



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Women and the media

France, 12-13 November 2018

Summary Report



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Introduction

The mutual learning seminar, held in Paris on 12-13 November 2018, examined good practices from France on women and the media. It was the first time the topic was discussed at a mutual learning seminar and a sign of the growing recognition of its crucial importance in achieving gender equality. Government representatives and experts from 17 other EU Member States also participated. In addition to France, the participating countries were: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. The European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) also participated.

The EU's [‘Audiovisual Media Services Directive’](#) (2010, currently under revision¹) prohibits discrimination based on sex in audiovisual commercial communications and encourages Member States to promote a diversified and realistic picture of men’s and women’s skills and potential. Moreover, the European Platform of Audiovisual Regulatory Authorities (EPRA), an independent platform of regulators, has recently issued a report on gender representation in the audiovisual media industry², which highlights the existence of pervasive disparities. Therefore, the seminar was a timely opportunity to review national measures and discuss further action.

1. The good practices of the host country

1.1. French government legislation and policies

The French government has taken a transversal and proactive approach to promoting gender equality and fighting sexism and sexist abuse. Over the last decades, a comprehensive legal framework has been adopted, including on gender parity in elected positions and quotas for women’s representation in decision-making on company boards. There is a strong framework for gender equality in employment, including requirements to implement gender equality plans with penalties for non-compliance and the prohibition of sexual harassment and sexist abuse at the workplace. A new law on effective equal pay came into force in 2018.

In terms of gender equality in the media, the 2014 law on real equality was a tipping point as it extended the regulatory powers of the French Broadcasting Authority (CSA), which now has legal rights to ensure a fair representation of women and to monitor radio and TV programmes. In 2017, these powers were also extended to advertising to ensure women are represented appropriately.

The Ministry of State of Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination has spearheaded cross-government coordination and mobilisation on the issue. Firstly, all Ministries are required to adopt roadmaps on equality and to take proactive steps. For example, since 2017, the Gender Equality Observatory of the Ministry of Culture and Communication issues an annual monitoring report and it has adopted a

¹ Directive 2010/13/EU of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive), OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, revised by COM/2016/0287 final.

² European Platform of Audiovisual Regulatory Authorities (EPRA). Working Group II. Achieving greater diversity in broadcasting – special focus on gender; Benefits and best practice approaches. Comparative background paper. 4 September 2018. EPRA 2018/04.

new roadmap (2018-22), including action on equality at the workplace and the fight against sexism and gender-based violence. The Ministry of Education promotes media literacy in education from an early age onwards, and the Centre for Education on Media and Information (CLEMI), a government institution, has training materials and created a schools' competition called 'zero cliché', both designed to promote a critical understanding of the media and sexist stereotypes. The Ministry of Health has programmes to tackle harmful stereotypes in the media, which can contribute to illnesses such as eating disorders. Local government has also been active with initiatives such as the Paris Municipality's decision in 2018 to prohibit sexist advertising in municipal displays and in Normandy, the regional government has issued a series of guides on how to avoid gender stereotypes in official communications.

Another State initiative is the certification process offered by the National Organisation for Standardisation (AFNOR) for diversity and equality labels. A number of TV and radio channels have been awarded the diversity label but not yet the equality label.

1.2 Mandate and measures taken by the French Broadcasting Authority (CSA)

Following the adoption of new legislation in 2014, the CSA has new legal rights and competencies. It can advise and also sanction both public and private media that do not respect the law concerning the appropriate representation of women. The CSA set up a working group with the main media organisations to reach a joint agreement on the new reporting requirements. The CSA now issues an annual report on women's presence in audiovisual productions in both qualitative and quantitative terms, that highlights good practices and includes recommendations. It is indisputable that there has been progress as a result of the new reporting requirements, with a 2% increase in women's presence in news programmes which is now at 40% of the total and a 5% increase in numbers of women experts which is now at 35% of the total. However, there are still challenges: for example, a 5% decrease in women experts was recorded during the last Presidential elections.

Over the last four years, the CSA has intervened in 22 cases, with letters, formal notifications and in two cases, after years of discussion, a decision was made to impose a heavy sanction. These two cases related to the use of women as sexual objects, and in both instances, the companies appealed but the sanctions were upheld at the high court in 2018. Therefore, the 2014 law can be considered a very effective instrument.

The government broadened the CSA's competences to better address gender stereotypes and women's underrepresentation in the media. In 2017, for the first time, the CSA issued an annual report on women's portrayal in advertisements based on the analysis of thousands of TV adverts. It found two-thirds featured sexualised women. It has convened stakeholders to adopt a code of conduct, with the aim of gradually reducing the use of recurrent gender stereotypes in advertising. The CSA is also negotiating a charter on reality TV shows and has commissioned a study on the digital environment with a view to drawing up a directive on stereotyping to be adopted by online video sharing companies.

