

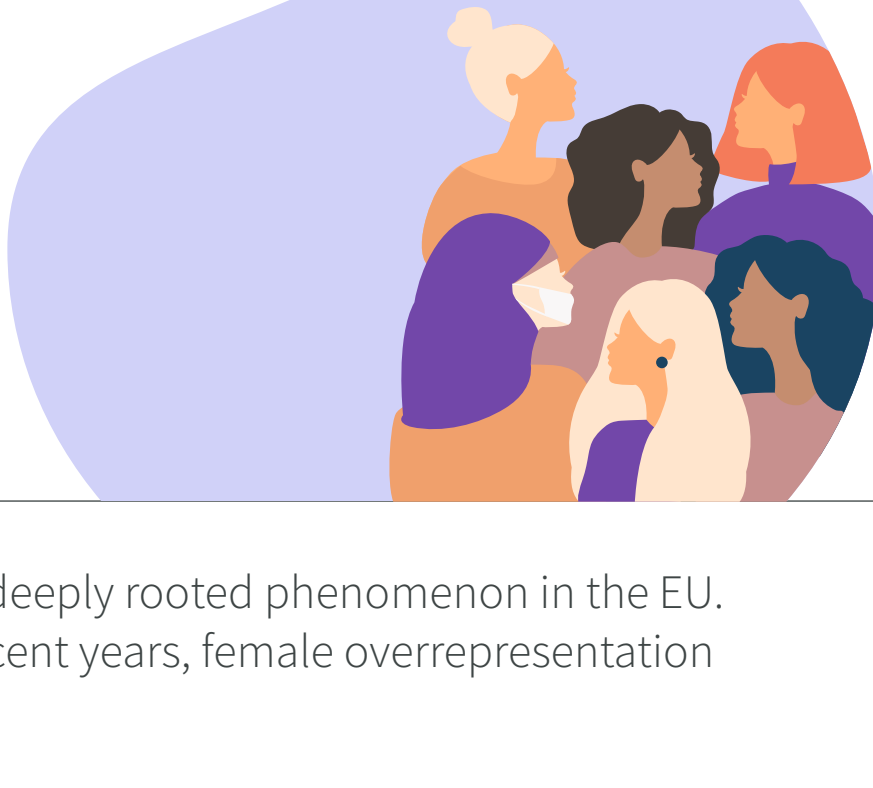
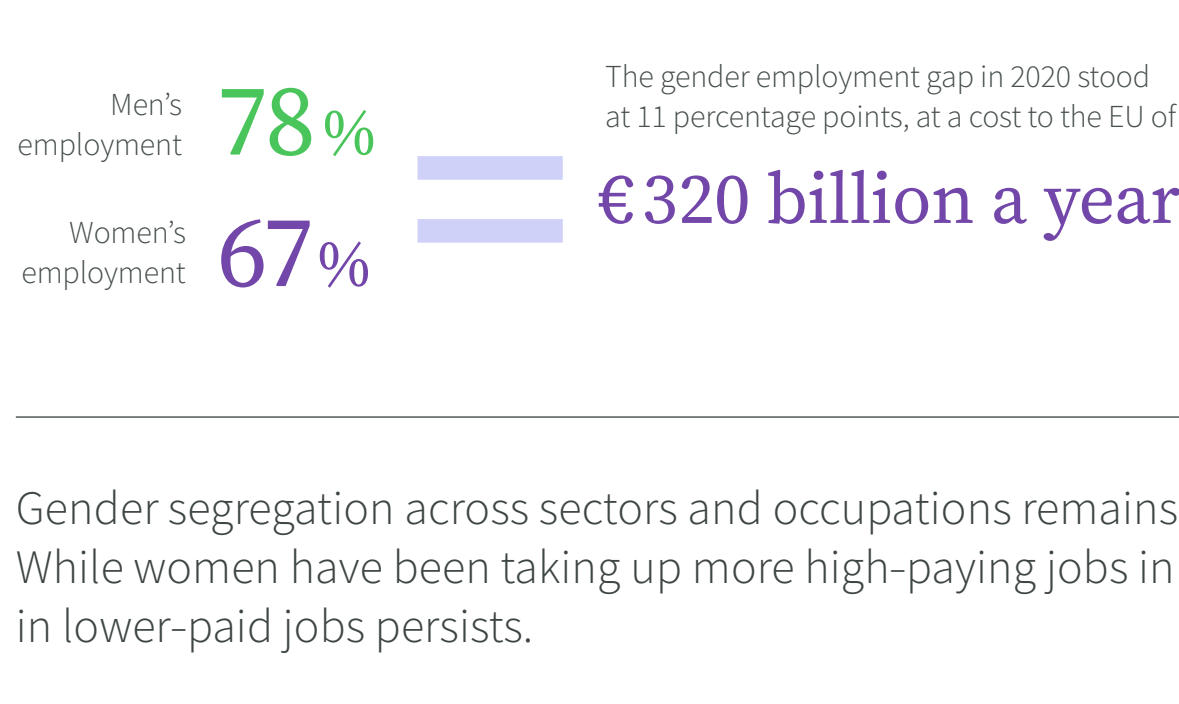
# Gender equality in the EU

