Opening Up SDG 5

How much do we know about

Gender Equality?

ABOUT ACCESS INFO EUROPE

Access Info Europe is a human rights organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting the right of access to information in Europe and globally. Access Info's mission is to advance democracy by making the right to information work in practice as a tool for defending civil liberties, for facilitating public participation in decision-making, and for holding governments accountable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UPDATE

This report was originally published in March 2020 and later updated in July 2020.

Contents

Executive Summary

Opening Up SDG 5: What do we know about Gender Equality?

Research by Access Info Europe has found that in a range of European countries there is poor availability of data on Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. This makes it impossible for citizens to know how well their country is progressing towards reducing discrimination and violence against women, and securing genuine equality in areas such as education, the workplace, and political participation.

Research conducted in seven (7) European countries – Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and the United Kingdom – on 28 SDG gender-related indicators found **huge disparities in the quantity and the quality of data available at the national level.**

On average little more than half (57%) of the gender-related data was published.

TABLE 1: Percentage of data available in each surveyed country.

UK	Spain	Austria	Germany	Hungary	France	Croatia
96%	71%	64%	64%	39%	36%	32%

In the UK, a full 96% of the data was available, followed by Spain, with a 71% of data available. Moderate levels of data publication were found in Austria (64%) and Germany (64%). Only one third or less of the data was available in Hungary (39%), France (36%) and Croatia (32%). It is not clear whether data is missing because it is not collected, or if governments simply have not yet published all the data that they have.

The **lack of common international standards for how countries should report SDG data** is also reflected in the wide variety of formats and platforms for publication. Some countries, such as Croatia, Germany and the UK, have deployed the user-friendly open source platform Open SDG, which permits data visualisations and makes the data easy to explore. Others such as Spain still have rather old-fashioned statistical websites.

Main findings of the research:

→ Publication of data on SDG 5 and other gender-related indicators is insufficient;
→ Datasets on key gender indicators are not published and seem not to exist in many countries;
→ Data is not collected in a way that fully aligns with the UN indicators;

→ There is weak reporting on non-statistical indicators such as educational measures or the existence of laws;

→ Dedicated websites exist but do not yet hold all the data, and some data is still stored in other locations;

→ Data is generally available in machine readable formats and can be downloaded, but it is not always available in open formats, and reuse conditions are often not clear and/or are hard to find;

→ Data is often not up to date and in some instances it is seriously out of date;

→ Data is not sufficiently disaggregated, reducing its value for prioritising action;

→ The clarity of the data and its presentation to the public, including by use of data visualisations, could be significantly improved;

→ Collection and publication of the data are normally voluntary, with few countries having laws or even policies requiring that data be compiled and published;

→ National statistics institutes are in charge of data publication but may not hold all the relevant datasets;

→ Eurostat, the EU statistics agency, publishes data that is aligned with just 55 of the 231 UN indicators, and for SDG 5 it publishes data on just six (6) indicators, deeming the others not to be relevant.

Recommendations

In order to improve the quality and quantity of data available on SDG 5, Access Info recommends that:

→ Every country publish the full set of data related to SDG 5, as well as data for all 231 SDG indicators;

→ All data held should be published and where data is not held, it should be collected;

→ Data collected should be fully aligned with the UN indicators;

→ Publication should be on dedicated websites that are easy for all members of the public to find, and which are user-friendly and easy to understand. The clarity of current visualisations should be improved;

→ Data should be disaggregated with all the sub-elements of the UN indicators included;

→ Data should be available in open-source, machine-readable format in line with the Open Data Charter principles;

→ All SDG data should be available free of charge with no limits on reuse, and the rules relating to reuse should be clearly stated;

→ Data should be as up-to-date as possible and published in real time;

→ Every country should have a law or policy requiring collection and publication of all SDG data;

→ National statistics institutes should be charged with data publication and be empowered to collect data from other sources as necessary;

→ Where necessary, public officials should be trained to ensure complete and accurate data collection and publication;

→ Eurostat, the EU statistics agency, should compile and publish data related to all of the SDG indicators;

→ The UN and the international community should adopt guidelines for countries on how to publish SDG data;

→ UNESCO should measure SDG data publication as part of measuring the right of access to information indicator for SDG 16.10.2.

The report contains a series of recommendations for each country, which can be found in Section IV: National Recommendations.

I. Introduction

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, aim to make significant advances on achieving peace and prosperity for people and the planet by 2030. This includes public access to information as part of SDG 16.

Of all the information that governments can make public, data about SDG progress is particularly important as it permits civil society and citizens to evaluate how well each country is performing and what needs to be done to advance towards achieving the goals by 2030.

In this context, Access Info and researchers across Europe evaluated the availability of information related to one of the most high-profile issues in the European space, which is SDG 5 on achieving **gender equality and empowering all women and girls**.

The conclusion from the Gender Equality Index 2019 released by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is that the **European Union is still far from reaching gender equality**. The EU currently scores 67.4 points out of 100 on this index, and has only increased 5.4 points since 2005.

The question Access Info set out to answer is how much data is available about the current state of gender equality in the European Union.

