



Gender Equality - What do the Parliaments of the European Union do

2-3 October 2012, Brussels

The Joint Meeting of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, associating the Bureau Working Group on Communication, brings together MEPs, their counterparts from national parliaments and specialised media on 3 October 2012. This Joint Meeting intends to explore the issue of the advancement of gender equality through legislation, internal staff policies, communication policy and promote gender equality among politicians in parliaments and government. A workshop for journalists organised by the European Parliament's Press Service the day prior to the Joint Meeting, aims to provide greater detail on what steps the European Parliament itself is taking in this area.

This leaflet provides information about some key publications (mainly studies) delivered by the European Parliament's Policy Department C - Citizens' rights and Constitutional Affairs, in relation to the issue of gender equality and diversity. Within the European Parliament, policy departments are research units that support parliamentary bodies - the President, committees, delegations and the Secretary General - in the fulfilment of their legislative and institutional tasks. The role of policy departments is three-fold: 1) provide timely specialised advice to all parliamentary bodies; 2) carry out research addressing their needs; 3) manage the budgets for external expertise according to the decisions taken by committees, under the supervision of the directors and the directors-general.

Staff policy

Recruitment and Equal Opportunities Systems in National, European and International Civil Services - Available in EN, FR

After defining the civil service, their size and the proportion of women, this study offers an overview of recruitment systems and equal opportunities policies in the public administrations of the Member States of the European Union, the European institutions, the Secretariat of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

November 2008
PE 408.333

Women in politics

Electoral Gender Quota Systems and their Implementation in Europe - Available in EN

The report maps the diffusion of electoral gender quotas in the 30 EU/EEA countries. In 21 of the countries some type of gender quotas are in use, either legislated or voluntary party quotas. The report evaluates the effectiveness of different quota types in different electoral systems. Some gender quotas have resulted in major leaps in women's representation, while others had led to almost no change. The conclusion is that in order to be effective in changing women's historical underrepresentation electoral gender quotas have to fit the electoral system and should include regulations about the rank order of women and men on the electoral lists as well as sanctions for non-compliance. In general, the report reveals a mixed picture in Europe when it comes to women's representation. This up-dated version of the 2008-study (PE 408.309) shows that women's parliamentary representation increased only from 23.6 % in 2008 to 24.7% in 2011. In the most recent parliamentary election in 13 of the countries as well as in the election to the European Parliament women's representation increased, but ten countries experienced stagnation and in seven for the countries women's share of the MPs dropped. Eight case studies on Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom are included in the report.

September 2011
PE 453.210



Promoting gender equality in legislation on EU and national level

Gender Quotas in Management Boards - Available in EN

The note reviews the evidence on the effectiveness of legal instruments as compared with voluntary regimes in narrowing the gender gap on corporate management boards. It finds that legal instruments to enforce quotas are an effective and fast means of achieving change. The use of voluntary regimes has led to some increase in the proportion of women on corporate boards, but the effects are significantly smaller and slower. The only instance of achieving 40% of each gender was through the use of legal instruments to enforce quotas. The note identifies and reports on the positions and recommendations of nine international bodies on this matter.

February 2012

PE 462.429

The Policy on Gender Equality in Cyprus - Available in EN

The note reviews gender equality legislation and policy developments in Cyprus in six key thematic areas including economic independence, the reconciliation of private and professional life, equal representation of women and men in decision-making, the eradication of all forms of violence against women, and the elimination of gender stereotypes, and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

April 2012

PE 462.447

The Policy on Gender Equality in Denmark - Available in EN

The briefing paper describes current Danish policies, practices and legislation within the area of gender equality. It addresses economic independence, reconciliation policies, participation in decision-making, gender-based violence and trafficking, gender stereotypes, and gender equality in development policies. The former liberal-conservative government (2001-2011) has focused on equal opportunities, gender equality as a means to economic growth, voluntary measures and freedom of choice. Increased attention has been paid in recent years to ethnic minorities and to men's role in gender equality.

