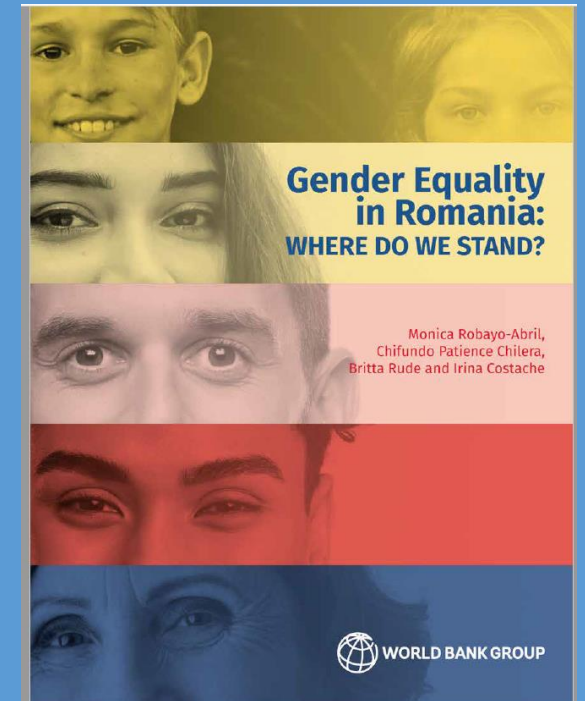


# Romania Country Gender Assessment

## Key Findings

### ***Poverty and Equity and Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global Practices***

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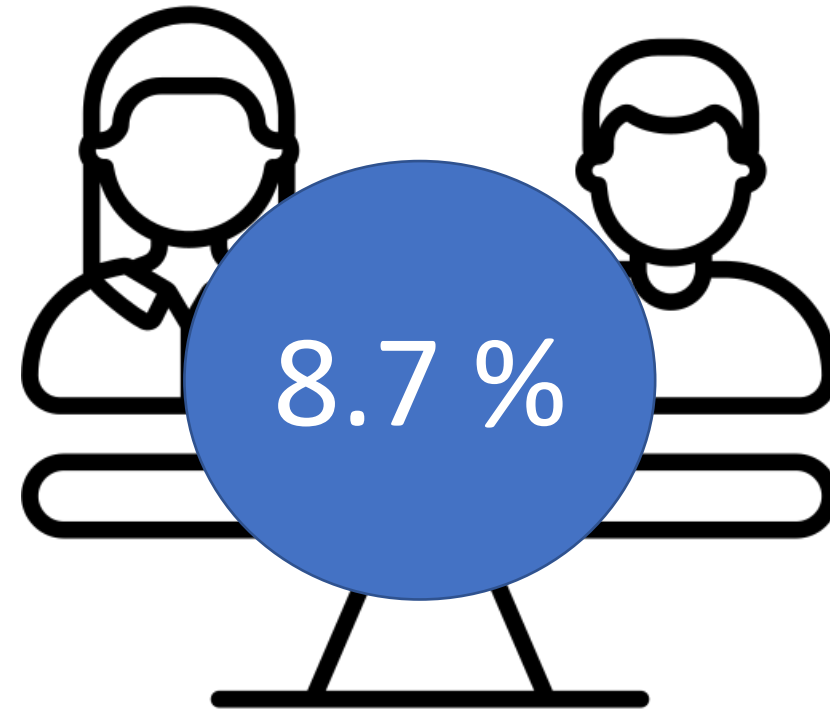
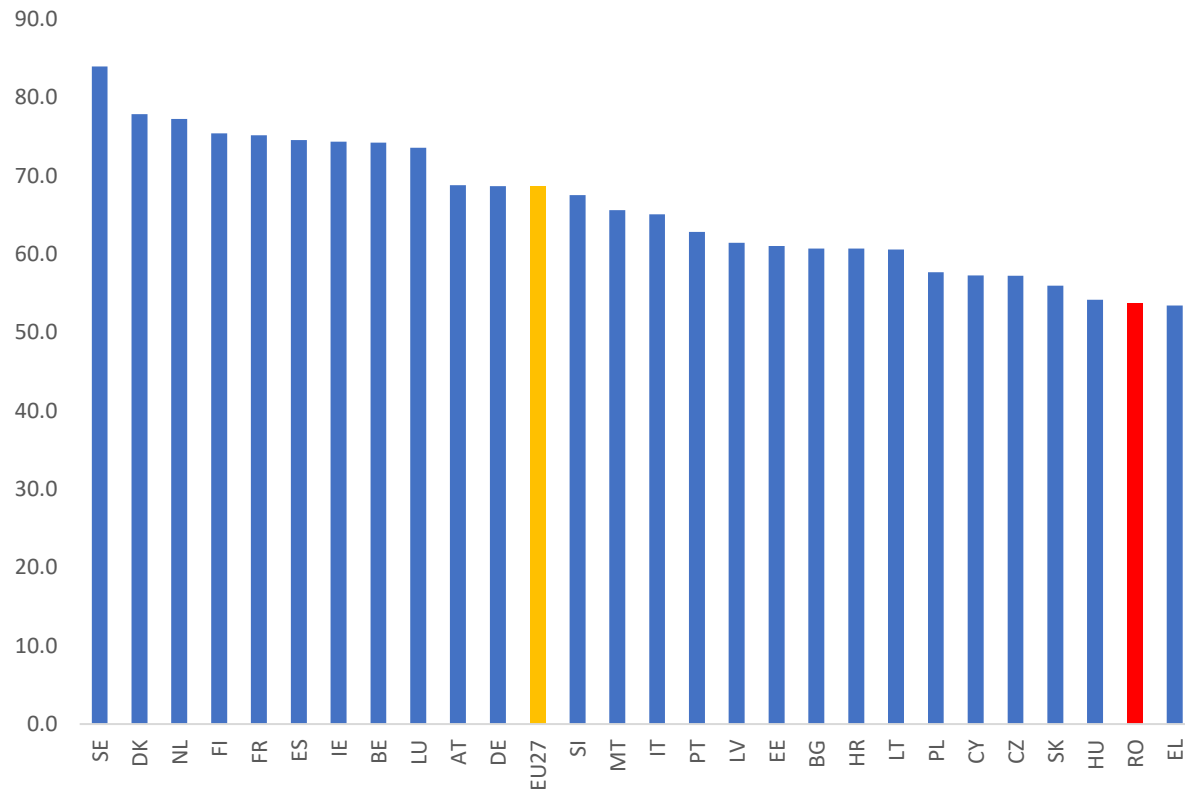


**WORLD BANK GROUP**

December 11, 2023

