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GENDER ROLES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION, PAID WORK AND FAMILY LIFE IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA - A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE -

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“The most important career decision women make is whom they decide to marry.”

Sheryl Sandberg, COO at Facebook

Context (I)

- ❑ The condition of women in society has been intensively debated in the last decades. Since 1975, the importance given to ensuring basic human rights increased together with the development of directives that have supported the principle of equality between women and men in relation to *working conditions, training and promotion, social security, access to goods and services, maternity protection and parental leave*. In 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam included the *gender component in all European Community policies*, establishing that *the principle of equal treatment is a fundamental right*.
- ❑ Since then, EU Member States have formulated and promoted various policies and measures to combat inequality, drawing attention to *the importance and the need to increase female labour market participation rates*. The European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 shows that *increasing female labour market participation helps to counteract the effects of population aging*, and the Member States that have promoted policies to balance work and family life *recorded higher labour market participation rates among both women and men*, and relatively high birth rates also.

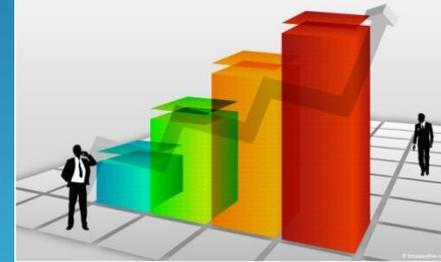


Context (II)



- ❑ Europe 2020, the European Union's ten-year jobs and growth strategy, was launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed; at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level of education.
- ❑ The national targets as set out in the National Reform Programs (NRP) in April 2014:
 - Bulgaria: 76% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed; 36% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education.
 - Romania: 70% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed; 26.7% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education.
- ❑ Scientists argue that the behaviour of women between paid work and family life can be explained by the Welfare state policies such as public childcare provision (Siim 2000; Lewis & Astrom 1998; Morgan 2005). But *cultural values also contribute to the explanation of the behaviour of women between family and employment, because culture interacts with welfare state policies* (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). *Family culture, by its values related to gender roles and the division of domestic work, the division of childcare provision and the degree of dependence or autonomy of the spouses, varies from a society to another and is subject to change.*
- ❑ As eastern European countries, *both Bulgaria and Romania experienced a smaller gender employment gap during communism* when the State encouraged women's participation on labour market. *The post-socialist picture is very different* with regards to women's participation on labour market, which conducts to the idea that *the evolution of the gender gap in employment reflects the variety of socio-cultural, institutional and economic factors.*

METHODOLOGY



- ❑ This paper uses analysis of official statistics regarding female participation in tertiary education and on labour market in Romania and Bulgaria (*Data source: Eurostat Data Explorer*).
- ❑ Moreover, using data from *three waves of the European Values Study* (1991/1993, 1999, and 2008), the paper aims to capture possible variations in gender role attitudes regarding family and paid work, two aspects of life influenced by the changes in family culture.
 - egalitarian views on gender roles outside the house, measured by the item “*Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income*”;
 - egalitarian views on gender roles inside the house, measured by the item “*Important in marriage to share household chores*”;
 - the impact of paid work on motherhood, measured by the item “*A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work*”.
- ❑ For the three waves of the European Values Study, representative samples of the adult population were used. The results were weighted to adjust the sample distribution by gender and age. Descriptive statistical methods were used, both numerical and graphical.

EUROPE 2020 TARGETS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

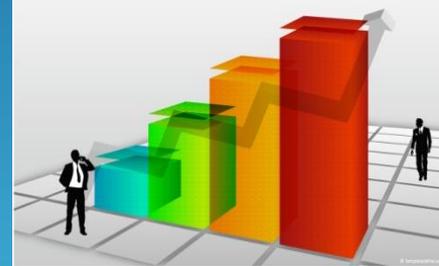


Figure 1 shows the position of Bulgaria and Romania in relation to the European 2020 Strategy targets with regards to tertiary attainment rate among population aged 30 to 34 years.

Although Romania has one of the lowest targets in EU (26.7%), the share of population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education in 2013 is below the national target.

To be noticed that the total share is lowered by the share of men aged 30-34, in which case only 21.6% completed tertiary education in 2013.

Bulgaria exceeded its target in the case of female population, but the share of total population aged 30-34 is below the national target (lowered by men).

