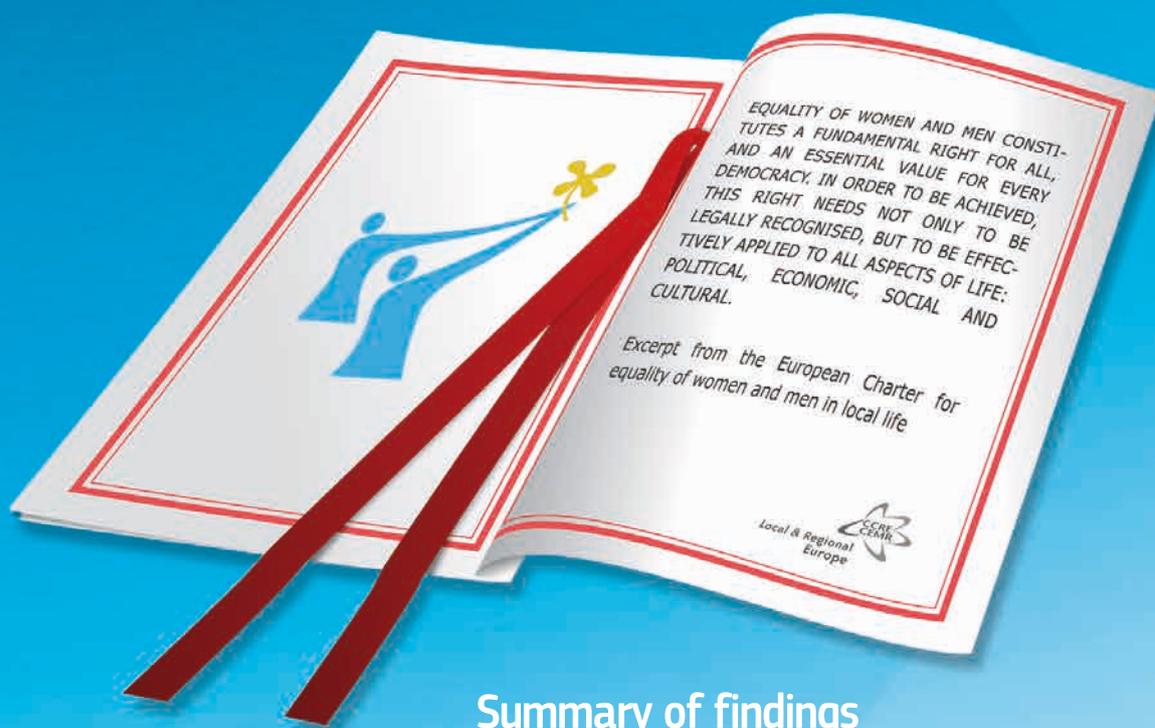




The situation of **gender equality** at **local and regional level** in Europe



Summary of findings

Pilot project for development of indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

10 August 2015

Written by



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Summary of findings

Pilot project for development of indicators to measure
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for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

10 August 2015

This document has been prepared for the European Commission by Dr Katerina Mantouvalou, Magali Gay-Berthomieu, Dr Simona Milio and Petra van Nierop (ICF); and by Johanna Törnström, Durmish Guri and Dr Angelika Poth-Mögele (CEMR). It has been developed in the context of the pilot project for Development of Indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter of Women and Men in Local Life. However, it reflects the views of the authors only and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the situation of gender equality at local and regional level in Europe amongst the signatories of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (hereafter the Charter) ⁽¹⁾. It is prepared as part of the pilot project ⁽²⁾ 'Development of indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life'.

The aim of this study was to develop and test a number of indicators to monitor the implementation of the Charter in order to gain an overview of the situation of gender equality at local and regional level in the European Union. In total, 76 indicators were created corresponding to all 30 articles of the Charter. The analysis drawn in this report is based on information gathered through different methods, mainly desk research, an online survey that was disseminated to all signatories of the Charter and some interviews with Charter signatories. The findings of such analysis present the main trends in a sample of the most committed signatories to the Charter and the pilot project.

Below is a summary of the main findings and recommendations.

Main findings: Signatories to the Charter have made real efforts to implement the actions listed under the 30 articles of the Charter, but these efforts have not been equal across the thematic areas covered by the Charter. Progress has been more substantial in some areas than in others.

