

# Quotas to remedy gender inequality can bring big change in politics and business



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EIGE has published its latest data on women and men in decision-making across the EU, in the seven countries that receive support from the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), and in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

[Statistical brief: gender balance in politics](#)



[Statistical brief: gender balance in largest listed companies](#)



## Key findings

## Politics

### Men still outnumber women in parliaments across Europe

- In November 2019, two thirds of EU parliamentarians were men (67.8 %) and one-third were women (32.2 %).
- Almost three quarters of parliamentarians in the IPA beneficiaries are men (73.4 %). Only Montenegro has a gender-balanced parliament.

### Men dominate political party leadership

- In November 2019, women accounted for less than one in five (17.1 %) leaders of major political parties in the Member States.
- In the IPA beneficiaries, women account for 6.5 % of political party leaders.
- None of the major political parties in Czechia, Hungary, Malta or Slovakia has had a woman leader since the first data collection in 2011. The same is true of all IPA beneficiaries except Turkey.

### Less than half of EU countries have legislative quotas...

- Legislative candidate quotas, which aim to ensure a minimum proportion of each gender amongst candidates, are currently in place in 11 Member States and in all IPA beneficiaries except Turkey. Targets range from 50 % women in Belgium and France to 30 % in Ireland.
- Ensuring a minimum proportion of each gender on candidate lists does not necessarily translate into electoral gains and only the Spanish and Portuguese parliaments have so far reached their quota targets (40 % and 33 % respectively).
- In the IPA beneficiaries, the Albanian, Kosovo, North Macedonian and Serbian parliaments have reached their respective quota targets.

### ...yet quotas can bring big change over time

- The proportion of women members of parliament in countries with legislative candidate quotas has almost doubled since 2004, from 18.2 % to 34.0 %. This is an increase of 15 percentage points.
- Countries without quotas increased from 24.8 % to 30.8 % since 2004. This is an increase of just 6.0 percentage points.
- Without change, countries with legislative quotas will achieve gender balance in six years, whereas those taking no action will need more than two decades.

## Business

### The share of women on boards is at an all-time high

- In October 2019, the share of women on boards of the largest publicly listed companies in the EU has more than doubled to 28.8 % from 11.9 % in 2010.
- However, more than seven in 10 board members are still men. France is the only country where gender balance has been achieved on company boards (45.2 %).
- In the IPA beneficiaries, women hold on average just 17.8 % of board-level positions.

### The impact of action to bring in more women is striking

- Since 2010, countries that have taken legislative action have seen a rise of 27.2 percentage points, resulting in 36.5 % women on boards.
- Countries that have implemented non-regulatory measures have seen half that progress since 2010, with a rise of 14.3 percentage points, resulting in 28.1 % women on boards.
- Countries that have taken no action have seen almost no progress.

### Progress is slower at senior executive level

- In the EU, women account for just 18.6 % of senior executive positions in the largest listed companies.
- Countries that have taken legislative action and have the highest proportion of women board members actually have the lowest share of women senior executives (14.7 %).
- Fewer than one in 10 in the largest listed companies in the EU have a woman chair or CEO.

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## Further reading

[Gender Statistics Database: Women and men in decision-making](#)



[EIGE's Gender Statistics Database: evidence for decisions](#)