II. Methodology

Access Info conducted research in seven (7) European countries – Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UK). These countries were chosen as a randomised representative sample of EU countries, and are places where we had researchers available to conduct the investigation.[1]

Working with the national researchers, we assessed the availability of data for the 14 indicators used by the UN to evaluate progress on SDG 5. We also selected 14 additional indicators – drawn from SDGs 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, and 16 – that have a gender dimension. Examples of the additional indicators include SDG 1.2.1 on those living below the national poverty line disaggregated by sex, or SDG 3.1.1 on maternal mortality. A full list of all the 28 indicators used can be found in Annex A.

The methodology included looking for specific SDG data websites, as well as searching for the data from other publicly available national sources. The aim was to find out if, in practice, citizens, CSOs, and journalists really do have access to complete, up-to-date, findable, open data on the implementation of SDG 5.

Although we did not ask researchers to submit access to information requests, this was done in Hungary to try to locate the data, which revealed that some additional and more up-to-date datasets exist but have not been published.

An access to information request was also submitted in Spain to verify whether all available data was published by National Statistics Institute, or if any of the missing data was reported somewhere else; this resulted in the identification of some additional data in the Voluntary National Review.

Access Info Europe also submitted a request to Eurostat to understand the process behind the selection of its 100 indicators. More details on this can be found in Section VI: The Eurostat Case.

---

[1] The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020, after this research was conducted.

III. Key Findings: Missing Data / Mixed Quality

1. Significant gaps exist in the publication of data on SDG 5 and other gender equality indicators in all of the countries surveyed

It is impossible to get a full picture of the state of progress towards achieving gender equality in any of the seven countries surveyed.

The UK comes closest to providing a complete dataset, with 96% of the data published on a dedicated and easy-to-find website, although the UK has not published data for SDG 16.2.2 on the "number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation". What they did instead, is provide an explanation as to why this data is not currently available, and provide further information and external links to related data that is available.

Spain has 64% of the data published on a centralised website. There is, however, more data publically available elsewhere that has not been accounted for on this website. Information on the existence of legal frameworks "to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex" (indicator 5.1.1) is not available on the SDG dedicated webpage, even though such a law exists and is publicly available. In addition to this, data relating to 16.2.2 on the number of victims of human trafficking is only available in Spain's Voluntary National Review. Including these two data sets, Spain publishes a total of 71% of gender-related data.

Austria and Germany also have a relatively good level of publication of data – 64% both of them – with SDG data contained in one centralised platform. Indeed, as we comment below, Germany is using the same SDG publication software as the UK, although it has not yet added as much data.

Next is Hungary, which has published only 39% of the data against the 28 indicators we reviewed, with 36% of this data being on an SDG-specific website. Researchers noted that where the information is not on the SDG website, it is contained within other datasets and hard to find. For example, on the proportion of women subjected to sexual violence, the researcher found from a different source more recent data than that published on the SDG website.

France also has low levels of publication, with only 36% of data published, followed by Croatia, where only 32% of the data is available, and only 25% on a specific website.

TABLE 1: AVAILABILITY OF DATA FOR THE 28 SDG GENDER INDICATORS

	UK	Spain	Austria	Germany	Hungary	France	Croatia
Reporting Percentage	96%	71%	64%	64%	39%	36%	32%
Indicators reported on (out of 28)	27	20	18	18	11	10	9

TABLE 2: SDG GENDER INDICATORS CONTAINED ON A SPECIFIC SDG WEBSITE

	UK	Spain	Austria	Germany	Hungary	France	Croatia
Reporting Percentage	96%	64%	64%	64%	36%	32%	25%
Indicators reported on (out of 28)	27	18	18	18	10	9	7

TABLE 3: AVAILABLE DATA FOR SDG 5 INDICATORS BY COUNTRY

- 🟩 Data is available and clearly published as SDG indicator data.
- 🟧 Similar data is available, but not clearly published as data relating to an SDG indicator.
- 🟥 No relevant data available.

	AUSTRIA	CROATIA	FRANCE	GERMANY	HUNGARY	SPAIN	UK
5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	🟩	🟧	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟧	🟩
5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟩
5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩
5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩

Indicator							
5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments	🟩	🟩	🟧	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩
5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩
5.a.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩
5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩

TABLE 4: AVAILABLE DATA FOR OTHER GENDER-RELATED SDG INDICATORS, BY COUNTRY

	AUSTRIA	CROATIA	FRANCE	GERMANY	HUNGARY	SPAIN	UK
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green
4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, […]) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; […]	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green

Indicator							
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟧	🟥	🟩
16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	🟩	🟧	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟧	🟥
16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩
16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩

This research reveals a lack of data, not only for SDG 5, but also for other SDGs with gender relevance. For example, indicator 5.6.1 on informed decisions on sexual relations and contraception, or indicator 3.7.1 on family planning, are largely excluded from data reporting. An interesting example is Austria, which merely indicates that Goal 5.6.1 is "largely achieved", yet gives no data to prove this.

Similarly, the lack of reporting on indicators 11.7.2 on victims of physical or sexual harassment and 16.2.3 on sexual violence of those under 18, means that it is impossible to evaluate levels of sexual violence in the surveyed countries.

Another example is the failure to report on the non-statistical indicators such as 4.7.1 on education on development, including gender equality and human rights, or indicator 16.7.2 on inclusive decision-making.