- ▶ **Good progress** has been made towards the implementation of the Charter in the area of *Democratic accountability*. This covers the existence of an institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality at local and regional level. Even if there is a political will to work on gender equality issues, lack of financial and human resources often plays an important role in terms of the implementation of the Charter in different areas.
- ▶ **Some progress** has been made in the areas of *Political role*, *Employer role* and *Service delivery*. Signatories to the Charter have made policy commitments to promote equality between women and men in decision-making and to ensure that their employees are treated fairly, irrespective of their gender, and that the needs of all citizens are equally taken into consideration in the services provided by local and regional authorities. However, the degree to which these commitments are implemented varies.
- ▶ **Limited progress** has been made in the areas of *Public procurement and contracts*, both in relation to gender equality policy commitments and to concrete actions to mainstream gender in this area of work.

Local and regional authorities seem to deal with their commitment to the Charter in different ways and great variations in the extent of its implementation have been noted amongst signatories within and across Member States. These variations are due to a number of different factors, such as different competences and lack of capacity, the institutional framework and the fact that other important preconditions to mainstream gender equality are not always sufficiently in place.

1 Developed in 2006 by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in collaboration with its national associations, the Charter is a tool to support gender mainstreaming at local and regional level in Europe. To date 1 309 signatories from 24 EU Member States have signed the Charter.
2 Pilot project according to the definition in Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1).

Recommendations: The following key recommendations emerge, targeting different groups.

Policymakers at local, national and European level

- ▶ Enhance political support provided at local, regional, national and European levels to boost equality between women and men at local and regional level.

Signatories to the Charter

- ▶ Build capacity in order to implement their gender equality commitments under the Charter.
- ▶ Aggregate available data and analyse data to uncover inequalities between women and men.
- ▶ Build capacity on how to gather, process and interpret data.
- ▶ Periodically monitor the implementation of the Charter.
- ▶ Share knowledge and experience with other signatories in order to support each other on how to work on gender equality.
- ▶ Allocate sufficient financial and human resources in order to implement their gender equality commitments under the Charter.

CEMR

In the short term

- ▶ Promote the final conference and the training session in order to raise awareness about the Charter and its tools.

In the long term

- ▶ Continue to actively work to promote gender equality at all levels of governance in Europe.
- ▶ Enhance political support through the Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.
- ▶ Implement a differentiated approach to the signatories of the Charter, which may help to accelerate progress in the implementation of its gender equality commitments.
- ▶ Provide information on EU-level funding to promote gender equality.
- ▶ Consider the possibility of amending the Charter in order to highlight the important role that gender equality can play as a lever for economic development.

Résumé analytique

Ce rapport offre un aperçu de la situation de l'égalité de genre aux niveaux local et régional en Europe parmi les signataires de la Charte européenne pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la vie locale (ci-après, «la Charte») ⁽³⁾. Il a été préparé dans le cadre du projet pilote ⁽⁴⁾ «Développement d'indicateurs en vue de mesurer la mise en œuvre de la Charte européenne pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la vie locale».

Le but de cette étude était de développer et de tester un certain nombre d'indicateurs de suivi de la mise en œuvre de la Charte, afin d'acquérir une vue d'ensemble de la situation relative à l'égalité de genre aux niveaux régional et local dans l'Union européenne. Au total, 76 indicateurs ont été créés, correspondant à chacun des 30 articles de la Charte. L'analyse qui en est faite dans ce rapport est basée sur des informations rassemblées selon différentes méthodes, principalement par de la recherche documentaire, par une enquête en ligne diffusée à tous les signataires de la Charte, et par quelques entretiens avec des signataires de la Charte. Les conclusions de cette analyse révèlent les grandes tendances au sein d'un échantillon des signataires les plus engagés dans la Charte et dans le projet pilote.

Ci-dessous se trouve un résumé des principales conclusions et recommandations.

Conclusions principales: les signataires de la Charte ont fait de véritables efforts pour mettre en œuvre les actions listées dans les 30 articles de la Charte, mais ces efforts n'ont pas été égaux dans tous les domaines thématiques couverts par la Charte. Les progrès ont été plus ou moins substantiels selon les domaines.

