

# Gender balance in the European Green Deal

In December 2019, the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal <sup>(1)</sup>, a growth strategy with the overarching goal to make Europe climate neutral by 2050 and transform the EU into an equitable and prosperous society where no one is left behind. Alongside climate as the main focus, the EU action to deliver the European Green Deal includes energy, environment and oceans, agriculture, transport, industry, research and innovation, and finance and regional development <sup>(2)</sup>.

In March 2020, the European Commission adopted the EU gender equality strategy <sup>(3)</sup> presenting policy objectives and

initiatives to make significant progress towards a gender-equal Europe by 2025. One of its key objectives is to achieve gender balance in decision-making and in politics (with a representation of at least 40 % of each sex), which is a precondition for a properly functioning democracy and crucial for a successful leadership that can solve complex challenges.

This statistical note presents key findings on women's and men's representation in decision-making processes in the European Green Deal as a whole, and in the eight areas for action at the national and EU levels <sup>(4)</sup>.

## Gender-balanced representation in national governments for climate and energy portfolios, but agriculture and transport dominated by men

In November 2022, women accounted for 32 % of senior ministers in national governments (i.e. those with a seat on the cabinet). A breakdown by function <sup>(5)</sup> suggests that the allocation of portfolios is not gender neutral. Compared to their overall share of senior ministers (32 %), women are under-represented among ministers with basic (29 %) and economy (25 %) portfolios, fairly represented in infrastructure (31 %) portfolios and over-represented in sociocultural portfolios (43 %) <sup>(6)</sup>.

In the eight areas of the European Green Deal there is variation within these broad categories of government function. In the

infrastructure portfolio, some Green Deal areas have a better gender balance than overall, with gender parity among senior ministers with responsibilities for **climate** (50 % women), and gender balance (at least 40 % of each sex) in the area of **energy** (43 % women). Women are also slightly better represented in the area of **environment and oceans** (35 % v 32 %). However, women are under-represented among ministers with responsibilities for **agriculture** (under Economy, 15 % women) and **transport** (under Infrastructure, 14 % women). Women accounted for more than a third of senior ministers dealing with **research and innovation** (36 %), the only Green Deal area categorised as a sociocultural portfolio.

<sup>(1)</sup> Commission communication – The European Green Deal, COM(2019) 640 final, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF).

<sup>(2)</sup> These eight areas have been identified based on the areas displayed in the European Green Deal landing page, [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en).

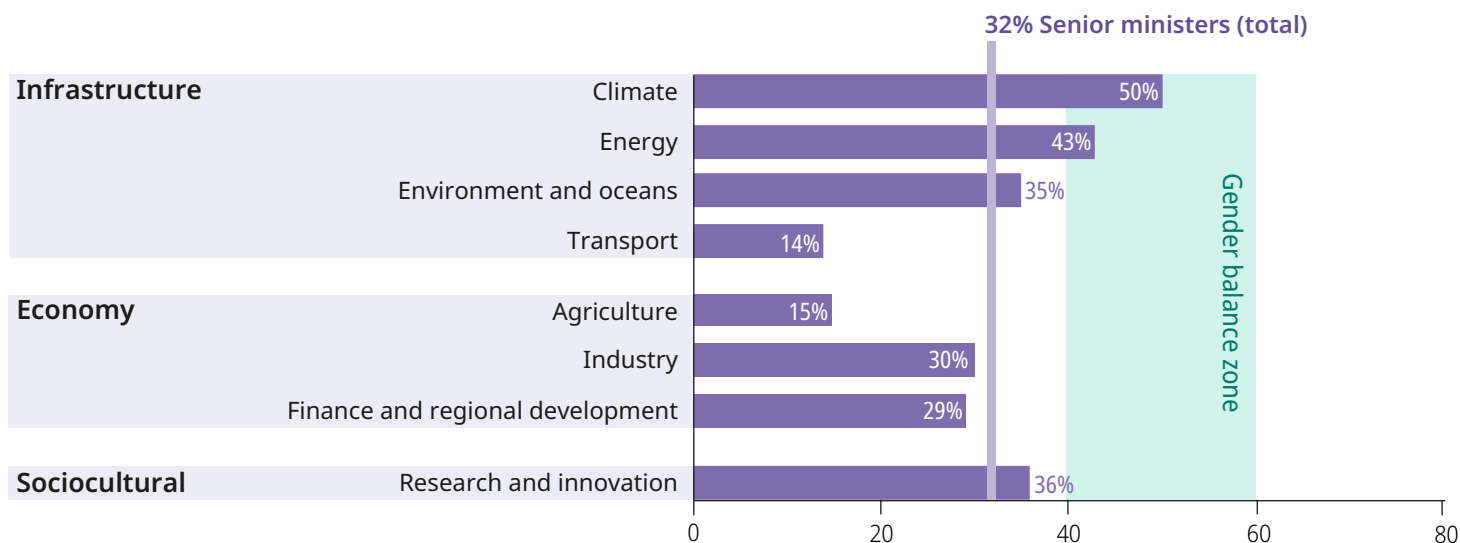
<sup>(3)</sup> Commission communication – A Union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>.

<sup>(4)</sup> All data used in this note are based on data collected and calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Data reflect the situation in May 2023 for the European Parliament and the European Commission, November 2022 for national government ministers and September 2022 for the committees of national parliaments. Data are largely drawn from existing datasets produced by EIGE, complemented, where relevant, with additional direct data collection and external data sources. A methodological annex contains all the underlying data, lists of positions and organisations covered, along with accompanying information and detailed methodological notes on the approach followed for the disaggregation of microdata. The methodological annex is available upon request, please contact [eige.sec@eige.europa.eu](mailto:eige.sec@eige.europa.eu).

<sup>(5)</sup> Based on the BEIS typology, which includes four types of state functions: B – Basic (foreign and internal affairs, defence, justice, etc.), E – Economy (finance, trade, industry, agriculture, etc.), I – Infrastructure (transport, communication, environment, etc.) and SC – Sociocultural functions (social affairs, health, children, family, youth, elderly people, education, science, culture, labour, sports, etc.). This classification is used by EIGE in its Gender Statistics Database for data collection on women and men in decision-making, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

<sup>(6)</sup> EIGE Gender Statistics Database – [National governments: ministers by seniority and function of government](#).

**Figure 1.** Share of women among senior ministers responsible for the eight areas of the European Green Deal, EU-27, November 2022



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (unpublished microdata).

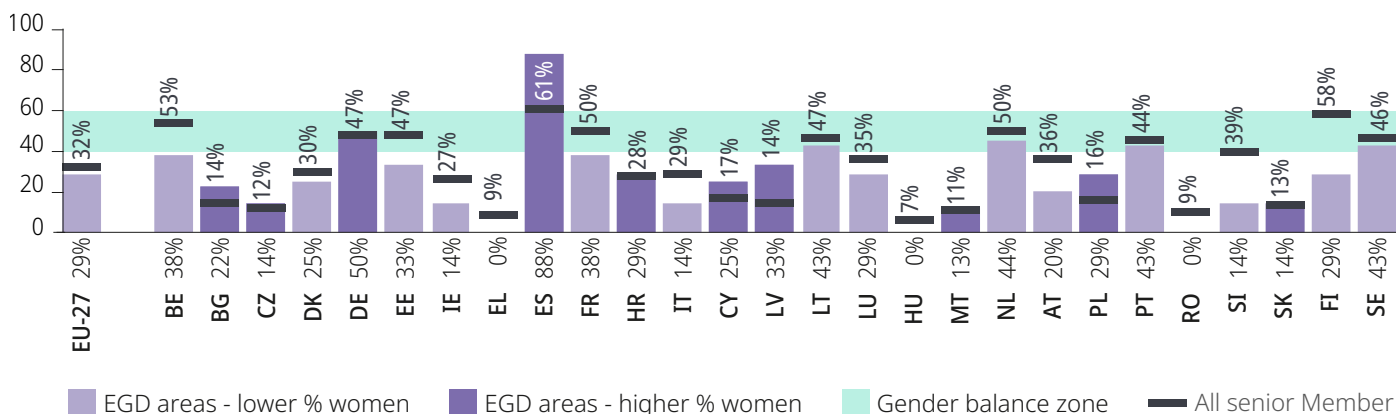
NB: Not all EU Member States have a senior minister with specific responsibilities for every European Green Deal area. Consequently, data for the following areas cover a limited number of Member States: Climate (13), Energy (21), Environment and oceans (26), Industry (18) and Research and innovation (23). All Member States, with the exception of Romania, have at least one senior minister with responsibilities in several areas (i.e. counted in more than one area).

### Fewer women as senior ministers with European Green Deal portfolios in the majority of Member States

Data by Member State on senior ministers with responsibilities in European Green Deal areas show that in most cases (17 Member States), women are less represented in these areas compared to the overall share of senior ministers, with Slovenia and Finland having the greatest differences (25 and

29 percentage points respectively) (7). Among the 10 Member States where women are better represented in European Green Deal areas, the difference is most pronounced (more than 10 percentage points) in Spain, Latvia and Poland (Figure 2) (8).

**Figure 2.** Share of women among senior ministers responsible for areas of the European Green Deal by Member State, EU-27, November 2022



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (unpublished microdata).

(7) Slovenia: 14 % in European Green Deal areas compared to 39 % for all senior ministers; Finland: 29 % compared to 58 %.