1.3 The good practices of the Union of Advertisers (UDA)

The Advertising Regulatory Authority (ARPP) is a self-regulating body for the advertising industry. It updated its code of ethics in 2018 and has an online alert mechanism for complaints, which, if deemed justified, can lead to the withdrawal of an advert. There has been considerable debate within the industry about gender stereotypical advertising, with some arguing that adverts merely mirror the society and should not seek to take on a transformational role. Addressing recurrent and systematic stereotypical sexualisation of women is the most important action to take. In cooperation with the CSA, the ARPP and other stakeholders, the UDA has adopted a charter of commitment for the fight against sexist, sexual and gender stereotypes in advertising. It currently has 33 signatories. The plan is to use a grid of stereotypical images to analyse adverts over a two-year period and then publish a report with recommendations on how to make progress. The grid will be made public in January 2019 but is already in use by some advertising agencies. Influenced in part by the *#metoo* movement, the advertising world is changing, together with the attitudes of the general public, particularly the millennial generation.

1.4 The good practices of Agence France Presse (AFP)

Following concerns expressed by some women journalists on how domestic violence was being reported and other issues, AFP's Head of Global News commissioned an independent study by the University of Toulouse 2 on the representation of women and men in the AFP content. As a consequence, in 2018, AFP adopted new guidance in order to reflect diversity and to improve the portrayal of women in its news reports, increase the number of women experts and ensure the use of gender-specific language. AFP also conducted awareness-raising sessions for journalists, and invited gender experts to meetings, in order to review areas of potential reporting bias, such as ensuring physical descriptions and references to clothing are not limited to women; that the representation of men and women in sports' dispatches is balanced; that a person's family status is only referenced if it has genuine news value; and that if a person is referred to by the first name only, it is not just in the case of women. It also aims to give greater prominence to reporting on gender-based violence and ensure it is respectful. Journalists have been trained on how to report gender-based violence, as many are not familiar with the law and procedures. AFP publishes 3000 pictures every day but only 14% are of women. While it is work in progress, there is now greater awareness that attention to diversity and gender balance will result in AFP benefitting from a wider range of sources, access to new experts and better journalism all round.

1.5 The good practices of the Radio France Group (RFG)

While the government has been the main driver for change in addressing the representation of women in the media, the public radio, RFG, also decided to set an example. The RFG Diversity Committee sets measurable targets to increase by 5% each year (i) the under-representation of women in programme content; (ii) in staffing; and (iii) among invited experts. From 2016-2017, it increased the number of programmes about combatting sexism from 143 to 251; the number of women staff increased from 32% to 38%; and the number of women experts from 28.2% to 32.6%. The group also commissioned a study about how listeners perceive gender balance and diversity and published feedback from listeners about the stereotypes they identified on RFG programmes. In the last year, audience figures reached new

records, and although it is hard to pinpoint the exact cause, it is clear that the RFG has recruited new listeners who identify with the changes introduced.

2. The situation in the other participating countries³

In **Austria** the 2013 Federal Budget Law requires every Federal Ministry to determine gender equality outcomes for their activities. However, neither the Ministry for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media nor the Austrian regulatory authority have included gender equality in their agendas. In the media industry, only the public broadcasting service, ORF, has adopted gender equality policies and an equal opportunities plan. Women comprise around 40% of the media workforce but are under-represented in senior management and are more likely to be employed on insecure contracts. Women as a focus of the news only comprise 21% of the stories according to the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report⁴. Gender stereotyping is common, particularly in advertising, where humorous content can mask sexism and female images are often altered to create images of ‘perfect beauty’. There are many good practice examples, starting with media literacy and gender equality as teaching principles in all schools with guidelines and background materials available on the Ministry of Education’s website. The ORF gender equality plan, recipient of a UN Women’s Leadership Award in 2015, requires that all company decisions go through a ‘gender check’ and new managers must attend training on gender competence. Prompted by the *#metoo* movement, ORF adopted new guidelines on sexual harassment; and in 2018, it adopted new goals to increase the number of women in technical posts. Women comprise only 12% of film directors, and in 2016, the Austrian Film Institute introduced an incentive scheme to increase their numbers. There are also many active civil society organisations, feminist and academic networks working to empower girls and women.

