

ENGLISH VERSION

# Women's Watch

2012 - 2013

**A FEMINIST OVERVIEW  
OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE**



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
**LOBBY**  
EUROPÉENNE DES FEMMES



*Dear reader,*

This publication is the first of its kind – a genuinely feminist appraisal of the situation on the ground in 30 countries with regards to women’s rights and gender equality, judged by the yardstick of the European Women’s Lobby’s feminist ideals. It is the result of a lot of thought, study and attention. I hope it will help us all to see the wood from the trees, and understand why the work of women’s associations, and those who support them in so many different ways, is so crucial.

The Women’s Watch report is a snapshot, and a genuinely feminist appraisal of the situation of women’s rights in Europe in 2012-13 looking both at legislation and statistical data. The data collected has been knitted together with our critical lens, creating what we believe to be a ground breaking comparative work. Examining three core areas (women in decision-making, economic independence and care responsibilities and violence against women and sexual and reproductive rights) we now have the opportunity to pull out interlinked threads. Policies that affect one area have knock on effects in others, our report highlights these links and areas where there are both good news stories, but also areas where there is a lot of work to be done in different countries.

**Women in decision making:** Women are increasingly visible in elected office, with rates from 43% of female parliamentarians in Sweden to 9% in Hungary and Malta. However, once we move into different forms of decision making roles (heads of political parties, senior ministries, positions on corporate boards; real positions of decision making power) women disappear. What we see is that the incremental approach to participation in decision-making without binding measures has been effective in some countries, but it has taken decades and we no longer have time to waste. So what we are saying is: parity works, let’s implement it!

**Economic and caring responsibilities for women:** We see that the crisis and austerity policies are potentially jeopardising decades of progress towards gender equality. Women’s employment rates had been growing steadily but have stalled in the last year and the quality of women’s work is decreasing. The gender pay and pensions gap are only one facet of examining how the impact of provision of care places for children and for the elderly effect women’s lives and choices. A multi-layered approach that focuses on equality in paid and unpaid work between women and men and on promoting women’s economic independence is needed.

**Violence against women:** There is still a high discrepancy between legislations addressing violence against women throughout Europe, therefore creating inequalities between women in terms of protection from violence. Violence against women remains invisible because of the lack of data, at European and national level. This is why the EWL is calling for a European Strategy and Year to raise awareness and develop consistent action to end this pervasive violation of women’s rights. In terms of women’s sexual and reproductive, our analysis shows that the right to abortion is still not granted everywhere in Europe, and that there is an obvious lack of sexuality education, which is instrumental for achieving equality between women and men.

Thank you for reading, and acting!

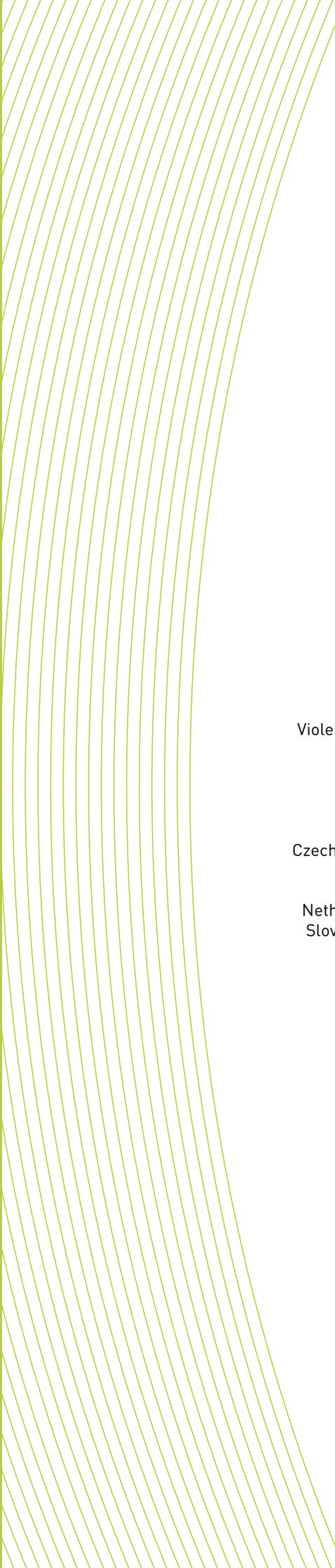
*Viviane Teitelbaum*  
EWL President

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**THE EUROPEAN WOMEN’S LOBBY (EWL) IS THE LARGEST UMBRELLA ORGANISATION OF WOMEN’S ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU), WORKING TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN. EWL MEMBERSHIP EXTENDS TO MORE THAN 2000 ORGANISATIONS IN ALL EU MEMBER STATES AND 3 CANDIDATE COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS TO 21 EUROPEAN-WIDE ASSOCIATIONS.**





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# Methodology and FAQ

## WHY AN EWL WOMEN'S RIGHTS REPORT?

The EWL wants to propose a feminist alternative to the existing gender equality reports for the European Union. These reports tend to understand gender equality as the absence of gender gap in the public sphere. Their focus is on equality outcomes (e.g. employment rate, percentage of women in parliaments, etc.) rather than on policies (availability of public childcare services, policies to combat violence against women, etc.). For the EWL, this understanding of equality is too narrow.

## WHAT IS THE IDEA OF EQUALITY BEHIND THE EWL'S REPORT?

The EWL's report is based on a comprehensive, feminist understanding of equality between women and men, which covers both public and private spheres. In addition to the absence of gender gaps, perfect equality between women and men entails that women fully enjoy their human rights, and that a gender perspective is taken into account in all spheres of life, including in public policies.

## WHAT DOES THE EWL REPORT MEASURE?

The EWL report measures how far European Union (EU) Member States and candidate country are from perfect equality between women and men (as conceived by the EWL). The EWL report looks at equality outcomes (measured as both level and gaps) as well as the quality of policies and the efforts of public authorities to promote gender equality and women's rights.

## WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE EWL REPORT?

The EWL report measures women's situation and gender equality in three fundamental areas: women in decision-making, women's socio-economic status and violence against women and women's sexual and reproductive rights.

- *Gender equality between men & women in decision-making.*

This dimension measures women's representation in the highest levels of political (national parliaments and governments) and economic (boards and presidents of largest publicly-quoted companies) decision-making. In both cases, the existing policies and legislation to promote women are assessed as well.

- *Women's socio-economic position / care responsibilities*

This dimension is captured through women's economic independence across the life-cycle and the organisation of care. The former is measured through the gender gap in the full-time employment rate, the gender pay gap, and the poverty of older women. The organisation of care is measured through the percentage of children and elderly receiving formal care, the quality of maternity leave legislation, and the impact of parenthood on women's employment.

- *Violence against women and women's sexual and reproductive rights.*

A clear drawback in the dimension of violence against violence (VAW) is the lack of comparable and comprehensive data on VAW. Qualitative indicators therefore have more weight for this dimension. Two indicators have been chosen to measure the situation in relation to VAW: policies to combat VAW and the existence and quality of support services (number of places in

shelters for victims of VAW). Sexual and reproductive rights are measured through availability of legal and free abortion and the quality of sexuality education in schools.

## WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

The EWL has used as far as possible official EU data. The EWL recognises the many limitations of these statistics and therefore seeks in this publication to provide ample space for contextualisation and explanation. Additional data is also provided by the members and partners of the EWL.

## HOW IS THE EWL REPORT CONSTRUCTED?

The EWL report is constructed through two steps:

- First, all data is converted to a 0-5 scale, where 5 signifies perfect equality ("EWL equality ideal") and 0 signifies a "EWL red card," an unacceptable situation. We made sure that the different kinds of data used to construct the indicators (percentages, ratios, evaluations) are comparable to each other. The equality ideal and the red card are decided individually for each indicator, based on the EWL political position.
- The second step is to calculate the average of the indicators within each of the three dimensions and thus give an overall score for each dimension. We have also calculated the score for the sub-dimensions to facilitate analysis.

The EWL report seeks to provide a snapshot of the situation as regards gender (in)equality in the countries of Europe, based on its "equality ideal". However, the EWL recognises that

specific indicators used separately might give a more correct picture of the factual situation of gender equality across Europe.

### HOW ARE THE RESULTS ANALYSED?

It is important to pay attention to the context and assess the structural reasons behind the results of given indicators. For example in Italy the low gender pay gap is not sign of a gender equal labour market, but is largely due to a low female employment rate and the large share of well-educated women in the female workforce and large numbers of low-skilled male workers. When analysing the results, the EWL is looking beyond the figures, at the broader context. The EWL also seeks to highlight and explain when the statistics and the frame of the "EWL equality ideal" give a misleading view of the situation in a given country.

## INDICATORS

### **Women in decision-making**

#### PARITY IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

- Proportion of women in national parliaments  
*Source: European Commission, 2012*
- Proportion of women senior ministers in national governments  
*Source: European Commission, 2012*
- Legislation to promote parity in national parliaments  
*Source: European Parliament, 2011*

#### WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

- Proportion of women on boards of administration  
*Source: European Commission, 2012*
- Proportion of women presidents of the largest 50 publicity-quoted companies - *Source: European Commission, 2012*
- Legislation to promote women on boards of administration of private companies - *Source: European Commission, 2012*

### **Socio-economic position of women & care responsibilities**

#### WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

- Gender pay gap - *Source: Eurostat, 2010*
- Difference in employment rates between women and men aged 15-64 in full-time equivalent rates - *Source: Eurostat, 2011*
- Difference between at risk of poverty rate after social transfers for women and men over 65 years (average of two indicators: gap with men's poverty and women's absolute poverty rate) - *Source: Eurostat, 2010*

#### WOMEN'S CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Proportion of children under school-age in formal child-care (average of two indicators: proportion under 3 and proportion between 3 and school-age) - *Source: Eurostat, 2012*
- Proportion of elderly persons who receive care from others than relatives - *Source: European Commission, 2009*
- Difference in employment rates of women and men aged 25-49 with children under 12 - *Source: European Commission, 2011*
- Quality of maternity leave legislation (duration and remuneration of leave) - *Source: EWL 2012; European Commission, Impact Assessment Report, 2008*

### **Violence against Women & women's sexual and reproductive rights**

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)

- Existence and quality of National Action Plan to combat VAW - *Source: EWL Barometer 2011*
- Number of places in shelters for women victims of VAW per 10 000 inhabitants - *Source: EIGE 2012*

#### WOMEN'S SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

- Existence and quality of sexuality education  
- *Source: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2006*
- Quality of access to legal abortion - *Source: EWL, 2012*

# Women in decision-making

## Political decision-making



On average, there are 3 men for every woman deputy in national parliaments or senior ministers in European governments. Sweden stands out with more women ministers than men.

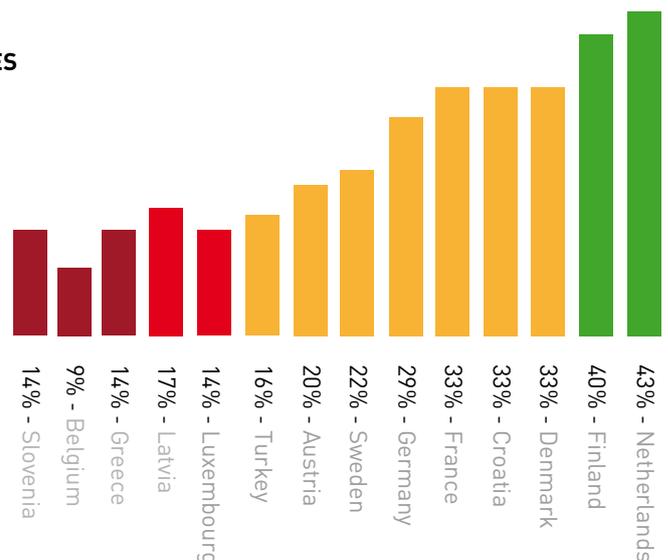
In Turkey, Slovakia, Estonia, Slovenia and Hungary, less than 1 minister in 10 is female.

More than half of the 30 countries studied have no women in leadership within major political parties. Finland (40%) and the Netherlands (43%) are notable counterweights to this exclusion.

### % OF FEMALE LEADERS IN MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

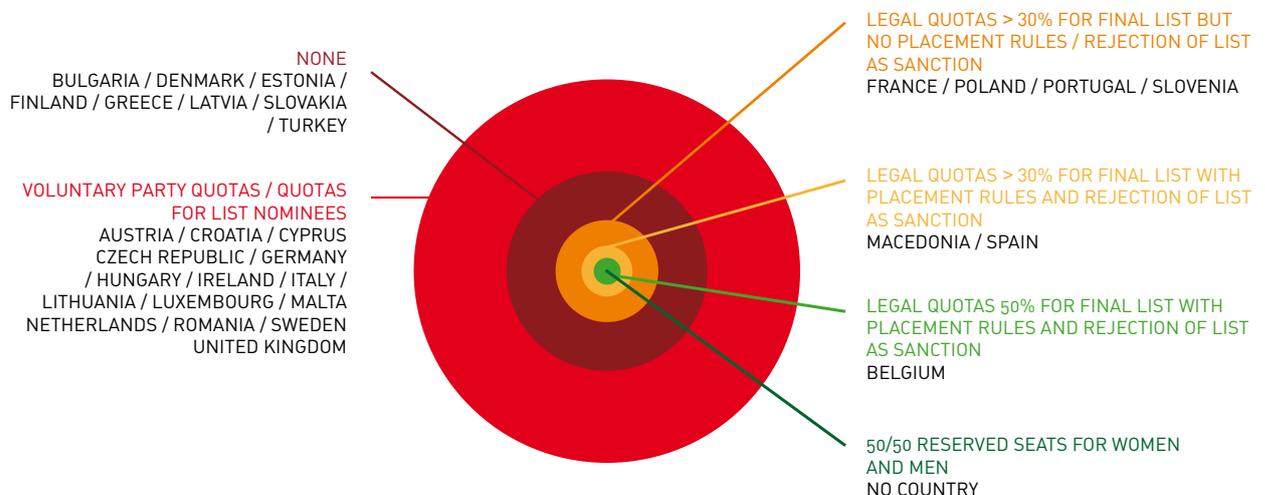
0%

BULGARIA / CYPRUS / CZECH REPUBLIC / HUNGARY / IRELAND / ITALY / POLAND / SLOVAKIA / SPAIN / UNITED KINGDOM / ESTONIA / LITHUANIA / MACEDONIA / MALTA / ROMANIA /



### LEGISLATION FOR PARITY IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Effective legislation requiring equal placement of women and men on electoral lists can rapidly improve the political representation of women (Belgium, Spain, FYROM). A range of factors (media coverage, public attitudes, etc.) continue however to limit the outcomes of legislative measures without guaranteed seats (as is the case in Belgium for example, where the 50% of women on electoral lists translates only into 39% representation in parliament). Although some countries obtain good results without legal quotas (Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland), a legal guarantee prevents potential regressions.