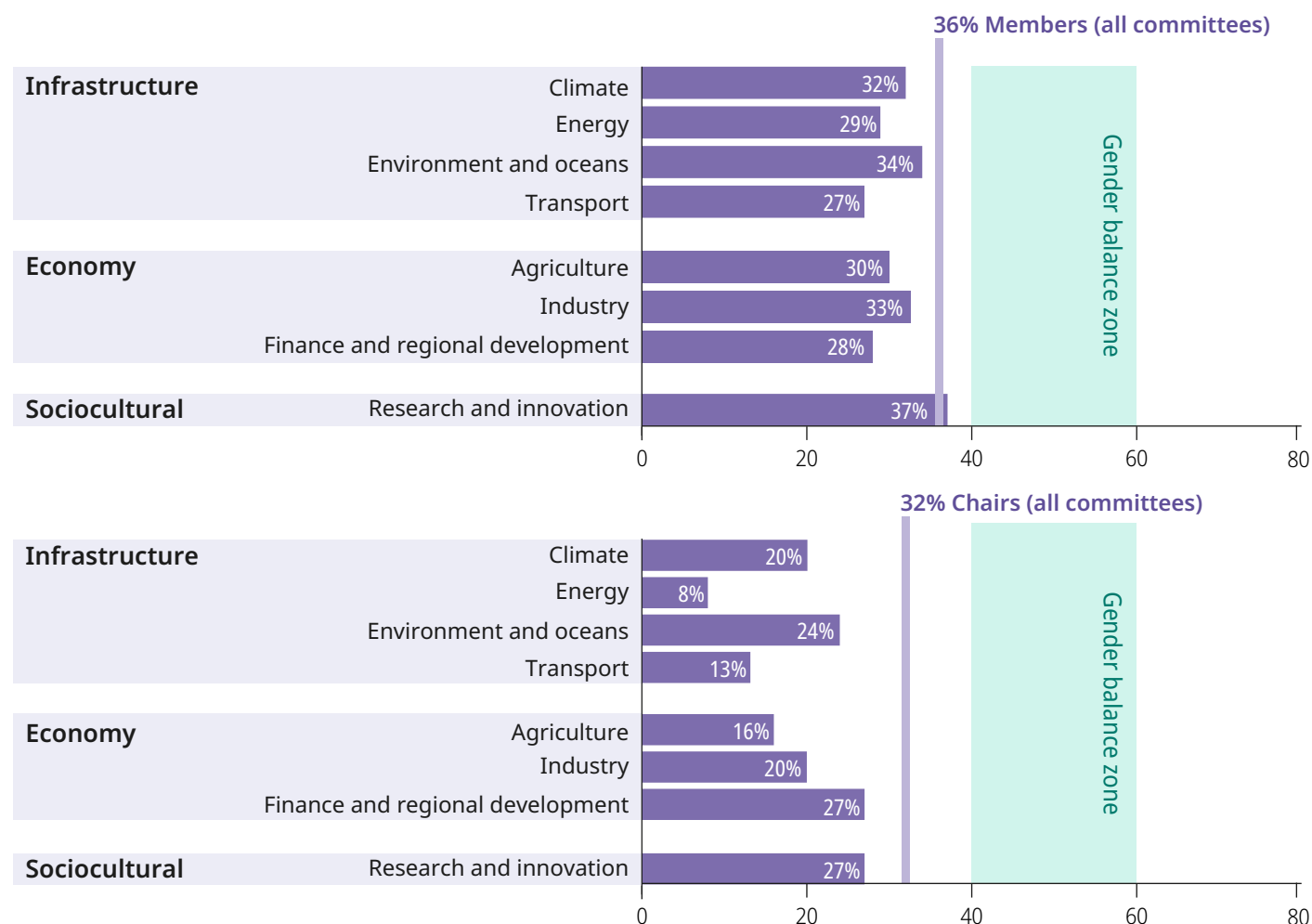
(8) Spain: 88 % in European Green Deal areas compared to 61 % for all senior ministers; Latvia: 33 % compared to 14 %; and Poland: 29 % compared to 16 %.

## Women under-represented as members and chairs of national parliamentary committees dealing with European Green Deal areas

In September 2022, women accounted for a third (33 %) of the members of all national parliaments in the Member States, which is reflected in the composition of parliamentary committees (36 % women members and 32 % women chairs)<sup>(9)</sup>. Considering only the subset of committees dealing with European Green Deal issues, data show that women were slightly better represented (compared to the overall representation as members and chairs) in committees dealing with the area of **research and innovation** (37 %), but less

represented in the remaining areas, accounting for less than 3 in 10 members in committees dealing with **energy** (29 %), **finance and regional development** (28 %) and **transport** (27 %) (Figure 3). Moreover, women were less likely to chair a committee in any European Green Deal area than other committees, and in particular in the areas of **agriculture**, **transport** and **energy**, where women make up less than a fifth of committee chairs (16 %, 13 % and 8 % respectively, Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Share of women among members and chairs of parliamentary committees dealing with eight areas of the European Green Deal, EU-27, September 2022



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (unpublished microdata).

NB: Data cover permanent/standing parliamentary committees in single/lower and the upper houses, together with joint committees of both houses, where applicable. Not all Member States have a parliamentary committee or senior minister with a specific responsibility for every European Green Deal area. Consequently, data for the following areas cover a limited number of Member States: Climate (12), Energy (19), Agriculture (22), Industry (12) and Research and innovation (19). All Member States with the exception of Bulgaria, Greece, Finland and Sweden have at least one parliamentary committee with responsibilities in several areas (i.e. counted in more than one area).

