



European
Commission

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE SCOREBOARD

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Thematic analysis

Equality

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This paper is part of a series of thematic analyses undertaken by the European Commission to illustrate the impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The RRF is the European Union's largest ever funding instrument and is intended to support European economies and societies to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and build resilience against future shocks. EU Member States commit to implement ambitious reforms and investments and receive funds from the RRF when they achieve these commitments.



Policy Overview

Equality and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups are high on the EU's policy agenda. This thematic analysis outlines the contribution of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to addressing inequalities in the EU. The fiche provides an overview of the existing policy context in the EU and gives an overview of the measures that Member States are taking in their national recovery and resilience plans (RRPs)¹.

Women and men were impacted differently by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the crisis also significantly affected specific groups such as refugees, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ people², older people and people with a migrant, minority racial or ethnic background, including marginalised Roma communities. In addition, the pandemic and the measures to contain it hit disadvantaged groups harder. The crisis accentuated the challenges that certain groups already faced. It further entrenched existing inequalities and discrimination, and exacerbated social exclusion and marginalisation³. For those depending on help from others to take care of their physical needs, physical distancing created major difficulties. Restrictive measures had an additional impact on mental well-being, in particular of people who already relied to a high degree on their social circles.

People in disadvantaged situations are even more vulnerable during a crisis if they face challenges in relation to multiple characteristics, such as children of migrants or living in marginalised Roma communities, women with disabilities and women with a migrant background. Although the availability of concrete data is scarce, and it will take time to assess the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic to its full extent, the pandemic often exacerbated the disadvantaged situation of these people depending on their specific situation⁴. Policy efforts aimed at resilience and social cohesion require continued attention and effective support to these groups. For instance, the 2022 Gender Equality Index reports a worsened work-life balance for women during the pandemic and lower employment participation rates as a result of it⁵. Also, pregnant women in the EU with a migrant background faced a higher maternal mortality rate than non-migrant women due to their vulnerable situation, which was exacerbated by the overstretched healthcare services⁶. Among countries with the highest rates of non-EU-born people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (which is in most cases twice as high compared to country nationals), this rate decreased in only one Member State in 2021 in comparison to 2020 (by 7,4 percentage points) and increased by around 10 percentage points or more in some others⁷. Similarly, the pandemic negatively affected many marginalised

¹ Although many persons and groups experience inequalities, the current analysis focuses on a few categories and topics, namely equality between women and men, and inclusion in society and the labour market of refugees and persons with a migrant background, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups such as Roma. The main basis for this focus is the list of categories laid out in Article 10 TFEU (non-discrimination). Measures for the inclusion of elderly or youth are covered in other thematic analyses (e.g. on [social protection](#) and [employment support and job creation](#)). The measures included in this analysis regarding gender equality are based on the flags attributed to those measures on the basis of the methodology for reporting social expenditure as set out in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2105. The flags for measures having a focus on gender equality were attributed to measures under all 6 RRF pillars, thereby covering a wider scope than measures of a social nature referred to in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2105. See also footnote 32.

² As defined in the EU's LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, LGBTIQ people are people:

- who are attracted to others of their own gender (lesbian, gay) or any gender (bisexual);
- whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth (trans, non-binary);
- who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female (intersex); and
- whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sexuality and/or gender (queer).

³ [Fundamental Rights Agency Report \(2021\): The Coronavirus Pandemic and Fundamental Rights: A Year in Review](#)

⁴ See e.g. the [2021 annual edition of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe \(ESDE\) review](#), titled "Towards a strong social Europe in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis: Reducing disparities and addressing distributional impacts" and [the 2022 Joint Employment Report](#) (14 March 2022).

⁵ [Gender Equality Index 2022: Gender Equality under Threat, Specific Groups Hardest Hit | European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ Gender Equality Index 2022: The COVID-19 pandemic and care (EIGE, 2022).

⁷ [Proposal for a Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council \(22 November 2022\)](#).

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



Roma communities that often already faced limited access to water, electricity, sanitation, and digital equipment, infrastructure and skills. The rate of children at risk of poverty and social inclusion in the EU increased marginally between 2020 and 2021, from 24% to 24,4%⁸. Children with a migrant background faced additional challenges related to school closures and distance learning, e.g. due to lack of ICT resources and adequate spaces in the home environment⁹. In addition, people with disabilities in the EU are predominantly women (52 million women and 40 million men)¹⁰, which increases the gendered impact of the crisis on this already vulnerable group. Persons with disabilities, especially women and people of working age, were still much more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than the rest of the population in 2021 in all Member States. In some Member States, the pandemic exacerbated their poverty risks, and the ensuing economic fallout triggered concerns that disability-related poverty and inequality may be entrenched and deepened¹¹.

Member States introduced several crisis-response measures over the course of and after the COVID-19 pandemic to cushion its impact, including on vulnerable groups as described above. These measures were taken also with support from EU funding, such as the European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)¹² and the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU)¹³.

