

Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Opinion on "Gender Balance in Decision- making in Politics"

The Opinion of the Advisory Committee does not necessarily reflect the positions of the Member States and does not bind the Member States

2017

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1. Introduction

Women in the European Union (EU) make up more than half of the population and of the electorate, yet women continue to be under-represented in decision-making positions and processes - despite being highly educated – even if some progress has been made in recent years.

Equal participation of women and men in decision-making is a matter of justice, democracy, equality, respect for human rights and good governance. Equality between women and men in the field of decision-making is crucial to better reflect the composition of society and strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. It is also likely to benefit the EU's economic growth and competitiveness.

The under-representation of women in elected and appointed political positions remains a critical issue at the level of the EU and in most EU Member States, even though the situation varies considerably between EU Member States.

Some figures from 2017 confirm this persistent tendency¹:

- Women account for 37% of members of the European Parliament, a slight improvement (2 pp) compared to the previous legislature.
- Women account for 29.8 % of the members of single/lower houses of national parliaments. The proportion of women has risen from 22% in 2004 showing a slow rate of progress. However, there is considerable variation between Member States.
- Women account for less than 17% of leaders of major political parties.
- Women account for 33% of the presidents and members of regional level assemblies (where relevant) and for 32% of mayors or other leaders and members of local/municipal councils.
- Women account for 28% of senior ministers in national governments. Moreover, analysis of the distribution of men and women senior ministers by type of portfolio shows that men continue to hold most of the key positions related to the economy and to basic functions such as foreign and internal affairs, defense and justice. Women ministers, on the other hand, tend to hold so-called “soft” portfolios with socio-cultural functions.
- The European Commission has nine women among its 28 members. The proportion of women (32%) is unchanged from the previous Commission.

The under-representation of women in decision-making is a very broad and multifaceted issue that needs to be placed in the context of many policy efforts aimed at improving gender equality at all levels of society, including education, employment, family and private life.

¹ Data refers to the 28-EU Member States and was collected mainly during the third quarter 2017. Source: EIGE database on gender statistics. More data available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dqs>

It also shows a gap between political commitments at EU and international level and the implementation of comprehensive, coherent and long-term national strategies that are necessary to achieve an effective balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions and processes.

The objective of this opinion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is to provide feedback to policy stakeholders at national and European level on how to make further progress on gender balance in decision-making positions in politics by identifying the key remaining challenges, reinforcing synergies between international organisations/bodies, suggesting further possible actions at local, regional (where relevant), national and European level as well as undertaking impactful public initiatives.

2. Context

The **European Union** has been promoting the equal participation and representation of women and men in decision-making for many years now. More recently, with the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), the EU Member States committed, inter alia, to promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields. Moreover, in the 2015 Council conclusions on "Equality between women and men in the field of decision-making", Member States were called, inter alia, to consider a broad range of different measures, legislative and/or non-legislative, voluntary or binding, as well as the exchange of good practice, with a view to improving the gender balance in decision-making bodies in all areas; to encourage the setting of ambitious targets and timelines in accordance with national circumstances; to take measures to eliminate individual, organizational and social obstacles that result in women's decisions not to enter politics.

Furthermore, governments, political parties and the European and national parliaments were called to promote a balanced representation of women and men in the political sphere, paying attention, most notably, to their positioning on party lists, for example by introducing a "zipper" system where male and female candidates would appear alternately on such lists, including with a view to the European Parliament elections in 2019, the nomination of a new European Commission in 2019, and nominations to high-level positions in the EU Institutions.

The **EU Member States** have also committed to achieve equal representation of women and men in decision-making in international political frameworks such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women)², the Beijing Platform for Action and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5 on achieving gender equality, in particular target 5.5³, and Goal 16 which aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels", in particular target 16.7).

² Article 3: States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. Article 7: "Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country."

³ Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making is one of the five priority areas of action in the **European Commission's Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-2019)**.⁴ Commission's actions include raising awareness on the issue, co-operating with and supporting stakeholders such as governments and NGOs, in designing and implementing policies and activities to promote gender balance in decision-making positions, mutual learning and the exchange of good practices. The Commission monitors the situation by disseminating information, data and analysis of trends in the field, in co-operation with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).⁵ The Commission also promotes gender balance at all levels of decision-making within its administration.⁶ It adopted a set of measures to bring female representation in its management to at least 40% by 1 November 2019.

