

# Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations

## POLICY CONTEXT

In December 1995, the European Council acknowledged the European Union's commitment towards the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and expressed the intent to review its implementation across the Member States on a yearly basis. Adopted in 1995, the BPfA formally recognised the relationship between women and media as one of the major challenges for the achievement of equal opportunities for women and men in contemporary societies and defined, among its key objectives, increasing the level of women's participation and access to expression and decision-making in the media.

The European Parliament resolution on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform (2000/2020(INI)) underlined the need for a more gender balanced participation in all decision making levels in the mass media sector and therefore encouraged the media to take initiatives to attract more women journalists. The 2012 legislative proposal of the European Commission, *Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures* might have a potential impact on the media sector.

In the process of the EU follow-up of the BPfA, the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU (first half of 2013) chose to explore gender balance in decision-making in media organisations across the EU. On 21 June 2013, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of Ministers of the European Union (EPSCO) adopted Conclusions on Women and the Media and took note of the first indicators prepared for the Irish Presidency on the basis of EIGE's report.

## FINDINGS

EIGE's report for the Irish Presidency addresses the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in media by analysing the proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations, both public and private, and the existence of internal policies to promote gender equality in organisations. Thus, the first EU level indicators to measure the progress of gender equality in media are introduced and presented in the report.

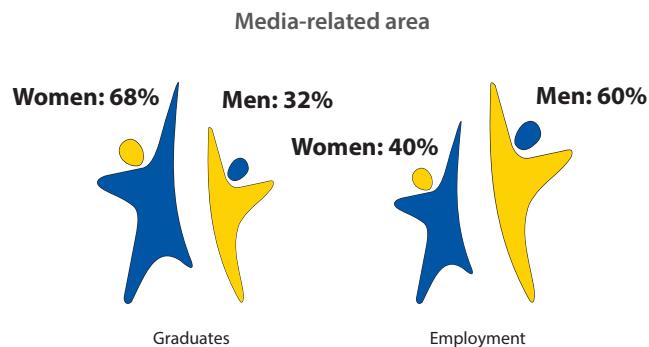
### Indicators on gender equality in decision making in media organisations

- **Indicator 1.** Proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations in the EU
- **Indicator 2.** Proportion of women and men on the boards of media organisations in the EU
- **Indicator 3.** Policies to promote gender equality in media organisations

## Persistent gender inequalities in the media sector

In spite of an increasingly favourable European legal and policy framework for the advancement of women, the overall progress of gender equality in the media sector is slow.

The findings reveal that the media sector in the EU Member States and Croatia continues to be male-dominated despite the fact that women make up nearly half the workforce and account for more than half tertiary level graduates for media related careers.



Source: Eurostat, 2010

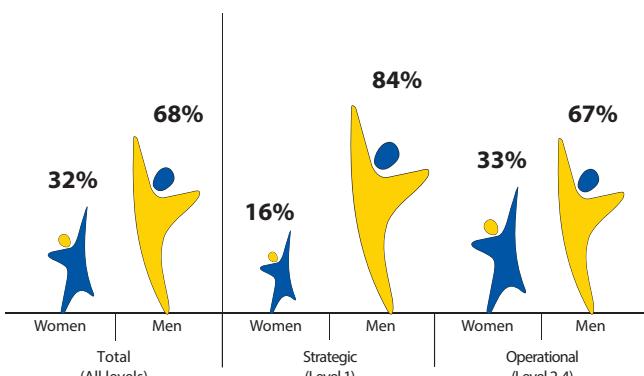
Persistent patterns of inequality in the form of under-representation, glass ceiling to advancement of women and gender pay gap remain still firmly embedded within the media sector. Women and men continue to be segregated by different functions at different levels of importance and/or prestige (e.g., magazines vs newspapers), roles requiring different skills and competences (e.g., low representation in technical areas).

Given that it is precisely the media that foster a broad understanding of the complexities of gender equality among policy makers and the public, it is extremely relevant to address the structural and cultural aspects of gender inequality in media organisations.

### Women in decision-making in media organisations

The proportion of women involved in top-level decision making in media organisations is still extremely low. This discrepancy manifests the prevailing gender inequality and exemplifies the waste of highly qualified and skilled human resources.

Proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations in the EU- 27, 2012

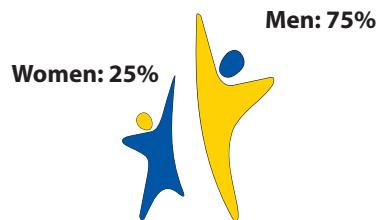


Source: Data from 96 media organisations in the 27 EU Member States, collected in July – September 2012.

The data show that across all management levels women constitute around one-third (32 %) of senior staff in decision-making positions. The number of women increases at lower levels of decision making: at strategic level (Chief Executive Officer) women occupy a mere 16 % of positions, while at operational level women's proportion reaches 33 %.

Regarding the board membership, women comprise just 25% of the positions analysed in the media organisations in the EU. Women are better represented on the boards of public service broadcasters (29 %) than in private media organisations (21 %).

#### Women and men in the board, EU-27, 2012



Source: EIGE, 2012

It is important to tackle gender imbalance in decision making by pointing out that women's presence in the workforce is not the same as women's presence in decision making. Improving the participation of women in decision-making roles could bring a significant change in the media sector.

#### Internal policies on gender equality in media organisation

Gender equality plans, diversity policies and codes of conduct exist in just over a quarter of media organisations, both public and private. Similarly, relatively few organisations have formal mechanisms in place to monitor their gender and/or equality policies: only 16 % of surveyed organisations have a committee responsible for equality-policy, 14 % of media organisations have an equality/diversity officer and 9 % have an equality/diversity department. Organisations that implement gender

equality policies and measures are more likely to have a higher proportion of women in strategic decision-making positions.

The role of media sector has always been considered crucial for the promotion of gender equality. Media not only reflect but also create socio-cultural patterns and norms and are increasingly seen as a powerful actor in shaping public opinion and culture. Implementing effective changes in this sector is therefore crucial.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### At the EU and national level

- Introduce explicit policies and actions to encourage media sector to promote and support more women in decision-making positions.
- Make use of the proposed indicators for regular monitoring of the advancement of gender equality in media sector.
- Improve awareness of gender equality in the media by disseminating and sharing good practices identified in this area.
- Assure specific funding and support civil societies' initiatives on gender equality in the media.
- Cooperate with the media and civil society organisations on creating a platform and sharing good practices on women and the media.

#### At national level

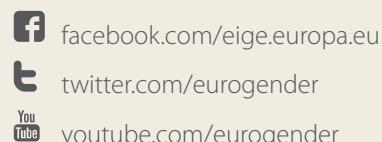
- Adopt a proactive approach to ensure gender equality in media organisations by including gender equality in the media in national action plans on gender equality.
- Encourage national media regulatory bodies to develop and implement specific policies on gender equality.
- Professional media organisations and associations could act as role models by striving for gender equality in their own internal structures.

### European Institute for Gender Equality

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 by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

EIGE's Report: **Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media - Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations** is available at <http://eige.europa.eu>.

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



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