

Policy Context

Women's persistent under-representation in political and economic decision-making is a current and important challenge for the EU and its Member States. The Gender Equality Index, developed by EIGE in 2013, measures existing gaps in achieving full gender equality in six domains, one of which concerns 'power'. This domain assesses the gap between women's and men's representation in political, social and economic decision-making. Based on available data, this domain showed the lowest gender equality score with 38 points out of 100 for the EU, emphasising that women's under-representation in power and decision-making continues to be a pressing issue.

European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-15)

- Defines the promotion of women in decision-making as one of six priority areas.
- Aims to promote equality in decision-making in general and on company boards.

Commission Proposal for a Directive on gender-balance in economic decision-making (2012)

- Sets 40 % as an objective for the under-represented sex among non-executive directors in publicly listed companies by 2020.
- Requires companies with a lower share of the under-represented sex to base candidate selection on a comparative analysis, using gender-neutral and unambiguous criteria and to prioritise the under-represented sex when qualifications are equal.
- Obligates publicly listed companies to define their own targets for executive directors.
- Enhances fairness and transparency in board selection processes by pushing companies to consider a broader base of candidates.

Civil Society Engagement (2014)

- EWL's campaigns on '50/50' and 'Parity Democracy and Active European Citizenship: No Modern Europe - a Democracy without Gender Equality'.
- Promoted equal representation of women and men in all European institutions, to help put women's rights and gender equality high on the EU political agenda.
- Addressed gender imbalance in the selection and participation of candidates for the European Parliament.

The strategic objectives of the BPfA and the EU indicators

- G1.** Take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making.
- G2.** Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Area G has been reviewed twice, by the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 1999, and by the Italian Presidency in 2003. A set of 18 indicators, measuring the ratio of women and men in key positions/ organisations and assessing policies promoting a greater gender balance during elections, was developed. These indicators have been crucial in assessing Area J, Women and the Media and Area K, Women and the Environment.

The database, Women and men in the EU - facts and figures, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality provides the latest data and information on these indicators, available at:

<http://eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-men-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>

Findings from EU-wide data

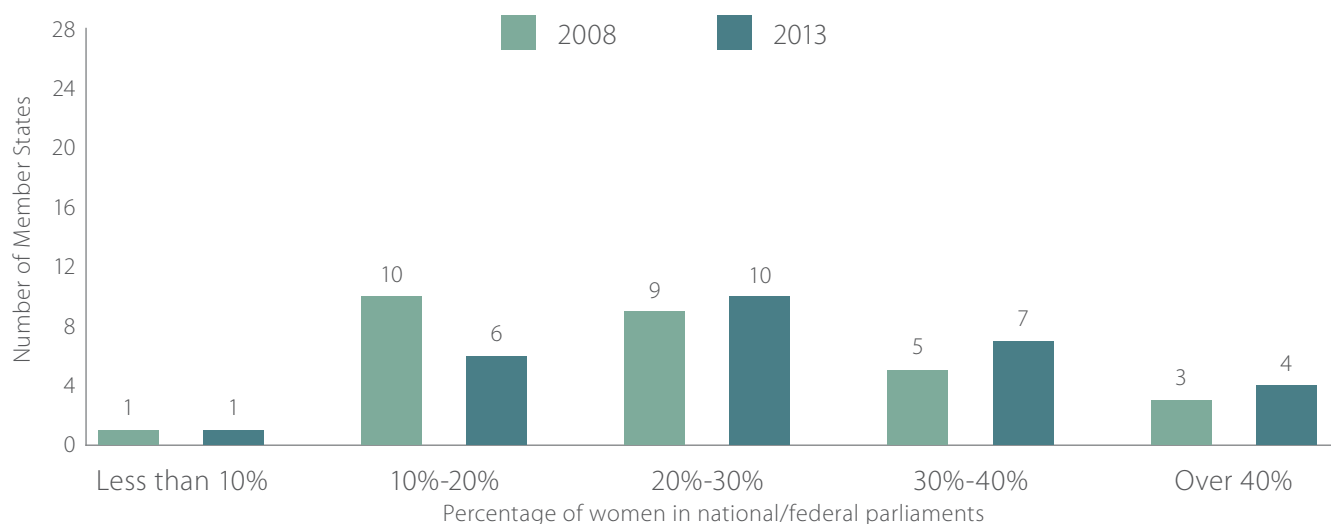
Slow advancement of women's participation in national or federal decision-making assemblies

While slight increases in women's access to national/federal parliaments are visible, they are slow (increase of 3 p.p. to 27 % for single/lower houses between 2008 and 2013). On average, women occupy only a third of political decision-making positions in the EU-28, holding less than 30 % of the seats in federal/national parliaments in half of the Member States. In the Member States with regional parliaments, in 2013, the overall representation of women reached 32 %.

In local assemblies (councils and municipalities) in 2013, overall there were 32 % women represented in the EU. The highest percentage was noticed in Sweden (43 %), followed by seven other Member States where women reached more than 30 % representation.



NUMBER OF EU MEMBER STATES BY THE LEVEL OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN NATIONAL/FEDERAL PARLIAMENTS, 2008 AND 2013



Source: European Commission, Database Women and men in decision-making

Increased participation of women in decision-making in the European institutions

Women's representation in the European Parliament (EP) has slowly, but steadily increased in the last 35 years (from 16 % in 1979 to 37 % in 2014). They remain under-represented though as Members and Vice-Presidents of the EP (3 out of 14).

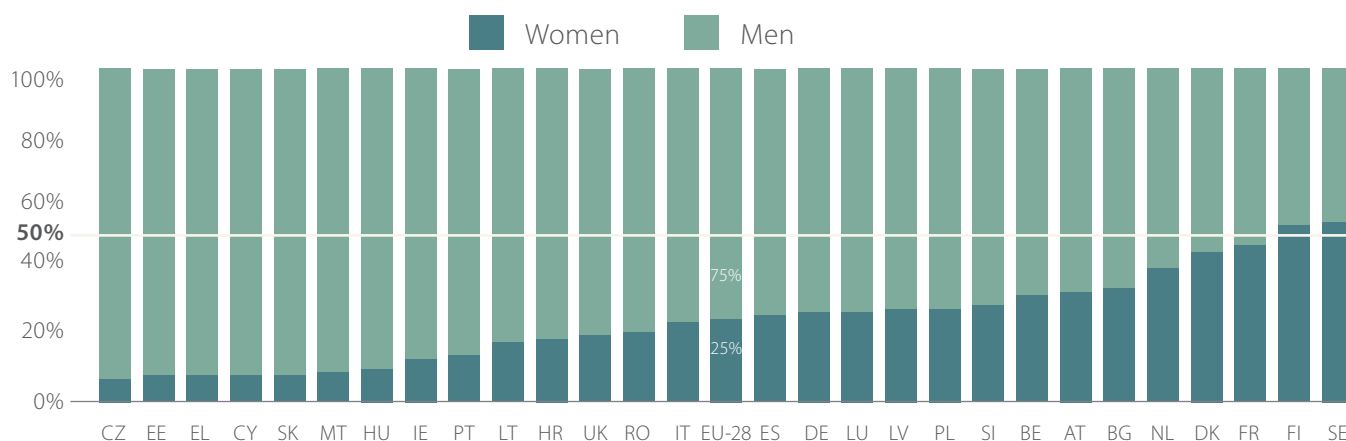
Women hold 33 % of level 1 and 39 % of level 2 administrative positions and constituted 32 % of Commissioners in 2013, while the European Central Bank has not had a woman governor since 2010. The European Court of Justice has seen a slight increase in women judges since 2008 (11 % to 15 %), contrasted by the European Court of First Instance, with a decrease from 44 % to 22 %.

Men are over-represented in the majority of national governments

Women only make up one quarter of senior and junior ministerial positions in the EU; only in two Member States do they hold 50 % of all ministerial positions and 40 % in three others.