The Committee of Ministers of the **Council of Europe** adopted Recommendation Rec(2003)3⁷ on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, "taken to mean that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in politics or public life should not fall below 40%", and recommending governments of Member States consider measures to at least achieve that target. Moreover, balanced participation is one of the five strategic objectives of the current Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, and will remain in the next Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, currently being finalised. An analytical report on the third round of monitoring on the Recommendation's implementation has recently been published using 2016 data⁸.

Based on the findings, the report warns against the often-voiced idea that the evolution towards gender balance is linear: setbacks are possible and a positive evolution is not a natural given. In the legislative power, overall, the CoE 2016 monitoring report points towards slight improvement for some indicators but also towards stagnation. The average proportion of elected women stayed around 25% and was consistent across the legislative assemblies surveyed (lower/single houses, upper houses and regional parliaments).

The highest proportion of women members in single/lower houses was found in countries using proportional list systems, while the lowest proportion of women members was found in single majority systems. Moreover, there was a strong correlation between the strength of the legislative quotas and the percentage of women elected in national elections. The strength was measured in terms of quota percentage, whether they include a rank order for women and men, and whether they include sanctions and if so, the type of sanction. Countries with political party quotas, rules or regulations, either for national elections or for internal party decision-making bodies, had on average higher levels of women in national lower houses, among party executives and among party members, than countries without such measures. This finding shows that political will and commitment towards more women in politics is essential to achieve results.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/files/strategic_engagement_en.pdf

⁵ EIGE database on gender statistics: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>

⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2070_en.htm

⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/1680519084>

⁸ "Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Decisions-Making, Analytical report – 2016 data", Council of Europe, 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e> Data covers CoE member countries.

3. Key challenges to achieve gender balance in politics

Contributing factors to gender imbalances in political power and decision-making are social, cultural, economic and institutional. The Advisory Committee identified **the following key challenges** to be addressed in order to overcome the gender gap in political decision-making:

- Politics remain a **male-dominated domain**. Due to traditional gender roles in society women candidates often must tackle issues such as sex discrimination and gender stereotyping, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, unequal share of paid and unpaid work⁹ or the lack of family and social support. In political engagement, this double burden becomes a triple burden, especially in honorary offices mainly on the local level.

- **Time and working arrangements** continue to mainly favour men and exclude women, despite the recent trend of higher participation of men in family care and challenging the traditional gender roles. More women in decision-making positions needs also the **involvement of men** and to promote a more **equal way of sharing social and family responsibilities** – as social and professional inequalities influence all aspects of women's lives, including their availability to run for office. Parliaments should also rearrange their sitting hours (e.g. by establishing compressed sitting weeks, creating schedules that start early, avoiding late voting, and aligning sitting times with the school calendar) so that parliamentarians can return to their electorates and spend more time with their families.

- **Political parties' processes, procedures, structures, culture, and activities** – whether direct or indirect, formal or informal - can support or hinder women's participation in politics. Political parties **are key actors** whose role is fundamental as they recruit, train, nominate and rank the candidates that will run for office. Internal party culture play an important role in deciding women's possibilities to climb the party rank, and getting involved in politics in the first place.

- **Candidate selection within parties** does not tackle gender inequalities, leading to male-focused recruitments. Party recruiters testify to women being harder to persuade to run for elections than men, thus recruiting and selecting women candidates might need a different approach than traditional recruitment. Messages should be better targeted to women's needs and experiences and run on a longer time before elections to tackle gender inequalities efficiently. The negative impact of some electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies should also be taken into account.

- Women candidates tend to have less **access to campaign funding** from political parties and also more limited personal financial resources that will directly impact their electoral success and political career.

- The **lack of system of enforcement**, such as well-designed temporary special measures, such as parity laws for candidate lists for elections with effective sanctions, make it difficult to advance towards gender balance in political decision-making and to reduce deep-rooted social barriers. When legislation exists, a challenge also remains in the existence of a gap between legislation and its implementation. The measures to enforce gender balance should be designed according to the different electoral systems.

⁹ In Europe, women spend twice the amount of time on care work as compared to men.

