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Trust in institutions: Swiss women have less than men.

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A study commissioned by the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that the women in Switzerland have less trust in their public institutions than men. Whilst Switzerland enjoys a high level of trust in its institutions by international standards, it also has one of the widest gender gaps.

In most OECD countries, women have less trust in public institutions than men. Switzerland has the highest levels of trust in institutions among OECD countries but also has one of the most pronounced gender gaps among the 30 countries analysed. The study conducted by the OECD on behalf of the FOGE documents the scale of this phenomenon in Switzerland for the first time.

The study highlights significant disparities between women and men in several areas. For example, 45% of women report having confidence in their ability to participate in political life, compared to 65% of men.

This is also reflected in political participation: 26% of women indicate that they do not participate in any political activities, compared to 17% of men. This gender gap is nearly twice as high as the average for OECD countries.

Significant differences also emerge in satisfaction with public services: about half of women believe that the authorities handle requests for assistance fairly, compared with nearly two-thirds of men. When it comes to trust in decision-making processes, the gap is just as striking. Less than half of women believe that Parliament fairly represents the interests of different regions and sections of the population, compared to nearly six in ten men.

Need for action and next steps

These gaps in trust raise democratic concerns, as they influence the use of public services, participation in referendums and support for reforms. To address this, the study sets out several courses of action: to promote the inclusion and political participation of girls and women from an early age, to take better account of gender-specific expectations and experiences in public services, and to improve the clarity and accessibility of administrative procedures. The study also highlights the importance of strengthening the collection, analysis and use of gender-disaggregated data. Such data is essential for better identifying the

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needs of the population as a whole and developing effective public policies.

The findings of this study will inform the ongoing work to define new measures as part of the adaptation of the 2030 Gender Equality Strategy, in accordance with the mandate given by the Federal Council. These findings are situated within a broader context in which research shows that female students in Switzerland exhibit lower interest in politics and lower political ambition than their male peers.
These trends underscore the role of social norms and gender stereotypes in shaping professional aspirations, self-confidence, and political behaviour.
Moreover, some OECD countries are witnessing growing gender polarisation, particularly among young people, reinforcing the need for careful analysis of these dynamics. (SOURCE: FOGE)

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