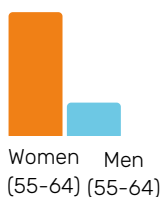




Gender inequality in old age

Older women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that accumulate during the life course and impact later life. Ageism often intersects with other forms of discrimination such as sexism, ableism, racism and classism to name just a few. Older women's lived experiences and realities are often overlooked while they experience ageing in a specific way. To tackle the systemic barriers that they face, we need to design policies that use an intersectional gender perspective. Gender inequality at a younger age translates into old age inequality.

Employment and social protection



In 2023...
32.7% of women aged 55-64 were in part-time employment, compared with 8.6% of men in the same age group.

The gender pay gap for 55-64 years people is the highest of all age groups.

In 2023, women over 65 received a pension that was on average 25% lower than that of men.

- Women who are in part-time employment and/or who experience career breaks because of motherhood or the need to care for relatives face diverse barriers.
- Part-time work and the fact that on average, men earn higher wages than women impact the pension gap.
- The lack of adequacy of minimum pensions in many EU Member States results in higher poverty and social exclusion rates for women.

Long-term care



On average... 70% of unpaid informal carers are women.

- The precarious employment situation in the sector is faced by a mainly female and ageing workforce.
- Differences in life expectancy and the prevalence of chronic diseases lead to older women having more needs for long-term care and support.
- As women have on average lower incomes than men, access to formal care remains largely unequal.

“There was no way I could leave without a legal battle over the house, and my sons loved their father, the grandchildren loved him, everyone in my life knew him as well. I didn't think I could start a whole new life, he'd always be in my life. And I was his carer.”
Marie, 69 years old

Gender-based violence



In 2021... 24% of women aged 65-74 reported experiencing gender-based violence.

- Data on gender-based violence against older women is scarce.
- There is a lack of protection mechanisms and awareness that domestic violence affects women of all ages.
- Long term abusive relationships make it difficult for women to leave. Many victims are from generations in which women were less likely to have financial independence.
- Support services are not adapted to the needs of older women.



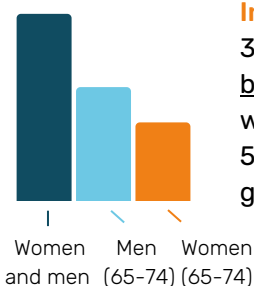
© Photo Credits: Centre for Ageing Better



Gender inequality in old age

“Poverty among older women is a result of inequalities in the household, labour market, and state institutions.”
 Heidrun Mollenkopf, AGE Platform Europe President

Digitalisation



In 2023...
 33.8% of men aged 65-74 had digital basic skill, compared with 23.3% of women in the same age group and 55.6% for individuals of all age groups.

- On average, older women are at higher risk of digital exclusion than older men because they have lower incomes, lower financial literacy, shorter careers, often worked in jobs which required no or low levels of digital skills or faced gender discrimination in accessing training on digital skills.
- Older women’s digital exclusion results from accumulated disadvantages during the life course.

Poverty and social exclusion

Older women’s poverty rate is 7.5 percentage points higher than men’s over 75.

- More women than men face poverty and social exclusion.
- The fact that pensions do not consistently reflect increases in living costs impacts the risk of poverty.
- The risk of poverty is higher among women with disabilities, women living alone, women with a low level of education, and migrant women.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the European Commission adopts a new **Gender Equality Strategy** that is intersectional and takes into account the lived experiences and challenges of older women.
- Work towards an **Age Equality Strategy** that will work hand in hand with the Gender Equality Strategy, focusing on ageism and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Adopt the **Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive** to ensure that the EU offers comprehensive protection against discrimination in key areas of life, including for older women.
- Support the need for a **UN convention on the rights of older persons** that takes due account of the inequalities faced by older women.
- Collect and analyse **data on older women**, disaggregated by different age groups.
- Following the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention, support the appointment of an **EU Coordinator to end all forms of violence against women** that will work towards the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence and the Directive on Victims’ Rights.
- Call on the European Commission to include ageism and how it intersects with racism/sexism in the drafting of the new **Anti-Racism Strategy** and the renewed **LGBTIQ Equality Strategy post-2025**.
- Mainstream the rights of older women, their lived experiences and perspectives in all initiatives of the **FEMM Committee**.
- Ensure the **active participation of older women** in the design and implementation of EU policies, notably via the consultation of organisations of older women.
- Encourage **organisations advocating for the rights of women**, to include older women’s realities and challenges.