# Unlocking Romania's Potential: Currently ranked second lowest in the EU, gender inequality in human capital and economic opportunities means that talent and potential go untapped, limiting economic growth prospects

Gender Equality Index (2022)



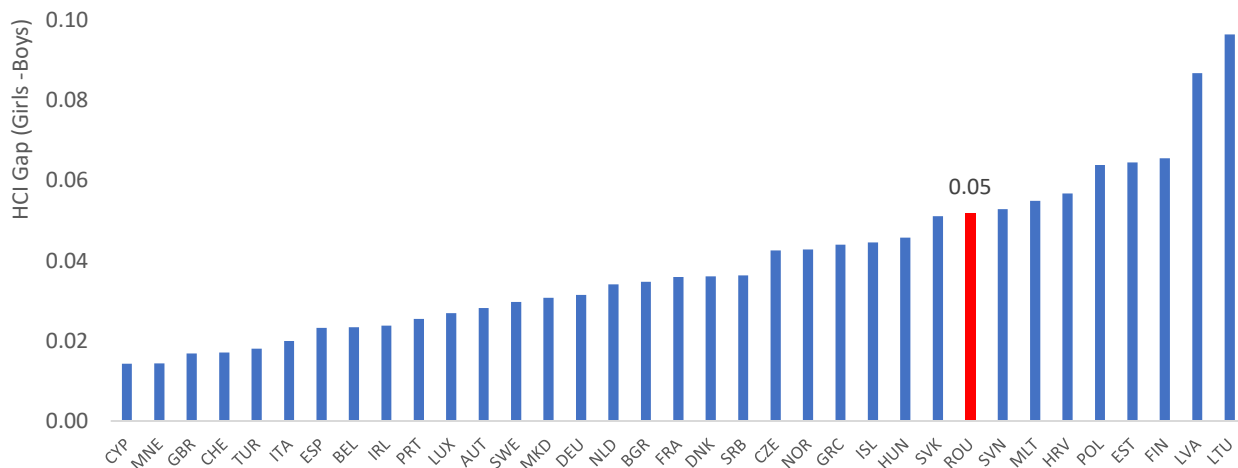
- Romania is one of the **least performing** countries on the Gender Equality Index EIGE (2022).
- Romania's economy could **grow by 8.7 % (additional GDP) by 2030** by eliminating gender equality (McKinsey)