Between 2008 and 2013 the proportion of women holding specific ministerial portfolios has changed. In 2013, women held less basic (20 % to 18 %) and socio-cultural functions (40 % to 38 %) and more economic (17 % to 24 %) and infrastructural (24 % to 25 %) ministerial positions.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, BY MEMBER STATE, 2013



Source: European Commission, Database: Women and men in decision-making

Legislative and self-regulatory measures can speed up gender balance in political decision-making

Electoral gender quotas can increase women's representation. In 2013, legislative quotas adopted by the government were employed in seven Member States, and 13 had voluntary quotas in place. Most recently, Ireland and Italian regions introduced legislative quotas.

Significant increase of women in high-ranking positions in national public administrations

Overall in 2013, women represented more than one third of all civil servants with level 2 functions (39 %), compared to 34 % in 2008. Women are less represented on level 1 of the administration with 30 % (28 % in 2008). The largest increases occurred in the socio-cultural functions; with an increase from 35 % to 41 % at level 1 and from 42 % to 49 % at level 2.



Slow advancement of women's access to positions as Supreme Courts' judges

Women remain under-represented among Supreme Court judges, with only a slight increase by 3 p.p. since 2008 to 35 %. While women make up half of the judges in six Member States, they account for less than 9 % in two.

Little advancement in women's presence in economic decision-making and on boards of publicly listed companies

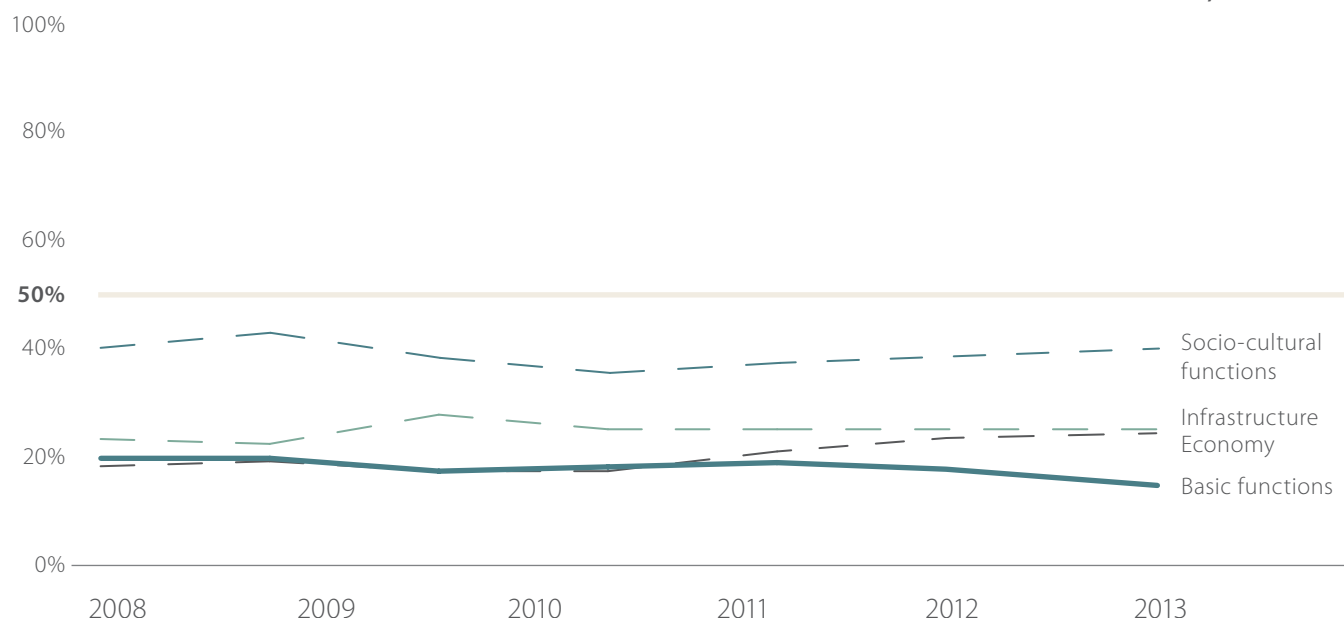
Women's access to economic decision-making is increasing at a slow pace. In 2013, one in five members of National Central Banks' decision-making bodies was held by a woman in the EU, whereas boards in five Member States were entirely male-dominated. Among the chief executives (CEO) on the executive boards of the largest publicly listed companies, none were women in 13 Member

States, compared to 15 Member States in 2008. While women's representation among executive and non-executive board members in the largest publically listed companies in the EU is slightly higher, they are under-represented with 12 % and 19 % of positions respectively.

Social partners at EU level active in promoting women to top positions

The number of female Presidents of Labour Confederations has not increased significantly since 2008 and women's representation on their respective boards stays low. Women's representation among Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Employer Confederations has improved. Out of the sixty presidents of EU Employer Organisations eight are women, in contrast to one in 2008, and women make up 17 % of the total governing bodies in contrast to 9 % in 2008.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MINISTERS BY FUNCTIONS IN MINISTRIES IN THE EU-28, 2008-13



Source: European Commission, Database: Women and Men in decision-making

Useful initiatives

Support for the **EU's initiative on legislative quotas** for company boards, was expressed by several Member States (DK, IE, IT, AT, PL, PT). Denmark, for instance, has issued a recommendation for concrete targets for Boards of Directors. Other countries, such as Austria, Belgium and Germany have recently passed or will soon pass legislation for gender quotas for specific companies. In Italy, an awareness-raising campaign, Gender quota. A more balanced country has a better future, was launched to support the 2011 legislation on women's participation in boards and a law was introduced (Law No 120/2011) which aims to increase the proportion of women on boards of public companies. In Poland, all supervisory bodies selected by the Minister of State Treasury are expected to reach 30 % of women by 2015. In Portugal, since the 2012 Resolution of the Council of Ministers, private companies were expected to implement equality plans. Since 2013, the new law states that each administrative and supervisory body of State-owned enterprises must have the presence of both women and men amongst their members. In Spain, 31 companies have signed collaboration agreements with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, including the target of reaching within a four-year period, a 20 % presence of women in top management positions and steering committees or to increase their presence by 5 p.p. The *Promociona* project, carried out with business organisations, involves companies in the selection and promotion of women's talent among their staff and encourages specific training, creation of networks and coaching.



ADVANCEMENTS AND OBSTACLES IN AREA G: WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

ADVANCEMENTS

- Importance of women's access to decision-making has gained visibility.
- Women's participation has increased slightly.
- The introduction of parity laws/legislative quotas reinforces the commitment of Member States to greater gender equality.
- EU-level initiatives, such as the proposed directive for a 40 % quota for women in non-executive board positions seek to improve gender balance.
- Social partners play a role in improving women's access to decision-making bodies.
- The proportion of women among the highest civil servants and Supreme Court judges has slightly increased.

OBSTACLES

- Women occupy less than a third of EU political decision-making positions and even less at the highest levels.
- The proportion of women in national governments has increased only to a limited extent.
- Public/private economic and financial institutions are still almost entirely male-dominated.
- No significant increase in the proportion of women in the governing bodies of the European labour organisations.
- Women are over-represented in middle to high levels of public administration and in sectors linked to women's traditional roles.

The way forward for the EU

- Design and implement effective policy measures (and legislation where appropriate) to break the 'glass ceiling' in major economic structures, especially those with public profiles.
- Consider and potentially implement effective strategies and tools (e.g. gender quotas) to achieve gender balance in elected and nominated posts in major political structures.
- Address and tackle the gender norms, attitudes and stereotypes hindering women's equal representation in decision-making positions in the political, economic and social domains.
- Encourage social partners and relevant stakeholders to cooperate in actively promoting the equal access of women to decision-making bodies.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policy-makers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

More information: <http://eige.europa.eu>

The Resource and Documentation Centre (RDC) of the European Institute for Gender Equality is an innovative and practical tool developed to assist in locating key resources on gender equality, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among those with an interest in gender equality policies and practices and to offer an online space for discussion and debate.

More information: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/rdc>



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