

**Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the
advancement of gender equality**

Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform
for Action in the EU Member States

**Main
findings**



This publication was developed by the team of experts of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): Sara Aguirre, Dr Ioana Borza, Ilze Burkevica, Dr Anne Laure Humbert, Barbara Limanowska, Indrė Mackevičiūtė, Merle Paats and Dr Jolanta Reingardė. A particular thank you goes to other colleagues at EIGE for the editing, publishing and administrative support.

The data collection and initial analysis was part of a study commissioned by EIGE and carried out by a consortium of the Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History (Atria) and KARAT Coalition. The project was coordinated by Ilze Burkevica and Ioana Borza (EIGE) together with Lin McDevitt-Pugh (project manager) and Corine van Egten (senior researcher).

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014

ISBN 978-92-9218-363-9

doi:10.2839/18076

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Printed in Luxembourg

PRINTED ON ELEMENTAL CHLORINE-FREE BLEACHED PAPER (ECF)



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Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States

Main findings



The European Institute for Gender Equality is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all European Union policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, and to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. Further information can be found online (<http://eige.europa.eu>).



Foreword

Nearly 20 years ago, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing (1995) raised the global problem of gender inequality, which resulted in an international commitment by almost all United Nations (UN) member states to initiate a radical agenda for change. The European Union (EU) and its Member States committed themselves from the very beginning to deliver on the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). One of the major areas of concern of the BPfA, called ‘institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women’, is crucial for the advancement of gender equality in all other areas addressed by the platform for action.

This publication compares and presents the progress of Member States in the area of institutional mechanisms and gender mainstreaming since 2006, when the first report on institutional mechanisms was developed by the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The main findings show that by 2012, all Member States had established governmental bodies for gender equality and bodies for the promotion of equal treatment on various grounds. Notwithstanding positive trends in

institutional settings over the last decade, the bodies responsible for gender equality are often marginalised in national governmental structures; split into different policy areas; hampered by complex and expanding mandates; lacking adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources; and experience insufficient support from political leadership.

On behalf of the institute and its team, I would like to thank all institutions and experts who contributed to this study, and especially the Lithuanian government, the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice, the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, EIGE’s Working Group on Beijing Indicators and EIGE’s staff. We hope that the findings and recommendations of this study will give impetus for broader debates on the challenges facing institutional mechanisms and gender mainstreaming in the EU today and will contribute to making gender equality a reality in the European Union.

Virginija Langbakk,

Director

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)



Country abbreviations

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
EU-28	28 EU Member States

Abbreviations

BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil society organisation
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EC	European Commission
Ecosoc	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ENEGE	European Network of Experts on Gender Equality
EU	European Union
FEMM	The European Parliament's Committee of Women's Rights and Gender Equality
GAPGE	Governmental action plan for gender equality
GB	Gender budgeting
GIA	Gender impact assessment
GM	Gender mainstreaming
HLG	High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSAGI	UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women
QUING	Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies
RNGS	Research Network on Gender Politics and the State
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

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Introduction

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) promotes and protects the human rights of women and girls, reaffirming these rights as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights (1). Area H of the BPfA called 'Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women' defines three strategic objectives with the aim to support governments in their work of promoting and supporting gender equality.

H1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies

H2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects

H3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

In the context of the 10-year review of the BPfA, EU ministers responsible for gender equality adopted a common declaration reaffirming strong support for and commitment to the full implementation of the BPfA in the EU. That same year the European Council invited the Member States and the European Commission to strengthen institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and to create a framework for assessing its implementation. In 2006, the Finnish Presidency presented a report on the status of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the 25 EU Member States and proposed three indicators to monitor the implementation of the first two strategic objectives in this area (2):

1 the status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality;

2a personnel resources of the governmental gender equality body;

2b personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men;

3 gender mainstreaming.

Those indicators were again reviewed in the Beijing+15, the third EU-wide appraisal of the BPfA, carried out by the Swedish Presidency in 2009 (3). The report emphasised the need to enhance the status of the governmental gender equality bodies in order to bring gender equality to the forefront (4).

In its strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15, the Commission highlighted the need to take gender equality into account in all its policies and committed to implementing gender mainstreaming (GM) as an integral part of policymaking.

Building on this background, in 2013, the Lithuanian Presidency chose to review the development of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality in the Member States and propose a new indicator in this area. The indicator on production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex was introduced in the Council conclusions adopted on 9 December 2013 (5).

The current publication summarises the main findings of EIGE's report on *Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States* (6). It presents an overview of the progress by using the indicators proposed by the Finnish Presidency and introduces a new

indicator on gender statistics. The analysis is based on the data provided by the governmental representatives to the self-reporting survey in 2012, which are compared to the results of a survey carried out by the Finnish government in 2005. The survey data are complemented by semi-structured interviews, carried out with women's NGOs in all Member States in 2012.

The publication also provides a more elaborate presentation of two gender mainstreaming tools — gender impact assessment and competence development for gender mainstreaming — deriving from EIGE's studies on the institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in the EU (2013) and gender training in the EU (2012–13).



Definitions of core concepts

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the EU. It aims to ensure **equal opportunities** and equal treatment for women and men and to combat any form of **discrimination on the grounds of sex** ⁽⁷⁾. The EU has adopted a two-pronged approach to gender equality, combining positive action in support of the under-represented sex (so-called specific measures) with gender mainstreaming, understood as the mobilisation of all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving gender equality ⁽⁸⁾. EU Member States have taken the commitment to promote gender equality and mainstream gender in various policy areas.

The BPfA refers to institutional mechanisms as a national structure for the advancement of women, defined as a central policy-coordinating unit inside the government whose main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas. EIGE's report adopts the approach of the EU institutions and policies, and uses the term 'institutional mechanisms for gender equality' as the currently existing governmental bodies have a broader mandate that goes beyond 'the advancement of women' and extends to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in other policy areas. Moreover, besides the governmental gender equality bodies in the Member States, the analysis of institutional mechanisms also includes the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men in the EU Member States.

Directive 2002/73/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women establishes that 'Member States shall designate and make the necessary arrangements for a body or bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of sex' ⁽⁹⁾. Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) ⁽¹⁰⁾ provides recommendations for the mandates and provisions of the body for the promotion of equal treatment between women and men as regards:

- location of the body: these bodies may form part of agencies with responsibility at national level for the defence of human rights or the safeguard of individuals' rights';
- external support to their activities: 'at the appropriate level exchanging available information with corresponding European bodies such as any future European Institute for Gender Equality' ⁽¹¹⁾.

In 2009, the Council of the European Union ⁽¹²⁾ acknowledged the following conditions as necessary for an effective functioning of institutional mechanisms for gender equality:

- clearly defined mandates and powers to develop and implement gender equality policies at the highest possible level in the government, falling under the responsibility of a cabinet minister;
- institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralised planning, implementation

and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organisations and community organisations from the grassroots upwards;

- sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity;
- the opportunity to influence the development of all government policies.

Among the external factors which might impact the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for advancement of gender equality are: the degree to which women's organisations are involved in policy development and evaluation; the extent to which international agreements and legislation from both the UN and the EU have an influence within the countries; the general economic and political climate in the country; the decentralisation of the gender equality mandate to regional and local governmental institutions; the tendency to merge gender equality issues with other forms of inequalities; and the shift from a political and administrative to a legalistic approach to gender equality. EIGE's studies, focused on some of these aspects and their findings, are presented below.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming was established as one of the key elements for gender equality in the BPfA. It states that '[i]n addressing the issue of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.'⁽¹³⁾

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) formalised the gender mainstreaming concept at the EU level by explicitly emphasising the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality

between women and men among the tasks and objectives of the Community (Articles 2 and 3).

Since 1996, the European Commission has emphasised that the concept of gender mainstreaming 'involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose to achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them'⁽¹⁴⁾. The documents of the European Commission and of the European Parliament acknowledge that gender mainstreaming should not be regarded as a replacement for direct equal opportunities policy but an addition to it. This has been developed into and presented as what currently is known as the dual approach to gender equality, which is based on gender mainstreaming, i.e. the promotion of gender equality in all policy areas and activities, and on specific measures⁽¹⁵⁾.

The BPfA identified several conditions for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, namely, political commitment; appropriate interministerial coordination structure; involvement of civil society; gender awareness training and advisory services for governmental bodies; legal reform in different areas; sufficient budget resources and professional capacity; and application of gender mainstreaming tools.

EIGE's report on *Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States*⁽¹⁶⁾ elaborates on the following methods and tools of gender mainstreaming developed by the EU Member States.