October 2011

PE 453.213

The Policy on Gender Equality in Poland - Available in EN

The text presents a review of the most important legislation, institutional arrangements and policy programs with regard to gender equality in Poland. In particular, the following policy fields are covered: gender and politics, reproductive rights, human trafficking and domestic violence, access to different forms of employment, as well as the solutions within the field of reconciliation of work and family. The final section describes the problem of public attitudes towards gender and gives examples of programs aimed at counteracting gender stereotypes.

May 2011

PE 453.177

The Policy on Gender Equality in Hungary - Available in EN

This note reviews gender equality legislation and programs in Hungary in several areas of primary importance for both policy makers and women themselves. These include the field of paid and unpaid labour, the reconciliation of paid work and care responsibilities, violence against women, access to political decision making as well as the existence of gender stereotypes in Hungarian society.

March 2011

PE 432.756

The Policy on Gender Equality in Belgium - Available in EN

This study gives a view of four areas of social security benefits as they affect women's labour market prospects and reconciliation of work and family life as well as freedom of movement of household with care responsibilities, the situation with respect to rights and the effects of fiscal systems on reconciliation of work and family life.

June 2010

PE 425.620



Spanish Policy on Gender Equality : Relevant Current Legislation and Policies

Available in EN

This paper explores the main current Spanish legislation and policies relating to gender equality. Spain has moved in approximately three decades from being a 'latecomer' to being a 'pioneer' in gender equality policies. During this time Spain has consolidated its institutional machinery on gender equality policies (section 1.1). It has developed a strategy to promote gender equality based on equal opportunities, positive actions (2.3), and gender mainstreaming (2.2), and has adopted both plans and laws as policy instruments (2.1). It has approved a comprehensive law against gender violence that frames it as a public matter of high political priority and an issue of Human Rights (3.1), and an equality law that covers a broad range of issues, from paternity leave to a more gender-balanced political representation (respectively in 3.2 and 3.3). It has improved gender equality in politics, through a parity government and an increase in women's political representation (3.3). It has placed the issue of reconciliation of work and family on the political agenda (3.2). The Spanish government is currently working on new laws such as a law on sexual and reproductive health and an equal treatment act covering different inequalities. Despite this progress, many challenges still lie ahead for Spanish policy on gender equality, some of which will be tackled in this briefing note.

October 2009

PE 419.612

Gender Equality in Turkey - Available in EN

This note reviews gender equality in Turkey with a focus on the existing legislation and programs. The issue of gender equality in Turkey is particularly important for Turkey's adoption of EU norms and acquis. The main challenges in this respect are violence against women, equal opportunities at the work place, paid and unpaid labour, hidden forms of discrimination and access to political decision-making and representation.

January 2012

PE 462.428

The Policy on Gender Equality in Croatia - Available in EN

This study gives a view of four areas of social security benefits as they affect women's labour market prospects and reconciliation of work and family life as well as freedom of movement of household with care responsibilities, the situation with respect to rights and the effects of fiscal systems on reconciliation of work and family life.

June 2011

PE 453.188

The Policy on Gender Equality in Iceland - Available in EN

Iceland gender equality act dates back to 1975, the current one enforced in 2008. Iceland is characterised by a high labour market activity of women but large gender gaps. Currently, the specific Icelandic profile in gender policies is reflected in the act on parental leave policies providing men with three month paternity leave. New legislation on gender quotas on company boards aims at increasing the decision making power of women in economic life. Also in the field of gender based violence some active measures have been taken.

September 2010

PE 425.633

Other measures to combat gender inequality

Women in ICT - Available in EN

The information and communication technologies sector is of increasing importance to virtually every sector of the economy. There is a high demand for highly-qualified workers to fill the increasing demand of this expanding sector and women, due to their currently low presence in ICT, constitute a pool of potential candidates. This briefing paper presents a brief overview of selected literature and best-practice cases proposed by the European Commission on the issue of how to attract more women into ICT-related courses and consequently to a career in ICT. Two approaches are thus taken: firstly, an analysis of the presence of girls and young women in ICT-related courses and best practices on how to encourage them to pursue such academic path; secondly, an overview of the obstacles female workers face in their work and progression in ICT companies, and best-practice cases on how to attract more female qualified workers into the sector, how to ensure there is fair progression in their careers, and a good work-life balance.

