

RURAL WOMEN AND MEN IN BALTIC SEA REGION

Overview, Statistics, Recommendations

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Overview, Statistics, Recommendations

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1. INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to give you another report of ours concerning gender equality in the Baltic Sea Region. It has been a result of a fruitful cooperation between Winnet Skåne, Winnet Sverige and the University of Szczecin. Thanks to the partnership, the Winnet Centre of Excellence® has been created which is the international network of researchers and practitioners for the purpose of doing and promoting policy oriented research on Gender and Economy. All the authors of this Report are members of the Centre.

In the work the overview of the life situation in rural areas from gender perspective has been presented. We also have looked deeper into the idea of the blue

and green sector and to the full extent possible, the women's and men's activities in these sectors were analysed. Furthermore, the relationship between gender equality and the sustainable development was examined. At the end we have proposed the recommendations of how to support gender equality in the region regarding the degree of urbanization.

The authors claim it is important to activate women's resource in rural areas of BSR countries, because it will be a step towards the manifestation of full human potential of the region: rural and urban, women's and men's potentials and talents!

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2. OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN RURAL AREAS

Quality of life by degree of urbanization in 2013

In 2013, some 42.2 % of the EU-28's population lived in cities, while the corresponding shares for towns and suburbs (30.2 %) and rural areas (27.6 %) were somewhat lower (Figure 1). Across the Baltic Sea Region countries (BSR countries), there were considerable differences in the shares of the population living in each of these three types of area, for example:

- Iceland (64.3 %) and Norway (64.4 %) were the only countries in the Baltic Sea Region where a majority of the population lived in cities;
- Germany (41.1 %) and Sweden (30.9 %) had the highest shares of their populations living in towns and suburbs, while;
- Almost half (47–48 %) of the populations of Latvia and Lithuania lived in rural areas.

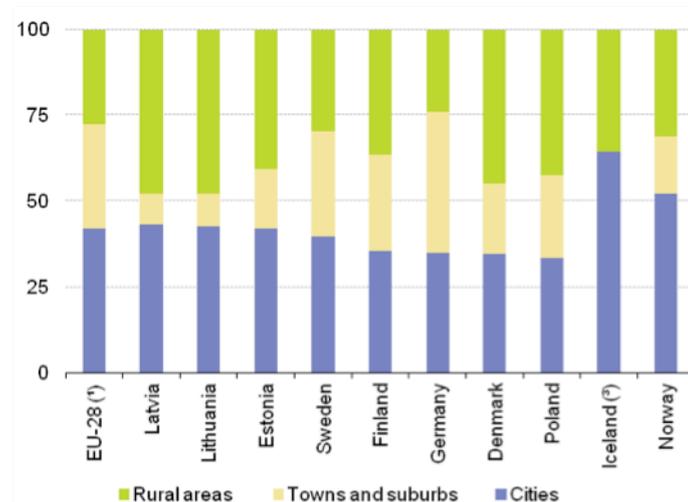


Figure 1. Distribution of the population, by degree of urbanization, 2013, (% of total)

(1) Rural areas: estimate.

(2) Rural areas: low reliability.

(3) Towns and suburbs: low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_lvho01)

The statistics presented hereafter take account of these differences, as the size of the bubbles in Figures 2–14 reflect the relative share of each of the three types of area in the national population.

Quality of life dimensions

The Europe 2020 strategy set the joint goals of the EU becoming a 'smart, sustainable and inclusive economy', while reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million.

Strong difference by degree of urbanisation between 'new' and 'old' EU BSR countries

1. At risk of poverty or social exclusion

Figure 2 presents the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion across the BSR countries in 2013. This peaked at 27.4 % among those living in rural areas, while the risk of poverty and social exclusion touched almost one in four (24.4 %) of the EU-28's population living in cities, and a slightly lower share (22.1 %) among those living in towns and suburbs.

There were considerable differences between the individual BSR countries. All four were those living in cities which had a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion were European countries who were EU members after 2004. This was particularly the case in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland; where the risk of poverty or social exclusion was the highest for those living in rural areas.

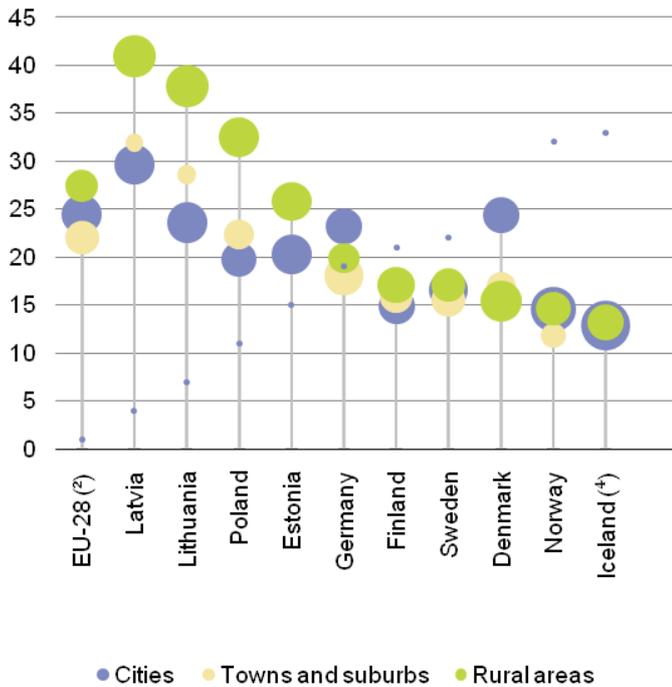


Figure 2. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by degree of urbanization, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ in (%)

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: 1)

However, in a majority of the Baltic Sea Region countries (9 out of the 10 for which data is available), the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was higher in rural areas than it was in cities. Latvia was the only country with the highest level (40.0%) of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in rural areas. In case of Germany and Denmark the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was higher in cities than it was in rural areas.

2. Employment rate

The Europe 2020 strategy set a target of increasing the EU-28's employment rate, among those aged 20–64, to 75 % by 2020. In 2013, there was little difference (0.8 percentage points) between employment rates according to the degree of urbanization: the highest employment rate in the EU-28 was recorded for those living in towns and suburbs (68.8 %), while the corresponding rates for city dwellers (68.3 %) and those living in rural areas (68.0 %) were slightly lower.

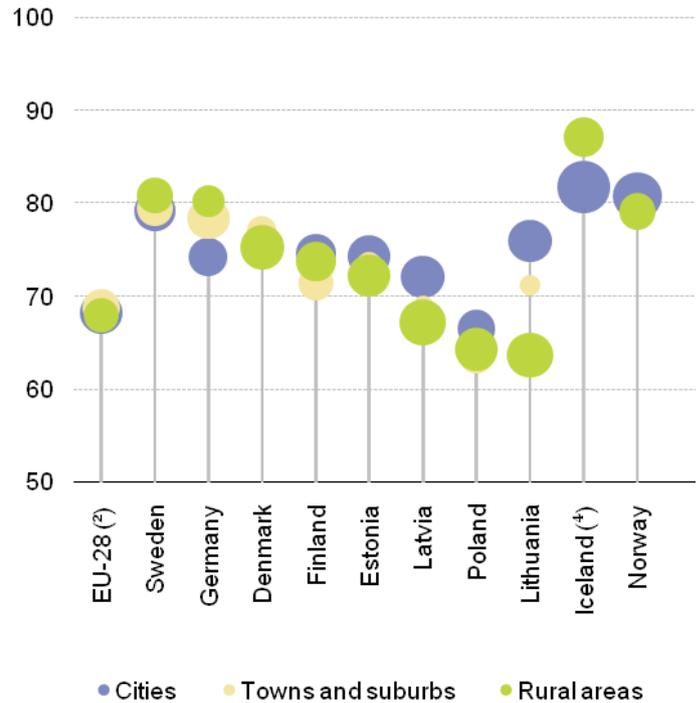


Figure 3. Employment rate, persons aged 20–64, by degree of urbanization, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ in (%)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanization in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: lfst_r_ergau and ilc_lvho01)

Across the EU Member States, there was a far wider distribution of employment rates by degree of urbanization (Figure 3). For example, in Germany, the employment rate among those living in rural areas was 6.0 percentage points higher than that for city dwellers, a pattern that was repeated (although to a lesser degree) in two other Baltic Sea Region countries. By contrast, employment rates in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania were 2.2, 4.7 and 12.3 percentage points higher among those living in cities than they were for inhabitants of rural areas. Denmark was the only country from Baltic Sea Region where the highest employment rate was recorded among those living in towns and suburbs.

3. Satisfaction with accommodation

In 2013, there was a relatively narrow range in average levels of satisfaction experienced by individuals in the EU-28 in relation to their accommodation (Figure 4). Satisfaction was highest (7.6 on a scale of 0–10) among those living in towns and suburbs, while the corresponding values for those living in rural areas (7.5) and in cities (7.4) were slightly lower.

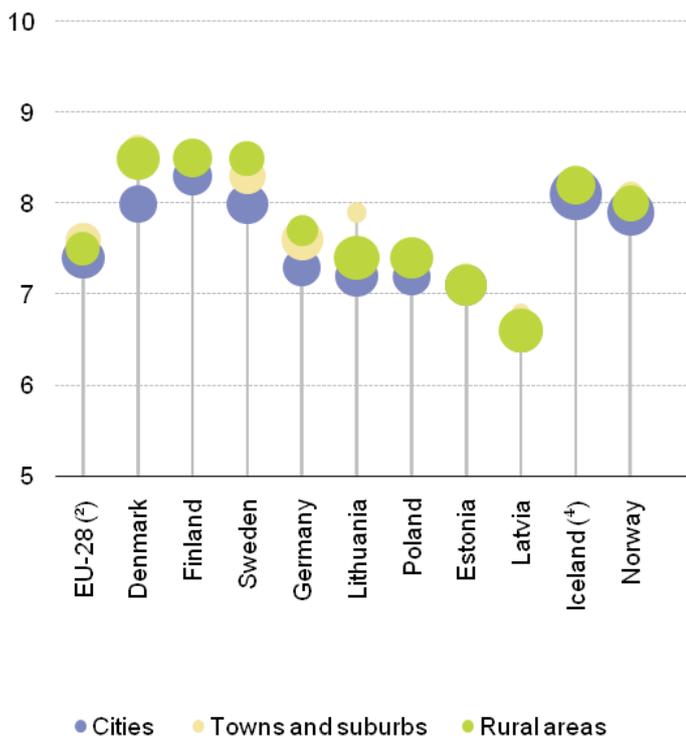


Figure 4. Average satisfaction with accommodation, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (scale, 0–10)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_pw02 and ilc_lvho01)

Among all countries, those living in rural areas were clearly more satisfied with their accommodation than the population living in cities. In Latvia and Lithuania those living in towns and suburbs had, on average, a higher degree of satisfaction with their accommodation.

When it comes to satisfaction with accommodation evaluated as high, medium or low by domain, there are following conclusions:

- Generally, in five of BSR countries -Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland- women tend to be more satisfied with their accommodation in comparison to men.
- In Germany, twice as many women and men estimated their satisfaction with accommodation as high satisfaction as opposed to low satisfaction.
- In Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania, the proportion of women and men who evaluated their satisfaction with accommodation as high or low is respectively similar.

4. Satisfaction with commuting time

As part of a 2013 module on well-being, respondents gave their opinion concerning their degree of satisfaction with commuting time, in terms of a broad appraisal of the time it took to travel to and from work. On a scale of 0–10, the highest level of satisfaction among individuals in the EU-28 was recorded for those living in towns and suburbs (7.5), just ahead of those living in rural areas (7.4) and in cities (7.3).

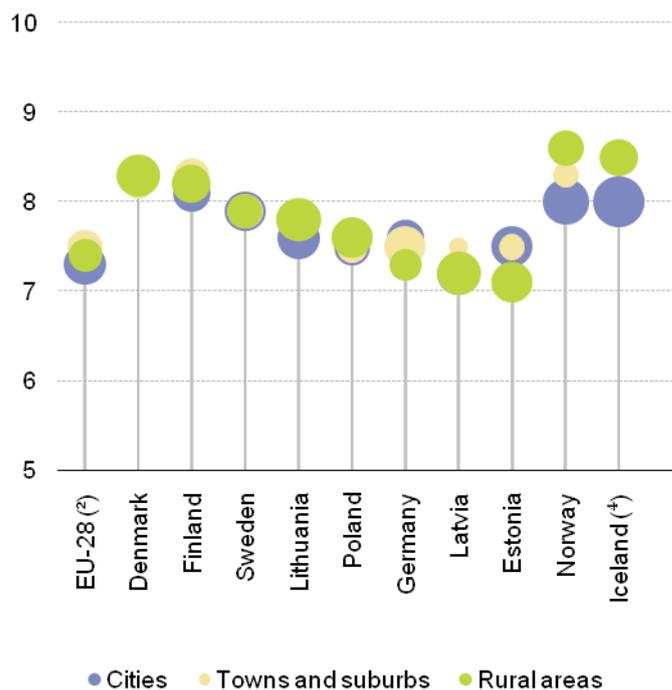


Figure 5. Average satisfaction with commuting time, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (scale, 0–10)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Among the BSR countries, there were no significant differences among those living in the cities, towns and suburbs, and rural areas. Those living in cities of Norway and those living in rural areas of Estonia were relatively unsatisfied with their commute to work (Figure 5). Compared with those living in rural areas, city dwellers in Estonia and Germany were more satisfied with their commuting time.

Percentage of satisfaction experienced by women and men in commuting time evaluated as high, medium or low by domain, presents the following:

- Women in countries like Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway indicated their satisfaction with commuting time as high in comparison to men.
- In Latvia, Lithuania and Poland the proportion of women and men who evaluated their satisfaction with commuting as high or low in nearly on the same level.

5. Satisfaction with time use

In 2013, there was little or no difference at an EU level in relation to the average levels of satisfaction experienced by individuals in relation to their time use. Satisfaction was highest (6.8 on a scale of 0–10) among those living in towns and suburbs, as well as those living in rural areas, while the corresponding value for those living in cities was marginally lower (6.7).

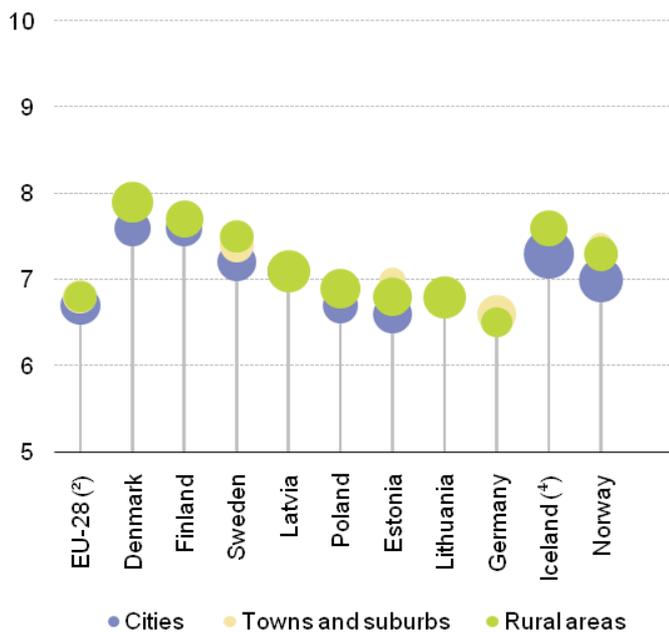


Figure 6. Average satisfaction with time use, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾

(scale, 0–10)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_pw02 and lc_lvho01)

There was a mixed pattern among the EU Member States, although national characteristics appeared to play a greater role than sub-national characteristics (Figure 6). For example, those living in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Latvia were more inclined to be satisfied with their time use than those living in Poland, Estonia or Germany, irrespective of whether they lived in cities or rural areas.

According to satisfaction with time use evaluated as high, medium or low by domain, there are following conclusions:

- In Denmark 44.3% of women and 39.8% of men evaluated their satisfaction with time use as high
- Nearly equal proportion of women and men who are highly and lowly satisfied with their time use is in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia
- The double disparity in high and low satisfaction between women and men is in Denmark and Finland.

6. Self-assessment of health

Health determines economic and social development by reducing or increasing the quality of human capital. Therefore the state of health level, even in a subjective self-evaluation is also increasingly relevant in the context of the ageing population in the whole European Union.

In 2013, the proportion of the EU-28 population (aged 18–64) who assessed their own health as being bad or very bad reached 6.7 % among those living in rural areas, which was somewhat higher than the shares recorded among those living in towns and suburbs (6.1 %) or cities (6.0 %).

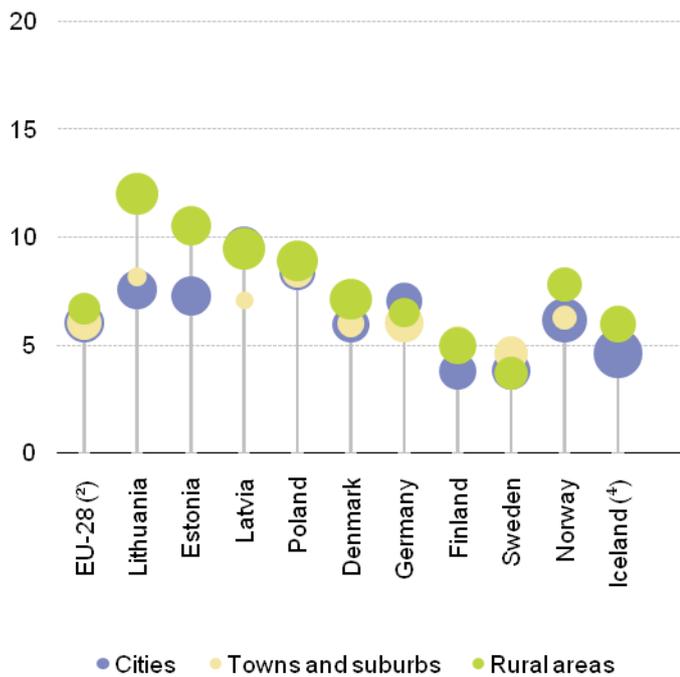


Figure 7. Self-assessment of health, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (% of persons aged 18–64 assessing their own health as bad or very bad)

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_lvhl01 and ilc_lvho01)

The high amount of participants assessing their health as bad or very bad was very typical to eastern BSR countries. For example, the greatest gap in reporting bad or very bad health between those living in rural areas and cities was in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia (Figure 7). By contrast, in Finland and Sweden the level of health state assessed as bad or very bad was the lowest one among all BSR countries.

7. Early leavers from education and training

Across the EU, the proportion of early leavers from education and training was higher among those living in rural areas (13.3 %) than it was for those living in towns and suburbs (12.6 %) or cities (10.7 %).

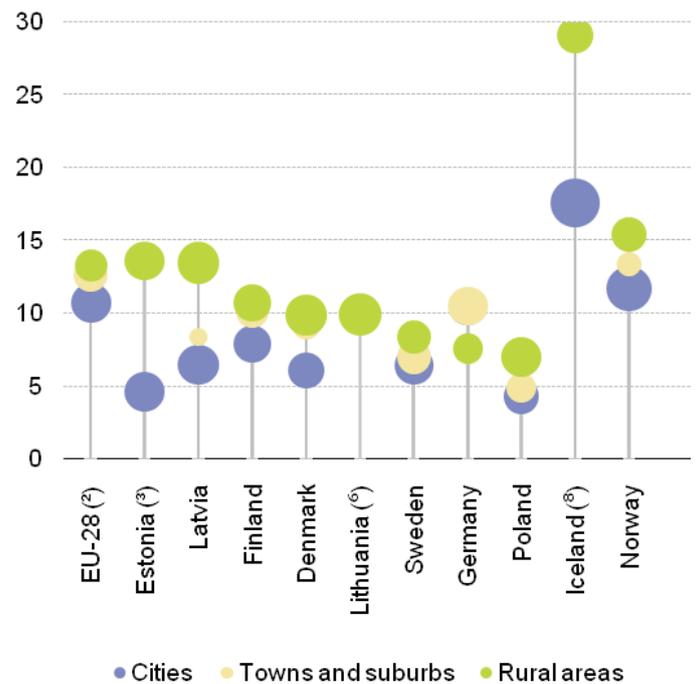


Figure 8. Early leavers from education and training, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (% of 18–24 year-olds)

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽³⁾ Cities: low reliability.

⁽⁶⁾ Cities and towns and suburbs: not available.

⁽⁸⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: edat_ifse_30 and ilc_lvho01)

There were widespread differences both between and within BSR countries (Figure 8). As a general rule, early leavers accounted for a higher share of the population aged 18–24 living in rural areas in most of the EU Member States. The proportion of young people who were early leavers was particularly high in the rural areas of Iceland, Norway, Estonia, and Latvia. So was the enormous difference in proportion between rural areas and cities in case of Estonia, Latvia, and Iceland. By contrast, the proportion of early leavers from education and training was particularly high among those living in the cities of Iceland and Norway.

8. Upper level of secondary education

The proportion of the EU-28 population (aged 18–74) who had attained at least an upper secondary level of educational attainment in 2013 was particularly high in cities, at 77.8 (Figure 9). The share of persons living in cities across the EU-28 who completed at least an upper secondary level of education fell to less than three quarters in towns and suburbs (73.8 %) and rural areas (71.2 %).

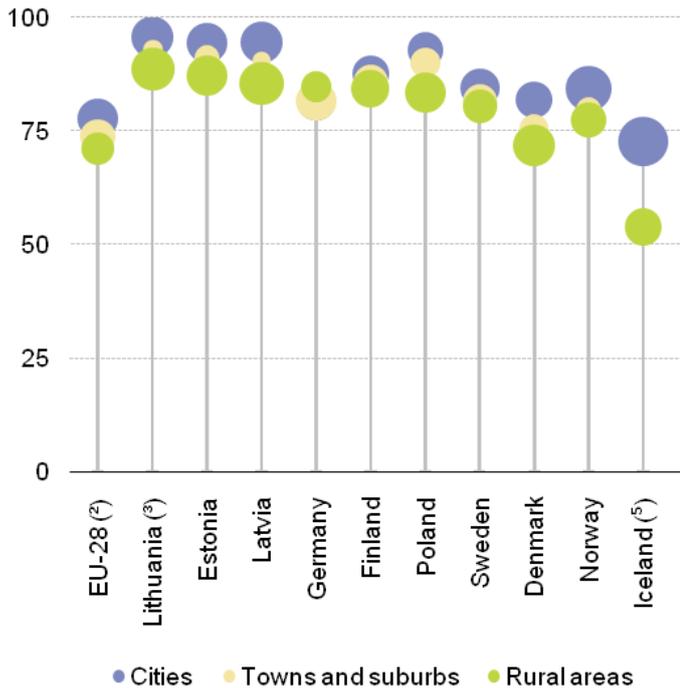


Figure 9. People with at least an upper secondary level of education, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (% of 18–74 year-olds)

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽³⁾ Towns and suburbs: low reliability.

⁽⁵⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: edat_ifs_9913 and ilc_lvho01)

In the vast majority of the BSR countries, a lower share of the rural population (compared with those living in cities) had attained at least an upper secondary level of educational attainment. In Iceland more than 50 % of the population living in rural areas, towns and suburbs had not attained at least an upper secondary level of educational attainment. Germany was the only BSR country where a higher proportion of the population living in rural areas (compared with those living in

cities) had attained at least an upper secondary level of education.

9. Someone to rely on in case of need for help

The vast majority of the EU-28 population declared that they had someone to rely on in the event that they needed help. In 2013, some 94.1 % of those living in rural areas stated this was the case, which was marginally higher than the shares recorded among those living in cities (92.9 %) and those living in towns and suburbs (93.2 %).

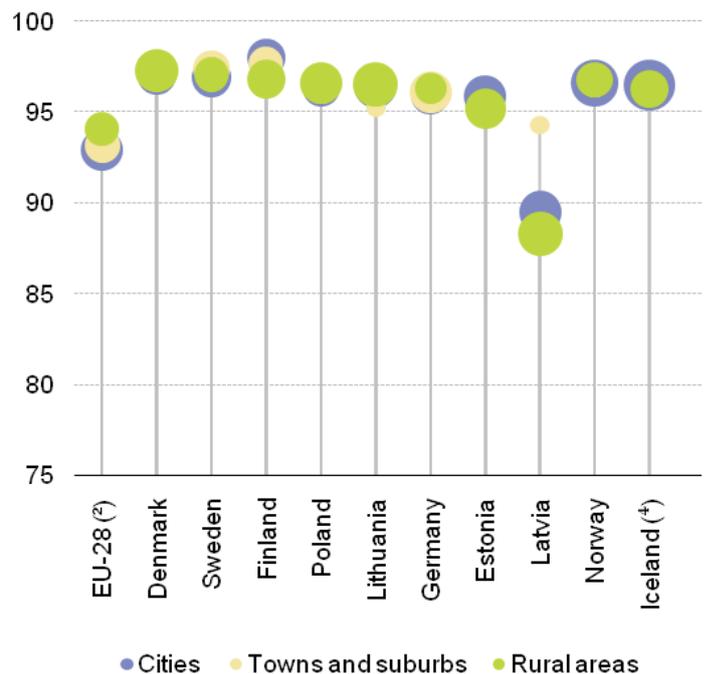


Figure 10. People stating they have someone to rely on in case of need for help, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾, (%)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate for population.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_pw07 and ilc_lvho01)

Generally, almost across all the BSR countries, a relatively high proportion of the populations reported that they had someone to rely on, irrespective of the degree of urbanisation under consideration (Figure 10). Nearly all the countries presented the same level (95%) and above of relying on someone when in need of help. The opposite was true in Latvia, where those living in rural areas and cities could less rely on someone when in need of help.

10. Crime, violence or vandalism

A far higher share of people living in cities reported crime, violence or vandalism in 2013 (Figure 11). More than 20.9 % of those living in cities across the EU-28, reported crime, violence or vandalism in their local area. This could be contrasted with a much lower share among those living in towns and suburbs (12.0 %), falling to 7.3 % of the population living in rural areas.

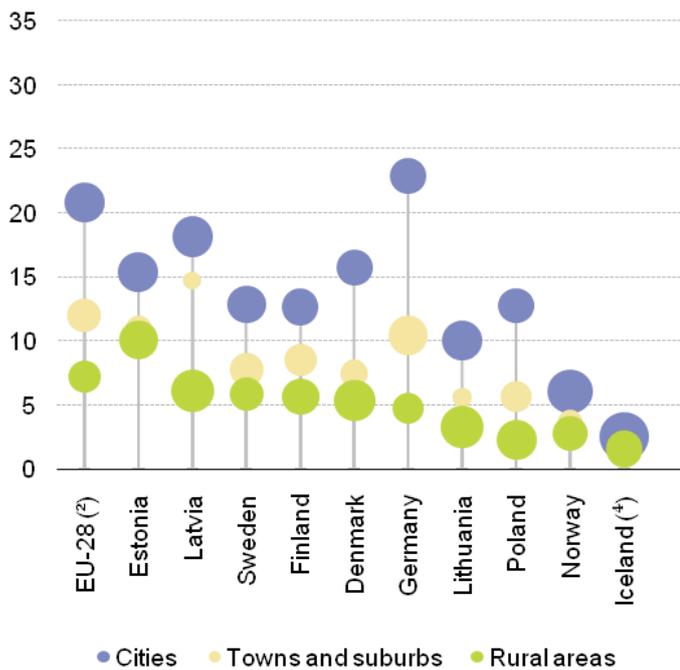


Figure 11. People reporting crime, violence or vandalism in their area, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_mddw06 and ilc_lvho01)

In the BSR countries, this pattern was repeated, with higher rates of crime, violence and vandalism in cities than in rural areas. The difference was particularly marked in Poland and Germany, where those living in cities were at least four times as likely to report crime, violence or vandalism as those living in rural areas. Iceland was atypical insofar as it was the only BSR country in which the proportion of people living in rural areas and cities reported crime, violence or vandalism in their area on almost the same level.

11. Environmental problems

Across the EU-28 in 2013, the proportion of people reporting pollution, grime or other environmental problems was highest, unsurprisingly, among those living in cities (Figure 12). There was a clear relationship between degrees of urbanisation and the share of the population reporting pollution, grime or other environmental problems, as these touched a much lower share of the EU's population living in towns and suburbs (12.8 %), or rural areas (8.3 %).

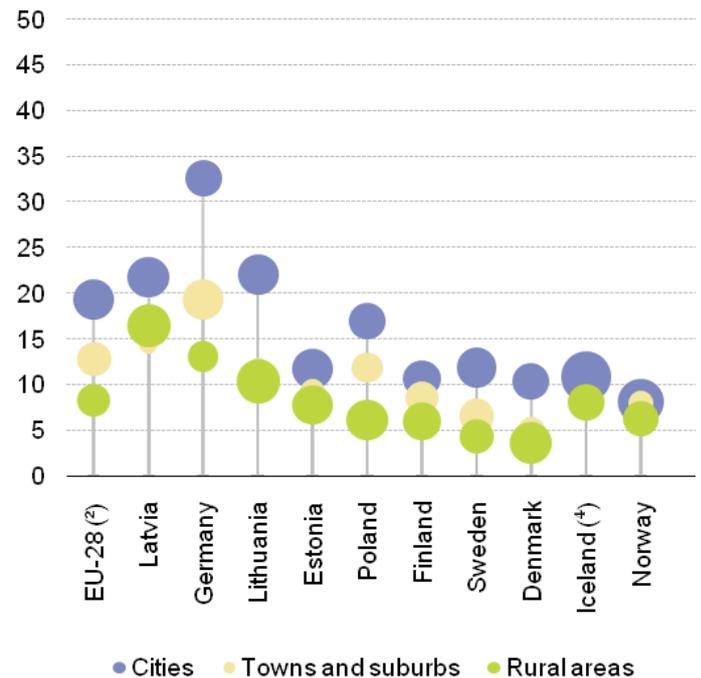


Figure 12. People reporting pollution, grime or other environmental problems in their area by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (%)

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_mddw05 and ilc_lvho01)

Overall, without taking account of the degree of urbanisation, respondents in Denmark, Sweden and Finland reported some of the lowest levels of exposure to pollution, grime and other environmental problems. Looking in more detail, a very high proportion of those living in the cities of Germany and Lithuania reported exposure to pollution, grime and environmental problems.

12. Average trust in others

In 2013, defined on a scale of 0–10 - average trust in others was identical in the EU-28 for the three different degrees of urbanisation, at 5.8 (Figure 13).

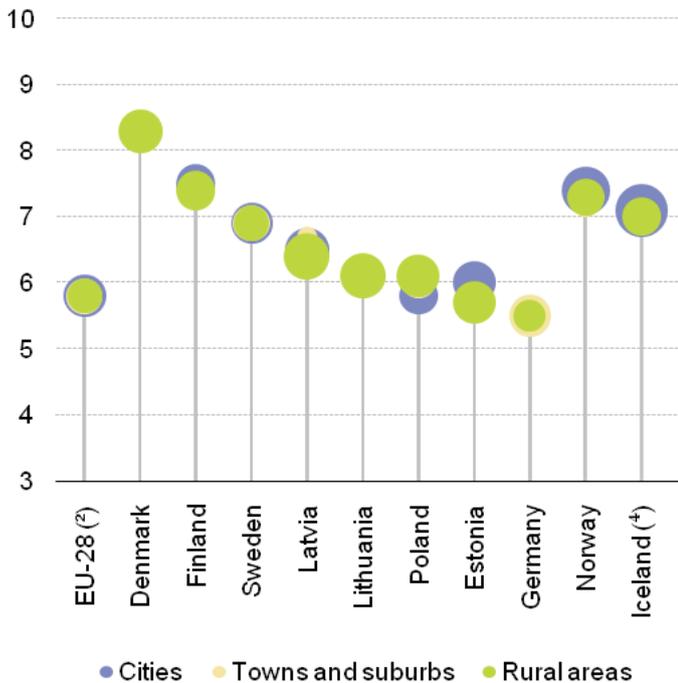


Figure 13. Average trust in others, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾ (scale, 0–10)

⁽¹⁾ Note the y-axis has been cut. The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_pw04 and ilc_lvho01)

Across the BSR countries, trust in others varied considerably more across BSR countries than it did by degree of urbanisation within each of the country separately. That said, those living in the countries of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland tended to record somewhat higher levels of trust than those living in the former East Bloc countries. By contrast, the lowest degree of trust in others was in Germany.

13. Overall life satisfaction

In 2013, overall life satisfaction in the EU-28 (as measured on a scale of 0–10) was similar across the three different degrees of urbanisation: satisfaction was slightly higher in towns and suburbs (7.1) than it was in either cities or rural areas (both 7.0).

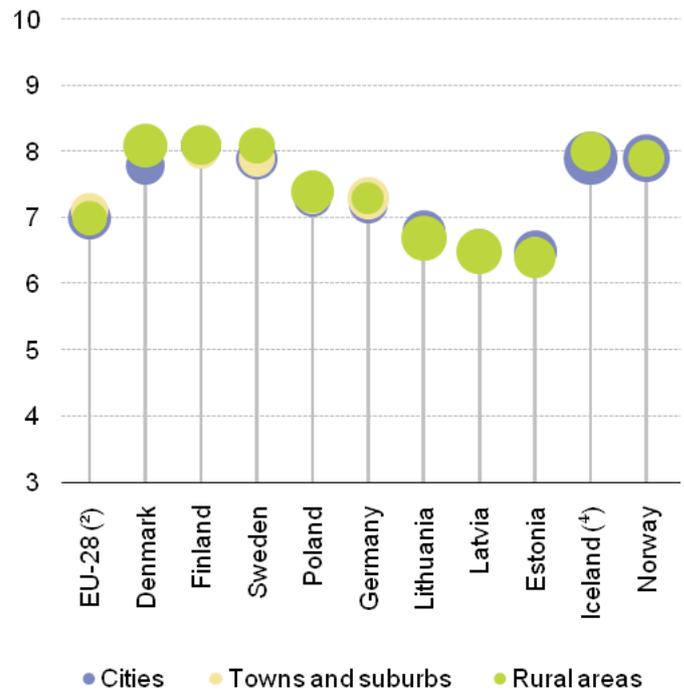


Figure 14. Overall life satisfaction, by degree of urbanisation, 2013 ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The size of the bubbles reflects the share of each degree of urbanisation in national population.

⁽²⁾ Rural areas: estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Towns and suburbs: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc_mddw05 and ilc_lvho01)

Across the BSR countries, life satisfaction (irrespective of the degree of urbanisation) tended to be highest in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, and Norway. On the contrary were Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (Figure 14) which joined the EU in 2004. Surprisingly, the overall life satisfaction is on the same level for those living in cities, towns and suburbs and in rural areas in Germany and Poland.

According to the percentage of women and men rating their overall life satisfaction as high, medium or low by domain who are 16 years old and over with an educational attainment level, the results are following:

- The single digit percentage of women and men who estimated their overall life satisfaction as low is in Finland, Sweden and Iceland.
- The highest percentage of women and men who estimated their overall life satisfaction as high was in Denmark.
- In Latvia and Lithuania, only 13.3% and 19.9% estimated their overall life satisfaction as high, and so did women, 12% and 18% respectively.
- Over 25% of women and men did find their overall life satisfaction as low.

3. WOMEN AND MEN IN RURAL AREAS – FACTS AND FIGURES

To know more about the situation of women living in the rural areas, it is necessary to compare it with the situation of men living in the rural areas and/or people

living in intermediate or urban regions. In this part of report data showing basic information about economic conditions in rural areas has been described.

The share of female population in rural areas has decreased in most BSR countries

While analysing the situation of women living in rural regions it is worth knowing how large the research group is. Population by gender in 2000 and 2014 is shown in table 1. According to the data presented in that table, the number of women in rural areas in 2014

in comparison to 2000 increased in Germany and Finland. The biggest decrease in the number of women in rural regions has been observed in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.

Table 1. Population by gender in 2000 and 2014 in BSR countries (in 1 000 persons from 15 to 64 years)

	2000						2014					
	Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions		Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
DENMARK	:	:	:	:	:	:	428.6	426.8	867.2	875.0	503.4	525.2
GERMANY	11331	11291	8 873	9 115	3 975	4 139	11151	11185	10799	10646	4 568	4 380
ESTONIA	199.3	172.9	66.9	61.4	219.3	217.9	199.9	183.7	47.6	49.1	191.0	190.4
LATVIA	411.7	361.0	109.7	103.0	313.6	301.3	352.4	306.5	82.6	81.6	235.7	236.5
LITHUANIA	312.6	282.5	380.5	346.2	510.0	486.6	283.3	256.2	325.8	298.7	402.7	394.3
POLAND	3 669	3 454	4 804	4 698	4 509	4 519	3 746	3 524	4 774	4 795	4 138	4 302
FINLAND	:	:	146.8	149.3	285.5	296.9	542.3	527.3	520.5	527.1	667.5	701.7
SWEDEN	587.6	588.1	1 700	1 772	464.9	480.9	714.8	714.1	1 849	1 917	454.7	492.7
NORWAY	325.3	323.9	660.4	675.4	435.2	454.8	:	:	:	:	:	:

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

On the basis of the data presented in the table 1 it is possible to calculate the shares of women living in rural areas in the total population. Due to the significant differences in the population of the BSR countries, these shares are a better indicator which will allow one to compare the situation in different regions. The share of women living in rural areas in the total population decreased in most of the analysed countries

between 2000 and 2014. The only increase in the share took place in Germany. In 2014 the highest share of women living in rural regions has been noticed in: Estonia (22,2%), Lithuania (20,5%), Poland (19,1%) and Latvia (18,2%). On the other hand, the lowest percentage has been recorded in Sweden (7,4) and Germany (8,7%).

Gross value added in rural regions has grown

The data presented in the table 1 allow to calculate the share of women and men living in the rural areas in the general population. That share varies from 15,4% in Sweden to 44,3% in Estonia and its highly diversified in the BSR countries. Apart from that, it's necessary to emphasise that rural regions are inhabited by the substantial part of society, who work for general well-being. Due to that gross value added at basic prices in 2000 and 2012 in BSR countries was presented in the table 2.

The highest gross value added in rural regions in 2012 has been noted in Germany, 343 308,86 million euros, and the lowest – in Latvia, 4 410,76 million euros, and in Estonia, 4 800,8 million euros. Beside the fact that in the analysed countries, gross value added has grown between 2000 and 2012, it is necessary to add that gross value added in rural regions is lower than in urban regions, in both analysed years. Moreover, in the context of development, gender issues are hardly ever discussed.

Table 2. Gross value added at basic prices in 2000 and 2012 in BSR countries (in Million euro in all NACE activities)

	2000			2012		
	Predominantly urban regions	Intermediate regions	Predominantly rural regions	Predominantly urban regions	Intermediate regions	Predominantly rural regions
DENMARK	44 590.68	65 046.42	39 015.54	68 185.31	89 495.41	50 978.01
GERMANY	:	:	:	1 208 068.40	918 821.76	343 308.86
ESTONIA	3 145.30	464.80	1 902.60	9 415.50	1 165.60	4 800.80
LATVIA	4 965.96	907.03	1 703.93	12 950.78	1 997.44	4 410.76
LITHUANIA	:	:	:	11 615.24	9 547.15	8 970.02
POLAND	66 141.16	58 389.55	40 848.51	140 108.49	118 521.04	83 538.84
FINLAND	43 950.92	34 111.55	41 022.17	64 439.38	47 774.69	59 405.47
SWEDEN	71 514.71	140 398.21	37 126.65	116 102.99	206 314.04	51 330.64
NORWAY	:	:	:	86 140.92	120 815.91	64 666.83

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

After the calculation of the share of gross value added in rural regions and the gross value added in general, it's possible to compare in which of the analysed countries is the biggest and the smallest part of it generated in rural regions.

The ranking order in 2012 was presented as below.

Ranking 2012: 1. Sweden (13,73%), 2. Germany (13,9%), 3. Latvia (22,78%), 4. Norway (23,81%), 5. Poland (24,41%), 6. Denmark (24,43%), 7. Lithuania (29,77%), 8. Estonia (31,21%), 9. Finland (34,62%).

It is not possible to present the ranking order in 2000 due to the lack of relevant data for three of the studied countries.

Employment rate among women in rural regions is lower than in urban

In all analysed countries employment rate among women has grown between 2000 and 2014, which is shown in table 3. In 2014 the highest employment rate among women has been observed in Germany (80,2%) and Sweden (73,8%), while the lowest in Poland (53%). What is important, is the fact that differences between

BSR countries are much smaller when the employment rates in rural regions in general are taken into consideration. This rates take the numbers from 60,4% in Poland to 75,8% in Germany in 2014, what can be estimated on the basis of data presented in table 3.

Table 3. Employment rates by gender among people from 15 to 64 years in 2000 and 2014 in BSR countries (in %)

	2000						2014					
	Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions		Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
DENMARK	:	:	:	:	:	:	71.0	77.2	70.0	75.1	68.4	75.7
GERMANY	56.9	71.9	58.7	73.6	58.5	75.2	76.3	67.7	78.9	70.6	80.2	71.3
ESTONIA	62.7	69.6	51.8	58.6	56.3	60.2	69.8	78.2	54.3	64.5	65.7	70.1
LATVIA	56.2	65.6	49.1	62.6	50.9	57.1	68.2	72.7	61.2	65.4	59.7	63.8
LITHUANIA	58.7	61.8	57.7	61.2	58.4	60.5	70.8	69.6	65.9	69.4	59.9	62.4
POLAND	50.3	61.8	46.5	59.2	51.3	62.6	59.5	71.5	53.6	66.4	53.0	67.5
FINLAND	:	:	66.3	72.5	61.5	71.2	72.0	74.9	66.0	66.4	65.6	67.4
SWEDEN	78.1	77.6	68.9	73.1	69.2	72.3	76.1	79.0	71.8	75.9	73.8	75.4
NORWAY	77.6	84.3	72.9	81.6	72.7	80.1	:	:	:	:	:	:

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

The comparison of employment rates in rural regions by gender shows that those rates are higher among men than women in most BSR countries. Moreover, a similar situation has been observed in all OECD countries (OECD, 2008, p.12-13). The biggest difference in 2014 was noted in Poland, where the employment rate among women was lower than among men by 14,5 percentage points. In the other analysed countries this difference was significantly smaller. The fact that the employment gender gap is

narrowing has been noticed in documents presented by Eurostat (F. Ramb, 2008). The only exception to this situation took place in 2014 in Germany, where employment rate among male in rural regions was significantly lower than among women by 8,9 percentage points. The example of Germany is specific due to one more reason, unlike other BSR countries, the employment rate among women in rural regions is higher than in urban regions.

Unemployment rate among women living in rural areas has decreased over the years

The potential of the labour source that is not used can be described by the unemployment rates, which have been presented in table 4. Unemployment rates among women in urban and rural regions differ among BSR countries. In 2014 in Denmark, Germany, Estonia and Sweden unemployment rates among women in rural regions were lower than in urban regions. On the other hand, the situation in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and

Finland was reversed. The positive aspect that need to be noticed is the fact that the unemployment rate in rural regions among women has decreased over the analysed years. The lowest unemployment rate in 2014 among women in rural regions was observed in Germany (4,4%), Estonia (5,4%) and Denmark (6,4%), while the highest in Lithuania (13,1%), Latvia (12,7%) and Poland (11,5%).

Table 4. Unemployment rates by gender among people 15 years old or over in 2000 and 2014 in BSR countries (in %)

	2000						2014					
	Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions		Predominantly urban regions		Intermediate regions		Predominantly rural regions	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
DENMARK	:	:	:	:	:	:	8.2	7.3	6.3	6.0	6.5	6.2
GERMANY	:	:	:	:	:	:	5.1	6.2	4.4	4.9	4.4	4.7
ESTONIA	9.1	11.0	20.0	31.6	11.5	13.8	7.0	6.5	12.5	14.6	5.4	7.6
LATVIA	12.2	13.8	15.6	13.6	14.3	17.0	7.3	8.8	13.2	12.1	12.7	15.9
LITHUANIA	15.4	18.2	12.6	17.7	13.2	18.6	6.5	10.7	7.2	9.8	13.1	15.1
POLAND	15.3	11.8	21.6	16.9	17.3	14.3	7.8	6.8	9.4	8.9	11.5	9.5
FINLAND	:	:	12.5	10.4	12.9	9.8	6.8	7.8	9.0	10.4	8.1	9.8
SWEDEN	2.5	3.9	5.8	6.3	5.5	7.0	7.2	7.1	8.1	8.6	6.9	8.2
NORWAY	2.5	2.7	3.6	3.8	3.4	4.0	:	:	:	:	:	:

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

The comparison of unemployment rate by gender was favourably to women in many BSR countries. Only in Poland and in Lithuania was the unemployment rate in rural regions in 2014 higher among women than men. The biggest differences has been noted in Latvia (3,2

percentage points) and Estonia (2,2 percentage points), in favour to women. Similar conclusion can be drawn while analysing unemployment rates in BSR countries in general (Hozer-Koćmiel, Misiak, Tomaszewska, 2014).

BSR countries divided into three groups in terms of Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in unadjusted form, according to the definition given by Eurostat, “represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of

male paid employees”. Employees in companies with ten or more employees made up the population. The unadjusted GPG in 2013 significantly differ in BSR countries, what has been shown in figure 15.

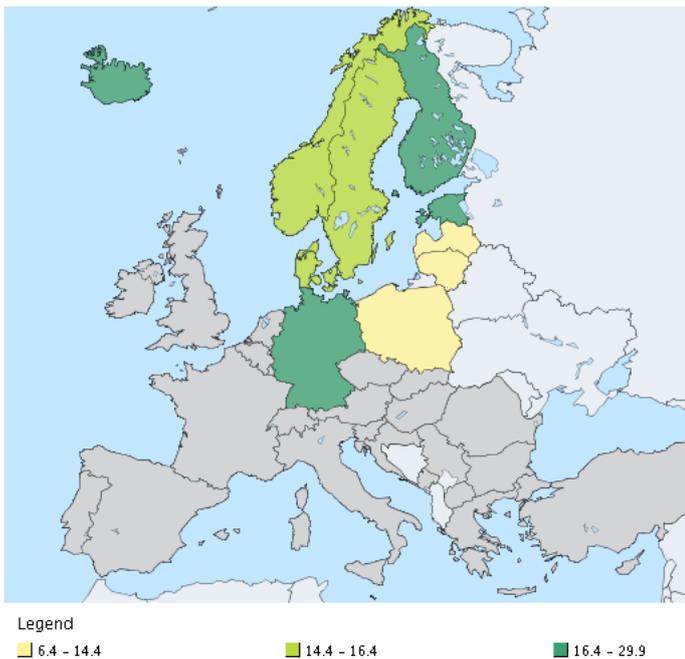


Figure 15. Gender pay gap in unadjusted form in 2013 in BSR countries (in %)

Source: Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/eurostat/tgm/mapToolClosed.do?tab=map&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdc340&toolbox=legend>

BSR countries have been divided into three groups while analysing the differences between average gross hourly earnings of male and female paid employees. The first group, with the lowest scale of differences, consist of three countries: Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. The other three -Denmark, Sweden and Norway- form a group with the average size of differences, while the highest GPG has been noted in Germany, Finland, Estonia and Iceland.

While analysing differences in earnings it is worth to consider whether they had changed over the years (see figure 16).

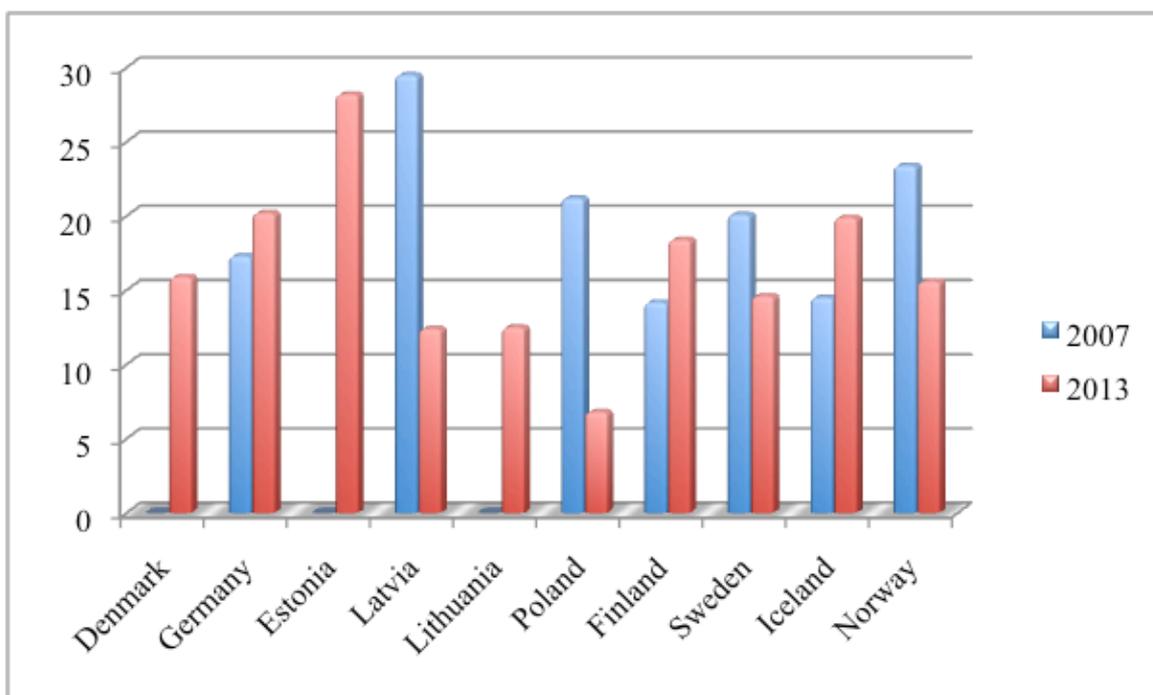


Figure 16. Gender pay gap in unadjusted form in 2007 and 2013 in BSR countries (in %)

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

In four of analysed countries (Latvia, Poland, Sweden and Norway) GPG has decreased over the years. Reversed situation has been observed in Germany, Finland and Iceland, which means that the differences in earning between men and women got bigger. Due to the lack of relevant data for three of the studied

countries it is not possible to present the changes in GPG over analysed years. Taking the GPG into consideration by economic control, it can be observed that in most BSR countries differences are lower in the public sector than in the private one (Torstenson, Hozer-Koćmiel, Misiak, 2013).

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN BSR COUNTRIES

Women live in a more sustainable way than men

Many research show that women live in a more sustainable way than men, therefore the aim of this chapter is to see what is the level of sustainability of development in the Baltic Sea Region countries and to check its relationship with gender equality. We proposed a Taxonomic Measure of Sustainable Development and analyzed its correlation with Gender Equality Index. The thesis has been formulated that there is a strong and positive relation between the two variables. That means that the higher the gender equality is, the more sustainably developed the region is.

The TMSD measure also effectively illustrates how strongly differentiated the BSR countries are in terms of sustainable development. The most favourable situation was observed in Scandinavian countries and Norway. It is also worth noticing that in most of the countries the level of sustainable development rose over the time of observation.

The global crisis of the last decade apparently worsened the socio-economic situation in some regions of BSR countries. The decrease in production volume, salaries, employment, income, consumption and investment was observed. The GDP growth rate went lower in wealthy countries than in the worse off countries after

economic transformation. Despite the fact that the growth rates quickly recovered to its pre-crisis values, the quality of life of some population groups in Europe has evidently deteriorated (Stiglitz et al, 2010).

In many regions, women's economic situation is hard, due to their disadvantageous position on the labour market, lower salaries and incomes as well as their stronger dependence on social protection. At the time of crisis, the situation gets even harder – this is why women's position on the labour market is often described as “last in – first out”. This means that they are less likely than men to find a good job and more likely to lose it (Izdes, 2007).

In the majority of the Baltic Sea Region countries the necessity to increase female participation rate in employment is strongly emphasized by both economists and politicians. It is generally believed that it is the best way to reduce a growing gap in labour force due to ageing (except migration). Increased women's market activity means more effective allocation of human resources, better use of people's talents -both women and men- the consequence of which is a positive effect on economic growth (Ruminska-Zimny 2009, Lofstrom 2009).

Gender issues are hardly ever discussed in the context of the sustainability of development

Despite public debate about the sustainability of development gender issues are hardly ever discussed in this context. Research shows that women live in a more sustainable way than men and that their market activity is generally more environmentally friendly. What is more, some authors claim that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development (Johnsson-Latham, 2007).

The authors propose the Taxonomic Measure of Sustainable Development TMSD constructed on the basis of the Sustainable Development Indicators published by Eurostat. The TMSD has been calculated as a simple average of the variables:

$$TMSD_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{10} X_{ij}}{10},$$

where:

TMSD_i – Taxonomic Measure of Sustainable Development in the *i*th country, X_{ij}– the *i*th value *j*th Sustainable Development variable.

The TMSD for each country has been defined as the value ranging from 0 to 1, where 0 means the total absence of sustainability in the country and 1 means a totally sustainably developed country when it comes to the analyzed variables. The variables have been normalised to range from 0 to 1, and expressed as stimulants (which means that the higher the value of the variable the better e.g. monthly income).

The empirical analysis has been performed on the basis of the Sustainable Development Indicators which are used to monitor the EU Sustainable Development Strategy in a report announced by Eurostat every two years. They are presented in ten themes: socio-economic development, sustainable consumption and production, social inclusion, demographic changes, public health, climate change and energy, sustainable transport, natural resources, global partnership and, finally, good governance. The measure is very simple. The authors do not use any weights, presuming equal influence of each of the component variables.

Out of more than 100 indicators, twelve have been identified as headline indicators. They are intended to give an overall picture of whether the European Union has achieved progress towards sustainable development in terms of the objectives and targets defined in the strategy.

The variables which are used in this research to calculate TMSD are:

- X1 – Growth rate of real GDP per capita,
- X2 – Resource productivity,
- X3 – People at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion,
- X4 – Employment rate of older workers, birth,
- X6 – Greenhouse gas emissions,

- X7 – Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption,
- X8 – Primary energy consumption,
- X9 – Energy consumption of transport relative to GDP,
- X10 – Official development assistance as share of gross national income.

Two of the monitored headline indicators: the Common Bird Index and the Fish Catches are omitted in the study as there is no data available for the years of this observation.

Gender equality was described by the Gender Equality Index GEI created by European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius. The measure covers 6 Basic domains: Work, Money, Knowledge, Time, Power, Health, and 2 Satellite domains: intersecting inequalities and violence. GEI make take the values from 0 to 100, where 0 means total inequality, and 100 the opposite.

In order to measure the relation between the level of the sustainability of development and the gender equality index, the Pearson coefficient was used. It is a simple statistical measurement that indicates the strength and direction of the relation. The measurement may take the values from (-1) to (1). When the value of the measurement is close to one it means that the relation is strong and negative; the higher the values of one variable the lower the values of the second one. When the Pearson coeff. is close to 0 there is no relationship between the 2 examined dimensions. When the values are close to 1 it means that the relation is positive and strong: the higher the values on one variable the higher the values of the other one.

The analysis has been performed for nine Baltic Sea Region countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. The data concern the years 2004 and 2012.

Evident changes in the level sustainable development: upward tendency in most countries

Level of sustainability of development (TMSD) differed substantially across the BSR countries (see Fig.1 and Tab. 1). The countries with the lowest level of sustainable development in 2012 were Poland and Germany followed by Finland and lower income countries such as Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. The best situation in terms of the examined variables was observed in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Surprisingly low value of the German index is a consequence of its poorly assessed socio-economic development - in this instance measured with the growth rate of real GDP per capita, relatively poorly rated demographic changes as well as unfavourable parameters of climate change and energy. In the case of the latter, Germany witnessed particularly large primary energy consumption.

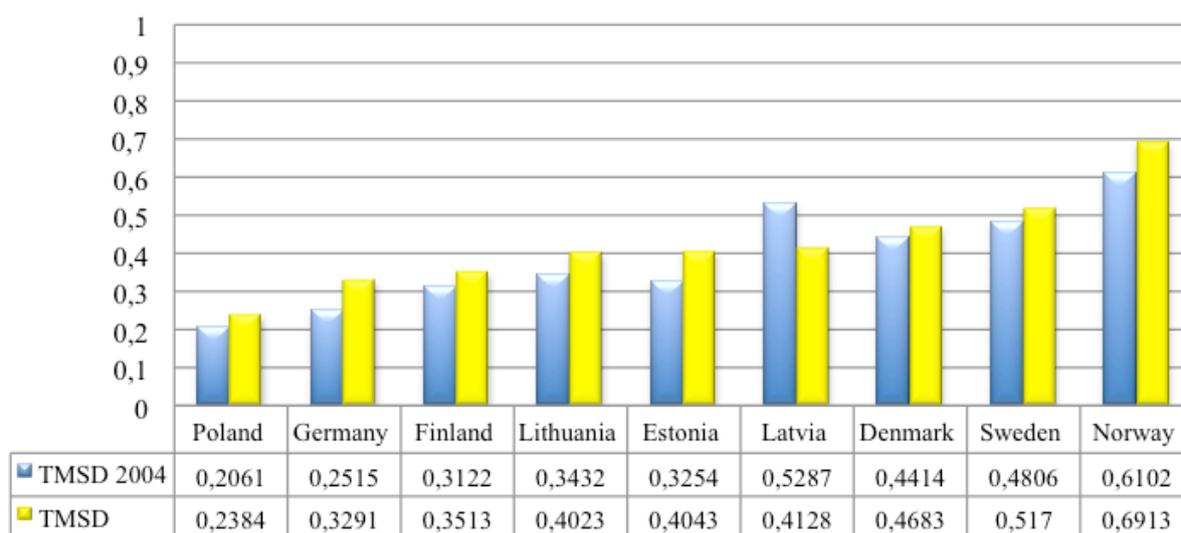


Figure 17. Taxonomic Measures of Sustainable Development in 2004 and 2012 in BSR countries

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

Table 5. Comparative Analysis of the Taxonomic Measure of Sustainable Development in 2004 and 2012

Country	TMSD 2004	TMSD 2012	Change in %
POLAND	0.2061	0.2384	3.2%
GERMANY	0.2515	0.3291	7.8%
FINLAND	0.3122	0.3513	3.9%
LITHUANIA	0.3432	0.4023	5.9%
ESTONIA	0.3254	0.4043	7.9%
LATVIA	0.5287	0.4128	-11.6%
DENMARK	0.4414	0.4683	2.7%
SWEDEN	0.4806	0.517	3.6%
NORWAY	0.6102	0.6913	8.1%

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

In the two periods of study (2004 and 2012) changes in the sustainable development level measured with Eurostat Headline Indicators were clearly visible. In the majority of the BSR countries (8 out of 9) the increase in TMSD was observed. Only one country: Latvia saw the TMSD decrease. The reason of that change is the deterioration in terms of the two important components: Socio-economic development (Growth rate of real GDP per capita) and Climate change and energy (Greenhouse gas emissions). Another question is that there was no data for Latvia for Social inclusion (People at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion) in 2004, what caused the higher values of the index that it

should be. In fact the country should be excluded from the analysis because of the lack of relevant data for one of the studied period. The ranking order in 2012 in comparison to 2004 could be presented as below.

Ranking 2004: 1. Norway, 2. Latvia, 3. Sweden, 4. Denmark, 5. Lithuania, 6. Estonia, 7. Finland, 8. Germany, 9. Poland.

Ranking 2012: 1. Norway, 2. Sweden, 3. Denmark, 4. Latvia, 5. Estonia, 6. Lithuania, 7. Finland 8. Germany, 9. Poland.

It is worth noticing that in both analysed years the countries could be divided into two groups: the well-off and better developed Scandinavian countries with Norway and Germany, and the group of less developed countries that had undergone economic transformation. The latter have been catching up with the more developed states from the first group, but many differences in the micro-economic, social and environmental spheres can still be observed.

Strong and positive relation between Sustainable development and Gender Equality could be observed in BSR countries

To answer the question how sustainability of development is related to gender equality two indices were used. The first one is the author's TMSD, and the second one is GEI published by EIGE. The

GEI measure reached the highest values for Sweden, Denmark and Finland, and the lowest ones for Lithuania, Poland and Estonia (column 1 of the tab. 2).

Table 6. Comparative Analysis of the Taxonomic Measure of Sustainable Development in 2004 and 2012

Country	GIE 2012	Work	Money	Knowledge	Time	Power	Health	TMSD 2012
LITHUANIA	43.6	61.0	41.5	47.4	24.1	32.1	84.9	0.40
POLAND	44.1	61.4	52.2	44.0	20.9	34.5	82.6	0.24
ESTONIA	50.0	64.6	49.1	53.0	51.4	27.5	83.8	0.40
GERMANY	51.6	72.5	76.3	44.1	41.6	28.0	89.5	0.33
FINLAND	72.7	72.6	79.9	67.3	61.3	75.7	89.0	0.35
DENMARK	73.6	81.6	79.2	75.1	64.9	60.0	91.8	0.47
SWEDEN	74.3	78.6	80.2	66.3	63.9	74.3	93.1	0.52

Source: own study on the basis of EIGE and Eurostat data

The difference in gender equality was caused mainly by the lack of Power, significant gender gap in terms of the Time use, and also the gap in terms of Money. The other components of gender equality (Work, Knowledge and Health) showed smaller variety for the chosen BSR countries. In the next step we used the Pearson coefficient to measure the relationship between

GEI and TMSD. The value of it was 0,73, which means that there was strong and positive relationship between gender equality and the level of sustainability of development. The higher the gender equality the more sustainably developed the country, and vice versa. The relation could be called the 'two way street', where the variables mutually influence each other.

5. WOMEN AND MEN IN GREEN AND BLUE SECTOR OF ECONOMY

Green sector of economy in general

The green economy provides decent work and stable employment prospects. This sector of economy is becoming more and more popular. According to the April 2012 Employment Package, the green economy is identified as a key source of job creation in Europe.

‘Green jobs’ cover all jobs that depend on the environment as work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities. It can also include jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy, materials, and water consumption.

Environment-dependent activities based on natural resources represent a further relevant source of direct, indirect and induced employment. In 2007, these sectors employed 28.4 million individuals (in full-time equivalents) in the EU28. It is about 17% of the EU working age population. More than 10 million people were employed in agriculture only. The employment share of environment-dependent sectors was the highest in Romania (60%), Bulgaria (40%) and Poland (about 32%). In Fig.18. the comparison between the overall economy and the environmental economy is presented for the period 2000-2012.

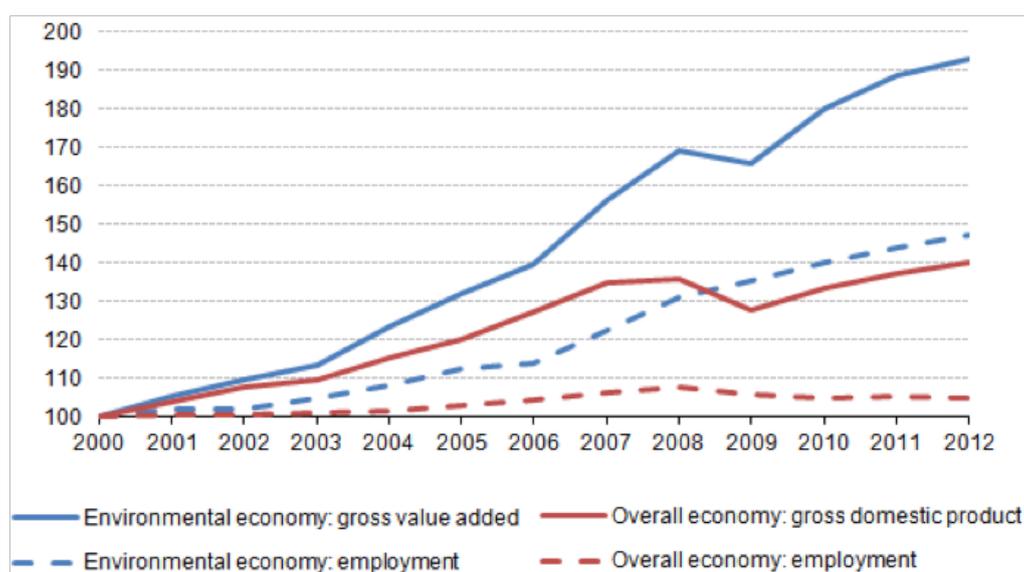


Figure 18. Development of key indicators for the environmental economy and the overall economy, EU-28, 2000–2012.

Source: Eurostat (env_ac_egss1)

We can observe that during 2000-2012 there was a steady pattern of net job creation within the environmental economy. Annual employment increases were in the range of 2–4 % most years, with lower growth in 2002 and higher growth in 2007 and 2008.

According to Eurostat data, the activity with the highest contribution to the gross value added of the EU-28’s environmental economy in 2012 was energy and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities.

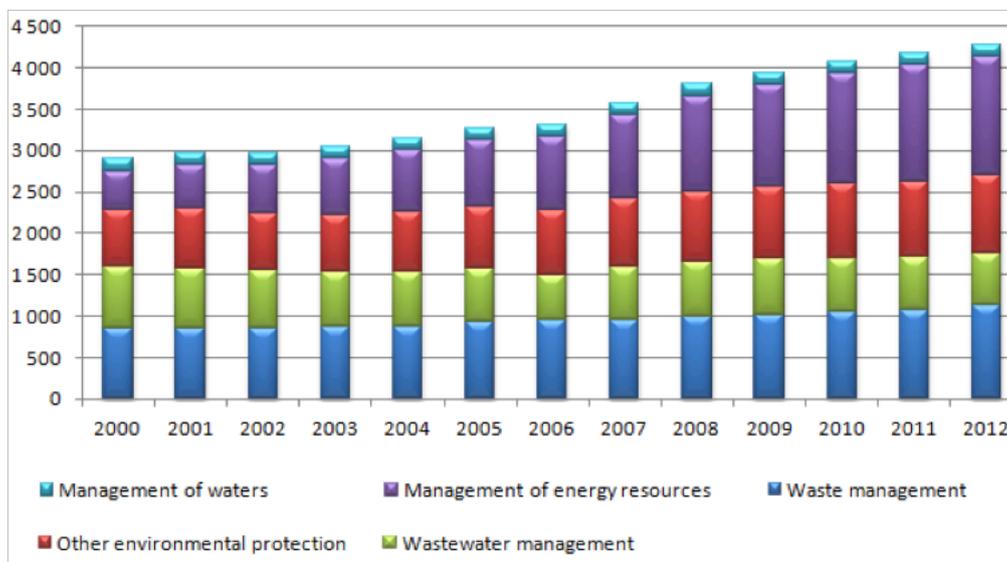


Figure 19. Employment in the environmental economy, by domain, EU-28, 2000–2012

(thousand full-time equivalents)

Source: Eurostat (env_ac_egss1)

The increasing number of employees within the green sector of the economy since 2000 was due to the growth in the management of energy resources, mainly those concerning the production of energy from renewable sources and the production of equipment and installations for heat and energy saving. Employment in this environmental domain increased from 475 thousand full-time equivalents in 2000 to 1.4 million full-time equivalents in 2012. The domain of waste management was the second most important contribution to employment growth in green sector, where employment increased to 1.1 million full-time equivalents in 2012. The only domain where employment decreased during the period 2000–2012 was wastewater management from 113 thousand

full-time equivalents down to 635 thousand full-time equivalents in 2012.

Green sector of economy in BSR countries

There still is a lack of all systematic collection of data on the development of environment-dependent activities in Baltic Sea Region. Eurostat provides a database on the Environmental Goods and Services Sector. Despite continuous improvement efforts, available data are still fragmented and incomplete, that is why we need to focus on only some specific sectors. Fig.20. – Fig.23. present the amount of female and male employees at the age from 15 to 64 in all BSR countries including Iceland and Norway in some green sector domains.

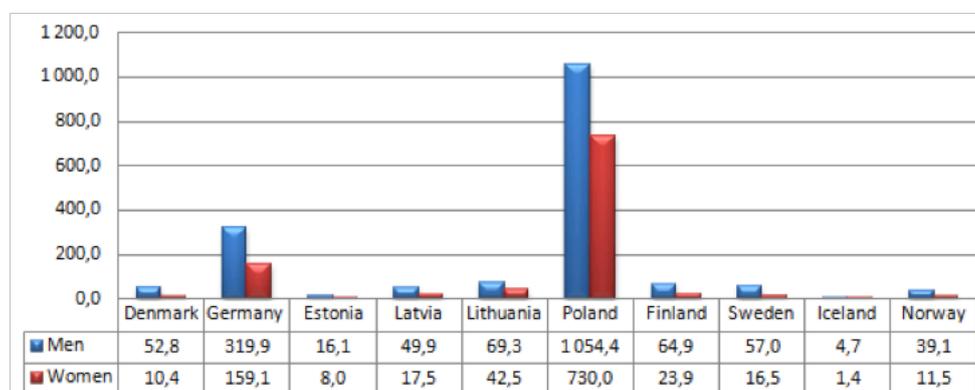


Figure 20. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (unit- thousand) in 2014

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

In agriculture, forestry, and fishing, the leader is Poland both for women and men. The highest disparity

between male and female employment in these sectors is in Denmark.

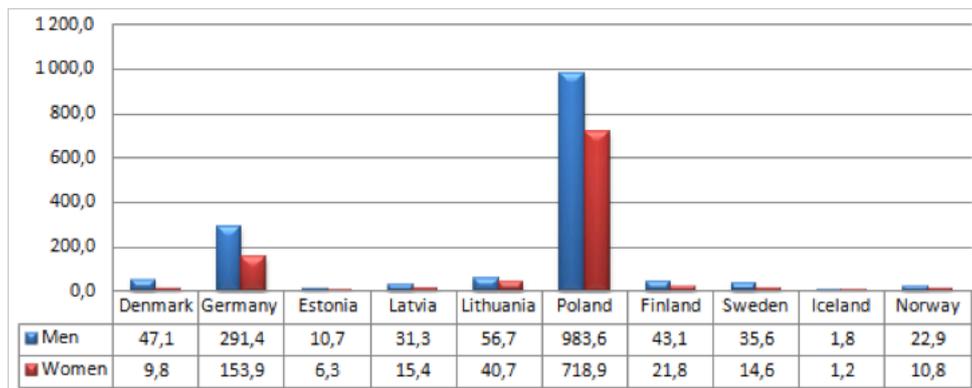


Figure 21. Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities (unit- thousand) in 2014
Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

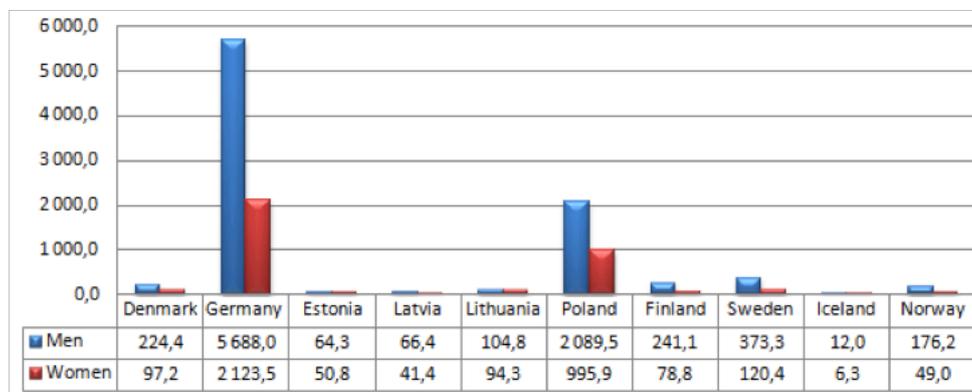


Figure 22. Manufacturing (unit- thousand) in 2014
Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

The employment share of manufacturing in BSR countries is the highest in Germany. The lowest disparity between male and female employment is in

Estonia. Manufacturing is a domain in the green sector with one of the highest female employment.