Gender equality is a fundamental right for EU citizens and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## Employment and gender

Two out of three net new jobs in the EU over the last two decades have been taken up by women. While the gender employment gap has narrowed in recent decades, women continue to participate less than men in the labour market.

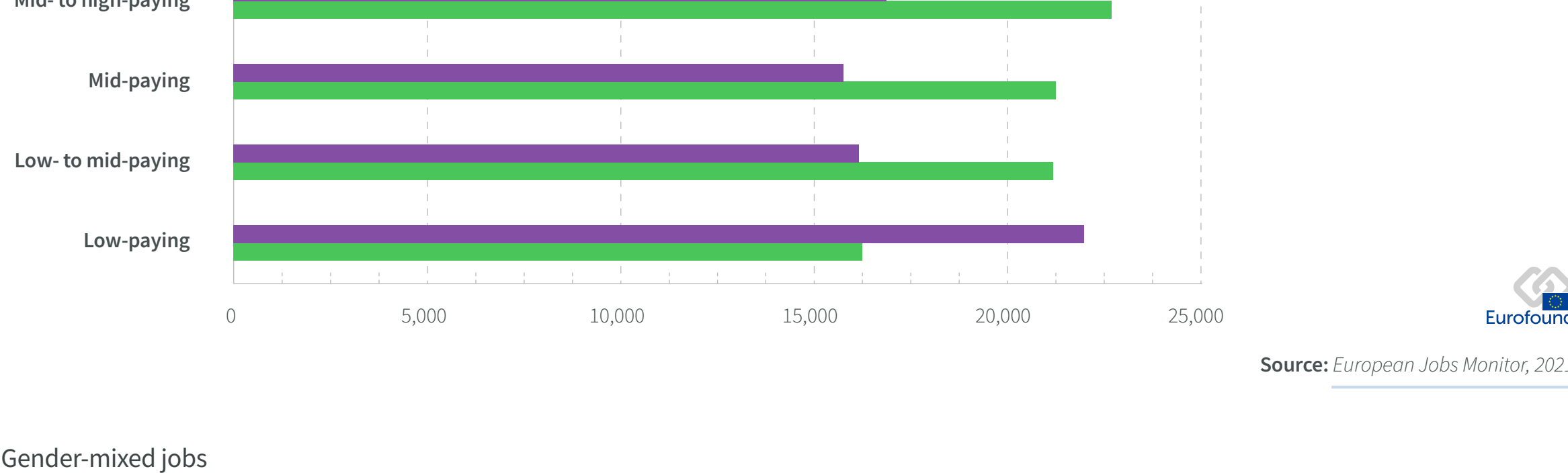
The gender employment gap measures the difference between the employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64.



Source: Eurostat

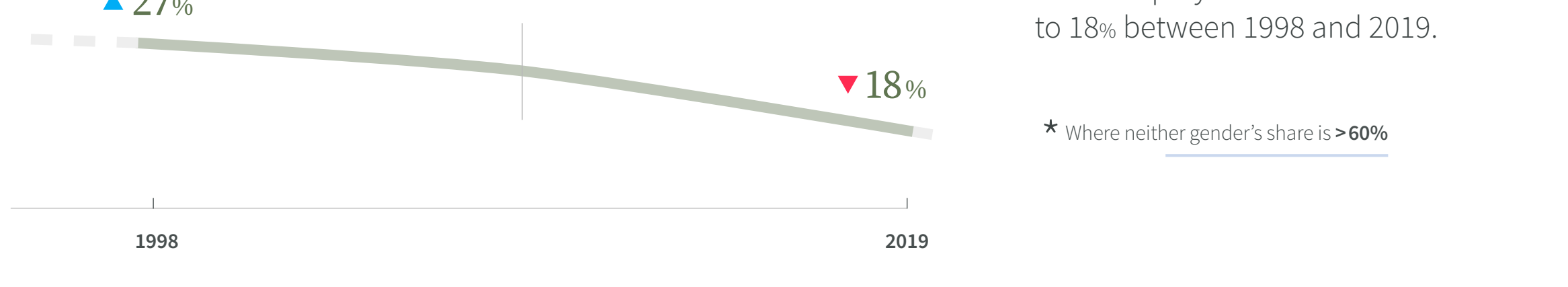
Gender segregation across sectors and occupations remains a deeply rooted phenomenon in the EU. While women have been taking up more high-paying jobs in recent years, female overrepresentation in lower-paid jobs persists.

