

### Preferences and feasibility of self-employment

#### Key facts

- Very different attitudes towards self-employment can be observed across countries and across time, with a marked decrease in preferences for self-employment over the last three years.
- Women consistently rate self-employment as being less feasible than men do.
- Young people are more optimistic about the possibility of setting up a business in the near future, even though the actual rate of entrepreneurship among the young is particularly low.

#### Relevance

Stimulating entrepreneurship requires a good understanding of the reasons leading people to become self-employed. Self-reported information on preferences for self-employment, and on the feasibility of starting a business, can help policy-makers assess changes in the business environment. These data also help understand whether particular socio-economic groups perceive stronger difficulties when thinking about an entrepreneurial career. Attitudes towards entrepreneurship can be shaped by different types of policies, including entrepreneurial education, media campaigns and mentorship programmes.

#### Definitions

*Preferences for self-employment* shows the percentage of individuals declaring they would prefer to be self-employed if they were free to choose between self-employment and wage employment.

*Feasibility of self-employment* indicates the percentage of individuals declaring that, regardless of preferences, it would be feasible for them to become self-employed within the next five years.

Both indicators cover a population aged 15 years and above.

#### Comparability

Data are drawn from the *Flash Eurobarometer on Entrepreneurship*, which is a general survey of the adult population conducted periodically for the European Commission Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry. The survey is

meant to gather information about peoples' entrepreneurial mindset and gain insights on how these differ across countries. It examines the motivation, choices, experiences and obstacles linked to entrepreneurship; the survey considers self-employed and business owners as entrepreneurs.

The 2012 survey covered 40 countries: the EU27, Brazil, China, Croatia, Iceland, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States. The size of the target sample was of 1000 individuals in each country, apart from the United States where 3000 individuals were interviewed.

The interpretation of the results is subject to caution: as the samples are relatively small, marginal differences observed across countries and gender might be the result of sampling errors and not necessarily differences in the underlying population. Interviews were conducted via telephone, both on fixed lines and mobile phones, except for India where the interviews were conducted face-to-face. The phone numbers are selected based on a randomisation procedure, with stratification by region and level of urbanisation. For all countries surveyed, a national weighting procedure was derived based on data on gender, age, region and size of locality from national statistical offices. Finally, a possible issue for comparability is the different share of non-respondents in different countries.

#### Sources/Online databases

European Commission, *Eurobarometer Survey on Entrepreneurship*, <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/eurobarometer/>.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

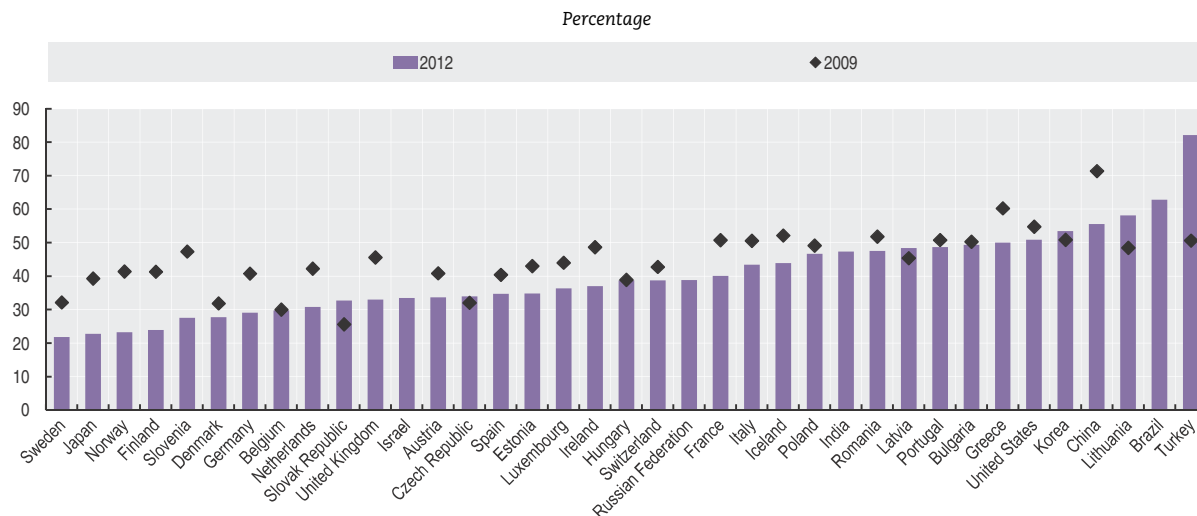
#### For further reading

European Commission (2013), *Entrepreneurship in the EU and beyond – Flash Eurobarometer 354*, Report, [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_354\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_354_en.pdf).

OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap. Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now\\_9789264179370-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en).

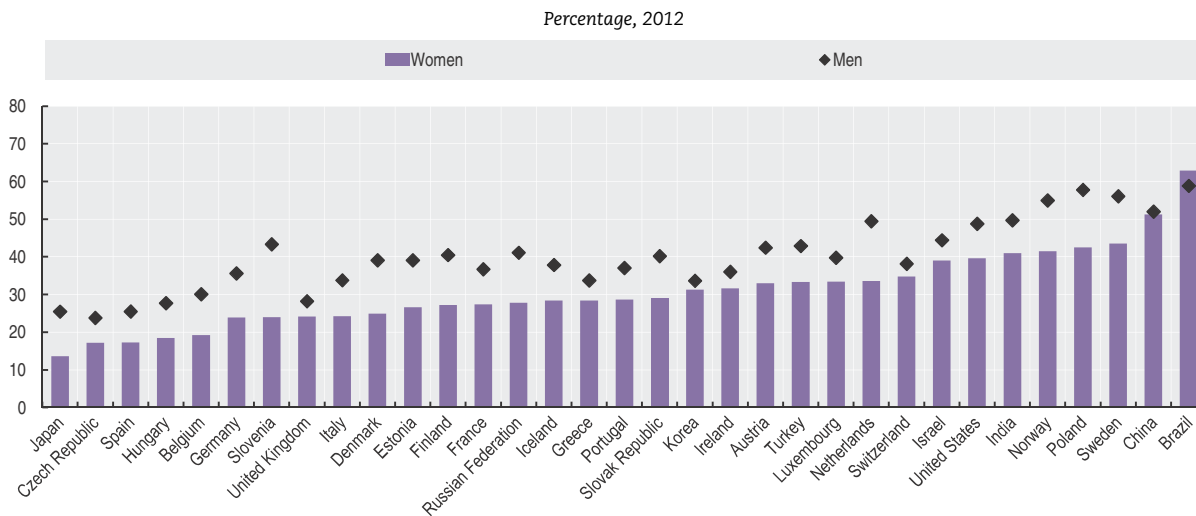
OECD (2004), *Women Entrepreneurship. Issues and Policies*, 2nd OECD Conference of Ministers Responsible for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), [www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/31919215.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/31919215.pdf).

Figure 5.17. Preferences for self-employment



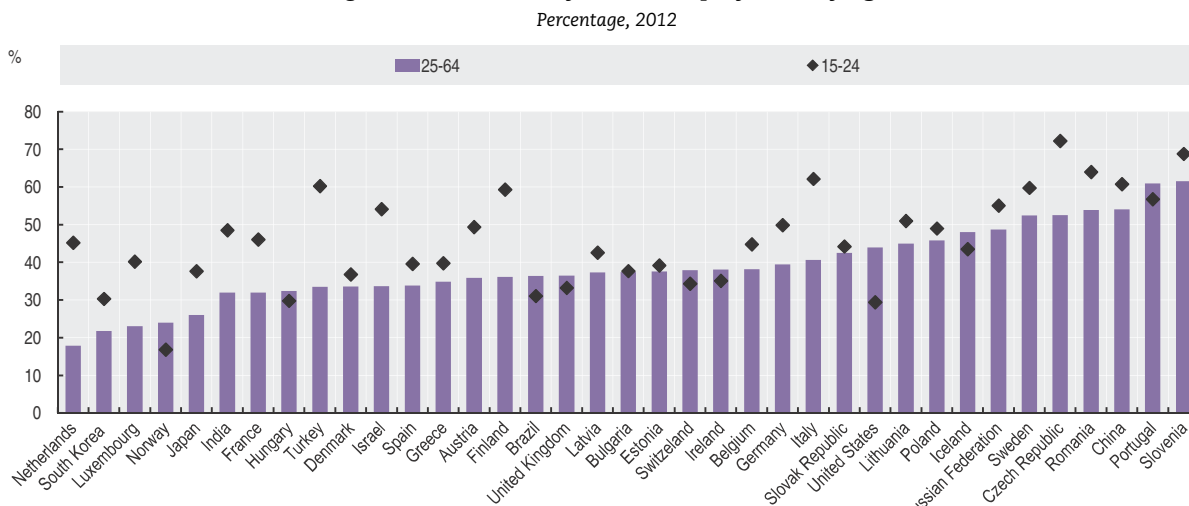
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829381>

Figure 5.18. Feasibility of self-employment by gender

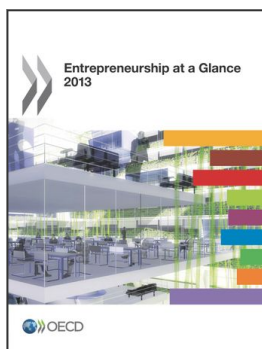


StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829400>

Figure 5.19. Feasibility of self-employment by age



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829419>



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