



FRANCE

COUNTRY DATA SHEET¹



WHAT DO RESPONDENTS THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING FRANCE TODAY?

- ➔ There is little consensus in France as to the most important issues facing the country. **The two most prominent issues are the economy and COVID-19**, each being a top issue for around half of respondents in France: *“the economy”*² (52 percent) topped the list, with *“global diseases and pandemics”* (47 percent) coming second. *“Climate change and the environment”* (39 percent) and *“migration, asylum seekers, and refugees”* (28 percent) are also considered important. **Eleven percent of respondents see “inequality between women and men” as a top issue in France today.**
- ➔ These priorities are broadly the same for both female and male respondents but differ somewhat by age. Younger respondents are much more likely to care about *“racism and other forms of discrimination against minorities”* (35 percent, aged 18 to 24) than older cohorts (14 percent, aged 45 to 59; 11 percent, aged 60 and older). Similarly, **23 percent of the young (aged 18 to 24) see gender inequality as a top issue**, compared to six percent in the older age brackets (aged 45 and older), and **32 percent of female respondents aged 18 to 24 see gender equality as a top issue.**
- ➔ As concerns the environment, education matters. Forty seven percent of university-educated respondents think climate change is a top issue, compared to 32 percent of respondents who did not go to university.



WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN FRANCE THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ **The vast majority (80 percent) of respondents in France think gender equality is important.** Attitudes here are the same for both male and female respondents. Ten percent of respondents who self-identify as politically right-leaning feel gender equality is not personally important.
- ➔ **Only 50 percent of respondents in France believe that gender equality in France is “better” now than it was 25 years ago.** More female respondents believe the situation is the *“more or less the same”* (41 percent) or *“worse”* (13 percent) than 25 years ago.

¹ This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for France. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In France, 1,002 respondents were surveyed, including 524 female respondents, 476 male respondents, and 2 respondents who identified “in another way.” Of the 1,002 respondents, 114 were aged 18 to 24, 338 were aged 25 to 44, 245 were aged 45 to 59, and 305 were aged 60 and older. Please see www.focus2030.org and www.womendeliver.org for more information.

² Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.

- ➔ An age gradient exists, with older respondents more likely to believe that gender equality is “better” now than it was 25 years ago (58 percent, aged 60 and older) than younger respondents (46-47 percent, aged 18 to 59). Income also affects perceptions of gender equality, as 60 percent of the highest income quintile believe things are “better,” compared to only 38 percent of the lowest.
- ➔ **Most respondents (64 percent) think that the French government “should do more” to promote gender equality**, 23 percent think it is “doing the right amount,” and eight percent think it is “doing too much.” Of the 64 percent who think the government “should do more,” the group is evenly split between thinking “a lot more” should be done (32 percent) and “a bit more” (32 percent).
- ➔ **Forty-nine percent of respondents in France claim that the government should “reform laws to promote gender equality and end discrimination against women.”** This view is held more strongly by female (54 percent) than male respondents (45 percent).
- ➔ **The most agreed-upon reason for gender inequality in France is “because unpaid care, domestic work, and parental responsibilities are not share equally between women and men” (43 percent).** Specifically for male respondents, the most selected reason is “because of religion and culture that do not treat women and men as equals” (42 percent).



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **Ending gender-based violence is ranked by respondents as the top priority the French government should focus on**, with 39 percent choosing “end violence against women” as their first choice. Seventy-five percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ In keeping with strong support for government action to protect women’s safety, most respondents in France (68 percent) believe that **the French government should “increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women.”** Respondents also support measures to “end traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls” (49 percent) and want the government to “fund programs to support women who have experienced violence” (39 percent).
- ➔ Only 19 percent of male respondents support government intervention to “address the unequal balance of power between women and men at home within families, marriages, and relationships,” but this rises to 26 percent among female respondents and 37 percent among female respondents aged 18 to 24.
- ➔ **Over half of respondents in France (55 percent) feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment** in some place or another. Female respondents feel more at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault than their male counterparts, with 59 percent of them feeling at risk, or knowing someone who feels at risk, compared to 48 percent of male respondents.
- ➔ The place where most respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, is “in public spaces,” where 42 percent feel at risk.

- ➔ Younger age groups are also noticeably more likely to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, “in public spaces”: 56 percent of those aged 18 to 24 were likely to feel at risk, compared to 31 percent of those 60 and older. **Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, 67 percent feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in public spaces**, and only seven percent do not feel at risk of assault or harassment anywhere.
- ➔ The overwhelming majority of respondents in France (80 percent) believe it is “unacceptable” for “women to always obey their partners,” while eight percent deem it “acceptable.” A significant proportion also believe that it is “acceptable” for “women to refuse sexual intercourse with a partner” (87 percent) and that it is “unacceptable” to “whistle at a woman in the street or touch her without consent” (80 percent).



ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Promoting women’s economic justice and rights is the second most highly-ranked priority**, with 22 percent ranking “access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights” as the top priority. Sixty-nine percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **In order to improve women’s broader economic opportunities, the most selected measures for the French government to focus on are to “achieve equal pay for women and men” (57 percent) and “prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace” (53 percent).** The importance of gender pay parity increases with age, as 46 percent of those aged 18 to 24 select “achieve equal pay for women and men,” compared to 68 percent of respondents aged 60 and older.
- ➔ Forty-nine percent of female respondents feel that they have faced at least one form of discrimination in their life out of a predetermined list of options. Twenty-four percent of all female respondents report that they have been “not paid as much as male counterparts where [they] work,” 22 percent feel that they “did not have the same access to promotion opportunities in [their] job as [their] male peers.” In addition, eight percent have cited “difficulty accessing education and professional training compared with [their] male peers/relatives,” and five percent “have not or will not receive the same inheritance as their male relatives.”
- ➔ “To let women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care” is “unacceptable” for 70 percent of respondents in France. Additionally, “to ask a woman during a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children” is “unacceptable” for 66 percent of respondents in France, with female respondents finding it more “unacceptable” (71 percent) than their male counterparts (61 percent). The majority (80 percent) also find it “unacceptable” that “women earn less than men for the same work.”
- ➔ The economic impact of the pandemic seems to have hit male and female respondents similarly in France, as both report that they “couldn’t do as many hours of paid work as [they] usually would” (17 percent) and “faced unexpected financial hardship” (11 percent) at the same rate.
- ➔ **Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, 41 percent say their “time pursuing [their] own education or training has decreased” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (compared to male respondents aged 18 to 24), and for 46 percent of all respondents aged 18 to 24, their “time doing household work has increased.”**



FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is respondents third priority overall**, with 10 percent ranking *“improve women’s participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements”* as their top priority. Forty percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ For 41 percent of respondents, *“achieving equal representation of women in politics”* is a key measure that the French government should take. This view was held more strongly among male respondents and female respondents aged 60 and older (49 percent). Additionally, 36 percent claim that achieving equal representation of women on the boards of companies is an action the French government should take, a view which is held more strongly among women (40 percent) than men (31 percent). There are lower levels of support for other policies in this area, such as supporting young women’s participation in politics (23 percent), ensuring the safety of feminist activists and women involved in politics (18 percent), and funding feminist movements (12 percent).
- ➔ The imposition of gender quotas on political decision-making bodies is seen as a good way to advance gender equality in France for 50 percent of respondents, with 22 percent disagreeing. Female respondents aged 60 and older were more supportive of gender quotas compared with other age groups, whereas older male respondents were no more supportive of them than younger male respondents.



BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is the fourth most cited priority**, with seven percent ranking *“access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools”* as the top priority. Thirty-five percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **The two most cited measures respondents think the French government should prioritize are “increasing access to sexual health services” and “increasing access to contraception and family planning options,” with almost 40 percent citing each of these as important.** There was a difference of 6 percentage points between male respondents’ and female respondents’ view on the importance of sexual health services, with only 34 percent of male respondents rating this as important, compared to 40 percent of female respondents. For thirty-two percent of respondents in France, *“increasing access to accurate information including sexual education in schools”* is also a measure the French government should take. This rose to 40 percent for female respondents, both aged 18 to 24 and those aged 60 and older.
- ➔ **Ten percent of female respondents in France have “had difficulty accessing [their] chosen method of contraception,” rising to 16 percent among younger female respondents aged 18 to 24.** Although a very small percentage of female respondents in France (five percent) have *“had difficulty accessing abortion and/or post-abortion care”* in their lifetime, this is more pronounced (11 percent) among female respondents aged 18 to 24.
- ➔ During the pandemic in France, four percent of all respondents have had difficulty accessing contraception and other sexual health services. Again, younger respondents aged 18 to 24 have had the most difficulty (9 percent).



FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **Feminist action for climate justice is the fifth most cited priority**, with six percent ranking *“promote women’s participation in climate change action”* as the top priority. Twenty-three percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ Although promoting women’s participation in climate change action scores low in importance compared to other proposed government measures, when asked directly about *“promoting women’s efforts to respond to climate change,”* 41 percent of respondents claim that the French government should *“promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change.”*



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **The sixth most cited priority is technology and innovation for gender equality**, with only four percent ranking *“invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities”* as the top priority. Twenty-four percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, respondents believe that the French government should *“provide equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)”* (48 percent) and *“increase the safety of digital spaces for girls and women”* (44 percent). Only six percent think the government should do nothing in this area.



FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Sixty-two percent of respondents in France hold the view that the French government should “increase funding for gender equality in France.” Additionally, 54 percent believe that the government should “increase its funding for international projects and organizations fighting for gender equality around the world.”** More female respondents than their male counterparts support increased funding, both for national projects (66 percent, female respondents; 58 percent, male respondents) and international projects (58 percent, female respondents; 50 percent, male respondents). Additionally, a higher proportion of younger respondents support funding for gender equality projects generally, whether domestically (67 percent among 18 to 24, compared to 58 percent among 60 and older) or abroad (68 percent among 18 to 24, compared to 45 percent among 60 and older). Support was even higher among female respondents aged 18 to 24, of whom 74 percent support funding for gender equality projects domestically, and 72 percent support international funding.
- ➔ **Fifty-seven percent of respondents in France “agree” that achieving gender equality is essential to end poverty in all countries, compared to 13 percent who “disagree” with this.**



WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN FRANCE WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ As a way of promoting gender equality, 38 percent of respondents in France would be willing to “*sign a petition*,” which was higher among female (42 percent) than male respondents (33 percent). Similarly, 38 percent of respondents would “*vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality*” and 32 percent would be willing to “*promote gender equality in everyday conversations and interactions*.” Only 11 percent say they would not be willing to consider taking any of the actions proposed for global gender equality.



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ➔ The health impact of the pandemic has broadly fallen on men and women equally with 11 percent of respondents indicating they “*experienced difficulty accessing medical treatments, medicines, health and hygiene supplies*.” However, female and male respondents do diverge in their reporting of experiences of stress and mental health. Notably more female (22 percent) than male respondents (14 percent) have “*experienced emotional stress or mental health issues*” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The intersection of age and gender is shown to have an impact, as younger female respondents aged 18 to 24 (30 percent) report higher levels of stress than their young male counterparts (13 percent) or female respondents aged 60 and older (20 percent).
- ➔ Thinking about the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality, most respondents (66 percent) agree that “*the government’s response to support people through the COVID-19 pandemic has met the needs of women and men equally*.” Only 10 percent of respondents disagree.
- ➔ Respondents in France also think that “*women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery efforts to COVID-19, including in the development of policies and treatments*,” with 81 percent supporting this idea and only three percent opposing.
- ➔ There is disagreement as to whether “*inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of COVID-19*.” Overall, more disagree (32 percent) than agree (24 percent), but even more say that they neither agree nor disagree (35 percent). Disagreement with the statement is driven by male respondents (36 percent) and respondents over the age of 60 (42 percent).

This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.