

# European labour markets under pressure - new knowledge on pathways to include persons in vulnerable situations

## Final conference

Date: 3 February 2026



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# Welcome

Date: 3 February 2026



Carolina Ibañez-Vila, European Research  
Executive Agency

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# Introduction to the project

Date: 3 February 2026



**Dr Elisabeth Ugreninov, Oslo Metropolitan University**

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## European Labour Market Under Pressure

New Knowledge on Pathways to  
Include Persons in Vulnerable  
Situations (PATHS2INCLUDE)

[Learn more about the project](#)



PATHS2INCLUDE is a European research project focusing on understanding processes that shape barriers or facilitate inclusive labour markets. It aims to uncover factors that can be changed and revised by political decisions aiming to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion in the European labour markets.

# The consortium

Financed by EU under Horizon-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01

Funded under: Destination, Social and Economic Transformations

Topic: Overcoming discrimination for an inclusive labour market



Oslo Metropolitan University

Universite du Luxembourg

Universitatea Din Bucuresti

PIN S.c.r.l./ ARCO Action Research for Co-Development

Universitat de Girona

Leibniz University Hannover

Institute for Structural Research

Confederation des Organisations Familiales De L'Union  
Européenne (COFACE)

Norway

Luxembourg

Romania

Italy

Spain

Germany

Poland

Paths2Include Consortium  
Members



Paths2Include

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)



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# European Labour Markets Under Pressure

- Persistent inequalities and discrimination remain
  - Affect ethnic minorities, women, older workers, and people with health limitations
  - Increasing inequality in earnings and widening disparities in job quality
- Vulnerabilities are shaped by structural and contextual factors
  - Disadvantages accumulate over the life course
  - Patterns are embedded in national, regional and sectorial labour market contexts
- Demographic change intensifies labour market vulnerability
  - Europe's population is ageing
  - Immigration and forced displacement triggered by wars
- Digitalisation and automation pose new risks
  - Risk of unequal impact on low-skilled and those in precarious employment

# PATHS2INCLUDE: objectives, aims and target groups

- Objective: to disentangle the dimensions of discrimination and unequal opportunities in the labour market over the working life, in order to generate new knowledge for developing more inclusive labour markets for persons in vulnerable situations
- Aim: to understand how and why certain groups become vulnerable in the labour market by examining
  - the mechanisms behind discrimination and unequal opportunities
  - how contextual and structural conditions create and reinforce vulnerability
  - how intersectionality shape risks and prospects
- Target groups: vulnerability related to gender, immigration background, family status, care responsibilities, health, and age

# Pathways to include persons in vulnerable situations

Understanding employment gaps: concepts, policy challenges and data measuring labour market attachment for groups in vulnerable situations

Discrimination in hiring

Factors behind (un)successful labour market inclusion and career trajectories

Early and late exit: the impact of policies and institutional factors

Mapping risk factors in labour market attachment and in the future of work

Understanding labour market inclusion: key determinants and plausible scenarios

Generating new evidence with clear policy impact to support more effective decision-making

# Setting the scene: Panel debate on equal opportunities in the labour market

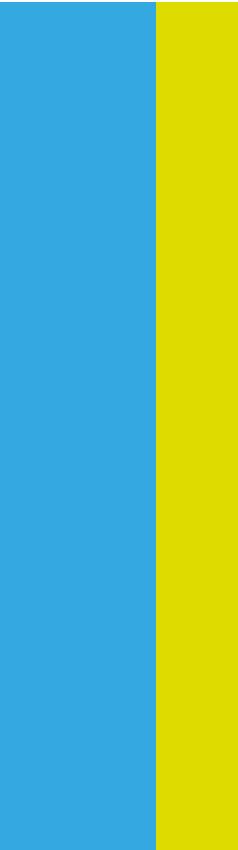
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# **Soft skills and soft spots: Unpacking structural opportunities for discrimination**

Dr Jon Rogstad, Oslo Metropolitan University

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)



# Wrong hire is the greatest risk

*The greatest risk for me is hiring the wrong person. We have to have a person who fits in with the team. Those are often the keys to success. (...) What I'm most afraid of is that I will slip-up on personal qualities. And then I'm a little less afraid of missing out on the professional profile, because one can learn a lot on the job. (Employer)*

## The study

- Opportunity structure (Petersen & Saporta (2004): Not *why* discrimination, but *where*
- Homosocial reproduction (Kanter 1977)
- Method: 60 employers in Norway, Germany, Romania and Poland

## Findings

- Fitting to is trainable, fitting in is fixed
- Social skills is used as a legitimate qualification – not regulated by the anti-discrimination laws
- Freedom to choose homosocial reproduction

# Gender equal labour markets

Dr Sara Ayllón, University of Girona

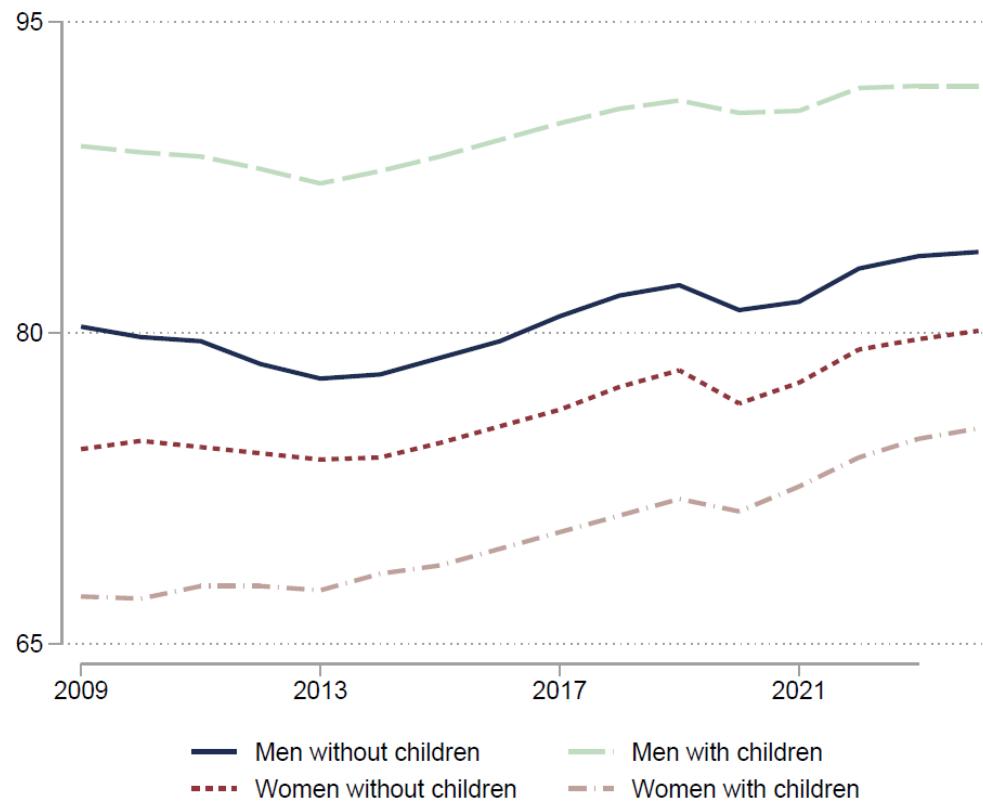
[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)



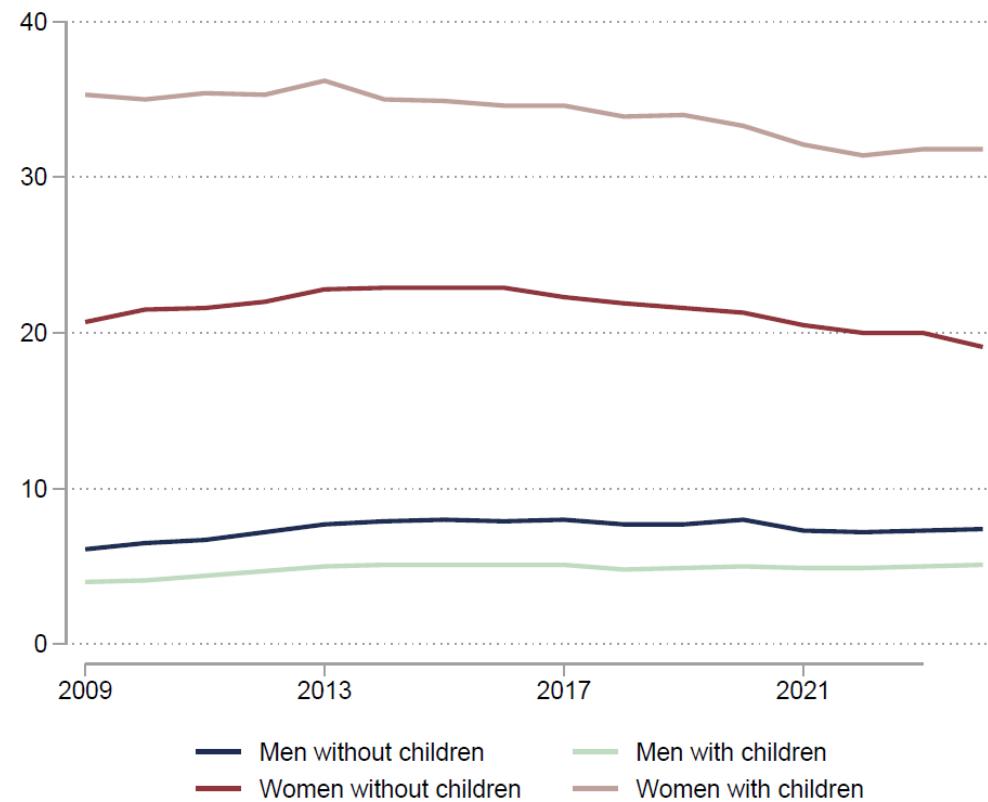
# Key findings

- Our research has focused on examining why parenthood continues to generate large gender gaps in labour market inclusion and job characteristics across Europe.
- In particular, we have looked at:
  - the extent to which inherited **gender norms and cultural expectations** around caregiving and breadwinning determine the position of women in the labour market;
  - the extent to which the post-pandemic **expansion of remote work/working from home** has helped improve the position of women in the labour market.

