



NATIONAL REPORT

Cyprus

Sotira Couvaras, Konstantina Skolariki,
Katerina Kadena
sotira@wisefour.eu, konstantina@wisefour.eu,
katerina@wisefour.eu

Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Part A: Challenges for women in their professional life	5
3.1. Methodological framework and objective.....	5
3.2. Reaching out to the target group and collection of responses.....	5
3.3. Analysis of responses collected	5
3.3.1. Demographics.....	5
3.3.1.1 Age	5
3.3.1.2 Foreign Languages	6
3.3.1.3 Education	6
3.3.1.4 Difficulties faced	7
3.3.2. Professional experience	8
3.3.2.1 Current Employment	8
3.3.2.2 Changes in employment due to COVID-19.....	9
3.3.2.3 Career changes	10
3.3.2.4 Educational courses	11
4. Part B: the point of view of the stakeholders.....	15
4.1. Methodological framework and objective.....	15
4.2. Reaching out and engaging the stakeholders	15
4.3. Proceedings of the focus group and feedback collected.....	15
4.3.1. Understanding the low participation of women in the labour market.	15
4.3.1.1 Maternal leave policies and childcare.	15
4.3.1.2 Gender pay gap.....	17
5. Part C: Analysis of interventions at policy and institutional level.....	18
5.1. Statistical data on women employment	18
5.1.1. (Un)employment rate	18
5.1.2. Gender pay gap	18
5.1.3. Gender equality index.....	20
5.2. Support provided at government level.....	20
5.3. Support provided at Programmes level	23
5.4. Support provided by CSOs	23
6. Conclusions	24

1. Executive Summary

This report aims at providing insight on the challenges women face in their professional lives as provided by women that are divorced and long-term unemployed from Cyprus. In order to collect all the necessary information, two questionnaires were distributed. One questionnaire targeted our desired group (women divorced and long-term unemployed from Cyprus) and the second questionnaire was addressed to stakeholders (i.e. AE providers, career advisors, CSOs). The questionnaire for women aimed at collecting the experiences, problems, and obstacles that women face in their efforts to (re-)integrate the labour market as well as their skill levels in various domains. The additional information collected from the short questionnaire for stakeholders focused on the existing limitations they face when asked to facilitate women to access employment. These questionnaires were distributed in our network of collaborators, in our platforms as well as to other identified relevant organizations and institutions. The data collected were then analyzed in order to create a state-of-the-art report, at a national (Cyprus) level, presenting the challenges that women face when accessing employment or even changing career paths.

2. Introduction

The EMPOWERED project aims towards empowering women regarding 1) their digital upskilling and 2) their psychological state. The partners plan on achieving this via the development of a training course. The desired end result is the empowerment of women in these two areas as well as the fact that their positions in the labour market will be reinforced. The project was structured in such way that each partner focuses on a specific target group. In particular, Wisefour focuses on women from Cyprus that are divorced and long-term unemployed. Two questionnaires were developed in the framework of this work package. One questionnaire addressed women and aimed at identifying the challenges for women in their professional lives. The second questionnaire addressed any relevant stakeholders in order to collect information in regard to the current situation as well as existing limitations for women in the labour market. These questionnaires were distributed in our network of collaborators, in our platforms as well as to other identified relevant organizations and institutions. The data collected were then analyzed in order to create a state-of-the-art report, at a national (Cyprus) level, presenting the challenges that women face when accessing employment or even changing career paths. The aim of this document is two-fold. On one hand, it will focus on analysing the responses received from the questionnaire disseminated to the target group of interest (long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus). On the other hand, the responses from the stakeholders will be analysed. The third section of the report will analyse the interventions at policy level in Cyprus regarding women's employment.

3. Part A: Challenges for women in their professional life

3.1. Methodological framework and objective

With our main aim being to identify the obstacles and challenges women face whether when making a career change or during their work endeavors, a questionnaire was created to be distributed in different groups of women. The final result will be the development of different national reports. In our case, a national report regarding the situation in Cyprus and specifically regarding long-term unemployed and divorced women was developed. This questionnaire also aimed at gathering insight about potentially useful training courses. In order to gain as much insight as possible in the challenges faced by women in their professional life, we distributed this questionnaire. 30 responses were collected, and an inclusive conclusion was formed. The questionnaire was structured in a way that gathered information regarding the experiences, problems and obstacles that women face in their efforts to become an integrated part of the labour market.

3.2. Reaching out to the target group and collection of responses

Wisefour reached out to the target group via several different means in order to collect the necessary number of responses. We scouted and contacted organizations and institutions that seemed relevant to our analysis. In particular, we contacted 10 such relevant organizations/institutions. 2 informed us that they didn't have access to the target audience (long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus), 2 informed us that would be very interested in helping with the work to be carried out in the framework of EMPOWERED and 4 informed us that they would be willing to help by posting the needs and the questionnaire on their platforms and social media as well as by forwarding the questionnaires to their network. We didn't hear back from 2 of the organizations we contacted. In addition, we distributed the questionnaires to our network of collaborators as well as in our platforms and social media channels.

3.3. Analysis of responses collected

Once we have received the necessary number of responses and due to the structure of the questionnaire (and its different sections: 1. Focusing on collecting information about the women's professional experience, 2. Their work experience and 3. Their skills and competencies), the corresponding three sections of analysis were formed.

3.3.1. Demographics

3.3.1.1 Age

30 long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus responded to our questionnaire. As can be seen from the figure below, eight (8) of these women (35%) were under 30 years old (shown in light blue), four (4) women (17%) were 30-35 years old (shown in orange), two (2) women (9%) were 35-40 years old shown in grey, six (6) women (26%) were 40-45 years old (shown in yellow) and three (3) women (13%) were over 45 years old (shown in dark blue).

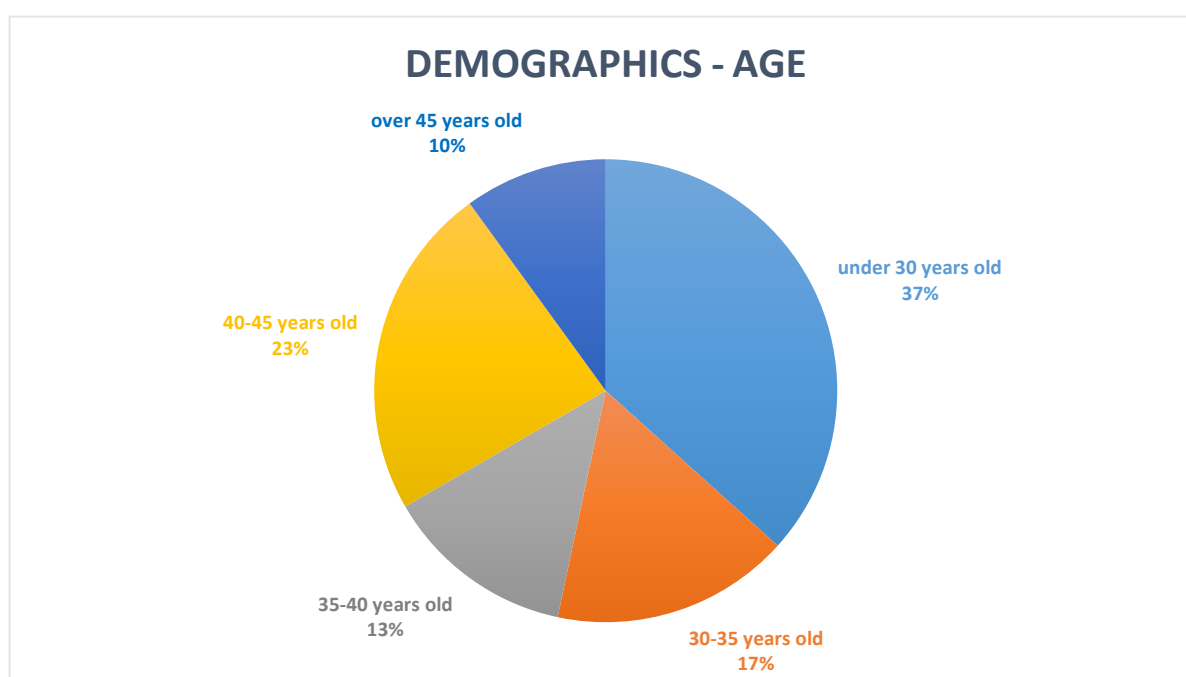


Figure 1. Age demographics of the 30 women from our target group (long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus) that responded to the questionnaire.

3.3.1.2 Foreign Languages

The responses from the questionnaire, not surprisingly, show that English is the most common foreign language spoken by the women in our target group. As can be seen from the figure below, 96% of the women who responded speak English as a foreign language. More specifically, 60% of these women speak English at a very good level, 23% at a good level and 13% at sufficient. The second most common languages identified include French (10%) and German (10%). The data collected shows that 30% of the women speak more than one foreign language with the most common combinations being English and Spanish (13%) and English and German (13%).