In **Bulgaria**, the 2016 Law on Equality between women and men establishes the principle of equality and designates specialised bodies and mechanisms. However, Bulgaria remains a highly patriarchal society, as underscored by the 2018 Constitutional Court decision halting the national ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“the Istanbul Convention”). Furthermore, there is an overall lack of media freedom and distrust of the media by the general public. There is also a marked tendency for the Bulgarian mass media to reproduce discriminatory gender stereotypes and portray women in a sexist manner. The GMMP report (2015) found that women were the subjects of only 37% of all TV and radio stories, with 69% of all stories reinforcing gender stereotypes. In advertising, gender stereotypes and sexualised portrayals of women dominate. In this patriarchal context and in the light of the lacking press freedom, the topic of women and the media is not on the agenda. A Eurobarometer survey (2017) found that 60% of Bulgarians considered that there is no problem with the way women are presented in the media and in advertising. Therefore, comprehensive policy frameworks and regulatory mechanisms are required to address the misrepresentation, sexualisation and dehumanisation of women in the media. In close collaboration with the women’s movement, there is a need to draw up action plans and monitoring mechanisms,

³ For more information on the situation in the participating countries, please refer to the country papers for this seminar, available on the Programme’s website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mlp-gender-equality-seminar-women-and-media-france-12-13-november-2018_en

⁴ <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports>

carry out training on media awareness for audiences, journalists and journalism students as well as introduce media education in schools from an early age.

In **Croatia**, the Law on Gender Equality (2008) requires media to adopt self-regulating policies, including the promotion of gender equality and prohibition of offensive, degrading or humiliating representation of persons on grounds of sex and sexual orientation. The National Plan for the Fight against Discrimination (2017-2022) considers the media as a priority area. The Ombudsperson at the government Office for Gender Equality is responsible for monitoring gender representation in the media, receiving complaints and carrying out training programmes. It issues an annual report submitted to the Parliament. From 2014 onwards, the Agency for Electronic Media also monitors gender representation in news television programmes and advertising. It receives 3% of the public television licence fee, with which it has established the Fund for Pluralism and Diversity to finance media content promoting gender equality. The Law on Croatian Public Television (2012) and the Law on Electronic Media (2013) also regulate and promote gender equality in the media. Croatian public television has adopted measures to monitor the gender balance among its employees, and reports to the Ombudsperson. Journalism is a highly precarious profession and has become increasingly feminised. Over 40% of graduate journalists have temporary work contracts. There was a 15% gender wage gap in the information and communication sector in 2016. Women are under-represented in senior management and there is marked sectoral segregation. Apart from Croatian public television, other media organisations have few policies or measures to promote gender equality. However, studies reveal that stereotypical representation of women in media content is common. The Croatian Journalism Association in its code of ethics prohibits gender stereotyping and reporting that promotes discrimination and there are plans to adopt a new code on gender-based violence. There are also university research centres and NGOs with a strong focus on women in the media.

In **Cyprus**, media has been recognised as key to challenging gender stereotypes and inequality. Some measures have been included in recent National Action Plans, although monitoring mechanisms have yet to be introduced. The Radio and TV Broadcasters Laws (1998-2016) prohibit programmes that incite hatred and advertisements that discriminate. The Journalists' code of practice also prohibits gender-based discrimination and there is a public complaints system. The Cyprus Advertising Regulation Organisation (CARO) advises members and reviews complaints, including on grounds of gender-based discrimination. The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies has published a handbook on gender and the media and has launched a website of women experts, called the 'She Experts Initiative'. Women are severely under-represented in the media, with only 19% of news content focusing on women, according to the GMMP report (2015), with women's representation in digital media even less. Both subtle and blatant gender stereotypes are present but there is a lack of continuous and comparable research data. There are many barriers to career development, with men representing 86% of media industry management positions and 88% of front-page journalists' posts. On TV, there is clear gender segregation: only 11% of the politics and government reporters are women. There are no gender equality employment policies in the media industry to address issues such as the gender pay gap, sexual harassment and work-life balance. Often when complaints are submitted about media reports or advertisements, there is no practical follow-up. Sustainable monitoring of women's representation and portrayal in the media is required. Training programmes for media audiences could enhance citizens' capacity to recognise discriminatory media

content and increase the use of the existing complaints mechanisms, as well as encourage the development of other platforms of citizen journalism.

The **Czech Republic** lacks a systematic approach to women and the media. The government equality strategy (2014-2020) recognises that there is a low awareness of gender issues and the existence of gender stereotypes in media content and advertising. It calls for a balanced participation of men and women in decision-making and gender mainstreaming in the media, including a system of media monitoring and advertising. However, in public broadcasting, there are no specific requirements related to equal employment opportunities. According to the 2013 EIGE report⁵, only 24.6% of management positions are held by women; there are no women at all in the most senior positions; and the number of women board members is among the lowest in the EU. Only 21% of news stories are about women and 13% of experts are women. Notwithstanding, the 2017 Eurobarometer report found that 61% of the population have no problem with the way women are represented in the media and advertising. The public broadcasting regulatory authority has the power not to renew a license if programmes consistently incite hatred, including on grounds of gender. However, few cases are brought forward and there is insufficient cooperation among regulatory authorities. Some NGOs have sought to monitor the media and provide the regulatory bodies with assessments of key cases of discrimination. NGOs have also set up mentoring programmes for women journalists and created awareness about sexism in media representation in advertising through training programmes and a conference.

