



# The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

## Gender segregation in the labour market and education

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### Comments Paper - Luxembourg



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# Fight against segregation in education: policies and initiatives in Luxembourg

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## 1. Gender segregation in employment and education in Luxembourg

### 1.1. Employment

The **gender employment gap (20-64)** stood at 12.9 % in 2014, down from 14.1 % in 2013, higher than the EU-28 average of 9 %. Luxembourg ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the EU.

**Gender segregation** increased from 22.6 % in 2013 to 23.1 % in 2014 in **occupations** and increased from 15.8 % in 2013 to 15.9 % in 2014 in **economic sectors**. These are both below the EU-28 average of 24.4 % for occupations and 18.9 % for economic sectors. Luxembourg ranks 26<sup>th</sup> for occupations and 27<sup>th</sup> for sectors in the EU. The gender segregation in Luxembourg is nevertheless in a great extent influenced by the specific composition of the labour force in Luxembourg, mainly composed by foreigners and trans-border workers. Portuguese, men and women, are concentrated in construction and manual workers for men and in cleaning or unskilled occupations in the services for women. This is not the case for Luxembourg nationals. Luxembourg women are concentrated in the public sector, teaching and administration, and in the health sector: In 2012, 61.3 % of foreign women living and working in Luxembourg were occupied either in the “other services sector” either in the Trade and Horeca sectors (only 25 % of nationals), whereas 55.7 % of Luxembourg women were found in the public administration or health sector (17 % for foreigners).

The feminisation rate in STEM-related occupations is very low in Luxembourg in comparison with the European average. Following SHE FIGURES, in 2014 scientists and engineers represent 12.9 % of the male labour force, women 5.5 %. The share of women in researchers is the lowest in EU-27 with 21 % with all sectors taken into account and only 11 % in the business sector (the lowest percentage in EU-27<sup>1</sup>).

### Education and occupations

As in most European countries girls are performing better than boys at school. In 2013 girls were representing 58 % of the diplomas awarded on secondary school level.

Nevertheless, girls remain overrepresented in the languages, artistic, administrative health and social fields, but under-represented in mathematics, technics, mechanics, computer sciences, electro-technics fields.

<sup>1</sup> She Figures 2012, European Commission, DG Research, Luxembourg and Eurostat – Human Resources in Science & Technology (online data code: [hrst\\_st\\_ncat](#)).

Considering the higher educational levels, the fields where women are largely overrepresented are psychology (80 %), education and health (75 %) and languages and literature (73 %) and at the opposite only 15 % of women in computer sciences and 17 % in engineering.

Even if women are largely dominant in the education sector, differences are huge following the cycles of the educational system. In the first cycle of the fundamental education (children before 6), 97 % are women. 75 % of the teachers are women in the other cycles of the fundamental education. In secondary school 51 % are women and 49 % in higher education.

Even if 51% of the teachers on secondary level are women, the educational differences are of course duplicated, with a larger share of female teachers in secretarial teaching (almost 100 % !), health, languages and biology, but very few women in chemical, physics, mathematics and computer sciences (only 5 % !).

The two tables in annex, reporting the share of women among students in higher education and the percentage of women among teachers by field are illustrative since it is more or less the same segregation. It shows that the further educational choices of boys and girls in higher education are partly influenced by the overrepresentation of men teaching in science, technics, computing and mathematics. This implies that policies and measures have certainly to be implemented in order to increase female participation in teaching scientific and technical courses, in secondary and tertiary school.

The gender stereotypes remain persistent even among the young generations and the evolution, even if positive, is very slow. The percentage of women between 30 and 34 years who have reached the tertiary level has considerably increased compared to 2002: 20 % and 55 % in 2014. In 2014 there is a larger share of women with a tertiary level of education than men, with 4 % difference.

## 2. Policy debate and policies

If we except the Girls' and Boys' Day initiative, and the MEGASPIL that both aim at encouraging girls and boys to choose or at least to be interested in atypical occupations for their sex, the accent is more on diversifying the occupational and educational choices of girls.

### Girl's and boy's day

In 2002 the Girls day has been initiated in Luxembourg. The idea was to give the opportunity to students to familiarise themselves with atypical occupations, i.e. occupations with a low feminisation rate. In 2005 the Boys' Day has been launched by the Genderhaus Redange (Gender Home of Redange) in collaboration with the Secondary school of Ettelbruck. One year later the two initiatives have merged and became the "Girls' Day - Boys' Day: Deng Chance fir atypesch Beruffer kennen ze léieren".