It is not clear why some indicators have no data, as no explanations are given. It might be that the government of a particular country believes that this data is not relevant in a European context or that they simply do not have the data. Whatever the reasons, the absence of such data makes it difficult to make a complete evaluation of how a country is performing in important areas, and it is not possible to compare its progress with that of other countries.

RECOMMENDATION: There is a pressing need for countries to collect and publish SDG data, and, more specifically, data related to gender equality. In order to fill the data gaps, every country should report on all SDG indicators. To the extent that this means creating new datasets, this should be a priority in order to ensure that in each country there is a full picture of the current state of progress on gender equality.

2. No reporting on non-statistical indicators

There are a number of SDG indicators that cannot be presented as data at the national level either because they are designed for global data collection or because they are more qualitative questions.

Examples include indicator 5.1.1 on the existence of laws promoting equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, or indicator 4.7.1 on the mainstreaming of education on global citizenship, including gender equality and human rights.

We found that the level of reporting on the non-statistical indicators in the seven surveyed countries is very low, with the sole exception of UK (reported on all five), followed by Austria (reported on four out of five indicators).

Austria and the UK are good examples of how to report non-statistical indicators. In both cases links are provided from the SDG page to the relevant sources of information, such as the legal frameworks for promoting, enforcing, and monitoring equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. This is a very simple way of providing relevant information and means citizens can easily find what they need, without having to search multiple online sources.

Reporting on these indicators provides an excellent opportunity for national governments to communicate about specific legislation or specific actions that are being carried out to effectively achieve gender equality. Citizens should not only have access to data on current levels of SDG implementation, but also information on actions that have been taken or are being taken to fully achieve the SDGs by 2030.

TABLE 5: AVAILABILITY OF NON-STATISTICAL INDICATORS RELEVANT TO GENDER

	AUSTRIA	CROATIA	FRANCE	GERMANY	HUNGARY	SPAIN	UK
4.7.1	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.1.1	🟩	🟧	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟧	🟩
5.6.2	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.a.2	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
5.c.1	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩

It is important to note that national statistics institutes are normally in charge of collecting national data on SDG indicators. This is a possible explanation as to why those indicators that are not purely statistical are being skipped in the national indicators sets. This explanation is not, however, an acceptable excuse.

This non-reporting is a missed opportunity to ensure that national citizens are informed about the position of their country on these indicators.

RECOMMENDATION: Every country should report on all non-statistical indicators. All countries should ensure that there is reporting on all SDG indicators, both statistical and non-statistical. Non-statistical SDG data should be presented and explained to the public in an accessible way.

3. SDG websites exist but are incomplete

The seven (7) surveyed countries have established a dedicated website or a specific reporting platform for publication of SDG data. In some cases, these websites are simply dedicated sections of the national statistics institutes' official websites, as is the case with Austria, France, and Spain.

Other countries have opted for a separate website for SDG reporting, as is the case with Croatia, Germany, Hungary and the UK's.

The quality of the dedicated websites varies. The **best SDG websites** that we found are those of Croatia, Germany and the UK, which use the open source reporting platform Open SDG. This website has been specifically designed to report SDG data and it is very easy for anyone to use it. It measures the reporting progress and it allows for data visualisation and downloads in open formats. More details can be found in Section V below on Open SDG: Good Reporting Practice.

TABLE 6: NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORMS IN EACH SURVEYED COUNTRY

	NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORMS
AUSTRIA	http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/internationales/agenda2030_sustainable_development_goals/un-agenda2030_monitoring/index.html
CROATIA	https://croatianbureauofstatistics.github.io/sdg-indicators/
FRANCE	https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2654964 https://www.agenda-2030.fr/odd/odd5-realiser-legalite-des-sexes-et-autonomiser-toutes-les-femmes-et-les-filles-44
GERMANY	https://sustainabledevelopment-germany.github.io/en/
HUNGARY	https://www.ksh.hu/sdg/
SPAIN	https://www.ine.es/dynt3/ODS/es/index.htm
UNITED KINGDOM	https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/

Contrasted with the better practices, we found websites with large volumes of data but which were not user-friendly. Austria, for instance, has a reasonably complete set of data, but the website is far from attractive and is not very interactive. If you want to view the data, you need to download a PDF or an XLSX file.

Germany SDG website

STATISTIK AUSTRIA SDG section

In France, for the data that is published, there is a reasonable amount of detail, but multiple clicks are required to access each dataset and it is not possible to have an overview of all the data; some familiarity with the website is required to be able to navigate it well. This is something that could be improved and simplified.

Hungary's website is user-friendly and is colourful and has graphics, but is superficial, lacks data, and there are no links to the external sources where more information can be found.

Spain's SDG data publication could be improved as well. While SDG data is published centrally on the National Statistics Institute's (INE) website, it is difficult to navigate for those not used to statistics websites. In addition to this, data visualisation for SDG data is poor and non-interactive. Downloading full datasets can be complicated as links provided lead to larger datasets where it can be difficult to find the specific SDG data. Furthermore, for some indicators, there is a link to an external source, such as a ministry. In some cases, these links take the user to the front-page of the respective Ministry's website, meaning that a citizen would have to search through that website to find the data.

