

## Beijing + 20:

The 4th Review of the Implementation of the  
Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States

# Report



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Member States



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# Foreword

Gender equality is one of the founding values of the European Union (EU) (Treaty of Rome 1957) and continues to be an integral part of EU policy-making. This has been exemplified in recent times by the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 (COM(2010) 491 final) and the Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU). However, and despite the progress gender inequality is persistent and constitutes one of the most fundamental challenges for the EU today, as it has direct implications not only for justice and human rights, but also for economic growth and sustainability.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted in 1995 at the 4th UN World Conference on Women and 2015 marks its 20th anniversary. The BPfA set out the first international agenda for women's empowerment and affirmed that women's and the girl child's human rights are inalienable, integral and indivisible. In the same year and consistent with the EU's commitment to gender equality, the Madrid European Council acknowledged the EU's commitment to the BPfA and requested an annual review of the BPfA's areas of concern in all Member States with a full review to be conducted every five years. Following up on the 2010 review conducted by the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU, this current report evaluates and compares the progress made since then and the challenges remaining in achieving gender equality in the 12 areas of concern in the EU-28.

I am happy to say that the increased efforts of the EU and its Member States in relation to gender equality have had a positive impact. Since 2007, Gender Pay Gap has been reduced and women's representation in decision-making bodies has increased; as has their participation in the labour force and in higher education, basic services for women victims of violence have improved and there is a significant increase of gender statistics produced by Member States.

Nevertheless, while improvements have been noted, women and girls are still disadvantaged in all of the respective areas. The Gender Pay Gap is still prevalent (16 % in the EU-28), in particular, for self-employed women (the Gender Pay Gap of 45%) and women's under-representation in positions of decision making remains an issue. In the EU-28 women hold only a fourth of political decision-making positions in national governments. Moreover and despite Member States' efforts, gender-based violence continues to be a threat to women's and girl's health and well-being.

Many challenges remain. Recent trends in merging equality bodies dealing with gender alone with bodies dealing with multiple discrimination grounds can represent a threat to the visibility and effectiveness of gender equality as a policy area. Gender mainstreaming and its tools, although more acknowledged, have faced difficulties in being accepted and properly applied. Besides, the impact of gender stereotypes and norms which affects women's and girl's position in society needs to be addressed, as these underpin discrimination and help maintain inequalities.

On behalf of the institute and its team, I would like to thank all of the institutions and experts who contributed to this publication and extend our particular gratitude to the Italian Government, the participants of EIGE's Experts Forum and the experts of the national gender equality bodies of the EU-28. We hope that the findings and recommendations of this report will give impetus for broader debates and will assist in addressing remaining challenges facing the European community in achieving full gender equality.

**Virginija Langbakk,**

Director

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)



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# Abbreviations

## Country abbreviations

<b>AT</b>	Austria	<b>LV</b>	Latvia
<b>BE</b>	Belgium	<b>MT</b>	Malta
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria	<b>NL</b>	Netherlands
<b>CY</b>	Cyprus	<b>PL</b>	Poland
<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic	<b>PT</b>	Portugal
<b>DE</b>	Germany	<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>DK</b>	Denmark	<b>SE</b>	Sweden
<b>EE</b>	Estonia	<b>SI</b>	Slovenia
<b>EL</b>	Greece	<b>SK</b>	Slovakia
<b>ES</b>	Spain	<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>FI</b>	Finland	<b>EU-25</b>	25 EU Member States (before BG, RO and HR accession to the EU)
<b>FR</b>	France	<b>EU-27</b>	27 EU Member States (before HR accession to the EU)
<b>HR</b>	Croatia	<b>EU-28</b>	28 EU Member States
<b>HU</b>	Hungary		
<b>IE</b>	Ireland		
<b>IT</b>	Italy		
<b>LT</b>	Lithuania		
<b>LU</b>	Luxembourg		

## Glossary

<b>BPfA</b>	Beijing Platform for Action	<b>EPSCO</b>	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	<b>Equinet</b>	The European Network of Equality Bodies
<b>COPS</b>	UN Conference of the Parties	<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>CoR</b>	The Committee of the Regions	<b>EWL</b>	European Women's Lobby
<b>CSDP</b>	Common Security and Defence Policy	<b>FEMM</b>	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (European Parliament)
<b>CSR</b>	Country Specific Recommendations	<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>DG</b>	Directorate-General	<b>GIA</b>	Gender Impact Assessment
<b>EC</b>	European Commission	<b>HLY</b>	Healthy Life Years
<b>EECA</b>	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>EESC</b>	The European Economic and Social Committee	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>EIGE</b>	European Institute for Gender Equality	<b>PICUM</b>	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
<b>EGGE</b>	European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment	<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>ENEGE</b>	The European Network of Experts in the Field of Gender Equality	<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>EGGSI</b>	European Commission Expert group on gender equality, social inclusion, health and long-term care	<b>WAVE</b>	Women Against Violence Europe
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament		
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund		

# Executive summary



# Executive summary

The 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action represents an opportunity to assess the progress made by the EU in the area of gender equality since the last review five years previously. This report presents an assessment of key trends in the EU and its Member States in the period 2007–12, highlighting the areas where there has been progress and where challenges remain.

What is indisputable is the extent to which the EU has focused on tackling gender inequality, not only since committing to monitoring the Beijing Critical Areas in 1995, but previously in its very early days after the Treaty of Rome. Globally, the EU has reaffirmed its commitment, developed many policies and ensured resources to make gender equality a reality. This involved many actors and institutions at EU level and in the Member States, who have been dedicated to achieving progress.

Nevertheless, these organisations operate within a context, which, in the time frame of the review, (2007–12) has proved to be difficult; with an economic and financial crisis that had repercussions in many different areas, not least gender equality. In reviewing progress, it is therefore important to take this contextual landscape into consideration, the impact of which has seen some trends worsen within this interval.

This executive summary draws on the key findings from the review concerning the current situation in the 12 critical areas of concern. The first part outlines the areas which have seen the most progress between 2007 and 2012, while the second sets out the key challenges that remain. It presents some conclusions across the 12 critical areas and discusses the way forward to achieve greater gender equality.

## Institutional and legal developments

Promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination in the EU Member States is a long-standing policy commitment of the European Union. The right to equal treatment is a general principle of European Union law, which has been reinforced through various legislation and strategies since 1990.

In addition to the rights enshrined in the treaties, a number of Directives have been adopted to ensure equal treatment of women and men at work, to prohibit discrimination based on sex in social security schemes, to set out

### Landmarks in the EU commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action

**1995:** Madrid European Council requested an annual review of the implementation of the BPfA in the Member States

**1998:** European Council agreed that the annual assessment of the implementation of the BPfA would include a proposal for a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators

**2000:** Overview Report Beijing + 5

**2005:** Overview Report Beijing + 10

**2005:** Declaration of EU ministers responsible for gender equality reaffirming their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the BPfA

**2010:** Overview Report Beijing + 15

**2014:** Overview Report Beijing + 20

minimum requirements on parental leave, to provide protection to pregnant workers and recent mothers and to set out rules on access to employment, working conditions, remuneration and legal rights for the self-employed.

To reaffirm and support the close link between the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 and the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–20) in March 2011. This document highlights the need to strengthen gender equality further in the context of the current economic crisis and reaffirms its commitment to implementing the BPfA. It also encourages social partners and enterprises to implement initiatives in favour of gender equality and to promote gender equality plans in the workplace, and calls for the gender equality perspective to be incorporated into Employment Guidelines, National Reform Programmes, the Annual Growth Survey, Country Opinions and Country-Specific Recommendations.

The European Union has developed several inter-related structures to ensure the advancement of gender equality, through structures within the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, but also as part of the European Council and through the work of the European Ombudsman. The



European Court of Justice interprets EU law, including that relating to discrimination based on sex to ensure it is applied in the same way in all EU Member States. European agencies also play an important role, with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) which supports the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination based on sex and to raise awareness about gender equality issues, and benefits from the support of its sister agencies, the FRA and Eurofound.

In 2010 the European Commission strengthened its commitment to gender equality by adopting the Women's Charter (COM(2010) 78 final). In the same year, this was followed up by the adoption of the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 (COM(2010) 491 final), which reaffirms the dual approach of specific actions and gender mainstreaming in five priority areas, the implementation of which is financed by the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework for the period 2014–20. Every year, the Commission provides a detailed assessment of the progress made towards equality between women and men in Europe within the priority areas of the Strategy (SEC(2011) 193 final; SWD(2012) 85 final; SWD(2013) 171 final). The mid-term review complements the annual reports by providing information about the contribution of each Commission service and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to the implementation of the Strategy (SWD (2013) 339 final).

The year 2010 also saw the launch of the European Union's 10-year growth strategy, Europe 2020 (COM(2010) 2020 final), which, although it does not specifically refer to gender equality, emphasises the need to foster growth that is smart, sustainable and inclusive. Under both the smart and inclusive growth agendas, EU targets look at employment (making specific references to gender inequality and other grounds of inequality) and education. The inclusive agenda defines an additional EU target for reducing the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million.

Gender equality is included in the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014–20) adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 17 December 2013 (European Parliament, 2013d). The proposed budget for these actions is EUR 439 million over the period 2014–20.

Non-governmental organisations and the social partners also play a crucial role in the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, encouraging the formulation of policies and laws by initiating debate and giving input to the Commission and other EU institutions. Relevant organisations that are key stakeholders in European social dialogue, working in a number of specific policy areas at European level include the European Women's Lobby (EWL), European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); Business

Europe; the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME); and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP).

Since 2010 several important legislative proposals by the Commission have been initiated and/or adopted:

- Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity, which considerably improves the protection of self-employed women workers and assists the spouses or life partners of self-employed workers, including in the case of maternity.
- Directive 2010/18/EU implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by EU Social aims at improving the reconciliation of work, private and family life for working parents and equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work across the EU.
- Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims was adopted in October 2012. The Regulation on the mutual recognition of civil law protection measures will complement the Directive on the European Protection Order applicable in criminal matters, which was adopted in December 2011.
- Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims was adopted, followed by the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012–16).
- Directive (COM(2012) 614 final) on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures. The aim is to increase the number of women on corporate boards by setting a minimum objective of a 40 % presence of the under-represented sex and by requiring companies with a lower share of the under-represented sex to introduce pre-established, neutrally formulated and unambiguous criteria in selection procedures for those positions in order to attain that objective.

## Progress in the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action

### Women and Poverty (A)

The BPfA aims to promote strategies and measures in the Member States that address the needs of women in poverty, as well as other policies, measures and practices which ensure that women have equal rights and access to economic resources, savings and credit. The cross-cutting nature of poverty needs to be considered as some groups of women are particularly at risk, such as for example lone parents, migrants or elderly women.

Recent policy developments, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, commit the European Union and the Member States to making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty as a necessary factor in order to promote social inclusion and a requirement of the objective of reaching inclusive growth.

Women's economic activity rates are on the rise, although women in the EU remain much more likely than men to be economically inactive due to family care responsibilities. In addition women, even when they are active, are nevertheless more likely to have interrupted employment patterns and to be in part-time employment. Participation in the labour force is an important tool to reduce poverty, and decrease the level of 'at risk of poverty'. Indeed Member States have developed specific actions in this area, although few specifically address women's poverty since the Beijing + 15 review. According to the review of reports to the UNECE, promoting women's access to employment emerges as the key criteria of Member States' approach to addressing women's poverty risk.

In 2012 in the EU, 17 % of the population were at risk of poverty, an increase of 0.2 p.p. since 2007. The gender poverty gap is relatively small, standing at just 1 % in 2012, with women slightly more at risk than men. Changing economic conditions, especially in traditional industrial sectors, has contributed to an increased men's risk of poverty above the increased risk for women since 2007, and overall the gender poverty gap has narrowed since the Beijing + 15 review, though as a result of worsened conditions for all.

While gender differences are small overall, certain groups of women in the EU remain more likely to be living at risk of income poverty than men. This is the case for lone parents among which women are disproportionately represented. It also concerns young women (16–24 years) and older women (65 and over), in the latter case due to the

cumulative effect of the gender pay gap over time, as well as lower pension entitlements caused by interruptions to women's social security contributions during their working lives. The reform of pension schemes to accommodate the different patterns of women's and men's careers in some Member States are a positive development to address older women's poverty risk.

### Education and Training of Women (B)

The BPfA objectives in the area of education and training are to ensure equal access and develop non-discriminatory education and training, improve the promotion of and women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education and lifelong learning. The indicators in this area focus on attainment at the highest levels of education as well as on resources and the monitoring of the implementation of educational reforms.

Education is an area in which there has been a notable increase in the participation of women, continuing the trend noted in the earlier review of the BPfA. Women now outnumber men in education and training at the tertiary level in most EU Member States. However, patterns of segregation in educational fields remain important, with women over-represented in sectors linked to traditional roles, such as health and welfare, humanities and teaching. Areas such as science, mathematics and computing, engineering and construction, are still male-dominated, although the gender gap in traditionally male-dominated sectors of education (and the professions) seems to be slowly resorbing. Sectors traditionally dominated by women have not seen significant change in the balance between women and men, a trend which could be partly linked to the lower social (and economic) status being attached to these sectors, as well as the gender expectations attached to certain sectors (e.g. early childhood education).

Policies that aim at encouraging a more gender-balanced representation in these career paths may need to reevaluate the corresponding professions to which they lead. In the majority of Member States at undergraduate level, there are proportionally more women students in most disciplines, except in science, mathematics and computing and engineering, manufacturing and construction. This is not the case at post-graduate level, where EU students are still mostly men. Within higher education structures, a profound gender imbalance still exists in the number, seniority and influence of women in academia.

In response to these patterns, EU Member States have taken steps to respond to persisting gender inequalities in education by focusing on issues such as stereotypical gender roles and their impacts on career choices and vertical and horizontal segregation in education, with



a view to reducing employment segregation and the gender employment gap. In some Member States, a specific priority has been given to the discrimination experienced by girls from disadvantaged groups. Some Member States have started to implement laws and policies to increase the representation of women in higher levels of academia.

Education is a key area ensuring that individuals realise their potential and contribute to social and economic growth. Indeed, women with higher levels of education are far more likely to be in employment than women with no education or low-level qualifications. However, evidence shows that women's and men's career trajectories vary even with similar educational backgrounds. Women and men may not have access to the same opportunities, or may choose gendered career paths even within non-traditional sectors. Therefore a key issue is whether women are able to capitalise on higher education to the same extent as men. This asymmetry represents a great waste of resources and talent.

## Women and Health (C)

The strategic objectives in relation to women and health encompass not only increasing women's access to quality healthcare, information and related services, and the strengthening of preventative programmes that promote women's health, but also undertaking gender-sensitive health initiatives particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health issues, and promoting information and monitoring of women's health.

Life expectancy is on the rise amongst women and men in most EU Member States, with the gap between women's and men's life expectancy closing, as women's life expectancy is not increasing as fast as men's. This trend may be linked to lifestyle changes, such as the increased prevalence of smoking or drinking among women in the EU relative to men.

Cardiovascular diseases are the most common cause of disability and mortality among women in Europe, higher than for men. In general, the share of women's deaths from cardiovascular diseases decreased between 2007 and 2010, but the trend was reversed in some Member States. Cardiovascular diseases affect women and men differently: women are disproportionately affected by strokes, while for heart disease the opposite is true.

Healthy life years (the percentage of life women are likely to spend disability-free) have increased in approximately half the Member States between 2007 and 2012. Overall, there was a slight decrease from 63 to 62 estimated healthy life years on average for EU women in 2012 compared to 2010.

The majority of women and men in the EU consider healthcare to be accessible and most report no unmet

needs. Where there are unmet needs, cost appears to be the most common reason, especially among women. The low proportion of unmet needs overall hides the fact that certain groups, not least women from a migrant background, face much greater difficulties accessing healthcare structures.

The attention given by Member States to sexual and reproductive health and rights, notably in the context of the sustainable development goals post 2015 agenda, are uneven. In some cases, access to services, and support for women's reproductive rights are being restricted.

Addressing health from a gender perspective is one of the greatest challenges facing the EU in terms of women's health. It entails tackling the causes of differences in health behaviours, the prevalence of diseases and their causes, and access to healthcare in such a way that solutions address women's needs directly and do not remain gender neutral. As a result of rising life expectancy, but not mirrored in healthy life years, individuals spend a greater proportion of their life suffering from ill-health and/or disability. Ensuring the integration of a gender perspective in the treatment of elderly and disabled women and equal access to healthcare programmes for migrant women is a challenge for the majority of Member States. In addition, with increasing populations of migrant women in the EU, Member States must also ensure equal access to healthcare and programmes to address the needs of these groups of women.

## Violence Against Women (D)

The BPfA aims to tackle violence against women through the promotion of integrated measures in the Member States to prevent and eliminate violence against women; increased knowledge on the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventative measures; and through assisting victims of violence including those affected by trafficking.

Since Beijing + 15 increased efforts have been made to tackle issues in this critical area of concern together with a greater commitment of Member States to preventing and combating gender-based violence against women, most notably through the process of ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

The area of violence against women has gained more visibility, with more research and data collection and a better understanding of the nature and scale of the problem in the EU. A number of studies have been conducted in this area of concern, including collecting methods, tools and good practices in preventing domestic violence and on state measures to combat violence against women. These efforts have been complemented by notable EU and Member State initiatives to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework to combat violence against women.

Recent EU-wide research (FRA, 2014) on the prevalence of different forms of violence against women show that most EU Member States conducted national prevalence studies on violence against women between 2000 and 2011. An EU-wide survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA, 2014) estimated that across the Member States, approximately 22 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime and that 43 % of women have experienced some form of psychological intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Despite recent significant progress in data collection in this area, data gaps persist due to the under-reporting of violent incidents towards women, but also due to data-quality issues in administrative data where it is difficult to build an accurate picture of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, femicide, female genital mutilation and related criminal statistics. EIGE's study on administrative data sources on gender-based violence against women, published in 2014, shows that most Member States have insufficient sex-disaggregated data or specific mechanisms in place to coordinate the collection of these data and ensure their comparability, and that police and justice are the sectors more advanced in the provision of quality data on gender-based violence in the EU.

More severe forms of gender-based violence, such as homicide, rape or sexual assault are prosecuted in all Member State, despite differences in legal definitions. Still other forms of gender-based violence such as sexual harassment or stalking are not prosecuted in all Member States. Domestic violence is criminalised in most, though not all, Member States' penal codes, and all EU Member States have introduced some forms of protective measures related to this form of violence. Nevertheless, few cases of domestic violence are prosecuted, especially in the case of rape and sexual assault. National Action Plans to address the issue of domestic violence are in place in almost all Member States. However, progress is impeded by the lack of implementation timeframes, assigned responsibilities or limited budgets, and the absence of a gender perspective and cross-sector consultation processes.

Improvements have been made to services for women survivors of domestic violence in the EU, including increased recognition of the need to offer support to women survivors of violence facing multiple discrimination, and of the importance of the healthcare sector in responding to domestic violence. Most EU Member States offer perpetrator programmes, mainly including psychological or psychiatric treatment, counselling and therapies.

Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to further support women victims of violence. While more than half of the EU Member States provide a national women's helpline, not all operate 24/7 or are free of charge. Most Member States provide women's shelters, but services have been

cut in some EU Member States. Half of the recommended number of shelter places is currently not offered.

The majority of Member States recognise the importance of training professionals on preventing domestic violence, but only a few Member States have systematic training programmes for professionals, largely due to limited funding.

Gender-based violence remains a prevalent issue in the EU which gravely harms not only individual women, but also imposes serious harms on families, communities and societies more generally. Gender-based violence is also relevant to girls, although this does not always receive sufficient attention or visibility. It is therefore crucial to continue to address these issues and keep up the momentum that has been building since the last overall Beijing review.

## Women and Armed Conflict (E)

Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels is a key aim of the BPfA and an area of focus for the Member States where some progress has been made since the Beijing + 15 review.

The Beijing + 15 review pointed to a lack of a coordinated strategy in the Member States for the incorporation of gender issues in foreign and development policy. Whilst there are signs of positive progress in recent years in the involvement of women in decision-making in conflict resolution, diplomatic missions and EU delegations remain men-dominated, the average proportion of women in these bodies rarely exceeding 10 %. The same can be observed within UN peacekeeping operations and Common Security and Defence Policy missions (CSDP) missions, with average proportions of women at 5 % and 10 % respectively.

Training on gender issues in times of war and conflict resolution processes remains inadequate with few of the staff participating in UN peacekeeping operations and CSDP missions availing of such training. Progress has been made in some Member States in promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution and the promotion of women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace, continuing the trend identified in the 15-year review. Despite women being disproportionately affected by conflict, only a minority of aid goes directly to women. It is estimated that only around a third of aid provided by Member States and EU institutions to fragile States relate to activities that specifically target women or gender-equality measures.

Armed conflict also particularly affects women through the exacerbated levels of violence against women that arises during periods of conflict. It is an important factor for consideration when assessing the asylum claims of women coming from zones of conflict.



## Women and the Economy (F)

The BPfA seeks to promote women's economic rights and independence, including equal access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources. Since the Beijing+ 15 review, economic conditions have affected women's increasing employment rates, and contributed to a slight fall overall in the rate of women's employment in the EU between 2008 and 2012. Across the EU-28 the rate of women's employment remains well below the Europe 2020 target of 75 %. While women have been negatively affected by the economic and financial crisis, in many EU Member States, men's employment fell at the same or at a greater rate, due to their over-representation in affected sectors (such as manufacturing and construction). Even so, in the EU as a whole, men remain much more likely to be employed than women, and the gender employment gap remains rather large in many Member States. Austerity measures and budget cuts may disproportionately affect women if Member States make reductions in childcare provision and public services, and there is a squeeze on jobs in the public sector where women are over-represented in employment.

Amongst other barriers women continue to act as the primary carers of children and dependants and as a result are much more likely to work part-time than men. This greatly affects their economic and financial resources, including wages and pensions. There has been a reduction in the gender pay gap, an issue which the Beijing + 15 review identified as one of the most persistent forms of inequality between women and men, but the gender pay gap remains at an average of 16 % across the Member States.

All EU Member States have introduced some system of parental leave and many have expanded their 'long duration' childcare facilities (30 hours or more each week). There have also been continuing attempts to encourage employers to adopt more flexible forms of working. Despite that and the efforts to incentivise more fathers to take an active role in the family, little change has taken place in this respect since the Beijing + 15 review and women continue to take the majority of parental leave.

## Women in Power and Decision-making (G)

The BPfA seeks to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making and to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. The topic of women in decision-making has gained growing importance and visibility in the last few years at EU level and in a number of Member States. The development of the Commission's database on Women and Men in Decision-making increased awareness about the under-representation of

women in political and economic decision-making and allowed for the monitoring of the progress of gender balance in decision-making positions through specific reports such as the European Commission's progress report on women in economic decision-making in the EU (European Commission, 2012m).

Women's participation in political decision-making (elected and nominated bodies) has increased since the Beijing + 15 review. Moreover, some Member States have established strong commitments and adopted policies to promote women in power and decision-making, especially in the area of political representation. Parity laws and legislative quotas have reinforced Member States' commitments towards a greater gender balance in public institutions and governing bodies. Quotas for increasing women's participation have been developed at different levels of governance. Legislative quotas had a significant impact on the number of women in decision-making bodies in the relevant EU Member States, where there is sufficient hindsight to assess their effect. Political parties have also been encouraged to adopt voluntary quota systems to ensure a more gender-balanced representation among the elected representatives.

However, in spite of these initiatives, women continue to be greatly under-represented in decision-making, an issue already raised within the Beijing + 15 review. Overall in the EU, women occupy less than a third of political decision-making positions and women's participation in the top levels of governing bodies is still extremely low. In the EU, over the past five years, the proportion of women in national governments has remained stable, at 25 % of all ministers in the last quarter of 2013, although some progress has been noted in some Member States. However, the types of state functions exercised by women as ministers have changed and the share of women among ministers in economic and infrastructure functions has slightly increased. The proportion of women among the highest civil servants has also slightly increased, although women seem to be more present at middle-high levels than at the highest level of public administration. Additionally, women civil servants remain concentrated in socio-cultural functions, and are in charge of sectors that are linked to the traditional roles of women. Finally, a slight increase has been noticed in the number of women among judges of the Supreme Courts in the Member States and in the EU governing institutions.

In relation to women's participation in economic and financial decision-making bodies, progress is less evident. Central banks and the executive boards of the main European publicly listed companies remain very largely male-dominated. Some Member States have addressed the issue of women's representation and participation in these areas, but overall public action has been sparse. Within European labour organisations, women's participation is higher but there has been no significant increase in the

proportion of women among their governing bodies. A notable positive change concerns the decision-making bodies of European employer organisations, where the extremely low representation of women has slightly improved over the last five years.

Progress in women's representation in decision-making positions has been uneven. In some areas, there is still little change, and where proportions are increasing, they tend to do so at a relatively slow pace. In the last few years, tailored EU-level initiatives such as the proposed directive for a 40 % presence of the under-represented sex on corporate boards in publicly listed companies seek to accelerate progress towards a better gender balance in economic decision-making in the EU.

## Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (H)

The BPfA seeks to create or strengthen the national machineries and other governmental bodies for gender equality; integrate a gender perspective in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; and generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Across the Member States, the responsibility for gender equality has been increasingly placed at a higher level within the governmental structures. As of 2012, the majority of governmental gender equality bodies have been placed at the highest ministerial levels. While responsibilities, status and mandate of these bodies vary, their existence safeguards the work on gender equality and keeps it placed on the political agenda. At the same time, there has been a decrease in spending on human resources for governmental gender equality bodies since 2007.

Member States' legal commitment and governmental structures for gender mainstreaming appear to have expanded since the Beijing + 15 review. An increasing share of Member States (although still under half) have a legal commitment to implement gender mainstreaming. A positive trend is that almost all Member States have governmental structures for implementing gender mainstreaming.

Some progress can be noted in the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex in the Member States. The creation of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an important EU-level development in terms of the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and the promotion of gender equality. Among other achievements of EIGE, the Gender Equality Index marked a key improvement in the visibility

of sex-disaggregated statistics in the EU since the 15-year review.

However, several worrying trends are observed as well. One of the most noticeable developments between 2005 and 2012 is the gradual merging of the specialised bodies for the promotion of equal treatment for women and men with an overarching, independent body responsible for addressing several grounds of discrimination. An assessment of this ongoing process throughout the EU, of its positive and less positive aspects on the promotion and protection of rights on both individual and collective levels, remains to be done. For example, some of its consequences are to make it difficult to identify and measure what budget and resources are allocated to combat gender inequalities.

A second evident trend is the growing importance and focus placed on addressing gender equality through legal and judicial means. A shift has taken place towards legal and procedural mechanisms to address discrimination at the individual level undermining the possibilities to address structural inequalities and discriminations at the societal level.

The political context specific to each Member State, which may be fluid and unpredictable, can either help or hinder the sustainability and efficiency of the governmental gender equality bodies. It is one of the factors that strongly impacts gender equality as a policy area and as an institutional structure. Ensuring governmental support for gender equality as a policy proved to be one of the strongest factors for the development and sustainability of institutional mechanisms.

## Human Rights of Women (I)

The objectives in the area of women's human rights are to guarantee the full implementation of all human rights instruments to protect and promote women's human rights, including ensuring equal access to justice for all women. It is the only area of the BPfA in which no EU-specific indicators have been developed.

Gender-based violence is identified as an area related to gender equality that is central to the Human Rights of Women. It is the strongest manifestation of gender inequalities and a fundamental breach of human rights. The roots and cycle of violence form an integral part of the mechanisms maintaining inequalities and harming the integrity and dignity of women.

Legislation on anti-discrimination exists, but its transposition and implementation is complex and difficult, largely because of the gender-neutral approach inscribed within legislation and the prevalence of stereotypes within legal and judicial institutions in the Member States.



Access to justice for women can be impeded by structural and institutional barriers, such as costs of judicial proceedings and can include legal fees; transportation to courts, accommodation, childcare provisions during the trials and work absence during lengthy judicial proceedings. It has received only limited attention since the Beijing + 15 review, despite the recognition of different barriers to access justice. These obstacles may be institutional (linked to the gendered functioning of the legal and judicial system), economical or cultural. Women belonging to certain groups may be more at risk of multiple forms of discrimination, hindering their access to justice on an equal basis. This is also the case for women victims of violence who still face considerable obstacles in seeking redress.

Human Rights of Women are of a cross-cutting nature. Nevertheless, gender and sex are the least used ground in discrimination cases. Furthermore, when it is considered along one or more of the other grounds, it is often given less consideration.

Looking forward, the area of women's human rights needs to move beyond multiple forms of discrimination, where there is an additive effect of different grounds, towards the concept of intersectionality, which suggests a multiplicative effect between different grounds. For example, sex and disability together, in this perspective, are seen as much more than the sum of their parts, and are inseparable to understand the particular form of disadvantage that it entails.

The fact that the area of human rights of women is the only critical area yet to be populated by indicators, in all likelihood, reflects the plurality of approaches and issues inherent to the area. Given that gender equality is so strongly intertwined with the integrity and dignity of individuals, with human rights underpinning the values it stands for, there is a strong need to move forward in this area.

## Women and the Media (J)

The BPfA aims to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication, and to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. The earlier Beijing + 15 review noted actions in the Member States to address the sexist and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media and in advertising, and efforts to increase dialogue between government, media and advertising bodies to challenge sexism and gender roles in society. New challenges have emerged such as the role of online and electronic media and their potential influence on gender equality.

The number of women entering the media profession has increased in the EU, but this has not reached top-level

positions within diverse media organisations (public, private, radio and TV, etc.), where there is the greatest influence on the editorial content. Although women in the EU are now well represented in media-related degrees and in media organisations, they face a persistent 'glass ceiling' in the sector as a whole, combined with a large gender pay gap and sectoral segregation in some parts of the media sector. There is no accepted methodology for gender mainstreaming in the media, and the fact that socio-cultural norms differ significantly across the EU exacerbates the lack of a consistent approach.

The development of indicators at EU level and the EU-wide data collection on the media sector undertaken by EIGE represent a major advance. Since 2014 the data on gender balance in decision-making bodies of public media service broadcasters and the regulatory authorities at national level are integrated in the European Commission's database on women and men in decision-making.

Media content, and the stereotypes they contain and promulgate, remains critically unaddressed by policies at EU and Member-State levels. Greater use of media monitoring tools to analyse content would allow for a better understanding and monitoring of the situation. Cyber-violence is an issue that many Member States have raised as an emerging issue. The Internet and social media are becoming places where women are increasingly targeted through crimes of violence such as stalking and harassment, revenge porn, threats of violence and domestic violence online.

## Women and the Environment (K)

The BPfA has formulated objectives around involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, integrating gender considerations into sustainable development policies and programmes, and putting in place effective mechanisms at all levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. An emphasis on women and climate change decision-making is relatively new in the EU, as is the discussion of how climate change and gender may relate to each other. Generally, Member States have taken steps to boost women's representation in science and technology education, rather than within environmental politics and industries. It is still rare for governments to include gender objectives in their environmental strategies.

Since Beijing + 15, indicators were developed and accepted by the Member States for this area of concern for the first time. These show that women have not yet achieved equal representation in climate change decision-making at any level (national, European and international), which severely undermines broader commitments to involving women and men equally in environmental policies that

will impact on their lives and those of future generations. In 2011, women made up around a quarter of the top roles in national Environment, Energy and Transport Ministries, and a quarter of those in the climate-related DGs of the European Commission.

Generally, women have made the most progress in integrating into degrees, professions and political arenas that relate to the environment specifically, but they have less presence in those that relate to energy and transport.

Women in the EU make up more than half of those graduating from natural sciences degrees; however, they averaged only 28 % of those in technology degrees in 2011, with slow progress. Even in the EU Member States with the best participation of women in technologies fields, they failed to reach 40 % of graduates in 2011. Slow progress conforms to the picture of horizontal segregation at lower levels of education, and restricts the career opportunities of both women and men.

Women have made significant progress towards parity within the key bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), although the 'glass ceiling' exists in that they are less well-represented in the arenas with the greatest strategic influence (UN Conference of the Parties — COPs). The gender balance on international delegations has improved. However, women are less well-represented in networks with the highest international profile and level of political influence.

The Beijing + 15 review highlighted that to facilitate strategies on women and the environment it is necessary to develop some common conceptualisations on what should be included in the concept of the environment, for which discussions still needs to take place.

There is a strong need for further research on the gendered nature of climate change and on understanding better the dynamics of women's and men's impact on climate in order to be able to develop feasible climate change gender-sensitive policies. Gender perspectives need to be integrated and adopted in the current discussions on green growth and economy which are an integral part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and not only limited to the analysis of women's access to green jobs. Women's presence and access to decision-making in climate change-related topics needs to be continually monitored and improved.

## The Girl Child (L)

The BPfA seeks to remove discrimination against girls in areas of society such as health and education, as well as to promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential. It provides

an opportunity to tackle inequalities for girls across several areas.

Tackling economic exploitation and violence against girls, eliminating negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls, promoting the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life, and strengthening the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child are also key objectives. No EU-wide data have been regularly collected on some of the issues addressed by area L, the 'Girl Child'. However, data collected in the framework of other studies can be used to assess general progress and remaining challenges.

Continuing the trend of the 15-year review of the BPfA, the participation and performance of girls in mathematical and scientific literacy has continuously increased over time. Both in mathematics and sciences, the gap between girls' and boys' results is reducing. In sciences, girls now outperform boys in the majority of Member States. The proportion of women students in tertiary education in the field of science, mathematics and computing has remained stable (between 30 % and 50 %) in the majority of Member States. On more negative lines, women in science continue to select the 'traditional' women-dominated employment options: the proportion of women in teacher training and education science was very high in 2006 and still is five years later.

Great variations exist in the provision of sex and relationship education in the EU, with a lot of focus on contraception, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS) and unplanned pregnancies. In contrast, the curricula for sex and relationship education misses addressing subjects such as gender-based violence, gender stereotypes in romantic relationships, stigma related to HIV/AIDS and LGBT youths. The promotion of healthy and equal relationships in general is rarely addressed.

With regard to body self-image, important differences are visible between boys and girls. Many teenage girls identified themselves as overweight in 2010 and in all EU Member States girls are much more likely than boys to think that they are overweight, whether or not it is grounded in reality.

At the time of the Beijing + 15, EU Member States reported few initiatives exclusively targeting the situation of the girl child in their national contexts. Most documents adopted at EU level concern the status and the situation of children in general. This trend has continued in spite of several attempts to sensitise EU and Member States institutions that children's rights are gendered.

# Introduction



# Introduction

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA) (1) was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

The BPfA sets an agenda for women's empowerment by removing all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. As an agenda for action, the Platform seeks to promote and protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women throughout their lifecourse. It respects and values the full diversity of women's situations and conditions and recognises that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment.

The BPfA outlines the strategic objectives and actions in 12 critical areas of concern. Successful implementation of the objectives requires a strong commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities of women and men on the part of governments, international organisations and institutions at all levels. It also requires adequate mobilisation of resources to strengthen the capacity of institutional mechanisms to promote gender equality.

All the EU Member States have adopted the Beijing Platform for Action and thus committed themselves to its implementation. In December 1995, the European Council acknowledged the European Union's commitment to the BPfA and expressed its intent to review the implementation of the Platform across the Member States on a yearly basis. Since 1999, quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed by successive presidencies of the Council of the EU in 11 out of 12 critical areas of concern for the purposes of monitoring progress towards achieving the BPfA objectives by the support of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) since 2010.

Since 1995, three thorough reviews of the implementation of the BPfA have been carried out: at the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000 (Beijing+5), at the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2005 (report of the Luxembourg Presidency in 2005 — Beijing + 10) and at the 54th Session of the CSW in 2010 (report of the Swedish Presidency in 2010 — Beijing + 15). The review of 2010 identified the main

trends of gender equality at the EU level and in Member States and remaining challenges for the future.

In 2015, in its 59th Session, the CSW will undertake a review of progress made in the implementation of the BPfA during 20 years after its adoption. The session will also address current challenges as well as opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

The present report is the fourth review of the overall development at the EU level in relation to the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPfA. It presents the main trends, progress and major challenges in gender equality in the EU, building on the EU-wide data and review of existing Beijing indicators, Council Conclusions on the follow up of the BPfA since 2010 and an analysis of national reviews provided by the Member States to the UNECE in 2014.

The report is divided into four sections. The first part introduces the review and assessment of the development of institutional gender equality mechanisms within the European Union. The second part provides an overview of the implementation of the strategic objectives of each area of concern of the BPfA, analyses the trends in the EU and Member States based on EU-wide data for the indicators agreed at EU level for each of the specific area of concern, and then takes notice of the emerging priorities and challenges that the Member States identified in their reports to the UNECE. The third part presents the key achievements, remaining gaps and challenges hindering the achievement of the Beijing objectives.

# 1. Institutional development at EU level



# 1. Institutional development at EU level

This section presents the institutional, legal and policy context for gender equality in the EU. The section is organised as follows:

- ⇒ **Section 1.1** provides the general context and overview of core EU commitments to gender equality;
- ⇒ **Section 1.2** reviews the structures and resources in place to support these commitments;
- ⇒ **Section 1.3** briefly analyses the major legislative developments since 2010 and current EU policy framework in the field of gender equality;
- ⇒ **Section 1.4** presents the progress in mainstreaming gender in EU policies;

Further information on key EU legislative and policy developments in the 12 areas of critical concern of BPfA is integrated in Section 2, as part of the review of progress in each area.

## 1.1 General context

Promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination in the EU Member States is a long-standing policy commitment of the European Union. The right to equal treatment is a general principle of European Union law, which has been reinforced through various legislation and strategies since 1990. In particular:

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) stipulates that the promotion of equality between women and men is one of the EU's fundamental tasks. It also introduces the concept of gender mainstreaming, or the elimination of inequalities and discrimination and the promotion of equality between women and men in all EU activities.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) states that equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay (Article 23) and reaffirms the ban on discrimination on a wide number of grounds, including sex (Article 21).

The Treaty on European Union (2009/1992) affirms equality between women and men (Article 2) and provides that the Union shall promote equality between women and men (Article 3 (3)).

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2009/1957) provides that the Union shall, in all its activities, aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality, between men and women (Article 8), thus establishing the basis for gender mainstreaming action. It also stipulates that the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex (and other grounds) when defining and implementing its policies and activities (Article 10).

In addition to the rights enshrined in the treaties, a number of Directives have been adopted to ensure equal treatment of women and men at work, to prohibit discrimination based on sex in social security schemes, to set out minimum requirements on parental leave, to provide protection to pregnant workers and recent mothers and to set out rules on access to employment, working conditions, remuneration and legal rights for the self-employed. EU Directives are legally binding for the Member States and must be incorporated into their national legislation.

To reaffirm and support the close link between the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 and the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–20) in March 2011. In this document, the Council highlighted the need to strengthen gender equality further in the context of the current economic crisis, as well as reaffirming its commitment to implementing the BPfA (?).

The Pact also encourages the social partners and enterprises to implement initiatives in favour of gender equality and to promote gender equality plans at the workplace, and calls for a gender equality perspective to be incorporated into Employment Guidelines, the National Reform Programmes, the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Opinions and the Country-Specific Recommendations.



## 1.2 Structures and resources for gender equality in the EU

The European Union has established several inter-related structures to ensure the advancement of gender equality.

### 1.2.1 The European Commission

The European Commission is the central institution in the European Union that 'shall promote the general interest of the Union' (Article 17 TEU) through proposing legislation, upholding the Union's treaties and overseeing the general day-to-day running of the Union. Since 2000, the Commission's primary responsibility for coordinating 'gender equality policies in all fields of the EU policy' lies with the Directorate-General for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship (DG JUST) <sup>(3)</sup>.

*Unit D2 Gender Equality* of DG JUST has primary responsibility for fostering gender equality in the European Union through the promotion of a dual approach to gender equality, encompassing both gender mainstreaming and specific measures. Its action is complemented by the Unit D1, Equal Treatment Legislation, which is responsible, inter alia, for ensuring compliance with the Directives on equal treatment between women and men.

*The Inter-Service Group on Gender Equality* brings together representatives from all the Commission's Directorates General. Its main task is to develop a gender mainstreaming approach in all European Commission policies and programmes and to contribute to and coordinate activities within the framework of the implementation of the European Commission Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010–15). It also constitutes a forum for the exchange of information and best practices in the field of gender equality.

The following bodies support the gender equality work under the coordination of the Commission:

*The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* assists the European Commission in formulating and implementing the EU activities aimed at promoting equal opportunities for women and men. The Committee is composed of representatives of the Member States from ministries or bodies having responsibility for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men, and representatives of the social partners at EU level, as well as representatives of European NGOs and international organisations as observers. Governmental representatives from the European Economic Area also participate as observers.

*The High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming* (HLG) is an informal Group made up of high-level Member States Representatives responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level. Besides other functions, the HLG is engaged in strategic planning of the follow-up of the BPfA, including the development of indicators. The Group also assists the European Commission in the preparation of the Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men.

### 1.2.2 The European Parliament

At the level of the European Parliament, the main bodies dealing with gender equality consist of:

*The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality* (FEMM) is the principal political body in the European Parliament responsible for the definition, promotion and protection of women's rights in the EU and beyond, and for an equal opportunities policy, including equality between women and men with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work. It seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on sex.

*The High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity* acts as a horizontal, overarching body responsible for promoting and implementing gender mainstreaming within Parliament's activities, structures and bodies, including the implementation of the gender mainstreaming priorities of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Equality and Diversity (European Parliament, 2013e).

### 1.2.3 The Council of the European Union

Member States' ministers responsible for gender equality meet in the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO). In the area of gender equality EPSCO, inter alia, adopts conclusions concerning the follow-up of the BPfA in the EU and take note of the Beijing Indicators <sup>(4)</sup>. EPSCO is also supported in its work by two other advisory committees, the Employment Committee <sup>(5)</sup> and the Social Protection Committee <sup>(6)</sup>. Both advisory committees, composed of representatives from the Member States, monitor and evaluate the progress in several areas covered by employment, social and health policies, support the development of the Council conclusions in these areas, deliver opinions and recommendations and support the work in implementing Europe 2020 Strategy through European Semester and country-specific recommendations.

### 1.2.4 The European Council

In March 2011, the European Council approved the New Pact for Equality between Women and Men for the period

2011–20, which is in line with the European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15, of the European 2020 Strategy, and reflects the Member States' commitment and determination to implement policies aimed at promoting gender equality. It urges the EU and Member States to work towards achieving equality, to close gender gaps in employment, education and social inclusion, to ensure equal pay for equal work and to promote the equal access and participation of women and men in decision-making. The Pact also calls for the promotion of work-life balance for both women and men and for action to reduce all forms of violence against women.

### 1.2.5 The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body which provides a platform where representatives of Europe's socio-occupational interest groups and others can express their opinions. The aim of this process is to strengthen the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union. It needs to be consulted by the Commission or the Council on mandatory basis in certain cases. The EESC can adopt opinions on its own initiative. All opinions are forwarded to the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament and then published in the EU's Official Journal. The Committee has six sections: Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT); Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO); Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC); External Relations (REX); The Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT); Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) (EESC, 2014).

### 1.2.6 The Committee of the Regions (CoR)

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), established in 1994, is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process and thus to encourage greater participation from EU fellow citizens. In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty strengthened recognition of the Committee of the Regions' role. The Committee of the Regions has to be consulted throughout the legislative process involving the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in several areas such as economic and social cohesion; trans-European networks; health; education and culture; employment; social policy; the environment; vocational training; transport; civil protection; climate change and energy (CoR, 2014).

### 1.2.7 The European Court of Justice

The European Court of Justice interprets EU law, including that regarding discrimination based on sex to ensure it is applied in the same way in all EU Member States. It also settles legal disputes between EU governments and EU institutions. Individuals, companies or organisations can also bring cases before the Court if they feel their rights have been infringed by an EU institution. Among the Court's recent activities related to gender equality issues was the judgment in the *Test-Achats* case (C-236/09), in which it ruled that charging different insurance premiums for men and women constitutes sex discrimination. In consequence, Article 5(2) of Directive 2004/113 became invalid, as the Article allowed Member States to differentiate between men and women in setting premiums and defining benefit programmes (European Commission (2013k).

### 1.2.8 The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

EIGE is the agency assigned to support the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination based on sex and to raise awareness on gender equality issues. Since 2010, EIGE has provided technical support to the Council of the EU and to its Presidencies in the follow-up of the BPfA by analysing and reviewing the areas of concern chosen by the Presidency of the Council of the EU; providing advice on updating and improving existing indicators; and by promoting the visibility and dissemination of indicators. To complement this work, EIGE collects, assesses and presents good practices used by Member States to implement policies across different areas of concern.

### 1.2.9 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

By collecting and analysing data on fundamental rights, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) assists EU Institutions and Member States in gathering evidence on fundamental rights. Working in partnership with the EU institutions, Member States and other organisations at the international, European and national levels, the FRA plays an important role in helping to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone living in the EU. Recently the FRA carried out an EU-wide survey on gender-based violence against women (described more broadly in relevant chapters).



### 1.2.10 The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) provides information, advice and expertise on living and working conditions, industrial relations and managing change in Europe to key actors in the field of EU social policy on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis. In the area of gender equality, in recent years, the Foundation has devoted even greater attention to gender-based inequalities, including the gender pay gap, through studies on equal opportunities, through its European Working Conditions and Quality of Life surveys, and by mainstreaming a gender perspective across its other activities. Data developed by Eurofound are used by EIGE for its Gender Equality Index.

### 1.2.11 European organisations

Non-governmental organisations such as the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the 'Social Partners' play a crucial role in the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, encouraging the formulation of policies and laws by initiating debate and providing input to the Commission and other EU institutions.

The European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET) aims to enhance the skills and capacities of the staff of equality bodies; identify and communicate the lessons from national equality bodies; and strengthen the ties between the Network and all stakeholders at European-Union level.

European social partners — the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); Business Europe; the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME); and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP) — are key stakeholders in European social dialogue, working in a number of specific policy areas at European level. They are strongly committed to enhancing gender equality in the labour market and workplace. The Framework of Actions on Gender Equality is a prime example of the type of actions put forward by the European social partners. The framework sets out four priority areas for action: addressing gender roles, promoting women in decision-making, supporting work-life balance and tackling the gender pay gap.

The ETUC has a Women's Committee, established in 1975, which comprises experts working in the field of gender equality from all of the national affiliates. The committee adopts positions on issues relating to equality between women and men and monitors the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the policies of ETUC.

## 1.3 Gender Equality legislation and policy

### 1.3.1 Major legislative developments since 2010

Since 2010 several important legislative proposals by the Commission have been initiated and/or adopted.