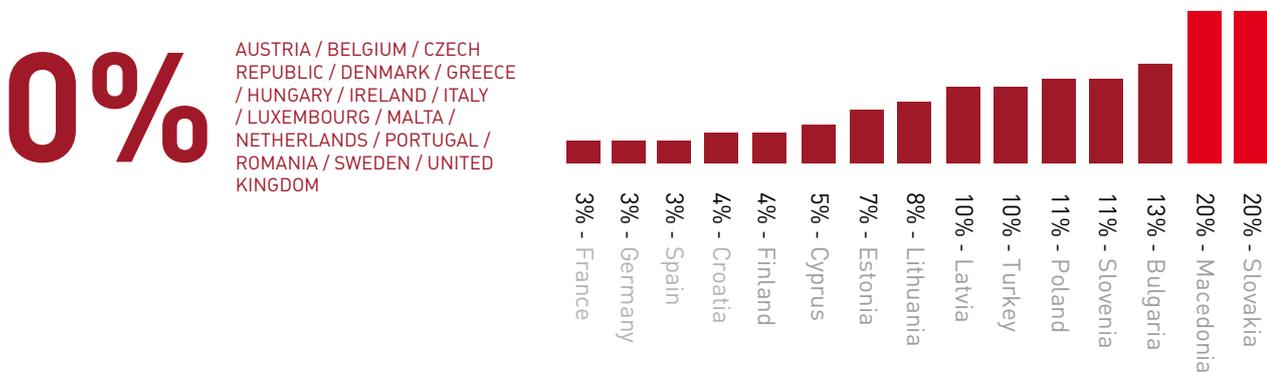
## Private-sector decision-making



Half of the 30 countries studied have no single large publicly-quoted company led by a woman.  
 In no single country does the proportion of women on boards of administration reach 30%.  
 The average is 14%.  
 In 9 countries, the representation of women does not reach 10%; in only 4 are there more than 20% women on boards.

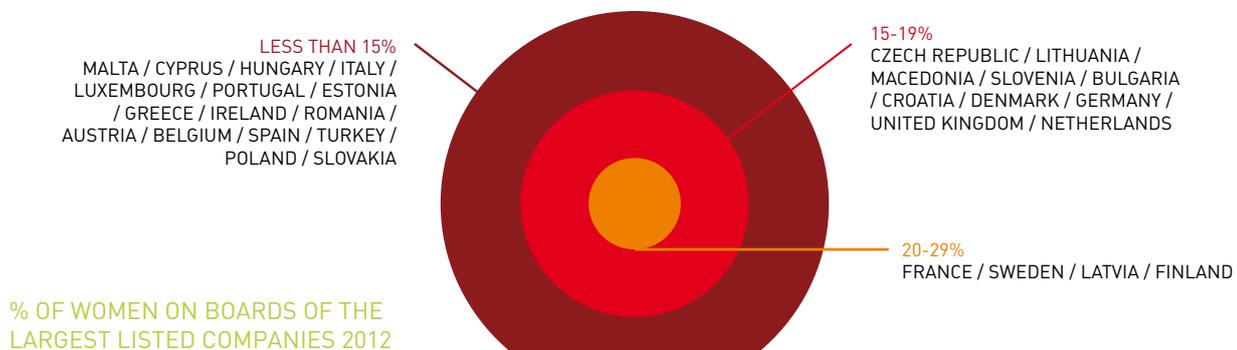
### WOMEN IN PRIVATE-SECTOR DECISION-MAKING

Women Presidents of largest quoted companies 2012 (%)



### LEGISLATION ON BOARDS OF ADMINISTRATION

Increasing the representation at the highest levels of decision-making in the private sector has recently become a hot political issue, including at the European level. In recent years, four EU countries, namely Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain have adopted legislation to increase the representation of women on corporate boards. Several others have set targets for state-owned companies or taken steps to enhance self-regulation.



Online questionnaire during 2012 and Eurostat's Population Statistics.

# Women's economic independence and care responsibilities

Women's economic independence is of crucial importance to enable them to make real choices in their lives on an equal footing with men and therefore, to progress toward gender equality. The EWL Report has looked at a range of indicators which give a global overview of different aspects that intersect to influence women's economic independence.

Real and full economic independence is not a reality anywhere in the 30 countries we examined. The numbers reveal that women on average in the EU continue to earn 16% less than men. Huge variations in pay differentiations between women and men exist between the Member States ranging from 1.9% in Poland to a striking 27.6% in Estonia. Yet this is a numerical indicator that does not take into account the gradual reduction in men's salaries because of the crisis – the gender pay gap is narrowing, but in the wrong direction as it is not a sign of progress in equality between women and men. In between these two extremes are a number of countries where the gender pay gap is still above 20% (Austria, Czech Republic, FYROM, Turkey, Germany, Greece, Cyprus and Slovakia). Data from Germany<sup>1</sup> show that the gender pension gap is 59% – revealing that the pay gap has life-long consequences as women's contributions to pension schemes and social security are limited because they earn less throughout their lives. Recent data<sup>2</sup> at EU level show that on average the gender pension gap is 39% - more than double the average gender pay gap mirroring the accumulation of gender inequalities that have a greater impact on women. While

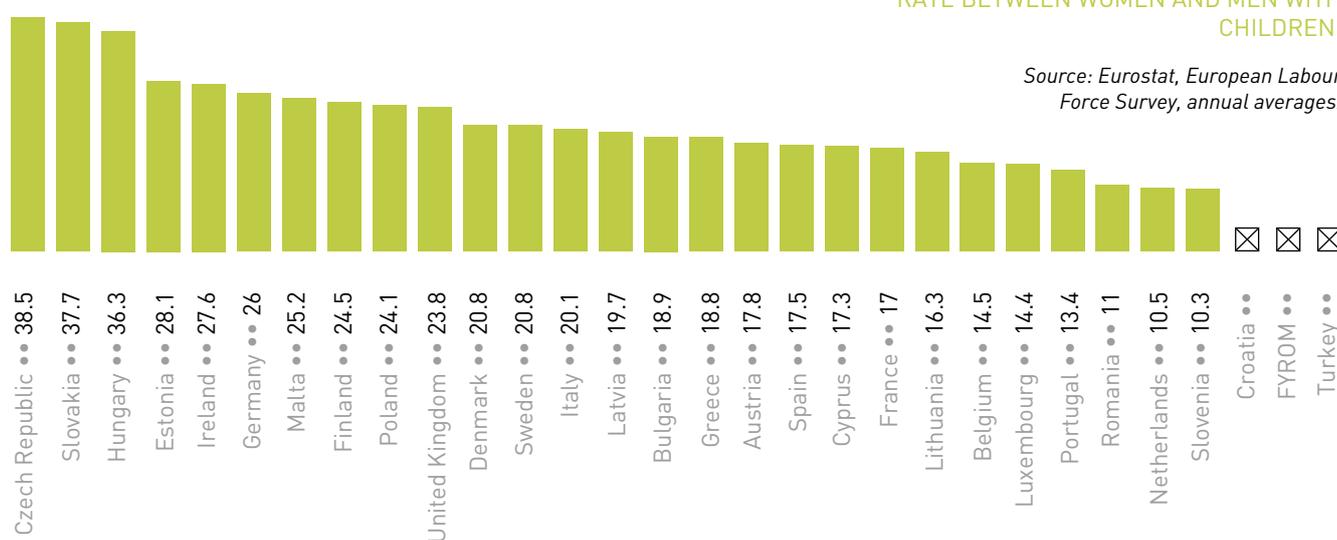
the gender pay gap has multiple facets, gender segregated labour-markets, the concentration of women in a limited number of sectors of the economy, mainly the care sector, health, education and retailing, all impact on women's working patterns and working conditions.

While women are remaining on the labour-market despite the crisis, in 2012, their employment rates in some countries (GR, ES, RO, SK, IE, DK, SI, LV, LT, EE)<sup>3</sup> have fallen to 2005 levels. We are witnessing the closing of some gender gaps such as unemployment rates. But caution must be exercised in interpreting this type of data, because it is revealing that overall working conditions are deteriorating for all. In addition, when women become unemployed they tend to be forced into precarious jobs or pull out of the labour-market altogether and off the unemployed statistical register. Cuts in public services in terms of child and dependent person care education and health have a disproportionate impact on women also as employees of these services.

Women's starting point at the labour market is different from men's. The gender inequalities on the labour market are deep-seated and linked to inequalities at home. Women continue to 'shoulder' caring responsibilities in greatest part, particularly with regards to child care and increasingly with regards to elderly care in the context of an ageing society. In our report, Sweden, Denmark, Malta and the Netherlands perform particularly well in the provision of formal elderly care, Belgium, the Netherlands, France excel in childcare provision, and the countries with furthest to go

DIFFERENCE IN THE EMPLOYMENT RATE BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN WITH CHILDREN.

Source: Eurostat, European Labour Force Survey, annual averages.



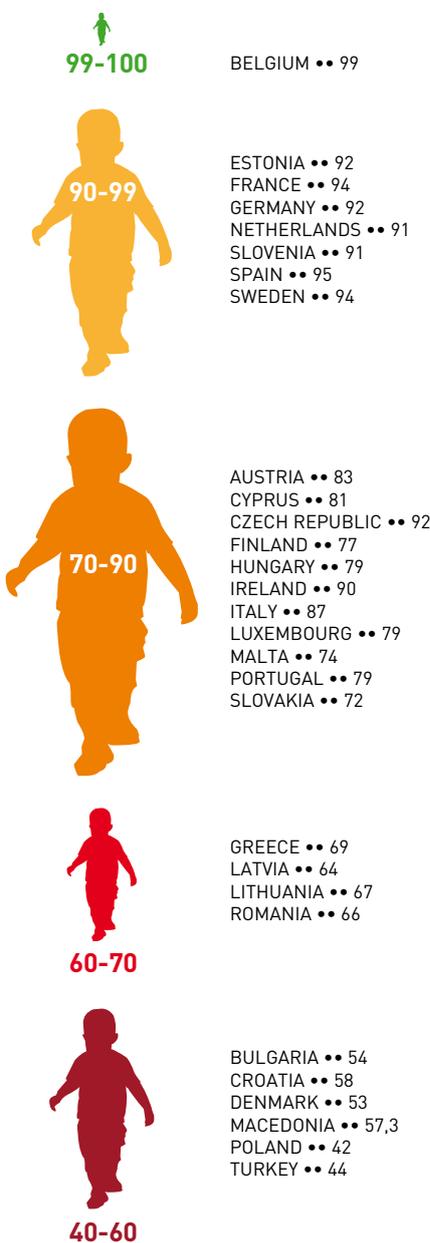
are Romania, Poland, Greece and Bulgaria for childcare, and Macedonia, Turkey, Cyprus, Croatia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland for elderly care. The link between care and employment is shown by the fact that women's employment rates drops by 12 percentage points when they have children, while it rises points for men in the same situation. The unequal share of care responsibilities between women and men, the very negative effects of the austerity measures on the provision of care leave and care services coupled with persisting stereotypes about gender roles compromise women's economic independence throughout their lives.

The redistributive role of public policies, of which care is a vital element, has been slow to bring about societal shifts towards collective responsibility for care and especially in increasing men's share of the responsibility for carrying out care tasks. Austerity measures increase the burden of care and responsibility further and are hitting those policies that have the most impact on women and men's ability to become equal earners and equal carers.

With regards to maternity leave, our Report reveals that provisions vary in duration, remuneration and from full benefit, full salary regimes to less generous and more restrictive regimes. The length of maternity leave varies from 6 weeks in the United Kingdom to 36 weeks in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and from 100% remuneration (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Croatia) to a very low 55% in Slovakia. Austerity measures are altering this landscape too, as more cuts in terms of percentage of salary and length of leave are increased (like the case of Lithuania in 2012).

This snapshot of where women are at with regards to their economic independence shows that while the situation regarding women's employment varies among Member States, many gender gaps persist in earnings, working patterns and expectations with regards to care. There is still a long way to go before women's economic independence becomes a reality in Europe.

## PROPORTION OF CHILDREN BETWEEN 3 AND SCHOOL-AGE IN FORMAL CHILDCARE %



<sup>1</sup> Federal ministry of Federal German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth - The Gender Pension Gap, 2012

<sup>2</sup> European Network of Experts on Gender Equality - The gender gap in pensions in the EU - forthcoming, 2013

<sup>3</sup> EWL The price of austerity, the impact on women's rights and gender equality in Europe, 2012

# Violence against women and girls and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights

## NUMBER OF SHELTER PLACES PER 10 000 POPULATION

Online questionnaire during 2012 and Eurostat's Population Statistics.

☒ = none  
| = data not provided



It is estimated that every fifth woman in Europe has been subjected to male domestic violence,<sup>1</sup> and that seven women die every day from it.<sup>2</sup> Between 40 and 50% of women in the European Union report some form of sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>3</sup> Despite the extreme gravity of this phenomenon, and despite continuous advocacy from women's NGOs all over Europe, political responses and resources allocated to this issue have been piecemeal, unequal and mostly inadequate at both national and European level.

In this Report, the EWL decided to look at two specific indicators, addressing on the one hand the policies of the EU Member States (the National Action Plans on violence against women (VAW), and on the other hand the services provided (shelters places for victims of male violence).

The EWL believes that a National Action Plan (NAP) on VAW is the minimum requirement and to some extent, the benchmark against which progress can be measured. A NAP is an indicator of the political priority given to the issue of VAW. Our indicator, based on the EWL Barometer on NAPs, shows that in 2013, only one European country has a NAP on all forms of VAW. In terms of the issues that should be covered by such a NAP, the EWL considers

that prostitution is a form of violence against women and girls, and should be addressed through comprehensive policy frameworks, together with all other forms of male violence. Therefore, we consider that only France has adopted such comprehensive NAP, since 2011. Ten other EU countries have NAPs on different forms of violence against women, with a gender perspective in the sense that they highlight the structural inequalities between women and men. In 2013, three countries do not have a NAP: Sweden had very comprehensive NAPs until 2011 but did not adopt new plan in 2012; after the change of government, no NAP was adopted in Spain; in the UK, Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland have regional NAPs but there is no national plan to address VAW.