It is clear that having a dedicated website for SDG data reporting makes it much easier for citizens to find the data and provides a clearer picture on the level of reporting – the levels of transparency – as well as on level of progress towards securing each SDG. It also means that it is easier for each national authority to ensure that all relevant data is published and up to date.

The negative impacts of not having a dedicated SDG website are that data has to be collected from different sources, often in different formats, making it harder to obtain an overall picture on SDG implementation.

RECOMMENDATION: It is strongly recommended that every country set up a dedicated website for reporting SDG data. Countries around the world are encouraged to make use of the Open SDG platform, which has the advantage that it has been designed specifically for reporting SDG data and which presents the data in a user-friendly and accessible way. Given that it is open source, it can be set up easily at low costs. More details in Section V on Open SDG: Good Reporting Practice.

4. SDG data is not completely open and reuse is thus limited

In this survey we evaluated the quality of the data in terms of openness, following the principles of the Open Data Charter.[2] This research looked into the reusability of data, in which format it is being published, whether it is up-to-date and disaggregated, and some other aspects that make data truly open.

TABLE 7: OPEN DATA CHARTER PRINCIPLES

	PRINCIPLE
1. Open by Default	Government "data or information should be open and available for the public to find, access, and use under an open and unrestricted license."
2. Timely and Comprehensive	Open data should be released in a timely manner. Data should be comprehensive, accurate, released in its original, unmodified form, and disaggregated.
3. Accessible and Usable	Open data should be published on a central portal, so it is easily discoverable. Data should be released in open formats, "free of charge, under an open and unrestricted license."
4. Comparable and Interoperable	"Data should be easy to compare within and between sectors, across geographic locations, and over time" and it "should be presented in structured and standardized formats to support interoperability, traceability, and effective reuse."
5. For Improved Governance and Citizen Engagement	"The release of open data strengthens the governance of and trust in [...] public institutions, reinforces governments' obligation to respect the rule of law, and provides a transparent and accountable foundation to improve decision-making and enhance the provision of public services."
6. For Inclusive Development and Innovation	"Open data can help to identify social and economic challenges, and monitor and deliver sustainable development programs. Open data can also help meet global challenges such as poverty, hunger, climate change, and inequality."

---

[2] International Open Data Charter: https://opendatacharter.net/principles/

TABLE 8: OPEN DATA ANALYSIS

	REUSE FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES	REUSE FOR NON-COMMERCIAL PURPOSES	DOWNLOADABLE	MACHINE-READABLE
AUSTRIA	Green	Green	Green	Green
CROATIA	Green	Green	Green	Green
FRANCE	Green	Green	Green	Green
GERMANY	Green	Green	Green	Green
HUNGARY	Red	Green	Green	Green
SPAIN	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
UK	Green	Green	Green	Green
	OPEN FORMAT	**VISUALISED**	**DISAGGREGATED**	**UPDATED**
AUSTRIA	Orange	Red	Orange	Green
CROATIA	Green	Green	Green	Green
FRANCE	Green	Green	Red	Orange
GERMANY	Green	Green	Orange	Orange
HUNGARY	Green	Green	Red	Orange
SPAIN	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange
UK	Green	Green	Green	Orange

- **REUSABILITY:** In order to allow citizens to reuse SDG data, it should be published under an open licence that allows for its reuse, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

In the UK, all UK government data is published under the Open Government Licence. This licence allows for both commercial and non-commercial reuse of data. Although the type of license was not specifically mentioned on the UK SDG website when this report was initially released (March 2020), the UK Office for National Statistics has now included this information on their website following the recommendation made by Access Info.

Data from Austria, Croatia, Germany and France is available under copyright, but it allows for reuse even for commercial purposes. However, Hungary's data, which is also under copyright, can only be reused for non-commercial purposes. In Spain, the National Statistics Institute contains SDG data from different sources, with reuse only authorised for data prepared by the Institute itself, both for commercial or non-commercial purposes; there is no information on the terms of reuse of data coming from other sources.

Access Info's found that it was generally hard to clarify what the reuse terms of the SDG data were, with researchers often having to check other parts of the relevant body's website, or even needing to contact the statistics institutes to get a full picture of the conditions.

Hungary's limit on the reuse of data for commercial purposes is highly problematic as it could limit use of this valuable data by businesses, and even by commercial media outlets; this could in turn limit debate on the progress towards the indicators as well as preventing entrepreneurs from developing products that could support attainment of the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATION: All SDG indicator data should be available under open licences, with reuse freely allowed, including for commercial purposes. All countries should ensure that the legal information relating to reuse is easy to find and understand.

- **FREE OF CHARGE:** In line with the principle of a fundamental right of access to information held by governments, all statistical data, especially that related to the important issues contained in the SDGs, should be available free of charge. We found that all the proactively published information examined in this study was free of charge. Nevertheless, in Hungary, the researchers reported a concern that since the Hungarian Statistics Office does not have a clear regulation nor explicit funding for SDG data collection, if data that is not already compiled were to be requested, even if it is held by other public bodies, there is a risk that the requester might be a charged for the data collection. We did not test this, but if this were the case, it would be highly problematic.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that the legal framework governing SDG data is clear, and that it requires the collection of such data and that it be made public free of charge.

- **DOWNLOADABLE AND MACHINE-READABLE DATA:** All the analysed data from the seven (7) surveyed countries is downloadable in machine-readable formats. This is a good practice.

RECOMMENDATION: Data should always be available for download in machine-readable formats.

- **OPEN FORMATS:** We found that there is a mix of formats available, although overall most were in some kind of open format, defined as a format that can be processed

with at least one free/open-source software tool.[3] Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary and the UK publish data in open formats. Austria, on the other hand, publishes its SDG data only in PDF and XLSX formats (XLSX is not strictly an open format, and although it can be read with open software, it is much better also to offer CSV files). Spain publishes SDG data in XLSX format, but for some datasets it allows users to download data in open formats, such as CSV.

As mentioned in the Methodology, section II, our researchers found additional data in Hungary that was not published as SDG data. This information was released by the Ministry of Interior upon a written question of a Member of the Hungarian Parliament. It was published in a rather badly-scanned PDF document, which is not machine readable and would pose a challenge for optical character recognition software, thereby greatly impeding the use of this data.

Data on women subjected to violence published in Hungary

RECOMMENDATION: Data should always be published in open formats, such as, for example, in CSV format and not only XLSX.

- **VISUALISATIONS:** Visualised data was found in six (6) of the seven (7) surveyed countries: Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and the UK. In Germany and UK use of the Open SDG platform facilitates interactive visualisations that permit filtering by various elements of the disaggregated data. Croatia uses a previous version of the Open SDG platform and its visualisations do not allow for filtering by disaggregated data. France and Hungary's visualisations are also interactive, with the French ones can be viewed by year. Hungary's data cannot be filtered either by year or level of disaggregation; on a positive note Hungary has a graphic comparing its data with that of other European Union countries, even where this shows that it is performing badly, for example on the number of women in the parliament. Spain's visualisations are of poor quality and are not interactive.

---

[3] Open Format Definition: https://opendefinition.org/ofd/

Percentage of women who experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months
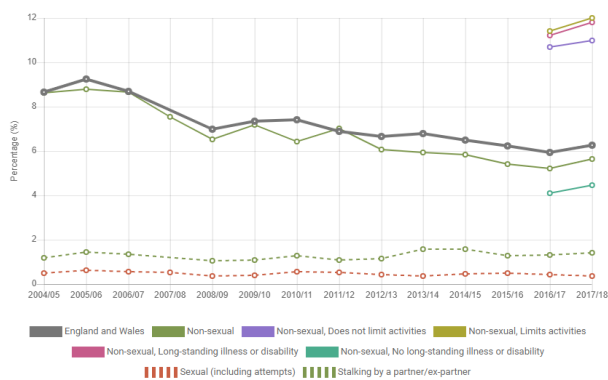
UK SDG Data Visualisation
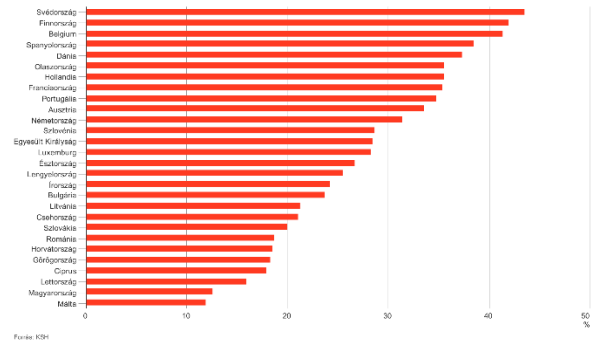
Hungary SDG Data Visualisation
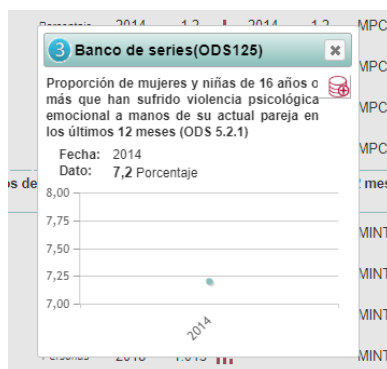
Spain SDG Data Visualisation

France SDG Data Visualisation

Visualisations are a good way to portray data so that it is easier for those citizens who are not data specialists to understand the information they are seeing.

RECOMMENDATION: When data is made public, this should be done in a way that makes it accessible for everyone. It is therefore recommended to present data in a user-friendly and visual way so it is easier for citizens to understand the information.

- **DISAGGREGATION:** There is a big disparity in SDG 5 data disaggregation. Some countries, such as Croatia, Spain and the UK, offer disaggregated data for each reported indicator (with the exception of the non-statistical indicators). In Spain, for example, SDG 5.2.2 on proportion of women subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, offers 11 levels of disaggregation. The UN indicator asks for age and place of occurrence to be reported on, and Spain disaggregates the data in eight (8) different places of occurrence, such as open spaces, public transport, or homes.

On the contrary, in Hungary, for example, there is no disaggregation for any of the reported indicators. In Austria and Germany, not all indicators are disaggregated. For example, Germany does not disaggregate the data by the proportion of women subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, rather it gives only the total numbers. France sometimes publishes several datasets for a single indicator, rather than one composite dataset with disaggregated data. An example is the indicator on proportion of women in managerial positions, which has four datasets associated with it.

Data disaggregation provides greater insight on different aspects that are important from a gender equality perspective. For example, for SDG 5.2.1 on the "*Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age*", without proper disaggregation it is impossible to know which type of violence women are subjected to. In this particular case, only Spain and UK offer disaggregated data by type of violence. Disaggregated data by people with disabilities on SDG 5 indicators was only found in a few of the UK datasets.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that all countries make a greater effort to publish more detailed datasets containing disaggregated data. To the extent that detailed data does not exist, it should be a priority to collect it. In particular, data should be collected by sex/gender, age and geographic region. It is highly recommended to collect data on persons with disabilities.

- **UP-TO-DATE DATA:** This survey found a large and concerning disparity in how up to date the SDG 5 data is, with many of the datasets being too old to be meaningful.

On Croatia's dedicated website, most of the data is available until 2018/2019. For Austria, the majority of the indicators were updated with data for the year 2018. France's latest data is from 2017, with the sole exception of one indicator with 2019 data. Germany's data ranges from 2013 to 2018. Hungary publishes data under three SDG 5 indicators and each one has a different date: 2015, 2016, and 2018, even though our research indicated that in some cases more recent data is available but has not been uploaded to the SDG website. In Spain, the data ranges from 2010 to 2019. For the UK, latest data ranges from 2015 to 2019. This causes a problem as outdated datasets can be misleading as data could no longer be accurate.

We also found that sometimes more recent data is available in the Voluntary National Reviews, but citizens should not have to wait for the publication of this document nor

have to know about it in order to know how their country is doing in advancing towards achieving the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATION: Governments should publish all SDG data available, proactively and continuously. Once a dataset is established, there should be a continuous collection and publication of the data, being as close to real-time updates as possible.

5. Collection and publication of SDG data is largely voluntary

The survey found that there is **no legal obligation to publish SDG data** in any of the seven (7) countries surveyed. None of the countries in question have implemented a legal obligation on national bodies to publish data on the SDG indicators.

Even for collection of data, the legal obligations are weak: only two (2) of the seven (7) surveyed countries, Germany and Spain, have laws in place that require their governments to collect data for reporting on the SDG indicators. **The remaining five (5) surveyed countries have no legal framework** that requires the government to collect data on the SDG indicators. Germany and Spain are again the only surveyed countries which establish by law the bodies in charge of SDG data collection, which are the National Statistics Institutes.

TABLE 8: THE EXISTENCE OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK REQUIRING SDG DATA COLLECTION

X AUSTRIA **X** CROATIA **X** FRANCE **X** HUNGARY **X** UNITED KINGDOM	✓ GERMANY ✓ SPAIN

Without a legal obligation, there is no guarantee that national governments and national statistics institutes will collect and publish SDG data. Citizens should be guaranteed access to SDG data as a way to understand and monitor the level of national SDG implementation taking place in the country where they live.

<u>**RECOMMENDATION:**</u> All countries should establish a clear legal obligation requiring SDG data to be collected, or at least make a strong policy commitment to do so. Such legal or policy framework should also respond to other concerns identified in this report, and require data to be published as well as designating the specific public body in charge of data collection and publication.

Access Info also recommends that national statistics institutes are given the role of coordinating the data collection. To the extent that training of public officials in relevant ministries and other government departments is needed so that data is collected in line with the SDG indicators and in disaggregated formats, this should be carried out as a matter or priority.

IV. National Recommendations

AUSTRIA

- Continue collecting and elaborating new datasets to achieve a higher level of reporting.
- Improve SDG reporting webpage so it is more user-friendly, including, for example, data visualisations.
- Publication of data in open formats.
- Publication of more disaggregated data.
- Establish a legal framework for SDG data collection and publication.

CROATIA

- Continue collecting and elaborating new datasets to achieve a higher level of reporting.
- Improve SDG data visualisations so it can be filtered by different levels of disaggregation, and upgrade to the latest version of the SDG platform.
- Establish a legal framework for SDG data collection and publication.

FRANCE

- Enlarge national set of indicators so that it is better aligned with UN set.
- Publish disaggregated data.
- Ensure up-to-date datasets.
- Establish a legal framework for SDG data collection and publication.

GERMANY

- Continue collecting and elaborating new datasets to achieve a higher level of reporting.
- Publish more disaggregated data.
- Ensure up-to-date datasets.

HUNGARY

- Enlarge national set of indicators so it is better aligned with the UN set.
- Improve SDG website by providing links to any relevant information or datasets.
- Allow reuse of data for commercial purposes.
- Publish disaggregated data.
- Ensure up-to-date datasets.
- Establish a legal framework for SDG data collection and publication.

SPAIN

- Continue collecting and elaborating new datasets to achieve a higher level of reporting.
- Report on non-statistical indicators.
- Improve SDGs webpage by simplifying the download process of datasets and improve data visualisation.
- Provide better guidance on reuse of data from sources other than INE.
- Ensure that all datasets are available for download in open formats.
- Ensure up-to-date datasets.

UNITED KINGDOM

- Continue collecting and elaborating new datasets to achieve a higher level of reporting.
- Establish a legal framework for SDG data collection and publication.
- Ensure up-to-date datasets.

V. Open SDG: Good Reporting Practice

The Open SDG Platform

The open source Open SDG[4] platform is an example of a model that can be used to ensure effective reporting of SDG data to the public.

The platform is the result of collaboration between the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), the US government, and the non-profit Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE). It is a reporting platform developed for managing and publishing data and statistics related to the SDGs. It presents SDG data in an easily accessible format, allowing users to search and visualise data.

Open SDG UK Platform (Front page)

Open SDG can be used free of charge and has already been rolled out in **Armenia, Croatia, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Rwanda, United Kingdom, United States, and the City of Los Angeles (USA)**. Croatia and Poland use an older version of the platform which includes less features. Using open source software, **Open SDG is available on the sharing platform GitHub,** so any country can use it and adapt it to meet national needs.
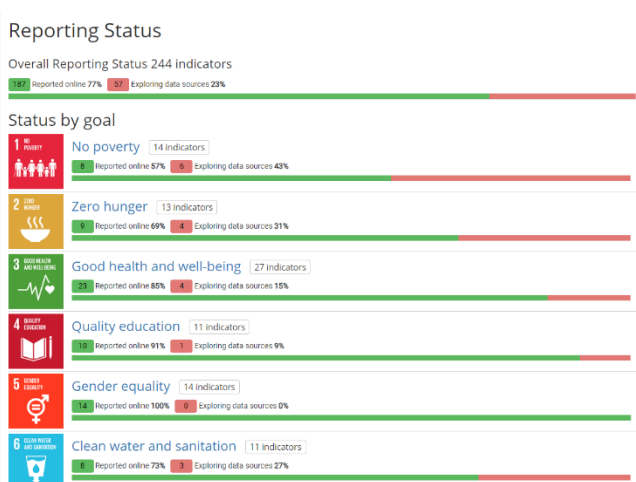
Open SDG UK Platform (Reporting Status)

The Open SDG platform is a user-friendly platform where users can explore the data linked to each SDG indicator. The platform allows users to see whether data is available for a particular indicator, whether the data is currently being collected, or if data is not yet available at all. The platform also includes a tab for **Reporting Status** where it displays an overview on the reporting status for all the indicators.

---

[4] Open SDG: https://open-sdg.readthedocs.io/en/latest/

For each indicator, **data can be visualised as graphs, data tables, and maps**. This can also be done for disaggregated data, if available. Data can be downloaded in **machine-readable and open formats**.
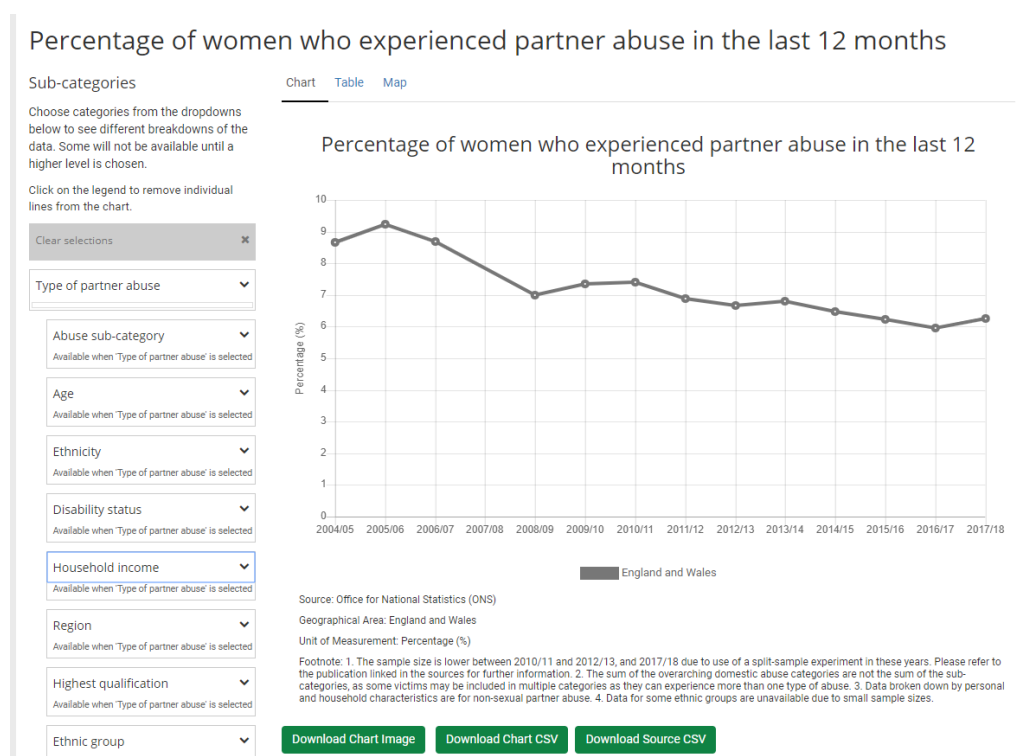
Open SDG UK Platform (SDG 5.2.1)

Data can be made available under copyright or under open licenses. In order to promote the reuse of data, we strongly encourage data to be available under **open licenses**.

The platform is available in all the **UN official languages** (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and **other languages have been added**, such as Armenian and German.

RECOMMENDATION: National Governments should use the Open SDG reporting platform. Given the importance of Member States reporting on the SDGs in a standardised way, and given the strengths of the Open SDG platform, it is highly recommended that all countries use it.