Employment distribution in the EU27 by gender and job-wage quintile 2019 (thousands)

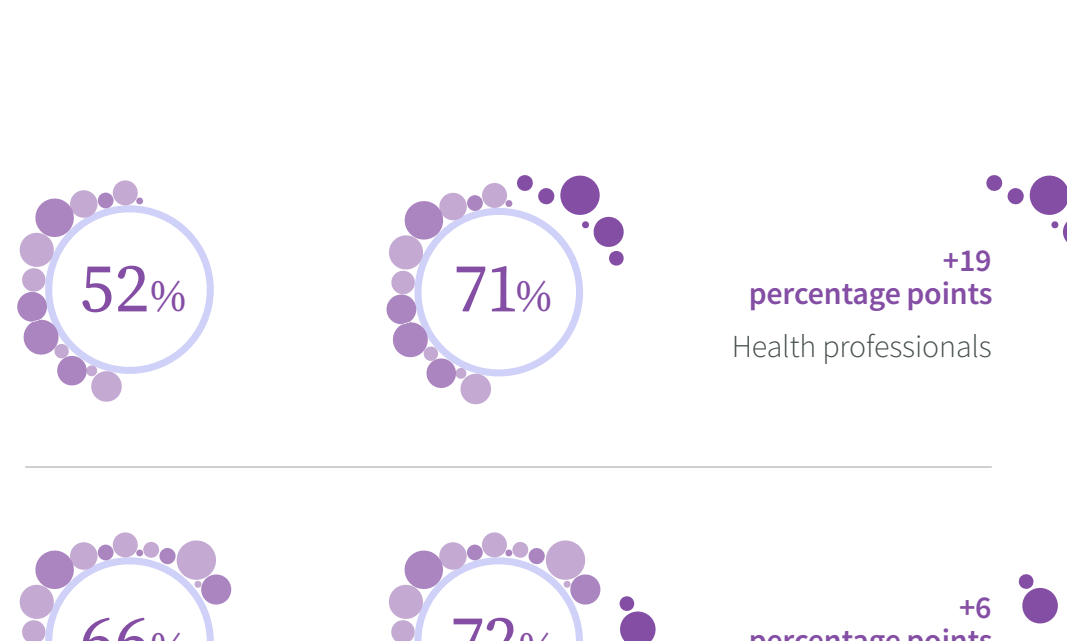


Source: European Jobs Monitor, 2021

### Gender-mixed jobs



Between 1998 and 2019, the biggest shift in the share of women's employment in large-employing jobs was in health and teaching.

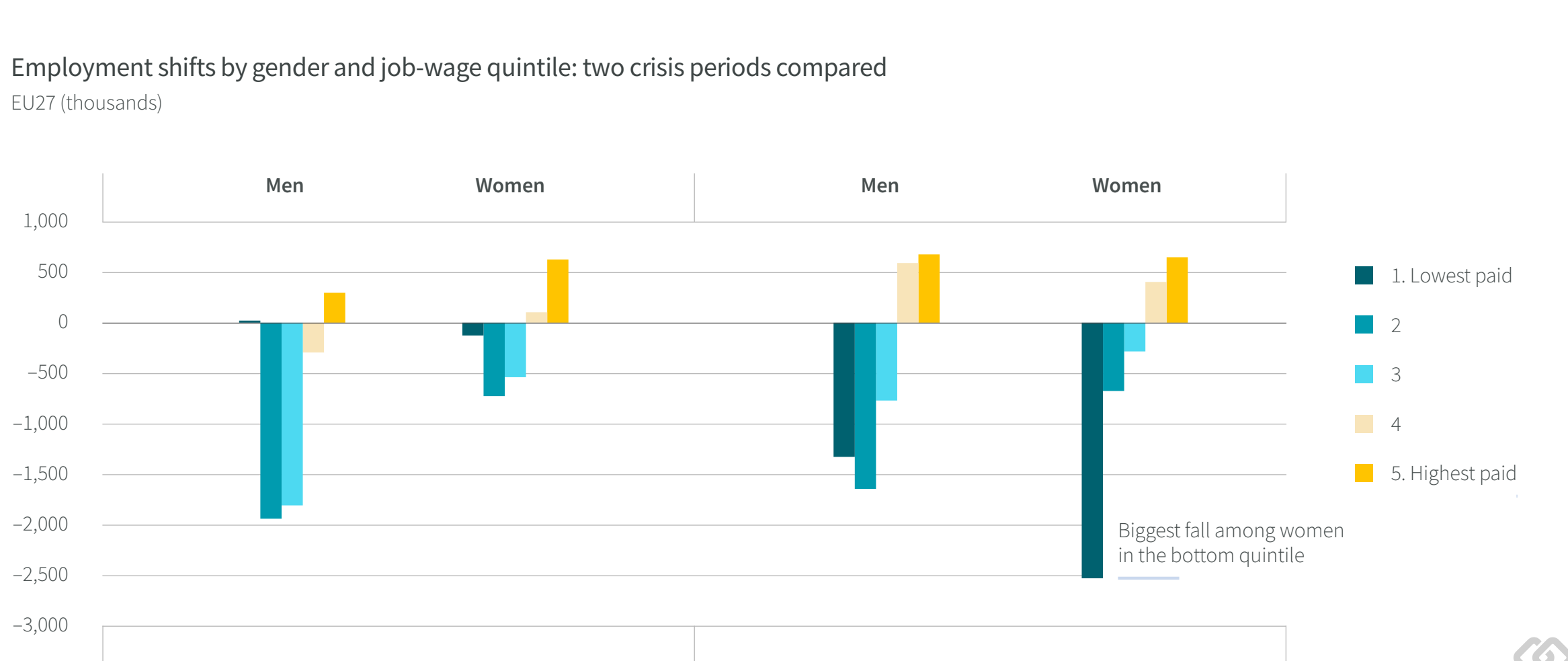


Source: European Jobs Monitor, 2021

## Low-paid women hit most by job loss

Compared with the 2008 recession, the COVID-19 crisis has been more balanced in its employment loss impacts by gender, although the biggest impacts have been experienced by women working in low-paid services sectors. Moreover, the patterns of job loss by quintile changed very little in the period between the first and second waves of the pandemic.

Employment shifts by gender and job-wage quintile: two crisis periods compared EU27 (thousands)



Source: Eurofound

Furloughing was heavily concentrated in lower-paid jobs during the pandemic and especially among lower-paid women.

Office-based knowledge workers have largely kept their jobs and incomes during the pandemic.

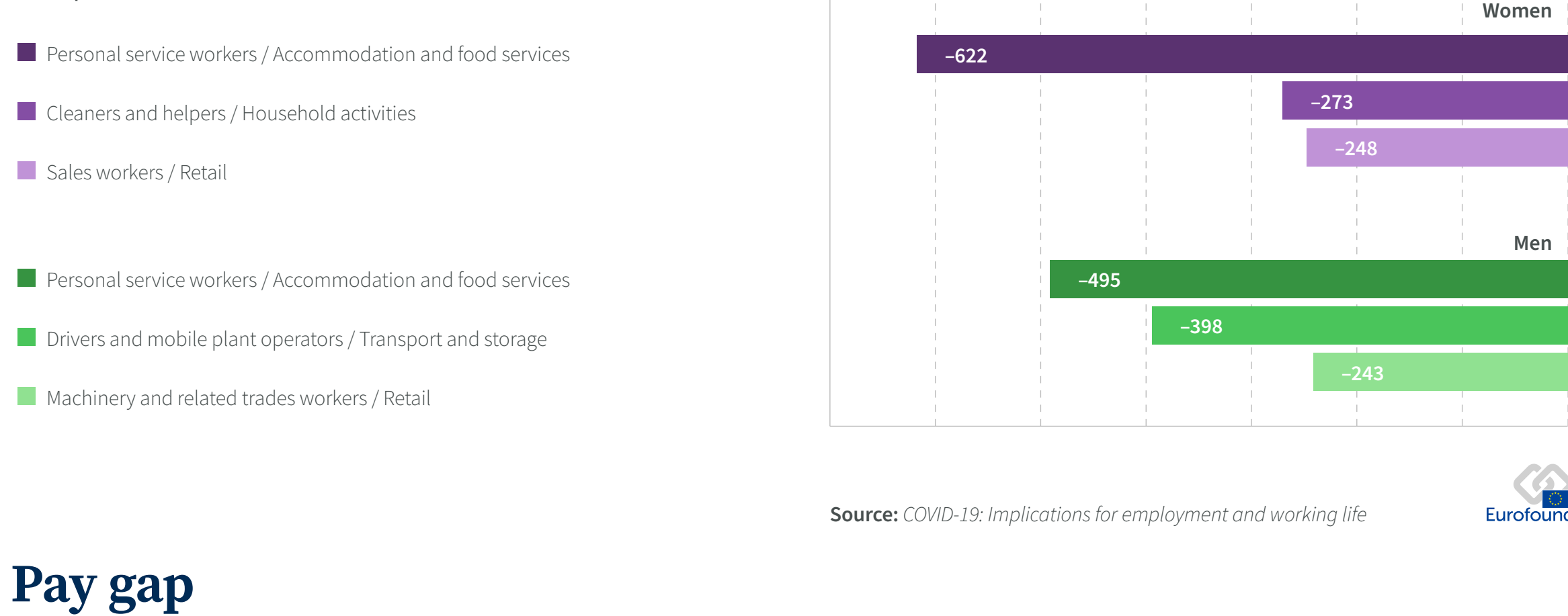
However, client-facing service workers, such as those working in restaurants, hotels, leisure and the arts, bore the brunt of the lockdowns, forced closures and declines in demand for in-person services. At the end of 2019, women were already overrepresented in these jobs.



Source: Eurofound and European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2021

Personal service workers in the accommodation/food services sector have accounted for nearly one-quarter of overall net employment losses during the crisis (-1.1 million).

Jobs with the biggest employment losses by gender, Q2 2019-Q2 2020 EU27, Change in employment (thousands)



Source: COVID-19: Implications for employment and working life

## Pay gap

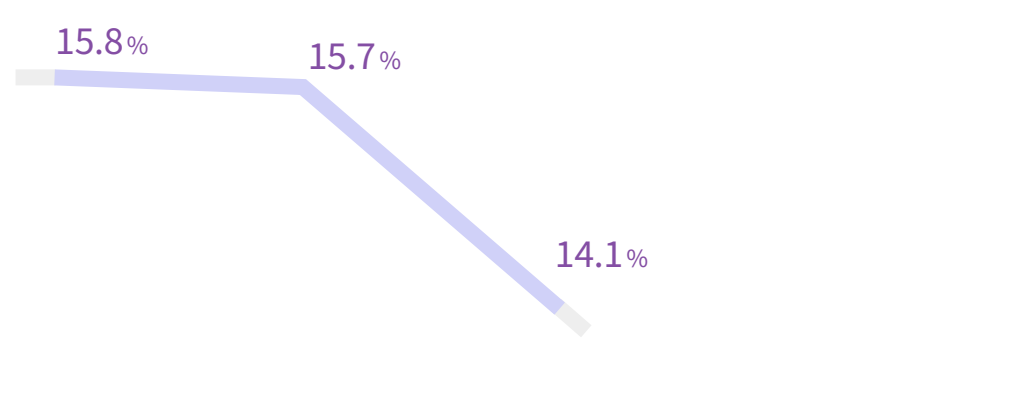
The gender pay gap means that women, on average, earn 14.1% less per hour than men.

The pay gap has reduced in around two-thirds of Member States.

More women work in lower-paid sectors and are more likely to work part time, suffering a part-time 'pay penalty'.

The gender pay gap is highest in well-paid jobs, despite younger women increasingly outperforming younger men in educational attainment.

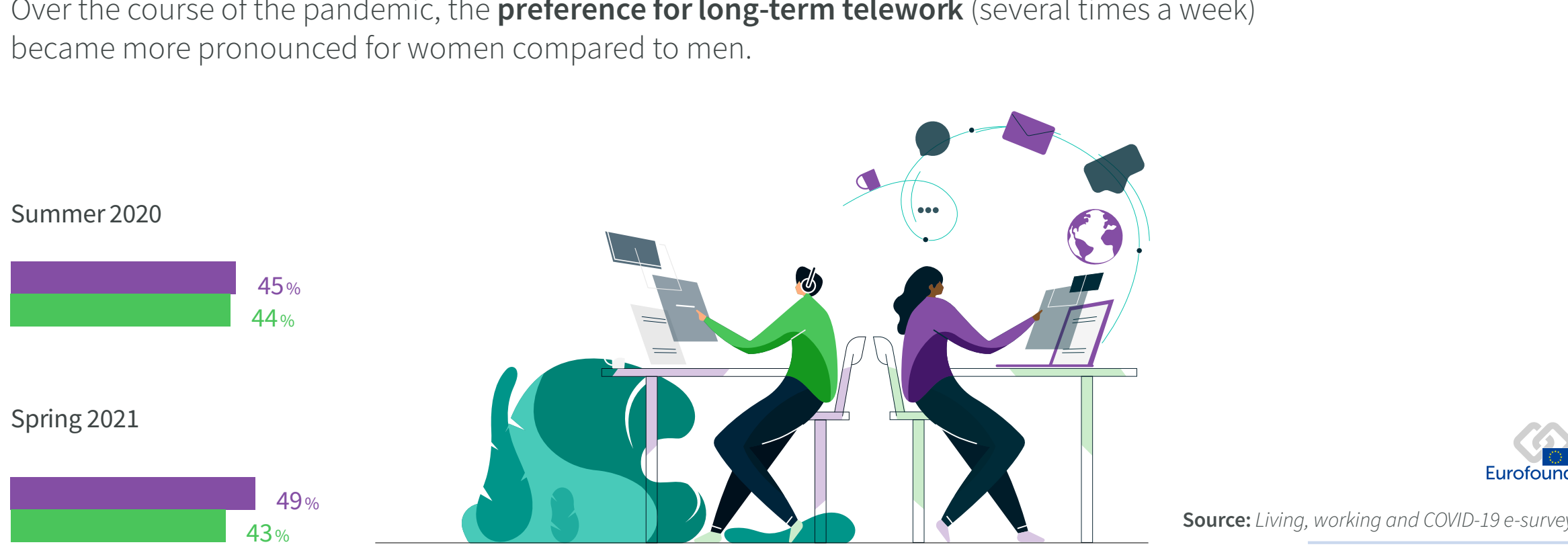
The gender pay gap in the EU was...



Source: Understanding the gender pay gap: What role do sector and occupation play?

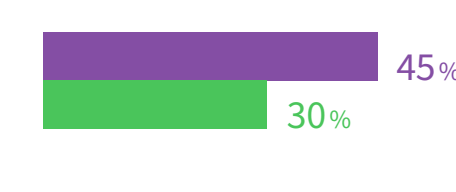
## Teleworking and return to the workplace

Over the course of the pandemic, the preference for long-term telework (several times a week) became more pronounced for women compared to men.



Source: Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

A higher share of women than men are in teleworkable occupations.



Source: Eurofound and European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2021

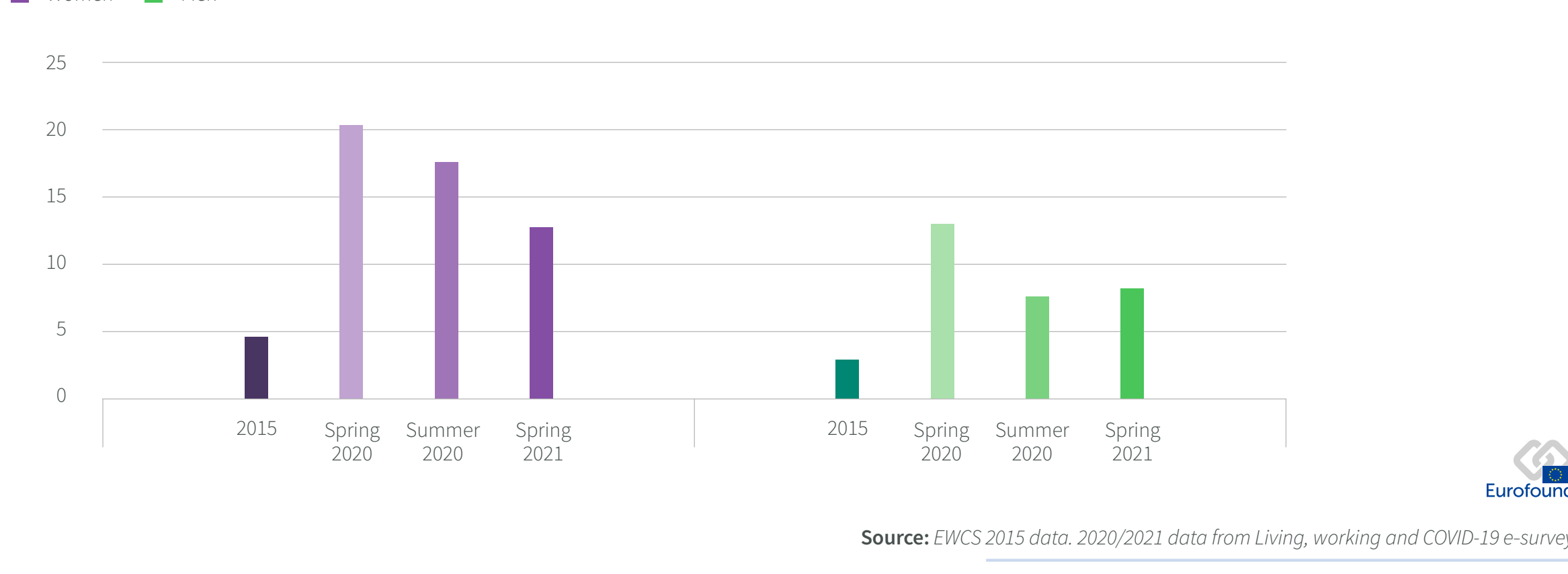
Autonomy and flexibility to organise working time are inherent elements of telework. But there are also risks where teleworking can:

- Exacerbate the glass ceiling
- Reduce the visibility of women teleworking from home
- Lead to long working hours
- Blur the boundaries between work and private life
- Increase work-life balance challenges
- Affect health and well-being, such as levels of anxiety

## Work-life balance conflict on the rise

During the pandemic, work-life conflict increased for women with young children due to school closures, as they had to juggle work, home schooling and care. Working parents with children under the age of 18 faced the hardest challenge in maintaining work-life balance.

Proportion of working parents finding it difficult to concentrate on their job because of family responsibilities, by gender and time EU27 (%)



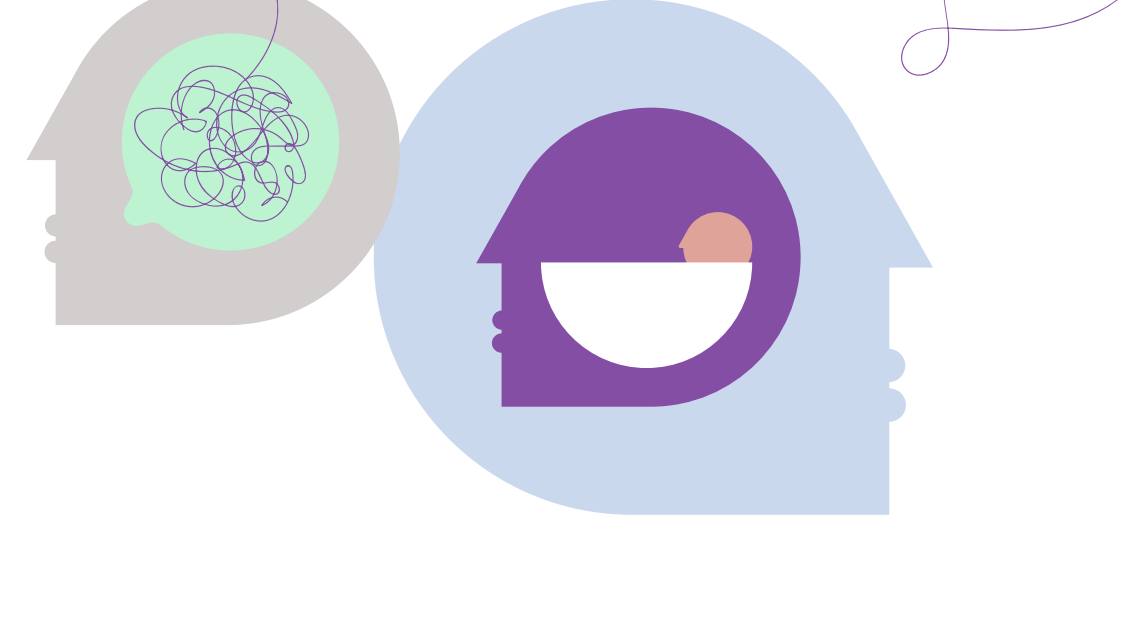
Source: EWCS 2015 data, 2020/2021 data from Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

## Mental well-being decreases during the pandemic

In spring 2021, there was an overall increase in negative feelings, such as tension/anxiety, loneliness, and feeling downhearted and depressed, across most social groups. The highest levels were registered among women.

By spring of 2021, depression was deemed a risk for 57% of working mothers. Teleworking throughout the pandemic has led to an accumulation of physical and mental pressures among parents, especially women.

For working fathers, the patterns over time have been similar to those of mothers, although the rates have been consistently lower: 42% of working fathers were at risk of depression in the spring of 2020, rising to 46% a year later.