The Commission has committed to making progress towards a Union of Equality¹⁴. The goal is to create the conditions for everyone to live, thrive and lead in society regardless of differences based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Equality considerations are taken into account in major Commission initiatives, also facilitated by the first Commissioner for Equality. Equality is also enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in 2017, for instance in principle 2 on gender equality and principle 3 on equal opportunities¹⁵. The Porto Social Summit in May 2021, following up on the Action Plan to implement the EPSR, resulted in a strong commitment by Member States and actors across the EU. Equality considerations are also continuously assessed in the framework of the European Semester¹⁶ and the Social Scoreboard that feeds into it¹⁷, among others through the Annual Support and Growth Survey, the Employment Guidelines, the Joint Employment Report and, where relevant, in the annual country reports.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy, adopted in March 2020, contributes to delivering a Union of Equality.

The key objectives of the Strategy are ending gender-based violence, challenging gender stereotypes, closing gender gaps in the labour market, achieving equal participation across sectors of the economy, addressing the gender pay and pension gaps, closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. At the core of the EU's gender equality strategy is a dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions. Various actions that were planned in the strategy have already been taken, including the important legislative proposals on pay transparency and on combating violence against women and domestic violence¹⁸. Furthermore, the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19) - What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?

¹⁰ Sources: (1) Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>, extracted on 14.04.2022; and (2) EU-SILC UDB 2020, v.1, April 2022. The numbers used here exclude persons with disabilities in institutions.

¹¹ Proposal for a Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council (22 November 2022).

¹² [SURE \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database)

¹³ [REACT-EU | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database)

¹⁴ The Union of Equality is a broad political aim, announced by President Von Der Leyen in her 2020 State of the Union address. Several equality strategies were adopted in 2020 and 2021 to make progress towards a Union of Equality: [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#); [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#); [Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#); [Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#); [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#).

¹⁵ [European Pillar of Social Rights | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

¹⁷ [Home | social-scoreboard.page.main \(europa.eu\)](#) – the statistics can be found on [the Eurostat page](#).

¹⁸ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



Directive on Gender balance on company boards (proposed by the Commission in 2012) was adopted in November 2022¹⁹. For the multi-annual financial framework for 2021-2027, the Commission is developing a methodology to track gender related expenditures in the EU budget (including the various spending programmes), to ensure that public finances contribute to advancing gender equality by strengthening gender mainstreaming in the budget process²⁰. Under the RRF, as explained under the overview of national plans, the ‘social tagging methodology’ allows for identifying measures included in the RRFs having a focus on gender equality (see footnote 32). The RRF Review Report had a special focus on gender-specific socio-economic consequences of the COVID crisis and how the RRFs contribute to gender equality²¹.

To further promote equality and inclusion, a set of additional ‘Union of Equality’ strategies was adopted by the Commission in 2020 and 2021 and their implementation is ongoing. This includes the EU’s Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030, the EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, the Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 and the LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025. Also, for these strategies, a combination of targeted actions and equality mainstreaming plays a key role, as does intersectionality as a horizontal principle. Besides the ‘Union of equality’ strategies, other relevant initiatives are the Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027²², as well as a wide range of actions taken under the European Education Area, in which promoting quality, equity, inclusion and gender equality in and through education and training for all is a strategic objective²³. A key initiative is the recently adopted Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success²⁴. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States are party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and hence bound by obligations on non-discrimination, the right to independent living and ensuring accessibility. These are conditions that also need to be respected in investments under the RRFs. As Member States have the main competence in many of the areas covered in the equality strategies (such as education or combating poverty), the Commission is working with Member States to achieve progress at national level, in particular through the design, implementation and monitoring of national equality strategies.

Several EU funds and instruments support equality and inclusion of specific groups in the Member States, complementing EU and national initiatives in the area. This is mainly – but not exclusively – achieved through the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), and InvestEU, with its dedicated window on social investment and skills. These funds are complementary to the reforms and investments in the national recovery and resilience plans.

Measures taken at national level – including through the RRFs – are guided by the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) in the European Semester and the assessment supported by the Social Scoreboard. These are key instruments to monitor equality and inclusion in the Member States and ensure they take action to address relevant challenges. In recent years, several Member States have received CSRs with an equality dimension; e.g. to improve the labour market participation of women, including through increased provision of childcare and long-term care services, to provide adequate income support for persons with disabilities, to ensure inclusion of people with a migrant background especially in education and the labour market, as well as recommendations to improve the inclusion of Roma and other disadvantaged groups. In 2019, all Member States received CSRs on education and skills, which play a key role in creating equal opportunities for all.

COM/2021/93 final (a [political agreement](#) was reached on 15 December 2022); Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence COM/2022/105 final.