- **Gender impact assessment** (GIA) can be defined as ‘an ex ante evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law or programme that makes it possible to identify in a preventive way the likelihood of a given decision, law or programme to have negative consequences for the state of equality between women and men. GIA can include a cost–benefit analysis’ ⁽¹⁷⁾.
- **Gender equality training and competence development includes** any educational tool that supports policymakers and implementers to be more aware of gender equality issues, build their gender competence and enable them to integrate gender considerations across the policies and programmes for which they are responsible ⁽¹⁸⁾.
- **Gender budgeting** generally refers to an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means ‘a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.’ ⁽¹⁹⁾
- **Evaluation** is a part of the programme cycle approach. It contributes to evidence-based policymaking and helps to inform European citizens about public money spending. It has thus a double purpose of accountability and learning.

Statistics disaggregated by sex

In line with the strategic objectives of the BPfA, the Council of the European Union (2009) ⁽²⁰⁾ calls on the Member States and the Commission ‘to support national and EU statistical offices and encourage cooperation and efficiency, also using the capacity of the European Institute for Gender Equality, with a view to further improving the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination of timely, reliable and comparable data disaggregated by sex and age, thereby shedding light on problems and issues related to women and men and the promotion of gender equality; and with this goal in mind to take steps to ensure that statistics, data and information on the relevant indicators relating to the Beijing Platform for Action are made readily available and regularly updated’.

Gender statistics are important for at least three reasons. Firstly, they raise public awareness on the plight and prevailing conditions of women and men. They provide policymakers with sufficient baseline information to institute favourable changes to existing policies affecting women and men differently. Finally, they provide an unbiased source of information to monitor the actual and real effects of government’s policies and programmes on the lives of women and men ⁽²¹⁾.

The existence of gender statistics and indicators as well as sex-disaggregated statistics is a fundamental condition for gender mainstreaming as they represent vital tools for the establishment, monitoring and follow-up of political goals and targets. This implies that statistics are needed during the whole process of policymaking, planning, implementation and evaluation of the work to reach gender equality.

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality: EU-wide indicators

Based on the collection of primary and secondary data ⁽²⁾, EIGE's report on *Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States* explores institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the EU Member States, inter alia, governmental gender equality bodies; independent

bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men in accordance with Directive 2002/73/EC; the existence of structures and use of methods and tools for gender mainstreaming; the involvement of civil society actors in gender equality policies; and governmental instruments to promote the production and dissemination of data and statistics disaggregated by sex.

Indicator 1: Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality

Indicator 1 is built to assess the first strategic objective of area H — to create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies — and a set of sub-objectives.

- The responsibility for promoting gender equality policies should be vested at the highest possible level of government, such as the level of a cabinet minister.
- The national machinery should be located at the highest possible level of government. It should have a clearly defined mandate, adequate resources, the ability to influence policy, to formulate and review legislation and to provide staff training.
- The government should establish procedures to allow the machinery to gather information on government-wide policy issues at an early stage and use it in the policy development and review process.
- The government should report on the progress on efforts taken, on a regular basis, to legislative bodies, and promote the active involvement of the broad and diverse range

of institutional actors in the public, private and voluntary sectors in the work for equality between women and men.

Indicator 1 is a sum variable with a maximum value of 10 which includes the following aspects:

- the highest levels of responsibility for promoting gender equality at the governmental level (0–2 points);
- the existence and permanence of a governmental gender equality body at national/federal level (0–2 points);
- the position of the governmental gender equality body within the governmental structure (0–2 points);
- the functions of the governmental gender equality body at national/federal level (0–2 points);
- the accountability of the government for the promotion of gender equality (the existence of a governmental action plan on gender equality (GAPGE) and reporting to the legislative bodies such as the parliament on the progress of gender equality) (0–2 points).



General overview

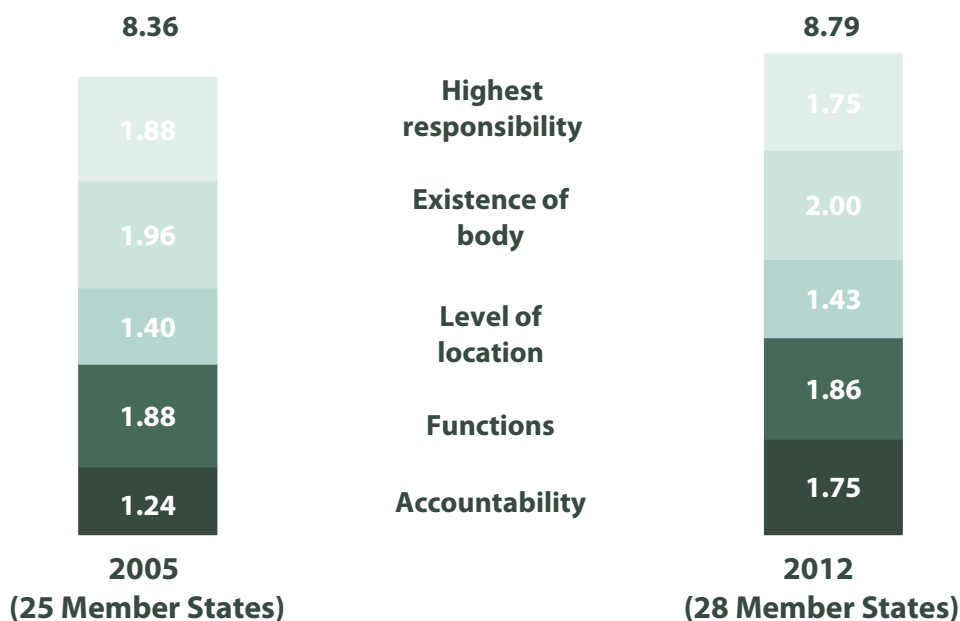
Overall, most Member States (BE, DE, EE, ES, IT, CY, LT, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, SI, SK, FI, UK) had made progress in the status of governmental responsibility in 2012 compared with 2005. Eight Member States (ES, IT, CY, LT, LU, AT, SE, UK) had reached the highest score of 10 points. In two Member States (DK, IE), a minor setback in the institutional structures can be seen, while in seven countries the indicator score remained at the level of 2005 (CZ, EL, FR, LV, LU, PT, SE). Comparisons for BG, HR and RO were not made as these countries were not included in the Finnish Presidency report in 2006.

Most of the progress is a result of improved accountability for gender equality policies, manifested by the increased number of Member

States which adopted national action plans for gender equality and established regular reporting on gender equality to the legislative bodies. However, the survey results do not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation of those action plans.

At the same time, the percentage of Member States which were in compliance with the BPfA objective of placing the responsibility for promoting gender equality at the highest possible level in the government declined from 88 % in 2005 to 79 % in 2012 ⁽²³⁾.

Figure 1: Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality (Indicator 1, maximum 10 points), 2005 and 2012



NB: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Source: Data collected during the 2006 Finnish Presidency and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

Location of the governmental gender equality bodies

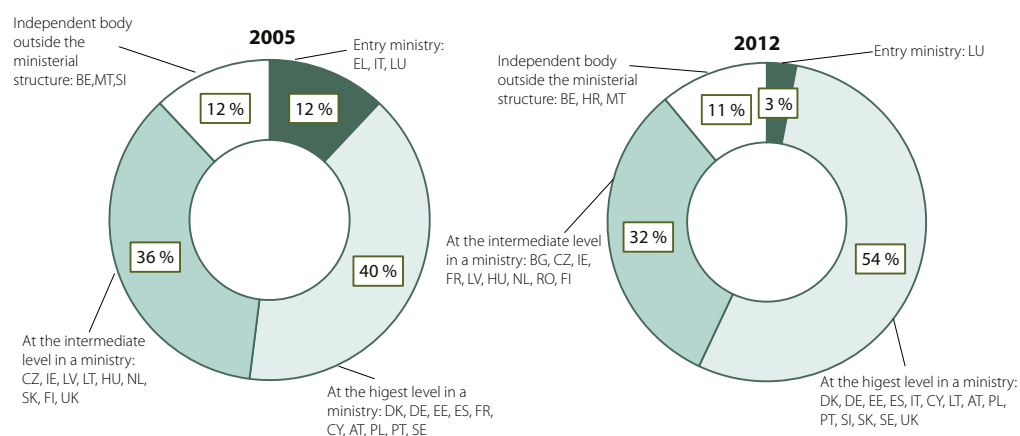
In 2012, all Member States had a permanent governmental gender equality body with a broad mandate to implement gender mainstreaming, draft laws and review policies. There has been a small increase (from 52 to 57 % between 2005 and 2012) in the percentage of Member States that had an entire ministry as the governmental gender equality body or body located at the highest level within the ministry. This led to a small drop in

Member States that placed the governmental gender equality body at the intermediate level from 36 to 32 % (Figure 2).

Functions of the governmental gender equality bodies

The analysis took into consideration the following functions of the governmental gender equality body: policy formulation; law drafting or initiation and legislation review; promotion of the implementation of government decisions;

Figure 2: Location of the governmental gender equality body by ministerial level, 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States)



NB: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Data are presented in percentages in order to make the comparison possible between 2005 and 2012 where the number of Member States was different.

Source: Data collected during the 2006 Finnish Presidency and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

coordination and/or development of gender mainstreaming processes and methodologies; policy analysis, monitoring and assessment of reforms; research and development; EU and international affairs; and information, publishing and training. Since 2005 a slight increase has been observed in the scope and number of tasks dealt with by the governmental gender equality bodies. The coordination and/or development of gender mainstreaming processes and methodologies was performed in

all Member States; in some Member States, the mandates of the governmental gender equality bodies were expanded to include policy analysis, monitoring and assessment of reforms; law drafting (initiating law) and/or reviewing legislation; policy formulation for the government; information, publishing and training; research and development; and promotion of the implementation of government decisions.



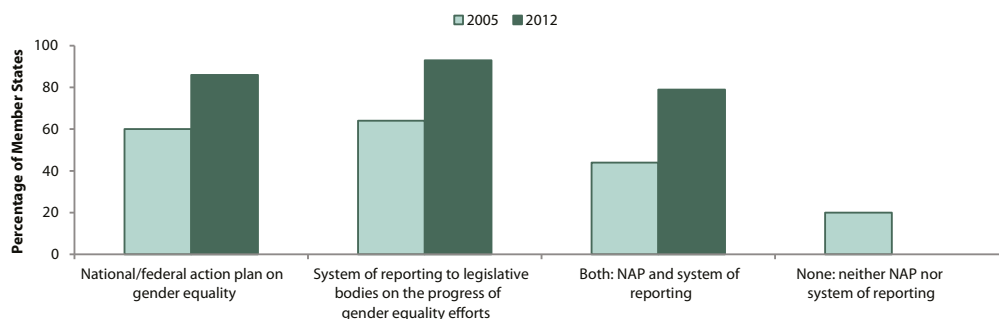
Gender equality action plans and the system of reporting to legislative bodies

In 2005, only 15 Member States had national action plans for gender equality. In 2012, this number increased to 23 from 60 to 86 %. There was also an increase in accountability of the government for the promotion of gender equality, measured by the existence of the regular system of reporting to legislative bodies — from 64 % in 2005 to 93 % in 2012. By 2012, more than two thirds of Member States (79 %) reported the existence of both

— national action plan and system of reporting — compared to 44 % in 2005 (Figure 3).

However, the existence of a national action plan is not a sufficient measure of progress. It remains important to assess the quality and outcomes of its implementation. There is ample evidence showing that, due to various reasons, the implementation of national plans in some countries faces serious setbacks ⁽²⁴⁾.

Figure 3: Percentage of Member States that had a GAPGE and a system of reporting, 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States)



NB: Data are not available for BG, HR, MT and RO: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Source: Data collected during the 2006 Finnish Presidency and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

Involvement of civil society

In 2012, almost all Member States reported the involvement of civil society, including women’s NGOs, social partners and other civil society organisations, in promoting gender equality at national/federal level, in most of the cases with the dissemination of information and awareness-raising.

The impact of the involvement of women’s NGOs in policy development, as indicated by their leaders, varied greatly among Member States, depending on funding availability for NGOs and the level of commitment of the government to

institutionalise the regular involvement of women’s NGOs. However, the majority of them think that civil society involvement in and consultation by the government on gender equality policies is limited, ad hoc or even non-existent. EIGE’s study on institutional capacity and effective methods, tools and good practices for mainstreaming gender equality (2013) shows that whereas stakeholder participation in the gender equality/gender mainstreaming policies has been integrated or institutionalised in a majority of Member States, it still fails to be fully embedded at every stage of the policy cycle in 12 Member States, where it rarely or only occasionally informs policymaking.

Indicator 2a: Personnel resources of the governmental gender equality body

A government commitment to promoting gender equality can also be measured in terms of resources allocated to the governmental gender equality body ⁽²⁵⁾.

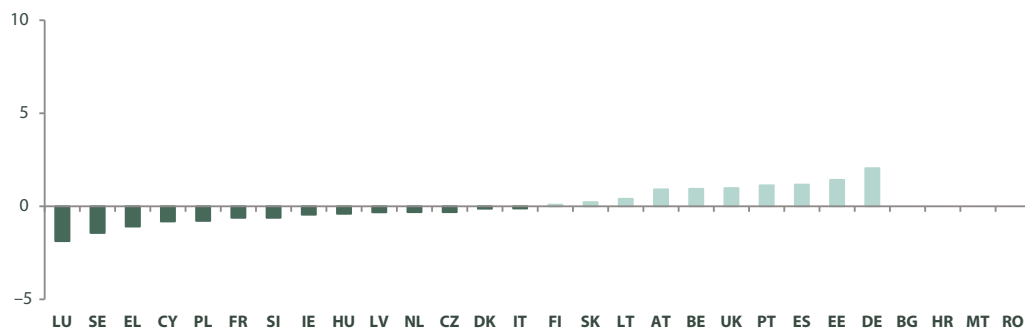
Indicator 2a indicates the ratio of the personnel resources available for the governmental gender equality body ⁽²⁶⁾ to the size of the Member State in terms of population. The number of employees is given in person years, meaning full-time, year-round employment excluding all project personnel that do not receive funding from the state budget. The indicator is calculated from the ratio of employees per population (million) in each Member State and describes the deviation from the median.

Regarding changes in personnel allocated to governmental gender equality bodies since 2005, human resources for gender equality

decreased in more than half of the Member States (Figure 4).

Making comparisons between personnel resources is a difficult task. The workload of the governmental equality body does not increase or decrease in direct proportion to the population size. It is therefore sometimes more meaningful to examine changes over time rather than the numbers themselves. Secondly, for federal states the governmental gender equality bodies at the regional level have been included in 2012 indicator scores. However, it is likely that some Member States that do not function under a federal system also have gender equality bodies at the regional level, making it difficult to provide an accurate comparative perspective between Member States.

Figure 4: Difference in human resources of governmental gender equality bodies, 2005 and 2012 by Member State, employees per population (1 000 000)



NB: Data are not available for BG, HR, MT and RO: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Source: Data collected during the 2006 Finnish Presidency and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).



Indicator 2b: Personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men

This indicator represents a government's commitment to promoting gender equality in terms of resource allocation for the protection and promotion of equal treatment in accordance with Directive 2002/73/EC.

Indicator 2b indicates the ratio of personnel resources available to the designated body for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men to the population size of the Member State. The number of employees is given in person-years, meaning full-time, year-round employment, excluding all project personnel who do not receive funding from the state budget. In case of independent bodies in charge of promoting equal treatment on several grounds, one of which is sex, an estimate of the number of employees solely in charge of combating discrimination on grounds of sex was requested. The indicator is calculated from the ratio of employees per population (million) in each Member State and describes the deviation from the median.

In 2012, only five countries (BE, ES, HR, PT, FI) had independent bodies working solely to promote equal treatment of women and men

(11 countries in 2005). The majority of Member States (BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, FR, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, SE, UK) had an independent body combating discrimination on several grounds, one of which is sex. These numbers capture the increasing trend in the Member States to merge the bodies exclusively dedicated to the promotion of equal treatment of women and men with those addressing various grounds of discrimination⁽²⁷⁾. As an outcome, the human resources solely in charge of combating discrimination based on sex are less visible in the independent equality bodies (Figure 5).

The number of employees per population of the independent body or bodies has grown since 2005 in five Member States (DK, EL, LV, PT, FI) and decreased in three Member States (CY, CZ, UK). Part of this growth can be attributed to the broadening of the mandate of already existing bodies from the sole ground of sex to multiple grounds. For 19 Member States, the comparison between 2005 and 2012 was not possible due to the lack of availability of information on the number of personnel.

Figure 5: Human resources of gender equality bodies in 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States), employees per population (1 000 000)



NB: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Data are presented in percentages in order to make the comparison possible between 2005 and 2012 where the number of Member States was different.

Source: Data collected during the Finnish Presidency 2006 and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

Indicator 3: Gender mainstreaming

Indicator 3 is based on the second strategic objective of area H on institutional mechanisms, 'Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public programmes and projects', and a set of sub-objectives:

- seek to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on women and men, respectively, is carried out;
- regularly review national policies, programmes and projects, as well as their implementation, evaluating the impact of employment and income policies in order to guarantee that women are direct beneficiaries of development and that their full contribution to development, both remunerated and unremunerated, is considered in economic policy and planning;
- promote national strategies and aims on equality between women and men in order to eliminate obstacles to the exercise of women's rights and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women;
- work with members of legislative bodies, as appropriate, to promote a gender perspective in all legislation and policies;
- give all ministries the mandate to review policies and programmes from a gender perspective and in



the light of the Beijing Platform for Action; locate the responsibility for the implementation of that mandate at the highest possible level; establish and/or strengthen an interministerial coordination structure to carry out this mandate, to monitor progress and to network with relevant machineries.