In **Estonia**, a gender equality council was established in October 2013 as an advisory body to the government on gender mainstreaming in national programmes. However, there is a persistent gender pay gap in all sectors. In the media, the gender pay gap is around 20% and there is marked occupational segregation, with women mainly carrying out behind-the screen work. The EIGE survey (2012) found that there were no women in the boards of directors in public broadcasting and the two main newspapers although in radio, many executive editors were women. The GMMP report (2015) found that 24% of media content had women as a focus, and that there had been no change since 2010. However, the number of women reporters was relatively high with women representing 44% of reporters in print media, 78% on the radio and 24% in TV, although they were predominantly young women. The Broadcasting Act established a regulatory authority where complaints can be submitted, and the Estonian press code of ethics provides for the equality of rights and obligations of women and men journalists. However, because of a low awareness of gender equality issues generally and a lack of inter-linkages between gender institutions and the media bodies, issues concerning media and women are not high on the agenda.

In **Finland**, there is no consistent collection of statistics on women in the media and apart from the GMMP, there have only been a few short-term project-based initiatives. Women are clearly under-represented in media content. According to the GMMP report (2015), the proportion of women as news subjects has declined and is now only 29%. Women over the age of 50 years are much less visible. In the film industry, there are positive trends, with females representing nearly half of all protagonists in fiction feature films in 2016 and 2017. However, when the more

⁵ EIGE, Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media, EIGE 2013. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/advancing-gender-equality-decision-making-media-organisations-report>

popular films are analysed, women protagonists are fewer and are often portrayed in subordinate positions. Over the last decades, women comprised one third of film directors, although in 2017, the number rose to 40%. Women comprise 58% of Finnish journalists but only one third of the senior management of news media. Prompted in part by the *#metoo* movement, there is a new focus on harassment and inappropriate treatment in the media. The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a report in September 2018 on working conditions in audiovisual production, revealing the scale of precarious work; activists published a book on the Finnish *#metoo* movement in October 2018; and the Finnish Film Foundation issued an operational programme to prohibit harassment in film production. In these ways the debate on women in the media has taken on new vigour and the role and the responsibilities of the public broadcasting company could well be reviewed in the near future.

In **Latvia**, there are no specific laws on gender equality and only general principles on non-discrimination in the journalists' code of ethics. There is also a lack of data and research on the subject. The media industry is now a feminised sector characterised by low pay and precarious work. In decision-making, women comprise 60% of positions but there is marked sectoral and vertical segregation. The proportion of women in both public and private media boards was 50% in 2014. A study from October 2018 analysed gender representation in the media. It found that women hosted only 15 of 52 public media broadcasts. The proportion of women experts is better on public radio where it was found that 199 male experts were invited to the programme compared to 109 women. However, male experts predominate in areas such as politics and economics. Both Latvian and Russian language media lack a gender perspective. There are current discussions about developing a media ombudsperson institution, which might potentially address gender equality issues in its mandate.

In **Malta**, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality was set up in 2004 under the terms of the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003) with the mandate to monitor national policies to address discrimination and promote gender equality. There is a current focus on actions to address domestic violence and femicide and Malta is the first country to host the European Observatory on Femicide, launched in March 2018. There has been substantive research on the issue of women and the media. The 2018 report of the European Parliament⁶ researched women's experiences working in the media and prior to that Malta participated in the EIGE report (2013)⁷ on women in the media and in the GMMP project. Despite public measures and policies, gender stereotypes are still very prevalent in Malta and this is reflected in media content, where women are under-represented, confined to stereotypical roles or, as is particularly the case for elder women, invisible. There are also few women experts in audiovisual content and vertical and horizontal segregation is common. Media practitioners have argued that there is a lack of legislation and an absence of self-regulation and codes of practice. Media education, both for journalists and as part of the school curriculum from an early age, is essential in order to create critical awareness and bring about a culture change. A proactive approach to ensure gender equality in media organisations is also required, taking both a top down and bottom up approach.