Source: Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

## Unbalanced distribution of unpaid care work

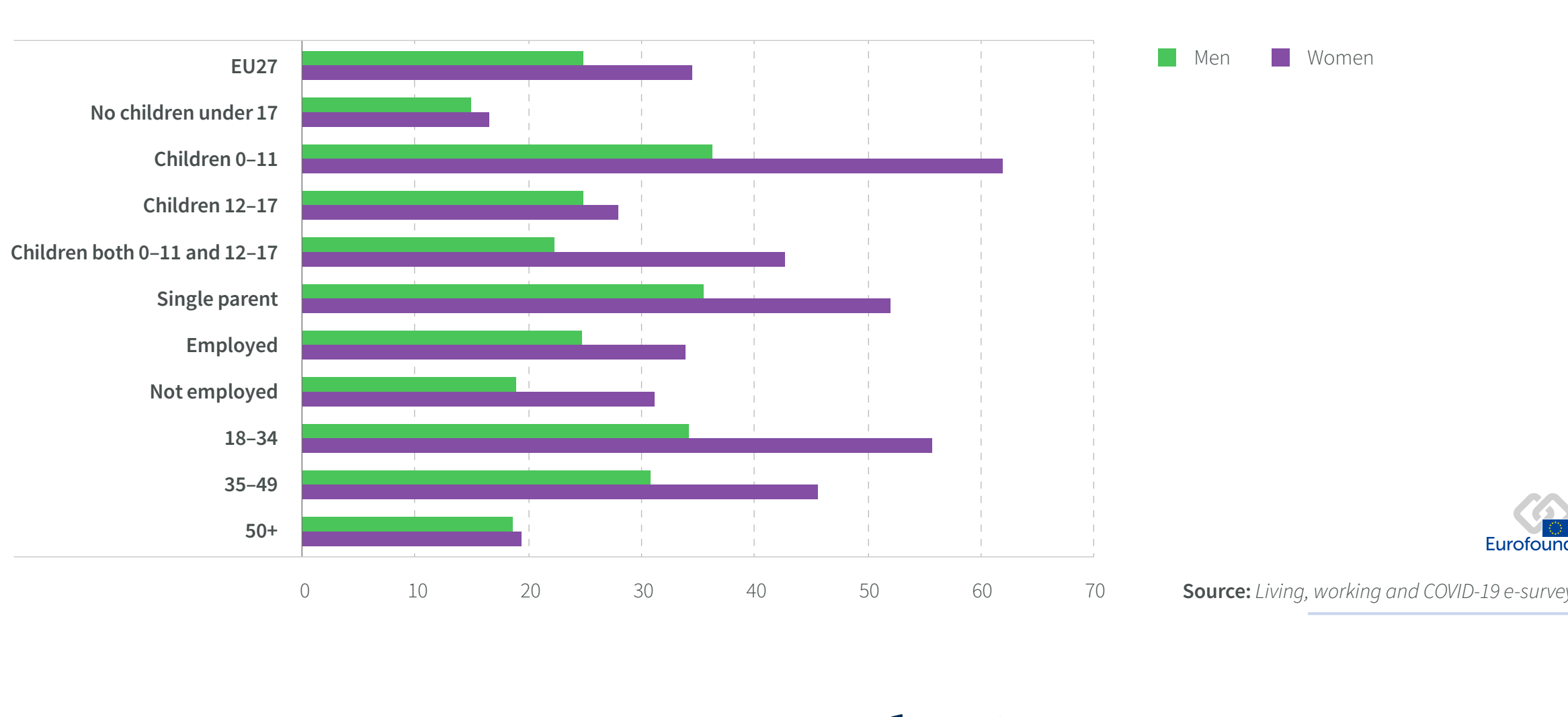
The COVID-19 crisis increased the burden of care responsibilities in private households.



Gender differences in time spent on caring activities and housework mean women struggle more with work and family responsibilities.

Rebalancing the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women helps to reduce work-life conflict and address gender gaps in the labour market.

Hours spent caring for children



Source: Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

## Long-term convergence among Member States

Despite positive developments, progress in gender equality has varied across Member States. The performance of some central and eastern European countries is improving at a slower pace compared to the EU average, causing them to fall further behind.

The social and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis has rolled back past achievements in gender equality, particularly in countries with lower levels of gender equality where the biggest advances had been made.

## The future for gender equality

Promoting gender equality is at the heart of the EU policy response to the COVID-19 crisis, in line with the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.



To strengthen the resilience of our society, it will be essential to mainstream gender in the design and implementation of emergency and recovery policy responses.



Women's employment will grow at a rate of at least three times faster than that of men up to the end of the decade to meet the gender and employment targets set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

The different consequences of economic shocks for women and men are often reinforced by gender segregation in the labour market and education. More dynamic education and training systems and other incentives will be required to promote the participation of women in male-dominated fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics or ICT), as well as to bring more men into female-dominated areas (such as the care sector).

More women are in teleworkable jobs, and the COVID-19 pandemic saw more women work from home than men. While telework can improve work-life balance for many workers, working women may risk lower workplace visibility, potentially leading to reduced opportunities for training and promotions, and ultimately slower career and salary progression.