In the area of employment, the principle of equal treatment between women and men has also been extended to self-employment. With effect from 5 August 2012, the Directive 86/613/EEC was repealed and replaced by Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity. This new Directive considerably improves the protection of self-employed women workers and assisting spouses or life partners of self-employed workers, including in the case of maternity: they are granted a maternity allowance and a leave of at least 14 weeks. At the EU level, this is the first time a maternity allowance has been granted to self-employed workers. Improving the social protection available to women in the labour market is expected to increase the share of women entrepreneurs.

In relation to parenthood, Directive 2010/18/EU implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by EU Social Partners (Business Europe, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC) and repealing Directive 96/34/EC aims at improving the conciliation of work, private and family life for working parents and equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work across the EU.

In its efforts to eradicate violence against women, in May 2011, the Commission adopted a package of proposals aiming at strengthening the rights of victims of crime. Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights support and protection of victims was adopted in October 2012. The Regulation on the mutual recognition of civil law protection measures will complement the Directive on the European Protection Order applicable in criminal matters, which was adopted in December 2011. These two instruments will benefit victims of domestic violence and ensure that protective orders issued in one Member State can be automatically recognised in another Member State, so that the victims do not lose their protection if they move or travel.

Several important actions against trafficking in human beings were successfully carried out. The Directive 2011/36/

EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims was adopted followed by the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012–16).

In November 2012, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures. The aim is to increase the number of women on corporate boards by setting a minimum objective of a 40 % presence of the under-represented sex and by requiring companies with a lower share of the under-represented sex to introduce pre-established, neutrally formulated and unambiguous criteria in selection procedures for those positions in order to attain that objective. The proposal for a Directive was accompanied by a Communication on 'Gender balance in business leadership: a contribution to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', which complements the proposed legislative measures, seeking to address the root causes of gender imbalance, to overcome gender stereotypes and to improve work conditions in such a way as to promote women's advancement in management.

### 1.3.2 EU policy framework for equality between women and men

In 2010 the European Commission strengthened its commitment to gender equality by adopting the Women's Charter (COM(2010) 78 final). In the same year, this was followed up by the adoption of the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 (COM(2010) 491 final), which reaffirms the dual approach of specific actions and gender mainstreaming in five priority areas and one area addressing cross-cutting issues: equal economic independence for women and men; equal pay for work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence; gender equality in external actions; and horizontal issues. For each of these areas, key actions are closely linked to the strategic objectives of the BPfA. The call for better use of the 'potential and talent pool of women' is also linked to the Europe 2020 objectives.

Every year, the Commission provides a detailed assessment of the progress made towards equality between women and men in Europe within the priority areas of the Strategy (SEC(2011) 193 final; SWD (2012) 85 final; SWD (2013) 171 final). The mid-term review complements the annual reports by providing information about the contribution of each Commission service and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to the implementation of the Strategy (SWD (2013) 339 final).

The year 2010 also saw the launch of the European Union's 10-year growth strategy, Europe 2020 (European Commission, 2010a), which, although it does not specifically refer to gender equality, emphasises the need to foster growth that is smart, sustainable and inclusive. Under both the smart and inclusive growth agendas, EU targets look at employment (making specific references to gender inequality and other grounds of inequality) and education. The inclusive agenda defines an additional EU target for reducing the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million.

### 1.3.3 Financial resources for gender equality

The Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 commits the Commission to implementing gender mainstreaming and specific actions, where necessary, as an integral part of its policy-making, financed by the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2014–20.

Gender equality is included in the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014–20) adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 17 December 2013 (European Parliament, 2013d). The aim of this programme is to support the Commission's efforts to build an EU-wide area of justice and rights focusing on activities that: promote gender equality; combat all forms of discrimination and fight racism; fight violence against women, young people and children; support Roma inclusion; help EU citizens and consumers to exercise their rights; and promote children's rights. The proposed budget for these actions is EUR 439 million over the period 2014–20. This will offer concrete financial support to various organisations specialising in the thematic areas of justice, fundamental rights and equal opportunities.

Until 2013, funding for gender equality measures was provided mainly through the financial programme PROGRESS, in particular its strand on gender equality and other financial instruments and programmes, such as the European Social Fund (ESF), the Seventh Research Framework Programme, Daphne III and Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, etc.



## 1.4 Gender mainstreaming

Based upon the assumption that no political area or subject is 'gender neutral', the European Commission follows a dual approach: gender mainstreaming and, where necessary, specific measures such as legislation or awareness-raising campaigns.

As defined by the European Commission, **gender mainstreaming** is the systematic integration of the respective situations, priorities and needs of women and men in all policies and with a view to promoting equality between women and men and mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situation of women and men in implementation, monitoring and evaluation (European Commission, 1996).

As a key element of the BPfA, gender mainstreaming is mentioned in the EU Treaties as well as in the EU's policy strategies. The Amsterdam Treaty introduces gender mainstreaming as the main equality strategy, whilst the Lisbon Treaty acknowledges the importance of the notion of sex/gender equality in all European policies and programmes (European Commission, 2010e).

Gender mainstreaming is also a key component of the current Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15. It is promoted as 'an integral part of the Commission's policymaking' and is highlighted by the Commission and other European institutions (i.e. the Council of the EU). The European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–20) also acknowledges the need to integrate gender in a transversal way into all the EU policy.

To assist policy-makers in assessing gender relevance in EU policies, specific gender mainstreaming tools, such as gender impact assessment and gender evaluation are used.

### 1.4.1 Gender mainstreaming in selected policy areas

Of key significance for the future of the EU, is bringing the gender perspective into important EU documents, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, providing a clear definition of benefits for women and men in relation to the goals and targets of Europe 2020, in terms of employment, innovation,

education, social inclusion, climate and energy and the 'flagship initiatives'.

The policies where a strong focus on gender mainstreaming would be most beneficial are:

- Employment and economic independence;
- Social inclusion;
- Research and innovation;
- Development and Cooperation and European External Action Service (EEAS);
- EU enlargement.

#### Employment and economic independence

In 2010, the European Council released 'Integrated Europe 2020 guidelines', for the development of economic policies of Member States over the next decade, including some gender equality aspects in the labour market. It is recognised that increased labour market participation by women is a pre-condition for boosting growth and for tackling demographic challenges. Guidelines 7, 8 and 10 aim at 'reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality', 'developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning', and 'promoting social inclusion and combating poverty' (?). In terms of direct emphasis on gender equality, they encourage Member States to create policies promoting equal pay; improving conditions for a better work-life balance; and stimulating further opportunities for the training, skills and professional experience of women. They also call for policies to prevent unemployment, in-work poverty and social exclusion, particularly among women.

To monitor the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets, the annual 'Joint Employment Reports' assess the implementation of the Employment Guidelines in the EU and National Reform Programmes. Some reports recognise the existence of considerable differences in terms of men's and women's participation in the labour market. The reports of 2011, 2012 and 2013 note significant barriers to greater involvement of women in the labour market, such as inadequate care facilities for children and other dependent persons or an imbalance in the take-up of parental responsibilities between women and men. The reports also reveal major divergences between EU Member States in the practice of gender mainstreaming, in particular between the 'core' and the 'periphery' EU Member States (°) of the euro area.

To address these challenges to women's participation in the labour market, the Commission has advocated immediate actions in some Member States, including a revision of

tax systems, flexible working arrangements and extended full-time day-care facilities. The latest draft of the Joint Employment Report for the Annual Growth Survey 2014 illustrates that some Member States have undertaken further steps to reconcile family and work obligations (European Commission, 2013).

### Social inclusion and protection

One of the key instruments for promoting women's social inclusion is the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Gender equality has been mainstreamed in key initiatives within the Platform which include efforts to promote the economic independence of women, assess gaps in entitlement to family-related leave and monitor the introduction of existing directives related to leave entitlements in the context of the Strategy (European Commission, 2014d).

The EU Structural Funds provide financial assistance to enable Member States to overcome structural weaknesses in the labour market. In 2011 and 2012 at its Annual Conventions the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion called for gender mainstreaming and for the EU Structural Funds to be placed at the heart of the Europe 2020 governance process and requested sufficient contribution credits for career breaks due to care responsibilities, as well as measures facilitating return to formal work.

In this context, the integration of the gender equality perspective in the Structural Fund regulations for the period 2014–20 (the 'cohesion policy period') shows improvement compared to the Regulation on the EU Structural Funds (No 1083/2006) for the period 2007–13 (Council of the EU, 2006a). The new regulations require the integration of a gender perspective at all stages of implementation of programmes (i.e. monitoring, reporting and evaluation) in each operational programme (except technical assistance programmes). They also request a description of the impact that the funding will have on the promotion of equality between men and women, data or indicators to be broken down by sex where required, as well as evaluations undertaken to measure the application of gender mainstreaming. Gender analysis is also encouraged at the national level, where appropriate, particularly in relation to specific targeted actions supported by the European Social Fund. Specific actions enhancing gender equality and effective gender mainstreaming are also envisaged in the Partnership Agreements.

### Research and innovation

Addressing the gender imbalance in the field of science and research in Europe is among the priorities of the research and technological development (RTD) strategy on gender and of the Commission's European Research Area (ERA)

Communication of 2012. Since the last review there have been a number of initiatives designed to address gender inequalities in science and research, mainly focused on the development of women's research careers and the need for structural change in research institutions.

The new gender equality provisions of Horizon 2020<sup>(9)</sup> stipulate integration of gender equality issues at each stage of the research cycle: from programming through implementation, monitoring and programme evaluation. Three objectives underpin the Commission's activities on gender equality within the framework of Horizon 2020:

- fostering gender balance in Horizon 2020 research teams, in order to address the gaps in the participation of women in the Framework programme's projects;
- ensuring gender balance in decision-making, in order to reach the Commission's target of 40 % of the under-represented sex in all its expert groups, panels and committees (50 % for advisory groups);
- integrating gender/sex analysis in research and innovation content, in order to improve the scientific quality and societal relevance of the produced knowledge, technology and innovation.

### Development and Cooperation and the European External Action Service (EEAS)

Current EU development policy contains a strong commitment to the equality of women and men, girls and boys, and it is also reflected in the current discussions on the post-2015 framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Some 200 projects and initiatives are currently funded by the EU around the world, which aim to enable women to have access to education and healthcare and to work and live free from violence and discrimination.

Sustained coordination work by the Commission services (DG Justice and DG Development and Cooperation) and the EEAS has been carried out in several areas, such as preventing violence against women (for example, eradicating female genital mutilation is the priority area for the Commission and the EEAS, and all EU delegations in third countries are fully involved in the implementation of the EU Guidelines against Violence against Women). The Commission services together with the EEAS continue to contribute to the implementation of the EU Comprehensive Approach to UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security. To monitor the implementation of this Approach, the EU has adopted a First Report on the Indicators in May 2011. The Commission services also closely collaborate with the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) in the UN CSW<sup>(10)</sup>.



The Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and UN Women signed in 2012 reaffirms the joint commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. Cooperation will primarily focus on ensuring women's representation in decision-making in the fields of economics, politics and justice worldwide, as well as better access for women to work and social opportunities. Combating sexual and gender-based violence is one of the priority areas of intervention.

## EU enlargement

As part of the enlargement process, the Commission has been monitoring the transposition and implementation of gender equality legislation in the candidate and potential candidate countries. There have been a number of specific activities undertaken recently in this area including monitoring the progress in gender equality in country-specific Yearly Progress Reports.

Gender-based violence is highlighted as one of the key challenges faced by most candidate countries and their law-enforcement bodies, as highlighted in the annual Enlargement Package, adopted by the Commission in October 2012, (European Commission, 2012a).

### 1.4.2 Gender mainstreaming in the EU

Fulfilling the EU commitment to gender equality relies on placing gender mainstreaming and gender equality visibly in the future Annual Work Programmes of the EC, in particular, in the context of a 'long term vision of what the EU might look like in key policy areas' (European Commission, 2012d, p. 2) and the Management Plans (2013) of the 42 DGs of the EC.

The Europe 2020 Strategy incorporates a number of core elements related to gender equality in the context of 'inclusive growth' calling upon Member States to tackle women's poverty and to improve women's social inclusion. Member States are also invited to adopt measures to close the gender pay gap; to improve the quality of women's jobs; to reinforce the training of women, particularly in sectors where they are under-represented; to promote policies for reconciling work, family and private life; and to facilitate access to childcare and care facilities for other dependants.

Application of gender mainstreaming tools, like Gender Impact assessment and development of indicators for measuring specific gender inequalities would add significantly to the quality and impact of measures to achieve inclusive growth. It would also help to meet the

challenges identified in the revision of headline indicators for monitoring the EU targets 2020, carried out by the EP.

The area of employment and social inclusion is an area where gender mainstreaming is more visible. Its effectiveness, however, faces some challenges from decreasing levels of targeted EU financial support for promoting equality between women and men in the Cohesion Policy budget, threatening the progress in mainstreaming gender in the Structural Funds. In its opinion on gender equality in the Cohesion Policy 2014–20, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men pointed out that such support is distributed unevenly between the different funds and that more funding should be directed to gender mainstreaming and care services for children and other dependants (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2012).

Likewise, gender mainstreaming in the Europe 2020 Integrated Employment Guidelines could be strengthened by more visible goal of economic independence of women and men and dual approach in the employment Guidelines (European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP, 2010).

Furthermore, there have also been calls for the Commission's Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs), based on the National Reform Programmes and Joint Employment Reports (the latest issued in July 2014) to incorporate a stronger gender perspective in areas which have recently been a focus of the EU political agenda, such as equal pay, promotion of women in economic decision-making and/or pension reforms (EWL, 2011a; European Alliance for a Democratic, Social and Sustainable European Semester, 2014).

To highlight these areas for further development, the latest EPSCO Council conclusions (June 2014) call on the Member States and on the European Commission to 'provide for a pillar on gender equality within the Europe 2020 governance framework based on:

- a) a section to be included in each draft Joint Employment Report providing information on the efforts and progress made by Member States to reduce the gender employment gap, which is henceforth to be taken into consideration in the key growth and employment messages of the Annual Growth Survey;
- b) measuring the progress made by Member States in achieving gender equality and encouraging further progress as necessary by making systematic use of instruments of the European Semester, including Country Specific Recommendations;

- c) a regular exchange with the European social partners in the context of the tripartite dialogue on these issues.’ (Council of the EU, 2014b)

Finally, a focus on gender equality would bring a substantial contribution to the implementation and evaluation phases of policy-making in areas that are not traditionally linked with women and gender equality (e.g. ICT, transport and enhancing the capacity of SMEs).

The European Parliament is also committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective in its work (11). An analysis of the committees’ and delegations’ work — requested by the Committee for Gender Equality and Women’s Rights (FEMM Committee) in 2014 — showed that a gender perspective had been integrated in the reports and recommendations only when certain gender equality issues became visible in public debate (European Parliament (2014b)). In addition, given the voluntary nature of gender mainstreaming in the work of parliamentary committees, it resulted in a strong focus on women’s rights and advancement of women as well as gender equality in the context of gender-based violence or women’s economic situation. Important bodies, such as the Committee on Budgets, did not visibly take gender into account in their deliberations or reports. This emphasises the importance of capacity-building for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in practice.

## 2. Policies and actions in the EU addressing the objectives of the twelve critical areas of concern: indicator-based analysis since 2007



## 2. Policies and actions in the EU addressing the objectives of the twelve critical areas of concern: indicator-based analysis since 2007

### 2.1 Women and Poverty (A)

#### 2.1.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

Poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional problem that goes beyond a basic lack of resources for survival (food, money, shelter, etc.). In the wider sense, it extends to the deprivation of civil, social and cultural activities, as well as of opportunities for political engagement and social mobility (Council of the EU, 2007a). The fact that women are over-represented among the low-income population and receive lower pay and income compared to men places women at larger risk of being severely affected by poverty compared to men.

In the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011–20 the Council of the European Union emphasised the need to reduce women's poverty as a necessary factor to promote social inclusion. The Europe 2020 Strategy and the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 link the reduction of women's poverty to the objective of inclusive growth.

The BPfA defined four strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and Poverty:

- A1. Review, adapt and maintain macroeconomic policies and the development of strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty;
- A2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources;
- A3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions;
- A4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.

In 2007, under the Portuguese EU Presidency, the Council agreed on three indicators including two sub-indicators

to measure the achievement of these objectives (Council of the EU, 2007b). The indicators make use of a calculation of at-risk-of-poverty, used by the EU to monitor efforts to reduce poverty and social exclusion (Indicators 1-2) and economic inactivity rates (Indicator 3). The indicators are covered by regular comparable data.

The indicators have some limitations, as the relative concept and the absolute experience of poverty differ among EU Member States. In the context of falling incomes, data on poverty-risk might not adequately capture trends in poverty, in cases like Greece where average income, against which poverty risks are measured, has been falling sharply. Furthermore, poverty risk is considered in relation to the household unit, assuming that income and other resources will be shared equally amongst household members, ignoring possible power relations within the family, and thus underestimating the true extent of gender gaps (EIGE, 2013b).

#### 2.1.2 EU policy developments

The Europe 2020 Strategy and the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 provide the basis for monitoring national policies aimed at boosting the social inclusion of women. The target is to raise at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion. The need to address poverty and social exclusion risks among women was reaffirmed in the Annual Growth Survey 2013.

The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion — one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy — is one of the key instruments to protect and promote women's social inclusion. Gender equality has been mainstreamed in key initiatives within the Platform, including efforts to promote equal economic independence, the assessment of gaps in the entitlement to family-related leave, and monitoring the transposition of existing directives related to leave entitlements.

The First Annual Convention of the Platform in 2011 emphasised that 'whilst both older women and men suffer from inequalities in terms of social protection, women are additionally affected by their fertility history, as well as by



informal caring responsibilities which restrict their access to good quality employment' (European Commission, 2011d, p. 13). Therefore, the pension systems should include '[sufficient contribution credits for career breaks due to care responsibilities, borne mainly by women, [...] [alongside] measures facilitating return to formal work' (European Commission, 2011d, p. 14).

New actions foreseen in the Commission's mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men for 2013–15 include:

- developing indicators to measure the gender pension gap, provision of childcare and early childhood education;
- mainstreaming gender equality into the objectives and activities of the programme for social change and innovation;
- improving parents' access to affordable early childhood education and care services, as a follow-up to the gender equality aspects of the Social Investment Package (European Commission, 2013i).

In order to achieve these goals, the Commission cooperates with EU Member States through the Social Protection Committee using the Open Method of Co-ordination (the Social OMC) <sup>(12)</sup>. The process also involves close cooperation with social partners and civil society organisations.

The European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity included specific initiatives targeting employment and poverty:

- The Green Paper consultation (2010) followed up by a White Paper (2012) on pensions both put a strong emphasis on gender issues (e.g. equalising pension ages, reducing the gender pension gap, active ageing) (European Commission, 2012j).
- A methodology for the calculation of the gender pension gap was developed with the support of the Commission's network of gender equality experts (European Commission, 2013n).
- An opinion on the gender dimension of active ageing by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2011).
- A proposal has been made for a Council Decision from 21 March 2013 authorising Member States to ratify the International Labour Organisation 2011 Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers (Convention No 189), which deals with aspects related to the anti-discrimination field setting minimum

requirements regarding employment equality, gender equality and maternity protection (European Commission, 2013c).

- An opinion on tackling the gender gap in pensions by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2013).

### 2.1.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Slight increase of the overall at-risk-of-poverty rate

In 2012, in the EU 17% of the population was at-risk-of-poverty, with women at a slightly higher risk of poverty than men. The risk of poverty has risen slightly for both women and men (up 0.2 p.p. since 2007), and the gender gap has narrowed to just over 1 p.p. in 2012 (at-risk-of-poverty is defined as the share of the population with an equalised disposable income below 60 % of the national median equalised disposable income, after social transfers). The gender gap in at-risk-of-poverty has narrowed in the EU due to an increase in at-risk-of-poverty among men in several Member States. The situation in some Member States and among specific groups is more diverse than the EU average. Since 2007, an increase in the risk of poverty was observed in two thirds of the Member States. The Member States hardest hit by the crisis, such as Greece and Spain, experienced a larger increase in poverty rates for women and men of working age.

In 2012, there were 15 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, HR, IT, CY, MT, NL, AT, RO, SI, SE) where women were at a higher risk of poverty compared to men. For the group aged 25 to 49, the women's poverty rate exceeded that of men's in 19 EU Member States. This is partly explained by the fact that women tend to face poorer pay and working conditions, are more likely to be in part-time work, fixed term contracts or to have care-related periods of inactivity.

#### Age is a significant factor for being at-risk of poverty

Across the EU, young people (16–24 years) are the group most exposed to at risk of poverty (24 % in 2012). This rate increased compared to 2007 in all EU Member States, with the exception of Belgium, Bulgaria and Finland. The gender gap of at-risk-of-poverty, even relatively small, for this age group is 1.6 p.p. (2012), which is slightly higher than the gender gap in at-risk-of-poverty for the entire population.

Being at-risk-of-poverty tends to decrease with age overall. In more than half of the Member States, older people (65 years or over) are less at-risk-of-poverty compared to the whole population. Since 2007, the risk of poverty among older people has slightly declined in EU, and more

significantly in some Member States due to changes in pensions arrangements (notably IE, PT) (Zaidi, 2012).

Age does affect women and men in the same way in relation to poverty. If the gender gap is low for the entire population, it widens significantly for those over 65 years. In 2012, elderly women were more at-risk-of-poverty than elderly men (16 % compared with 12 %). The gap is widest in Bulgaria, Sweden and Slovenia; in Cyprus and Croatia approximately one third of women are at risk of poverty. The gender gap can be explained by women's lower lifetime earnings and smaller or interrupted social security contributions during pregnancy, due to caring responsibilities or greater propensity to work part-time.

The gender gap is very wide when it comes to pensions, as women overall in the EU receive 39 % less than men. Over half of the Member States (17) have gender gaps in pensions above 30 % (European Commission, 2013b).

### Being single or a lone parent increases the risk of poverty

In 2012, 25 % of single people were at-risk-of-poverty compared with 17 % overall in the population, with slightly more single women at-risk-of-poverty than single men (26 % to 25 %). The gender gap has narrowed since 2007, influenced largely by an increased proportion of single men at-risk-of-poverty (from 22 % in 2007 to 25 % in 2012) in addition to a decrease in the proportion of single women at-risk-of-poverty (by 1.4 p. p). In some Member States, single women are much more likely to be at-risk of poverty than single men (BG, IT, CY). In Bulgaria, women are considerably more vulnerable to poverty (56 %) compared to men

(29 %). The opposite is true in fourteen Member States, where single men are at higher risk-of poverty compared to women (DK, EE, IE, FR, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, PL, SK, FI, UK).

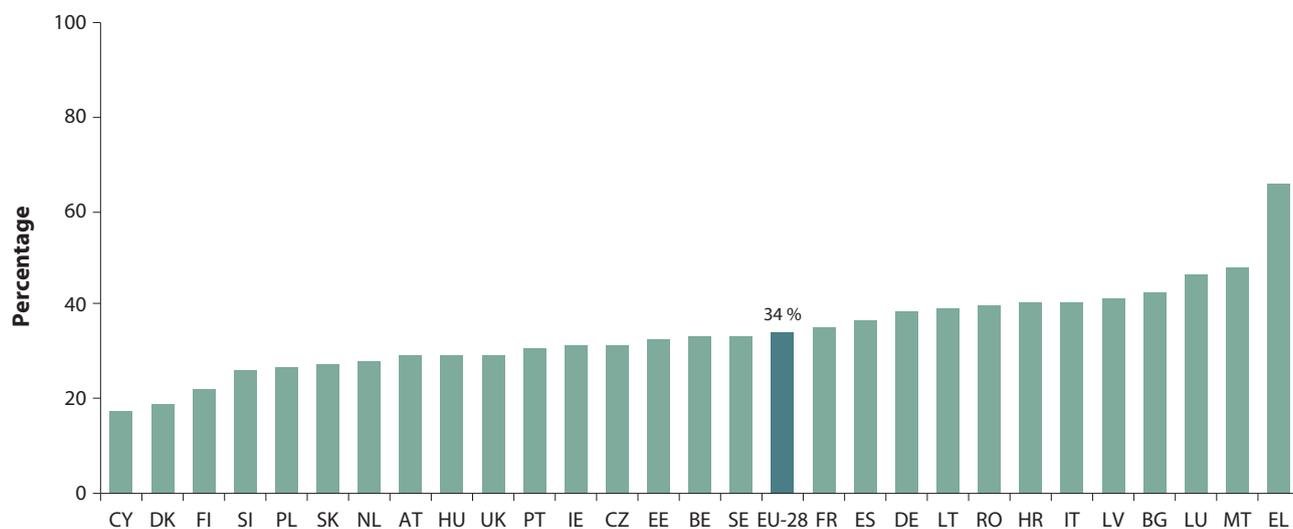
Being a lone parent greatly increases being at-risk-of-poverty. The number of lone parents at-risk of poverty reached 34 % in 2012 (Figure 1). In Greece, the number of lone parents at-risk of poverty has doubled (from 34 % in 2007 to 66 % in 2012). Increased poverty risk was also experienced by lone parent/carer households in France (11 p.p.), Bulgaria, Italy and Sweden (more than 8 p.p.). At the same time, a significant reduction was observed in Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom. Given that women make up the majority of lone parents/carers, they are significantly more at risk.

Most lone parents/carers combine parenting and childcare with employment which may lead to more precarious, low paid employment with a lower level of social protection. Other factors such as low income opportunities for women as indicated by the gender pay gap, make lone mothers/carers highly vulnerable to poverty.

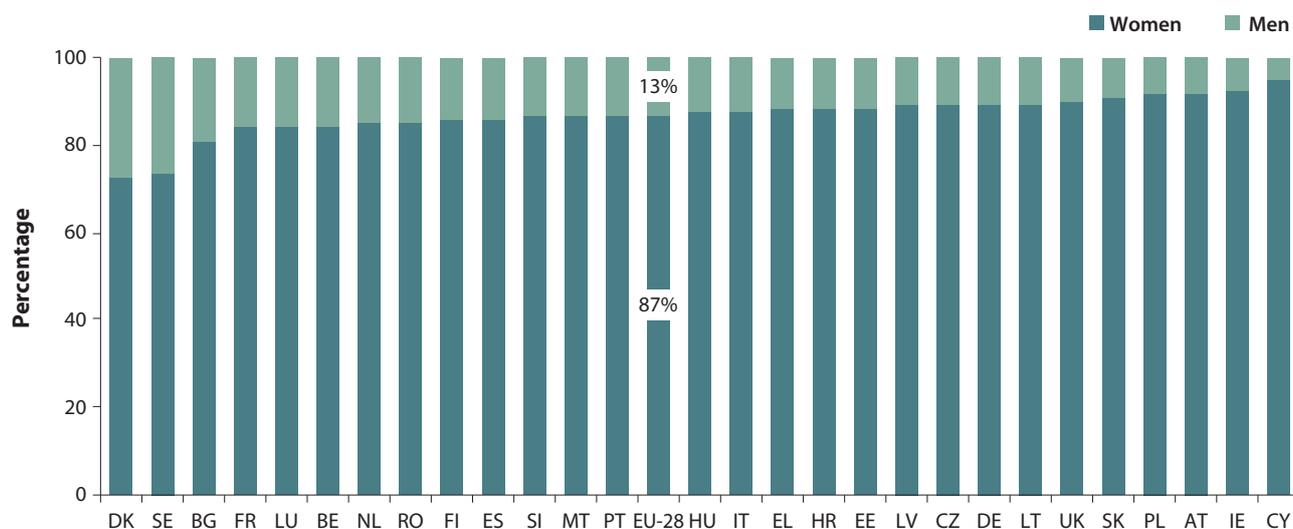
### Women's lower economic activity is a significant factor for being at-risk-of-poverty

Being employed is crucial for the economic independence of women and men, and any interruptions can generate a potential risk of poverty. Proportionally more women than men are inactive across the Member States, although the share of economically inactive women varies considerably among Member States (Figure 3). Over two fifths of women are inactive in Italy and Malta, where gender gaps

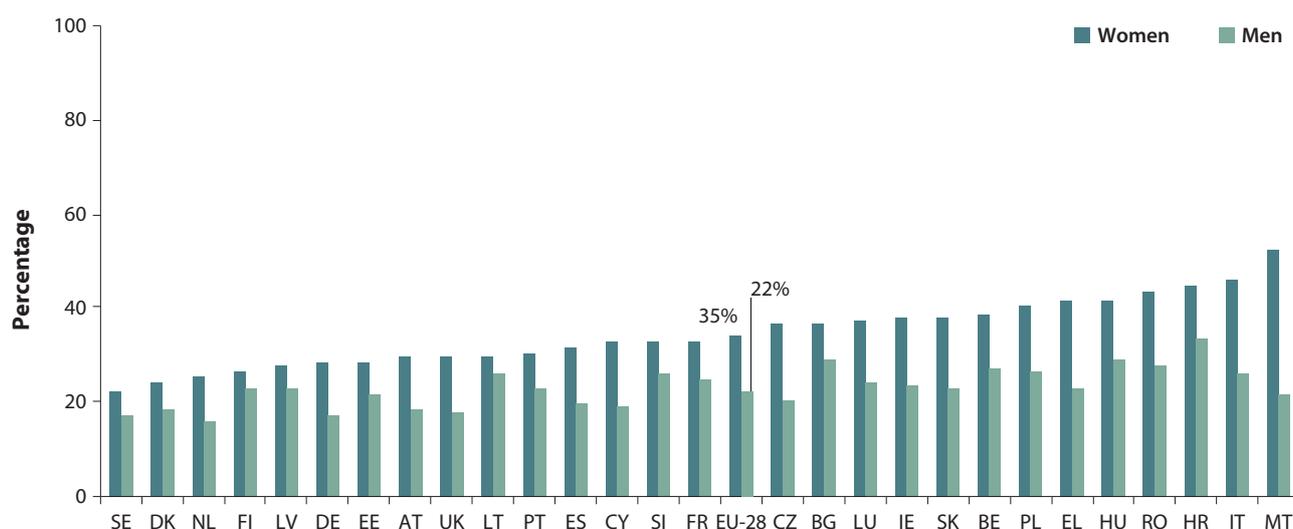
**Figure 1** Percentage of lone parents at risk of poverty, EU-28, 2012



Source: Eurostat, SILC (ilc\_li03)

**Figure 2** Lone parents (mothers and fathers) by Member State in the EU-28, 2012


Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfst\_hhindws)

**Figure 3** Percentages of inactive women and men (15–64) by Member State, 2012


Source: Eurostat (ifsa\_ipga)

in inactivity are the highest in the EU (20 p.p. and 31 p.p. respectively).

Since 2007, the proportion of economically inactive women and men aged 15 to 64 years decreased across Member States. This decrease was higher for women, reducing in part the gender inactivity gap at EU level for that period. Nevertheless, in 2012 the proportion of inactive women was still considerably higher than that of men; and women were at least six times more likely than men to be inactive due to caring or other family responsibilities.

## 2.1.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

### Women's access to employment remains a priority for Member States

Policy measures have focused on either facilitating access to work or self-employment, or developing care and childcare provisions to support mother's access to jobs. Several Member States have advanced their employment support programmes targeting families (mostly with a special focus

on lone parents, which are in majority mothers) (DK, DE, EL, HU). Countries such as Cyprus and Poland have launched schemes to promote women's entrepreneurship. In Poland the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy promoted entrepreneurship among women and granted subsidies to women intending to start a business. In Germany actions have focused on enabling women to participate equally in the labour market and increase the participation of women with and without children in gainful employment, and especially to improve the prospects, in terms of work-life balance, for lone mothers. In Spain, the Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014–16 foresees the adoption of a Special Plan for Equality of Women and Men in the Workplace and against Wage Discrimination.

Lone parents, among them particularly women, received more attention because of their larger exposure to risk of poverty. Facilitating lone parents' access to jobs features in the schemes of several Member States. Germany implemented two ESF funded programmes (2009–13) improving comprehensive support for lone parents, especially through local network structures. Ireland is currently undertaking a comprehensive reform of the One-Parent Family Payment to tackle long-term welfare dependency and high rates of lone parents who are in consistent poverty by improving their access to activation supports with the aim of increasing employment rates of lone parents.

### **Considerations to ensure fairer pensions for women**

On average, women receive lower old-age pensions than men, which reflects institutionalised gender inequalities in the labour market and the private sphere. Efforts to increase women's participation in the labour market and to guarantee their contribution to pension schemes take the form of reforming pension contributions to capture and mitigate gender differences or measures introducing compensation mechanisms (HU) or improving the right to a pension (DK).

Hungary introduced a 'Women 40' pension eligibility, which provides an opportunity for women who served for a long time to retire irrespective of the age limit. In the Netherlands, the Work and Welfare Act provides a supplement to the income of elderly people with an insufficient state pension and little or no other income. France has also reviewed its pensions entitlement for women considering the time dedicated to child-rearing, and revised the basic pension (of which most beneficiaries are women). Spain has also taken into account women's birth or adoption periods regarding pensions. Furthermore, it has adopted specific legislation to protect part-time workers in order to guarantee the application of the principle of equal treatment between part-time and full time workers regarding access to social security benefits, which favours mainly women and also their pensions, since they have the highest number of part-time contracts.

Recent trends that set an increase in the minimum contribution years for pensions may exacerbate gender differences in the long term.

### **Efficiency and effectiveness of social transfers to better tackle poverty**

Social transfers play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty, cushioning people from the worst effects of rising unemployment and falling incomes. Member States have been seeking a more efficient allocation of resources. This has taken the form of either new benefits/supports for at-risk groups of population or of efforts to better assess potential beneficiaries. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of benefits and assistance ultimately increases the success in poverty alleviation for those in greatest need.

Some Member States have developed new benefits, or fine-tuned their eligibility criteria, although the impact on women is as yet unknown. Austria and Estonia have in the last year developed new means-tested minimum income benefits. Croatia has enacted a New Social Welfare Act, with criteria for the provision of social assistance and services. Cyprus has also targeted new at risk populations (displaced mothers), and France has reconsidered its benefits for family support. Italy has developed new criteria to improve the targeting of benefits, and will also be testing a programme providing income support, as well as other measures with a commitment by the beneficiary to seek work, ensure the education of children.

A particular focus has been placed on social assistance through benefits for those in caring roles, predominantly women (EL, HU, AT). The Hungarian family support system helps families with young children by various childcare supports. The majority (90 %) of those entitled to the allowance are women. Recent changes include increasing the entitlement years, allowing for the possibilities of benefiting in the case of consecutively born children, or the ability to maintain the benefit if the mother returns to work.

A key issue, which needs further exploration, is the extent to which these types of measures reinforce or support the gendered division of labour. For example, whilst extending entitlement to child benefit may boost short-term income, it may not support the advancement of women's careers.

### **Addressing at-risk-of-poverty for diverse groups of women**

In their recent reports to UNECE, the EU Member States identified that women were more severely affected by poverty and exclusion, even in Member States where overall levels of poverty have decreased over time (NL, AT), or where there have been high employment rates and a relatively healthy economy (DE). The topic of the feminisation of poverty was referred to in connection with single-headed



households (in most cases headed by women), those with children or dependants, disabled and older women. Women's lack of economic independence was addressed as an issue that accentuates women's poverty (EE, EL, NL). Women's economic self-reliance, being independent from a partner or the transfer of social insurance, gives them greater freedom to make their own choices in life and lessens the chance of them falling into poverty.

Member States reported addressing the gender bias in poverty through their policies to tackle poverty or social exclusion, which benefits women in most cases. For example, in Bulgaria quantitative targets to reduce poverty by 2020 have been set in the 'National target for promoting social inclusion' and the 'National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria (2011–15)'. Specific gender-sensitive actions have been taken forward by Member States (IE, EL, HR, CY, HU, PL). Others make use of gender mainstreaming and gender equality tools, with a view to making interventions more effective and tailored (AT).

## 2.2 Education and Training of Women (B)

### 2.2.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

Education and training are instrumental in shaping the opportunities and aspirations of girls and women. Ensuring equal treatment in education is an important mechanism to achieving the realisation of women's full potential, as well as respecting their freedom of thought and eliminating discrimination against women. The Council of the European Union has urged the Member States to implement gender mainstreaming in their education and training policies at all levels, and stressed the importance of equal access to and participation in education of women and men (Council of the EU, 2007a).

The BPfA defined six strategic objectives in the critical area of Education and Training of Women:

- B1. Ensure equal access to education;
- B2. Eradicate illiteracy among women;
- B3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education;
- B4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training;

- B5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms;
- B6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

In 2007, the German Presidency of the Council of the EU carried out research on the education and training of women (Council of the EU, 2007a). The Presidency proposed four indicators to measure the implementation of three out of six objectives: B1, B3 and B4.

The indicators adopted by the Council during the German Presidency measure women's participation in education at different levels (Indicators 1 and 3a) and employment rates by sex and highest educational qualification attained (Indicator 2). The indicators capture gender segregation in education, both horizontally (i.e. field of study) and vertically (i.e. level of attainment) and the relative returns of education for women and men over time, according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) <sup>(13)</sup>.

Attainment at the highest levels of education is a predominant focus, since graduation from higher education is an important factor for women's and men's employment prospects. The pattern of women and men's employment among the academic staff in higher education institutions, differentiated by level of seniority, is also captured (Indicator 3b).

Data for indicators are available for all 28 Member States. However, as education structures and systems vary across the EU, data are not always fully comparable. The monitoring of progress in this critical area of concern has not been carried out since 2010. The 2012 Danish Presidency introduced a new indicator related to education in the critical area of Women and the Environment, through its focus on the area of climate change. The new indicator measures the proportion of women and men among all tertiary graduates including PhD graduates (ISCED levels 5 and 6) in natural sciences and technologies at the EU and Member-State level (area K, Indicator 4), making it very relevant to the area of Education and Training of Women.

### 2.2.2 EU Policy developments

The Europe 2020 Strategy sets out five headline targets for employment, research and development/innovation; climate change/energy; education; and poverty and social exclusion. The target of reaching 75 % employment of women and men aged 2–64 requires Member States to reinforce the education and training of women, particularly in sectors where they are under-represented and to invest 3 % of the EU's GDP in research and development. It also includes goals to reduce early school-leaving rates to below

10 % and to reach at least 40 % of 30- to 34-year olds to complete third-level education.

Supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Employment Guidelines present common priorities and targets for Member State employment policies that aim to support reforms for sustainable growth driven by knowledge and innovation. Employment Guideline 8 aims for 'developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning' thus encouraging Member States to create policies promoting further opportunities for training, skills and professional experience of women, including the fields of science, mathematics and technology.

'Innovation Union' is one of the flagship initiatives developed to advance the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy. It supports investment in research and development and actions improving the capacity to turn research into new services and products. 'Horizon 2020' is the financial instrument to implement the 'Innovation Union'. The promotion of gender equality is enshrined in its core documents. 'Horizon 2020' promotes gender balance in research teams by making this a ranking factor in selecting proposals with the same scores. It also extends to gender balance in decision-making with action to meet the target of 40 % of the under-represented women or men in each group (for example expert groups) and panels, such as evaluation panels.

Addressing gender imbalance in the field of science and research in Europe is one of the priorities of the Commission's Communication on the European Research Area from 2012 (European Commission, 2012i). It urges Member States, research stakeholder organisations and the Commission to ensure gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research by: removing legal and other barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of women researchers; addressing gender imbalances in decision-making processes; and strengthening the gender dimension in research programmes.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken over the past few years to address gender inequalities in science and research, such as to encourage girls and women to choose research as a career, improve data collection on women in science, tackle stereotyping of women in post-graduate education and research and promote gender equality in the implementation of the 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7). Examples of developments and activities in this area include:

- Research and development of methods. The Gendered Innovations experts group working on better integration of gender in future European research has developed methods, terminology and case studies that document

specific gendered innovations and demonstrate how methods of sex and gender analysis are applied in specific cases (European Commission, 2012l).

- EU communication campaigns, aimed at increasing awareness of stereotypes and obstacles to the choices and careers of women in science and technology.
- Monitoring and supporting women in science and research. The Marie Curie Actions put major effort into increasing the participation of women researchers at all stages of their career, with a target of 40 % women participation in all actions by the end of FP7, while seeking the best work/life balance and encouraging women to claim their place at project management level.

### 2.2.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Women represent a majority of university graduates in the EU

Women's participation in education is above the rate for men at graduate level in the EU in 2012 (59 %), the trend being unchanged since 2007.

The share of women graduates (at level 5 ISCED 1997) in science, mathematics and computing was 40 % in 2007 and in 2012, while in engineering, manufacturing and construction it rose slightly from 26 % to 27 %. The share of women in advanced research studies (ISCED level 6) increased in both of these male-dominated areas: from 40 % in 2007 to 42 % in 2012 in science, mathematics and computing, and from 24 % to 28 % in engineering, manufacturing and construction. In 2012, the highest overall rates of women's participation in science, mathematics and computing was in Romania (61 % at level 5 (ISCED 1997), and in engineering, manufacturing and construction in Cyprus (51 %). In 2012, the Netherlands showed the lowest overall rate of women's participation (25 %) in science, mathematics and computing at level 5 (ISCED 1997), while Ireland had the lowest overall rate of women's participation (17 %) in graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction (United Nations, 2006).

At post-graduate level, men PhD graduates still outnumber women (53 % in 2012; 54 % in 2007) with a small and decreasing gender gap. Changes are more visible at the Member States' level. In 2012, women outnumber men among PhD graduates in 12 Member States (BG, EE, HR, IT, LT, LV, LU, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI) compared to nine Member States in 2007 <sup>(14)</sup>.

### Higher levels of education are linked to a lower gender employment gap

The average employment rate of women rises in line with their educational level, particularly for those aged 25–49. There has been little change in this pattern since 2007.

In 2012, women with pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0–2) had the lowest employment rates (50 % for women aged 25–49 and 36 % for women aged 50–64). This is well below the employment rates of women with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3–4) (73 % for women aged 25–49 and 55 % for women aged 50–64) (United Nations, 2012). Women with the first and second stage of tertiary education (levels 5 and 6 ISCED 1997) were more likely to be employed (with an employment rate of 83 % for women aged 25–49 and 72 % for those aged 50–64) and their employment rate was well above the target employment rate of 75 % of Europe 2020 Strategy (United Nations, 2006).

In 2012, the EU-28 employment gap between women and men with education level 0–2 was 20 p.p. for those aged 25–49 and 17 p.p. for those aged 50–64. The employment gap between women and men reduced with education level 3–4: in 2012 the EU-28 employment gap for women and men with education level 3–4 was 13 p.p. and 12 p.p. for the 25–49 and 50–64 age groups respectively. At education level 5–6, the employment gap between women and men reduced even further, to 8 p.p. for both age groups, although it remained significant (United Nations, 2012).

The situation varied among the Member States, in terms of the impact that education had on both women's

employment and the gender employment gap. In 2012, the gap in the rate of employment of women aged 25–49 and those with education level 0–2 and those with level 5–6 ranged from around 11 p.p. (CY, LU) to around 50 p.p. (BG, LT, LV, MT). The employment gap between women and men with education level 5–6, in 2012 ranged from under 1 p.p. in three Member States (HR, LT, PT) to over 10 p.p. in five Member States (CZ, EE, LU, HU, SK) for those aged 25–49. For women aged 50–64 years, it showed more women in employment in four Member States (EE, LT, FI, SE) and a larger gender employment gap in other Member States (almost 30 p.p. in MT and over 14 p.p. in EL, CY, LU).

### Subject choices are subject to gender segregation

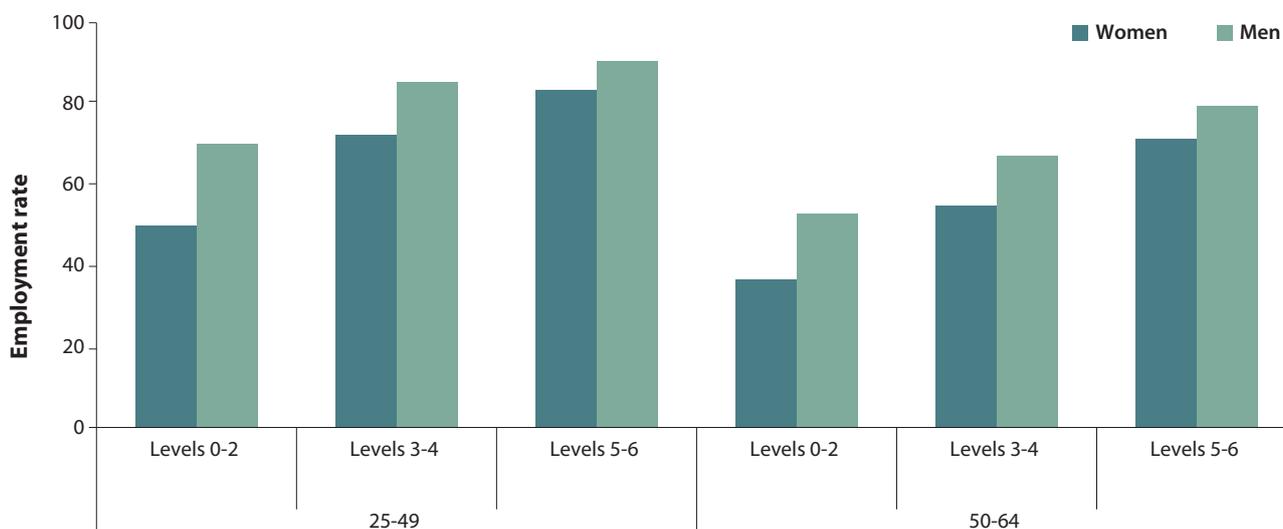
Despite the changes in educational attainment of women and men, segregation patterns remain deeply entrenched throughout the Member States. They tend to operate in line with gendered expectations, as women are over-represented in sectors attached to the traditional roles of women, such as health and welfare; humanities and arts or teacher training and education science.

Men outnumber women in engineering, manufacturing and construction at both level 5 and 6 (ISCED 1997) in all Member States in 2012. The participation of women and men is most balanced in 'agriculture and veterinary' (United Nations, 2006).