Having a NAP does not necessarily mean that policies are fully implemented and services provided. One can see that despite good NAPs, some countries have not invested in shelter places to guarantee to women a safe place if they want to flee male violence. Even if Finland, Lithuania, Greece, France, Portugal or Germany have good NAPs, they have less than one shelter place for 10 000 inhabitants, which is far below the minimum standards proposed by the Council of Europe.

VAW also remains invisible and underestimated as a structural phenomenon because of the general lack of official data, both at European level and in some European countries. Without this knowledge, we face a lack of services protecting women and of activities aiming at preventing and raising awareness on VAW. The number of shelter places is therefore a good indicator of the political will of Member States to collect data on VAW. Only Luxembourg, Slovenia, Malta and the Netherlands have a least one place in a safe shelter per 10 000 inhabitants.

Those two indicators should not hide other crucial issues related to VAW. The impunity of perpetrators is still high in Europe. Sexual violence in particular has one of the lowest conviction rates of any crime, and high levels of attrition. Such impunity is even more prevalent when the victims are women with specific needs. Women with disabilities are four times more likely to experience sexual violence and face forced sterilisation or abortion; many of them depend on the perpetrator for their daily care or even survival. Migrant women are often denied access to shelters; undocumented women can face deportation when reporting facts of male violence.

Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are human rights and their violation should be considered as a form of violence against women and girls. This is why the two other indicators linked to VAW in the EWL Report deal with sexuality education and abortion legislation. We witness a growing backlash to women's SRHR in Europe and new strategies to prevent women's access to reproductive and sexual health care.

The indicator on abortion legislation show that access to safe abortion is illegal, legally restricted, or practically restricted due to an unregulated use of conscientious objection in 14 EU Member States and 3 accession countries, that is more than half of the 30 countries we analysed. There is growing pressure of conservative and religious groups opposed to women's self-determination in relation to their reproductive and sexual health. Only 10 EU countries provide access to safe and free abortion, but even in those countries, legislation needs to be strengthened and is regularly attacked, showing that women's rights are to be constantly fought for. In addition, the recession and austerity measures have had a detrimental impact on women's enjoyment of their SRHR: in many countries, women's organisations and public services providing counselling and support see their financial sustainability threatened. France, which has good legislation on abortion, saw 180 abortion centres closing down over the last ten years.

It is not surprising that the correlation between sexuality education and the availability of sexual and reproductive health rights is very strong. Sweden, France and Belgium perform very well in this regard, but Poland, Malta and Austria come bottom of the list. For the EWL, sex education

should be based on a positive concept of health and sexual health, and should be implemented all over the EU; sexuality education should be compulsory, provided by teachers and health professionals, for children from 6 years old on. Only 8 EU Member States promote such model (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden), whereas in the rest of Europe, sexuality education is understood as a health issue (biological) or framed by a conservative or religious approach to sexuality.

Interestingly, the majority of the countries with no integrative approach to sex education are also the ones that fail to develop policy frameworks to address violence against women. This is why the EWL will continue to call for comprehensive policies to end violence against women, including violations of women's SRHR. At all levels, both national and European, EWL members are pointing out to the links between real equality between women and men and women's full control of their body and sexuality, free from all forms of male violence. In this perspective, the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is a priority, as well as a European Year and Strategy to End Violence against Women.

<sup>1</sup> EWL, *Unveiling the hidden data on domestic violence in the EU, 1999*

<sup>2</sup> Psytel, *Estimation de la mortalité liée aux violences conjugales en Europe, Programme Daphne III*

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 1998

# Austria



Women in decision-making: **1.57/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.85/5**

Violence against women: **1.4/5**

## Highlights

**28%**

women in parliament

**43%**

women senior ministers

**11%**

women on boards



no women presidents of the largest companies

**25.5%**

gender pay gap

**21.7%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**9%**

of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**69%**

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

## TRENDS:



There has been slow but steady progress over the last few years in increasing the number of childcare places for infants between 1 and 3 years old. Discussion has also intensified over whether to make the last 2 years of preschool compulsory (currently, 1 year is compulsory) and whether to increase the number of schools offering classes in the afternoon.

Improvements can also be seen in transparency on salaries since 2011, with companies being required to publish gendered pay data. By 2014, all companies with more than 150 employees will be bound by the legislation.

The Austrian Ministry for Women in 2012 began quarterly publication of a barometer with sex-disaggregated data on various topics concerning women's rights and gender equality. Topics covered in 2012 included part-time work and pensions, and domestic violence.

In 2009, new legal provisions were adopted to protect women and children from perpetrators of violence. A new programme was also implemented to train police and social services to better detect and deal with domestic violence and victims of trafficking.



Hopes for a National Action Plan to Eliminate Violence against Women in 2013 have been dashed due to forthcoming national elections and a lack of prioritisation of this issue.

## UNDERSTANDING AUSTRIA

Austria has one of the highest proportions of women in government in the EU, with 43% of women senior ministers, behind only Sweden, France and Finland. Austria also has an above-average number of women leaders of major political parties (20%). In the corporate sector, despite a legal requirement (of 25% women by end 2013 and 35% by end 2018) for companies with a 50% public stake since March 2011, women are rare in decision-making, representing only 11% of board members; there are no women Presidents among the largest listed companies.

With the exception of Estonia, Austria has the largest gender pay gap in the EU, at 25.5%. The full-time employment gap is also large at 21.7 points. New mothers have the right to 16 weeks of fully-remunerated maternity leave, but, if they wish to return to work, childcare provisions are scarce: only 9% of under 3 year-olds receive formal care. 17% of those between 3 and compulsory school-age remain in the care of their parents – generally mothers – or other informal carers. Many schools only offer part-time services, preventing parents from returning to full-time jobs. On the other hand, provisions for elderly care are comparatively good: 69% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care.

With regards to violence against women, Austria is some distance from the ideal situation. There is a National Action Plan on specific forms of violence against women, but there is no gender analysis, and preventive measures are lacking. According to government surveys in 2012, every other person knows a victim of domestic violence, and 75% of Austrians think such violence widespread. 33% of women have experienced sexual violence. Sexuality education is limited and not compulsory, and there are numerous practical obstacles in access to abortion.

# Belgium



Women in decision-making: **1.85/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.71/5**  
Violence against women: **2.6/5**

## UNDERSTANDING BELGIUM

Belgium has the most progressive legislation in the EU for parity in political decision-making: a “zipper” list system ensures an equal number of women/men candidates in equal positions. However, women are only 39% of members of parliament. Addressing entrenched stereotypes, including in political parties and the media, remains a challenge.

Legislation in the private sector also seeks to tackle the low representation (11% in 2010) of women on boards. The new requirement of 30% women on boards is the most stringent in the EU behind France’s 40% quota.

Belgium also scores comparatively well for women’s economic independence and the sharing of care responsibilities. The gender pay gap is almost half the EU average at 8.8%, despite a higher than average gap in full-time employment rates of women and men averaging 18.4%.

A relatively short maternity leave (15 weeks) and reasonable rates for public childcare encourages a rapid return to the labour-market for women with young children. However, while availability of childcare from 2.5 years is excellent, problems remain in availability for smaller infants, 35% of whom receive formal care. Maternity leave remuneration at 77% is one of the lowest in the EU.

In January 2007 Belgium adopted a very ambitious “gender mainstreaming law” for the structural integration of a gender perspective in all policies defined and conducted at Belgian federal level.

Belgium provides excellent access to sexual and reproductive rights, including to same sex couples. Sexuality education is also a best practice. However, there is a lack of support services for women victims of violence and the National Action Plan to combat violence has no gender analysis. Official police figures for reported cases count 21,579 victims of domestic violence in 2010, 15% of all women. In 2009, the police recorded 2885 rapes – 8 per day. Out of these declared rapes, only 6% of victims registered formal complaints.

## TRENDS:



In 2012, Belgium transposed EU legislation on parental leave. For births from January 2013, parents will be entitled to the new EU minimum of 4 months parental leave, up from 3 months per child.

In June 2011, Belgium adopted a law imposing the presence of at least 1/3 of each gender in management boards of state and publicly-listed companies. State companies are granted 1 year to comply, listed companies 5 years and small to medium-sized (listed) firms 8 years. The sanction for non-compliance is the loss of benefits by board members.

In July 2011, a new law banned media advertisement of cosmetic surgery.



Flexibility in the labour market decreased with the limitation of “credit temps” leave in the private sector to 3 years. Previously, workers were entitled to reduce their working hours in case of justified need for a period of up to 5 years. Only the first year provides full pension entitlements.

In December 2011, a new law also moved to progressively reduce pre-pension entitlements. While the pension age remains 65 after 45 years of work, by 2016 the pre-pension age will increase from 60 to 62 and the necessary minimum number of years of work and tax contributions will increase from 35 to 40. Pension entitlements continue to be calculated on the basis of 45 years of work.

## Highlights

Legal measure requiring 50% women/men on final party electoral lists with placement rules and rejection of the list as sanction for non-compliance

**39%**  
women in parliaments

Legal measure requiring 30% women on corporate boards

 no women presidents of the largest companies

**8.8%**  
gender pay gap

**47.4%**  
of women in full-time employment

**35%** of infants under 3 and 99% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

**0,45**  
shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

# Bulgaria



Women in decision-making: **0.71/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.42/5**

Violence against women: **1.5/5**

## Highlights

**23%**

women in parliament

**13%**

women presidents of the largest companies

**6.6%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**37.2%**

of women over 65 are at risk of poverty

**7%**

of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**0.15**

shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

Abortion is legal but not free of charge

## TRENDS:



In 2011, the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy launched a campaign to increase the number of women on company boards, which currently stands at 16%. In 2012, the ministry disseminated and encouraged companies to sign up to the European Commission's pledge for self-regulatory measures for parity in decision-making. Bulgaria provided the largest number of signatory companies for that pledge.

In 2009, a governmental fund with a yearly value of EUR 250,000 was established for NGOs providing services to women victims of domestic violence.



Despite national efforts to address the paucity of women on boards, in September 2012 the Bulgarian government decided to pre-emptively oppose EU legislation on this topic.

The disbursement of funds for service providers to victims of domestic violence, initiated in 2009, stalled in 2012, causing cuts in the availability and quality of services offered.

Institutional mechanisms for women's rights and gender equality have suffered setbacks. The National Council on Equality between Women and Men was downgraded in 2012 from a consultative to a declarative body. In 2012, funding for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality was withdrawn.

## UNDERSTANDING BULGARIA

Bulgaria faces many challenges in implementing international commitments for women's rights and gender equality. The lack of legislation for parity in decision-making hampers progress on this front. However, the representation figures are average for an EU country: women are 23% of parliamentarians, 24% of senior ministers and 16% of corporate board members. With 13% women company presidents, Bulgaria's performance on this score is second only to the 20% EU high of Slovakia.

Bulgaria's gender pay gap is average at 15.7% but the full-time gender employment gap is comparatively low at 6.6%. Still, only 55.9% of women are engaged in full-time paid work. Only 7% of infants under 3 and 54% of children between 3 and school-age are in formal care – some of the lowest figures in the EU.

Equally, a very low 12% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. Bulgaria has the highest poverty rates for elderly women (37.2%) and men (24.9%) in the EU. The gender gap in this area is also one of the largest, showing the impact of policies through the life-cycle.

The National Action Plan against violence has no gender analysis and only covers certain forms of violence experienced by women. Only 0.15 places in shelters for women victims of violence are available per 10,000 inhabitants. Women's associations estimate that 1 in 4 Bulgarian women has been a victim of physical or verbal abuse. According to the Alliance Against Domestic Violence (a coalition of 11 NGOs), the number of women asking for help doubled two-fold over the first 6 months of 2012 compared to 2011. Over the month of November 2012, more than 2,600 women received help from the Alliance.

# Croatia



Women in decision-making: **1.14/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **1.92/5**  
Violence against women: **1.75/5**

## UNDERSTANDING CROATIA

Article 15 of the Gender Equality Act calls on political parties to respect a 40% quota for members of the least represented sex on their lists. However, 2/3 of the 313 party lists did not respect this requirement in the last elections in 2011.

Only 40.6% of women (and 53.3% of men) are active on the labour market in Croatia. Furthermore, women's work in Croatia is precarious. In 2011, only 8.5% of new female employees were given a contract unlimited in time, as compared to 19.5% of men. The official gender pay gap is only 10.2%. However the country's largest private employment agency, "Moj posao", estimates a gap closer to 20% due to widespread tax evasion and under declaration of income.

There continues to be a strongly gendered division of care work, which is in large measure considered a private burden in Croatia: in 2012, an extension of leave provisions for new parents was taken up by fathers in only 0.47% of cases. Parental leave is only claimed by 4.67% of fathers. Childcare facilities are sorely lacking, with only 58% of children between 3 and school-age in formal care. Elderly care services are rudimentary, with the first palliative centre in the country opening only in 2012.

Violence against women is pervasive, as in other countries. In 2011, the victims were women in 82% of the 20,247 reported cases of domestic violence. Thus far, women's associations have not been able to obtain funding for shelters for women victims of violence. Support for victims of war rape during the conflicts accompanying the break-up of the former Yugoslavia is still sorely lacking.

Women's reproductive rights are restricted by the strong influence of the Catholic Church, which effectively limits access to abortion.

## TRENDS:



There is increasing awareness in Croatia of the need to increase women's representation in political decision-making. Research conducted in 2012 found that more than 60% of women find women's under-representation problematic and 85.4% support legal measures to increase the representation of women in parliament. Currently, women are 24% of members of parliament and were 34.96% of candidates in the last elections in December 2011.

Paternity leave has been lengthened and there is consideration of making such leave compulsory for new fathers.



Austerity measures are threatening gains made by women in the labour market, notably with the closure of kindergartens. While the duration of parental leave has been increased, child benefits have been cut. Women's work is increasingly precarious, with 92% of women working part-time or with short-term (mostly monthly) contracts. Contracts are not renewed in cases of pregnancy. Poverty rates rose between 2010 and 2012 to reach 21.4% of all women, and 32% of women over 65.

Regarding violence against women, trade union surveys report increased rates of sexual harassment.

Draft legislation proposals aiming to decriminalise prostitution and pimping were introduced in 2012.

