

LMF1.6: Gender differences in employment

Definitions and methodology

This indicator captures gender differences in employment through six measures. The first four focus on gender differences in employment participation and the extent to which men and women participate in paid work, and the last two on the degree to which men and women hold different types of jobs:

- i) The *gender gap in the employment rate* (15-64 year olds), with the gender gap measured as the percentage point difference between the male employment rate and the female employment rate. Definitions of employment follow [ILO guidelines](#).
- ii) The *gender gap in the full-time equivalent employment rate*, with the full-time equivalent employment rate calculated as the employment rate (15-64 year olds) multiplied by average usual weekly working hours, divided by 40. The resulting full-time equivalent rate can be interpreted as the proportion of the population that would be employed *if* all those in employment worked a full time 40-hour working week. The gender gap is again calculated as the percentage point difference between the male and the female rate.
- iii) Men's and women's *part-time employment rates*, defined as part-time employment as a percentage of total employment. Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job (see comparability and data issues).
- iv) The *gender gap in the employment rate by level of educational attainment* (25-64 year olds), with educational attainment measured using the standard three-part ordinal variable based on the ISCED 2011 classification system: 'low education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); 'medium education' reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and 'high education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent). The gender gap is again calculated as the percentage point difference between the male and the female rate.
- v) *Women's share of managerial employment*, defined as the proportion of managers that are women. 'Managers' are defined in most cases as workers with jobs classified in ISCO08 category one, though data for certain countries continue to use the older ISCO88 classification system.
- vi) Men's and women's *temporary employment rates*, defined as the proportion of employees in temporary employment. 'Temporary employment' is defined here as work under a fixed-term or temporary contract.

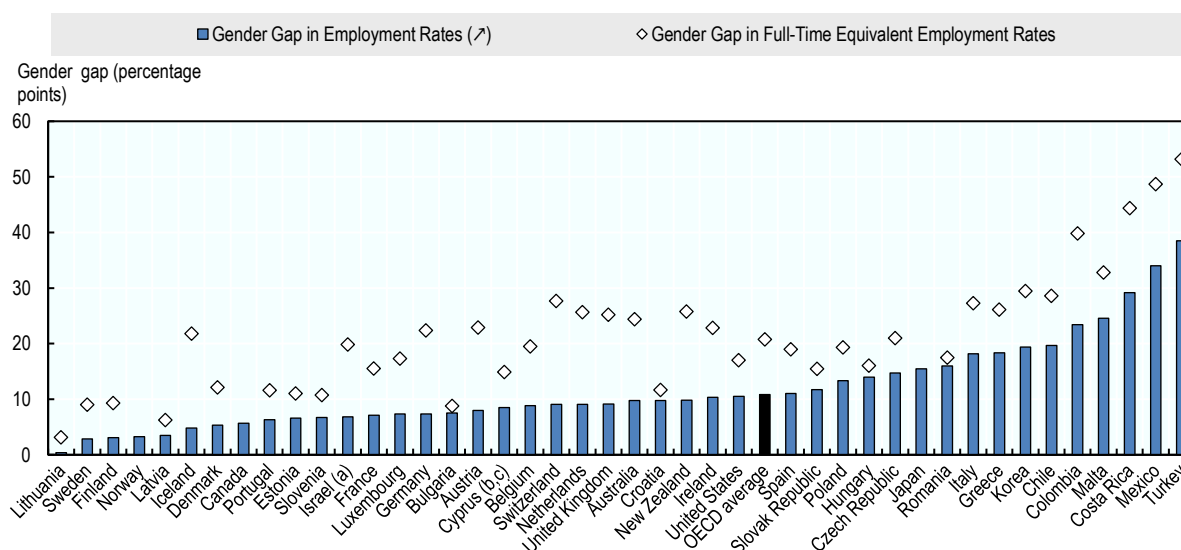
Other relevant indicators: Maternal employment (LMF1.2); Employment profiles over the life-course (LMF1.4); Gender pay gaps for full and part-time workers (LMF1.5); The distribution of working hours among in couple households (LMF2.2.) and in single-parent household (LMF2.3); Educational attainment by gender (CO3.1).

Key findings

Across the OECD, women are less likely to be employed men, though the size of the gap differs considerably between countries (Chart LMF1.6.A). In 2017, the OECD average female employment rate (64%) was around 11 percentage points lower than the OECD average for men (74.9%). In some countries (e.g. Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden) the gap in 2017 was only around 5 percentage points or less. In others (e.g. Mexico and Turkey) it was as high as 30 percentage points or more.

Gender gaps in employment widen once working hours are taken into account (Chart LMF1.6.A). In all OECD countries, the gender gap in the full-time equivalent employment rate is larger than the gap in the standard employment rate. In several eastern European and Baltic countries (particularly Hungary, but also Lithuania, Latvia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and some non-OECD EU member states such as Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania) the gap in the full-time equivalent rate is only marginally higher than the gap in the standard employment rate. This suggests that in these countries, gender differences in employment are determined mostly by differences in the ability to find employment in the first instance. In other countries, such as Australia, Austria, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the gap in the full-time equivalent employment rate is much larger (by around 15 percentage points or more) than the gap in the headcount employment rate. In these countries, highly unequal working hours contribute heavily to overall gender differences in paid work.

Chart LMF1.6.A. Gender gaps in employment rates and full-time equivalent employment rates
 Gender difference (men minus women) in the employment rate and the full-time equivalent employment rate, 15-64 year olds, 2017



Notes: The full-time equivalent employment rate is calculated as the employment rate for 15-64 years old multiplied by the average usual hours worked per week per person in employment (both dependent and self-employment), divided by 40. For the United States, the full-time equivalent is calculated based on usual working hours for dependent employees only. For Korea, data reflect actual rather than usual weekly working hours.

a. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

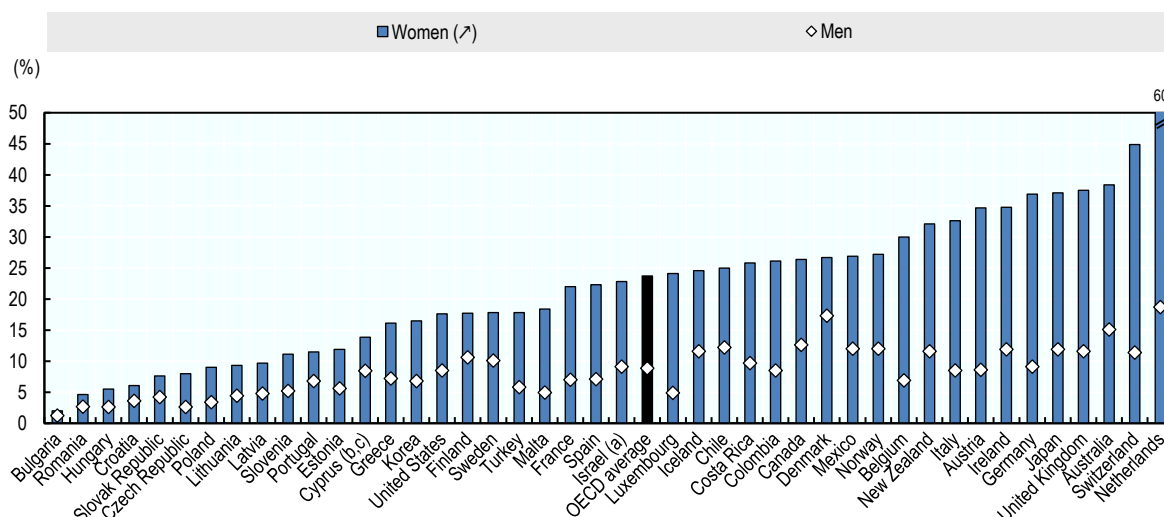
b. Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue";

c. Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Source: [OECD Employment Database](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm)

In many OECD countries, gender differences in working hours are driven by disproportionately high rates of part-time employment among women workers (Chart LMF1.6.B). In some countries (again, mostly eastern European countries) the female part-time employment rate is only slightly higher than the male part-time employment rate. In others, however, part-time employment rates for women are four or five times the size of those for men (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg). In the Netherlands, 60% of employed women work part-time, far higher than the share for employed men (18.7%).

Chart LMF1.6.B. **Gender differences in part-time employment**
 Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment, by sex, 2016



Notes: Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment. 'Part-time' here refers to people who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job. For the United States, data reflect part-time employees among dependent employees only. For Japan and Korea, part-time employment is based on actual rather than usual weekly working hours.

a. See note a to Chart LMF1.6.A

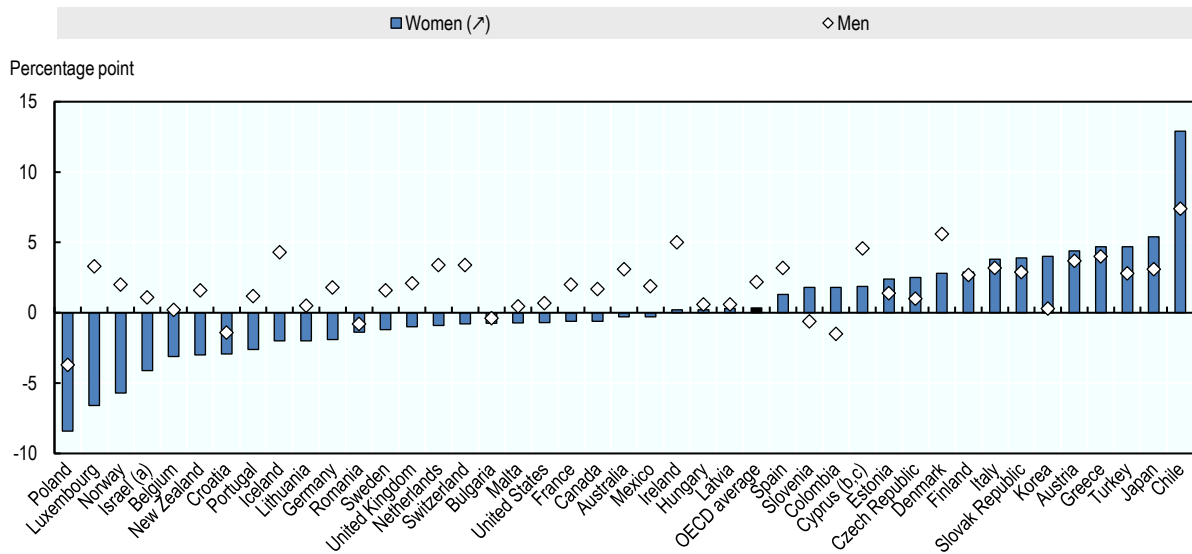
b. See note b to Chart LMF1.6.A

c. See note c in Chart LMF1.6.A

Source: [OECD Employment Database](#)

Trends in part-time employment are mixed (Chart LMF1.6.C). Roughly half of all OECD countries have seen women's part-time employment rates fall over the past decade or so, in some cases (e.g. Luxembourg, Norway and Poland) by as much as five percentage points or more. However, the remaining half saw women's part-time rates increase. In Chile, it increased by 13 percentage points, from 12% in 2005 to 25% in 2016. In contrast, men's part-time employment rates are increasing in almost all OECD countries (Poland and Slovenia are the exceptions.) Ireland has seen the share of employed men in part-time work grow by 5 percentage points since 2005, and in Denmark it has grown by 6 percentage points. However, the largest increase is again in Chile, where men's part-time rate has increased by 7 percentage points over the past decade or so, from 5% to 12%.

Chart LMF1.6.C. **Change in part-time employment**
 Percentage points change in the proportion of employed in part-time employment, by sex, 2005-2016



Note: Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment. 'Part-time' here refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job. For the United States, data reflect part-time employees among dependent employees only. For Japan and Korea, part-time employment is based on actual rather than usual weekly working hours.

a. See note a to Chart LMF1.6.A

b. See note b to Chart LMF1.6.A

c. See note c in Chart LMF1.6.A

Source: [OECD Employment Database](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm)

Gender gaps in employment rates are not identical across all socio-economic groups. Table LMF1.6.A, for instance, shows that in almost all OECD countries, gender employment gaps decrease with education. On average across the OECD, the gap among men and women with high education is only 9 percentage points, compared to 20 percentage points among men and women with low education. However, there are some exceptions. In Korea, for example, the gender gap is smaller among men and women with less than upper secondary levels of education than it is among those with upper secondary or tertiary education, mostly because employment rates are relatively low among less educated men.

Table LMF1.6.A. **Gender gap in employment rates by educational attainment**
 Employment rates for men and women by level of education attained, 25-64 year olds, 2016

	Below upper secondary			Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary			Tertiary Education		
	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap
	Australia	66.7	51.8	15.0	85.1	69.0	16.1	89.2	79.8
Austria	60.6	49.9	10.8	80.4	72.5	7.8	89.2	83.6	5.5
Belgium	55.2	37.2	18.1	79.8	65.9	13.9	88.3	82.6	5.7
Canada	63.7	44.5	19.2	79.4	67.3	12.1	85.9	79.6	6.3
Chile	83.6	43.9	39.7	85.9	59.6	26.4	91.0	78.8	12.2
Czech Republic	61.7	43.2	18.5	89.2	74.4	14.8	93.9	78.9	14.9
Denmark	70.9	51.2	19.7	84.1	77.4	6.7	88.4	83.9	4.5
Estonia	70.6	55.5	15.2	82.9	73.5	9.4	91.1	82.5	8.6
Finland	58.6	42.5	16.1	76.6	70.9	5.7	87.7	82.8	4.9
France	60.7	45.5	15.2	76.8	68.9	7.8	88.3	82.6	5.7
Germany	68.4	52.8	15.6	85.0	78.3	6.7	91.7	84.7	7.1
Greece	62.9	35.4	27.5	72.1	46.5	25.5	78.1	66.4	11.7
Hungary	66.0	46.9	19.1	84.8	69.3	15.6	92.4	79.6	12.7
Iceland	82.1	71.5	10.5	92.6	84.5	8.2	95.9	91.1	4.8
Ireland	62.3	35.2	27.1	81.6	62.5	19.1	89.5	81.0	8.5
Israel (a)	68.6	35.4	33.1	78.4	67.7	10.7	90.8	84.2	6.6
Italy	66.7	35.5	31.3	81.0	60.8	20.1	85.7	77.1	8.7
Japan	94.1	74.2	19.9
Latvia	67.6	50.6	17.0	77.0	68.4	8.5	89.9	86.3	3.6
Lithuania	54.0	48.7	5.3	76.5	70.0	6.5	91.4	90.2	1.3
Korea	77.3	58.3	19.0	84.4	61.7	22.7	88.9	63.8	25.1
Luxembourg	68.7	52.2	16.5	76.7	72.7	4.0	89.8	82.9	6.9
Mexico	89.0	43.8	45.1	89.6	54.5	35.2	88.4	71.6	16.8
Netherlands	73.5	49.5	24.0	85.4	74.6	10.8	91.7	86.0	5.7
New Zealand	81.3	64.6	16.7	89.9	74.9	15.1	92.9	85.1	7.8
Norway	66.9	54.5	12.4	82.8	75.7	7.1	89.6	88.2	1.4
Poland	52.9	30.5	22.4	78.9	58.7	20.1	93.3	84.6	8.7
Portugal	75.9	60.3	15.6	84.0	79.8	4.3	87.9	86.2	1.7
Slovak Republic	45.4	34.3	11.1	80.9	69.0	12.0	88.6	77.1	11.5
Slovenia	52.0	41.4	10.6	71.7	68.2	3.5	88.0	85.7	2.2
Spain	65.1	44.7	20.4	77.0	63.4	13.6	85.0	77.5	7.5
Sweden	72.9	60.0	12.9	88.3	82.9	5.5	90.4	88.8	1.6
Switzerland	75.1	60.8	14.3	86.7	77.5	9.2	92.0	83.5	8.6
Turkey	75.7	29.3	46.5	81.6	34.0	47.6	84.4	63.6	20.8
United Kingdom	71.2	54.5	16.7	86.4	75.3	11.1	90.0	81.3	8.7
United States	66.5	43.1	23.4	75.9	63.6	12.3	87.0	77.5	9.5
OECD average	67.4	47.4	20.0	82.0	68.4	13.6	89.5	80.9	8.5
Brazil	80.6	49.1	31.5	85.8	63.7	22.1	89.9	78.9	11.0
Colombia	89.2	54.0	35.1	88.2	63.0	25.1	89.3	78.0	11.3
Costa Rica	84.4	54.0	30.4	87.2	52.7	34.5	87.5	74.9	12.7
Russia	58.4	42.1	16.3	78.5	63.1	15.4	87.3	77.4	9.9
Bulgaria	47.7	32.2	15.5	77.6	68.4	9.2	87.5	83.5	4.0
Croatia	47.6	31.2	16.4	68.4	57.8	10.6	83.3	81.2	2.1
Cyprus (b,c)	64.3	49.7	14.6	77.9	61.1	16.8	83.6	77.2	6.4
Malta	78.6	32.9	45.7	91.4	72.7	18.7	94.7	88.5	6.2
Romania	68.6	39.5	29.1	78.2	61.4	16.8	90.5	85.3	5.2

Note: Data for Chile, France, Brazil and Russia refer to 2015. For most countries data refer to ISCED 2011. The countries with data that refer to ISCED-97 are: Brazil, the Russian Federation, and South Africa.

a. See note a to Chart LMF1.6.A

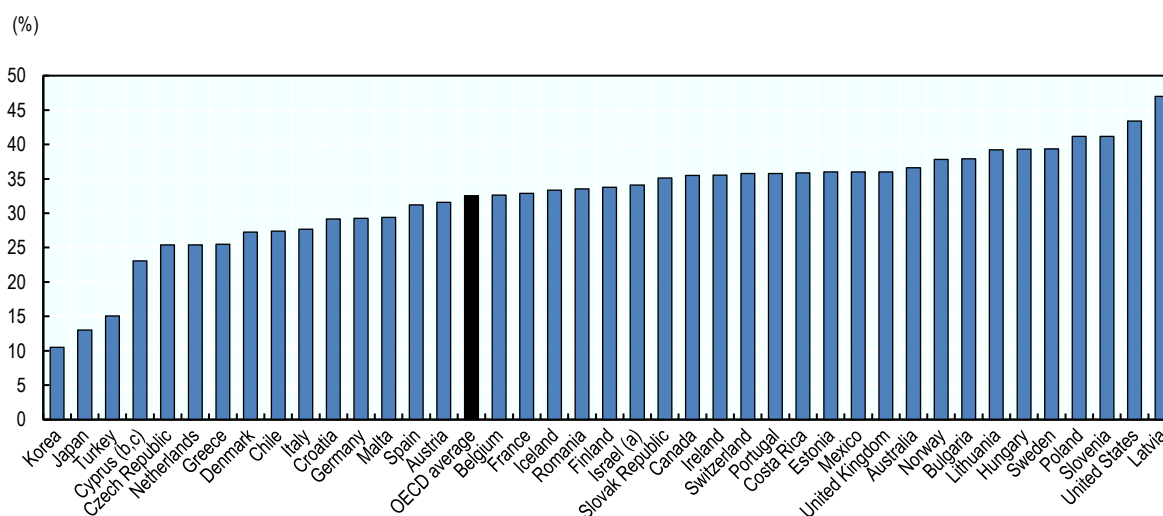
b. See note b to Chart LMF1.6.A

c. See note c in Chart LMF1.6.A

Source: [OECD Education at a Glance](#); For Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Romania: Eurostat Labour Market Statistics

As well as differing in the extent of their paid work, men and women also often differ in the types of jobs they hold. For example, across OECD countries, women workers are consistently under-represented in top positions – they face what is often called the ‘glass ceiling’. In all OECD countries, women make up less than half of those individuals employed as managers, although again this is subject to considerable cross-national variation (Chart LMF1.6.D). Women’s access to managerial employment is relatively high in the United States, where 43.4% of managers are women, and especially Latvia, where they make up 47% of managers. Conversely, women find it particularly difficult to reach managerial positions in both Japan and Korea, where they make up little more than 10% of managers.

Chart LMF1.6.D. **Women's share of managerial employment**
 Proportion (%) of managers that are women, 2016



Notes: Data for Korea refer to 2015, for Canada to 2014, and refer to 2013 for Costa Rica and the United States. For Canada, Chile, and the United States: percentage of employees that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 88 category one (as legislators, senior officials and managers) that are women. For all other countries: percentage of employees that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 08 category one (as managers) that are women.

a. See note a to Chart LMF1.6.A

b. See note b to Chart LMF1.6.A

c. See note c in Chart LMF1.6.A

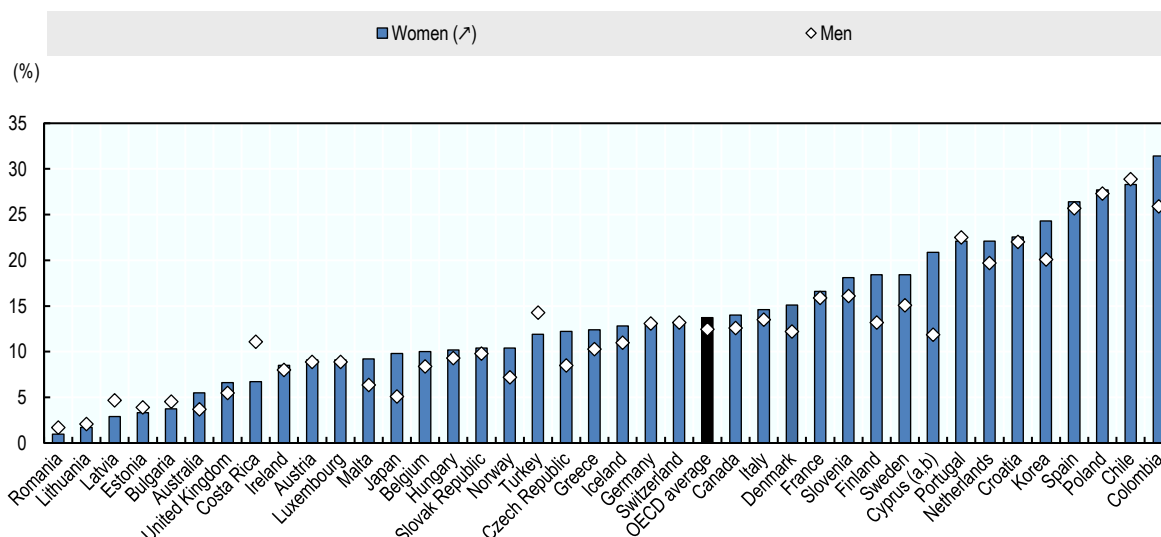
Source: ILO (2018), "ILOSTAT Database", ILO Department of Statistics

The flip side of this ‘vertical segregation’ is that many women workers find themselves stuck in low status, poorly-paid and insecure jobs at the lower end of the labour market – the so-called ‘sticky floor’. One measure of low job quality is temporary employment. Temporary contracts are by their nature insecure, are often associated with service sector jobs that have a seasonal component (e.g. hospitality and tourism), and in many countries are not covered by certain aspects of employment protection legislation. Moreover, in many instances workers in temporary jobs cannot access a number of financial services – such as loans and mortgages – and in certain cases may also face exclusion from social security systems.

Chart LMF1.6.E shows the proportion of male and female employees on temporary contracts in 2016. Gender differences on this measure are often less pronounced than those seen in many of the previous tables and charts – generally, male and female rates of temporary employment are fairly similar. Nonetheless, women’s temporary employment rates are higher than men’s in about two-thirds of the countries covered, with the OECD average gender gap standing at just over one percentage point. Among OECD countries, differences in temporary employment are largest in Finland – where the proportion of women employees on temporary contracts is over five percentage points higher than the rate for men – but are also considerable in Czech Republic, Japan, Korea and some of the other Nordic countries (e.g.

Norway and Sweden). In some OECD countries (e.g. Chile and Turkey), men's temporary employment rates are slightly higher than women's. In large part, this can be explained by the relatively large agricultural sectors in these countries, as jobs in agriculture tend to be both dominated by men and are often offered only on a fixed-term or temporary basis.

Chart LMF1.6.E. Gender differences in temporary employment
 Proportion (%) of employees in temporary employment, by sex, 2016



Note: Proportion of dependent employees with a temporary or fixed term job contract. Data for Australia refer to 2015

a. See note b to Chart LMF1.6.A

b. See note c in Chart LMF1.6.A

Source: [OECD Employment Database](#)

Comparability and data issues

Data for the first three measures shown in this indicator are taken from the *OECD Employment Database*. This is a well-established source of labour market data and there are few issues around comparability, although a couple of notes are necessary:

- For Chart LMF1.6.A, the data on working hours used to compute the full-time equivalents are for most countries based on usual weekly working hours on the main job for all employed. However, data for Australia, New Zealand and Norway refer to usual weekly working hours in *all* jobs, and for Japan and Korea to *actual* hours worked in *all* jobs. Relative to other countries, this may lead to an overestimation of average working hours. For the United States, data cover dependent employees only.
- For Charts LMF1.6.B and LMF1.6.C, part-time employment rates are based on a harmonised definition of 'part-time employment' whereby all workers whose usual weekly working hours on their main job are less than 30 are considered to work 'part-time'. Again, however, for Australia, New Zealand and Norway the data used are usual hours in *all* jobs, and for Japan and Korea, *actual* hours worked in *all* jobs. Relative to other countries, this may lead to an underestimation of the numbers working part-time. Data for the United States again cover dependent employees only.

Data for Table LMF1.6.A are taken from *OECD Education at a Glance 2018*. *OECD Education at a Glance* classifies educational programmes on the basis of the guidelines set out in UNESCO's *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)* framework. For most countries, the data shown in Table LMF1.6.A are based on the latest ISCED 2011 classification. However, data for some

(Brazil, the Russian Federation, and South Africa) continue to be based on the old ISCED 1997. For more details on the new ISCED 2011 and a comparison of ISCED 1997 and ISCED 2011, see [OECD Education at a Glance 2018](#).

The data shown in Chart LMF1.6.D are OECD estimates based on data from the ILO ILOSTAT database. Data for most countries are based on *the International Standard Classification of Occupations* (ISCO) 2008 revision, though for certain countries (Canada, Chile, and the United States) the data are classified on the basis of the older ISCO 1988 revision.

Lastly, the data on temporary workers used in Chart LMF1.6.E come from the *OECD Employment Database*. In all countries, the definition of temporary workers include those on fixed-term contracts, but some countries set a time limit of 12 months for an employee to be classified as “temporary” (including Australia, Japan, Norway and Switzerland). This generally leads to lower rates of temporary employment in these countries in comparison to countries that define all workers on fixed-term contracts as temporary workers regardless of contract duration.

Sources and further reading:

OECD (2007), *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life: A synthesis of Findings for OECD countries* (Volume 5);

OECD (2017) *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: an uphill battle*, <http://www.oecd.org/publications/the-pursuit-of-gender-equality-9789264281318-en.htm>;

OECD *Employment database*;

EU Labour Force Survey database, User Guide, http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm;

OECD *Education database* and *OECD Education at a Glance 2018*.