation in social innovation initiatives

No data was collected about women's participation in social innovation initiatives in the project's partner countries. The publicly available data can only be found on individual initiatives in specific countries. Data indicating women's participation in social innovation initiatives would be beneficial for the analysis and monitoring of women's activity in this area and would allow for effective measurement of policy measures taken at the national and EU levels.

The Social Enterprise Census is a biennial survey which gathers data on social enterprise activity in **Scotland**. It has been carried out biannually since 2015. The number of Social Enterprises in Scotland that women lead has increased from 60% in 2015 to 71% in 2021. Social Enterprises in rural areas have been relatively stable, from 32% in 2015 to 33% in 2021 (Census, 2021). Although the data is split by urban and rural and by gender, there is not an intersection or combination of these categories. Therefore, it does not report the proportion of women-led or the level of women's participation in social enterprises in rural areas.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) is a high-profile non-governmental organisation with 6 funding streams to support social entrepreneur-led initiatives in Ireland. Its 2021 Annual Report (SEI, 2021) highlights that it has allocated €13 million in funding and pro-bono support since its inception in 2004. This report shows that SEI has supported over 500 social entrepreneur-led organisations since 2004 and over 120 alone in 2021. While women-led funding initiatives are noted among the case studies of successful recipients, no gender-disaggregated data is presented for applications received nor funding distributed. This report does highlight, however, SEI's commitment to gender equality in its management structure, noting that there is a gender balance of 50/50 on its Board (SEI, 2022).

There is a lack of gender-disaggregated data on social innovation initiatives in rural areas in **Ireland**. Rethink Ireland's (2022) Social Enterprise Development Fund 2018–2023 is supported by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund. Its Fund Impact Report for 2022 notes that over its five-year period, €4.4 million was allocated to support Business Courses for 100 social entrepreneurs annually and 8 awards worth €30,000 each. No gender-disaggregated data is presented on applications for or recipients of these awards. The only reference to gender in the report is around the understanding of the term "social

enterprise", where it is reported that 41% of men asked had "some or a complete" understanding of the term compared with 38% of women asked.

With the support of the LEADER programme, **Lithuanian** LAGs have already implemented 88 social business projects in rural areas until 2022 for €5.75 million (Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, 2023). However, data on participation in social initiatives by gender are not available. Also, various new projects and funding opportunities are constantly being initiated to promote the implementation of social innovations in Lithuania. However, they are usually not targeted at gender or place of an entrepreneur's residence (Innovation Agency, 2023).

An example of social innovation initiative in **Italy** can be the women's social cooperative, "Learning, growing, living with women farmers", which has organised childcare provision services on the farm since 2006. The services are based on the principles of nature pedagogics. The cooperative aims to create opportunities for women farmers living in remote rural areas of South Tyrol. Over five hundred children from 0 to 4 are taken care of through this initiative each year. After a decade of experience, the cooperative associated over 118 women providing a childcare service in rural areas and increased the role of women in decision-making processes at the micro (farm), meso (the community) and macro level (province) (Sarkki et al., 2021).

08 Gender dimension in the strategic documents

This section summarises the contextual information on gender sensitivity in strategic policy documents. As we deal with the agricultural sector and rural areas, the key areas of interest are (i) the documents defining the support schemes funded by the EU and (ii) national regulations on parental leave and the associated benefits. Regarding (i), we investigate the CAP and CFP measures. The parental leave and benefits regulations usually comprise maternity leave and childcare leave. The analysis proceeds country-wise within each area of interest. Note that non-EU countries participating in the consortium are not covered in this section as much as the EU funding is considered.

8.1. Gender dimension in the CAP measures for 2023–2027

The CAP comprises funding for direct payments, market measures, and rural development. Each of the EU Member States presents a national CAP strategic plan where the country-specific measures are outlined. These measures may include (priority) criteria for different groups of applicants, including women. In particular, the LEADER programme and the Local Action Groups (LAGs) are often related to the agricultural sector's and rural areas' social development. In this sub-section, we identify such measures in the CAP strategic plans.

8.1.1. Croatia

The Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2023–2027 does not provide for measures aimed exclusively at women. However, in SO7, "Attracting and supporting young farmers and facilitating business development in rural areas", increasing the proportion of women among young agricultural workers is one of the objectives. In SO8, "Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including women's participation in agriculture, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including circular bioeconomy and sustainable forestry", gender balance in agriculture is mentioned as one of the objectives (MP, 2022b).

8.1.2. Ireland

Gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of CAP (EAGF) payments has traditionally been unavailable at the EU level; however, this data is available at the national level in Ireland. Figures included in the *Irish Farmers Association Diversity Strategy Towards 2025* (IFA, 2019) show that men receive 92% of direct payments, whereas women receive the remaining 8%.
*Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023 to 2027 (*Department of Food, Agriculture, and the Marine, 2022a, 2022b*)* is identified in its Ministerial Forward as "the first (CAP Strategic Plan) to have specific and targeted supports for women farmers" (p.i) with the stated aim of attracting and maintaining women in agriculture. These measures include:

- The introduction of a 60% grant rate for women between the ages of 18 and 66 (compared to 40% for men) as part of the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) (p.33).

- Women's involvement in increased agricultural and business activities is also addressed by promoting and supporting "bottom-up" involvement in European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) delivered under RDPs.
- The establishment of Knowledge Transfer (KT) Groups as part of the CSP's Knowledge Transfer Programme for knowledge exchange and shared learning which will promote the creation of women-only KT Groups to that women can "tailor the content to their own experience, circumstances and requirements" (p.36).
- An expressed commitment to gathering more gender-disaggregated data for all CAP programmes.
- Proposals to increase women's involvement overall in CAP processes through supporting women to lead activities as part of the National CAP Network.

It should also be noted that Food Vision 2030 Strategy- A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems, Ireland's 10-year strategy for the agri-food sector (Department of Food, Agriculture, and the Marine. 2021), asserts its commitment to addressing "generational renewal and gender balance" (p.32). It highlights women's underrepresentation in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, noting that female workers in these sectors have increased only slightly from 12% (2000-2009) to 14% (2010-2019) and sets out that one of its key goals is to address this. Under Action 9, a National Dialogue on Women in Agriculture is proposed.

8.1.3. Italy

The CAP strategic plan for Italy for 2023-2027 envisages several measures to support young farmers and women. Usually, such a priority is valid for specific regions and varies from region to region. For instance, the Emilia Romagna region includes women and young beekeepers (below the age of 40) as the selection criteria for qualifying for support measures.
Payment for adopting and maintaining organic production practices and methods for the regions of Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Puglia, Sicilia, and Sardegna also specify young farmers and women as the characteristics of the beneficiaries. The measures envisaging payments for animal welfare and non-agricultural productive investments in rural areas may also be confined to young farmers and women as the beneficiaries in some areas of Italy. As for the non-agricultural start-up's measure, various social groups are mentioned as possible criteria to be applied by the regions or LAGs. These also include women.

8.1.4. Lithuania

Data not available.

8.1.5. The Netherlands

It is expected by the Dutch government that support for rural development projects and businesses will increase employment by creating around 2500 jobs. An estimated 55000 persons may benefit from direct financial support and other actions such as advice, training and knowledge exchange related to environmental or climate-related performance. It is not specified how many of these jobs or supports will be targeted towards women (Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2022).

The social investment dimension of the Dutch Strategic plan regarding CAP measures focuses on young farmers and entrepreneurship. The European Commission expressed concerns and critique about the low level of commitment to promoting gender equality in the initial plan of the Dutch government. It encouraged the Netherlands to consider more ways to support women in rural areas beyond participation in agriculture (European Commission, 2022). They are currently working on a strategy to improve the position of women in the agricultural sector (as of summer 2023).

The percentage of female business successors lags the European average. However, statistics can give a distorted image because the Netherlands is one of the few countries where man-woman partnerships are possible. Often, only singular women farm heads are counted. As a result of which, Dutch women's role in agriculture is underestimated.

The CAP's implementation in the Netherlands intends to promote gender equality and the position of women in rural areas and especially in agriculture with the following NSP measures: 1) explicit attention is given to networks that focus on (future) female farmers and issues specifically related to this target group; 2) In LEADER, gender and the participation of women are taken into account in the selection of projects in the LOS (local development strategies); 3) In knowledge dissemination and information, it is possible to apply for subsidies in practical networks around strengthening female agricultural entrepreneurship (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, 2022).

8.1.6. Norway

Not available.

8.1.7. Scotland (UK)

Brexit has rendered Scottish farmers unable to benefit from the CAP. From 2025 there will be a new Agriculture Bill in Scotland which will replace the CAP and current Basic Payment system for farmers and crofters in Scotland. It remains to be seen if data on the uptake of the various scheme represented in the Bill will be gender disaggregated. While the CAP National Plans will not apply to Scotland, the Women in Agriculture Taskforce 2019 report made several far-reaching recommendations for policy to address gender inequality in agriculture. This amounts to a Women in Agriculture Development Programme managed and executed by the Scottish Government. There were three pilot schemes that were trialled in the 2020-21 programme, they were:

- 'Be your Best Self' Training which aimed to help women increased their confidence, explore available opportunities, and find new networks.
- 'Women in Agriculture Leadership Development Course', this was designed to both enable and empower women to take up leadership positions in the agriculture industry.
- 'Knowing your Business' course, which sought to increases women's knowledge, skills, tools and confidence so that their business can grow to its full potential.

Each of these programmes were then analysed and evaluated in the 2021 'Women in Agriculture research: Progress report-2020-21'. The 'Be Your Best Self' evaluation was done through follow up interviews with the participants and a data analysis of the pre-course and post-course surveys. It was found that the course had been a huge success, 86% stated that it had a positive impact on their confidence levels, 78% were more confident about signing up for agriculture events and 88% stated they would sign up for further training or employment opportunities. This course has since been run again and has continuously been oversubscribed. The 'Knowing your Business' training pilot will be run through four online courses in 2022-2023, the evaluation of this will be done through pre- and

post-course surveys, interviews, case studies and site visits. The evaluation of the programmes can be found in the study by the Scottish Government (2021).
The research to inform the development of a Leadership Programme has recently been completed, in the 'Women in agriculture - leadership programme development: research'. The methodology included 6 in-depth interviews with men and women of mid-level and leadership roles in agriculture and an evidence review of existing programmes. It found that women face barriers in leadership roles and when women are given the opportunity to network and connect with other women in leadership positions, they are likely to aspire to these similar roles. Therefore, the development of this programme should focus on both the practical and business skills women need in leadership positions. This will be to develop their confidence, resilience, and industry knowledge. Participants will be encouraged to demonstrate self-awareness and reflexivity for the group to explore their methods of leadership and career goals. The evaluation of the programme can be found in the study by Scottish Government (2023).

8.1.8. Spain

The measures of the Spanish Strategic Plan for the CAP linked to Objective 8 are both from pillar 1 and pillar 2, and its gender approach is reflected in the following measures:

- Pillar 1:
  - Additional payment to young farmers, which is increased by 5% if the applicant is a woman.
  - Sectoral aids financing investments: Eligibility criterion that prioritises women.
- Pillar 2:
  - Measures financing productive investments (modernization, transformation, diversification) or non-productive investments (basic services in rural areas): Eligibility criterion that prioritises women.
  - Entrepreneurship in rural areas linked or not linked to agriculture: Eligibility criterion that prioritises women.
  - LEADER initiative: The eligibility conditions for projects establish seven principles, none of which are explicitly linked to gender dimensions. Only Castilla La Mancha establishes that the Directive of the LAGs is composed of more than 40% women.

8.1.9. Sweden

The CAP strategic plan for Sweden 2023-27 mentions women and gender equality a few times, but it does not mainstream gender. While SO8 "Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including women's participation in agriculture, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including circular bioeconomy and sustainable forestry", no objectives concerning women or gender equality are presented in the Swedish strategic plan. This was criticised in a pre-review, and therefore it is argued that the 'gender equality aspect' has been reinforced in the plan's efforts and analyses. An example mentioned is that investments for diversification support activities like tourism and hospitality, where the number of women entrepreneurs are more significant. Still, the recommendation in the pre-review did not entail any plan changes.

8.2. Gender dimension in the CFP measures

The CFP is implemented through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The EMFAF

supports innovative projects that contribute to the sustainable use and management of aquatic and maritime resources. The national operational programmes (OPs) are prepared to specify the measures to be implemented in specific countries. The CFP has varying importance across the EU countries depending on their involvement in the marine industry. This sub-section overviews the situation across the consortium countries.

8.2.1. Croatia

The Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Republic of Croatia for 2021-2027 does not contain measures aimed exclusively at women. Still, in all 4 priorities, the importance of gender equality is recognised. The program includes relevant staff training in target institutions and provides for establishing financial instruments tailored to the needs of the aquaculture sector (MP, 2022a). The specific objectives to ensure gender equality include:

- Specific objective 1.1 To strengthen economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable fishing activities.
- Specific objective 1.2. To increase energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions by replacing or modernizing fishing vessel engines.
- Specific objective 1.3. To promote the adjustment of fishing capacity to fishing opportunities in the event of permanent cessation of fishing activities and the adjustment of contribution to an adequate standard of living in the event of temporary cessation of fishing activities.
- Specific Objective 1.4 To promote effective control and enforcement in fisheries, including the fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and the reliability of data for knowledge-based decision making.
- Specific Objective 1.6 To contribute to the protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Specific objective 2.1. To promote sustainable aquaculture activities, in particular, strengthening the competitiveness of aquaculture production while ensuring the long-term environmental sustainability of the activity (limited access to funding).
- Specific objective 2.2. To promote the marketing, quality and added value of fishery and aquaculture products and the processing of these products.
- Specific Objective 3.1. To facilitate a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island, and inland areas and promote the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture communities.
- Specific Objective 4.1. To strengthen international management of the seas and oceans by promoting marine knowledge, maritime surveillance, and cooperation among coast guards.

8.2.2. Ireland

The EMFF in Ireland is administered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). Results of the funding awards are available in *EMFF Grant Aid Annual Reports* (Irish …, 2022). Results are presented according to location. No gender-disaggregated data is reported.
In *EMFF Grant Case Studies 2020* (Irish …, 2021), there is one reference to gender in the New Fishermen Scheme, aimed at supporting fishermen and women under 40 to purchase their first fishing vessel. This scheme covers 25% of the cost of the vessel up to the amount of €75,000.
The key national policy document for the EMFF is the *European Maritime and Fisheries Fund - Operational Programme for Ireland* (2014-2023), cf. BIM (2021). This document sets out as one of its

core horizontal principles the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination. It sets out its aim to:

- Implement gender mainstreaming at all stages of the funding process: "including preparation, project selection criteria, implementation, monitoring and evaluation" (p.128).
- Promote gender balance on its monitoring committees.
- Gather and report gender-disaggregated data on funding applications and outcomes.
- Develop indicators to capture gender outcomes and impact of fund-related activities.
- Remove barriers to participation and promote equality of access to information on funds (e.g., through flexible provision and delivery of information) (p.129).

8.2.3. Italy

According to Il Sole24 (Delfino, 2021), by 2020, in the framework of the EMFF 2014-2020 programming period, 150 projects with women as beneficiaries had been funded, accounting for 7% of the total number of funded projects and corresponding to 22 million euros of funding. This was reported as a positive trend in the historically and traditionally male-oriented fishery sector compared to previous programming periods. The same article highlighted that: (1) *Processing of fishery and aquaculture products* was the measure accounting for the highest financial amount of resources in absolute figures devoted to projects targeting women beneficiaries (about 13 million euros) and (2) initiatives to reduce environmental impact in the framework of *Productive investments in aquaculture* measure captured the highest share (%) of resources allocated to projects targeting women as beneficiaries (35.5%), also perceived as evidence of women's greater sensitivity towards innovation and low-impact practices.

Data about EMFF 2014–2020, including a list of beneficiaries, are available in a dedicated section of the Ministry of Agriculture (MASAF) 's website (Ministero …, 2023).

Despite positive trends illustrated early on, among the key facts reported at the launch of preparatory work for the new programming period (FEAMP 2021-2027) it was highlighted, among other things, the still low integration of women in the fishery sector (Direzione …, 2020). Also, the results of an analysis carried out by the National Network of Italian Fisheries Local Action Groups show that coastal communities are currently affected by several critical issues related to situations of social exclusion, including low levels of education and computerisation of the personnel involved in the management of fishing enterprises for the administrative-bureaucratic part, the marketing of the product and the sustainable management of the fishing activity, which are tasks that are mainly carried out by women in fishing families. For this reason, the same document recommends 'enhancing the role of women in the world of fishing and marinas (and in particular to): develop complementary activities for women in fishing areas, while increasing their visibility (e.g., creation of new products using discarded fishing nets or processing fisheries products); initiate training courses for women to increase skills in the management of the fishing enterprise management (the fundamental role of women in many fishing communities); design interventions aimed at fostering sources of income complementary to fishing and aquaculture activities (Comitato …, 2020).

The current debate has also highlighted that greater knowledge of the phenomenon should be gained by monitoring initiatives within the National Fisheries Observatory. In addition, system measures would be needed to enhance the contribution of women's skills and facilitate the full inclusion of women in the fishing industry by encouraging the creation and strengthening of associations and networks of female fishing entrepreneurs. Moreover, the importance of training is stressed, to improve the quality and quantity of female participation. From a regulatory point of view, it is necessary to proceed as soon as possible with the recognition of the figure of the role of the helper, already envisaged in agriculture, and to pay attention to female fishermen employed in small-scale

fishing to ensure that their rights are guaranteed and protected (Pianeta Psr, 2022). Detailed information is available in FEAMPA (2023).

In the draft OP (Ministero …, 2022), women are mentioned in the following paragraphs:

- Concerning Priority 2: Promoting sustainable aquaculture activities and processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products and aquaculture products, thereby contributing to the food security in the Union.
- In the SWOT analysis concerning 'Processing and Marketing': 'There are over 5,000 employees, 94% are Italian citizens, and 48% are women. The level of education is lower in the sector than in the rest of Italian industry, as only 7% of the employees have completed higher education. The need for more qualified personnel is emerging due to the need to follow quality protocols and introduce new technologies that require financial investments and the acquisition of know-how indispensable for their operations.

With reference to all the priorities:

- The national OP will consider compliance with the provisions of Art. 9 of EU Reg. no. 1060/2021, ensuring that equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and gender mainstreaming and the prevention of any discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation are considered and promoted during preparation, implementation monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the Programme. Equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination principles are a cross-cutting aspect to be adequately promoted through specific selection criteria for operations and in the calls for proposals and selection procedures that will be activated. Adequate publicity and information actions will be promoted to ensure full access to funding by the groups at the most significant risk of exclusion.
- Some actions will be based on principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, promoting equal opportunities, access to the labour market, better and fairer working conditions, social protection and inclusion, generational change, skills development, the socio-economic integration of migrants, involvement of young people and other disadvantaged groups, enhancement of the role of women also as managers of enterprises, to ensure full access and broad utilisation of human potential in development processes. Added to this are measures to diversify fishermen's income, improve stakeholder participation, involve families and the community, and reduce the administrative burden on businesses.

8.2.4. Lithuania

Not available

8.2.5. The Netherlands

The Programme for the Implementation of EMFAF in the Netherlands comments on the composition of the Supervisory Committee as follows:
"It was decided not to fill a seat that monitors social themes (such as inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination). In the Netherlands, there are no issues in the areas covered by the EMFAF themes; therefore, monitoring through a separate representative in the monitoring committee is unnecessary". [translated by the authors] (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, 2021: 187).

This citation suggests the EMFF policy implementation in the Netherlands is refusing to acknowledge and address issues regarding gender inequality in the Maritime, Fisheries, and aquaculture sectors. According to a factsheet on EMMF policies in the Netherlands, fisheries represent a small part of the diversified maritime economy in the Netherlands, accounting for less than 0.1 % of the national GDP. The most significant part of the fishery sector employment occurs in processing. The Dutch Operational Programme targets (environmental) sustainability, competitiveness and profitability, and technical innovation (European Commission, n.d.). Gender dimensions are not mentioned or explicitly addressed in the policy implementation.
The Women in Fisheries Network of the Netherlands (VinVis) was established following a symposium hosted by Quist (2000) which identified how underrepresented women were in the sector. For example, the lack of participation in meetings was partly traced to the fact that invitations to meetings were being sent out to boat owners (predominantly men). Two years after the formation of VinVis, the members concentrated on challenging their unseen work in the public media and how their role needs to be validated (Quist, 2022). This became their strength, and they continued advocating for their sector. Whilst the group remained a voluntary organisation, they were approached regularly for feedback by Ministry officials. “At every meeting, VinVis highlighted the importance of the well-being of the family and community in the discourse on fisheries” (Quist, 2022). They were even one of the founding members of the AKTEA Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Europe in 2016. Even so, they were often disappointed at the lack of perspective of women in fishing communities that were ultimately incorporated (Quist, 2022). As we can no longer find up-to-date information on this group and only have problems attracting financial support or professional acceptance (Quist, 2022), we can only assume that this network has unfortunately dissolved.

8.2.6. Norway

Not available.

8.2.7. Scotland (UK)

In the 2021 UK European Maritime and Fisheries Fund report, the fund is structured around several Union Priorities (UP).

- UP 1 was for innovative research projects whose outcomes will add value to the sector, energy savings and scientific knowledge. It was reported that concerning the gender of beneficiaries, 1,584 (80%) are male, 17 (<1%) are female and 12 (<1%) are other. Gender codes do not apply to 376 (19%) projects where beneficiaries are organisations.
- UP2: this focuses on aquaculture and supporting innovative projects to help expand production while improving the sector's sustainability. It was reported that concerning the gender of beneficiaries, 107 (64%) are male, and 13 (8%) are female. Gender codes do not apply to 48 (29%) projects, where beneficiaries are organisations, as opposed to individuals.
- UP4: This seeks to increase employment in fishing communities. It was reported that concerning the gender of beneficiaries, 127 (30%) are male, 25 (6%) are female, and 31 (7%) are other. Gender codes do not apply to 240 (57%) projects, where beneficiaries are organisations, as opposed to individuals.
- UP5: which focuses on the development and investments of new or improved fishery operations. It reported that concerning the gender of beneficiaries, 50 (27%) are male, 4 (2%) are female, and 3 (2%) are other. Gender codes do not apply to 126 (69%) projects, where

beneficiaries are organisations, as opposed to individuals.

- UP6: This seeks to aid the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy. It was reported that concerning the gender of beneficiaries, 1 (3%) is female. Gender codes do not apply to the remaining 31 (97%) of projects where beneficiaries are organisations, not individuals.

This data demonstrates that women consistently receive less funding than men. This is related to the fact that women are underrepresented in the fishing industry, and there is a lack of awareness of the roles they play. The data for the report can be found at the Department for Environment Fund and Rural Affairs (2021).

This was discussed in the 'Women in Scottish Fisheries: literature review' report published by the Scottish Government in 2021; the main finding of this report found that women's roles were largely underreported; they make vital contributions to the industry; there is a lack of data about women in fisheries; and women face cultural challenges and assumptions in the industry. The method for the review was keyword searches in public search engines and informal discussions with those who worked in Marine Scotland, Defra, Seafish and those in the Scottish Government. The review can be found in the study by the Scottish Government (2022).

8.2.8. Spain

A part of the Programme focuses on developing local fishing and aquaculture communities, mainly through LAGs. This is where the gender approach is most evident, as gender and age criteria will be considered in the allocation of grants, promoting the training and entrepreneurial capacity of women and young people and their participation in the sustainable development of fishing areas.
In parallel, the General Secretariat of Fisheries, through the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, has developed the Plan for Gender Equality in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (PIGSPA) 2021-2027 as a guidance tool - both for fisheries administrations and for the various sectoral and social actors involved in the implementation of equality - in defining their policies and actions to combat inequality between women and men in the fishing and aquaculture sector.

8.2.9. Sweden

Not available.

8.3. Regulation on maternity/paternity leave and childcare

The regulations on parental leave and childcare vary across European countries, with some countries offering only very limited support, which may inhibit women's participation in innovative activities. The information gathered concerns amongst others the amount of statutory payment made to women and men on maternity/paternity leave, which critically determines how much leave will be taken. This also applies to the agricultural sector, where farmers are often self-insured. In this sub-section, we survey the principles applied to parental leave and benefits for the selected countries.

8.3.1. Croatia

The Maternity and Parental Support Act (Official Gazette, 2022) regulates *maternity/paternity leave*. The rights of employed and self-employed parents are:

- maternity leave, paternity leave.
- parental leave.
- half-time work (during maternity and parental leave).
- half-time work due to increased care needs of a child, a break for breastfeeding the child.
- leave of a pregnant employee or an employee who has recently given birth or is breastfeeding (it is paid by the employer, and the wage compensation is charged to the employer's fund).
- a day off work for a prenatal check-up (in agreement with the employer).
- leave or half-time work for the care of a child with developmental disorders.
- suspension of the employment or activity on the basis of which the beneficiary acquired the insured status until the child's third birthday.

A (self) employed pregnant woman or mother may take maternity leave on the 28th day or, at the earliest, on the 45th day before the day of the expected birth until the child is six months old, with the compulsory part of maternity leave covering the period from the 28th day before the day of the expected birth until the day of the expected birth. A day before the day of the expected birth until the 70th day after the birth of the child. After the 70th day after the birth of the child (i.e., after the end of the mandatory maternity leave), the mother of the child may transfer the remaining part of the maternity leave (additional maternity leave) in whole or in part to the father of the child. While taking maternity leave, the mother is entitled to *wage compensation* in the amount of 100% of the wage compensation basis determined in accordance with the regulations of the statutory health insurance (without limitation).
Paternity leave may be taken by an employed or self-employed father during the period from the day of the child's birth to the sixth month of the child's life, for a period of ten working days for one child, i.e., 15 working days in the case of the birth of twins, triplets, or the simultaneous birth of several children, depending on the number of children born. During the period of taking paternity leave, the salary compensation shall be 100% of the salary base determined in accordance with the provisions of the statutory health insurance (without limitation) and shall be paid at the expense of the state budget.

The right to parental leave is a personal right of every employed and self-employed mother and father, provided that the child's mother is employed or self-employed at the time of birth.
Exceptionally, however, an employed or self-employed father shall have the right to parental leave if the child's mother was not employed or self-employed at the time of the child's birth, provided that, as an unemployed or non-employed mother, she did not use or did not meet the eligibility requirements for the right to time and financial support.

Parental leave may be taken by employed and self-employed parents individually, alternately, or simultaneously, in accordance with a personal agreement. Wage compensation during parental leave for the duration of the first six months or eight months of parental leave is paid at the full rate of the base for wage compensation (100% of the base for wage compensation) but may not exceed 225.5% of the budget base per month in the case of full-time employment (EUR 995.45/HRK 7,500.13). At the same time, it may be lower if 100% of the wage base is below this amount, in which case it may not be less than 70% of the household base (EUR 309.01/HRK 2,328.20). In the remaining part of parental leave for twins, the third and each additional child (after the first six months if taken by only one parent, or eight months of parental leave if taken by both parents), the salary compensation is 125%

of the household base (551.80 EUR/4,157.50 Kuna). Compensation for taking parental leave during half of full-time employment is 110% of the household base (EUR 485.58/ HRK 3,658.60).
After full use of parental leave, one of the employed or self-employed parents shall have the right to work half-time at the proposal of the child's chosen preschool health care or family medicine (general practice) physician, and in accordance with the findings and assessment of the relevant professional panel of the Croatian Health Insurance Fund (CHIF), if the child's health and development require increased care and attention and the child is not a child with developmental difficulties.
An employed or self-employed parent of a child with severe developmental disabilities (a child with severe physical or mental impairment or severe mental illness) shall be entitled to leave for child care until the child reaches the age of eight years, based on the findings and opinion of the Institute for Assessment, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, after the expiration of the entitlement to maternity leave or while the entitlement is being used or after the expiration of the entitlement to parental leave.
An employed or self-employed parent shall have the right to work half-time after the expiration of the entitlement to maternity leave or during the use or after the expiration of the entitlement to parental leave, and to continue to use it after the child reaches the age of eight, as long as the need exists, based on the findings and opinions of the Institute for Expert Opinion, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, provided that both parents are employed or self-employed.
An employed or self-employed mother who is breastfeeding a child while working full-time is entitled to a *breastfeeding break* of two hours per day, regardless of whether the employed or self-employed father takes advantage of any of the rights provided for in The Maternity and Parental Support Act at the same time and for the same child.
This right may be exercised once or twice a day for one hour each time until the child reaches the age of one. An employed adopter or a self-employed adopter acquires the right to adoption leave on the day on which the decision on adoption becomes final. An employed adopter or a self-employed adopter shall be granted adoption leave for a period of six months for a child up to 18 years of age.
In the case of the adoption of twins or the simultaneous adoption of two or more children, or a child whose adoption is the third or each additional child in the family of an employee adopter or a self-employed adopter, or a child with developmental disabilities, adoption leave shall be extended by 60 days.
After using adoption leave, an employed or self-employed adopter shall be entitled to parental leave and all other rights of an employed parent and a self-employed parent for an adopted child up to the age of eight years under the conditions and for the duration set forth in The Maternity and Parental Support Act.
If an employed or self-employed mother gives birth to a stillborn child before taking maternity leave, or if the child dies before the expiration of maternity or parental leave, she shall be entitled to maternity leave, i.e., she shall be entitled to take maternity or parental leave for an additional three months from the day following the day of birth of the stillborn child, i.e., from the day of the child's death.
An employed or self-employed father who has not taken paternity leave in case of stillbirth or death of the child before the expiry of paternity leave is entitled to paternity leave, i.e., he has the right to continue using the right to paternity leave for the remaining period.

8.3.2. Ireland

Ireland has a national and separate statutory provision for maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave (as well as force majeure entitlements) and Parent's Leave. Each form of leave must be applied for separately.

Maternity leave. Global Employment Platform, Boundless (2022) has highlighted Ireland's statutory regulations on compensation during Maternity Leave as one of the worst in Europe. Statutory provision for maternity leave is established in the Maternity Protection Act (1994) and the Maternity (Amendment) Protection Act (2004). The entitlement is to 26 weeks of maternity leave plus additional 16 weeks (42 weeks total). All employees are covered by this policy, including workers on casual hours. Following the 2004 amendment, women must take at least 2 weeks of maternity leave before the birth (or placement in cases of adoption) and a minimum of four weeks afterwards.

While the period of leave is relatively generous, the key issue in Ireland is that employers are not required to pay women on maternity leave; this depends on individual contracts. Where women are not paid by their employers, subject to them having enough Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions, they can receive a *Maternity Benefit*, paid by the Department of Social Protection at €262 per week for the initial 26 weeks. Employers can top up this amount, but again, there is no obligation. It is common for women to have a significant pay drop for the entire period of their maternity leave. The optional extra 16 weeks of maternity leave is unpaid. The payment of €262 per week stops at 26 weeks.

Self-employed women are also entitled to maternity benefits provided they have sufficient (PRSI) contributions. However, self-employed women are required to apply for maternity benefits 12 weeks before the due date of the baby compared with 6 weeks before for female employees. Women are entitled to maternity benefits in stillbirths and miscarriages after the 26th week of pregnancy.

Paternity Leave. The entitlement of fathers to Paternity Leave is set out in the Paternity Leave and Benefit Act (2016). It establishes a period of two paid weeks for this leave that must be taken within 26 weeks of the birth (or placement in case of adoption). Fathers planning to take this week must give their employers 4 week notice of their intention to take Paternity Leave.

As with Maternity Leave, employers are under no obligation to pay Paternity Leave, which depends on individual contracts. Where fathers are not paid by their employers, they can receive payments from the Department of Social Protection at the same rate as Maternity Leave, also subject to their PRSI contributions. For fathers, this standard amount of €262 can be topped up by their employers. The understanding of fathers is inclusive in policy and includes same-sex couples, adoptive parents and self-employed.

Parental leave. In Ireland, the entitlement to each parent of 26 weeks of unpaid Parental Leave per child is set out in the Parental Leave Act 1998, the Parental Leave (Amendment Act) 2006 and the Parental Leave (Amendment) Act 2019. This must be taken before the child is 12 or 16 years old for a child with a disability. Generally, the 26-week allocation of Parental Leave per parent is nontransferable from one parent to another except in cases where both parents have the same employers where this can be negotiated. The Parental Leave Act (1998, 2006, 2019), including amendments, also allows for paid force majeure leave required because of injury to or illness of a family member. This allows up to 3 days to be taken in 12 months and 5 days over 36 months.

Following the Parent's Leave and Benefit Act (2019) and its 2021 amendment to the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, each parent is entitled to seven weeks' leave. This must be taken within the first two years of the child's birth or adoption.

As is the case of Maternity and Paternity Leave, employers are not obligated to pay for this leave. Again, it is paid at the same rate as these other types of leave, provided the employee (or self-employed parent) has sufficient PRSI contributions.

8.3.3. Italy

The details of the Italian policies are outlined in Governo Italiano (2022). *Parental, maternity, and paternity leave* will be reformed according to the following guidelines:

- Working parents can take parental leave until their child reaches 14 years.
- The introduction of flexible arrangements for managing parental leave, according to the forms established by the sector's National Collective Labour Agreements is stipulated by the most representative national trade unions and considering single-parent family needs.
- Granting a minimum of two months of parental leave, which cannot be transferred to the other parent for each child, and providing benefits if leave is equally distributed between both parents.
  Providing working fathers compulsory leave in the first few months of the child's birth, which is significantly longer than the 10 days is provided for by law, if the employer is given reasonable notice.

In addition, measures will be introduced to encourage female employment through:

- Benefits, including contributions, for companies during maternity replacements, the return of women to work, and their training.
- Gradual salary modulation during absences due to children's illnesses.
- Incentives for employers who apply the clauses of the sector's National Collective Labour Agreements containing flexible working arrangements, with the option for workers to request the reinstatement of the original contractual arrangements under contractual provisions.
- Measures to support financial training for women entrepreneurs and the digitalization of companies.

Legislative Decree No. 105 of 30 June 2022, implementing Directive (EU) 2019/1158, amends regulations regarding leave to help parents and caregivers to improve their work-life balance and better share family responsibilities.

Under the new Decree, in the event of the birth of a child or perinatal death, the working father must take 10 working days off (20 in the case of multiple births), not necessarily continuously but not divisible into hours. This compulsory leave can be taken from two months before the expected date of birth to five months afterwards, subject to prior notification from the employer. During this period of absence, the father is entitled to a daily allowance equal to 100 per cent of his salary, and he cannot be dismissed until the child is one year old.

Parental leave. Significant changes have also been made regarding the regulation of parental leave, as detailed below:

- The total number of months of leave to which a single parent is entitled has increased from 10 to 11, with a view to greater protection for single-parent families.
- The period of leave covered by an allowance equal to 30% of salary has increased from 6 to 9 months.
- The age of the child up to which parents are entitled to compensation during their leave has increased from 6 to 12 years.

The Decree also facilitates access to flexible working arrangements for specific categories of employees.

8.3.4. Lithuania

Law on the Approval, Commencement, and Enforcement of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos …, 2016) and Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos …, 2000) regulate the *maternity and paternity leave* and the associated allowances, respectively. In Lithuania, 2023 marked the most recent cycle of the reform of the Labour Code and parental leave. Specifically, the non-transferrable period of childcare leave has been introduced. Currently, two types of parental leave are envisaged: i) maternity leave and ii) childcare leave. Note that "maternity leave" is associated with preparation for delivery, whereas "childcare leave" relates to the post-delivery period. The corresponding allowances are envisaged.

The *allowances* under both types of leave are calculated based on the insurable income level one year before the commencement of the allowance. The salaried persons are taxed automatically. The farmers may opt for different ways to obtain the right to social security. First, they may act as sole proprietors embarking on agricultural activity and pay a fixed social security insurance and mandatory health insurance payment. For farms with less than 4 ESU, these payments are defined with reference to the minimum salary. For larger farms, a percentage of taxable income is set. Second, farmers may establish work contracts with their farms (spouses). In this case, the standard regulation of paying income tax, social security payment, and mandatory health insurance payment.

The maternity leave is allowed to commence on the 30th week of pregnancy and continues for 126 days. During this leave, the mother receives 77.58% of the gross average salary received before the leave. The allowance is subject to a 15% income tax and a 6% mandatory health insurance payment. The father can also apply for paternity leave for 30 days one year after the delivery with the same allowance.

The childcare leave is then allowed for up to three years after the delivery (out of which 4 months are split for only the father and only the mother equally, and these equal parts are non-transferable). The childcare allowance is paid for either 18 or 24 months. In the first case, the childcare allowance is 78% during the 4 non-transferable months and 60% of the average salary received one year before the maternity leave for the rest of the paid leave. In the second case, the childcare allowance is 78% during the 4 non-transferable months, 45% of the average salary received one year before the maternity leave for the rest of the first year of the leave, and 30% for the remaining second year. These are subject to the same taxes as maternity leave. Both mother and father can decide who takes the childcare leave outside the four-month non-transferable period.

The one-time benefit is paid out upon a child's birth (Lietuvos …, 1994). The periodic payments are paid for raising a child until 18. Also, the municipalities may introduce additional benefits in cash or kind.

8.3.5. The Netherlands

The 'Wet Arbeid en Zorg' (WAZO 'Law on Labour and Care) regulates the right to various types of leave, such as *parental leave and care leave*. Chapter 3 describes regulations related to pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, and foster care (Overheid.nl, 2015).

Maternity leave:

- Pregnant individuals are entitled to 6 weeks of maternity leave and at least 10 weeks of 'childbirth' leave, in total weeks. Maternity leave must be taken no later than 4 weeks before the day after the due date of delivery. Any unused portion of the 6 weeks of maternity leave can be added to the total leave. Maternity leave begins on the day after delivery and lasts for a minimum of 10 weeks.
- Since 1 January 2015, the last period of maternity leave can be taken in parts, up to 30 weeks, for the portion remaining after 6 weeks from delivery. Additional maternity leave may be granted if a child is hospitalized for more than a week, but no additional leave is provided for

the first week (Rijksoverheid, n.d.g).

- For those expecting twins or multiple births, the leave is extended to at least 10 more weeks, for a total of 20 weeks. Maternity leave can be taken starting 10 weeks before the due date and no later than 8 weeks before the due date (Rijksoverheid, n.d.c).
- If an individual is employed by an employer, they are entitled to receive *maternity allowance* during their leave. Self-employed persons are not entitled to maternity leave, which is often the case for farmers. Self-employed persons are supposed to determine their own working hours and leave and must provide a replacement income themselves, as this is regarded as an inherent part to being self-employed (Rijksoverheid, n.d.a).

ZEZ benefit for self-employed persons:

- Self-employed persons can receive a ZEZ benefit (Self-employed and Pregnant Scheme) from UWV. The 'Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen' (UWV) is a governmental institution that provides benefits and helps job seekers to find work (Rijksoverheid, n.d.f).
- The ZEZ benefit lasts at least 16 weeks. The benefit starts between 6 weeks and 4 weeks before the day after the due date. After giving birth, individuals are entitled to at least 10 weeks of benefits.
- When expecting twins, the ZEZ benefit lasts at least 20 weeks. The benefit starts between 8 weeks and 10 weeks before the day after the due date.
- The calculation of the ZEZ benefit is based on individuals' income and profit of the past year. The benefit never exceeds the statutory gross minimum (youth) wage (UWV, n.d.). As a consequence of the benefit being based on the past year's income, it will likely be low for farmers. The income from work is not deducted from the maternity allowance (UWV, n.d.).

Other rights:

- Pregnant individuals may be entitled to maternity *allowance* and childbirth allowance. In the event of illness around pregnancy or childbirth, those can receive a sickness benefit.
- In case the mother dies during maternity leave, her partner can take over the leave.
- Employers may not make pregnant individuals unemployed or discharge individuals during their maternity leave. Employers are not allowed to ask pregnant individuals to take vacation days for their maternity leave and to refuse the leave (Rijksoverheid, n.d.e).

Working conditions for pregnant individuals. During pregnancy and up to 6 months after delivery, individuals are entitled to adjusted working hours. Adjusted working hours can include additional breaks, regular working hours and rest periods, a suitable and lockable room for resting, and an exemption from overtime and night shifts. Additionally, individuals may not be required to work more than 10 hours per shift or an average of 50 hours per week in a period of 4 weeks, or an average of 45 hours per week in a period of 16 weeks. Employees can submit a request to their employer to adjust their working hours.

Individuals are also entitled to pregnancy examinations during working hours, and their wages will continue to be paid during this time. During the first 9 months of their child's life, employees have the right to breastfeed or pump during working hours, for up to ¼th of their working time per shift. Employers must provide a suitable, lockable space for this, and the time spent feeding or pumping must be paid by the employer. If the employer cannot or insufficiently eliminate possible dangers, individuals are entitled to adapted work during pregnancy and up to 6 months after delivery. Employers must also limit the physical strain of work as much as possible. These rules apply during and after pregnancy (Rijksoverheid, n.d.d).

Maternity leave for partners. The birth leave for partners who are employed is one week with the number of days depending on your regular weekly working (e.g., 5 days for full-time employment).

The employee can take the leave days at his/her own discretion but must do this within 4 weeks after the birth of the child.
Since 1 July 2020, partners can take up to 5 weeks (5 times the number of working hours per week) of additional birth leave. During the leave, the partner does not receive a salary, but a benefit from the UWV. Partners are entitled to additional birth leave if the child is born on or after 1 July 2020. They must take the additional birth leave within 6 months of the birth of the child. And they must first have taken the 1-week birth leave. During the leave, employees receive a benefit from the UWV. This benefit is a maximum of 70% of their daily wage (and a maximum of 70% of the maximum daily wage). The holiday allowance is calculated on this benefit (Rijksoverheid, n.d.b).
Childcare allowance. Entrepreneurs are entitled to receive childcare allowance. Childcare allowance is a contribution to the costs of childcare. The amount of childcare allowance depends on individuals' income, the number of children, and the type of childcare. To be eligible for childcare allowance, the child must attend a registered childcare facility (Ondernemersplein, n.d.).
Child benefit. Child-related budget is a contribution to the costs for children up to the age of 18. Parents may receive a contribution for the costs of raising their child(ren) up to the age of 18. Individuals will receive this in addition to the child benefit. The amount depends on the child's age and residence, and the income of the parents or caretakers (Belastingdienst, n.d.).
Parental leave. From 2 August 2022, parents may receive a benefit from UWV for 9 weeks of parental leave. The benefit is 70% of their daily wages. The condition is that they take these 9 weeks in the child's first year of life. Only parents who are employed are entitled to partially paid parental leave (Rijksoverheid, 2021).

8.3.6. Norway

The Norwegian National Insurance Act (1997) regulates *maternity/paternity leave*. The benefits at birth and adoption (NAV, 2006) are stipulated as follows: The primary condition for entitlement to parental *allowance* is an occupational activity with pensionable income, more than half of the basic amount on an annual basis, for at least six of the last ten months before the benefit period begins. In addition, the person concerned must be away from work. Parental allowance is calculated and paid in the same way as sickness allowance. For women who do not meet the conditions for the right to parental allowance, a one-off benefit is provided.
The National Insurance Act (Folketrygdloven, 1997) regulates maternity pay. This provision entitles a pregnant woman to maternity allowance when, due to the pregnancy, she cannot carry out her usual work because the work may entail a risk of injury to the child she is expecting. Arrangement of work tasks or relocation is also not possible. She must, therefore, temporarily stop working. Maternity pay can be given to employees, self-employed people, and freelancers. In addition to entry conditions for the right to maternity pay, the provision also contains rules for calculating the benefit, the length of the benefit period, and holiday pay.
If the woman can continue in part of her position, graded maternity pay can be granted. This applies in cases where the employer can partially redeploy the woman or partially facilitate the work. Graduated maternity allowance can also be granted if reduced working hours can prevent the risk of harm to the expected child. Pregnancy allowance is graded based on how much the woman works compared to the percentage of employment she has in the employment relationship.
According to the first paragraph, it is a condition for the right to maternity pay that the self-employed person is exposed to the same risk factors in their work that would give an employee the right to maternity pay. This means that, for the self-employed, the starting point must also be similar risk factors that employees are protected against.
The National Insurance Act (Folketrygdloven, 1997) focuses on parental allowance. Parental

allowance is given both at birth and at adoption. Parental allowance also includes the father's quota. The period of parental allowance can be postponed when the recipient of parental allowance has a statutory holiday, is in full-time gainful employment, cannot take care of the child due to illness, is admitted to a health institution or if the child is admitted to a health institution.
Parental allowance can also be withdrawn as a graduated withdrawal. The rules on graduated withdrawals were introduced by the Act of 21 April 2006 No. 10. The scheme came into force on 1 January 2007. This means that an employee, self-employed person, or freelancer can combine partial withdrawal of parental allowance with partial work to extend the leave over time. In terms of the amount, the beneficiary will not receive more in total parental allowance than if it were taken out in the usual way.

The Working Environment Act says the following (Arbeidsmiljøloven, 2005) concerning the duration of paternal leave. The following cases are envisaged:
Maternity leave (§12-4): Employees who are pregnant are entitled to leave for up to twelve weeks during pregnancy. After the birth, the mother must be on leave for the first six weeks unless she presents a doctor's certificate attesting that she can go back to work.
Care leave (§12-3): In connection with the birth, the father is entitled to two weeks' leave to assist the mother. If the parents do not live together, the right to leave can be exercised by someone else who assists the mother. Adoptive parents and foster parents are entitled to two weeks' leave in connection with taking over care of the child. This does not apply to stepchild adoption or if the child is over 15 years old.
Parental leave (§12-5): The parents are entitled to leave according to the rules in this paragraph and in §§ 12-2 and 12-4 for twelve months. In any case, the parents have the right to leave when parental allowance is paid from the national insurance.
(2) In addition to leave under the first paragraph, each of the parents is entitled to leave for up to twelve months for each birth. This leave must be taken immediately after the parents' leave under the first paragraph. An employee who has partial leave in accordance with § 12-6 is nevertheless not entitled to leave in accordance with this subsection.
(3) Unless both parents have custody of the child, the right to leave under the first subsection may be exercised by another who has custody of the child. An employee who is alone in caring for the child is entitled to up to two years' leave under the second paragraph.
(4) Adoptive parents and foster parents are entitled to leave according to the section here when the care of the child is taken over. The same applies to employees who have or are assigned parental responsibility when the other parent dies and who have had less than usual contact with the child. The right to leave does not apply in the case of stepchild adoption or if the child is over 15 years old.
In Norway, the parents can choose between 49 weeks covering 100 % of their salary or 59 weeks covering 80% salary. If choosing 100% coverage, there is the division of weeks between the parents. The mother's quota is 15 weeks, and the father's is 15 weeks. A quota to be distributed between the parents as they want. If choosing 80% salary, here is the division of weeks between the parents: 3 weeks before birth (3 weeks for the mother). The mother's quota is 19 weeks, and the father's Is 19 weeks. The quota to be distributed between the parents as they want is 18 weeks. The total payments are higher when choosing 100% salary coverage/49 weeks.

8.3.7. Scotland (UK)

In Scotland, employees can take up to 52 weeks maternity leave. The first 26 weeks are known as 'Ordinary Maternity Leave, and the last 26 weeks as Additional Maternity Leave. The earliest leave

can be taken 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. Employees must take at least 2 weeks after the birth (or 4 weeks if they are a factory worker), cf. MyGov.scot (2022).

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. However, payment varies over this period. For the first six weeks, women are entitled to 90% of their average weekly earnings (before tax). For the remaining 33 weeks, women are entitled to £172.48 or 90% of their average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). Men are entitled to two weeks of Paternity leave in Scotland. Men can take either 1 week or 2 consecutive weeks'' leave. Leave must finish within 56 days of the birth (or due date if the baby is early). Those who take Shared Parental Leave will get Statutory Shared Parental Pay which is £172.48 a week or 90% of a person's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. Parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them; they need to share the pay and leave in the first year after their child is born or placed with your family with the requirement that to receive shared parent leave you or your partner must: 1. Take less than the 52 weeks of maternity/adoption leave and use the rest as shared parental leave; 2. Take less than 39 weeks of maternity or adoption pay (or Maternity Allowance) and use the rest as shared parental pay. This information is found on the UK Government website; although some legislation and departments, such as agriculture, are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, maternity pay is not, cf. Gov.uk (2023a).

For those who are self-employed, the UK Government provides a maternity allowance. This is between £30 to £172.48 a week for 39 weeks. The amount depends on how many Class 2 National Insurance contributions you've made in the 66 weeks before your baby is due. To get £172.48 per week, a person must have the following:

- Be registered with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for at least 26 weeks in the 66 weeks before your baby is due.
- Paid Class 2 National Insurance contributions for at least 13 of the 66 weeks before the baby is due.

If an individual has paid less than 13 weeks of Class 2 National Insurance contributions, the Maternity Allowance will be calculated based on how many contributions the person has made. If they have not paid any Class 2 National Insurance contributions, they will be entitled to £30 per week Maternity Allowance. To increase the Maternity Allowance, a person can pay more Class 2 National Insurance contributions. After applying for Maternity Allowance, HMRC will inform them how many additional Class 2 National Insurance contributions they must pay. If they pay the additional Class 2 National Insurance contributions, they will get £172.48 weekly for 39 weeks. Class 2 National Insurance contributions are £4.01 per week. If they do unpaid work for their spouse or civil partner's business, they can get £30 a week for up to 14 weeks. This information can be found on the UK Government's website (Gov.uk, 2023b).

8.3.8. Spain

In relation to the regulation on maternity/paternity leave and childcare, it is important to differentiate in rural areas between women employees and self-employed women entrepreneurs and those who are worker-members in the cooperatives. Both are protected against a number of risks related to maternity/paternity as will be summarised below. For those self-employed an important improvement has been realised by way of the 2007 Self-Employed Work Statute (Law 20/2007, reformed in September 2015 as Law 31/2015) which established tax exemptions and reductions or

subsidies for social security contributions. More generally, the following risks related to maternity/paternity leave and childcare are covered:

1. Risk of loss of income during pregnancy: The economic benefit covers the loss of income that occurs when work must be suspended because of risk during pregnancy.
2. Risk during breastfeeding: The economic benefit covers the loss of income that occurs when work must be suspended because of breastfeeding a child under 9 months old.
3. Birth and childcare: periods of leave taken for Birth of a child and Adoption, guardianship for adoption and foster care provided that, in the latter case, their duration is not less than one year.
4. Self-employed mothers, are exempt from paying their monthly Social Security contributions of approximately €300 for two years.
5. Care of minors affected by cancer or other serious illness: A financial benefit for parents, adoptive parents or foster parents who reduce their working hours to care for a dependent minor affected by cancer or another severe illness.

Law 35/2011, of 4 October, on shared ownership of agricultural holdings, sought to empower rural women through a regulatory tool that would allow their access to social security protection. It can be considered a significant example of how a regulatory tool can be an instrument to make women's real contribution to agricultural activity visible and a way for their recognition as members of agri-food cooperatives.

However, the very scarce results obtained since its publication make it clear that other adequate measures for the widespread and regular adoption of shared ownership are probably not being developed. In other words, it is a measure that, in any case, must be accompanied by another set of measures that can be summarised in the provision of resources in rural environments: transport, health and education services, access to training, services to facilitate conciliation, etc.

Concerning this law, an important idea to bear in mind is the possibility of extending the figure of shared ownership to non-agri-food sectors of activity, given that the concept of rural women goes beyond the sphere of women farmers. At present (April 2023), the total number of farms covered by this law is 1,124, which means that this type of ownership is gaining importance and value for women linked to the sector and the rural areas in general.

For what concerns parental leave the *Law on Families of* 28 March 2023 is important. The regulation creates three types of care leave, in line with the 2019 European directive on work-life balance:

1. A paid leave of five days a year to care for a family member up to the second degree or a cohabitant, with or without a family relationship.
2. Eight weeks of parental leave, which may be taken continuously or discontinuously and on a part-time or full-time basis until the child reaches the age of eight. There is no provision for this leave to be paid.
3. A leave of absence due to force majeure to allow time off when reasons require immediate attention. It will be four paid days a year and can be taken by the hour.

8.3.9. Sweden

Sweden has publicly funded health care, elder care and social care and a social assistance system. The state also takes responsibility for children, with public day-care centres subsidised by the state. Public schools, and universities are free of tuition fees. Parents can take 18 months of paid maternity or paternity leave and have the statutory right to paid leave when children are sick – all financed through the tax system. According to the Social Insurance Agency in Sweden, you are eligible for parental benefits:

- if you are at home with your child instead of working, studying, or looking for work.
- if you are the child's parent or have custody of the child.

- you are a prospective adoptive parent.
- you are married to or living together with the child's parent.
- if you are insured in Sweden.

Parental benefit is paid out for one child for 480 days (approximately 16 months). For 390 days, the level of compensation is based on income (these are referred to as sickness benefit level days). For the remaining 90 days, the compensation is set at SEK 180 per day (these are referred to as minimum-level days). One can take out parental benefits up to and including the day the child becomes 12 years old or when the child finishes Year 5 at compulsory school. But, from the child's 4th birthday, one can only save 96 days. If twins, one can save 132 days in total.

According to Ahl et al. (2023), this system makes it easier to combine paid work with family responsibilities than in many other countries, and benefits are, in principle, the same for the self-employed, even if taking time away from one's business commitments may be more difficult. Eriksson and Hajdu (2021) discussed the parenthood issues among Swedish farmers.

In the report: The holy family, holy cows, or the holy gender equality? A study on the share of parental leave among entrepreneurs in rural areas (LRF, 2014a) [Swe. Heliga familjen, heliga kor eller heliga jämställdheten? En studie om fördelningen av föräldraledighet bland företagare på landsbygden], thirty people who live in rural areas and run businesses were interviewed on the share of parental leave among entrepreneurs in rural Sweden. Follow-up interviews were conducted with eight of the respondents. What emerged in the interviews was the following:

1. 60 per cent of those interviewed have shared parental leave, and the biggest reason why is, according to their own experience, an attitude and willingness to share more equally.
2. 40 per cent of those interviewed have not shared on parental leave, and the biggest reason for this choice is that the families experienced that they would have lost financially by sharing.
3. Distinctive for the couples who shared the parental leave is that the couple agreed on the distribution before the child was born and planned for how the desired distribution would be possible.
4. The interviewees see attitudes and traditions as the biggest reason why not more couples share parental leave in rural areas and that a change in attitudes is what is mainly required to get one more equal withdrawal.
5. The Social Insurance Agency and the parental insurance system are perceived as complicated for many of the interviewees.

The Gender Equality Academy also identified questions that they would need to continue working on:

A. Produce a parental leave manual for entrepreneurs.
B. Work to primarily influence men's attitudes applicable to parental leave.
C. Participate in the media debate about shared parental leave.
D. Select a few municipalities and try to get started with a shared parental leave trend.
E. Work with the Swedish Social Insurance Agency to make it easier for self-employed people.
F. Investigate the possibility of bringing in substitutes as an alternative to getting financial compensation during parental leave.

In the report "We have probably shared more equally than the norm – eight inspiring examples of entrepreneurs using their parental leave can be viewed(2014b) [Swe. Vi har nog delat mer än normen - Åtta inspirerande exempel på hur företagare på landsbygden nyttjat sin föräldraledighet] The Gender Equality Academy discusses how parenthood and entrepreneurship can be combined, so that both women and men get the opportunity to be together with their children and at the same time run a business, to share responsibility between parents for children and family, allow both parents to

be entrepreneurs and develop in their work. The Equality Academy seeks to highlight role models to inspire more people to discuss how parental leave is distributed between women and men. They present parents who share their experiences of how they created space both for parenthood and for businesses. One important factor seems to be enough careful planning of parental leave. Another factor is a change in attitude, which sometimes can be easier said than done, according to the Academy.

09 Conclusions

The statistical data analysis suggests that women's position in agribusiness and rural areas varies across the EU Member States. In general, however, there is still a significant difference in women's and men's access to paid employment and entrepreneurship. The difference is most pronounced when it comes to agriculture where most businesses and particularly the biggest and most productive farms are still run by men. The position of women in agriculture seems to have improved a bit in recent years but it is difficult to get a clear picture given the scarcity or complete lack of relevant data among others on ownership of land and other capital, and representation in agricultural organisations such as cooperatives and farm unions. As a result, we know little about decision-making at the level of the farm and (inter)national policy. But also, when it comes to the remuneration of farm labour and social security gender-specific data are still lacking for many countries. The same is true for the participation of women and men in innovative farming, such as organic agriculture, farm diversification and ecosystem services. There is some evidence of women's involvement, but the lack of comparable data inhibits a systematic analysis.

One of the CAP objectives for 2023–2027 addresses gender equality. However, the National Strategic Plans have given only limited attention to this objective. Again, the lack of data is probably a limiting factor, as it is difficult to develop policy measures without insight into the situation and its dynamic. This report focuses on macro-data, but statistics at the farm level are also crucial for the design of agricultural interventions. Therefore, additional variables related to gender should be included in the EU FADN/FSDN system.
Regarding women's involvement in innovative socio-ecological farming practices, the Spanish example of data reporting/collection is positive, where the information is recent and disaggregated by gender. The indicator integrating different environmental initiatives is presented as green activities. The Census of Agriculture and Structure Survey includes an analysis of the other gainful activities of farms, but only some partner countries (Spain, Italy) provide sex-disaggregated results. The goals set for organic farming in the strategy Farm to Fork put pressure on collecting these statistics and monitoring the situation. This indicator is included in the integrated farm statistics, the primary data revealing that the share of organic farms run by women was lower than that of conventional farms run by women at the EU level.

Across all partner countries, there are significant differences between male and female entrepreneurs. In terms of business start-ups by rural women, such publicly available data is usually very limited or not even collected. No gender breakdown is collected and reported for the members of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and their leaders in the project partner countries. Publicly available data on women's participation in LAGs would be valuable for monitoring progress in women's involvement in rural activities and entrepreneurship.
There are no data on women's participation in social innovation initiatives in the project partner countries. Generally, publicly available data is only available on individual initiatives in different countries. Data on women's participation in social innovation initiatives would be very beneficial to monitor women's participation and assess the effectiveness of the policy measures implemented.
The data on women's unpaid labour are scarce in the statistics practice of the EU. The same applies

to the data on the position of women in business partnerships. In many cases, no data or only (occasional) qualitative data are available for women's roles in farming organisations and cooperatives. In Lithuania, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy, there is no sex-disaggregated data on participation in cooperatives or unions, and in Norway, there are data, but they are not publicly available. Formal gathering and monitoring of such data would improve the effectiveness of the policies promoting women-led innovation in agriculture and rural areas.

The regulations on paternity/maternity leave vary across the EU countries, posing challenges for rural women in some countries as they may not be adequately safeguarded financially during this period. The decision variables are the duration of the maternity and childcare leave, the share of the salary that is paid during the leave, the proportion of the leave spent by each of the parents, and various benefits granted to working parents. Each country shows its own socioeconomic structures, and a single-best framework cannot be identified. further discussion is needed on the effectiveness of the policies adopted by different countries and their effect on women's engagement in rural and agricultural innovation.

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