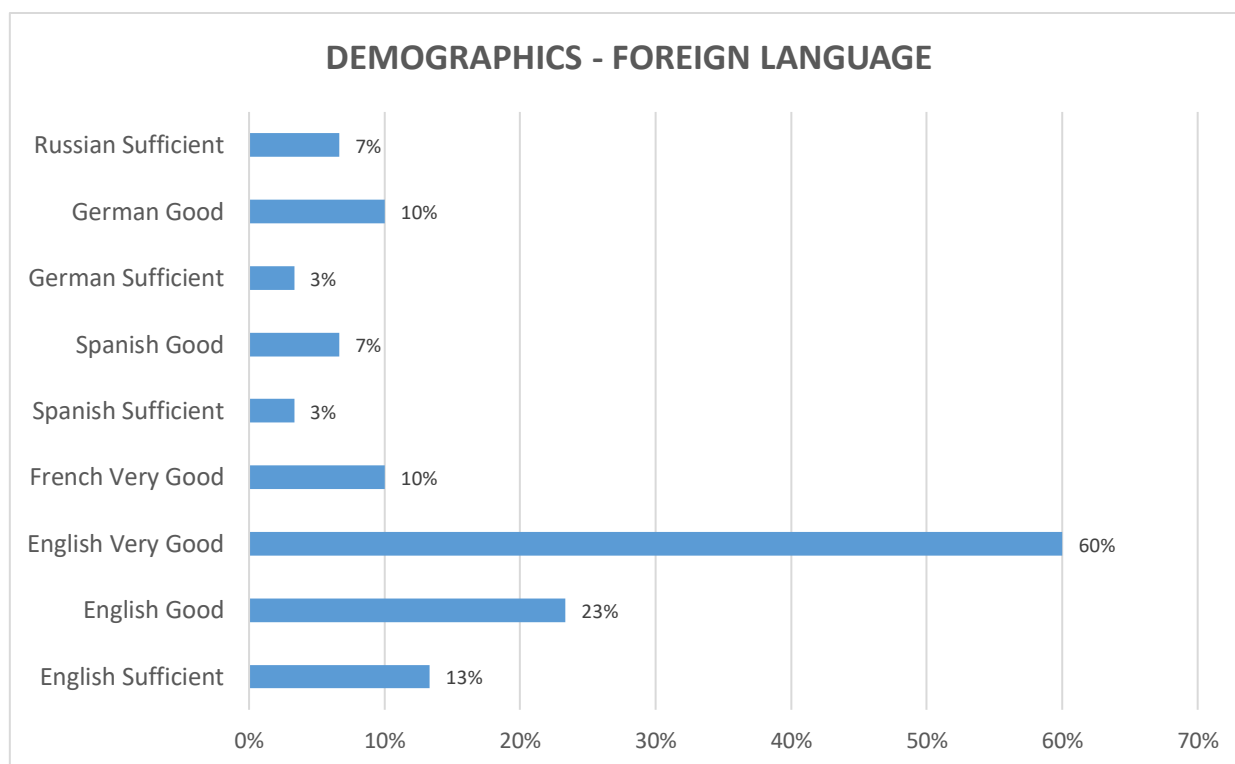


Figure 2. Foreign languages spoken by our target group.

3.3.1.3 Education

From the 30 women who responded to the questionnaire, two have completed their compulsory education/high school (7% shown in light blue in the figure below), 15 have completed their undergraduate studies (Bachelor's degree or similar) accounting for 50% of the women who responded (shown in orange), 11 women (37%) have completed a Master's degree or similar (shown in grey), 1 woman has a doctorate degree (4% shown in yellow) and 1 woman has vocational training and education (3% shown in dark blue)

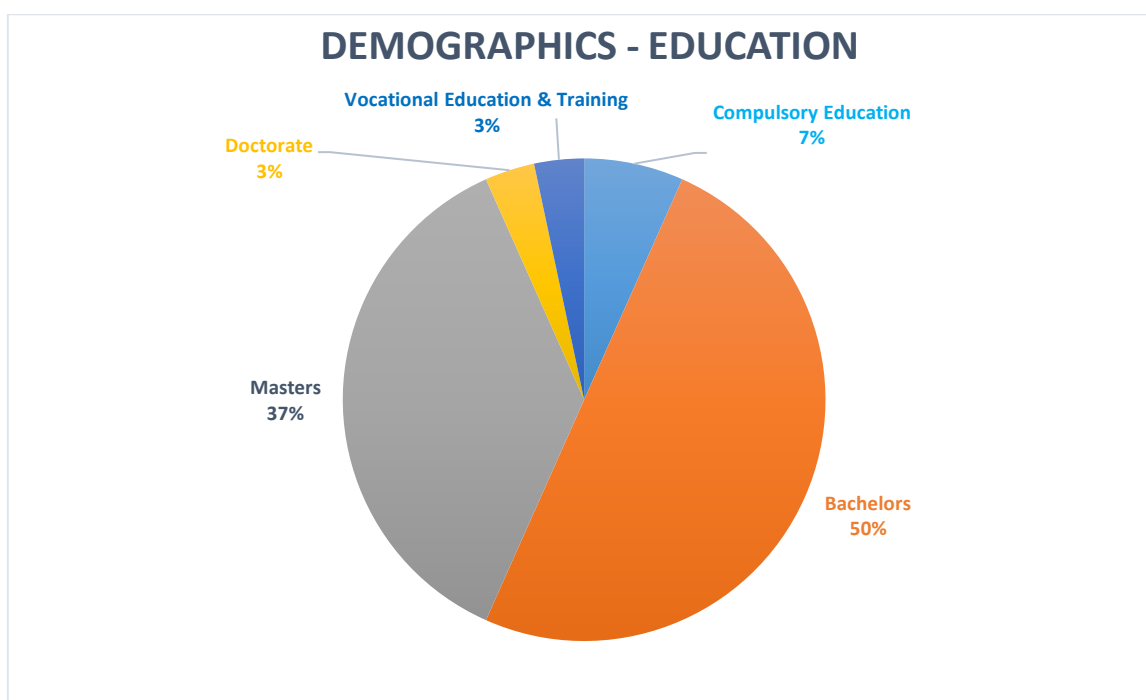


Figure 3. Education demographics of the 30 women from our target group (long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus) that responded to the questionnaire.

3.3.1.4 Difficulties faced

Regarding the difficulties the women who responded to the questionnaire face in terms of their professional lives, the majority of women (50%) focused on the lack of opportunities (shown in the figure below in grey). 40% stated that they faced difficulties in regard to balancing professional and personal life (shown in yellow). 33% of the women stated that the lack of digital skills is one of the main difficulties they face in terms of their professional lives (shown in orange). Interestingly, 27% of the women who indicated lack of experience as a difficulty they face, of which 10% also chose lack of training opportunities, and digital skills as obstacles. 17% of the women who chose lack of digital skills as a hindrance also stated that the lack of opportunities is an issue and 13% of the women who face the lack of opportunities as a difficulty also consider the balance between professional and personal life to be an issue.

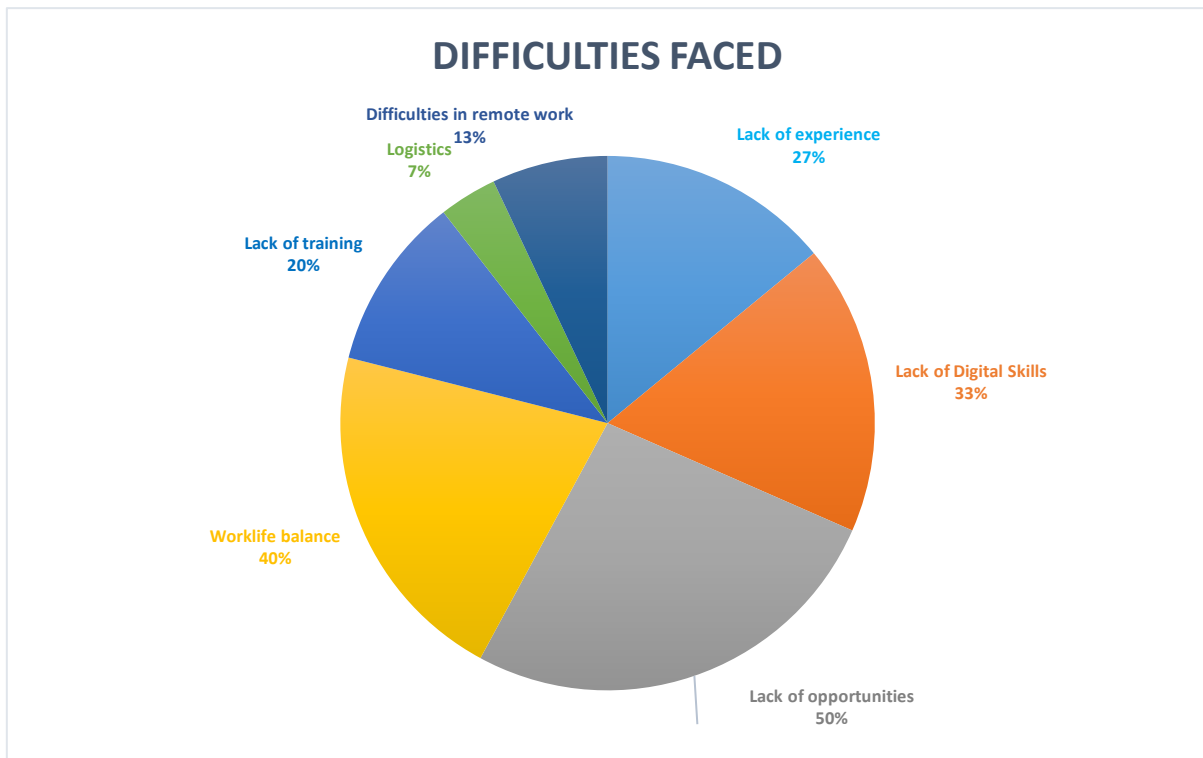


Figure 4. Difficulties faced from the 30 women from our target group (long-term unemployed and divorced women from Cyprus) that responded to the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Professional experience

3.3.2.1 Current Employment

From the 30 women who responded, 19 (63%) have been long-term unemployed in the past but are currently working, whereas 11 (37%) women have been long-term unemployed, and they still do not hold a position. Of those who are currently employed, 84% of the 19 women are currently employed full time and 16% are working part-time. The professional experience of the respondents can be broadly categorised according into the following classifications: 1. Entry-level, 2. Assistant/Support, 3. Manager. The job sector from which they belong is diverse, but the categories that received the most mention were Digital/Graphic Design and Sales. These sectors become more constrained in the framework of the women who currently hold a job.

