

POLICY REVIEW IN EU MEMBER STATES

There are many policies on gender balance in decision-making at the European level. However, reference to the media in these policies is limited. Policies that do refer to the media are focused on gender stereotypes and women's portrayal in the media, and neglect gender equality within the media industry and women's access to the production of media products.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), which took place in Beijing, issued a Platform for Action that clearly addresses and separates in the chapter regarding Media (J) the critical areas for gender mainstreaming, indicating two separate but complementary objectives:

- J1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
- J2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

In 1995, the European Union adopted such objectives and has since monitored every 5 years how they have been implemented in its Member States. These periodical evaluations have shown that the J1. Beijing Objective relating to women as decision-makers in the media has been neglected. As a result, in September 2010 the Commission's 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15' stated the aim to 'promote full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action'. The present national level policy review of EU-27 + Croatia is situated in this framework.

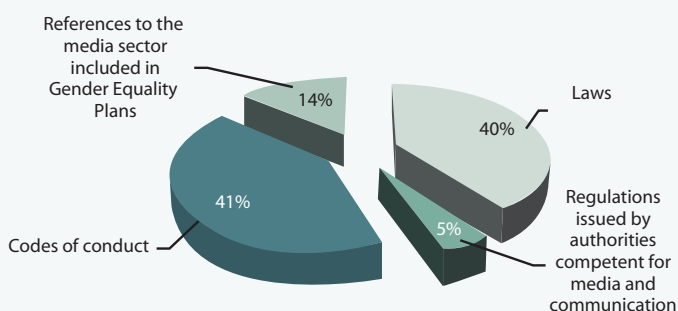


Figure 1. Policies on gender balance in decision-making by type.

Sixty-five policies were collected throughout Europe. It was then evaluated which policies impacting the media sector foster women's access to expression and decision-making in and through the media by complying with the following parameters:

- being gender specific;
- addressing the media sector.

In addition, it was considered whether:

- the presence of an authority that is responsible for the monitoring and application of the regulatory act is foreseen;
- any form of sanction is foreseen by the policy against those who violate its provisions or do not conform to them.

A final set of policies was identified and is here illustrated.

National anti-discrimination and labour laws addressing the media sector

At a national level, equality in the media industry is mainly regulated by general anti-discrimination and equality laws. This legislation prohibits discrimination and allows for positive action on the grounds of gender. However, it makes no specific provisions in relation to media organisations. Three national laws throughout Europe specifically address the media sector and contain references to gender equality:

- **'Loi du 5 mars 2009 relative à la communication audiovisuelle et au nouveau service public de la télévision'** (Law of 5 March 2009 on audiovisual communication and the new television public service), France.
- **'ZDF-Staatsvertrag vom 31 August 1991, in der Fassung des Fünfzehnten Staatsvertrages zur Änderung rundfunkrechtlicher Staatsverträge (Fünfzehnter Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag) in Kraft seit 1. Januar 2013'** (ZDF-Treaty of 31 August 1991, in the version of the Fifteenth State Treaty amending broadcasting law treaties — Fifteenth Broadcasting Treaty Amendment — in force since 1 January 2013), Germany.
- **'Note di indirizzo della RAI della Commissione parlamentare per l'indirizzo generale e la vigilanza dei servizi radiotelevisivi, 30.7.1997'** (Document of the Parliamentary committee for the general direction and supervision of broadcasting, 30 July 1997), Italy.

Regulations issued by authorities competent for media and communication

- In the case of regulations issued by authorities competent for media and communication there is just one case meeting the J1. Objective and it is a very comprehensive policy regarding the role of women in broadcasting '**Guidelines on Gender Equality and Gender Portrayal in the Broadcasting Media, issued in 2007 by the Malta Broadcasting Authority.**

Self-regulation policies

Within self-regulation policies, only those that were at the same time media and gender specific were selected. As a result, six pertinent cases were found: one of them being a 'general' code of conduct and the remaining five codes of self-regulation for public broadcasting.

- **The 'general' policy is the 2011 Act of Commitment for a Process of Self-Regulation from France.** It is considered in this way because it talks about media in general, unlike most codes of conduct that focus on a specific sector. The act was signed by three main parties: the representatives of most key French media organisations, the Commission on the Image of Women in the Media, and the French government via the Secretary of State for Family and Solidarity, responsible for equality issues. The global objective is to deconstruct gender stereotypes portrayed in the media. The specific objective is to increase the proportion of women experts appearing in programmes/articles.

The other five cases of self-regulation codes found in the analysis are:

- **Code of Czech Television (2003), Czech Republic;**
- **Diversity cell and charter at Belgium VRT (2003), Belgium;**
- **Gender Equality Policy Public Service Television SVT from Sweden (2008);**
- **Plan on gender equality for Austrian broadcasting company ORF (2012), Austria;**
- **Gender Equality Plan for the Finnish broadcasting company YLE (2012), Finland.**

All of these codes of conduct are issued by public broadcasting companies, which are committing in this way to promoting gender equality inside their organisations. The mechanisms they have implemented to reach this goal include: gender quotas for the hiring of the staff, provisions to ensure equal payment, and measures to promote employees' well-being and balance between work and personal life. Consequently, this set of policies are the most progressive and they could be considered good practices for the broadcasting sectors in the EU countries.

National Gender Equality Plan

- There are two National Gender Equality Plans which specifically address gender equality in the media field; these are the **National Equality Law in Spain (2007)** and the **National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Hungary (2010–21)**. These two regulatory acts deal specifically with aspects of work organisation within media companies that increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media.

Conclusions

In the European Union, women's participation and access to expression and decision-making in the media is mainly regulated at national level through a mix of legislation and self-regulation. In the majority of Member States, the media sector is implicitly disciplined by wider, general regulations, such as laws aimed at protecting against discrimination and/or at fostering gender equality, or labour laws.

One of the most relevant and widespread problems is the non-binding nature of the majority of policies. More precisely, there is a lack of criteria guaranteeing gender equality in access and participation of women to expression and decision-making in the media. Few acts and policies are, at the same time, legally binding, gender-specific, and specifically targeting issues of work organisation in the media sector.

Overall, the study found that public policy should openly address the promotion of women's participation and access to expression and decision-making in the media through the use of policies which have a specific focus both on gender equality and on the media sector, and which include forms of sanction for those who violate it or do not conform to them.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) commissioned a study to support progress towards Objective J1. of the Beijing Platform for Action. The aim of the study is to collect methods, tools and identify good practices in the field of women and the media, in EU Member States. The study was implemented in the period August 2012–May 2013.



ABOUT EIGE

The European Institute for Gender Equality is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers 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 information on gender equality in Europe.



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