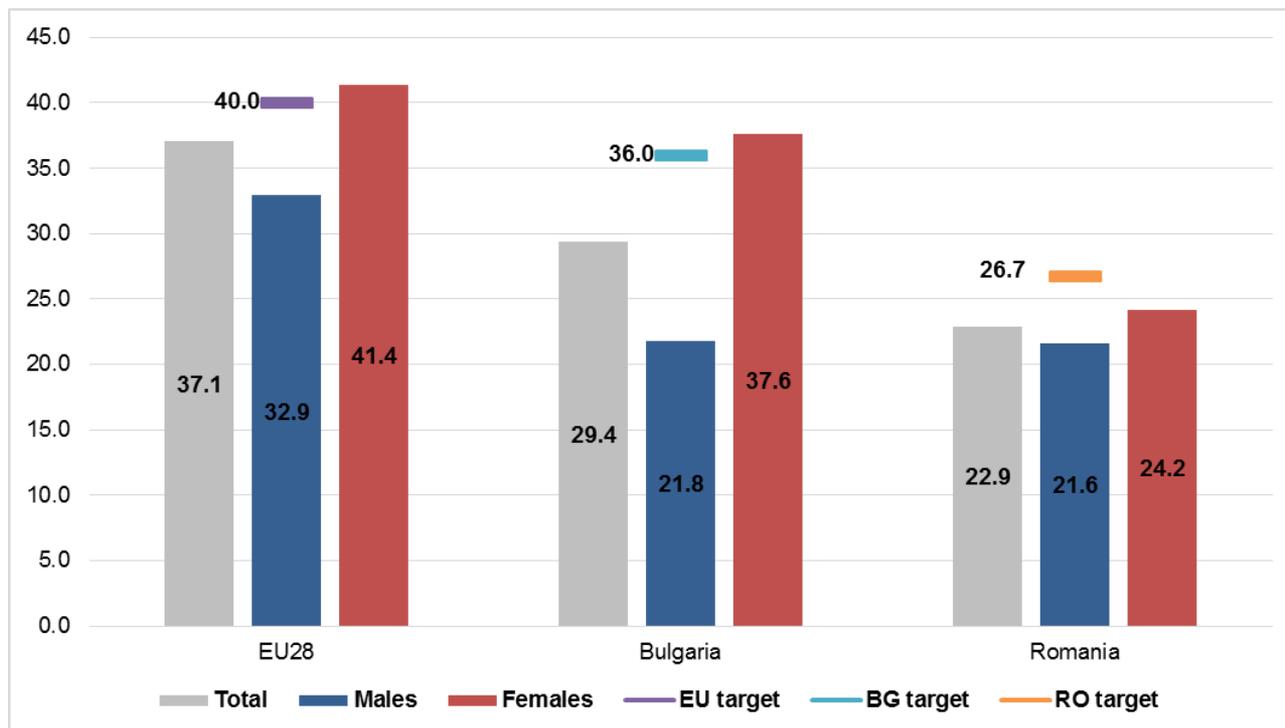


Fig. 1 – Tertiary attainment rate 2013, Europe 2020 headline target and national targets

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer, online data code: edat_ifse_07.

Note: Tertiary attainment rate represents the share of population aged 30 to 34 having completed tertiary education.

EUROPE 2020 TARGETS IN EMPLOYMENT



- ❑ With regards to labour market participation, the Europe 2020 Strategy sets a goal for labour market participation of 75% for women and men aged 20 to 64 by 2020.
- ❑ Again, Romania has one of the lowest targets in EU regarding the employment rate also.

❑ Looking at the employment rate of male population aged 20 to 64 in 2013, we could say that Romania already met the national target. Yet, *the gender gap is high, which is why the total employment rate of population aged 20 to 64 is lowered by the reduced value of this indicator in the case of female population (only 56.2%).*

❑ Bulgaria is also below the national target, but the gender employment gap is smaller than in Romania's case.

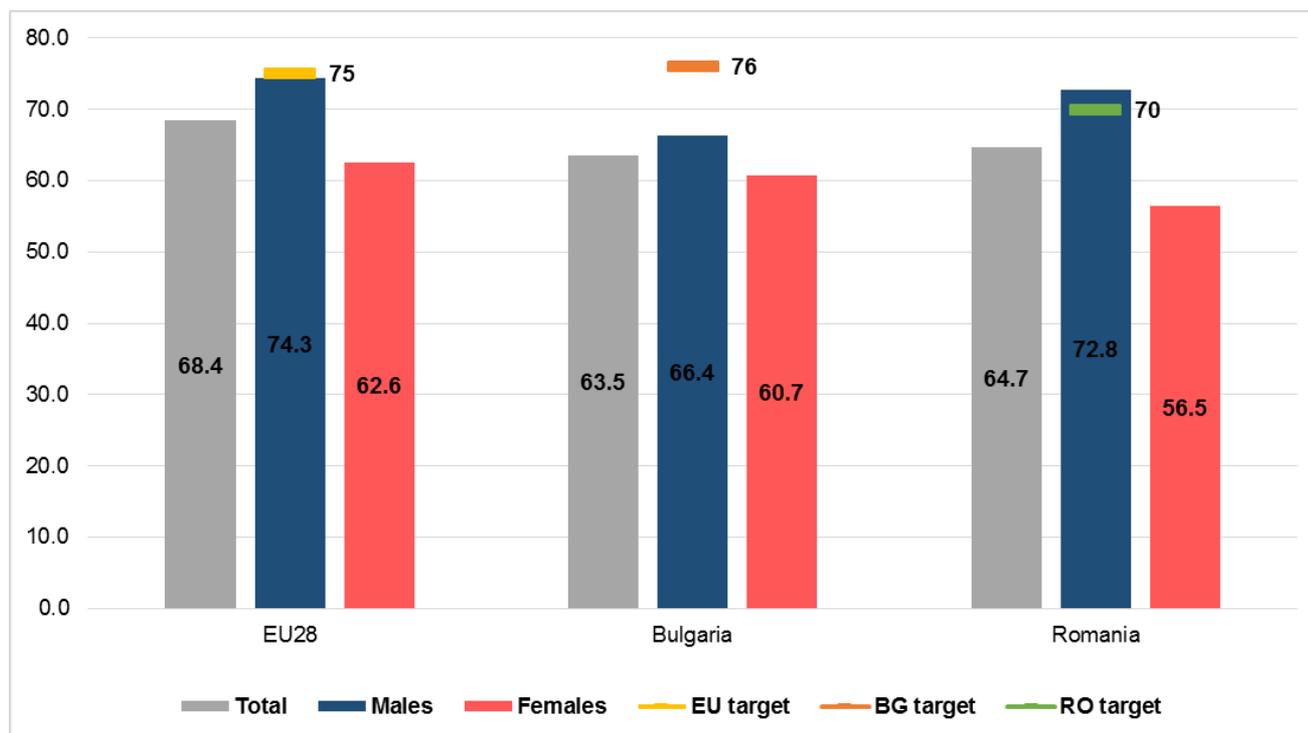


Fig. 2 – Employment rate (20-64 age group) 2013, Europe 2020 headline target and national targets

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer, online data code: lfsa_organ.