<sup>(9)</sup> EIGE Gender Statistics Database – [Parliamentary committees: president and members](#).

## National parliamentary committees dealing with European Green Deal areas have lower share of women in almost all Member States

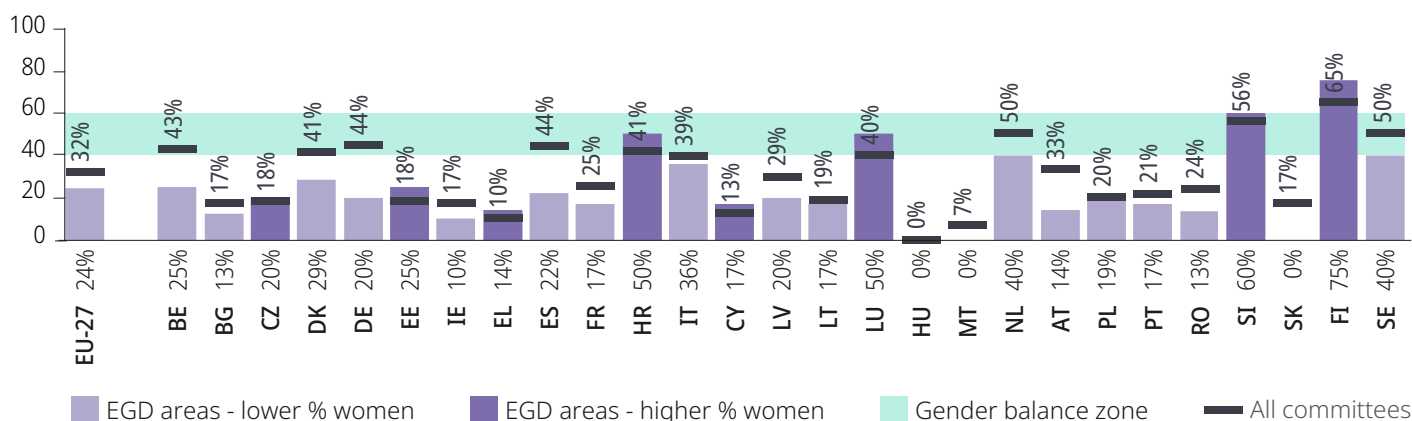
Data by Member State reveal that there are fewer women chairs of parliamentary committees dealing with European Green Deal areas compared to the overall number of chairs in more than two thirds of Member States (18), with Belgium, Germany, Spain, Austria and Slovakia having a difference of more than 15 percentage points (Figure 4). In contrast, in 8 Member States<sup>(10)</sup>, there is a higher share of women among chairs of committees in European Green Deal areas, with Luxembourg and Finland having a 10 percentage points difference. Noticeably, women are less represented as members of parliamentary committees related to European

Green Deal areas in almost all Member States, with only minor exceptions in Bulgaria and Lithuania<sup>(11)</sup>. The greatest differences are found in Malta and Slovenia (14 percentage points and 10 percentage points respectively)<sup>(12)</sup>.

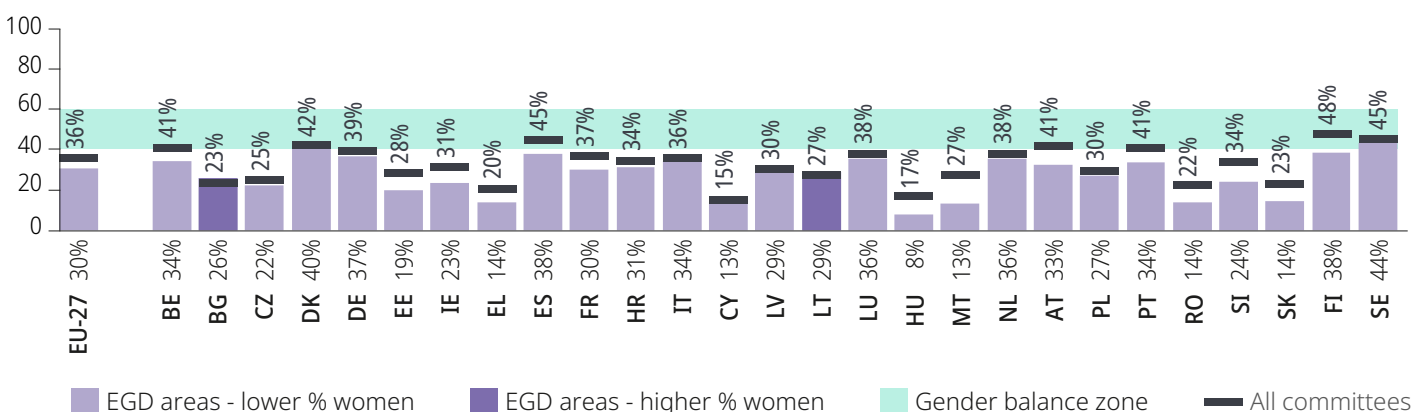
The under-representation of women in European Green Deal areas contrasts strikingly with the higher share of women members and chairs of all parliamentary committees with sociocultural functions (45 % and 43 % respectively), highlighting a marked and generalised horizontal gender segregation by policy area in national parliaments<sup>(13)</sup>.

