

Sexism at work

Eradicating sexism to change the face of the EU

Sexism continues to have an impact on our workplaces and societies, with **women being under-represented in most decision-making positions**.

In September 2020, according to EIGE's Gender Statistics Database, 86 % of presidents and prime ministers and 69 % of government ministers in the EU-28 are men^[1]. Across the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, 66 % of senior administrators are men^[2]. The majority of EU institutions are led by men^[3].

Only 20 years ago, the gap between women and men was even more pronounced. 100 % of EU countries and 90 % of EU institutions were led by men^[4]. 86 % of senior administrators in the EU institutions were men^[5].

Women in leadership positions are still a relatively new phenomenon. This reality shapes our conscious and unconscious beliefs about who should hold what role in the work context. When asked to draw a leader, most people will draw a man^[6].

As this handbook has shown, there is still some way to go to end sexism. Being able to identify sexism and having the right tools to tackle it will help organisations bring in and retain more women. This will help them change the face of the EU to better represent the reality of its citizens.

Footnotes

[1] EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 'National governments: presidents and prime-ministers' (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_gov__wmid_natgov_pres); EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 'National governments: ministers by seniority and function of government' (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_gov__wmid_natgov_minis).

[2] EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 'European Union institutions: senior administrators' (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_admin_eur__wmid_euadmin_eurins/hbar).

[3] In July 2020, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the European Ombudsman were led by women. The European Parliament, the European Council, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Court of Auditors, the European External Action Service, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and the European Data Protection Supervisor were chaired or run by men.

[4] In 1999, the presidents and prime ministers of existing EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom) were all men. In July 1999, the European Parliament was led by a woman. The European Council, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and the European Ombudsman, and were led by men. The European External Action Service and European Data Protection Supervisor had not yet been created.

[5] EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 'European Union institutions: senior administrators', 1999 (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_adm_eur__wmid_euadmin_eurins/hbar/year:1999/geo:EU/EGROUP:EUR_INST/sex:M,W/UNIT:PC/POSITION:ADMIN/ENTITY:TOT,EC,CNCL,EPARL).

[6] Criado Perez, 2019.