## Highlights

**25%**  
women members of  
parliament

**16%**  
women on  
corporate boards

**35.5%**  
of women in  
full-time  
employment

**32%**  
of women over 65 at  
risk of poverty

**15%**  
of infants under 3  
and 58% of those  
between 3 and  
school-age in  
formal childcare

**27**  
weeks maternity  
leave at 100% pay

# Cyprus



Women in decision-making: **0.42/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.28/5**

Violence against women: **1.25/5**

## Highlights

**11%**

women in parliament

**4%**

women on boards of the largest companies

**21%**

gender pay gap

**47.5%**

of women over 65 are at risk-of-poverty

**9%**

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

**0.14**

shelters places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

Limited access to abortion

## TRENDS:



The 2012 Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU set tackling violence against women as a priority. Increased awareness has led to a dramatic rise in the reported rates of all forms of violence against women in the last decade. In terms of deliverables, there have been a number of policy changes to address human trafficking and the adoption of a National Action Plan in 2010.

Action has also been taken to address the gender pay gap, which stands at 21%, by means of a 3-year EU funded programme.

Progress has further been made regarding family planning and education on sexual and reproductive health, with a new health education curriculum seeing the light in 2012 and targeting children from the age of 5.



Setbacks are noticeable in terms of women in decision-making. Following parliament and local elections in 2011, the presence of women decreased from 14.3% in the previous legislature to 10.7%. At present, only Hungary and Malta score worse than Cyprus for women in parliament (11%).

## UNDERSTANDING CYPRUS

Women's political participation in Cyprus is increasing, but from a very low point and only slowly, without the aid of legal measures. Enduring stereotypes and patriarchal structures within political parties, the media and society at large hamper women's participation.

Cyprus has the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate for elderly women (and men) across the EU. 91% of the dependent elderly do not receive any formal care; the burden of care falls largely on women family members. In addition, childcare as a formal social welfare provision is a relatively new concept in Cyprus. Informal arrangements continue to prevail with family (mostly grandmothers) playing the primary role in the provision of care. Maternity leave is short (16 weeks) and parental leave is unpaid.

Violence against women is viewed through the restrictive prism of "family violence", disguising structural gender inequalities and preventing the establishment of specialised services. The number of calls to domestic violence helplines more than doubled from 551 cases in 2001 to 1320 in 2011.<sup>1</sup> During this period, 80% of callers were women. Reporting rates for rape and sexual violence are also on the increase, jumping between 1990-1996 by 361% and between 2000-2003 by 195%. Cyprus has one of the lowest conviction rates for all forms of violence against women in Europe.

Provisions for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are limited in Cyprus. There is a strong lack of choice, accessibility and affordability of contraception. Abortion is prohibited except in cases of serious hazard to mother or child. Abortion services are not provided at state hospitals.

<sup>1</sup> Association for the Prevention and Handling of Domestic Violence (SPAVO)

# Czech Republic



Women in decision-making: **0.57/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **1/5**  
Violence against women: **1.75/5**

## UNDERSTANDING THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic has the largest employment gap in the EU between women and men with children under 12, at 37.7%. In addition, women on maternity leave receive only 69% of their salary, the lowest remuneration in the EU with the exception of neighbouring Slovakia. There are no flexible parental leave options or part-time work possibilities (only about 5% of all jobs are part-time). Formal childcare provisions are inadequate. Only 3% of infants under 3 are in formal childcare, one of lowest proportions of any EU country. This is despite the fact that work-life balance is one of the only gender equality issues recognised by the state (along with domestic violence, from a gender blind perspective).

Women face many obstacles in accessing decision-making posts. In the political arena, only the Green Party has a quota for the representation of women on the party lists. While women politicians gain strong direct support from voters, they are rarely appointed to positions of power.

An estimated 38% of women experience domestic violence,<sup>1</sup> but services for victims are sorely lacking. There are only 0.08 places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants.

## TRENDS:



In February 2012, 2 years after the new government failed to appoint a Minister for Human Rights, a new Chair for the Government Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men was nominated and the Council resumed work. A National Action Plan on the prevention of domestic violence was approved in April 2011. In terms of women in decision-making, electoral reform in 2012 bringing about the direct election of the President improves the chances of success of women candidates.



Following the 2010 elections, no single woman was appointed to government. Since then, only women have 3 gained ministerial positions. In addition, there have been a number of high level appointments of anti-equality proponents as advisers to government on human rights. The institutional framework for gender equality has further been weakened by the abolition of the Ministry for Human Rights and the 2-year interruption in the work of the Government Council for Equal Opportunities.

There is a general lack of political will to promote gender equality beyond issues of work-life balance and domestic violence. Even then, the Czech government has so far refused to sign the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women. The restriction of home-births is a further example of limits placed on women's freedom of choice.

## Highlights

**22%**

women in parliament

**25.5%**

gender pay gap

**3%**

of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**38.5%**

employment gap between women and men with children under 12

**69%**

pay during maternity leave

**48%**

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

Abortion is legal but not free of charge

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic: *The International Research of Domestic Violence Against Women CZ/2003*. URL: <<http://studie.soc.cas.cz/index.php3?lang=cze&shw=246>>

# Denmark



Women in decision-making: **1.57/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **3/5**

Violence against women: **2.75/5**

## Highlights

**39%** women in parliament and senior ministers

**0** no women presidents of the largest companies

**77%** of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**100%** of all dependent elderly persons have access to formal care

**18** weeks of maternity leave and 2 weeks of paternity leave, both at 100% pay

National Action Plan on specific forms of violence against women, but with no gender analysis

## TRENDS:



In 2011, the Danish government launched a national Equal Treatment Body for Gender to assist victims of discrimination, develop independent studies and projects, and present recommendations to the Danish parliament. It is still too early to assess the effects of the work of the Equal Treatment Body, which unfortunately has a limited budget.

Denmark in 2011 elected its first ever female Prime Minister. The Danish government adopted legislation in 2012 concerning women on boards. 1,100 of Denmark's largest companies must set voluntary targets for the proportion of women on boards. The government is also discussing possible legislation on the sharing of parental leave between mothers and fathers.



Two major negative tendencies with regards to the situation in Denmark are that the work for women's right has stagnated, especially with regards to legislation, and that the funding for NGO's as well as the institutional bodies for equal rights is deficient. The good intentions of the centre-left government which came to power in September 2011 have yet to be backed by concrete actions.

Gender mainstreaming has not been implemented effectively and is rarely used as a tool to promote equality. Gender mainstreaming of tax reforms has been delayed.

## UNDERSTANDING DENMARK

In terms of decision-making, Denmark joins its Nordic neighbours in scoring relatively well for women in political posts while having no legislative measures in place. In the private sector however, the absence of legal measures correlates with poor performance: there are no women presidents of the largest publicly-listed companies in Denmark and only 16% of board members are female.

More than 60% of women in Denmark are in full-time employment, a high score Denmark also shares with Sweden and Finland. The gender pay gap is nevertheless within the (high) EU average at 16%, and 18.5% of women over 65 are at risk of poverty. Dependent elderly persons do all however have access to formal care.

Denmark has good maternity leave provisions with 18 weeks of fully paid leave. 10 days of paternity leave are also fully paid. Childcare provisions are also good. According to the OECD Organisation, 65.7% of 0-2 years-olds and 91.5% of 3-5 year-olds are in childcare. EU figures on "formal" childcare count 77% of children under 3 and only 53% of those between 3 and school-age.

According to the National Institute of Public Health, about 26,000 women between 16 and 74 are victims of violence from a former or current partner every year. This has declined from some 42,000 in 2000. There are 0.61 places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants in Denmark.

# Estonia



Women in decision-making: **0.28/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**  
Violence against women: **2.5/5**

## UNDERSTANDING ESTONIA

In both the decision-making and the socio-economic sphere, Estonia ranks towards the bottom of the EU table. In the field of decision-making, the lack of binding legislation results in poor representation of women in both the public and private sphere. Women represent only 8% of senior ministers in government for example.

Estonia has the biggest gender pay gap in the EU at 27.6%. Almost as many women (58%) work full-time as men (60%). Estonia has very generous maternity and parental leave provisions, allowing new parents 18 months of leave with full pay. However, care provisions are lacking for those who wish to return to work, and women disproportionately take the leave. Only 21% of infants under 3 are in formal childcare, and women with children under 12 are 28.1% less likely to be employed as compared to men in the same category. Women also take on the majority of the burden of caring for dependent elderly relatives, only 12% of whom receive formal care.

Gender stereotypes in education persist, leading to gender-stereotyped educational choices, which helps perpetuate gender segregation of the labour market.

39% of people in Estonia know a woman victim of domestic violence within their family or friendship circle. Tolerance for violence against women is however relatively high, with only 72% of people thinking physical violence a "very serious" issue and 21% saying sexual violence is only "fairly serious".<sup>1</sup>

## TRENDS:



In 2010, a first gender pay gap survey was carried out in Estonia. In 2012, the government announced an action plan to close the gender pay gap, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Running until 2015, the EUR 4 million fund is also intended for actions to combat human trafficking and violence against women, to support the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner's office (currently severely under-funded and under-resourced), and to promote reconciliation of professional and private life. Some of the funding is open to women's associations.

Between 2010 and 2012, a pilot project also worked on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the state budget. This built on a series of gender mainstreaming projects run by the Ministry of Social Affairs since 2004.



Although Estonia adopted a Gender Equality Act in 2004, political will has been lacking to implement these legal provisions, reflecting a widespread lack of knowledge and understanding of human rights. Many of the bodies envisaged in the Act remain inexistent, including the Gender Equality Council, a government advisory body.

In the field of decision-making, there was a drop from 24% to 19.8% of women in parliament following the March 2011 elections. Fewer women were put on the electoral lists. There is only 1 female minister in government.

## Highlights

**20%**  
women in parliament

**7%**  
women on boards and women presidents of the largest companies

**27.6%**  
gender pay gap

**92%**  
of children between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare

**12%** of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

**20** weeks maternity leave at 100% pay

**0.5** places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10000 inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Finland

Women in decision-making: **2.28/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.64/5**

Violence against women: **3/5**



## Highlights

**43%** women  
in parliament  
and 47% senior  
ministers

**19.4%**  
gender pay gap

**61.8%**  
of women in full-  
time employment  
(gender gap 5.2%)

**24.5%**  
gender gap in  
employment  
for parents with  
children under 12

**79%** pay for  
maternity leave (18  
weeks)

**0.03**  
shelter places for  
women victims of  
violence per 10,000  
inhabitants

Access to abortion  
is available on  
demand free of  
charge

## TRENDS:



Ratification of the Council of Europe's Convention on violence against women is underway. A public debate has been launched on the criminalisation of the purchase of sexual services. Also, the criminal law on human trafficking is under review to allow more sensitivity to the vulnerability of victims, and lower the threshold of securing convictions for traffickers in cases of sexual exploitation. Finally, in 2012, the first ever report on murders within the family in Finland was published by the Minister of Interior.

Also, a new Child and Youth Policy Programme (2012-2015) is being implemented which aims at more gender-sensitive education.



In municipal elections held in October 2012, for the first time since the 1950s, the proportion of female candidates fell (by 1.6%), to reach 38.8%. The proportion of women in municipal councils fell to 36.2%.

In 2012, the city of Espoo (the second largest city in Finland) decided to discontinue funding its only shelter for victims of violence. Similar discussions have started in other cities.

The trend of boys and young men committing suicide is decreasing, whereas an increasing number of girls and young women under 24 take their own lives.

## UNDERSTANDING FINLAND

Together with neighbouring Sweden, Finland achieves a high rate of female representation in political decision-making, without the benefit of binding regulation. 40% of the leaders of major political parties are women. However, the recent decrease of women's representation in municipal government highlights the ever-present risk of a backlash against the increasing power of women's voices.

Although less than a 1/3 of private company board members are female (27%), Finland has the highest percentage of women on boards in the EU. Only public bodies are required (by political decision rather than law) to have an "equitable proportion" (at least 40%) of both women and men.

The socio-economic position of women in Finland is less secure. Although according to the latest statistics (2010), almost 62% of women work full-time and women's salaries have risen faster than those of men, the gender pay gap remains significant at 19.4% and is narrowing only slowly. Inadequate remuneration of maternity leave (79% of salary) and a low proportion of infants receiving formal care (28% of under 3 year olds and 77% of those between 3 and school-age) lead to a large gender differential in employment rates for parents of children under 12 (24.5%). In addition, only 39% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care.

The trend to close shelters for women victims of violence demonstrates a wider lack of understanding for the gender dimension of family violence. There is no decrease in the high numbers of women murdered by their male spouses and ex-spouses. The government's National Action Plan on Violence Against Women is ambitious, but lacks funding and human resources.

Regarding sexual education and reproductive rights, on the other hand, the country has reached very high standards.

# France

Women in decision-making: **2.42/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **3.07/5**

Violence against women: **2.42/5**



## UNDERSTANDING FRANCE

Despite parity legislation in place since 2000, gender balance in the current government and 33% of the leaders of major political parties being female, on an EU scale France has a very average representation of women in parliament (27% in the lower house; 22% in the upper house). This poor result reflects the weakness of the financial sanctions attached to legal quotas for national electoral lists, the reticence of political parties – especially conservative parties – to put forward women candidates, and the practice of holding double mandates at local and national levels.

Women make up 51.7% of public servants, but hold only 20.3% of management posts. Women are 10% of prefects, and 11% of ambassadors. In the private sector, new legislation should assist in the rapid increase of the proportion of women on boards of administration. At present, women are 22% of board members and only 3% of the presidents of large companies.

Just over half of women work full-time (53%). Maternity leave is a little short at 16 weeks but is fully paid, and a comparatively high 42% of infants under 3 and 94% of those between 3 and school-age (6 years) receive formal care thanks to a free, universal state-run pre-school system. However, a care gap remains for the youngest children (500,000 nursery places missing) and mothers continue to be far more likely to fill it: the gender employment rate differential for mothers and fathers of children under 12 stands at 17%.

In 2010-2011, 200 000 women in France aged 18-75 were victims of sexual violence outside of the home. Three times as many experienced such violence within their own homes.

## TRENDS:



The first ever gender-balanced government was instituted in France in 2012, with 17 women and 17 men, and with more women (11) heading ministries than men (9). A ministry for women's rights was re-established. Strengthened measures for gender mainstreaming were introduced at the ministerial level, and draft framework legislation is to be presented in 2013.

In 2010-2011, the French parliament adopted some of the strongest and most progressive quota legislation in the EU for parity on boards of private companies and within the higher echelons of public service. The French government has also committed to parity in the governance of universities.

