

**March 2019**

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the EU. 'Gender mainstreaming' underpins the EU's approach, meaning that, in principle, all EU policies need to take both female and male perspectives into consideration. However, much more work needs to be done to achieve gender equality. The Commission has identified priority areas for EU action in the coming years, such as increasing female labour market participation and economic independence, reducing gender gaps in pay, earnings and pensions, promoting equality in decision-making, combating gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality all over the world. For its events around International Women's Day in 2019, the year of the European elections, the European Parliament is highlighting the theme of women and politics. This Topical Digest offers a selection of recent publications produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service, on gender issues related to these events.

Women in politics in the EU: State of play

Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves and Martina Prpic, with Eulalia Claros, March 2019

This year is an election year, the results of which will have a significant impact on the EU policies in the years to come. Since EU policies influence the lives of women, often differently than men, it is important that both men and women have equal representation in posts that can make a difference, and the EU has committed to achieving this balance. Finding ways to reach it has been made easier as there is now solid evidence both of the obstacles that women face and strategies that can increase their participation and representation in politics.

Women in parliaments

Infographic by Martina Prpic, Giulio Sabbati and Samy Chahri, February 2019

This infographic provides information on the proportion of women in national parliaments around the world, compares representation of women in national parliaments with their numbers in the European Parliament over the years and shows the current proportion of women in the EP by political group. It also gives an overview of female representatives in the EP by Member State and outlines the gender quotas applicable to the EP elections in the current legislature and the next. This is an updated version of an infographic published in February 2017.

Women in regional and local government

'At a glance' note by Vasileios Margaras, March 2019

Local and regional government ought to constitute an advantageous sphere for women: a space where they can easily participate in decision-making without having to sacrifice their multiple family, social and career roles. Local institutions are also vital in women's empowerment, both as the level of governance responsible for service delivery that is closest to citizens and as stepping stones to public office at regional and national level. Local government can be an important avenue for getting practical experience in politics before moving on to the national/European arena. Nevertheless, data show that it is not always easy for women to participate in local/regional government structures.

Women in politics: a global perspective

Briefing by Joanna Apap, Eulalia Claros and Ionel Zamfir, February 2019

Data on women's presence in political leadership at global and EU level allows us to assess progress towards Target 5.5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which supports women's access to leadership in political and economic decision-making. The briefing highlights the share of women as heads of state and government in

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the world compared to the EU, women's share as ministers in national governments in the EU and the world, as well as the progress achieved on women's presence in national parliaments, in the EU and the BRICS countries during the past two decades. This is an updated version of a briefing published in March 2017.

Gender mainstreaming in the EU: State of play

'At a glance' note by Rosamund Shreeves, January 2019

When the European Union endorsed 'gender mainstreaming' as its official policy approach to gender equality, it was seen as a potentially revolutionary means of accelerating progress and achieving real equality between the sexes. Two decades on, concerns remain about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels. The European Parliament regularly assesses its own progress in this area. The resolution it adopted in January 2019 stresses the importance of improving the current gender balance in political and administrative posts and sets out recommendations for improving gender mainstreaming during the 2019-2024 parliamentary term.

EU policies - Delivering for citizens: Promoting equality between women and men

Briefing by Martina Prpic and Rosamund Shreeves, with Alina Dobрева, October 2018

The EU is committed to eliminating inequalities and promoting gender equality in all its activities, and this commitment is supported by a large majority of Europeans. Considerable advances have been made over the years, but progress has been uneven across the EU. In recent times progress has even slowed or regressed in some areas. During the current legislative term the EU institutions have worked on several issues, including work-life balance and violence against women. There is still much work to be done and it will require a lot of effort, as well as political will.

Gender equality in the EU's digital and media sectors

Infographic by Giulio Sabbati, Martina Prpic and Rosamund Shreeves, March 2018

The digital revolution is also a social process, and one which is not gender neutral. It can be a way for women to access new opportunities or it can reinforce existing gender inequalities. Media monitoring shows that there has been progress, but women continue to be under-represented as producers of media content and under- and misrepresented in media coverage.

Violence against women in the EU: State of play

Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves and Martina Prpic, November 2018

Violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of gender-based discrimination. Rooted in inequalities between men and women, it takes many forms. Estimates about the scale of the problem are alarming. Such violence has a major impact on victims and imposes a significant cost burden on society. The EU is tackling the problem in various ways, but has no binding instrument designed specifically to protect women from violence. Parliament's efforts have focused on strengthening EU policy in the area. This is a further update of a briefing by Anna Dimitrova-Stull, of February 2014.

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