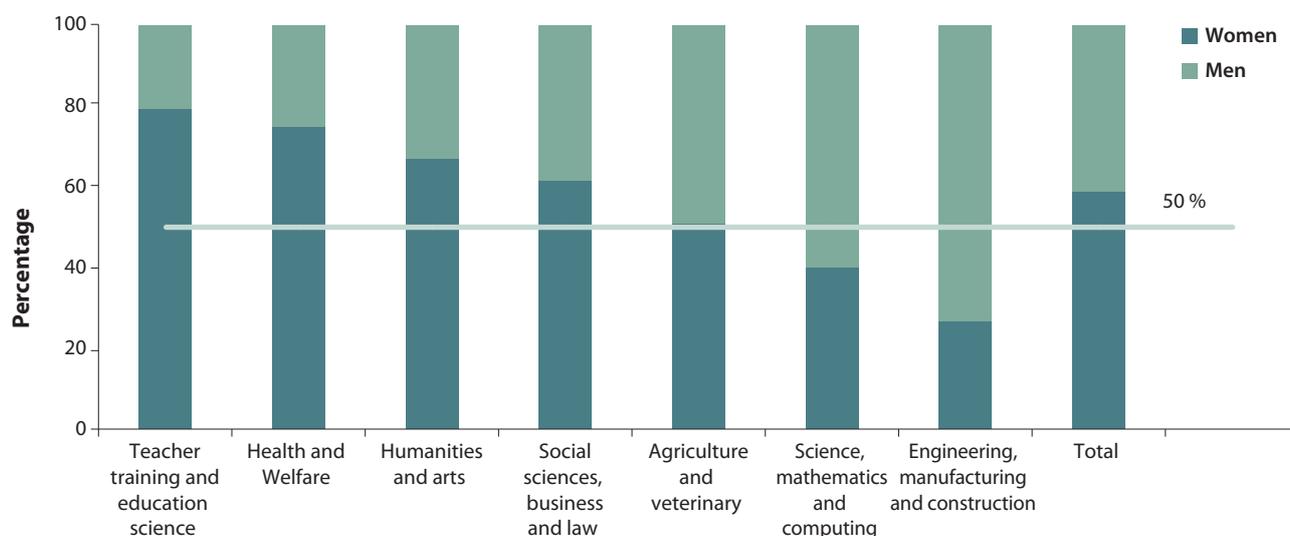
### Women are under-represented in senior positions in academia across all Member States

Men outnumbered women amongst academic staff at all grades in higher academic institutions, and accounted

**Figure 4** Employment rate for women and men by level of education and age group, EU-28, 2012



Source: Calculation based on Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa\_ergaed)

**Figure 5** Percentages of women and men of all ISCED 5 and 6 graduates, EU-28, 2012

Source: Calculation based on Eurostat, Education statistics (educ\_grad5)

for 60 % of staff in academic institutions in 2010 (a slight reduction from 62 % in 2007). The predominance of men amongst academic staff holds true for most Member States (except LV and LT). In some Member States men hold a particularly high share of academic positions (CZ, FR, LU, MT).

There are significant differences in levels of vertical segregation within the three grades of academic staff. In 2010 across the EU-27 on average women accounted for 44 % of Grade C posts (the first grade/post which a newly qualified PhD (ISCED 6) graduate would normally hold), 37 % of Grade B posts (researchers working in positions less senior than top positions but more senior than newly qualified PhD holders), and only 20 % of Grade A posts (the single highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted). The picture is not much different from 2007 (when women held 44 % of Grade C posts, 36 % of Grade B posts and 19 % of Grade A posts).

This pattern of vertical segregation holds for all Member States. There are variations in women's representation in Grade A posts (ranging from around a third of Grade A posts in LV and RO in 2010, to below 15 % in BE, CZ, CY, LT, LU, NL). In most Member States men outnumbered women at all staff grades in 2010 with five exceptions: women outnumbered men at staff Grade C in four Member States (EE, LV, LT, FI) and at staff Grade B in two Member States (RO, FI). The proportion of women heads of institutions in the Higher Education Sector in 2010 was only 16 %.

## 2.2.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

### Varied measures for tackling gender stereotyping are implemented

Gender stereotyping is recognised as a causal factor for gender segregation and gender inequality in the field of education and training. Gender stereotyping constrains choices made by, and expectations of, women and men. Particular attention is given to the curriculum in this regard. Gender roles, stereotypes and equality are, for example, discussed in social studies or history subjects in the Danish 'Folkeskole'. The Cypriot Action Plan on Gender Equality in Education (2014–17) includes measures to address gender roles and stereotypes in the family and in society. The Czech 'Gender Equality Situation under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and Proposal of Mid-Term Strategic Plan for Gender Equality' establishes eliminating the consequences of gender stereotypes as one aim of education policy. In Croatia, the standards for textbooks prescribe that 'textbooks must prepare both sexes for effective and equal participation in all areas of life' and 'promote gender equality'. The Pedagogical Institute, the Greek authority for the school materials, has taken steps to remove offensive stereotypes of women through the Inter-thematic Integrated Curriculum Frameworks (2004). The Hungarian National Curriculum includes a focus on teaching of human rights, including awareness of, and attitudes towards, equality between women and men.



Horizontal and vertical segregation is addressed by several Member States targeting choices of girls' and boys' in compulsory education. The Ministry of Education and Children in Cyprus prepared an action plan on gender equality (based on the National Action Plan for Gender Equality), to achieve a comprehensive and systematic approach to gender equality policies in education and training. Finnish Equality Programme (2008) promotes and coordinates measures aimed at improving gender equality with a focus on increased equality awareness in schools and alleviating segregation.

The Polish Government supports the 'Girls as Engineers' and the 'Girls as Scientists' campaigns of the Perspektywy (Perspectives) Educational Foundation and the Conference of Rectors of Polish Technical Universities which encourage women and girls to study technical and scientific subjects. The Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) offers tailored programmes to reduce barriers and inspire girls and young women to opt for educational/vocational training and careers and atypical professions. Associations such as 'sprungbett — Counselling Centre for Girls and Young Women' in Austria (Vienna) are supported to foster women's and girls' access to vocational training, further training, technology and science. In Germany, the annual event *Girls' Day — Future Prospects for Girls* — is government-funded and motivates girls and young women to opt for training or studies in fields traditionally not attracting women. Enterprises, universities, and research institutions organise an open day for girls aged 10 to 17, offering an insight into, and practical experience in, a wide range of careers and professions, thus broadening the range of vocational choices of girls, as it is mainly STEM careers that are concerned. Germany has an initiative called *New Paths for Boys* and *Boys' Day* that encourages young men to open up new perspectives for their future, to widen the range of both their role options and their career choices — including teaching.

### **Targeted gender equality measures in education and training**

Member States have included issues of education and training of women in gender equality plans or plans for gender equality in education. These plans enable cooperation between governmental departments and state agencies, and mobilisation of resources. The Croatian National Policy for Gender Equality (2011–15), sets out measures to improve gender sensitive education and training. In Spain, one objective of the Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014–16 is the promotion of equal opportunities through the education system, including measures of tackling stereotypes in the choice of studies and career opportunities, teaching and school management positions; advising students against multiple discrimination and promoting the awareness-raising and training on equal education in families and schools.

### **Gender equality capacity building in education systems**

Training and provision of support materials to teachers and school personnel are considered valuable by some Member States for the implementation of gender equality policies in education. In Italy, for example, training is provided to school personnel on gender and equal opportunities as part of the National Plan on training courses for teachers.

The Cypriot Pedagogical Institute has a web page dedicated to gender equality with information and material on equal opportunities for boys and girls at school for teachers. In Lithuania, a teaching aid 'Possibilities to Foster Gender Equality in School' for teachers and social pedagogues informs on gender equality goals in schools and offers tools on gender equality education at school and in the wider school community. In the framework of collaboration between the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, the 'Intercambia' Portal was created, to facilitate access to and exchange of information (ICT resources, a database and statistics) and knowledge on educational practices that promote equal opportunities and prevent gender violence.

Member States have taken efforts to mainstream gender equality in education policies, school curricula and contracts signed with educational establishments. Portuguese National Strategic Reference Framework (2007–13) sets out the use of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds. Priority Axis 7, 'Gender Equality', has the aim to spread a culture of equality through gender mainstreaming strategies in education and training among other initiatives. National curricula for basic schools and upper-secondary schools in Estonia specify gender equality as one of the core social values in the curricula.

A performance management approach to gender mainstreaming in education has been introduced in Denmark. Danish universities sign performance contracts with the responsible Ministry committing to working for better gender equality in their degree programmes.

### **The gender-segregated nature of the teaching professions is subject to measures**

The education sector predominantly employs women. Regardless of this, vertical segregation persists with men holding a majority of senior and middle management positions. Some Member States are seeking to address this issue. Over 260 young women scientists, for example, were appointed to unlimited W2 and W3 professorships in the first phase of a German programme for women professors. Such developments build on an ongoing trend in some Member States to pursue a strategy of promoting institutional change within organisations responsible for education and training policy or for the delivery of education and training. This has included in-service training to coordination mechanisms and

specialised gender equality teams and structures that provide advice and knowledge on gender in education issues.

## 2.3 Women and Health (C)

### 2.3.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

Health covers physical, mental and social well-being as well as the absence of sickness and infirmity, and is determined by the social, political and economic context of people's lives, as well as by biology according to the World Health Organisation.

Health is an important area of inequality between women and men due to their different and unequal access to and use of basic health resources. At the same time, women are exposed to certain health risks associated with sexuality and reproduction. Women are also at risk of negative health consequences associated with poverty and economic dependence, the experience of violence, and discrimination.

The BPfA defined five strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and Health:

- C1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality healthcare, information and the related services;
- C2. Strengthen preventative programmes that promote women's health;
- C3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues;
- C4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health;
- C5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

The three indicators for monitoring the implementation of this critical area of concern were adopted during the 2006 Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU. They mainly focus on the first strategic objective, i.e. the accessibility and quality of healthcare for women, and look at healthy life years (indicator 1), access to healthcare (indicator 2) and cardiovascular diseases (indicator 3). This critical area of concern has not been reviewed since Beijing + 15. Key topics that relate to several of its objectives, such as the effects of preventative schemes on women's health, therefore need more research.

### 2.3.2 EU policy developments

In its conclusions on Equality and Health in all Policies (June 2010), the Council expressed concerns about differences in health status between the EU Member States and the vulnerability to poor health of certain groups of persons (unemployed or persons on low incomes, the homeless, people with disabilities, and people from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds). The Council recognised that health services alone are not enough to maximise health potential and address inequalities and invited Member States to develop policies and actions to reduce inequalities, optimise the collection of data and knowledge (including measuring, monitoring and evaluation) and enhance public health capacities (Council of the EU, 2010a).

In March 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on reducing health inequalities in the EU (European Parliament, 2011b) highlighting common values and principles such as access to high-quality care, equality and solidarity. It reiterates that health is influenced by gender. Women are more affected by malnutrition and unhealthy behaviours such as smoking. They are under-represented in clinical trials, and suffer health consequences related to experiencing violence. It recognises that violence against women is a public health issue and also that the number of women involved in the development of health policies and programmes should increase. Inequality in accessing healthcare for economic reasons is also underlined. Various groups, such as people with disabilities, also face exclusion from the healthcare system. In conclusion, the Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to improve access to disease prevention, health promotion and healthcare services and reduce inequalities between social and age groups. The Parliament also called for a focus on access to healthcare for disadvantaged groups (children and adolescents, migrant groups, undocumented migrants especially women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, the elderly), as well as access for women to methods of contraception.

In February 2013, the European Commission issued the Communication Social Investment Package <sup>(15)</sup> recognising the role of the healthcare system in enabling the inclusive growth objectives in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

### 2.3.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### **Cardiovascular diseases have been in decline as the cause of mortality among women**

Cardiovascular diseases are still the main cause of mortality as well as of disability and morbidity among women in Europe. Approximately half of the deaths in the EU are caused by cardiovascular diseases.

Between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of women's deaths resulting from cardiovascular diseases, as a percentage of all causes of deaths, has slightly decreased in the majority of Member States, with the exception of some Member States (BG, CZ, EE, CY, LT, HU) <sup>(16)</sup>. Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common cause of death in the EU <sup>(17)</sup>, with one in seven women and one in six men dying from the disease (European Commission, 2009a). CHD was responsible for between 6 % (France) to 42 % (Lithuania) of women's deaths, as a percentage of total causes of deaths in 2010. The percentage for Lithuania, but also Slovakia (36 %) and Estonia (30 %) are in huge contrast to the EU average (13 %). This may also reflect the difficulties in determining cause of death and be the result of a practice of allocating deaths more frequently to CHD in some Member States when the cause is unclear.

Stroke, a cerebral-vascular disease, is the second most common cause of death in Europe; one in eight women and one in 10 men die from stroke in the EU (European Commission, 2009a). In all EU Member States, the percentage of women's deaths as a result of stroke is higher than that of men's stroke-related deaths. In 2010, the lowest percentage for women was reported in France (7 %) and the highest in Bulgaria and Romania (22 % for both). Generally, the percentage of women's deaths related to stroke, as a percentage of all causes of deaths, has shown a decline since 2007 in the majority of Member States, with slight increases reported in Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

### Increases in women's unhealthy behaviours are a threat to longer life expectancy

Women's life expectancy has been increasing in the EU and exceeds that of men. At the same time, in recent

years, a noticeable closing of the gender gap has taken place mostly in men's favour (Social Innovation Fund and European Innovation Centre, 2008). Increases in women's smoking, lung cancers among women coupled with a low participation in sport might have contributed to the closing of the gender gap in life expectancy. For example, mortality from cancer of the respiratory system has increased by almost 70 % for women since 1970 (European Commission, 2014i).

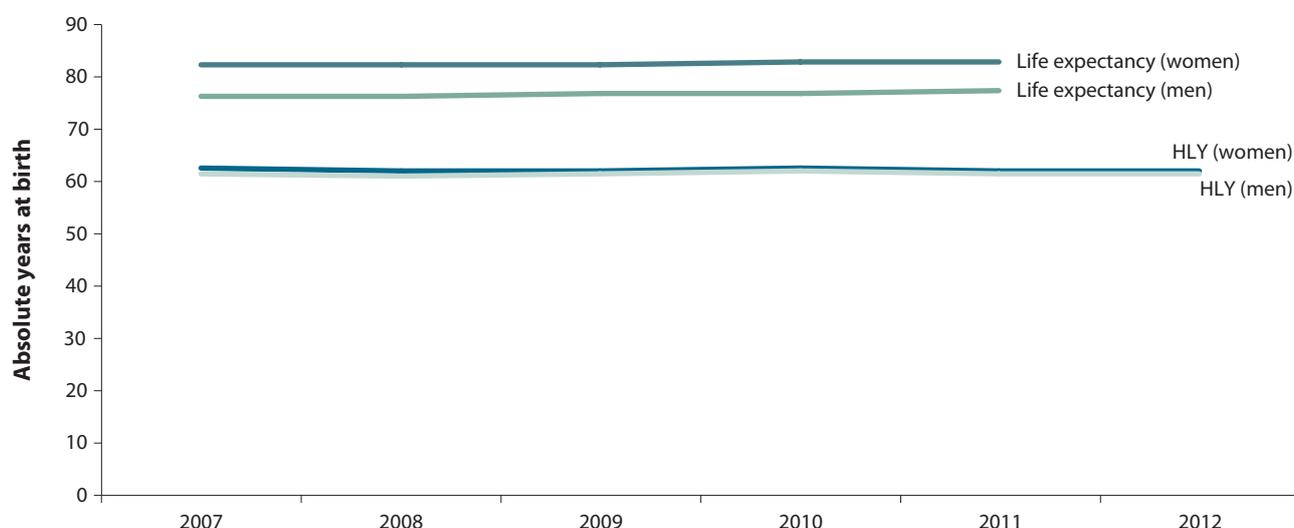
In several Member States, obesity is also more common among women than men and there are other health-related issues on the rise, such as increased drug use and binge drinking, creating higher mortality risks for women.

### Despite longer life expectancy, women spend more of their lives in disability and ill-health

Between 2007 and 2010, average healthy life years at birth in the EU-27 both for women and men remained steady at 63 and 62 years. From 2010 to 2012, there was a slight decrease in average healthy life years for women (from 63 to 62) as well as for men (from 62 to 61). The decrease for women has been quite significant (more than 5 p.p.) in four Member States (BG, DK, NL, SI) and to a lesser degree in seven others (DE, EL, IT, RO, SI, FI, UK), while an increase could be noticed in 11 other Member States (BE, EE, IE, ES, CY, LV, LT, LU, HR, HU, SE).

For the same period (2007–10) at the EU level, healthy life years at birth as a percentage of total life expectancy decreased for both women and men by 1 p.p. Women spend on average 76 % of their life disability free, while for men this period extends to 80 % of their life. A decrease in

**Figure 6** Life expectancy and healthy life years (HLY) for women and men in EU, 2007–12



Source: Eurostat Health statistics (hlth\_hlye)

the proportion of healthy life years for women and men was noticed between 2010 to 2011. As life expectancy in the EU has been steadily on the rise for both women and men since 1980 — with women having a life expectancy of 80 years or above in most (19) Member States, it points to a worrisome trend, whereby women face an increasing amount of time in disability and ill-health<sup>(18)</sup>.

### **Women are slightly more likely than men to perceive cost as a barrier to accessing healthcare**

In 2012, at EU level, there were no significant differences between women and men in terms of unmet medical examination needs (93 % of women; 94 % of men) and dental needs (93 % of women; 93 % of men). These differences become more noticeable at Member-State level, where in five Member States (EL, PL, RO, FI, SE), the rates of women declaring unmet medical needs were at least 2 p.p. higher than men's rates, ranging from 2 (FI) to 4 (RO). Compared with 2007, at EU level, in 2012, the unmet medical examination needs slightly increased for both women and men.

When it comes to reasons for unmet medical examination needs, the cost ('too expensive') differentiate women from men as 3 % of women compared to 2 % of men gave this answer in 2012, although this represents a small difference. These figures are largely comparable to the situation of 2007.

Cost as a barrier to medical examination is most significant for women in Bulgaria (6 % in 2012), Greece (8 % in 2012), Latvia and Romania (both 11 % in 2012). However, in Bulgaria 6 % of women reported that they had not visited health facilities in 2012, down from 17 % in 2007.

## **2.3.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

### **Prevention and early diagnosis reduced women's mortality from specific types of cancers**

Thanks to prevention and diagnostic work, several Member States note progress in reducing women's mortality from diseases, including certain cancers, HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality. Mortality rates due to breast and cervical cancer reduced in Croatia, Denmark, Lithuania and Slovenia, while incidents of HIV/AIDS dropped in Cyprus and Estonia. Furthermore, Member States note a decrease in newly diagnosed cases of breast and cervical cancers and HIV/AIDS. Free-of-charge screening for breast and cervical cancer were established in several Member States (BE, DK, DE, EE, IE, FR, HR, CY, LV, LT, HU, SI). In addition, several Member States introduced a free-of-charge Human Papillomavirus vaccination for young girls (between 12 and 14) to prevent cervical cancer (BE, DK, IE, FR, CY, HU, MT, PT, RO).

### **Prevention strategies improved maternal and infant health**

Maternal mortality and infant mortality has decreased as a result of prevention strategies (EE, CY, PL, RO, SK). In Poland, the development of early detection allowed the perinatal mortality rate to reduce from 7.2 % in 2009 to 6.5 % in 2012 (UNECE, 2014r, p. 64).

In the past few years, many Member States have developed new programmes and plans on maternal health. An example is pre-natal counselling and care offered to all pregnant women, in most cases free of charge (BE, DE, EE, HR, CY, PL, RO, SI). Other measures taken were the promotion of breast-feeding, supporting women in breast-feeding and creating baby-friendly hospitals (CY, HU, RO). Women's needs and preferences in child birth have been better promoted (CZ, HU). New regulations were adopted and allow for midwife-assisted birth, where the birth is deemed to result in no complications. The aim of this measure is to ensure respect for privacy of the pregnant women (UNECE, 2014f; UNECE, 2014m).

### **Decreased number of recorded legal abortions**

Another observable trend is the decrease in legal abortions, reported by some Member States (DK, DE, LT, PT, RO, SI, SK), which might be explained by an increase in consultations on family planning and improved accessibility to contraceptive methods especially for young women. In Romania, the recently improved services for family planning have been increasingly used, and access to free-of-charge contraceptives has been facilitated at various healthcare facilities (UNECE, 2014t). Access to contraception continues to be an issue in several Member States (BG, IT, CY, LT, NL, AT, PL, SK), some of which also reported a decrease in recorded abortions.

In other Member States, such as France, the number of abortions has been stable since 2006 and there is a high prevalence of use of contraceptives (UNECE, 2014). This trend refers to recorded abortions, hence those deemed to have been legally obtained. In Denmark abortions are considered legal up to only 12 gestation weeks. Access to abortion is limited or unavailable in Ireland, Malta and Poland.

### **Measures preventing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, present an insufficient gender perspective**

The Member States' reports to UNECE show a decrease in new HIV/AIDS infections and sexually transmitted diseases for both women and men in several EU Member States by pointing to the success of prevention programmes. Some countries have developed campaigns, websites or informative materials (such as brochures, pamphlets, leaflets



and booklets) to sensitise the public on HIV/AIDS (BG, DK, DE, EE, FR, HR, CY, LT, PT, RO). In parallel, free-of-charge testing and counselling have been organised and sexual education programmes have been developed and delivered (BE, DK, EL, HR, CY, PT, SK). Overall, the development of better treatments and the establishment of national plans and programmes and the accessibility to free-of-charge treatment allowed for a decrease in mortality rates from HIV/AIDS. Because of the lack of disaggregated data, it is not clear how women fare in terms of reduction in new HIV/AIDS infections.

The gender perspective is missing, in general, from policies and measures addressing sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. In several Member States, it is used when women are tested for HIV/AIDS during pregnancy (DE, EE, CY, PL, PT). On the one hand, this can help to identify new cases of HIV/AIDS, but they mainly aim at protecting the life of the unborn child, and less at preventing HIV/AIDS among women.

A few Member States introduced a gender perspective in their measures to address sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS (BE, DE, FR, PT, FI).

### **Limited action to facilitate women's access to healthcare**

Several Member States reported their commitment to ensure an equal access to the healthcare system to the entire population (BG, DK, DE, EE, IE, CY, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, FI) through publicly administering the healthcare benefits via a public health insurance scheme.

Moreover, some Member States have recognised the necessity to take gender differences into consideration in access to health (IE, FR, NL). France reports unequal access of women and men to the health system and the tendency of women to forego their medical needs due to financial difficulties. For these reasons, France will apply a gender sensitive perspective in its future healthcare policies (UNECEj, 2014), an approach that is also highlighted by the Netherlands (UNECE, 2014x).

Several other Member States have developed measures to improve access to healthcare services and to information on health to certain marginalised groups of women such as women with disabilities, rural women or women from different ethnic communities (BE, CZ, DK, DE, EL, LT, PT, RO). Despite that, the needs of migrant, asylum seeking and refugee women, women from ethnic minorities, elderly, disabled or women experiencing limited mobility are insufficiently tackled. These groups are exposed to higher risks of violence, lack specialised medical facilities and care and face discrimination in connection to pregnancy.

### **Low integration of a gender-perspective in the healthcare systems**

Addressing occupational hazards (i.e. biological response to hazards — such as heavy work, shift work or the body's reaction to chemical exposure) often focuses on men, except for women during pregnancy. Women's dual roles of family caretakers and workers are not always considered in measures addressing occupational hazards. There is also a general recognition that sex-disaggregated data in medical trials is costly and difficult to obtain.

The UK and Germany have developed gender-specific rehabilitation programmes; in the UK there have been separate actions within women's prisons on drug addiction (UN CEDAW, 2011f), and in Germany there is a separate approach to smoking prevention among boys and girls (UN CEDAW, 2007b). In Austria, a Women's Health Report was published in 2010, which includes women-specific health data and socio-demographic statistics (UN CEDAW, 2011b). In Greece, a project entitled 'Promoting Women's Health and Safe Motherhood WHEALTH' (2006–08) focused on collecting data specific to women's health issues, and included a campaign aimed at women's access to healthcare in the area of cancer prevention, pregnancy and motherhood, sexual health and menopause (UN CEDAW, 2011g). In Spain, the law requires the government to collect sex disaggregated data in the healthcare system, which has been done by Health Observatory since it was established in 2004 (UN CEDAW, 2009c).

Another way to implement a gender perspective in the healthcare system is the provision of women only services or promoting women as medical professionals. In Austria, a 2009 regulation stipulates affirmative action when choosing OBGYN doctors to ensure women have sufficient choices of women doctors in this area of health. As a result, seven women's health centres were established (UN CEDAW, 2011b). The centre in Vienna serves women in a variety of areas, such as physical activity, nutrition, pregnancy and age-related assistance. It also targeted the migrant women community <sup>(19)</sup>. In Cyprus, in 17 out of 29 health centres there are only women doctors and nurses employed (UN CEDAW, 2012b).

In the Netherlands, in consultation with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has launched an alliance which will explore what possibilities there are to promote gender awareness in the healthcare sector (Netherlands report to UNECE, 2014).

## 2.4 Violence against Women (D)

### 2.4.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), Violence against Women is understood as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women'. This includes in the family, in the general community and elsewhere, as well as acts undertaken by the state. Although everyone is susceptible to gender-based violence, women form the majority of victims.

The BPfA defined three strategic objectives in the critical area of Violence against Women:

- D1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
- D2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures;
- D3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

The Council of the EU endorsed a set of indicators in this area proposed by the Spanish and Danish Presidencies in 2002 and the Irish Presidency in 2004. In 2012 the Cypriot Presidency reviewed an indicator on victim support and its 13 sub-indicators (EIGE, 2012b). There are currently ten indicators in this area, seven of which have also sub-indicators. The indicators mainly address domestic violence against women and/or intimate partner violence as well as sexual harassment at the workplace.

A number of EIGE's reports and work are linked to indicators in this area of concern, including a study on Victim support (EIGE, 2012b) and methods, tools and good practices in the field of domestic violence.

### 2.4.2 EU Policy developments

Since 2010, the EU has underlined the importance of addressing violence against women. The European Protection Order, coming into force on 15 January 2014 on the prevention of violence against women in cross-border situations, consists of two instruments: one in the area of administrative and civil law, the other in the area of criminal

law. Mutual recognition of protective measures such as emergency barring orders by the police or restraining orders issued by courts are introduced <sup>(20)</sup>. Another important measure is the Victim's Directive, which will come into force in November 2015 and will guarantee common minimum standards for victims of crime (European Parliament, 2012b). The Directive states that violence against women is gender-based and it recognises the need for specialised services for disadvantaged groups of victims such as women victims of sexual violence or violence in close relationships or victims of trafficking <sup>(21)</sup>.

Since 2010, the Council of the European Union has adopted three sets of Council conclusions addressing violence against women. In 2010 Council emphasised the need to strengthen data collection on prevalence of violence against women and girls (Council of the EU, 2010c). In 2012, the Council called on Member States to 'ensure that support services for victims of violence are in adequate supply and apply a gender equality perspective' and called upon/requested the Commission to consider additional legal instruments and to develop a European strategy on combating gender-based violence. This is further confirmed by the 2014 Conclusions, which call upon Member States to tackle the issue of under-reporting, improve access to services and the setting up of appropriate and sustainable funding for combating gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

The European Parliament, through the activity of its Committee for Gender Equality and Women's Rights (FEMM Committee) has been a driving force in addressing violence against women in recent years. It repeatedly urged the Commission and the Member States to strengthen efforts to combat and prevent violence against women. In 2014, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Undocumented Women Migrants in the European Union <sup>(22)</sup> encouraging Member States to 'waive the requirement to provide documentation in order to access state-run shelters' (European Parliament, 2013c).

In its Resolution of 25 February 2014 <sup>(23)</sup>, the European Parliament requests the Commission to submit, by the end of 2014, a proposal for an act establishing measures to promote and support the action in Member States to prevent and combat violence against women; and to present an EU-wide strategy and action plan to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. It also provides detailed recommendations such as specialised shelters for at least one woman per 10 000 inhabitants and calls for the promotion of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (European Parliament, 2014b).

The European Commission has funded numerous European projects aiming at eliminating violence against women within the Daphne III and the PROGRESS programme and will continue that through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship



Programme, supplemented by funds under the Justice Programme. Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence is a priority area of the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15. In 2013, the Commission announced the policy communication on eliminating female genital mutilation (FGM) and a series of actions and also called for concrete measures in the Member States <sup>(24)</sup>.

Major work on data collection in the area of violence against women has been undertaken by EIGE and several other EU agencies (FRA and Eurofound). EIGE has extensively focused on data collection on various aspects of gender-based violence <sup>(25)</sup>, in particular on sexual violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), intimate partner violence, administrative data sources and the costs of violence. Work on a long-term approach on gender-based violence and data to support monitoring of efforts is in progress. Over 2011–13, the FRA conducted an EU-wide prevalence survey on violence against women (FRA, 2014) <sup>(26)</sup>. Since 2010, Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey measures sexual harassment in the workplace experienced by women and men such as 'unwanted sexual attention', 'threats and humiliating behaviour' and other acts (such as physical violence, bullying/harassment, sexual harassment).

In line with the Commission's Statistics Action Plan 2011–15, Eurostat plans to extend the information covered by its annual statistical collection on crime and criminal justice and to introduce breakdowns by gender for certain crimes, based on the data collection currently undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Data will be requested on the number of offences of rape; the numbers of men and women suspected, prosecuted and convicted of rape; the number of women and men victims of intentional homicide including data on whether the homicide was perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member. The EU participated in the preparations and negotiations of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). This is the first comprehensive, detailed and legally binding instrument in Europe and internationally. It entered into force on 1 August 2014, when 14 Member States of the Council of Europe ratified it and 22 more signed it <sup>(27)</sup>.

Women's NGOs such as the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and the European Network WAVE are playing an active role in establishing and improving measures to prevent and combat violence against women and their children. The EU recognised the important role of WAVE and EWL and funds the networks for their activities.

## 2.4.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

### Gender-based violence is increasingly prioritised in Member States

The area of violence against women has become an important area of work in the majority of EU Member States (BE, BG, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SK, FI). Member States have addressed issues such as: enabling independent livelihoods of elderly women to prevent vulnerability to violence (AT); or accession to the Istanbul Convention (BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, IE, IT, CY, AT, PL, SK, FI). Work on prevention (CZ, DE, EE, IE, HR, HU, PT), establishing and/or improving protection and victim support (DE, EE, IE, HR, HU, PT, SK, FI) and improving intersectoral cooperation and coordination (IE, HR, PT, FI) continued.

Since the last overall review of the BPfA, Member States have made significant progress in this area by adopting new legislation; developing and implementing new measures addressing various forms of violence such as female genital mutilation; protection of women from 'honour'-related crime through access to shelters and independent residency permits, as well as legal provisions to enable criminalisation of and protection from forced marriage. Several Member States have amended or introduced legislation to address stalking, and sexual violence and/or change the legal definition of rape to ensure compliance with international standards.

All EU Member States have a duty to recognise domestic violence as a public crime and to investigate and prosecute it. This principle is differently implemented and in three Member States (IT, HU, RO) it remains a private complaint which needs to be brought by the victim. This is against state obligations to protect the right to life <sup>(28)</sup> and the right to private life <sup>(29)</sup> under the European Convention of Human Rights (EIGE, 2012b).

Several Member States (ES, FR, PT, SE) have taken steps towards introducing gender-based definitions of domestic and intimate partner violence in criminal law (WAVE, 2013a). This may help to ensure that the crime is taken seriously and prosecuted as a public offense. Furthermore, the approach to prosecution is to deal with each incident of domestic violence individually, which in the cases of domestic violence may result in incidents not considered severe enough to justify sanctions (EIGE, 2012b). To counteract this, in Austria, the offence of 'serial perpetration' was included in the Criminal Code, provided for in the Second Act on Protection against Violence 2009 (UN CEDAW, 2011b).

Expanding the scope of domestic violence to economic violence is also important. In Slovenia, domestic violence was included in the new Criminal Code in 2008, and the 2008 Domestic Violence Prevention Act defined domestic violence to include physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence <sup>(30)</sup>.

Protection orders are another form of state legislative measure used to address domestic violence against women. Several EU Member States have implemented protective measures in the form of barring orders or restraining orders by the court, and the trend of adopting protection measures, requested in the last review Beijing + 15, continues.

The generally accepted method of issuing protection orders involves a three-step process (EIGE, 2012b):

- Initial police ban;
- Support given to victim following the police ban;
- Application for extension of the police ban and/or granting and implementation of a protection order by a civil court.

Such protective measures were first introduced in Austria in 1997 and have been implemented in other Member States since. Currently, police are permitted to ban the perpetrator from the home in 11 Member States <sup>(31)</sup>, with victims having the ability to apply for an extension and the issuance of a civil injunction. All Member States <sup>(32)</sup> have some form of protection measures inscribed into national law, with the most recent additions/amendments to law in Netherlands (2009) <sup>(33)</sup>, France (2010) <sup>(34)</sup>, Slovenia (2008) <sup>(35)</sup>, Slovakia (2008) <sup>(36)</sup>, Hungary (2009) <sup>(37)</sup>, Lithuania (2011) <sup>(38)</sup>, Ireland (2010 and 2011) <sup>(39)</sup>, BE (2012) <sup>(40)</sup>, DK (2012) <sup>(41)</sup>, LV (2014) <sup>(42)</sup> and the UK (2014) <sup>(43)</sup>. In Austria, the protection order legislation was amended extending the right to protect all persons (i.e. not only the victim, but also the victim's family) and to protect individuals rather than relationships (Austria State Report, 2011). Bulgaria criminalised non-compliance with the protective order (Bulgaria State Report, 2011). In Belgium, a new procedure for emergency removal from home was introduced (2012) to cover situations of violence or a risk of violence.

### **National Action Plans on preventing violence against women adopted by the vast majority of Member States**

In the last five years, there has been a clear EU consensus to adopt and implement National Action Plans (NAP) to end violence against women. Since 2007, the majority of Member States have adopted such plans (Austria is currently in the process of elaborating a NAP). The majority of national plans and strategies address domestic violence, but also other forms such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, femicide and

sexual harassment at the workplace. Not all NAPs focus on violence against women; some have a focus on violence in general (EE), family policy (LV), child protection (RO), with sections or priorities dedicated to either family violence, domestic violence or violence against women (EIGE, 2012b). The Italian NAP focuses on all forms of violence against women (including stalking) (UN CEDAW, 2011h). Belgium's plan gives a particular attention to female genital mutilation (UN CEDAW, 2008c). However, the definitions of violence in the majority of these plans still adopt a gender-neutral approach.

In 2011, a Daphne-funded report took a critical look at the existing NAP in several Member States (BG, FI, DE, IT, NL, UK), pointing to a number of shortcomings impacting their effectiveness (Kelly, Hagemann-White, Meysen and Römken, 2011). These included the lack of implementation timeframes and allocated responsibilities (BG) or budgets for implementation (IT), the absence of a gender perspective (FI, NL) and insufficient engagement of NGOs working on violence against women (NL).

### **Insufficient specialised support for women survivors of violence**

The existence of adequate numbers of specialised women's support services (women's helplines, shelters and advice centres) is regarded as the minimum standard of service provision according to the Istanbul Convention <sup>(44)</sup>. Women's support services not only offer support to individual women but also play a major role in awareness raising and change of attitude in society.

#### *Women's helplines*

In 2012, 17 Member States provided a national women's helpline (DK, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LT, LU, HU, AT, SI, FI, SE, UK) (EIGE, 2012a). Of the women's helplines, only nine operate on a 24/7 basis, and only 12 Member States offer the helplines free of charge (DK, IE, ES, IT, CY, LT, HU, AT, SI, FI, SE, UK) <sup>(45)</sup>. Funding for women's helplines varies, the majority of helplines receive some level of state support. In most Member States, helplines are operated by NGOs which demonstrates the active role, and importance of independent civil society organisations in both prevention and service provision (EIGE, 2012a).

#### *Women's shelters*

The Final Activity Report of the Council of Europe Task Force to combat Violence against Women, including domestic Violence recommends a standard for women's shelter, i.e. to ensure one place in a shelter per 10 000 inhabitants (Council of Europe, 2008). The EP Resolution (February 2014) supports this recommendation. Twenty-five Member States provide specialised women's shelters, with the exception of Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary. In terms of national geographical distribution, the majority of Member States have shelters



in all or most regions, whereas in some EU Member States women's shelters are mainly available in either major cities or the capital only. Only 16 Member States have declared free-of-charge service provision (EIGE, 2012a).

According to WAVE's data, in total, there are approximately 2 170 women's shelters available across the EU with approximately 24 300 beds<sup>(46)</sup>. Generally, about half (53 %) of women's shelter places still need to be established in the EU to fulfil the minimum standard and meet the needs. Comparison of EU Member States shows large differences in meeting the shelter beds standard, with approximately 16 000 places (45 %) missing in the old EU Member States, compared to approximately 9 000 places (87 %) in the new Member States (WAVE, 2014)<sup>(47)</sup>.

Between 2012 and 2013, some positive changes have been observed as new shelters have been opened throughout the EU. However, almost all CEDAW reports indicated that funding for specialist women's services has been reduced, insufficient or unsustainable. The funding to ensure high quality and sustainable women's services is not yet in place across the EU and is extremely necessary (EIGE, 2012b).

#### Women's centres

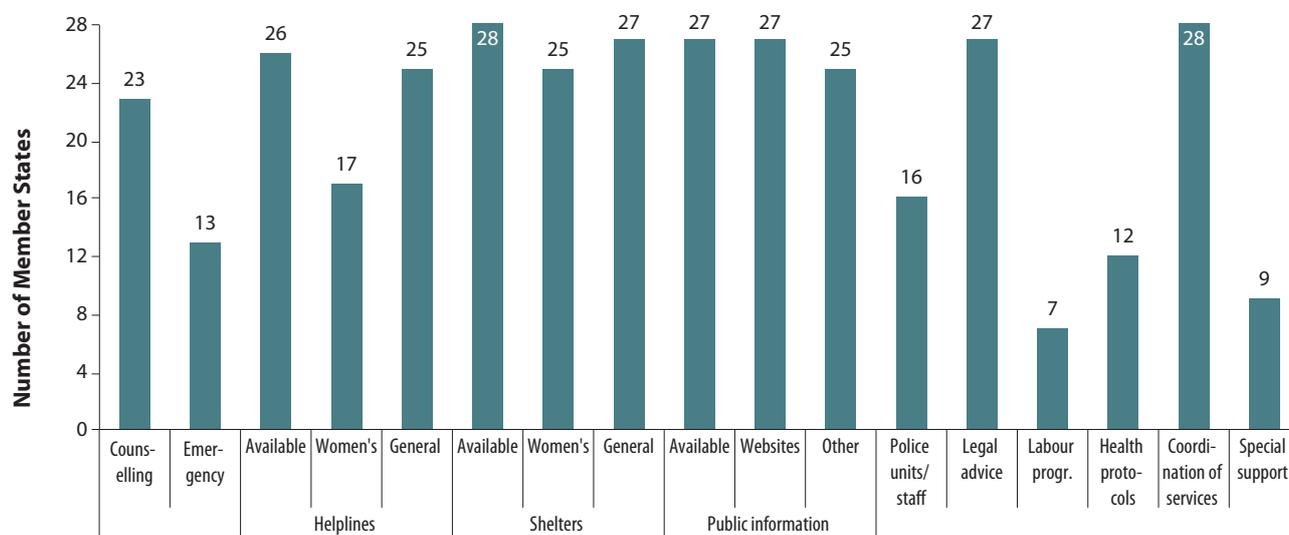
Women's centres (non-residential services), especially rape crisis centres showed a slight increase in numbers/services over the last five years, and are very important service providers for women survivors of violence. The majority of such centres provide counselling, advocacy, pro-active support, legal advice, court accompaniment, networking, outreach, resettlement support, specialist child support and other services (EIGE, 2010a). The Austrian model<sup>(48)</sup> of support

has recently been transferred to Lithuania as part of the 2011 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. Sixteen centres referred to as specialised health centres are now operating through a special government programme (WAVE, 2014).

Specialised services need to take into account the different needs that may arise from different groups of women. Attention to women facing multiple forms of discrimination increased recently, however, 19 Member States do not provide specialised services of this type at all (EIGE, 2012b). A report issued by the European Parliament, which analysed eight Member States (DE, EL, ES, FR, IT, NL, PL), found that the insufficient number of shelter places creates competition for, as a result, undocumented migrant women who are not entitled to social assistance, and are often denied access (European Parliament, 2013c).

The Swedish municipality of Gothenburg, for instance, provides public funding for shelters for undocumented migrant women (WAVE, 2013b). In Germany, there is a national women's helpline that covers all forms of violence against women, including cyber violence, and provides multilingual support. The helpline offers a video service with sign language for women with hearing impairments and access to the helpline is barrier free — also for women with learning disabilities in providing materials and trained counsellors for easy communication<sup>(49)</sup>. In 2013, a Daphne-funded project was launched, recognising that disabled women are at higher risk of violence and may encounter barriers, when accessing victim support<sup>(50)</sup>. Another Daphne project shows that undocumented migrants, as victims of violence, face high risk and multiple barriers in accessing services and justice (PICUM, 2012).

**Figure 7** Specialised services for women victims of violence in the EU-28, by type of service, 2012



Source: EIGE, Violence against Women — Victim Support, 2012. Data were collected in March–April 2012.

### Healthcare systems increasingly address violence against women

The need to organise an effective healthcare response to violence against women has become more widely recognised in the EU in the last five years and was confirmed by the FRA survey, showing that the majority of women survivors initially turn to the healthcare sector for assistance. A recent Daphne-funded project, DIVERHSE, conducted a mapping in six EU Member States to collect data on the existing healthcare domestic violence intervention models. It also set up a network of professionals to provide recommendations on good practices (Bacchus, Bewley, Fernandez, Hellbernd, Lo Fo Wong, Otasevic, Pas, Perttu and Savola, 2012).

In addition to the provision of training, guidelines and protocols that include referrals are crucial for the health sector. To enable referrals, a sustainable service centre for women victims of violence must be present. Currently, only 12 Member States have such protocols in place; of these, eight Member States apply them to all relevant institutions (hospitals, emergency services, maternity services, reproductive health services, general practitioners and mental health services), whilst in the remaining EU Member States, they apply to only some of the institutions listed (EIGE, 2012b).

In Germany, the 'Medical Intervention against Violence (MIGG)' (2008–11) aims to improve the healthcare treatment of women survivors of domestic violence, and to increase awareness among healthcare professionals on the issue. It gives training to medical professionals, forms networks of outpatient medical facilities and emergency violence support centres. Developing unified standards for the treatment of women victims of violence in emergency rooms and other medical facilities is another goal of the programme <sup>(51)</sup>.

In Belgium, a budget of EUR 500 000 is now scheduled annually to allow for multidisciplinary aid to circumcised women in two reference centres. In addition, a project for the registration of cases of female genital mutilation was launched in ten hospitals. This registration project involves sensitising and training the services of the hospitals involved.

### Member States support the work of improving the availability, quality and comparability of data on gender-based violence against women

#### *EU-wide survey on prevalence of violence against women*

With the publication of the EU-wide survey on prevalence of violence against women by the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2014, a major milestone was reached in estimating the prevalence of violence against women in the EU. The survey aims at measuring women's experience of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence (partner violence) and sexual harassment and stalking.

According to the survey, one in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in the EU since the age of 15, which amounts to 62 million women <sup>(52)</sup>. One in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence and one in 20 has been raped since the age of 15 (FRA, 2014).

The data is robust at the European level with the high number of 42 000 participants. The rates and the context (intimate partner/other) of different forms of violence vary among the Member States. For example, the highest lifetime rate of physical violence by any partner/non-partner was reported in Denmark (52 %) and the lowest in Austria (20 %). For physical violence by non-partner, the variation among highest and lowest was 30 p.p. ranging from 10 % (EE) to 40 % (DK) (FRA, 2014). The rate for reported physical violence by current/former partners showed a variation of 19 p.p. ranging from a low of 13 % (HR, AT, PL, SI) to 32 % (DK). The factors behind variation at Member State level need to be explored further.

The FRA survey measures consequences of physical and sexual violence, including emotional responses, psychological consequences, physical injuries, contact with police and other services and unmet needs of victims. Furthermore, the survey also measures fear of victimisation and its impact, and attitudes and awareness. Women's experience with reaching out to support organisations shows that women are more likely to visit a health professional rather than a specialised women's service, perhaps because of the lack of specialised women's services and/or lack of information available on existing services. The majority of victims (67 %) are not reporting the most serious incidences of partner violence to the police or another organisation, showing access to justice remains a challenge. The study shows that more than half (53 %) of women avoid certain situations or places for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted (FRA, 2014).

Overall, the findings show that violence against women is an extensive human rights abuse affecting the lives of many women (and their children) in the EU.

#### *Prevalence of violence against women in national surveys*

Between 2000 and 2014, all twenty-eight EU Member States conducted at least one prevalence survey addressing violence against women. The majority of studies that provide information on the prevalence of violence against women in the EU are dedicated prevalence studies, although not all are carried out on a regular basis. Within the safety or crime surveys conducted in some Member States (EE, LU, UK), questions on violence against women are included, with the added benefit that safety or crime surveys are usually conducted regularly.

Data in these surveys, however, are not comparable across Member States due to differing methodologies, time and reference periods, sample group characteristics, definitions



and the types of violence covered. Only a limited number of surveys have been carried out on the basis of a standardised methodology (IVAWS) (CZ, DK, IT, PL).

The forms of violence measured usually include at least physical and sexual violence. Since 2007, for the first time, there has been a trend on studying economic violence; seven Member States (BE, ES, LT, RO, SI, SK, UK) added economic and/or social violence, most likely in recognition of the fact that violence against women can take many forms and includes economic harm. Overwhelmingly, prevalence surveys continue to focus on intimate partner and domestic violence (WAVE 2014; WAVE, 2013a).

#### *National police statistics: domestic violence/intimate partner violence*

The availability of national police statistics across the EU shows that the majority of Member States fail to ensure minimum data disaggregation, such as by sex, age and/or relationship between victim and perpetrator. The available data are not comparable among Member States, as the registration of offences and classifications differ. The data available show a wide range in the number of victims, from a few hundred to over several thousand. At the same time, for data on femicide related to intimate partner violence, there are only few countries that provide such information (for example DE, ES, PT, UK) <sup>(53)</sup> at the national level (WAVE 2014; WAVE, 2013a).

The UNECE Database, even if limited to 21 Member States <sup>(54)</sup>, provides information (not on a regular annual basis) on victims of homicide by sex and relationship to the perpetrator for the years 2007 to 2011, but the data are not fully comparable <sup>(55)</sup>. Between 2007 and 2011, there were a total of 6 333 homicides of women and 14 942 homicides of men, with the majority of homicides of women by perpetrators known to them (4 535 — 72 %) and for men by perpetrators either unknown to them or unidentified (8 192 — 55 %).

When looking at homicide by spouse or ex-spouse, 1 683 women were killed as opposed to 459 men, confirming that nearly 80 % of victims of intimate partner homicide are women. The data shows that more women are killed by their current spouse (1 445) than by their ex-spouse (238). A drawback of such data is that legal definitions of social status are used (spouse or ex-spouse), but other statuses, such as legal separation or separation are generally omitted. The lack of information on the circumstances of the homicide fails to relay the likelihood that a portion of intimate partner homicide of men may be related to women's self-defence.

#### *National court statistics: domestic violence/intimate partner violence*

Court data are rarely publically available in a format to extract information about victim's and perpetrator's sex, age and their relationship. A review of criminal court data

available in 12 Member States (BE, CZ, EL, ES, FR, LV, LU, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE, UK) shows that only three Member States (CZ, ES, PT) disaggregate data by sex, age and relationship between victim and perpetrator (WAVE 2014; WAVE, 2013a).

In general administrative data sources on different forms of violence against women (i.e. intimate partner violence, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, stalking) are most commonly available from the police, followed by justice system (court statistics) and other sectors (health, social services). Typically, the highest level of disaggregation is available in administrative data on intimate partner violence, followed by data on rape, sexual assault, stalking and sexual harassment respectively, when various administrative data sources (i.e. police, justice, health, social services, other) are taken into account <sup>(56)</sup>.

Several of these advancements noticed among the EU Member States were monitored through the adopted Beijing indicators in this area that allow measurement of progress in policy, legislation, data collection and service provision. They are still limited to aspects such as intimate partner violence and sexual harassment at work. Furthermore, the area of sexual harassment has not been reviewed since the Beijing + 15 review. Several identified short-comings are presented with the aim to help address them in the future.

### **Women are three times more likely than men to experience sexual harassment in the workplace**

The European Working Conditions Survey includes the subject of sexual harassment in the workplace <sup>(57)</sup>. The survey measures the percentage of employees experiencing bullying and/or harassment, discrimination, threats and humiliating behaviour, physical violence and verbal abuse <sup>(58)</sup>, as well as unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment (Eurofound, 2012) <sup>(59)</sup>.

Unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment, experienced during the last 12 months <sup>(60)</sup>, are the least disclosed forms of 'adverse social behaviour' experienced by all workers (2 % and 1 % respectively). Women are twice as likely as men to experience unwanted sexual attention and three times more likely than men to experience sexual harassment <sup>(61)</sup> (Eurofound, 2012). The data shows that these and other adverse behaviours are more commonly reported by women than men.

The EU-wide FRA survey shows much higher prevalence rates: every second woman (55 %) in the EU has experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15 and 32 % indicated somebody from the employment context — such as a colleague, a boss or a customer — as a perpetrator. Additionally, approximately three quarters of women in a professional capacity or in top management jobs have experienced sexual harassment during their

lifetime (FRA, 2014a, p. 95). The work context in which sexual harassment takes place, including sectors and occupations, should therefore be examined in greater detail.

### **Programmes for perpetrators gaining more recognition**

The Istanbul Convention (Article 16) requires the setting up of programmes for perpetrators of violence against women aiming at teaching them non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns. CEDAW reporting provides evidence that the majority of Member States either included measures on perpetrators in national action plans, exchanged practices, funded projects and evaluations, or allocated personnel for work with perpetrators.

The majority of Member States offer perpetrator programmes focusing on psychological or psychiatric treatment, counselling and therapy. In five Member States, programmes involving re-socialisation during (or instead of) imprisonment are available (ES, LV, HU, PL, PT, FI). In Austria, the perpetrator programme is considered to be a rehabilitation measure (EIGE, 2012b). There is no evidence yet as to how far the Istanbul Convention standards are met by these programmes.

Currently efforts are taken to evaluate perpetrator programmes in the EU and agree on a common approach to an effective programme<sup>(62)</sup>. The project builds on the work of another project, *Working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Europe* (2008), and develops guidelines for perpetrator programmes with a focus on the safety of the victim. A good example is the perpetrator programme RESPECT in the UK.

In the context of an increased focus on working with violent men, women's NGOs are concerned about the risk of diverting funds from work with women survivors of violence to perpetrator programmes. An example of this was in Bulgaria, where funding mechanisms to support services provided by women's NGOs were utilised for work with perpetrators in 2012<sup>(63)</sup>.

### **Training for professionals more widely available**

Integration of concepts of violence against women into the basic training of professionals and development of clear policies and guidelines are needed to effectively support survivors and to implement existing measures. While the majority of Member States have recognised the importance of training, only a small number of them fund regular training in this area. A substantial share of training is conducted by NGOs, sometimes with no funding allocated to their work. Funding through European Union programmes such as Daphne, Grundtvig or Leonardo, and the European Social Fund enabled short-term training initiatives for police services, neglecting some professions, such as mental health professionals (EIGE, 2012b).

Luxembourg presents an example of training on domestic violence for new police officers which is both ongoing and mandatory. The training provides information on the existing laws (2003) and on the removal of domestic violence perpetrators from the home and consists of three parts: information on domestic violence, including the psychological aspects of violence; police interventions, including removals from the home and work with victims and perpetrators; and methods of collecting data on incidents<sup>(64)</sup>.

Spain offers a good example in the judicial sector where specialised courts dealing with gender-based violence have been established (UN CEDAW, 2009c). CEDAW stresses nevertheless, the need to increase and improve training of judges and legal professionals (UN CEDAW, 2013d).

## **2.4.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

### **The ratification of the Istanbul Convention underway**

A number of Member States expressed their willingness and initiated preparatory measures for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CZ, DE, EE, CY, PL, SK, FI). Among the preparatory measures, Member States mapped and reviewed existing measures (i.e. legislative, services) by comparing them with the obligations under the Convention; they also prepared draft bills for national approval of the ratification. The Convention was ratified by 14 countries and entered into force on 1 August 2014<sup>(65)</sup>.

### **Improved Institutional coordination and collaboration**

Several Member States have established institutional cooperation and coordination for their work on national action plans on gender equality and/or violence against women/domestic violence. Amendments to relevant legislative measures such as criminal law and protection orders were introduced throughout the European Union. In Bulgaria, pursuant to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, an intergovernmental working group from various ministries develops an annual programme on prevention and protection from domestic violence that contains the provision of services to victims, training and improving of cooperation (UNECE, 2014c). In Croatia, in 2010, various ministries have signed the Agreement on Cooperation for the Prevention and Suppression of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (UNECE, 2014d). In Finland, a cross-sectoral group from various ministries, was established 2008 and has continued 2012–15, coordinates



and monitors the developments of reducing violence against women/domestic violence in all age groups.

### **Prevention of violence against women gaining more prominence**

Prevention activities such as awareness raising, conferences, events and expert meetings and campaigns have been widely institutionalised in the majority of the Member States. Prevention activities focused on supporting/encouraging help-seeking behaviours, increase reporting of violence to the police, overcoming stereotypes and rigid gender roles, speaking out against violence, informing about available services, short films and research on intergenerational transfer of violence take place in EL, ES, HR, IT, CY, LT, HU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI. Greece is a good example of an ongoing campaign entitled 'You are not the only one, you are not alone' to inform survivors about support structures and to combat stereotypes which tolerate and reproduce violence against women. In addition, a website dedicated solely to the issue of gender-based violence was created to raise awareness of the issue (UNECE, 2014l). In Portugal, the idea of 'art against violence' was supported with a national prize 'VIDArte — Art against Domestic Violence' for works of film, theatre and literature in the area of domestic violence (UNECE, 2014s).

### **Improved research and administrative data collection**

Several Member States conducted national prevalence of violence surveys for the first time (CY, LT, AT, SI) since 2010. There are efforts to improve data collection by the police and/or court system as well as encouraging victims to report violence to the police (BG, CZ, DK, IE, ES, HR, IT, CY, LT, MT, FI). In Ireland, the establishment of the National Office for Prevention of Domestic Violence, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (COSC) in 2007 has been credited with developing a better focus on research and data collection (UNECE, 2014n). Data on relationship between victim and perpetrator, severity and frequency of violence is insufficient in Bulgaria (UNECE, 2014c). Measures of the Member States to increase victims' reporting to the police contribute to appropriate responses to the victims, by increasing also the conviction rates and holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions.

### **Increasing cooperation with non-governmental organisations**

A noticeable trend in the area of violence against women is increased cooperation of state actors with women's NGOs and the recognition of women's NGOs as key partners in combating violence against women, despite limited and unstable funding for women's initiatives. Historically, women's NGOs have been engaged in awareness-raising on violence against women, and currently women's organisations in almost all Member States serve a multitude

of roles including those of service providers. In addition, women's NGOs work in the area of raising public awareness, trainings, research and data collection, cooperation, expertise and information sharing and networking (BE, CZ, DE, EE, IE, IT, CY, LT, HU, AT, PT, SI, SK, FI).

In Cyprus, an NGO named SPAVO provides not only services to survivors of violence, but also collaborates with the state in the area of education on domestic violence and conducts research (UNECE, 2014e). Slovenia reports a good and useful cooperation with NGOs in combating violence against women and trafficking, as NGOs carry out numerous projects, education and training courses and play an important role in awareness raising (UNECE, 2014v). In Slovakia, the government is about to establish new services for women survivors of violence and plans to financially support gender specific women's NGOs that provide support to victims (UNECE, 2014u). In Hungary, a counter situation developed as the government shies away from cooperation with NGOs<sup>(66)</sup>, two of which are women's NGOs<sup>(67)</sup>. Survivors' access to services has improved in most Member States.

### **Insufficient availability of services**

Increased attention to improving access to victim support was noted and a few Member States reported an increase in seeking support from services (EE, AT, PL), although specialist services are still rare. Member States have sought to improve survivors' access to services through technology (mobile applications, websites) as well as through public outreach campaigns (DK, DE, EE, ES, IT, LT, AT, PL, SI, SK). Germany and Slovakia have undertaken surveys to assess the understanding of the services available to survivors throughout the country (UNECE, 2014k; UNECE, 2014u). As of 2014, women in Austria can download the femHELP mobile device application that enables them to quickly establish contact with support services, including the police. The application also enables victims to document their experience of violence (UNECE, 2014a). In Italy and Slovenia, awareness raising campaigns about available support services were carried out (UNECE, 2014o; UNECE, 2014v). In Lithuania and Slovenia, websites for survivors of violence were created with relevant information on how to seek support and/or report the violence. Denmark will conduct an evaluation to determine how best to limit the stay of women in shelter more than once (UNECE, 2014g).

While Member States are attempting to increase awareness of available help, several Member States mark the intention to expand the available specialised services for survivors of violence: to establish new services and/or improve existing services (CZ, EL, CY, LT, RO, SI, SK, FI). In Estonia, new shelters were opened (UNECE, 2014h). Germany opened a new national women's helpline (UNECE, 2014k) and Austria established a shelter for women and girls survivors of forced marriage (UNECE, 2014a).

### **Funding services for women survivors of violence not perceived as sufficient, systematic or sustainable**

Few Member States planned or increased funding for services or planned any funding increase for the future (AT, PT, FI) due to the economic crisis. Other Member States noted their lack of funding for women's services/initiatives and promised to ensure their improvement for the future as there is a need for systematic and sustainable funding for services (RO). In Cyprus, funding for initiatives on violence against women decreased (UNECE, 2014e). In Estonia and Slovakia, based on the funding provided by the European Social Fund and a Norway Grant funding, women's shelters and/or other women's initiatives benefited (UNECE, 2014h; UNECE, 2014u). In Bulgaria, funds to women's NGOs were allocated for the first time in 2011 (UNECE, 2014c). The references to funding in the Member States' UNECE reports (i.e. annual grants, project based) show that in the European Union, funding for women's services and initiatives is not yet sufficient, systematic or sustainable.

### **Strengthened actions to combat trafficking in human beings in the Member States**

Actions in the area of combating trafficking in human beings gain significance in the Member States' reports to the UNECE. This is most certainly reflective of 'elimination of trafficking in women and assisting victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking' being one of the three objectives under area D. Member States also need to transpose into their national law the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims (European Parliament, 2011a). They also need to fulfil their obligations under UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols Thereto and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The majority of Member States report legislative changes, establishment of national action plans and task-forces, service provision for victims and awareness-raising.

## **2.5 Women and Armed Conflict (E)**

### **2.5.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators**

Armed conflicts affect women and men as they are targeted as victims and suffer the economic consequences of these conflicts. As a large part of civilian population, women are particularly affected by conflicts as they tend to be among the great part of the harmed civilian population and

are more exposed to the risk of large-scale sexual abuse, trafficking, displacement and slavery. Women and girls are often exposed to specific forms of violence that have consequences even when war has ended. Women and girls are far more at risk of sexual violence such as rape, resulting in unwanted pregnancy, and have a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Sexual violence in times of armed conflicts is thus often used as a tactic of warfare. Due to their greater social vulnerability, consequences of armed conflicts have a longer impact on women and girls. Importantly, women contribute significantly to peace and reconstruction activities after armed conflicts and play an important role in conflict resolution.

The EU is committed to advancing gender equality and women's rights in its programmes and policies relating to armed conflict and developed its Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development for 2010–15 (European Commission, 2010d). It highlights the necessity to provide long-term protection to women in armed conflict, to support their participation in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, and increase their political participation.

The BPfA defined six strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and Armed Conflict:

- E1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation;
- E2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments;
- E3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;
- E4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace;
- E5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women;
- E6. Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.

During the French Presidency of the Council of the EU, in 2008, four indicators to monitor the implementation of this area were proposed and accepted. The indicators measure the coverage of diplomatic, defence and peacekeeping staff from Member States' governments and EU institutions and its influence in favour of gender equality, both during and after conflicts (Indicator 1), and in diplomatic missions; European Union delegations; UN peacekeeping operations;



and Common Security and Defence Policy missions (CSDP) (Indicator 2). The level of resources is also captured by the indicators, reflecting the human and financial resources devoted to understanding and empowering women in armed conflict (Indicators 3 and 3a). Indicator 4 measures the proportion of women and men amongst asylum seekers who have been recognised as 'refugees' or received subsidiary protection. This indicator measures the gender sensitivity of the refugee policies of the EU and the Member States <sup>(68)</sup>.

Since the BPfA +15 review, this critical area has not been reviewed.

## 2.5.2 EU Policy developments

Shortly after the acceptance of the four indicators for area E of the BPfA, the Council of the European Union adopted the 'Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security' in December 2008 (Council of the EU, 2011b). This important document assesses with the help of indicators the progress in protecting and empowering women in conflict and in post-conflict situations. In July 2010, the Council of the European Union adopted a set of 17 indicators, including the four presented and accepted in 2008 (Council of the EU, 2011b). One year later, in April 2011, new data were collected to cover this new set of indicators and presented in an analysis (Council of the EU, 2011b).

The European Parliament has in several documents addressed the specific situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situation. The European Parliament 'Resolution of 10 March 2010 on the implementation of the European Security Strategy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)' recalled the importance of including a gender perspective into all phases of CSDP operations, from planning to implementation. Training of deployed staff should include the themes covered under the 'UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security'. It also called for more gender-balanced staff. The European Parliament 'Resolution of 25 November 2010 on the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security' reaffirmed the need to implement this resolution concretely. The Parliament urged Member States to allocate significant financial, human and organisational resources earmarked for ensured participation of women and the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the field of foreign and security policy; and asked the Commission to facilitate access for small, women's NGOs to European subsidies. The European Parliament 'Resolution of 2 February 2012 on women's situation in war' focused on women's participation in peace processes and military and civilian peacekeeping operations and on the consequences of conflicts for women. The resolution encouraged Member

States to adopt several measures facilitating the inclusion of these topics into their cooperation policy in conflict-affected EU Member States, such as implementing women-friendly policies within the military; ensuring that all military and civilian staff receive gender equality training, emphasising the importance for men staff to attend this training; and implementing the European Union guidelines on violence against women and girls.

Annual evaluations of the 'European Union Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development for 2010–15' reveal slow progress, and the need for increased gender mainstreaming in EU development policy relating to women in armed conflict.

## 2.5.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

### Women are under-represented in the diplomatic and military sectors

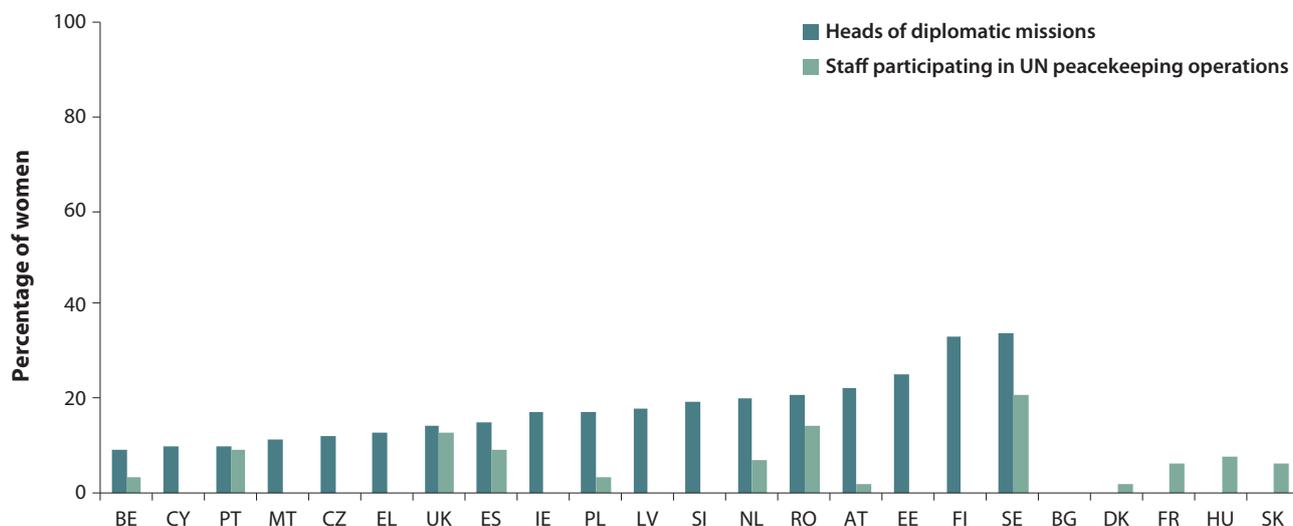
The majority of the reports and data provided by the EU Member States point towards a serious absence of women among the diplomatic missions, EU delegations, UN peacekeeping operations and among the decision-making positions in diplomatic and military services. In 2011, among the staff taking part in UN peacekeeping operations from 21 Member States, only 6 % were women, with the highest representation from Romania (14 %) and Sweden (21 %). Seven EU Member States (BG, EE, IE, EL, CY, SI, FI) had no women in their UN peacekeeping operations (Council of the EU, 2011b).

In total, 17 EU Member States submitted information on the staff participating in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions (Council of the EU, 2011b). The average proportion of women among mission staff was only 2 %, with the highest proportions from Finland (30 %), Sweden (21 %) and Estonia (16 %). The sex-disaggregated data collected in 2012 on CSDP staff in civilian missions showed that women represent only 25 % of the total staff (19 % of international staff and 33 % of local employees) <sup>(69)</sup>.

In 2010, among the 36 EU Delegations that replied to the questionnaire sent for the assessment of the evaluation of the Comprehensive Approach only one EU delegation was headed by a woman. Among the 18 Member States that provided information on the number of women heads of diplomatic mission, the average proportion was 17 %. Sweden, Finland and Estonia were the EU Member States with a higher representation of women (respectively 34 %, 33 % and 25 %), although that remains far from an equal gender representation (Council of the EU, 2011b).

CSDP heads of missions have the responsibility to implement gender policy at the operational level. In May 2014, among the 16 CSDP and EU missions in operation

**Figure 8** Percentage of women among the heads of diplomatic missions and staff participating in UN peacekeeping missions, by Member State, 2011



Source: Council of EU, Report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UN Security Council UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, 2011b

(four in the Balkans, Caucasus and Eastern Europe; three in the Middle East and eight in Africa), there was no woman Operation Commander or Forces Commander.

Several Member States set up specific measures to address significant gender imbalance amongst the military and diplomatic staff. In Austria, a specific programme was developed to increase the number of women's applications for leading positions in the foreign services at international level, by taking into consideration their family situations (UN CEDAW, 2011b).

In Spain, the Women's Observatory for the Armed Forces (Observatorio de la Mujer en las Fuerzas Armadas) was created with the aim of analysing the selection processes and the integration and retention of women in the armed forces and to monitor the increase of women employed in the military sector. The Observatory also conducted gender impact studies. A prize called 'Soldado Idoia Rodríguez' was established, which recognises the efforts of people who have acted to enhance the role of women and gender equality in the Armed Forces <sup>(70)</sup>.

### Inadequate gender training in conflict and fragile states

In the framework of the promotion of the UNSCR 1325 <sup>(71)</sup> and 1820 Resolutions, several presidencies of the Council of the EU — Sweden (2009), Spain (2010) and Hungary (2011) — considered the importance of, and need for, training amongst CSDP staff. The 'Comprehensive Approach' recommends that training should be provided to all military and civilian staff

and calls for the integration of a gender perspective into the training activities of the then CSDP (formerly EDSP — European Security and Defence Policy) (Civil Society Dialogue Network, 2011). Member States are asked to offer relevant and sufficient training courses to their delegated staff as they prepare for deployment. Gender is recognised as a fundamental aspect to understand the multidimensional concepts of security and to provide adequate protection to all individuals affected by the conflict (Olsson and Sundström, 2012).

The latest available data, provided in 2008/2009, on diplomatic, civilian and military staff employed by the EU Member States and military and police staff participating in UN peacekeeping operations and CSDP missions showed that gender equality training was not implemented to a sufficient extent (Council of the EU, 2011b). Specific training in gender equality to diplomatic staff was implemented only in eight Member States (BG, CZ, DK, CY, NL, AT, PT, SI), but there was no clear information about the proportion of women and men attending them.

Other information on gender equality training provision may be found in the National Action Plans (NAPs) adopted by a number of EU Member States for the implementation of the UNSCR Resolution 1325. Seventeen Member States currently have adopted NAPs (BE, DE <sup>(72)</sup>, DK, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LT, NL, AT, PT, FI, SI, SE, UK) <sup>(73)</sup>. Some of these NAPs consider the training needs of their military and civilian staff (BE, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, PT, UK) <sup>(74)</sup>. There is limited information as to the content of such trainings, available only in some cases, i.e. in implementation reports.

### Low share of aid to address gender equality issues in fragile states

In 2009 and early 2010, EU Member States spent about EUR 200 million on issues related to women, peace and security (Council of the EU, 2011b). EUR one billion was spent on issues globally related to gender (with a direct or indirect impact). Sweden and the Netherlands were the biggest donors, funding women, peace and security activities to a level of EUR 27 million and EUR 23 million respectively. Regarding the contribution of EU institutions, EU Delegations contributed to funding projects with a direct impact on gender and women's rights with a value of EUR 65 million. Almost a third of this funding was directed to activities aiming at implementing the UNSCR 1325 Resolution. Data showed that about 28 % of the total of the EUR 67 million spent on SSR (Security Sector Reform) and DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration) were related to activities that specifically target women.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) provides information on aid allocated to gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected situations for the period 2007–08 (OECD-DAC, 2010). Through the use of the DAC gender equality policy marker, donors are supposed to assess the gender objectives of their intervention either by defining gender equality as a 'principal objective' as in an explicit and fundamental objective of the aid activity, or 'significant objective' as in a secondary objective of the aid activity. Alternatively, it may not have any gender equality objective. The report 'Aid in Support of Gender Equality in Fragile and Conflict-affected States' shows that almost one third of DAC members' aid to fragile States defines gender equality as a principal or significant objective (75). Of the

aid allocated to fragile States by Germany, 76 % focused on gender equality in 2007–08 and was followed by Sweden (75 %); Luxembourg (71 %); France (68 %) and Belgium (64 %). However, only 19 % of aid provided to fragile states coming from EU institutions focussed on gender equality. The lowest percentages were found in Portugal and the Netherlands (5 % and 9 % respectively).

Only 20 % of the aid allocated to the peace and security sector has a gender equality dimension and only 38 % of all DAC members included a gender equality objective for aid allocated to governance sector of fragile states.

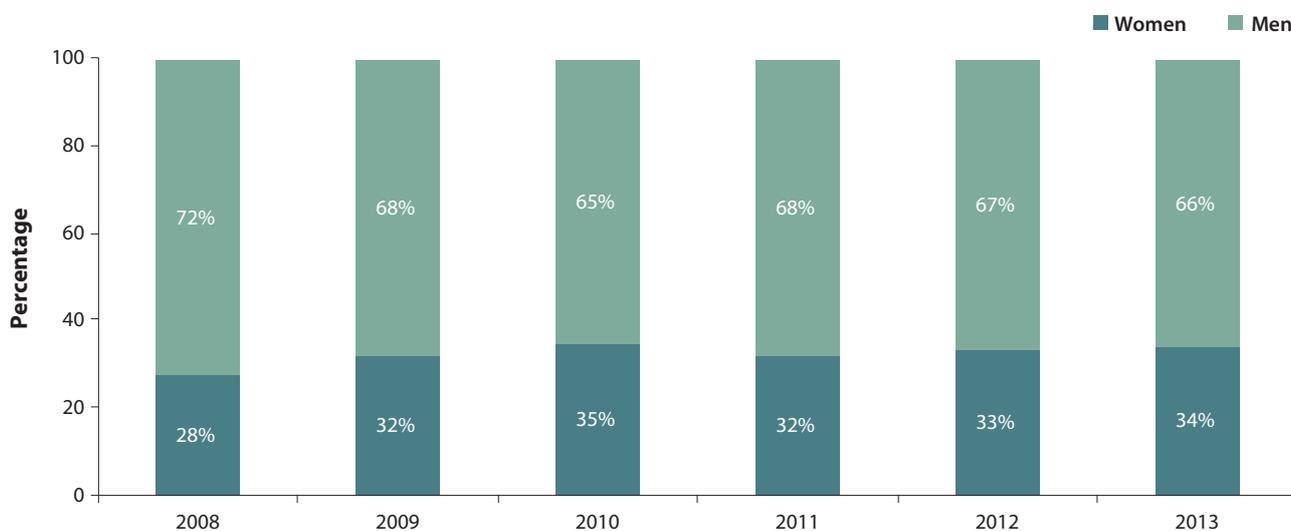
### Increased number of women among asylum seekers

In 2010, the Council of Europe noted that 'gender issues [were] not being properly taken into account in the assessment of asylum claims' and that the asylum procedures often ignored the difficulties that women could encounter to 'tell their full story' and called Member States to better take into account the relevance of gender-based violence and gender-based persecution in asylum claims (Council of Europe, 2010).

According to Eurostat, between 2008 and 2012, there has been an increase in the proportion of women applying for refugee status (from 29 % in 2008 to 34 % in 2012). There also has been an increase in the number of new asylum women applicants (when the first asylum application is registered), from 30 % in 2008 to 35 % in 2012.

In spite of these increases, men still represent almost two thirds of asylum seekers in the European Union. However, gender distribution differs significantly, depending on the

**Figure 9** Percentage of women among asylum seekers in the EU, 2008–13



Source: Eurostat, Decisions on applications and resettlement (migr\_asycdfsta)

asylum seekers country of origin (Council of Europe, 2010). Asylum, as in migration, is becoming more and more feminised, due to the specific consequences of conflict and war on women. Consideration of the relevance of gender-based violence against women and gender-based persecution in asylum claims would enable the women to tell their stories and avoid some of the difficulties they encounter (Council of Europe, 2010).

At the EU level, 'there is a common understanding that the refugee definition can encompass gender-related asylum claims and that the purpose and object of the Refugee Convention require a gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive approach' (Querton, 2012). At the same time, there still are 'vast and worrying disparities in the way different EU Member States handle gender-related asylum claims' (Asylum Aid, May 2012). These were also the conclusions of a 2012 report analysing the gender-related asylum claims in Europe in nine EU Member States (BE, ES, FR, IT, HU, MT, RO, SE and UK) (Querton, 2012).

There has been an increase in the number of decisions on refugee status in line with the growing number of asylum seekers who have lodged an application. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of decisions targeting women's applications almost doubled (from 59 730 to 95 875). Proportionally, positive decisions on women's applications have increased more than positive decisions on men's applications, although the proportion of women who acquire the refugee status has decreased in the last couple of years: in 2010, women represented 40 % of the positive share; in 2012, they represented 34 %.

### 2.5.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

#### Increased participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels

Four Member States reported a strengthened position of women in peacekeeping missions (FR, CY, HU, AT). Austria deployed a gender expert onto peacekeeping mission in Kosovo to provide advice to the commander. Since 2010, six officials from the Ministry of Defence have been trained as Gender Field Advisors. Overall, the share of women in Austria's seconded personnel to OSCE field operations and of women police officers involved in international missions rose to almost 5 %. This trend was also visible in the proportion of women soldiers participating in international peace operations, which went up by 1.4 % according to the implementation report of April 2014, showing progress in reaching the NAP targets.

In Hungary, the share of women in peacekeeping troops rose to 9 % but there are no women in military

commands. In Cyprus, more women have been appointed to ambassadorial posts, raising their total number to 39. In Belgium, the inclusion of this objective in the second NAP represents a step forward to increase the representation of women in international organisations and missions carried out by the Belgian diplomacy and military.

Women's participation has increased in military official positions in some Member States (HR, PL). The proportion of women in the administrative positions of the defence sector in Croatia increased significantly.

#### Growing recognition and support for women's contribution to peace-building

The promotion of women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace was boosted by the organisation of the strategic Regional Conference 'Women in Peace-building: access to justice for women in post-conflict countries' in Croatia. Cyprus built a Women's Multicultural Centre that aimed to bring together women from all communities to promote gender equality, reconciliation and peace.

Finland currently funds a three-year project 'The UN High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes' which aims to generate more consultative peace processes by promoting women's effective participation on key thematic areas of peace agreements. The Netherlands supported the work of thousands of women's organisations through the implementation of the programme Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) in the framework of the second Action Plan 1325 (NAP; 2012–15). These objectives i.e. the integration of women in all phases of conflict prevention and conflict management, as well as the protection of women and girls against sexual violence and rape in armed conflicts have also been considered by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with specific programmes that have been implemented in Burundi, Columbia, Guatemala, Nepal.

#### Support for women victims of conflict advancing in some Member States

Several Member States provided protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. In France, women presented 35 % of the asylum seeking applicants in 2010 and obtained five times more subsidiary protection than men. In this line, Romania identified relevant national legislation, monitoring and developing national evaluation of its current practices to respond to the needs of asylum seekers and disadvantaged groups. Denmark is currently updating its national action plan which aims to 'achieve greater, active participation of women in peace building at international and local levels; enhancing the recognition of the special needs and rights of women and girls before, during and after armed conflict; providing



protection of girls and women against violence, including gender-based violence, such as rape and sexual abuse, and ending impunity for gender crimes' (UNECE, 2014g).

### Increased measures to tackle violence against women in areas of conflict

In Poland, actions were taken to eliminate violence against women during NATO missions and operations. In Italy, the participation of women in conflict resolution was enforced by the 2013 Defence Communication Plan aiming to disseminate a gender culture among the Armed Forces through the organisation of training, conferences and symposiums. France worked on increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels. During its Presidency of the G8, the prevention of sexual violence during conflicts was of an important focus. At EU level, France also participated in the working group for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on sexual violence in conflicts.

## 2.6 Women and the Economy (F)

### 2.6.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

Equal access to economic resources is not just a matter of women's economic independence but has long been recognised as a prerequisite for the achievement of economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Encouraging women's participation in the labour market is crucial to GDP, economic growth and, more generally, to ensure the EU makes full use of available talent and human resources. Increases in women's employment rates are an implicit part of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, which calls for 75 % employment rate of all Europeans (aged 16–64). In its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010–15), the European Commission pledges to support gender equality in all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The BPfA defined six strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and the Economy:

- F1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources;
- F2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;

- F3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women;
- F4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks;
- F5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
- F6. Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Women and the economy is one of the areas of the BPfA for which the most work on indicators has been done in recent years. In 2008 and 2011, the Council focused on the issues of work-life balance, and 2010, the Council addressed pay inequalities between women and men. The Greek Presidency in 2014 set out to review the implementation of the first strategic objective to promote women's economic rights and independence. The most recent conclusions of the EU Council in June 2014 identified three additional indicators and sub-indicators to fill a gap in relation to strategic Objective 1 (promoting women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources) (Council of the EU, 2014b).

### 2.6.2 EU Policy developments

The Europe 2020 strategy, launched in March 2010, emphasises the importance of inclusive growth in the form of a 'high-employment economy as a priority and proposes the headline target of raising the employment rate for the population aged 20–64 to 75 % (European Commission, 2010a). A flagship initiative, 'An agenda for new skills and jobs' (2010), proposes a set of actions to boost inclusive growth, supported by measures of which some target women. In line with these two documents and aiming to create better and more jobs throughout the EU, the European Employment Strategy (EES) provides a framework (the 'open method of coordination') for the Member States to discuss labour market issues and coordinate their employment policies. It is based on the Annual Growth Survey (AGS), which sets out the EU's priorities to boost growth and job creation and opens the European Semester — an annual cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination between European institutions and Member States. The 'employment package' adopted in April 2012 urges the Member States to strengthen their employment policy and to create quality jobs and growth — in general and including women (European Commission, 2013).

Every year the European Commission adopts a set of country-specific recommendations for Member States should on their economic, employment and social policies.

The recommendations also address gender equality issues, showing recognition of the role of gender equality for growth.

The Employment Guidelines urge EU Member States to promote policies on equal pay and conditions, better work-life balance and to provide opportunities for training, skills and professional experience of women. Some professional networks, such as the European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP) find the guidelines 'lacking both the overarching goal of economic independence of women and men' and 'a coherent integration of the dual approach in terms of gender equality as an important prerequisite to the transfer to the follow-up documents' (e.g. national reform programmes) (Gender-CoP, 2011). The lack of adequate data in some areas covered by guidelines impedes the effective monitoring process of relevant targets (EIGE, 2011). The increasing focus on job 'quality' expresses a concern that boosting employment should not be done at the expense of quality jobs. Arguments that an increase in part-time jobs may have been at the expense of quality of work (Leschke and Watt, 2008) have also been raised. Moreover, patterns of educational and occupational gender segregation may heighten the differences in the quality of jobs available for women and for men (European Commission 2009a).

One of the main legislative changes in the area of women and the economy in the past few years was the adoption of the revised Parental Leave Directive (Council Directive 2010/18/EU) <sup>(76)</sup> <sup>(77)</sup>. The main changes introduced in 2010 include: longer leave and measures for adoptive parents and parents of children with a disability. The transfer of leave between parents was authorised, retaining for each parent at least one month of leave <sup>(78)</sup>. The changes offer more incentive for fathers to take at least part of their leave, as the right to at least a month per parent is not transferable. However, Member States are not obliged to introduce a (partially) paid parental leave, which would provide a strong incentive for both parents to take parental leave. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether the non-transferability of one out of four months parental leave will incentivise fathers to take their entitlement as until now parental leave is much more likely to be taken by mothers (European Commission, 2010e).

New provisions have been put in place for self-employed workers through the Directive on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity (2010/41) (replacing Directive 86/613/EEC which was the first provision at EU level for a maternity allowance for self-employed workers and their spouses or life partners). The new Directive extends coverage to all self-employed workers and partners, introduces other measures to prevent discrimination and harassment of those in a self-employed capacity and applies the principle of equal treatment on the grounds of sex. Despite these improvements, it is the national law

that transpose the Directive and apply definitions of 'goods and services provider' or 'self-employed' (Countouris and Freedland, 2013).

In addition to the legal and policy developments discussed above, the European Commission launched a number of initiatives to promote gender equality in the labour market in the period 2010–14, such as the European 'Equal Pay Day' (March 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014); 'Equality Pays Off' programme (August 2012); Recommendation for Member States to improve pay transparency for women and men in a bid to help close the gender pay gap (March, 2014). Themes covered in European Commission reports since 2010 include: women in senior positions, promotion of gender equality at the workplace, the role of men in gender equality, gender balance in business leadership, and challenges for gender equality in the context of the economic crisis.

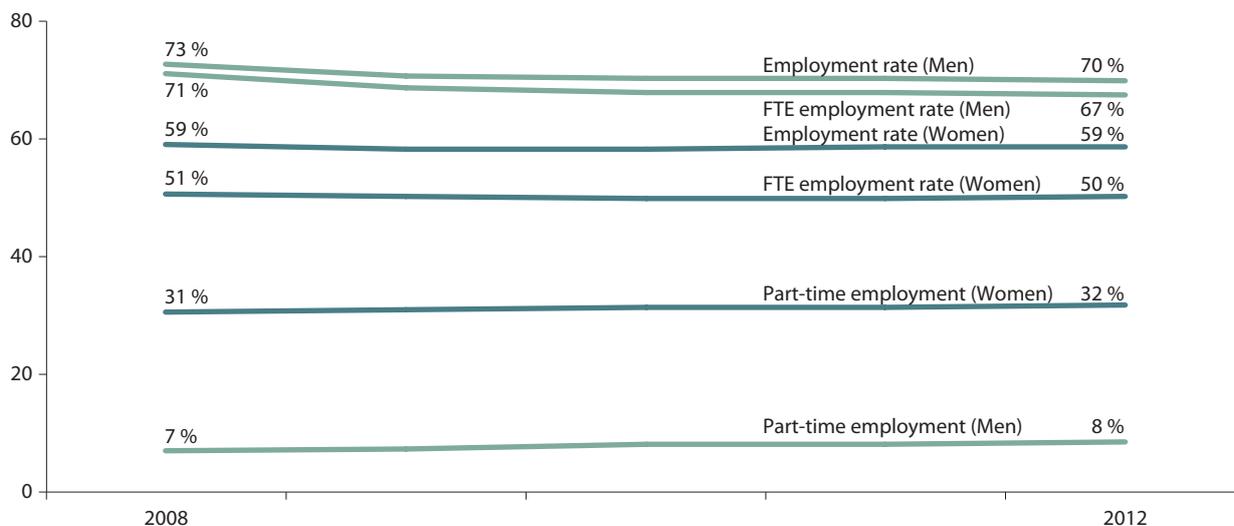
### 2.6.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Women's employment continues to fall short of the Europe 2020 employment target

Over the long term, women's employment rate has risen slightly in the EU and by 2012 reached an overall rate of 59 % (1 p.p. up from 58 % in 2007). Even so, women's employment remained behind that of men's employment in all Member States with 11 p.p. difference at EU level (Figure 10). Much of the rise is associated with a relative growth in part-time jobs. The gap between the employment rate of women and men (gender employment gap) in 2012 ranged from under 1 p.p. in Lithuania to 29 p.p. in Malta. Seven Member States had a relatively low gender employment gap of 5 p.p. or under (BG, DK, EE, LV, LT, FI, SE). In contrast, another eight Member States had gaps above the EU average (CZ, EL, IT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SK).

Before the economic crisis, the decline in the gender employment gap was reflected in an upward trend in women's employment, while after 2007 it reflected the downward trend in men's employment. The crisis has primarily hit the areas of employment that have been dominated by men. In 2012, the employment rate for men had fallen in all but a handful of Member States; it was lower than 70 % in 17 Member States.

The gender employment gap varies by age, with a tendency to increase with age. In 2012, the gender employment gap for 25–54 year olds was double that for 20–24 year olds (12 p.p. compared to 6 p.p.). It increases for the 24–35 age group (the central years of fertility), and is highest for the 55–64 age group (nearly 15 p.p.). For this last age category, the gap partly reflects the low levels of skill among older women and the low statutory retirement age for this category of women compared to men of the same age group.

**Figure 10** Full-time equivalent and headcount employment rate in the EU-28, 15–64, 2008 and 2012

Source: for full-time equivalent, Eurostat calculation upon EIGE's request; for employment rate and part-time employment rate, Eurostat, EU-LFS (lfsa\_ergan; lfsa\_eppgacob)

Note: The employment rate represents employed persons as a percentage of the same group of total population; the FTE employment rate is a unit to measure employed persons by average number of hours worked: a full-time person is counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she works; part-time employment as percentage of the total employment

Comparisons of national differences in labour market engagement are usually based on employment rates, which do not fully reflect the variations, for example, in the numbers of hours worked. Therefore, the headcount measures of employment tend to overestimate women's employment and to underestimate the gender employment gap. The use of full-time equivalent employment rate (FTE) takes into account the higher incidence of part-time employment among women. It is obtained by comparing each worker's average number of hours worked to the average number of hours worked by a full-time worker. A full-time worker is therefore counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker is calculated in proportion to hours worked.

The increasing use of part-time employment, particularly for men aged 15–64, has led to a decline in FTE, which dropped to 67 % in 2012, 3 p.p. less than in 2008. Women's FTE rate decreased by 1 p.p. from 2008 to reach 50 % by 2012 (Figure 10). The EU level figures mask the scale of the drop in FTE employment in some Member States: between 5 p.p. drop among women (DK, IE, LV, ES) and 7 p.p. (EL); and between 5 p.p. among men (LT, SI) to 14 p.p. (IE, ES) and 16 p.p. (EL).

A comparison of employment rates and FTE employment rates is relevant in the context of employment target of 75 % of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Differences are lower for men than women, as men are less likely to be employed in part-time jobs. In the EU-28, men's FTE employment rate is 72 % for the 20–64 age group, only 3 percentage points below the Europe 2020 target. Women's FTE employment rate is 54 % for the

20–64 age group in the EU-28, which is 21 percentage points lower than the target (Figure 11). The Netherlands present the highest difference between FTE rate and the headcount rate for women (24 p.p.), with differences above 10 percentage points in another four Member States (BE, DE, AT, UK).

In addition to the overall EU key target for employment, in 2011, country-specific targets were set in the National Reform Programmes by the majority of Member States: they range from an employment target of 63 % for Malta <sup>(79)</sup> to a target of 80 % for Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. Similarly, although some of the national targets have been achieved by 2012 in terms of men's employment rates, women's employment rates remain below the national targets in all Member States.

### Women continue to outnumber men in part-time work

Part-time employment is much higher among women compared to men in all Member States: in 2012, the proportion of women working part-time was at least four times as great as men's in the EU, with 32 % for women and 8 % for men, as well as in nine Member States (BE, CZ, DE, ES, FR, IT, LU, MT, AT). Part-time working is particularly prevalent in the Netherlands where over three-quarters of employed women work part-time but women in four other Member States represent over two-fifths of part-time employees (BE, DE, AT, UK). In contrast, less than one in ten employed women worked part-time in six Member States (BG, CZ, HR, HU, RO, SK) <sup>(80)</sup> (see Figure 12).

**Figure 11** Full-time equivalent employment rate and Europe 2020 targets in the EU-28, 20–64, 2012

Source: Eurostat calculation upon EIGE's request; for Europe 2020 targets, [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf)

Note: FTE employment is a unit to measure employed persons by average number of hours worked: a full-time person is counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker gets a score in proportion to the hours she or he works

Since 2007, men's part-time employment has been increasing at a faster rate than that of women (although from a much lower base)<sup>(61)</sup>. The proportion of men working part-time more than doubled in some cases (IE, CY, SK).

Working part-time has long-term effects on pay and prospects, including lower pensions and increased risk of poverty (EIGE, 2014b; Smith and Villa, 2010; European Commission, 2010f). Studies from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland and UK quantified the impact of working part-time on average income and showed a penalty for part-time work<sup>(62)</sup> (Council of the EU, 2010f; Smith and Villa, 2010). In 2010, the Structure of Earnings Survey data clearly show a gender pay gap between women and men part-time workers, in favour of men (apart from IE, MT, RO). The pay gap for full-time workers was above that of part-time workers in 17 out of 25 EU Member States for which data was available (unadjusted form). While interpreting the pay rates of women and men suggestions emerge to measure women's part-time wages against men full-time wages, in order to reflect the wage penalties faced by those who work part-time.

In relation to working hours, governments took different measures to encourage greater flexibility, including equalising the social rights of part-time and full-time workers<sup>(63)</sup>; information campaigns; and prizes for family-friendly practices. Different forms of family-friendly policies can be adopted — for example, financial support through the family tax credit system or subsidies for audits and actions implemented within businesses and other organisations. In

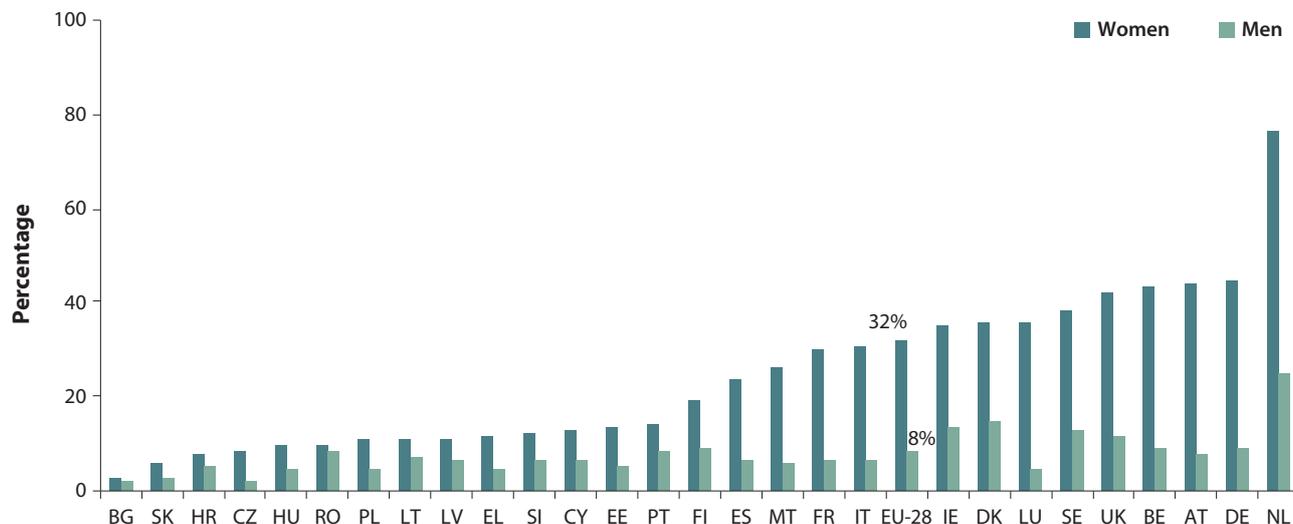
some EU Member States<sup>(64)</sup>, employees that meet certain conditions (size of employer, age of child, etc.) have a legal right to request flexible working hours, such as Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. The approach to flexible working time varies across EU Member States, which has implications for equality indicators in different EU Member States. Nonetheless, there has been a general EU trend towards encouraging more flexible working (European Commission, 2010f).

Women's general disadvantaged position in the labour market makes mothers more likely to work part-time and take on childcare responsibilities than fathers (Council of the EU, 2010f; Smith and Villa, 2010) and unless fathers take a more active role in sharing the responsibility for the care of children and other dependants, the gender imbalances will remain and pay inequalities may be reinforced. The importance of equal sharing of responsibility between women and men for care of children and other dependants and work-life balance measures in promoting women's participation are highlighted in EIGE's latest study on 'Gender Equality and Economic Independence: Part-time Work and Self-employment' (EIGE, 2014b).

### The Barcelona objectives for formal childcare are not being met by many Member States

The effect of the provision of childcare on women's employment is complex and it is not clear how far current childcare arrangements are designed to support the employment of both parents. Some childcare may be more

**Figure 12** Part-time employment rates of women and men (15–64 years), by Member State, 2012 (percentage of total employment by sex)



Source: Eurostat, LFS (lfsa\_eppga)

for educational than work-related reasons. In some cases, the concentration of provision on short duration childcare may make it more difficult for mothers to work, due to short hours of free care.

The Barcelona Summit 2002 set targets that childcare systems should provide 33 % coverage for under three-year olds (for 2012 achieved by BE, DK, ES, FR, LU, NL, PT, SI, SE); and 90 % coverage for those aged three years to compulsory school age (for 2012 achieved by BE, BG, DK, DE, EE, ES, FR, IT, MT, SI, SE). Of these, six EU Member States have achieved both targets. In 2012, less than a third (30 %) of children under three years were in childcare across the EU-28, with a high degree of variance across Member States: 5 % or less in four Member States (CZ, PL, RO, SK), or over 50 % in another three (DK, NL, SE). Overall, 14 % of children under three were placed in childcare for 30 hours or more each week. Not all childcare is provided at this length, with some being on a part-time basis and thus being less friendly to full-time working parents. Since 2007, the figures for Member States and the EU show a year-on-year increase in childcare coverage for under three-year olds.

In 2012, 83 % of children of the age group three years to the minimum compulsory school age were placed in childcare, and 46 % of them in childcare for 30 hours or more. Childcare coverage for this group has increased across Member States since 2007, although at different pace. Several Member States increased the coverage of childcare (BG, LV, MT), especially regarding long-duration childcare of 30 hours or more. Despite these trends, between 2007 and 2012, the share of this age group in any form of childcare fell in eight Member States (in order of the greatest falls, these are UK, CY, HU, SK, DK, NL).

The proportion of children cared for by parents alone (i.e. without any form of formal or other childcare) varies greatly across Europe. For children under three, the proportion cared for only by their parents remained the same in 2012 compared to 2007, at 51 % at EU level<sup>(85)</sup>. The proportion of children in the age group three to compulsory school age fell by just 2 p.p. (from 12 % to 10 %), in the same period.

The lowest proportion of children cared for by parents alone is in five Member States (DK, CY, LU, NL, PT). In contrast, very few young children are cared for by anyone other than parents in some Eastern European Member States (BG, LT, HU, SK).

Subsidised childcare places are provided in most Member States, although the rate of subsidy varies and tends to depend on family income (Council of the EU, 2010f; European Commission, 2009f). Cost has been identified as an obstacle for many parents, particularly for low income families. In the European survey on family life, respondents who are lone parents or carer households were the most likely to find it difficult to combine family and work (57 % of these individuals responded in this way) (Eurofound, 2008). In some EU Member States such as Belgium (Flanders) 'priority groups' are being supported for childcare provision with 20 % of subsidised places reserved for lone parent families and low-income families (European Commission, 2013a).

### Women continue to shoulder the main caring roles within families

In 2010, women still spent more than 70 hours on paid and unpaid work each week and their number is more than twice that for men (32 % compared to 13 %). In 10 Member States

(CZ, DK, EL, ES, CY, HU, NL, RO, SI, SK) there were around two fifths of women who worked more than 70 hours. Childcare responsibilities account for the main reason women work longer hours than men. Women aged 25–44 spend three times longer caring for children each day than men (EIGE, 2011). The caring responsibilities for dependent elderly are assigned most often to women as residence in formal care institutions is not particular common in Member States as more than half of dependent elderly received informal or no care in 19 Member States.

There has been some reduction in the gender gap in time use (measured as the percentage point difference between men and women who spend at least 70 hours per week in paid and unpaid work) as the values for 2010 were lower compared to 2005 in 13 out of the 21 Member States for which data were available.

The generally negative impact of caring responsibilities on women's employment opportunities, and the potential contribution of improvements in childcare provision have been highlighted in a number of recent European-level reports (European Commission, 2014g; European Commission, 2013b). In the Gender Equality Index, the score for gender equality in caring activities was 38.8 out of 100 for 2010, representing one of the lowest scores in the EU-27 (EIGE 2013b).

### **Fathers take parental leave more often but at different levels across the Member States**

Parental leave laws can support parents in two complementary ways: by offering job-protected leave and by offering financial support during that leave <sup>(86)</sup>. This leave is separate from paid maternity leave (and paid paternity leave where it exists). According to the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC), the situation on parental leave is rather mixed. Parental leave is not always paid, and where it is paid different rates apply (a flat-rate amount in BE, BG, CZ, FR, LU, AT, SK; a proportional amount in DE, DK, IT, LV, LT, HU, PL, RO, FI, SE, and full pay in EE, SI) (Ray, Gornick and Schmitt, 2008) <sup>(87)</sup>. The total protected job leave available to parents varies widely across the EU Member States, reaching up to 300 weeks in France and Spain.

The take-up of parental leave across employees at any time is likely to depend on a range of factors including the numbers of eligible workers; the length of leave; the flexibility in taking parental leave; whether it is paid or unpaid; and the availability of alternative forms of leave for new parents (such as longer duration maternity/paternity leave) <sup>(88)</sup>. Data for 2010 is available for seventeen Member States on the proportion of employed men on parental leave (children younger than 8). Fourteen of these had rates below 2 % (the highest proportion of employed men taking parental leave was in Sweden (11 %), Finland (4 %) and Denmark (2 %) <sup>(89)</sup>). In six Member States the proportion of men who took or are on parental leave was below 0.5 %

(CZ, ES, IT, HU, AT, PL). Since the previous review of the BPfA, increase in the proportion of men taking parental leave was relatively small. At that time, the figure was less than 1 % throughout the EU.

Figures from the Labour Force Survey (2010) show that on average, women in the EU represented 89 % of all persons who were either on or had taken parental leave. Amongst those who were actually on parental leave in 2010, women accounted for nearly 94 %. Women represented at least 95 % of persons who took or were on parental leave in ten Member States (BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, LV, HU, MT, PL, SK). Sweden and Denmark had the lowest share of women who took or were on parental leave (well under 70 %). The higher propensity of mothers to take parental leave has been linked to gender differences in the allocation of time, gender gaps in wages and leave policies. They eventually reinforce gender inequality in the labour market (EIGE, 2011).

### **Economic crisis challenge work-life balance policies**

Several gender experts have warned that budgetary cuts to public care services may threaten broader progress towards improving work-private life balance (Bettio, Smith and Villa, 2009; Smith and Villa, 2010; Council of the EU, 2010f). At the same time, the European Women's Lobby has called for the inclusion of gender equality in Member States' national policies and National Reform Programs (NRPs) (along with specific gender equality objectives in the 2020 Strategy) (EWL, 2014).

The annual Joint Employment reports (2011, 2012 and 2013) highlight the severe fiscal burden on the public budget as a barrier to women's employment. Women's greater involvement in the labour market continues to be hindered by: inadequate childcare facilities and the lack of services for other dependent persons; labour markets unfriendly to a career break; unbalanced take-up of parental responsibilities; and the perception that lengthy (financed) parental leave as a hindrance for career development and a severe fiscal burden on the public budget. In order to address these challenges, targeted temporary reductions in employer social security contributions, revision of tax systems, flexible working arrangements, and extended full-time day-care facilities, have been advocated for, among others, by the European Commission. The latest Joint Employment Report annexed to the Annual Growth Survey 2014 showed that some Member States took steps to integrate family and work obligations (European Commission, 2013j).

### **Labour market inequalities and segregation perpetuate the gender gaps in pay and employment**

Gender segregation, both vertical and horizontal, is evident by sector of employment, and by occupation/work function. The unequal take-up of part-time work between

women and men is a key factor in some EU Member States, linked to women's propensity to combine work with care responsibilities. The skills of women and men therefore may be perceived differently and valued unequally; it can re-enforce gender stereotypes and strengthen the reproduction of a 'business as usual' approach across different industries; and may perpetuate the gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap fell in most Member States between 2007 and 2012. In 2012, the gender pay gap ranged from 30 % in Estonia to 2 % in Slovenia (based on gross hourly wages, full-time and part-time employees in all sectors) <sup>(90)</sup>. The largest decline in the gender pay gap was in Lithuania, which saw a fall of ten percentage points to reach 13 % in 2012. Six Member States had a gender pay gap of under 10 % in 2012 (IT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SI) Whereas in another six Member States the gender pay gap was more than 20 % (CZ, DE, EE, HU, AT, SK). As women are over-represented in minimum wage jobs, annual increases of the minimum wage have helped to reduce the gender pay gap in some cases (CY) <sup>(91)</sup>.

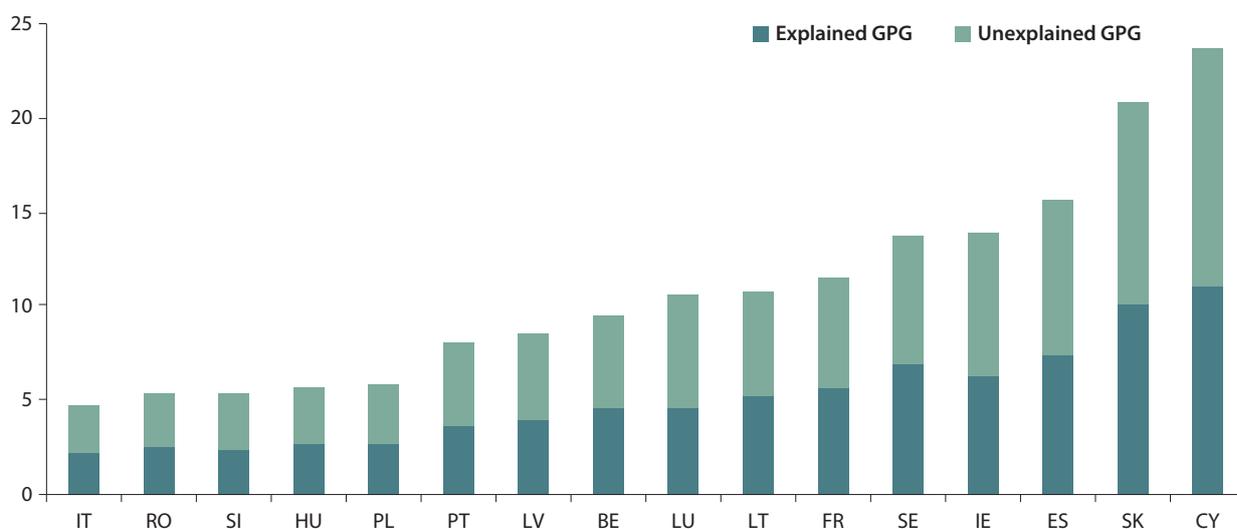
Many reports from Member States focus on the gender pay differentials between public and private sector employment. The public sector has been associated with better employment opportunities and conditions for women including lower-skilled women. Whilst the start of the financial crisis severely affected men's employment (especially in the private sector), its later effects may be a greater loss of jobs among women, particularly in EU Member States that have implemented cutbacks in the public sector (Rubery, 2013). Some national governments have taken affirmative action to improve the position of

women in the labour market, through a focus on public sector jobs. In Finland, for over a decade, there has been a programme to increase the share of women on the boards of state-owned companies. The programme has increased the proportion of women.

Sector of employment underlies pay patterns, and in general, the pay gap negatively affects women across both public and private sectors, although there is a high degree of variation across Member States. In 2012 the gap ranged from 3 to 24 % in the public sector, and 9 to 29 % in the private sector. When looking at the gender pay gap based on gross hourly wages (full-time and part-time employees), in most Member States in 2012 the pay gap in the public services was lower than that in privately controlled employment (apart from BG, LV, HU, SE) <sup>(92)</sup>. The difference between the public and private sector was particularly high in Cyprus with a pay gap of under 1 % in the public sector and 24 % in the private sector.

In relation to the pay gap in management (ISCO 12 and 13), the gap was over 20 % in 15 Member States, (CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, LT, LU, HU, NL, PL, PT, SK, FI, SE, UK), and the largest gap was found in the Czech Republic (38 %) and Germany (37 %) in 2006. Pay gaps in management however are low in some Member States (under 7 % in BG, CY, RO). Data on the gap in industry, construction and services (except public administration, defence, compulsory social security) suggests that in several cases the unadjusted pay gap is highest <sup>(93)</sup>. Some Member States show very large differences across sectors (EE, HR, LV, HU) of 15 p.p. difference between the gender gap in construction, industry and services and

**Figure 13** Percentage of the explained and unexplained gender pay gap by using labour market patterns, 2006



Source: Council of the European Union (2010h), The gender pay gap in the Member States of the European Union: quantitative and qualitative indicators. Belgian Presidency Report 2010, Belgian Presidency

Note: data were not available for BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, MT, NL, AT, FI, UK

the gap in public administration, defence and compulsory social security, whereas in Croatia, a large gender pay gap was noted in public administration.

The gender pay gap can only be half explained when using the labour market patterns between women and men; the rest can contain elements, like direct discrimination, stereotypes or other variables that were not considered in the analysis. Amongst the sixteen Member States for which data on the share of explained pay gap is available in 2006, Sweden was the only one where the explained part of the gender pay gap was bigger compared with the unexplained part.

### **Collective bargaining helps to reduce the gender pay gap**

Collective bargaining facilitates progress in equal pay, particularly the level of salary thresholds/minimum wages; the visibility of gender equality placed on employers' agendas; and job classification and evaluation standards and systems. Most authors agree that collective bargaining has an important role to play in reducing pay gaps: pay inequalities between women and men are lower where collective bargaining is strong (ETUC, 2008). A 2009 report in Greece pointed to the removal of direct discrimination and the reduction of wage inequalities when employees are members of trade unions (European Commission, 2009g; Council of the EU, 2010f).

Some EU Member States have incorporated clauses on equal pay for women and men in their collective agreements, such as the agreements in different sectors (BG, DK, ES, FR, AT, SE). A Framework for Actions on Gender Equality was adopted by the European social partners in 2005 and led to measures at national level. Trade union and employers' representatives have created a body with responsibility for the question of equal pay for public sector employees. Joint action plans have been adopted by the social partners, and trade unions and employers' organisations have participated in initiatives on equal pay. In Portugal, a project to promote equal pay did a gender analysis of functions and a training reference system on equal pay. The actions of several EU Member States have focused on improving pay surveys and gender equality planning, addressing stereotypes in the work environment and adopting neutral function classification systems. However, different national systems make comparisons difficult. In some EU Member States, negotiations are decentralised at the level of individual enterprises, whilst in others negotiations are at a sector, or national level. The role of dialogue with companies, and amongst the social partners, varies depending on the nature of pay structures. Where wage agreements are more devolved/ autonomous, there is low representation of women in collective bargaining negotiations. A Danish working group has highlighted the need for training for salary negotiations. It also pointed to the need to use the Works Council in equal remuneration

and to support employers, for example through the use of job evaluation tools. In 2013 in Poland, a Round Table of EU Ministers for Gender Equality on 'Gender Wage Gap and Participation of Women in the Labour Market' took place, which provided an opportunity for the exchange of experiences on the European level.

### **Rates and characteristics of self-employment differ between women and men**

Self-employment has been identified as an employment option which has the potential to support work-life balance, as it can offer increased flexibility and opportunities to work from home and reduce the costs of childcare for example (Hundley, 2000; Lombard, 2007). Therefore it might seem surprising that compared to men, fewer women set up businesses across the EU (European Commission, 2009a). During 2008–12 the share of total employment of self-employed women was only 10 % compared to 18 % for self-employed men. Social norms, attitudes and stereotypes damage women's entrepreneurial intentions and aspirations (EIGE, 2014b).

Despite a mixed picture, statistics on self-employment show overall only low or zero growth in the last few years across EU Member States<sup>(94)</sup>. The largest increase in women's self-employment in 2008–12 was in Slovakia and Czech Republic (up 2 p.p. although remaining well below the EU average), and in Greece (where it rose 1 p.p. from a relatively high base). Elsewhere the proportion of women who were self-employed decreased.

Self-employed women are concentrated in sectors which largely reflect the wider gender segregation in the labour market. In 2012, across the EU-28, women were over-represented amongst the self-employed in public administration, education, health and social work and in arts, entertainment and recreation (59 % and 58 % respectively), but had a relatively low share of self-employment in information and communication, industry and especially construction (20 %, 19 % and 4 % respectively). According to the OECD (2012), women are particularly under-represented in self-employment in engineering, computing and business administration (OECD, 2012). This is despite the fact that in general, self-employed women tend to be educated to a higher level than men. Well over a third (37 %) of self-employed women in the EU-28 had tertiary level education in 2012 (above the rate for self-employed men (28 %) (EIGE, 2014b).

The gender pay gap between self-employed women and men is high (45 % across EU Member States 2012). Gender segregation in self-employment remains a factor in the pay gap between self-employed women and men (Piacentini, 2013). Other factors grounding the earnings in self-employment include differences in education, propensity to part-time work, business size and type,



career interruptions and women's greater time spent outside the workplace due to care responsibilities. Overall, self-employed workers, especially women are generally more at risk of poverty than employed people. Reduced levels of social protection associated with self-employment (especially for maternity entitlement) further exposes self-employed women to the risk of poverty.

Research on the performance of women entrepreneur's shows they do relatively well compared to men with similar characteristics (Marlow and Ahl, 2012). However, they tend not to expend their businesses to the same extent as men. The share of self-employed women with employees among total employment for women is low in all EU-28 Member States, and under 1 % in some cases. In 2012, only under a quarter (24 %) of self-employed women compared to around a third (31 %) of men were self-employed and with employees in the EU-28. Self-employed women are much more likely than men to report being self-employed without employees and not in a position to freely hire others (52 % compared to 37 % in 2010 across the EU-28). This trend has been linked to women being more likely to be self-employed but in 'regular' work with only one client <sup>(95)</sup>. Some 14 % and 11 %, respectively, of self-employed women without employees and self-employed men without employees had only one client; and 10 % of self-employed women without employees compared to 7 % of self-employed men without employees could not make important decisions for their business. This means women may be more vulnerable than men to economic changes.

## 2.6.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

### Increasing women's labour market participation — a key priority for Member States

The most frequent priority mentioned in the UNECE reports by Member States is increasing women's labour market participation through boosting employment rates. Targets have been set in some cases (for example, the ambition to increase women's employment to 65 in CZ). Policies and programmes interlinked with improving work-life balance by increasing the number of childcare centres and combating gender stereotypes linked to the distribution of care and household responsibilities between women and men.

Given the breadth of the area of women and economy, approaches to support women into work and address labour market segregation vary considerably across Member States and share a variety of individual goals. One thing they share in common is that they are usually funded through a combination of national and EU funds. For example, measures providing work placements and/or training

have been implemented to increase the participation and employment rates of women (CY, AT). Cyprus has provided special training courses to inactive women (Cyprus report to UNECE, 2014) whilst in Austria individual support was offered through a newly created network of Job Centres for Women (Austria report to UNECE, 2014). Spain carries out programmes for the social and labour market integration of particularly disadvantaged women.

### Reduction in the gender pay gap is uneven among the EU Member States

Member States have focused attention on gaps in the labour market participation rates of women and men. Some particular successes in boosting women's employment were noted in the reports (BG, IE HR, IT, AT, PT). At the same time, many Member States continue to report a disproportionate number of women in part-time employment (CZ, DK, ES, AT, RO).

Austria and Germany developed tools for monitoring wages of women and men and identifying discrepancies. In addition, awareness-raising activities such as the international Equal Pay Day make people aware of this issue. Several Member States targeted the pay gap in specifically designed programmes. One of the most comprehensive projects was the Equal Pay Programme in Finland. The evaluation of this programme showed that collective agreements, the introduction of new analytical pay systems, equality planning, pay surveys and support measures for women's career planning had helped to reduce the gender pay gap (UNECE, 2014i). In Spain, a self-diagnosis gender pay gap manual is available for companies. The manual is based on a computer tool, easily downloadable from the web and user friendly <sup>(96)</sup>. Spain also disseminates information and carries out awareness-raising activities for companies and citizens on the international and national Equal Pay Day (UNECE, 2014w).

### Increased female entrepreneurship and self-employment in some Member States

Some Member States highlighted their efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship and self-employment as part of the strategy to boost women's employment (BE, IE, HR, PT, RO). For example, the number of Croatian companies owned by women saw a particularly dramatic increase from 13 % in 2002 to 25 % in 2013, and the proportion of those employed in businesses run by women increased from 7 % in 2002 to 13 % in 2008 (UNECE, 2014d).

### Diverse initiatives to support work-life balance

Actions were noted to support the integration of work and family life in a range of areas across various Member States, such as improvements in the provision of childcare; strengthening or introduction of paternal leaves; extension

of childcare benefits to certain groups of workers (such as part-time workers); and the introduced measures in partnership with employers to improve work and family life balance for women. Member States have reported progress in relation to the provision and take-up of formal childcare places (DK, AT, PL). In Austria, the childcare rates increased considerably between 2007 and 2013 (UNECE, 2014a). To balance work and family life of women, investments have been made in childcare provision. Poland allocated over a hundred million PLN for establishment of childcare centres between 2011 and 2012 (UNECE, 2014r).

Importantly, the reports from a few Member States highlight some slight positive developments in terms of shifting the balance of childcare responsibilities away from women. In Estonia, fathers were entitled to parental leave and receive associated benefits since 2004, and whilst the share of fathers taking this option was initially quite low (2 %), by 2013 it had risen to 7.5 % (UNECE, 2014h). Besides such investments, some countries ran awareness raising campaigns regarding the possibility of paternal leave of fathers (BE, IT, LT, PL, AT). Overall some slow progress to redress the balance of family responsibilities between women and men was noted. In Denmark, men have increased the proportion of time spent on housework by almost two hours a day over the period 1964 to 2008, and the amount of time spent on housework by women has decreased by an hour since 1964 (UNECE, 2014g). Formal provision of childcare is crucial to facilitating women's access to the labour market. There, currently more than 97 % of all children aged 3 to 5 are in nursery schools, and almost 91 % of all children aged 1 to 2 are in crèches or similar day-care facilities (UNECE, 2014g).

## 2.7 Women in Power and Decision-making (G)

### 2.7.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

Gender imbalance in political and economic decision-making is a current and important challenge for the EU and its Member States. Women remain under-represented in the political and economic domain in the majority of Member States.

In 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality published the Gender Equality Index that among its six domains included the domain of power. This domain 'focuses on the gap between women's and men's in different levels of representation in the political, social and economic spheres and their share of positions of power' (EIGE, 2013b). Based on available data, this domain showed the lowest gender

equality score — 38 points out of 100 for the EU. Moreover, 19 Member States scored below 38 and only five Member States reached 50 points or higher (FR, NL, DK, FI, SE). These results show the existence of a significant deficit of gender equality in power and decision-making.

The BPfA defined two strategic objectives in the critical area of Women in Power and Decision-making:

- G1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making;
- G2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

During the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 1999 and during the Italian's Presidency of the Council in 2003, a set of 18 indicators were developed and accepted for this area <sup>(97)</sup>. Most of these indicators (except indicator 4) seek to measure the ratio of women and men within key positions and organisations of political, social and economic influence in the EU. This includes the civil service; courts; elected political structures (national parliaments; regional assemblies); and macroeconomic bodies (Central Banks; economic ministries; representative organisations of employers and employees). Indicator 4 relates to the first strategic objective, and aims to capture the policies that promote greater gender balance during elections. Most of these indicators are covered by the data available in the Commission's database on Women and men in decision-making <sup>(98)</sup>. This area of concern is very relevant to other areas. Indicators have been adopted to measure women's participation in decision-making in media organisations and their boards (area J, Indicators 1-2) and in climate change decision-making bodies (area K, Indicators 1-3).

### 2.7.2 EU Policy developments

The EU commitment to gender balance in politics began in 1991 (Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities between women and men 1991–95), when the Council Recommendation on 'balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process' became the first formal Council act in this field (1996). Since then, the issue of women in decision-making has remained visible in the gender equality agenda of the EU, including in subsequent financing programmes and policy strategies for gender equality (2001–05, 2006–10).

'Promoting equality in decision-making' is one of the six priority areas of the European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010–15). Promoting equality in decision-making in general and aiming at increasing the number of women on company boards in particular is the

major objective of the Strategy. In this context, in November 2012 the European Commission proposed legislation with the aim of attaining a 40 % objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies (European Commission, 2012g). On November 2013, the European Parliament voted with a strong majority to back the proposed Directive.

The proposal for a new legislation contributed significantly to accelerated progress towards a better gender balance on the corporate boards of listed companies registered in the EU<sup>(99)</sup>. Companies which have a lower share (less than 40 %) of the under-represented sex among the non-executive directors will be required to make appointments to those positions on the basis of a comparative analysis of the qualifications of each candidate, by applying clear, gender-neutral and unambiguous criteria. In case of equal qualification, priority will be given to the candidate of the under-represented sex. The proposal enhances fairness and transparency in board selection processes by pushing companies to take a broader base of candidates from the outset (European Commission, 2014e).

The European Parliament has adopted several Resolutions in this area<sup>(100)</sup>, conducted studies on the European elections from a gender perspective and promoted campaigns enhancing women's participation as voters and as candidates in the European elections. In 2014, the EWL together with several political groups represented in the European Parliament, organised the 50/50 Campaign to promote the equal representation of women and men in all European institutions to put issues of women's rights and gender equality high on the EU political agenda (EWL, 2014). At the

same time, this campaign was complemented by another campaign, funded by the European Commission, in several EU Member States (CY, CZ, LT, RO). The campaign 'Parity Democracy and Active European Citizenship: No Modern European Democracy without Gender Equality' aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the selection and participation of candidates for the European Parliament<sup>(101)</sup>.

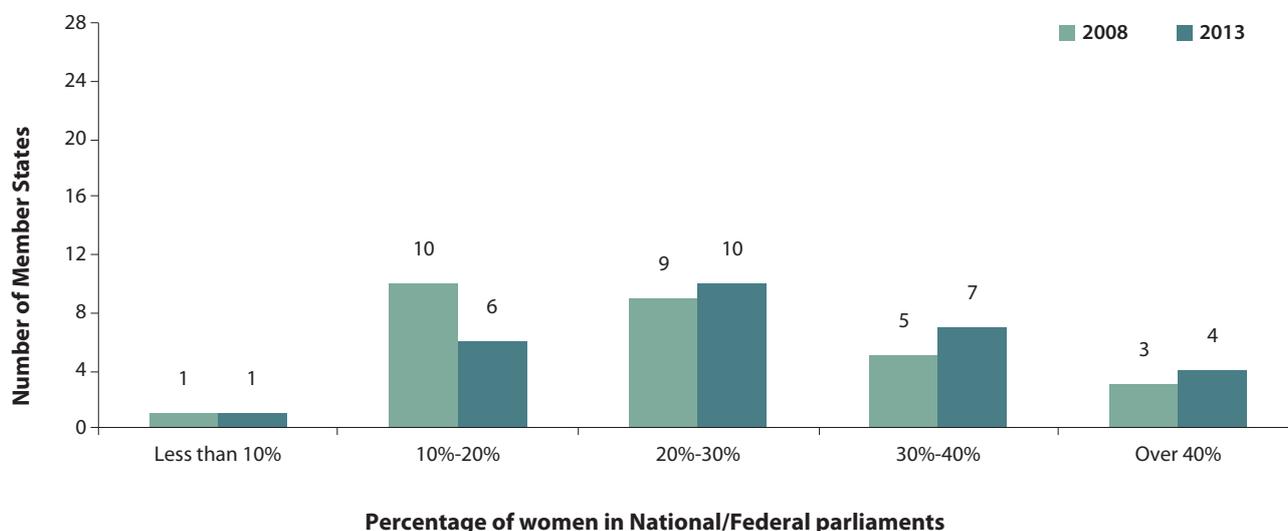
### 2.7.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Slow advancement of women's participation in national or federal decision-making assemblies

Increasing women's presence and participation in decision-making has been a long-time political goal within the EU. Since these aspects started to be assessed and monitored, a continuous but slow increase is apparent. The latest data show that on average, women occupy less than one third of political decision-making positions within national or federal parliaments in the EU-28. In 2013, the overall representation of women in the single/lower houses of national/federal parliaments of the Member States reached 27 %, a slight increase from 24 % in 2008. In 2013, more than half of the EU-28 had fewer than 30 % of women present in their national/federal parliaments.

In the Member States where there are regional parliaments, in 2013, the overall representation of women reached 32 %. In 2013, Belgium saw a big increase of women in the regional parliaments, around 41 % of women, partly due to the existence of quota system since 1994. France is another example where there has been a steady increase

**Figure 14** Number of EU Member States by the level of women's representation in national/federal parliaments, 2008 and 2013



Source: European Commission, Database Women and men in decision-making

of women representation at regional level (French Regional Assemblies) after the adoption of the Parity Law in 2000. In local assemblies (councils and municipalities), in 2013, there were 32 % women overall represented in the EU. The highest percentage was noticed in Sweden (43 %), followed by seven other Member States (BE, DK, ES, FR, LV, FI, UK) where women reached more than 30 % representation.

### Increased participation of women in decision-making in the European institutions

At the end of the legislative period 2010–14, only 35 % of members of European Parliament were women and only three out of 14 European Parliament Vice-Presidents. Following the European elections in May 2014, the rate of women's participation amongst MEPs rose to 37 %, and to 6 out of 14 Vice-Presidents. Over the 35 years since its creation, women's participation in the European Parliament saw a slow, but steady increase: between 1979 and 2014, there was a clear upward trend: 16 % (1979), 18 % (1984), 19 % (1989), 26 % (1994), 30 % (1999), 31 % (2004), 35 % (2009) and 37 % (2014) <sup>(102)</sup>. In terms of administrative positions, women's representation stands at 33 % for level 1 and 39 % for level 2.

In 2013, the number of women Commissioners in the European Commission represented 32 % of the total number of members <sup>(103)</sup>. In terms of administrative positions, women's representation stands at 15 % for level 1 and 31 % for level 2, placing the European Commission in a leading position among EU institutions, after the European Parliament.

The trend is not kept within the European economic decision-making bodies where only one woman sat on the

board of the highest European Economic Institution (the European Central Bank) until 2010, and not a single woman since then <sup>(104)</sup>. In the European Court of Justice there has been a slight increase in women's representation since 2008 (from 11 % to 15 %). In contrast, the proportion of women in the European Court of First Instance decreased from 41 % to 22 %.

### Men are over-represented in the majority of national governments

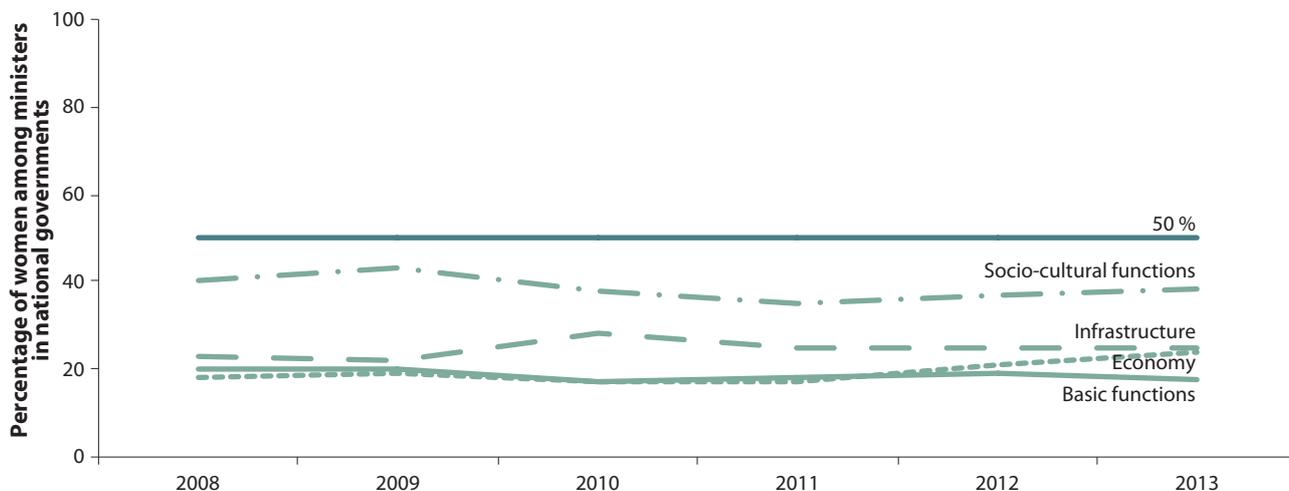
In the EU, women represent only one quarter of senior/junior ministers in national governments (Figure 15), less than in national and regional parliaments (in 2013, 27 % and 32 % respectively). The higher representation of women in federal and regional assemblies, in contrast to national governments, contradicts the argument that there is a lack of women with ambitions for a political career and who are prepared for high-level decision-making posts. At the same time, the composition of governments is subject to frequent changes, as compared to national and regional assemblies; therefore, data at this level are likely to vary and are consequently less predictable.

In 2013, 50 % of ministers in two Member States were women (FI, SE) and in three Member States ministerial positions were held by 40 % or more (DK, FR, NL). In the band 30 %–39 %, there are three Member States (BE, BG, AT). Most Member States have between 20 % and 29 % of ministerial positions held by women in national government (DE, ES, IT, LV, LU, PL, RO, SI, UK).

**Figure 15** Percentage of women among the members of the governments, by Member State and in the EU-28, 2013



Source: European Commission, Database Women and men in decision-making

**Figure 16** Percentage of women as ministers in EU by functions of ministries, 2008–13

Source: European Commission, Database Women and Men in decision-making

The composition of ministerial portfolios <sup>(105)</sup> has changed noticeably between 2008 and 2013.

The proportion of women holding portfolios with basic functions decreased from 20 % to 18 %; for socio-cultural functions the proportion of women slightly decreased from 40 % to 38 %; for economic functions, the proportion of women grew more significantly from 17 % to 24 %; and another rise was observed for ministers in infrastructure, from 24 % to 25 %. The increase in women's share of economic functions and infrastructure is a positive development, particularly given that the percentage of women ministers has remained unchanged. In 2013, nevertheless, there were six Member States (CZ, EE, IE, HR, CY, MT) where there were no women holding any of the economic functions.

### Legislative and self-regulatory measures can speed up gender balance in political decision-making

Electoral gender quota systems can help women to access decision-making position in a greater number. There are (a) legislative quotas in the elections for the national/regional/local assemblies and (b) voluntary quotas adopted by political parties. The quota system should be compatible with the electoral system and can be supplemented by rules to define rank order and effective legal sanctions (European Parliament, 2013a).

Legislated quotas for elections <sup>(106)</sup> have proven to be an effective measure to increase the representation of women. In 2008, there were six EU Member States with legislative quotas for elected assemblies at national or regional level (BE, EL, ES,

FR, PT, SI). Since then (2008), other Member States adopted legislation on gender quotas in their electoral systems:

- In Ireland the Electoral Act was amended in 2012. Political parties will lose 50 % of their state funding unless at least 30 % of the candidates at parliamentary elections are women and at least 30 % are men, commencing at the next general elections. The legislation provides that this figure will rise to 40 % women after a further seven years.
- In Italy, following the Constitutional reform in 2003, 12 out of 20 regions have adopted gender quotas in their regional laws: Abruzzo, Calabria, Campania, Friuli VG, Lazio, Marche, Puglia, Sicily, Trento, Tuscany, Umbria, Vad d'Aoste. Seven more regions have applied similar provisions as in the previous law on gender quotas for the National Assembly (1987-2001) (including Basilicata, Emilia Romagna, Liguria, Lombardy, Molise, Piedmont, and Veneto). The laws of Sicily, Tuscany and Friuli VG provide for the alternation of women and men on candidate lists.
- In Poland, amendments to the Election Code adopted in January 2011, introduced legislated candidate quotas on electoral lists to the National and Regional Assemblies: 'The number of candidates who are women cannot be less than 35 % of all candidates on the list. The number of candidates who are men cannot be less than 35 % of all candidates on the list'.

By 2014, the political parties of 13 EU Member States (CZ, DE, HR, IT, CY, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, RO, SI, SE, UK), adopted

voluntary (or party quotas), which also supported the entrance of women to the European Parliament in 2014 (European Parliament, 2014a). These Member States complete the list of those (BE, FR, EL, PL, PT, SI, ES) who have in place legislative quotas and applied them for the establishment of party lists for the elections to the European Parliament in June 2014. In most cases, the quotas were established in the 1990s. The scope of quotas varies from 20 % (in political parties in Hungary and Malta) to 50 % (parity) in some Green, Left and socialist parties (such as Germany, France, and UK) (European Parliament, 2014a). In Denmark, where the proportion of women in national assembly is high, party quotas were discontinued after some years of implementation without having visible negative consequences (European Parliament, 2013a).

Further steps are needed in order to achieve the 40–60 objective. As the European Parliament emphasises, ‘despite the fact that many political parties in EU-28 make efforts to promote gender equality in decision-making, gender gaps persist and women continue to be a minority in the political sphere. Nonetheless, progress has been achieved over recent decades. Most of the political parties that have committed themselves to achieve gender balance have managed to accomplish their goals’ (European Parliament, 2014a).

### **Significant increase of women in high-ranking positions in national public administrations**

Data on the proportion of women acting as highest-ranking civil servants (positions after the minister, appointed, elected or nominated) show an increase during the last five years. Women at level 1 of the administration increased from 28 % to 30 % and at level 2 from 34 % to 39 %. In six Member States (EL, LV, PL, RO, SI, SE), women exceed 40 % at level 1; in 13 Member States the proportion of women at level 2 is above 40 % (BG, EE, EL, HR, LV, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE).

The distribution of the highest-ranking women civil servants amongst different fields of action (socio-cultural, economic, etc.) shows a significant increase in all functions, but the positions of each function (level 1) remain lower than level 2. Women represent more than one third of civil servants with level 2 functions. The largest increase occurred among socio-cultural functions — in the last five years, women’s representation at level 1 increased by six percentage points (from 35 % to 41 %), whereas at level 2 the share increased by seven percentage points (42 % to 49 %).

In Belgium a gender quota was introduced in 2012 for the two highest levels in the hierarchy of the federal administration (UNECE, 2014b). Similarly, in France since 2013, nominations at the high level of civil service must include at least 20 % of each sex. This quota will increase to 30 % in 2015 and 40 % in 2017. The French Prime Minister has urged Ministers to accelerate efforts for a gender balanced participation in the high civil service, having formed a parity government since

May 2012 (UNECE, 2014j). In Ireland, targets set under the National Women’s Strategy 2007–16 for the employment of women at middle and senior management grades in the civil service have been exceeded. Women now constitute 42 % of the Assistant Principal Officer grade and 34 % of the Principal Officer grade. In the Netherlands, since 2013, there has been a government target of at least 30 % women in the Senior Civil Service by 2017 and a ‘Charter for talent in the top’ was signed by several ministries to put in place supporting measures for talented women (UNECE, 2014x)

### **Slow advancement of women to positions as Supreme Court judges**

The proportion of women judges in Supreme Courts has slightly increased between 2008 and 2013 (from 32 % to 35 %). The share of women judges is higher than the EU-28 average in ten Member States, and in six Member States women are more than half of the judges: Romania — 84 %, Bulgaria — 77 %, Luxembourg — 75 %, Hungary — 54 %, Slovakia — 54 %, and Latvia — 51 %. At the opposite end, only 9 % of Supreme Court judges are women in Portugal and UK. In some Member States, a significant increase in women presence as judges at Supreme Courts could also be noted: in Malta from 0 % in 2008 to 18 % in 2013; and in Greece from 17 % to 31 %.

### **Little advancement in women’s presence in economic decision-making and on boards of publicly listed companies**

Only one woman has been appointed as the Governor in a national Central Bank in the EU-28 since 2008 (Chrystalla Georghadji in Cyprus). Fewer than one in five members of the decision-making bodies of the National Central Banks is a woman (18 %), while there has only been a slight increase to this percentage since 2008 (16 %).

Only two Member States have more than 30 % of women among the members of decision-making boards (Finland: 42 % and Slovenia: 40 %). In 2013, the decision-making bodies of the Central Banks of five EU Member States were entirely dominated by men (CY, LT, AT, PT, SK), a situation not much different from four years previously when six EU Member States were in that situation (DE, IT, CY, AT, PT, SI). Germany, Italy and Slovenia appointed women to these bodies, but those in Lithuania and Slovakia have lost their women members.

At the end of 2013, half of the EU Member States (13) had no women as chief executive (CEO) of an executive board in the largest publicly listed companies<sup>(107)</sup>. At this level of decision-making, no significant improvement could be noticed, compared with 2008, when the number of EU Member States without a woman chief executive (CEO) was 15.



The picture is better among board members, executives and non-executives, of the largest publically listed companies in the EU. In October 2013, women represented 12 % of executives and 19 % of non-executives of the largest listed companies. The proportion of women non-executives saw an increase from 11 % in 2008. At the executive level, there are four Member States where women reach over 20 %: Estonia — 24 %, Latvia — 22 %, Romania — 22 % and Sweden — 21 %. At the non-executive level, the number of Member States which have higher percentages of women than the EU-28 average (18 %) is 12 (BE, BG, DK, DE, FR, LV, NL, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK).

### **Social partners at EU level active in promoting women in top positions**

At European level, there are seventeen employee organisations who participate in the European Social Dialogue (European Social Partners) <sup>(108)</sup>. Since 2008, there has not been a significant increase in the proportion of women among the Presidents of the Labour Confederations. The current President of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is a woman. The other four women are Presidents of:

- The European Confederation of Executives and Managerial Staff (CEC);
- The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU);
- The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE);
- The International Federation of Actors (FIA).

Among members of their boards, the proportion of women stood at 23 % in 2008. The number of women who are executive heads has remained the same since 2008 (three women). In 2013 there are women executive heads in the ETUC, the Confederation of the Public Sector and the Confederation of Journalists.

The proportion of women among presidents and vice-presidents of the Employer Confederations marked a significant improvement over the last five years. According to the EU database on decision-making, among the sixty European employers organisations (cross industry and sectoral), women act as President in eight of them (13 %), as opposed to only one in 2008 <sup>(109)</sup>.

Between 2008 and 2013, the number of women members of the total governing bodies of the Employer Confederation increased from 73 (9 %) to 191 (17 %). There are 21 women executive heads in these organisations (34 %), whereas in 2008 there were only 14 women (25 %).

## **2.7.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

### **Support for the EC proposal for a Directive Women on Boards**

In the context of the EU's commitment to legislate in company boards, several Member States have developed activities supporting this objective (DK, IE, IT, AT, PL, PT).

In Denmark, the independent Committee on Corporate Governance has issued a recommendation for concrete targets for Boards of Directors. As the Danish report notices, 85 % of the companies have already complied (UNECE, 2014g). New rules on the gender composition of the largest Danish companies were introduced. The new rules state that the boards of directors in the largest Danish companies must set a target figure for the share of women (i.e. the under-represented sex), including a time frame in which the target must be reached. Companies are required to develop policies to promote the share of women in managing positions, hereby ensuring a sufficient recruitment base to the board positions. The rules also contain the obligation for the companies to disclose the target figure and policies in the annual report. The purpose of the new rule is to ensure a development in the share of women in management, whilst allowing the companies to set their own ambitious and realistic targets (UNECE, 2014g).

In Italy, an awareness-raising campaign 'Gender Quota. A more Balanced Country has a Better Future' was launched to support the 2011 legislation on women's participation in boards. In 2011, Italy introduced a law — Law No 120/2011 known also as the law 'Golfo-Mosca' for 'pink quotas' — which aimed to increase the proportion of women on boards of public companies. The law requires that boards (executive and non-executive) of publicly listed companies and state-owned companies have at least 33 % of either sex by 2015 and set a target of 20 % for the transition period. In the event of non-compliance, a progressive warning system can culminate in the eventual dissolution of the board (UNECE, 2014o).

In Poland, all supervisory bodies selected by the Minister of State Treasury must reach 30 % of women by 2015 (UNECE, 2014r). In Portugal, since the 2012 Resolution of the Council of Ministers, private companies have had to implement equality plans. Since 2013, the new law states that each administrative and supervisory body of state-owned enterprises must have — as an objective — the presence of both women and men amongst their members (UNECE, 2014s).

In Spain, 31 companies have signed collaboration agreements with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, including the target of reaching within a four-year period, a 20 % presence of women in top management positions and steering committees or to increase its presence by 5 p.p. Also, the 'Promociona' project, carried out in collaboration with business organisations, includes actions devoted to involve companies in the selection and promotion of women's talent among their staff and to facilitate specific training, creation of networks and coaching (UNECE, 2014w). Another initiative in Spain, pursuant to article 54 of Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March on effective equality for men and women, which states that the Public Administration and its associated or subordinate public bodies will observe the principle of balanced presence in the appointment of boards of directors of companies in whose capital it has a holding, there has been a progressive increase in the presence of women in the company boards of public enterprises, from 25 % in 2009 to 31 % in 2013 (UNECE, 2014w).

In 2011, the Federal Government of Austria committed to increasing the proportion of women to 25 % by 31 December 2013, and to 35 % by 31 December 2018, within the supervisory bodies of businesses with a Federal State holding of 50 % and more. In addition, since 2012, the voluntary Austrian Corporate Governance Code's provision on equality for women in managerial positions was upgraded in status. Non-conformity now needs to be justified as listed companies are required to disclose the measures they take to promote women in supervisory boards, management boards and other managerial positions (UNECE, 2014a).

In Belgium, under the Law of 28 July 2011, Boards of Directors of independent companies have to apply a gender quota of a third (of each sex) over the next six years (for large companies) or either years (for the small and medium) or immediately (for public owed companies). Sanctions are foreseen for those companies not complying with the law as well as an evaluation of the impact of the Law by the Parliament in 2023 (UNECE, 2014b).

In Germany, the strategy for promoting women on boards is close to being adopted. The Federal Government is seeking to accelerate development through statutory measures and to make it irreversible for large companies. A gender quota of at least 30 % is to be set for supervisory boards of companies which are stock-listed and subject to co-determination on the basis of parity. Furthermore binding targets for increasing the percentage of women in the supervisory boards, executive boards and the top levels of management for companies which are either listed on the stock exchange or subject to co-determination on the basis of parity are to be made obligatory (UNECE, 2014k).

## 2.8 Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (H)

### 2.8.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

The BPfA defines institutional mechanisms for gender equality as the national machinery for the advancement of women and sees them as the central policy coordination unit inside the government. The main task of these institutional mechanisms is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas. Such institutional mechanisms are crucial to support the progress of gender equality in other areas. Within the EU framework, institutional mechanisms for gender equality refer to the current existing governmental bodies that have a mandate that goes beyond the advancement of women and extends to gender equality and the mainstreaming of such a dimension into general policies (EIGE, 2014a).

The BPfA defined three strategic objectives in the critical area of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women:

- H1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies;
- H2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects;
- H3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

In 2006, the Finnish EU Presidency prepared a report on the status of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the EU-25. The report was the basis for the three indicators developed for this area and was accepted by the Council of the European Union in its meeting in December 2006 (Council of the EU, 2006b). The indicators cover different aspects of institutional mechanisms, including the status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality (Indicator 1) and the personnel resources of the governmental and other gender equality bodies (Indicator 2) <sup>(10)</sup>. Indicator 3 aims to measure the extent to which gender mainstreaming occurs in Member States (for instance, use of the main methods (gender budgeting; gender impact assessments; etc.), as well as the structures in place to carry out gender mainstreaming (inter-ministerial coordination structure; contact people in ministries and so on).



In 2013, the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council chose to review this area and based on the technical support provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). New data were collected to assess progress in this area and a fourth indicator was developed and accepted by the Council during its meeting in December 2013 (Council of the EU, 2013b). Indicator 4 aims at measuring the third objective of this area by the use of sex-disaggregated statistics as a tool for gender mainstreaming. Sex-disaggregated data are vital for gender mainstreaming, and gender impact assessments. The Council of the European Union called on Member States to improve the 'production, dissemination and use of comparable, reliable, regularly updated statistics disaggregated by sex in all relevant areas' (Council of the EU, 2013b).

### 2.8.2 EU Policy developments

The Council of the EU reaffirmed the need to support institutional mechanisms for gender equality and called for a dual approach, consisting of gender mainstreaming and positive actions (Council of the EU, 2013b). It called for national strategies, action plans, gender mainstreaming tools and methods, as well as efforts to make full use of comparable gender statistics.

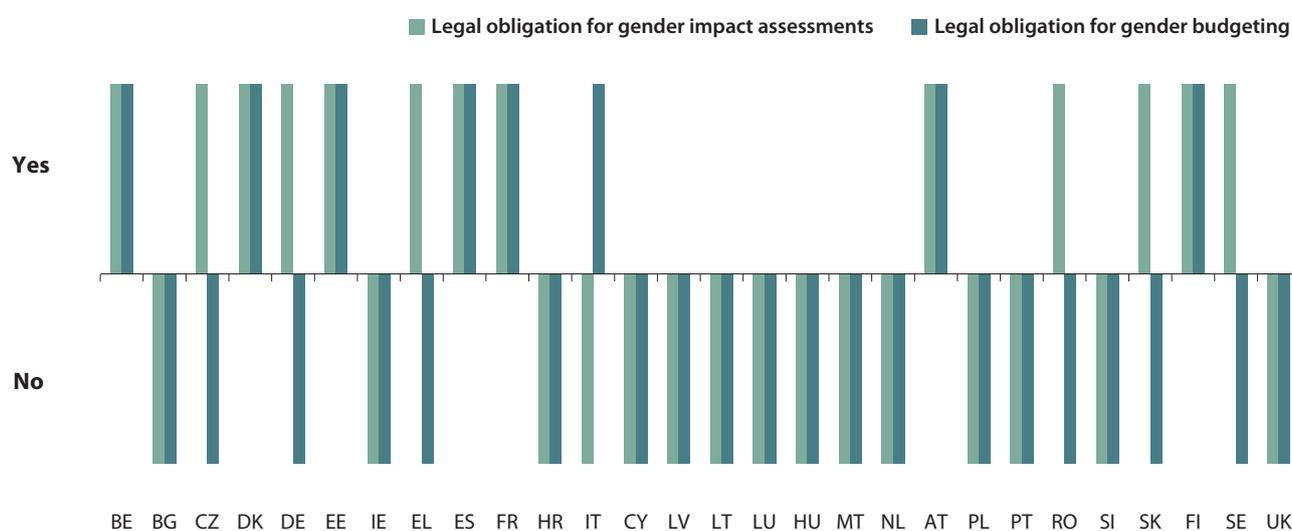
At the EU level, a very important recent development in terms of mechanisms for gender equality was the establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2006, and which has been operational since 2010 (European Parliament, 2006). EIGE is the only specialised EU agency to address gender equality and ensure gender mainstreaming. It is located in Vilnius (Lithuania)

and supports the EU Member States and the European institutions, in particular the European Commission, in their efforts to promote gender equality, fight sex-based discrimination and raise awareness about gender issues. Among its numerous tasks, EIGE is responsible for the collection and analysis of comparable data on gender issues; developing methodological tools, particularly for the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas; facilitating the exchange of best practices and dialogue among interested parties; and raising awareness among EU citizens.

Since it started its operations in 2010, EIGE played an important role in the monitoring and assessment exercise of the Beijing Platform for Action within the EU. Working with the support and advice of the governments of the countries holding the Presidencies of the Council — which since 2011 include Poland, Denmark, Cyprus, Ireland, Lithuania, Greece and Italy — together with the European Commission and the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, EIGE has assessed the developments in five areas of concern. Six technical reports to the presidency countries have been produced (two on Women and the Economy, Women and the Environment, Violence against Women, Women and the Media, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women). Throughout this process, EIGE has developed new indicators in four of these areas, and provided the basis for Council conclusions to adopt these for further monitoring.

EIGE has also developed and disseminated a database called Women and Men in EU: Facts and Figures<sup>(11)</sup> that presents all 12 areas of the BPfA, the indicators adopted so far by the Council of the European Union and the most recent data existing for these indicators.

**Figure 17** Legal obligations to use gender mainstreaming methods by Member State, 2013



Source: EIGE, *Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality*, 2014. Data were collected in January–April 2013.

In addition, EIGE has collected and distributed several good practices in the areas and objectives of the BPfA chosen by Presidency countries<sup>(112)</sup> to support the Member States in their efforts to develop the tools and methods for gender mainstreaming and to exchange practices and information about them that help in supporting and developing gender equality.

In 2013, EIGE launched the first Gender Equality Index (EIGE, 2013b)<sup>(113)</sup> for the European Union which measures the achievements realised in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. It also includes satellite accounts which focus on violence and intersecting inequalities. The first Gender Equality Index took the year 2010 as a benchmark, and will be available for 2005 and 2012 when its update is launched in June 2015.

### 2.8.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Increased legal and institutional commitment for gender mainstreaming

Nearly half (47%) of Member States have a legal commitment to implement gender mainstreaming (compared to 36 % in 2006) (EIGE, 2014a). All but three now have governmental structures for implementing gender mainstreaming (a positive trend). The majority of Member States have contact persons in all Ministries and more than half have interdepartmental coordination mechanisms/bodies to coordinate gender mainstreaming. In eight Member States,

gender budgeting became a legal obligation (BE, DK, EE, ES, FR, IT, AT, FI). However, gender impact assessment and gender budgeting are rarely carried out and not compulsory in most Member States.

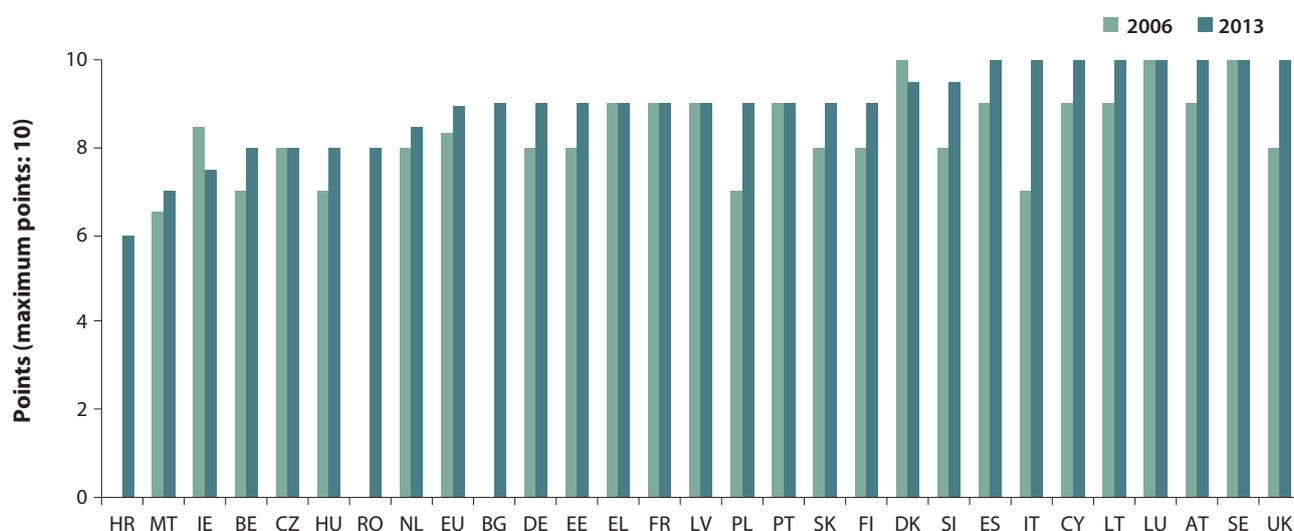
According to the BPfA, the implementation of gender mainstreaming requires: commitment of the government; structure of governmental bodies and officials responsible for gender mainstreaming; consultation with gender experts both within the government and with civil society; knowledge (training and awareness-raising) on how to implement gender mainstreaming; and the use of methods and tools<sup>(114)</sup>. When assessed as to how they performed, the top EU Member States were Finland and France (14 points), Spain and Sweden (13.5 points) and Austria (13 points). At the other side of the ranking were Ireland (2 points), Slovakia (3.5 points), Latvia (4 points) and Greece (4.5 points). All other EU Member States scored within the middle range of the scale (5-10 points).

#### More EU Member States show high levels of performance in promoting gender equality

Member States' commitment and responsibility for promoting gender equality depends upon:

- the level of responsibility at governmental level;
- the existence of a governmental body for promoting gender equality;

**Figure 18** Developments in governmental responsibility for promoting gender equality by Member State, 2006 and 2013



Source: EIGE, *Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality*, 2014a. Data were collected in January–April 2013.

Note: For 2006, data for BG, HR and RO were not available.



- the institutional level governmental body;
- the functions of this governmental body;
- the accountability of the government for the promotion of gender equality.

Based on the assessment of their performance according to set criteria, a Member State receives 10 points if the highest responsibility for promoting gender equality is vested in a cabinet minister; there is a permanent governmental gender equality body at the highest level in a ministry (or it forms an entire ministry); it has the main functions of 1) forming government policy, 2) reviewing legislation, drafting laws, 3) promoting the implementation of government decisions and 4) coordinating and/or developing gender mainstreaming; and the Member State has both an action plan for promoting gender equality and a system for reporting regularly to legislative bodies (EIGE, 2014a, Council of the EU, 2006b).

The report prepared by EIGE for the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council (EIGE, 2014a) compared the situation in the Member States in 2013 with the assessment carried out in 2006 by the Finnish Presidency. In this regard, the overall performance of some Member States was upgraded since 2005. In 2013, eight EU Member States (ES, CY, LT, LU, AT, SE, UK) scored the maximum amount (10 points), instead of only three Member States in 2006. Amongst other EU Member States, ten improved their situation (BE, DE, EE, HU, MT, NL, PL, SI, SK, FI), five remained at the same level (CZ, EL, FR, LV, PT) and two others (DK, IE) received a lower score than in 2006.

### **A legal requirement to produce sex-disaggregated statistics exists in almost all EU Member States**

Following the introduction of the new indicator in 2013, EIGE began the process of quantitatively measuring the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex. The score is given in a scale from one to six points, measuring performance against three criteria:

- government commitment in producing statistics disaggregated by sex;
- government commitment to disseminating these statistics;
- methods in use for the dissemination of gender statistics.

Four EU Member States (BG, ES, HR, HU) scored the top number of points (6). Another seven EU Member States are located one point below (5 points) (DE, EE, LV, AT, SK, SE, UK). Three EU Member States are on the lower side of the ranking (IE, LU with 1 point and IT with 1.5 points).

Some progress can be noted in the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex in the majority of EU Member States. Over half (57 %) of the Member States mostly met the requirement to produce and disseminate data, compared to 48 % in 2005. Only three EU Member States have no national legal obligation to produce sex-disaggregated statistics and seven have no obligation to make these statistics accessible to the public (EIGE, 2014a).

### **An independent body for the promotion of equal treatment between women and men exists in five EU Member States**

According to the Recast Directive 2006/54/EC, Member States should assign equality bodies with the duty of addressing discrimination based on sex. EIGE's report (2014a) shows that in most EU Member States, equal treatment between women and men has been included among the broad spectrum of different forms of discrimination and under the responsibility of the same institution.

In 2013, only five Member States (BE, ES, HR, PT, FI) still had a specialised anti-discrimination body working solely to promote equal treatment between women and men; this is half compared to 11 in 2006. The majority of Member States (BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, FR, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, SE, UK) addressed discrimination based on sex and equal opportunities between women and men together with several other grounds of discrimination, placed under an independent body designated to address and combat discrimination. This number captures the increasing trend in the Member States to have under a single body/institution the various grounds of discrimination, including sex-based discrimination and the promotion of equal treatment between women and men<sup>(15)</sup>. As the findings of the Lithuanian report show, the human and financial resources for combating discrimination based on sex are difficult to identify and the work carried out solely for equal opportunities between women and men lost among the vast areas and tasks the need to be covered.

In almost all EU Member States, the economic crisis has hit the public sector, which saw significant reductions in staff. However, there was a different impact on gender equality among Member States, and not all Member States showed a worsening position in the EU-28 ranking. The number of employees per population of the independent body or bodies<sup>(16)</sup> has grown since 2006 in five Member States (DK, EL, LV, PT, FI) and decreased in three Member States (CZ, CY, UK). Part of this growth can be explained by the broadening of the mandate of already existing bodies from the sole ground of sex to multiple grounds. For 19 Member States, the comparison between 2006 and 2013 was not possible due to lack of availability of information on number of personnel.

## 2.8.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

### Strengthening of gender equality mechanisms and implementing gender mainstreaming increasingly features on EU Member States' future agendas

EU Member States are committed to improving their gender equality mechanisms by advancing legislation and by including gender mainstreaming in public policy-making. Austria, where the legislative basis is strong, highlights that equal treatment laws shall have a specific and general preventative effect (UNECE, 2014a). Cyprus states that the enhancement of the National Machinery for Women's Rights and the appointment of a Gender Equality Commissioner is one of their milestones for administrative and institutional reform to enhance the effectiveness of the gender equality strategy, as well as effective coordination between Equality Bodies (UNECE, 2014e). A stated future objective for the Czech Republic is to reinforce the coherence and functioning of the institutional structures for enforcement of the gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming (concurrent with the transfer of the gender equality agenda to the Ministry for Human Rights). As part of this objective, gender equality will be defined as a cross-sectional priority across the public administration, and the role of the Council of the Government for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men will be strengthened in monitoring the implementation of the gender equality strategy (UNECE, 2014f). One of the priorities set forth in Spain's Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014–16 is the full implementation of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities in all governmental policies and actions, improving the instruments and mechanisms designed to mainstream the principle of equality in public policies (UNECE, 2014w).

In Malta, the Government has adopted the strategy of gender mainstreaming to develop a holistic approach towards gender equality that tackles the interconnected causes generating unequal relationships between women and men, girls and boys, in all areas of life. In 2012, following a series of discussions with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), the Office of the Prime Minister reaffirmed government policy on 'Gender Mainstreaming in Practice', formalising the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the business, policy, law-making and project/programme development and implementation processes of the public administration. Thus it was reiterated that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all public employees through the work carried out in each Ministry, Department and Entity, and each department/entity is required to submit a brief annual report to NCPE, on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the sphere of gender equality and

mainstreaming. To support this work, NCPE provides assistance via training and consultation to entities in the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

### Growing interest in and use of gender mainstreaming tools

The key development emerging in the EU Member States is the increased use of gender mainstreaming tools. Gender mainstreaming instruments and tools (gender budgeting, gender impact assessment, gender reporting, etc) were installed in the public administration through new legislative and administrative rules:

*Gender budgeting:* Since 2013, the Federal State, the Federal Provinces and the Municipalities in Austria have been required to apply gender budgeting in budget management (UNECE, 2014a). In Belgium, in 2010 the Council of Ministers adopted a circular on gender budgeting and a manual was published on the legislative and practical context. Since 2010, all French Ministries have adopted transversal policies to highlight the budgetary efforts made for the gender equality.

*Gender impact assessment:* In France, in 2012, gender equality aspects are included at the ex-ante impact assessment of legislative documents. The objective is to evaluate if the regulations may benefit one sex disproportionately in a direct or indirect way, or worsen the existing situation. Since 2013, the 'test gender' tool has been in place as a specific tool for gender equality in the ex-ante impact analysis of legislation and administrative rules to be submitted to the Council of Ministers (UNECE, 2014b). In Austria, the gender impact assessment focuses on the effects that ministry projects might have on the equality of women and men by analysing the impact in six areas: payments to natural or legal persons; employment, income, and education; unpaid work; public revenue; decision-making processes and bodies; it is also used in analysing the laws and it includes: problem analysis, objectives and measures, indicators and an assessment of the range of impacts (UNECE, 2014a). Ministries also have to undertake a gender equality assessment of legislative proposals in Denmark and Finland (UNECE, 2014g; UNECE, 2014i). In Spain, since the implementation of the legislation of an ex-ante impact assessment report of legislative and regulatory proposals (2009), a Methodological Guide on how to draw up those impact assessment reports have been developed (UNECE, 2014w).

*Gender reporting:* In some Member States new structures for reporting on gender equality have been put in place. Finland introduced the Government Report to the Parliament on Equality between Women and Men in 2010. Also, since 2012 ministries have been obliged to report annually on their gender mainstreaming efforts to the central gender equality structure, and the performance of ministries is monitored through annual reports, which provide a tool



for praise and/or 'naming-and-shaming' (UNECE, 2014i). In Germany, the Federal Government submitted its first Report on Gender Equality in 2011 (UNECE, 2014k) and is committed by decision of the German Parliament to draft such a report from now on once every election period. In Denmark, the Gender Minister is responsible for drawing up an action plan report for gender equality (UNECE, 2014g).

### **New institutional structures for gender equality**

The Member States' reports to the UNECE show a complex picture of the recent developments in the institutional mechanisms in charge of gender equality policies. While they describe an existing political will to reinforce and speed up substantive gender equality they also draw attention to the economic crisis that led to restructuring and cuts in public administrations and affected these institutions. Most of the changes concern the merging of gender equality policies with other priorities and remits, like policies addressing broader equalities groups, or merging action on gender equality with other public sector interventions (DK, EE, IE, ES, CY, HU, AT, PT, RO, SI). Most commonly, the responsibility for gender equality was merged with social affairs, human rights and citizenship or family policies.

New governmental bodies, with the role to consult and advise the government on issues of gender equality were established: the Gender Equality Committee was set up in the Danish Parliament in 2011; the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (the 'Government Council') was created in Slovakia in 2011; and the Gender Equality Council was created in Estonia in 2013.

Other changes in institutional structures encompassed changes in how the responsibility for gender equality is dealt with by the government. In France, a new advisory institutional mechanism was created in 2013, the High-level Council for equality between women and men, and a Minister for Women's Rights was appointed (UNECE, 2014j).

### **Fostering collaboration with NGOs boosts policy accountability**

The importance of women's organisations and non-governmental organisations working in the field of gender equality policies has been long recognised and reaffirmed, both internally and externally by the governments of the Member States. (DE, IE, NL, PT). More specifically, in Germany the government actively supports the German Women's Council, as well as a nationwide group of all associations of women migrants (UNECE, 2014k). In the Netherlands women's associations receive subsidies by the government for their consultative role in policy-making (UNECE, 2014x). In Portugal up to 40 NGOs may be represented in the Advisory Board of the (newly restructured) Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (UNECE, 2014s).

At the same time, strengthening gender equality mechanisms, including their allocated resources is a permanent focus of the work of networks of women's organisations and associations such as the European Women's Lobby (EWL, 2010a). One of its recent reports (EWL, 2012b) showed that the current economic downturn was associated with the closure of public gender equality institutions, mergers with other institutions or drastic funding cuts. This resulted in a loss of visibility and lack of focus on gender equality infrastructure, and could be considered as infringing on EU and international commitments to women's rights and gender equality.

## **2.9 Human Rights of Women (I)**

### **2.9.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators**

Gender equality is a prerequisite of the application and enjoyment of human rights and it is a fundamental principle that needs to be part of a human rights perspective. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action states that 'the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights [...] and that the human rights of women should form an integral part of the United Nations human rights activities, including the promotion of all human rights instruments relating to women.' (Provision 18, Vienna Declaration, United Nations, 1993). The human rights of women have been described and addressed in several international and European legal instruments that bind the Member States, who are state parties to the due diligence responsibility of implementation.

The BPfA defined three strategic objectives in the area of Human Rights of Women:

- I1. Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- I2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice;
- I3. Achieve legal literacy (i.e. empowerment of women regarding issues involving the law).

All EU Member States have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) <sup>(17)</sup> and this bound them legally to put the provisions of CEDAW into practice (Council of the EU,

2009b). Thus, EU Member States regularly submit national reports on the measures taken to comply with the treaty obligations to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) composed of 23 experts on women's rights from all around the world. The CEDAW Committee analyses these reports and issues specific recommendations for each country. These recommendations are to be followed up in the next country reporting session. In terms of reporting, the EU Member States are at different stages, from submitting their 8th and 9th report to the CEDAW Committee (FR, PT) to submitting their 3rd and 4th report (EE, LV, RO) <sup>(118)</sup>. They report on the implementation of each article of the Convention and provide further information to the CEDAW Committee after the evaluation of their reports. The CEDAW Committee, at the end of a longer process (around one year), issues concluding observations, that need to be taken into account and addressed within the next reporting session. Also, very relevant in this reporting process are the so-called shadow reports coming from civil society organisations which offer additional information and an alternative view to the one provided by the governments.

The articles of the CEDAW Convention follow to a great extent the objectives of the 12 areas of concern of the BPfA, thus offering a good and substantive overview of the national developments in legislation and policies in the area of gender equality. When it comes to the area of human rights of women, the reporting to the CEDAW Committee represents a useful source of information for the EU Member States, not least given that assessing the implementation of the CEDAW Convention is the first objective for this critical area of the BPfA.

In its annual report on equality between women and men <sup>(119)</sup>, the European Commission reports on its contribution to the spring session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the UN principal global policy-making body on gender equality and the advancement of women. Since the Beijing + 15 review, celebrated during the 54th meeting of the CSW in March 2010, the EU has continued to report on the subjects addressed during these sessions each year, under its section dedicated to external actions. It highlighted its common position on subjects such as: 'implementing the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls' (2014) <sup>(120)</sup>; 'the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls' (2013); 'the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, sustainable development and current challenges' (2012); and 'access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work' (2011). This EU international work and reporting has been complemented by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the EU and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Since April

2012, this MoU forms the basis of a partnership aimed at making progress towards achieving the key international commitments in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment (European Commission, 2014i). A big absence in the reporting process at EU level is the review of the area of human rights of women, which has yet to take place.

## 2.9.2 EU policy developments

Gender equality and human rights are core principles of the EU legislation reflected in the Treaties of the European Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000), several EU Directives (e.g. Directive 2006/54) and other legal instruments. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was signed in 2000 and became legally binding with the entering into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. The Charter strengthens the general legislative framework for human rights in the European Union. It establishes the principle of gender equality and prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including sex. Article 47 of the Charter guarantees all individuals the right to effective remedial measures and to a fair trial. Access to justice is a fundamental value of the European Union, considered as a key aspect of the protection of human rights and an essential instrument to ensure the rule of law. At the same time, the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (2009) states that: 'The Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women' (Article 8, TFEU) and '[...] to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation when defining and implementing its policies and activities' (Article 10, TFEU). The Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 <sup>(121)</sup> encourages Member States to take the different needs of women (including older women, lone parents, women with a disability, migrant women and women from ethnic minorities) into account within legislation and policies.

Aside from discrimination, policy also focuses on gender-based violence as a violation of human rights. The Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 also places a specific emphasis on the idea that violence against women is a violation of women's human rights. The European Pact for equality between women and men (2011–20), adopted by the Council of the European Union in March 2011, stresses this connection and calls on Member States to take the necessary steps to tackle discriminations in different areas of social life (Council of the EU, 2011a).

Since the last review BPfA+15, the human rights of women have been addressed in several EU policy documents and working documents. These new instruments have strengthened the EU legislative framework for women's rights. This section mentions those that have a broader coverage, while more specific ones are presented within their specific thematic area.



Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (or 'Recast Directive') was adopted with the aim to protect under the same instrument several aspects of equality policy. From 15 August 2009 onwards, the former Directives on equal pay for men and women (75/117); equal treatment of men and women in employment (76/207 as amended by Directive 2002/73); equal treatment of men and women in occupational social security schemes (86/378, as amended by Directive 96/97) and the Directive on the burden of proof (97/80) are now included under a single one, the Recast Directive <sup>(122)</sup>. The Recast Directive does not only compile pre-existing ones, but also introduces some new concepts (European Commission, 2009f). Its objective is to increase clarity, modernise and simplify the provisions of some Directives on equal treatment and pay between men and women, in order to make gender equality law more accessible for a broader public.

In 2011, the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force after the EU signed the Convention in 2007. It is the only international human rights instrument that the EU has ratified. The European Commission developed the European Disability Strategy 2010–20 and established a network of experts to report and monitor the implementation of the Convention and the Strategy (Academic Network of European Disability Experts). Reporting on the situation of women and girls with disabilities has been carried out either in specific reports and within other thematic reports focused on issues of people with disabilities <sup>(123)</sup>.

In 2011, the European Commission adopted a Communication encouraging the development of national strategies for Roma integration. (Communication on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020 — COM(2011) 173 final). Each country produced a Roma strategy or a set of integrated policy measures that were assessed by the European Commission in a Communication adopted in 2012 (National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework). The European Council adopted a recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States on 9 December 2013 (Council of EU, 2011d) <sup>(124)</sup>.

In relation to gender-based violence, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a directive aiming at reinforcing the rights of victims of crime (Directive 2012/29/EU; European Parliament, 2012b), which under Recitals 17 and 18 introduce the concepts of 'gender-based violence' <sup>(125)</sup> and 'violence in a close relationship' <sup>(126)</sup>. The Directive is to be implemented at national level by the end of 2015 (more on the Directive in area D on Violence against Women in this report).

### 2.9.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### **Legislation on anti-discrimination that is difficult to transpose and implement**

The principle of equality between women and men and the right to non-discrimination based on sex is present in the fundamental laws of all EU Member States (e.g. the Constitution) and in specific laws addressing gender equality or equality between women and men.

The implementation of the EU Directives in the area of gender equality is monitored by the Network of Legal Experts of the European Commission, through their analyses, reports and case studies. Some identified limitations include legal transposition and practical implementation. For example, implementation is hampered by the largely gender-neutral approach adopted by legislation, where it is assumed that consequences are the same for women and men a (Verloo, 2007) and by the prevalence of stereotypes within legal and judicial institutions in the Member States.

#### **Structural and institutional barriers for women accessing justice**

Women face specific structural and institutional barriers in accessing justice. These difficulties might be linked to the costs of judicial proceeding and can include legal fees; transportation to courts, accommodation, childcare provisions during the trials, work absence during lengthy judicial proceedings. Understanding structural gender differences in terms of resources and caring obligations are thus important in the context of access to justice (Council of Europe, 2013; UN CEDAW, 2013e).

Stereotypes and unequal representation in the judiciary and the police can have an impact on the quality of services received by women and men, or whether there will be an initial contact in the first place. For example, gender bias in courts can be introduced by traditional attitudes and beliefs connected to gender stereotypes (Spanish Observatory against Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, 2013). This is presented as the reason why, in all Member States, only a small number of cases end in a conviction and high levels of attrition are registered (EWL, 2011b; Council of Europe, 2013).

Court and police officers may lack understanding about the roots and cycle of violence against women (Council of Europe, 2013). Indeed, when investigating and gathering evidence for a prosecution, insufficient coordination between judicial and criminal institutions may require women survivors of violence to re-explain their statements and re-experience medical examinations. Many women might be discouraged from pursuing convictions due to the long judicial proceedings and this secondary victimisation. Victimisation itself takes place at many different levels, from initial contact with the police for example, and ultimately

at a more general level within society itself, thereby permeating the entire system.

Developing data and research at both national and European levels would help to identify and better assess the obstacles to women's access to justice, possibly by building upon the work already conducted by several European and international institutions (Council of Europe; the CEDAW Committee) <sup>(127)</sup>

### **Intersectional discrimination is difficult to assess, particularly where sex is used as a discrimination ground**

It is difficult to address intersectional discrimination as it is a complex concept that is difficult to define, and which is implemented differently within the legal systems of the EU Member States. In line with the requirement of the EU and national legislation, to assess if a person has been discriminated against, it is necessary to identify an identical case that acts as a reference case, under the principle of comparability. This principle makes finding a suitable comparison difficult and limits the scope of the application of the principle of non-discrimination in practice. (European Commission, 2009b; European Commission, 2007).

Gender is a cross-cutting issue as women and men are part of all groups and are affected by all forms of discrimination. However, the recent monitoring of the cases of discrimination in the Member States <sup>(128)</sup> showed that gender and sex are the least used ground for discrimination cases; and that when it is considered along other grounds, it is often dismissed giving more importance to other grounds of discrimination.

### **Women from different groups face different challenges when exercising their rights**

Women are not a homogeneous group and women in the European Union do not face the same challenges in accessing or claiming their rights. Certain legal, institutional, structural, socioeconomic and cultural factors hinder women's enjoyment of their human rights. Women across a range of groups face particular barriers to justice, such as exclusion from the legal system, low propensity to seek justice due to fear, lack of awareness of their rights, inadequate counsel and discriminatory attitudes from civil legal and judicial servants.

*Migrants (including refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented women)*

In most Member States, the right to temporary residence is granted upon the proof of a regular work contract. Since many migrant women work in non-regulated sectors and the informal economy, they cannot demonstrate continuous employment (European Commission, 2008c). At the same

time, the (largely gender-blind) laws on residence and employment rights in several Member States are still linked to family status, and thus have a different impact on women and men. For example, women who have entered the country as the 'spouse of a man worker' depend on the continuity of their relationship to be entitled to remain in that country (European Network of Migrant Women and EWL, 2012a). This is particularly problematic in the case of gender-based violence where victims find it even more difficult to report an incident or break free <sup>(129)</sup>. Undocumented migrant women face even greater difficulties in accessing justice. As victims of crimes, they might not access justice for fear of being criminalised (FRA, 2011) <sup>(130)</sup>. This is particularly the case for victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution.

#### *Women from a minority group*

Women from minority groups (whether ethnic, linguistic or religious) also face difficulties in accessing their rights. In general, women from ethnic minorities are most at risk of poverty and of social exclusion. This is partly due to poorer access to education, which results in less access to employment and healthcare systems, as well as judicial and legal instruments (European Commission, 2008c) <sup>(131)</sup>. There are difficulties and barriers that women from ethnic minorities face in accessing the labour market and the social policies of the Member States do not address them. This is a particularly important issue, since in most of EU Member States, benefits and pensions depend on individual participation in the labour market.

#### *Roma Women*

The Roma population represents Europe's largest group of individuals from an ethnic minority with an estimated size of six million in the EU. The term 'Roma' population is commonly used at policy level but masks the diversity of groups it can cover. Roma women experience some of the most pronounced forms of marginalisation and discrimination (European Commission, 2008c). Roma women face multiple discriminations, inside and outside their community. The strong patriarchal family structure in Roma communities restrains women in the domestic sphere and discourages them from pursuing higher education and from looking for employment outside the home. These inequalities are strengthened by the specific discriminations that Roma women suffer in society in general.

The 2010 survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in the 11 EU Member States where the majority of Roma population currently live (BG, CZ, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, PL, PT, RO, SK) found out that Roma women are more at risk of exclusion compared to Roma men in education, health, employment and housing access. Regarding their experience of discrimination and their rights awareness, Roma women are more likely to ignore their rights and the legal mechanisms in place to enable them to access



justice (FRA, 2013a). The survey collected information on Roma's socio-economic conditions, their experiences of discrimination and their rights awareness.

#### *Women with disabilities*

Women with disabilities also experience specific discriminations. According to the European Parliament Report on Women with Disabilities, 46 million women and girls in the European Union, who make up 16 % of the total women population of the EU, live with disabilities (European Parliament, 2013b). Besides discrimination in their access to employment, social services and education, women and girls with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence, particularly domestic and sexual exploitation. The report refers to estimates that show that 'women with disabilities are between one and half and 10 times more likely to be abused than non-disabled women' (European Parliament, 2013b). Also, in Germany, the study on the life situations of and pressures on disabled women provides representative data on the discrimination and violence experienced by disabled women. The results show the level and forms of violence, discrimination and structural violence of which disabled women are victims (BMFSFJ, 2013).

#### *Lesbian or bisexual women and transgender people*

According to the Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA), European Union Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Survey (FRA, 2013b), lesbian and bisexual women, as well as transgender people, are more likely to report being discriminated against on the basis of their gender than gay and bisexual men. Women were also more numerous to have experienced a sexual attack on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity than men.

#### *Older women*

Older women (over 65 years) still face specific and considerable discrimination, especially in regard to their access to employment (EIGE, 2013b) or when claiming reparation, in accessing courts and police stations. They may also not be aware of the services to which they are entitled, and experience more difficulties in recognising themselves as victims.

### 2.9.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE

#### **Restrictive legislation curbs women's access to reproductive rights**

The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recognises that sexual and

reproductive rights are human rights and that women (and girls) should be entitled to the right to dispose of their body in the conditions of their own choice.

Member States differ in their approaches towards sexual and reproductive health and rights, and especially when it comes to the issues of contraception and legal abortion. Several Member States adopted legislative measures that limit women's reproductive rights, including limited delivery options or restricted access to safe and legal abortions. Access to contraception also became more restricted in some Member States as women need to pay for contraception — it is not supported by public health insurances (BG, LT, AT, PL, SK) or, in several cases, doctors refuse to issue emergency contraception, or require women to go to hospital following the ingestion of the abortion-inducing pill <sup>(132)</sup> (IT, CY, LT, NL). Cyprus is short of safe or legal abortion services and the law places the decision about termination of pregnancy with the medical doctors and not with the woman (Cyprian Joint NGO Submission, 2013, Article 12). A specific case is the Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom, where abortion is still prohibited, unless the pregnancy poses a risk to the life of the woman or to her physical or mental health (long-term or permanent).

Respect for women's human rights and equal treatment has been a part of the activities of several human rights organisations within Member States and across the EU. The Estonian Human Rights Centre runs the project 'Equal Treatment Network' during 2012–15 which seeks to promote equal treatment and to improve the protection against discrimination through networking and cooperation between civil society organisations and strategic advocacy. The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) published a new form of a Status Report aiming to present the essential issues of human rights in Denmark. The themes prioritised in the DIHR Status report for 2013 focused on gender equality in Denmark. Moreover, the Department for Equal Treatment of the DIHR works on the development of methods for the promotion of equal treatment and non-discrimination, some of the toolboxes that have been developed in this field are the 'Diversity Wheel', 'The Diversity Lab (for the private sector)' and 'The Equality Lab' (for municipalities).

## 2.10 Women and the Media (J)

### 2.10.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators

The media (print, broadcast, social media or other forms) plays a vital role in shaping the opinions, beliefs and prejudices of those who consume it. Women are producers and consumers of media, and form part of media content itself. Media

content is not always 'gender-sensitive'; and has the potential to portray degrading images of women and to perpetuate stereotypes in relation to women's and men's roles.

The relationship between women's roles in media and the way producers, consumers and content relate has become increasingly complex due to digital technology and new forms of communication. Traditional forms of media are being consumed differently, including using new means to act on public feedback.

The BPFa defined two strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and the Media:

- J1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
- J2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

In June 2013, when the Council of the EU recognised the importance of the media sector in promoting and supporting women in decision-making (Council of the EU, 2013b), it was the first time that the EU had selected indicators to be proposed for this area. The three accepted indicators cover the share of women and men in decision-making posts and boards (Indicators 1-2) and policies to promote gender equality in media organisations (Indicator 3).

In the summer of 2012, comparable EU-wide data were collected in all EU Member States — 27 Member States plus Croatia which was not yet in the EU — looking at women's representation in decision-making within public and private media organisations (EIGE, 2013a). The research, however, did not explore the much more complex aspects of how the participation of women in positions of editorial control affects the gender sensitivity of media content.

Starting in August 2014, the European Commission's Database on women and men in decision-making includes data on the representation of women and men in the decision-making bodies of public service broadcasters and of the independent regulatory authorities overseeing media activities at national level in all 28 EU Member States<sup>(133)</sup>, collected in 2012 and published by the European Institute for Gender Equality.

## 2.10.2 EU policy developments

Women's employment and career development in the media sector has been the subject of research and concern within the EU for some time, nevertheless, the number of EU-wide policy acts and documents to address them is relatively low. Recent initiatives to challenge discrimination and gender stereotypes include the report of the FEMM

Committee of the European Parliament on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU (European Parliament, 2012i); the Opinion on Breaking gender stereotypes in the media of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the European Commission (Advisory Committee, 2010); and not least, the Directive 2010/13/EC also known as the Audio-visual Media Services Directive which banned incitement to hatred on the grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality (European Parliament, 2010a). Article 6 of the Directive states that 'Member States shall ensure by appropriate means that audiovisual media services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction do not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality'. (Article 6, Directive 2010/13/EC).

The Council conclusions from June 2013 mark a significant development in this area. The Council calls for further voluntary initiatives to be undertaken by media organisations, in order to advance gender equality (Council of the EU, 2013b). Its suggestions include recruitment practices based on 'clear, transparent, neutrally formulated' criteria and 'employee-centred organisational culture'; policies that allow for a better balance of work and family responsibilities; and gender-sensitive management. The emphasis on self-regulation is a reflection of the attempt to balance the principles of gender equality and freedom of the press.

Examples of useful approaches to equal opportunities for women and men in media employment have been identified in EU-wide research (EIGE, 2013a), and there is a growing social dialogue in the EU, which supports improvement in the situation of women media professionals. In 2011, the EU Audio-visual Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, part of the European Economic and Social Committee, adopted a Framework of Actions on Gender Equality (AVSDC, 2011). Together with the Framework for Action, the Committee published a 'toolkit' on good practices and suggested actions around gender equality in audiovisual media bodies, which social partner organisations agreed to implement within their membership. In addition, both European and global unions of professional journalists have developed guidance and pursued initiatives in favour of women's career development in the media industry, including monitoring the positions of women and men and work in favour of flexible working and equal pay<sup>(134)</sup>.

## 2.10.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

### Women are under-represented in the management of media organisations

Over the course of two decades, women's employment in the media sector has increased, reaching nearly half (44 %) of the employment force of the media sector by 2011. At EU level, women represented the largest group (68 %) of graduates in journalism and information courses<sup>(135)</sup> in 2011.



Women's progress in entering media professions can be traced in both national and EU-wide studies (EIGE, 2013a).

At the same time, women in media organisations occupy positions which exert limited influence on strategy and content. EU-wide, there are few women in decision-making positions in media organisations, reaching only 32 % of these top positions. The 'glass ceiling' effect is demonstrated by the share of women decreasing as the seniority of the position increases: women accounted for 21 % of EU Chief Operating Officers and 16 % of Chief Executive Officers. In 2012, fifteen Member States had no media organisations with women Chief Executives or Chief Operating Officers (CZ, DK, EE, IE, EL, ES, CY, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, SK, FI) (EIGE, 2013a). The pool of jobs at this level is relatively small but the lack of women's presence is a cause for concern, given that these roles are typically those with the most influence on media strategy and content.

The level of participation of women in management jobs in the media sector varies among Member States and some Member States have relatively strong representation of women in some of the top positions. In 2012, the share of women reached or exceeded 40 % of managers responsible for key operational units (for example, the Head of News, the Head of Sport) in ten Member States (BG, EE, HR, CY, LV, LT, RO, SI, FI, SE), and reached or exceeded 40 % of senior operational managers (for example, those on Management teams) in nine Member States (BG, DK, DE, LV, LU, RO, SI, SK, SE). In Bulgaria, women's representation was either at full balance or even higher than the proportion of men at all levels of management.

There are differences between private and public media organisations: whilst overall in 2012 women made up 35 % of the management positions of public media bodies, the figure was 29 % for private media organisations. The 'glass ceiling' effect at the highest level of management was clearly visible in the private sector: in private media organisations women held 12 % of CEO positions and 18 % of chief senior operational manager positions, below the level for public media organisations (22 % and 26 % respectively) <sup>(136)</sup>. This may be the result of a stronger obligation of the public sector to implement equality and diversity strategies.

To an extent, this public/private distinction is reflected in the gender representation within different media formats. Considering all levels of decision-making (levels 1-4), newspapers had a slightly worse gender balance (29 % women in these positions) than TV or radio (EIGE, 2013a). Similarly, women occupied only 23 % of such positions on the boards for newspapers in 2012, against 27 % for those in radio (normally public) and 28 % of those in TV and radio combined (normally public) (EIGE, 2013a). These small differences are therefore somewhat linked to the fact that most newspapers are funded privately.

### **Women are under-represented on the boards of media organisations in the EU**

Women's representation on the boards of EU media organisations stood at 26 % in 2012, slightly below the figure for representation in the top management positions (33 %). On average, 29 % of the members of public media boards were women, compared to 22 % in the boards of private media organisations. Women made up 40 % and over of those on public media boards in eight of the EU-28 Member States and of those on private media boards in six of the EU-28 Member States. Seven EU-28 Member States had a strong under-representation of women amongst board members (under one in ten) in the private media sector (BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, HU, NL), and two were below this level in the public sector (CZ, HU) (EIGE, 2013a). These differences translate into women's representation within different media content.

Women have made slightly better progress on the boards of organisations that regulate the media. Overall, women held 31 % of the board places in regulatory bodies in 2012, and had reached or exceeded 40 % in 12 Member States (BE, BG, DK, IE, ES, CY, HU, NL, AT, PT, FI, UK).

### **Widespread horizontal and vertical gender segregation within media organisations**

The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) published a large-scale comparative study in 2011, which provided further details about the status of women journalists, including information on women and men's positions; salaries; recruitment processes; and other workplace practices (IWMF, 2011). At international level, the under-representation of women journalists in certain fields is significant, for example in governance, production and design, and technical positions (IWMF, 2011). At the same time, this under-representation is in contrast to women's over-representation in other media fields. In several Member States, women were over-represented in sales, finance and/or administration (DE, ES, FR, UK) (IWMF, 2011). The patterns could reflect the way women and men journalists are trained and recruited (Delano, 2003) <sup>(137)</sup>. Another example of gender segregation in the media is the generally higher prestige accorded to media where men dominate, such as newspaper broadsheets, compared to magazines, where women are more strongly represented.

Employment patterns in Member States highlight that occupations within the media sector are also prone to gender segregation. Gender segregation within media jobs, such as the high concentration of women in junior/mid-level jobs rather than in management positions, has enhanced the gender pay gap. There are also differences in some EU Member States between working patterns and the job security of women and men journalists. In France, for example, women are much more likely to be working part-time (IWMF, 2011).

The relatively low share of women in decision-making positions may help to explain other negative aspects of their career development in the media industry. Some national studies have found that they have a low level of influence on media content <sup>(138)</sup> and that, even when directly producing media content, they may be restricted to covering certain issues (Women in Journalism, 2012, Twardowska and Olczyk, 2003) <sup>(139)</sup>.

### Policies and measures can strengthen gender equality within media organisations

The reasons for women's concentration in lower positions of authority in organisations are complex — not only for the media but also for the political, economic and other spheres (see critical area G) <sup>(140)</sup>. In the media, some have attributed gender segregation to the persistence of out-dated working practices, such as rigid work timetables; informal 'old boy' networks of advancement; unaccommodating return-to-work policies after childbirth; and a masculine-dominated organisational culture (de Bruin and Ross, 2004). More recently, when interviewed, women working in senior media positions pointed to a lack of transparency in recruitment and promotion processes, which damaged women's chances of reaching the top.

In 2012 only a small minority of media organisations — 36 % — had policies on gender equality and equal opportunities, or practical measures to advance gender equality such as establishing equality policies and monitoring mechanism (EIGE, 2013a). A quarter (26 %) had a gender equality policy or code of conduct, and a fifth (21 %) had adopted an equal opportunities and diversity policy <sup>(141)</sup>. Differences in

the prevalence of gender equality policies are particularly apparent between public and private media bodies. The number of public media organisations that approved a gender equality policy or code of conduct is twice as large (38 %) as their private counterparts (17 %) and for equal opportunities and diversity policies the proportions were 24 % versus 19 % (EIGE, 2013a).

Few media organisations have mechanisms in place to implement and monitor commitments on gender equality (in 2012 some 16 % had a committee in place responsible for equality policy issues; 14 % had an officer in charge of equality and diversity; and 9 % had a department for this purpose (EIGE, 2013a). Public sector organisations were nearly twice as likely to have a committee responsible for equality issues; three times as likely to have an Equality and Diversity Officer; and over twice as likely to have a Department overseeing equality and diversity (EIGE, 2013a) <sup>(142)</sup>.

Both public and private media organisations in the EU are slightly less likely to have adopted practical measures to advance gender equality (33 %) than to have adopted general gender equality codes of conduct and monitoring mechanisms (36 %). In descending order, the proportions reporting where more 'practical steps' had been taken were: sexual harassment policy — 23 %; dignity at work policy — 18 %; maternity leave policy — 17 %; paternity leave policy — 16 %; equality awareness training for staff — 8 %; leadership training for women — 6 %; harassment advisors — 4 %; and trainee positions for women <sup>(143)</sup>. The measures appear to be strongly linked with a greater share of women in strategic decision-making positions (level 1) and on media boards (Figure 19).

**Figure 19** Percentages of women in strategic decision-making positions (L1) and on the boards of media organisations when different gender equality policies are in place or not, 2012



Source: EIGE, *Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations*, 2013. Data were collected in July–September 2012.



The existence of any of these measures made women nearly three times as likely to be acting as CEOs or in another strategic (level 1) position<sup>(144)</sup>. In general, interviewees for EIGE's research agreed that gender equality policies and practices could have a positive impact on sparking a broad cultural shift, even if they disagreed over the precise measures (EIGE, 2013a).

### **In cooperation with governments, NGOs and social partners work towards advancing women to top positions in the media**

Social partner and civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, have been active in supporting women's progress in employment including in the media. Many media unions have officers or councils on equality issues or women's issues in particular (DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, IT, HU, AT, FI, UK)<sup>(145)</sup>. There are also unions specifically for women media professionals, such as the Romanian Women Journalists' Association and the UK's Women in Film and Television. The association from the UK offers a range of gender equality training courses<sup>(146)</sup>, and runs a mentoring scheme for British women working in the creative media since 2011<sup>(147)</sup>. In addition, there is a range of other civil society organisations working around women and the media. The Spanish Coordination of European Women's Lobby has created a directory of women journalists who write on gender equality issues<sup>(148)</sup>. Furthermore, the 'zero violence against women' information project in Italy coordinates a daily review of how the topics on women and gender equality are covered by the Italian press<sup>(149)</sup>. The European Women's Lobby monitors policies on women and the media, engages in training for journalists and plays a role in collecting European-wide data on gender stereotypes, sexism and violence in the media (EWL, 2010b).

## **2.10.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

### **EU Member States promote a balanced and non-stereotypical representation of women in the media**

In their reports to UNECE, most Member States discuss the persistent challenges in encouraging the media to portray women in a 'balanced and non-stereotypical' way (Objective 2 of the Beijing Platform). The National Gender Equality Strategies of several Member States that address this critical area are mostly focused on the media content (the basis of Objective 2), and less on participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication (Objective 1). Several of the national policy strategies on gender equality

include specific measures to promote media content that is 'gender-sensitive' or that boosts awareness of women's rights and issues (ES, HR, CY, LT, AT, RO, SI, FI).

Croatia's National Policy for Gender Equality 2011–15 aims at combating gender stereotypes and 'obliges the media, above all HRT [Croatian Radio and Television], to provide media space for broadcasting gender-sensitive content and inform the public about the obligation to introduce gender-sensitive policies in all areas of social life [...] (UNECE, 2014d).

In Belgium, collaboration has been established between the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men and the Jury of Advertising Ethics with the objective of strengthening the inclusion of the gender dimension in the processing of complaints about sexism in advertising (UNECE, 2014b). Actions addressing the media are currently in place as part of national actions plans in other Member States also (CY, PT, FI), although in other cases Member States discuss the need to tackle gender stereotypes, although mostly in general terms (LT, RO).

Generally, actions to improve women's access and participation in media decision-making and to promote a 'balanced and non-stereotypical' portrayal of women are based on collaboration and encouraging voluntary actions on the part of media organisations, as opposed to statutory measures to mandate the presence of senior positions or to enforce specific media content. For example, in Greece, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality has worked with media bodies in advertising and communication, as well as the Greek National Council for Radio and Television. Through such cooperation, it aims to 'control the dissemination of gender stereotypes through advertising, etc' (UNECE, 2014l).

Other persistent challenges faced by the Member States in addressing Women and the Media come from the current understanding of 'the media' which may not be broad enough to adapt to the recent developments. Many Member States discuss the role of 'traditional' media (TV, newspaper, radio) and advertising, but only Spain appears to have tackled more substantially the role of online and electronic media in influencing gender equality (it has adopted two Plans of Action for the equality of women and men in the Information Society (December 2009, September 2014). This is extremely relevant and important as 'new technologies of communication' are the basis of both Action Plans.

### **Awareness-raising initiatives and journalist trainings facilitate a more balanced representation of women and men**

Generally, the main approaches encouraging 'balanced and non-stereotypical' representation of women in media content are awareness-raising initiatives for both media professionals and the general public. Poland and Croatia

report holding round tables with media representatives to discuss these issues and to encourage more positive and diverse images (such as the ‘Entrepreneurial Woman’ series in Poland); Austria, Portugal and Slovenia discuss the media award schemes to reward gender-sensitive advertising and non-stereotypical portrayals of women in ‘media products’. In the Czech Republic, an NGO took a reverse approach, by hosting the ‘Sexist Piggy’ competition to shame the most sexist national advert of the year.

Related to the above, some Member States report trainings for media representatives, either carried out by the government or by the NGOs. For example, Croatia’s Office of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality ran joint training courses for the employees of a key public broadcaster (HRT), in collaboration with the HRT Educational Centre and the HRT Academy. These covered ‘Aspects of Gender Equality in Programmes on HRT’ and ‘What HRT can do as a Public Service...’ (UNECE, 2014d). Similar sensitisation exercises have been pursued in Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain. Many Member States report having general governance codes that ban discrimination and hatred in media content. Since 2009, legal changes and the development of new institutional mechanisms are relatively rare, when it comes to content monitoring, except for Austria that reported that the Austrian Advertising Council established an anti-sexism board in 2011, as well as noting the Amendment to Federation Act on the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation in 2010.

### **Women’s NGOs in partnership with social partners promote gender equality in the media sector**

Several EU Member States (CZ, DK, EE, ES, HR, CY, NL, IT, RO, SK) indicate that NGOs and social partners are engaged in monitoring how women are portrayed in various media channels; supporting women in the sector; leading or contributing to general research on women and the media. In 2012, the Estonian Women’s Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) analysed how women entrepreneurs were depicted in business newspapers (UNECE, 2014h). The Woman’s Institute in Spain has undertaken extensive research to monitor adverts for sexist and discriminatory context and to enter into voluntary agreements with large-scale media organisations, in order to encourage them to promote a non-discriminatory and positive image of women, as well as offering relevant training actions. In 2009 and 2010, the Institute concluded agreements with the Spanish (Public) Radio and Television Corporation (RTVE) on the programmes that demonstrate women’s participation and contribution in diverse social fields. Other cooperation initiatives in 2013 and 2014 included training courses on gender equality for journalists and the broadcasting of gender equality news (UNECE, 2014w).

## **2.11 Women and the Environment (K)**

### **2.11.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators**

A global consensus to address environmental issues, particularly around climate change and its risks is gradually increasing with focus on resource insecurity, climatic uncertainty, social dislocation and high economic cost. Awareness that women and men are affected differently by these issues, and that gender inequalities undermine women’s ability to respond to these threats is growing, strengthened by signs that women and men have different habits of consumption when it comes to transport <sup>(150)</sup>; diet <sup>(151)</sup>; purchases; etc. They do not always agree on the best solutions to climate change (Schultz and Stuess, 2009, p. 20; Naturvårdsverket, 2009, p. 15; Röhr and Hemmati, 2008a, p. 798). Gender inequalities may also make women the frontline victims of natural disasters in the EU (Nogueira, Falcão, Contreiras, Paixão, Brandão and Batista, 2005; Pirard, Vandentorren, Pascal, Laaidi, Le Tertre, Cassadou and Ledrans, 2005) <sup>(152)</sup>.

The BPfA defined three strategic objectives in the critical area of Women and the Environment:

- K1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels;
- K2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development;
- K3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The first four indicators in this critical area of concern were developed recently, in the autumn of 2012, upon the initiative of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The report prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality presented the data for these indicators and formed the basis of Council conclusions from December 2012 which took note of these indicators (Council of the EU, 2012b). Given the importance of key environmental issues to women’s situation, these indicators focus on the level of influence women hold in important climate change decision-making arenas (especially climate change mitigation). They cover the proportion of women and men in climate change



decision-making bodies at the national level in the EU Member States, within the European Parliament and the Commission, and at international level (Indicators 1-3). Indicator 4 addresses the proportion of women and men in the fields of natural science and technologies and considers the degree of gender segregation within fields of study relating to the environment.

The second and third strategic objectives of the BPfA are not yet covered by indicators. These objectives call for a better integration of the gender perspective into environmental policies and programmes, which is still an aspect that needs to be addressed within the EU environmental and climate change policies.

Since 2013, data for the first three indicators are also available in the European Commission Database on women and men in decision-making (Environment section).

## 2.11.2 EU policy developments

The EU has been actively mitigating the effects of climate change, with a series of policy measures on energy efficiency<sup>(153)</sup>; sustainable transport<sup>(154)</sup>; and carbon capture and storage<sup>(155)</sup>. Amongst the industrialised nations, the EU has also taken a pioneering role in international conventions on climate change.

During the last five years the European Parliament has been actively promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in environmental decisions. In 2012, it debated and approved a report on Women and Climate Change, calling on the Commission and Council to 'ensure that climate action does not increase gender inequalities but results in co-benefits to the situation of women, to mainstream and integrate gender in every step of climate policies, from conception to financing, implementation and evaluation' (European Parliament, 2012d, p. 4). Furthermore, the Parliament has released a number of resolutions in this area. In 2012, it considered the move towards the 'green economy' and encouraged the Commission and Member States to research how this transition might impact women and men. It also called for research on 'women's essential role in facilitating this transition'<sup>(156)</sup>.

The European Commission places energy and transport<sup>(157)</sup> among the priority areas of its EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change (COM2013/0216 final), but analyses of gender differences in these areas are very limited<sup>(158)</sup>. In general, the EU climate policy or relevant programmes would benefit from further research facilitating understanding of the complex relationship between women, men and the environment that would help defining adequate targets for EU climate policies and programmes.

## 2.11.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

### Slow progress in involving women in environmental decision-making

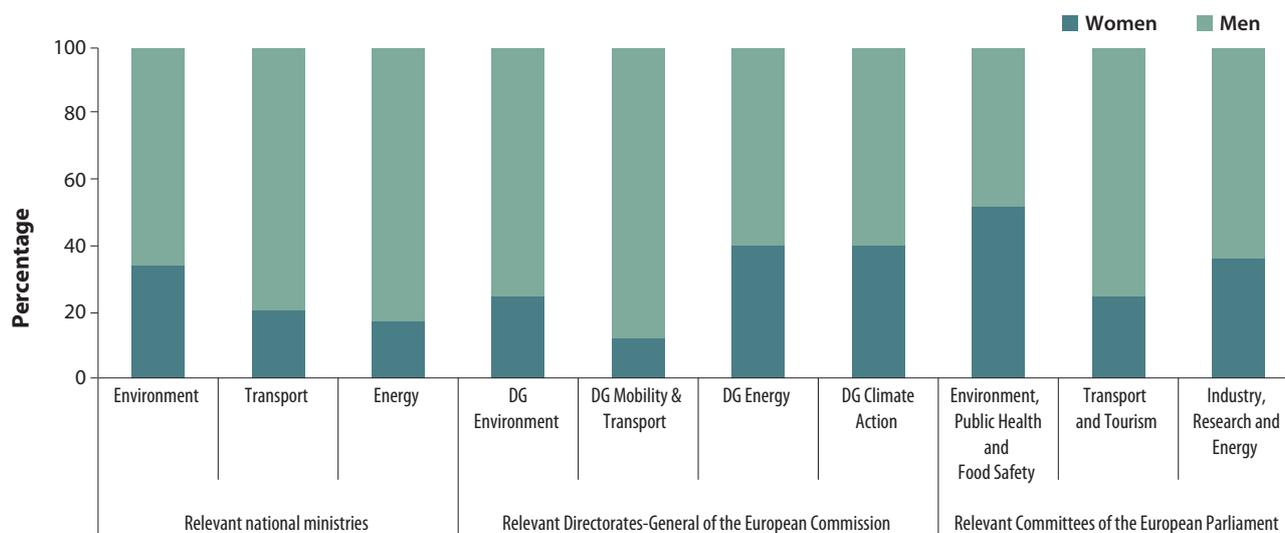
The EU has its own distinct patterns of production, consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For instance, whilst the greatest cause of GHG emissions across the world is deforestation, the European Commission concluded that — for the EU — the biggest emissions in 2011 were caused by energy (33 % for supply; 27 % for use) and transport (20 %) <sup>(159)</sup>. In line with recognised gendered patterns of energy consumption and transport use of the private agents, incorporation of a gender perspective into the climate policies is very important.

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 ('gender mainstreaming').

Currently <sup>(160)</sup>, men make up majority of decision-makers in the EU in this area and dominate the top levels of the national ministries that deal with climate change <sup>(161)</sup>. Overall, in 2013, women represented 19 % of senior ministers and 34 % of the top administrators (levels 1 and 2) in Environment, Energy and Transport Ministries in the EU <sup>(162)</sup>. In 2013, within the climate-related ministries of 11 Member States (BE, CZ, DK, DE, IE, HR, IT, LT, LU, HU, MT), women accounted for less than a quarter of administrators. In eight Member States (BG, EE, EL, PL, RO, SI, FI, SE) did they represent more than 40 % of the posts.

Women succeeded better in rising to the top of the environment sector than that of the energy or transport sectors. In 2011 — the latest year for which a breakdown by sector is available — women were best represented in Environment Ministries, where they held around a third (34 %) of positions at the top levels of the main national ministries <sup>(163)</sup>. Whereas this involvement in environmental decision-making is encouraging, slow progress of less than a fifth of the top positions is observed in other areas with a key impact on climate change, particularly energy and transport (17 % and 20 % respectively) (EIGE, 2012a, Annex II) <sup>(164)</sup>. There were only a few Member States with a strong representation of women in the Ministries for Energy (BE, CY, SE) and Transport (RO, FI, SE). In 21 Member States, women held a maximum of 25 % of the decision-making positions in Environment Ministries.

Similar patterns of under-representation are displayed by the EU-wide climate institutions. In 2013, women made up around a quarter (27 %) of decision-making positions in the relevant Directorate-Generals of the European Commission: Environment; Mobility and Transport; Energy; and Climate

**Figure 20** Percentage of women in high-level positions in national ministries and EU institutions, 2011

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

Note: For the national level, data were collected in August–October 2011. For EU Institutions, data were collected from European Commission Directory from August 2011 and from the European Parliament Committees' website in August 2011.

Action. As a whole, there has been little change since 2011, although there was a rise in women's representation in DG Environment (from 25 % in 2011 to 38 % in 2013) and a fall in DG Energy (from 40 % in 2011 to 20 % in 2013). Currently (2013), there has been an increase in women's number within DG Climate Action (40 %) and DG Environment (38 %), and a decrease within DG Energy and DG Mobility and Transport (Figure 20). In DG Mobility and Transport, for instance, women held only one out of the eight most senior posts in 2011 and 2013.

Women appear to be doing better in the climate-related Committees of the European Parliament (2010–14). Overall, they make up 38 % of those on the following Committees: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; Transport and Tourism; Industry, Research and Energy. As above, they are doing best in the environmental arena, accounting for 49 % of those in the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee. Next best is the Industry, Research and Energy Committee, where they make up 36 % of members. Finally, they compose exactly a quarter of the Transport and Tourism Committee. There has been a slight drop in women's representation on these committees (39 % in 2011; 38 % in 2013). Considering the overall proportion (35 %) of women in the EP the proportion above represents a relatively strong level of participation.

Both at the national and EU levels, the environment, energy and transport sectors show persistent signs of the 'glass ceiling' effect, whereby the proportion of women decreases as the seniority of a post increases.

Several crucial environmental decisions are made at local and regional level, but, at the moment, no EU-wide, comparable data are available to show and describe women's participation at these levels.

### Increased participation of women in decision-making on climate change at international level

Women have made the greatest progress in the main climate institutions of the UN. They have been most successful within the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Between 2009 and 2012, women's representation increased steadily within the national delegations of the EU to the SBs in 2013 (<sup>165</sup>). The average participation of women for these delegations was 42 % between 2005 and 2009. Between 2009 and 2013, this average rose to 45.3 %; in 20 out of 28 Member States, women made up 40 % or more of the national SB delegations in 2013 (BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LV, LT, HU, PL, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK). In only three Member States (LU, NL, AT) did women form less than a quarter of the national SB delegations (2009–13). In other words, of all climate-related institutions in the EU, women are now particularly close to equal representation in the national delegations to Subsidiary Bodies (as part of the UNFCCC).

Within the delegations to the UN Conference of the Parties (COPs), women have also made progress over the last five years, although to a lesser extent. The COPs are the governing body of the UNFCCC and meet on an annual basis. Women formed 39 % of the Member State



delegations to the COPs between 2008 and 2012. This marked a small improvement from previous years, when they averaged only 36 % of such delegations (2004–08). In 2013, the national delegations from 12 Member States had 40 % or more women represented on average from 2008–12 (BG, EL, ES, HR, IT, LV, LT, RO, SI, FI, SE, UK).

Women occupy a greater share of Heads of national SB delegations: 39 % of heads are women (2008–12 average), against 36 % previously (2004–08 average). In four Member States, the SB delegations were headed entirely by women between 2008 and 2012 (EE, ES, HR, LV). In 2013, there were 14 Member States where less than a quarter of the delegation heads were women in the previous five years (BE, CZ, DE, IE, EL, FR, LU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, SE, UK). The same was true of the overall EU delegations<sup>(166)</sup>. As these positions are normally occupied by leading national ministers within government it reflects the women's (under)representation within national political structures (see critical area G).

### **More women obtaining degrees in subjects related to the environment**

There are seven subject areas usually associated with the environment — 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)<sup>(167)</sup>. These seven fields typically support careers in the environment, energy and transport sectors, and in order to assess how many women have access to such careers through education it is valuable to analyse the proportion of women that study them at tertiary education level. Across the EU, a good gender balance within the natural sciences exists, although men continue to dominate technology-related degrees. Comparable EU-wide data show a consistent trend of women constituting more than half of those studying natural sciences degrees (ranging from between 52 % and 56 % overall in 200–12). The lowest representation of women among the students in this field is 42 % (BE, IE). In the majority of Member States women dominate the natural sciences, making up even around 70 % of these university students in 2012 (BG, CY, PL).

### **Men continue to dominate technology-related degrees**

In 2012, at EU level, women made up only 28 % of technologies students — a small increase of 1 p.p. compared to 2007 (27 %). The fields of engineering and engineering trades (one of the technologies subjects) are the least populated by women, in 2000 there were only 16 % of women students, which increased to 18 % in 2009<sup>(168)</sup>.

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 the electricity, gas, steam and air-conditional supply sector, transportation and storage (EIGE, 2012a). Among the boards of the largest energy companies in Sweden, Germany and Spain, only 5 % of the companies had 40 % representation (or higher) of women; the remaining 60 % consisted of men on boards (Carlsson-Kanyama, Ripa Juliá and Röhr, 2010). There are less than 15 % women among the board members of the EU energy companies (EPWN, 2010). In addition, in 2010, there were only 19 % women working in the transport sector in the EU (EIGE, 2012a).

Unconnected 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 working environments that do not accommodate women's needs (Röhr and Ruggieri, 2008, Accenture, 2002, TRANSGEN, 2007).

Nonetheless, it is possible to assume that receiving education and training in the field of technologies facilitates the 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 (European Commission, 2011d). Furthermore, it undermines 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.

## **2.11.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

### **Diverse approaches to integrating gender aspects in environmental decision-making**

The lower participation of women in positions of influence and decision-making across society in general is a recurring theme in the reports to the UNECE. Some Member States have made moves to improve women's representation in decision-making on environmental issues (DE, LT, AT).

The lower Austrian climate programme promoted the active involvement of women in environmental policy decision-making and the integration of gender-perspectives. In Austria, the city of Vienna has addressed gender-responsive planning for more than twenty years and women-related topics are well integrated into urban planning (for example, it is a requirement that women are included in preparing and inviting tenders for any urban construction project in Vienna).

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. The BMUB funded the 'Green Economy' project via the LIFE e.V./gannet agency — Focal Point for Gender, Environment and Sustainability from April 2011 to June 2012. The aim of the project was to actively involve women and women's organisations in Germany in the opinion-forming process for shaping a Green Economy.

In Lithuania, 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. Lack of knowledge on gender in environment and nature protection, particularly regarding women and children's health in specific localities were identified as key challenges along with too few women in decision-making on environmental issues and the fact that women's organisations tend to give little attention to environmental and nature protection issues.

### **Increased application of gender mainstreaming**

Methodologies to integrate equal opportunities into environmental policies and programmes appear to be increasingly on the agenda in some Member States (CZ, IT, PT, SI).

The Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 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. Gender equality is emphasised in the preparation of measures and will be applied in the selection criteria for specific measures such as positive actions to improve the status of women and increase their participation.

In the Czech Republic in 2010, the Ministry of the Environment developed an approach for incorporating a gender equality perspective into projects and plans with significant impacts on the environment, such as plans for building construction, urban greenery or transport services, like removal and leakage prevention of substances that are closely connected to women's reproductive health and to lifestyle and tumour diseases. This approach is also linked to transport policies; the Transport Policy of the Czech Republic for 2005–13 includes the cross-sectional principle that gender equality is respected within all the defined priorities, equal opportunities and social policy.

### **Increased interest and support for assessing the gender aspects of environmental issues**

Member States comment in their reports about little evidence or data on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming on improving environmental policies or in measuring the impact. Consideration of measurement has been integrated into some recent programmes (BE, IT, FR, PT).

In Portugal, the key measures under the V National Plan for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination (2014–17) includes studies on the relationship between gender-energy and gender-environment, as well as gender mainstreaming in the environment, spatial planning and energy policies, plans and programmes. This aims to identify opportunities and measures to promote gender equality and equal opportunities, environmental protection and economic growth.

In France, a new policy framework concerning 'energy transition' will select relevant indicators on gender equality in the statistics of the General Commission for Sustainable development (CGDD)/Observation Service and Statistics (SoeS) in 2014 (French report, 2014j, p. 41).

Bio-monitoring emerges as a notable action taken to measure the impact of environmental concerns on health emerging from the UNECE report. The Flemish Community assessed the impact of environmental policies on women by a human bio-monitoring since 1999. This project involves testing certain environmental substances and when processing these results, the concept of gender is taken into account to assess if women are more susceptible to certain types of pollution (UNECE, 2014b, p. 34). In the current campaign Human Bio Monitoring (2012–15) newborns and their mothers are a specific target group. Particular attention is paid to the impact of the environment on the health of women of lower socio-economic status. In Italy since 2008, human bio-monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) has been added to the list of national priorities of the Italian Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the National Institute of Health, and a series of monitoring programmes launched focusing on women of reproductive age, for which exposure to POPs arouses a big concern (UNECE, 2014o). These activities are in line with the European Environment and Health strategy 2004–10, which included human bio-monitoring of toxic pollutants of environmental origin among the priority actions to be undertaken in Europe.

In 2009–10, the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) carried out a project in cooperation with women's organisations in Finland in order to empower women's organisations around the Baltic Sea to deal with climate change at local level. In 2011, the ENUT published a gender analysis of 'Sustainable Estonia 21' with



recommendations on how to mainstream gender equality into the implementation of the strategy.

Overall, there is still little evidence to support the different impacts environmental policies have on women and men. This is a significant gap requiring more evidence to help design new initiatives, which might help to improve gender equality in shaping environmental programmes and in a more equal distribution of benefits generated by the programmes.

### **Stronger support for women's access to science and technology education and careers**

Many Member States report steps to encourage girls and young women to pursue technological fields of study (see critical area B). The CEDAW Committee has recommended eight EU Member States to strengthen their efforts to broaden the academic and vocational choices of girls and boys (BG, CZ, DE, EL, CY, HU, NL, AT) (United Nations, 2011).

One of the most common actions reported by Member States is the setting up of career support programmes for women in technology, natural sciences and other related professions (six Member States). These have focused both on providing opportunities directly to women and on promoting more gender-sensitive recruitment procedures. Denmark, Germany and Italy took large-scale actions to ensure the employment or access to employment of women in environment-related fields, promoting more gender-sensitive recruitment, and nomination and monitoring and encouraging a better gender balance throughout their organisations.

Other Member States reported relevant targets and budgets in broader equality strategies: 'Plan — Italy 2020' aims to get women into occupations where they are under-represented, including the 'green jobs' sector<sup>(169)</sup>. Spain's Plan Avanza committed EUR 37 million to gender equality and improving women's participation in the information society, linking to a campaign in 2008–11 to give visibility to role models demonstrating women's technological skills. Hungary's National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality — Guidelines and Objectives 2010–21 prioritises boosting women's participation in the sciences. One of its indicators is the number and rate of women in certain levels and fields of sciences.

Gender-sensitive employment policies within environmental sector bring necessary changes within science and technology ministries. The Federal Ministry for Science and Technology in Germany introduced flexible working hours (amongst others) and the Federal Minister of Economics and Energy together with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth supported the 'berufundfamilie® audit', an initiative that

aims to assess the success of organisations in promoting 'family-friendly corporate structures'.

## **2.12 The Girl Child (L)**

### **2.12.1 Strategic objectives, availability and the relevance of indicators**

Childhood is a gendered experience, and the needs and rights of the girl child demand specific attention within policies addressed to children. Girls and boys are still exposed to gender stereotypes in the media and in education, and these different treatments applied to girls and boys lead to stereotypical educational and professional careers. Girl children are more vulnerable to gender-based violence, including sexual abuse, pornography and trafficking. Roma girls, girls from remote rural areas, girls with disabilities, girls in child institutions continue to face challenges in accessing health, education and social services. Eating habits, cancer and sexual health have also a gendered dimension and are experienced differently by girls and boys.

The BPfA defined nine strategic objectives in the critical area of the Girl Child:

- L1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
- L2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
- L3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential;
- L4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
- L5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
- L6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work;
- L7. Eradicate violence against the girl child;
- L8. Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life;
- L9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

In 2008, acknowledging the cross-cutting nature of the topics addressed under area L, 'The Girl Child', the Slovenian Presidency

suggested that ‘[t]he indicators regarding the status of the girl child should be of a much more complex nature [...] [as [v]arious aspects of the girl child’s life and opportunities have to be explained through a very limited number of indicators’ (Council of the EU, 2008b, p. 15). The Council conclusions of June 2008 accepted the proposed three indicators for this area of concern based on the report prepared by the Slovenian Presidency (Council of the EU, 2008b).

The first of the indicators (Indicator 1) looks at sex and relationship education in primary and secondary schooling, which plays an important role in improving the position of girls, providing them with the necessary tools to make informed sexual choices, and helping them to challenge gender roles in general. Social expectations related to body image affect girls to a greater extent than boys, with damaging psychological and social consequences. Measuring the extent of negative self-image amongst girls and boys, in recognition of the relationship between self-image and health — which is understood by the Beijing Platform to mean total physical, mental and social well-being — is considered an important step to understand the reasons underlying these perceptions and to tackle its consequences better (Indicator 2). With the third indicator (Indicator 3), the Slovenian Presidency raised concerns relating to girls’ representation in educational fields. Given the importance of educational choices on life prospects — see critical areas B (Education and Training of Women) and K (Women and the Environment) — it is important to measure the relative performance of girls and boys at age 15 in mathematics and sciences as well as the presence of women in tertiary education in subjects within which they tend to be under-represented.

Since the Beijing + 15 review this area of concern has not been reviewed and thus no EU-wide data have been collected to assess developments and its implementation in the Member States. The current analysis is based on sources and data presented in several studies carried out since 2010 and take a European and even wider perspective.

### 2.12.2 EU policy developments

The European Union adopted several commitments towards the effective implementation of children’s rights, some of them specifically targeting the rights of the girl child. In addition, policies towards health, education, violence, poverty and youth employment, are relevant to the girl child even if the indicators do directly address these topics.

The EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child adopted in 2011 seeks to foster the effective implementation of the provisions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights addressing children’s rights and of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (European Commission, 2011b). It focuses on a number of concrete

actions, such as child-friendly justice, protecting children in vulnerable situations and fighting violence against children, both inside and outside the European Union.

The impact of the economic and financial crisis on children has been largely addressed by the latest EU policy and guidance documents. In June 2012, the Social Protection Committee produced an advisory report to the European Commission on ‘Tackling and preventing child poverty, promoting child well-being’ (Social Protection Commission, 2012). In October, the EPSCO Council conclusions focused on the same issues (Council of the EU, 2012c).

In February 2013, the European Commission issued a recommendation on ‘Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage’, in which it recognises that ‘children are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than the overall population’. Strategies to address child poverty should pay particular attention to children in vulnerable situations. Thus, the Commission recommends that gender equality and the fight against discrimination faced by children on all grounds (including sex) should be part of any efforts to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. The recommendation also calls upon Member States to recognise that children are independent rights-holders. Specific actions targeting issues such as eradicating barriers that hinder children’s access to school, reducing early school leaving or increasing the participation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds are recommended.

Member States have also been urged to pay specific attention to the issue of violence against children. The Commission adopted two Directives — Directive 2011/36/EU on Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims and Directive 2011/92/EU on Combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography — aiming at reinforcing the framework for protection of victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking, identifying children as being particularly at risk in 2011. The Victim’s Directive (Directive 2012/29/EU) also addresses children victims of crime, implicitly referring to the girl child. The Directive states that violence against women is gender-based and it recognises the need for specialised services for vulnerable groups of victims such as women victims of sexual violence or violence in close relationships or victims of trafficking and ‘their children’<sup>(170)</sup>.

The report prepared by the Slovenian Presidency in 2008 states that EU policy and commitments targeting children are not sufficiently gender sensitive and specific issues faced by girls are marginally addressed<sup>(171)</sup>. There are few areas where particular attention is paid to girls’ specific disadvantaged situation, such as certain forms of discrimination and different forms of violence including female genital mutilation (European Parliament, 2012h, European Commission, 2013a, European Commission, 2013g).

### 2.12.3 Trends emerging from EU-wide data

#### Closing the gender gap in performance in mathematics and scientific literacy

The 2012 PISA (172) results indicate a lower result of girls in mathematics, than that of boys, although the differences between boys' and girls' results seem to be reducing compared with 2009. In science, the differences between girls' and boys' results are smaller and girls outperform boys in a majority of Member States (BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, HR, FR, LV, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI, SE) (Figure 21).

The proportion of women students in teacher training and education science was very high in 2006 and still is six years later, reaching 77 % of all students at EU level. The lowest proportion in 2012 is in Greece (65 %) and the highest in Croatia (94 %), followed by Italy and Romania (91 %). Overall the proportion of women students in teacher training and education science has increased in 15 Member States and decreased in nine.

The biggest gender imbalance to the disadvantage of women can be observed among students in tertiary education in the field of science, mathematics and computing: in 2012, girls made up less than 50 % in all EU Member States except Romania and Italy (52 %). There are more than 45 % women students in Cyprus and Portugal and in all other Member States women comprise more than 30 % except in Belgium (27 %) and in the Netherlands (23 %) (Figure 22). Since 2007, there have been small variations in EU Member States in the proportion of girls studying science, mathematics and computing.

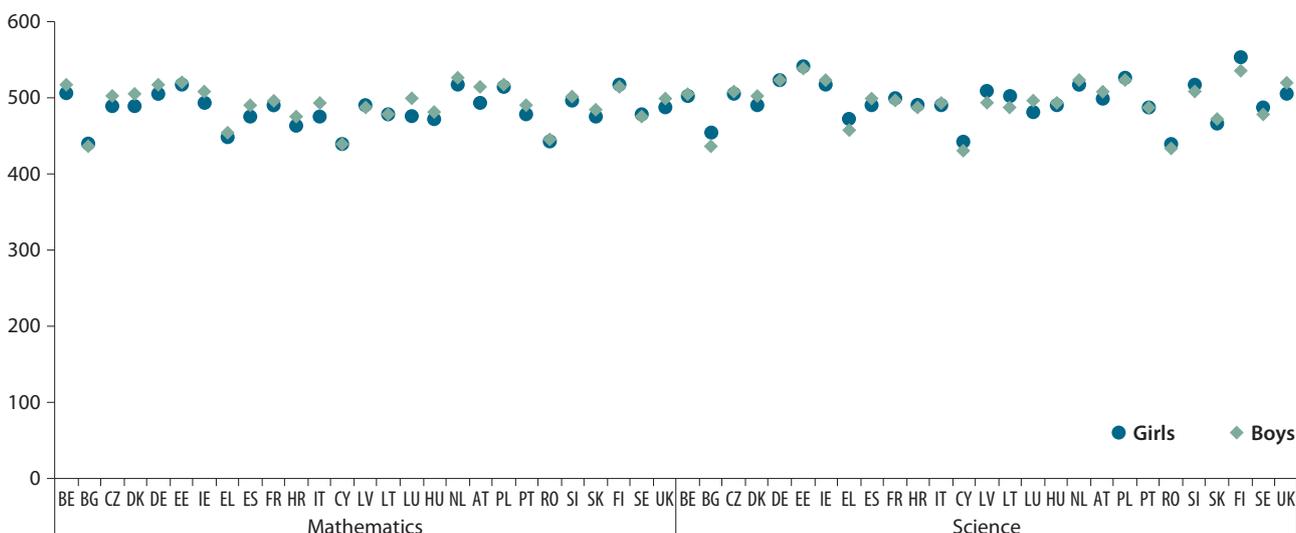
Some Member States have taken steps to increase the proportion of girls in scientific studies (Indicator 3). Austria has implemented a gender-sensitive vocational orientation, and encouraged girls to choose non-traditional career paths, such as engineering studies using some online tools such as the campaign 'find your own way' and its dedicated website where girls can access online vocational and professional counselling. In the framework of the 'FIT'-project ('Women into Technology'), girls can visit universities and colleges of applied sciences. In the UK, public policies have tried to improve the gender balance in academic and vocational scientific and engineering education through the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ambassadors Programme, using women (and men) scientists and engineers as role models to encourage young girls to pursue scientific and engineering studies. The Scottish government focused on raising awareness and has developed a strategy to increase women's proportion in STEM.

#### Sex and relationship education in the EU varies and tends to focus on health

Sex and relationship education is diverse among Member States and addresses different age groups — the age at which sex and relationship education can legally be taught (between 5–6 and 14–18) — is taught by a diverse type of professionals (teachers, health professionals and NGOs), focuses on a variety of topics and subjects and can be addressed, within different subject areas (as part of the biology programme, as a specific subject).

In 2012, sex education was not mandatory in seven EU Member States (BG, IT, CY, LT, MT, PL, RO) (Stull, 2012). In Italy, Poland and Lithuania, sex education is offered on a voluntary basis;

**Figure 21** Girls and boys performances in mathematics and sciences according to PISA scores, by Member State, 2012



Source: PISA, 2012 (<http://pisa2012.acer.edu.au/>)

Note: data are not available for MT

students are not required to attend and parents may prevent their children from attending classes. Many Member States provide sex and relationship education at an early age (<sup>173</sup>), but only Ireland (<sup>174</sup>), Germany and Sweden provide sex and relationship education throughout all school years (from six to 18 year olds). Germany attributes the recent success to keep abortions at an all-time low rate to the introduction of sex and relationship education (UNECE, 2014k).

In the majority of Member States (17), sex and relationship education is a prerogative of the Ministry of Health; in others, of the Ministries for Family and/or Youth or of the Ministry of Education ('Sexual Awareness for Europe (SAFE II): Ensuring healthy future generations who love and care for each other' 2008a). In nine Member States (DE, DK, ES, AT, PL, PT, FI, SE, UK) (SAFE II), sex education is integrated into the formal education curriculum by law. There are eight Member States which have a strategy for sex education (BE, DK, DE, IE, CY, AT, PT, FI) and four Member State have budget allocated (DE, IE, AT, SE).

In contrast to the diversity of methods used and age groups of students, sex and relationship education tends to mostly address the topics of contraception, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS), and unplanned pregnancies. In most cases the curricula for sex and relationship education misses addressing subjects such as gender-based violence, gender stereotypes in romantic relationships, stigma related to HIV/AIDS and LGBT youths.

Several Member States implemented policies to guarantee girls' access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (which relates to Indicator 1). The Woman's Institute in Spain made several agreements to promote the integration

of a gender perspective in the healthcare services and research. Since 1997 it has carried out a programme for the prevention of pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS among youth, and trains primary healthcare personnel on how to deal with young people (UN CEDAW, 2013d). In the Netherlands, public policies for sex and relationship education, specifically addressing girls with migrant backgrounds, address the prevention of teenage pregnancies (UN CEDAW, 2008a).

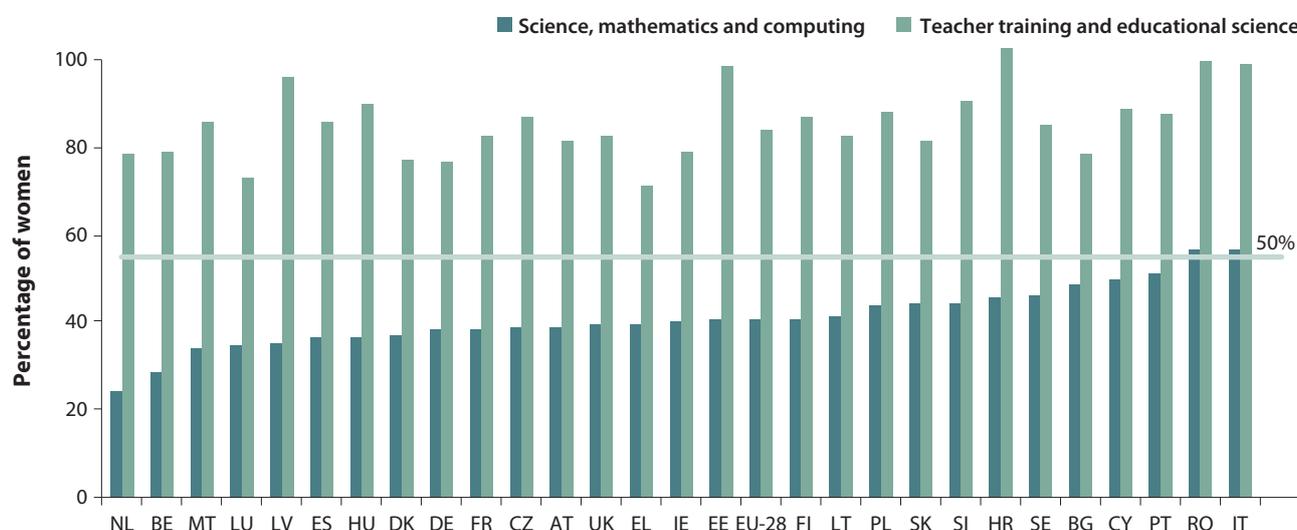
Contraception is not free of charge in 14 Member States; a fee might be required, or, it might not be available to everyone due to unequal geographical access to reproductive and sexual health (BE, CZ, DE, IE, ES, CY, LV, LT, AT, PL, SK, SE). The healthcare professionals working with young people on sexual and reproductive rights receive limited support and only three Member States (FI, SE, UK) provide them with guidelines.

These variations in the provision of sex and relationship education have an impact on girls' health (potentially leaving them unable to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases or to prevent unwanted pregnancies), on girls' access to education and the future prospect of employment (early pregnancy being linked with early school drop-out) and can considerably impede girls' rights to control their bodies.

### Girls from a very young age have a negative perception of their body

The 2009/2010 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey on 'Social determinants of health and well-being among young people' provides the necessary

**Figure 22** Percentages of women tertiary education students from all students in science, mathematics and computing and teaching training and educational science, by Member State, 2012



Source: Eurostat, education statistics (educ\_enr15)



information on the evolution of girls' and boys' body self-image (WHO, 2012). The HBSC survey questions girls and boys on their actual Body Mass Index (BMI) and the perception they have of their own body. The survey seeks to identify the proportion of young people at three different ages (11, 13 and 15 years old) who have a negative image of themselves. Previous similar surveys were carried out in 2001/2002 and 2005/2006.

In 2010, the number of girls and boys who reported 'they are 'a bit fat' or 'much too fat' varied among the Member States, but overall and along the time, there are more girls than boys who report these assessments: 27 % of 11 years old girls overestimated their weight, compared to 22 % of boys. The BMI calculation show that it is more likely that boys are medically overweight or obese compared to girls (WHO, 2012): there are 17 % of boys overweight compared to 13 % of girls in the age of 11 years old.

Girls' negative perception of their bodies' increases with age, the highest proportion of dissatisfaction being registered at 15 years of age. A high proportion of 15-year old girls identified themselves as overweight in 2010: 40 % compared with 22 % of boys of the same age.

Girls are more likely to engage in weight reduction programmes at a very young age due to their negative perceptions of their bodies — overweight or obese. The proportion of girls starting a diet increases with age, whilst the boys' proportion tends to decrease. At the EU level, the percentage of 11 year old girls and boys who follow a diet are 14 % and 12 % respectively. At 13, the proportion of girls is increased to 18 % and the proportion of boys is reduced to 11 %. At 15, 22 % of girls follow a weight reduction programme, against only 9 % of boys.

These behaviours are also a consequence of gender stereotyping and of the impact of media on girls' image in general — stigmatisation around weight and shape. This aspect is not yet considered by the current indicator.

### **Gender stereotypes impact specific groups of girls differently**

The specific situation and challenges that girls belonging to Roma communities face have been subject to policies and measures in several Member States where Roma communities are living. Thus, issues like early school drop-outs or the lower level of educational and a particularly high rate of illiteracy; which often forced them to leave school earlier and to assume care and family responsibilities need to be addressed. The same phenomena can be seen among girls with a migrant background or coming from poorer families. They leave school early as they need to take on low paid jobs to bring economic support to their family (European Commission, 2008c).

### **New forms of violence targeting girls**

Other forms of violence using new technologies to target children, and more specifically girls have recently appeared, such as cyber-bullying <sup>(175)</sup>. Some Member States have started to modify their legislation to ensure that girls are protected from this form of psychological violence, especially at an age where it can have disastrous consequences on the well-being of girls (ES, PT, UK).

### **2.12.4 Trends and developments emphasised in Member States' reporting to the UNECE**

In their reports to UNECE, several Member States placed the analysis of the situation of girls within the area of 'Education and Training' or under several other areas of concern.

### **Policies on children's rights are not sufficiently gender-sensitive**

Whilst Member States recognise children's rights and the need for child protection, gender-specific action is limited. Developments in the area of children's rights and/or child protection within international law and policy have been supplemented by developments on the national level. Many Member States emphasise achievements when reporting adherence to international legal instruments on children's rights and protection (DE, EL, HR, CY, FI) <sup>(176)</sup>; the development of policy strategies, which focus on advocating children's interests and rights (ES, HR, SI, SK); and the creation of institutional mechanisms to promote and protect children's interests and rights (IE, IT, CY). The latter encompasses the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law in Cyprus (set up 2007); the Department (Ministry) for Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland (set up 2011); and the National Ombudsman for Childhood and Adolescence in Italy (currently being set up).

A range of actions to protect children from violence, trafficking and sexual abuse were implemented by Member States. Romania pursued awareness-raising campaigns on violence against children; Germany developed a Plan of Action for the Protection of Children and Young People from Sexual Violence and Exploitation; the Czech Republic set up a National Plan for Combating Commercial Sexual Abuse of Children.

Several Member States draw heavily on the EU legislative and policy framework on children, however, it is in rare cases that Member States explicitly recognise the higher vulnerability of girls to particular problems. The Czech Republic states that 'gender-specific areas include eating disorders, where girls continue to prevail' (UNECE, 2014f). Germany argues that 'Eating disorders in the form of anorexia, bulimia and

binge eating disorders are among the most underestimated illnesses particularly affecting girls and young women' (UNECE, 2014k). Greece points out that the 'vast majority' of child victims in cases of trafficking, child abuse and child pornography are 'minor women (girls)' (UNECE, 2014l).

### **Member States address the segregation in education, violence against girls and their specific health needs**

Some Member States implemented gender-specific interventions encouraging girls and boys to consider 'non-traditional' subject and career pathways. Austria, Germany and the Netherlands hold annual 'Girls' Days', when girls are provided with information and mentoring for different career options in science, technology and engineering. Cyprus, Denmark and Poland report similar actions, such as the 'Girls as Engineers' campaign in Poland. In Poland, the government funded one-off empowerment/leadership training for girls and girls and young women were more encouraged to follow sports courses. In Estonia, there are several types of initiatives, like career days for girls (and boys), support and training to encourage girls and boys for non-traditional career-path and several empowerment trainings (UNECE, 2014h).

A small number of Member States mentioned actions addressed to girls facing specific discrimination. Romania and Slovenia developed programmes to improve the access to education of children from the Roma community (UNECE, 2014v; UNECE, 2014t). These have no clear gender dimension, despite the fact that Roma girls are particularly likely to leave school early and to face high levels of illiteracy (European Commission, 2008c).

Health issues and addressing violence against girls were among initiatives noted in the reports to UNECE. Portugal, Hungary and Denmark introduced the Human Papilloma Viruses (HPV) vaccination for teenage girls (UNECE, 2014g; UNECE, 2014s; Hungary report to UNECE, 2014m), whilst in Croatia, the Programme to Combat and Prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases offers specific guidance to girls and parents on HPV (UNECE, 2014d). Other Member States e.g. Ireland, Germany and Portugal, mentioned strengthening their laws and actions, also in its development cooperation, against female genital mutilation<sup>(177)</sup>.

Austria and Hungary highlighted the interest to target resources towards more vulnerable groups of girls: Austria funds emergency support services 'for girls and young women at risk of falling victim to or who are victims of forced

marriage' (UNECE, 2014a); Hungary runs an engagement programme for teenage girls considered to be 'vulnerable in several respects', such as young mothers and drug users (UNECE, 2014m).

### **Member States tackle gender stereotypes through awareness-raising campaigns in schools**

All EU Member States see the obligation to challenge social norms and stereotypical gender roles and they support awareness-raising actions, focused on reinforcing the principle of gender equality, tackling stereotypes and demonstrating the possibility of diverse life choices to girls and boys. The awareness-raising interventions often take place in schools and engage teachers as important actors. Some Member States prepared resources for teachers (DK, PT). In Denmark 'educational material on gender roles in connection to alcohol, smoking, health and other issues' were published and sent to all schools (UNECE, 2014g). In Portugal, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) published guidelines on 'Gender and Citizenship' for 'several school clusters' (UNECE, 2014s). In other cases, resources have been used to train teachers and other educationalists (AT, RO). In Romania, more than 80 courses were conducted with around 4 000 teachers to disseminate the ideas of gender-sensitive education (UNECE, 2014t). In Vorarlberg (Austria), nursery school teachers were trained in how to challenge gender roles (UNECE, 2014a). And other Member States updated their curricula to include specific modules on human rights and equality (ES, HU) or the 'gender aspect' (CZ, IT, SI). The 'Intercambia' (Exchange) project in Spain, whose objective is sharing experiences and innovative materials on equal opportunities, has created a portal 'Exchange Portal'; and the 'Plurales' project, carried out by the Woman's Institute in collaboration with different public institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports through the National Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CNIIE) and the autonomous communities is developing a specific methodology to create equality education models (UNECE, 2014w).

### 3. Beyond Beijing + 20: key issues for gender equality



## 3. Beyond Beijing + 20: key issues for gender equality

Overall, the major challenges to the achievement of strategic objectives of the BPfA can be identified as:

- The entrenched nature and persistence of gender norms and stereotypes. The relatively low emphasis given to social attitudes to gender equality, and often low prioritisation on the spectrum of policy priorities.
- The focus in the EU on gender equality needs to be maintained and reinforced. Recent trends in merging equality bodies dealing with gender alone with bodies dealing with multiple grounds can represent a threat to the visibility and effectiveness of gender equality as a policy area.
- Ensuring that gender equality remains a policy priority and is mainstreamed in other policy areas. Gender equality policies need clear and measurable strategic objectives with specific targets and timeframe, ensuring that governmental body's mandate and capacity allow it to influence the development of all government policies, to formulate and review legislation and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of government decisions.
- Equal participation of women in the production of knowledge and ideas as well as goods and services and gender equality in economic independence as major economic opportunities and stimulus for economic growth are not fully realised.
- The continuation of a cycle of disadvantage which reinforces the poor future prospects of women. Women are disadvantaged in the labour market especially in terms of the gender pay gap, which in turn means that mothers are more likely than fathers to opt to be primary carers within families and women in later life are more likely to be at risk of poverty in old age.
- The high prevalence of gender-based violence against women and the largest statistical gaps, particularly when it comes to comparable data at EU level, are key areas to be considered in measuring the progress of gender equality at EU level.
- Gender imbalance in political and economic decision-making remains an important challenge at EU level and for all Member States. Despite the fact that women make up nearly half the workforce and account for more than half of tertiary level graduates, the proportion of women involved in decision-making in various domains

remains very low. This discrepancy shows a waste of much highly-qualified and skilled human resources.