Note: Employment rate represents employed persons as a percentage of same age total population.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- ❑ Employment rates (15-64 years) are significantly higher among women with a tertiary education than among low-educated women, both in Romania and in Bulgaria. This translates into a lower gender employment gap in the case of tertiary education and a higher gender employment gap in the case of the ones with lower educational levels.
- ❑ Low-educated women from Romania have an employment rate slightly above 40%, which translates into an employment gender gap of 20 percentage points, compared with women with a tertiary education in which case the gender employment gap is only around 4 percentage points.
- ❑ Bulgaria and Romania have similar gender employment gaps only in the case of population with tertiary education.

| | All ISCED levels | | ISCED levels 0-2 | | ISCED levels 3-4 | | ISCED levels 5-8 | |
|-----------------|------------------|------|------------------|------|------------------|------|------------------|-----|
| | WER | GG | WER | GG | WER | GG | WER | GG |
| EU28 | 64,0 | 11,7 | 42,8 | 18,8 | 65,7 | 11,7 | 79,6 | 6,7 |
| Bulgaria | 62,0 | 5,7 | 31,4 | 10,5 | 63,3 | 7,1 | 79,7 | 4,2 |
| Romania | 58,4 | 16,4 | 44,4 | 21,1 | 58,7 | 16,6 | 82,5 | 4,2 |

Table 1. Women's employment rates (ER) and gender employment gap (GG) by educational attainment, age cohort 15-64, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer -Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfst_hheredch.

Note: 2011 ISCED levels: 0-2 - less than primary, primary and lower secondary; 3-4 - upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary; 5-8 - short-cycle tertiary, bachelor, master and doctoral or equivalent.

EMPLOYMENT RATES BY GENDER AND AGE

The gender gap in employment is observed at each life stage, but *is generally more pronounced in case of age group 30-39 in Romania and in the case of age groups 25-34 in Bulgaria, as these are the age groups when most children are born.*

| | Employment Rate | | | Gender Gap | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------|---------|------------|----------|---------|
| | EU28 | Bulgaria | Romania | EU28 | Bulgaria | Romania |
| 15-24 years | 30,3 | 18,4 | 18,6 | 3,7 | 5,6 | 8,4 |
| 25-29 years | 65,8 | 55,4 | 63,5 | 9,4 | 11,6 | 12,7 |
| 30-34 years | 69,8 | 67,1 | 68,1 | 13,4 | 9,1 | 16,8 |
| 35-39 years | 72,3 | 76,2 | 71,8 | 13,0 | 1,5 | 15,2 |
| 40-44 years | 73,8 | 77,3 | 72,8 | 11,6 | 2,2 | 14,7 |
| 45-49 years | 74,2 | 77,6 | 71,8 | 10,1 | -1,2 | 14,2 |
| 50-54 years | 70,3 | 74,1 | 61,7 | 11,0 | -1,9 | 17,6 |
| 55-59 years | 58,1 | 63,2 | 42,9 | 13,6 | -1,2 | 21,6 |
| 60-64 years | 27,6 | 24,7 | 22,9 | 14,2 | 16,9 | 13,5 |
| 65 years or over | 3,4 | 2,0 | 10,2 | 4 | 3,1 | 2,7 |

Table 2. Women's employment rates and the gender employment gap by age group, age cohort 15-64, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer - Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfsa_organ.

Note: Gender employment gap represents percentage point difference between the employment rates for men and for women.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (1)

- ❑ *Women's employment rates generally decrease, while men's increase, as the number of children is growing. As a consequence, the gender gap in employment widens significantly as the number of children increases. So, parenthood is one of factors underlying the gender employment gaps.*
- ❑ The average gender employment gap in Bulgaria is of only 3.7 percentage points for childless persons as against of 18.2 pp for persons with three or more children. In the case of Romania, the average gender employment gap is of 13.8 percentage points for childless persons and of 25.5 points for persons with three or more children.

| | No children | | 1 child | | 2 children | | 3 children or more | |
|-----------------|-------------|------|---------|------|------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | WER | GG | WER | GG | WER | GG | WER | GG |
| EU28 | 62.1 | 7.9 | 67.7 | 13.7 | 67.7 | 19.0 | 54.0 | 27.4 |
| Bulgaria | 59.5 | 3.7 | 68.3 | 8.2 | 65.6 | 12.9 | 29.3 | 18.2 |
| Romania | 55.0 | 13.8 | 63.8 | 16.0 | 63.4 | 17.0 | 47.7 | 25.5 |

Table 3. Women's employment rates (ER) and the gender employment gap (GG) by presence of children, age cohort 15-64, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer - Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfst_hheredch.

Note: Gender employment gap represents percentage point difference between the employment rates for men and for women.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (2)

- ❑ What really increases the gender employment gap is *the age of the youngest child*.
- ❑ Bulgaria and Romania have similar gender employment gaps in case of children younger than 6 years. Yet, the gender employment gap reduces significantly in Bulgaria's case when children grow older. Romania also experiences a reduced gender employment gap in the case of older children, but not as significant as Bulgaria.

| | Less than 6 years | | From 6 to 11 years | | 12 years or over | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------|--------------------|------|------------------|------|
| | WER | GG | WER | GG | WER | GG |
| EU28 | 59.2 | 26.3 | 69.6 | 15.9 | 71.2 | 9.6 |
| Bulgaria | 50.3 | 24.0 | 70.2 | 6.0 | 75.8 | 0.7 |
| Romania | 54.9 | 24.1 | 62.5 | 19.9 | 68.7 | 12.9 |

Table 4. Women's employment rates (ER) and the gender employment gap (GG) age of children, age cohort 15-64, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer - Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfst_hheredch.

Note: Gender employment gap represents percentage point difference between the employment rates for men and for women.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (3)

- On the other hand, analysing the gender employment gap in relation to parent's educational level, it is observed the fact that there is a relation between employment, education, parenthood and gender in both countries. The most distinctive gender gap is registered in case of parents with lower educational levels, regardless the number of children and regardless children's age, especially in Romania. In Bulgaria we also see that in the case of younger children the GG is significantly high, regardless the educational level of the parents.

| Age of children | Education | GG Romania | GG Bulgaria |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Less than 6 years | ISCED 0-2 | 28 | 22.1 |
| | ISCED 3-4 | 25.7 | 26.9 |
| | ISCED 5-8 | 10.3 | 22.6 |
| From 6 to 11 years | ISCED 0-2 | 21.9 | 8.3 |
| | ISCED 3-4 | 19.8 | 5.9 |
| | ISCED 5-8 | 6.9 | 4.9 |
| 12 years or over | ISCED 0-2 | 17.3 | 9 |
| | ISCED 3-4 | 13.4 | 2 |
| | ISCED 5-8 | -0.5 | -0.8 |

Table 5. The gender employment gap (GG) by educational level and age of children, age cohort 15-64, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer - Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfst_hheredch.

Note: Gender employment gap represents percentage point difference between the employment rates for men and for women.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (4)

- ❑ In Bulgaria the employment rate of mothers is 15.7 pp lower than that of women without children, whereas the employment rate of fathers is 11.8 pp higher than that of men without children.
- ❑ In Romania the employment rate of mothers is 7 pp lower than that of women without children whereas the employment rate of fathers is 6.4 pp higher than that of men without children.
- ❑ The employment gap is higher in Bulgaria than in Romania, when comparing the employment rate of the same gender.

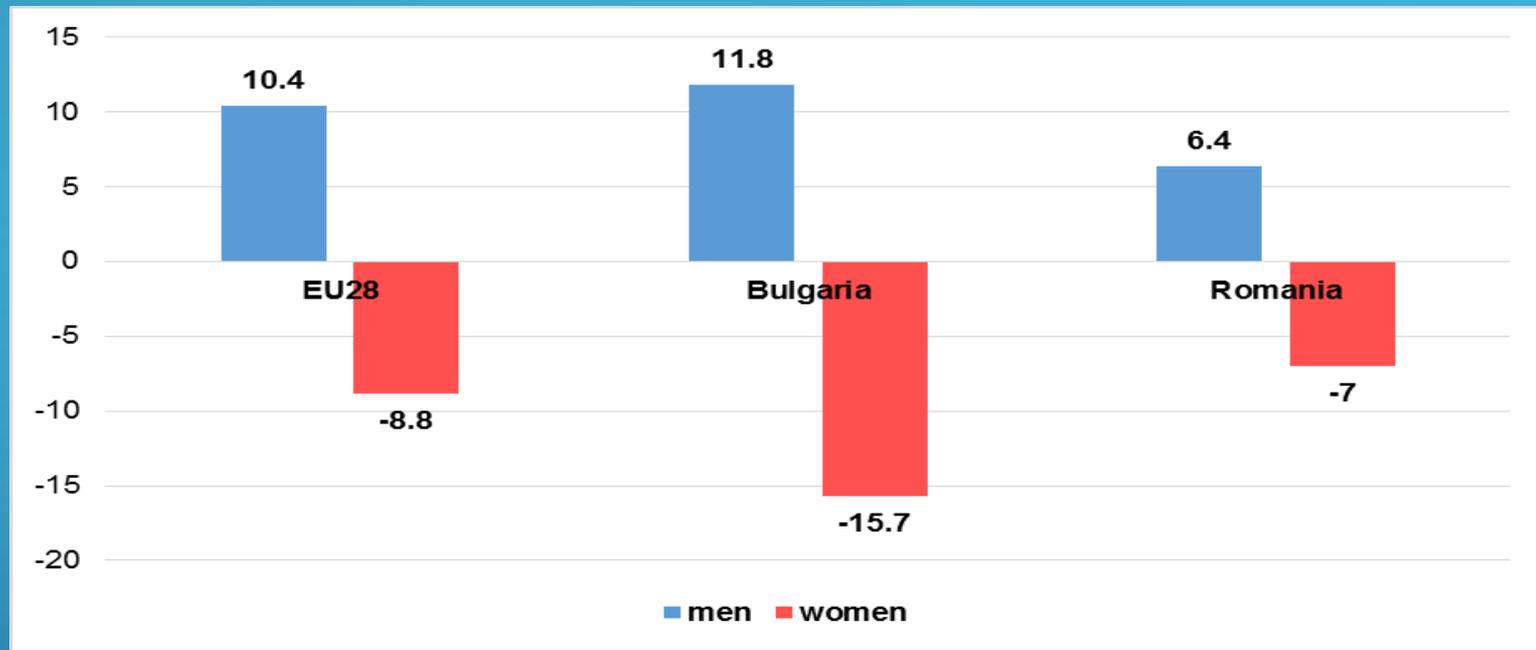


Fig. 3. Employment rate of women and men (aged from 25 to 49) according to their family status, 2013.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer - Labour Force Survey, online data code: lfst_hheredch.

Note: Employment gap represents percentage point difference between the employment rates of the ones without children and the ones with a child under 6 years old, per gender.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (5)

- ❑ EU Member States agreed to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and to at least 33% of children under 3 years of age (Barcelona targets, in 2002). The Barcelona targets were set under the understanding that parenthood has a high impact on employment rate of women.
- ❑ Bulgaria and especially Romania still need to make progress in order to meet the established Barcelona targets.
- ❑ The employment rate of women having children under 6 years is higher in Romania than in Bulgaria, despite the fact that the percentage of children cared by formal arrangements is smaller in Romania.

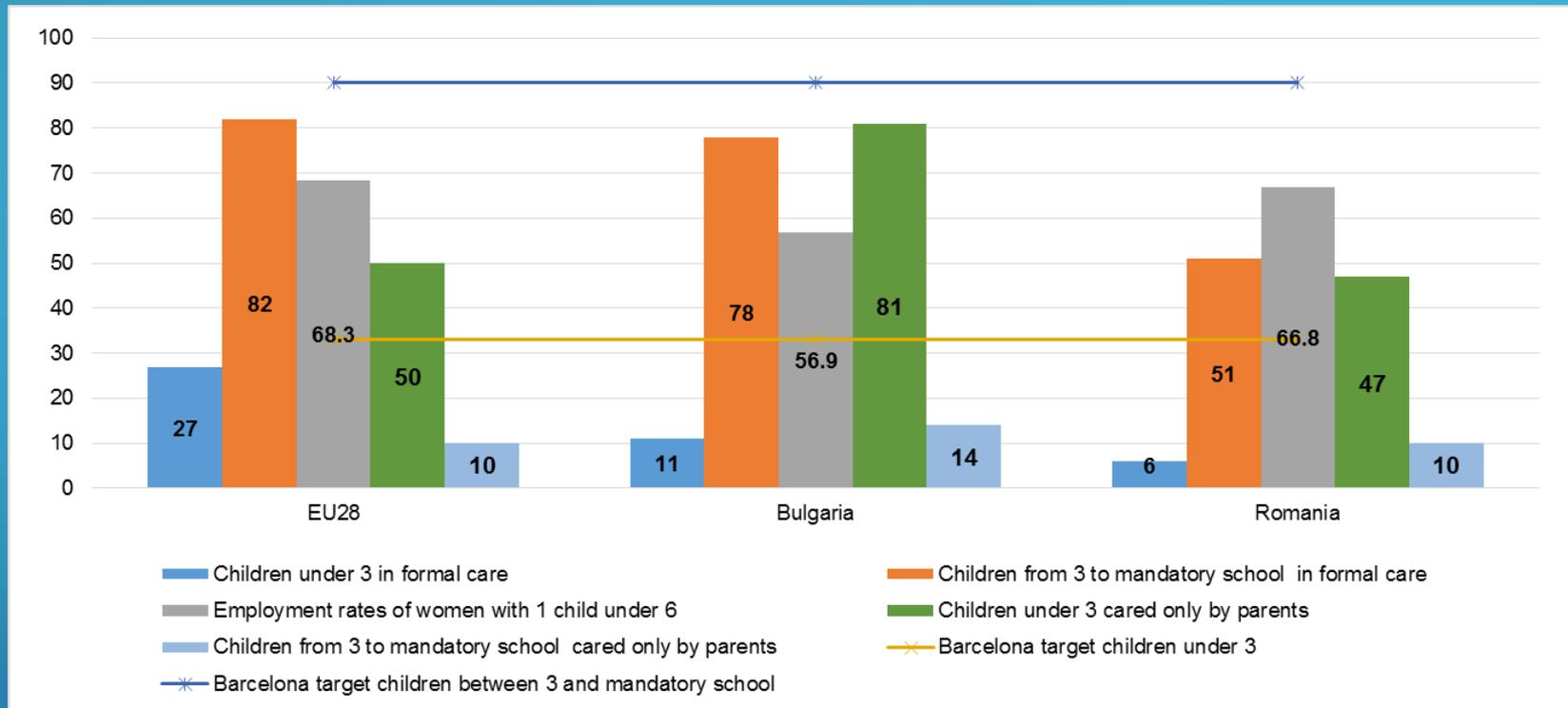


Fig. 4. Employment rate of women aged 25 to 49 with 1 child under 6 years & percentage of children in formal care, 2013.
 Source: Eurostat Data Explorer – EU-LFS & EU-SILC, online data codes: lfst_hheredch & ilc_caindformal & ilc_caparent.

THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON EMPLOYMENT (6)

- 52 per cent of women aged 25 to 49 in Bulgaria and 84% of women in Romania who do not work claim that it is because childcare is too expensive. The main problem in meeting the Barcelona targets is not that individuals perceive that services are of insufficient quality, but rather that they are either too expensive or not available.
- *Due to small sample sizes and the subjective nature of the data, it is not possible to make definitive conclusions regarding this point.* The actual demand for childcare can be influenced also by the use of informal arrangements inside the family or/and by the possibilities offered by the maternity/parental leave system.

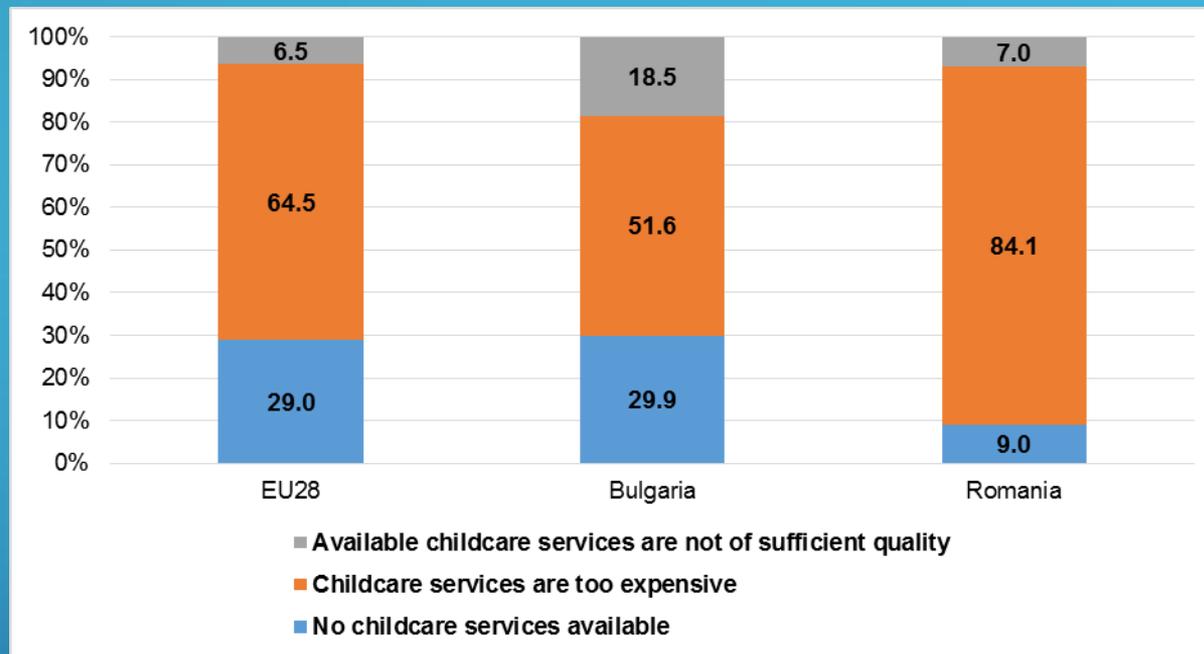


Fig. 5. Women's main childcare related reasons for not working, aged 25 to 49 years, 2010.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer – EU-LFS data 2010, ad hoc module 'Reconciliation between work and family life', online data code: lfso_10cnowchi.

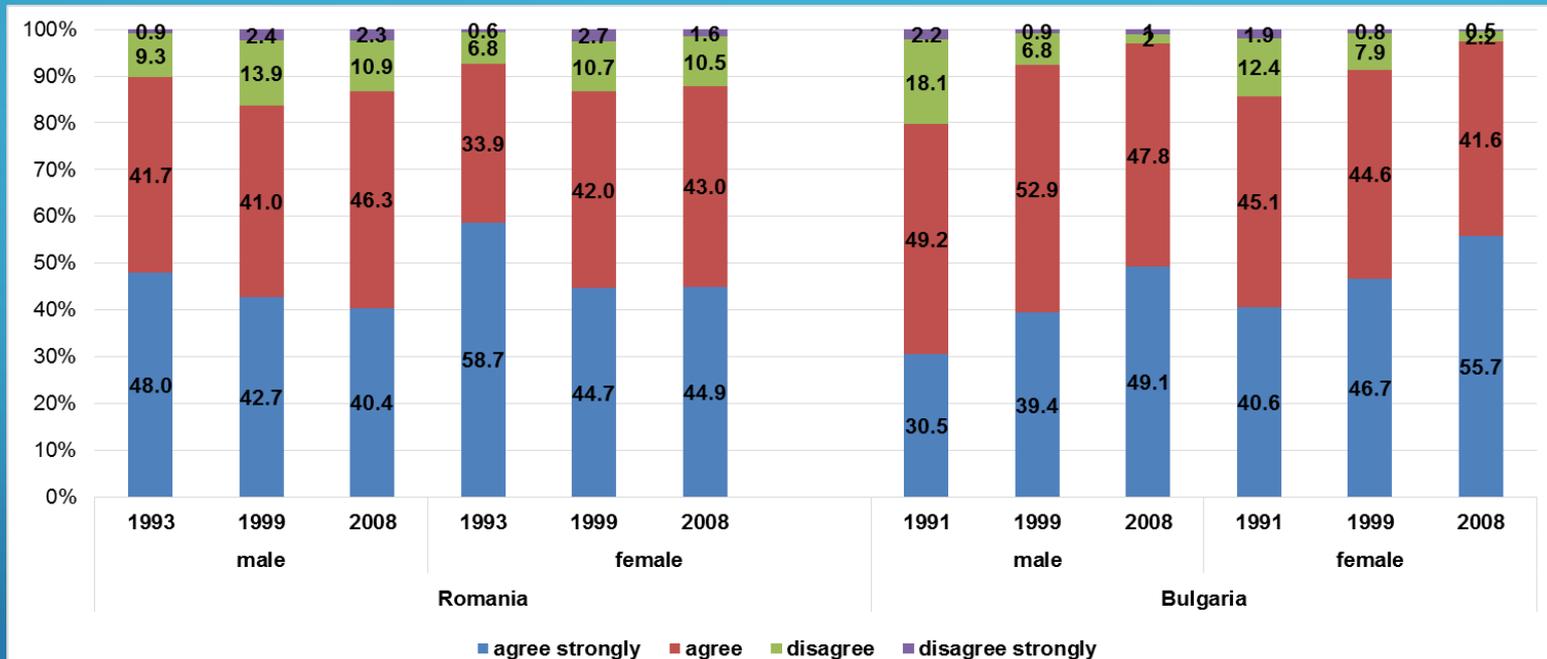


CHANGES IN GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES



- *Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income* -

- ❑ The majority of population supports the fact that *both husband and wife should contribute to household income*, in all three periods of time (1990/93, 1999, 2008). Both spouses should have paid jobs and the differences between the views of men and the ones of women are rather insignificant.
- ❑ *Still, support for the dual earner model is higher among women as compared to men if we consider only the answer "very important". Also, the level of approval is higher in Bulgaria than in Romania (about 10pp difference in 2008).*
- ❑ Most interesting: in Romania the percentage of those answering "*very important*" decreased in Romania but increased in Bulgaria, regardless of gender between 1993/91 and 2008.



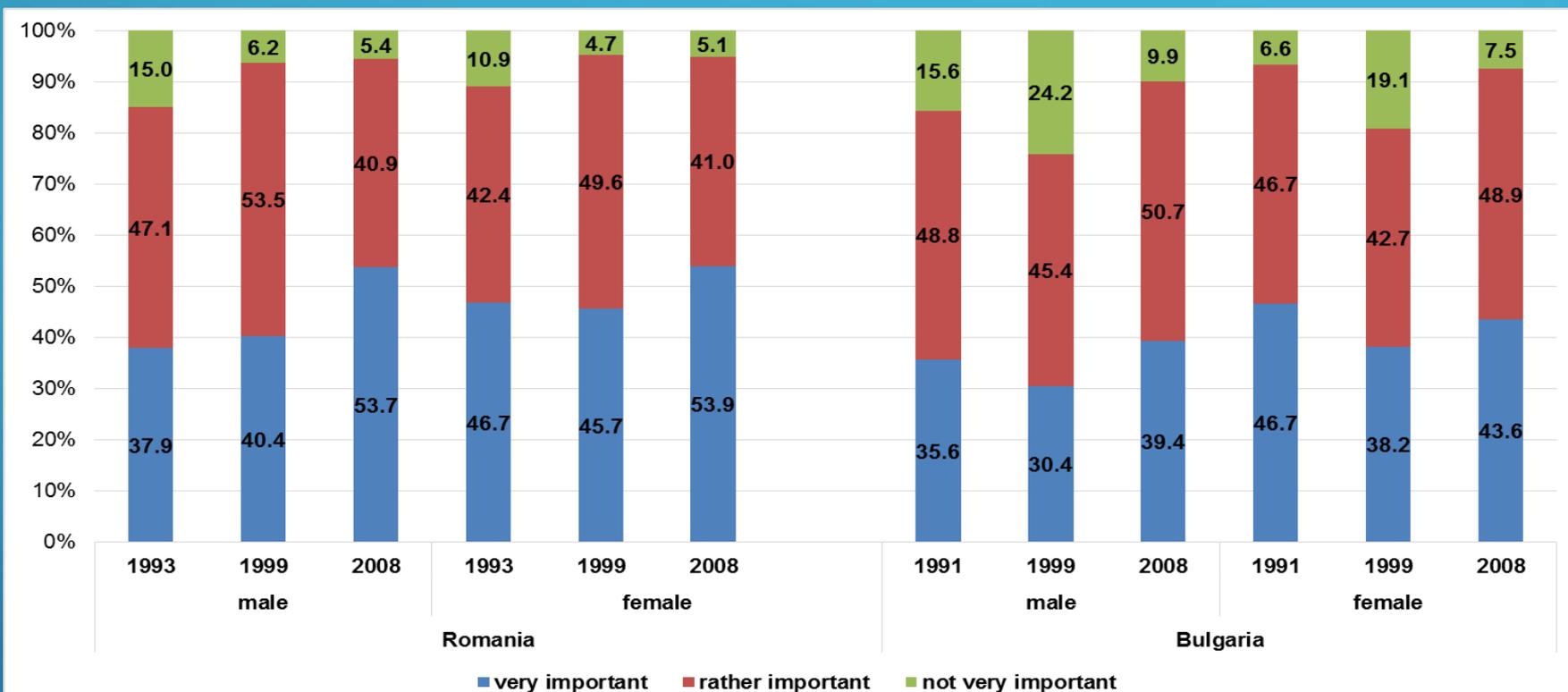


CHANGES IN GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES

- Important in marriage to share household chores -



- The support for gender equality within the household is higher among female population as compared to males if we look at the ones answering “very important”.
- In the 2008 wave, the percentage of people considering that sharing household chores is “very important” is similar for Romanian men and women, but there are some small differences in the case of Bulgaria.
- Overall, the support for the importance of sharing household chores is higher in Romania.



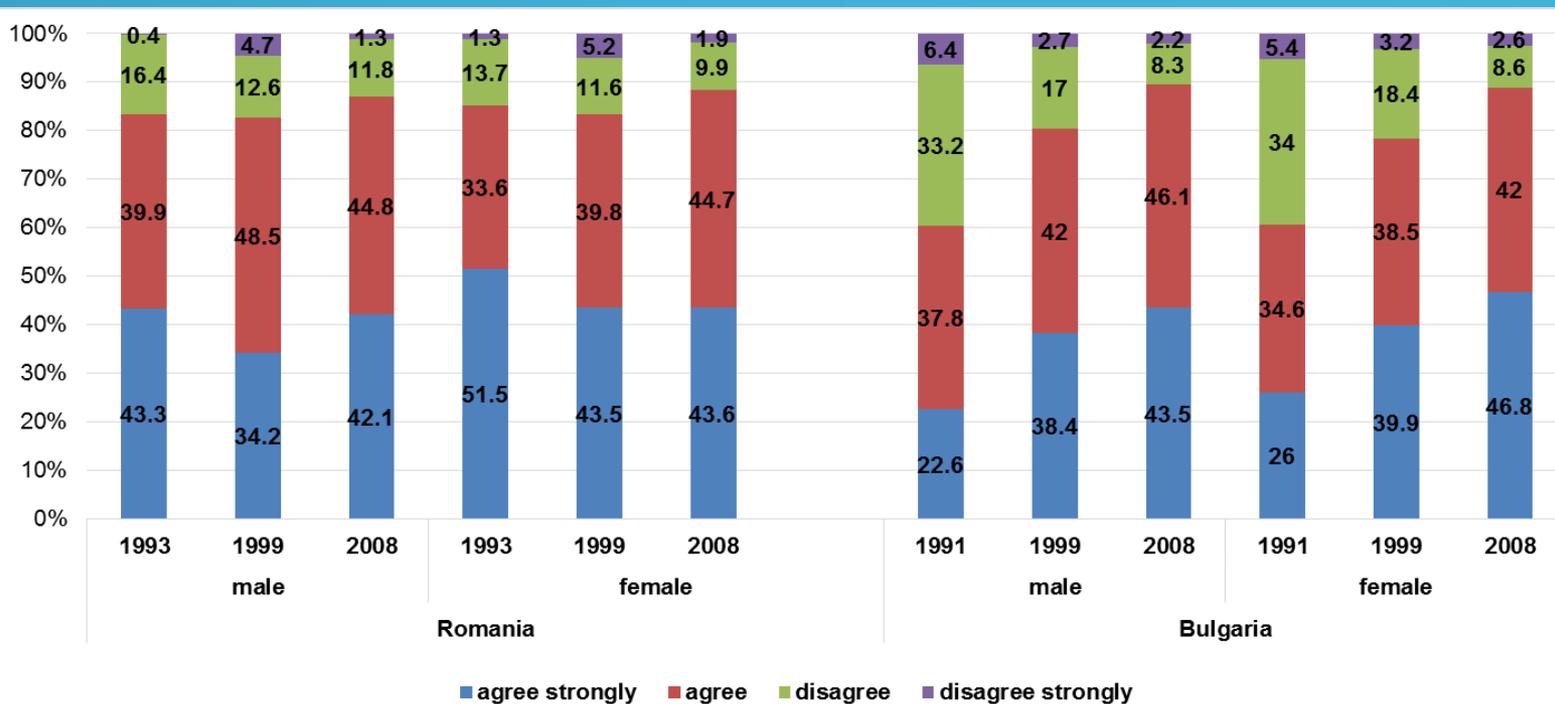


CHANGES IN GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES



- A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work -

- Overall, the percentage of population who agreed with the fact that a working mother is able to establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a non-working mother hardly increased between 1993 and 2008 in Romania regardless of gender. In Bulgaria the level of approval significantly increased during the analysed period, for both genders, thus reaching the level of Romania.
- When analysing only the respondents who strongly agreed with the fact that a working mother is able to establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a non-working mother: Romanians lowered their level of approval with the statement between 1991/93-2008, while Bulgarians increased it, especially in the case of female population.



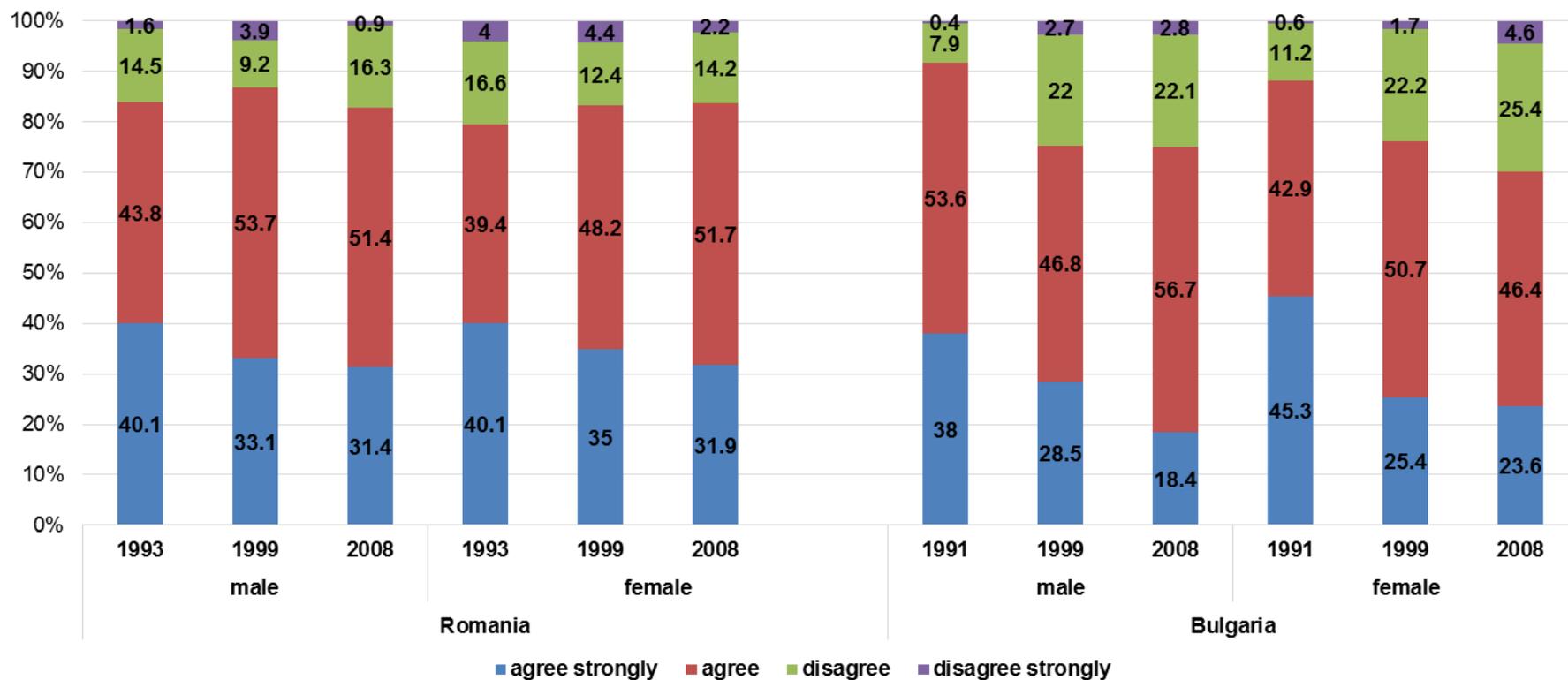


CHANGES IN GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES



- *A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children-*

The communist system of “equality” did not improve women’s lives, which is why women seem to consider gender equality on labour market as an undesirable goal for them. This idea seems to be rather constant in Romania over time, while in Bulgaria there is a significant change of attitude (the percentage of those who “strongly agree” decreased over time in Bulgaria, for both women and men).



CONCLUSIONS (1)

- ❑ In the context of Europe 2020 Strategy, both Romania and Bulgaria are below the national targets regarding tertiary attainment rate among population aged 30 to 34 years and labour market participation of women and men aged 20 to 64.
- ❑ Romania is closer to reach the national target regarding tertiary attainment (also has one of the lowest targets in EU) and the difference between men and women was low in 2013 (2.6 pp in favour of women). Bulgaria was 6.6 pp far from the national target and the difference between men and women was also higher (15.8 pp) in 2013.
- ❑ Regarding the participation on labour market, Bulgaria also has a higher national target by comparison with Romania, while the employment rates for the total population aged 20-64 years were comparable (63.5% for Bulgaria and 64.7% for Romania) in 2013. But the gender employment gap was higher in Romania than in Bulgaria in 2013, so Romania has to make more efforts to reach its national target (5.7pp Bulgaria and 16.3pp Romania).



CONCLUSIONS (2)

- ❑ Employment rates are significantly higher among women with a tertiary education than among low-educated women, both in Romania and in Bulgaria. This translates into a lower gender employment gap in the case of women with tertiary education and a higher gender employment gap in the case of women with lower educational levels.
- ❑ The gender gap in employment is observed at each life stage, but is generally more pronounced in case of age group 30-39 in Romania and in the case of age group 25-34 in Bulgaria. The gender gap in employment widens significantly as the number of children increases, but is even more pronounced in case of smaller children in both countries. Yet, the gender employment gap reduces significantly in Bulgaria's case when children grow older, which is not Romania's case.
- ❑ There is a relation between employment, education, parenthood and gender in both countries, but in Bulgaria we also see that in the case of younger children the gender employment gap is significantly higher regardless the educational level of the parents. The two countries do not receive enough institutional support for childcare and work-life balance.





CONCLUSIONS (3)

- ❑ According to the data from the three waves of the European Values Study, the majority of population supports the fact that both the husband and wife should contribute to household income, but the level of approval is higher in Bulgaria than in Romania (about 10pp) and the support for the dual earner model is higher among women as compared to men in both countries.
- ❑ Most interesting: between 1993/91 and 2008, the percentage of those answering “very important” decreased in Romania and increased in Bulgaria, regardless of gender, in relation to the statement “*Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income*”.
- ❑ Women from Romania and Bulgaria seem to consider *gender equality on labour market as an undesirable goal* for them given the high level of approval with the statement: “*A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children*”. Still, there is some change in people’s attitudes, as the percentage of those who “*strongly agree*” with this statement decreased over time, for both women and men, especially in Bulgaria.



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