



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Women and the Media

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Fighting for Gender Equality in Media Organisations, Discourses and Practices

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1. Description of the national policy context

1.1. General context and policy

Through its legislation, Romania appears to have a strong commitment towards equal opportunities and gender equality. Law no 202 issued in 2002 and improved since quite a few times clearly states that gender discrimination is forbidden in every aspect of the social life (work, education, access to public services), as are all the other types of discrimination – based on race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs etc. The law passed as part of Romania's efforts to join the EU, and so did the National Agency on Equal Opportunities – the local correspondent of the European Institute of Gender Equality.

The law's second chapter has definitions and provisions to be applied in the workplace (media and advertising sectors not excluded), from recruitment and selection to employment, promotion, maternity leave or end of contract and also sexual harassment (ANNEX A).

Equal opportunities are clearly stated but from de jure to de facto there is still a long way: in practice women still have a hard time at work, lower salaries, fewer chances to be promoted, low access to top management and difficult conciliation between personal and professional life (work-life balance).

EIGE's Equality Index¹ places Romania at the back of the EU – 52.4 compared to the EU average 66.2. Nevertheless, indicators on women in the workplace are sensibly higher than the general index, as opposed to the domestic violence one or decision making / power. This indicator is consistent with the actual Romanian reality; most media and advertising organisations have men CEOs, even though women are fairly represented in the total of employees and even middle management. PR and BTL agencies are mostly feminine.

1.2. Legal framework: short history

Legislation and policy changes in gender equality came hand in hand with the process of European integration, which was and continues to be a key driver of policy change generally in Romania.

The Romanian Constitution, (1991), revised in 2003, includes the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with provisions on equal

¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/RO>

rights and non-discrimination. Article 16 provides that: citizens are equal before the law and public authorities, without any privilege or discrimination

But there are no positive measures to support equal or representative decision-making, despite the fact that the Constitution was drafted after important international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995. Both documents clearly state women's equal participation in decision-making as a goal and set out a range of provisions.

The Law No. 202/2002 on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men republished in the Official Gazette, Part I no. 326 of June 5, 2013 represents the key legislative tool and stipulates the following areas as priorities: equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men in the labour market; in access to education, health care, culture and information as well as in decision-making.

1.3. Other tools in the fight against discrimination

- *National Council Against Discrimination (CNCD)*
Equal opportunities provisions are also present in laws related to the existence and functioning of the National Council Against Discrimination (CNCD). The institution sanctions any behavior against human dignity, hate speech or actions creating a hostile atmosphere (ANNEX B). The Council's activity and jurisprudence are rarely linked to gender bias or stereotypes - there are merely no complaints on this topic, as one can see from the annual report².
- *National Audiovisual Council (CNA)*
This is an independent public institution under Parliamentary control, led by a Council whose members are proposed by the Senate (3), Chamber of Deputies (2), President (2) and Government (3), and appointed by the Parliament. This Council safeguards the public interest in audio-visual communication. Audiovisual Law No. 504/2002 stipulates that oversight can also be enforced when NGOs, specialised in the protection of women's and children's rights petition the Council (Art. 89, paragraph d). In 2010 the Council exercised its powers.
- *Ombudsperson*
The Ombudsperson has under her/his mandate the protection of citizens' rights and liberties in their interactions with public authorities. The Ombudsperson protects citizens against the actions of public institutions, and also covers equal opportunities for women and men.
- *Parliamentary Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Chamber of Deputies*
Established in 2003, and focused on gender equality, the commission aims at the elimination of all types of sex discrimination, integrating gender equality in legislative initiatives, public policies and programmes.

² http://api.components.ro/uploads/1d3a0bf8b95391b825aa56853282d5da/2018/05/Activity_Report_CNCD_2017.pdf

- *Parliamentary Commission on Equal Opportunities, Senate*
- *Romanian Advertising Council*
The Council elaborated a code (ANNEX D) of good practices which clearly states a non-discrimination commitment, including gender-based discrimination and stereotypes (Art.7 on social Responsibility)³. Moreover, 88 companies and institutions recently signed the Diversity Chart – only 6 communications agencies among them (PR and advertising), no media organisation. The Chart⁴ states that signatories are to apply equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles in all decision making and HR policies, as well as to implement awareness programs on these topics among its employees and management (ANNEX E).
- *Civil society, scholars and feminist groups*
In addition, civil society plays an important role in tackling the issue of women and media.

2. Policy results in terms of gender equality

2.1. Key results of good practice initiatives

Like in other countries, the issue of women in media⁵ is actually well documented regarding media content (women in the news, on television programs, etc.) and media employment. Doctoral thesis⁶, NGO's reports on the image of women in Romanian society⁷ provide reliable data on progress or failures in the fight against sexism, stereotyping and discrimination.

Romanian research in collaboration with national and international institutions emphasise the situation of women in/and media. Worlds of Journalism⁸ presents the gender balance in news rooms: "in Romanian news rooms women outnumber men. They are not only more numerous but also much younger, being under 30. Women have university degrees and, in comparison with men, are more often specialised in journalism. Thus of the 341 interviewed journalists, 62.5 percent (213) were female and 37.5 percent (128) were male; 84,8 percent of the Romanian journalists were younger than 30, on average being 30.65 years old.(...)Over 80.0 percent of the Romanian journalists with university degrees had specialised in journalism and/or other fields of communication".

The presence of women in media organisations was completed by the representation of women in media⁹ (old and new media, and different genres and formats):" The supremacy of men in shaping and covering the continent's news agenda endures despite the fact that in many of the 11 countries surveyed, women

³ <http://membrii.rac.ro/cod>

⁴ <http://www.cartadiversitatii.ro/textul-cartei-diversitatii>

⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality (2013)- *Women and the Media-Advancing Gender Equality in Decision Making in Media Organisations*

⁶ N.Apostol (2018) *Dimensiune de gen si munca in journalism*, Bucuresti, Tritonic

⁷ Woman's image in the Romanian Society. Media Analysis report

www.activewatch.ro/Assets/Upload/files/ALTFEM_2013.pdf

⁸ *Worlds of Journalism Study* https://epub.ub.unimuenchen.de/30967/1/Country_report_Romania.pdf

⁹ *Where are the Women Journalists in Europe's media* (2018) <https://en.ejo.ch/research/where-are-all-the-women-journalists-in-europes-media>

make up around half the number of journalists and more women than men are choosing journalism as a career”.

The researchers, who looked at reporters’ bylines and the images accompanying stories, found that in nearly every country, across both print and digital, men wrote most of the content in the news, business, and comment sections. Across all 11 countries, men wrote 41% of the stories, compared to just 23% written by women, while almost half of all the pictures (43%) that were published were just of men, compared to just 15% featuring only women. That is why analysts considered ‘European Journalism a largely male affair’.

2.2. ‘Mediascape’ still shaped by gender inequalities

Recent studies (Ross & Padovani 2017, Roventă-Frumușani 2013, Surugiu 2013, EIGE 2013, Byerly 2011, GMMP 2015, etc.), both Romanian, European, and global, present a gender imbalance in media organisations, in content, as well as in journalism practices

The Romanian ‘mediascape,’ as well as the global one, has been affected in the past few years by two important pressures and, consequently, changes: the economic crisis and the digital revolution. The status of journalists, especially women journalists is marked by uncertainty, precarity and vulnerability; these gender inequalities are added to the generic current and acute ones, such as poverty and longevity. The ‘double burden’ results in women’s professional under-utilisation (part time jobs, freelancers, short-term contracts), as well as their over-utilisation (multitasking in both the profession and the family)¹⁰.

Similarly to the French landscape, we have to emphasise the persistence of multiple discriminations (intersectionality) in women’s professional life: age discrimination, stereotypical representation in media content and stereotypical positioning in media organisations. Even if the presence of women in news became more important as authors (presenter, reporter, etc.) of the news, unfortunately news that challenge stereotypes remain very scarce.¹¹

According to the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project Report for Romania, the gender gap between male and female news reporters is narrowing in many major news topics (politics and government) and a slight improvement concerning the presence of women as subjects of news appears too. Women represent roughly one-third of the subjects of news: 32 percent in print; 19 percent in radio news and 40 percent in TV news. Men are still portrayed in news as the main actors of public life: 76 percent of subjects in news concerning politics are men, while only 24 percent are women. Subjects such as politics and economy are still regarded as men’s concerns in traditional media, as well as on Internet, where women and men are even more unequally represented as news subjects.

Contrary to the top-down transformation undertaken in the post-socialist countries through, primarily, passing legislation based on the Western model a genuine transformation will rather take place bottom up. This could entail new socialising

¹⁰ D.Roventă-Frumușani et al.(2017) “It Takes Two to Tango:Gender in Romanian Media Organisations”.In K.Ross&CPadovani (eds.).*Gender Equality and the Media.A Challenge for Europe*.London, Routledge,p.171-184.

¹¹ Global Media Monitoring Project 2015 National Report Romania
<http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports>
http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/imported/reports_2015/national/Romania.pdf

models within the family and school, but especially could foster the promotion of new media models by women in decision-making and leadership positions (in media organisations, political decision-making forums, etc.) capable of making and implementing change.

3. Transferability aspects and general Intersectional inequalities

Since the first GMMP in 1995 there has been a slow but constant rise in the proportion of women in the news (now at 24 per cent) in spite of the increasing number of women occupying executive positions in politics, business and law, but rarely making the front page. The common denominator of women's presence in media organisations and media content is the vertical and horizontal segregation, the feminisation and precarisation of the journalist profession, the lack of visibility of women experts and the stereotypical representation of women.

A Gender Equality Observatory (in France within the Ministry of Culture and Communication since 2013), the extension of the regulatory powers of the National Audiovisual Council (in France the law of the 4th of August 2014) could contribute at the promotion of the gender mainstreaming approach.

The status quo could be challenged fostering the constant implication of civil society and by improving media and gender education and research. CLEMI initiatives and *Mathilda Education* as well as the women experts list or the *Gender Observatory* are paradigmatic transferable examples for all countries. In Romania FILIA (ONG for the women's rights ¹² is working now on the new edition of the *Gender Barometer* and has published the *Catalogue of offensive advertisements*¹³.

4. Conclusions and agenda for the future

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. That is why research, teaching and awareness activities should be based on multiple approaches:

- an integrative approach (based on the concepts of intersectionality, synergy and media/technology convergence) putting gender on the research agenda in order to reduce the gap of knowledge on women issues such as: education, health, multiple discrimination, maternity, women in mass media, etc.;
- an academic approach consolidating the Gender Studies area in the higher education systems as transversal discipline present in social and human sciences, but also in medicine, economy, history, etc.

In order to promote gender equality by means of institutional changes related to HR management, decision making, funding, research programs, we suggest to:

- develop innovative practices aiming to ensure gender equality tackling different obstacles to equality (gender stereotypes, use of masculine grammar, gendered interactional patterns, gender blind work environment etc.).

¹² www.centrufilia.ro

¹³ O.Băluță (2012) *The Catalog of Offensive Advertisements*, Bucharest, Maiko.