- **Sexism, gender norms and stereotypes** persist, calling into question women's legitimacy to run for office, which enormously influence candidates and voters. These gendered perceptions of leadership and the phenomena of the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass cliff'¹⁰ are social limitations to women's active and sustained participation in politics. In this context, more women in parliaments or governments is not enough. The roles and positions of women politicians must also be evaluated. Deep rooted in society, gender-based stereotypes are reinforced by **mass and social media** which feature a lack of equal presence (time-shares), a differentiation in subject-matter discussion of women and men in the media and a distorted portrayal of women in politics (including degrading treatment, online and offline threats of gender-based violence and sexist hate speech). Stereotypes particularly influence women belonging to under-represented groups (see below). They are made hardly visible in political decision-making and their access and participation in public and political life is even more challenging than for other women.

- **Women in all their diversity need to be represented in politics.** Women of all ages, in particular young women, working class women, women from racial or ethnic origin, Roma women, women with disabilities, women from the LGBT community, migrant women are under-represented and often overlooked in political decision-making.

- Gender balance in political decision-making also depends on the adoption of gender equality policies in all fields. **Gender mainstreaming mechanisms** are not sufficiently implemented and **positive attitudes and understanding** towards the benefits of gender mainstreaming in this domain are still lacking.

- There remains a need for more **sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics**, particularly at sub-national levels, on numerous aspects related to women's political participation, which limits measurement and full understanding of the issue. There is a need to improve current **indicators** and develop new ones improving harmonisation as much as possible data at EU level and among Member States.

4. Recommendations and possible actions

Policies tackling the root causes of the under-representation of women in politics would benefit from EU impulsion and co-operation, including with international organizations, which can build on the existing good practices (see annex 1 for examples).

4.1 Recommendations

The European Commission and the Member States should, in accordance with their respective competences:

1. Include issues regarding gender roles including women's participation in political and public life in the primary and secondary school curricula accompanied by innovative, attractive and successful materials and tools for the teaching community.
2. Promote training programmes about gender norms as well as strategies or codes of conduct to prevent and combat sexism, gender stereotypes and sexist hate speech

¹⁰ Research has revealed that women are more likely than men to be appointed to leadership positions when an organization is in crisis. For example, women are still more likely to be nominated in unwinnable constituencies.

(including online) for all stakeholders: women and men, journalists, politicians and candidates, family partners to female candidates.

3. Support gender mainstreaming training for all political parties and members of parliament, including a package of actions for all new members (training, guides, mentoring, coaching) with a special focus on the younger generations.
4. Carry out awareness-raising activities regarding the importance of women's political participation; presenting success stories and role models, in particular during the election period.
5. Consider introducing legislative electoral measures for ensuring equal representation of women and men with effective enforcement measures.
6. Encourage political parties to promote clear and transparent recruitment, candidate selection and career development procedures and working methods, taking into account a gender perspective; positive actions, such as gender reporting on progress made, and gender quotas to access decision-making posts; equal representation of women and men in candidate selection committees; use of gender-inclusive language.
7. Encourage political parties to adopt an Action Plan for Gender Equality, ensuring that no barriers exist – substantive, structural or cultural – to women's full participation and to equality between women and men members and staff, and stipulating that the structures, operations, methods and work of the party is to be reviewed so as to ensure they respond to the needs and interests of both women and men.
8. Strengthen gender mainstreaming mechanisms within political assemblies, which may be formal (commission or committee) or informal (caucus or working group) by creating network-platforms and ensuring the involvement of both women and men in these mechanisms.
9. Consider adapting family-friendly policy measures and adopt transformative measures for reconciliation of work, private and family life in order to amplify political measures advancing women in politics. A reconciliation measure could be to hold party meetings and sessions of representative bodies at times that are compatible with family life, to provide care services during parliamentary sittings and party meetings and/or to implement models of parental leaves for elected politicians.
10. Promote mentorships for women, in particular by fellow MPs, and gender equality and mainstreaming courses designed for MPs, taking into account women's diversity.
11. Establish a network-platform for elected women as a mechanism for the development of dialogue and the exchange of opinions on the field of equal participation in decision-making between elected women and also organizations, NGO's and gender experts.
12. Keep supporting the important role women's organizations and NGO's play with their continued advocacy for gender equality in political decision-making.
13. Promote gender analysis of electoral systems and all aspects related to elections, including the type of system in place, voter education, the possibility or not to hold several mandates at the same time, or rules regarding campaign financing.

14. Improve and harmonize as much as possible data collection and analysis by Member States of women and men's political participation in decision-making positions, with a special emphasis on the regional and local level, in order to monitor the progress made, both on a quantitative and qualitative basis, making full use of the work of the European Institute for Gender Equality.
15. Encourage the reinforcement of synergies between international organizations/bodies' activities (Council of Europe, United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, European Commission, EIGE, etc.).

4.2 Support at EU level

The Advisory Committee identified 4 main European levels supporting Member States actions promoting gender balance in politics.

4.2.1. AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

- Support wide awareness-raising campaigns to combat gender stereotypes and sexism in decision-making and regarding the benefits of gender balance in decision-making positions using different communication support and tailored at general public, political parties, major public schools and universities.
- Support public debates, conferences, and roundtables, on the principles and importance of gender equality and gender balance in decision-making positions, both at EU and Member States level (national, regional, local).
- Support gender equality and gender mainstreaming training courses designed for members of parliaments and fostering mentorships between women members of the European Parliament and women of national or regional parliaments.
- Support training courses aiming to inspire women to consider a career in politics, to equip women with the tools and techniques necessary to successfully get elected and to inform women of the benefits of becoming more politically active, in part targeting young women and women who often are not heard or seen in politics (women from racial or ethnic origin, Roma women, women with disabilities, women from the LGBT community, etc.).
- Support special media trainings for journalists and women candidates (based on Slovenian experience, see annex 1 on good practices) as well as campaigns through media that sensitize the electorate on the need for women in public life at all levels.

4.2.2. LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER POLICY MEASURES

- Consider the possibility of adopting a new Recommendation promoting women's political participation in decision-making positions, building on Council

Recommendation of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process.¹¹

- Ensure monitoring of the implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September 2015, in particular Goal 5 on achieving gender equality.
- Ensure monitoring of the implementation of the first “gender roadmap” adopted by the G7 Working Group on 24 May 2017.¹²

4.2.3. EUROPEAN NETWORKING AND DATA COLLECTION

- Encourage the appropriate exchange channels between the European Parliament and the Member State’s parliamentary institutions on ways of achieving gender balance in decision-making.
- Reinforce ongoing dialogue with national parliaments in order to establish regular exchanges of views, exchange new techniques and report on policy impact assessments, with a view to promoting a shared approach and further developing best practices in advancing gender mainstreaming.
- Increase efforts to improve and harmonize data collection and processing at EU level and among Member States and improve existing collection and evaluation tools.
- Continue to promote the EIGE Gender Statistics database to optimise exchange of Member State’s data and best practices.

4.2.4. EU INSTITUTIONS AS A ROLE MODEL

- The European Commission should:
 - Encourage each Member State to submit two Commissioner candidates (instead of one): a woman and a man. The President of the Commission chooses candidates while seeking to establish a gender balanced Commission.
 - Encourage European political parties to ensure gender parity on electoral lists for the European Parliament.
 - Nominate gender-balanced teams for commissioners in 2019, including for president and vice president positions.
 - Balancing women and men’s appointments in the Commission General Directorates, building on its Communication of July 2017 on “A better workplace for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion”.¹³ and in the European External Action Service.

¹¹ Council Recommendation of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process (96/694/EC)

¹² The G7 Roadmap for a gender-responsive economic environment identifies three main policy priorities: 1) women’s participation and leadership in decision-making; 2) women’s access to decent and quality jobs; and 3) eliminating violence against women and girls.

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-equal-opportunities-diversity-inclusion-2017.pdf>

4.3 Reinforce synergies between international organizations/bodies' activities

The Advisory Committee stresses the importance of strengthened co-operation among international organisations where EU Member States participate, such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), including through cross-references to existing standards and tools and co-ordination of relevant activities. It suggests improving existing structures/tools with the objective of better knowing, accessing, sharing and exchanging data among all institutional levels and with NGO's. Example:

- EIGE online tool for Gender-sensitive Parliaments tested in co-operation with national and regional parliaments, and to be launched in 2018. EIGE's online self-assessment tool is part of a wider effort by EIGE to provide European and national public institutions with practical instruments to foster and strengthen a gender-oriented institutional transformation. It helps to collect data on European, national and regional levels for several points in time. The primary function of the tool is to allow a self-assessment of parliaments in Europe by responding to online survey, measuring the level of gender-sensitivity and progress over time. The tool was developed in partnership with OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament.

Annexe: good practices

Good practices exchanges contribute to enhance equal participation of women and men in political power and decision-making. In June 2016, the European Commission organized a mutual learning seminar on promoting gender balance in politics with a focus on two practices from Slovenia and France.¹⁴

The Advisory Committee identified the following national and supranational initiatives promoting gender balance in politics that may inspire other EU Member States:

National initiatives

BELGIUM

- At the Belgian level, two regions (the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region) have recently reinforced the obligation of women to be represented on the electoral lists presented by political parties in the context of municipal elections. In these two regions, at the local elections in 2018, the lists will have to be composed of the same number of women and men, and women and men will have to be placed alternately on the entire list. As a reminder, the laws and decrees on parity impose since the early 2000s that the electoral lists are composed of as many women as men. These laws, which apply to all levels of power, also provide for the alternation of men and women in the first two places of the electoral lists.
- The Institute for Equality of Women and Men analyzes the gender composition of legislatures and executives following each election¹⁵. It provides data analysis making comparisons and evolution analysis possible.

FRANCE

- Binomial candidates for departmental¹⁶ elections: citizens do no longer vote for one candidate, but for a team of female and male candidate. This guarantees gender parity on departmental level, on the other hand it establishes shared decision-making positions in territorial politics, introducing the potential of shared responsibilities and enhancing the possibilities of work-life-balance for politicians.

GERMANY

- Attracting women to local policy-making by awarding prizes for successful women politicians and by networking activities to bring together active and future female politicians inter alia as mentors and mentees (Helene Weber Prize and Helene Weber College, both on a national scale and independent of party affiliation).
- Initiatives supported by the German ministry of women to promote gender balance in politics, regarding the part of the media and digital world, which is important in transferring role models of women in politics and everyday life. E.g. the initiative “pro quota direction” (Pro Quote Regie), an association of female directors who work for gender equality in the film- and television business, and “pro quota media” (Pro Quote

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

¹⁵ <http://igvm->

[iefh.belgium.be/fr/publications/de_politieke_vertegenwoordiging_van_vrouwen_na_de_verkiezingen_van_25_mei_2014](http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/publications/de_politieke_vertegenwoordiging_van_vrouwen_na_de_verkiezingen_van_25_mei_2014)

¹⁶The department is a territorial authority, ranking between local and regional assemblies. There are 101 departments in France.

Medien), an initiative for female journalist in Germany. Their main goals are to bring more women in leading positions in film businesses (producers, directors, camerawomen) and in leading positions in the newspapers, magazines and online editorial offices of great publishing companies. Gender stereotypes and sexism should be removed from all screens and Medias.

IRELAND

- Platform for recruiting, training and mentoring program of candidates entitled "Women for election" <http://www.womenforelection.ie/>. Women for election train candidates, campaign leaders, and work in universities to get young women to enter politics.

LUXEMBOURG

- Legislation: Strict monitoring and legal sanctions, consisting of reducing public funding of political parties for non-compliance of gender quota on party lists (40% quota on national elections lists and 50% for European elections).¹⁷
- Communication: Awareness-campaign over two years preceding local elections with testimonials, workshops in partnership with local authorities, unions and NGOs; large advertisement campaign in national media¹⁸.
- Agenda setting: background analysis and strategy on balanced representation of women and men presented by minister in Press conference in 2014.¹⁹
- Recent local election results²⁰ present 24.8% of women elected comparing to 2011, there is a plus of 2.6% (22.2%). Comparing to former elections (1999) the increase has slowed down.²¹

MALTA

- The Labour Party launched a new initiative to promote more women candidates within the party. Under the LEAD initiative seventy women are trained and mentored so that half of the candidates of the party will be women in the 2027 general elections.

ROMANIA

- Romania is involved in the "HeForShe" campaign launched by UN Women. The President of Romania is one of the 10x10x10 Global Impact Champions.

SLOVENIA

- The Coalition for balanced representation of Women and Men in Public Life that included prominent individuals from NGOs, academia and MPs as well as the representatives of the media played a key role in the lobbying and adoption of legislated gender quotas.
- Legislated gender quotas for national elections, local elections and elections to the European parliament with legal sanctions for non-compliance in the form of the

¹⁷ Loi du 15 décembre 2016 portant: 1. modification du Code du travail; 2. modification de l'article 2 de la loi modifiée du 21 décembre 2007 portant réglementation du financement des partis politiques. www.legilux.lu

¹⁸ www.votezegalite.lu

¹⁹ www.mega.public.lu

²⁰ Local elections took place on 8 October 2017 in Luxembourg (for a total of 105 local authorities)

²¹ www.cnfl.lu Observatoire du Conseil national des femmes du Luxembourg

rejection of the party list. (More information on adoption and implementation of the legislation: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_si/summary_report_si_2016_final_en.pdf)

- Capacity building, mentoring and networking for women politicians: Mentoring day with a Woman Politician (publication in Slovene: <http://www.arhiv.uem.gov.si/fileadmin/uem.gov.si/pageuploads/MestaPoliticnegaOdlocanja/MentorskiDan.pdf>), Network of Women Mayors (Project OPENN: <http://www.mirovni-institut.si/en/projects/obtaining-political-equality-new-names-openn>)
- Trainings on efficient media communication and use of social networks for journalists and politicians (Meta Women workshops: <http://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project/SI03-0014>)
- Awareness-raising campaigns (Towards Equalizing Power Relations between Women and men: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9DYLfrjWo4&feature=youtu.be>)

SPAIN

- The Spanish Act for Effective Equality between women and men of 2007 amended the General Election Regime Law obliging the lists of candidates presented by political parties for election²² to have a balanced presence of women and men, each sex representing a minimum of forty percent. This minimum proportion will likewise be maintained in each group of five candidates. Non-compliant lists are withdrawn by the electoral authorities.²³
- Since the approval of the Equality Act, the General Directorate of Internal Policy of the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs carries out analyses with detailed data on the impact of compulsory compliance with the principle of balanced presence of women and men in candidate lists in national, local and European Parliament elections.²⁴
- The Standing Orders of the Congress of Deputies and of the Senate were amended²⁵ introducing the possibility of remote voting for deputies and senators, in certain plenary sessions for reasons based on pregnancy, maternity, paternity or serious illness, duly justified and authorised by the Bureau of the Chamber.
- The Congress of Deputies and the Senate have a separate standing legislative parliamentary committee that deals with women's issues ("Equality Commission").

Supranational initiatives

- The **European Commission** adopted a set of measures to bring female representation in its middle and senior management to at least 40% by 1 November

²²Election (to the lower house of parliament, municipal, island councils, members of the European Parliament and of the legislative assemblies of the Autonomous Communities)

²³ This amendment has contributed to increase the political presence of women: in the last Spanish general elections of June 2016, women held 39% of seats in the Congress of Deputies, a point away from balanced presence, being the third country of the European Union, together with Belgium (39%), with the best representation of women in Congress after Finland (42%) and Sweden (46%) This progression for Spain can be also observed at a local level where the proportion of women mayors and councillors has grown in a sustained manner; in 2015, there were 19% women mayors and 36% councillors, more than two times the number than ten years earlier (6,53% and 16,45% (1995).

²⁴ They are available (in Spanish) at the webpage of the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs: <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/archivos-y-documentacion/documentacion-y-publicaciones/publicaciones-descargables/elecciones-y-partidos-politicos>

²⁵ The links to the publication of these amendments in the Official State Gazette (in Spanish) are: Congress- Reforma del Reglamento del Congreso de los Diputados por la que se modifican los artículos 79 y 82. https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2011-13243; Senate: Reforma del Reglamento del Senado por la que se modifican los artículos 92 y 93 https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2013-12420&lang=ca

2019, including individual targets for all Commission departments when it comes to appointing Heads of Unit.²⁶

- The **EIGE** online tool for Gender-sensitive Parliaments is an example of an effort to improve synergies between international organisations in order to strengthen collaboration. The tool was developed in partnership with OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament, etc. The primary function of the tool is to allow a self-assessment of parliaments in Europe by responding to online survey, measuring the level of gender-sensitivity and progress over time.
- On 27 September 2017, the **Council of Europe** adopted a *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector*. The Recommendation aims at including a gender equality perspective in all branches and activities of the audiovisual sector to respond to issues such as the lack of awareness of the prevalence of gender inequality, gender bias, the unequal distribution of funding and investment, the low representation of women at key positions in the audiovisual sector, unequal pay, and the unequal access to employment opportunities. Measures to implement the Recommendation include “supporting awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns on combating gender stereotypes, including hate speech and sexism in the audiovisual sector” and “promoting non-stereotypical images, and avoiding sexist advertising, language and content which could lead to discrimination on grounds of sex, incitement to hatred and gender-based violence”. The Recommendation includes an Appendix with “Guidelines for improving gender equality in the audiovisual sector: measures for implementation” and another Appendix with “Recommended monitoring methods and performance indicators”.²⁷

In addition, the Council of Europe adopted a specific *Recommendation on gender equality and media* in July 2013²⁸. The Recommendation indicates that media organisations should be encouraged to adopt self-regulatory measures, internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal supervision, and develop standards in media coverage that promotes gender equality. A consistent internal policy and working conditions should be promoted, aimed at equal access to, and representation in, media work for women and men, including in the areas where women are underrepresented. Furthermore, a balanced participation of women and men in management posts, in bodies with an advisory, regulatory or internal supervisory role, and generally in the decision-making process is to be encouraged. A Handbook was published in 2015 to support member States in their implementation of the 2013 Recommendation on gender equality and media²⁹.

- **UN Women** views women’s political empowerment and participation as a human right and fundamental to achieving a peaceful and sustainable future. The promotion of women’s political empowerment and leadership is widely regarded as an area of strength for UN Women, with more than 90 country and/or programme offices reporting work in this area in 2016.

²⁶ The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy adopted by the European Commission (July 2017): http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2070_en.htm

²⁷ Link to the full text: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6

²⁸ Link to the full text: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c7c7e

²⁹ Link to the full text: <https://rm.coe.int/1680590558>

The goal of *UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021* is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including women's full enjoyment of their human rights. To break trends and accelerate efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women has prioritized several thematic priorities grounded in comprehensive theories of change based on achievements and lessons, the first of which is "more women of all ages fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes." This thematic output is designed to assist Member States, upon their request, in translating global norms and resolutions on women's political empowerment and leadership into national policies to achieve transformative results for women and girls and address multiple Sustainable Development Goals in a synergistic manner (namely SDG Target 5.5: to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life"). This thematic priority identifies four pillars for action:

- Support development and implementation of robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements that facilitate women's participation. This includes relevant reforms to constitutions, gender equality laws or party statutes, and policy actions such as setting numerical targets for women in leadership positions with temporary special measures (TSMs) and reforming party statutes.
- Expand the pool of qualified and capable women to run for election, including through initiating programmes that boost women's confidence and capacity to lead, enhancing their campaign strategies and techniques and promoting linkages with supportive CSOs (civil society organisations).
- Transform gender norms so that women are accepted as legitimate and effective leaders including through implementing training programmes and developing campaigns that sensitize the media and electorate on the need for women in public life at all levels.
- Support women leaders in gender-sensitive political institutions, including parliament, political parties and EMBs (Electoral Management Bodies), to attract, promote and retain women leaders, and highlight the constructive contribution they make to decision-making.

The *UN Women Training Centre* is dedicated to supporting the UN and other stakeholders to realize commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights through transformative training and learning. Training for gender equality is an important means of achieving Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5. The work of the Training Centre is guided by UN Women's vision and mission grounded on international normative frameworks such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action.

The UN Women Training Centre provides a variety of services to government counterparts, civil society organizations, the United Nations, and other interested stakeholders. These include training courses and resources related to UN Women strategic areas using different modalities and for diverse stakeholders on a scheduled basis and upon demand; technical assistance to develop, implement an evaluate Training for Gender Equality; an [eLearning Campus](https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org) (<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org>) for online training activities and communities of practice; as well as an open online forum for knowledge and resource sharing on

Training for Gender Equality. In 2016, the Training Centre delivered 27 courses to over 35 thousand participants.

- **The Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments**³⁰ was designed to support parliaments in their efforts to become more gender-sensitive. It presents a broad range of strategies in seven action areas that can be implemented by all parliaments, irrespective of the number of women members.
- The **European Women's Lobby's European Political Mentoring Network (EPMN)** aimed to empower women from ethnic minorities ahead of the May 2014 European elections and to increase their representation in the European Parliament (EP). The Network addressed the lack of gender parity and ethnic diversity in political decision-making at European level. The EPMN connected 11 women MEPs (the mentors) with 11 women from a migrant or ethnic minority background and different political parties, who were interested in running for the 2014 European elections (the mentees). The purpose is to better prepare the mentees to compete for the 2019 European elections, by sharing advice and experiences during one-to-one meetings.

³⁰ A gender-sensitive parliament responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and work. Gender-sensitive parliaments remove the barriers to women's full participation and offer a positive example or model to society at large. <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-plan.htm>