(a) Employment rate



(b) Part-time employment rate



# Key findings: gender norms

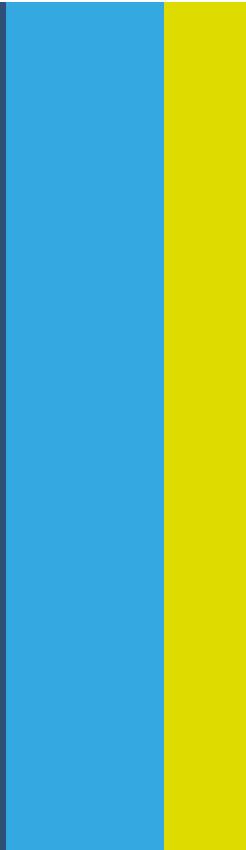
- We have gone beyond existing research which links **+ progressive gender norms** with a **higher likelihood of being employed** for mothers, and we have looked at job characteristics.
- What do we find?
  - Gender norms are not strongly linked with job characteristics for **mothers** with two important exceptions: part-time and remote work. The more progressive norms, the more likely women are to have this type of job.
  - The interlink between job characteristics and gender norms is stronger for **fathers**.

# Key findings: gender norms

- What do we find?
  - Gender norms progressivity is negatively associated with fathers being employed, working part-time, holding multiple jobs, being underemployed or in the public sector...
  - ... but positively associated with being a supervisor, working remotely and having a high-skill job.
- Thus, while **for mothers progressivity serves to make them feel comfortable using greater flexibility margins, for fathers the influence of gender norms extends to a broader set of job quality and attachment indicators.**

# Key findings: remote work

- What do we find?
  - The post-pandemic expansion of remote work has (modestly) helped to improve the position of mothers in the labour market by providing more flexibility.
  - Specifically, we find that an increase of **5 percentage points in the number of employees that work from home has narrowed the motherhood gap for full-time employment by 2%**.
  - Moreover, the gap for desired hours worked has also reduced about 2%.
- Thus, the flexibility brought about by remote work has the potential to help women better reconcile work and family life.



# **Extended working lives: individual, organisational, and institutional drivers of vulnerability**

**Dr Iuliana Precupetu**, Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB)

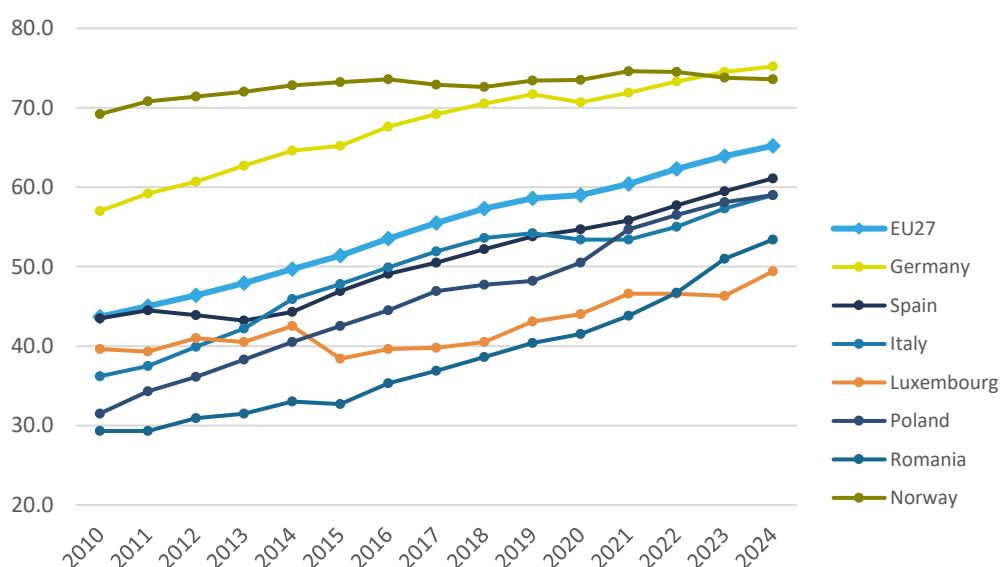
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# Individual and intersecting risks

European reforms have been successful in extending working lives

## Employment rate of older workers, age group 55-64



Source: Eurostat, 2026 [tesem050]

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)

Despite the progress, vulnerability is increasingly concentrated among specific groups.

### Health limitations are a central push factor

- Health-related exits are the second most common route out of employment, after public pensions at statutory retirement age: 8% of retirees leave work due to ill health.
- Not being limited by health problems reduces the odds of early-retirement intentions by around one third. (Vasile et al., 2025).

### Intersecting risks shape vulnerability

- The intersection of gender, health limitations, and caregiving responsibilities substantially increases vulnerability in later working life.
- Financial resources are decisive: they largely determine whether these risks translate into actual detachment from employment. (Alecu et al., 2025).

# Organisational contextual factors

## Barriers to inclusion

- Older workers face structural and attitudinal barriers, including age stereotypes, assumptions about declining productivity or digital skills, and limited workplace adaptation. These barriers are particularly pronounced in physically demanding and rapidly changing sectors.

*“Older employees are technically far inferior to younger ones... ‘Where do I press?’” (DE\_Int07)*

## Inclusive practices and retention

- Organisations emphasise the value of experience, using older workers as mentors and carriers of organisational knowledge, especially in sectors facing skills shortages.

*“We have a department head who is now retiring but will remain in an advisory role. That is invaluable because expertise disappears otherwise.” (DE\_Int01)*

## Organisational capacity matters

- Leadership and organisational capacity are decisive: inclusion practices vary strongly between large and small organisations.
- A persistent gap between policy and practice remains, particularly in Poland and Romania (Tufă et al., 2025).

# National contextual factors

- **Country context shapes labour market exit.** Individual characteristics account for only a modest proportion of variation in early-retirement intentions (2–11%), while country-level factors explain a substantially larger portion (16–24%).
- COVID-19-related measures, particularly expanded telework, temporarily reduced exclusion risks, demonstrating the **buffering role of institutional responses**.
- **Exit routes** differ between countries: Northern and Western European countries show more diversified exit patterns, combining public, occupational, and private pensions. In contrast, Southern and Eastern European countries rely mainly on public pensions.
- **Integration of older workers varies across countries:** In Romania and Poland, retention is driven by productivity expectations and labour shortages, often without additional training. Norway treats age diversity as a resource, supported by institutionalised intergenerational practices. In Germany, retention frequently focuses on safeguarding niche or specialised expertise.

# From longer to sustainable working lives

- Extending working lives without addressing inequality increases vulnerability.
- Organisations and institutions are key enablers of sustainable extended working lives.

# What data gaps change in our understanding

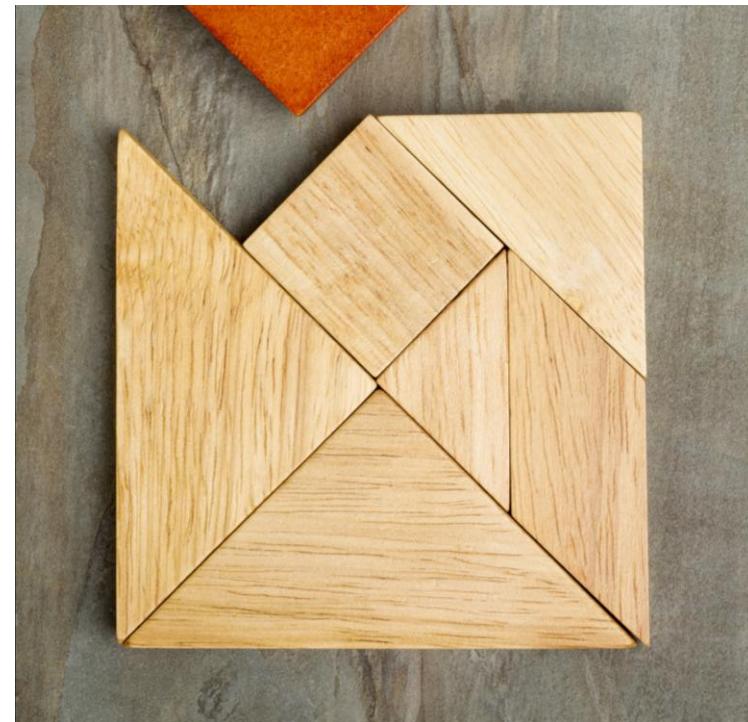
Prof Dr Robin Samuel, Ona Valls, University of Luxembourg

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)

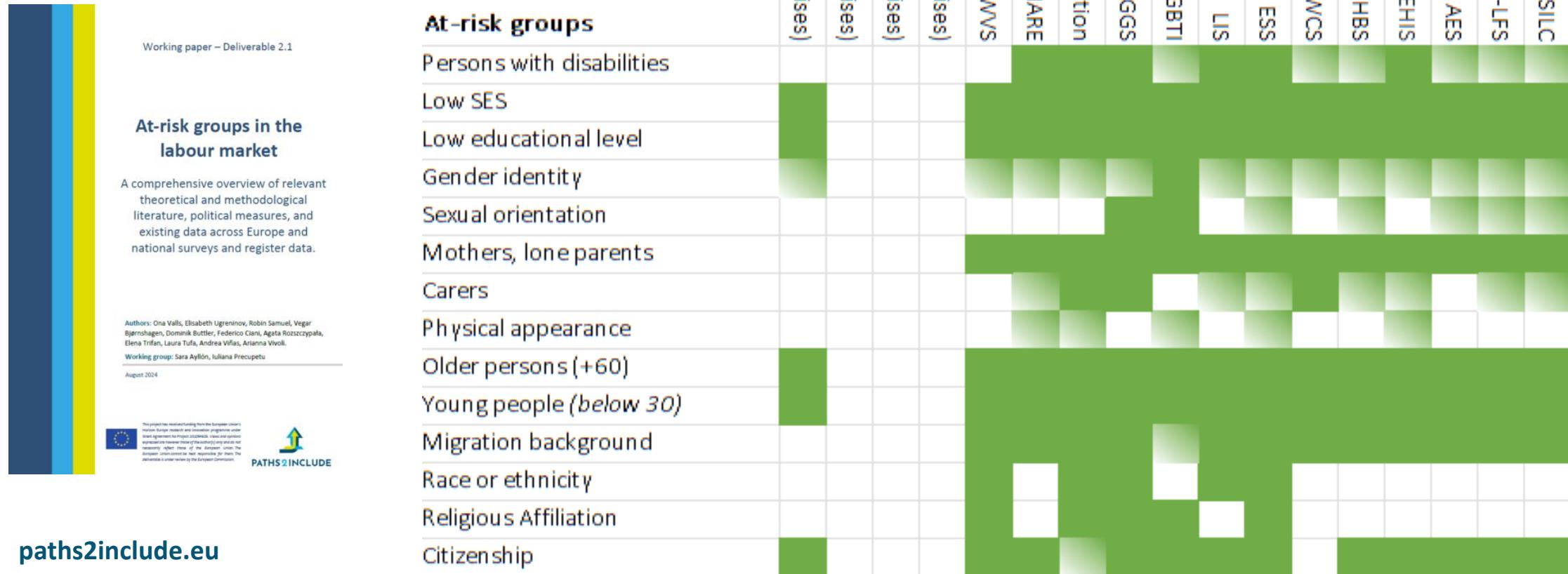


# Why data gaps matter for labour market inclusion

- Labour market inclusion depends on *who can be identified in data, where exclusion occurs, and how outcomes evolve over time*
- Current European and national sources under-measure intersectional vulnerability
- As a result, evidence-informed policy is weakened:
  - Groups remain statistically invisible
  - Mechanisms remain untested



# “Statistical invisibility”: missing identifiers for at-risk groups



# Intersectionality is analytically central, but sample sizes are too small



Surveys include variables relevant to vulnerability, yet intersectional groups are often too small for robust analysis.



Limits our ability to estimate compounded disadvantage (not simply additive effects).

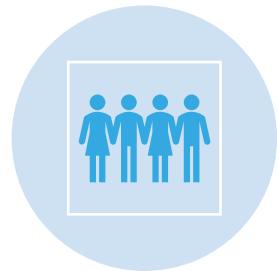


**Implication: policies designed on “single-axis” evidence risk missing those most exposed to exclusion.**

# Process gaps: we cannot observe exclusion at the point it happens



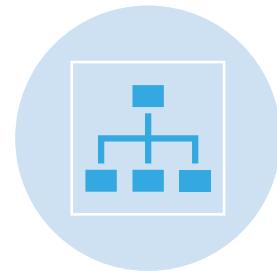
Recruitment-stage  
blind spot



Focus on perceived  
discrimination and  
attitudinal indicators

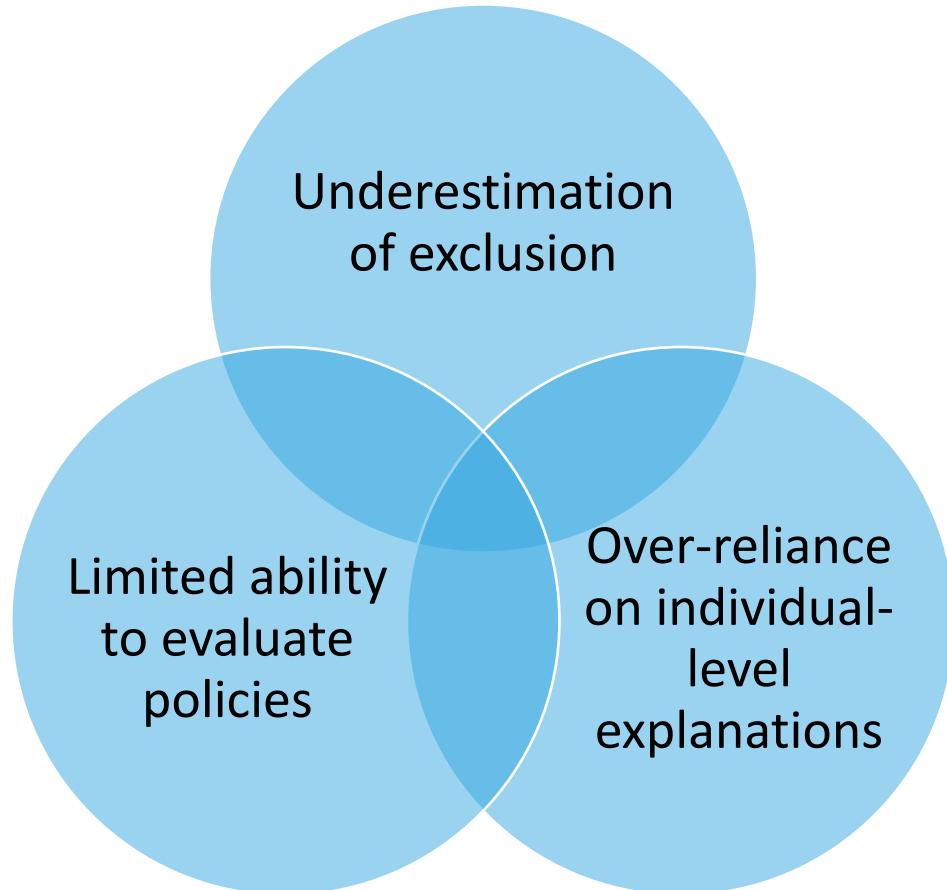


Correspondence/field  
experiments hard to  
harmonise



Organisational  
determinants remain  
under-measured

# What these data gaps change in our understanding (and what to do next)



## Better evidence:

- strengthen inclusive measurement
- increase sample sizes
- build longitudinal infrastructures

# Setting the scene: Panel debate on equal opportunities in the labour market

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# 11.00-11.30 Coffee poster session

Date: 3 February 2026



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# Study session 1. The role of workplace dynamics for shaping inclusive labour markets

Date: 3 February 2026

Author: Dr Dominik Buttler, Leibniz University Hannover



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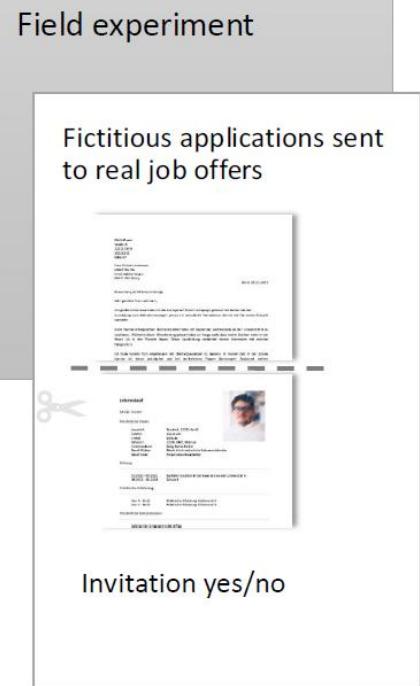
## Research aims

To develop new knowledge on **organisational factors linked to discrimination** and labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups (defined by **gender, ethnicity, and care responsibilities**).

# The empirical approach

- The factorial survey experiment (FSE)
- The survey questionnaire
- In-depth interviews with employers/recruiters

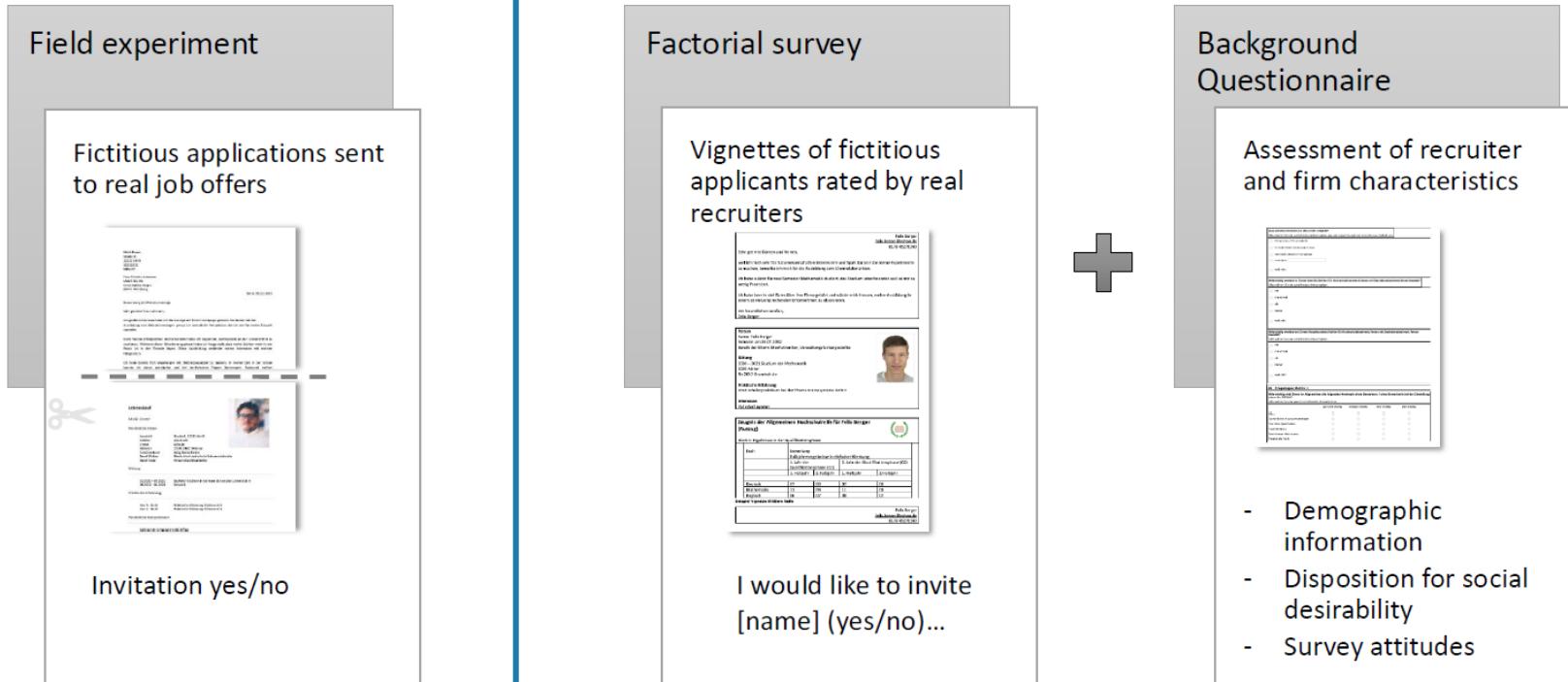
# Why factorial survey experiment?



Forster & Neugebauer (2024)

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)

# Why factorial survey experiment?



Forster & Neugebauer (2024)

[paths2include.eu](http://paths2include.eu)

# Factorial survey experiment: design and selection of variables

## Jobs applied for

1. ICT technician
2. secretary
3. bookkeeping clerk
4. office clerk
5. sales worker

## Dimensions and levels

1. referrals [a candidate was recommended; did not have recommendations]
2. gender [women; men]
3. **country of origin [native; Ukraine; other country (Syria/Belarus/Nepal)]**
4. country where graduated [host country; home country]
5. level of host country language [C2; B2]
6. **partnership status [lives with a partner; lives alone]**
7. **parenthood status [one preschool-aged child; no children]**
8. type of experience [in a similar position; unrelated]

You are recruiting for the full-time **ICT technician** position. You have received a sufficient number of applications. All the applicants have the resident and work permit allowing them to be employed in your country. Among them there is a candidate with characteristics provided below:

<b>Application</b>	the candidate was recommended by one of the employees
<b>Age</b>	25 years old
<b>Gender</b>	woman
<b>Nationality</b>	Syrian
<b>Education</b>	BA degree in IT obtained in Germany
<b>Professional experience</b>	two years of professional experience in Germany in a similar position
<b>Mother Tongue</b>	Arabic
<b>German</b>	upper intermediate level (B2)
<b>English</b>	upper-intermediate level (B2)
<b>Background information</b>	the candidate lives with a partner/spouse and rises a preschool-aged child

You are recruiting for the full-time **ICT technician** position. You have received a sufficient number of applications. All the applicants have the resident and work permit allowing them to be employed in your country. Among them there is a candidate with characteristics provided below:

<b>Application</b>	you received the application directly from the candidate
<b>Age</b>	25 years old
<b>Gender</b>	man
<b>Nationality</b>	Ukrainian
<b>Education</b>	BA degree in IT obtained in Ukraine
<b>Professional experience</b>	two years of professional experience in Germany in a similar position
<b>Mother Tongue</b>	Ukrainian
<b>German</b>	proficient level (C2)
<b>English</b>	upper-intermediate level (B2)
<b>Background information</b>	the candidate lives alone and rises a preschool-aged child

How likely is that you will **invite this person for the interview** given the needs and characteristics of your organisation? (0 – very unlikely; 10 – very likely)



How likely is that you will **invite this person for the interview** given the needs and characteristics of your organisation? (0 – very unlikely; 10 – very likely)



How likely is that this person **would be employed** given the needs and characteristics of your organisation (0 – very unlikely; 10 – very likely)



How likely is that this person **would be employed** given the needs and characteristics of your organisation (0 – very unlikely; 10 – very likely)



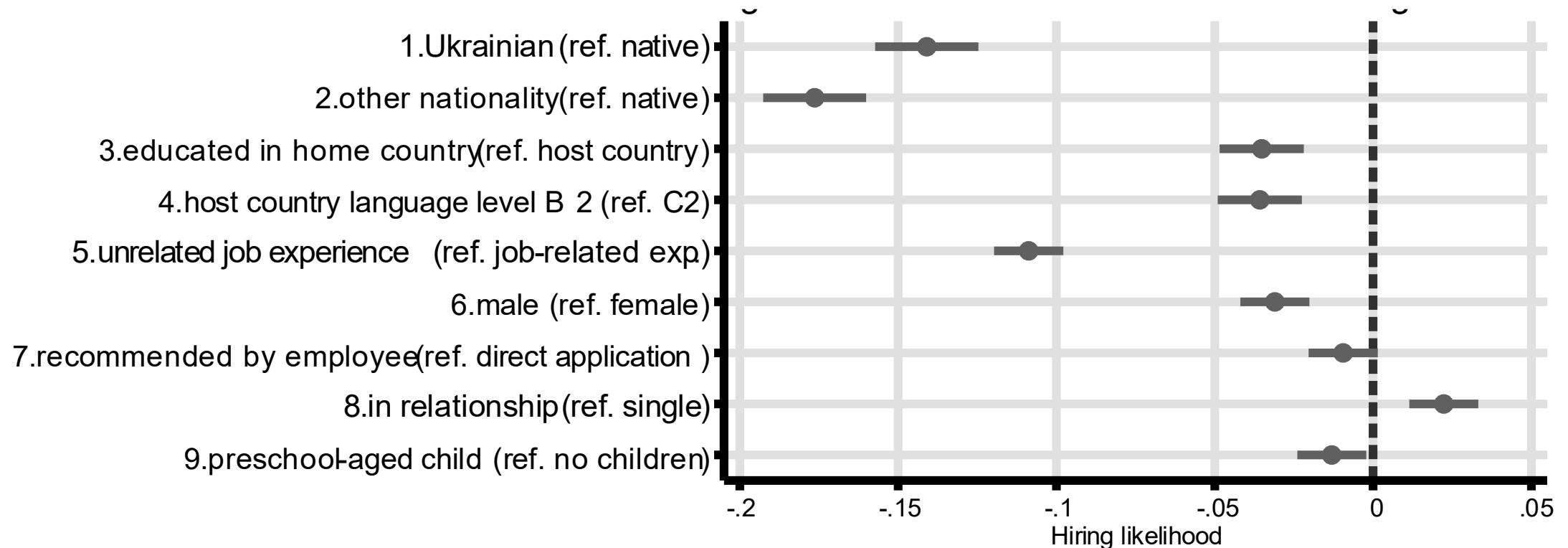
# Survey organisation and sample selection

- FSE implemented in September-December 2024 with the use of the respondents panels
- Sample size: 2082 individuals (12,492 vignettes in total)
  - Germany: 600 respondents (3,600 vignettes)
  - Norway: 410 respondents (2,460 vignettes)
  - Poland: 581 respondents (3,486 vignettes)
  - Romania: 491 respondents (2,946 vignettes)
- In-depth interviews with employers/recruiters (15 in each country, N=60)

# Survey questionnaire: organisational factors linked to discrimination

- Recruiters' discretion (opportunity structure for discrimination) (Petersen & Saporta, 2004)
- Diversity aims (Dobbin & Kalev, 2022)
- Diversity policy measures (Dobbin & Kalev, 2022)
- Greedy jobs (Goldin, 2021)
- Flexible work arrangements (Connelly, 1992)

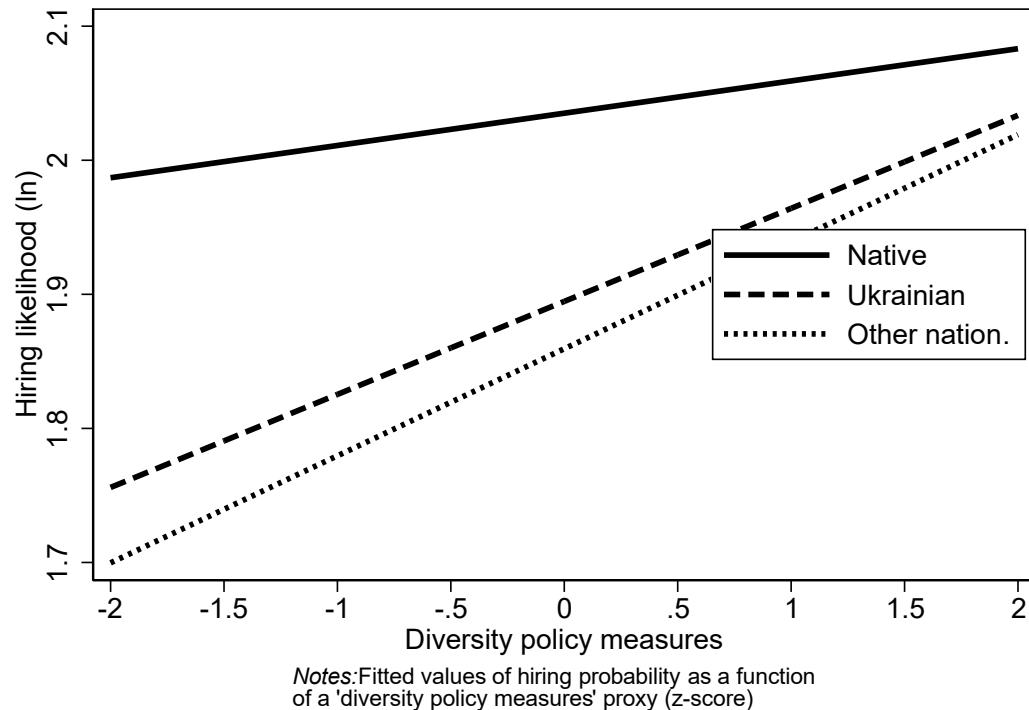
# Determinants of hiring likelihood



Notes: Coefficients of vignette variables with 90% CIs  
Estimates based on a two-level linear random intercept model  
Dep. variable: ln of hiring likelihood

# Organisational determinants of hiring discrimination (ethnicity)

## Hiring discrimination & diversity measures

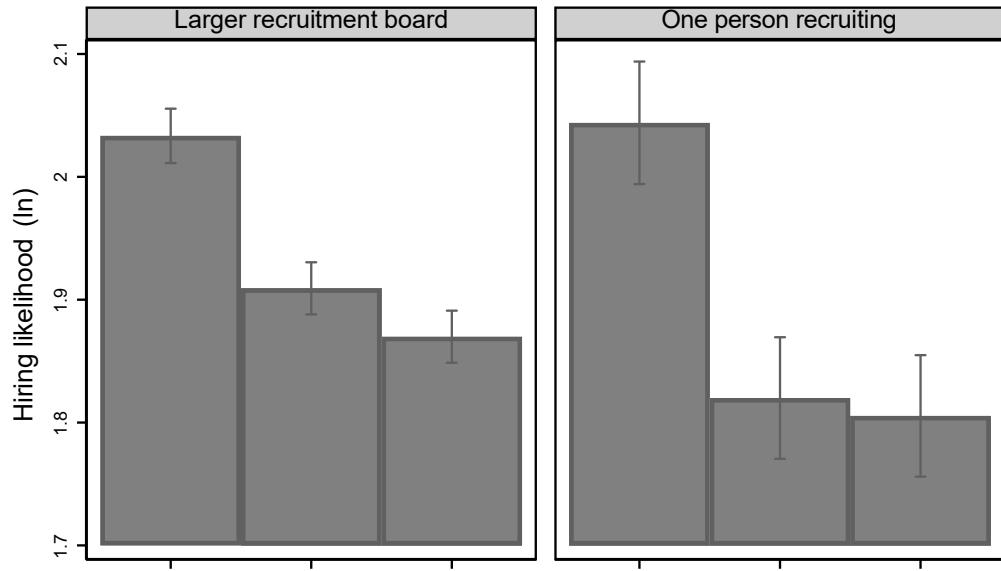


## Inclusive hiring: causal mechanisms

- Large and public sector organisations
- Organisations with diversity policy aims
- Organisations with diversity policy measures
  - Inclusive hiring
  - Mentoring programmes
  - Support systems
  - Training opportunities

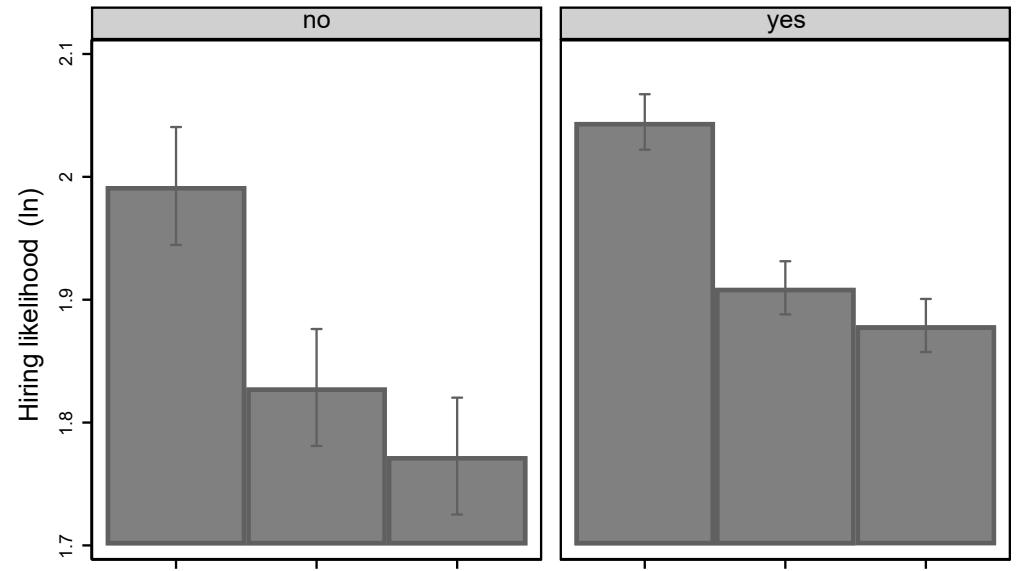
# Organisational determinants of hiring discrimination (ethnicity)

## Recruitment board composition



Notes: Fitted values of hiring probability as a function of recruitment board size; 95% CIs

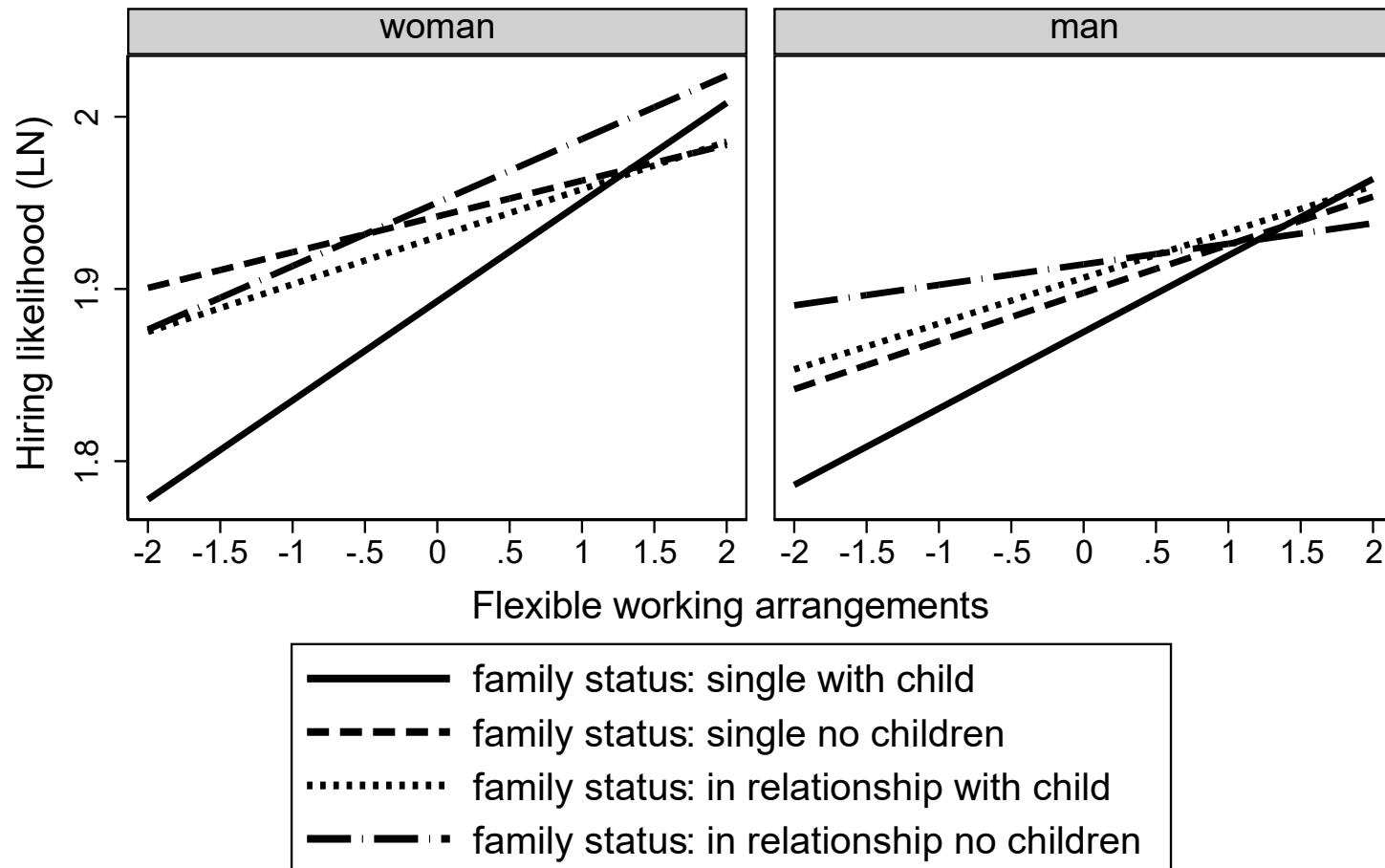
## Training opportunities



Notes: Fitted values of hiring probability as a function of training opportunities; 95% CIs

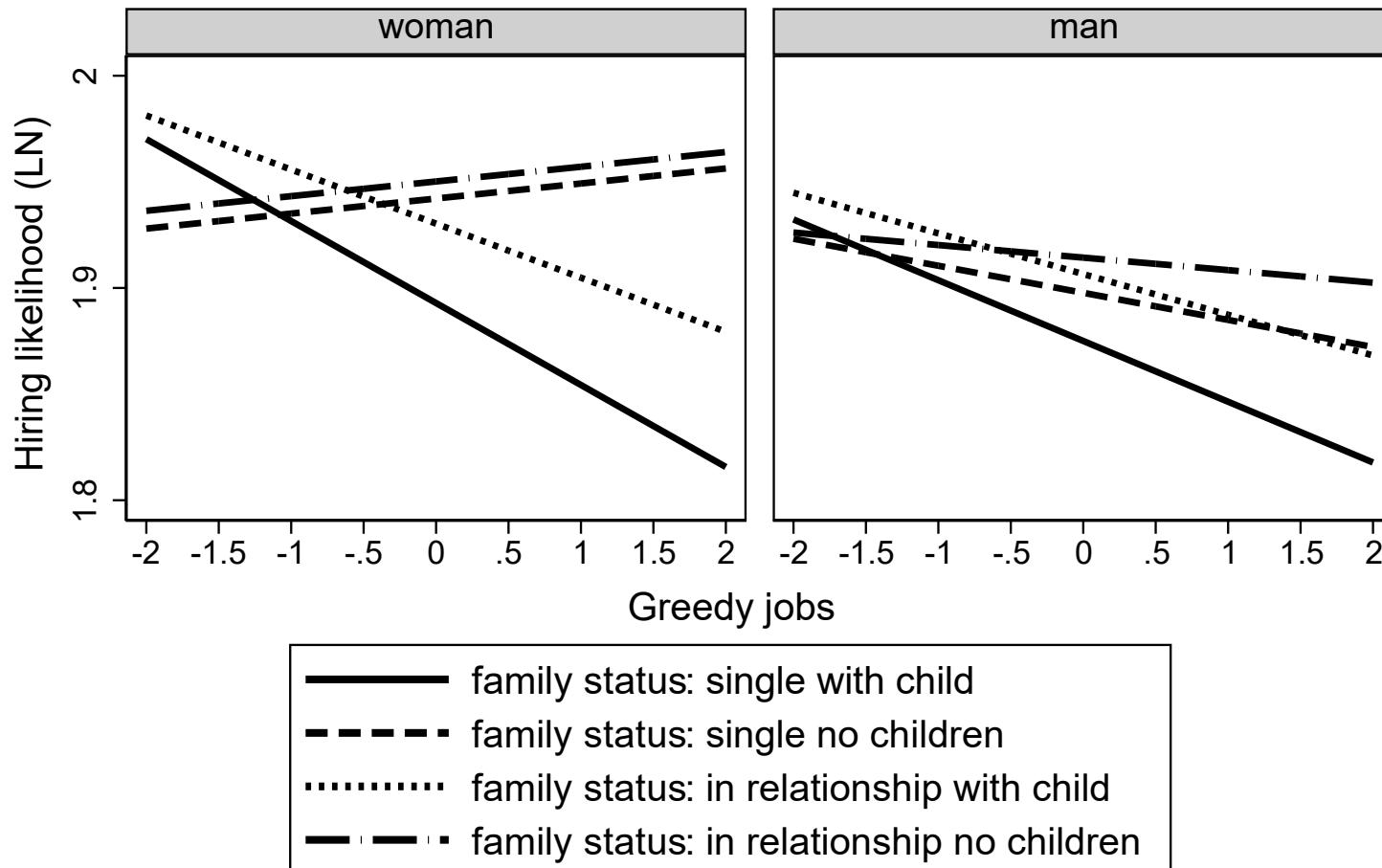
# Organisational determinants of hiring discrimination (care)

## Flexible working arrangements



# Organisational determinants of hiring discrimination (care)

## Greedy jobs



# Conclusions & recommendations

- Flexible working arrangements
- Recruitment process
  - Collective recruitment panels
  - Fair assessment of soft skills
  - Clear evaluation criteria for organisational fit
- Diversity policy measures
  - Diversity policy aims alone not sufficient
  - Mentoring and inclusive hiring practices
  - Support systems for immigrant workers
  - Awareness of anti-discrimination law
- Training opportunities

# Thank you for your attention!

## Contact Information:

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# Study session 1. The role of workplace dynamics for shaping inclusive labour markets

Date: 3 February 2026

Author: Dr Dominik Buttler, Leibniz University Hannover



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# 12.30-13.30 Lunch break

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# Study session 2. How Artificial Intelligence redefines labour market vulnerability in Europe

*From historical risks to future resilience*

Date: 3 February 2026

Author: Mateusz Krzakała, Institute for Structural Research



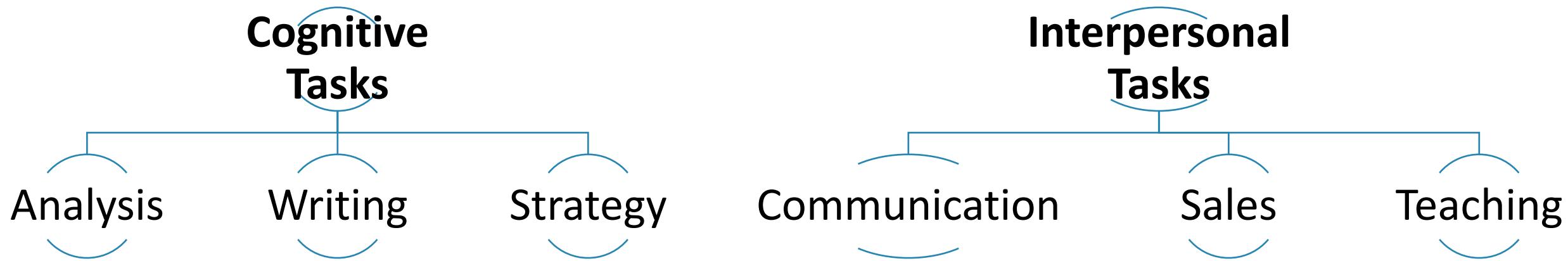
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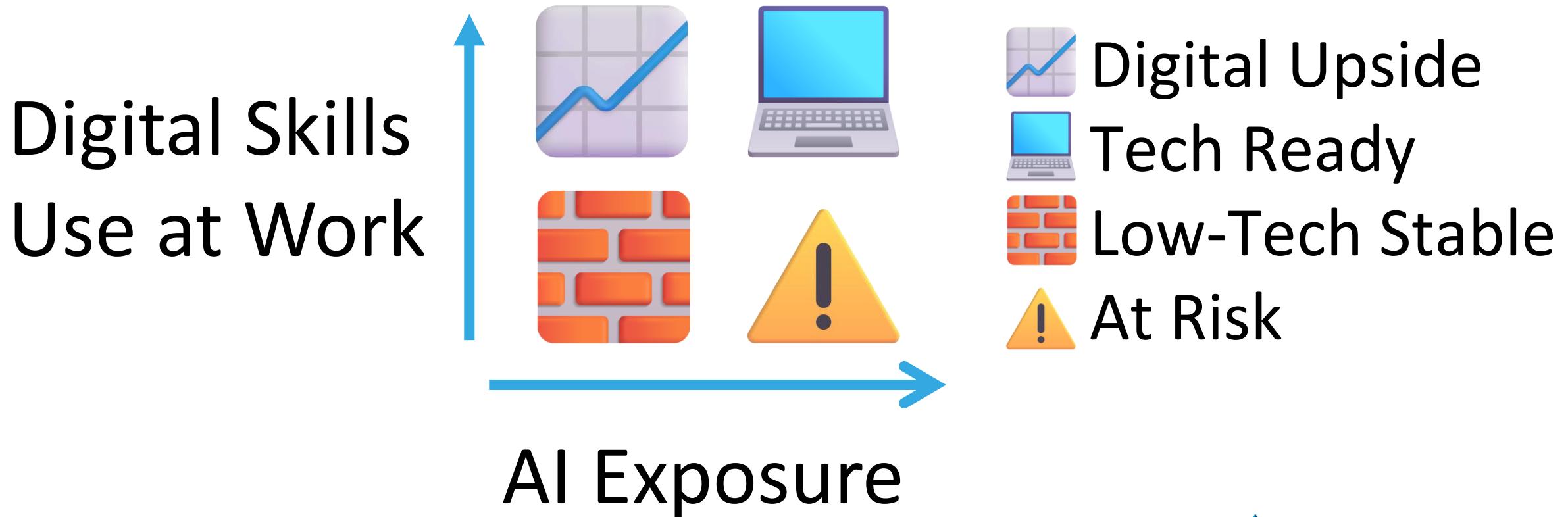
# Motivation

- Beyond routine tasks: The shift from Physical Automation (Robots) to Cognitive Automation (AI).
- New vulnerabilities: Why "safe" office jobs are now the frontline of disruption.
- The question: Who is at risk when the machine can read and write?
- **A step forward:** Applying a new framework to quantify risk while conceptual approaches are still early-stage and results are preliminary.

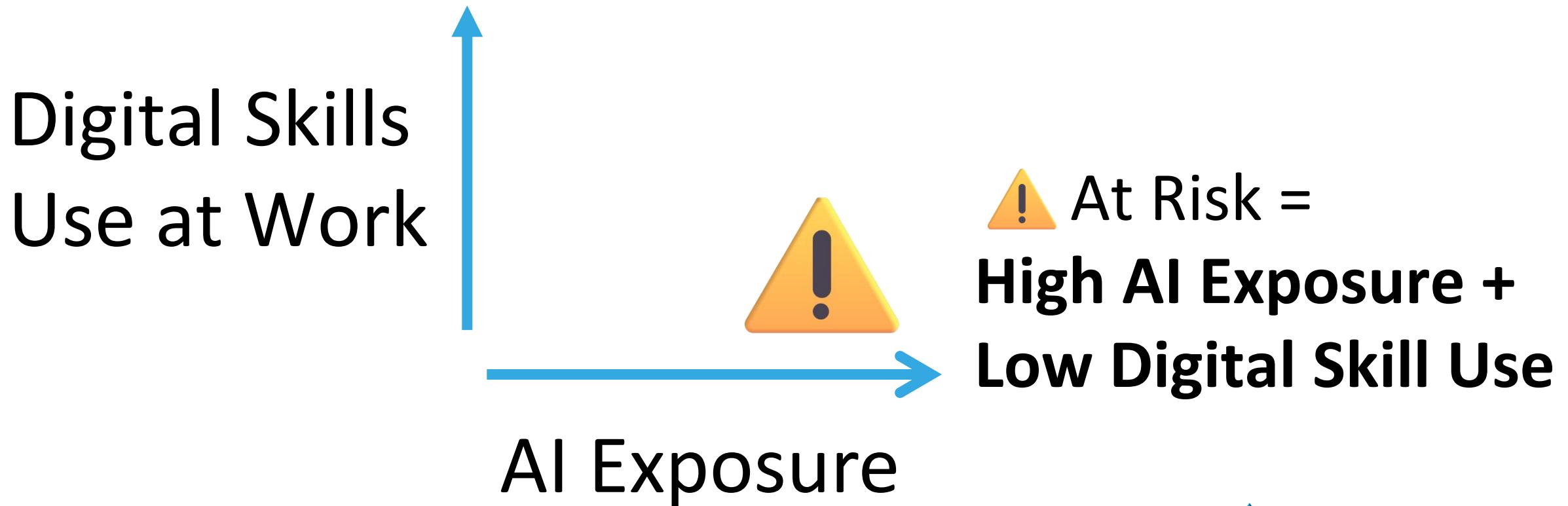
# AI is not just automating routine physical tasks.



# We have developed a new framework to measure "AI Adaptability Risk."



High risk occurs when high exposure meets low digital skills.



# This "Adaptability Risk" affects 14% of the total EU workforce.

## Teaching professionals

- 92% Tertiary educated, 75% Women, 91% Native workers

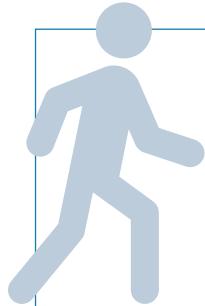
## Sales workers

- 18% Tertiary educated, 69% Women, 87% Native workers

## Legal, social and cultural associate professionals

- 90% Tertiary educated, 63% Women, 85% Native workers

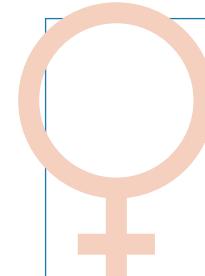
# We must adjust our view of groups at risk on the labour market



Migrants



Less than tertiary educated



Women

# To build resilience, policy must evolve with the risks

I. Occupation-specific upskilling

II. Support gender equality and ageing workforce

III. Access to support systems for new at-risk groups

# I. Occupation-specific upskilling

- Target the "High Adaptability Risk" group (14% of workforce)
- Shift from "Digital Literacy" to „Occupational AI Fluency"
  - Focus on tools specific to the trade, not generic coding.
- Core Curriculum:
  - Prompt Engineering (asking the right questions)
  - Output Verification (checking AI for errors)
- "Train the Trainers" via Sectoral Councils
- Leverage AI to augment human productivity

## II. Support gender equality and ageing workforce

- **Design accessible, confidence-building digital training**
  - Address specific barriers: Implement flexible scheduling to support caregiving duties.
  - Lower the threshold: Adopt teaching approaches that assume **no prior technical experience**.
- **Create retention and reskilling incentives**
  - Encourage employers to invest in the **existing workforce** rather than replacing older or female workers.
  - Goal: Transform "high-exposure" roles into "high-value" supervisory roles.

### III. Access to support systems for new at-risk groups

- Implement portable benefits & learning accounts
  - Ensure funding and social protection follow the worker, not the job.
- Deploy regional monitoring platforms
  - Track real-time data on which occupations and specific skills are being automated.
- Establish integrated “one-stop” local centres
  - Target areas with high concentrations of at-risk workers.
  - Services: training + childcare + mental health + employer matching.

# Study session 2. How Artificial Intelligence redefines labour market vulnerability in Europe

*From historical risks to future resilience*

Date: 3 February 2026

Author: Mateusz Krzakała, Institute for Structural Research



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# Study session 3: What is the cost of inaction on gender equality in EU labour markets?

Evidence from EUROMOD to inform EU employment and gender equality targets

Date: 03/02/2026



**Authors:** Arianna Vivoli and Federico Ciani, ARCO – PIN Foundation – University of Florence

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# Why this matters now for the EU

Persistent gender employment gaps undermine:

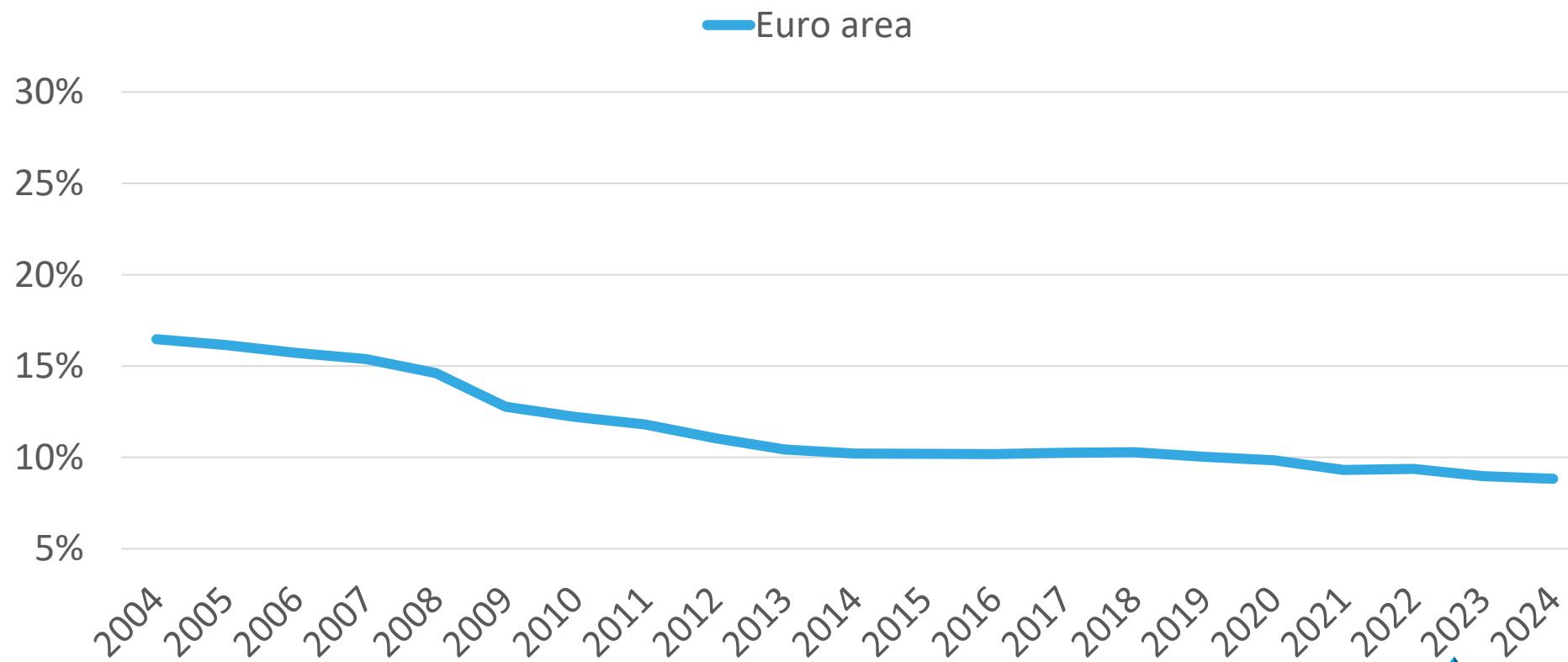
- fiscal sustainability
- poverty reduction efforts
- social cohesion

Labour shortages and population ageing increase the cost of underutilised female labour. Closing the gap is explicitly embedded in:

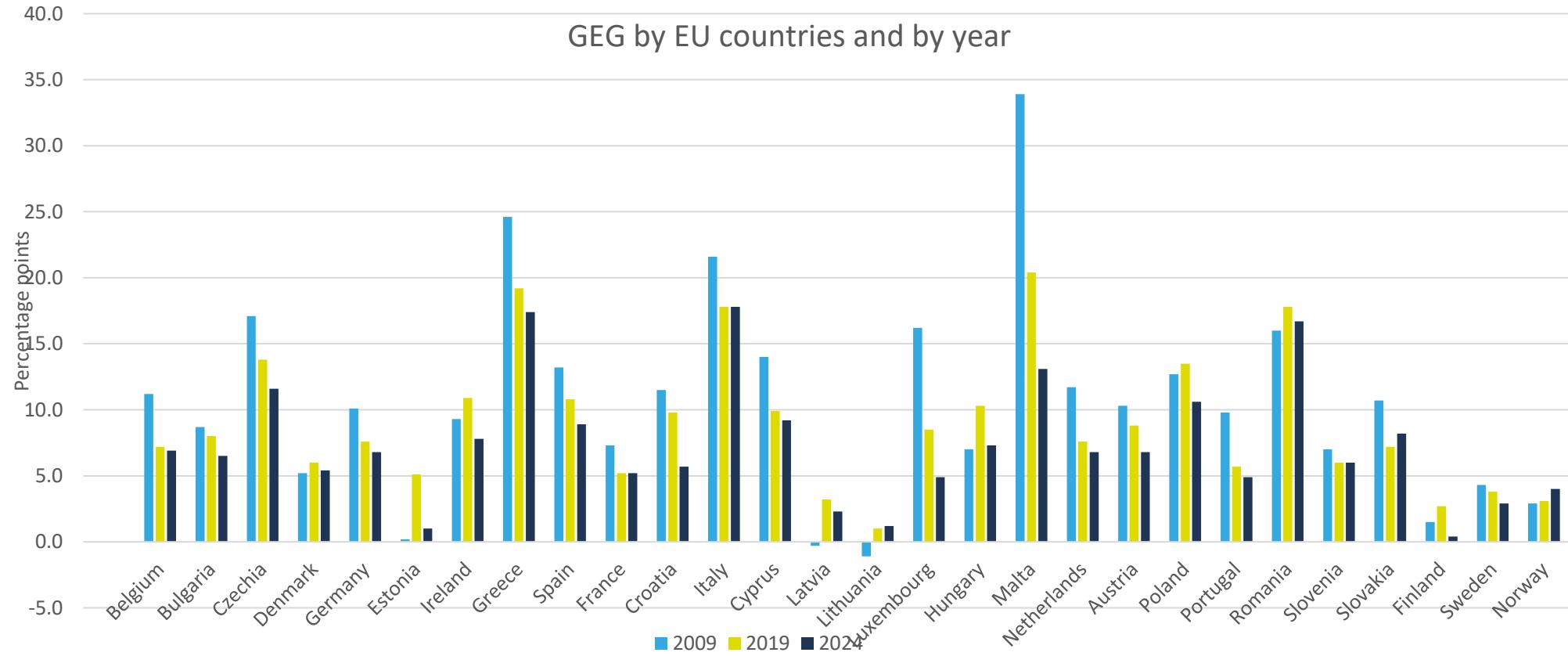
- the European Pillar of Social Rights
- the 2030 EU employment target