In 2011, a parliamentary report defined prostitution as a form of violence against women and a resolution reaffirmed the abolitionist principles of the Republic. A legislative proposal to penalise buyers of sexual services and reinforce the protection of victims is being discussed by the parliament and senate.

In 2012, strengthened legislation on sexual harassment came into force. Deputies approved the full reimbursement of abortion procedure costs, and the availability free of charge of the contraceptive pill to girls between 15 and 18.



In 2010, the pension age increased from 60 to 62, and women and men must now work an extra two years up to 67 in order to qualify for a full pension. As women already spend long periods out of the labour market for unpaid care duties, they rarely qualify for full pensions. In addition, the raise of the pension age is not accompanied by policies to improve the employability of older women, whose employment rate is much lower than men's of the same age-group.

## Highlights

**27%**  
women in  
parliament

**49%**  
women senior  
ministers

**3%**  
women presidents  
of the largest  
companies

Legal measure  
requiring  
**40%**  
women on boards of  
administration with  
effective sanctions  
since 2010

**16%**  
pay gap

**67%**  
of dependent elderly  
receive formal care

Abortion is available  
on demand free of  
charge

# FYROM

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Women in decision-making: **1.28/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **1.35/5**  
Violence against women: **2/5**

## Highlights

**32,5%**

women in parliament

Legal quota for 1/3 women on electoral lists with effective sanctions

**21%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**0.3%**

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

National Action Plan on domestic violence, but with no gender perspective



No formal sexuality education

Abortion is legal but not free of charge

## TRENDS:



FYROM in May 2011 signed but has yet to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women and from 2012 launched a new 3-year strategy on domestic violence, with annual action plans jointly developed by the relevant ministries and civil society.



Local elections in 2009 returned not a single woman mayor, down from 4% in the 2005-2009 term. Political parties placed only 14 women on the electoral lists, as compared to 352 men. In rural municipalities and those with mixed ethnic populations, no women were candidates.

Women's labour market participation has decreased over the last decade. A gendered segregation in employment sectors has also led to the predominance of women in the most vulnerable, least influential and least well-paid professions. An especially vulnerable and unprotected category is that of women working in the textile industry.

## UNDERSTANDING FYROM

FYROM has some of the strongest legislation for parity in parliamentary decision-making in Europe: every third place must go to a member of the least represented sex; should this proportion not be respected, the list is considered invalid. There are no legal measures for parity in private sector decision-making. Women are 15% of board members and a comparatively high 20% of the presidents of the largest publicly-listed companies.

FYROM has the highest unemployment rates in Europe, with more than 31% of both women and men registered as unemployed in 2011. Of the remaining population however, only 35.3% of women are employed, as compared to 52.3% of men. When employed, a second gap is evident between the minority of women working full-time (39.3%) and the majority of men in such positions (60.3%).

There is no official data regarding the gender pay gap in FYROM but studies indicate a gap ranging from 15% to 25%.

Care services for children are insufficient: 42.6% of infants under 3 and 57.3% of those between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare. For dependent elderly persons, formal care is in practice inexistent.

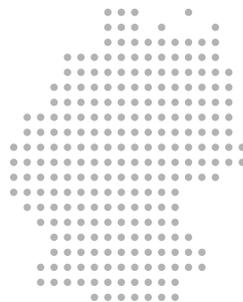
The number of declared cases of domestic violence increased by 23.3% between 2010 and 2011. The victims were women in 83.2% of the reported cases in 2010, and 85.5% of the cases in 2011. However, the national strategy to combat domestic violence contains no gender perspective. There are 0.15 places in state-run shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants.

# Germany

Women in decision-making: **1.57/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**

Violence against women: **3.5/5**



## UNDERSTANDING GERMANY

Women's overall employment rate in Germany has shown a consistent upwards trend, but the absolute volume of women's labour market contribution remains stagnant due to the predominance of part-time work for women (45,5%). Most women in Germany do not earn a living wage and are economically dependent on their partners. This is in large measure due to insufficient care provisions, which make it impossible for many women to work full-time. 50% of dependent elderly persons receive no formal care. Only 20% of infants under 3 are in formal childcare, and women's employment rate drops by 19.3% when they have children under 12; men's rises by 6.7%.<sup>1</sup> This segregation is upheld through a tax system based on combined family income, which represents an incentive for women to stay home or take on low-income jobs. Since 2006, women's economic dependence has been further reinforced by the allocation of unemployment allowance based on household rather than individual income.

In terms of violence against women, Germany in 2007 adopted its second National Action Plan with a gender perspective. Attitudes to violence against women have changed significantly in recent years, with 86% of people saying it is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law, up from 53% in 1999.<sup>2</sup> Some 25% of women aged 16-85 have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partner.<sup>2</sup> The first German help line for Violence against women was established in 2012.

The decriminalisation of procuring in 2002, introduced in an attempt to improve the living conditions of women in prostitution, leaves large numbers of women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking. According to police reports, the number of women trafficked into Germany for sexual exploitation increased by 70% between 2005-2010.

## TRENDS:



In 2011, Germany's biggest 30 firms signed a pledge to increase the number of women on boards, with targets varying from 12% by 2014 to 35% by 2018. In 2011, women held just 3.7% of executive board positions. In December 2011, female representatives of the 6 main political parties, together with women's associations, adopted the 'Berlin Declaration' calling for binding legislation for parity on boards. Prominent women from the entire political spectrum, civil society and business have since signed the declaration.



Since 2009, gender equality policy measures are not a political priority in Germany and few new measures have been introduced or considered. A non-binding flexi quota for women on boards has proven ineffective. A proposed childcare subsidy for stay-at-home parents has been criticised as counter-productive by women's associations.

In 2010, funding was cut for labour market integration strategies which were particularly beneficial for women as their workforce participation is drastically lower than men's. The budget was cut from EUR 6.6 billion in 2010 to EUR 4.4 billion in 2012 and is foreseen to reduce further to EUR 3.9 billion in 2013.

In 2007, the official retirement age was increased to 67. Although one of the initial goals of the reform was to tackle the poverty of elderly women, the new criteria to qualify for a full pension are so high that they cannot be met by most women.

## Highlights

**33%**

women in parliament and 38% senior ministers

**3%**

women presidents of the largest companies

**23.1%**

gender pay gap

**21.9%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**26%**

gender employment gap for parents of children under 12

**0.84**

women's shelter places per 10,000 inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010.

<sup>2</sup> German Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, "Health, safety and health of women in Germany" (2004)

# Greece



Women in decision-making: **1/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.14/5**  
Violence against women: **2.5/5**

## Highlights

**21%** women  
in parliament

**7%** women  
on boards and no  
women presidents  
of the largest  
companies

**22%**  
gender pay gap

**8%** of infants  
under 3 and 58%  
of those between 3  
and school-age in  
formal childcare

**71%** of  
dependent elderly  
persons receive  
formal care

**17** weeks  
maternity leave at  
100% pay

Abortion is available  
on demand free of  
charge

## TRENDS:



In 2012, Greece transposed EU legislation for the equal treatment between men and women in Self employed activities, improving the rights of assisting spouses, mainly women.



The crisis has hit all Greeks hard, but women are often in more vulnerable positions to start with. Women's unemployment rate has increased dramatically year upon year from 13.1% in 2009 to reach 29% in August 2012. 62.1% of women between 15 and 24 are unemployed, as compared to an also staggeringly high 46.8% of young men.

The gender pay gap in 2010 stood at 22%. Since then, minimum wage has been reduced by 22% for adults and 32% for young workers.

Cuts in essential services such as health, education and childcare have a double impact on women as employees and prime recipients of public services. In addition, when services are cut, women take on the major burden of their replacement.

The effects are visible in increased poverty, affecting more than a quarter of women over 65, and 43% of single-parent families. Funding cuts also leave more women vulnerable to violence, as shelters and women's associations close down. In parallel, the number of calls to helplines is increasing.

The budget of the General Secretariat on Equality has been cut by 30%, further weakening women's voices in the development of post-crisis Greece.

## UNDERSTANDING GREECE

Greek legislation for the promotion of women on boards of administration only covers state companies. The general representation of women on boards is one of the lowest of the EU.

Only 46% of women work full-time, compared with more than 70% of men. Insufficient childcare services mean that only 8% of infants under 3 and 58% of those between 3 and school-age are in formal care.

Although Greece has legislation protecting women from dismissal upon return to work following maternity leave, discrimination is widespread.

In Greece, 34% of people said in 2009 that they knew of a woman experiencing domestic violence in their neighbourhood, up from 22% in 1999.<sup>1</sup> There is little tolerance however for violence against women, with 93% (the highest figure in the EU) of people saying that it is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law. This is a remarkable change on a decade earlier, when only 25% of people thought violence against women unacceptable. 98% of the population favour tougher laws.

98% of Greeks believe that social services have an obligation to help women victims of violence. However, at present, there are 7 shelters for women victims of violence in Greece, or 0.18 places per 10,000 inhabitants.

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer  
344 - 2010

# Hungary

Women in decision-making: **0.14/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **1.5/5**  
Violence against women: **2.5/5**



## UNDERSTANDING HUNGARY

According to opinion surveys, Hungarians are the most negative of all Europeans with regards to gender equality. Together with Malta, Hungary has the lowest proportion of women in parliament of all the EU Member States. Not a single major political party is headed by a woman and there is only 1 woman senior minister. There are no measures in place for the promotion of women in decision-making in the private sector, and the results are equally bad.

Less than half of women are employed full-time, although the number of men in full-time employment is also quite low at 59.9%. Women without young children in Hungary have a higher than EU average employment rate. However, this drops significantly (by 28.8%) when they have children under 12. Maternity leave is only remunerated at 70% of the last salary, one of the lowest levels in the EU. Fathers are only entitled to leave after the child reaches 1 year. Mothers are 90% of the claimants of parental leave, and usually take a minimum of 2 years out of the labour market.

Hungary does not have a National Action Plan on violence against women. The previous government elaborated a Gender Strategy in 2010, including a section on violence against women, but it was not implemented. 20% of Hungarians know a woman victim of domestic violence in their immediate neighbourhood,<sup>1</sup> and, according to police statistics, every year some 70 women die in domestic violence cases. However, there are no shelters in Hungary dedicated to the protection of women victims of violence. There are "family shelters", but women have access only when accompanied by children. Indeed, the only data available for shelter places concerns those for children. In 2011, 717 requests for shelter were refused.

## TRENDS:



In December 2012, the Hungarian Constitutional Court declared the definition of "family" used in a new law on family protection unconstitutional. The Court ruled too narrow in scope the definition which limited "families" to households based on marriage or filiation as families, excluding same-sex registered partners, but also unmarried heterosexual couples living together.



Following May 2012 elections, State gender equality machinery was dismantled. The National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality remains unimplemented. Changes in the law on civil society organisation have threatened the existence of women's associations.

Gender equality policies have been replaced by ideologically biased family policies that focus on demographic growth. In the national discourse, gender equality and family friendliness are seen as contradictory, and "family mainstreaming" has replaced gender mainstreaming.

In April 2011, the government adopted a new Constitution, which states that 'life deserves protection from conception'. Later in the year, the Hungarian government ran an advertising campaign aiming at reducing the number of abortions and promoting adoption. The campaign pictured a foetus well beyond the legal cut-off point for abortion.

Dismissing pregnant women workers is easier thanks to new labour laws adopted in 2011, and the right of fathers to paternity leave is compromised as it has now become unpaid.

## Highlights

**9%** women in parliament and 1 woman minister

**17.6%** gender pay gap

**4.8%** of women over 65 are at risk of poverty

**9%** of infants under 3 in formal care

**16%** of dependent elderly receive formal care

**36.3%** gender employment gap for parents of children under 12

**0%** no shelters for women victims of violence

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

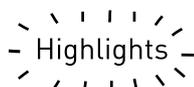
# Ireland



Women in decision-making: **0.25/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.5/5**

Violence against women: **1.25/5**



**15%** women  
in parliament

**9%** women  
on boards and no  
women presidents  
of the largest  
companies

**67%** of  
dependent elderly  
persons receive  
formal care

**10.3%** of  
women over 65 are  
at-risk-of poverty;  
no gender gap

**27.6%**  
gender gap in the  
employment rates  
of women and men  
with children  
under 12

Abortion is only  
permitted to save a  
woman's life

## TRENDS:



The February 2011 Programme for Government contained many commitments related to gender equality, including a constitutional convention to review sexist clauses in the Constitution, the introduction of universal health care, gender quotas for political parties and state boards and legislation to prohibit Female Genital Mutilation.

The Irish government adopted quota legislation in December 2011, requiring that all political parties have 30% women candidates by the next election or their state funding will be cut.

A number of high profile women have been appointed to top jobs in the judicial and legal system, including the first female Attorney General, President of the Supreme Court and Director of Public Prosecutions. However, every other level of the court and judicial system remain male-dominated.



The austerity measures in Ireland are having a disproportionate impact on women. The 2012 budget hit women and children hard with cuts to benefits for lone parents, pension entitlements for older women and women's organisations. The government funding strategy is leading to the decimation of the women's sector in Ireland and greatly affecting women's civic and political participation in public life.

## UNDERSTANDING IRELAND

State companies are required to have at least 40% women on their Boards.

The constitutional right to an abortion in Ireland is very limited, covering only risk to the life of the woman including the risk of suicide. It remains illegal to perform an abortion in cases of pregnancy by rape, danger to the health of the mother and fatal foetal abnormalities. 4,000 Irish women travel to the UK for abortions every year. In 2010, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ireland's failure to implement the existing constitutional right to a lawful abortion when a woman's life is at risk violates Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).<sup>1</sup> The Irish government in the ECHR case could not point to 1 single abortion that had been carried out in the State under the limited constitutional right to an abortion in life-threatening pregnancies.

Maternity leave in Ireland is relatively generous at 26 weeks, but remuneration is low at 80%. Consequently, many women quit their jobs, producing a large gender employment gap. Only 23% of children under 3 are in formal childcare.

Regarding violence against women, it is estimated that every fifth woman experiences domestic violence during her lifetime. In 2010, there were 1,545 admissions of women and 2,355 admissions of children to refuge in Ireland. A survey in a Dublin maternity hospital found that 1 in 8 women questioned had experienced abuse while they were pregnant. Since 1996, 186 were women murdered in the Republic of Ireland. In resolved cases, 53% of women were killed by their current or former partner. Almost 1/4 (23.6%) of perpetrators of sexual violence against women were intimate partners or ex-partners.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [2011] 53 ECHR 13; [2010] ECHR 2032.

<sup>2</sup> Women's Aid Ireland

# Italy

Women in decision-making: **1/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.64/5**

Violence against women: **1.25/5**



## UNDERSTANDING ITALY

Only 46.8% of women in Italy are employed and 48.2% are classified as “inactive”. Among the employed, a significant number work part-time, with the gender gap in full-time employment at 25.7%, one of the largest in the EU. The gender pay gap, on the other hand, is small at 5.5%.

Care responsibilities inhibit women’s full participation in the labour market. Only 21% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. In addition, childcare facilities in Italy are insufficient. Only 11% of infants under 3 have places in public nursery/kindergarten facilities, while only 22% are in formal childcare at all. 58% of mothers with one child under the age of 15 work. This drops to 54% for those with 2 young children and 33% for those with 3.

Violence against women is endemic in Italy, with the UN Special Rapporteur warning of alarming increases in femicides. 80% of violence in Italy is within the home, with 82% of perpetrators being intimate partners. In 2010, 13,696 women sought refuge in shelters. Only 26% registered a formal complaint.

While in principle abortion is legal and free of charge in Italy, more than 70% of doctors refuse to perform interventions, severely limiting access in practice. Similar restrictions hamper access to the morning-after pill.

## TRENDS:



Italy recently passed groundbreaking legislation for the increased representation of women in decision-making. A first bill in 2011 introduced a quota of 1/3 for the under-represented sex on the boards of publicly-listed companies, to be reached by 2015. Sanctions are progressive: warning; fine; dismissal of the board. A second bill in 2012 provided for a legal parity measure within municipal and regional councils, local authorities and public commissions.

A new network (“Rete delle Donne”), has emerged to lobby for the introduction of a “zipper” system for national electoral lists to ensure gender balance among candidates.

In September 2012, the Italian government signed but has yet to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women.



Increasing unemployment and cuts in social and health expenditures are strongly impacting upon women’s lives. Recent reforms to the pension system are leaving increasing numbers of elderly women at risk of poverty. In 2010, 19.5% of women over 65 in Italy experienced poverty. While the median pension for a man is EUR 1,311 per month, the average for women is just EUR 893 per month.

In 2012, the budget for the National Action Plan to combat violence against women was cut from EUR 20,000 to EUR 18,000, putting pressure on already limited services to victims.

## Highlights

**21%**  
women in parliament

**6%**  
women on boards and no women presidents of the largest companies

**5.5%**  
gender pay gap

**25.7%**  
gender gap in full-time employment

**22**  
weeks maternity leave at 80% pay

**0.09**  
places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

Abortion is legal but restricted by widespread conscientious objection and religious influence

# Latvia



Women in decision-making: **1/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**  
Violence against women: **1.25/5**

## Highlights

**23%**

of women in parliament and 29% senior ministers

**26%**

women on boards of largest companies

**17.6%**

gender pay gap



gender gap in full time employment rates

**16%**

of infants under 3 and 64% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare



no shelters places for women victims of violence

Abortion is available on demand free of charge

## TRENDS:



The representation of women in decision-making in Latvia has recently been boosted by a number of appointments of women to ministerial positions (women are 29% of senior ministers) and to corporate boards of administration (26% women). In the EU, only Finland scores higher than Latvia in terms of women on boards.

The Latvian government has introduced free cancer-screening for breast and cervical cancer, and in 2010 made the HPV vaccine available to girls aged 12-14 years.



Pressure is increasing on women's associations due to the withdrawal of external funding from Latvia and the lack of any structural funding to civil society by the State.

Declining birthrates combined with a conservative backlash have led to consideration in Latvia of a reform of the legislation regarding the rights of the Child to include a provision for the protection of rights 'from the moment of conception'.

## UNDERSTANDING LATVIA

On many measures, Latvia scores comparatively well in relation to gender equality. In decision-making, women are 35.75% of municipal councilors for example, and 26% of board members in private companies. Almost as many women as men work full-time.

However, many of Latvia's gender equality laws and policies remain unimplemented and gender stereotypes are strong. According to surveys, most Latvians think women should be housewives, take care of the children and do the shopping. They also believe men should be the bread-winners of the family; they should not bear responsibilities in the home and should never express their emotions.

These attitudes translate into a heavy burden on women for unpaid domestic responsibilities, in a context of poor state services. Only 10% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. 16% of infants under 3, and 64% of those between 3 and school-age, are in formal childcare.

Gender stereotypes also permeate the labour market, where 6,985 women and 8 men work at the preschool level.

There are no shelters for women victims of violence in Latvia, despite the fact that 39% of people know a woman victim of domestic violence in their family or friendship circle, and 47% know a victim in their immediate neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> The high levels of violence against women are coupled by widespread tolerance for the offence, with only 66% of people saying it is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law.

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Lithuania



Women in decision-making: **0.57/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.78/5**  
Violence against women: **1.25/5**

## UNDERSTANDING LITHUANIA

The election in 2009 of a female Head of State increased the prominence of women in decision-making in Lithuania. However, the drop in the number of women Members of the European Parliament points to the fragility of progress in this area. Only one political party has instituted a quota for women on its lists. In the socio-economic field, Lithuania has a gender pay gap which is below the EU average (14.6%). However, the gap is estimated to be much higher in the private sector, reaching 44% in finance, banking and insurance.

On average, an equal amount of women and men work full-time in Lithuania. Nevertheless, a life-cycle analysis reveals a strong gender gap linked to parenthood. Women aged 25-49 without young children are significantly (11.1%) more likely to be employed than their male counterparts. However, this trend is reversed for parents, with the gender employment gap in favour of men rising to 16.3%. Childcare remains a challenge, with only 13% of infants under 3 and 67% of those between 3 and school-age being in formal care.

At present, there are no specialised state services for victims of violence against women in Lithuania. 48% of Lithuanians know victim of violence against women among their immediate family and friends, the highest proportion in any EU country.<sup>1</sup> While 89% say that violence against women is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law tolerance remains. Lithuania has the highest proportion (26%) of any EU population describing sexual violence as "fairly" rather than "very" serious.

Access to abortion is restricted by religious influence and an overuse of conscientious objection.

## TRENDS:



Since May 2009, Lithuania has had a female Head of State, the first in the country's history. In 2012, the number of women in parliament increased by 5%, to reach almost 1 in 5.

For the first time in June 2012, a Lithuanian woman was elected to the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In 2011, legislation on domestic violence was passed and a national programme to develop specialised shelters for victims of violence against women was set up.

In 2011, as Chair of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Lithuania hosted a seminar on women's entrepreneurship and a high level conference for the exchange of good practice in gender equality. In March 2012, the Lithuanian parliament amended the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to promote women's entrepreneurship and strengthen sanctions in cases of discrimination.

In view of its July-December 2013 Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers, Lithuania has set as a priority the effective functioning of institutional mechanisms towards de facto gender equality, as a contribution to the Europe 2020 targets.



The representation of women members of the European Parliament for Lithuania dropped from 38% in the 2004-2009 legislature to 25% in the current 2009-2014 legislature.

## Highlights

**24%**  
women in parliament

**15%**  
women on boards of the largest companies

**14.6%**  
gender pay gap

No gender gap in full-time employment rates

**13%**  
of infants under 3 and 67% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

 no shelters places for women victims of violence

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 244 - 2010

# Luxembourg

Women in decision-making: **1/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.85/5**

Violence against women: **3/5**

## Highlights

**25%**

women in parliament and 27% senior ministers

**6%**

women on boards and no women presidents of the largest companies

**12%**

gender pay gap

**23.9%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**6.3%**

of women over 65 at risk of poverty

**3.5**

shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

## TRENDS:



In December 2012, the criminal code of Luxembourg was modified to widen access to abortion services.

The government is currently working on a national action plan for sexual education in schools. While the right to sexual education is enshrined in law in Luxembourg, the lack of a legal framework affects quality.



Pension reforms in Luxembourg finalised in December 2012 failed to address the lack of individualised pension rights for women and men.

Numerous awareness-raising campaigns have failed to impact upon the low representation of women in decision-making. At municipal level, the proportion of women councilors is stagnant at 21.5%.

## UNDERSTANDING LUXEMBOURG

Despite two of the main political parties having statutory measures in place for respectively 33% and 50% representation of women on their lists, and other parties having informal targets in place, only 1 in 4 national members of parliament is a woman. Provisions for self-regulation in the private sector are similarly ineffective. A corporate governance code states that "Insofar as possible the board should have an appropriate representation of both genders", but women represent only 6% of corporate board members. No legal measures are under consideration for political or private sector decision-making bodies.

Women are significantly less likely than men to be employed full-time in Luxembourg. Only 48.5% of women work full-time, compared to 72.4% of men. This gap reflects the persistence of traditional gender roles, notably with regards to care responsibilities for young children and elderly dependent family members. Women's employment rate drops by 9.4% when they have children under 12. 36% of infants under 3 and 79% of those between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare. Concerning dependent elderly persons, 50% receive formal care. The gender gap in employment and the lack of individualised pension rights restrict the economic independence of women, although poverty remains limited.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 women in Luxembourg will experience domestic violence over her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Luxembourg has a National Action Plan with a gender perspective which tackles some forms of violence against women since 2009, and which will be evaluated at the end of 2013. The country has, for example, the largest number of places in shelters for victims of violence against women of any EU country. On the other hand, there is no official data regarding the occurrence of sexual violence in Luxembourg.

<sup>1</sup> Femmes en détresse (FED), Luxembourg

# Malta

Women in decision-making: **0.28/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.48/5**

Violence against women: **1/5**

## UNDERSTANDING MALTA

Although EU figures assess the gender pay gap in Malta as one of the lowest among the EU Member States, 62% of Maltese women are inactive on the labour market, and financially dependent on someone else. In spite of the increase in female employment, Malta still has the lowest full-time employment rate for women in the EU (35.3%) and the biggest gender gap in employment. This is largely due to large amounts of inactive women aged 34 years and over, who, for various reasons, leave the labour market.

In the entire country, there are only 10 state-subsidised childcare centres catering for children below the age of 3. In all, 44 centres are registered with the Department of Education and some 15% of infants are in childcare. There exists no legislation to regulate childcare centres. Despite tax breaks, good quality care is still considered to be expensive.

Women not in the labour market depend on their husband's retirement pension that is partly inherited when the male spouse passes away. However, an anomaly exists for couples who are both in employment but who lose entitlement to the lower pension once one of the spouses passes away. More often than not it is the woman who tends to outlive her male spouse.

Every year in Malta, some 300 women make use of shelters for victims of violence. 1 out of 7 reported cases of rape are within marriage, while 62% of the rapists are known to the victim. In 90% of domestic violence cases, children are either in the same room or in the room next door. 90% of women who seek mental care have been abused.<sup>1</sup>

Malta is the only country in the EU not to allow abortion under any circumstances.

## TRENDS:



In January 2012 statutory maternity leave was increased from 14 to 16 weeks and is due to reach 18 weeks from January 2013. Although the added weeks are only remunerated at minimum wage (EUR 160 per week), for the first time, the State is covering the expense of maternity leave, lowering thereby the temptation of employers to discriminate against women. Also, Malta introduced tax incentives for women to return to work following child-rearing leave and to offset the costs of childcare.

Malta finally adopted a policy and strategy on sexuality education in 2012. However, implementation is still at an early stage and no system of monitoring has been foreseen.

A Sexual Assault Response Team is due to be set up in 2013.

In 2011, Malta finally legalised divorce (under certain conditions).



Malta has the lowest rate of women's participation in decision-making in the EU in terms of women members of parliament (9%) and women on boards (3%). In addition, it is feared that the Maltese government will not support proposed EU legislation to promote more gender balance on boards.

Precarious work is on the increase and, although it is hitting both sexes, women are worse off.

## Highlights

**9%**

women in parliament

**36.8%**

gender gap in full-time employment

National action plan on domestic violence but no gender analysis

**1.08**

shelters places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

**6.1%**

gender pay gap

**100%**

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

Abortion is illegal

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Women of Malta.

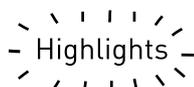
# Netherlands



Women in decision-making: **1.85/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **3.07/5**

Violence against women: **3.5/5**



**38.6%**

women in parliament and 38% senior ministers

Legislation for parity on corporate boards but no sanctions

**18.5%**

gender pay gap

**50%**

of infants under 3 and 91% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

**100%**

of dependent elderly persons have access to formal care



National Action Plan on violence against women

Abortion is available on demand free of charge

## TRENDS:



In June 2011, the Netherlands adopted legislation for the promotion of parity on corporate boards of administration. Currently, 19% of board members of the largest companies are women; there are no women presidents. The legislation foresees no sanctions but there will be an evaluation of progress in 2016.

The number of women ministers increased following the September 2012 general election from 29% to 38%. The minister of defence is for the first time a woman.

Tackling violence against women and domestic violence were set as government priorities in November 2012. A range of awareness-raising actions have been launched.



The number of women in parliament decreased following the September 2012 elections from 41% to 38.6%.

The new government has introduced spending cuts affecting public services, including subsidies to education and childcare, and availability of services for persons with disabilities. Such cuts particularly affect women as they lose public sector jobs as well as benefits and services of which they are prime recipients. The major burden of the care services returns to women.

## UNDERSTANDING THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands scores comparatively well for the representation of women in political decision-making. Of the 11 political parties represented in parliament, 4 have a female leader. There are, however, no legal requirements for gender balance on electoral lists; only 2 parties have quotas in place.

In the Netherlands, 60% of women participate in the labour market, but there is a strong gender divide to the quality of women and men's employment. In 2011, 76.7% of employed women worked part-time, by far the highest rate in the EU. Surveys find that women perform an average of 35 hours per week in unpaid work, as compared to 20 hours per week for men. In addition, there is a clear segregation of employment sectors, with most women active in "traditional" female sectors such as education, care and services.

Yearly, there are an estimated 200,000 cases of domestic violence in the Netherlands, with 83% of perpetrators being men, and 60% of victims being women. Some 20% of cases are reported to the police.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 177,500 women are also victims of sexual violence, compared to 10,700 men. Police training to deal with violence against women has improved significantly in recent years. However, with regards to domestic violence, a new gender-neutral approach has led to a loss of adequate services for women victims, as well as preventive measures. There is no National Action Plan to tackle violence against women.

Procurving was decriminalised in the Netherlands in 2000, leading to a rise in prostitution. The Netherlands is listed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime as a top destination for victims of human trafficking. A 2008 police report found out that 50 to 90% of the women in licensed prostitution "work involuntary".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research and Documentation Centre & INTERVICT Institute (2011).

