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Economic and social Situation of the Population

619-1300

## On the way to gender equality

Current situation and developments



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## Gender equality from a statistical perspective

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For twenty years, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has been publishing statistical information on the current situation and trends over time in gender equality. The principle of equal rights of men and women has been enshrined in the Swiss constitution since 1981. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure equality, in particular within the family, education and working life. This also includes the right to the same pay for the same job. The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) was introduced in 1988 by the Federal council. The equality law, which forbids in particular every form of discrimination in the area of work, has been statutory since July 1996. At a legal level, much has been achieved. Equality needs to be not only statutory but should also be a reality in everyday life. Despite progress, actual equality has not yet been achieved in many areas of life. Pay equality for example has not yet been realised and the division of paid and unpaid work is still characterised by gender differences. The newly published and updated brochure on gender equality from a statistical perspective shows the current trends, the progress made and the gaps that still exist in gender equality.

# Education

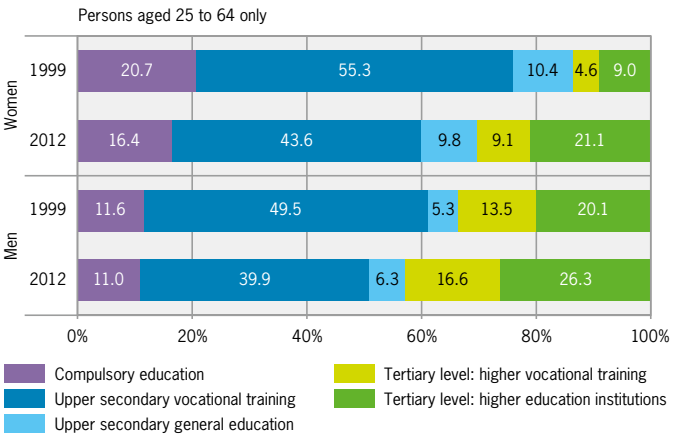
Education is one of the most important means by which gender equality can be achieved. People with a good education usually have more opportunities to shape their working world and living environment and can cope more easily with new challenges in family, profession and politics. People with a better education tend to have better paid jobs.

## Differences in education

The proportion of women aged between 25 and 64 years with no post-compulsory education qualification is much higher than that of men of the same age. The gender difference is particularly great at tertiary level. However, a tendency towards higher levels of education for both men and women can be observed.

## Educational attainment of the resident population, 1999 and 2012

G 1



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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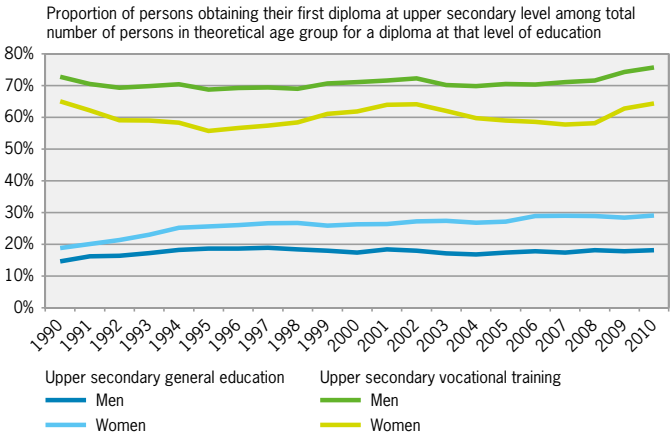
## Educational qualification rates

At upper secondary level women are more likely to have a general education qualification, men a vocational one. This gender gap has not changed much over the past twenty years. However, since 1990 the proportion of women with a general education at upper secondary level has significantly increased by about 10 percentage points.

In higher education institutions too, graduation rates have risen continually, particularly among women, and since 2008 there are more female graduates than male.

### Educational qualification rate at upper secondary level, 1990–2010

G 2

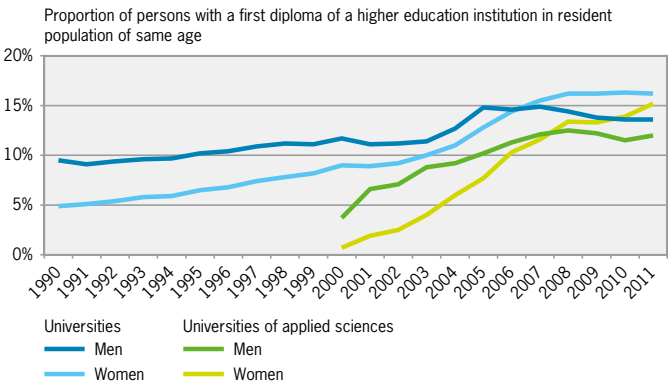


Source: Federal Statistical Office, Pupil and student statistics, ESPOP, STATPOP

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### Educational qualification rate at higher education institutions, 1990–2011

G 3



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SIUS, ESPOP, STATPOP

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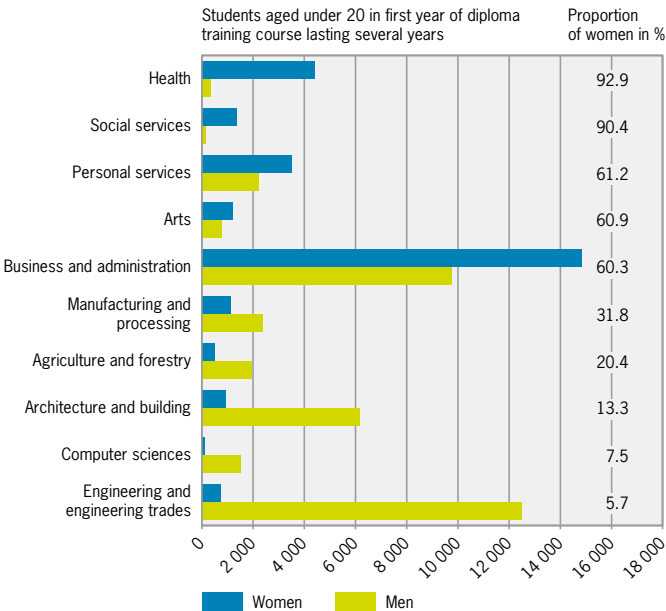
## Career and study choices

Career and study choices are extremely gender specific. Vocational education and degree courses in the area of economy are among the most popular overall. The proportion of women following multi-year vocational courses in Business and Administration is 60%. The proportion of female admissions to economic science degree courses is 46% at universities of applied sciences and 36% at universities.

Young men are much more likely than young women to choose technical professions and degree courses such as engineering or architecture and construction, technical sciences and information technology (IT). Young women on the other hand are much more present than young men in vocational training and degree courses in health-care, humanities and social sciences, social work and teaching.

### Admissions to upper secondary vocational training (multi-year), 2010

G 4

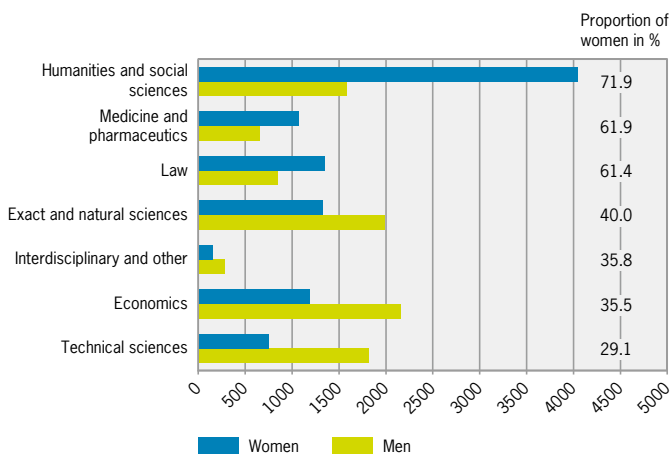


Source: Federal Statistical Office, Pupil and student statistics

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## Admissions to universities by fields of specialisation, 2012/13