**Figure 4.** Share of women among members and chairs of parliamentary committees dealing with areas of the European Green Deal by Member State, EU-27, September 2022

### Parliamentary committees - Chairs



### Parliamentary committees - Members



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database (unpublished microdata).

<sup>(10)</sup> Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Finland. In Hungary there are no women chairs of committees at all.

<sup>(11)</sup> Bulgaria: 26 % women in parliamentary committees in European Green Deal areas compared to 23 % in all committees; Lithuania: 29 % compared to 27 %.

<sup>(12)</sup> Malta: 13 % women in parliamentary committees in European Green Deal areas compared to 27 % in all committees; Slovenia: 24 % compared to 34 %.

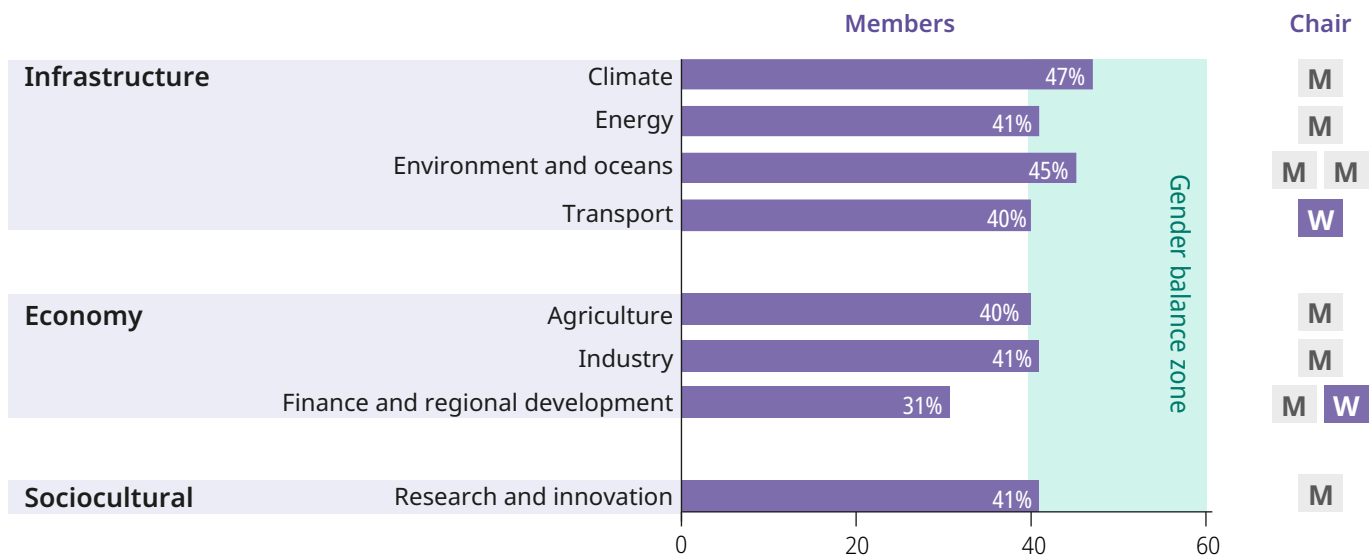
<sup>(13)</sup> EIGE Gender Statistics Database – [Parliamentary committees: president and members](#).

## European Parliament committees are gender balanced but are mostly chaired by men

In May 2023, committees of the European Parliament with responsibilities in the European Green Deal areas had a gender-balanced representation except for those dealing with finance and regional development areas (the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Regional

Development), where women accounted for 3 in 10 of the combined members (31 %). However, except for the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, all Green-Deal-related committees were chaired by men (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Share of women among members of European Parliament committees dealing with the eight areas in the European Green Deal, May 2023



Source: EIGE, direct data collection from the European Parliament’s website.