The Girls' and Boys' Day combines the encouragement for girls to choose STEM or other "atypical" occupations for women and the encouragement for boys to choose education and occupations in the health, old age, childcare or youth occupations for men. For the boys they are going to childcare, health, old age and youth. The weakest participation rates for boys (number of participating / number of places

offered) are met in the childcare and old age jobs. For the girls the participation rates do not appear to be significant.

The success of this project depends on the number of firms and institutions willing to participate: students are given the opportunity to spend one day in a firm or administration to familiarise themselves with an atypical occupation. In 2015, 1,134 students have participated, 743 girls and 391 boys.<sup>2</sup>

## Girls in Tech (GIT)

Girls in Tech Luxembourg is part of Girls in Tech Worldwide, and has been founded in January 2014. Girls in Tech was born out of a need to provide a place for women to cultivate ideas around their careers and business concepts involving technology and entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup>. Girls in Tech is based on voluntary work of their members *“Our objective is to promote the role of women in occupations and jobs linked with technology and digital world. Nowadays they don’t choose spontaneously these directions whereas opportunities do exist. There is a lack of models able to motivate them, to demonstrate them that it is possible for a woman to make a career in these sectors while having a family life. Also, technology and the digital technology permeate all the occupations and jobs”* (Edit-Place, Managing Director – Girls in Tech Luxembourg).

Since 2014 when Girls in Tech has been created, the network has developed a lot of events, trainings and workshops, and Girls in tech has become a privileged interlocutor of organisations and actors. There is in Luxembourg the will of encouraging and developing diversity in technological industries.

## Rails girls

“Rails girls<sup>4</sup> is a Finnish initiative that originated in Helsinki in 2010, and provides girls and women with the necessary IT knowledge to develop and spread their ideas on the Internet, through the programming language Ruby. In addition to the transmission of technical knowledge, the initiative also aims to motivate girls and women to contribute to the development of information technologies and to develop their interest and enthusiasm for this field, which is dominated by men” (National Action Plan 2015-2018)

## Megaspil

Megaspil is a card game launched in 2013 and is directed to the children of the second and third cycles of fundamental education. The game is based on the idea of forming couples of a man and a woman doing the same job in the craft industry, the objective being to show to the pupils that girls and boys may opt for the same educational choices and the same jobs.

<sup>2</sup> More information is available on <http://www.girls-day.lu/fr/formulare>

<sup>3</sup> More information available on: <http://luxembourg.girlsintech.org>

<sup>4</sup> [www.railsgirls.com](http://www.railsgirls.com)

## The National Action Plan for Equality of Women and Men 2014-2018

The National Action Plan (2015-2018) not only lists the existing policies but also proposes new initiatives:

- to broaden the purpose of the Girls' Day and Boys' Day by establishing a national day of equality between girls and boys which aims to encourage an exchange of good practices in order to promote educational guidance as well as professional choices based on the intellectual abilities, talents and interests of the person. This would involve providing young people with knowledge about gender equality more interactively, in cooperation with partner ministries and possibly the professional chambers (to be planned in the form of fairs, conference series, workshops or other methods) ;
- To motivate girls towards professional independence, entrepreneurship, particularly in e-commerce (instruments of choice: mini-companies, Genial, etc.);
- To implement a mentoring system, facilitate access to specific training or fields by being assisted by a classmate of the other sex.

Connected to the issue of segregation in education, the action in higher education is also relevant. From that point of view, as quoted in the National Action Plan for Equality 2015-2018, "the Ministry of Higher Education and Research has tried for a number of years to achieve a better balance as regards equality between men and women in terms of appointments and renewals of appointments of the members of various boards under its supervision.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Research will assess the need to develop a "Gender Action Plan" for public research, with the particular aim of addressing the "leaky pipeline" issue and the "glass ceiling" effect while considering the decreasing number of women as they progress in their scientific and academic research careers" (National Action Plan 2015-2018).

### 3. Transferability aspects

There is no specific policy or initiative strictly devoted to encourage girls to opt for a STEM educational path and a STEM occupation and career. The Girls' and Boys' Day is larger since it concerns also boys but also because the objective is to encourage girls to choose (or at least to offer the possibility) atypical occupations, i.e. generally not chosen or occupied by women.

More oriented policies towards STEM education and occupations should probably be encouraged. In fact, when looking at the choices made by the girls during the Girls' and Boys' Day, and comparing with the number of places available, science and research seem to be less attractive than security (police), transport and logistics or computing and media. Moreover very few places in science, research or technical occupations are offered by companies or administration.