Employment rate for women is lower than for men in green sector

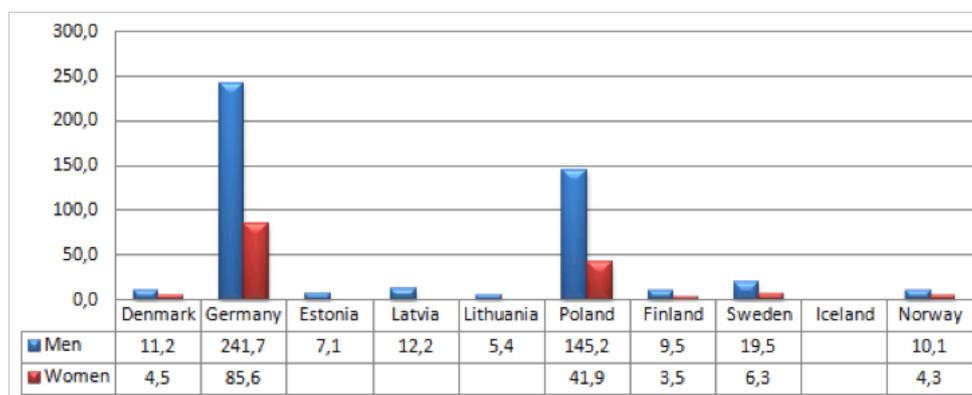


Figure 23. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (unit- thousand) in 2014
Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

There is a lack of data according to female employment in the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sectors in four BSR countries. These sectors are mainly dedicated to men. Some research estimates that implementation of energy efficiency measures could lead to 2 million jobs being created or maintained by 2020 and the development of renewable energy sources could lead to 3 million jobs by 2020.

In all environment-dependent activities, the disparity between male employment and female employment is high. Tab.7. presents the estimated share of female employees. The highest number of female employees is in administrative services and the lowest is in natural resources and construction (the construction of buildings with low-energy consumption and passive buildings, the refurbishment of existing buildings to improve energy consumption, noise insulation work, maintenance and repair of water networks, construction work for wastewater and waste treatment plants and sewerage systems).

Blue sector of economy

The blue sector is the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole. Seas and oceans have a great potential for

Table 7. Women in Green Job Sectors

Sector	Components	Estimated share of female employees (2009)
Primary	Farming/fisheries/forestry	20%
	Natural resources	8%
Secondary	Manufacturing	24%
	Construction	9%
Tertiary	Engineering services	12%
	Financial and business services	15%
	Eco-tourism	20%
	Administrative services	68%

Source: own study on the basis of the Eurostat data

innovation and growth for European economy. The blue sector of the economy represents 5.4 million jobs and generates a gross added value of almost €500 billion a year. The domains included in this sector, such as aquaculture, coastal tourism, marine biotechnology, ocean energy, seabed mining, have a high potential for sustainable jobs. BSR countries have all needed elements for the successful development of an innovative and sustainable maritime economy, such as low unemployment, high growth rates and low government debt ratios. This is an area with a densely populated coastline and very intense use of the sea and its ecosystems.

BSR countries have all the necessary elements for successful development in blue sector

Tab.8. presents five maritime economic activities (MEAs) with the highest employment and the largest gross value added (GVA) throughout the Baltic Sea region. While coastal tourism and fish for human consumption stand out in terms of their importance for the job market, short sea shipping is by far the greatest generator of GVA.

Table 8. Employment and GVA in each of maritime economic activity for BSR

Maritime Economic Activity	Employment	GVA
Coastal tourism	127 000 jobs	€ 3.1 billion
Fish for human consumption (more than 70% in fish processing and retail)	117 000 jobs	€ 3.8 billion
Shipbuilding	51 000 jobs	€ 2.0 billion
Short sea shipping	39 000 jobs	€ 5.7 billion
Passenger ferry services	26 000 jobs	€ 2.0 billion

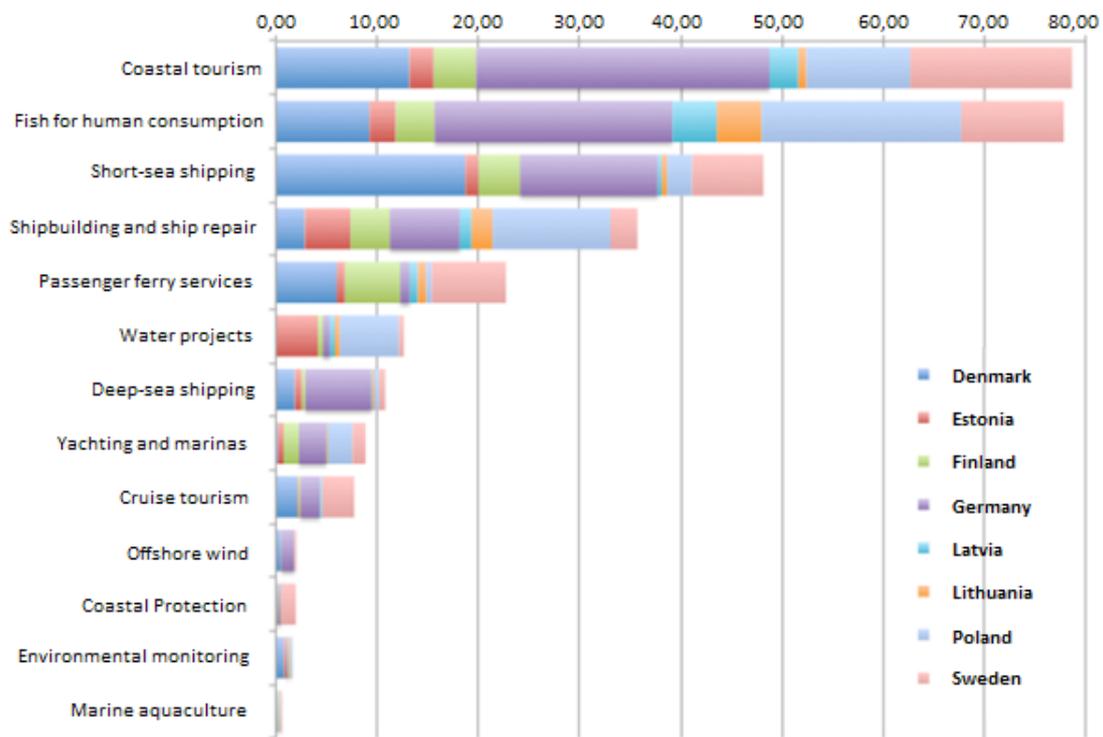


Figure 24. Size of maritime economic activities aggregated over sea basin

Fig.24. shows the absolute size of each MEA for the whole BSR presented as a score based on GVA and employment as well as –in each bar– a breakdown by Member State. The largest maritime economic

activity is coastal tourism and then fish for human consumption. The countries with the highest score in coastal tourism are Germany, Sweden and Denmark.

There is a lack of data in the context of gender issues in the blue sector

There isn't any available collection of data with MEAs in terms of male and female employment. One thing is certain, the most promising sectors of the Baltic Sea maritime economy for both men and women are: coastal and cruise tourism, offshore wind, aquaculture and blue biotechnologies.

Purple sector of economy

Apart from green and blue sector of economy, there is also a purple sector, which refers to taking account of cultural aspects in the economy. The cultural sector, which is understood as the production of cultural

goods and services, is a core component of the purple economy. It concerns 3.3% of gross domestic product in Europe. The purple aspect is present at every stage of the value chains of extremely diverse sectors such as food, construction, tourism and more. There is the complementarity that is possible between the green and purple economies. The example of using local original components shows the direct link between regional agricultural products and the maintenance of biodiversity and traditional local materials and eco-construction. The logic of short supply chains generally responds to the issues of both green and purple.

6. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS HOW TO IMPROVE RURAL WOMEN LIFE SITUATION

In most BSR countries the share of female population in rural areas in population in general has decreased. However, gross value added at basic prices in rural regions has grown in 2012 in comparison to 2000 in analysed countries. Due to that fact it is important to take care of the sustainability of development not only in urban but also in rural regions. One of the ways to achieve that is to reduce Gender Pay Gap noted in all BSR countries.

There is a significant gap in collecting statistical data divided by gender and place of the leaving. The quality of life analysis can either enable gender perspective or degree of urbanization. There is no such data which provides information on quality of life both of women and men according to their area of living – city, town or suburb, rural area. The quality of life as a broader concept encompassing both objective factors (for example, health, labour status, income distribution or living conditions) and subjective perceptions (based on an individual's assessment of different aspects that impact on their life) should also encompass both genders.

Research show that women live in a more sustainable way than men, therefore it is important to enhance and activate women resources in the BSR economies, among others through the labour market. In order to show similarities and differences in level of the sustainability of development a simple taxonomic measure was proposed. The countries differed strongly in that term but the upward tendency in most countries could also be observed.

The quantitative analysis of the correlation between gender equality and sustainability of development showed strong and positive relation between the two dimensions. It means that the higher the gender equality, the more sustainably developed the BSR country. The authors formulated some recommendations concerning life of women and men in rural areas of BSR countries:

- Gender issues should be more often discussed in the context of the sustainability of development.
- The future statistics on quality of life should include possibility of comparing data not only from the female and male perspective, but also according to the area of living – city, town and suburb, and rural areas. The performance of each gender in terms of the degree of urbanization enables a better comparison of similarities and disparities which determine life chances and well-being. This performance could help to determine targeted measures that may be used to improve specific situations by the policy makers.
- In order to know how fast the post transition economies (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland) have been catching up with the more developed ones, it is useful to use a quantitative approach and methods to the problem.
- It is important to activate female economic activity and empower them economically, because it will increase gender equality.
- More women in the labour market will strengthen the sustainability of development in the country, as women live in a more sustainable way than men.
- Gap between earnings should be rather an effect of differences in level of education, competences and experience, not an effect of gender. Due to that organisations and institutions should strive to eliminate gender pay gap. First step to achieve that is to increase female earnings.
- There is lack of statistical data in specific areas (i.e. health, education) by gender and place of living (rural / urban). It is desirable to expand given data by those factors.
- Sustainable development can be achieved faster by lowering unemployment rates among women, not only in rural region, but in general. It is one of the reasons why women's entrepreneurship is worth promoting.
- “Green” and “blue” jobs have a great potential for innovation and growth for European economy and they should be more promoted among women.

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All the authors of this report are members of the Centre.

In the work the overview of the life situation in rural areas from gender perspective is presented and the relationship between gender equality and the sustainable development is examined. The authors propose recommendations of how to support gender equality in the region regarding the degree of urbanization.

The authors claim it is important to activate women's resource in rural areas of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region, because it will be a step towards the manifestation of full human potential of the region: rural and urban, women's and men's potentials and talents!

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