⁶ European Parliament, Gender equality in the media sector, European Union 2018. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/596839/IPOL_STU\(2018\)596839_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/596839/IPOL_STU(2018)596839_EN.pdf)

⁷ EIGE, Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media, EIGE 2013. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/advancing-gender-equality-decision-making-media-organisations-report>

In the **Netherlands**, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for equality, including non-discrimination in employment and the portrayal of women in the media. The gender pay gap in the information and communication sector was 15.2% in 2014, only slightly lower than the national average. According to the EIGE report (2013), women are under-represented in the highest levels of media organisations and the public broadcasters appear to do worse than the private sector. On the other hand, although the number of women journalism students has now reached 68%, only 35% of media industry employees are women, possibly because more women work on a precarious self-employed basis. Monitoring studies show that the representation of women in both public and private television was under 40% in 2010 and since then has declined slightly. Women are particularly under-represented in older age groups and in specific roles, such as sports news and as experts. Another area of concern is the influence of entrenched ideas of beauty and the sexualisation of women, particularly acute in advertising. The Dutch company Unilever found that women are shown as 'professionals' in only 3% of commercials and as 'intelligent' in only 2%. The OCW has identified gender stereotyping in the media as a priority but wary of infringing on press freedoms has opted for the encouragement of self-regulation. The OCW has plans to develop a structured monitoring system of the representation of women (and LGBTI persons) in the media. It has also signed an agreement for the period 2017-2020 with the Dutch public media (NPO) so as to increase the representation of women in public media. Another Ministry supported initiative involves the NPO, the VICE media company and the main commercial broadcaster (RTL) and aims to increase the number of female experts. Selected candidates are interviewed by programme editors and participate in screen tests and practice debates so as to facilitate contacts and exchange. There are also a number of web listings of female experts and a professional network of women journalists that seeks to advance gender equality and offers training programmes.

In **Poland**, the media industry, in particular governing boards, remains vulnerable to political pressure. In 2017, women only comprised 15% of boards of trustees and management boards, although they are more equally represented among reporters and presenters, with 48% women on television and 57% on radio. However, according to the GMMP report (2015), women are only 7% of the subjects of news releases and another study in 2017 found that women make up only 15% of experts and politicians. The Media Ethics Council has oversight over issues such as gender equality, but its ethical chart does not mention the issue. NGOs and media institutions have joined forces to establish a web database of women experts and carry out workshops on the topic of women in the media. Following a high-profile case of sexual harassment in 2015 when a male journalist was dismissed, and three women journalists received financial compensation, there is more awareness about these issues. One major media institution issued a circular letter to all staff condemning gender discrimination and mobbing and stating that such actions could be subject to a disciplinary review. In the October 2018 local elections, one prominent women's activist publicly criticised both public and private television for failing to invite a single woman commentator or expert to their programmes about the elections, although on one station, the main news presenter was a woman. This situation highlights the lack of gender awareness among women journalists and the need for continued professional training.

In **Portugal**, the government's National Equality Plan (2018-2030) includes a focus on promoting equality between men and women in various spheres, including the media; and on the prevention of gender-based violence. The Regulatory Authority for the Media (ERC) does not have any specific mandate to promote gender equality

but it does have a mechanism whereby individuals or organisations can register a complaint about offensive or discriminatory content. Since 2015, the ERC has assumed a monitoring function and issues a report on gender representation in television programmes, although it does not cover advertising. RTP, the public broadcaster, includes the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity in its code of ethics and in the past has conducted career advancement programmes for women in middle-management positions. It has also promoted work-life balance initiatives, including flexible working arrangements and childcare services. The Media Capital Group, a private company, has a code of conduct which includes the promotion of equality but has not implemented any specific measures. The media profession is heavily feminised with women comprising 53.9% of the workforce in 2014, although they are under-represented in senior positions. Women are also under-represented in media content: one study of main prime time news programmes from 2015-2017 found that 70% of all protagonists were male, corroborating the finding of the GMMP report (2010) that only 16% of news stories included women experts. Since 2013, an NGO initiative has monitored media content over a seven-day period on an annual basis to promote critical debate but so far it has not focused on gender issues. However, there is a yearly journalism prize for any media content that fosters equality between men and women. In recent years, there has been a positive development with more sensitive gender-perspectives in reporting in the quality print media, including concerning various controversial judicial rulings exonerating the perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Romania's Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (2002) is the key legislative tool. It is supported by the work of the National Agency on Equal Opportunities and the National Council against Discrimination, this latter with a complaints mechanism although it rarely considers cases of gender discrimination. The National Audiovisual Council is an independent public institution under Parliamentary oversight and is designed to safeguard the public interest. The Romanian Advertising Council code of good practices has a commitment to non-discrimination and 88 companies recently signed the Diversity Chart on the application of equal opportunities and implementation of awareness-raising programmes in the industry. Women are well represented in journalism and outnumber men in news rooms. According to the GMMP report (2015), the gender gap between women and men news reporters is narrowing. However, women are often younger and more likely to have specialist educational qualifications than their male counterparts. They are also more likely to have precarious employment contracts and face inter-sectional discrimination, including on grounds of age and stereotypical sectoral segregation and representation in media. For example, women are only 24% of the subjects of programmes on politics and lack visibility as women experts. An integrated approach is required based on concepts of intersectionality together with the consolidation of research on gender issues as a transversal discipline.