<sup>2</sup> National Centre against Human Trafficking

# Poland

Women in decision-making: **0.85/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.14/5**  
Violence against women: **0.75/5**



## UNDERSTANDING POLAND

The 2011 introduction of a legal measure for 35% women on parliamentary electoral lists in Poland is welcome. However, it remains to be seen whether, without placement rules, women candidates will be allocated a fair proportion of winnable seats. At present, women hold little power within Polish political parties, none of which has a female leader.

Women's economic situation in Poland is precarious. When employed, women's wages are similar to men's; Poland has the lowest gender pay gap in the EU (1.9%). 51% of women aged 15-64 work full time, but large numbers are unemployed or inactive, with a significant factor being the lack of childcare facilities.

Poland has the lowest rate of pre-school infants in formal childcare of all EU countries. Only 2% of infants under 3 and 42% of those between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare. While almost an equal number of women and men without children under 12 are employed, among those with children the gender gap rockets to over 24%.

Poland's future ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women could improve awareness, prevention and services for victims in the country. In a 2009 Eurostat survey, 24% of respondents in Poland saw domestic violence as only a "fairly serious" problem and only 72% saw physical violence against women as "very serious".<sup>1</sup> At present, there are only 0.01 places in shelters for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants.

There are many problems connected to sexual and reproductive rights in Poland due to strong religious influence: access to sexual education and contraception is limited, and abortion since 1993 is illegal except in cases of rape, if the foetus has severe abnormalities or if the woman is at risk of death.

## TRENDS:



In January 2011, the Polish Parliament approved a Gender Quota Bill for a minimum of election of the 35% women candidates for the 460-seat lower House of Parliament. There are no placement rules. The list is rejected in case of non-compliance. So far, no general election has been held under the new law. The rule does not apply to elections to the 100-seat upper House, the Senate, where women currently hold only 13 seats.

In June 2011, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its first ever judgment relating to Poland's abortion law. The court ruled that Poland repeatedly violated the human rights of the plaintiff by refusing her sufficient pre-natal diagnostic care.

In December 2012, despite strong opposition from conservative politicians and the Roman Catholic Church, Poland signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.



The economic crisis has worsened significantly the economic situation of women in Poland, pushing large numbers out of employment and into the informal economy, and into low-paid jobs in both the formal and informal sectors. In addition, austerity measures have led to cuts in social protection benefits.

A bill proposing to bring Poland's laws on abortion in line with many EU countries was rejected in October 2012, while another proposes to prohibit abortion in cases where there is a high probability of serious and irreversible damage to the foetus.

## Highlights

**24%**  
women in parliament and 20% senior ministers

**12%**  
women on boards and 11% presidents of the largest companies

**1.9%**  
gender pay gap

**14.4%**  
gender gap in full-time employment rates

**2%** of infants under 3 and 42% of those between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

**18** weeks maternity leave at 100% pay

Access to abortion is severely restricted

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Portugal



Women in decision-making: **0.71/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.71/5**

Violence against women: **3.25/5**

## Highlights

**29%**

women in parliament

**17%**

women senior ministers

**6%**

women on boards and no women presidents of the largest companies

**12.8%**

gender pay gap

**23.5%**

of women over 65 are at risk of poverty

**21**

weeks parental leave at 100% pay

Abortion is available on demand free of charge up to 10 weeks of pregnancy since 2007

## TRENDS:



The last 3 Portuguese governments have prioritised tackling domestic violence with legislative measures and awareness campaigns, including within law enforcement agencies. The number of prosecutions of (male) perpetrators increased from 71 in 2000 to 1,377 in 2011.<sup>1</sup>



Portugal's progress in terms of gender equality slowed drastically in 2011. The number of women ministers decreased from 31% in 2011 to 18% in 2012. Unemployment benefits have been cut by 20% and the female unemployment rate is set to rise sharply as family budget reductions hit demand for services, where the majority of employees are women. Access to social benefits is being restricted and cuts and restructuring of care services is impacting upon women's care burden as well as their rights. Maternity hospitals are being closed; benefits for carers of children with disabilities have been cut by 30%.

The general hardships are also leading to rising levels of violence against women, with an increase of 21% from 2011 to 2012 in the number of women murdered in cases of domestic violence.

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are weakened by the addition of further grounds for discrimination to their competence. Mechanism for the distribution of funding are being similarly broadened while the administrative burden on civil society recipients is increasing, drastically affecting the sustainability of women's associations and the essential services they offer.

## UNDERSTANDING PORTUGAL

Portugal has since 2006 a quota system for the least-represented sex in lists for parliamentary elections. The law requires every third candidate on the list to be from the least-represented sex. However, the final distribution of seats always favours the most-represented sex (i.e. men) as, each time an elected candidate withdraws or moves to another political function, the next person on the list (2/3 male), takes the place.

58.2% of women in Portugal work full-time, as compared to 69.6% of men. Although more women work part-time than men, women's employment rate does not drop significantly (1.9%) when they have children. This points to the strength of the country's parental leave system, which encourages the sharing of leave between parents, and return to work. If both parents take at least 30 days of leave, up to 21 weeks are remunerated at 100% pay. If only the mother takes the leave, full pay is limited to 17 weeks.

According to the Portuguese Ministry of Justice, 90.6% of victims of domestic violence in Portugal are women.<sup>2</sup> In 64% of cases, the violence is continuous and hidden. The issue has been receiving increased attention, with the introduction of legislation in 2007, and attitudes have changed significantly: 88% of Portuguese now regard domestic violence as unacceptable, up from 46% in 1999. Attitudes regarding sexual violence have nevertheless developed in the opposite direction: only 72% of people now consider sexual violence to be "very serious", down from 79%. 26% of people think sexual violence only "fairly serious".<sup>3</sup>

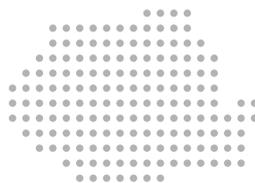
<sup>1</sup> Direção-Geral de Política de Justiça, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Report from Portugal to 29th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Romania

Women in decision-making: **0.14/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **1.78/5**  
Violence against women: **1.25/5**



## UNDERSTANDING ROMANIA

The representation of women in decision-making in Romania is poor. In terms of political decision-making, 2 parties have a 30% voluntary quota rule for their electoral lists. Still, women are only 11% of members of parliament, well below the EU average of 25%.

Romania has one of the lowest general employment rates in the EU, at 58.5%, as well as one of the lowest unemployment rates. 52% of women aged 15–64 are employed and 6.8% are unemployed. The remainder are “inactive”, or working in vulnerable positions in the informal economy. Although there is little apparent gender gap in the proportions of women and men working full-time and a comparatively low gender pay gap (12.5%), women’s economic vulnerability is evident in the fact that twice as many women as men over 65 are at risk of poverty.

A very low 8% of infants under 3 are in formal childcare. Between 3 and school-age the figure is slightly better at 66%. Regarding dependent elderly persons, only 23% receive formal care. A massive 92.5% of those women with care responsibilities who are not employed or who work part-time say they do so due to lack of care services. This is by far the highest proportion of any EU country, the next highest figure being 68.6% in Greece.

Only 68% of Romanians consider violence against women unacceptable and think it should always be punishable by law, one of the lowest proportions in any EU country.<sup>1</sup> According to the National Agency for Family Protection, over 12,000 cases of domestic violence were registered in 2009, representing an increase of 8% from 2008 and 41.81% compared to 2007. The vast majority of victims are women. The existing legislation regarding domestic violence is very weak. Across the country, there are places in shelters for only 4.46% of victims.

## TRENDS:



No positive developments are reported over the period studied (2009–2012).



Institutional mechanisms for gender equality have recently been weakened in Romania. In 2010, the government abolished the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The National Agency for Family Protection was also abolished. For this reason, there is no data regarding domestic violence available from 2010 onwards for example.

In April 2012, a parliamentary bill was put forward to restrict access to abortion. The law would require women wanting to undergo an abortion to attend psychological counseling sessions. The sessions would involve showing women the procedure of abortion (most likely in video format). The woman would also have to “reflect” for a five-day interval before the procedure takes place. The debate is ongoing.

## Highlights

**11%**

women in parliament and 10% senior ministers

**12.5%**

gender pay gap

**13.9%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**20.7%**

of women over 65 are at risk of poverty

**8%**

of infants under 3 are in formal childcare

**18** weeks

maternity leave at 85% pay

Abortion available on demand but not covered by health insurance

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Slovakia



Women in decision-making: **0.42/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **1.07/5**

Violence against women: **1.5/5**

## Highlights

**16%**

women in parliament

**7%**

women senior ministers

**13%**

women on boards

**20%**

women presidents of the largest companies

**20.7%**

gender pay gap

**3%**

of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**0.03**

shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

## TRENDS:



Between July 2010 and April 2012, the post of prime minister of Slovakia was for the first time held by a woman, Iveta Radičová.

Over the last 5 years, the number of women presidents of the largest publicly-listed companies has doubled, and Slovakia now has the highest proportion of women CEOs of any EU country (20%).

In 2009 and 2012 the European Court of Human Rights issued judgments against the Slovak government and in favour of Roma women in Slovakia who had undergone forced sterilisation.



The gender gap in employment is increasing in Slovakia, and women's unemployment has risen above men's in the context of the economic crisis.<sup>1</sup> The crisis has also brought about increased job insecurity and discriminatory abuse, as well as reduced social protection.

In 2010, access to abortion was restricted in Slovakia by the introduction of a 48-hour waiting period. Also, the legal amendment stipulates that personal data such as the identity numbers of women seeking abortions should be recorded. At the same time, access to the morning-after pill is effectively being blocked by conservative religious groups. Contraceptives and abortion are further restricted by high costs and extensive use of "conscientious objection".

## UNDERSTANDING SLOVAKIA

There are no legal measures in place in Slovakia for the equal representation of women in political decision-making, and women's representation has not increased in two decades. Currently, women are 16% of members of parliament, 1 minister out of 15 in government, and 13% of corporate board members.

Women in the labour market in Slovakia are confronted with horizontal and vertical segregation, reinforced by gender strong stereotypes in the education system. In areas such as health, social services and education, women constitute about 80% of the workforce; in the government sector 70%. Conversely, in the private sector with usually higher wages, women represent only 41% of all employed.<sup>2</sup> Slovakia has a large gender pay gap at 20.7%, the effects of which are most evident in the fact that almost triple the number of women as compared to men over 65 are at risk of poverty.

With the exception of the neighbouring Czech Republic, Slovakia has the highest gender employment gap for parents of children under 12. The employment rate drops by 26.7% when women have young children, whereas it increases by 11% for men.

Maternity leave remuneration in Slovakia is the lowest in the EU, at only 55% of former salary, leading many women to quit their jobs. Also, formal childcare for infants under 3 is almost inexistent. 13% of dependent elderly receive formal care.

1 in 5 women experience domestic violence from a current partner, and 27.9% of women have experienced violence at the hands of a former partner.<sup>3</sup> However, only 75% of people say domestic violence is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gender.gov.sk>

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.* <sup>3</sup> Bodnárová, B. – Filadelfiová, J. – Holubová, B. *Representative research of appearance and experiences of women's violence against women (VAW) in Slovakia. Institute for Work and Family, 2008.*

<sup>4</sup> *Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010*

# Slovenia

Women in decision-making: **1.14/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.78/5**  
Violence against women: **2/5**

## UNDERSTANDING SLOVENIA

Legislation for parity in political decision-making has been effective in increasing the representation of women in the Slovene parliament to 38%. While placement rules are not possible due to the mixed electoral system, women candidates have effectively obtained a number of seats in the National Assembly matching their presence on the lists.

In economic decision making, however, the 2004 government recommendation calling for 40% women on boards of all state bodies and state-owned enterprises has not been implemented. Among the largest private companies, women are only 15% of board members.

Slovenia has the lowest gender gap in the EU in employment for parents of children under 12. Indeed, Slovenia is the only country in the EU where women with young children (84.9%) are more likely than those without children under 12 (83%) to be employed. Women's employment rate increases by 1.9% when they have children, while men's increases by 12.2%.

Good maternity, paternity and parental leave provisions encourage parents' return to work. Most women in Slovenia take a year leave when they have a child (92% of those who take parental leave are women). 91% of infants between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare. However, 40.2% of those women with care responsibilities who are inactive or work part-time say they do so due to lack of adequate care services.

Slovenia has the largest gender gap in the poverty rates of elderly women and men. Almost 3 times as many women as men over 65 are poor; the gender gap is 17.6%, by far the highest in the EU. Only a third of dependent elderly persons receive formal care.

Every third person in Slovenia knows a victim of domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> Services for victims of violence against women are comparatively good by EU standards, with 1.14 places in shelter per 10,000 inhabitants.

## TRENDS:



Slovenia has made rapid progress in the representation of women in political decision-making, thanks to a 2006 amendment to the general elections law. In 2004, the proportion of women in parliament was 12.2%. The new legislation required 35% of candidates on national electoral lists to be women. Women already enjoy parity in leadership positions within the parliament. In addition, by 2014, 40% of candidates on local electoral lists must be women, with alternation by sex for the first half of the list.

The official gender pay gap in Slovenia is one of the lowest in the EU, at 4.4% in 2010. The gap is also narrowing, with the figure for 2011 being 3.7%.



In 2011-2012, the Slovene government adopted new legislation on access to social assistance and tackling the public deficit, reducing a wide range of social benefits, which will impact in particular on women and more vulnerable social groups. For example, as of 2012, remuneration of parental leave has decreased from full pay to 90% of the last salary. Public health insurance coverage has also been cut. In terms of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to abortion has been limited by a cap in public insurance coverage at 80% of the costs of intervention.

## Highlights

**38%**

women in parliament

**8%** women senior ministers

**15%** women on boards of the largest companies

**3.7%** gender pay gap

**9.2%** gender gap in full-time employment rates

**27.1%** of women over 65 at risk of poverty

**36%** of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**1.14** shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Spain



Women in decision-making: **1.57/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2.28/5**  
Violence against women: **1.5/5**

## Highlights

**37%**

women in parliament and 31% women senior ministers

**16.7%**

gender pay gap

**16.8%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**38%**

of infants under 3 in formal childcare

**17.5%**

gender gap in employment of parents with children under 12

**16**

weeks maternity leave at 100% pay

**0.98**

shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

## TRENDS:



Spain's investment over recent years in tackling violence against women has brought about increased awareness and changing attitudes. During its 2010 Presidency of the EU, Spain put a European protection order (adopted in December 2011) and a European helpline for victims of violence on the agenda.