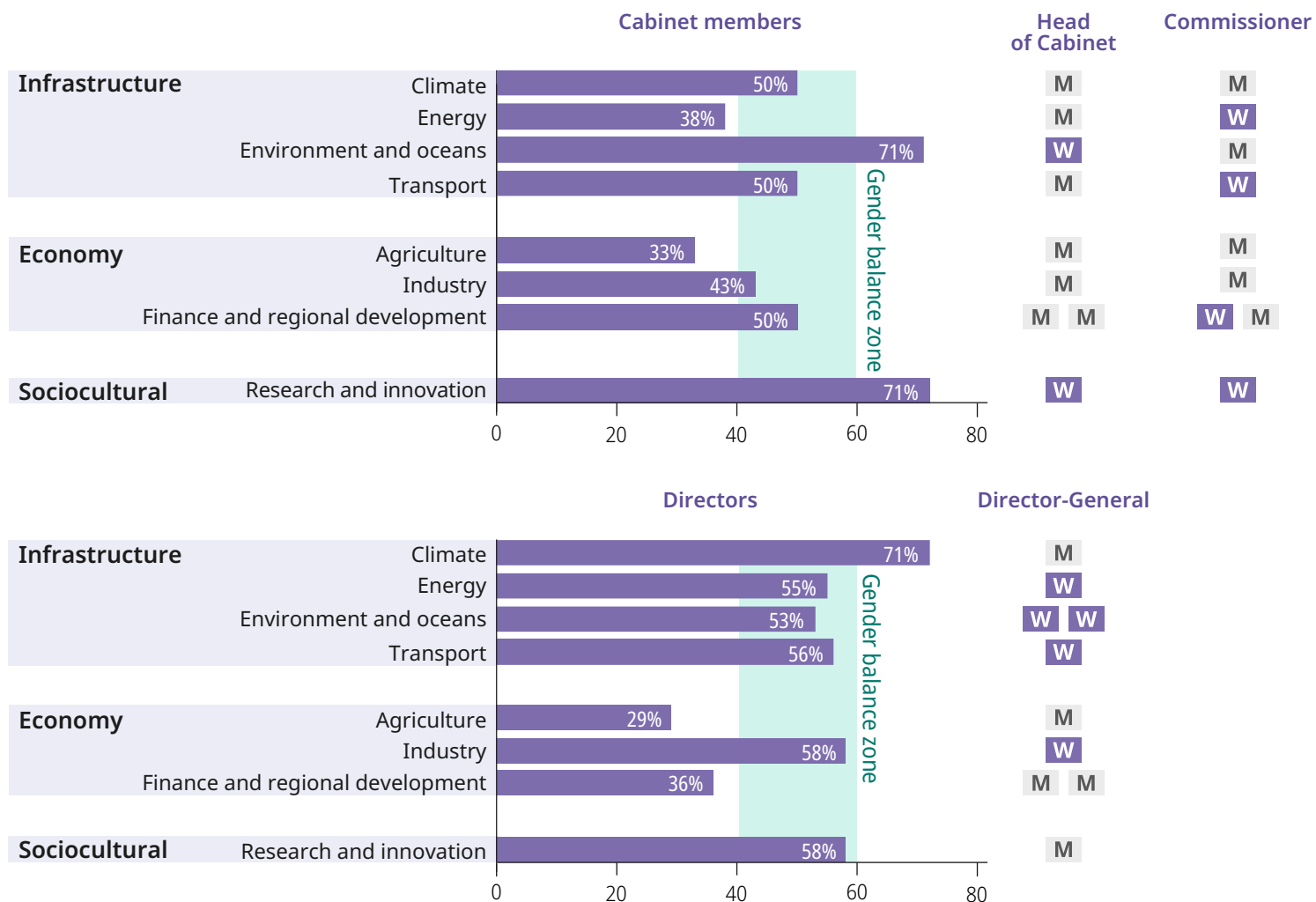
NB: The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety has responsibilities for two areas (climate, and environment and oceans). The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy has responsibilities for three areas (Energy, Industry, and Research and innovation).

## Gender balance among commissioners and directors-general, women outnumber men in climate, environment and oceans, and research and innovation areas

In May 2023, women held a third or less of key positions in cabinets of commissioners and key staff of directorates-general (DGs) in the area of agriculture. Women outnumbered men (i.e. account for 60 % or more) among the directors of the DG responsible for climate. In the cabinets of the commissioners responsible for the environment and

oceans and research and innovation, 5 out of 7 members (71 %) are women (Figure 6). The top positions were gender balanced: women account for 4 of the 9 commissioners (44 %) and half of the 10 directors-general (50 %); however, the heads of the cabinets were mainly men (2 in 9 headed by a woman, 22 %).

**Figure 6.** Share of women among commissioners, cabinet members, directors and DGs dealing with the eight areas of the European Green Deal in the European Commission, May 2023



Source: EIGE, direct data collection from the European Commission's website.

## Women account for 3 in 10 Members of the European Parliament meeting with lobby organisations about the European Green Deal

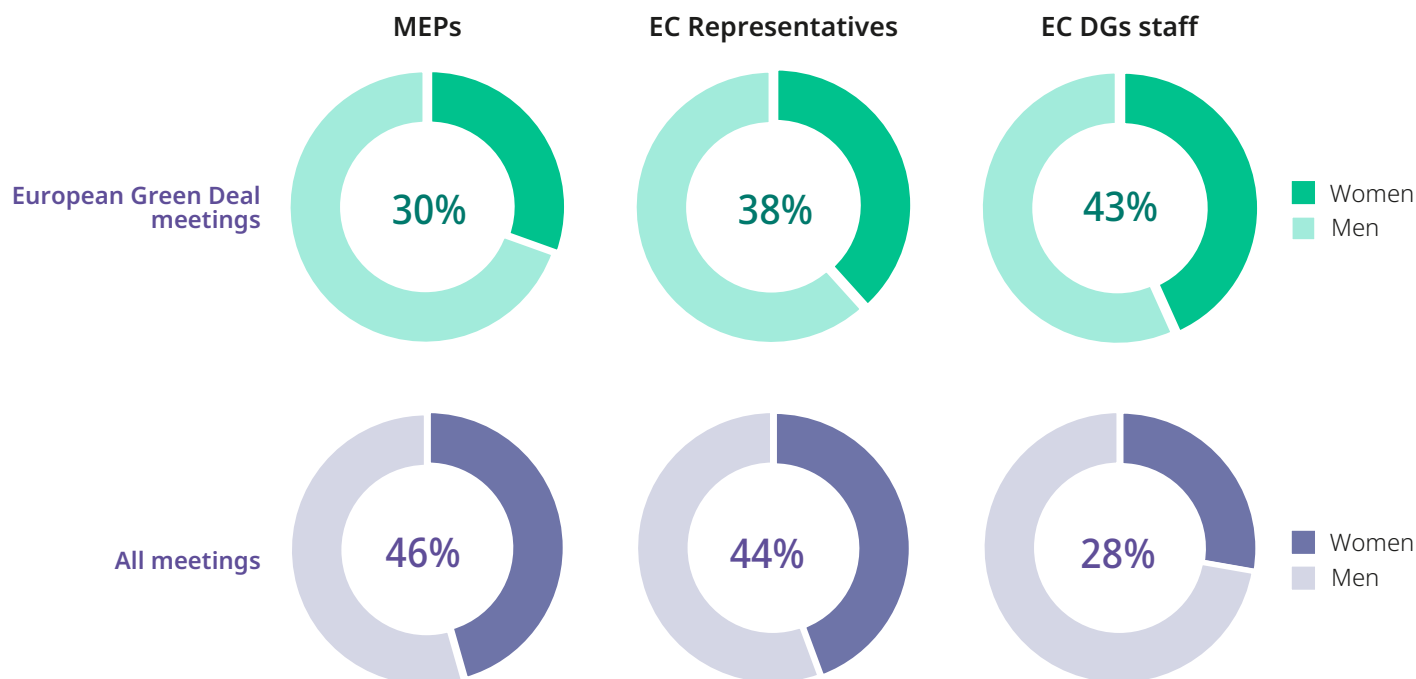
Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and representatives of the European Commission regularly meet with interest groups and individuals wishing to provide input into decisions and policymaking at the EU level. Between 2019 and 2023, MEPs held more than 44 300 meetings with interest groups, more than 660 of which dealt with the European Green Deal<sup>(14)</sup>. Women made up 30 % of MEPs who participated in the European Green Deal meetings, compared to under half (46 %) of women MEPs in all meetings (Figure 7). Over the

same period, in the meetings held by political roles in the European Commission (i.e. the president, vice-presidents, commissioners or cabinet members), fewer women also participated in meetings on the European Green Deal (38 %) than in all meetings (44 %) (15). The opposite was true, however, in meetings held by administrative staff of the European Commission (i.e. representatives of relevant DGs); women accounted for 43 % of those discussing the European Green Deal compared to 28 % overall.

<sup>(14)</sup> Data on meetings held by MEPs with organisations signed up to the EU's transparency register are obtained from the Integrity Watch Data Hub, which contains data compiled by Transparency International EU from the European Parliament website once a month. The dataset obtained reflects data updated on 1 May 2023. Based on data from the Integrity Watch Data Hub, between August 2019 and April 2023 44 358 meetings were held by MEPs with representatives of interest groups or individuals, 666 of which were about the European Green Deal.

<sup>(15)</sup> Information on meetings held between the European Commission and interest groups and individuals is compiled and published on the EU Open Data Portal data.europa.eu. Information on the date, the name of the representatives and the subject of the meeting are made publicly available in line with the strict rules on transparency from the European Commission. Data were extracted on 18 April 2023.

**Figure 7.** Share of women among MEPs and representatives and staff of the European Commission and in meetings with interest groups and individuals, 2019–2023



Sources: European Commission, [data.europa.eu](https://data.europa.eu), file generated on 18 April 2023, data cover January 2019 to April 2023; Integrity Watch Data Hub, European Parliament lobby meetings, data cover June 2019 to April 2023.

