

# Gender-sensitive Parliaments

## What is the tool for?

This is an online tool to support parliaments in assessing and monitoring gender-sensitivity in terms of their organisation and working procedures.

The European Union is strongly committed to promoting gender equality in accordance with international and European frameworks and policy guidelines. Equality between women and men is a fundamental EU value, an EU objective and a driver for economic growth. Gender equality means that women and men have equal opportunities to realise their individual potential – by contributing to their country's economic and social development, and benefitting from their participation in society.

Although in recent years there has been some progress in removing formal barriers to women's participation in politics, as well as attempts by the EU to implement gender quotas and raise awareness of this issue, women remain underrepresented at all levels of decision-making. On average, women occupy less than a third of seats in the national parliaments of the EU. Therefore, women's representation and involvement in political settings should be an essential aspect of democratic decision-making processes. Moreover, research shows that the active inclusion of women into political decision-making has many consistent positive effects on society as a whole that contribute to the improvement of citizens' lives.

Parliaments - local, regional, national or European - are the main democratic institutions at the Member States, and they have the political and cultural duty to initiate and maintain political processes and policies that are aimed at making women's representation effective. Therefore, the different parliaments should ensure that their efforts to work toward a fairer society include a gender dimension.

This online tool is part of a wider effort by EIGE to provide European and national public institutions with practical instruments to foster and strengthen a gender-oriented institutional transformation.

**What are gender-sensitive parliaments?**

A parliament is gender-sensitive when it actively respects and delivers on gender equality. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) defines parliament gender-sensitivity as follows:

A parliament that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its composition, structures, operations, methods and work. Gender-sensitive parliaments remove the barriers to women's full participation and offer a positive example or model to society at large. They ensure that their operations and resources are used effectively towards promoting gender equality. A gender-sensitive parliament is one in which there are no barriers – substantive, structural or cultural – to women's full participation and to equality between its men and women members and staff. It is not only a place where women can work, but also one where women want to work and contribute. A gender-sensitive parliament sets a positive example by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among society both nationally and internationally. A gender-sensitive parliament is therefore a modern parliament; one that addresses and reflects the equality demands of a modern society. Ultimately, it is a parliament that is more efficient, effective and legitimate.

Parliaments are working organisations with rules, norms, internal procedures, and a specific gendered culture like any other working place; being a man or a woman at a parliament makes a difference in terms of power and influence. Parliaments are, however, also very specific work places as they are symbols of democracy and legality, and responsible for making laws, deciding taxes and overseeing the government via hearings and inquiries.

Gender-sensitive parliaments are not a simple and "static" phenomenon, but display a high level of complexity and change across countries and across time. There is not a single path that leads to gender-sensitivity: one country may start from increasing the number of women MPs, while another may focus on creating more gender-sensitive political parties. What is common for all is that gender-sensitive parliamentary institutions are more efficient and able to better respond to the needs of women and men.

Gender-sensitive parliaments include both women and men in their work; they are aware that internal rules and norms are not gender-neutral; and make efforts to pursue gender equality both internally and externally through gender-sensitive policies. Ultimately, concentrating on gender equality means contributing to building a fairer society where social justice is a shared value, effectively implemented.

# Is your parliament gender-sensitive?

## DOES THIS SOUND RIGHT?

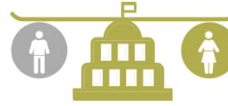
**51%** of the **population** are women

**30%** of the members of national **parliaments** in the EU are **women**

**3 out of 28** Member States have gender-balanced parliaments with **over 40% of women**

at the current growth rate, it would take another **20 years** to achieve gender-balance in national parliaments

## WHY DO WE NEED GENDER-SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS?



For more **fair, legitimate and democratic** political institutions



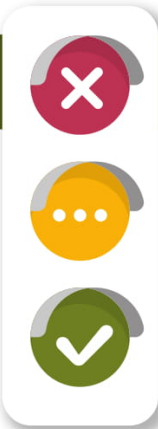
For a **gender-balanced** representation



For getting both **women's and men's** interests on the **political agenda**

Use EIGE's tool to see how responsive your parliament is to the different needs of women and men. Find out what changes are needed to make your parliament **more gender-sensitive!**

**WITH THIS EVIDENCE, YOU CAN MAKE YOUR CASE!**



## FIND OUT WITH OUR GENDER-SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS TOOL



### WHAT is the tool for?

- Find out the strengths and weaknesses of your parliament



### WHO can use it?

- Open version available to anyone: civil society, media, academia
- In-depth version: national and regional parliaments



### HOW does the tool work?

Answer questions and get your parliament's scores on:

- Equal opportunities to **ENTER** the parliament
- Equal opportunities to **INFLUENCE** the parliament
- Adequate **SPACE** to women's interests on parliamentary agenda
- Gender-sensitive **LEGISLATION**
- The parliament's **SYMBOLIC** function



### WHAT do you need?

Assess the level of gender-sensitivity of your parliament by collecting public information about:

- Electoral and political system
- Institutional structures
- Agendas / topics of legislation
- Public communications

**Get the GREEN LIGHT!**