An interesting observation from the data is that education did not have too significant of an impact on the current employment status of the women respondents. In reference to Figure 5 below 55% of women who hold a master's degree are currently employed. In addition, 50% of the women who finished their compulsory education/high school are currently employed, 73% of the women who hold a Bachelor's degree or relevant certification are also employed. However, these data might not be highly reliable due to the small sample size. According to Eurostat data from 2021, the rate of young females (aged 15-34 years old) in Cyprus who have formal education and are employed is 4.6% and in the EU is 9.6%¹.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifse_19/default/table?lang=en
PROJECT NUMBER – 2021-1-R001-KA220-ADU-000026741

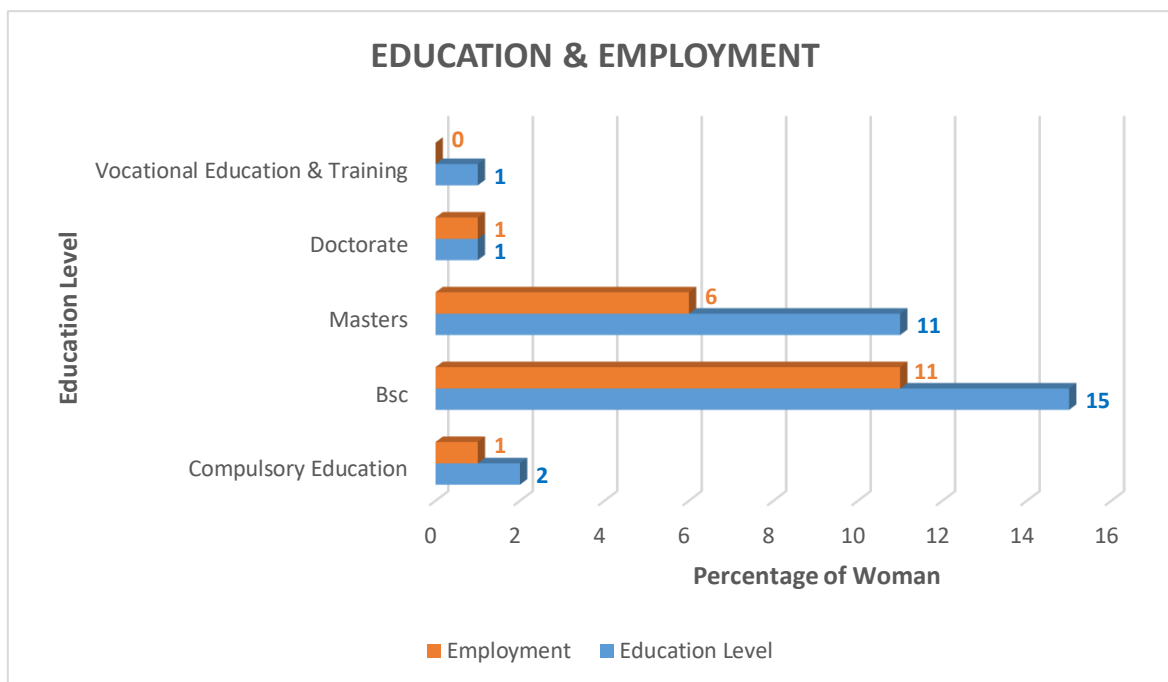


Figure 5. Employment rate and education level.

3.3.2.2 Changes in employment due to COVID-19

From the 19 women (63% of our reached target group) who are currently employed, 21% stated that their positions were indeed affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (shown in blue in the figure below), whereas 78% stated that they faced no significant changes. According to the responses, the most common change is the fact that people lost their jobs. The second most common change was the fact that remote work become available. However, the small sample size of the reached target group may also provide for somewhat biased data seeing as the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had in Cyprus for women’s employment between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the fourth quarter of 2020 reduced employment rate by 1.9% (shown in figure below in orange). The same affect for women in EU lead to a reduction of 0.9% (shown in grey).

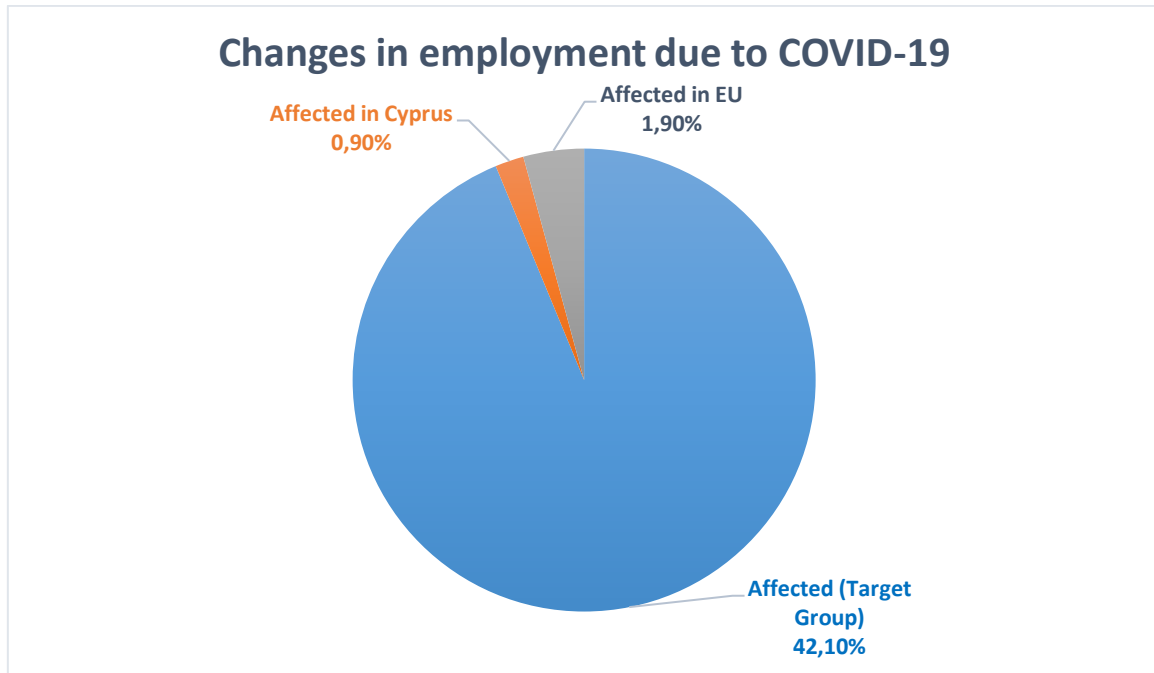


Figure 6. Changes in employment due to COVID-19 shown for our target group (in blue), for women in Cyprus for the year 2019-2020 (in orange) and shown for women in the EU for the year 2019-2020 (in grey).

3.3.2.3 Career changes

As can be seen in the figure below, 43% of the women who responded to the questionnaire were definite in their desire to start a new job and 37% would like to change their position and/or sector. 23% of women stated that they don't want to start a new job and 43% that they are satisfied with their position/sector and wouldn't want to change it. Some of the women surveyed (33%) were not sure whether or not they want to start a new job and 20% might want to change their position/sector.

In more detail, referring to the figure below, 23% of the women who responded wanted to start a new job at a new position/sector (light blue), 17% of the women responded that they wanted a new job but at the same position/sector (shown in orange), 3% stated that they want to start a new job, but were unsure if they wanted a different position/sector (shown in grey). There was a portion of women who stated that they don't want to change jobs (17%), 7% wanted to switch to a new position/sector but continue doing the same job (shown in dark blue).

20% of the women who responded were uncertain whether they would like to start a new job. Specifically, 7% of the women stated that they may want to start a new job at a different position/sector (shown in yellow), 10% of the women stated that they maybe want to start a new job but in the same position/sector (shown in mid-tone blue) and 17% of the women stated that they want to maybe start a new job and perhaps in a new position/sector (shown in green).

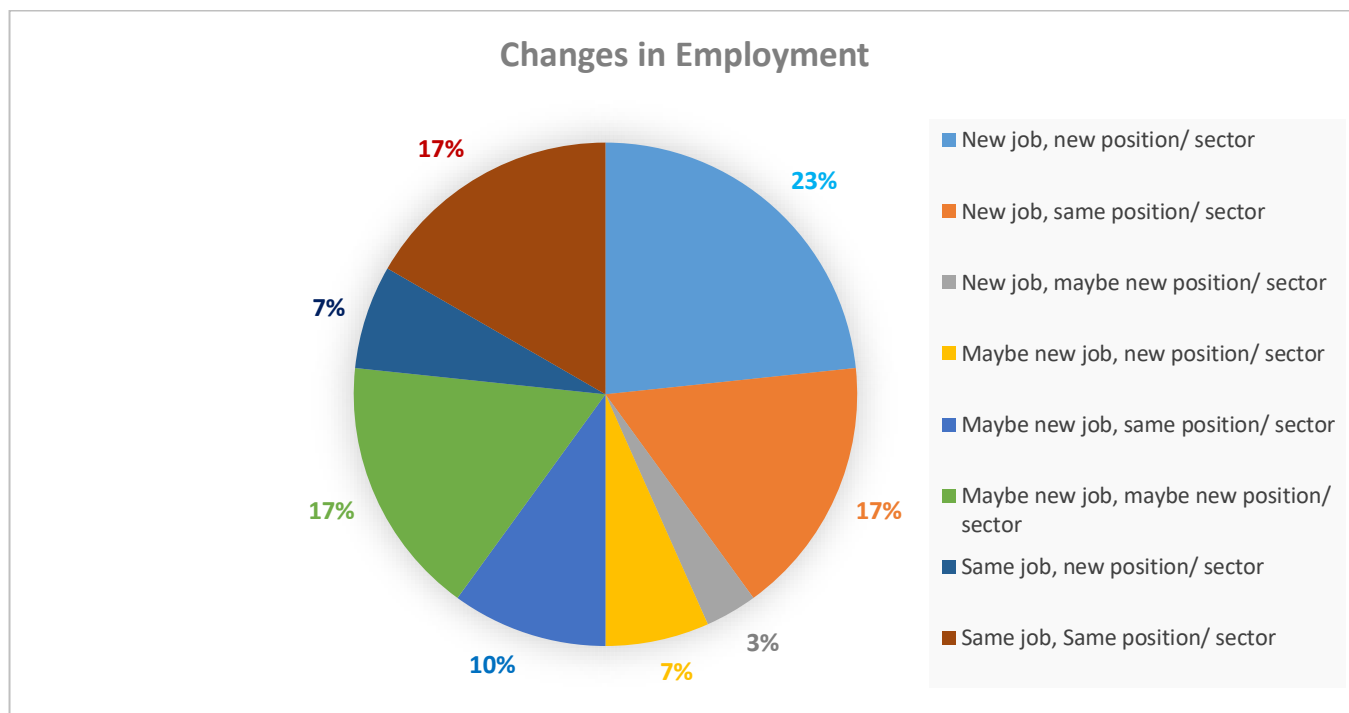


Figure 7. Percentage of women who want to make certain changes in their professional setting.

3.3.2.4 Educational courses

53% of the women who completed the questionnaire, stated that they have attended an education course in the past three years, whereas the other 47% stated they haven't. 63% of these courses were on digital related topics, such as IT skills, digital skills, web development or regarding digital tools in general. According to the responses collected, the most common barrier faced by the target group regarding educational courses is the cost of the courses (57%) followed by the lack of time they have to invest in such endeavour (47%). As can be seen from the figure below, the third most common barrier is the lack of information (30%), and lack of presence of women role models and success stories (27%).

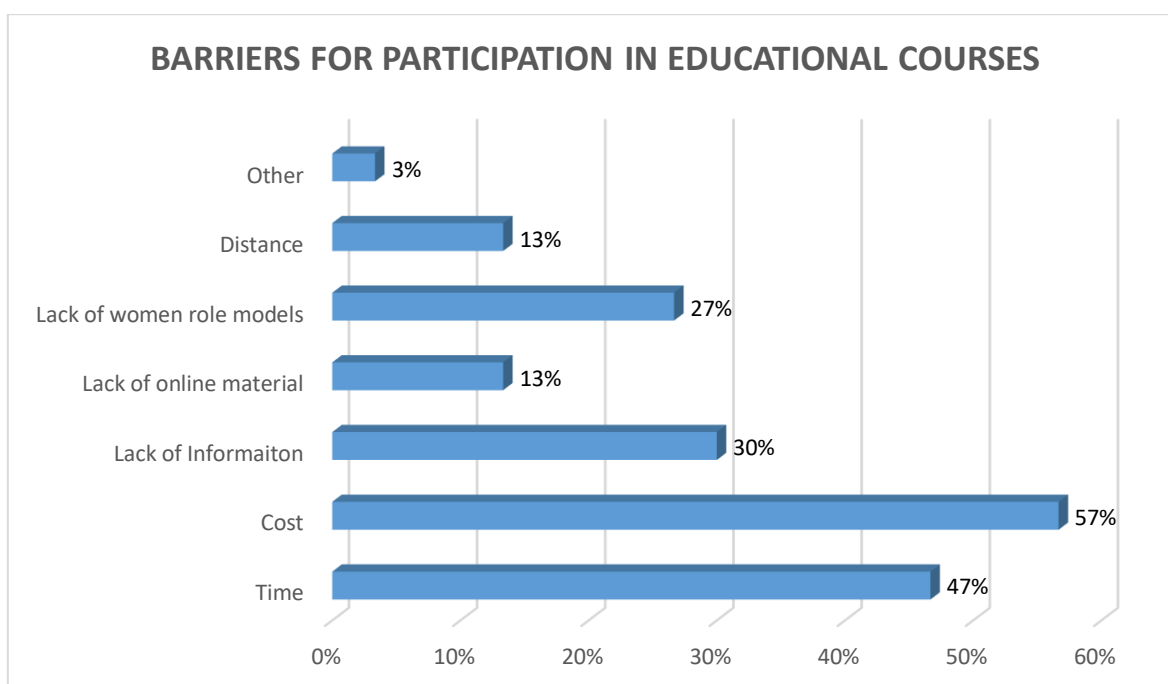


Figure 8. Barriers faced by our target group regarding the participation to educational courses.

63% of the women who completed the questionnaire stated that they face more than one barrier in their pursuit to attend or take part in educational courses/ programmes or training. The most common combinations, as can be seen in the figure below, are the cost of the courses and the lack of information (17%), as well as, the cost of the courses and the lack of time (17%). Other common combinations include the lack of time and the lack of presence of women role models and success stories (13%) and the cost of the courses and the lack of presence of women role models and success stories (21.4%).

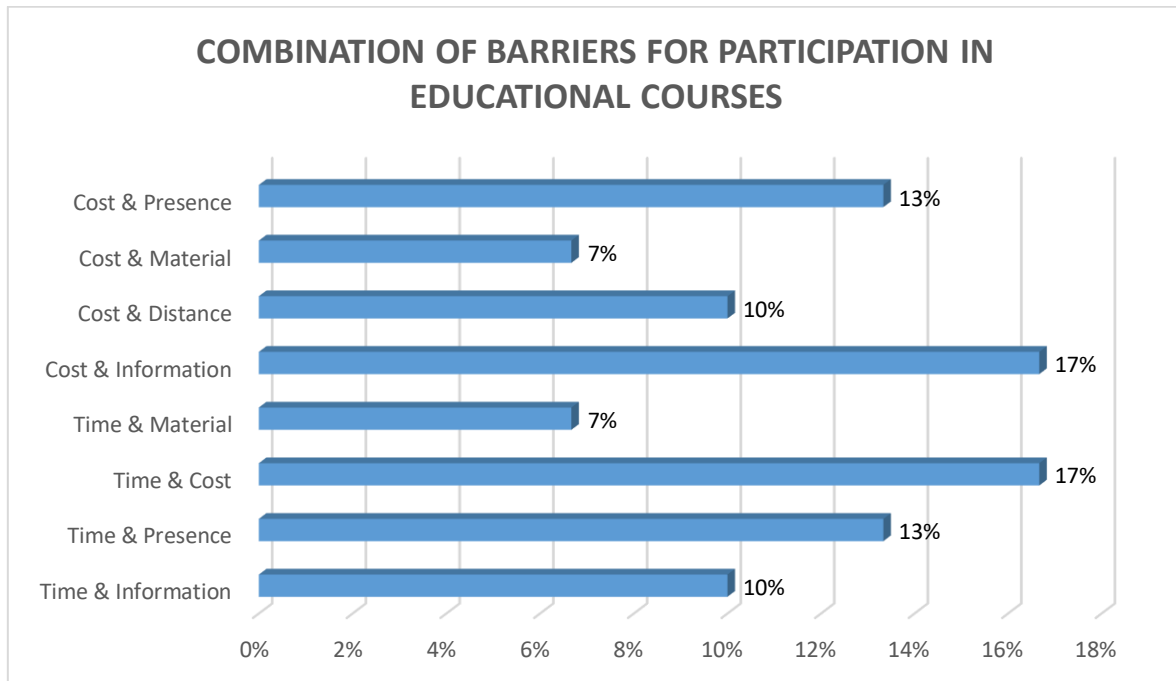


Figure 9. Combinations of barriers for participation in Educational Courses

3.3.3. Skills and competencies

In order to identify the areas that the target group lacks knowledge as well as to estimate their skill level in said fields, certain key areas of expertise were identified and the women from our target group were asked to state their skill level ranging from sufficient to very good. In particular, these areas can be seen in the table below. The table lists the skills of women from our target group in a descending order based on the 'not sufficient' classification. First on the list are the skills in which women appear to be lacking the most training/knowledge.

The ones that we identified as key areas that the target group has low skill level, listed by priority are:

1. **Use of Software for data analysis.** 47% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 23% stated that it is sufficient, 20% that it is good and 10% that it is very good.
2. **Use of Software for programming and creation of applications:** 40% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 27% stated that it is sufficient, 17% that it is good and 17% that it is very good.
3. **Best practices of remote working.** 30% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 23% stated that it is sufficient, 23% that it is good and 23% that it is very good.
4. **Design thinking.** 30% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 23% stated that it is sufficient, 30% that it is good and 17% that it is very good.
5. **Use of digital tools for financial management.** 23% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 37% stated that it is sufficient, 20% that it is good and 20% that it is very good.
6. **Marketing strategies.** 23% of the women who responded stated that their skill level in regard to this area is not sufficient, 17% stated that it is sufficient, 20% that it is good and 20% that it is very good.

Table 1. Skill level of the target group in certain fields. The table lists the skills of women from our target group in a descending order based on the 'not sufficient' classification. First on the list are the skills in which women appear to be lacking the most training/knowledge.

	1- not sufficient	2-sufficient	3- good	4- very good
Use of Software for data analysis	47%	23%	20%	10%
Use of Software for programming and creation of Applications	40%	27%	17%	17%
Design thinking	30%	23%	30%	17%
Best practices of remote working	30%	23%	23%	23%
Use of digital tools for financial management	23%	37%	27%	13%
Marketing strategies	23%	37%	20%	20%
Use of digital tools for time management	17%	27%	27%	30%
Use of LinkedIn/social media for job search	17%	30%	23%	30%
Use of PC, laptop, Pad, mobile device for completing tasks/ requests related to Public Administration	7%	23%	33%	37%
Principles of effective communication	7%	30%	30%	33%
Use of digital tools for remote working	3%	20%	33%	43%
Social media for business (Facebook - Instagram)	3%	30%	33%	33%
Use of PC, laptop, Pad, mobile device for searching information	0%	20%	20%	60%

Therefore, it is concluded that key training areas in which women from our target lack knowledge and require more training include digital skill (data analysis, digital tools) as well as other hard skills such as management and design thinking. These results give us an idea regarding the areas where the biggest gaps are present and therefore where our training programme should focus. This was further solidified, and a more holistic view was formed by the data collected from the next question regarding the preferences of the target group.

Additionally, we identified the skills that women from our target consider important. As can be seen from the table below, these skills are:

- 1) **Problem solving.** 60% of the women who responded consider this to be a very important topic.
- 2) **Self-confidence/personal empowerment** is an area that the target group would opt for training
- 3) **Entrepreneurship and creativity, Motivation, and CV building and job search.** 50% consider these three topics very important.
- 4) **Setting and Achieving goals.** 47% of the women who responded stated that these three topics are very important.
- 5) **Social media for business, Design thinking and Time Management.** 43% of the women who responded stated that these three topics are very important.

National Report- Cyprus

Table 2. Training topics that the target group considers important. The table lists the topics in a descending order based on the 'very important' classification. First on the list are the topics which women consider to be very important.

	1- not relevant	2-relevant	3- important	4- very important
Problem solving	7%	10%	23%	60%
Self confidence/ personal empowerment	7%	13%	27%	53%
Entrepreneurship and creativity	3%	13%	33%	50%
Motivation	7%	7%	37%	50%
CV building and job search	10%	10%	30%	50%
Setting and achieving goals	3%	20%	30%	47%
Social media for business	3%	17%	37%	43%
Design thinking	13%	20%	23%	43%
Time management	7%	10%	40%	43%
e-commerce	20%	20%	20%	40%
Making presentations	0%	23%	37%	40%
Balancing professional and personal life	3%	13%	43%	40%
Active listening, empathy and providing feedback	7%	17%	37%	40%
Marketing techniques	7%	23%	33%	37%
Digital tools for managing and completing tasks related to Public Administration	20%	17%	27%	37%
Financial management	20%	17%	33%	30%
Understand and interpret data	13%	23%	37%	27%
Remote working	17%	20%	43%	20%
Website development	27%	17%	37%	20%
Applications development	23%	43%	13%	20%

In concluding this section, we have now better insights of the areas that women lack training and should enhance their knowledge as well as the topics that are considered important to their development, thus they need to acquire the relevant skills. These will be our informant steppingstone for the next steps of the EMPOWERED project, when designing the training programme.

4. Part B: the point of view of the stakeholders

4.1. Methodological framework and objective

In order to collect insights and information from the relevant stakeholders also regarding the perceived limitations women face in regard to their work as well as their access to employment, a similar approach as above was followed. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to identified relevant stakeholders. Discussions between the stakeholders, the responses we collected from the questionnaires as well as desk research performed regarding the actions at policy level and programme level (national and EU) allowed us to collect the corresponding data in order to form an overview of the situation. In particular, first we contact and engage the relevant stakeholders in order to establish a focus group and subsequently we distributed the survey and collected the corresponding feedback.

4.2. Reaching out and engaging the stakeholders

In a similar manner we contacted the target, we also reached out and engaged the relevant stakeholders. Some of which we had previous collaborations with and therefore knew the work they carry out as well as their reach. We also identified some additional stakeholders, part of a broader network in order to gain a solid and comprehensive insight on women employment. As it will become evident from the feedback collected, the majority of the stakeholders were quite consistent of their insights. The majority of the stakeholders provided insight regarding women who were looking for a new job as well as relevant coaching/training.

4.3. Proceedings of the focus group and feedback collected

4.3.1. Understanding the low participation of women in the labour market.

As it will also be shown below, there are several interventions at policy and institutional level and overall support provided by the government as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) and also provided at programmes level to women in Cyprus. However, the insight provided by the stakeholders and the extensive desk research performed from our side show that there are major steps to be done in terms of gender equality in employment. The key areas, identified from the focus group as well as from the responses collected from the stakeholders' survey that appear lacking in terms of policies and laws established to support women employment and gender gap, are: 1. Parental leave policies and related issues such as childcare, 2. Gender pay gap.

4.3.1.1 Maternal leave policies and childcare.

Regarding the parental leave policies, the overall impression is multifaceted. In particular, the conclusion drawn is that better parental policies have to be reinforced that will also incorporate solutions for issues such as better childcare infrastructures. This particular issue is of great significance particularly for our target group (long-term unemployed and divorced women) seeing as on many occasions they face difficulties in getting a new job due to childcare issues. Many women don't have a relative to take care of their child(ren) or they have a weak socioeconomic background that allows them to hire a caregiver for their child, therefore they can't start a new job (especially full-time) seeing as they are required to spend their days at home taking care of the child(ren) (especially if they are at a young age). Thus, better childcare infrastructures at the workplace would provide an anchor of necessary help for women to get back to work after having a baby or start a new position while also taking care of their child(ren).

These insights collected from the focus group as well as the survey responses are also aligned by the laws/policies currently implement in Cyprus regarding this topic but also from relevant statistics from previous years. In this framework, the "Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure Principal" Law was in place from 2002 until 2012 when it was abolished. Even though this law didn't focus on maternal leave, it recognized the fact that parents may be required to be absent from work in order to take care and participating in the raising of their child(ren)². It is also worth mentioning that this was unpaid leave. What is currently being reinforced is an amendment to Cyprus law n° 100(I)/1997 "The Maternity Protection Law"³. According to this amendment maternity leave is extended from 18 weeks to 22 weeks for the second child and to 26 weeks for the third child and any subsequent children. The protection offered

² http://cyllaw.org/nomoi/arith/2012_1_047.pdf

³ http://cyllaw.org/nomoi/arith/1997_1_100.pdf

National Report- Cyprus

by this law includes dismissal and discrimination. Among these lines a Technical Committee under the Labour Advisory Board has also been established to resolve this issue and offer support.⁴

The following graph shows that parenthood has a greater impact on women's employment rates compared to male rates in both Cyprus and the EU.

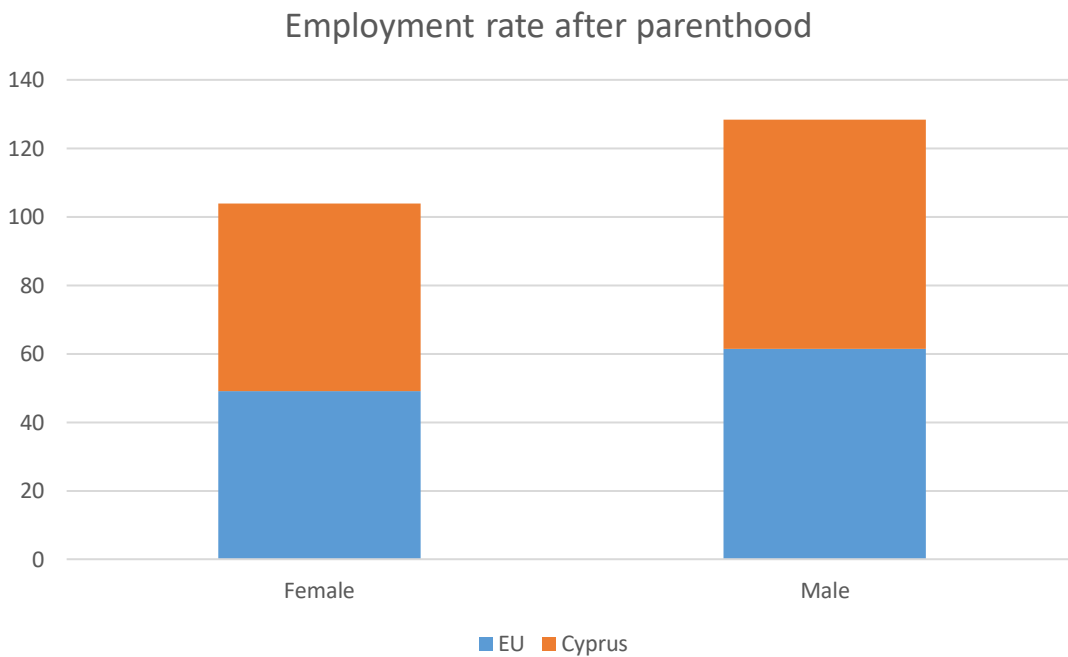
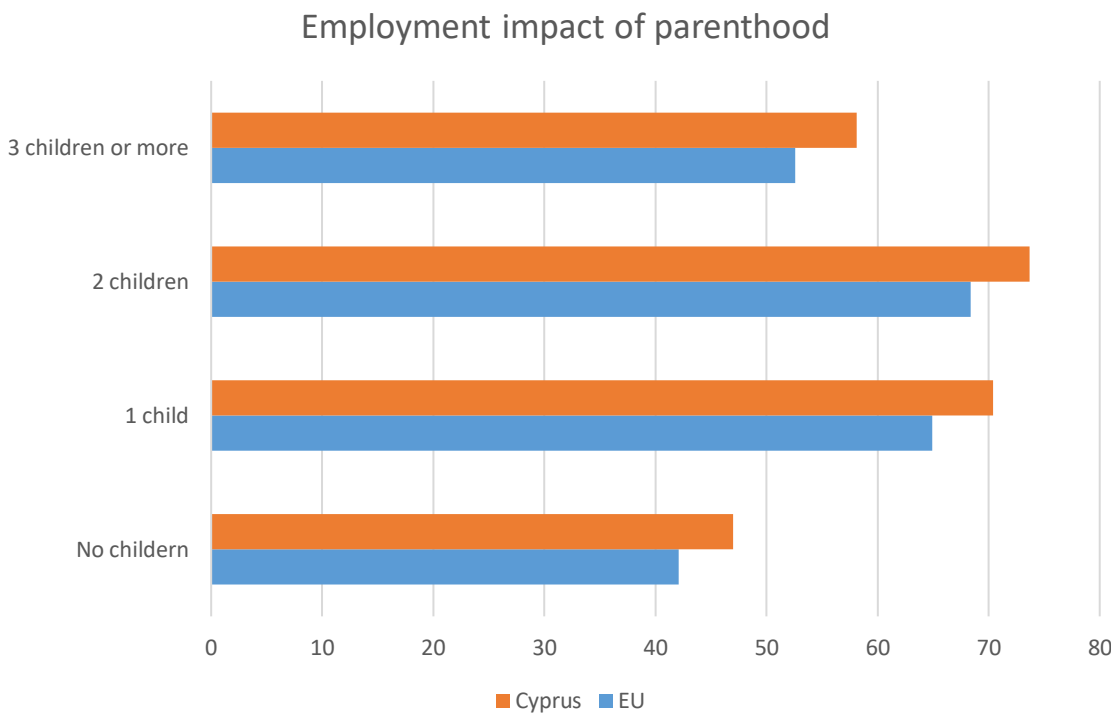


Figure 10. Employment rate after parenthood in women and men over 18 years old in EU and in Cyprus. Data from 2020.⁵

More in particular, according to the following graph we can see that women's employment rates increase after the have 1 or 2 children but decreases after having a third child. This may be the case seeing as having three or more children raised the difficulties both regarding the high out-of-pocket costs but also regarding lack of childcare infrastructures. Therefore, as is more common, women assume care responsibilities for the children.



⁴ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFST_HHEREDCH__custom_2653507/default/table?lang=en
PROJECT NUMBER – 2021-1-R001-KA220-ADU-000026741

"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein." Page 16

Figure 11. Employment impact of parenthood in women over 18 years old in EU and in Cyprus. Data from 2020. Note that the age of the children ranges from less than 6 to over 12 years old.⁶

4.3.1.2 Gender pay gap

Another significant issue regarding women's employment which will also become evident from the statistical data provided in Part C of this report is the gender pay gap. According to the relevant stakeholders, equal pay still remains an unresolved issue for women. Because of its significance the opinions were torn about the required future actions. Some believed that resolving and striving for overcoming inequality in the workplace would simultaneously resolve the pay gap. On the other hand, due to the significance of this issue, many stakeholders believe that it should be individually addressed by a consortium of people including policymakers, employers, and employees. Great emphasis was given to employers seeing as regardless of the current policies and laws at place they can always make the decision to pay their staff in an equal manner regardless of gender or any other gender-related bias.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFST_HHEREDCH__custom_2653507/default/table?lang=en
PROJECT NUMBER – 2021-1-R001-KA220-ADU-000026741

5. Part C: Analysis of interventions at policy and institutional level

5.1. Statistical data on women employment

5.1.1. (Un)employment rate

Statistics from 2020 show that in Cyprus, the unemployment rate for women (aged 15 to 74 years old) was 7.6%, which was also the same for men⁷. During the same time, the unemployment rate for women in the EU was 7.4% (vs. 6.8% for men)⁸. For the same year, in Cyprus the employment rate of women aged 20-64 was 69.1% (vs. 82.2 % for men) when in EU the employment rate for women the same age was 67.7% (vs. 78.5% for men). The gender employment gap, the difference between the employment rates of men and women aged 20-64, in Cyprus for 2020 was 12% (11.1% for EU)⁹. The full-time equivalent employment rate, a unit used to measure employed persons in a way that makes them comparable even though they might work different number of hours per week, for single women in Cyprus is 33.7% (in EU it is 30.5%) compared to the FTE rate of single men that is 59.2% (in EU it's 53.2%) (these data are from 2020)¹⁰. The same rate for the same year, concerning lone parents is 64.1% for women in Cyprus (60.7% in EU) compared to the 50.4% for men in Cyprus (74% in EU).

The long-term unemployment rate for women aged 17 to 74 years old for the same year was 2% (2.6% for EU)¹¹. Interestingly, as can be seen in the figure below, statistics show a surge in the long-term unemployment rate of women aged 15-74 from 2012 which started to decline after 2014.

Long-term unemployment rate (Women)

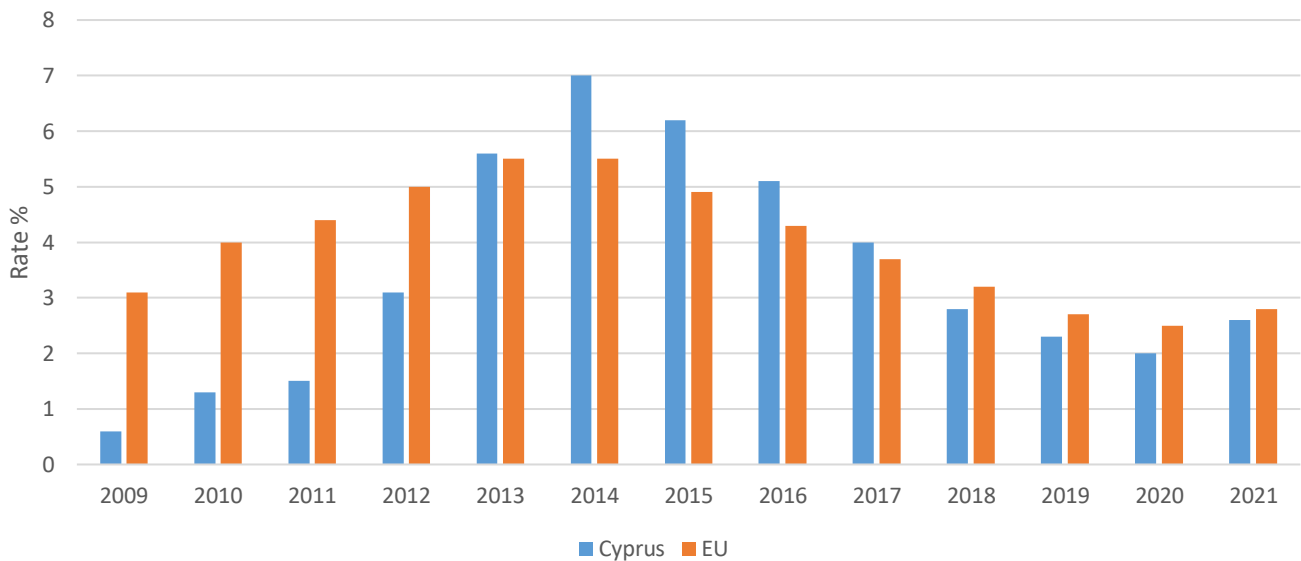


Figure 12. Long-term unemployment rate (Women aged 15-74, Cyprus & EU, data from 2009-2021).¹²

5.1.2. Gender pay gap

As it will be shown below, Cyprus has a variety of legislative measures in place to protect against gender discrimination in regard to access to the labour market. It is also worth mentioning that the gender pay gap in Cyprus stands at 9% (data from 2020), when the average gender pay gap in the EU is 13%¹³. A legislative measure on equal pay has been in place from 2002 (Law n° 177(I)/2002). Even though the gender pay gap maintained a fairly stable rate (average of 5.5%)

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSA_URGAN__custom_2578590/default/table?lang=en

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSA_URGAN__custom_2578590/default/table?lang=en

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tesem060/default/table?lang=en>

¹⁰ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/domain/intersecting-inequalities/CY>

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tesem130/default/table?lang=en>

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tesem130/default/table?lang=en>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_05_20/default/table?lang=en

throughout the years 2010-2020 and taking into consideration that it is almost three times less than the average rate of EU (15%) it still leaves room for improvement (see figure below).

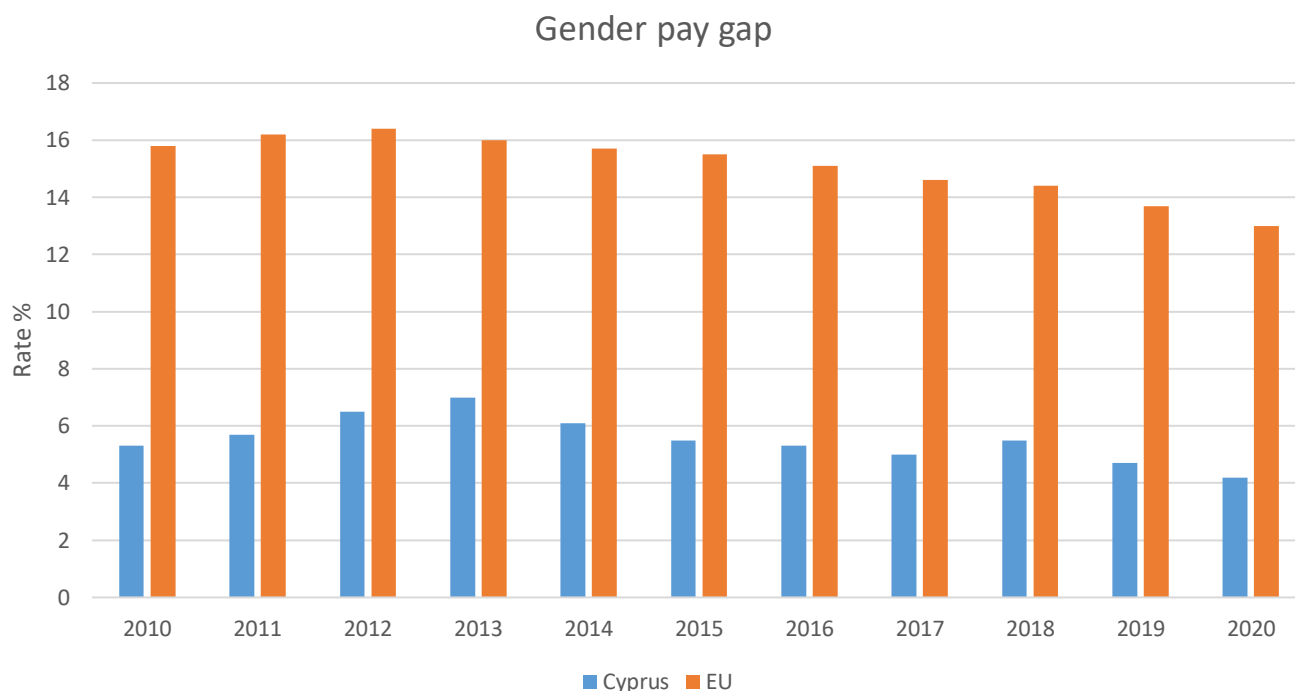


Figure 13. Gender pay gap (Cyprus & EU, data from 2010-2020).¹⁴

Data from 2018, showed that the gender overall earnings gap in Cyprus is 25.2%. The gender overall earnings gap is a synthetic indicator that measures the impact of:

- 1) the average hourly earnings,
 1. the monthly average of the number of hours paid (before any adjustment for part-time work) and
 2. the employment rate, on the average earnings of all women of working age - whether employed or not employed - compared to men.

The average overall earnings gap in the EU for the same year was 36.2%¹⁵. Interestingly, the figure below shows a decrease in the gap for Cyprus between 2010 and 2018 by 8.5%, whereas a 3.3% increase occurred in the EU.

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_05_20/default/table?lang=en

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/TEQGES01/default/table?lang=en&category=labour.employ.lfsi.lfsi_emp
PROJECT NUMBER - 2021-1-R001-KA220-ADU-000026741

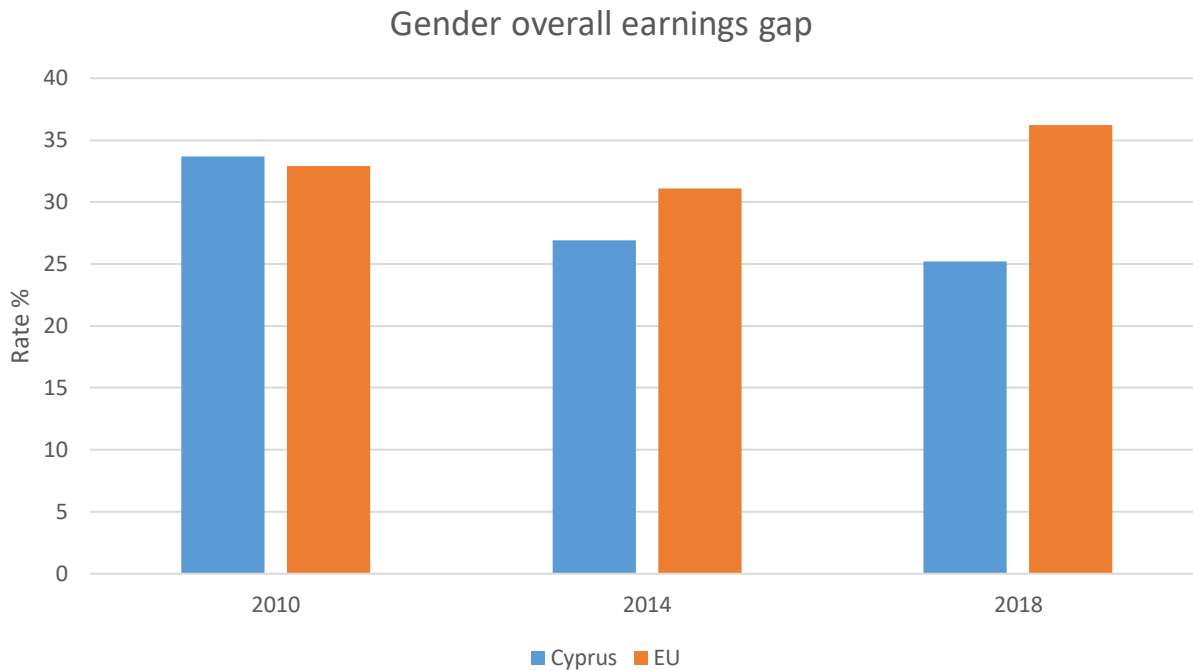


Figure 14. Gender overall earnings gap (Cyprus & EU).¹⁶

5.1.3. Gender equality index

Another interesting indicator to note is the gender equality index. In 2020, Cyprus ranked 21st in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Cyprus scored 56.9 points out of 100 (EU scored 67.4 points). Cyprus showed a continuous increase in this score since 2010. The score has increased by 7.9 points from 2010 to 2020, improving its rank by six places¹⁷. Gender inequalities appeared to be more prominent in the domain of power, where Cyprus scored 29.8 points¹⁸. The domain of power measures gender equality in decision-making positions across the political, economic and social spheres. This is also evident from the fact that in the national parliament only 22% of decision-makers are women¹⁹.

5.2. Support provided at government level

Although the Cypriot Constitution enforced the equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination, direct or indirect, on the ground of gender (article 28 of the Cypriot Constitution of 1960)²⁰, more precise and active steps towards gender equality were taken in later years. More precisely, a significant number of legislative measures regarding gender equality have been passed in the last decade. These measures focused among others on equal pay, maternity protection, prohibition of discrimination and equal treatment in the workplace. EU directives as well as other international legislative measures have influenced the gender equality measures of Cyprus. Such directives include European Directives 76/207/EEC, 2002/73/EC and 2006/54/EC. These directives focus on equal treatment regarding access to employment, vocational training and promotion as well as general working conditions.²¹

Additionally, a number of National Action Plans have been developed over the years to address gender inequality. Cyprus developed its National Action Plan on Gender Equality²² which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29.8.2007 and covered the period of 2007-2013. This plan was formulated on the basis of international conventions and recommendations from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Concluding Comments to the Cyprus Report to the CEDAW Committee in 2006, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), as well as EU policy frameworks such as the Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women and several EU Directives

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/TEQGES01/default/table?lang=en&category=labour.employ.lfsi.lfsi_emp

¹⁷ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/country/CY>

¹⁸ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/domain/power/CY>

¹⁹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/game/CY/W>

²⁰ <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/syntagma.pdf>

²¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/resources/cyprus/ekthesi-gia-tin-efarmogi-tis-eyropaikis-odigias-76-207-ee-2002-73-ee-kai-2006-54-ek-anaforika-me-tin-isi-amoivi-andron>

²² <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

which are mentioned above. According to this plan, there are a variety of action in support of gender equality specifically in the workplace and in employment areas. In particular, these actions are:

1. Under the thematic unit of women and economy: promoting equal pay between men and women, which as can be seen from the laws listed below, is a principle that has been in place since 2002 (Law n° 177(I)/2002)
2. Promote equal opportunities in terms of education. This action is supported by the Law n° 205(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment Laws for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education”. A gender equality committee was established that was responsible for monitoring and implementing this law.
3. Maternity protection. The Maternity protection law was first introduced in 1997 (Law n° 100(I)/1997) and has since faced many amendments.

In a similar framework, next came the Strategic Action Plan for Equality for the period 2014-2017. In the context of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2014-2017, a committee was set up consisting of its representatives Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, Ministry of Justice and Public Affairs Order, of the Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Occupation Education, of the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration and of the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, where after a series meetings the Commission decided to proceed with the issuance of its Accession Guide Gender dimension in the public policies of the State.²³

A new National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women was established for the period 2019-2023. This action plan was prepared in close cooperation with all the responsible government departments, women's organizations and other NGOs, academic institutions, the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, National Mechanism for Rights as well as various human rights organizations. This was formulated on the basis of international conventions and recommendations, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Final Comments in its Report Cyprus to the CEDAW Commission in 2013 (2010-2015), the development strategy of the European Union "Europe 2020" and the European Pact for Equality Gender 2011-2015, as well as EU legislation and policies, in particular of the European Strategy for Equality between Men and Women (2010-2015) 2020.²⁴

Although the active promotion and support of gender equality still remains frail, there is a variety of laws implemented in Cyprus that aim at the support of women in the work environment. These laws also focus on enhancing and maintaining equality in term of employment. In particular, such laws include:

1. Law n° 100(I)/1997 “The Maternity Protection Law”. This law that has been consistently updated from 1997 until 2019, has been harmonized with Directive 92/85/EEC (European Economic Community-EEC) and deals directly and specifically with the protection of pregnant women in the work environment.²⁵
2. Law n° 1(III)/2002 “Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women”.²⁶
3. Law n° 133(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Professional Social Plans Insurance Law”.²⁷
4. Law n° 177(I)/2002 “Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work to which Equal Value is attributed”. This law advocates for equal pay between men and women for the same job position. A committee is established to ensure this law is reinforced²⁸. This law was amended in 2004 (Law n° 193(I)/2004) enabling the Commissioner of Administration (Ombudsman) to independently examine complaints regarding equal pay between men and women²⁹.
5. Law n° 205(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment Laws for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education”³⁰. Specifically, this law advocates for equality among men and women regarding:
 - a. employment opportunities and marital status

²³ <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/cyprus-nap/#:~:text=Cyprus%20adopted%20its%20first%20National,coordination%20with%20other%20relevant%20Ministries.>

²⁴ <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/cyprus-nap/#:~:text=Cyprus%20adopted%20its%20first%20National,coordination%20with%20other%20relevant%20Ministries.>

²⁵ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/1997_1_100.pdf

²⁶ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_3_001.pdf

²⁷ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_133.pdf

²⁸ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_177.pdf

²⁹ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2004_1_193.pdf

³⁰ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_205.pdf

National Report- Cyprus

- b. employment opportunities and pregnancy, lactation, maternity
 - c. regulations that limit women based on their gender
 - d. vocational education regardless of gender
6. Law n° 58(I)/2004 “The Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Law”. This law falls within the competence of the Department of Labor of Cyprus and is fully harmonized with Directives 2000/78/EC (European Commission-EC) and 2000/43/EC. It provides a general framework for dealing with discrimination in order to implement the principle of equal treatment.³¹
 7. Law n° 18(I)/2008 “Law providing for the application of equal treatment of men and women in access to goods and services as well as their provision”. This law aims at equal treatment of men and women in professional social security plans as well as at prohibiting direct discrimination on grounds of sex.³²

Other efforts initiated by the government or actions that governmental bodies are involved in regarding the women in the labour market include:

- 1) A subsidy scheme for attracting people in the labour market through flexible forms of employment. The aim is to facilitate women to (re) enter the labour market. The relevant stakeholders involved in this scheme include: the government both central and regional, employer federations, trade unions, the chambers of commerce and industry other social partners.³³
- 2) The project “Actions for reducing the gender pay gap”. The Department of Labour Relations implemented this project that started in July 2010 and was concluded in December of 2015. As the name suggests, this project aimed at reducing the gender pay gap by among other offering relevant training to the associated stakeholders and also by raising awareness regarding this issue.³⁴
- 3) The Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Education (EIF), which was established and operates on the basis of Articles 22 and 23 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education Laws of 2002-2014 (Law n° 205(I)/2002).³⁵
- 4) The Committee for Equal Opportunities which is responsible for monitoring the governmental policies and actions on the issue of equal opportunities.³⁶
- 5) A Technical Committee under the Labour Advisory Board that aims to balance professional and family life, to improve of childcare facilities as well as parental leave legislation.³⁷
- 6) Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality.³⁸ The main responsibilities of the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, among others are:
 - a) the promotion of equality between men and women
 - b) the elimination of discrimination against women,
 - c) the monitoring and coordination of the work carried out by the National Mechanism for Women's Rights, the monitoring
 - d) the implementation of policies and measures that promote gender equality
 - e) the submission of proposals / suggestions for its legislative enactment
 - f) the equality and the elimination of legislative discrimination,
 - g) the organization of seminars
 - h) the training programs on equality between men and women,
 - i) the organization of raising awareness campaigns to inform the public and women in particular in regard to their rights etc.
- 7) National Mechanism for Women's Rights. This mechanism the National Mechanism for Women's Rights was set up by the Council of Ministers as a continuation of the Permanent Central Office for Rights of Women (founded in 1988). It deals with all issues related to women's rights, focusing on the elimination of legal discrimination against women and the promotion of effective equality between men and women.³⁹

³¹ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2004_1_058.pdf

³² http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2008_1_018.pdf

³³ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/matching-skills/all-instruments/subsidy-scheme-attracting-people-labour-market-through-flexible-forms-employment>

³⁴ http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dlr/dlr.nsf/reductionofwage_en/reductionofwage_en?OpenDocument

³⁵ http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/home_en/home_en?opendocument

³⁶ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

³⁷ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

³⁸ http://www.mjpo.gov.cy/mjpo/mjpo.nsf/sectorgend02_el/sectorgend02_el?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1

³⁹ http://www.mjpo.gov.cy/mjpo/mjpo.nsf/sectorgend02_el/sectorgend02_el?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1

As it was previously mentioned, in terms of childcare infrastructures and the impact of parenthood to women employment, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works recognised that women are often responsible for their children’s transportation to and from school. Therefore, they launched a programme for the enhancement of public transport in Cyprus⁴⁰.

5.3.Support provided at Programmes level

At a programmes level, there is a variety of national and EU programmes that support women in their work endeavors and business implementation. In particular during the previous years, the following programmes were designed with the aforementioned aims in mind:

1. The Women Entrepreneurship Support Plan. This project was included in the Operational Program 2014-2020 "Competitiveness & Sustainable Development" and was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the EU. (ETPA) and the Republic of Cyprus for the period 2014 - 2020. This project aimed to develop, support and promote the entrepreneurship of women (aged 18 to 55) who wished to venture into any given business in the framework of the project. Special emphasis was given to the utilization of new technologies, the use of innovative methods of production and promotion of products and services, the development of entrepreneurship in the field of environment and in general the promotion of modern business activities aimed at creating new viable, dynamic, evolving, and competitive small and medium enterprises.⁴¹
2. The EQUAL Community Initiative. This project was co-funded by the EU Member States within the 2000-2006 programming period and aimed at promoting gender equality and increasing employability.⁴²
3. "Young Female Entrepreneurial Program" is a Strategic Partnership project that aims to offer support and training to women with a weak socioeconomic background. This project lasted from 2019-2021.⁴³

Other programmes include:

1. Developing Equality Allies: An Innovative Workplace Inclusion Programme. This programme aims to raise awareness among senior-level managers of organisations in Cyprus regarding the challenges faced by women in their careers, to train them on key skills on how to become active allies for these groups and to facilitate the development of ally actions within their organisations. ⁴⁴
2. EQUAL Project "Kanalía Prosvásis" (Access Channels) that focused on flexible working arrangements and female employment in Cyprus. ⁴⁵
3. The "Scheme for the Enhancement of Women’s Entrepreneurship" introduced by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism that aimed to support and encourage entrepreneurship by women between the ages of 18 – 55. ⁴⁶

5.4.Support provided by CSOs

The insight gained from the focus group as well as from the stakeholders’ survey was that civil society organisations don’t have enough budget to support women employment. According to the stakeholders, CSOs are ready and willing to help women in the process of employment through active efforts. Therefore, certain actions are being implemented in this regard.

Support provided by CSOs includes:

⁴⁰ <https://www.publictransport.com.cy/cms/page/get-prepared-for-school>

⁴¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/el/projects/Cyprus/female-entrepreneurs-driving-dynamic-new-firms

⁴² https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/about.html

⁴³ <https://female-business.eu/>

⁴⁴ <https://ucy.ac.cy/allies/en/>

⁴⁵ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/resources/cyprus/eyeliktēs-methodoi-apasholisis-kai-gynaikeia-apasholisi-stin-kypriaki-agera-ergasias>

⁴⁶ <http://www.meci.gov.cy/meci/sit/sit.nsf/32177ee11d0d6003c225816f001d4b05/cebd93d3c6ea2470c22581f300442024?OpenDocument?OpenElement>

National Report- Cyprus

- 1) The Observatory for the Implementation of Gender Equality Legislation in the Collective Agreements, Women's Bureau, Pancyprian Federation of Labour-PEO.^{47,48}
- 2) The Cyprus Productivity Centre also provided support to women by implementing a pilot project co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Cyprus Government.⁴⁹

6. Conclusions

The desk research performed in the framework of this report shows that even though Cyprus is far ahead from other EU countries in regard to gender equality in women employment, there are still many issues to resolve and a plethora of actions to implement. This holds true for interventions at governmental and intuitional/policy level but also in the workforce ideals overall. With this report we managed to identify the areas that our specific target group (long-term unemployed and divorced women in Cyprus) lack knowledge and expertise, the barriers they face when trying to evolve and enhance their knowledge by attending a variety of training programmes and/or educational courses as well as the fields of expertise that are considered important to them. The aforementioned data we received from the questionnaire distributed helped us concluded that the training programme to be designed in the framework of the EMPOWERED project should include material regarding digital tools and data analysis as well as broad hard skills such as financial management and design thinking. The potential topics to be included in the training programme include:

1. The use of Software for programming and creation of Applications,
2. Use of Software for data analysis,
3. Best practices of remote working,
4. Use of digital tools for financial management,
5. Design thinking,
6. Marketing strategies,
7. Problem solving,
8. Motivation,
9. CV building and job search,
10. Making presentations,
11. Entrepreneurship and creativity,
12. Self-confidence/ personal empowerment,
13. Social media for business,
14. e-commerce,
15. Design thinking,
16. Setting and achieving goals.

The focus group in addition to the data from the stakeholders' survey provided helpful insights in understanding the low participation of women in the labour market with the two most significant ones being: 1. the impact of caring responsibilities and 2. financial disincentives. Overall, there are some policies currently implemented in Cyprus that support women employment but not many that actively strive for achieving equal representation, treatment and pay. These actions/policies/laws are summarised in the table below.

⁴⁷ <https://www.peo.org.cy/el/>

⁴⁸ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/structures/cyprus/pancyprian-federation-labor-peo>

⁴⁹ http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/kepa/kepa_new.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument

PROJECT NUMBER – 2021-1-R001-KA220-ADU-000026741

"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

	Laws	Actions/Programmes	Committees	Centers/Initiatives
Women employment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women Entrepreneurship Support Plan • Young Female Entrepreneurial Program • The “Scheme for the Enhancement of Women’s Entrepreneurship” 		The Cyprus Productivity Centre
Gender pay gap	Law n° 177(I)/2002 “Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work to which Equal Value is attributed”	Project “Actions for reducing the gender pay gap”		
Gender gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law n° 1(III)/2002 “Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women” • Law n° 133(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Professional Social Plans Insurance Law” • Law n° 205(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment Laws for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education” • Law n° 58(I)/2004 “The Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Law” • Law n° 18(I)/2008 “Law providing for the application of equal treatment of men and women in access to goods and services as well as their provision” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQUAL Project “Kanalia Prosvasis” (Access Channels) that focused on flexible working arrangements and female employment in Cyprus • Developing Equality Allies: An Innovative Workplace Inclusion Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Education (EIF) • The Committee for Equal Opportunities which is responsible for monitoring the governmental policies and actions on the issue of equal opportunities. • A Technical Committee under the Labour Advisory Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EQUAL Community Initiative • The Observatory for the Implementation of Gender Equality Legislation • Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality • National Mechanism for Women's Rights
Maternal leave/ childcare	Law n° 100(I)/1997 “The Maternity Protection Law”			



The EMPOWERED consortium:

