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### Main Lessons Of The Women's Forum Barometer 2021 Edition

Ahead of the G7 summit, an urgent call for an inclusive recovery

*A few days ahead of the G7 Summit, taking place on 11-13 June 2021 in the UK, the Women's Forum is publishing the results of an Ipsos survey of nationals of the G7 countries, highlighting the importance of taking the full measure of how and to what extent women have been affected by the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences. If we want, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson puts it as the UK is holding the Presidency of the G7, to help the world fight, and then build back better from the coronavirus, then putting gender equality at the heart of the recovery is a must.*

*For this survey, Ipsos questioned 3500 citizens of the G7 countries, using a representative sample of the national population aged 18 and over from each of the seven G7 countries (quota method). The survey was conducted online between 8 and 20 April 2021.*

### The Covid crisis has had devastating effects for many men, but even more for women

**The populations of the G7 countries have been violently hit by the consequences of the pandemic.** Even among the richest economies in the world and despite the measures put in place by governments, a large portion of the population of these countries has been affected in various ways, even more so than one year ago.

- 70% of the population of the G7 countries (both men and women) have experienced fear of the future since the start of this pandemic (+2 points compared to last year)
- 59% have been afraid to go to hospitals (+1 point)
- 55% have experienced burnout, anxiety or depression (+2 points)
- 53% feel they had to more things at home
- 50% say they do not take enough time to make sure they are in good health and this is increasingly the case (+4 points)
- 49% have seen their purchasing power decline (-1 point)
- 45% have had the feeling that no one is helping them (+2 points).
- 42% report losing confidence in themselves since the start of the pandemic (+3 points)



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**Italians especially have been traumatised by the cruelty of the consequences of this pandemic**, and have been very strongly affected, both psychologically (79% say they experienced fear of the future, 76% fear of going to hospitals, 60% burnout, anxiety or depression, 58% the feeling no one was helping them), but also economically (66% report a decrease in their purchasing power compared to 39% in the UK).

**But in many instances, and even if men have been strongly impacted by the pandemic and its consequences, women have been even more affected in many ways.**

- **75%** (+2 points compared to last year) **of women report being afraid of the future, compared to 65% of men – 10 points more.** The women who experienced the worst situation are Italian women: 85% report being afraid of the future compared to 73% of Italian men. In the UK, the gap between women and men is even bigger (16 points) with 74% of British women experiencing fear compared to 58% of British men. And the country where the situation worsened the most for women is Germany, with 71% of German women afraid of the future (+15 points), significantly more than last year, when Germany was doing quite well containing the first wave of the pandemic.
- **59%** (stable) **have experienced burnout, anxiety or depression, compared to 50% of men: 9 points more.** Women in Canada have especially been affected, with 72% (+4) saying they suffered from these problems. In Canada, but also in the UK, France and Germany, men were much less impacted (14 points less on average).
- **32% of women have experienced extreme tiredness and stress, given all they had to do (at work and at home), compared to 22% of men.** The gap is even greater in Canada and France (16 points difference between men and women). Having children has very different consequences for men and women: 47% of women with at least a child below 18 regularly feels exhausted, compared to 34% of fathers. With children below 6 y.o., the gap is even bigger: 56% of mothers of young children feel regularly overwhelmed, compared to 34% of fathers of kids the same age: 22 points less.

These impacts, experienced to a greater extent by women, add up to create significant overall inequalities between men and women. They threaten the progress slowly made in the last years towards more gender equality, with durable impacts on women's lives and careers.

Many women have been so strongly affected that they even doubt they will be able to bounce back, or anticipate it will be very hard for them to recover, especially young women and women with young children who are at a crucial time in terms of choices for their future career.

- **66% of the women of the G7 countries consider their physical health has been affected** by the pandemic and **36% among them think it will be hard to recover**, this is even the case of 52% of single mothers, 50% of mothers of children below 6 yo. (compared to 34% of fathers of children of the same age) and 42% of women with low income (compared to 33% of men with low income).

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- **Their psychological health has been even more impacted, with 74% considering they were affected and among them 42% thinking it will be hard to recover** (compared to 33% of men), and even 59% of single mothers, 52% of mothers of children under 6 y.o. (compared to 34% of fathers) and 51% of women under 35 (compared to 37% of young men).

Single mothers, and mothers of young children are also more likely to think they will have difficulties to bounce back economically or professionally. Overall, 9% of women consider they will never fully recover economically, and 8% when it comes to their professional ambitions, because there are some choices they made or opportunities they lost that will have a durable impact.

### **Stereotypes about the role and place of women in society are still widespread, making the risk of women's withdrawal from the economic scene real**

Traditional models remain very vivid in the G7 countries, especially when it comes to the role of women and the confrontation between motherhood and career. Many respondents have integrated that a woman has to choose between them:

- 64% of those surveyed believe that "it is more difficult for a woman than for a man to have a successful career because she has to agree to sacrifice part of her family life" (70% of women think so)
- 50% still believe that "you can't have it all – if you want to be a good mother, you have to agree to sacrifice part of your professional career" (49% of women as well)
- 26% think that "a woman will always be happier in her role as a mother than in her professional life."
- 25% also consider that "women don't rise as much as men to high level of responsibilities because they are not ready to do the same sacrifices".

These models are so strong that for many of those surveyed, they even mask the existence of gender inequalities and the mechanisms through which these inequalities are perpetuated:

- 46% believe that "people exaggerate gender inequalities" (53% of men think so compared to 39% of women).
- 43% believe that "women don't choose the same careers as men out of their own choice and free will" (48% of men believe so compared to 39% of women).

These traditional models are especially strong in Germany and in Japan where a clear division is still operated by many between the social roles of men and women, much less in countries like France or even Italy, where populations are (sometimes surprisingly because of their perceived Latin mentality) rather well aware of gender inequalities and adverse to gender stereotypes.

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### Nationals of G7 countries agree that gender inequalities persist even in their countries and have to be fought

Almost all of the people interviewed agree that gender inequalities exist to at least some extent, the majority thinking there are widespread, even in the G7 or in their country.

- Less than 1% of the people interviewed consider that gender inequalities are inexistent today, be it in the world, the G7 countries or their own country.
- On a scale of 0 to 10 (0 meaning these inequalities are non-existent and 10 that they are extremely widespread), they rate the level of inequalities on average at 7/10 globally, 5.9/10 for the G7 countries and 6 in their own country.
- In Italy, the USA and Japan, people consider that the level of gender inequality is higher in their country than in the rest of the G7.

Witnessing these persistent inequalities, citizens of the G7 countries think that reducing them should be considered a priority:

- 90% of the people surveyed believe that closing the gender gap is something that is **important**, and 29% even see it as an absolute priority (32% among women). This expectation can be witnessed in every country and is even stronger in Italy (95%, 50% of Italian women even think it should be a top priority), France and Germany (93%).

Nearly all the people consider however that it is going to be more difficult now, with the crisis, to close the gender gap:

- 97% of the people surveyed consider that the shock of the pandemic will make this goal more difficult to attain, at least to some extent. On average, on a scale of 0 (no impact) to 10 (much more difficult) they rate the increase of difficulty to 5.4, with Italians being especially worried of the impact of the pandemic (6.8).

### People are convinced that reducing gender inequalities would be for the common good

There is a broad consensus on the fact that integrating women into every decision-making level is beneficial:

- 90% of G7 citizens believe that the outcomes of decisions are positive when women and men are involved in decision-making (men and women being equally convinced).
- A significant majority believe that better access to senior management roles for women would have positive effects, with 78% agreeing in terms of the ability to innovate and to think differently, and 70% agreeing in terms of the company's growth.
- The vast majority are convinced that if women had better access to employment in technology-based companies (STEM and AI), the impact would also be positive: 80% agree



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on the positive impact on society and on economic growth, and 72% on the efficiency of technological applications and AI tools.

The vast majority of men and women report that ending gender inequalities would have positive consequences for all. A large majority believe that if women had the same opportunities as men, this would have positive consequences on:

- Society as a whole: 79% (85% of women and 73% of men)
- Employment: 74% (81% of women and 67% of men)
- Economic growth: 74% (81% of women and 65% of men)
- Overall wages: 73% (81% of women and 64% of men)

The proportion of men thinking it would have positive impacts has however slightly declined (-3 to -6 points) compared to last year, as some of them might feel threatened in these unstable times, and therefore less likely to support the promotion of women.

When it comes to fighting climate change, G7 populations are also ready to support the green initiatives led by women, a good way to make things change since women have more often than men taken actions to be more sustainable.

- Only 32% of people believe that women are doing more than others to promote action against climate change
- Yet 47% of women have changed their consumption habits to be more sustainable (compared to 36% of men)
- Globally, women are also more likely to be negatively affected by the impacts of climate change than other people, something only 33% of the people surveyed are aware of
- A majority are however ready to support green initiatives led by women: 65% say that between two projects addressing climate change with the same level of relevance, they would favour the one led by a woman and 56% (60% of women) would invest in a green fund for women, to facilitate investment by women in green initiatives.
- 72% would advocate for the nomination of women CEOs of leading groups in the field of energy.





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ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

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