

Policy Context

A global consensus to address environmental issues - particularly concerning climate change and its risks - is increasing gradually, with a focus on resource insecurity, climatic uncertainty, social dislocation and high economic cost. Awareness of the differentiated effects of environmental issues on women and men and the ways in which gender inequalities undermine women's ability to respond to these threats is increasing; strengthened by the indication of women's and men's different consumption habits.

Climate Change Mitigation in the EU in general

- Implements measures in energy efficiency, sustainable transport and carbon capture and storage and assumed a pioneering role in international conventions on climate change.

Conclusions of the Council of the European Union (June 2012)

- Stress the urgent need to improve gender equality in decision-making in the field of climate change mitigation, especially the transport and energy sectors.
- Stress that gender-based prejudices and stereotypes help perpetuate a gender-segregated educational system and labour market, including the areas of the green economy, which are most vital for climate change mitigation (e.g. transport and energy sectors).

The European Parliament (2007 – 12)

- Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that climate change action does not negatively impact gender equality and to mainstream gender into climate policies.
- Proposes the move to a 'green economy' and calls for research on its impact on women and their role in the transition.

The European Commission

- Considers energy and transport as a priority area (COM(2013)0216 final).

The strategic objectives of the BPfA and the EU indicators

- K.1.** Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.
- K.2.** Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.
- K.3.** Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The indicators in this critical area of concern were developed recently following the initiative of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU. As environmental challenges are important to women's situations, these indicators focus on the influence women hold in important climate change decision-making arenas, especially climate change mitigation. Further, they assess the proportion of women and men in the fields of natural science and technologies and analyse gender segregation within educational choices. Indicators concerning the second and third strategic objectives of Area K of the BPfA are not yet available. Thus, these objectives - calling for a better integration of a gender perspective in environmental policies and programmes - remain to be addressed.

The database, Women and men in the EU - facts and figures, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality provides the latest data and information on these indicators, available at:

<http://eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-men-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>

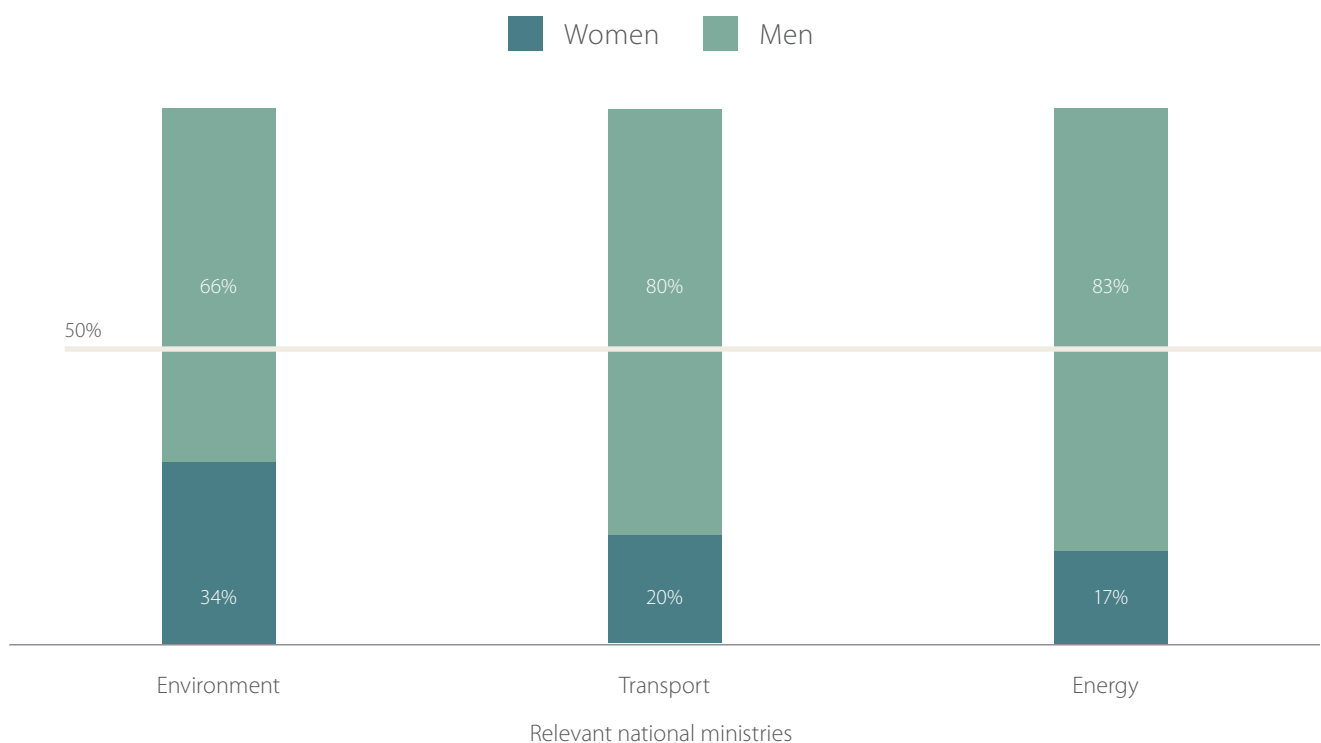
Findings from EU-wide data

Slow progress in involving women in environmental decision-making

Involving women in strategic climate-related decisions is not just a democratic imperative, but vital in considering how environmental policies and programmes affect women and men. The majority of decision-makers in the



PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN HIGH-LEVEL POSITIONS IN NATIONAL MINISTRIES, 2011



Source: EIGE, Gender Equality and Climate Change, 2012.

EU in this area are men and the top levels of the national ministries, dealing with climate change are male-dominated. Overall, women represented 19 % of senior ministers and 34 % of the top administrators in Environment, Energy and Transport Ministries in the EU in 2013.

Women are more successful in reaching top positions in the environment sector compared to energy and transport sectors. In 2011, women were best represented in environment ministries, holding around a third of top level positions in the ministries (34 %).

Similarly, women remain under-represented in EU-wide climate institutions. In 2013, women held about a quarter (27 %) of decision-making positions in the relevant Directorate-Generals of the European Commission.

Women are seemingly better represented in climate-related Committees of the European Parliament (2010-14): they make up 38 % of members in the relevant Committees, best represented in the environmental arena, accounting for 49 % of those in the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee.

The 'glass ceiling' effect seems to be persistent at both national and EU levels, with a proportionate decrease of women at the highest level of positions.

Number of women in decision-making on climate change at international level has increased

Women's progress has been greatest in the main climate institutions of the UN, specifically within the Subsidiary

Bodies to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change where women's representation increased steadily between 2009 and 2012.

Within the delegations to the UN Conference of the Parties, women have also made progress over the last five years, although to a lesser extent: from 36 % (2004-2008) to 39 % (2008-2012).

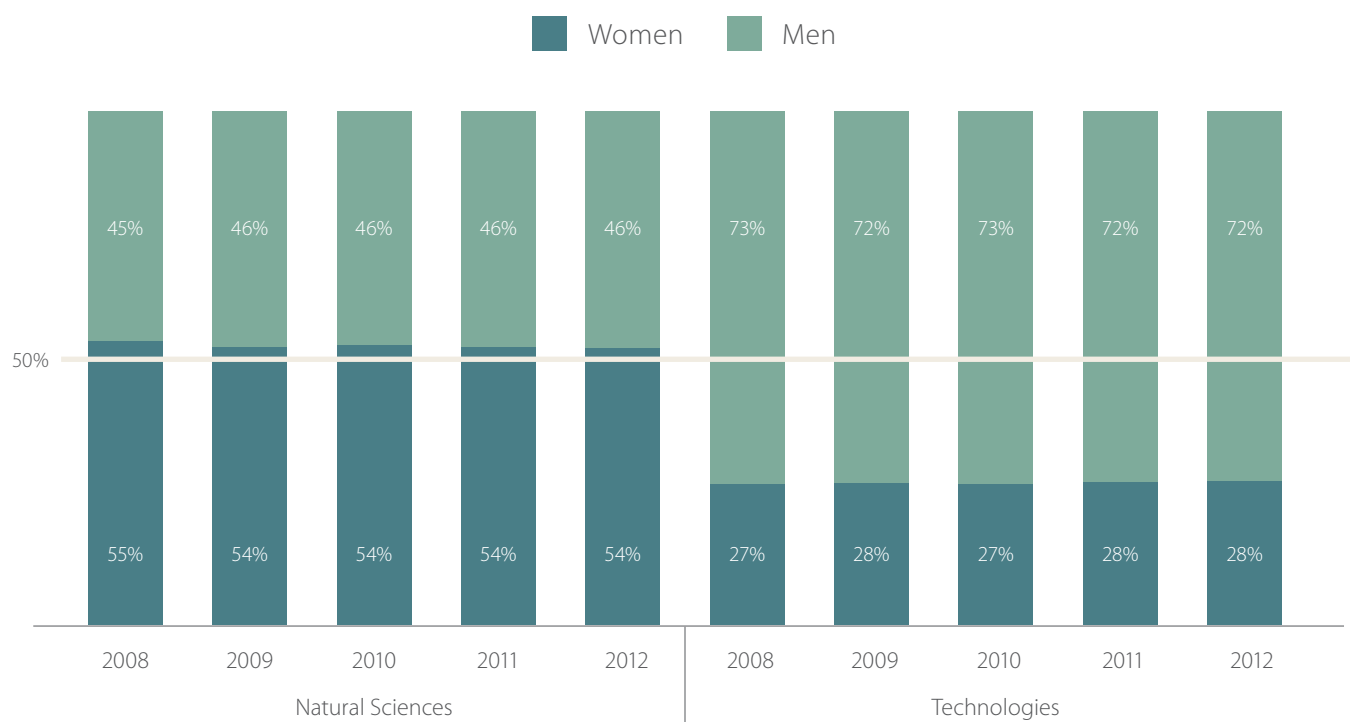
Men continue to dominate technology-related degrees

There are seven fields that typically support careers in the environment, energy and transport sectors — categorised either as natural sciences (life sciences and physical sciences) or technologies (engineering and engineering trades; manufacturing and processing; architecture and building; transport services; and environmental protection). Across the EU, a good gender balance within the natural sciences exists, although men continue to dominate technology-related degrees.

Based on the assumption that accessing jobs in environment related fields requires qualifications in the above mentioned areas, women have little or limited chances of entering related employment and progressing in these industries. In 2010, women accounted for only a fifth (22 %) of EU employees in electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply sectors, transportation and storage.



PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN TERTIARY GRADUATES IN NATURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES, 2008-2012



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics.

Educational qualifications may not be the only barriers to women's participation and advancement in the energy and transport sectors. Other factors include the persistence of gender stereotypes, the pressure to travel extensively, as well as unfavourable to women working environment.

Nonetheless, it is possible to assume that receiving education and training in the field of technologies facilitates employment in these industries. As such, the under-representation

of women amongst such graduates acts as an obstacle to the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims to challenge segmentation between different workers in the labour market. Furthermore, it threatens the achievement of objectives of the European Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-15), which recognises segregation in both education and the labour market as a key cause of the gender pay gap.

Useful initiatives:

Diverse approaches to integrate gender aspects in environmental decision-making have been employed by the Member States. The Austrian climate programme promoted the active involvement of women in environmental policy decision-making and the integration of gender perspective. In Austria, the city of Vienna has addressed gender-responsive planning for more than twenty years and gender-related topics are well integrated into urban planning. In Germany, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) applies the guiding principle of gender equity, both within its own authority and in funding projects through associates.

Increased application of gender mainstreaming was reported by Lithuania, where the national programmes for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men have addressed issues of women and the environment since 2003. This has included promoting cooperation between NGOs through the integration of equality issues in environmental projects, and through government-led environmental programmes, including the opportunity to profit equally from the results of these projects. In Slovenia, The Rural Development Programme 2007–13 systematically encouraged equal opportunities and accessibility to all measures. Subsequently, a new Rural Development Plan 2014–20, that follows sustainability goals, has been adopted. Agricultural and rural development measures will be used to improve living standards and enhance gender equality. In the Czech Republic in 2010, the Ministry of the Environment developed an approach to incorporate a gender-equality perspective into projects and plans with significant impacts on the environment, such as plans for construction, urban greenery or transport services, like removal and leakage prevention of substances that are closely connected to women's health.



ADVANCEMENTS AND OBSTACLES IN AREA K: WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ADVANCEMENTS

- Women's representation in decision-making positions on the environment and in international delegations to the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC has improved.
- Women's presence in degrees and professions relating to the environment has increased.
- Discussions on the inter-relationship between climate change and gender are emphasised.
- Member States aim to increase women's presence in science and technology education.

OBSTACLES

- Global challenges such as climate change impact on women and men differently.
- Women are under-represented in environmental decision-making at all levels (national, European and international).
- Women are under-represented in all environment-related degrees and especially in degrees, professions and political positions that relate to energy and transport.
- Mainstreaming gender in environmental policies is challenging and gender objectives are rarely included in environmental strategies.
- An understanding of gendered energy production and consumption patterns is insufficient.

The way forward for the EU

- Gain a better understanding of the relationship between gender and the environment to capture the impact of environmental policies or programmes on women and men.
- Effectively mainstream gender considerations when responding to global challenges (e.g. climate change, green growth).
- Acknowledge that women may be more vulnerable to climate changes and specifically consider the impact on women belonging to minority groups.
- Ensure gender-sensitivity of policies by balancing women's representation in decision-making positions to account for women's needs and contributions.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policy-makers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

More information: <http://eige.europe.eu>

The Resource and Documentation Centre (RDC) of the European Institute for Gender Equality is an innovative and practical tool developed to assist in locating key resources on gender equality, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among those with an interest in gender equality policies and practices and to offer an online space for discussion and debate.

More information: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/rdc>



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