## EU delegations to international climate change discussions are well balanced

Climate change and environmental degradation are global challenges and, as such, require global response<sup>(16)</sup>. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is a series of United Nations climate change conferences with the goal of reviewing progress made by the members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to limit climate change. The EU representation in international discussions on climate change has generally been well gendered balanced in the last decade. In 2022, women

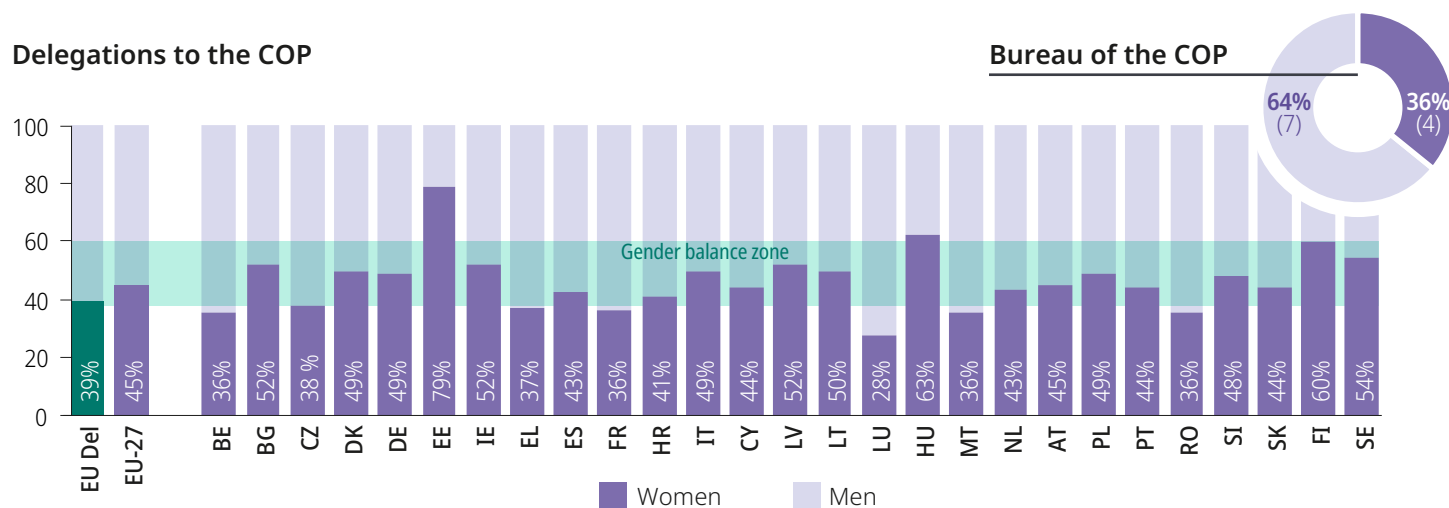
made up 45 % of delegates from EU Member States to the COP and 39 % of EU delegates; these figures have not changed much since 2012 (41 % and 39 % respectively)<sup>(17)</sup>. At the country level, national delegations had at least 30 % women in all cases except Luxembourg (28 %), while the Estonian delegation was predominantly made up of women (79 %). The Bureau of the COP for 2022 consisted of 11 members, four of which were women (36 %, down from 44 % in 2021)<sup>(18)</sup>.

<sup>(16)</sup> The 1994 UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The COP is the main decision-making body of the UNFCCC. The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015 at COP 21 is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. The European Green Deal is the backbone of the EU strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for a climate neutral economy, submitted to the UNFCCC in early 2020.

<sup>(17)</sup> EIGE Gender Statistics Database – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): EU and national delegations.

<sup>(18)</sup> EIGE Gender Statistics Database – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): Bureau of the Conference of Parties (COP).

**Figure 8.** Share of women among delegates to the COP and Bureau of the COP, EU Member States and EU delegation, December 2022



Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.

## Ways forward: more efforts are needed to address gender imbalances and ensure a just and equal green transition

Despite a balanced representation of women and men in top international negotiations about climate, women remain under-represented in the EU-level dialogue on the European Green Deal and relevant decision-making positions for climate action at both the EU and national levels, particularly in relation to the areas of agriculture, transport, and finance and regional development. There is a generalised horizontal segregation in national parliamentary committees, with women being under-represented in several areas of the European Green Deal compared to their overall level of representation in parliament. Still, the meaningful participation of women goes beyond achieving gender balance as it must ensure there is space for them as leaders and for sharing their expertise. Moreover, vertical segregation by policy area persists in the EU and

national parliamentary committees, with men dominating committee chairs in key areas for climate action.

The current gender imbalances risk producing policies that fail to adequately incorporate a gender perspective and overlook issues affecting women disproportionately. In order to deliver the European Green Deal, with a just and socially fair transition leaving no one behind, more efforts are needed to tackle the under-representation of women in key decision-making positions, particularly at the national level, honouring the EU and national commitments on equal representation in positions of power<sup>(19)</sup>. In this respect, it is vital to ensure the availability of data on decision-making by relevant areas in order to track progress towards the set goals.

<sup>(19)</sup> International and EU commitments include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the UN in 1979 and ratified by 189 countries to date; the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries at the World Conference on Women in 1995; the sustainable development goals, adopted by all UN members in 2015; the Council of Europe gender equality strategy 2018–2023; the European Commission gender equality strategy 2020–2025.

### European Institute for Gender Equality

We are an independent centre and the primary source for information on gender equality in the European Union. We contribute to making the European Union become a Union of Equality, where women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our societies.

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