G 5

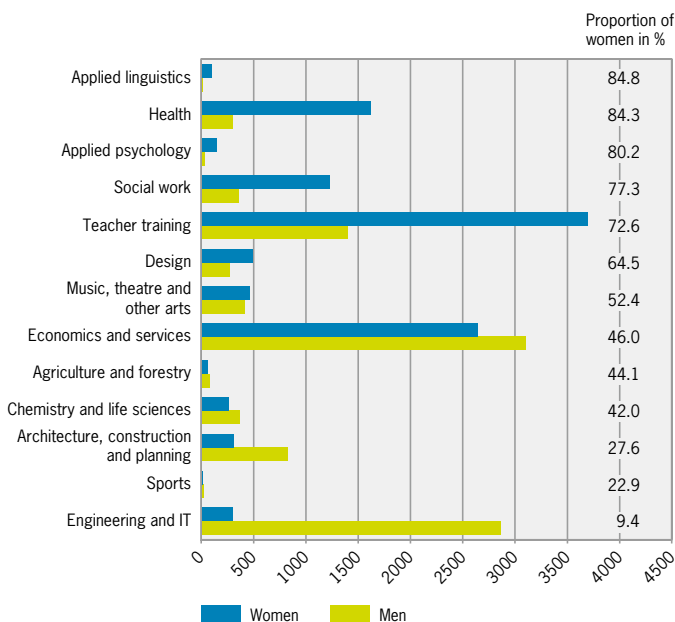


Source: Federal Statistical Office, SIUS

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## Admissions to universities of applied sciences by fields of specialisation, 2012/13

G 6



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SIUS

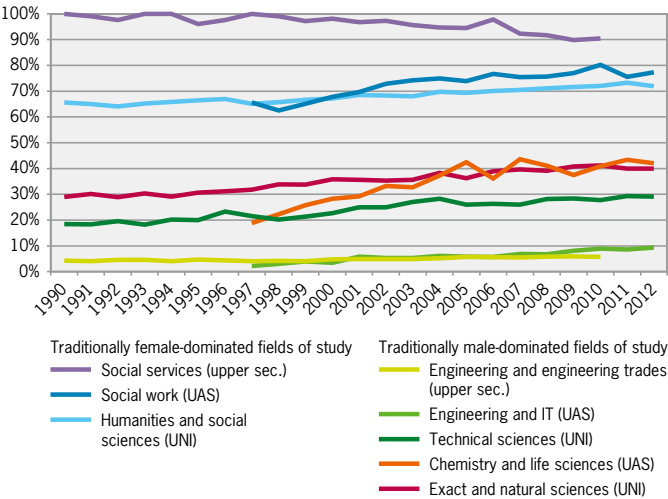
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In the past two decades the gender specific career and study choice has become slightly less rigid. The proportion of young men in the typically female-dominated field of social affairs has increased at upper secondary level. The proportion of women has risen in all university faculties as well as in typically male-dominated fields at upper secondary level and in the universities of applied sciences.

**Share of women in selected fields of specialisation, from 1990 onwards**

**G 7**



Upper sec.: vocational training at upper secondary level; UAS: universities of applied sciences (tertiary level); UNI: universities (tertiary level)

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Pupil and student statistics, SIUS

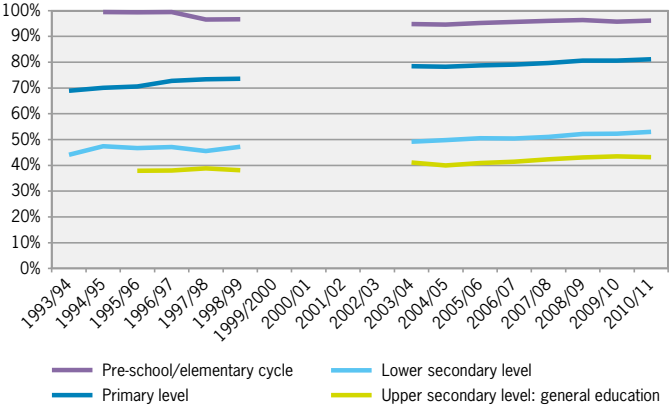
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**Teachers**

The higher the grade, the smaller the proportion of women among teachers. Pre-school teaching is an almost exclusively female domain; at university the ratio is inverted. It should however be emphasised, that women are represented in greater numbers among university staff than they were in the past. For example, the proportion of female professors at university has considerably increased since 1980. Despite this fact, in 2011 they still represented a minority of 17.6% (1980: 1.8%).

## Proportion of female teachers from preschool to upper secondary level, 1993/94 – 2010/11

G 8



Break in statistics for school years 1999/2000 to 2002/03.

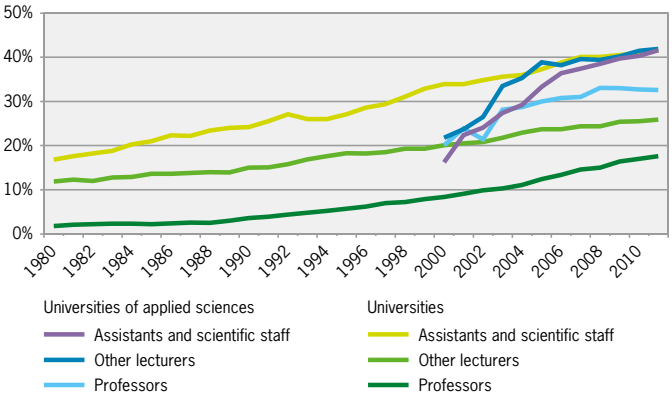
Due to the revision of the school staff statistics (excl. universities) and adaptations in the classification of education levels, the figures for 2010/11 for the pre-school/elementary cycle up to and including upper secondary level cannot be compared with data from previous school years. The figures prior to school year 2010/11 will be updated mid-2013.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, School teaching staff statistics

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## Proportion of female teachers at higher education institutions, 1980 – 2011

G 9



Source: Federal Statistical Office, University teaching staff statistics

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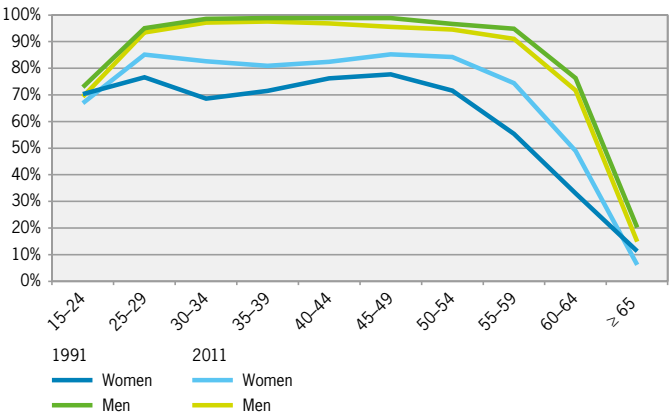
# Employment

The economic activity of women differs in several aspects from that of men, for example with regard to the number of hours worked and professional position. Furthermore, the economic activity rate for women is lower than that of men and the unemployment rate higher. These differences must be considered within the wider context of the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women (see sections *Balancing work and family life* and *Unpaid work*). Certain typical characteristics of female employment, such as part-time work, have to do with the family situation of women, the type of households in which they live and the work they carry out at home, as they still perform the majority of housework.

## Economic activity

The economic activity rate<sup>1</sup> is significantly higher for men than for women: 76% of the male population and 61% of the female population aged 15 and above are employed or looking for a job. The female economic activity rate from the age of around 30 until 45 and from 55 years onwards is considerably lower than that of men. The reason for this is that many women withdraw (temporarily) from employment to start a family and to devote themselves to bringing

**Economic activity rate by age group, 1991 and 2011** **G 10**



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

© FSO

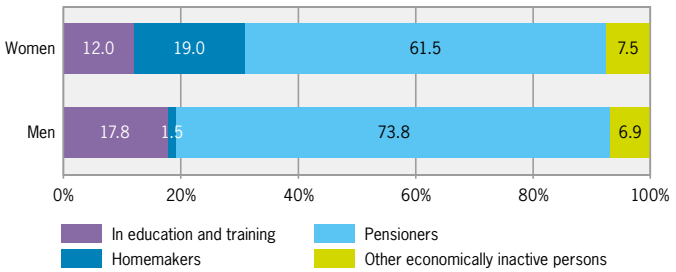
<sup>1</sup> The economic activity rate measures persons capable of gainful employment (persons in employment and ILO unemployed) as a percentage of the total reference population.

up their children. They also retire from the workforce earlier than men. The differences between men and women's labour participation rates at different times of life have, however, become noticeably smaller over the past two decades.

The economic activity rate of men has fallen slightly in all age groups since 1991. In contrast, the economic activity rate for women has risen in almost all age groups, in particular in the group of 55 to 64 year-olds. The gradual raising in recent years of the legal retirement age for women has contributed to the increase in this age group. The economic activity rate of mothers with children younger than 15 years of age has also risen considerably. These are mainly women who remain professionally active during and after the period of bringing up children. The economic activity rate has fallen only among younger women (15–24 years) and older women (≥ 65 years). This is probably due to the extension of the education period and also to the falling number of women in employment after retirement.

