

Increasing the representation of women in political decision-making is a prerequisite for gender equality as it benefits society, politics and democracy. The EIGE study, 'Women in power and decision-making', focuses on identifying good practices in three areas:

- competence development;
- awareness-raising;
- advocacy and political tools on gender balance.

Competence development

In order to attract more women to politics, mechanisms have increasingly been established — within a party or by external, cross-party initiatives — to support female candidates and politicians. Most big parties have programmes for skills and competence development with the aim of empowering women. Similar cross-party initiatives are taken by NGOs and feminist organisations.

Competence development and **awareness-raising** are often closely interlinked to tackle women's under-representation in politics as they complement and reinforce each other. This factsheet presents inspiring good practices in these two fields from different Member States.



The applied tools include, for instance, mentoring, training courses and seminars, public campaigns and work with the media, as well as the establishment of knowledge and expertise networks to support the participation of women in political decision-making. The selected examples of good practices demonstrate a comprehensive mix of measures that may also inspire other Member States.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Example 1:
From Woman to Woman — Portugal
(Portuguese network of young people for gender equality)

An innovative project aimed at motivating and empowering young women to take part in politics. It presents an interesting and transferable example of improving the confidence and skills of young women via mentoring schemes, competence development programmes and social transformation projects. It had a cross-party dimension and was given good visibility in the media.

Example 2:
Women, power, politics — Helene Weber Kolleg — Germany
(European academy for women in politics and business)

A well-established initiative focusing on mobilising women to take political mandate at local level. It creatively combines a range of interlinked tools: the Helene Weber award, a comprehensive mentoring programme, local projects by award winners and an informative website. This cross-party project is supported by the Federal Government. The model for a multi-faceted approach is also relevant for other countries.

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising is a central tool for overcoming inequalities and challenging stereotypes. Awareness-raising campaigns are recognised as being among the most efficient and effective means of communicating information, particularly to the general public, but also to smaller target groups.

Awareness-raising campaigns promote gender equality in elections, provide information about women candidates and convince political parties and/or voters to pay attention to gender balance. As numerous examples demonstrate, a well-designed campaign can move things forward and have an important impact on attitudes, behaviours and beliefs.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN AWARENESS-RAISING

Example 1:

Stup Strama — Croatia

(Centre for education, counselling and research — CESI)

An example of a small and innovative campaign prior to elections that has been running since 2007. Launched by a feminist organisation, it has been naming and shaming those political parties that persist in ignoring quota legislation — 40 % for each sex in the electoral lists — by setting up ‘pillars of shame’ in the streets of Zagreb and other cities. Its web portal posts sexist or discriminatory statements by politicians and gives the public the chance to vote for the most outrageous. The campaign is thought to be one of the factors that have contributed to a small improvement in gender representation in recent elections.

Example 2:

Combatting male dominance in politics — Sweden

(Political parties and NGOs)

A long-standing initiative addressing the issue of domination and social manipulation. In a political context, it led to the debate about power and how it can be used in a democratic way. Role plays, films, exercises and clips aim at raising awareness and helping to combat male domination techniques. The *Power Handbook*, with advice for women on how to get access to power, was widely disseminated in Swedish society. It was translated into many languages and spread worldwide.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) commissioned the study ‘Women in power and decision-making’ in order to review and analyse the implementation of strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action in the area ‘Women in power and decision-making in political, economic and social fields’ in the EU Member States and to collect good practices in the area of women’s political participation. The study was carried out by ÖSB Consulting GmbH in cooperation with Queen’s University Belfast and supported by a network of country experts in all 28 Member States.

Further information related to the study is available at <http://eige.europa.eu/good-practices>

ABOUT EIGE

The European Institute for Gender Equality is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers 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 information on gender equality in Europe.

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