¹⁹ [Directive \(EU\) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures.](#)

²⁰ Point 16(f) of the [Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources](#)

²¹ Recovery and Resilience Facility Review Report | European Commission (europa.eu)

²² Action plan on the integration and inclusion (europa.eu)

²³ Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025; Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)

²⁴ [Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving.](#)

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



Measures supporting the inclusion of people fleeing Ukraine

Although most RRP were adopted long before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the RRF was not initially created to address its impact, many plans include reforms and investments that can be used to assist displaced people from Ukraine and support their inclusion in society. Such measures include reforming and improving migration policies and asylum systems (e.g. through digitalisation and simplification of procedures), supporting access to the labour market, creating inclusive education and training systems, facilitating the recognition of qualifications, accessible healthcare, and social and affordable housing. While these measures do not specifically target displaced people from Ukraine, Member States often designed them to assist refugees in general and promote their inclusion in society. The Action Plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027 sets out measures for relevant government and civil society actors at various levels to build more inclusive societies²⁵. It focuses on education, employment, healthcare and housing and covers all phases of the integration process. To support the rapid and effective labour market integration of displaced people from Ukraine, the Commission adopted a Recommendation on the recognition of academic and professional qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine²⁶, as well as a Communication with Guidance for access to the labour market, vocational education and training and adult learning of people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine²⁷, outlining a range of good practices and measures that Member States can undertake.

Equality in the recovery and resilience plans

Overview of the plans²⁸

Gender equality and equal opportunities for all feature prominently in the RRF Regulation, even if there are no explicit criteria in this regard for assessing the RRP. During the preparation of the national recovery and resilience plans, the Commission has consistently called on Member States to reflect equality considerations in their respective national plans and explain how their plans were expected to contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all, as envisaged by the RRF Regulation²⁹. For some Member States, equality measures also contribute to addressing their respective country-specific recommendations. In addition, the Commission has consistently promoted mainstreaming of equality considerations.

The RRP contribute to equal opportunities in several ways, depending on both the design and implementation of the measures. First of all, the 26 plans adopted until November 2022 contain 131 measures with a focus on gender equality, and many reforms and investments that are explicitly aimed at contributing to equal opportunities (these measures are the main focus of this analysis and are outlined below)³⁰. Sometimes these measures are targeted to specific groups, whereas in other cases they promote equal opportunities and inclusion of

²⁵ Action plan on the integration and inclusion (europa.eu)

²⁶ Ukraine: Commission helps professionally qualified refugees (europa.eu)

²⁷ Guidance to help people fleeing war to access jobs (europa.eu)

²⁸ The list of Member States mentioned between brackets in this section under the various types of measures contributing to equality is, as a rule, non-exhaustive.

²⁹ Article 18(4)(o) of Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

³⁰ Aside from the share of measures with a focus on gender equality displayed in the graph further below, measures explicitly contributing to equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups can be distinguished in those solely focusing on their inclusion and those where certain disadvantaged groups are, for instance, targeted *among* the beneficiaries.

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



women and disadvantaged groups more generally in various fields, such as education, the labour market and the economy more in general, without specifying their target groups.

Aside from explicit efforts to mainstream equality considerations in their RRP, Member States have included reforms and investments that, while not featuring explicitly in this analysis, may nevertheless have a lasting positive impact on equality, especially when designed with the needs of women or disadvantaged groups in mind. This applies for instance to measures in the areas of labour market, housing, health, and education, but also in less obvious areas such as energy, transport, infrastructure, connectivity and digitalisation. For instance, reforms and investments in infrastructure, public transport or digital connectivity may not initially be regarded as policies contributing to equality, but their effective implementation can indeed significantly contribute to equal opportunities for example in terms of access to remote education, essential (health) services and utilities, or by allowing people with limited mobility or living in remote areas to participate in economic activities and social life. Due to the nature of the RRF and of the methodology used to identify the policy areas on which measures have an impact, contributions of such reforms and investments to equality may not be easy to measure *ex ante* (and for this reason they are rarely listed below). Another example of measures having the potential to contribute to equal opportunities are those supporting energy efficiency of households, which in some cases may benefit certain disadvantaged groups more than other people. A number of relevant measures can be found in other thematic analyses on the RRF Scoreboard. For these reasons, the analysis below is primarily based on the measures that are most directly contributing to equality, but the list should by no means be considered as exhaustive.

The RRF review report highlights that Member States have included in their RRP a wide range of measures to tackle inequalities between women and men, in particular with regard to education, training and integration in the labour market. The Commission developed two methodologies that allow it to monitor progress towards the objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility by: (i) requiring Member States to provide gender disaggregated data, when reporting on certain common indicators³¹ and (ii) identifying the share of measures with a focus on gender equality in each RRP³². With regard to the latter, based on the attribution by the Commission of gender equality flags to relevant measures, in consultation with Member States, 131 measures in the 26 plans adopted by November 2022 are considered to have a focus on gender equality (see graph below). These include measures contributing to the six policy pillars of the RRF Regulation, reflecting the Member States' commitment to mainstreaming gender equality across sectors and policy areas. In addition, several further measures throughout the plans also have the potential to contribute to gender equality more indirectly. As described in the Review Report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility³³, the plans include a number of reforms and investments to: (i) support green and digital up/re-skilling among women (e.g. Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden); (ii) improve access to and energy performance of early childhood education and care facilities, which is also expected to increase women's labour market participation (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain); (iii) increase representation of girls and women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), information and communications technologies and cutting-edge research activities (ICT, e.g. Portugal, Greece and Italy); (iv) incentivise entrepreneurship among women and increase their access to finance (e.g. Cyprus, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain); (v) support the integration of women in the labour market and reduce the gender pension gap (e.g. Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain); and (vi) improve the delivery of healthcare to women and the working conditions in professional activities predominantly carried out by women, such as nursing (e.g. Austria and Sweden).

³¹ Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2106 establishes 14 common indicators against which Member State report on the progress towards the objectives of the Facility and four of these common indicators require disaggregation of data by gender.

³² Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2105. It should be noted that the Commission applied this methodology not only to measures of a social nature, but also to all other measures included in adopted RRP having a focus on gender equality, in order to better capture these throughout the plans. This did not have to be the main focus of the concerned measures. It also implies that measures not flagged may also have an impact on gender equality. In addition, given the methodological constraints, the *ex-ante* nature of the assessment and the performance-based nature of the RRF, the real impact and expenditure on gender equality cannot be directly derived from the flags.

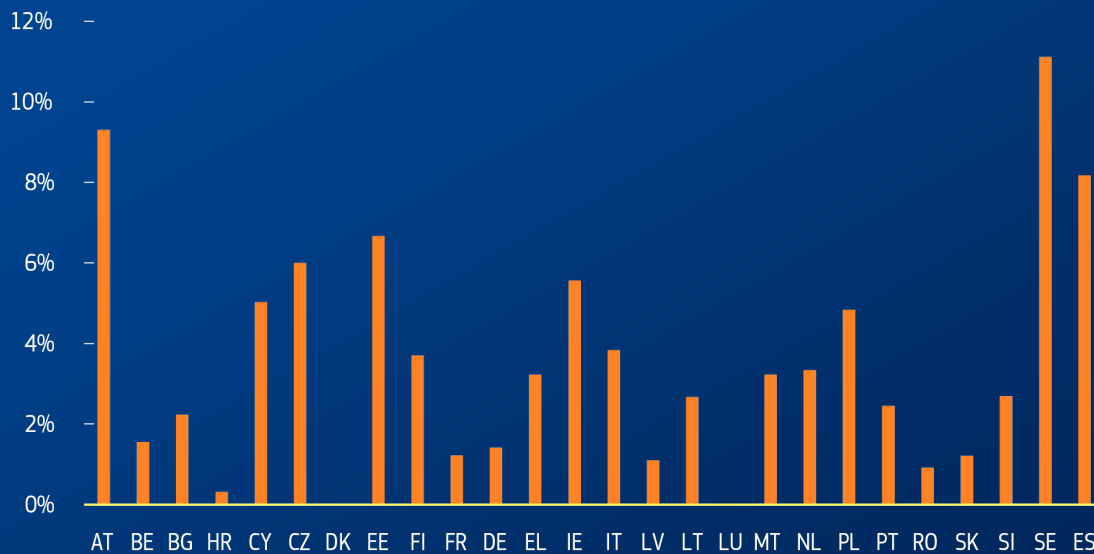
³³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/com_2022_383_1_en.pdf

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



Share of measures with a focus on gender equality per RRP



Note: This chart shows for each national plan the share of measures having a focus on gender equality, based on the social tagging methodology³⁴, also presented in the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard.

The need to improve economic and social integration of persons with disabilities is addressed by the RRF

especially through investments to (i) provide them with adequate assisting devices, ICT tools and/or training in using IT tools for more efficient communication (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania); (ii) improve access to digital public services and to introduce a single document to facilitate movement of people with physical impairments (e.g. Croatia); (iii) tackle energy poverty in households with people with disabilities (e.g. Cyprus); (iv) renovate social infrastructure, private residences, schools and other (public) buildings to increase their accessibility, as well as reforms with an important lasting impact in terms of accessibility e.g. by ensuring that all construction and renovation projects include accessibility considerations (e.g. Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Italy); and (v) expand early intervention educational programmes and raise awareness about persons with disabilities and measures to address their challenges (e.g. Greece). Several national plans introduce new incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities (e.g. France, Greece, Romania), and targeted schemes to support their integration in the labour market (e.g. Latvia, Greece, Finland, Slovenia). Going forward, a number of national RRFs include further reforms with a view to ensuring continuous support to persons with disabilities for example by revising the existing legal framework on

³⁴ Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2105. The graph represents an indicative picture of measures contributing to gender equality and is by no means exhaustive. Given the methodological constraints, the ex-ante nature of the assessment and the performance-based nature of the RRF, the real impact and expenditure on gender equality cannot be directly derived from the flags attached to the measures. In addition, measures not flagged at all as having a focus on gender equality may also have a (positive, lasting) impact on equal opportunities between women and men. Concerning the methodology: the Commission applied the tagging methodology not only to measures of a social nature, but also to all other measures included in adopted RRFs having a focus on gender equality, in order to better capture such throughout the plans. This did not have to be the main focus of the concerned measures.

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



disability (e.g. Italy) and the design of new national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities (e.g. Portugal, Romania). In the field of health and long-term care, the RRF will contribute to enhancing community-based supported living structures for persons with disabilities or provide them with independent living assistance by persons of their choice with the aim to avoid institutionalisation and social exclusion (e.g. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, Romania).