The crisis in Spain led to 191,700 women losing their jobs between July and December 2012, as compared to 80,600 men. Women, and progress towards gender equality, are strongly affected also by cuts in essential services. In 2012, the health budget was cut by 13.7% and the education budget by EUR 350 million, with nurseries taking a cut of EUR 100 million. Subsidies for care of dependent persons have been reduced by more than 30% and are expected to be cut by a further EUR 200 million in 2013. Women's employment programmes have been cut by a full 94%. Funding for prevention of violence against women has been reduced by 27%. Services for victims have also suffered cuts of 20%. Paid paternity leave has been abolished.

In 2011-2012, the funding of the "Instituto de la Mujer" was cut by 34%. In all, funding for equality policies has been reduced by 49.09%. Funding for women's associations has also been reduced. Women's voices are also weaker within government, where only 4 of the 13 ministers are female; the former government contained an equal number of women and men.

## UNDERSTANDING SPAIN

Spain has some of the strongest legal measures of any EU country for parity in political decision-making. 40% of candidates on national electoral lists must be women, with placement rules. Non-binding legislation adopted in 2007 for similar improvements for women's representation in the private sector has also had an important impact, with the number of women on corporate boards increasing from 1.9% in 2004 to 11% in 2012.

In 2010, 46.6% of women in Spain worked full-time, as compared to 63.4% of men. Care responsibilities continue however to restrict women's ability to fully integrate the labour market. 59.2% of women with care responsibilities who are "inactive" or work part-time say they do so due to lack of care services. While a good 94% of infants between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare, the proportion is only 38% for children under 3. Also, only 21% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. Women perform on average more than 4 hours of unpaid work for the family and household every day, as compared to less than 2 hours for men.

Spain has a National Action Plan covering specific forms of violence against women, which contains a gender analysis. Awareness has increased, with 23% of Spaniards in 2009 saying they know of a victim of domestic violence within their family or friendship circle, as compared to 15% in 1999.[1] Tolerance is low for violence against women, with 91% of respondents saying that it is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law, one of the highest figures in the EU.

Conservatism and religious influence continue to limit sexual education and access to legal abortion.

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010

# Sweden

Women in decision-making: **2.14/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.35/5**

Violence against women: **2.5/5**



## UNDERSTANDING SWEDEN

Political will for the realisation of gender equality is strong in Sweden. In the sphere of political decision-making, Sweden joins its neighbour Finland in presenting a consistently strong performance for women parliamentarians and ministers. Legislation to promote parity does not exist. However, Sweden has effective parity in national, regional and local parliaments.

Gaps remain however in the share of paid and unpaid work. While women are well-integrated into the labour market in Sweden, 40.4% work part-time, as compared to 14% of men.

Women's working time is influenced by the number of children and the age of the child, but men's working time is not affected by this. Also, women in Sweden continue to take 76% of the 480 days allocated for parental leave, although men's share is increasing. The paid parental leave system means that children under the age of 1.5 years are almost never in formal childcare, although all Swedish children are by law offered formal childcare.

100% of dependant elderly receive formal care. A gender divide also persists in occupational segregation of the labour market. Among the 30 largest occupations by number of employees, only 3 have at least 40% of each sex. In 9 of the 10 largest occupational groups, men have a higher monthly salary than women. Sweden has strong policies for combating violence against women and developed comprehensive action plans addressing all forms of male violence, including prostitution. The Swedish approach to prostitution proved to be successful: through the criminalisation of the purchase of sex and the support to prostituted persons, the Swedish model gained increased support from the population and succeeded in substantively deterring procuring and trafficking. However, Sweden needs to continue to prioritise the fight against all forms of violence against women. The number of reported cases of male violence has risen over the years as more women speak out, but there lacks new action plans to coordinate efforts.

## TRENDS:



The current Swedish government is unique in the EU in that it includes more women than men ministers. The majority of managers in municipal, county council and central government are women (52 %). In the private sector, the proportion of women in top posts is also increasing. The proportion of women on boards has risen from 6% in 2002 to 25% in 2012. However, 61% of women on boards are deputy members. The corresponding figure for men is 21%.

In Sweden, gender mainstreaming, already advanced at national level, is now being applied to the regional level.

The 2009 very positive 10 year review of the Swedish law on prostitution has increased the attractiveness of this model elsewhere in Europe. Iceland introduced a law penalising demand for sexual services in 2009. Similar measures are expected in Ireland in 2013 and discussions have started in France.



Sweden is witnessing a rise of anti-feminist hate speech. Other negative developments concern the implementation of tax breaks for household help which structurally reinforce the unequal labour market and undermine the welfare state. Also, the current public policy for research grants has a strong gender-bias, with only 12% of grants being awarded to female researchers. This has provoked a substantial backlash against the equality of women and men in higher education.

## Highlights

**54%**

women senior ministers

**43%**

women in parliament

**94%**

children between 3 and school age in formal care

**100%**

of dependent elderly receive formal care

**15.8%**

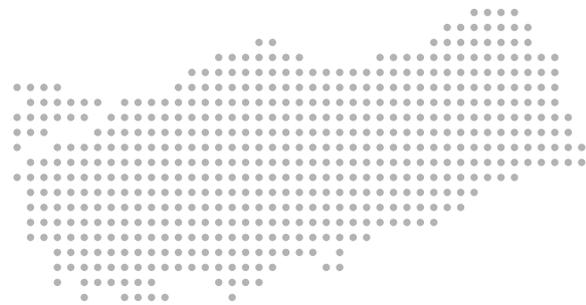
gender pay gap

**21.6%**

poverty rate for women over 65

NAP on all forms of violence against women with a gender perspective

# Turkey



Women in decision-making: **0.142/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **0.25/5**

Violence against women: **1.75/5**

## Highlights

**14%**

women in parliament

**4%**

women senior ministers

**11%**

women on boards and 10% women presidents of the largest companies

**25%**

gender pay gap

**39.4%**

gender gap in full-time employment rates

**44%**

of infants between 3 and school-age in formal childcare

**0.26**

shelter places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

## TRENDS:



Turkey is, together with Portugal so far the only country in Europe to have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women. In 2012 the Convention entered into national law and, throughout this process, awareness regarding violence against women has considerably increased. Police training for prevention and victim support is also envisaged.

Following 2011 elections, the number of women in parliament increased from 9.1% to 14.4%.

Discussions are underway to amend the Turkish Constitution. A proposal under consideration would make parity legislation a constitutional right.

The Capital Markets Board, Turkey's financial regulatory and supervisory agency, issued in 2012 a statement stipulating that at least one board member of publicly traded companies should be female.



In June 2011, the government of Turkey renamed the "State Ministry responsible for Women, Family and Social Services" as the ministry of "Family and Social Policies".

Although the proportion of women in parliament increased following the 2011 election, the number of women appointed to government declined to just 4% - 1 in 25 - the lowest figure of all EU and EU official candidate countries. The proportion of women senior officials is 3%.

As of December 2012, the regulatory requirement for state shelters for victims of violence against women now only applies to districts with 100,000 inhabitants, up from 50,000.

## UNDERSTANDING TURKEY

There is no legislation in place in Turkey for parity in decision-making in the political or private sector, and women's representation in parliament, government and corporate decision-making bodies remains among the lowest in Europe.

In 2011, only 25.6% of women were formally employed full-time in Turkey, as compared to 65% of men. This is a very slight increase on the 2010 figure of 24%. 58% of women's employment is in the informal economy.

Women's employment is strongly affected by the lack of formal care structures. Only 0.5% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. Regarding children, only 44% of children between 3 and school-age are in formal childcare, by far the lowest proportion of any EU member or candidate country. A state childcare scheme is still under development.

According to official research carried out in 2008, between 26% and 57% of married or divorced women in Turkey have experienced domestic violence. There are 86 shelters for victims of violence against women in Turkey. 55 of them are NGO shelters; 31 are run by local government.

Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are limited by conservative religious influence in Turkey. An overuse of conscientious objection limits access to legal abortion; there is no sexual education provided in schools.

# United Kingdom



Women in decision-making: **1/5**  
Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**  
Violence against women: **1/5**

## UNDERSTANDING UK<sup>2</sup>

In terms of political decision-making, women's representation is higher in the devolved administrations of Scotland (35%) and Wales (42%) than at UK level. In Northern Ireland, however, it is only 19.5%. At the UK level, only the Labour Party has an internal quota system for 35% women on its lists.

50.9% of women in the UK work full-time, as compared to 70.4% of men. In Northern Ireland, the gap is as high as 30%. The number of women working part-time is more than triple that of men (43.3% vs. 12.6%). Almost 30% of those women with care responsibilities who are in part-time work or classified as "inactive" say this is due to inadequate care services. Only 44% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. Regarding childcare, provision is good for children over 3. However, only 35% of those under 3 are in formal care. Indeed, women's employment rate drops by 16.3% when they have children under 12.

Long periods spent outside the labour market for care duties, coupled with a gender pay gap of 19.5%, lead to lower savings and pensions for women. Women's pensions in the UK are on average 2/3 the size of men's and 24.5% of women over 65 are at risk of poverty.

At least 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence in their lifetime and between 1 in 8 and 1 in 10 women experience it annually. Less than half of all incidents are reported to the police, but they still receive one domestic violence call every minute in the UK. On average, two women a week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims.<sup>3</sup>

In Scotland, a broader violence against women policy approach has seen substantial funding uplifts for rape crisis services. Abortion remains severely restricted in Northern Ireland.

## TRENDS:



In February 2011, a government-commissioned report recommended voluntary targets for 25% women on the boards of the largest 100 companies by 2015. While the number of women non-executive directors has risen from 15.6% in 2010 to 21.5% in 2012, the proportion of women executive directors has gone only from 5.5% to 6.7%.

In March 2011, the UK changed its visa rules to give foreign partners of UK citizens and residents who flee relationships after violence access to support services. Legislation and other measures are under consideration to tackle violence against women, including prostitution and human trafficking.



The Women's National Commission, an independent government advisory board, was abolished in December 2010. A number of measures have been instituted, which make it harder to oppose government legislation on the grounds that it will disproportionately affect women or other social groups negatively.

Austerity measures and funding cuts are affecting women disproportionately. Women's associations predict that twice as many women than men will lose their jobs in the public sector by 2017.<sup>1</sup>

In England and Wales, legal aid has been cut for victims of violence against women, as has funding for shelters and other local services. Funding for childcare provision has been cut by 24% since 2011 and tax credits for working parents have been reduced.

## Highlights

**22%**  
women in  
parliament and  
20% women senior  
ministers

**16%**  
women on boards

No women  
presidents of the  
largest companies

**19.5%**  
gender gap in full-  
time employment  
rates

**35%** of  
infants under 3 in  
formal childcare

**23.8%**  
gender gap in  
employment for  
parents of children  
under 12

<sup>1</sup> Fawcett Society.

<sup>2</sup> Some gendered policy areas apply across the UK, but a range of issues are devolved to the Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh administrations. In some cases differential outcomes are indicative of particular approaches at the sub-national level.

<sup>3</sup> Women's Aid UK

## Glossary

**Parity:** the equal representation of women and men (or 50%).

**Quotas:** voluntary or legal measures requiring a defined proportion of women and men in a given body or an electoral list, to offset barriers that effectively prevent women from reaching positions of power.

**“Placement rules” for electoral lists:** legal requirement for a balanced distribution of women and men candidates on electoral lists (for example a “zipper system” requiring a sequence of alternating women/men candidates).

**“Effective sanctions” linked to legal quotas:** the rejection of the electoral list in the case of non-compliance with electoral rules. In the case of quotas pertaining to parity on corporate boards of administration, effective sanctions include the annulment of the latest appointment, the annulment of the entire board, the withdrawal of financial remuneration of the members of the board, and the striking of the company from the national stock-exchange.

**Publicly-listed companies:** companies of which the shares are traded on the stock exchange of the country concerned.

**“Largest” companies:** companies counted by the stock exchange as part of the primary blue-chip index, covering the 50 largest companies by market capitalisation and/or market trades.

**Gender pay gap:** the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of male employees and of female employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male employees.

**Gender gap in full-time employment rates, measured in full-time equivalents:** the difference between the number of women and men employed for the number of hours per week considered in the national context to constitute “full-time”. Inactivity rate: proportion of a given population classified neither as “employed” nor as “unemployed”.

**Inactivity rate:** care provided by persons other than relatives and formally recognised (but not necessarily funded) by the State.

**Formal child and elderly care:** care provided by persons other than relatives and formally recognised (but not necessarily funded) by the State.

**At-risk-of-poverty-rate after social transfers:** the proportion of a given population receiving less than the state-defined minimum income (taking into account salary and social benefits)

**Maternity leave:** a given period of leave entitlement from paid employment reserved for women for childbirth and recuperation in the aftermath of childbirth. The current minimum standard as regulated by EU law is 14 weeks.

**“Quality” maternity leave legislation:** the legal entitlement to at least 20 weeks leave from paid employment at full pay.

**Full pay:** remuneration of leave from paid employment at the equivalent of former average monthly earnings.

**Femicide:** death resulting from acts of violence against women.

**“Gender perspective/analysis” in National Action Plans to combat violence against women”:** Integration and understanding of a definition of violence against women as a structural form of discrimination against women, linked to historical and cultural patriarchal structures in society.

**Shelters for women victims of violence:** Women specific services providing safe accommodation and comprehensive support to women survivors of violence and their children, applying a gender-approach. A minimum of 3 shelter places per 10,000 inhabitants is considered satisfactory to meet the needs of victims of violence against women.

**“Quality” sexuality education:** compulsory sexuality education, provided by teachers and health professionals, for children from 6 years upwards, based on an integrative model. The integrative model understands health as vital to promoting personal well-being and the quality of life of all persons, and encourages erotophilic attitudes towards sexuality (sex is considered natural and to be associated with positive feelings).

**Abortion “on demand”:** the availability of abortion services to all women upon simple request (but not necessarily state-funded), without excessive justification or waiting period required.

**Conscientious objection:** the invocation by medical practitioners of personal ethical or religious grounds to refuse the performance of certain services (such as abortion or prescription of contraceptives).

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<sup>1</sup> Although this publication has benefited from the input of the members of the EWL, the positions and opinions put forward are those of the EWL – defined in relation to European Union policies, and do not necessarily reflect the complexity of positions of the EWL member organisation in relation to their respective countries.

*End of the English version*