According to the BPfA, the implementation of gender mainstreaming requires: commitment of the government; structure of governmental bodies and officials responsible for gender mainstreaming; consultation with gender experts both within the government and with civil society; knowledge (training and awareness-raising) on how to implement gender mainstreaming; and the use of methods and tools.

In the 2006 Finnish Presidency report, some of these issues were already addressed by Indicator 3. EIGE's report on *Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States* proposes improvements to this indicator by taking into consideration more tools of gender mainstreaming and proposing a restructuring of Indicator 3 as follows:

1: status of the government's commitment to gender mainstreaming (maximum 2 points);

2: existence of structures for gender mainstreaming (maximum 4 points):

2.1. structures of gender mainstreaming (contact persons or focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in ministries and/or an interministerial coordination structure for gender mainstreaming);

2.2. consultations with the governmental gender equality body on new policies and policy evaluations;

3: commitment to and use of the methods and tools for gender mainstreaming (maximum 10 points):

3.1. commitment to using gender mainstreaming methods and tools (legal obligation to undertake gender impact assessment and/or gender budgeting);

3.2. use of gender mainstreaming methods and tools (gender impact assessment; gender budgeting; gender training; and monitoring and evaluation);

3.3. availability of reports from evaluation studies.

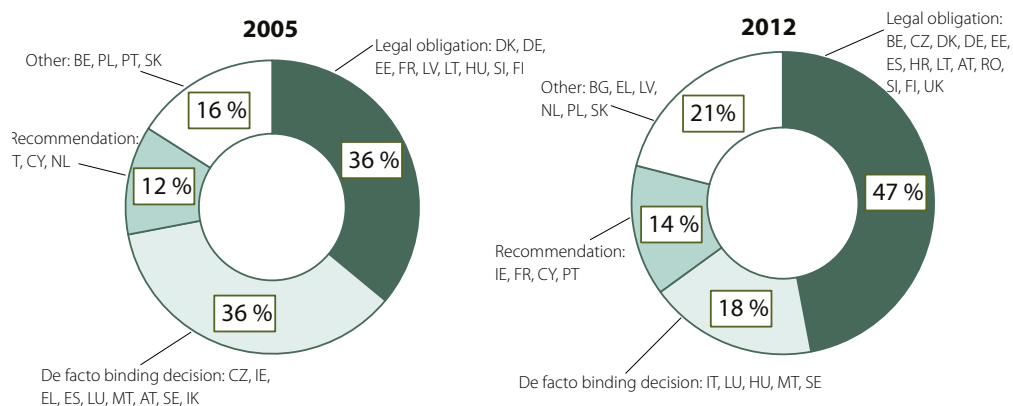
The indicator on gender mainstreaming is a sum indicator with a maximum value of 16. None of the Member States have reached the maximum score on this indicator for 2012, but five Member States (ES, FR, AT, FI, SE) received 12 or more points. However, as many as half of the Member States (BG, IE, EL, LV, LU, HU, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK) received less than eight points in 2012.

Government commitment to gender mainstreaming

In most of the Member States the government's commitment to gender mainstreaming is a legal obligation or a de facto binding decision of the government. Altogether, compared with 2005, there has been an increase in the proportion of Member States which established a legal obligation to gender mainstreaming.

While there was progress in proportions overall, there was no general tendency in the level or strength of commitment to implement gender mainstreaming at Member State level. The status of the commitment to gender mainstreaming between 2005 and 2012 improved in seven Member States (BE, CZ, ES, IT, AT, PT, UK), decreased in six (IE, EL, FR, LV, HU, NL) and in 12 Member States it did not change (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Types of commitments to gender mainstreaming in the EU Member States, 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States)



NB: BG, HR and RO were not included in the Finnish Presidency survey and therefore data for 2005 are not available.

Data are presented in percentages in order to make the comparison possible between 2005 and 2012 where the number of Member States was different.

Source: Data collected during the Finnish Presidency 2006 and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

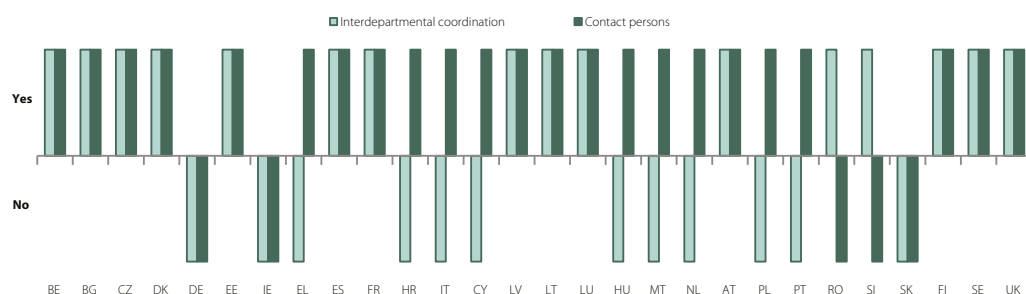
However, the existence of a legal obligation or recommendation on gender mainstreaming does not guarantee in itself the successful implementation of the strategy in practice. As pointed out by the Joint Employment Report 2007/08 of the Council of the European Union, 'most Member States are still far from adopting a full gender-mainstreaming approach to employment policies, notably through systematic gender impact assessment of policy measures.'⁽²⁸⁾

Structures for gender mainstreaming

In 2012, almost all Member States had an inter-ministerial structure to implement gender mainstreaming in the government, such as a gender mainstreaming coordination structure in other ministries (16 Member States), a network of contact persons for gender mainstreaming (23) or both (14) (Figure 7). Between 2005 and 2012, the proportion of countries that did not have any of these structures decreased from 20 to 11%.



Figure 7: Types of gender mainstreaming structures in the 28 EU Member States, 2012



Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

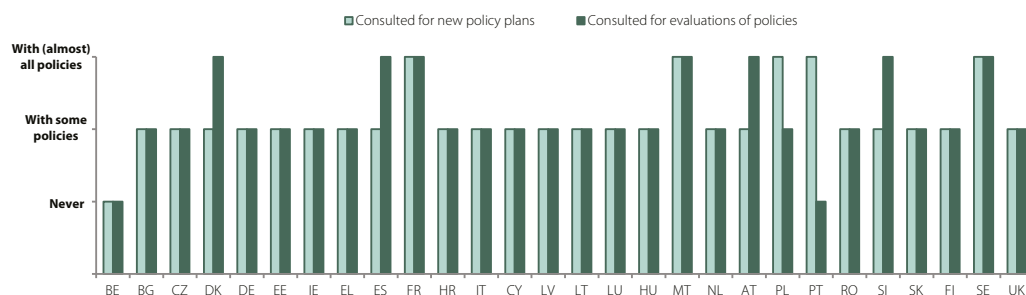
Consultations with the governmental body for gender equality

According to the BPfA, the role of the governmental gender equality body is important since it has the responsibility of ‘providing training and advisory assistance to government agencies in order to integrate a gender perspective in their policies and programmes’. The data show that in only five Member States (FR, MT, PL, PT, SE) the governmental gender equality body was consulted on nearly all new policies other than on gender equality. In the other 22 Member States (BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, HR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, RO, SI, SK, FI, UK), the body was consulted only on some new policies.

SI, SK, FI, UK), the body was consulted only on some new policies.

The governmental gender equality body was consulted with for (nearly) all policy evaluations in seven Member States and for some policy evaluations in 19 Member States (Figure 8). The involvement of the governmental gender equality body led to an adjustment of policy in the majority of cases (50–75 %) in 10 Member States (DE, EL, ES, FR, IT, AT, PL, SI, SE, UK) and in 13 Member States (BG, CZ, DK, EE, IE, HR, CY, LT, HU, NL, RO, SK, FI) only in some cases (25–50 %).

Figure 8: Consultation of the governmental gender equality body for new policy plans and/or evaluation of policies (in policy fields other than gender equality) in 28 EU Member States, 2012



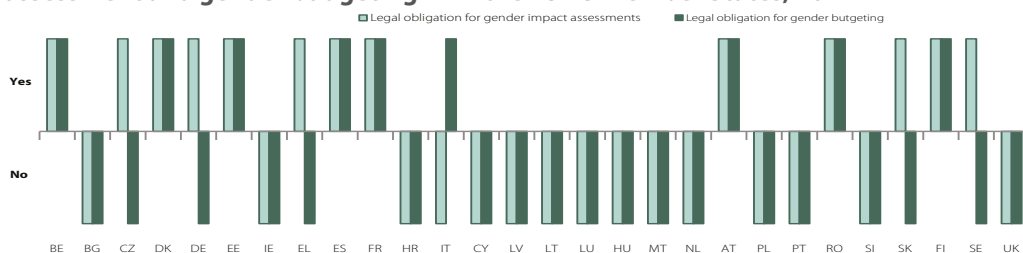
Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

Commitment to and use of the methods and tools for gender mainstreaming

By 2012, thirteen Member States had established a legal obligation to undertake gender

impact assessments in drafting laws and/or policies. Only eight Member States had a legal obligation to implement gender budgeting or gender impact assessments of ministerial budgets (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Legal obligations to use methods of gender mainstreaming — gender impact assessment and gender budgeting — in the 28 EU Member States, 2012



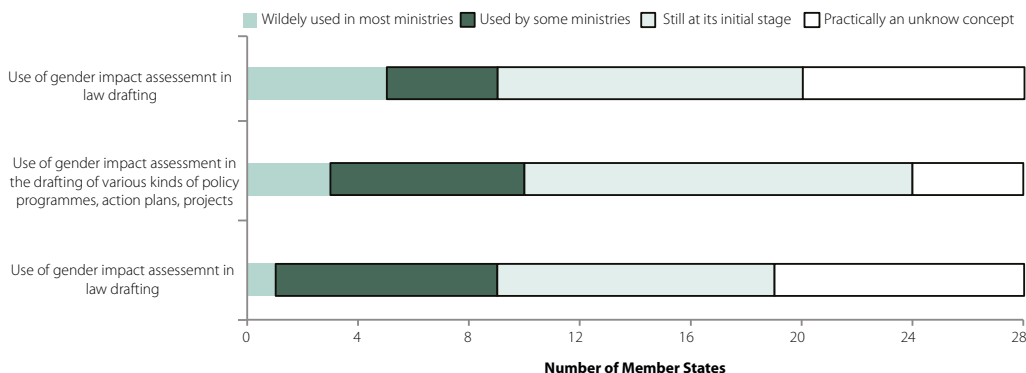
Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

However, the link between the legal obligation to use specific gender mainstreaming methods and tools and their actual use is not straightforward. In several Member States with an established legal obligation, the use of gender mainstreaming methods and tools was practically an unknown concept or still at its initial stage. However, in several other Member States, gender mainstreaming methods and tools were used in most or several ministries without a legal obligation.

Gender impact assessment (GIA)

In 2012, nearly half of the Member States adopted legal or policy provisions for the implementation of GIA along with guidelines and other support materials. However, only two Member States (ES, SE) used GIA widely for drafting various kinds of policy programmes and another five (CZ, DK, DE, FR, FI) used it sometimes (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Number of Member States using gender impact assessments, 2012



Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).



Only four Member States (ES, FR, PL, SE) reported that the application of GIA in drafting laws in the majority of cases brought an adjustment to make the final outcomes more gender equal. In

the other Member States, GIA made an impact only in some cases, and in other cases there was even no adjustment at all.

Institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in the EU Member States

EIGE's complementary study on 'Institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in the 28 Member States of the European Union' (2013) revealed that the practice of GIA seems to be deployed mainly in relation to the preparation of legislation. In many countries the implementation of GIA appears rather formalistic and resembles a 'tick-the-box' exercise that does not entail real analysis.

The study involves deeper analysis of the implementation of GIA in the selected countries and regions. The following criteria were applied.

- The GIA method that is deployed should correspond to the definition for GIA that was used in the context of the study ⁽²⁹⁾.
- Available information on the implementation of GIA should indicate that the GIA is underpinned by a substantial analysis (as opposed to treating GIA as a 'tick-the-box' exercise).
- There should be some history and/or volume of GIA implementation in the country, indicating some degree of institutionalisation of the method.
- There should be evidence of current or recent implementation of GIA.
- Guidelines or other support materials exist for the implementation of GIA.

The research indicates that the following countries and regions correspond to the abovementioned criteria: DE (*Land* level: Lower Saxony), ES (regional level: Catalonia), AT, FI and SE. Although the initial data mapping did not suggest that the history and/

or volume of GIA implementation in DK are of significance, DK has been included in the analysis because of recent emphasis on GIA in a reframed approach to gender mainstreaming.

Overall, the study revealed that little information is publicly available or accessible on the implementation of GIA in the analysed countries and regions. Where available, information indicates an ongoing process of institutionalisation, with strong variations across policy areas and which does not account for a systematic use of GIA as an integrated part of law and policymaking. The two cases with the highest proven record of GIA implementation are SE, where GIAs have not been regulated and are being carried out with different methodologies, and Catalonia, where GIA is fully legislated and where a centralised model applies. Therefore, it can be concluded that the paths of institutionalisation of GIA do not seem to be indicative for its degree of implementation.

GIA case studies were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- GIAs that were not about gender equality policy-specific measures;
- GIAs that were particularly influential (or at least had some impact on policy);
- GIAs that were well done from a technical point of view.

The reports of these cases, as well as the guidelines that steered these GIAs, were collected and analysed. Where available, academic and grey literature about the deployment of GIA in the country/region was also integrated in the analysis.

Table 1: Selected cases of gender impact assessment per country/region

Country/ region	GIA case	Year	Type of document	Policy area(s)
AT	Law for federal employees representation	2013	Act	Public service reform
AT	Amendments to the federal law for universities and institutions of higher education of 2002	2013	Amendments	Education
Catalonia	Plan for cooperation for development 2003–06	2003	Policy plan	International cooperation and development policies
Catalonia	Law 2/2004 for the improvement of districts, urban areas and towns requiring special attention	2004	Act	Urban and territorial policies
DK	Law 162, 18 April 2012 (law on a 2 year experimental scheme on job prizing to long-term unemployed social security recipients)	2012	Act	Employment
DK	Law 134, 25 February 2010 (law on the construction of a new railway section Copenhagen–Ringsted)	2010	Act	Transport
FI	The act on enhancing integration (30.12.2010/1386)	2010	Act	Migration, integration policies
FI	Migration 2020 strategy	2013	Policy strategy	Migration
DE	Law on equal opportunities for disabled people (2007)	2007	Act	Disability, anti-discrimination
SE	The right to participate. Recently arrived women and family member immigrants in the labour market	2012	Policy strategy	Migration, integration, employment
SE	Equally sick listed — a gender perspective on the sick leave process	2010	Policy assessment	Health insurance, social benefits



Selected cases cover a period of approximately 10 years of GIA implementation across the EU (2003-13) and a dozen policy areas, including anti-discrimination, disability, health, employment, integration and migration, higher education and research, international cooperation, public transportation, social security and urban and territorial policies.

The analysis shows that GIA, as a key instrument for effective gender mainstreaming, is neither systematically legislated nor regulated. Yet, the existence of a legal framework — or the absence thereof — does not account for its degree of institutionalisation, or the thoroughness of its implementation.

In terms of scope, depth, procedures, services in charge, quality checks or evaluations, GIAs are framed differently in the analysed countries and regions, thus illustrating the existence of different models. Such diversity is partly mirrored in the existence of different definitions of what is actually meant by GIA.

The task to carry out GIA is usually ascribed to different institutions, following distinct procedures in different countries and regions. Depending on the institutional settings, different types of actors are contributing to the processes of GIA. Countries differ according to the degree of autonomy of civil servants in this task, the assistance provided by governmental gender equality bodies and the potential intervention of 'external' actors such as gender or legal experts. The scope of legislative or policy documents subjected to GIA varies significantly across selected regions and countries.

Quality assurance is important to ensure that GIA adequately addresses all relevant gendered aspects of the documents, mobilises sufficient gender and technical expertise and provides recommendations which are

consistent with the domestic policy framework on gender equality. In several of the sample cases, gender equality units are consulted along the process by the ministries or departments in charge of GIA, providing civil servants with relevant instruments and expertise.

In most of the countries and regions, GIA is performed at quite an advanced stage of the policy cycle. In other terms, a great part of the law-making process has already taken place when drafted measures are assessed from a gender perspective, thus limiting the options to substantively reshape projected norms or policies. When significant changes are requested, in particular by the governmental gender equality body involved in the process, they may therefore entail political decisions.

In summary, very different models are in place for the implementation of GIA, and the underlying conceptions of what actually constitutes GIA differ. Emphasis can be on the analysis of the present situation, rather than on an assessment of potential effects of a future legislative or policy measure. GIA might be perceived and performed as a separate exercise or as an integral part of a preparatory process for legislative or policy measures.

There is relatively low attention paid to the more transformative dimension of GIA through the design of innovative recommendations or alternative measures that go beyond the mere anticipation of potential gendered effects. The diagnoses of gender inequality in a specific policy area, rather than prognoses in the form of alternative scenarios contributing to greater gender equality, usually receive the greatest deal of attention.

Gender training

In nearly all Member States, initiatives were undertaken in the past 3 years to raise awareness on gender equality among ministries and other bodies of public administration. However, regular gender equality training was not

very common. Only five Member States reported that their governmental employees were trained on a regular basis. Gender training on an ad hoc basis was obviously more prevalent, particularly for employees of other ministries/departments (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Number of Member States providing gender equality training, 2012



Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

The European Commission's evaluation on the use of employment Social Funds to support gender equality in the Member States concluded that staff training on gender equality issues

was unevenly spread across Member States, 'although it should be considered as an irreplaceable component of any mainstreaming strategy'.⁽³⁰⁾

Competence development for gender mainstreaming — Gender training

Another study by EIGE on 'Mapping gender training in the European Union and Croatia' (2013) reaffirms that sufficient gender equality competence of staff at all levels of public administration is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. Gender equality competence development is understood to include a wide

range of different educational tools and processes, such as face-to-face training events; gender equality training; staff induction; on-line modules; guidance materials and compendia of resources; consultancy arrangements; networks for sharing expertise; etc.

Gender training is the most widespread, often the only, form of gender competence development across the EU and thus the two concepts — gender equality competence development and gender training — are often used interchangeably.



In EIGE's study on gender training in the European Union, gender training was defined as an educational tool and a process that supports policymakers in their efforts to integrate gender considerations across the policies and programmes for which they are responsible. The first phase of the study entailed a mapping exercise for the period of 2005–11 based on the review of primary sources, desk research and stakeholder interviews. Additionally, during the second phase of the study the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with relevant actors in promising competence development initiatives in five Member States. The aim of the interviews was to identify the essential prerequisites and success factors for effective gender equality training.

Generally, it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions about the scale of gender training in the European Union, or to compare its provision across the different Member States. As EIGE's study suggests, Member States do not systematically collect information about the number of gender training initiatives or the number of beneficiaries of gender training.

Existing data from 2012 indicate that the number of gender training initiatives and even more the number of staff in public administrations who have been trained remains rather low in most of the EU Member States. Most of the initiatives that were implemented during 2005–12 were largely stand-alone and ad hoc projects. This suggests that most EU countries failed to institutionalise gender training through the development of elaborated mechanisms for a systematic provision of gender equality knowledge and skills in the public sector on the national, regional or local levels. There are examples though (e.g. AT, FI, SE) where gender mainstreaming objectives were followed by a rather intensive

and specialised effort to fill in the existing knowledge gaps of the relevant staff.

The study results show that in the period from 2005 to 2011, there were limited financial resources or specific budget lines allocated to gender training in most of the EU countries. The provision of gender training strongly depended on the EU programmes as the main funding source, such as 'Progress' and/or the European Social Fund.

Another essential factor with regard to the provision of gender training is its quality, which depends on a number of factors. Amongst others, these include proper institutional set-up, good qualifications of gender trainers, availability of practical training tools, adequate needs assessment as well as regular monitoring and evaluation.

The existence of a legal and policy commitment to gender equality comes to the forefront as a precondition for a proper gender competence development system. Study results suggest that where gender mainstreaming was a legal requirement, it was more likely to give an impetus for the provision of gender training for staff at all levels of public administration.

Gender training providers, otherwise referred to as gender trainers, have emerged as a profession after the recognition of gender mainstreaming as a comprehensive strategy in some of the countries. In practice, the qualifications of gender trainers and respectively the quality of gender training can vary considerably. At national level, initiatives to train the trainers have been identified in only eight Member States. A number of practical resources have been made available for the use of gender trainers. Despite the emerging market for such professionals, neither EU nor

national reference frameworks for the quality of the services provided by gender trainers exist, although there have been attempts to work on such. Reportedly, institutions and organisations commissioning gender training lack guidance through the process of finding and selecting high-quality training services.

Another source of concern with regard to gender training is its actual response to the needs of those who receive it and the potential to transform the processes and working environments to be more gender equality focused. EIGE's study on gender training concluded that most of the training programmes tend to be generic. While in a few Member States there are examples of training tailored to the specific needs of participants, the most common form is a general, small-scale, short (less than 1 day long), one-off training. In a number of countries such modules were offered in response to newly

introduced policies or laws, or as a part of induction programmes for new employees.

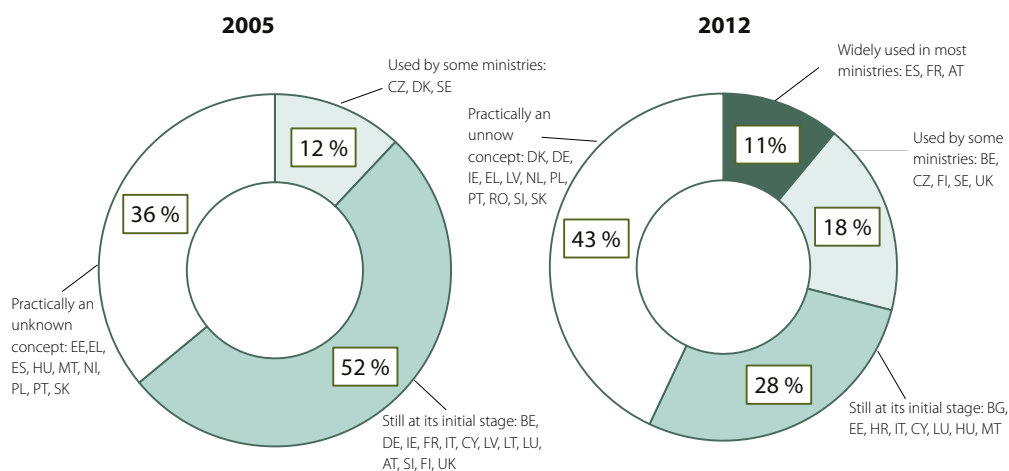
However, going beyond the introductory sessions, tailoring the contents to better respond to the actual tasks and roles of the participants and arranging regular competence building appears to be problematic. Amongst the identified challenges are the lack of commitment of policymakers to gender equality and limited funding for more in-depth and long-term approaches. A wide range of tools and resources are now available across the EU, but there seems to be a short supply of specialised tailored practical training resources, relevant to specific projects or policy areas as well as competent gender trainers, especially in sectors where the gender dimension is less evident. The training sessions organised are rarely obligatory, and the voluntary basis makes it difficult to ensure sufficient levels of attendance.

Gender budgeting

In 2012, of the eight Member States (BE, DK, EE, ES, FR, IT, AT, FI) that established a legal commitment to gender budgeting, only Spain, France and Austria reported that gender budgeting

was widely used by most ministries, while five countries (BE, CZ, FI, SE, UK) reported a wide use by some ministries. In the majority of countries, gender budgeting was either still at the initial stage or practically an unknown concept in public administration (Figure 12).

Figure 12: The use of gender budgeting in the EU Member States, 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States)



NB: Data are presented in percentages in order to make the comparison possible between 2005 and 2012 where the number of Member States was different.

Source: Data collected during the Finnish Presidency 2006 and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

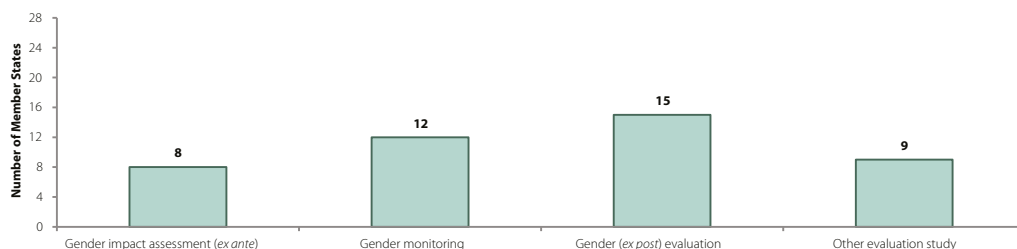
Out of the 16 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, EE, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LU, HU, MT, AT, FI, SE, UK) in which gender budgeting was used to a varying degree, budgets were adjusted in the past 3 years in only seven (CZ, ES, FR, AT, FI, SE, UK).

Evaluation and monitoring

In 2012, 12 Member States (BG, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, CY, NL, PL, PT, FI, SE) used gender monitoring as a tool for gender mainstreaming;

15 Member States (CZ, DE, FR, HR, IT, CY, LT, HU, MT, AT, PL, PT, SI, FI, SE) carried out gender *ex post* evaluation; and only eight Member States (DE, FR, HR, CY, PL, PT, FI, SE) used both monitoring and *ex post* evaluation as part of gender mainstreaming (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Number of Member States that use monitoring and evaluation as part of gender mainstreaming, 2012



Source: Data collected January–April 2013 (EIGE).

Indicator 4: Production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex

A major precondition for effective gender equality policies and legislation is the availability of timely and high-quality statistics disaggregated by sex. Such statistics help to ensure evidence-based decision-making and evaluate the extent to which the objectives and targets have been met.

Indicator 4 is a new indicator based on strategic objective H.3 of the area on institutional mechanisms — Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation — and a set of actions to be taken by national, regional and international statistical services and relevant national and UN agencies, in cooperation with research organisations and documentation centres.

In 1998, the Council agreed that the annual assessment of the implementation of the BPfA would include a proposal on a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks. Since 1999, sets of indicators have been developed by subsequent presidencies in nearly all areas of concern of the BPfA. Each year the Council has adopted conclusions on these

indicators and stressed the need to review them in the future. In several critical areas of concern, the relevant indicators and statistical data were not always available at EU level and sometimes missing even at national level, making the monitoring of progress of gender equality over time impossible.

The recently launched 'Gender equality index' ⁽³¹⁾ shows that the domain of gender-based violence against women represents the largest statistical gaps in the EU in measuring the progress of gender equality at EU level. Statistical gaps in this area are important evidence in supporting the European Parliament's resolution on priorities and the outline of a recent EU policy framework to fight violence against women. The division of time between women and men, decision-making, health behaviours and intersectionality (which recognises that women and men are not homogenous groups among categories such as family status, sexual orientation, disability or migration status) are yet other areas which lack good quality data. The lack of data availability also seriously impedes the assessment of the implementation

of the Europe 2020 strategy from a gender perspective, in areas such as research and development, innovation and technologies, climate change and energy.

It is therefore important that the producers and users of statistics in each country regularly review the adequacy of the official statistical system and its coverage of gender issues and ensure the regular production of statistical publications on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users ⁽³²⁾.

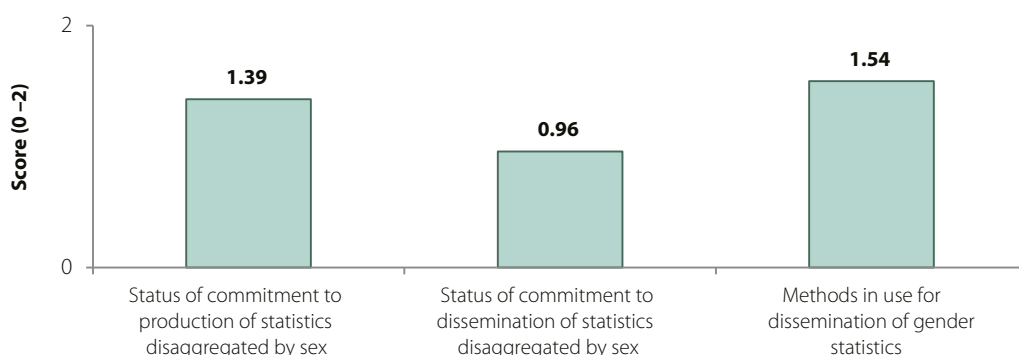
This indicator is designed to measure governmental commitment to the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex and to identify the methods in use for the dissemination of such statistics. The proposed indicator on area H3 of the BPfA includes the following aspects:

- government commitment to production of statistics disaggregated by sex (maximum 2 points);
- government commitment to the dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex (maximum 2 points);
- methods in use for the dissemination of gender statistics (the existence of publications and/or dedicated websites) (maximum 2 points).

Four Member States (BG, ES, HR, HU) have reached the maximum score (6 points) on this indicator, while IE and LU obtained the lowest scores.

A comparison of the aspects included in this indicator shows that Member States use different methods for the dissemination of gender statistics even if there is no national legal obligation to collect and publish the statistics disaggregated by sex (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Performance of the 28 EU Member States in the collection and dissemination of gender statistics, 2012

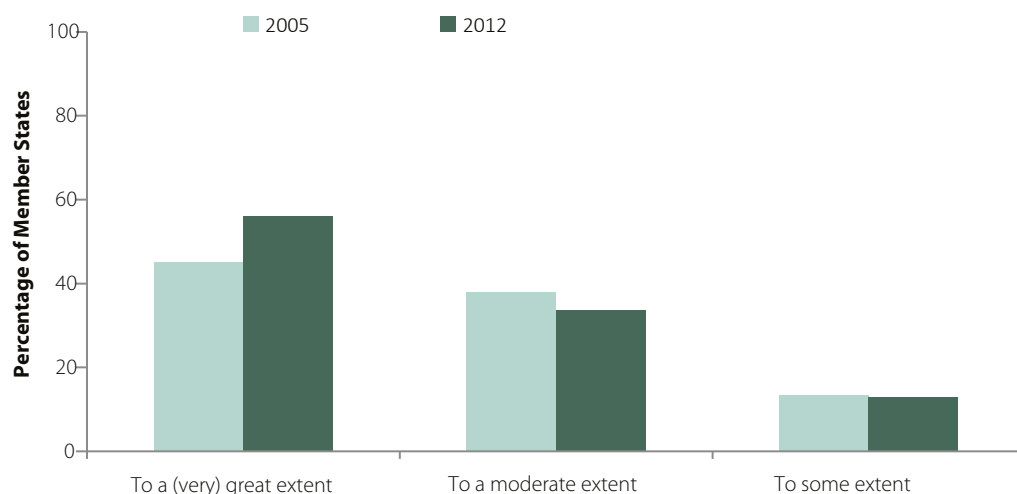


Source: Data collected in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

In 2012, the requirement regarding the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex was met to a great extent by 16 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, DE, IE, EL, ES, HR, CY, LV, HU, MT, PL, RO, SI, UK). Eight Member States (EE, FR, LT, NL, AT, PT, SK, SE) fulfilled it to a moderate extent and Italy, Luxembourg and Finland to some extent. The overall situation in

2005 and in 2012 shows some progress in the Member States in providing gender statistics: in 2012, 57 % of Member States declared they met the requirement for the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data 'to a great extent' compared with 48 % of Member States in 2005 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Percentage of Member States that fulfilled the requirements for collection and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex, 2005 (25 Member States) and 2012 (28 Member States)



NB: Data for BG, HR and RO were not available for 2005.

Source: Data collected during the Finnish Presidency 2006 and in January–April 2013 (EIGE).

The majority of Member States produce and disseminate publications on gender statistics regularly. Two thirds of Member States have a dedicated website for gender statistics (a specific website on gender statistics, a section of

the website of the statistics office or a section of another website). However, the commitment for production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex under the Beijing Platform for Action has yet to be fully realised.



Conclusions

In the European Union and its Member States, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), EU legislation and national regulations on gender mainstreaming together constitute the framework for appropriate institutional mechanisms for gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action not only identified the availability of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women as one of its 12 critical areas of concern but also established it as **a necessary precondition for the pursuit of gender equality in all other areas.**

Although recognised as a fundamental value of the EU and as a policy area in its 28 Member States, **the status and profile of gender equality currently shows signs of decreased importance in the EU:** there are fewer governments with cabinet ministers responsible for gender equality since 2005 and more governments with deputy ministers and assistant ministers taking this responsibility. No improvements can be seen in the hierarchical location of the governmental gender equality bodies. Despite being highly recommended by the Council of the European Union (2009) ⁽³³⁾, one third of the 28 EU Member States still do not have the governmental gender equality body at the highest possible level in the government, falling under the responsibility of a cabinet minister.

Another trend is the **growing focus, supported by political and financial resources, on the judicial aspects (the legalistic approach) of equal treatment/gender equality,** as opposed to the development and promotion of gender equality in its broad sense. This means that gender equality work may be reduced to individual cases that may

or may not be brought to the courts, tribunals or other instances and runs the risk of losing power and strength in addressing structural inequalities and discriminations at the societal level. To remain a prominent part of the political agenda, gender equality needs, on the one hand, powerful and sustainable mechanisms which develop, implement and monitor the promotion of gender equality and, on the other, institutions which protect the legal rights of women and men.

These **recent developments contribute to the marginalisation of gender equality as a political goal** and undermine gender equality as an important policy area in itself. In many Member States, **gender equality has, as a result, been pushed off the political agenda or submerged within the broader field of equal opportunities.**

The number of Member States that have adopted governmental action plans for gender equality increased since 2005. Reporting on the implementation of the plans to the legislative authority has also expanded and is now established in 26 Member States. However, the existence of a national action plan is not a sufficient measure of progress. It remains important to assess the quality and outcomes of its implementation.

Government officials reported that social partners and civil society organisations are increasingly involved in the activities and tasks of the governmental gender equality body, in most of the cases for the dissemination of information and awareness-raising. The national representatives of women's organisations indicated that their involvement in and consultation by the government on gender equality policies is

limited, ad hoc or even non-existent. **Whereas stakeholder participation in the gender equality/gender mainstreaming policies has been integrated or institutionalised in a majority of Member States, it still fails to be fully embedded at every stage of the policy cycle**, where it rarely or only occasionally informs policymaking.

A positive trend can be observed in the **Increased legal commitment of Member States to gender mainstreaming compared with 2005, and established structures (interministerial coordination and/or focal points in ministries) responsible for gender mainstreaming in nearly all Member States**. However, the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming tools and methods is insufficient in the majority of countries because of the unclear or weak legal or administrative mandates to apply gender mainstreaming in practice. Comparatively few Member States carry out regular training and capacity-building on gender equality, mostly for the employees of the governmental gender equality body. Gender impact assessment is either an unknown concept or is still at an initial stage of application in the majority of Member States. Gender budgeting has become a legal obligation in only eight Member States, out of which gender budgeting is widely used by the ministries in just three Member States.

One of the most noticeable developments between 2005 and 2012 was the **gradual merging of the independent body for the promotion of equal treatment for women and men with a body or institution dealing with several grounds of discrimination**. As the current report shows, there are only five Member States where discrimination based on

sex is addressed separately. Whereas the importance of acknowledging the heterogeneity of women and men in terms of age, class, disability, ethnicity/race and sexual orientation is crucial to the recognition of diverse experiences among women and men, the consequences of downplaying gender as a structural dimension and underlying element of all inequalities should not be overlooked. As this is still an ongoing process within the EU, the assessment of its positive and less positive aspects remains to be made.

The political context specific to each Member State, also very fluid and unpredictable, helps or hinders the sustainability and effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality. **Ensuring governmental support for gender equality as a policy proved to be one of the strongest factors for the development and sustainability of the institutional mechanisms**.

It is crucial to recognise that institutional mechanisms for gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, are an indispensable precondition for the pursuit of equality between women and men. Anti-discrimination measures cannot serve their purpose if not accompanied by mechanisms responsible for the development and implementation of forward-looking gender equality strategies aiming at integrating gender into the work of all governmental institutions. It has become an especially relevant issue in the context of the economic crisis and consequent cuts in public budgets, entailing the risk of seriously affecting the functioning of gender equality institutions and downgrading the status of gender equality policies.



Recommendations

Institutional structures

Strengthen the institutional structures by:

- ensuring that there is a governmental body responsible for gender equality, located at the highest possible level in the government, falling under the responsibility of a cabinet minister, with adequate responsibility and means for action;
- ensuring that gender equality remains a policy priority, is mainstreamed in other policy areas and complements the work of addressing cases of discrimination based on sex;
- setting clear and measurable strategic objectives for gender equality with specific targets and timeframes, ensuring that the governmental body's mandate and capacity allow it to influence the development of all government policies, to formulate and review legislation and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of government decisions;
- establishing or strengthening an advisory board on gender equality or another permanent entity involving relevant branches of government, women's NGOs and other civil society organisations, researchers and social partners on a regular basis.

Gender mainstreaming

Promote the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming via:

- an interministerial structure and focal points in every ministry;
- legal obligations for the use of gender mainstreaming tools and methods, including training for gender mainstreaming, gender

impact assessment, gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;

- appropriate budgets to have these carried out;
- raising awareness on the benefits of gender mainstreaming;
- strengthening the legal and institutional commitment to improving the gender competences of civil servants across the different sectors.

Sex-disaggregated data

Promote the collection and dissemination of gender statistics by:

- having legal obligations or binding structural agreements with statistics institutions and/or other organisations on the collection and publishing of statistics disaggregated by sex;
- producing statistics and establishing new indicators where they are lacking in the areas such as gender-based violence, attitudes on gender roles and intersecting inequalities (data disaggregated by sex and also by other grounds for discrimination, such as ethnic origin, age, etc.);
- ensuring that gender statistics represent relevant gender issues, by consulting different stakeholders' groups when developing indicators;
- ensuring that gender statistics are freely available to policymakers, researchers, NGOs, social partners and all citizens;
- considering the establishment of targets and indicators in the action plans for gender equality to measure progress and evaluate developments.

Endnotes

- (1) United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995 (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3dde04324.html>).
- (2) Council of the European Union, Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of institutional mechanisms, prepared by the Finnish Presidency, 2006.
- (3) Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action Beijing+15: The Platform for Action and the European Union, Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009.
- (4) Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action Beijing+15: The Platform for Action and the European Union, Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009.
- (5) Council conclusions on the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality, Brussels, 9–10 December 2013 (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139978.pdf).
- (6) European Institute for Gender Equality, Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2014 (http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0213481ENC_0.pdf).
- (7) Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2010/c 83/01) (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2010.083.01.0001.01.ENG#C_2010083EN.01001301).
- (8) European Commission, Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities, COM(96) 67 final of 21 February 1996.
- (9) See Article 8a of Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (OJ L 269, 5.10.2002, p. 15).
- (10) Susanne Burri noticed in the analyses carried out on the transposition of the recast directive in 2011 that 'Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) consolidates a few existing directives on gender equality. The objective of the recast directive is to combine the main existing provisions



on gender equality as covered by this directive as well as by relevant case-law (Recital 1) in a single text. According to the Commission, such a text should increase clarity and should modernise and simplify the provisions of directives linked by their subject in order to make Community legislation clearer and more effective. Gender equality law should in this way be more accessible for a broader public.’ The directives that form part of this recasting exercise are Directive 75/117/EEC on equal pay between men and women; Directive 76/207/EEC as amended by Directive 2002/73/EC on equal treatment for men and women in access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions; Directive 86/378/EEC, as amended by Directive 96/97/EC on equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes; and Directive 97/80/EC on the burden of proof. The recasting exercise thus did not include the directives on the principle of equal treatment between men and women in statutory social security (Directive 79/7/EEC), self-employment (Directive 86/613/EEC, now repealed by Directive 2010/41/EU) or access to and supply of goods and services (Directive 2004/113/EC). The same is true for the directives on pregnancy and maternity leave (92/85/EEC) and on parental leave (96/34/EEC, now repealed by Directive 2010/18/EU), which have a different legal basis.

(11) See Article 8a of Directive 2002/73/EC.

(12) Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action Beijing+15: The Platform for Action and the European

Union, Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009.

- (13) United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995 (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3dde04324.html>).
- (14) European Commission, Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities, COM(96) 67 final (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1996:0067:FIN:EN:PDF>).
- (15) European Commission, Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15, COM(2010) 491 final (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:en:PDF>).
- (16) European Institute for Gender Equality, Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2014 (http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0213481ENC_0.pdf).
- (17) European Institute for Gender Equality, ‘Institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in the 28 Member States of the European Union’, draft report, 2013.
- (18) European Institute for Gender Equality, Mapping gender training in the European Union and Croatia, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2013.

- (19) European Institute for Gender Equality, Mapping gender training in the European Union and Croatia, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2013.
- (20) Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action Beijing+15: The Platform for Action and the European Union, Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015487%202009%20ADD%201>).
- (21) European Commission and Eurostat, 25th CEIES seminar: Gender statistics: occupational segregation: extent, causes and consequences, 2004, p. 28.
- (22) The methodology of the study is described in full in the main report of the European Institute for Gender Equality on Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality — Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, 2013.
- (23) Data are presented in percentages in order to make the comparison possible between 2005 and 2012 where the number of Member States was different.
- (24) European Institute for Gender Equality, Country profiles — Gender equality index, 2013 (<http://eige.europa.eu/apps/gei/content/Gender-Equality-Index-Country-Profiles.pdf>).
- (25) Council of the European Union, Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of institutional mechanisms, prepared by the Finnish Presidency, 2006.
- (26) Due to different institutional structures, the indicator does not include all personnel working on gender equality in the government administration. Neither does the indicator take into account the degree to which certain tasks of gender equality bodies are outsourced.
- (27) This trend among EU Member States to unify the bodies responsible for addressing discrimination might be the result of the requirement formulated in Article 20 of Directive 2006/54/EC known as the recast directive, where Member States are advised that the bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of sex ‘may form part of agencies with responsibility at national level for the defence of human rights or the safeguard of individuals’ rights.’
- (28) Council of the European Union, Joint Employment Report 2007/08, 2008 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%207169%202008%20INIT>).
- (29) Gender impact assessment was defined as an *ex ante* evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law or programme, which makes it possible to identify in a preventive way the likelihood of a given decision, law or programme from having negative consequences for the state of equality between women and men. Gender impact assessment may include a cost–benefit analysis.
- (30) European Commission, Evaluation of the European Social Fund’s support to gender equality, 2011 (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6643&langId=en>).



- (31) European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender equality index, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2013 (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/activities/gender-equality-index>).
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- (33) Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action Beijing+15: The Platform for Action and the European Union, Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?!=EN&f=ST%2015487%202009%20ADD%201>).

European Institute for Gender Equality

Effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality
Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014

2014 — 42 pp. — 17.6 × 25 cm

ISBN 978-92-9218-363-9

doi:10.2839/18076



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