

Gender stereotypes

What are gender stereotypes?

"...traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of roles between women and men in the home, in the workplace and in society at large, with women depicted as running the house and caring for children while men are depicted as wage-earners and protectors"

[Report on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in the EU](#), the European Parliament, 2012

Even now when more women than ever before are hired to lead organisations and more men use their right to parental leave the effects of gender stereotyping cannot be underestimated. One still observes the **persistence of stereotypical gender perceptions** across different generations, countries of the European Union and fields of life. It is in most everyday realities that gender matters – in education, work, family and relationships, health, leisure, determination of identity, society life. Despite the changing realities gender stereotypes remain deeply ingrained, still very vivid and consistent.

In many different ways gender stereotypes have far-reaching societal influence and are detrimental to the lives of both, women and men. They **limit people's freedom and choices**. They lead to discrimination. They cause unnecessary suffering. Because of the insidious effects gender stereotypes need to be addressed on different levels and by different actors.

EIGE's work

In 2011 launched a study of “collected narratives on gender perceptions in 27 EU Member States”. The final results were published in 2013. The study analysed the presence and effects of gender stereotypes across the EU, based on qualitative interviews with ordinary people.

The analysis of the narratives led to valuable insights, which are presented through a comprehensive Synthesis report of the study.

Synthesis report: A study of collected narratives on gender perceptions in the 27 EU Member States



The researchers have actually gone to each of the EU Member States and talked to at least 8 people of different gender, age, background. They collected 514 stories from 27 EU Member States, based on the interviews with 216 persons. The narratives are stored in original languages, all with English translated fragments.

Collection of gender stories



By telling about their own experiences the people who got interviewed gave an idea of their own attitudes, reflected on the views of others and remembered everyday situations where they or the people they knew were treated differently for one or the other reason.

Through these stories the study traced and mapped existing gender norms and perceptions as well as the impact of gender stereotypes on the lives of people, including their educational and vocational choices, relationships, everyday life, health, power, violence, participation in social life.

All the different real life episodes brought together here make you laugh, they make you remember, some of them shock you, the others make you sad. But they all give a feeling of us living in a world where one's gender plays a role, where things happen in people lives just because they are women and men, where they are still treated and valued differently because of the length of their hair or the type of their clothes. While reading the stories you might think you are talking to your neighbor or friend, to your parent or employer. Amazingly enough you might find a story which reads like our own one.

The project turned out to be truly unique as it enabled everyone to “touch” the realities of many people. The online collection of personal stories allows the reader to see how gender actually makes a difference in the lives of both women and men, young and old, from Lithuania and Sweden to the UK and Spain.

For those who are interested and eager to further analyse the rich materials, we make available the collection of stories in MAXQDA database to allow for more qualitative data analysis possibilities.

[Download the gender narratives in maxqda format \(27,3MB, .zip\)](#)