

New report: Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations

WOMEN UNDER-REPRESENTED IN DECISION-MAKING IN MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

Women hold only 22 % of strategic decision-making posts in the public media and only 12 % in the private media organisations in the EU-27– as the research of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows. ‘Increased number of women in the decision-making structures of media organisations would bring social justice, better use of talents and innovative decisions. It would also improve media content.’ - says Virnija Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

EIGE’s new report ‘Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations presents for the first time reliable and comparable EU-wide data on women and men in decision making in the media sector. The report will support policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to achieve gender equality.

Challenging the glass ceiling

EIGE’s report points out that the organisational culture within media structures remains largely masculine, despite the fact that women considerably outnumber men in university-level education in this field and constitute nearly half the workforce within the media industry. Women continue to be significantly underrepresented in decision-making structures, both at operational levels as senior managers and at strategic levels, as chief executive officers and board members of major media organisations across the EU Member States.

There is a significant difference between the private and public media sectors. In public media organisations the ratio of women to men occupying strategic decision-making position is only 1 in 5, whereas in private media organisations it decreases to only 1 in 10. Within the decision-making boards of media organisations women represent only 25% of all members.

Internal equality policies for gender balance in decision making

Despite the fact that organisations implementing gender equality policies and measures are more likely to have a higher proportion of women in strategic decision-making positions, EIGE’s research shows that gender-equality plans, diversity policies and codes of conduct exist only in around a quarter of the surveyed media organisations. Only few organisations have formal mechanisms in place to monitor their gender equality policies. Sixteen percent of the surveyed organisations have a committee responsible for equality-policy issues, 14 % have an equality/diversity officer and 9 % an equality/diversity department. In general, public media organisations are more likely than private ones to have a gender equality policy, code or measure in place.

Whose freedom is protected?

Self-regulation has been the main strategy for the media industry. ‘Many politicians have been reluctant to take action concerning gender equality in the media because there is a risk that it could be seen as a form of censorship or a way of limiting freedom of expression, if the media industry becomes more regulated. On the other hand, it is time to think whose freedom of expression is being protected or hampered. Until now news agendas have been mostly about men for men.’ says Dr Maria Edström, expert on women and the media from the University of Gothenburg.



More women in the media – to shape gender-equal society

Based on EIGE's report, the Council of the European Union has adopted conclusions on 'Advancing Women's Roles as Decision-Makers in the Media' and took note of the first indicators for monitoring the implementation of the area of Women and the Media of the Beijing Platform for Action within the EU Member States.

In line with the findings presented in EIGE's report, the Council calls on the Member States and the European Commission to take active measures to foster gender equality at all levels, including women's advancement in decision-making roles in the media industry. The Council also calls for enhancing awareness of gender equality within the media sector and the exchange of good practices between Member States in this area, which will support the process of achieving a gender-equal society.

The full report 'Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations' is available at <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/advancing-gender-equality-in-decision-making-in-media-organisations-report>

Report's factsheet: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/fact-sheet-advancing-gender-equality-in-decision-making-in-media-organisations>

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