# Human Capital is a pathway to an increase in economic opportunities, but some challenges remain ..

## Low Human Capital

- The levels for boys and girls are among the lowest in ECA region, even when compared with countries with similar GDP per capita levels
- A girl born in Romania today will be 61% as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health, a level higher than boys (56%) - 5 percentage points gap.

0.12 **Human Capital Index Gap (Girls- Boys), 2020, selected EU and enlargement countries**



Sources: Author's estimates based on World Bank, Human Capital Index, Note: Positive gap means girls are better off

## Education: Key Challenges through the lifecycle



- **ECE:** Very low net enrolment rates for both boys and girls (0- to 2-year-olds), especially in rural/low income; large gender disparities in urban.
- **3-6 Age:** Gender Disparities narrow, but differences persist among poorer families
- **Primary and Secondary:** Net enrollment rates are falling and below EU average for boys and girls
- **School dropouts** are relatively high;
- **Quality:** Performance drops for boys and girls according to PISA results
- **Tertiary:** women outperform men but significant gender segregation in the field of study and gender gaps in digital literacy
- **Low public spending**

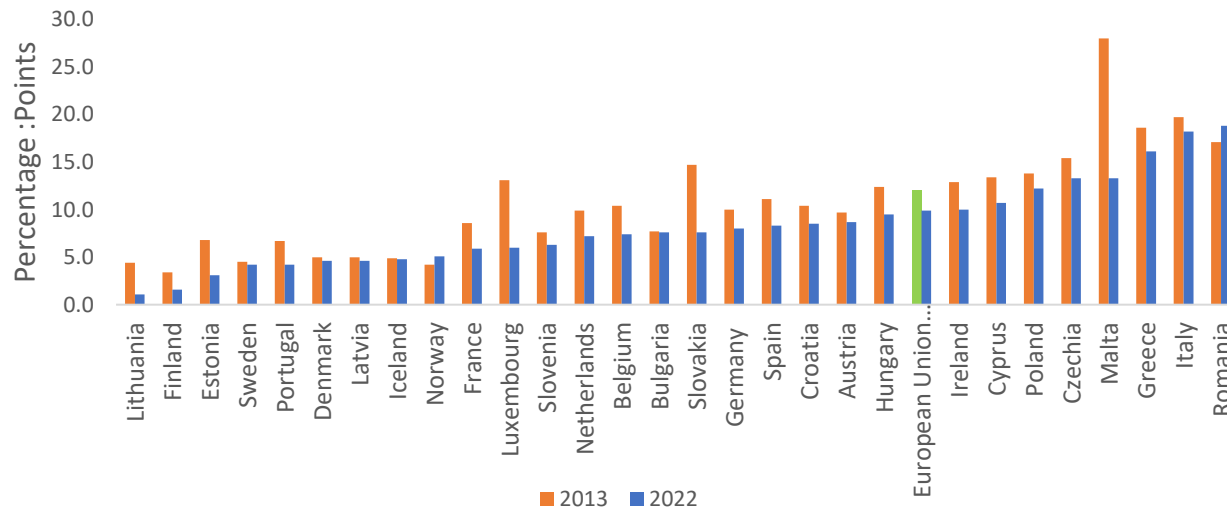
## Health: Key Challenges

- **One of the highest rates of adolescent birth rates and teenage pregnancy in the EU** (especially in rural areas) and potentially linked to dropouts