From that point of view the integrated approach adopted by VHTO in the Netherlands is interesting and should inspire other countries like Luxembourg, even if the Ministry of Equality (MEGA) already coordinates more or less different policies or initiatives listed in the comment's paper.

## 4. Conclusions

As frequently stressed, segregation on the labour market and in education has to be related to the quality of employment and to the wage compensation: feminised jobs are often associated with lower wages due to the stricter control.

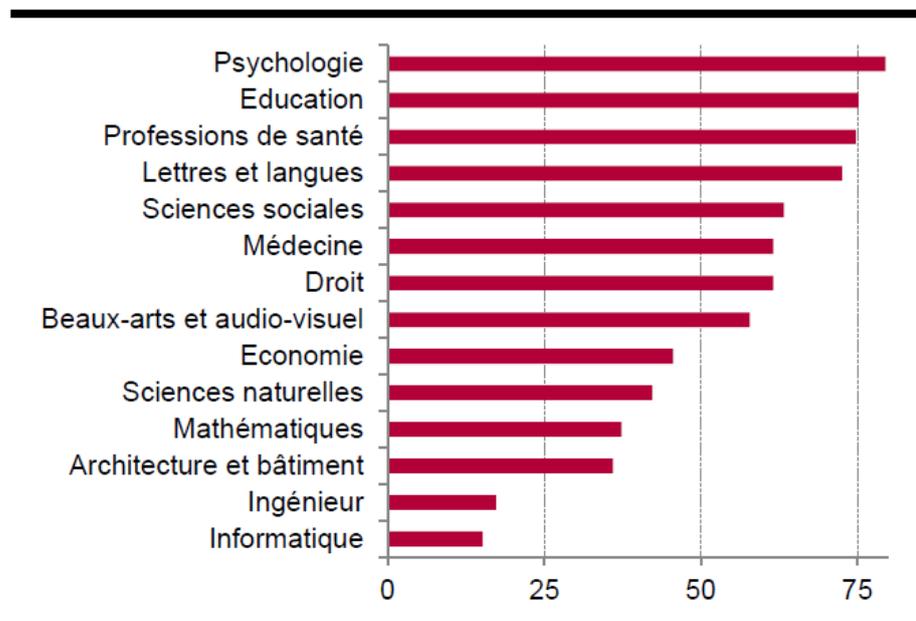
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## ANNEXES

Percentage of women among students in higher education by field

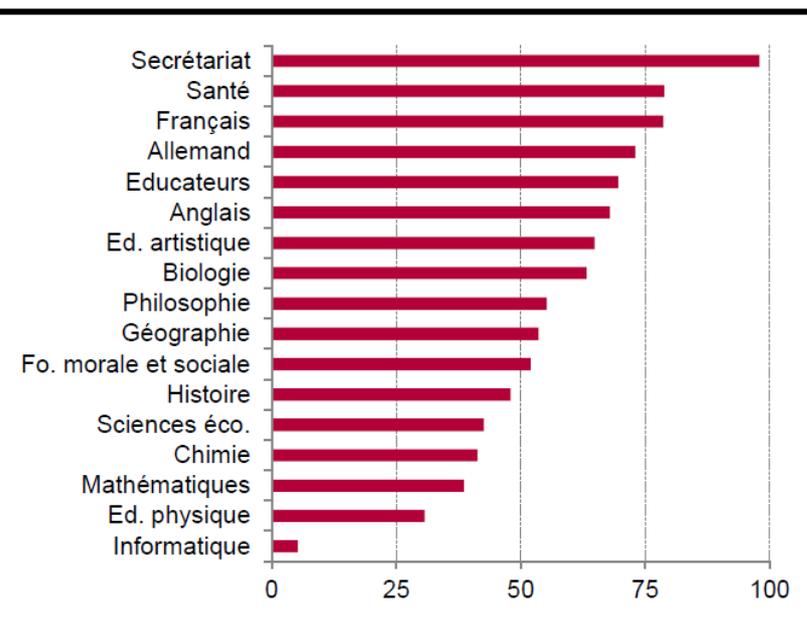
**Graphique 2 : Pourcentage de femmes parmi les étudiants, par domaines d'études (sélection), 2013/14**



Source : Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche ; Étudiants ayant bénéficié d'une aide financière de l'État

Percentage of female teachers in secondary education by field (2012-2013)

**Graphique 4 : Pourcentage d'enseignantes dans l'enseignement secondaire et secondaire technique, par branche (sélection), 2012/13**



Source : Ministère de l'Éducation nationale