



GENDER EQUALITY AND MEDIA



Analytical Report
Gender Equality Commission
Steering Committee on
Media and Information Society

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Analytical Report – 2019 Data

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and Information Society

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French edition:
*L'égalité entre les femmes et
les hommes et les médias.*

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Report of the progress made since Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media

2019 Data

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In 2013, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted its [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2013\)1 on gender equality and media](#) calling on member States to support efforts by media to promote gender equality.

Recalling both media freedom and gender equality's key role in ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights and democratic governance, the sixteen measures listed in the recommendation focus on the six following areas:

- ▶ Gender equality policy and legislation;
- ▶ Adoption and implementation of national indicators;
- ▶ Provision of information and promotion of good practices;
- ▶ Accountability channels;
- ▶ Research and publication;
- ▶ Media literacy and active citizenship.

Beyond member States, some of these measures were also directed at media organisations and their self-regulatory bodies, as well as media regulatory authorities.

A handbook¹ was published in 2015 to support member States in their task, by guiding them through a set of tools and existing good practices that had already contributed to positive changes in various countries in Europe and beyond.

Additional guidance to help members and media stakeholders achieve a more gender-equal media field was provided through two recent instruments of the Council of Europe. In 2017, a recommendation was adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers regarding gender equality in the audiovisual sector.² More recently, the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism adopted in 2019 also includes a section on addressing sexism in the media.³

The present report is based on the answers to a questionnaire addressed in 2019 to Council of Europe's member States, media organisations, media regulators

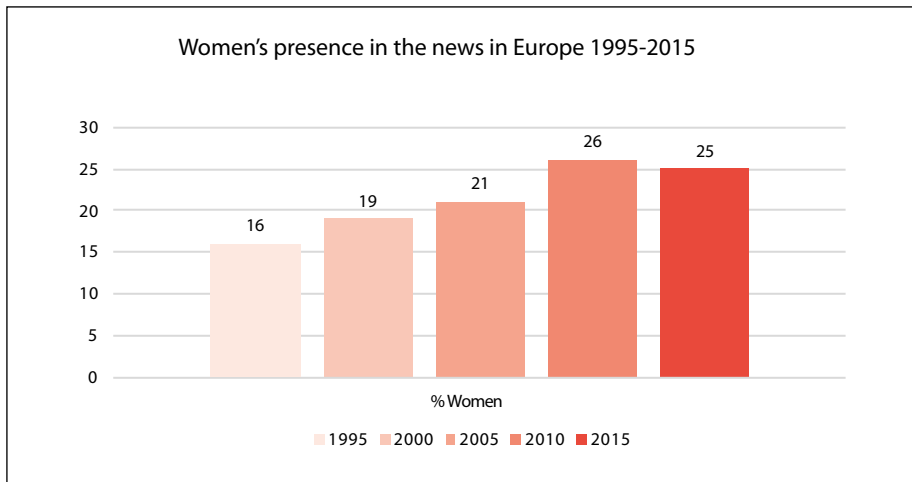
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1. Handbook on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on gender equality and media: <https://rm.coe.int/1680590558>
 2. Recommendation CM/Rec (2017) 9 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality in the audiovisual sector: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6
 3. Recommendation CM/Rec (2019) 1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-055519-gbr-2573-cmrec-2019-1-web-a5/168093e08c>

and media self-regulatory bodies, to assess progress made since the adoption of Recommendation (2013)¹ on gender equality and media.

The report was prompted by evidence of a lack of progress in the field of media coverage of women, as well as continued gender inequalities in the profession and a weak representation of women in decision-making roles in the media industry.

Gender equality and media content

The results of the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)⁴ have shown no improvement since the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Report regarding the portrayal of women in the news. The GMMP 2015 Report concluded that globally women represented only 24% of the people who could be seen, read or heard in the traditional news media (25% for the European Union 28), matching the results of the previous world monitoring in 2010. In Europe, the situation was the same for online media and traditional media, indicating that women's underrepresentation in traditional media had crossed over into the digital news world. Overall, the data collected in 2015 showed that a lot of work still needs to be done to make a real change in the representation of women in media.

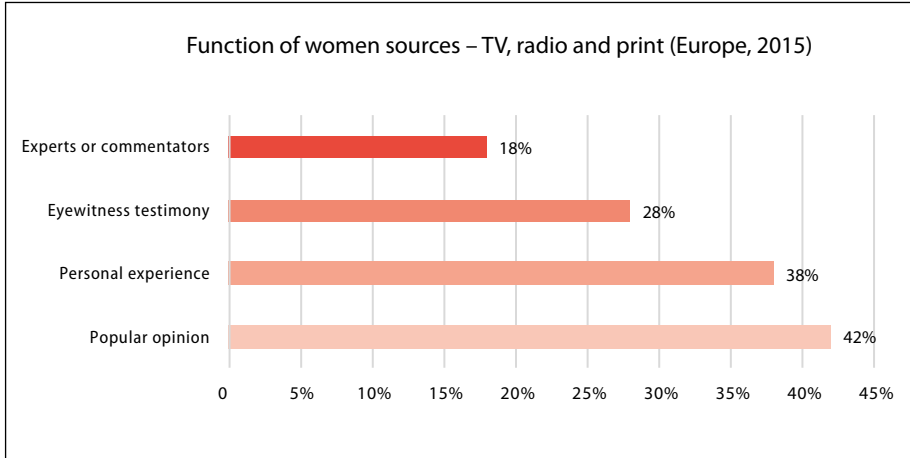


Source: Global Media Monitoring Project, samples of TV, radio, newspapers, and online news in 28 European countries, taken every five years since 1995.

These challenges relate to women's visibility and to gendered ways of addressing stories. For example, while the most frequent function for all sources was expert/commentator (41%), less than one in five experts or commentators were women (18%), nearly half as many as appears as sources in North American news (32%). Women are also much more likely to write online stories with a science/health slant (46%) or a social/legal focus (42%) than politics (37%) or crime (33%). In other words, women "are asked to speak as private people not because of their expertise

4. Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015 <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports>

and professional background, once again pushing women into the sphere of the private with men dominating the more prestigious and 'important' public sphere of experts and spokespeople."



Source: Global Media Monitoring Project, Europe, 2015

Challenges also relate to stereotyped representations of men, and even more so, women, and to the low level of interest for gender equality issues in the media. The very low proportion of news stories addressing gender equality-related topics (5% in 2015) or challenging gender stereotypes (3% in 2015), shows that this theme is still barely addressed in media with little progress over time, showing the need for more training and awareness raising within the profession.

A study⁵ looking at gender stereotypes in television advertisements in eight European Union member States found a rather balanced representation among the primary (adult) characters (48% men versus 52% women), but substantial imbalances when broken down by age with 63% of women in the 18-34 age span and 38% for the 35+ age span. This raises concerns about the objectification and sexualisation of women in advertising and the lack of visibility of women over 35 years of age.

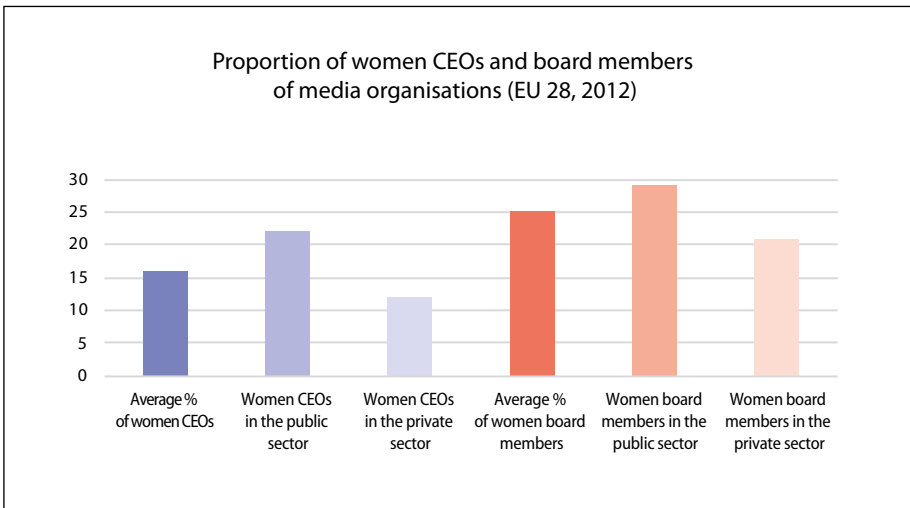
Gender equality in the media profession

Regarding media as a profession, although women are increasingly present in newsrooms, significant gender-based differences and inequalities persist. Women made up 41% of reporters and presenters in Europe in 2015, but with notable differences between different media types (48% women in television, 40% in radio and 34% in print media) and roles (37% of reporters as opposed to 47% of presenters): a pattern more or less unchanged since 2000.⁶

5. Study quoted in European Institute for Gender Equality, Beijing+25, the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, 2020 <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/beijing-25-fifth-review-implementation-beijing-platform-action-eu-member-states>

6. Ibid.

Women’s access to leading roles in the media also remains limited. Available data show that there are still serious gender inequalities regarding decision making and media ownership. In 2012, only 16% of chief executive officers (CEOs) of media organisations were women. Across all types of decision-making roles, gender inequality was significantly worse in the private sector than in the public sector. 2017 data on public broadcasters show that women constitute 37% of presidents and members of boards/councils, progress as compared to the 29% figure from 2012. A 2019 study conducted by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) confirms this inequality, showing that while women make up 44% of the workforce in public broadcasting media, they only constitute 25% of higher ranks and executive positions.⁷



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality Gender Statistics Database, March 2020.

In a European study conducted in 2018,⁸ women working in media reported “widespread gender-based discrimination and inequality of opportunity within their industries, including in pay, hiring, allocation of work, and promotion. (...) The most common of these include insufficient provision for parents with childcare responsibilities, competitive rather than cooperative modes of communication, and ‘normalisation’ of sexual harassment and bullying”.

Since 2017, the #MeToo movement has helped shed light on existing gender inequalities and high levels of sexism, sexual harassment and violence in various areas, including in the media. Women in various sectors speak up more and some measures are taken to address the persistence of gender-based violence. At the same time, a significant increase of gender-based attacks of women journalists is observed. A survey conducted by the International Federation of Journalists in

7. EBU Gender Equality and Public Service Media report, 2019 <https://www.ebu.ch/contents/publications/research/membersonly/report/gender-equality--psm.html>
 8. Gender Equality in the Media Sector, Study of European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, 2018. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/596839/IPOL_STU\(2018\)596839_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/596839/IPOL_STU(2018)596839_EN.pdf)

October 2017 has shown that one in two women journalists experienced violence at work, including online abuse, verbal abuse, psychological abuse and sexual harassment.⁹ Another international study from 2019¹⁰ revealed that nearly 66% of women journalists surveyed said they had been subjected to online harassment or threats, with more than one in 10 reporting it happened often or daily.

It is also worth noting that the public perception of gender roles in society is strongly influenced by the way media portray women and men. Interestingly a Eurobarometer report issued in 2017¹¹ shows that more than half of all respondents (54%) thought there was a problem with the way women are portrayed in the media and advertising in their country. A total of 91% thought that promoting gender equality was key to ensuring a fair and democratic society.

Regarding the advancement of gender equality issues in the media sector itself, the lack of recognition of gender equality within the structures and policies of media organisations perpetuates a culture of inequality of treatment and of opportunities. This contributes to lack of progress in terms of gender equality and change of mindset. This area is where the present report indicates little progress, but the very limited number of responses received in this area makes it difficult to make any generalised conclusions as to the state of play of gender equality within the media organisations.

Progress, but the need for a profound change of culture in the profession

However, the present report shows that some progress took place at the level of national legislations and media regulations aimed to improve gender equality in media. It is true that some countries remain cautious as to how they address gender equality in relation to media freedom, despite their great commitment to gender equality. Nevertheless, a number of solid initiatives were launched to improve the situation, raise awareness among media stakeholders, journalists and advertisers. Initiatives such as the granting of broadcast licenses on the basis of gender equality criteria, co-funding media projects that strengthen gender equality, or supporting gender equality programmes in the media are concrete steps that can contribute to change mindsets and encourage media professionals to report through a gender lens.

The limited responses received from self-regulatory bodies indicate that the issue of gender equality has not been high on their agenda. The Council of Europe 2015 Handbook on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1¹² already indicated that the number of complaints brought to these bodies for violations of gender equality was very low. In 2019, rulings on gender equality by self-regulatory

9. International Federation of Journalists survey: One in two women journalists suffer gender-based violence at work, 2017 <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/reports/detail/ifj-survey-one-in-two-women-journalists-suffer-gender-based-violence-at-work/category/press-releases.html>

10. Attacks and Harassment: The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Work, International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) 2019 <https://www.iwmf.org/attacks-and-harassment/>

11. Special Eurobarometer 465, Gender Equality 2017, Gender Equality, Stereotypes, and Women in Politics https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2154_87_4_465_ENG

12. Ibid

bodies across Europe are still lacking. Citizens and civil society have a role to play in using complaint mechanisms to enable self-regulatory bodies to set precedents.

Finally, very little has been done both from a member States and media organisations perspective to change the mindset and culture in the newsrooms regarding gender equality and to tackle inequalities in the workplace. This key task must be addressed seriously if media are to reflect the realities of women and men and to initiate a proper change of approach towards gender equality. The aim should be to allow current and future journalists to work in gender-friendly and equal environments and to develop a gender lens in their reporting.



METHODOLOGY FOR THE DRAFTING OF THIS REPORT

A draft questionnaire directed to four different kinds of stakeholders (member States, media regulators, media organisations and self-regulatory bodies) was circulated to the members of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society for comments and approval. Once amended and approved, the questionnaire was circulated to member States, media regulatory authorities and self-regulatory bodies and media organisations, in spring 2019.

Responses were received from:

- ▶ 33 member States;
- ▶ 17 media regulatory authorities;
- ▶ 4 media self-regulatory bodies;
- ▶ 3 media organisations.

Definitions used in the context of the current report

Media regulatory authorities are organisations that have been vested with the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing media regulation aimed at ensuring a wide range of independent and autonomous media in the audio-visual sector. Lately, some regulatory authorities have also assumed competences to monitor online media. There is considerable diversity in the remit of national media regulators, however some of their essential tasks include: the granting of broadcasting licences, monitoring of programmes' compliance with legal obligations including those on advertising, adoption of codes of practices and regulations pertaining to pluralism, protection of minors, promotion of social and cultural diversity, combating hate speech, etc.

Self-regulatory bodies are independent mechanisms tasked to monitor media content and to respond to public complaints with the aim to strengthen public confidence, maintain editorial independence and limit state interference. Self-regulatory bodies often take the form of media or press councils.

Media organisations in the context of this report are understood as including a wide range of print, broadcast and online actors involved in the production and dissemination of news and media content via press, radio, television and online media.¹³

One of the main difficulties was to assess and compare statements that came from respondents' self-assessment and could inevitably result in some form of bias especially if not supported by sufficient evidence. Another one was that some respondents decided not to answer all questions but only some of them, which explains why the answers to some questions are less documented.

Another issue that appears in this report is the lack of response from decentralised state bodies because in some countries, regional entities have important prerogatives in terms of media policies, which will not be reflected in detail here.

While the issue of advertising was not specifically mentioned in the questionnaire, many member States made clear reference to it and several examples are used throughout the report.

Finally, the lack of response from self-regulatory bodies and media organisations made it difficult to draw general conclusions regarding developments in those bodies

13. For a more detailed definition see Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e36) or Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 on a new notion of media (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805cc2ca)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Member States

Most member States have been cautious in introducing legislative provisions expressly addressing gender equality and media, which can be partly explained by a reluctance to interfere with press and media freedom. Among the 33 member States that replied to the questionnaire, 7 have included specific provisions on gender equality in their general media laws, while 17 inserted media provisions in their gender equality acts; 10 have either adopted specific requirements on non-discrimination, respect for human dignity or gender equality in their broadcasting (or other specific media) legislation.

Very few respondents have clearly referred to Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 playing a role in the development of specific initiatives to move towards more gender equality in the media sector. Only seven respondents referred to it, either regarding legislation amendments or regarding specific initiatives to tackle gender equality in the media.

Member States' legislation on media regulatory authorities provides the latter with several tools to fight discrimination and to some extent protect gender equality in broadcasting. Among the 13 member States that answered the questions on regulators, the majority grant regulatory authorities monitoring powers which can be applied through the granting of licences and/or the issuing of sanctions (either

administrative or financial) for non-compliance with the provisions on incitement to hatred or violence and discrimination. Some national laws (4) also insist on some gender equality requirements in the regulators' own structures. However, only four regulators are obliged to provide a gender equality component in their annual reporting.

Most member States claim that their legislation on public service media (PSM) includes some provisions that address gender equality issues. This is in line with the public service mission these media have to comply with, including non-discrimination principles.

While countries such as the United Kingdom recall primarily the principle of diversity in their media laws, more than half of the respondents (12) specifically mention gender equality in their broadcasting law. Legislation may alternatively require public service media to respect human dignity (2), human rights (1), equality in electoral matters (2), or impose on the PSM to counteract gender-based violence/violence against women (4). It can also prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender/sex (1), warn against sexist stereotypes (3), prohibit hatred on the basis of gender/sex (6), or warn against the use of sexist language (1).

Finally, the majority of member States (25) have adopted concrete initiatives to strengthen gender equality in media, including the funding of gender equality programmes, gender equality oriented licensing procedures, publications of handbooks, as well as the adoption of **soft instruments** such as gender equality plans.

National media regulatory authorities

This report highlights great disparities among national regulatory authorities. The majority of the 17 respondents reported a limited level of development in terms of gender equality, with only four claiming and providing evidence that they have reached an advanced level, namely Belgium, France, North Macedonia and Sweden.

However, most respondents (11) reported that they oversee or implement gender equality-related regulations, including regarding combating gender stereotypes, and provided concrete examples. Some have dedicated specific web pages to gender equality issues. This is the case for the North Macedonian Regulator AVMU which has included a banner on its website on "gender and media"¹⁴

As regards regulators' internal structures, very little seems to have been done to address gender balance in general, except for the Swedish regulator, which produces an annual analysis on the subject. Hardly any regulator has provided training on gender equality for their staff; the one exception being the regulator from North Macedonia.

Only four regulators indicated having a legal obligation to report on gender equality on an annual basis. This raises the question of increasing the competences of regulators in this field given the positive examples in Belgium and France, for instance, and the involvement of such regulators in data collection.

14. <https://avmu.mk/en/home-en/>

Half of the responding regulators (9) reported having received complaints about gender equality from the public in the past five years but few provided details as to how those complaints were handled.

Finally, a great majority of respondents reported that their procedures and decisions were public.

Self-regulatory bodies

Analysis of responses from self-regulatory bodies shows that little has been done by them to address gender equality formally, even though the issue of non-discrimination on the basis of sex is included in most codes of ethics. While only four self-regulatory bodies answered the questionnaire (Belgium, Ireland, Spain-Catalunya and Switzerland), additional elements were added thanks to some member States' responses which provided information about press councils. They include the Azerbaijan Press Council, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Press Council, the Finnish Council for Mass Media, Georgia's Charter of Journalistic Ethics, Lithuania's Commission of Ethics and the Swedish Press Council.

All responding bodies and member States reported having parity in their boards even in the absence of binding criteria to this effect. The two exceptions among respondents that do have binding parity criteria are Sweden and Switzerland.

Finally, there are very few decisions available on gender equality from responding self-regulatory bodies. It would appear that few complaints were considered in the past five years on this topic despite publicity being made on websites. The lack of decisions shows either the reluctance of the public to lodge complaints or, that many complaints were considered unfounded and did not lead to any further action.

Media organisations

Only three media organisations responded to the questionnaire, namely Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), Irish Near Media Co-op and the Moldovan Association of Independent Press. While the limited responses do not allow the drawing of clear conclusions, key elements could be noted.

Respondents reported little progress in gender equality, acknowledging that no gender equality policy had been adopted internally, nor any charter or code containing provisions on gender equality. This trend is confirmed by several researches and studies such as the one carried out by the International Federation of Journalists¹⁵ or the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).¹⁶

15. On violence against women journalists, see: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ifj-survey-one-in-two-women-journalists-suffer-gender-based-violence-at-work.html>

16. The EIGE study looks at the existence of codes, policies, implementation and monitoring mechanisms to promote gender equality in the media, *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media — Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations, EIGE 2013*. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/advancing-gender-equality-decision-making-media-organisations-report>

However, the Irish Near Media Co-op adopted a policy against harassment as stipulated by law and both the Moldovan Association of Independent press and the Irish Near Media Co-op reported organising awareness-raising training and having editorial discussions about gender portrayal.

All respondents reported a very limited, if any, impact of the #MeToo movement in news production and staff matters. While desk research suggests that several European media have started looking into their own practices (for example, *Le Soir*¹⁷ in Belgium and *Le Temps*¹⁸ in Switzerland), no study is available yet to indicate whether the #MeToo movement has changed the narrative on gender equality in all newsrooms.

17. The newsroom reflecting on their practices, has increased the number of stories addressing gender equality. It has also unveiled a harassment scandal in a Brussels Based theatre following the Weinstein case.

18. *Les femmes sont les grandes absentes des pages "Opinion et débat" du Temps* : <https://blogs.letemps.ch/labs/2017/03/04/les-femmes-sont-les-grandes-absentes-des-pages-opinion-debat-du-temps/>



Part I

MEMBER STATES

Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 encourages member States to “adopt an appropriate legal framework intended to ensure that there is respect for the principle of human dignity and the prohibition of all discrimination on grounds of sex, as well as incitement to hatred and any form of gender-based violence within the media”.

A total of 33 member States responded to the questionnaire (Table 1) and provided very detailed responses illustrating a variety of legislation to address gender equality in the media.

Table 1 – Responding member States and central authorities/bodies in charge of the co-ordination and/or promotion of gender equality issues

MEMBER STATE	AUTHORITY IN CHARGE OF CO-ORDINATING THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY
Armenia	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Austria	Division of Women and Equality in the Federal Chancellery
Azerbaijan	State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Gender Equality Agency Gender Centre of Republika Srpska Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria	National Council on equality between women and men
Denmark	Minister of Equality
France	State Secretary for Equality between Women and Men

MEMBER STATE	AUTHORITY IN CHARGE OF CO-ORDINATING THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY
Finland	Gender Equality Unit, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Germany	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Georgia	Inter-agency under the Human Rights Council
Greece	General Secretariat for Gender Equality
Hungary	Equal treatment authority
Iceland	Directorate of Gender Equality
Ireland	Department of Justice and Equality
Latvia	Ministry of Welfare
Lithuania	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson
Luxembourg	Ministry of Equality between Women and Men
Malta	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
Republic of Moldova	Council for preventing and eliminating discrimination and ensuring equality Governmental Commission for Gender Equality Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
Montenegro	Ministry of Human and Minority Rights - Department for Gender Equality
Norway	Ministry of culture, Equality and anti-discrimination ombudsman
Poland	Government plenipotentiary for equal treatment Ombudsman/Human Rights Commissioner
Romania	National Agency for Equal Opportunity for women and men
Serbia	Co-ordination body for gender equality Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans' Affairs and Social Affairs (sector for anti-discrimination policy and promotion of gender equality)
Slovak Republic	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities) Gender Equality Committee (intergovernmental advisory group) Co-ordinating methodical centre for the prevention of violence against women
Slovenia	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Gender Equality Division, Advocate of the Principle of Equality;

MEMBER STATE	AUTHORITY IN CHARGE OF CO-ORDINATING THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY
Spain	Ministry of the Presidency, Parliamentary Relations and Equality State Secretariat for Equality (in the ministry) which contains two General Directorates: The Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities and the Government Delegation for Gender Violence
Sweden	Swedish Gender Equality Agency
Switzerland	Federal Office for Gender Equality
Turkey	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men
Ukraine	Ministry of Social Policy
United Kingdom	Government Equality Office

Most provisions on gender equality are limited to broadcasting organisations and are included in a general law on gender equality rather than in specific media law. This can be explained by the reluctance of some member States to interfere with media freedom and to possibly enact conflicting legislation. Softer measures, however, are used more often to encourage gender balance in media reporting. To this end, a high number of respondents have developed extensive policies and launched specific initiatives to support awareness raising and promote a more gender-sensitive culture in the media sector.

This section also highlights the disparities of legislation regarding regulators and the diverse competences they have with regard to regulating gender equality in the audiovisual sector.

A. Legislation

1. Type of legislation adopted for the promotion of gender equality in the media

Legislators have been very cautious in including gender equality provisions in media-related legislation, and analysis of the responses shows that specific provisions on media are much likelier to be included in gender equality laws in many Council of Europe's member States. Table 2 outlines the different legislations on gender equality by country.

Table 2 – National legislation on gender equality in the media

MEMBER STATE	HUMAN DIGNITY IN CONSTITUTION ¹⁹	GENDER EQUALITY LAW	LAW AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
Andorra	-	-	-
Armenia	-	-	-
Austria		X	
Azerbaijan		X	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		X	
Bulgaria		X	
Denmark			
Finland			
France		X	
Georgia	-	-	-
Germany			
Greece			
Hungary	X	X	
Iceland		X	
Ireland		X	
Latvia	-	-	-
Lithuania	X	X	
Luxembourg		X	
Malta	-	-	-
Republic of Moldova		X	
Montenegro		X	
Norway	-	-	-
Poland		X	
Romania		X	
Serbia			
Slovak Republic			
Spain		X	X
Sweden			
Switzerland		X	
Turkey	-	-	-
Ukraine		X	
United Kingdom		X	

19. While many countries refer to human dignity in their Constitution, only one country has mentioned it in its response. This section of the questionnaire was an open question and has led to different inputs depending on the country.

	BROADCASTING LAW/PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING (PSB) MEDIA LAW	MEDIA ACT	ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW	LAW ON ADVERTISING
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	X			X
			X	X
	X			X
				X
				X
	-	-	-	-
	X			X
	X			X
	X	X		X
	-	-	-	-
		X		
	X	X		X
	-	-	-	-
	X			
	X	X		
	-	-	-	-
	X		X	X
				X
		X		X
	X			X
	X			X
			X	
	X			
	-	-	-	-
				X

Legend

- x Covered by legislation
- No legislation
- No answer provided

(a) A limited number of media-related legislation includes gender equality provisions

Gender equality issues relate to two aspects of media: equality within media companies (employment issues, equal opportunities and equal treatment, equal access to decision-making positions) and gender equality in media content.²⁰

Not all member States have enacted media laws of a general nature and even fewer have included specific gender equality provisions in such media-related laws. Member States are particularly cautious in regulating media content. The written press, in particular, is generally an area where democratic governments refrain from legislating for fear of being accused of political interference. In fact, seven countries have highlighted the absence of specific legislation addressing gender equality and media, namely Armenia, Finland, Georgia, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and Turkey.

Some member States refer to the general provisions included in their national legal framework and national constitution to ensure respect for the principle of human dignity (Hungary), or the prohibition of all discrimination on grounds of sex (Bosnia and Herzegovina²¹ and Sweden²²).

Five responding countries reported about the existence of a specific reference to gender equality in their media acts. Iceland²³ calls on media service providers to take measures to counter gender stereotypical images, and in Luxembourg,²⁴ Lithuania²⁵ and Serbia²⁶ media laws forbid discrimination on the basis of sex. In Montenegro, legislation on electronic media forbids discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or sexual orientation.²⁷

In Sweden, the Broadcasting Act does not address gender equality per se, but the law requires broadcasters to *"ensure that the overall media services reflect the fundamental concepts of a democratic society, the principle that all persons are of equal value, and the freedom and dignity of the individual."*²⁸

The audiovisual sector, however, is generally subject to stricter regulation, given the vast impact of mass media on public opinion making. This gives member States more leeway to encourage broadcasters to ensure a fair, accurate and inclusive reporting. A number of countries have included specific reference to gender

20. Council of Europe, Handbook on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1, page 11).

21. Law on prohibition of Discrimination No. 59/09 and 66/16.

22. Discrimination Act, 2009.

23. Media Act 38/2011.

24. Law on electronic media, 27 July 1991.

25. Law on the provision of information to the public, 2 July 1996, No. I-1418, last amended on 1 June 2017- No. XIII-396, "It shall be prohibited to publish in the media information which spreads war propaganda, instigates war or hatred, ridicule, humiliation, instigates discrimination, violence, physical violent treatment of a group of people or a person belonging thereto on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions, views or religion". <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/911eb75251d611e78869ae36ddd5784f?jfwid=-1d3h0wfy9b>

26. Law on public information and media, 2014.

27. Law on electronic media, 2011.

28. Radio and Television Act, No. 2010:696, 17 June 2010, Chapter 5.

equality in their broadcasting legislation, namely Austria,²⁹ Bulgaria,³⁰ Germany,³¹ Greece,³² Iceland,³³ Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova,³⁴ Slovak Republic,³⁵ Spain³⁶ and Switzerland.³⁷ This can also be explained by the fact that the audiovisual sector is more closely monitored by media regulatory authorities, which makes it possible to follow the implementation of any gender equality norms or guidelines. Moreover, public service broadcasters are specifically regulated and must abide by a number of strict criteria to operate, including anti-discrimination principles.

The German broadcasting treaty makes reference to the respect of constitutional provisions³⁸ which include gender equality. The Interstate Broadcasting Agreement (Rundfunkstaatsvertrag) is the nationwide law for radio station and television licensing in the Federal Republic of Germany. It explicitly states that private broadcasting companies “shall work towards” a society free of discrimination.³⁹ Media laws of the federal states (*Länder*), likewise include some rules to contribute to the promotion of gender equality. For example, radio and broadcast programmes should contribute to the realisation of equal rights for women and men.

(b) General trend: the inclusion of provisions related to media in gender equality legislation

The analysis of responses illustrate that gender equality laws often contain specific elements related to media, usually addressing issues such as equal opportunities, gender pay gap, advertising, and sometimes sexist content. These provisions can be used to compensate the lack of specific requirements on gender equality in media laws.

Bosnia and Herzegovina’s legislation on gender equality⁴⁰ recalls everyone’s right of access to the media, or in other words, everyone has the right to receive the information imparted by the media, regardless of gender. This legislation also prohibits any public display of a person in a manner that degrades them because of their gender. In Montenegro, the gender equality law specifically calls on media to promote gender equality through its “programmatic conception”. In the Republic of Moldova, the gender equality law⁴¹ includes a specific provision on equal opportunities in the media, encouraging programmes that “*impact on changing social*

29. Federal Act on Audiovisual Media Services.

30. Bulgarian Radio and Television Act, Article 8.

31. Rundfunkstaatsvertrag (RStV).

32. Presidential decree 109/2010.

33. Act on National Broadcasting Service No. 23/2013.

34. Code of audiovisual media services, 8 November 2018.

35. Act 308/2000.

36. Act 7/2010 of 31 March 2010.

37. Federal Act on Radio and Television refers to “fundamental constitutional rights, which include gender equality).

38. Interstate Treaty on the regulation of broadcasting and Telemedia.

39. The RStV distinguishes between public and private broadcasters. § 41 of the RStV explicitly states that the private broadcasting companies “shall work towards” a society free of discrimination.

40. Law on gender equality No. 32/10.

41. Law No. 5, 9 February 2006.



and cultural patterns". The French legislation on gender equality adopted in 2014⁴² makes specific reference to audiovisual media and empowers the media regulator (CSA) to act in this field. The Ukrainian law on equal rights and opportunities for women and men specifically encourages media to adopt ethical codes to prevent sexist violence.⁴³ In Azerbaijan, the 2006 law on gender equality "*aims to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and to ensure gender equality in the political, economic, social and cultural sphere*".⁴⁴

Good practice – Iceland

Article 23 of the Media Act No. 38/2011 requires all media organisations to submit annual reports to the Media Commission; annual reports are required to contain various information, including as regards the representation of both sexes in those interviewed or the share of women and men among their staff.

42. Legislation on equality between women and men, 4 August 2014.

43. Law on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men (2006), Article 21.1.

44. Gender Equality Act, 10 October 2006.

Good practice – United Kingdom

Under the 2017 Equality Act, all companies (including media organisations) above a certain size must publish their gender pay gap data. The regulation came into effect on 6 April 2017.⁴⁵ It applies to private and voluntary sector organisations with 250 or more employees. For large public service media, this has resulted in public scrutiny and pressure for action. Following the publication of its gender pay gap data, the reaction of one of its senior women correspondents and the action of the National Union of Journalists, the BBC has taken measures to redress part of its gender pay gap. Developments are still ongoing, but some reductions in the gender pay gap were already achieved mainly through increasing the number of women in senior roles and through addressing some specific pay issues.

(c) Provisions aimed at preventing sexist advertising

Several national legislations address sexist advertising, either through gender equality law, media services acts or legislation on advertising. This is the case for Austria,⁴⁶ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany,⁴⁷ Greece,⁴⁸ Iceland,⁴⁹ Lithuania,⁵⁰ Luxembourg, Poland,⁵¹ Romania,⁵² Serbia, Slovak Republic,⁵³ Spain,⁵⁴ and Ukraine.⁵⁵

Other countries such as Spain⁵⁶ directly address measures against gender-based violence in a specific law. The Spanish legislation against gender-based violence specifically looks into media that show advertising portraying women in a degrading or discriminatory manner or violate the dignity of a person. The law also empowers a certain number of bodies to apply to a court regarding the withdrawal of *“advertising material deemed illegal for using the image of women in a degrading manner”*.⁵⁷

45. United Kingdom Equality Act 2010 (gender pay gap information) Regulation 2017; Equality Act 2010 (Specific duties and public authorities) Regulation 2017

46. Federal Act on Audiovisual Media Services, BGBl I 2001.

47. § 7 (1) No. 2 of the RStV prohibits any advertising that contains or promotes discrimination based (among others) on sex in both public and private broadcasters. According to § 54 (1) of the RStV, teledmedia must be in accordance with the Constitution, where again Article 3 of the Constitution comes into play. However, the rules on advertising in § 7 of the RStV also cover teledmedia.

48. Law 4604/2019.

49. Act on the Equal Status and equal rights of men and women No. 10/2008.

50. Law on Equal Opportunities for women and men.

51. Act on radio and television, 29 December 1992, Article 16b.

52. Law No. 202 on equal opportunities and treatment, 19 April 2002.

53. Act 147/2001 on advertising.

54. Act 34/1988 of 11 November.

55. Law on Advertising, Article 8.

56. Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December on integrated protection measures against gender violence.

57. Ibid, Article 10.

In Romania, the Gender Equality Act warns against advertising that breaches human dignity on the basis of gender. It reminds advertising companies of the need to comply with equal opportunity and treatment in order to eliminate gender stereotypes in their production.

2. Legislation adopted in response to Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media

Seven countries expressly stated that they had adopted legislation as a result of the adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1, namely, Armenia, Bulgaria (law on equality between women and men), Greece, Republic of Moldova, Serbia (2014 media law), Switzerland and Ukraine (2017 law on “ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men”).

In Switzerland, since 2018, the licence granted to public broadcaster SRG SSR (Société suisse de radiodiffusion et television)⁵⁸ has been subject to an additional provision requiring it to reach an “*appropriate representation of both sexes in its editorial programmes*”. In the explanatory note, it is explained that the licence granting is based on an “*equitable representation of both sexes*” and such equitable representation will also contribute to “*raise awareness among SSR staff.*”

The Council of Europe Recommendation on gender equality and media did not only influence legislation, but also led to a range of affirmative and support measures. The Government of the Republic of Moldova, in 2017, endorsed a strategy to ensure equality between women and men for the period 2017-2021. Its action plan includes a series of prerogatives assigned to the audiovisual authority that are in line with the recommendation, such as broadcasting licences and respect of the principle of non-discrimination, including gender equality. In Greece, the recommendation was taken into account in the drafting of the National Action Plan for gender equality (2016-2020). In Serbia, the recommendation also served as a tool for media literacy/gender equality activities conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Information.

3. Legislation on media regulatory authorities including specific provisions on gender equality and work of media regulators towards gender equality

Media regulatory authorities have traditionally been vested with the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing media regulation aimed at ensuring a wide range of independent and autonomous media in the audiovisual sector. Lately, some regulatory authorities have also assumed competences to monitor online media.

There is considerable diversity in the remit of national media regulators, however some of their essential tasks include the granting of broadcasting licences, monitoring of programmes’ compliance with legal obligations including those on advertising, adoption of codes of practices and regulations pertaining to pluralism,

58. <https://www.srgssr.ch/en/home/>

protection of minors, promotion of social and cultural diversity, combating hate speech, etc.

Legislation governing media regulatory authorities in the field of gender equality *“is usually minimal or very general in scope”*⁵⁹ but regulators may also use the principles of diversity, pluralism and non-discrimination to support their actions in favour of gender equality.

While only 14 member States out of 33 responded to the section of the questionnaire on media regulators, 17 media regulators answered the part of the questionnaire aimed specifically at their activities. Their combined answers provide a solid basis for analysing the competences and responsibilities of media regulators in the field of gender equality. This aspect is addressed in the part of the present report pertaining to media regulatory authorities.

4. Legislation on public service media that includes specific requirements on gender equality

Many national legislative frameworks on public service media include specific requirements on gender equality (Table 3). This can be explained by the public service mission of those broadcasters, and by the particular need to provide reliable information and quality education or entertainment programmes to the diverse societal groups without discrimination and respecting their human rights.

59. Handbook on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1, Council of Europe, page 16.

Table 3 – Gender equality-related requirements in the national legislation on public service media

MEMBER STATE	PROTECTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY	PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS	GENDER EQUALITY	GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES	DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX/GENDER	
Austria						
Bosnia and Herzegovina			X	X	X	
Bulgaria			X			
Finland			X			
France			X			
Georgia			X			
Germany			X			
Greece						
Iceland			X		X	
Lithuania			X		X	
Luxembourg						
Republic of Moldova			X			
Poland					X	
Romania	X				X	
Serbia		X			X	
Slovak Republic	X				X	
Spain			X			
Sweden			X			
Switzerland						
Turkey			X		X	
United Kingdom						

	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	HATRED ON THE BASIS OF SEX/ GENDER	STEREOTYPES/ SEXISM	GENDER EQUALITY IN INTERNAL STRUCTURES	SEXIST LANGUAGE	EQUAL REPRESENTATION /TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND MEN	DIVERSITY
		X		X		X	
		X		X		X	
		X					
			X				
	X	X					
						X	
		X	X				
	X			X			
				X			
	X				X		
				X			
	X						
	X		X	X	X		
						X	
							X

(a) Provisions on gender equality in the content of public service media and their internal structures

More than a half of respondents (12 out of 21) refer to specific provisions on gender equality in public service media legislation. Six countries forbid incitement to hatred on the basis of gender and three have adopted some specific rules regarding internal structures of public service media.

While the United Kingdom refers primarily to the principle of diversity in their media laws, a number of respondents have included provisions in their public broadcasting law that requires public service media to respect either human dignity (Romania and the Slovak Republic), human rights (Serbia), gender equality (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sweden and Turkey), or equal gender representation during elections (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Some respondents also referred to more specific gender equality legislation that prohibits incitement to gender-based violence/violence against women (Georgia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova and the Slovak Republic), discrimination on the basis of gender/sex in programmes (Bosnia and Herzegovina), sexist stereotypes (France, Iceland and Spain), incitement to hatred on the basis of gender/sex (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova), or the use of sexist language (Spain).

Several member States have also adopted strong laws against sex-based discrimination in advertising applicable to public service media. The law on Radio and Television in Bosnia and Herzegovina introduces some principles applicable to marketing and advertising enhancing the need not to compromise human dignity and to prevent discrimination on grounds of race, gender and nationality. In other countries such as the Slovak Republic, the Advertising Standards Council has published guidelines and manuals on sexist advertising.

Finally, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain have adopted specific internal rules regarding the equal representation of women and men in their structures, thus forcing broadcasters to achieve parity and promote gender balance at work. The respondent from Bosnia and Herzegovina however points at the limited number of women applicants to the Boards of Governors (3 out of 16 in 2016). It would be interesting to investigate further how these positions are being advertised to determine how to reach more women in this kind of processes.

(b) Monitoring of the implementation of legislation in public service media

Monitoring and reporting is mainly done through national regulators (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). In some member States, monitoring tasks are entrusted to governmental bodies (Luxembourg), or to broadcasters themselves, through their own monitoring (Republic of Moldova), or indeed via the publication of the broadcaster's own annual report (Germany, Iceland, Ireland and the United Kingdom), many of which are directly available on the broadcasters' websites.

B. Policies for the promotion of gender equality in the media

1. Programmes or projects aimed at enhancing or promoting gender equality in media content

Recommendation Rec/CM (2013)¹ encourages member States to “support awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns on combating gender stereotypes in the media”. Responses to the questionnaire show that there is a real trend among member States to support initiatives and policies in favour of enhanced gender equality in media content and advertising.

Of the 33 responding member States, 25 have adopted gender equality plans or specific strategies that include a specific section on media and consider the role of the media as essential for addressing gender stereotypes and raising awareness.

In Spain, for instance, the State Pact against gender-based violence adopted in 2017 points at media as a major instrument to raise awareness and impact society. Some countries have allocated specific funds to support gender equality and have launched specific co-funding schemes on media that include a gender equality component (Ireland, Lithuania, Serbia and Slovenia).

The issue of gender-based violence and media is present in many activities developed by member States through training or conferences (Azerbaijan, Greece, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine).

Several member States have also developed specific guidelines on gender equality and media (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain and Ukraine) although it is not always clear whether media professionals had been involved in the process at any stage. Indeed, if such guidelines were not elaborated through a participatory process involving a wide circle of stakeholders, their impact could be limited as a result.

Some TV channels have also developed specific programmes on gender equality and on women such as in Azerbaijan and Ireland.

Raising awareness among the next generation of journalists is a prerequisite to ensure a more balanced portrayal of women and men in the media. France and Lithuania have supported journalism schools’ initiatives to raise awareness of gender equality and develop students’ critical thinking in portraying gender issues.

Regular data collection is key to supporting actions towards gender equality and measuring progress made. Several member States have supported the Global Media Monitoring Project research looking into the position of women in the news across the world, and provided funds to monitoring teams (Finland and Germany). In France, a large study on women’s speaking-time on the radio and on TV was published by the National Institute for Audiovisual (INA) in March 2019, which showed that men speak twice as much as women on TV and radio.⁶⁰ The Republic of Moldova developed a monitoring methodology in 2018, including new indicators measuring sexism, gender equality and incitement to hatred.

60. https://presse.ina.fr/etude_temps_de_parole_hommes_femmes_ina/

A less positive element of the analysis is the limited number of initiatives aimed at developing more gender-balanced newsrooms. Very few member States have looked into gender inequalities in the media workforce. Except for legislation applicable to all enterprises such as the innovative United Kingdom regulation requiring large companies to disclose gender pay gap data,⁶¹ member States rarely address this issue in a specific manner, even in relation to public service broadcasters. However, it is worth pointing to initiatives such as the French equality label received by France Television, the German *Pro quote Medien* initiatives supporting women in top positions in films and television, the Irish funding for women on air and the Swedish audit of media to ensure respect for the Anti-Discrimination Act on harassment.

Good practice – Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)

The Belgian Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles) funded two studies, one on being a woman journalist (“Etre femme et journaliste en Belgique francophone”, 2018⁶²), which analyses the place of women in journalism through a large survey targeting both journalists and their employers. The rich material includes information on the challenges women journalists face in the exercise of their professional activities, in their employment and work conditions, building their careers as well as in balancing their work, family and private life.

Another study addresses the media coverage of violence against women (“Le traitement médiatique des violences faites aux femmes : une étude et des recommandations aux journalistes”, 2018⁶³). It includes an analysis of media resources and provides specific recommendations to journalists for example on how to cover the topic, contextualise the facts or to carefully choose their wording.

Good practice – Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2017, the Council of Ministers adopted the Action Plan for Human Rights Education for Journalists and Media Professionals for the period 2016-2019. This action plan contains concrete measures to improve the access and presentation of marginalised and minority groups in the media, including guidelines on reporting on gender equality. The Press Council and associations of journalists participated in the preparation of the action plan.

Good practice – Serbia

Serbia organises annual calls for co-financing projects dealing with information addressing national minorities and persons with disabilities, and encouraging the production of media content that contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of double discrimination against women and against members of minority communities and social groups.

61. See point A on legislation.

62. More information: <http://www.ajp.be/journalistesfemmes/>

63. More information: <http://www.ajp.be/violencesfemmes-1-etude>

Good practice – Spain

The Equality Observatory of the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation (CRTVE) was set up to ensure progress towards full equality and to combat sex-based discrimination and one of its worst expressions, gender-based violence. The objectives of the observatory are to:

- ▶ Promote respect, knowledge and diffusion of the principle of equality between women and men, seeking to avoid any form of inequality and sex-based discrimination in the activities of the RTVE Corporation.
- ▶ Encourage the presentation of an image of equality, plurality and balance between both sexes, without sexist stereotypes or standards of beauty, and of women's active participation in different functions in all areas of life, with special attention on the contents of programmes aimed at children and the younger audience.
- ▶ Monitor the existence and application of ethical codes in favour of the promotion of equality and the prevention of gender violence in the activity of the RTVE.
- ▶ Ensure that the content broadcast on any of the media of the RTVE do not justify, trivialise or incite violence against women.
- ▶ Encourage the use of non-sexist language.
- ▶ Collaborate in institutional campaigns aimed at promoting equality between women and men and to eradicate gender violence.

The CRTVE also created in 2018 a position of 'equality editor' whose mission is to guarantee equality between women and men in both content and presence on public television and radio. Some national newspapers (paper and digital), such as *eldiario.es* or *El País* have also appointed similar editors.

2. Initiatives related to gender equality in advertising

Several member States have introduced or supported initiatives that address gender equality in advertising. In 2018, the French Regulator CSA launched a charter against sexist stereotypes in advertising that was signed by the advertising industry.⁶⁴ In Austria, advertising watch groups were formed in several federal states and are often supported by local authorities. In the Slovak Republic, the *Sexist Blender* is an NGO initiative launched in 2016 and aimed at raising awareness on sexism in media advertising.

64. <https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Toutes-les-actualites/Actualites/Retrouvez-la-charte-contre-les-stereotypes-sexistes-dans-les-publicites>

Good practice – Germany

“Monitoring project on sexist advertising in Germany” launched by Pinkstinks

Pinkstinks e.V. is a Hamburg-based NGO that campaigns against sexism and gender-based marketing. The project maps the persistence and prevalence of sexist advertising and includes measures to take down sexist advertising in the media (ads or video clips, print and online).

Citizens can denounce sexist advertising by taking pictures and sharing them with Pinkstinks via a web form including location and reason for the complaint. Pinkstinks then checks the complaint and posts it on a map on its homepage. This map also:

- ▶ Indicates whether Pinkstinks considers that the advertising is sexist or stereotypical;
- ▶ Informs about action taken by Pinkstinks;
- ▶ Indicates if the company has withdrawn the advertisement.

The monitoring project is an effort to make sexism and stereotypes in advertising visible, record it in a database and reduce it through various sensitisation and education modules.

The project also includes:

- ▶ Development of educational resources, e.g. to sensitise local advertising agencies in how to avoid producing sexist advertising;
- ▶ Campaigns and educational materials for schools and advertising agencies to explain why sexism is a problem;
- ▶ Newsletters and blog entries.

The monitoring project receives support from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). More information: www.pinkstinks.de

Good practice – Spain

In Spain, the Observatory on the image of women⁶⁵ of the Institute of Women responds to complaints on sexist advertising appearing in media. It received 945 complaints in 2018. In 2019, the Observatory also supported the production of two publications entitled #OVER⁶⁶ and “Hello, you do not know me”⁶⁷ by the advertising association Club de Creativos/as, to eradicate discriminatory gender stereotypes in advertising. These publications are distributed to institutions, libraries, women’s centres, universities, organisations and professionals in the advertising sector, as well as consumer associations. In addition, a travelling exhibition based on these publications will be organised.

65. <http://www.inmujer.gob.es/observatorios/observlmg/home.htm>

66. <https://www.clubdecreativos.com/over/>

67. <https://www.clubdecreativos.com/hola-tu-a-mi-no-me-conoces/>

C. Gender Equality Indicators

Introducing indicators provides the basis for assessment of a specific situation and offers, through the definition of a clear timeline, a possibility to monitor changes. Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 encourages the “*adoption and implementation of national indicators for gender equality in the media*”, involving “*relevant stakeholders*” in the process and also requires member States to “*update gender equality indicators regularly*”.

Ten responding member States reported having developed some form of indicators. Table 4 shows that they take different forms from straightforward indicators to gender equality plans or a monitoring methodology. The majority of these member States did not involve media in the process.

Three member States (Greece, Serbia and the Slovak Republic) indicated that their indicators were inspired by the indicators proposed by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE).⁶⁸

Table 4 – Member States’ indicators on gender equality in the media

MEMBER STATE	INDICATORS
Austria	Equality plan for public service broadcaster (staff, training needed) including binding measures to increase the proportion of women in the organisation.
France	General indicators that apply to companies of more than 1,000 employees: gender pay gap, promotion, salary increase, pay after maternity leave, women’s pay.
Germany	Women in leadership, gender pay gap, gender balance in supervisory committees and availability of childcare.
Greece	Using indicators of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): ⁶⁹ proportion of women in decision-making posts in media organisations, proportion of women and men on the boards of media organisations, policies to promote gender equality in media organisations.
Hungary	Appearance of women in media, percentage of women and men passive speakers, amount of funding for gender studies; stereotypical depiction , women represented in degrading manner.
Ireland	Financing of sound and visual productions is subject to sex-disaggregated data on film crews and decision-making positions; licensed commercial television broadcasters must provide a gender breakdown; community broadcasters must meet a 60/40 gender breakdown on boards.
Republic of Moldova	Monitoring methodology of media service providers covering sexism in advertising, gender equality and incitement to hatred.
Serbia	Gender equality index inspired by EIGE (2014, 2016).

68. EIGE Report, Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/advancing-gender-equality-decision-making-media-organisations-report>, 2013.

69. Ibid.

MEMBER STATE	INDICATORS
Slovak Republic	National Strategy for Gender Equality 2014-2019 and National Action Plan for the prevention and elimination of violence against women (eliminating degrading and violent display of women's bodies); monitoring report on media and advertising in terms of violence against women and promotion of gender equality, using the methodology of the GMMP; annual summary of gender equality indicators based on EIGE's indicators.
Turkey	Print media research (staff sex-disaggregated data)

The adopted indicators mainly cover the participation of women in media organisations and leading roles, gender portrayal, coverage of violence against women, gender in film crews, the gender pay gap and wages, and sexist advertising.

Ireland is the only country that refers to specific indicators for funding and granting licences: funding of audiovisual productions' final payment is subject to gender data on film crews and decision-making positions.

Good practice – Slovak Republic

Based on its "National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014–2019," the Slovak Republic aims at "strengthening the autonomy and bodily integrity of women by eliminating the degrading and violent displays of their bodies." The Action Plan focuses on violence against women and domestic violence in the media and in advertising and produces annual monitoring of selected media "to increase the effectiveness of media law and self-regulation".

Over the past decade, regular media monitoring in the Slovak Republic published under the 'Monitoring report on Media and Advertising in terms of Violence against Women and Promotion of Gender Equality' and used the methodology of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).⁷⁰ The method enabled getting relevant gender-sensitive data to detect the media coverage on violence against women and gender equality, the relevance of these issues, to collect data on the representation of women and men in media, on the use of gender-sensitive language and to compare data over the monitored period.

D. Dissemination of the Council of Europe Recommendation on gender equality and media

While only a few responding member States have reported having disseminated the recommendation, several took initiatives to enforce it and raise awareness about it in seminars and public events involving media (Austria, Azerbaijan, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine), and to translate it into their national languages (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Ukraine).

70. <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp>

Other countries used as a basis for national action plans (Ireland, Luxembourg and Turkey) or published it on their respective websites. Some member States specifically mentioned sharing the recommendation with relevant stakeholders (Latvia, Romania, Serbia and Spain). One interesting approach was that of Switzerland which included raising awareness of the recommendation as part of its licensing negotiation with broadcasters.

Fourteen of the responding member States did not report about the dissemination of the recommendation.

Conclusions

This chapter shows that the issue of gender equality in media is addressed in diverse ways by member States and that including media-related issues in gender equality legislation is usually the most favoured medium to do so.

Moreover, public service media are usually vested with an obligation to respect gender equality in their programmes. More could be done to strengthen the gender equality culture in the media by regularly gathering data and involving editorial teams in the process. The lack of gender equality policies, and the way they are developed, is another issue that merits further reflection.

The work of media regulators on gender equality is also very diverse but several countries show promising practices that have produced significant results. Most of those did so on the basis of their legal obligations, but some have used their own initiative to make a change and improve awareness on gender equality issues.

Finally, member States have been active in developing policies and initiatives to address gender equality in the media. It would be interesting to measure progress made and investigate further how media organisations have been associated in the development of such initiatives to secure real progress.

Part II

MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Seventeen respondents answered the part of the questionnaire specifically dedicated to regulatory authorities (Table 5).

Table 5 – National media regulatory authorities that responded to the questionnaire

MEMBER STATE	REGULATOR
Armenia	Ministry of Justice
Belgium	Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA)
Czech Republic	Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV)
Cyprus	Radio and Television Authority (CRTA)
Denmark	Danish Agency for Culture, Media Division (SLKS)
Estonia	Estonian Technical Surveillance Authority (TTJA)
France	Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA)
Germany	Medienanstalten
Hungary	National Media and Infocommunications Authority
Italy	Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni (AGCOM)
The Netherlands	Commissariaat voor de Media
North Macedonia	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AVMU)
Poland	Krajowa Rady Radiofonii i Telewizji – KRRiT
Portugal	Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social (ERC)
Slovenia	Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS)
Sweden	Press and Broadcasting authority
Switzerland	Office fédérale de la communication (OFCOM)



The majority of the 17 respondents reported a limited level of development in terms of gender equality, with seven acknowledging that they had not started implementing any gender equality regulation, five assessing their level as intermediate and one stating that they had just started. Only five respondents said they had reached an advanced level, namely Armenia, Belgium, France, North Macedonia and Sweden. It should be noted however, the Armenian respondent provided no evidence of such an advanced level.

Additional information provided by member States, which complements this section, shows that a number of states have enacted legislation entrusting media regulators with different competences pertaining to gender equality, from issuing sanctions to running campaigns and monitoring sexist advertising.

Only a few regulators, however, have legal obligations to promote gender equality in their reporting, including in their annual report, and hold responsibilities for ensuring that public service media respect a number of gender components in their practices.

A. Gender equality in the decision making of media regulators

1. Legal frameworks

Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)¹ calls on member States to “ensure through appropriate means that media regulators respect gender equality principles in their decision making and practice”.

Legislation in nine of the responding countries grant regulators monitoring capacities in the form of licensing (Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Kingdom), and/or in the capacity to issue sanctions (either administrative or financial) for

non-compliance with provisions on incitement to hatred and discrimination (Bosnia and Herzegovina,⁷¹ Bulgaria,⁷² France,⁷³ Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg,⁷⁴ Poland⁷⁵ and Serbia⁷⁶).

Very few national frameworks specifically mention the obligation for the regulator to ensure fair gender portrayal. In France,⁷⁷ the law of 4 August 2014 extensively increased the competence of the regulatory authority CSA in terms of promoting women's rights and gender equality. Another law in January 2017⁷⁸ provides specific competence to the CSA to fight against sexist advertising.

In Spain, the law on equality between women and men⁷⁹ and the law on integrated protection against gender-based violence⁸⁰ also require the audiovisual authority to adopt measures to ensure that women are portrayed "*in accordance with constitutional principles and values*". In Sweden the Media Act requires all broadcasters to consider the impact of television when choosing the subject, character and time of programmes. That applies particularly to those programmes dealing with violence, sex and drugs. It is also prohibited to transmit programmes that are offensive to any sex, race, or sexual orientation. This rule applies to advertising as well.

As regards the inclusion of gender equality in the monitoring role vested to media regulators, four regulators have a legal obligation to report on gender equality, namely in France, Greece, Sweden and Switzerland. Two member States have highlighted the role of regulators in issuing guidelines and in running campaigns on gender equality (Greece and Lithuania).

2. Monitoring practices

Most media regulatory authorities (11) reported that they oversee or implement gender equality-related regulation, including in relation to combating gender stereotypes, however, as shown by Table 6, the scope of regulators' monitoring tasks and the level authority entrusted to them are very diverse.

71. Law on Communication No. 31/03, 75/06, 32/10 and 92/12 <https://www.vzs.ba/index.php/vijece-za-stampu/kodeks-za-stampu-i-online-medij>

72. Article 8, paragraph 1, and Article 75, paragraph 5 of the Bulgarian Radio and Television Act (RTA)

73. Law of 4 August 2014 on gender equality

74. The Autorité Luxembourgeoise indépendante de l'audiovisuel (ALIA) was created in 2013.

75. National Act of 29 December 1992 on Radio and Television (Articles 18.1 and 47h)

76. Rulebook on the protection of Human Rights in the field of Media Services

77. Law of 4 August 2014

78. Law No. 86-1067 of 27 January 2017

79. Organic Act 3/2007, 22 March

80. Organic Law 1/2004, 28 December

Tableau 6 – Media content monitoring in the national legislation on media regulators

MEMBER STATE	SANCTIONS FOR HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX/GENDER, SEXISM	PROVISION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN INTERNAL STRUCTURES	PROHIBITION OF PROGRAMMES	
Austria		X		
Bosnia and Herzegovina		X		
Bulgaria	X			
France	X			
Germany		X		
Greece				
Iceland			X	
Lithuania	X			
Luxembourg	X			
Poland	X			
Serbia	X			
Spain ⁸¹	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Sweden		X Gender equality perspective in its own organisation		
Switzerland		X Target for staff appointment		
United Kingdom		X		

81. There is no national media regulatory authority in Spain; however, there are media regulators in some autonomous regions, such as Andalusia, Catalonia or Valencia.

LICENSING TAKES GENDER EQUALITY INTO ACCOUNT/ PROGRAMME PROHIBITION	ALLOWED TO TAKE MEASURES TO ENSURE FAIR GENDER PORTRAYAL	GUIDELINES/AWARENESS RAISING FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND NON-DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX/GENDER	ADVERTISING
X			X
		X	X
		X	
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X			

The Bulgarian Council on electronic media, for example, conducts regular and occasional controls and issues administrative sanctions in case of hateful and discriminatory media content. In Iceland, the media commission can request media to report but has no capacity to ask for additional information as a follow-up and has only limited means in case of non-compliance. In Lithuania, regulatory authorities (the Inspector of Journalist Ethics and Radio and Television Commission) produce analytical surveys every two years. However, there is no obligation to include a gender equality component in these reports. It is up to the regulators to decide if the inclusion of such information would be “relevant”. In Sweden, monitoring is done through annual dialogues between the ministry for culture and the regulatory authority. Additionally, the Swedish regulator specifically monitors gender-based violence in media content. In Switzerland, a diversity commission monitors the implementation of diversity rules and publishes annual report on achievements and progress. In Serbia, the regulator published its first report⁸² on gender equality and gender stereotypes in 2015.

Another aspect of monitoring is the regular gathering of data. The Belgian and French Conseils Supérieurs de l’Audiovisuel have done remarkable work in producing annual reports analysing the presence of women and men, as well as diversity in audiovisual programmes. Several regulators have also taken specific action to reinforce their own work on gender equality beyond legal requirements.

A comparative report published by the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA)⁸³ in 2018 provides an interesting overview of the roles and approaches adopted by national regulators in promoting more balanced gender representation and portrayal. The report identifies how some regulators have been proactive in reinforcing gender equality even though many did not have to fulfil any legal obligation in this regard. The North Macedonian Regulator AVMU is one of them. It has, for example, included a banner on its website on “gender and media”⁸⁴ to address more specifically the topic. The EPRA report points that although the North Macedonian regulator has no legal obligation to collect or prepare data on the representation of women and men, they use the results from their annual surveys on representation and portrayal to debate and raise awareness with the media.

Some regulatory authorities have also endorsed specific internal strategies on gender equality. This is the case for the Portuguese Regulator ERC, which adopted in 2014 a *Plan of action for the promotion of equality between men and women and combating gender stereotypes*. The authority monitors television content and has established working groups focusing on comparative analyses, guidelines, and recommendations.

82. <http://rem.rs/uploads/files/izvestaji-o-nadzoru/Rodna-ravnopravnost-RTS-1.pdf>

83. Achieving Greater Diversity in Broadcasting – special focus on Gender; benefits and best practice approaches, EPRA, 2018

84. <https://avmu.mk/en/home-en/>

Finally, some regulators have a specific competence in monitoring advertising and making sure it does not discriminate on the basis of sex. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Denmark and France. In Finland, the Council of Ethics in Advertising, a self-regulating committee, issues statements on the acceptability of individual advertisements. Its decisions, sometimes dealing also with gender equality, are mostly followed by advertisers.

3. Annual reports on gender equality produced by media regulators

While Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)¹ expressly recommends that member States “*mandate media regulators to include an assessment of the implementation of gender equality policy in the media in their annual reports*”, few of them have done so in practice.

Only the regulators of Belgium, France and Sweden claim they report on gender equality on an annual basis as part of their legal requirements. In Hungary, where such legal requirement does not exist, the regulator reported that it nevertheless includes a section on gender diversity in media services in its annual report.

Similar conclusions can be drawn in respect of broadcasters’ own reporting obligations. Only the Belgian, Dutch, French and Swedish public service broadcasters are required to report annually on their gender equality performances.

4. Complaints on gender equality received by media regulatory authorities

Regulators from Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Ukraine – that is, half of respondents – reported having received complaints about gender equality from the public in the past five years. The French CSA has even witnessed a clear increase in the number of complaints, possibly as a result of the #MeToo movement, pertaining to the issue; gender equality issues represented 19% of their complaints in 2018.

Complainants mostly pointed to sexist behaviour or comments, as well as the depiction of violence against women, the portrayal of women as sexualised objects, the identification of victims of sexual violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Regulators in the Czech Republic and Ukraine also responded to claims on sexist advertising.

5. Publication of procedures and decisions

Apart from Armenia, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, all responding regulators have made the complaints form and procedure available on their websites, in addition to which they publish press releases when decisions are taken and have included a detailed list of complaints in their reporting.

B. Gender balance in regulators' internal structures

1. Legal frameworks

Only few legislations provide for gender equality targets in relation to the regulators' internal structures (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). In Sweden, the applicable legislation obliges the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority to incorporate a gender equality and diversity perspective in its organisation. In the United Kingdom, the Communication Act 2003 requires OFCOM⁸⁵ to take the steps it considers appropriate to promote equality of opportunity between women and men in employment and training by television and radio broadcasters. As part of their OFCOM licence, broadcasters are also required to make arrangements to promote equality of opportunity in employment for their employees. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the law on communications⁸⁶ imposes specific gender equality conditions to the regulatory body for its own election including an equal gender representation. However, according to the regulator, in practice the Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency (the strategic management body) has never had a woman member. In management positions, only one woman has been appointed as deputy director.

Also, general gender equality acts apply to media regulators and can influence their structures. Thus, the Austrian response referred to provisions of the Federal Equal Treatment Act which prohibit discrimination based on sex in access to employment, working conditions, social benefits and termination of employment.

2. Internal regulations and practices

Generally, little is done to improve gender balance in the functioning of regulatory authorities. While legislation sometimes imposes on the authority to reflect the diversity of its citizens (North Macedonia), stronger requirements are not imposed. However, in one case internal regulations provide for a gender quota.

Good practice – Switzerland

OFCOM (Office fédéral de la communication) has set a target of 39-40% of women staff members.

Some other regulators pointed at efforts made to provide gender-friendly job posting (Germany), to introduce salary scales to address the gender pay gap (Belgian CSA) or flexibility for family carers (Czech Republic). Several regulators pointed at gender balance on their board.

85. The Office of Communications, United Kingdom

86. See Articles 36, 39 and 43 of the Law on Communications. Article 36.4 "in nomination and appointment of the members of the Council of the Agency, equal representation of both genders shall be promoted, and the percentage of participation of genders in the bodies of the agency, as a rule, shall indicate equal gender representation."

Good practice – Sweden

The Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority produces an annual analysis (policy documents, benefits, salary, and working hours) to examine any difference between women and men. The group in charge of conducting the analysis is equally composed of women and men.

Hardly any regulators have provided training on gender equality for their staff except for the North Macedonian AVMU which ran a gender awareness training for all its staff in 2018, and Ukrainian NRADA which organised an expert seminar in the framework of a Council of Europe co-operation project. However, several respondents pointed to the setting up of working groups or the drafting of guidelines on gender equality as evidence of willingness to bring about change.



Part III

SELF-REGULATORY BODIES

The setting up of independent mechanisms to monitor media content and respond to public complaints enables media to strengthen public confidence, maintains editorial independence and limits state interference.

Recommendation Rec(2013)1 encourages media organisations to “*adopt self-regulatory measures, internal code of conduct/ethics and internal supervision, and develop standards in media coverage that promote gender equality.*” It also encourages third parties to “*consistently defend gender equality by bringing their concerns to self-regulatory bodies.*”

Out of more than 30 existing press councils in Europe,⁸⁷ only four self-regulatory bodies replied to the questionnaire (Belgium, Ireland, Spain-Catalonia and Switzerland), but this section also refers to additional elements shared in responses by member States which have provided details about press councils, including concerning the Azerbaijan Press Council, the Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Finnish Council for Mass Media, Georgia’s Charter of journalistic ethics, Lithuania’s Commission of Ethics and the Swedish Press Council.

Only two respondents have adopted policies to promote gender equality. In the Belgian Ethics Press Council (CDJ), policies were adopted against discrimination on the ethical board and in the body’s own recruitment process. In the Swedish Press Council, a gender quota for board members was established (a minimum of 8 members of each sex out of 21 members).

All bodies insist on having parity on their board while they have adopted no binding criteria, except for Sweden and Switzerland. Gender equality is taken into account in cases of “multiple candidacies” in Belgium, or only for candidates outside those proposed by the media industry in Ireland. In Sweden, legislation requires all authorities, including the press council, to incorporate a “gender equality and diversity perspective” in their organisation.

87. See list of press councils on the Alliance of Independent Press Councils in Europe <http://www.aipce.net/>

Codes of ethics form the basis for handling complaints from the public. Few organisations have included any principle of gender equality in their codes but several refer to the principle of non-discrimination based on sex or gender. This is the case for Belgium, Georgia, Ireland, Catalunya in Spain and Ukraine. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Press and Online Media Code provides specific definitions to guide journalists regarding terminology such as “discrimination” or “gender equality”. In Azerbaijan, the Press Council amended, in November 2018, its ethical code to include a “protection of the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination”.

Very few complaints on gender equality have been lodged to responding self-regulatory bodies in the past five years. The Catalunya Regulator in Spain received one complaint on inappropriate language. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Press Council issued recommendations for the media on the treatment of gender and on the use of gender-sensitive language.

All respondents asserted that publicity about their complaint mechanism was available through websites, publications, and on request.

It is worth pointing out the Spanish example of “Equality Editor”, a new self-regulatory mechanism in place in the public broadcaster RTVE and in newspapers *eldiario.es* and *El País*. These appointments received very positive comments from the industry and could be replicated elsewhere. The *New York Times* has also appointed an equality editor.

While the lack of response from self-regulatory bodies make it difficult to draw general conclusions, additional desk research has shown that the limited volume of self-regulators’ decisions involving gender equality issues make it difficult for those bodies to contribute to changing the narrative.

More public awareness about the role of these bodies, more publicity around their decisions and more gender balance in their composition should lead to self-regulatory bodies receiving more complaints pertaining to biased or inappropriate gender portrayal and to ensure that such complaints contribute to changes in media practices.

Good Practice – Association of Professional Journalists, Belgium (Wallonia – Brussels Federation)

In June 2019, the Association of Professional Journalists presented its third study on equality and diversity in the daily newspapers of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in Belgium. Compared to the two previous studies (carried out in 2011 and 2013-2014) there was little significant progress, some regression and stagnation on almost all criteria. Six dailies (*Le Soir, La Libre, La Dernière Heure, L’Echo, Nord Eclair and Le Courrier de l’Escaut*) were analysed, that is, a sample of 1,596 articles, 18,697 contributors, studied on the basis of 5 grounds (gender, origin, age, socio-professional category and disability) according to 26 criteria. The sample is spread over three periods in 2018. More information: <http://www.ajp.be/diversite/#rech1>

Good Practice – European Broadcasting Union (EBU)

The report *All things being Equal*⁸⁸ published in December 2019 by the European Broadcasting Union contains very concrete tips and case studies drawn from EBU members' initiatives to strengthen gender equality. The report explores thoroughly the successful strategies that underpin a gender-equal media organisation: gathering of workplace data and staff feedback to diagnose the issues, development of clear workplace policies to support equality of opportunity, and enabling a positive workplace culture through flexibility, leadership and changes in behaviours to retain talent. The role of men in the process is considered "essential to success".

88. See: https://www.ebu.ch/publications/position-paper/login_only/guide/all-things-being-equal--gender-equality-guidelines-from-public-service-media



Part IV

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 invites media organisations to “*adopt self-regulatory measures, internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal supervision, and develop standards in media coverage that promote gender equality, in order to promote a consistent internal policy and working conditions aimed at: equal access to, and representation (...); balanced participation of women and men in management (...); a non-stereotyped image, role and visibility of women and men.*” The recommendation also encourages that complaint procedures are made available in relation to media content considered contrary to the principle of gender equality.

Only three media organisations responded to the questionnaire, namely Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), Irish Near Media Co-op and Moldova Association of Independent Press. While the limited number of responses does not allow to draw clear conclusions, respondents highlighted some general trends that are very relevant to the industry.

Respondents claimed a limited level of advancement in terms of gender equality, stating that they had not adopted any internal gender equality policies, nor charters or codes with gender equality provisions. This is confirmed by other studies.⁸⁹ However, the Irish Near Media Co-op adopted a policy against harassment as stipulated by law and both the Moldovan Association of Independent Press and the Irish Near Media Co-op claimed to hold awareness-raising training and editorial discussions on gender portrayal.

The three respondents have claimed little if any impact of the #MeToo movement in news production and staff matters.

This section shows the need to further investigate the level of advancement of media organisations in the field of gender equality. In particular, it would be interesting to identify the quality of policies that have been adopted to strengthen gender equality and how those policies were developed in co-operation with the editorial staff. Some of the key aspects for changing media culture are the collection of data, the regular monitoring of policies’ implementation and a strong commitment from media leaders. Such issues would be worth examining in a future exercise.

89. On the existence of codes, policies, implementation and monitoring mechanisms to promote gender equality in the EU see Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media – Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations, EIGE 2013. On online trolling see International Federation of Journalists’ survey <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ifj-survey-one-in-two-women-journalists-suffer-gender-based-violence-at-work.html>

Good Practice – French Press Agency (AFP, France)

Following concerns expressed by women journalists, the French Press Agency (AFP) adopted in 2018 new guidelines to reflect the diversity and improve women's portrayal in its reports. They include information about gender-sensitive language, about the publication of positive images of women, sensitive reporting of cases of gender-based violence and increased use of women experts. The agency also ran staff training sessions on these issues and invited gender equality experts to meetings.

Good Practice – Dutch broadcaster NPO

The Dutch broadcaster NPO signed a performance agreement⁹⁰ with the Dutch Government which includes a balanced presence of women on and off screen and which has an annual reporting obligation. According to the agreement, NPO measures annually what the Dutch audience thinks about the representation of women in NPO's television and radio content.

In 2018, the results highlighted that NPO's audience was predominantly positive about the representation of women in their programmes. For TV programmes, 53% of respondents were satisfied with the representation of women. The report shows however a relatively high percentage of respondents expressing their incapacity or unwillingness to answer the set of questions on gender equality.⁹¹

Representation of women

	INADEQUATE	SOMEWHAT INADEQUATE	SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE	DON'T KNOW/ NO RESPONSE
TV	2.5%	5.7%	20.2%	53.1%	18.5%
NPO Radio 1	4%	8%	21%	40%	27%
NPO Radio 2	6%	7%	21%	32%	35%
NPO 3FM	4%	8%	20%	34%	35%
NPO Radio 4	6%	9%	15%	26%	45%
NPO Radio 5	5%	7%	17%	30%	41%
NPO FunX	2%	9%	21%	50%	18%

90. <https://over.npo.nl/organisatie/onze-waarde-voor-nederland/prestatieovereenkomst>

91. [file:///C:/Users/IFJ/Downloads/terugblik_2018_npo_1%20\(4\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/IFJ/Downloads/terugblik_2018_npo_1%20(4).pdf), page 21



CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the answers to the questionnaire on the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media shows a greater awareness and some solid initiatives for improving gender equality in the media at the level of member States. The same applies to a number of regulatory authorities, which have made an important step, including by introducing their own initiatives to better monitor and implement gender equality in public broadcasters' content.

The need to respect freedom of expression and media freedom is one of the arguments put forward in some member States to explain why many initiatives and policies remain limited in scope. However, it should be noted that freedom of expression is closely linked to other rights and can support and amplify them. Like freedom of expression, equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and any true democracy. In this context, gender equality and freedom of expression should be seen as intertwined rather than opposing rights when adopting and implementing policies and legislation.

Moreover, media have a particularly important role to play in influencing public opinion and even shaping political agendas, given their potential for reaching the broadest audiences. They can - and should - therefore be encouraged to wield their voices and power to promote gender equality, denounce domestic violence and violence against women, as well as gender stereotypes and sexism.

While media organisations and self-regulatory bodies have a key role to play in promoting gender equality, both in their own structures and employment policies and in the content they produce and the decisions they take, the Council of Europe recommendation has had a limited impact on their activities. The fact that very little action was taken to promote the recommendation, notably at national level, can partly explain this result. It must also be noted that few respondents from media organisations and self-regulatory bodies answered the questionnaire.

However, additional desk research shows that some actors in the media sector have taken significant initiatives to improve the situation. In France, *Prenons la Une*, a group of women journalists, works to denounce gender inequalities and held its first assembly in 2018. In Spain, the journalists' section of the Spanish trade union CCOO has published specific guidelines on reporting on the LGBTQ+ population. In Belgium, the Association of Professional Journalists (AJP) published reporting guidelines on violence against women in 2018 and issued, together with the Universities of Brussels and Mons, a first study highlighting the reasons why women journalists leave the profession. The BBC initiative 50/50 set in 2018 the challenging objective of 50/50 representation of women and men on screen.⁹² The majority of the programmes met those objectives by April 2019.⁹³ The 2019 EBU report *All things being equal*, gathering good practices and tips from European public service media to strengthen gender equality, is another clear sign that this side of the industry has started to reflect on its own practices and is preparing for change.

While the world celebrates the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action, and ahead of the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project, the time has come for more efforts and changes in the media industry that would provide a balanced and fair portrayal of women and men, and offer newsrooms free of discrimination and of harassment for all. This also requires considering the notion of intersectionality and how all aspects of social identities (sex, gender, race, social origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability) can add to discrimination. It would also be crucial to adequately address the violence that women journalists are confronted with, both in newsrooms and online, and the consequences this violence has on press freedom and pluralism.

Documenting the state of play will be crucial to make a change. While collecting data remains a challenge, media organisations and their leaders must be involved in the process. The more inclusive the process will be, the more likely media organisations and professionals will own the results and be willing to be actors of change. This process should also include widening the awareness of the Council of Europe standards, particularly Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media, among the media organisations and journalists.

92. <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/5050>

93. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2019/5050-project-results>



APPENDIX

Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media⁹⁴

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013 at the 1176th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

Gender equality is an indispensable condition for the full enjoyment of human rights. The enjoyment of the rights as granted by the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) and in its protocols shall be safeguarded without any discrimination, including on grounds of sex. This requirement is strengthened by Protocol No. 12 to the Convention (ETS No. 177), which guarantees the enjoyment of any right recognised by law without discrimination.

Genuine democracy requires the equal participation of women and men in society. Democracy and gender equality are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The inclusion of women and men, with respect for equal rights and opportunities, is an essential condition for democratic governance and sound decision making. Gender equality means equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public life, including the

94. The term "media" in this recommendation refers to the terminology of Recommendation CM/Rec (2011)7 on a new notion of media, adopted on 21 September 2011.

media. The achievement of gender equality is a prerequisite for the achievement of social justice. This is not of interest to women only, but it concerns society as a whole. The Council of Europe has accorded much importance to these matters over the last few decades, demonstrated, *inter alia*, by the 1988 Committee of Ministers' Declaration on equality of women and men and by the 2009 Committee of Ministers' Declaration on making gender equality a reality.

Media freedom (including editorial freedom) and gender equality are intrinsically inter-related. Gender equality is an integral part of human rights. Freedom of expression, as a fundamental right, goes handinhand with gender equality. Furthermore, the exercise of freedom of expression can advance gender equality.

There is a gender dimension to media pluralism and diversity of media content. The Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)2](#) on media pluralism and diversity of media content reaffirms that pluralism and diversity are essential for the functioning of a democratic society, for fostering public debate, political pluralism and awareness of diverse opinions by different groups in society. The media are centrally placed to shape society's perceptions, ideas, attitudes and behaviour. They should reflect the reality of women and men, in all their diversity.

The media can either hinder or hasten structural change towards gender equality. Inequalities in society are reproduced in the media. This is true in respect of women's under-representation in media ownership, in information production and journalism, in newsrooms and management posts. It is even more blatant as regards women's low visibility, both in terms of quality and quantity, in media content, the rare use of women as experts and the relative absence of women's viewpoints and opinions in the media. Media coverage of political events and election campaigns is particularly telling in this respect, as are the persistence of sexist stereotypes and the scarcity of counter-stereotypes. Furthermore, women, as media professionals, often encounter pay inequalities, the "glass ceiling" and precarious conditions of employment.

Media in modern societies hold an immense potential for social change. The potential of media to promote and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and to contribute to their advancement was acknowledged at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). Ten years later, the UN Commission on the Status of Women recognised that the objectives agreed there had not been fully achieved. To facilitate the implementation of these objectives, in December 2012 UNESCO published the useful "Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media" (GSIM).

Public service media are to be the vanguard of the modern media system and have to serve all communities in society. This calls for particular attention to gender equality both in terms of participation and access to public service media as well as content and the manner in which it is treated and presented. Public service media is, or should be, a reference for social cohesion and integration of all individuals, and has an important role in furthering gender equality within the media and through the media. There is also a considerable potential for community media to promote open and direct dialogue between all social groups, including via digital platforms (see the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)3](#) on the remit of public service

media in the information society, the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue adopted on 11 February 2009, and Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2012\)1](#) on public service media governance, adopted on 15 February 2012).

Measures for the effective implementation of the standards adopted can contribute to gender equality and combat inequality. In its Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)17](#) on gender equality standards and mechanisms, the Committee of Ministers underlined that States should encourage effective measures to ensure that gender equality, as a principle of human rights, is respected in the media, in accordance with the social responsibility that is linked to the power they hold in modern societies. In its 2009 Declaration on making gender equality a reality, the Committee of Ministers called for measures to encourage media professionals, and the communication sector generally, to convey a non-stereotyped image of women and men. The gender perspective is emphasised in many instruments of the Council of Europe and is particularly accentuated in relation to the new media ecosystem in Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2011\)7](#) on a new notion of media.

In view of the above, and recognising the need to provide a gender equality perspective while implementing its established standards in the field of media, the Committee of Ministers – under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe – recommends that the governments of member States:

1. adopt adequate policies in line with the appended guidelines which can create the appropriate conditions under which the media can promote gender equality as a fundamental principle of their activities and institutional organisation in the new multidimensional media environment;
2. disseminate this recommendation and its guidelines and raise awareness among the relevant stakeholders and the media, in particular about the central role of gender equality for democracy and the full enjoyment of human rights;
3. the recommendation to the attention of the media sector, journalists and other actors and their respective organisations, as well as the regulatory authorities for the media and new communications and information services for the preparation or revision of their regulatory and self-regulatory strategies and codes of conduct, in conformity with the guidelines below.

Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1

Guidelines

A. Member States

1. already in place, member States should adopt an appropriate legal framework intended to ensure that there is respect for the principle of human dignity and the prohibition of all discrimination on grounds of sex, as well as of incitement to hatred and to any form of gender-based violence within the media.

2. States should particularly ensure, through appropriate means, that media regulators respect gender equality principles in their decision making and practice.
3. States should support awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns on combating gender stereotypes in the media.

B. Media organisations

4. Media organisations should be encouraged to adopt self-regulatory measures, internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal supervision, and develop standards in media coverage that promotes gender equality, in order to promote a consistent internal policy and working conditions aimed at:
 - equal access to, and representation in, media work for women and men, including in the areas where women are underrepresented;
 - a balanced participation of women and men in management posts, in bodies with an advisory, regulatory or internal supervisory role, and generally in the decision-making process;
 - a non-stereotyped image, role and visibility of women and men, avoidance of sexist advertising, language and content which could lead to discrimination on grounds of sex, incitement to hatred and gender-based violence.

C. Measures for implementation

5. The following mechanisms for the implementation of strategies and policies to achieve gender equality goals in the media should be considered:

Review and evaluation of gender equality policy and legislation

- i. Review and update the legal framework on media from a gender equality perspective on a regular basis.
- ii. Mandate media regulators and require the public service media to include an assessment of the implementation of gender equality policy in the media in their annual reports.

Adoption and implementation of national indicators for gender equality in the media

- iii. Discuss with relevant stakeholders the opportunity for and adoption of, if appropriate, national indicators based on international standards and good practices; holding public hearings and discussions in connection with this.
- iv. Carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the situation of gender equality in the media at national level, based on the adopted indicators.
- v. Update gender equality indicators regularly.

Provision of information and promotion of good practices

- vi. Encourage the media to provide information to the public in a clear way (e.g. online) on the complaints procedure in relation to media content which they consider contrary to the principles of gender equality.

- vii. Support and promote good practices through the development of networks and partnerships between various media outlets to further gender equality in the various activity areas of the new media ecosystem.

Accountability channels

- viii. Encourage non-governmental organisations, media associations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to consistently defend gender equality by bringing their concerns to self-regulatory bodies or other specialised bodies (e.g. press councils, ethical commissions, advertising councils, anti-discrimination commissions).
- ix. Encourage the updating of existing media accountability mechanisms and their effective use in cases of violation of gender equality in the media.
- x. Encourage the establishment of new mechanisms for media accountability and civic responsibility, for example, fora for public debate and platforms opened online and offline, making direct exchanges possible between citizens.

Research and publication

- xi. Promote active research into the issues of gender equality and media, particularly relating to media access, representation, participation (quantitative and qualitative profile) and working conditions in the media; research focused not only on women, but also on the relationship between genders; regularly publicising the outcomes of such projects.
- xii. Promote active research from a gender equality perspective on media coverage of certain areas of particular concern in a pluralist democracy, such as reporting on politics and media coverage of election campaigns and publishing the results; organising discussions with a view to improving policy and legislation.
- xiii. Promote research on the impact of the media in the shaping of values, attitudes, needs and interests of women and men.

Media literacy and active citizenship

- xiv. Promote gender sensitive media literacy for the young generation, prepare young people to approach different forms of media content responsibly and enable them to acquire a critical view of media representations of gender and to decode sexist stereotypes; enhance the gender equality perspective in the media literacy programmes for young people of different ages as a factor for broad human rights education and active involvement in the democratic processes.
- xv. Develop specific awareness-raising tools through and about the media for adults, including parents and teachers, as important factors for developing gender education and active citizenship in the information society.
- xvi. Raise the awareness and strengthening the capacities of media professionals and media students by offering regular educational and vocational training programmes geared to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge of gender equality and its crucial role in a democratic society.

” *The media can either hinder or hasten structural change towards gender equality. Inequalities in society are reproduced in the media. This is true in respect of women's under-representation in media ownership, in information production and journalism, in newsrooms and management posts. It is even more blatant as regards women's low visibility, both in terms of quality and quantity, in media content (...). Media in modern societies hold an immense potential for social change.*

**Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1
of the Committee of Ministers to member States
on gender equality and media**

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