July 2012

PE 462.469

The Use of Gender in Insurance Pricing - Available in EN

In March 2011, on the basis of the Council Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services, the Court of Justice applied the prohibition of direct discrimination which does not permit any specific justification, unlike indirect discrimination, in the sector of insurance which is particularly important from an economic perspective. From 21 December 2012, discrimination based on the gender will be prohibited. What is the impact of this decision on the insurance companies, on the consumers?

October 2011

PE 453.214



How Could the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) be Implemented in the EU Legal Framework? - Available in EN

The UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women is the principal and most comprehensive international legal instrument to advance the equal recognition, enjoyment and exercise of all human rights of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil and domestic fields. Gender equality, non-discrimination and protection of human rights are established as general principles of the EU and in addition all of the EU Member States are Parties to the CEDAW Convention. Some commonalities with the EU law on gender equality can be identified but also certain differences or weaknesses and strengths of the EU law in comparison to CEDAW. Finally, the challenges for accelerating full implementation of CEDAW within the EU legal and policy are tackled.

May 2011
PE 453.193

Benefits of a Maternity / Parental Leave in the EU-27 - Literature Review

Available in EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PL

Maternity/Parental leave and the relevant benefits constitute important means through which welfare states provide support to families to contribute to social reproduction, to guarantee a good start in life for children, to protect children's and mothers' wellbeing and more recently to address current demographic and economic problems and help families achieve work/family balance, a declared EU priority. This note presents the important benefits and the crucial role maternity/parental leave plays on the societal and family level in the context of the EU-27.

September 2010
PE 425.648

The Gender Dimension of Geographic Labour Mobility in the European Union

Available in EN

This study focuses on the gender dimensions of labour mobility within the European Union. It focuses on the experiences of mobile EU workers and considers the extent to which forms of intra-EU mobility are gendered. The concept of 'worker', for the purposes of this study, embraces not only employed citizens but also those 'economically active' people moving in search of work, those training for employment and family members who accompany an employed partner but who are not themselves employed at the point of entry. The focus on gender addresses several linked concerns. Firstly, whether migration motivations are themselves gendered: do men and women show different attitudes towards mobility? Secondly, whether the barriers to mobility are gendered: does mobility present different challenges for men and women? And thirdly, whether the outcomes of these processes are gendered particularly in terms of employment and career progression.

November 2009
PE 419.617

Women on the Labour Market - Available in EN, FR

This study sets out a detailed analysis of the specific weaknesses typical of women's working lives in Europe, taking eight countries (Germany, Sweden, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland and Hungary) as examples.

November 2008
PE 408.327

Policy Departments

Effective parliamentary work relies on specialised, objective, high-quality and up-to-date information. To this end, five units responsible for research, analysis and policy advice, known as policy departments, were created to provide this expert advice. The activities of Policy Departments cover all areas of competence of the European Parliament. They produce high-level independent advice, based on research carried out either in-house or by external researchers.

Policy departments deliver a wide range of expertise, comprising texts as diverse as in-depth studies on complex legislative issues, comparative studies and short background briefings. These documents aim to support the work of the various parliamentary bodies. They serve a variety of purposes: they can feed directly into the legislative work of a specific committee or serve as a briefing for delegations of Members. Apart from a few confidential documents, all texts produced by the policy departments are available on the Parliament's website for the benefit of all Members and the wider public.

Contact



Policy Department C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs: poldep-citizens@europarl.europa.eu

Where to find all studies?

Link to the e-studies database: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/studies>



European Parliament - Policy Department C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs