



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality


The role of men and boys in advancing gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes Ireland, 16-17 February 2023

Summary Report



Ein Unternehmen der ÖSB Gruppe.

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Introduction

The seminar on the role of men and boys in advancing gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes was held in Dublin on 16-17 February 2023. It was co-hosted by Ireland and Austria, along with the participation of 14 Member States, the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

Welcoming addresses were given by the co-hosts Jane-Ann Duffy from the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Angelika Weiß from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, stressing the importance of European and national level actions to involve men and boys in gender equality. Helena Soares from the European Commission's Gender Equality Unit, DG Justice and Consumers, highlighted the importance of the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 in tackling gender stereotypes, the related EU-wide awareness campaign on gender stereotypes and funding under the Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values Programme. She announced a recent important step in the process to move forward with the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention.

1. The Irish good practice: Data collection on gender norms and stereotypes

1.1 Introduction

The Irish good practice focussed on an innovative exercise in collecting statistics on gender norms and stereotypes to assess attitudinal change, inform policy and highlight data gaps. This approach reflects a shift from the previous focus in gender equality policy, which has primarily been directed to women, to one that recognises the importance of men and masculinities in transforming harmful gender stereotypes and norms.

1.2 Policy context

The [National Strategy on Women and Girls 2017-2020](#), addresses gender equality across six objectives, which recognise, amongst other areas, positive social norms and the importance of data. Key challenges include the lack of quantifiable and comparable data on measuring gender norms and stereotypes and ensuring that language is inclusive and not alienating for men and boys. The government will soon commence consultations for a new national strategy, and it is anticipated that it will have a stronger focus on engaging men and boys in gender equality.

Changing gender norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequalities was a central recommendation of the recent [Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality, 2019-2021](#). The Citizen's Assembly, an exercise in participatory democracy designed to tackle key social issues that require constitutional change, recommended the removal of the ideological framing of care as women's responsibility in the Irish Constitution.

This is particularly relevant as Irish women, on average, spend twice as much time as men on care and household responsibilities. Amongst the recommendations of the associated [Parliamentary \(Oireachtas\) Committee on Gender Equality](#) (OCGE) is an education programme to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes through a revised programme on social and personal relationships and sexuality education for schools. The [Third Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 2022-2026](#), also addresses gender norms under the goal to work “towards the eradication of the social and cultural norms that underpin and contribute to gender-based violence”.

In 2022, a high-level gender equality plan was concluded to coordinate government policy on equality, with a broad remit that includes gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. The government is preparing a national equality data strategy across all equality grounds with an intersectional perspective. In addition, the government’s equality body, the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#), has played an important role in challenging social norms across all equality grounds.

1.2 The 6th Statistical Spotlight: Gender norms in Ireland

The [6th Statistical Spotlight: Gender Norms in Ireland](#) is one in a series of focussed statistical reports designed to inform policy. It represents an innovative data gathering exercise on gender norms and stereotypes based on the OECD’s [Man Enough?](#) Framework, drawn up in 2021 to measure 10 masculine norms in the political, economic and private spheres. The overall aim is to monitor attitudinal and societal acceptance of restrictive and or positive masculinities to help policymakers to understand attitudes that influence, for example, the low uptake of paternity leave, female participation in politics and leadership roles, and gender-based violence and consent. It includes a roadmap to measure changing norms to inform transformative approaches to gender equality. A starting point for Ireland was that the OECD indicators adopted accessible language to help transform gender norms. This reflected a view that Ireland needed to move away from the language of so-called “toxic masculinities” to the measurement of broadly held gender norms and stereotypes that inhibit gender equality. The application of the framework to Ireland was also an acknowledgement that slow progress on gender equality may be the result of deep-rooted attitudes reinforced and reproduced by institutional practices and policymaking.

Where possible, the findings were compared with data from other European countries to assess Ireland’s comparative progress. However, the data in the 6th Statistical Spotlight reveals significant gaps in measuring changes in gender norms and challenges in communicating the benefits of gender equality and positive masculinities to men and boys. As data from Ireland was only available for a small number of OECD indicators, with the most significant data gaps in the private sphere, proxy indicators were used in instances where data was limited or unavailable, and in some cases additional data was included to contextualise or deepen the assessment.

The Spotlight data revealed progress on some gender norms, for example, on female labour market participation with high approval ratings for more gender equality in sharing of care roles. Additional data was collected on part-time employment and

reasons for those not seeking employment or working part-time, showing the clear impact of care responsibilities on women's shorter working hours or part-time work. When coupled with the data showing strong support for male breadwinner roles and assumptions of women as natural carers and the lower value put on women's work, this has helped to explain the low uptake in parental leave and paternity benefit, including by the impact of different occupational categories and low pay. Some data, for example, was contradictory on attitudes to sharing household work and unpaid care. Other data points highlight underlying attitudinal resistance to gender equality with low levels of female representation in leadership and public life, suggesting the persistence of masculinist constructs of leadership. Other attitudinal data shows that a significant minority does not understand sexual consent and supports regressive ideas about gender-based violence. A strength of Spotlight is its role in acting as a baseline to measure progress and address data gaps over time, with significant potential to inform future policy. Overall, Spotlight has been a constructive way to show tensions, on the one hand, between attitudinal support for positive masculine norms and, on the other hand, the persistence of retrograde norms and practices on leadership, care and gender-based violence.

2. The Austrian good practice: Targeted measures to tackle gender stereotypes

2.1 Introduction

The Austrian good practices address targeted measures in the community to tackle gender stereotypes, funded as part of a package of measures designed to change gender stereotypes and prevent gender-based violence. Specifically, the good practices are grounded in a solid legal framework for preventing violence, which has primarily targeted women as victims. Recent policy developments of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, in the framework of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, have put greater emphasis on supporting work with men to prevent violence and work with perpetrators to end violence against women. This work has three main goals: to enable men to seek help, to promote caring masculinities with male youth, and to provide public information and awareness where men, in particular, are called upon to intervene when they witness violence.

The establishment in 2015 of an umbrella organisation (DMÖ) has improved the coordination of programmes working with men, boys and perpetrators in a gender equality framework. It has built successful cooperation between civil society and public authorities to help men build non-violent caring lives. DMÖ works closely with the Ministry and coordinates funding for men-specific programmes with an explicit aim to transform gender stereotypes and implement caring masculinities. The aim is to ensure that a positive care concept for men, grounded in gender equality, enters public discourse. Six key projects supported and co-financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs were selected for the Mutual Learning Seminar. One project is carried out with

the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters (AÖF), and the other five are carried out with organisations working with men and boys and the umbrella body DMÖ. As these programmes are relatively new, it has not been possible yet to evaluate the outcome of the measures introduced to change gender stereotypes. However, the take up of the programmes by men and boys suggests promising progress. It has been essential to ensure that additional funding is made available for these programmes and that these measures are available for men in rural areas.

In relation to data, recent developments include a new database on gender-based violence in Austria. The results of the Austrian survey under the framework of the EU-GBV survey were published in November 2022, showing that 27% of women over the age of 15 years in Austria experienced non-partner violence, 16% experienced intimate partner violence, and 22% of women experienced stalking. The results of the full EU-GBV survey 2020-2023 will be disseminated in 2024.

2.2 Innovative approaches to promote civil courage: STOP! Neighbourhoods without violence

The [StoP Stadtteile ohne Partnergewalt](#) (Stop: Districts without partner violence) project was established by the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters, AÖF, and piloted in Vienna Margareten in 2019, with support from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer protection. It has a goal to involve neighbourhoods in community organising and instil a sense of community responsibility to promote civic courage to prevent violence. Since then it has been successfully rolled out to 25 districts and municipalities across Austria.

StoP uses a copyrighted evidence-based community organising methodology to help civil society to develop skills, awareness and active roles in preventing violence against women by recognising and interrupting violence early. In this context, neighbourhoods are empowered to build community resources and awareness and show civil courage in violence prevention and where victims feel safe and supported to seek help. Establishing StoP requires that participants complete a training course on violence prevention, safe spaces and community organising to create a sustained approach. An innovative part of the programme is the creation of so-called local action groups, called women's and men's tables, where participants gain knowledge and learn about active interventions to prevent violence. In this context, men willing to participate in change are motivated to become allies against violence against women and to take active bystander roles.

2.3 Working with men to tackle stereotypes and prevent violence

The second good practice consisted of examples of five different initiatives working with men to tackle stereotypes and prevent violence against women, with support from the Ministry. Under the first goal, a specific aim is to challenge the stereotype that men do not seek help, with the aim to support men to change their behaviour. This has led to additional funding to increase the availability of low-cost counselling for men in all provinces. In addition, a freephone crisis line for men [MännerInfo](#)

enables men, as well as relatives who are concerned about the behaviour of another family member and victims of violence, to seek help. The crisis line can also link men with the counselling service for men. Text-based outreach is planned to reach young people.

The second goal is to create caring masculinities and show that sharing care has positive benefits for men and women and can lead to healthier lives and reduced violence against women. Initiatives include running gender-sensitive and age-appropriate workshops with boys and male youth, with a specific focus on preventing violence among socially disadvantaged boys. A further initiative focuses on boys and adolescents through the [Boys' Day](#) – Career Orientation Day for Male Youth' which has since 2008 involved more than 5,000 boys each year in awareness around non-traditional occupational choices, for example, in nursing or primary school teaching.

Concerning the third goal, a public awareness campaign, [Mann spricht's an](#) ("Men speak up") has raised public awareness about male violence, explicitly addressing men as witnesses rather than perpetrators. The campaign is disseminated by a video on TV and on social media, and with posters and coasters in bars with photos of men in different roles. The aim is to engage men to prevent violence in the private sphere, public spaces, and the Internet.

3. The situation in the other participating countries

In **Belgium**, governmental and civil society initiatives have included boys and men as allies and beneficiaries of gender equality. Data collected by Belgium's federal Institute for Equality Between Women and Men, academic researchers and civil society have addressed issues such as sexist attitudes, gender stereotypes in schools and perceptions of masculinities amongst young people. However, data is not comparable or longitudinal. Government actors at federal, regional and municipal levels address the engagement of men and boys, for example, under the National action plan to tackle gender-based violence and associated project funding. An example is [MoveMen](#), a joint initiative launched in 2021 between two civil society organisations, Movement against Violence (vzw Zijn) and the Centre of Expertise on Gender and Feminism (RoSa vzw). The initiative combines education, campaigns and advocacy to engage boys and men in the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of violence. It includes youth-led campaigns in secondary schools focussed on the prevention of sexual violence.

In **Croatia**, national policies do not systematically address the role of harmful gender norms and the role of boys and men in achieving gender equality. There needs to be systematic data collection and more government support for interventions in this field. In the area of equitable care, the introduction of father's leave is a significant advancement. The draft National Plan for Gender Equality, 2022-2027, aims to combat gender stereotypes and harmful gender norms, with measures to combat stereotypes in the media and the judiciary, promote non-stereotypical educational

pathways for girls and boys and address gender stereotypes in childcare. In practice, gender-transformative work with men and boys is largely carried out in civil society. *Status M* is the only organisation that tackles harmful gender norms and stereotypes around equitable parenthood and care, men's roles in childcare, prevention of violence and elimination of gender stereotypes. Academic research has explored attitudes and practices, pointing to progress towards gender-equitable attitudes in education and work, but persistent gaps in the private sphere of family and care roles remain. The broader context of the backlash on gender equality and what is described as the "anti-gender" movement has led to gender-transformative work with men and boys being labelled as "gender ideology", which might hinder the development of the work with men and boys.

Czechia has no institutionalised strategy for collecting data on gender norms and gender stereotypes, although some gender disaggregated data is collected by the Czech Statistical Office. Several universities collect data as part of research on gender equality, men and masculinities. Gender norms and stereotypes are addressed under the national Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030, covering men and boys in non-traditional roles and in promoting gender equality, and men as perpetrators of violence. In 2012 a Working Group on Men and Gender Equality was established under the Government Council for Gender Equality to address fatherhood, education and violence. NGOs have been active in addressing gender stereotypes. Two significant initiatives aimed at boys and men are the *LOM* (League of Open Men) and *Genderman* (a project under Open Society). In addition, the domestic violence support organisation, *Spondea*, works with perpetrators of domestic and/or sexual violence. One NGO has played a role in connecting boys leaving institutional care at 18 years with male volunteers to help with their socialisation in society. A further NGO successfully carried out a competition to identify the worst sexist adverts over a period of 10 years, which led to policy change for the inclusion of sexist advertising in the criminal code.

The **French** High Council for Equality has highlighted the need for sexual education to address the harmful consequences of pornography and videogames on rape culture. Since 2006, the Inter-ministerial Agreement for the Equality of the Sexes in the Educational System has addressed two goals: gender stereotypes to encourage girls to work in STEM fields and the prevention of gender-based violence. Initiatives include university projects that have addressed the deconstruction of gender stereotypes in secondary schools, and the *ABCD of equality* on gender stereotypes at school, which led to significant public debate and attacks from religious and right-wing groups. The Observatory on Woman-Directed Violence established in 2002 in the Seine-Saint-Denis Department has implemented an innovative project, *Youth Against Sexism*, in secondary schools using forum theatre and creative arts. A further example is the [violentomètre](#), with graduating colours from green to red, aims to help young women's awareness about controlling behaviours. In 2020 a national telephone line was established for perpetrators of domestic violence, and each region has a perpetrator counselling centre. More recently, initiatives have targeted men and boys through training and the implementation of a *violentomètre* for perpetrators.

In a **German** context, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has initiated and funded multiple projects targeting boys and men on gender equality and gender stereotypes. They include of gender-sensitive counselling for men and an awareness campaign that seeks to challenge the gender norm that men do not talk about their problems ("[echte Männer reden](#)" [real men talk]). The *HEROES*® programme, which targets young adults from honour cultures, challenges traditional gender norms in workshops in the school setting. A further initiative is the [MeinTestgelände](#) [MyTest Site] online platform which encourages boys to examine their gender norms by publishing articles about their personal experiences related to the effects of gender on their lives. Other initiatives include the annual [Boys' Day](#), a national helpline for men *Männerinfo*, and the BMFSFJ awareness campaign ([Stärker als Gewalt](#) [Stronger than Violence]) launched in 2019. Despite the good infrastructure of gendered data, there is no attempt to collate the existing data into a comprehensive report.

Positive legal changes in **Greece** result from the ratification of both the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention and ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2021-2025, introduced by the Gender Secretariat of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, contains measures to improve reporting of domestic violence. The Hellenic Police now carry out annual reporting on domestic violence and the introduction a specialised domestic violence division has helped build trust with the police. An awareness-raising campaign, "Strong Me", has started a debate about the need for national reporting on femicide. The Gender Secretariat for the Department of Family Policy and Gender Equality has implemented two projects to promote gender-based violence prevention. They include a horizontal risk assessment tool and the application of a panic button for victims of domestic violence. A further important measure is the introduction of 14-days paternity leave for fathers. Although there are no dedicated projects that specifically target men, masculinities and boys, the Ministry of Education is currently reviewing the curriculum on gender roles, reproductive health and gender-based violence.

Latvia has achieved a good level of formal equality (under the EIGE gender equality index). However, in practice there is still a need for transformative work to be carried out with men and boys to tackle deeply ingrained discriminatory social norms, which are reinforced by traditional conservatism. Women in Latvia experience some of the highest levels of domestic violence and femicide in the EU. Various proactive legislative reforms have been introduced, including the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, 2021-2023. However, the Istanbul Convention has not yet been ratified. Some innovative practices have helped to promote a better understanding of gender roles, for example, through public events. Examples include [Forum Stand Up!](#) run by the Marta Resource Centre for Women, and the [Barbershop conference](#), inspired by the UN's *HeForShe* movement. A further positive development is the emergence of the father's and men's group movement that has challenged traditional gender norms.

In **Malta**, work with men and boys on gender equality and preventing gender-based violence has primarily taken place through project-based campaigns and events.

Examples include the National Commission for Promotion of Equality's project (2016-2017) on Equality Beyond Genders, which targeted 900 boys in post-secondary schools. The Commission for Gender-Based and Domestic Violence has implemented several programmes and has addressed the engagement of men and boys in training professionals, police and social workers. In March of 2022, the Commission collaborated with the Men Against Violence NGO in holding a conference on Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention, which included interventions by foreign experts and debate on the topic. Men Against Violence runs projects in schools and workplaces, emphasising men's and boys' roles in preventing gender-based violence and challenging traditional gender norms. Overall, there is awareness about the need to engage men and boys in breaking socially constructed gender norms and prejudices, but there is no structured, comprehensive strategy. Concerning data, Malta has considerably improved its data collection in recent years. However, there is no data collected on attitudes to and perceptions of gender equality.

The **Netherlands** has a long history of engaging men and boys in gender equality, leading to greater awareness about the benefits of their involvement. There is a comprehensive range of data and research on attitudes, gender norms and stereotypes. Data is published by the government every two years in the [Emancipatiemonitor](#). Policy debates are focussed on shared care work, violence and safety, and gender and sexual diversity. The National Action Programme Sexual Violence and Sexual Transgressive Behaviour stresses the importance of men's and boy's involvement in cultural change around norms and values, and amongst other areas, promotes bystander interventions and support for victims/survivors. The organisation, [Emancipator](#), has a goal to engage boys and men in gender justice in various areas. Other organisations have developed campaigns and initiatives appealing to boys and men as part of their work. A good example is the campaign [Act4Respect](#) which addresses men and masculinities through capacity building of professionals working with young people and supports interventions for young people at risk of becoming either victims or perpetrators of sexual violence. Despite the multiplicity of initiatives on the ground, this work is fragmented and better collaboration is needed between policy-makers, professionals and organisations.

Portugal's focus is on gender equality in education. Data on gender norms and gender stereotypes reveals that gendered vocational choices result in occupational segregation in the labour market. The Portuguese Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination, 2018-2030, addresses gender stereotypes. Gender equality is one of six themes in the National Strategy of Education for Citizenship (2018), which promotes active citizenship in students. The Portuguese (anti)sexism campaign led by public bodies and NGOs involves schools, local authorities and other organisations in raising awareness. At the same time, higher education institutions increasingly promote a gender-sensitive approach to teaching and research. NGO campaigns have targeted boys and men, and schools have initiated projects to combat sexism. They include the establishment of a network of co-education experts and guidelines on gender stereotypes for teacher training and the public. A project on gender mainstreaming in education addresses gender equality in teaching practice and in

school organisation and culture. Several projects have addressed the “ethics of care” in schools aimed at awareness of the benefits of men’s roles in parenting and care. A good example is the *MaRvel Project: Masculinities (Re)veiled, 2021-2024*, involving NGOs, public institutions and public schools, which uses a documentary on the experiences of marginalised young men to facilitate a discussion amongst young people about masculinity.

Despite some progress in gender equality, **Romania** lacks a coherent and explicit focus on men’s involvement in advancing gender equality. Gender equality initiatives largely target women, and men and boys’ involvement is addressed in policies on gender-based violence, gender equality in the labour market and the sharing of care work. A lack of comprehensive disaggregated data hampers progress, an issue highlighted in the 2022 GREVIO report on Romania’s implementation of the Istanbul Convention in relation to data on domestic violence. The first survey on attitudes, gender norms and stereotypes on violence against women was commissioned by the women’s organisation FILIA: *Gender Violence Barometer 2022*. Some progress has been made in understandings of gender identity and sexuality by civil society organisations, such as *MozaiQ LGBTQ+ or EasyECO*. Although no specific initiatives address prevention with perpetrators, the “STOP VIOLENCE!” programme, implemented within the penitentiary system since 2010, helps participants to acknowledge the effects of domestic violence and to develop relationship skills. Good practices include the Gender Equality Festival, held by the NGO, *ALEG*, which raises young people’s awareness about women’s rights and gender stereotypes. Successful business women and women working in STEM have given talks to school pupils, helping to empower girls and raise awareness amongst boys about non-traditional jobs.

Slovakia has implemented various measures to address violence against women, but they are insufficient to address the increasing prevalence of domestic violence since the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no specific education curricula on stereotypes and gender norms, nor state services aimed at men and boys. The national policy framework, set out in the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2022–2027, addresses the most extreme forms of violence against women and violence prevention. Furthermore, a new criminal law provides for the introduction of intervention centres for victims of domestic violence. Since 2018, the Coordinating Methodical Centre (CMC), established under the previous Plan, has run a National Project, Prevention and Elimination of Gender Discrimination, which includes the objective to work with men and boys to prevent domestic violence and measures targeted to perpetrators in Penitentiary Care. The NGO *Aliancia žien* are specialists in training for psychologists, therapists and social workers working with perpetrators. NGOs addressing harmful stereotypes include a programme by *Esfem* on gender-sensitive education for boys and an education programme by *Slniečko*, called *Kozmo and his adventures* on violence prevention with school and preschool children. However, there is strong opposition to establishing a legal framework for preventing domestic violence, led by a movement mobilising against the so-called “gender ideology”, which has also opposed ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

4. Key issues discussed during the seminar

Participants engaged in active, thoughtful, and wide-ranging discussions around some common themes during the seminar, which are summarised below.

- EU data and data from Member States in key policy areas have enriched our understanding of gender inequalities; however, this rarely tackles detailed attitudinal insights that can inform new policy measures on transforming gender stereotypes and norms. For this reason, seminar participants recognised both the value and potential for the transferability of the Irish Spotlight initiative, while highlighting **the need to address significant data gaps**.
- There is consensus about the need to carry out social norms change with men and boys. Evidence points to the **importance of interventions enabling boys and young men to safely explore their attitudes, roles and understanding of restrictive gender stereotypes**. At the level of awareness raising with boys and young men, participants stressed the need for age-appropriate and innovative methods, such as creative arts and forum theatre, workshop discussions with young people and Boys' Days. At the EU level, project funding, for example, to address gender stereotypes in early education (e.g. KINDER) and the European Council's materials to fight sexism, have contributed to this end.
- A lot of discussion took place about **how to communicate effectively and in non-judgemental ways with victims and perpetrators of violence**. Practical tools, such as the [violentomètre](#) in France, the Irish St Valentine's day campaign (www.toointoyou.ie) with information through a no trace website, and the Vodafone [BrightSky](#) app in Czechia, are examples of tools that have helped raise awareness amongst victims and perpetrators about controlling behaviours. In addition, several countries have introduced "Ask for Angela" initiatives in the hospitality and other customer-facing sectors, helping victims signal the need for safety responses, such as from bar or restaurant staff. These tools can be easily disseminated via social media.
- **Engaging men and boys in gender transformational work is complex, resource intensive and requires a shift in perspectives**. Funding, which is often short-term, limits the long-term sustainability of programmes, which also need to be embedded at a structural and institutional level. Although in some countries, public discourse on men and masculinities is still very new, young men are increasingly shaping new role models in parenting and care roles. In addition, young people show an appetite for discussion about consent and building respectful relationships, with some positive outcomes and feedback from young people.
- Policy debates on working with boys and young men have shifted from interventions and labelling men's toxic masculinity to ones that **engage men in proactive change and caring masculinities**. The examples and good practices discussed show that work in transforming gender stereotypes can be successful

when programmes, on the one hand, target specific groups of "at risk" men, including perpetrators of violence, and, on the other hand, are directed to men and boys in the general population around caring masculinities and civil courage. It is important in this context to build strategies to understand and address different types of resistance to change from women and men.

- A critical driver of change in gender stereotypes is the **introduction of non-transferable fathers' leave** in implementing the Directive on Work-Life Balance. However, gender norms and structural inequalities in the labour market mean that the burden of care still rests on women.
- Participants also discussed the danger that measures targeting different groups of men may contribute to the "othering" of some groups of disadvantaged and racialised men, contributing to the worrying trend of anti-gender equality and anti-immigration narratives across Europe. As a result, there was consensus about the **need to urgently address gender transformative change in all social classes**, including men in leadership, political and public influencing positions. Showcasing men in senior and influencing roles as champions for gender equality and as male role models supporting caring masculinities can make a positive contribution to gender equality and to ending violence against women.
- The backlash against gender equality in some countries and a strong lobby from men's religious and right-wing groups have reinforced men's traditional roles. Consequently, **efforts to spell out the positive benefits of transforming gender norms**, engaging in violence prevention and achieving gender equality for everyone are all the more urgent.
- At the level of policy change, participants discussed **effective ways to engage men and boys in gender equality in strategic and cross-cutting policy debates**, including actions on gender mainstreaming in areas such as justice, economy, education, the labour market, homelessness, health and mental wellbeing, and family life. Multistakeholder and community engagement, along with the intersectional voices of women and men, brings added value to strategic policy developments and practical initiatives. Equality bodies also play a crucial role in supporting institutional change and awareness of equality from an intersectional perspective.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Participants expressed their appreciation of the detailed insights gained from the Irish and Austrian experiences and the opportunity for a rich exchange of learning to inspire new ideas and action at the national level. Group discussions enabled participants to reflect on what they had learnt, discuss potential new strategies and make recommendations to progress work with men and boys in transforming gender stereotypes. On the basis of these discussions, the following summarises the main recommendations.

- Policymakers should consider **multifaceted, coordinated, cross-sectoral approaches** and interventions to embed gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approaches to attitudinal change and awareness raising. Strong laws and additional dedicated resources remain critical to endorsing and implementing preventative strategies and working with men and boys.
- **Member States should be supported to use and collect data** under the OECD indicators, which provide a valuable framework to inform policymaking, including a strategy to address data gaps at the EU level.
- It is essential that **programmes for men and boys received new funding and do not divert funding from women's programmes**. Funding programmes should recognise that gender transformation change needs to be addressed through coordinated and cross-cutting government policy and action. In addition, there has been a lot of learning from European and international networks, an example of which is the MenEngage Alliance. However, more resources are needed to progress this networking and to amplify the benefits of mutual learning on fatherhood and caring masculinities.
- Because violence against women is deeply rooted in unequal and harmful gender norms, it is **essential that men and boys from different target groups are involved in transforming gender norms**. However, emphasis needs to be given to training men in public, political and influencing roles to be champions and allies in achieving gender transformative change. The focus should be on change through civic courage and caring masculinities.
- It is essential that **awareness-raising** and information campaigns consider the campaign audience and **promote positive messaging** and an emphasis on the **win-win of gender equality**. This means shifting from messaging around toxic masculinity to men's roles in transformational social change.
- There must be a balance between individually focussed actions related to gender norms change and those policy interventions that address structural and institutional change. Emphasis must continue to be put on the **need to tackle structural inequalities** that impact on issues such as occupational segregation and the gender pay gap, including promoting the social and economic value of care.
- Resources should be targeted to where they can have the most effect. For example, education and teachers' roles should be key targets for intervention in school-related work with boys. Interventions, including helplines and perpetrator counselling and treatment programmes, are urgently needed for perpetrators of violence, and must reach men in rural as well as urban areas. To sustain this important work, **funding programmes must be firmly embedded in long-term structural funding arrangements**, be evidence-based and independently evaluated.

- An **in-depth Europe-wide survey on attitudes to gender stereotypes** and transformative approaches to gender equality, supplemented by qualitative data, has the potential to open up new policy insights about attitudes to social norms change. This is critically important in complementing existing national data and in addressing data gaps, particularly for smaller countries.
- **More emphasis needs to be given to cross-sectoral work on gender equality** and to more effectively embedding gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in areas such as the EU's Green Deal and national Recovery and Resilience Plans.

In their closing remarks, Helena Soares, from the European Commission and the co-hosts from Ireland and Austria thanked participants for the invaluable discussion and the active and high-level of engagement on this important issue during the seminar.