- The effect of the economic crisis on gender equality needs to be continuously assessed. This includes assessing not only the size, but the relative position of gender gaps. Gender equality does not improve where a smaller gender gap is the result of a worsening situation for both women and men. In addition, the impact of the austerity measures implemented in many Member States in various areas of the BPfA will need to be reviewed with the benefit of greater hindsight.

The main findings emerging from this review provide relevant insights on the remaining challenges towards gender equality in the EU beyond 2015 and suggestions as to possible gender equality policy priorities for EU institutions and Member States. They can also contribute to greater gender-sensitivity in evaluating the implementation of Europe 2020 and strengthen the call for a gender-sensitive growth strategy for the EU.

### Women and Poverty (Area A)

Differences in economic activity between women and men are a significant factor in the area of poverty, with quality employment seen as the best route to economic independence and financial security. Measures which support gender equality in economic activity therefore need to be reinforced and target the risk of poverty faced disproportionately by women as a result of interrupted careers and different working patterns.

Policy measures that prevent poverty are particularly needed to support the women who are most at risk of poverty, notably young women aged 16–24 years and lone parents. Most of all, a particular area of action is that of tackling the gender pension gap, which can be seen to represent the sum of gender discrimination over the life course.

### Women and Education (Area B)

The work to address gender stereotypes in education and training needs to continue at EU and Member-State levels as gender segregation in education translates into



further inequalities in the labour market and contributes to differences in the economic opportunities of women and men. Stronger attention is needed on the extent to which women are able to capitalise on higher education by accessing the same career paths and employment opportunities as men. Therefore, policies that encourage a more gender balanced representation of women and men in education should evaluate the corresponding professions they lead to.

It is important to ensure that women and men who choose careers in non-traditional sectors have opportunities to progress within different professions to the same extent and are able to access the same career opportunities. Attracting boys into feminised sectors, often defying strong stereotypes, is an important action to ensure more equal opportunities for all.

## Women and Health (Area C)

Health needs to be addressed from both a sex and a gender perspective, to ensure that the underlying causes of differences in health situations, prevalence of diseases are better understood. Access and right to reproductive health is a challenge due to lack consensus across Member States, but needs to be addressed given its central position in the lives of women. It means dealing with difficult topics, not least abortion and contraception.

The trends towards increasing life expectancies and decreasing healthy life years of women point to Member States' need to ensure that the treatment of elderly and disabled women is addressed in the future and, from a gender perspective, keeping in mind that those groups of women are at a higher risk of abuse and/or neglect.

In the context of changing patterns in health status and growing ill-health among women it is important to focus on determinants of health from a gender perspective. Developing data in this area is a priority to allow for this assessment.

Conditions in access to health vary but more could be done to tackle the general and specific barriers which women face in access to healthcare. Cost appears to be the most common reason for unmet needs. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that all groups have access to health structures, as for example it is more problematic for migrant women or other groups.

## Violence against Women (Area D)

Ensuring commitment and resources is key in combating violence against women. Political will and regular funding of services for victims of violence is a significant factor in strengthening the effects of existing measures and actions to combat violence against women and improving those measures in a way that ensures the meeting of minimum standards of support for violence survivors across all Member States.

The collection of prevalence and administrative data of adequate quality is crucial for monitoring the implementation of actions of the Member States in the area of VAW. Development of indicators would help to increase comparability across Member States and facilitate dealing with the issue of the under-reporting of incidents of violence.

Direct forms of violence against women should be addressed in connection to norms, attitudes and stereotypes (that result in indirect forms of violence) which underpin gender-based violence against women and gender equality in general.

Combating violence against women cannot be effective without engaging and involving men. As patriarchal culture, constructions of hegemonic masculinities and gender norms underpin the issue of gender-based violence; it can only be addressed with the involvement of men and a critical assessment of patriarchal structures and hegemonic masculinities.

## Women and Armed Conflict (Area E)

EU and Member States administrations dealing with military and diplomatic staff need to integrate a gender perspective into procedures and practices and raise the commitment to gender capacity building for frontline staff, to improve the current level of gender sensitivity among personnel and raise gender balance in diplomatic and military sectors.

Greater visibility and knowledge of the needs and specific vulnerability of women in time of conflict can improve the quality and allocation of foreign aid and ensure better understanding of the specific challenges women face as a result of conflict, including those of gender-based violence in times of conflict. Both a gender perspective and women's human rights are and should be a crucial component in the process of handling and processing asylum claims.

## Women and the Economy (Area F)

Gender inequalities in participation and segregation remain widespread in the labour market. The imperative remains to ensure equal participation (in both part-time and full-time capacity) of women and men in the labour market as well as to tackle horizontal and vertical gender segregation between sectors and occupations. In the context of the Europe 2020, unequal participation in the labour market as the result of women's over-representation in part-time work and lower activity levels overall and puts the achievement of its employment target at risk. Promoting family friendly policies and implementing transformative measures that can challenge the unequal distribution of caring and domestic tasks between women and men and encourage men taking parental leave are highly needed. Without adequate provision of employment which supports work-life balance and establishment of social structures that comply with Barcelona targets, it is unlikely that men will be persuaded to shift the balance of care responsibilities in families.

Work to reduce the gender pay gap could benefit from increased visibility of pay differentials through better data on pay. Furthermore, governments and social partners need to search for innovative forms to secure women's employment and ensure that the economic situation does not undermine the minimum wage in EU Member States, which would have a differential impact on women as they are over represented in minimum wage jobs.

## Women in Power and Decision-Making (Area G)

The under-representation of women in decision-making positions is a reality in all areas of life. The political and economic areas are prominent on the policy agenda, however, areas related to social power and decision-making need more visibility. The under-representation of women in all areas epitomises not only a democratic deficit but also a great waste of talent throughout the EU.

Design and implementation of effective policy measures including legislation would help to break the 'glass ceiling' in major economic structures especially those with a public profile. Formal and informal quotas in political decision-making proved to be effective in elected and nominated posts in major political structures in EU Member States. Initiatives on the gender norms, attitudes and stereotypes that prevent women from equal representation are encouraged.

## Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (Area H)

Commitment and resources are both important facets of the efficiency of institutional mechanisms and need to be supported through the allocation of appropriate human and financial resources in order to meet increased demands and multiple tasks. The coordinating role of the institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in other policy areas and complementing the work of addressing cases of discrimination based on sex is very important. To support the political commitment for gender mainstreaming increased capacity for the application of the major gender mainstreaming tools for policy-making: gender budgeting, gender impact assessment is vital.

Reinforcement of gender equality legislation and stronger visibility as a policy priority can contribute to the move from '*de jure*' to '*de facto*' equality, the implementation of gender equality legislation and the European *acquis* needs to be reinforced. Not only does gender equality need to remain a policy priority, is also needs to be mainstreamed in other policy areas and complement the work of addressing cases of discrimination based on sex.

Recent trends at national level show a shift from single to multiple grounds of discrimination. However, in doing so, it also tends to tackle gender equality from a legal or judicial perspective, which tends to protect rights on an individual basis as opposed to promoting collective capabilities, and which may downplay gender as a structural dimension and undermine gender equality as an important policy area in itself. It is therefore important to retain and strengthen structures and resources dedicated specifically to gender equality, keeping the positive focus on multiple discrimination and intersectionality introduced by the greater interactions with other grounds of inequality.

## Human Rights of Women (Area I)

This area represents the last area of concern to be monitored. Indicators have yet to be developed to assess the progress of Member States in the area of the Human Rights of Women.

Women, particularly those who are victims of violence, still face considerable obstacles to claiming reparation when their rights have been affected. Ensuring equal access to justice for all women, by removing institutional barriers



(linked to the gendered functioning of the legal and judicial system), economical or cultural, is a necessary condition for the effective implementation of human rights legislation.

Women's diversity is increasingly recognised, nevertheless, further measures are needed to ensure equal enjoyment of the rights by women and men and tackling multiple discrimination and intersectionality as well as the specific issues of those women who survived violence.

## Women and the Media (Area J)

Women's participation in top decision-making positions and as board members in media organisations is insufficient and needs to increase. Media organisations have started to adopt voluntary measures, which need to be complemented by policy measures that support these organisations in transforming the media sector and its content. These patterns of gender inequalities and stereotypes have serious consequences on the content produced by media organisations.

The development of new technologies and emergence of different media forms signal the need to go beyond traditional media organisations. The position of women in relation to new technologies, such as their position within digital media organisations, remains unexplored. Other forms of media that could benefit from further investigation include advertising, film-making and publishing.

## Women and the Environment (Area K)

Gender and the environment remains a largely unexplored relationship. Gender considerations need to be effectively mainstreamed when responding to global challenges such as climate change or the green growth of the economy. The differentiated impact that policies have on women and men needs to be taken into consideration both at EU and national levels, using tools such as gender impact assessment.

Women, because of their position in society, may be more vulnerable to negative changes in the environment, despite their lower negative impact on the environment generally. A balanced representation of women in decision-making positions in this area is key to ensuring the gender sensitivity of policies, as well as the needs and contribution of women in relation to climate change.

## The Girl Child (Area L)

The progress made in relation to girls' performances in mathematics and scientific literacy needs to be followed by a focus on achieving a more gender-balanced representation of girls and boys in the higher level fields of study in science, mathematics and computing.

Sex and relationship education is an important part of the area of the girl child. More holistic and regular sex and relationship education is needed in most EU Member States. Shifting the focus to include not only health issues, such as the prevention of STIs and unplanned pregnancies, but also issues relating to the impact of norms, attitudes and stereotypes and promotion of gender equal relationships is recommended.

Body-image and self-hatred are emerging as serious issues. Measures to address girls' self-image and how they relate to their body need to be reinforced, and should start from an early age. The impact of norms, attitudes and stereotypes on girls needs to be given more credence. The emergence of new technologies, and thus increased scope for gender-based violence against girls, for example in media representation or cyber-bullying, is an emerging threat.

Girls' perspectives also need to be seen within the context of other areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. Their position is pertinent to a number of areas, such as but not limited to health, education, poverty or the media. It is crucial to make their situation there more visible.

## Beijing, 20 years on...

Gender equality is a prominent feature of the EU policy agenda, with many institutions working towards its realisation. The European Commission, within the framework of Europe 2020, plays an important role in this monitoring. Following the Annual Growth Survey, which at the outset of the European Semester cycle sets out broad European Union economic priorities, and the accompanying Joint Employment Report mandated by Article 148 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that provides an analysis that underpin the key employment messages of the Annual Growth Survey, the Commission proposes country-specific recommendations (CSRs) for budgetary, economic and social policy on a yearly basis.

Among the Country Specific Recommendations approved by the Council, a number of highlighted issues specifically relate to gender equality (BG, CZ, EE, IE, HR, IT, HU, MT, NL, AT, RO, SK) <sup>(178)</sup> e.g. on the pay gap, participation in the labour market and part-time employment, childcare provision, segregation as well as pension levels and retirement age.

Policy initiatives have been affected by the economic context in the EU since the last review. It has resulted in a strong focus on fiscal consolidation policies, which may have had the unintended consequences of giving less attention to gender equality policies, despite identifying them as an essential response to the economic crisis (European Commission, 2012e; European Commission, 2013o).

Looking forwards, three particular areas need to be considered in future policy development to support a more holistic approach to the implementation of the 12 areas of the Beijing platform for action. These areas are:

### **Strengthened visibility and importance of gender equality**

Analysis of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality shows the signs of an apparent decrease in the attention paid to gender equality. There has been a gradual submerging of gender equality issues in the broader field of equality within the perspective of multiple grounds of discrimination. The independent bodies for protection against discrimination on the ground of sex are thus increasingly replaced by bodies for protection against discrimination on various grounds. Whereas the importance of acknowledging the heterogeneity of women and men in terms of age, class, disability, ethnicity/race and sexual orientation is crucial to the recognition of diverse experiences among women and men, the consequences of downplaying gender as a structural dimension and underlying ground of all inequalities should not be overlooked. The political, social and administrative remit of gender equality has started shifting towards legalistic and procedural mechanisms addressing discrimination at the individual level. Gender equality is more seldom addressed and promoted through policies and institutions that tackle gender gaps and the disadvantages of certain groups of women, but is more often viewed as a human right requiring legalistic measures to protect individual citizens against discrimination. This approach risks marginalising gender equality as a political goal and undermining gender equality as an important policy area in itself (EIGE, 2014a).

### **Tackling gender stereotypes and engaging men**

Understanding and combating the norms, attitudes and stereotypes that hold back gender equality is an important step. It needs to be understood as a mechanism that creates, strengthens and maintains gender inequalities in society. Making these explicit and measuring them can provide the opportunity to engage with more transformative work in society across the Member States.

The Beijing Platform for Action's focus is on women's empowerment. However, gender equality cannot become a reality if it fails to engage men in striving for a society that

is more equal and inclusive. Making gender equality a reality relies on the engagement of all to achieve and transform the EU's social and economic reality for the better.

### **Effective implementation of gender mainstreaming into EU policies and monitoring of progress**

A growing body of EU laws recognises gender equality not only as a central matter of social policy, but also as a fundamental right. Strengthened gender mainstreaming in key documents such as the European Commission's most recent Annual Work Programmes would contribute to the general EU goals of gender equality and its impetus for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Since it was introduced almost 20 years ago gender mainstreaming and its complex tools, in particular *Gender Impact Assessment*, *gender budgeting* and *capacity building*, have faced difficulties in being accepted and properly applied. Awareness among decision-makers of its importance has been increasing/growing but its implementation has been slow due to insufficient levels of competence within specific sector or policy areas. EIGE's in-depth study on Gender Training in the EU found that improved gender competence can lead to positive gender mainstreaming results if certain preconditions are met — namely, if the development of gender competence is embedded in both national strategies for gender equality and gender equality plans of organisations, that resources dedicated to gender training are adequate, that accountability mechanisms are in place and that all policy actors are addressed on an ongoing basis (EIGE, 2013c).

Secondly, the absence of a common 'standard' on how to apply gender mainstreaming in the planning, development and implementation of policies at the EU and Member State levels in a coherent way often results in the omission of the gender equality perspective from the policy-making cycle (analysis, objectives and targets). The institutional mechanisms to support the actors with responsibility for mainstreaming gender during the implementation phase are often inadequate, as those actors have limited access to practical tools for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the gender perspective and thus for assessing the impact of allocated funds to women and men (European Commission, 2011c; EIGE, 2013c; Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2012; Gender-CoP, 2011).

Thirdly, the shortage of *gender-sensitive indicators* in some areas makes it difficult to identify and design strategies that address gender-related inequalities and gender gaps across Europe overall, and not only in areas related to economic ones. Moreover, it complicates the monitoring and assessment of the progress in the implementation of a gender perspective into overall policy and legislative commitments. The importance of gendered indicators for



the advancement of gender equality policies has been also highlighted by one of BPfA strategic objectives, which calls for the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation of policies (United Nations, 1995b). EIGE's Gender Equality Index, launched in mid-2013, responded to this call by disseminating EU-harmonised, sex-disaggregated data to assess progress in various domains of gender equality, providing a comprehensive measure of gender within the EU policy framework.

Some policy fields suffer from a significant lack of comparable data and/or insufficient quality, like parental leave figures or lone parents. In the area on decision-making in various social domains (education and culture, research and innovation, sports, media, etc.) and health behaviour, broader data are needed with sex as a variable (EIGE, 2013b).

Violence against women has long represented an important statistical gap in measuring the progress of gender equality

at EU level, addressed recently by the Fundamental Rights Agency's Survey on Violence against Women. However, comparable data on the norms, attitudes and stereotypes that underpin gender-based violence and perpetuate current unequal power relations between women and men in society are still largely absent (EIGE, 2013d).

The distribution of Time between women and men remains difficult to measure, as are other areas of the BPfA including the Girl Child or Armed Conflict (since 2008 when indicators on women and armed conflict were proposed and endorsed by the EPSC<sup>o</sup>Council, no initiative to collect EU-wide data was taken).

Finally, the collection of other important contextual information is increasingly needed for a more subtle analysis of intersecting inequalities (multiple-discrimination) and recognition that women and men are not homogenous groups, sufficient data on family status, sexual orientation, disability and migration status is required.



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World Health Organisation (WHO) (2012), *Social determinants of health and well-being among young people: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study — international report from the 2009/2010 survey*, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, prepared by Currie, C., Zanotti, C., Morgan, A., Currie, D., de Looze, M., Roberts, C., Samdal, O., Smith, O. and Barnekow, V. (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/armenia/publications/social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people-health-behaviour-in-school-aged-children-hbsc-study>).

Zaidi, A. (2012), 'Exclusion from material resources: poverty and capability deprivation among older people in EU countries', *From Exclusion to Inclusion in Old Age: A Global Challenge*, edited by Scharf and Keating, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 71–88.



## 5. Endnotes



## 5. Endnotes

- (1) [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform)
- (2) The Pact calls for action particularly in the areas of employment, education and social inclusion. Amongst others, it requires the EU and Member States to close the gender gaps in employment, education and social protection; ensure equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; promote women's entrepreneurship, flexible working arrangements and various forms of leave for both women and men; improve childcare services and care provisions for other dependants; and take into account the specific situation of women from disadvantaged groups. Other commitments concerning the BPfA refer to the need to eliminate gender stereotypes, fight all forms of violence against women, and promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields.
- (3) Before 2010, the task area of gender equality has been allocated to DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.
- (4) For a discussion of the bodies making up the Council of the EU, see Council of the EU — Council Configurations: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/council-configurations/employment,-social-policy,-health-and-consumer-affairs>
- (5) See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=115>
- (6) See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=758>
- (7) Employment guidelines are part of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines which combine also the broad economic policy guidelines (guidelines 1–7).
- (8) Definition of areas: North and core of the euro area: AT, BE, DE, FI, FR, LU, NL; South and periphery of EA: EE, EL, ES, IE, IT, CY, MT, PT, SI, SK; Non EA — North: CZ, DK, PL, SE, UK; Non EA - South and periphery: BG, HR, LV, LT, HU, RO. Ref: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/jer2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/jer2014_en.pdf)
- (9) Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness.
- (10) In 2012, DG Justice in cooperation with the EEAS and DG Development and Cooperation prepared an EU position paper for the 57th session of the CSW in 2013, whose priority theme was 'Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls'. The CSW was able to arrive at a very good outcome reflecting the main EU priorities outlined in the position on this important topic.
- (11) In 2011, Parliament adopted its third (and last) resolution on gender mainstreaming, where it 'commits itself to regularly adopting and implementing a policy plan for gender mainstreaming'. The resolution's policy plan for gender mainstreaming in 2011–13 proposes a set of priorities for consistent and effective incorporation of the gender perspective into all work carried out by the Parliament.
- (12) The Social OMC is a framework for national strategy development for social protection and social investment, which sets out the basis for a voluntary process for cooperation and coordination of policies between EU Member States on poverty and social exclusion, health care, long-term care, and pensions. The process also involves close co-operation with stakeholders, including Social Partners and civil society. More information at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1063&langId=en>.
- (13) The International Standard of Classification of Education (ISCED) was set up by UNESCO to compare education statistics and indicators from around the world. More information at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx>
- (14) In 2007 there were eight such exceptions (BG, CY, EE, FI, LV, LT, IT, PT), LU and HR not included.



- (15) [http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/docs/swd\\_investing\\_in\\_health.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/docs/swd_investing_in_health.pdf)
- (16) <http://eige.europa.eu/internal/bpfa/results#/41/indicators/67/statistics/274/map/0/4937/0/0>
- (17) Data not available for Belgium and Denmark for 2010
- (18) [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Mortality\\_and\\_life\\_expectancy\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Mortality_and_life_expectancy_statistics)
- (19) <http://angebote.femsued.at>
- (20) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/files/directive\\_2011\\_99\\_on\\_epo\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/files/directive_2011_99_on_epo_en.pdf)
- (21) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF>
- (22) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A7-2014-0001&language=EN#title2>
- (23) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2014-0126>
- (24) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender\\_based\\_violence/131125\\_fgm\\_communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/131125_fgm_communication_en.pdf)
- (25) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/event/strategic-planning-meeting-on-gender-based-violence-data-collection>
- (26) The survey also measured experience of violence in childhood. In total, 40 000 women (approximately 1 500 per Member State, aged 17–74: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/survey-gender-based-violence-against-women>
- (27) [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_en.asp)
- (28) European Court of Human Rights, judgement *Opuz vs. Turkey*, appl. 33401/02, 9.6.2009.
- (29) European Court of Human Rights, judgement *Bevacqua and S. v. Bulgaria*, appl. no. 71127/01, 12.6.2008.
- (30) <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/439/64/PDF/N0843964.pdf?OpenElement> Pp. 14–15.
- (31) EIGE Area D Report on Victim Support does not include UK, as during that time frame, a ban that can be directly imposed by the police was only conducted on a pilot study basis. As of 2014, the protection order has been rolled out in England and Wales.
- (32) Previously, EIGE report Area D Victim Support indicated Latvia was the only Member State that did not have a protection order.
- (33) In the Netherlands, the system of banning a perpetrator from the home by the police was adopted in the protection framework.
- (34) In France, Article 12 of the Law Number 2010-769 reformulated some provision of the Code of Criminal Procedure, by introducing a protection order against a spouse, life partner or civil partner (also against former spouses, life partners or civil partners).
- (35) In Slovenia, specific criminal offence or a provision of higher penalties was introduced for non-compliance with a protection order.
- (36) In Slovakia, the Police Forces Act was amended to include protection orders.
- (37) In Hungary, a general law on protection orders was adopted.
- (38) In Lithuania, Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was introduced.

- (39) Domestic violence legislation in respect of safety and barring orders was amended in Ireland in 2010 to apply to same-sex civil partners and in 2011 to persons with whom the applicant had lived in an intimate and committed same-sex or opposite-sex relationship, or with whom they had a child in common, including where the couple concerned do not live together or have never lived together.
- (40) In Belgium, a new procedure for emergency removal from home was introduced in 2012 to cover situations of violence or at risk of violence.
- (41) In 2012, a new legislation was adopted by the Danish Parliament whereby the existing provisions on restraining orders and expulsions were amended and unified in a single Act (Act No 112 of 3 February 2012 on restraining orders, exclusion orders and expulsion). This new piece of legislation entered into force in March 2012.
- (42) On 31 March 2014, in Latvia, amendments in Civil Procedure law came into force to guarantee protection orders in cases of domestic violence. These amendments provide the right of a person suffering from violence or stalking to ask a court on his or her own initiative, or with the intermediation of the police, to take appropriate protection measures against the perpetrator within civil proceeding.
- (43) In the UK, the ban of the perpetrator from the home was first piloted in June 2011, with the protection orders finally rolled out across England and Wales in March 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pilot-scheme-to-protect-victims-of-domestic-violence-extended> and <https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>
- (44) Standards of service provisions see Chapter four of the Istanbul Convention Explanatory report.
- (45) The report mentions existence of 17 national women's helplines. See also WAVE. (2014). Since the publication of the report, additional helplines have been identified in BG and DE. The helpline in BG is operated by an NGO, is free of charge, but does not operate 24/7. The helpline in DE is free of charge and operates 24/7.
- (46) Information on number of beds in women's shelters not available for BG, RO, FI and SE.
- (47) Compared with the Council of Europe recommended standard of 1 shelter place per 10 000 inhabitants.
- (48) The Austrian Intervention Centres for Women Victims of Domestic Violence takes a proactive approach to contacting affected women, upon receiving police information on violence. The centres are also open to any women survivors of domestic violence who wish to receive support. The centres receive most of their funding from the state and exist in each region.
- (49) See [[www.hilfetelefon.de/de/startseite](http://www.hilfetelefon.de/de/startseite)]: The helpline is run in cooperation with the the Federal Office for Family and Social Affairs (in the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior, Women's and Youth Affairs — BMFSFJ).
- (50) This was entitled Access to Specialised Victim Support Services for Women with Disabilities Who Have Experienced Violence, it was coordinated by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. Please see [www.thl.fi/en\\_US/web/en/research/projects/avow](http://www.thl.fi/en_US/web/en/research/projects/avow)
- (51) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/odel-project-migg-medizinische-intervention-gegen-gewalt>
- (52) Different forms of stalking measured included physical forms of harassment (ex. hugging, kissing), verbal acts of harassment (ex. being subject to sexually suggestive comments), non-verbal forms including cyber harassment (sexually explicit SMS messages or inappropriate advances on social networking sites).
- (53) With the exception of Portugal and Scotland (UK), no Member State has published data on the number of women murdered by their intimate partner in their official police data. For Portugal, the data comes from data on homicides from the Observatory on Women Murdered (UMAR). For Scotland (UK), the data comes from the report of the Scottish Government titled Homicide in Scotland 2011–12. In addition to the published data on homicides of women, data on homicides of women was made available in Hungary based on a formal request to the Hungarian office of the prosecutor.



- (54) Data is missing for BE, CZ, FR, EL, IE, LV, PL.
- (55) Some states exclude non-intentional homicide, but include traffic accidents; some limit data to a certain population, and the information is compiled from various sources.
- (56) European Institute for Gender Equality. Administrative Data Sources on gender-based violence in the EU. <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/administrative-data-sources/european-union>
- (57) [www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf)
- (58) [www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/ewcs](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/ewcs)
- (59) Eurofound. Fifth European Working Conditions Survey Questionnaire. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/ewcs/2010/questionnaire.htm>
- (60) Eurofound. Fifth European Working Conditions Survey Questionnaire. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/ewcs/2010/questionnaire.htm>
- (61) For other forms of 'adverse behaviours', the EU average rates (for women and men workers) are as follows, for the 2010 survey: verbal abuse 11 %, humiliating behaviour 5 %, bullying and harassment 4 %, physical violence 2 %, sexual harassment 1 %.
- (62) [www.wave-network.org/content/project-impact-evaluation-european-perpetrator-programmes](http://www.wave-network.org/content/project-impact-evaluation-european-perpetrator-programmes). The guidelines can be downloaded in different languages from the Dissens website: <http://archive.work-with-perpetrators.eu/en/guidelines.php>
- (63) [www.wave-network.org/sites/default/files/DOCUMENTATION\\_15th%20WAVE%20Conference%20Sofia%202013\\_4.pdf](http://www.wave-network.org/sites/default/files/DOCUMENTATION_15th%20WAVE%20Conference%20Sofia%202013_4.pdf)
- (64) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/specialised-training-on-domestic-violence-for-grand-duchy-future-members-of-police-forces>
- (65) [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_en.asp)
- (66) Transparency International (4 June 2014). Transparency International Calls for An Immediate End to Intimidation of Civil Society in Hungary. [Access: 3.7.2014] [http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency\\_international\\_calls\\_for\\_an\\_immediate\\_end\\_to\\_intimidation\\_](http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency_international_calls_for_an_immediate_end_to_intimidation_)
- (67) WAVE. (2014). Hungary: Government Agents Raid the Offices of 3 NGOs that Help Distribute Norwegian Grants, in an Attempt to Intimidate Civil Society. [Access: 3.7.2014] <http://www.wave-network.org/content/hungary-government-agents-raid-offices-3-ngos-help-distribute-norwegian-grants-attempt>
- (68) Few EU Member States have adopted a refugee reception policy that incorporates a gender perspective. However, EU Directive 2004/83/EC recommends a more gender-sensitive interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, as it extends the grounds for protection to other forms of endangerment within EU Member States of origin, such as 'degrading treatment' or generalised violence as a result of armed conflict.
- (69) CSDP Civilian Missions Gender Figures, December 2012
- (70) Idoia Rodríguez was the first woman soldier who died while taking part in a Spanish military operation abroad (Afghanistan).
- (71) UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000. It reminds the international community of both the specific vulnerable situation of women in time of wars and their central role in conflict resolution processes. As a result, women should be included in all phases of negotiation and implementation of peace agreements <http://www.eplo.org/implementation-of-unscr-1325-in-europe.html>

- (72) In its UNECE report, the German government states that the goals of 1325 are essential components of German foreign, security and development policy and includes a reference and link to the National Action Plan which describes in detail the measures Germany is and will undertake.
- (73) <http://www.eplo.org/implementation-of-unscr-1325-in-europe.html>
- (74) UN Security Council Resolution 1820 reinforces Resolution 1325. Focusing on sexual violence as a war crime, it demands to all parties intervening into armed conflicts and their resolution to take measure to protect civilians from such a crime. These measures include the promotion of training for military staff.
- (75) OECD-DAC current EU members are: AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, SK, SI, SE and UK. The EU as donor is also a member. Other non-EU members are: Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and United States.
- (76) Council Directive 2010/18/EU: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:068:0013:0020:EN:PDF>
- (77) The new Parental Leave Directive (Council of the EU, 2010e) follows the Framework Agreement on parental leave in which the European social partners laid down minimum requirements designed to facilitate the reconciliation of parental and professional responsibilities for working parents. Replacing Directive 96/34/EC, which put into effect the 1995 social partner agreement and established for the first time minimum standards on parental leave at EU level, the new Directive strengthened and clarified the rights for working parents.  
See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=650&furtherNews=yes>
- (78) Coming into effect within two years, the amendment stipulated that each working parent has the right to take time off to care for children up to eight-years old for a minimum of four months (previously three months).
- (79) Malta has witnessed a significant increase in the participation of women in the labour market throughout recent years. The employment rate stood at 63.1 % in 2012, which exceeded the previous national target of 62.9 %. In effect, the Government has revised its employment target (among 20 to 64 year olds) to 70 % by 2020. Measures and initiatives to continue increasing the participation of women in the labour market, and thus to further enhance the empowerment of women have been given priority.
- (80) The gender gap in total employment rates quoted elsewhere does not reflect this important dimension of gender equality because they are a head count rather than a measure of hours worked.
- (81) The increase in the proportion of men working part-time since 2007 was above the increase in the proportion of women working part-time in all but five Member States (LV, LT, PL, RO, SL). Note this is related to policies of work sharing (e.g. in Hungary) in the recession (Karamessini and Rubery, 2013).
- (82) The impact of working reduced hours in a full-time job may differ from working in a specifically designed part-time job – i.e. in some cases the rights to reduce hours may be more positive than simply promoting part-time job creation.
- (83) Directive 97/81/EC on part-time work requires equal treatment for part-time staff with comparable permanent staff.
- (84) Right established to request flexible working.
- (85) Figures do not include Croatia.
- (86) The Parental Leave Directive (PLD) of 1996 established individual rights for all employed persons to leave at the birth of a child, even if this was not necessarily paid.
- (87) Ray et al. (2008) examined the effect of parental leave policies on the workplace and care giving by developing a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) paid leave measure calculated as the wage replacement rate multiplied by the duration of leave. Most EU Member States were found to provide between three months and one year of FTE paid leave. Germany, Norway, Greece, Finland and Spain provided the most FTE paid leave in 2008.



- (88) In some cases, paid maternity/paternity leave may be seen as preferable to parental leave, because it can be taken *'en bloc'*.
- (89) The proportion of employed women on parental leave ranged from 4 % to 30 %.
- (90) In unadjusted form, the gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of men and women paid employees, as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male employees.
- (91) Recent trends have seen real terms decreases in minimum wages, although not necessarily as fast as other wages.
- (92) There are some data gaps, however.
- (93) Excludes activities of households as employers and extra-territorial organisations and bodies.
- (94) For the purposes of the EU-LFS self-employment encompasses people who are self-employed for the purpose of earning profit, spend time on the operation of a business or is in the process of setting up a business. The group is heterogeneous and includes people who employ others, own-account workers and craft workers/farmers. The data has been criticised for not reflecting entrepreneurship since in some cases self-employed people could be in 'regular' work with only one client with little influence on decisions related to the work (Eurofound, 2010a).
- (95) Nearly a third (32 %) of self-employed women without employees were paid regularly an agreed fee compared with 31 % of self-employed men without employees.
- (96) [www.igualdadenaempresa.es](http://www.igualdadenaempresa.es)
- (97) The corresponding research is available here: <http://eige.europa.eu/internal/bpfa/results#/84/indicatorsinfo>
- (98) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm)
- (99) COM(2012) 614 final: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm)
- (100) The latest is: European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on women in political decision-making — quality and equality (P7\_TA(2012)0070).
- (101) <http://paritydemocracy.eu>. The campaign was coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in partnership with the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the Women Employment Information Centre (Lithuania), the Forum 50 % (Czech Republic) and the Romanian Women's Lobby (Romania). The EWL 50/50 Campaign in 2008–09 gathered the support of more than 300 prominent women and men from all over Europe and all political affiliations. The 50/50 Campaign marked important progress in women's participation in the EP which rose from 31 % to 35 % after the 2009 European Parliament elections.
- (102) <http://www.results-elections2014.eu/en/gender-balance.html>
- (103) DG Justice — Database of Gender balance in decision-making positions, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-commission/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-commission/index_en.htm). Data are available until the end of 2013.
- (104) Until 2010 there was only one woman among the 22 members of the Board of the Bank. Source: DG Justice — Database of Gender balance in decision-making positions, European financial institutions. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/financial-institutions/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/financial-institutions/index_en.htm)
- (105) In the Database on Women and men in decision-making, the 'BEIS' typology refers to four types of state functions: (a) Basic functions (foreign and internal affairs, defence, justice, etc.); (b) Economic functions (finance, trade, industry, agriculture, etc.); (c) Infrastructure (traffic, communication, environment, etc.); and (d) Socio-cultural functions (social affairs, health, children, family, youth, elderly people, education, science, culture, labour, sports, etc.).

- (106) Global Database of quotas for women ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)) run by the IDEA, University of Stockholm and the Interparliamentary Union
- (107) According to the definitions provided in the Database: women and men in decision-making, the company analysed are 'the largest publicly listed companies in each country. **Publicly listed** means that the shares of the company are traded on the stock exchange. The "**largest**" companies are taken to be the members (max. 50) of the primary blue-chip index, [...]. Only companies which are registered in the country concerned (according to the ISIN code) are counted.' See [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/executives-non-executives/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/executives-non-executives/index_en.htm)
- (108) DG Justice — Database of Gender balance in decision-making positions, European social partner organisations — Employee organisations. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/civil-society/social-partners/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/civil-society/social-partners/index_en.htm)
- (109) DG Justice — Database of Gender balance in decision-making positions, European social partner organisations — Employer organisations. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/civil-society/social-partners/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/civil-society/social-partners/index_en.htm)
- (110) Given the issues in calculating and comparing funding allocation across Member States, these indicators measure the ratio of staff resources going to either the governmental gender equality body (indicator 2a) or the body/[ies] for the promotion of equal treatment between women and men (indicator 2b). The separation of this measure into two sub-indicators is in part a reflection of the varied equality bodies that exist across the EU, the most basic distinction being whether they fight discrimination on several grounds or solely on the grounds of sex. As a minimum, there should be a body in place to promote equal treatment in general, in line with Directive 2002/73/EC. This was passed in the European Parliament in 2002 and called on Member States to establish one or more bodies to promote, analyse, monitor and support the promotion of equal treatment of all persons.
- (111) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-men-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>
- (112) <http://eige.europa.eu/good-practices>
- (113) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/activities/gender-equality-index>
- (114) This assessment was taken on board in the report presented by the Finnish Presidency in 2006 to the Council of the European Union. In its assessment carried out in 2013, EIGE proposed an improved methodology for assessment that offers the possibility of a much clearer picture as to the reality:
- 1: Status of the government's commitment to gender mainstreaming (maximum 2 points);
  - 2: Existence of structures for gender mainstreaming (maximum 4 points):
    - 2.1. Structures of gender mainstreaming (contact persons or focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in ministries and/or an inter-ministerial coordination structure for gender mainstreaming).
    - 2.2. Consultations with the governmental gender equality body on new policies and policy evaluations.
  - 3: Commitment to and use of the methods and tools for gender mainstreaming (maximum 10 points):
    - 3.1. Commitment to using gender mainstreaming methods and tools (legal obligation to undertake gender impact assessment and/or gender budgeting).
    - 3.2. Use of gender mainstreaming methods and tools (gender impact assessment; gender budgeting; gender training; and monitoring and evaluation).
    - 3.3. Availability of reports from evaluation studies.
- (115) This trend among EU Member States to unify the bodies responsible for addressing discrimination might be the result of the requirement formulated in Article 20 of Directive 2006/54/EC known as the Recast Directive, where Member States are advised that the bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of sex 'may form part of agencies with responsibility at national level for the defence of human rights or the safeguard of individuals' rights'.



- (116) The basis of this is Indicator 2b which shows the ratio of personnel resources available to the designated body for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men to the population size of the Member State. The number of employees is given in person-years, meaning full-time, year-round employment excluding all project personnel that do not receive funding from the state budget. In case of independent bodies in charge of promoting equal treatment on several grounds, one of which is sex, an estimate of the number of employees solely in charge of combating discrimination on grounds of sex was requested. The indicator is calculated from the ratio of employees per population (million) in each Member State and describes the deviation from the median.
- (117) Not all EU Member States signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention that entered into force in December 2000. Estonia, Latvia and Malta are those who did not sign and ratified the Optional Protocol. See information about the text of the Optional Protocol and the status of its signature and ratification at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCEDAW.aspx>
- (118) For up to date info on the country reporting to CEDAW Committee, please see: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29)
- (119) See the annual reports at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index\\_en.htm#h2-2](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm#h2-2)
- (120) The EC prepared the Communication 'A Decent Life for All - Ending Poverty and Giving the World a Sustainable Future', published in February 2013 where the Commission highlighted the role that women must play in the new post-2015 overarching framework and the need to remove all forms of barriers to equal participation. It stated that the framework should put 'particular emphasis on moving towards a rights-based approach to development, on reducing inequalities, as well as on the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights and gender equality'. These principles were reaffirmed and reinforced in the Council Conclusions on 'The overarching post-2015 agenda', adopted in June 2013 and setting out the EU's common position for negotiations on the post-2015 agenda.
- (121) European Commission (2010), Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–15 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF>
- (122) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054>
- (123) See the different reports prepared for the European Commission on people with disabilities: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/document/index\\_en.htm#h2-5](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/document/index_en.htm#h2-5)
- (124) European Council Conclusions EUCO 23/11 of 23 and 24 June 2011, following the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council Conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, 106665/11 of 19 May 2011.
- (125) 'Violence that is directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression or that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately, is understood as gender-based violence. It may result in physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm, or economic loss, to the victim. Gender-based violence is understood to be a form of discrimination and a violation of the fundamental freedoms of the victim and includes violence in close relationships, sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment), trafficking in human beings, slavery, and different forms of harmful practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called "honour crimes". Women victims of gender-based violence and their children often require special support and protection because of the high risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation connected with such violence.' See Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

- (126) 'Where violence is committed in a close relationship, it is committed by a person who is a current or former spouse, or partner or other family member of the victim, whether or not the offender shares or has shared the same household with the victim. Such violence could cover physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence and could result in physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss. Violence in close relationships is a serious and often hidden social problem which could cause systematic psychological and physical trauma with severe consequences because the offender is a person whom the victim should be able to trust. Victims of violence in close relationships may therefore be in need of special protection measures. Women are affected disproportionately by this type of violence and the situation can be worse if the woman is dependent on the offender economically, socially or as regards her right to residence.' See Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.
- (127) For the work of the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, see: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/access\\_to\\_justice/index\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/access_to_justice/index_en.asp) and for the general discussion on access to justice of the CEDAW Committee, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Accessjustice.aspx>
- (128) This conclusion is based on looking through the latest numbers of the European anti-discrimination law review and Gender Equality law review, both publications that monitor the cases of discrimination in the Member States, through the networks of the legal experts of the European Commission.
- (129) As highlighted by the Immigrant Council of Ireland Independent Law Centre in its communication to the CEDAW general discussion on Access to Justice, in 2013.
- (130) As highlighted by the organisation Andalucia ACOGE in its contribution to the General Discussion on 'access to justice' of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in 2013.
- (131) The report also provides data and examples from the EGGSI Network's national reports.
- (132) This refers to the RU486 pill.
- (133) For definitions used, sampling methodology and data collection please see EC's database Women and men in decision-making, at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm)
- (134) In 2012, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) released a Handbook on Gender Equality Best Practices in European Journalists' Unions. In 2009, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) published a guide on Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism.
- (135) Education Statistics, Eurostat, table educ\_grad5. This is an approximate figure, calculated on the basis of the Eurostat's estimates of the absolute numbers of students in the year.
- (136) Also limited data is available this suggests that women Director-Generals of public service organisations remain relatively uncommon. These are the share of women who have held the role in these EU Member States: Austria: 1/10 since 1960; Denmark: 1/10 since 1925; Romania: 0/11 since 1989; Spain: 5/27 since 1956; United Kingdom: 0/14 since 1927.
- (137) Delano (2003) explored why different types of media bodies may become gender segregated, finding that often women journalists 'train into' magazine journalism, whereas men get work experience through working at local papers.
- (138) In spring 2012, the organisation Women in Journalism conducted a study of 18 daily and Sunday papers in the UK, finding that women had chosen only 22 % of the front page by-lines (2012).
- (139) A study in Poland found that over half of journalists working in Polish TV stations were women, yet that men were given responsibility in more 'demanding programmes' and women were restricted to those seen as less challenging (Twardowska and Olczyk, 2003).



- (140) A summary of the research on media decision-making is available in EIGE, *Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations* (2013), Chapter 1.
- (141) The media organisations covered in this research may not reflect the full range of gender equality policies and practices in the EU.
- (142) These are the figures for 2012: Equality committee — private media bodies: 11 %; public media bodies: 21 %. Equalities and Diversity Officer — 7 %: private; 21 %: public. Equalities and Diversity Department — 6 %: private; 14 %: public.
- (143) EIGE (2013), Figure 2.14
- (144) For the level 1 positions, 38 % were held by women when such measures were in place, against 14 % when they were not (EIGE, 2013a, Figure 2.17).
- (145) These are the Austrian Journalists' Union, the Danish Union of Journalists, the Estonian Women Journalists and Editors Union; the Journalists' Union in Finland; the Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions (PFJU) in Greece; the Association of Hungarian Journalists (MÚOSZ) the Irish National Union of Journalists; the Italian media unions FNSI, USIGRAI and ODG; the Spanish Federation of Journalist Associations (FAPE); the Spanish Federation of Journalist Unions (FESP); the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematography and Theatre Union (BECTU) in the UK; and the National Union of Journalists in the UK.
- (146) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/training-courses-and-modules>
- (147) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/mentoring-for-women-working-in-the-film-and-television-industry>
- (148) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/database-of-professional-women-in-the-media-with-gender-perspective>
- (149) <http://eige.europa.eu/content/website-zeroviolenzadonne>
- (150) In 2009, the EU-SILC database showed that more men (62 %) in single-person households have a car than women (40 %).
- (151) For example, there is evidence for Sweden (Räty and Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010), Germany (Max-Rubner Institut and Bundesforschungsinstitut für Ernährung und Lebensmittel, 2008), and Denmark (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009:44).
- (152) In the context of natural disasters, gender has many related effects, including situations where: boys and men typically acquire rescue- and survival-related skills; and the traditionally domestic role of women makes them vulnerable due to the lower resilience of homes than workplaces.
- (153) Directives 2010/31/EC; 2005/32/EC; 2003/66/EC; and 2009/125/EC
- (154) Regulation No 443/2009 and Directives 2003/30/EC; 2008/101/EC
- (155) Directive 2009/29/EC.
- (156) European Parliament *resolution of 11 September 2012 on the role of women in the green economy* (2012/2035(INI)). See also European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2012 on women and climate change and European Parliament.
- (157) The adaptation strategy makes explicit reference to these fields. See EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change /\* COM/2013/0216 final.
- (158) For example, see European Energy Security Strategy, SWD(2014) 330 final. See also *White Paper (2011): Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system*.

- (159) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, *Progress towards achieving the Kyoto and EU 2020 objectives*, COM(2013) 698 final.
- (160) The data presented in this part of the report come from two sources: EIGE report *Gender Equality and Climate Change* (2012) for 2011 data; and the *Database on women and men in decision-making* of the European Commission from 2013 data. In 2013, for the first time, the Database of the European Commission included the indicators developed by EIGE on decision-making in the environment, transport and energy, published in its 2012 report and accepted by the EPSCO Council in December 2012. Where data were not available for 2013, the report presents data from 2011, the only ones existing at EU level at the moment.
- (161) There are some inconsistencies in the definitions of these 'top positions'. Please see Annex 2.11 for a full explanation.
- (162) Level 1 administrator: highest level of administrative (non-political) positions within each ministry. Level 2 administrators: second level of administrative (non-political) positions within each ministry. Please see Annex 2.11 for more discussion of these levels.  
Data on the proportion of women junior ministers is missing for many Member States, so an EU average has not been given.
- (163) The latest data in the EC database (2012/13) does not break down the figures by sector, so figures have been given for 2011. In this context, the 'top decision-making positions' refers to those in the highest levels/positions (political level); the top level of managerial or administrative decision-making; and the heads of sectoral departments or divisions.
- (164) Annex II, EIGE, *Women and the Environment: Gender Equality and Climate Change* (2012); also EIGE's database on Women and Men in Europe: Facts and Figures.
- (165) The percentages for Indicator 3 are calculated on the basis of the women's average representation over the past five years within the delegations to the COP and the SBs. For instance, an average for 2013 is calculated using the annual representation between 2008 and 2012. The figures for heads of SB delegations are calculated on the same basis.
- (166) The EU sends an overall delegation to the COPs and SBs, in addition to the individual Member State delegations.
- (167) The list is not comprehensive; these subjects will sometimes cover topics that do not relate to the environment, and there will be other excluded subjects that involve some consideration of the environment.
- (168) In the same way that men are over-represented in some subjects, women dominate others, such as teaching and health. For more on the gendered segregation of subject choices, please see critical B: Education and Training of Women.
- (169) To support this ambition, the Italian government accepted a National Plan for interventions to promote reconciliation between work and family in 2010, and allocated EUR 40 million to its implementation.
- (170) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF>
- (171) The exact quote is: '[...] despite the high political priority given to children's rights and needs by the Member States and the Commission, the interests of girls as a distinct but diverse social group continue to be under-represented in policies and programmes'.  
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209669%202008%20ADD%201>
- (172) The performance of girls in mathematical and scientific literacy is shown by the 2012 OECD PISA Study (OECD, 2012). As PISA studies were conducted in 2003, 2006 and 2009, it is possible to establish trends over time. Malta participated in 2009, but not in 2012. Croatia and Cyprus participated only in 2012.
- (173) WHO standards recommend starting sex and relationship education at a very early age, adapting the content to the understanding and needs of the child.



- (174) In Ireland, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is included in the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum throughout primary education, and is mandatory at senior cycle (information provided by Irish Government representative within the HLG on GM, September 2014).
- (175) <http://soc101group2.providence.wikispaces.net/Gender+Distinctions+in+Cyber+Bullying>
- (176) Such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Optional Protocol to the Convention for the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
- (177) Ireland and Portugal mention this in the section on the 'girl child', although other Member States have also strengthened their laws against female genital mutilation since 2009.
- (178) [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm)





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