In addition, several national plans explicitly include Roma among the beneficiaries of measures that support socio-economic inclusion and improve access to services, or more generally support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. For instance, in Romania the RRP refers specifically to the Roma population and the RRF will contribute to establishing integrated community centres to provide medical services to marginalised communities and establish legally binding targets in relation to healthcare services. This measure is complemented by a target to reduce the number of rural communities, including those with Roma population, not served by a family doctor by 35%. In Slovakia, in the field of education and skills, the Facility will support access to and inclusion in quality mainstream education of socially disadvantaged students, including Roma, for instance by establishing legal entitlements for childcare; financing and promoting teaching of the main official language as a second language (especially for minorities with another first language); and identifying other specific needs of these groups, including through targeted promotion of existing services (e.g. childcare facilities) to people in Roma communities as well as providing additional learning assistance to vulnerable groups, including Roma children. Other reforms and investments that support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups concern the creation of youth centres targeting the personal development of young people from vulnerable groups, including Roma (e.g. Bulgaria); upskilling, recognition of professional qualifications and labour market integration of Roma people (e.g. Greece); the provision of energy-efficient social housing for vulnerable groups (e.g. Spain); and the creation of day service or childcare centres, especially in communities with a significant Roma population, which helps prevent the separation of children from their families and promote, at the same time, the labour market integration of parents (e.g. Romania, Slovakia). Roma may also benefit from various other measures in the plans that do not explicitly include them among the beneficiaries, but that aim among others at social and territorial cohesion and inclusion of disadvantaged groups, for instance in the areas of labour market, housing, and education.

Member States also included measures to improve the protection and integration of migrants through support and provision of services. For instance, RRFs include reforms and investments to improve and digitalise the reception system for migrants and refugees (e.g. Belgium, Greece, Spain), simplify procedures to obtain work and residence permits, especially for highly qualified third-country nationals (e.g. Finland), as well as the recognition of educational qualifications (e.g. Slovakia), support the integration of migrants in the labour market (e.g. Greece), and encourage participation in vocational training (e.g. Greece, Sweden).

Good practices



The Spanish recovery and resilience plan represents an example of how equality can be mainstreamed across a national plan, supporting people experiencing inequalities from different angles.

The plan supports integration of women in the labour market by incorporating gender mainstreaming in all activities of the public employment services, introducing reforms to close the gender pay gap and boosting women's digital and green skills. In addition, it includes measures to improve the protection of victims of gender-based violence, trafficking, and sexual exploitation through training for health professionals on early detection of gender violence, investments to set-up telephone and online services including legal advice, psychological and emotional support, as well as the creation of 24-hour crisis assistance centres in all provinces, including Ceuta and Melilla. This support is complemented by measures to provide victims of gender-based violence with personalised support and pathways to social inclusion and professional trainings.

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



More broadly, the Spanish plan mainstreams social cohesion and integration of disadvantaged groups across different measures, including through a number of reforms with a broad impact. For instance, the plan includes: (i) a reform to facilitate the transition from unemployment benefits to social protection including for people in vulnerable situations; (ii) a reform of the tax system that is also based on the analysis of its possible impact on vulnerable groups and families with children; and (iii) the development of a National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence that will include a protection plan specifically designed for vulnerable groups. In addition, some investments feature similar mainstreaming considerations, such as: (i) investments to deliver active labour market policies targeting long-term unemployed people and vulnerable groups; and (ii) support to vulnerable students to overcome educational obstacles and reduce early school leaving.

Among the measures to support disadvantaged groups, Spain has also planned reforms and investments to improve the reception system for migrants and refugees. Reception policies will be tailored to the needs of vulnerable people and asylum seekers. The RRP will also contribute to improving access to accommodations as well as the quality of reception services. These measures will be complemented by investments to digitalise the reception and management system of migrants and refugees, to make it more efficient and improve the allocation of migrants across reception centres at regional level.



The Slovak recovery and resilience plan promotes equality in a variety of areas and through a wide range of reforms and investments.

With important reforms ensuring legal entitlements for childcare and by increasing investments in childcare facilities, Slovakia aims not only to enable a higher participation of women in the labour market, but also to support the inclusiveness of education, in particular for Roma children. Reducing and preventing segregation in education, by promoting inclusion of pupils from disadvantaged groups (in particular Roma) in mainstream education, is an important objective of a set of measures that include reforms and investments that are likely to have a lasting positive impact. This includes a targeted reform making pre-primary education mandatory from the age of 5 and establishing a legal entitlement to childcare from the age of 3. In addition, the measures include the training of 10 000 teachers and other specialist staff, investments in more and better possibilities for teaching Slovak as a second language, and a strategy to identify and develop further support measures in education. This should allow authorities and schools to better identify the special educational needs of pupils and to provide support for children with language barriers. The plan also envisages active promotion of early care services in marginalised Roma communities and reforms to improve access to higher education for disadvantaged students. Furthermore, the plan will create an early warning system in the context of prevention of early school leaving, including through mentoring and tutoring opportunities.

Slovakia is also notably addressing obstacles for the inclusion of people with disabilities in education, by removing physical, information and technological barriers in more than 250 large secondary schools. Another investment aims at removing physical and other barriers in universities, and generally increasing accessibility to (public) buildings through renovation and construction projects in the plan. A reform in the area of social and long-term care aims to make care facilities for older people and people with disabilities more effective. The needs of socially disadvantaged groups and people with disabilities are also taken into account by measures addressing energy poverty.



The Swedish plan has a strongly mainstreamed focus on gender equality and contains a series of measures to address equality challenges

The Swedish plan includes a number of legislative measures and mechanisms that are likely to have a lasting impact on equality. The plan itself provides a detailed description of challenges faced by the country in the fields of gender equality and equal opportunities for all, which largely benefits from data disaggregated by gender. Moreover, it includes a number of mechanisms and governance structures with the explicit aim to ensure that equality aspects will be duly considered during the implementation of reforms and investments. Such mechanisms include a recourse to gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming in public authorities and higher education institutions, as well as an explicit

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



responsibility of state authorities for the implementation of existing disability policies that is established through legislation.

In addition, the plan contains various reforms and investments specifically addressing inequalities. Measures with a focus on gender equality include a reform with the potential to improve the recognition of the profession of nursing assistant and, hence, improving their working conditions. A large majority of care workers (e.g. 92% of nurses and carers employed in municipal care), whose opportunities for permanent employment and levels of pay may be improved on the basis of the reform, are women. Sweden has indicated that more attractive working conditions may help broaden the target group for recruitment and attract more men to the profession. Furthermore, the plan includes several reforms and investments in the area of education, training and reskilling targeted at young people and people with a migrant background, in particular women, including through the provision of Swedish language classes to migrants. The plan also outlines a focus on addressing gender-sensitive educational patterns, for example through awareness-raising activities, in order to contribute to a less gender-segregated labour market.

Country overview

The non-exhaustive list of measures included in the Country Overview is based on the Council Implementing Decision for each Member State, also taking into account the flags attributed to measures having a focus on gender equality, as reflected in the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard.

Austria

The Austrian plan addresses social and economic challenges that have emerged or were exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis. It includes reforms and investments relating to health, child- and long-term care seeking to contribute to improving the situation of women on the labour market. Pension splitting and measures to increase the effective retirement age should contribute to increasing the pensions of women, notably at the lower end, and therefore help reduce the gender pension gap. Women are identified as one of the specific target groups for the establishment of a National Financial Education Strategy under the plan. The plan also supports the inclusion of migrant pupils in the education system.

situations of exclusion. Furthermore, a reform included in the plan aims at supporting the integration of people with a migrant background into the labour market.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian plan extensively addresses challenges in the area of social and territorial cohesion. It includes reforms and investments enhancing equal access to quality education and promoting participation in early childhood education, with a reform making pre-school education mandatory from the age of 4 and investments in educational infrastructures, including kindergartens. This should also improve the labour market participation of women. Other investments in the plan target the personal development of young people from vulnerable groups, including Roma, by establishing youth centres. The plan aims to improve the social support system and ability to enter the labour market e.g. by reforming the minimum income scheme and modernising long-term care for older people and people with disabilities, increasing their mobility and opportunities for independent living.

Belgium

The Belgian plan includes an investment aiming at analysing gender inequality on the labour market and promoting the integration of women into the labour market. It also supports the creation and renovation of early childcare infrastructure. The plan will also contribute to the provision of accommodation places for poorly-housed groups, like homeless people, migrants, female victims of violence, single people and people in

Croatia

The Croatian plan includes a reform aiming to create a clear and modern legislative framework aimed at improving working conditions and work-life balance and

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



at decreasing the gender pay gap. A reform to improve recruitment in the civil service includes a commitment to increase gender balance and gender equity, as well as promotion of women to senior manager positions. The plan also includes investments to improve the system of exercising the rights of persons with disabilities in the field of mobility, as to finance infrastructure for autonomous new electric vehicles adapted as far as possible to the needs of passengers with disabilities. Furthermore, a new social mentoring service will be made available to a number of socially vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, victims of violence, homeless persons, migrants and Roma, as part of an investment under the plan.

 **Cyprus**

The Cypriot plan includes a series of reforms and investments aiming at strengthening equal opportunities for all. As such, a measure has the objective to strengthen the digital skills across the Cypriot society to prepare everyone for the digital transition, with a special emphasis on women and vulnerable groups. It also includes the extension of free compulsory pre-primary education from the age of four combined with several investments in the fields of early childhood education and care as well as long-term care which have the potential to support women's inclusion in the labour market and to enhance the social inclusion of children from disadvantaged and/or migrant background. Furthermore, the plan supports the enhancement of community-based living structures for persons with disabilities to avoid institutionalisation and social exclusion. It further promotes energy efficiency measures to tackle energy poverty in households with people with disabilities.

 **Czechia**

The Czech plan is expected to strengthen economic and social resilience and achieve a lasting impact. The plan aims at addressing inequalities in education, including through the expansion of childcare facilities and reinforced support of schools with a relatively high proportion of children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. It includes investments in facilities for children below the age of three and a legislative amendment to ensure sustainable financing of low-age childcare, with a view to supporting labour market participation of women. Measures related to the

new construction code, the renovation of buildings and their improved accessibility, digitalisation, eHealth and social care take account of the situation and needs of people with disabilities.

 **Denmark**

The Danish plan includes a few measures addressing equality considerations. This applies for instance to provisions for integrating gender balance and diversity of research teams in the overall assessment of applications for a green R&D programme. Furthermore, the design of a new digital strategy and subsequent legislative changes is also expected to take equality considerations into account.

 **Estonia**

The Estonian plan includes a skills reform for the digital transformation of businesses, which notably aims to contribute to increasing the participation of women in ICT training and ICT professions. It also includes measures aiming to reduce the gender pay gap, including through the creation of a digital gender pay gap tool. A reform of the long-term care framework is expected to serve as a basis for investments and development of services by local authorities to provide for independent living for older people with lower care needs and people with disabilities to support independent living.

 **Finland**

The Finnish plan includes a reform of continuous learning to improve the employment opportunities of working age people and enhance the participation of under-represented groups. It also includes a reform to streamline the work- and education-based immigration process, in order to increase immigration of skilled workers and to improve the opportunities for international degree students to find employment in Finland. Furthermore, an investment aims to increase the participation of people with partial work ability, including persons with disabilities, in the labour market.

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



France

The French plan includes a reform aiming to increase the scope of requirements for enterprises to report on an index measuring progress in the area of gender equality, as well as the implementation of a plan for equal opportunities in the civil service. The plan also includes an investment to support employers who hire a person with a disability through a subsidy. Another investment consists of a “Guided employment” support scheme to provide individualised guidance to persons with disabilities. In the area of education, the plan supports a tutoring programme pairing higher education students with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Germany

The German plan includes an investment to finance the building, extension, conversion, refurbishment, renovation and equipment of child day-care facilities and services in order to create new childcare places and enable parents to return to work earlier after a period of maternity or parental leave. The plan also includes measures supporting apprenticeships and help for students with COVID-19-related learning disadvantages, which are expected to benefit vulnerable young people, including those with migration background.

Greece

The Greek plan includes reforms and investments promoting the labour market participation of women, for instance through renewed active labour market policies and a significant increase in the creation of childcare facilities. The plan also includes a reform aiming to enhance social inclusion, independent living, employability and early childhood intervention for persons with disabilities, as well as several measures to facilitate their access to social benefits. Furthermore, the plan promotes the digital transformation of the immigration and asylum system, with a view to improving the services for the beneficiaries concerned. The integration of refugees in the labour market is also supported through a dedicated investment aimed at upgrading the linguistic and professional skills of refugees, providing incentives to employers to hire them, and ensuring recognition of their professional experience.

Ireland

The Irish plan is expected to contribute to social cohesion by supporting employment prospects, particularly through creating work placement opportunities, training and educational programmes. It includes an investment supporting the provision of skills which are most relevant for the twin transition, with a specific target of young women with a low educational attainment level benefitting from training. Furthermore, an investment supporting the transformation of technological universities requires beneficiary institutions to take gender equality and equal opportunities into consideration when designing specific projects, including through the provision of gender-disaggregated data.

Italy

The Italian plan supports the creation of women-led enterprises and positive corporate policies. The reform of Active Labour Market Policies, investments in childcare and in women’s participation in research and in STEM also aim to enhance women’s inclusion in the labour market. Fiscal and public employment reforms included gender equality aspects. The reforms of disability and for non-self-sufficient elderly persons set new frameworks promoting de-institutionalisation, autonomy and coordinated access to services. Various accompanying investments aim to support homecare, accessibility of homes and public spaces, access to training and ICT tools. Investments in social projects in ‘inner areas’ of the country that are remote or isolated also target migrants, while the reform of undeclared work and the investment in housing for agricultural workers are expected to improve the inclusion of undeclared workers, who are most often migrant workers.

Latvia

Latvia's plan envisages the implementation of various reforms and investments to promote gender equality and equal opportunities. For instance, to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities, it includes a measure promoting access to public services and employment. In addition, new public transport vehicles are set to be equipped with easy access for persons with

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



reduced mobility. Furthermore, the envisaged strategic framework for further development of the minimum income support system contains a plan for the promotion of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. As regards gender equality, the plan includes measures aimed specifically at female engagement in information and communication technology career opportunities, with a view to improving the gender balance of information and communication technology specialists. The labour market situation for female jobseekers is expected to be improved by targeted measures aimed at promoting the reconciliation of work and family life through the creation of remote and part-time work opportunities for households with children.

Lithuania

The plan contains some measures that are expected to help Lithuania address the challenges related to gender equality and equal opportunities for all. These include measures that directly and indirectly aim to address the needs of persons with disabilities such as facilitating accessibility to buildings and independent use of online public services. The plan also envisages a measure to enhance adequacy and sustainability of social benefits including an introduction of additional benefits to single people with disabilities and older people. The development of digital skills, especially for disadvantaged groups, is also included in Lithuania's plan. The reform of long-term care provision and investments in setting up long-term day-care centres and mobile teams aim to increase the share of long-term care patients receiving out-patient long-term care services and is expected to improve the possibility for working-age carers - most of whom are women - to return to the labour market.

Luxembourg

Although the plan does not contain measures that specifically target disadvantaged groups, the plan includes measures that are expected to foster inclusion, such as the reform Housing Pact 2.0 aimed at increasing the offer of affordable housing. Investments in telemedicine, accompanied by measure to ensure digital inclusion, could improve access to healthcare, including for instance for people with limited mobility.

Malta

The Maltese plan includes several reforms and investments aiming at promoting equal opportunities for all. For instance, it enhances early childhood education and care infrastructure with a view to contributing to equal opportunities for all children and the labour market participation of persons with care responsibilities, in particular women. It further comprises the adoption and implementation of measures of its first Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy Action Plan, including tackling gender stereotypes and collecting disaggregated data to further support evidence-policy making. Reforms and investments to enhance quality inclusive education, reduce early school leaving and to expand upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all adults, and in particular for the low-skilled, are expected to benefit disadvantaged groups in the society.

Netherlands

The Dutch plan contains labour market measures reducing institutional differences between self-employed and employees, for instance through the introduction of a mandatory disability insurance for the self-employed. These aim at levelling the playing field between types of workers and are also expected to foster equal opportunities for all. Investments in digital skills may facilitate the labour market participation of women in the ICT sector. The plan includes extra support for schools with students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to combat learning losses following the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing market reforms, among others aiming to provide more affordable housing, also have the potential of reducing inequalities.

Poland

The Polish plan addresses social and territorial cohesion challenges through a combination of reforms and investments. It includes several measures with a potential to support the labour market participation of certain groups, in particular women. These measures primarily focus on developing childcare facilities and

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



the long-term care system. They also include a reform of the Labour Code to make forms of employment more flexible and introduce possibilities for remote work. In the field of transport, a reform requires an upgrade of rolling stock with requirements for passengers with disabilities.

Portugal

The Portuguese plan encompasses a reform entailing a new National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, with actions on the regulatory framework, certification and access to public spaces and services. Accompanying investments are expected to deliver 1000 dwellings with improved accessibility by 2025, and to develop digital information tools, such as geo-referencing tools for accessible spaces. Measures to foster gender equality include establishing a voluntary scheme that gives public recognition to firms applying equal pay policies and the requirement for firms with persisting gender pay gaps to draw up actions plans to address those disparities. Investments in STEM skills will also target women and incentives for open-ended contracts will support gender balance across sectors. The reform of the National Strategy to Combat Poverty provides the framework for interventions targeting specific groups, including the most vulnerable groups.

Romania

The Romanian plan includes a reform equalising over time the retirement age between women and men, and a minimum threshold of 50% for women's participation in digital skills training programmes. The plan also envisages to develop a quality early childhood education and care system, with a particular focus on children from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. The plan also incentivises participation of vulnerable people in the labour market (including persons with disabilities, Roma and other minorities). Funding schemes for libraries aim to enhance the basic digital skills by training 100 000 citizens from disadvantaged communities. Other investments aim to improve access to basic health care for people in rural disadvantaged and marginalised areas, as well as to address the needs of people with disabilities, e.g. by improving accessibility of transport, buildings and digital public services.

Slovakia

Equality measures feature prominently in the Slovak plan, aside from measures aimed at inclusion of marginalised Roma communities and people with disabilities described in the highlighted examples. The plan integrates gender equality considerations in various areas, for instance in the reform of school curricula. A reform making pre-primary education from the age of 5 compulsory and introducing a legal entitlement to a place in kindergartens from the age of 3 aims to advance women's labour market participation. This is accompanied by investments in childcare facilities. A targeted training programme is expected to improve digital skills of older people and people from other disadvantaged groups. In the area of migration, Slovakia envisages a fast-track scheme to shorten and simplify procedures to obtain work and residence permits, as well as other supporting investments e.g. for the recognition of qualifications.

Slovenia

The Slovenian plan includes reforms and investments to support affordable housing, with the potential to promote access to adequate housing for disadvantaged groups. An investment supports more flexible ways of organising work which may enhance the participation of women in the labour market. In the area of long-term care, the plan includes a reform to establish a single system that is expected to relieve especially women of care duties, enable them to re-enter the workforce and enhance their social inclusion. The plan also includes an investment dedicated to flexible working methods adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities in sheltered companies and employment centres.

Spain

Spain has provided extensive information on the expected contribution of the RRP to gender equality and equal opportunities for all and the mainstreaming of those objectives. The plan has a strong focus on gender balance, which is one of the four cross-cutting lines of action in the Spanish plan. There are different measures across the plan with direct impact in reducing the gender gaps, such as the promotion of information and communication technologies specialist vocations among women, measures to boost the implementation

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Thematic analysis



of pay transparency and gender equality plans in companies, an increase in the offer of early childhood education and care, investments supporting women entrepreneurship and the social and labour integration of women from disadvantaged groups.

Sweden

The Swedish plan includes a number of mechanisms and governance structures ensuring that equality will be duly taken into consideration during its implementation. A reform has the potential to improve the recognition of the profession of nursing assistant, in which there is a majority of women. It complements other measures in the field of long-term care aiming to promote women's labour market participation. Reforms and investments in the field of vocational education have a specific focus on gender equality and the provision of Swedish classes for migrants.