

Gender equality in parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament in 2019

What is EIGE's Gender-sensitive Parliaments tool?

A gender-sensitive parliament is one which ensures that there are no barriers to women and men participating equally and having equal influence over decision-making. Parliaments should serve as positive examples of gender-equal workplaces, promoting this principle both internally and externally through gender-sensitive laws and policies.

The European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) Gender-sensitive Parliaments tool monitors and assesses gender sensitivity in the organisation and working procedures of parliaments by analysing the proportions, roles and positions of women and men. The tool also allows for an assessment of how parliamentary operations, actions and legislative decisions respect and promote gender equality. The general

version of the tool is available to anyone, while an in-depth version is available for national and regional parliaments.

The tool in action

Between April and June 2019, EIGE collected information to complete the general version of the tool for the national parliaments of all 28 EU Member States and the European Parliament, based on publicly available data. Information was collected across five areas, each dedicated to measuring a specific aspect of gender sensitivity in parliaments. The main findings for each of these areas are presented in this fact-sheet.

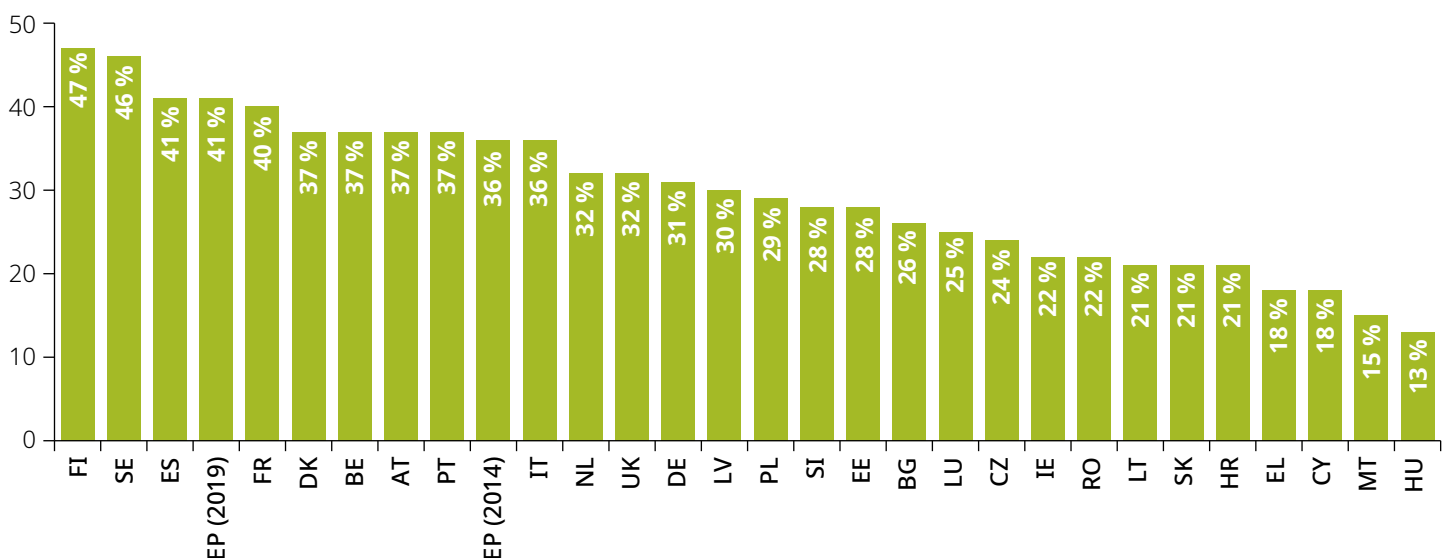
These results show the strengths and weaknesses of parliaments in terms of their gender sensitivity and can serve as a benchmark to help track and analyse progress in enhancing gender equality in parliamentary work over time.

Area 1: Do women and men have equal opportunities to ENTER the parliament?

The European Parliament has achieved its most gender-balanced composition to date, with the share of women MEPs having increased from 36 % in 2014 to 41 % following the 2019 elections, surpassing both the world and EU averages for national parliaments. However, the European Parliament does not apply an EU-wide gender quota to its electoral system, instead relying on Member State measures to achieve a gender balance in the Parliament.

Despite this positive progress, on average women still represent less than one third of MPs in EU national parliaments. A larger proportion of women candidates (34 %) than elected female MPs (29 %) suggests that women are disadvantaged as candidates, with men occupying the top positions on party lists, as well as 'safe' or 'winnable' seats. Furthermore, most Member States do not apply a system-wide quota to their national electoral system — only 10 Member States apply system-wide quotas (BE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, PL, PT, SI).

Figure 1. Women members of national parliaments, EU-28 (2019) and European Parliament (2014 and 2019)

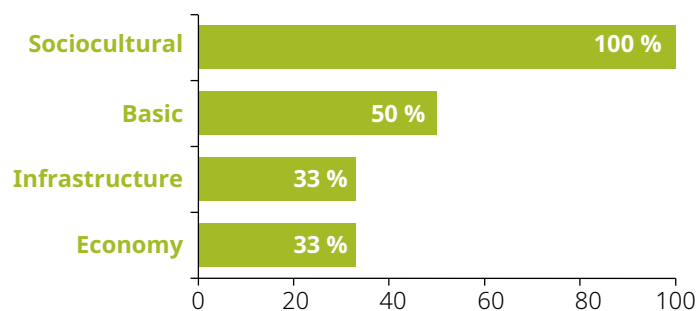


Area 2: Do women and men have equal opportunities to INFLUENCE the parliament's working procedures?

While women's representation among MEPs has improved, leadership of certain EU parliamentary committees is still highly segregated. Following the 2019 European Parliament elections, all four of the committees on sociocultural functions are chaired by women and three of the six committees on basic functions are chaired by women. However, women head only two of the six committees on infrastructural functions and two of the six committees on economic functions. A similar pattern can be seen among national parliaments, where only 28 % of parliamentary committees are led by women.

Having equal opportunities to influence parliamentary work also implies that women and men have equal access to a safe working environment. In February 2019, the European Parliament included a standard of conduct in its Rules of Procedure that Members shall refrain from any type of psy-

Figure 2. Committees of the European Parliament chaired by women, by type of function (2019-2024 term)



chological or sexual harassment. At the national level, only nine Member States' parliaments publish information on the existence of mechanisms for preventing gender-based discrimination against MPs (DK, EL, IE, HR, LV, MT, FI, SE, UK).

Area 3: Do women's interests and concerns have adequate SPACE on the parliamentary agenda?

A number of dedicated bodies within the European Parliament, such as the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, aim to promote and protect women's rights, and to implement gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament's activities, structures and bodies. However, effective and systematic use of gender budgeting is still lacking in EU institutions.

Most Member States (71 %) have a dedicated gender-equality body in their parliamentary structure, but very few of these have full legislative capacity (IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, CY, LU, AT, PT, RO, SE, UK). Despite these structures being in place, gender does not appear to be effectively mainstreamed in parliamentary work — for instance, where parliaments have a strategic plan, gender equality is mentioned only infrequently. There are also few internal bodies in charge of gender budgeting.



Area 4: Does the parliament produce gender-sensitive LEGISLATION?

Gender-sensitive parliaments should produce legislation that considers and integrates women's and men's concerns into the political process and across all policy sectors. For example, the European Parliament adopted a range of legislation and policies to achieve the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. It is also taking steps to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in order to strengthen the legal framework for addressing gender-based violence. Further, the gender-mainstreaming amendments introduced by the European Parliament empower the FEMM committee to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in the reports of other parliamentary committees.



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Most Member States (except LV, HU, SK) have adopted specific laws or legislative quotas to enhance gender equality. Most Member States (BE, BG, CZ, DK, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, CY, LU, HU, MT, AT, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK) also have a ded-

icated gender-equality body to oversee the implementation of gender action plans and national programmes for enhancing gender equality, and for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

Area 5: Does the parliament promote gender equality through its SYMBOLIC function?

The European Parliament shares important information on gender-equality policies and initiatives via its official website. It also publicises events organised by the FEMM committee through its official social media channels. In terms of the gender sensitivity of its premises, the European Parliament offers adequate childcare facilities for staff and visitors. However, further efforts are required to emphasise women's contribution to politics and democracy in the Parliament buildings, given that most spaces are still named after men.

In the last calendar year, most national parliaments in the EU held planned initiatives dedicated to gender equality on their premises (BG, CZ, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PT, RO, FI, SE, UK). Further, over half of the national parliaments disseminate information about parliamentary initiatives related to gender equality (DK, DE, EL, IE, ES, FR, LT, MT, NL, AT, PT, RO, FI, SE, UK). However, information on gender-equality policies and initiatives continues to be absent from the majority of national parliament websites. Additionally, less than half of the national parliaments (DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, IT, LT, NL, AT, PT, SE, UK) have dedicated childcare facilities on their premises.

Figure 3. National parliaments with childcare facilities (%), EU

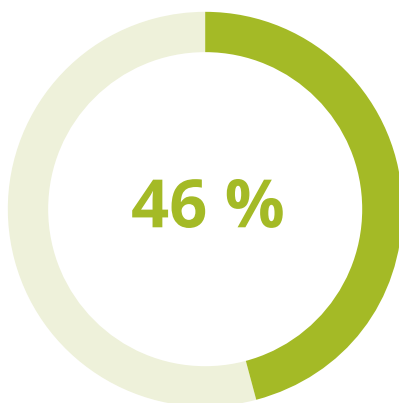


Figure 4. National parliaments which organised gender equality initiatives on their premises in 2018, EU

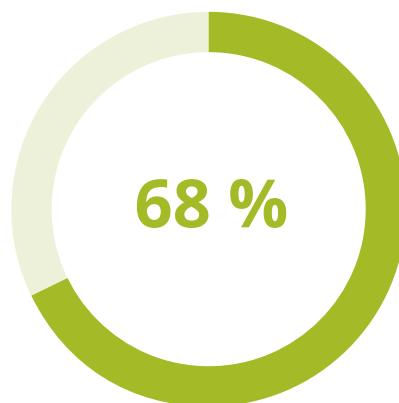
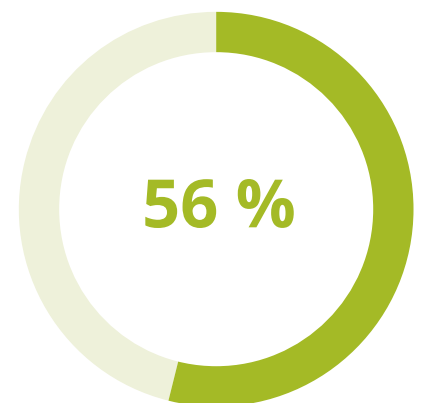


Figure 5. National parliaments which disseminate parliamentary initiatives related to gender equality, EU



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1) Equal opportunities to ENTER the parliament

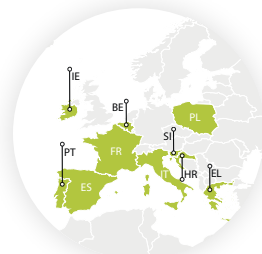
11 of the 28 Member States applied gender quotas in the 2019 European Parliament elections

41 %
women MEPs

Record-breaking share of women MEPs after the 2019 European Parliament elections

29 %
women MPs

Gender quotas applied to national parliamentary elections in 10 Member States



Candidates in the last parliamentary elections
(National level) (European Parliament)



2) Equal opportunities to INFLUENCE the parliament's procedures

23 national parliaments had a man president

Leaders of national parliamentary committees:



31 %
Women



69 %
Men

3) Women's interests and concerns have adequate SPACE on the parliamentary agenda

20 national parliaments have a gender equality body

...12 of which have full legislative capacity

4) The parliament produces gender-sensitive LEGISLATION

21 Member States have a gender action plan or programme

7 Member States have not ratified the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women



5) The parliament's SYMBOLIC function

13 national parliaments have childcare facilities

19 national parliaments organised gender equality initiatives on their premises in 2018

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) 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 by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.
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European Institute for Gender Equality
Gedimino pr. 16
LT-01103 Vilnius
Lithuania

Contact details

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

[facebook.com/eige.europa.eu](https://www.facebook.com/eige.europa.eu)

twitter.com/eurogender

[youtube.com/user/eurogender](https://www.youtube.com/user/eurogender)

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/eige>

eige.sec@eige.europa.eu

+370 52157444



Publications Office
of the European Union