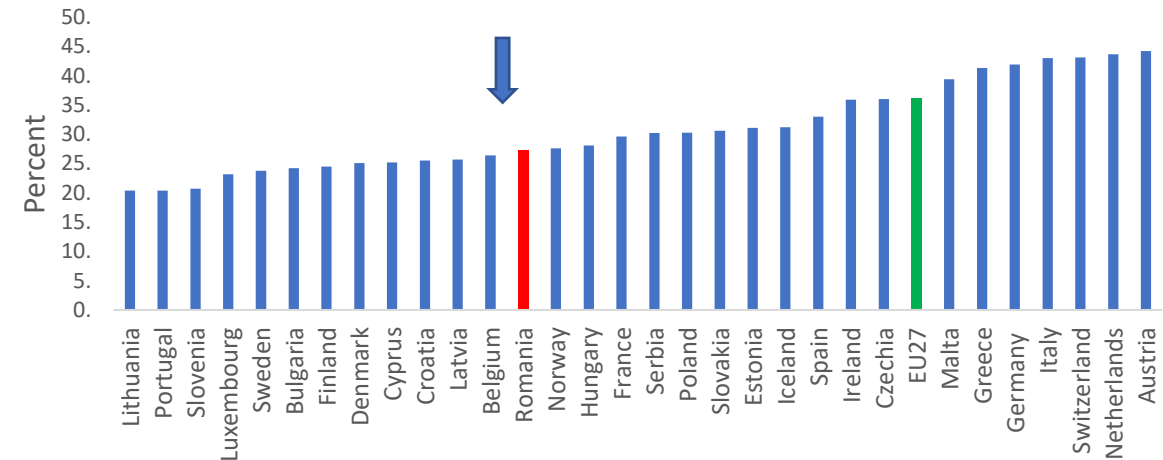
# Accumulated human capital does not necessarily get utilized. Large gender gap in labor force participation, entrepreneurship and pension

- **Large LFP Gaps:** the highest in the EU and increasing. Largest gaps: low-skilled, especially during childbearing years and rural areas
- **Lower employment rate among women with younger children**
- **Persistent and Unexplained Wage Gap:** The gender wage gap is not among the highest, but it is persistent, and mostly unexplained by differences in observable characteristics; discrimination may play a role
- **Large gender gaps in entrepreneurship and sizable pension gender gap**

Gender gaps (men minus women) in labor force participation  
(percentage points): 2013 versus 2022



Gender Overall Earning Gap  
(2018)



# What's holding women back? Lack of Skills, Limited access to childcare and eldercare, harmful attitudes and limited work arrangements leaves to untapped talent labor market

## Skills

- Younger women are more educated than males, but..
- Concentration in lower-paying sectors, also due to segregation in the education field
- Lack of skills among older cohorts and Roma