In **Slovakia**, media legislation and regulatory bodies have general principles on protection from sexual discrimination. The National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Equality (2014-2019) includes goals to eliminate gender stereotypes in education and ensure women's dignity in images; as well as provisions for the regular monitoring of the media and advertising from a gender perspective. However, in practice, because of limited awareness, there is a weak commitment to fight sexism in the media and gender stereotyping is very common. Furthermore, there is only limited amount of research or data available. In 2016, one study found that the gender pay gap among journalists was 18% and another study from 2009 found there is strong vertical segregation in the media sector with only 25% women

in senior management of the main media companies. In terms of media content, a government study covering 2009-2011 found that women featured in 26% of news programmes and were only 20% of experts. On the regulatory councils, women are under-represented: the public broadcaster RTVS has only one woman out of nine council members. The Advertising Standards Council (ASC) however has gender balance on its Arbitration Committee and the code of ethics includes goals to eliminate sexism, gender stereotypes, and gender-based violence. In 2017, one fifth of complaints submitted to the ASC related to sexism. In five cases, it found there had been a breach of its ethics code. One NGO provides gender competency training, including for journalists. The NGO-initiated 'Sexist Blunder' award has raised awareness of sexist advertising and has received support from the ASC.

In **Slovenia**, the media sector is regulated by the Media Act and the public broadcasting RTV Slovenia Act, and there are self-regulatory bodies for journalism and advertising. These all have general provisions on prohibiting discrimination and refraining from use of gender stereotypes and disparaging images. Under the Media Act, local radio and television stations must respect the principle of equal opportunities for men and women in order to qualify for subsidies. The National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2015-2020) includes the objectives of increased representation of women in media content and less stereotypical representations. However, coordination between State institutions responsible for media and gender equality is generally weak. The EIGE report (2013) found that women comprised over one third of senior positions in the media industry although these were generally operational not strategic positions. Women were the subject of over one third of television programmes. Another recent study in September 2018 found that the average share of women's representation in TV news, current affairs programmes and in commentary articles in print was 27%. However, during the recent elections in all main media, women were mentioned in only 17% of almost 2000 reports. Academic research led by the Peace Institute concluded that gender roles continued to be stereotyped. The Ombudsperson of RTV Slovenia has acted on complaints on the under-representation of women experts in news programmes, and the use of gender-insensitive language and online hate speech and abuse. The Association of Journalists and SOS Help-line for Women and Children Victims of Violence have jointly developed guidelines for journalists on how to report on gender-based violence and carried out training workshops. The government is planning to reform media regulations, so it may be possible to introduce new measures to promote gender equality, in particular as part of the criteria for state subsidies.

In **Spain**, gender equality is a key priority of the current government and 11 out of 16 Ministers are women. While women are the majority of journalism graduates, women suffer from higher levels of unemployment and are less likely to have a permanent contract. Women make up only 25% of senior staff, although the figure is slightly higher in state-owned media. According to the GMMP report (2015), while women make up 45% of all journalists on camera in TV programmes, well above the EU average of 36%, the participation of women politicians in news programmes is low at 27%. Women make up only 9% of experts, and the proportion of women as subjects of news items is also very low, with women over 50 years of age vastly under-represented. The Spanish Constitutional Act (2007) requires the media industry to implement gender equality plans. RTVE, the public radio and TV broadcaster, is required to promote the principle of equality and non-stereotypical images of women and men. However, follow-up has been weak until March 2018, when the RTVE established an Equality Observatory to eradicate discrimination and violence against women and children in media content and to tackle inequality or

sexual discrimination in employment. The General Audio-visual Law (2010) has provisions on eradicating behaviour that promotes situations of inequality and there are specific provisions making it illegal to use degrading or discriminatory images of women in advertising in the Organic Act (2004) and the General Advertising Law (1988). The Equal Opportunities Strategic Plan (2018-21) has a specific objective to combat sexism and gender stereotypes in the media and advertising on the Internet. The Women's Image Observatory monitors media images and has an effective complaints mechanism in place. It has been very active issuing notifications and in 2017, referred 15 cases to other competent bodies including to the Attorney General's Office. In 2018, there was a strike of women journalists to protest about unequal employment conditions and sexual harassment and gender bias in media content. There are also a growing number of feminist academics and media professional associations promoting gender equality initiatives in the media.

In **Sweden**, the Gender Equality Agency was established in 2018 with the overall goal of ensuring that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. There is a long tradition of self-regulation of the media guarded strenuously by politicians and industry alike. In 2014, the Ministry of Culture assigned the Swedish public broadcasting service gender and diversity goals in content production that has resulted in improved monitoring. With leadership and regular monitoring, some newsrooms have achieved gender balance, such as Swedish Television Umeå. The three public service broadcasting services now all have women CEOs. However, the senior management of the largest media corporations is still male dominated. Recognising the lack of comparable sex-disaggregated data, the Swedish Research Council has created an international media research project and an open-access database will be launched in 2019. The Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (EURO-AGEMI)⁸ is another important initiative, bringing the media industry and academics together. The real forerunner has been the Swedish Film Institute with a gender equality perspective permeating all its work from production funding to recruitment, and a goal of 50/50 by 2020. In 2009, an ombudsperson's position was established to oversee the advertising industry to monitor sexist and stereotypical advertising. A number of civil society groups are active, including the Swedish women's lobby which campaigns for legislation against sexist advertising. In 2018, the city of Stockholm banned sexist advertising in public places. Another important initiative is the online biographical dictionary of Swedish women. Since 2015, some media organisations have used algorithms to monitor gender in their online content. The largest Swedish newspaper developed a gender bot in 2018 that delivers individual statistics every month to the journalists on the number of women they interviewed. Since 2017, the *#metoo* movement has also been a catalyst for change, naming perpetrators and exposing more subtle forms of sexism and racism in newsrooms.

3. Key issues discussed during the seminar

During the discussion, there was a rich exchange of ideas about strategies to fight the under-representation and misrepresentation of women in the media. It was recognised that a ***strong legal framework on gender equality*** was important to address discrimination in employment, in particular the gender pay gap, vertical and horizontal segregation and the growing incidence of precarious work that has contributed to the feminisation of the media profession. ***Legislation and State regulation of the media*** was viewed as an option in some national circumstances,

⁸ <https://www.agemi-eu.org/>

whereas in other countries, it could be viewed as a threat to press freedoms and would not be an easily acceptable strategy. It was agreed that the architecture of media regulation depends on the evolution and history of each country and there are considerable variations. Some participants considered that broader political support might be achieved if regulation was introduced linked to gender equality goals related to women's power and influence. In most countries, there is self-regulation of the media with varying levels of attention to gender equality, gender stereotyping and sexism and authority to impose sanctions. It was noted that mechanisms for the regulation or self-regulation of social media presented a particularly acute challenge. However, there was a strong consensus that in the French context, legislation had proved an effective vehicle for change and was a reflection of the strong political commitment across the government to the promotion of gender equality.

Monitoring and data collection were viewed as key instruments to create awareness of the need to address gender stereotyping and the discriminatory portrayal of women, including among media professionals who are often unaware of gender bias in their own work. However, despite government commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action, in some countries there was insufficient follow-up and monitoring. There was a detailed discussion on the scope of any monitoring. Apart from indicators on women's participation in the workforce and representation in news programmes, it was noted that monitoring could also include fictional audio-visual content and advertising. Many observed that there was a need to strengthen the quality of data and to ensure, insofar as consistent methodologies are available, comparable over time and across countries. There was also a discussion about the relative merits of systems whereby self-regulating media councils were responsible for the monitoring or whether it should be a combination of internal monitoring and additional external academic research. Algorithms and bots could well improve the scope and effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms in the future. While recognising certain limitations in terms of the quality of the data, nonetheless, the GMMP, which has been in operation since 1995, is the only comparative content analysis in existence. In some countries, it represents one of the few sources of data available and has been a valuable tool for building awareness of discrimination and sexism in the media industry and programme content and for naming and shaming worst offenders.

Gender-budgeting was another strategy, whereby State entities are required to adopt a gender equality goal, with financial indicators and benchmarks. However, these tools are not generally applied to the media sector. One area where participants noted good practice concerned public broadcasting services which have set goals for women's employment or State film institutes which have funding criteria conditional on the gender balance of the film director's team or technical staff. Another area of debate was the extent to which it is beneficial to link licensing and public funding of radio and TV channels to gender equality criteria. Public contracts are conditional on certain social and labour standards, including in some countries gender equality employment plans, so it could be possible to extend these criteria to licensing radio and TV channels. In one country, regional and local radio stations that bid for public funding are required to respect gender equality, but the criteria are not very detailed, and the issue is not given much weight in the points system for the bid. Elsewhere, media companies that receive public funding are required to monitor their programme content, but the reporting is not transparent. Some participants also questioned whether the government would have the capacity to monitor the extent to which media companies complied with any gender equality requirements linked to licensing.

Another focus of discussion was the effectiveness of **complaints mechanisms** submitted to State or media industry appointed watchdogs or regulators, to ombudspersons, advertising councils or other equality observatories. In some cases, it appeared that the ombudspersons were increasing the scope of their powers but in other countries, there was concern that many watchdog mechanisms lacked effective sanctions. These mechanisms were often dependent on the extent to which there were active civil society groups committed to submitting complaints about images which are sexist or portray women in stereotypical ways. The promotion of charters of commitments on gender equality by advertising companies appeared a useful mechanism.

There was a general consensus that **fighting gender stereotypes and sexism in media content** required a multifaceted approach. In many countries, there were online directories of gender experts to assist journalists to increase the number of women commentators on current affairs programmes or other initiatives to provide networking opportunities for experts to meet journalists. Mentoring programmes for young women journalists or awards for journalism focusing on gender equality issues were also seen as important incentives. However, it was recognised that tackling gender stereotypes was not an easy task, particularly in advertising and fiction, and in areas such as children's cartoons and video games. Sexism is often reinforced in humorous content although it was noted that cultural attitudes are changing, and, in some contexts, humour is used to challenge gender stereotypes and there are now successful feminist cartoonists.

The treatment of **gender-based violence in the media** was raised by many participants, as it has moved to the forefront of the media as a result of the *#metoo* movement. Participants expressed interest in examples of specific legislation against gender-based violence whereby degrading images of women that can provoke gender-based violence are deemed a crime. Participants from some countries considered that the media treatment of domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment has become more gender aware, and more critical of judicial sentences that have exonerated perpetrators of crimes.

Education and training for media students and professionals on what constitutes a gender stereotype, forms of artificial beauty and unconscious biases, was considered a vital strategy. Education on gender equality and media literacy in schools from primary upwards was also viewed as essential to combatting gender stereotypes. Some countries had already revised school curricula to address gender stereotypes but in other countries school texts strongly reinforced women's traditional roles. It was also agreed that schools needed to provide media information literacy courses to help students identify fake news and challenge media for lacking credibility if they do not include women; it was also noted that sexism and sexist abuse, particularly on social media was a particular challenge.

There was also consensus that **academic institutions and civil society organisations**, including feminist NGOs, play a vital role in exposing gender stereotyping, sexism and abuse and in generally promoting cultural change. Their role ranges from developing online lists of women experts, setting up observatories on women in the media that regularly submit complaints to the ombudspersons and other alert mechanisms and providing training on gender equality to media professionals. Many civil society organisations are also active on social media to denounce and combat sexism.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The seminar participants concluded that political will and transversal action from the highest government levels was a fundamental ingredient of the successful practices in France; and that a multifaceted strategy including both top down and bottom up approaches was required in order to achieve gender equality goals, taking into account gender representation on audiovisual councils and media company boards; equal employment opportunities, the gender pay gap and precarious work in the media industry; and monitoring media content to address gender stereotyping, sexism, sexist abuse and gender-based violence.⁹

Recommendations by participants included:

- Taking into account the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the EPRA report, as well as national circumstances, to consider whether to develop new legislation or strengthen existing self-regulation of the broadcasting and print media and to extend the monitoring role, scope and powers of broadcasting and press councils with regard to gender equality in the media industry.
- To encourage governments to review their gender equality plans and gender budgeting commitments to strengthen or develop new sections on gender equality goals in the media industry;
- To extend the number of countries participating in the GMMP project and build the capacity of the GMMP country groups through developing comparative and consistent benchmarks and indicators; as well as explore government and multilateral funding options for the project.
- To develop gender-awareness training programmes for media students and professionals, including managers; mentorship programmes or awards to promote good journalism on gender equality issues; provide specific training on issues such as how to understand and report on gender-based violence; and produce practitioners' guidance, handbooks, fact sheets or other materials on gender equality goals in the media industry.
- To promote education on gender equality and media literacy in schools in order to increase gender awareness, and to promote cultural change; as well as to revise school curriculum to eliminate gender stereotyping in textbooks.
- Building on the networks developed at the mutual learning seminar, to develop a collaborative information-sharing network, also with a view to organising bilateral good practice exchanges, possibly in cooperation with the Association of European Journalists;
- To include new indicators on women and the media in future Europe-wide research, such as EIGE's Beijing +25 report and to consider ways in which these indicators could be connected with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

⁹ Hereafter referred to as 'gender equality goals in the media industry'.

- To carry out advocacy with the following Europe-wide institutions to encourage them to develop or strengthen their focus on gender equality in the media:
 - The European Audiovisual Observatory¹⁰ of the Council of Europe, which is a public service organisation mandated to collect and process information and statistics on the audiovisual sector;
 - The European Commission, in particular with regard to the adoption of the Commission's new policy framework document on gender equality¹¹ so that gender equality goals in the media industry are clearly reflected in the priority actions of the new Commission.
 - The European Platform of Audiovisual Regulatory Authorities¹², an independent body, so that it can follow up on its 2018 survey on gender representation in the media and give consideration to taking up broader responsibilities for Europe-wide monitoring of women in the media.

¹⁰ <https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/>

¹¹ Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/strategic_engagement_for_gender_equality_en.pdf.

¹² <https://www.epra.org/>