Economically inactive persons are mainly pensioners, followed by housewives among women and by persons in (continuing) education among men.

**Economically inactive persons aged 15 and over, 2012** **G 11**



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS © FSO

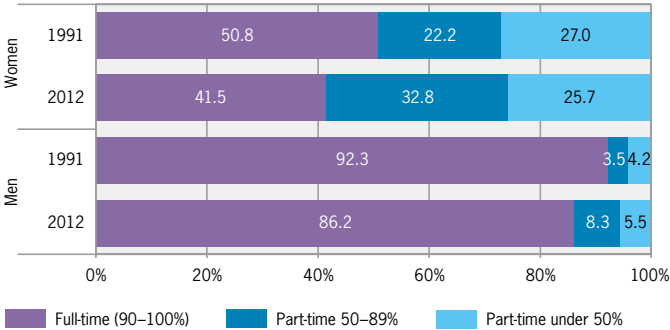
**Part-time employment**

58% of employed women and 14% of employed men are in part-time employment. Low work-time percentages are much more common among women than men. Among employed persons, one woman in four and one man in twenty has a work-time percentage of less than 50%. Part-time employment is therefore a typical feature of female employment. It can imply insecure working conditions, poorer social

security arrangements (e.g. pension fund) or fewer continuing education and career opportunities. On the other hand, it offers the possibility of undertaking other tasks in addition to gainful employment such as looking after children, voluntary work and housework.

**Full-/part-time employed, 1991 and 2012**

**G 12**

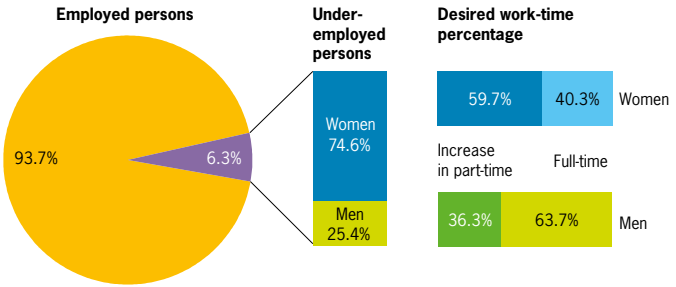


Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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Since 1991, the number of workers with a work-time percentage of between 50% and 89% has increased, among both women and men in employment. There has been no substantial change in low work-time percentages of less than 50%. Only a few women have a work-time percentage of less than 20%: those that do are mainly mothers. However, since 1991 there has been a considerable drop in the number of mothers with low work-time percentages, particularly in favour of work-time percentages of 50% and more.

Of the 6.3% underemployed persons, i.e. employed persons who would like to work more, three-quarters are women. This indicates that part-time work does not always provide a satisfactory solution: 4 out of 10 underemployed women would like to work full-time (2004: 3 out of 10), the other 6 out of 10 would like to increase their part-time work (2004: 7 out of 10). Exactly the reverse holds true for underemployed men: 6 out of 10 would like to work full-time and 4 would like to increase their part-time work-percentage (2004: 5 and 5). Mothers with a partner and child(ren) as well as single mothers are particularly affected by underemployment.



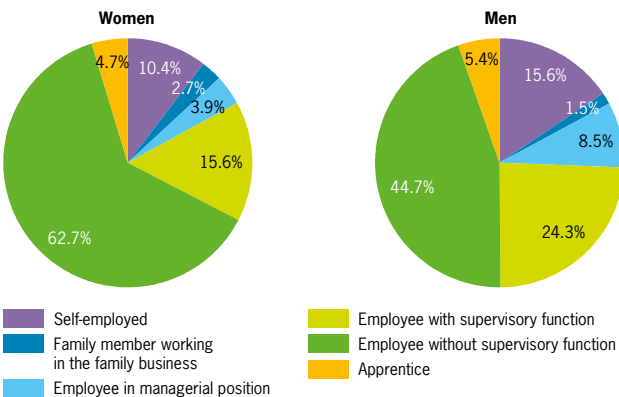
Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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### Professional position

Women are generally employed in lower positions than men: They are often employees with no managerial function. Men are much more likely to be self-employed or employed in business management or with a supervisory function than women. This inequality exists even between men and women with the same educational level. This is in all likelihood attributable to the fact that women have family and household responsibilities that limit their professional flexibility and leave them fewer opportunities to gain professional experience.

### Professional position, 2012



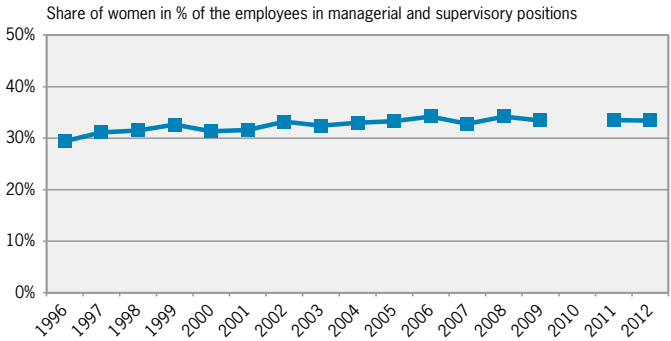
Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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Since the mid-1990s, the proportion of women working in family businesses has decreased. In contrast, the proportion of self-employed women has risen slightly. For men, no noticeable changes are reported regarding the division of professional positions. Women constitute a third of employees in managerial and supervisory positions. This proportion has changed little since 1996.

## Women in management, 1996–2012

G 15



Break in series due to rewording of question on professional position. Although the rewording was introduced at the start of 2010, it is only valid for the whole sample from 1st quarter 2011. For this reason the 2010 data are not published.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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## Balancing work and family life

Combining work and family life is a central element on the way to gender equality. It is a challenge which concerns the whole family. Whether out of financial necessity or because increasingly fewer women want to give up their professional life for the family, it is a widespread reality that both parents work. Satisfactory compatibility between work and family life has not yet been achieved – neither for mothers nor fathers. The question as how to best reconcile family and career has far-reaching consequences for both sexes: As the main responsibility for bringing up and looking after children continues to be borne by women, they are less flexible with regard to their employment. Men who would like to work part-time, for example in order to devote more time to their family, still find it difficult to be accepted in the work place. The limited career opportunities of a part-time job are still a reality today for men and women.

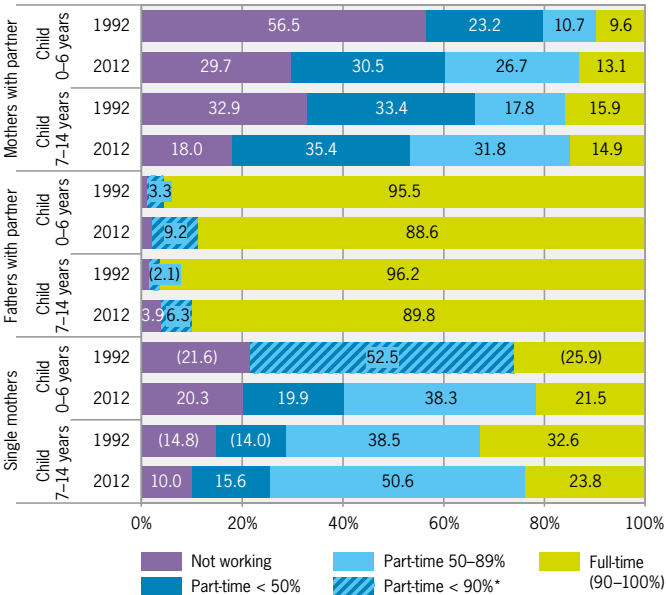
## Economic activity of mothers and fathers

Today mothers are increasingly economically active: The economic activity rate of mothers with children under 15 is now the same as that of women without children (2012: 77% each; 1991: 60% compared to 71%). However, they mainly work part-time and if there are young children living in the household, tend to have shorter working hours (less than 50%). The age of the youngest child and the family situation have a strong influence on the employment situation of the mother. If they have a child under 7 they are considerably less likely to work than with a youngest child aged between 7 and 14. Single mothers are not only more likely to be professionally active than mothers with a partner, but they also tend to have a higher work-time percentage.

Men adjust their employment situation differently to their family situation than women: If they have children under 15, they are more likely to work full-time than men without children under the age of 15.

### Professional situation of mothers and fathers by age of youngest child, 1992 and 2012

G 16



\* Due to the small number of cases in the sample it is not possible to differentiate between less than 50% part-time and 50-89% part-time.  
 (Figure): The result is based on fewer than 50 observations in the sample and should therefore be interpreted with great caution.



In contrast, women with children under 15 are much more likely to work part-time than women without children under the age of 15. The proportion of full-time employed fathers has, however, fallen since 1991; the proportion of fathers in part-time employment with work-time percentages of between 50% and 89% has accordingly risen.

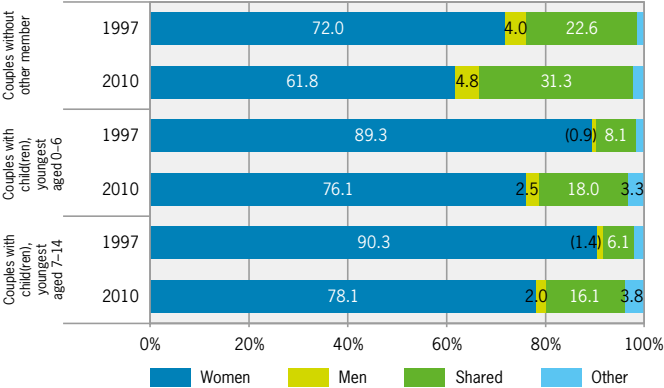
**Main responsibility for housework**

Three out of four women who live in a couple household with children under the age of 15 have the main responsibility for the housework. There is no noticeable difference depending on the age of the youngest child. This proportion is much higher in family households than in partner households without any other members. Shared responsibility for housework is undertaken by roughly a sixth of couples with children under the age of 15; this is considerably less than for couple with no other household member, where the proportion of shared responsibility is roughly a third.

A clear change has been observed between 1997 and 2010 in all couple households. Sole responsibility of the female partner for housework is declining in favour of shared responsibility.

**Main responsibility for housework in couples, 1997 and 2010**

**G 17**



(Figure): The result is based on fewer than 50 observations in the sample and should therefore be interpreted with great caution.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS © FSO

## Employment models in couple households

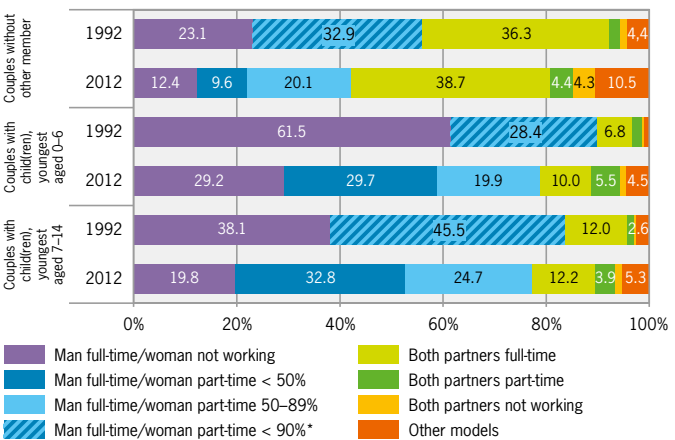
In addition to house and family work, in couple households employment is also unequally divided; this is particularly true for family households. Usually, the woman reduces her working hours or gives up (temporarily) her job completely when children live in the household. In couple households with children, the employment model with full-time employed father and part-time employed mother is the most frequent. As the children grow older, a drop is seen in the number of households with economically inactive mothers and a corresponding increase in households with part-time or full-time working mothers. In only 4–5% of couple households do both partners work part-time; no noticeable differences can be observed as to the presence and age of children.

The *traditional breadwinner* model – full-time employed man and economically inactive woman – has been on the decline since 1992: The number of couple households following this model has been practically halved. In couple households with children under 7 it has fallen from 61% to 29% in the past 20 years. The model *both partners part-time employed* and other models are more common these days than in the past. Over the years there has been no great change to the percentage of *both partners full-time employed* model, with the exception of a slight increase among couple households with children under the age of 7.

### Employment models in couples, 1992 and 2012

G 18

Persons aged between 25 and normal retirement age, without unemployed based on ILO definition



\* In 1992, the difference between part-time work of < 50% and part-time work of 50–89% was not made for all household members.

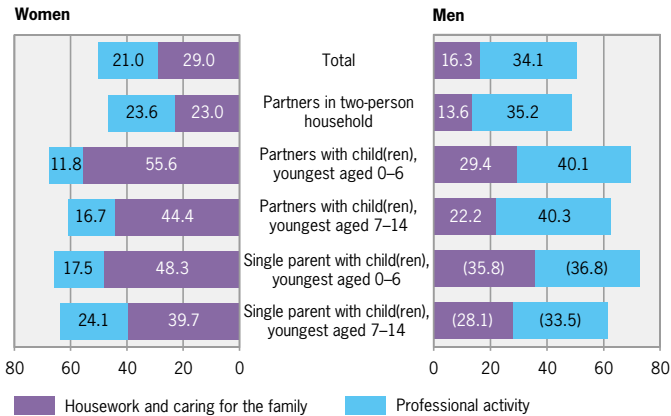
## Employment, domestic and family workload

Mothers and fathers with children under 15 are often under great time pressure due to their job, housework and caring for the family, particularly parents of pre-school children. Although the gender roles related to work and family are unequally divided in our society, the total amount of hours worked by men and women is the same in comparable family situations. However, men invest more time in paid work, women in unpaid work.

### Average number of hours spent on professional activity and on housework and caring for the family, 2010

G 19

Only economically active persons aged 15 to normal retirement age, in hours per week



(Figure): limited statistical reliability

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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Since 1997 not much has changed regarding the unequal division of labour. The increase in the amount of time invested by fathers in house and family work, in particular for fathers with a partner and the youngest child under 7 should, however, be pointed out. In 1997, these fathers invested 24 hours a week and in 2010 29 hours. Together with their gainful employment, in 2010 men worked 69 hours a week (mothers: 67 hours). This trend bears witness to increasing commitment on the part of fathers to housework and caring for the family; a relatively large amount of the time they invest is in the educational care of their children (playing with them and helping with homework).

# Unpaid work

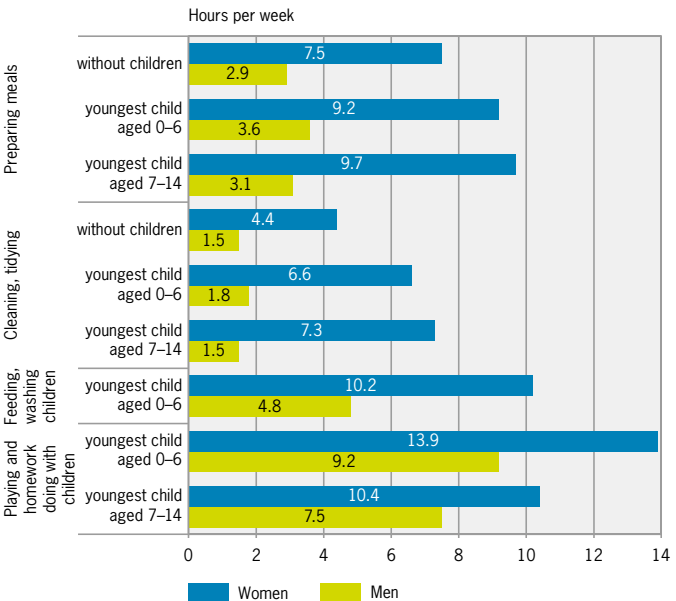
Unpaid work, such as housework, looking after the family, caring for persons needing assistance, honorary and voluntary activities for associations or organisations and helping friends and relatives, is essential for society. Participation by women and men in this area varies considerably depending on the type of unpaid work.

## Selected housework and family tasks

Women spend more time than men on most household and family tasks (exceptions are administrative tasks and household repairs). Looking after and caring for children, preparing meals and cleaning are the most time-consuming tasks. It is noticeable that fathers with a partner participate mostly in looking after children, in particular playing and doing homework with them. The extra time needed in a family with children compared to a couple without children for preparing meals and cleaning as well as looking after small children is provided by the mothers. In addition, mothers spend considerably more time looking after small children than do fathers.

**Average time spent on selected housework and family tasks in couple households, 2010**

**G 20**



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

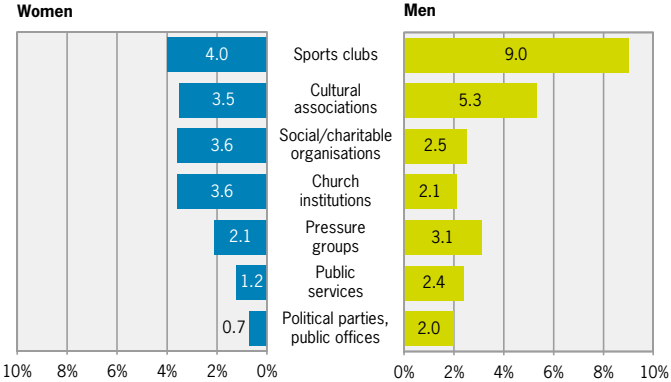
## Voluntary work

Men commit themselves more than women to *organised voluntary work* (23% compared to 17%). By far the most voluntary and honorary work is done for sports clubs. Women are more involved in social/charitable and church associations and men more in cultural associations and pressure groups (e.g. professional or environmental protection associations, etc.) as well as political office or public service (e.g. first-aid and security services, fire brigade etc.). People who carry out such tasks spend on average almost one and-a-half working days per month (women 13 hours, men 14 hours).

### Participation in organised voluntary work, 2010

G 21

As percentage of resident population aged 15 and older



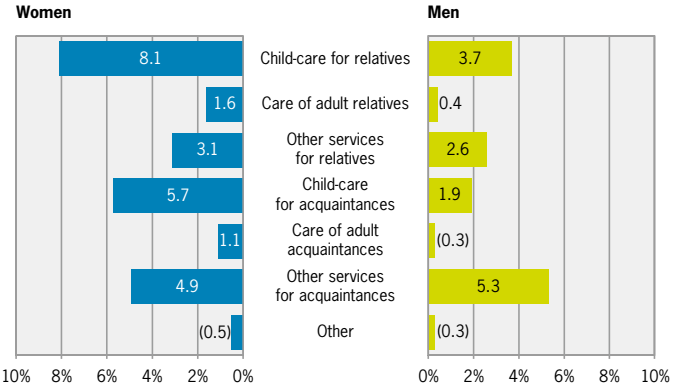
Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS: Unpaid work

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In contrast to the situation with honorary and voluntary activities for associations or organisations, in *informal voluntary work* women take on unpaid assistance to relatives and acquaintances much more often than men (23% of women compared to 14% of men). Women mostly look after friends' and relatives' children. Men mostly perform other services for friends and neighbours. People who carry out such tasks spend on average almost two working days per month (women 17 hours, men 12 hours).

Overall a decline in participation rates can be observed over the past ten years.

As percentage of resident population aged 15 and older



(Number): The assessment is based on fewer than 50 observations in the sample survey and should therefore be interpreted with great caution.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS: Unpaid work

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## Wages

Specific features of female economic activity, such as lengthy interruptions for family reasons and the resultant fewer years of service and lack of professional experience, impact on the wage differential between the sexes. In addition, wage is dependent on factors such as education, professional position and the required level of skills for the position. The inequality between men and women in these areas can be clearly seen in differences in wage.

A survey commissioned by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) showed that approximately 62.4% of the wage gap between men and women in 2010 could be explained by objective factors. The remaining 37.6% of the wage gap cannot be explained by objective factors and must be seen as wage discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Comparative analyses of women's and men's wages based on Earnings Structure Survey are available in German or French at [www.statistik.admin.ch](http://www.statistik.admin.ch) > 03 – Arbeit und Erwerb > Löhne, Erwerbseinkommen > Indikatoren > Lohnniveau > nach Geschlecht.

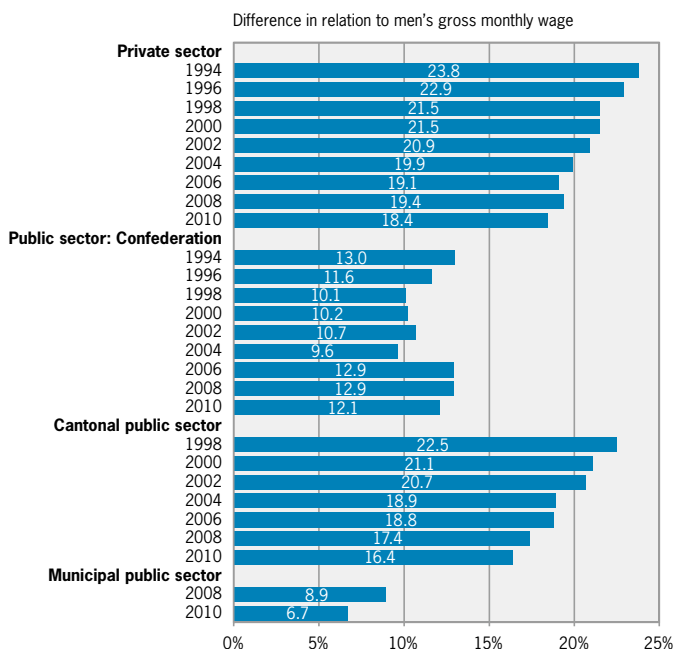
## Wage gaps in the private and public sectors

Women's wages are considerably lower than men's. The standardised gross monthly wage (median)<sup>3</sup> of women in the private sector was CHF 5176 in 2010, that of men was CHF 6346. This represents a wage gap of 18.4%. Wages for both men and women have risen since 1994; in contrast the wage gap between men and women is gradually getting smaller.

The standardised monthly gross wage (median) of women in the federal public sector was CHF 6653 in 2010; that of men was 7573 which represents a gap of 12.1%. Although this gender wage gap is noticeably smaller than in the private sector, it has not shown any clear trend over time towards a further reduction.

### Share in gender wage gap, 1994–2010

G 23



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SESS

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<sup>3</sup> Gross monthly wages are standardised to 40 hours a week and 4 $\frac{1}{3}$  weeks a month. The median divides the group under investigation into two: For half of the employees, the standardised wage is above the given median, for the other half below it.

In the cantonal public sector the gap is similar to that in the private sector. In 2010, the standardised gross monthly wage (median) was CHF 7164 for women and CHF 8568 for men. The wage gap is 16.4%. Since 1998 it has been declining gradually.

### Wage gaps in selected economic branches

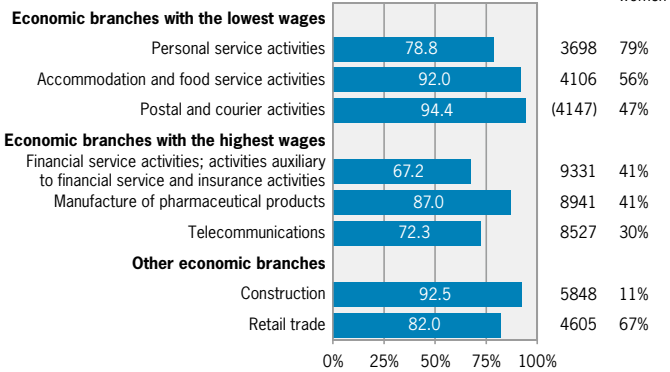
Wage levels vary considerably between sectors; the wage gap between men and women exists however in all economic branches. In the branches with the lowest wages, the wage gap between men and women lies between 6% and 21%. With 47% of female employees, wage gaps are lowest in the *postal and courier activities*. In the branch of *personal service activities*, with a high proportion of women (79%), they are highest. In the economic branches with the highest wages the wage gap is also high: Here women earn between 13% and 33% less than men. Women are under-represented in these branches: The percentage of women is between 30% and 41%. Interestingly, in the *construction branch* where the female proportion of employees is only 11%, the wage gap is narrow (8%). In the *retail trade branch*, women are significantly over-represented (67%) and the wage gap is 18%.

### Womens' wage as % of mens' wage, 2010

G 24

In selected economic branches of the private sector

Gross monthly wage (median), in CHF      Proportion of women



(Figure): coefficient of variation higher than 5%; the numerical value is therefore uncertain in statistical terms.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SESS and JOBSTAT

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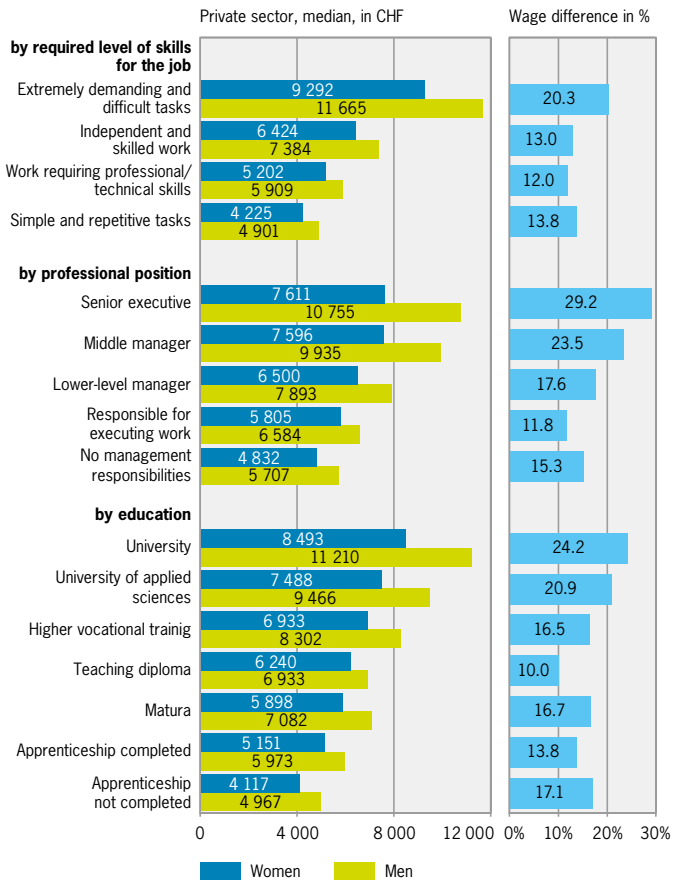
## Wage gaps according to other criteria

The wage gap between men and women in the private sector tends to increase in step with the level of education, the level of skills required or the management position. Depending on the requirements of the position, women earn between 12% and 20% less than men, depending on educational qualifications between 10% and 24% less and depending on professional position between 12% and 29% less.

The general trend towards a decrease in the wage gap in the private sector cannot be seen in senior and middle management, where the gap is already relatively high.

### Gross monthly wage by various characteristics, 2010

G 25





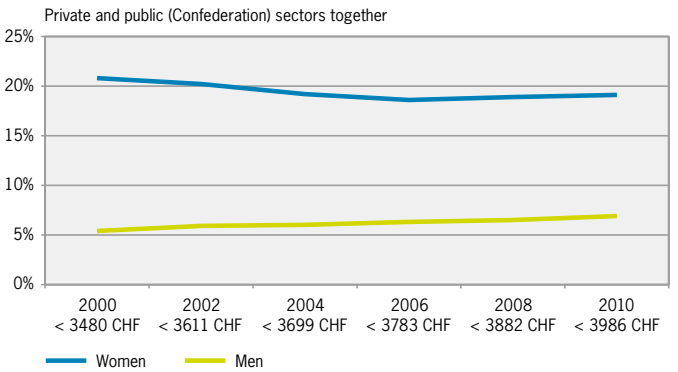
Source: Federal Statistical Office, SESS

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Low wages

The proportion of people with a low wage<sup>4</sup>, that is who earned less than CHF 3986 gross per month with a 40 hour week, depends greatly on gender: Seven out of ten are women. The proportion of low wages among women declined slightly in the years from 2000 to 2006 and remained stable from 2008 to 2010. Among men, on the other hand, the proportion has risen slightly but continuously.

Employees with a low wage



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SESS

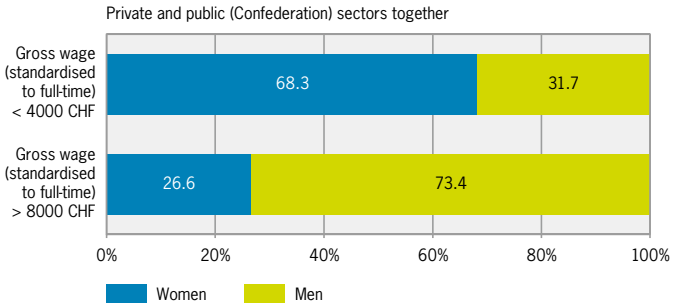
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<sup>4</sup> Low wages are equivalent to two thirds of the standardised monthly gross wage.

Twice as many women in employment as men earn a standardised gross monthly wage of less than CHF 4000. In the upper segment of the wage pyramid, almost three times as many men than women earn a gross wage of more than CHF 8000 per month.

## Employees with high and low wages, 2010

G 28



Source: Federal Statistical Office, SESS

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## Poverty

Poverty and the receipt of social assistance, especially in the event of divorce or in old age, are often the result of the gender-specific division of labour, which leads women to work shorter hours and to interrupt their employment. The responsibility for children as a single parent is a risk factor which, predominantly for women, can lead to poverty and the receipt of social assistance.

### Poverty rate

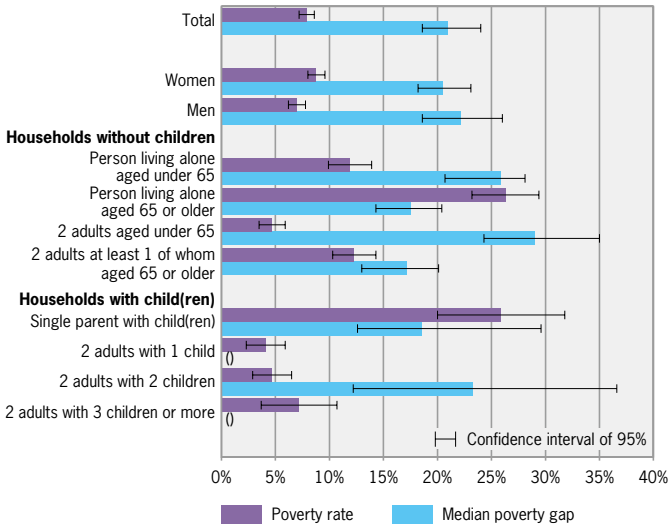
The poverty rate<sup>5</sup> of the permanent resident population in private households in Switzerland was 7.9% in 2010, i.e. approximately every thirteenth person was considered to be poor. Women are more likely to be poor than men. Particularly at risk are single parents, persons living alone, persons without post-compulsory education, the unemployed and the economically inactive persons as well as persons living in households with low labour market participation. Single parents are confronted with financial difficulties that arise from

<sup>5</sup> The poverty rate corresponds to the percentage of poor people in the total population. A person is considered poor when she lives in a household with a household income that is below the poverty line. The poverty line is based on guidelines from the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS). In 2010 it was on average approximately CHF 2250 per month for a person living alone, CHF 3600 for a single parent family with two children and CHF 4000 for a household with two adults and two children.

the greater basic needs of two households brought about by separation; at the same time the employment possibilities are limited by having to take care of children. Large families are also more subject to poverty. For persons aged 65 and older it should be noted that asset bases are not taken into account. As household wealth often grows with increasing age, it can be assumed that the financial resources of people of retirement age are more likely to be underestimated and that current expenditures are also being met by using up that wealth. This is confirmed by other factors observed among persons aged 65 or older: the smaller poverty gap<sup>6</sup> (17% compared with 21% in the Swiss resident population), fewer cases of material deprivation<sup>7</sup> (2.5% compared with 5.4%) and the much larger proportion of people who are greatly satisfied with their household's financial situation (70% in comparison with 58%).

**Poverty rate and poverty gap by selected population groups, 2010**

**G 29**



( ) Results that are based on fewer than 100 observations are not shown.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SILC

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<sup>6</sup> The median poverty gap measures the middle (median) gap between the disposable income of the poor population and their current poverty line and thus indicates the extent to which the poor population is affected by poverty. The poverty gap grows larger when the income of poor people becomes further removed from the poverty line.

<sup>7</sup> The material deprivation rate is described as income-related deprivation – i.e. the lack of essential consumer goods or inability to maintain basic living conditions – with regard to at least three out of nine areas of life.

The poverty rate in Switzerland has tended to decline in comparison with 2008 (9.1%; 2010: 7.9%). Since that year, the median poverty gap has fallen by more than 7 percentage points (2008: 28.3%; 2010: 21.0%). The situation of the poor population has therefore improved, as their income is now less far away from the poverty line.

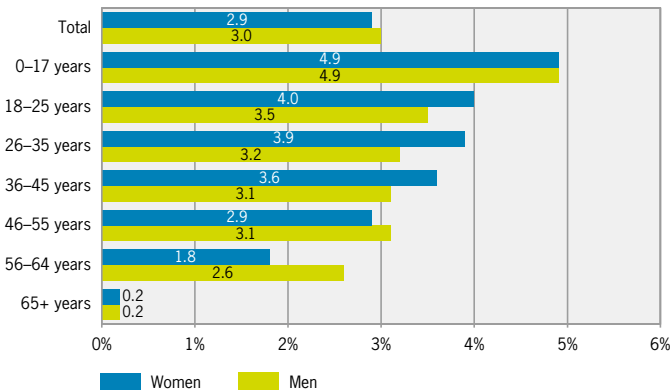
**Social assistance**

In 2011, the social assistance rate<sup>8</sup> was 3.0%. This means that for every 1000 persons in the permanent resident population, 30 received social assistance. The social assistance rate is highest among children, young people and young adults up to the age of 25. Risk factors for young men and women are insufficient education and the unemployment that this leads to. Economic inactivity because of child care duties is a specific risk factor for women. They are therefore less able to stop receiving social assistance due to an improvement in their employment situation than men.

Single parents, a group that is composed mainly of women, are at particularly high risk of relying on social assistance. Of all private households with social assistance a fifth are single parent households, whereas their proportion of all private households in Switzerland is only a good 5%. The reasons for this are the same as for the over-representation of single parents in the population affected by poverty: higher costs caused by children and separation as well as limited employment opportunities due to looking after children.

**Social assistance rate by age group, 2011**

**G 30**



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Statistics on Social Welfare Receivers

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<sup>8</sup> The social assistance rate measures the proportion of people receiving social assistance as a percentage of the permanent resident population or of specific socio-demographic groups.

This can also be seen in a comparison of age groups: Women's social assistance rate is considerably higher between the ages of 18 and 45. From the age of 45, particularly in the 56 to 64 year-old age group, men are more affected. The rate of persons receiving social assistance is the same for men and women in the youngest and oldest age groups; in the latter case, however, proportionally more women are found as there are more women in the population. Those aged 56 to 64 are more likely to become long-term social assistance recipients, i.e. longer than one year. An end to dependence on social assistance is usually achieved when the existence minimum can be covered by other social benefits (i.e. social insurances). For the 26 to 55 year-old age group, however, the most common way to ending dependence on social assistance is an improvement in the employment situation.

## Domestic violence

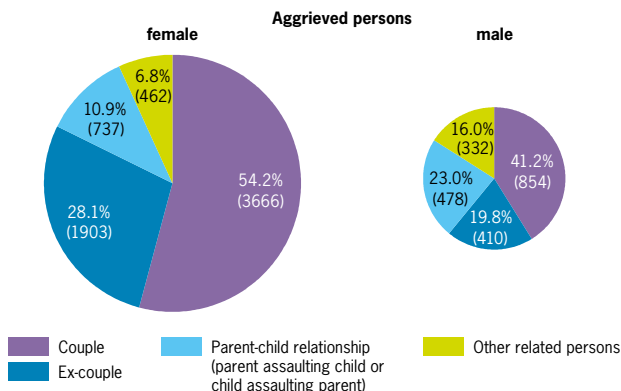
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Violence occurs against a backdrop of difficult and problematic circumstances, affecting both men and women but in different ways and to varying extent. Men are more likely than women to appear in police statistics for violent crime, both on the side of the accused party as on the side of the aggrieved (male percentage 2011: 83% and 57%). Men are more likely to be victims of violence in the public sphere, women on the other hand from domestic violence.

Figures on prosecutions – here the figures from the Police Crime Statistics (PCS) – can provide only limited information as to the true extent of events when illegal acts such as domestic violence are concerned. There are a number of unreported cases, the size of which cannot be determined with any certainty.

Domestic violence is a common social problem in Switzerland too and accounts for 38% of violent crime registered in police statistics for which the relationship between the accused and the aggrieved person is recorded. 76% of all aggrieved parties are female. In 2011, the police registered 4.9 persons of male gender as victims of domestic violence for every 10,000 male inhabitants. For female inhabitants this figure was 15.4 per 10,000. According to the PCS, persons of female gender are 3.1 times more likely to be victims of domestic violence than men.

Among accused persons, the gender ratio is reversed: per 10,000 inhabitants of the respective gender 15.7 are male and 3.8 female. This means that according to the PCS, persons of male gender are 4.1 times more likely to be perpetrators of domestic violence than women.



Source: Federal Statistical Office, PCS

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The consequences of domestic violence are serious: Victims have to cope not only with physical and psychological health problems, they are also often confronted with social and financial problems. Children are also often affected by violence within the partnership.

In 2011, 74% of all consultation cases at victim counselling centres were made by female victims. 84% could be ascribed to male perpetrators and in 52% of cases a family relationship existed between the victim and the suspect. The assistance given to women by counselling centres is very often protection and lodging, social and psychological assistance, as well as financial help.

## Politics

Women account for the majority (53%) of people entitled to vote. Their representation on the path to becoming members of political institutions, however, gets steadily weaker. They accounted for roughly 33% of candidates and for only 29% of those elected (2011 National Council elections).

The first woman in the Federal Council was elected in 1984. Since that time, apart from a period with no women between 1989 and 1993, at least one woman has been in the Federal Council. In 2010, women were in the majority in national government for the first time: They held four of seven seats. In 2011 the number of women fell again to three.

## Women's representation in the Executive

	Women	Men	Proportion of women
<b>Confederation</b>			
Federal Council	3	4	42.9%
<b>Canton</b>			
Cantonal governments	37	119	23.7%

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Elections Statistics

## Women's representation in the Legislative

	Women	Men	Proportion of women
<b>Confederation</b>			
National Council	58	142	29.0%
Council of States	9	37	19.6%
<b>Canton</b>			
Cantonal parliaments	655	1953	25.1%

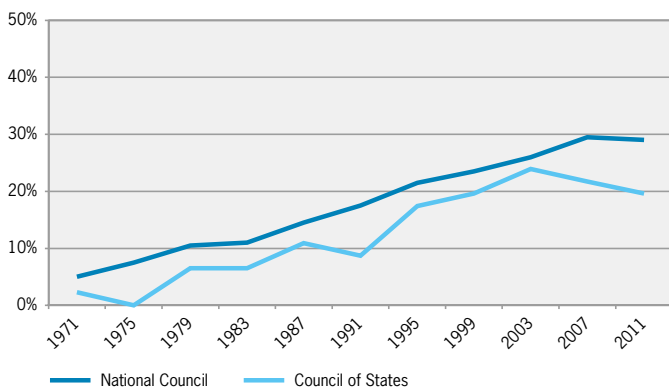
Source: Federal Statistical Office, Elections Statistics

The proportion of women in cantonal government was 23.7% at the end of 2012. The greatest number of women can be found in the cantonal government of Vaud (four out of seven). At least one woman is present in all cantonal governments, but in more than two-thirds of cantons she is one of five or seven councillors.

After the 2011 elections, 19.6% of the 46 councillors of the Council of States were women. In 1971, the year women obtained the right to vote and to be elected, a woman was elected for the first time to the small chamber; until the early nineties the trend was however

## Proportion of women in the National Council and in the Council of States, 1971–2011

G 32



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Elections Statistics

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rather slow to take off (percentage of women about 9%). In 1995, this increased significantly to 17%; in 2003 the highest percentage to date was reached (24%). The representation of women declined slightly with the 2007 and 2011 elections.

29.0% of the 200 National Council Members are women (2011 election results). Although their numbers have steadily increased since the first National Council elections with the participation of women – from 10 women in 1971 to 35 in 1991 and 59 in 2007 – in 2011 they fell slightly for the first time (by one person to 58).

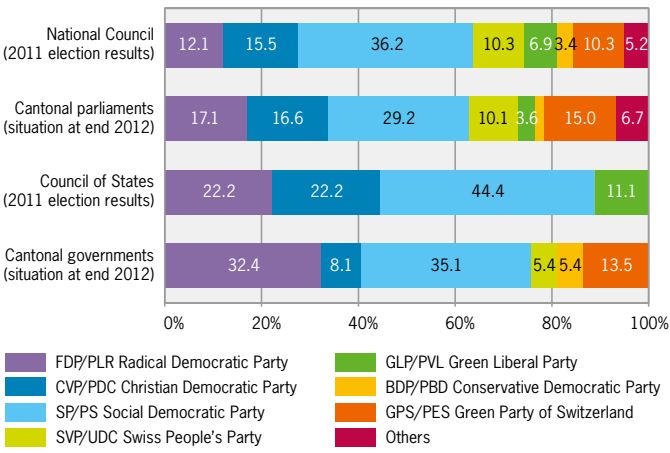
The percentage of women in cantonal parliaments was 25.1% at the end of 2012. It is highest in the cantons of Basel-Landschaft (36%), Zurich and Obwalden (both 33%) and lowest in the cantons of Ticino (13%) and Glarus (12%).

**Women in political institutions by party**

Female representation varies greatly among the different political parties. In the cantonal governments and in the Council of States, both of which are normally elected by the majority vote system, most of the women elected in the cantonal executives belong to the SP or FDP parties. Those elected in the Council of States belong to the SP, FDP or CVP.

In the National Council and in the cantonal parliaments, which follow a system of proportional representation, the distribution of elected women among the political parties follows a long-established

**Women in political institutions by party G 33**



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Elections Statistics/Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau © FSO

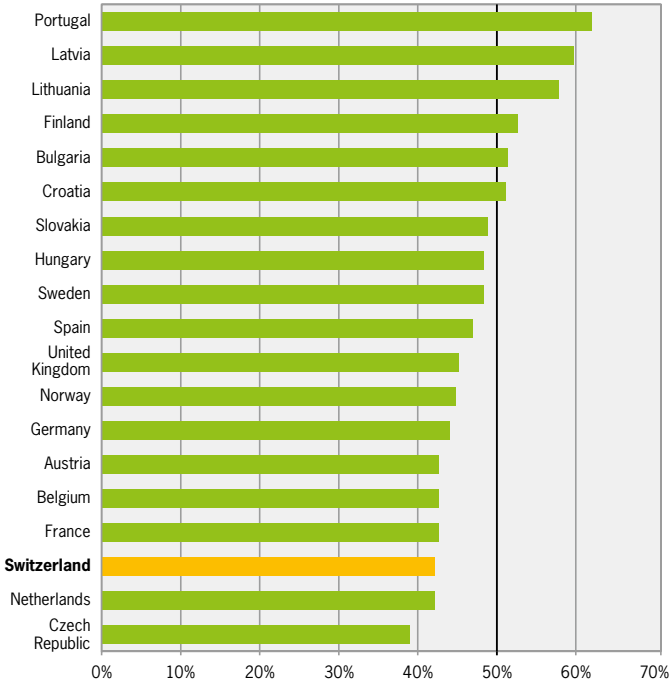
pattern: Women are over-represented in the red-green parties; their share falls the further right the party is positioned. 47% of all women elected to the National Council and 43% elected to the cantonal parliaments belong to the SP or Green parties although these parties possess only about 1/3 and exactly 1/4 respectively of all seats. In the SVP on the other hand, which possesses 27% of all seats in the National Council and 21% of seats in the cantonal parliaments, women account for only 10% of seats.

## International comparison

In international comparison, Switzerland shows a mixed picture in respect of gender equality. Depending on the area under discussion, Switzerland performs more or less well in comparison with other European countries. With regard to doctorate degrees and the proportion of female professors at higher education institutions,

### Proportion of female graduates on advanced research programmes, in 2010

G 34



Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

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Switzerland does not compare well. It should however be mentioned, that in the last twenty years the proportion of female professors has risen considerably. Switzerland has one of the highest female economic activity rates in Europe, which is however obtained by a high proportion of women in part-time employment. With regard to the gender wage gap and the representation of women in parliament, Switzerland comes out average in comparison with the other European countries surveyed. None of the countries represented has yet achieved gender equality in national parliament.

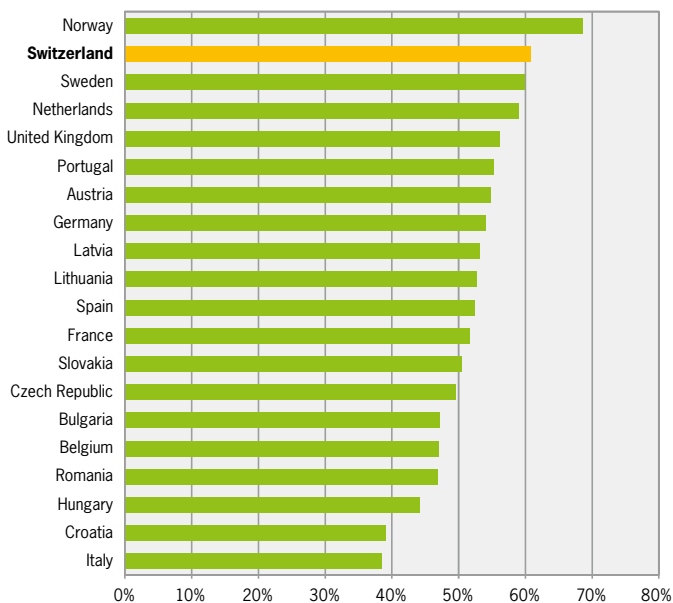
**Proportion of female teachers at tertiary level, in 2010–2011**

**G 35**



Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

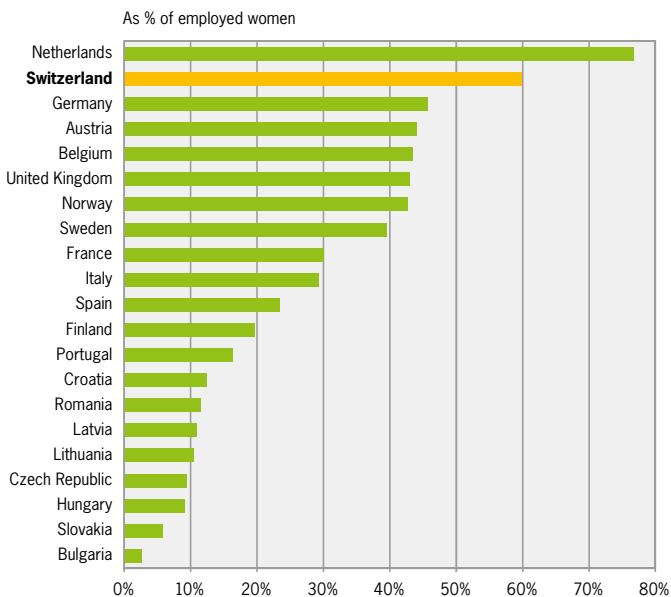
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Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

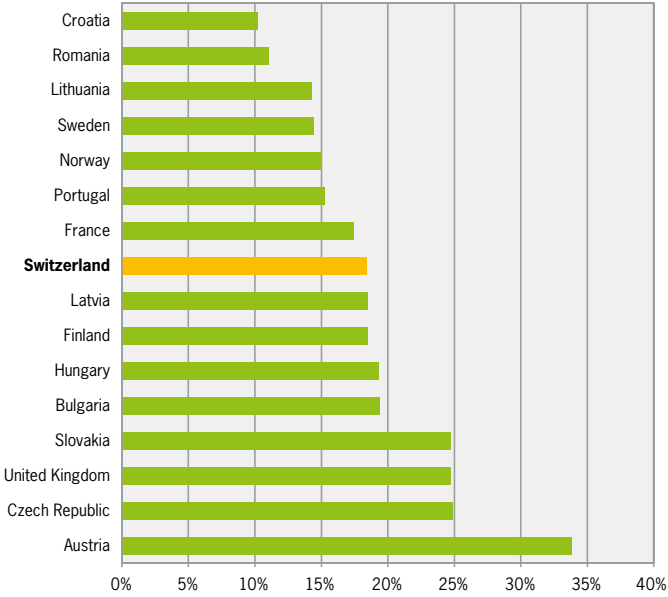
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Women in part-time employment, in 2011



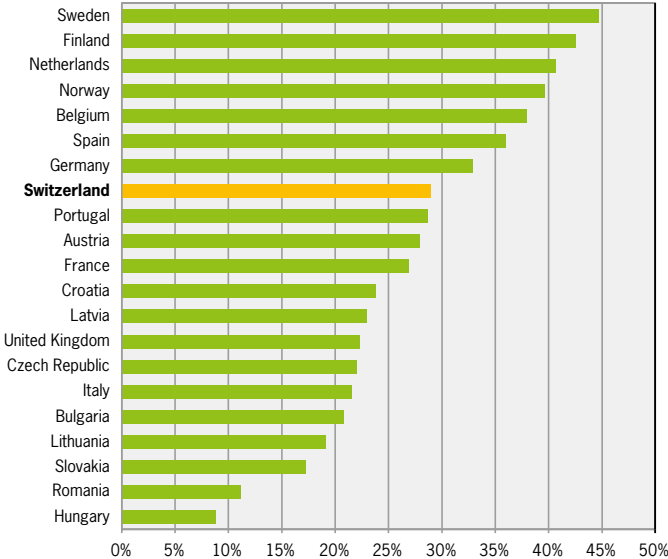
Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

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Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

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Results of most recent elections

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

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## Further statistical information

Partially available in English

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<b>Unpaid work:</b>	> Unpaid work
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