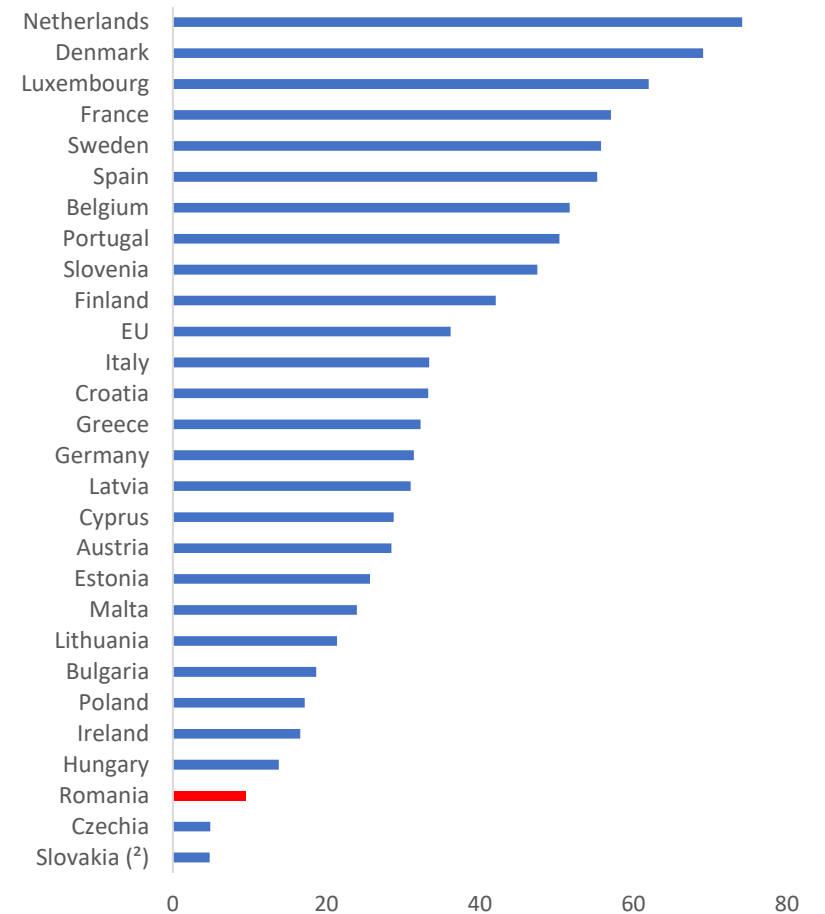
## Access to Services: Formal Childcare and Parental Leave Policies

- Lower Limited access to child and elder care services and unequal care burden.
- 9 out of 10 people with a child of 3 years or younger do not dispose of formal childcare (Eurostat, 2022).
- Parental leave policies. Mothers absorb a larger part of parental leave compared to fathers.

## Harmful attitudes and social norms and Limited Work Arrangements

- 76 percent of Romanians believe that a man's role is to earn money and 83 percent believe that women should care for home and family
- Both men and women think that, when jobs are scarce, men should be given priority over women
- Work Arrangements: most employed mothers work full-time and limited flexibility on work arrangement

**Formal Childcare (% children aged less than three that attend formal childcare more than 1 hour per week), 2021**



# Hidden in plain sight: gender-based violence is underreported, underfunded and invisible in the public agenda

## Various forms of violence persist:

- **Domestic violence:** 30% of women in Romania have experienced physical and/or social violence since the age of 15
- **Sexual violence:** 32% of women in Romania have experienced sexual harassment.
- **Child marriage:** highest national incidence in EU
- **Trafficking:** Romania is a primary source country for sex trafficking and forced labor in Europe, mostly women & Children
- **LGBTI:** Highest rate of physical or sexual attacks in EU (along with Poland)

## Data and Knowledge Gaps:

- No recent data on prevalence since 2014 EU-Wide Survey on Violence Against Women
- Administrative data is incomparable: inconsistencies in tabulation, unharmonized cross-institutional frameworks for data
- Only two comprehensive perception surveys have been conducted on GBV

## Response Gaps:

- Based on 2020 administrative data: 45,405 cases of domestic violence reported to the police, only 3.3% had legal remedy and only 4.4% received services from public and NGO-based providers

# Low female participation in politics and policy, coupled with persistent gender norms hinder progress

## **Low Female political participation**

- Only 18.5% of seats in Parliament were held by women (IPU, 2021)
- At the local level, only 12.4% of mayors, leaders, and other members of the local councils and municipals are female

## **Positive shift in gender norms but various forms of GBV and low female political participation persist**

- Driving factors of sticky gender norms are not well understood
- Gender stereotypes, stigma, and discrimination lead to people underreporting GBV or accessing services
- Even more barriers for people with gendered socio-economic inequalities and minorities

# High Level Policy Recommendations to Advance Gender Equality: 4 Key areas

## 1. Improve women's access to quality jobs along with care infrastructure

- Improve skills among older cohorts and address school dropouts among younger cohorts (and links with teenage pregnancy)
- Promote redistribution of care responsibilities that allow for better combination of family/work/flexi-work
- Policies to remove disincentives/ barriers to employability among working-age women, with a focus on access to child and elder care, complemented with pension reform

## 2. Strengthening data-driven fiscal policy for gender equality

- Fiscal incidence studies to illuminate fiscal policy's role in promoting equitable outcomes and addressing gender disparities
- Innovative monitoring and gender budgeting tools, such as **PARIS 21** and **EIGE Gender Budgeting Tool**, to strengthen data, monitoring, and evaluation, emphasizing better survey and admin data on Roma and time use survey.

More details on policy interventions are provided in the report.



# High Level Policy Recommendations to Advance Gender Equality: 4 Key areas (cont..)

## 3. Entrepreneurship and financial and digital inclusion

- Improve access to entrepreneurial education from an early age, fostering women entrepreneur's network
- Overall healthier entrepreneurial ecosystem in Romania and the role of female entrepreneurs in the green transition

## 4. Dismantling systemic barriers and sticky norms

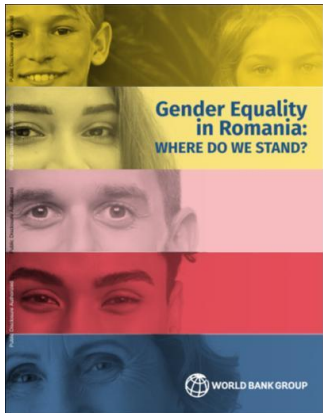
- Amend the Law on violence to incorporate the principles of the Council of Europe fully to harmonize cross-institutional frameworks for gender-based violence data collection, prevention and response
- Political and economic decision-making can be improved with strengthened policy response, e.g. introduction of temporary special measures such as gender quotas
- Adequate financing to communication and awareness campaigns, and efforts to change societal norms around violence, domestic responsibilities and women's economic contributions

More details on policy interventions are provided in the report.

# Links to Main Report and Background Studies

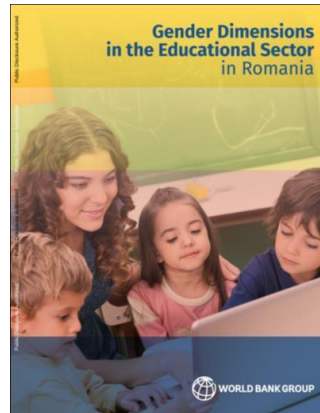
Gender Equality in Romania: Where Do We Stand? - Romania Gender Assessment

[Gender Assessment Report](#)



Gender Dimensions in the Educational Sector in Romania: Background Study for the Romania Gender Assessment

[Education Background Study](#)



The Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship in Romania: Background Study for the Romania Gender Assessment

[Entrepreneurship Background Study](#)



Legal Framework and Assessment of Policy Gaps in Romania: Background Note for the Gender Assessment

[Legal Framework](#)



“Preparatory School Years and Maternal Employment in Romania” Policy Research Paper [Maternal Employment and Childcare](#)

Preparatory School Years and Maternal Employment in Romania\*  
Monica Roboș-Abrăm and Birna Răuș  
November 30, 2023

**Abstract**  
In this paper, we test the introduction of preparatory school classes targeting six-year-old children in Romania to study if universal, compulsory, public care provision could increase female employment. Results from difference-in-difference estimations show that the reform resulted in rising employment rates for mothers of six-year-old children. The effect is larger for mothers living in households with elderly people, but larger for those facing stronger trade-offs prior to the reform. Overall, investing in universal, compulsory, public childcare is beneficial and could significantly increase female employment and labor force participation rates.

**Keywords:** Government Policy; childcare; Economics of Gender; Public Policy; Time Allocation and Labor Supply  
**JEL Codes:** I21, J16, J18, J22

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