# Why this matters now for the EU

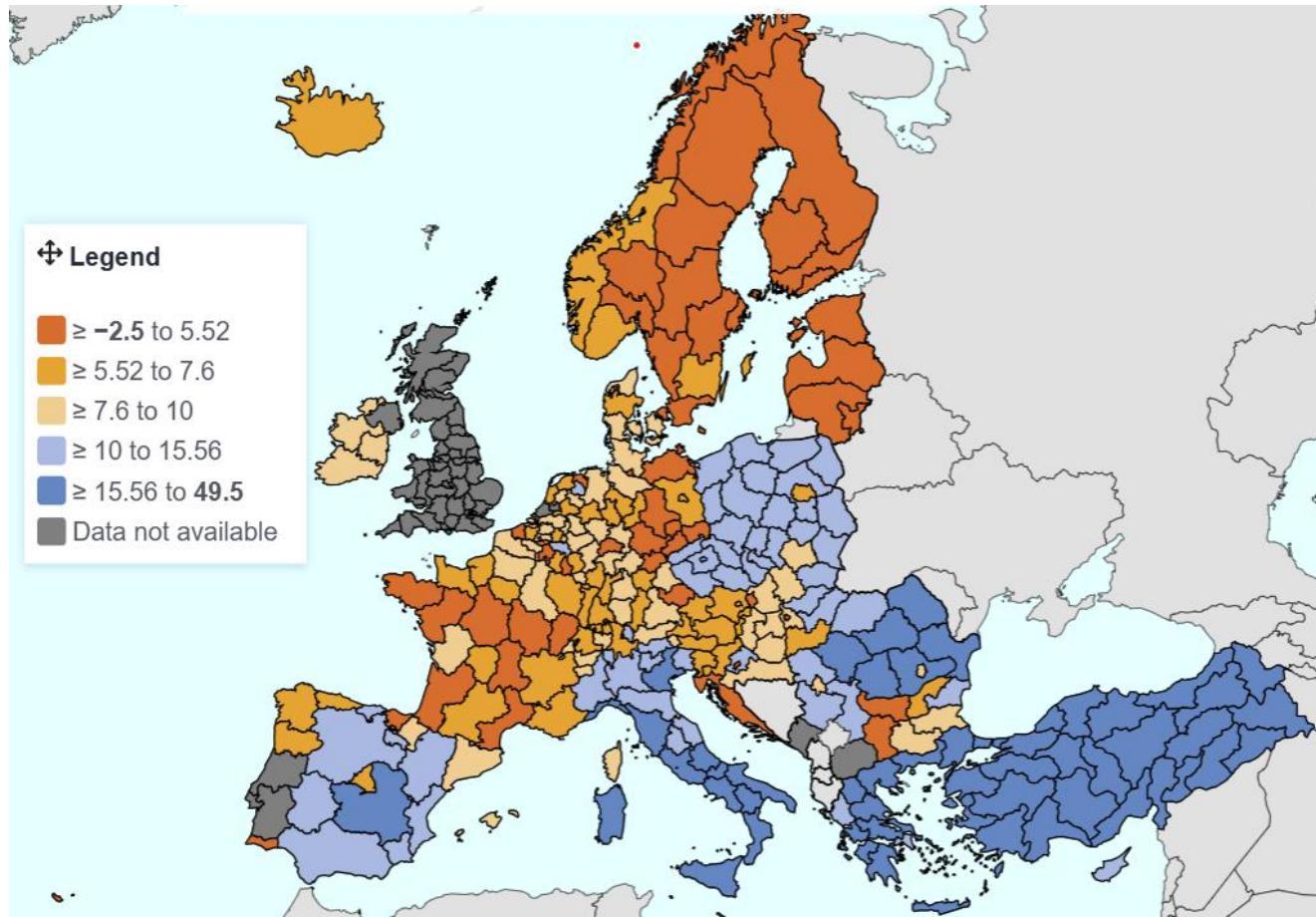
## Gender employment gap in the Euro area



# Why this matters now for the EU



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# Why this matters now for the EU

- For EU countries, increasing FLFP is the politically easier to sell solution to increase the societal **sustainability of welfare systems**.
- **Better allocation of resources:** The gender employment gap represents, in part, an underutilization of female talent, and reducing it has positive effects on aggregate welfare (WEF, 2024).
- Other new forces increasing women's disadvantages in labour markets; **Covid-19** and its gendered impact on the LM (Reichlet et al, 2021; Sevilla and Smith, 2020); **routinization** and automation of occupations (Grigoli et al. 2020).

# Our work in P2I

- We simulate the fiscal and distributional impacts of reducing or closing the gender employment gap. Focus on:
  - government revenues and expenditures
  - poverty rates
  - income inequality
- Objective:
  - make the cost of inaction visible
  - inform policy design, not only evaluation

# Why microsimulation?

- Aggregate indicators hide distributional effects
- Microsimulation allows us to:
  - quantify fiscal impacts
  - track poverty and inequality
  - compare alternative policy scenarios *ex ante*
- EUROMOD, that is a tax-and-benefit model developed and maintained by the JRC, is a powerful tool to simulate, evaluate and compare the impact of tax-benefit policies. Plus, we use the LMA add-on to simulate LM transitions.

# Two scenarios

- 1. Full closure of the gender employment gap:** Women's employment rates are raised to match those of men within each country. This is not a realistic policy scenario, but a benchmark used to quantify the upper-bound cost of inaction.
- 2. Narrowing the gender employment gap (EU 2030 target):** simulation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan headline employment target: at least halving the gender employment gap by 2030, relative to its 2019 level, in each country.

# Selected countries

- **Italy** – highest gender employment gap in the EU (17.8%)
- **Romania** – high gap and Eastern EU context (16.7%)
- **France** – large economy, lower gap, large absolute effects (GEG 5.2%)
- **Sweden** – very low gap, testing diminishing returns (2.9%)

# Scenarios

We simulate alternative scenarios to reduce the gender employment gap

Two reference points:

1. Full closure of the gender employment gap
2. EU 2030 target

Scenarios differ in the number of women entering employment, by country

YEAR	2024 GEG	Scenario Full closure	Scenario 2030
France	5.2%	5.2%	2.6%
Italy	17.8%	17.8%	8.9%
Romania	16.7%	16.7%	7.8%
Sweden	2.9%	2.9%	1.0%

# Who enters employment in the simulations?

1. **Probabilistic approach:** Transitions into employment are simulated using individual and contextual characteristics. Characteristic are used to compute probabilities. Two selection variants:
  - **Pure competition scenario:** women with the highest predicted probabilities of entering employment
  - **Rawlsian scenario:** women with the lowest predicted probabilities of entering employment
2. **Targeted approach:** Transitions are assigned according to policy-established eligibility criteria, reflecting existing employment incentives.

# Results – Agenda 2030 – Fiscal space

1. **Closing the gender employment gap pays off:** Across all countries, narrowing the gap increases government revenues and slightly reduces social expenditure. Effects are strongest in **Italy and Romania**, where the gap is larger.
2. **Who enters employment matters:** When employment gains mainly benefit women with higher employability, fiscal gains are systematically larger. When gains focus on women facing the greatest barriers, fiscal effects are smaller but more redistributive.
3. **Revenue gains are mainly tax-driven:** Higher employment leads to substantial increases in **income taxes and social insurance contributions**. Italy shows the largest absolute gains (+3.84%).
4. **Social spending declines:** Reductions in social expenditure are mostly driven by lower work-related benefits. Efficiency-oriented scenarios reduce unemployment benefits more strongly, while equity-oriented scenarios generate larger declines in **social assistance and housing benefits**, as they target more vulnerable households.

# Results – Agenda 2030 – Poverty and Inequality

- 1. Income inequality declines in all countries:** Both scenarios lead to a reduction in the Gini index. Polarisation (S80/S20) declines more under the Rawlsian scenario, which targets women further from the labour market.
- 2. Poverty risk decreases across all countries:** Simulated transitions into employment reduce the At-Risk-of-Poverty (AROP) rate in all cases, though with different patterns across countries and scenarios.
- 3. Household composition shapes outcomes:** Poverty reductions are driven by the employment of women in specific household types (e.g., families with children), highlighting the importance of targeting design.

# Results - Agenda 2030 target IT

- Population forecasts with EUROPOP2023 long-term Eurostat projections for 2030

	Baseline	Reweighting	Reweighting + 2030 population forecast	Reweighting	Reweighting + 2030 population forecast
				Diff to baseline (%)	Diff to baseline (%)
<b>Government revenues</b>	497,612.90	514,948.59	522,180.01	3.48%	4.94%
<b>Direct taxes</b>	242,199.62	246,971.40	255,976.65	1.97%	5.69%
... income taxes	222,086.73	226,800.97	234,673.92	2.12%	5.67%
... wealth taxes	20,112.90	20,170.43	21,302.73	0.29%	5.92%
<b>Social insurance contributions (SIC)</b>	255,413.27	267,977.19	266,203.36	4.92%	4.22%
... employee social insurance contributions	57,384.43	60,182.76	59,921.67	4.88%	4.42%
... self-employed social insurance contributions	20,233.08	20,680.92	20,898.75	2.21%	3.29%
... employer social insurance contributions (not part of disposable income)	177,795.77	187,113.51	185,382.94	5.24%	4.27%
<b>Government expenditures</b>	447,543.67	445,333.30	478,904.30	-0.49%	7.01%
<b>Benefits</b>	447,543.67	445,333.30	478,904.30	-0.49%	7.01%
... work-related benefits	74,407.04	75,929.09	75,193.29	2.05%	1.06%
... family and education benefits	25,742.87	25,328.45	21,749.15	-1.61%	-15.51%
... social assistance and housing benefits	8,067.68	7,402.65	7,040.51	-8.24%	-12.73%
... pensions, health and disability benefits	339,326.08	336,673.10	374,921.35	-0.78%	10.49%

# Conclusions

1. Reducing the gender employment gap generates additional fiscal space, reductions in poverty and moderate inequality effects. Even partial closures matter from a macro-fiscal perspective.
2. There is no single optimal policy: trade-offs are unavoidable and choices are political, not technical. Not acting is also a policy choice.

# Conclusions

1. The cost of inaction is real and measurable: maintaining current gender employment gaps implies foregone revenues, higher social spending and persistent poverty risks.
2. Tools like EUROMOD + LMA translate abstract targets into concrete impacts and allow comparison of alternative policy paths. They help shift the debate from: *“Is this desirable?”* to *“What happens if we do – or do not – act?”*

# Thank you!

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# Study session 3: What is the cost of inaction on gender equality in EU labour markets?

Evidence from EUROMOD to inform EU employment and gender equality targets

Date: 03/02/2026



**Authors:** Arianna Vivoli and Federico Ciani (ARCO – PIN Foundation – University of Florence)

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# 15.30-16.00 Coffee poster session

Date: 3 February 2026



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# Closing Panel debate: The role of the European Union in shaping inclusive labour markets

Date: 3 February 2026



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# Conclusion and next steps

Date: 3 February 2026

Elizabeth Gosme, COFACE Families Europe



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# Thank you!

17.00-19.00  
Networking  
reception

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