In order to make the most out of this platform, it is crucial that the core datasets held by each country are **well elaborated, disaggregated, and up to date**. If data is poor or insufficient, the platform functionalities will be rendered meaningless, simply acting as a colourful distraction from the fact that there are gaps in the datasets.

Although this will be a challenge for some countries, Access Info believes that use of the Open SDG platform will make it easier for countries to organise their data and therefore easily identify gaps.

VI. The Eurostat Case: Data Divergence

For the monitoring of SDG progress at the overall European Union level, the European statistics body Eurostat uses a list of 100 indicators with a maximum of six (6) indicators per SDG. This contrasts with the UN established list of 231 individual indicators. Of those 100 indicators, only 55 are included in the UN list, as reported by Eurostat, with the others not coinciding exactly with those used by the UN.[5]

In order to understand the process behind the selection of these indicators, which are different from the UN indicators list, Access Info Europe used the platform AsktheEU.org[6] to request from Eurostat all relevant documents they might hold on this matter. Eurostat provided a list of documents, including minutes from European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) meetings and the "EU SDG Indicator set 2019".

At the 31st ESSC Meeting, the SDG indicators were categorised in four different groups: "Available Indicators", "Out of Scope of Official Statistics", "Potentially in Scope but Not Relevant" and "In Scope and Relevant, but Not Available".[7] The list of SDG 5 indicators classified as "not relevant" are:

- 5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.
- 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age.
- 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.
- 5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.

It is stated in the minutes of the 33rd ESSC Meeting that there was a discussion where "*some Member States highlighted the importance of better aligning the EU indicator set with the UN global indicators in order to increase international comparability and to avoid any misunderstanding of the data by users*".[8]

In the end, however, it was agreed to use a list of 100 indicators, of which only 55 correspond with the UN indicators list. The UN set includes a total of 231 individual indicators, meaning only 23,8% of global indicators is available at EU level.

The decision by Eurostat to use only some of the UN indicators is highly problematic. It means that it is almost impossible to compare SDG data at EU level with SDG data coming from other

---

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators

[6] AsktheEU.org is an Access Info Europe's platform to request information to European Union institutions: https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/eu_sdg_indicators#incoming-22334

[7] https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/6858/response/22334/attach/4/ESSC%202016%2031%2015%20SDG%20EN.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

[8] https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/6858/response/22334/attach/9/33rd%20ESSC%20final%20Minutes%20EN.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

parts of the world that follow the UN indicators. It is also impossible to use the data that Eurostat has compiled to supplement gaps in national datasets.

This means that Eurostat plays no useful role in ensuring that SDG data is collected and published at the national level on some of the more sensitive issues. For example, for countries such as Croatia, France, and Hungary that have not published data on female genital mutilation, it would be useful if Eurostat insisted that this data be collected and published.

RECOMMENDATION: Eurostat should enlarge its set of indicators to further align with the UN set. Specifically, it should work with European Union Member States to ensure that Europe sets a high standard by publishing a complete set of quality data for all the indicators on gender equality. With only ten years remaining to achieve the SDGs, collecting data and reporting on implementation across the EU should be made a priority in order to bolster common efforts to reach the Agenda 2030 goals.

Annex A

The questionnaire which was completed by each of the researchers in each country consisted of the following questions.

1. Does your country have a legal framework that requires the government to **elaborate on** (i.e. collect data for reporting on) the SDG indicators?
2. In your country, does the law require that the SDG indicators be **published**?
3. If proactive publication is required, does the law specify any of the following:
   - **Place** of publication.
   - **Frequency** of updates.
4. Does the law specify the name of the public body/bodies responsible for the **elaboration** of the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators in your country?
5. Does the law specify the name of the public body/bodies responsible for the **publication** of the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators in your country?
6. The **publication** of the SDG indicators is **available** on:
   - A **unique government website** created for this purpose.
   - SDG indicators are published on **several websites** run by public bodies, which make clear that these are SDG indicators.
   - SDG indicators are published on **several websites** run by public bodies, and it is **not always clear** that they are SDG indicators.
   - There is **no specific website** for publication of the SDGs.
7. **SDG 5 Indicators**:
   - Is data **published**?
   - Is it **findable**?
   - In which **format** is data published?
   - When was the last **update**?
   - **Link** to dataset
   - **Comments** / Difficulties / Recommendations
   - **List of indicators:**

5.1.1	Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
5.2.1	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

5.2.2	Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence
5.3.1	Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18
5.3.2	Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age
5.4.1	Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
5.5.1	Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments
5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions
5.6.1	Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care
5.6.2	Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
5.a.1	(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure
5.a.2	Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control
5.b.1	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
5.c.1	Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

8. **Other SDG indicators** which may be relevant for gender equality:
   - Is data **published**?
   - Is it **findable**?
   - In which **format** is data published?
   - When was the last **update**?
   - **Link** to dataset
   - **Comments** / Difficulties / Recommendations
   - **List of indicators:**

1.2.1	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio
3.1.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
3.7.1	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment
8.5.1	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
10.2.1	Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
11.7.2	Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
16.1.1	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age
16.2.2	Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation
16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18
16.7.2	Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

Opening Up SDG 5: How Much Do We Know About Gender Equality? - 2020

Access Info Europe: www.access-info.org