- ▶ **Des progrès satisfaisants** ont été réalisés en vue de la mise en œuvre de la Charte dans le domaine de la *Responsabilité démocratique*; cela inclut l'existence d'un cadre institutionnel pour la promotion de l'égalité de genre aux niveaux local et régional. Même s'il existe une volonté politique de travailler sur les problèmes d'égalité de genre, le manque de ressources financières et humaines joue souvent un rôle important quant à l'implémentation de la Charte dans différents domaines.
- ▶ **Quelques progrès** ont été réalisés dans les domaines du *Rôle politique*, du *Rôle d'employeur*, et du *Rôle de prestataire de services*. Les signataires de la Charte se sont engagés politiquement à promouvoir l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la prise de décision, à faire en sorte que leurs employé(e)s soient traité(e)s impartialement, sans distinction de genre, et à prendre en compte de façon équitable les besoins de l'ensemble des citoyen(ne)s dans les services offerts par les autorités locales et régionales. Cependant, le degré de mise en œuvre de ces engagements varie.
- ▶ **Des progrès limités** ont été réalisés dans le domaine de la *Fourniture de biens et services*, qu'il s'agisse d'engagements en faveur de politiques d'égalité de genre ou d'actions concrètes en vue de l'intégration de la dimension de genre dans ce secteur d'activité.

Les autorités locales et régionales semblent traiter leur engagement envers la Charte de différentes manières, et de grandes variations dans l'étendue de la mise en œuvre de la Charte ont été notées à l'intérieur des États membres ou entre ces derniers. Cela est dû à différents facteurs, y compris des

3 Développée en 2006 par le Conseil des communes et régions d'Europe (CCRE) en collaboration avec ses associations nationales, la Charte est un outil visant à encourager l'intégration de la dimension de genre aux niveaux local et régional en Europe. À cette date, 1 309 signataires de 24 États membres de l'UE ont signé la Charte.

4 Projet pilote au sens de l'article 49(6) du Règlement (CE, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 du Conseil du 25 juin 2002 portant règlement financier applicable au budget général des Communautés européennes (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1).

compétences différentes, un manque de moyens, le cadre institutionnel et le fait que d'autres prérequis importants pour l'intégration de la dimension de genre ne sont pas toujours suffisamment présents.

Recommandations: les recommandations-clés suivantes émergent, ciblant différents groupes.

Décideurs politiques aux niveaux local, national et européen

- ▶ Améliorer le soutien politique fourni aux niveaux local, régional, national et européen afin de stimuler l'égalité des femmes et des hommes aux niveaux local et régional.

Signataires de la Charte

- ▶ Renforcer les capacités afin de mettre en œuvre les engagements de la Charte en matière de genre.
- ▶ Agréger les données disponibles et les analyser afin de révéler les inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes.
- ▶ Renforcer les capacités en matière de récolte, de traitement et d'interprétation des données.
- ▶ Contrôler régulièrement la mise en œuvre de la Charte.
- ▶ Partager connaissances et expérience avec d'autres signataires afin de s'entraider sur la manière d'œuvrer à l'égalité de genre.
- ▶ Allouer suffisamment de ressources financières et humaines en vue de mettre en œuvre les engagements de la Charte en matière d'égalité de genre.

CCRE

À court terme

- ▶ Promouvoir la conférence finale et la séance de formation en vue de sensibiliser l'opinion publique aux engagements de la Charte et aux outils qu'elle propose.

À long terme

- ▶ Continuer à promouvoir activement l'égalité de genre à tous les niveaux de gouvernance en Europe.
- ▶ Améliorer le soutien politique par l'intermédiaire de la Commission permanente pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la vie locale.
- ▶ Adopter une approche différenciée envers les signataires de la Charte, ce qui pourrait aider à accélérer le progrès dans la mise en œuvre des engagements en matière d'égalité de genre.
- ▶ Fournir de l'information sur les financements au niveau de l'UE en faveur de la promotion de l'égalité de genre.
- ▶ Envisager la possibilité d'un amendement à la Charte afin de souligner le rôle important que l'égalité de genre peut jouer dans la promotion du développement économique.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Bericht gibt einen Überblick über die Situation der Geschlechtergleichstellung auf lokaler und regionaler Ebene in den europäischen Gemeinden, die die „Europäische Charta für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern auf lokaler Ebene“ (nachstehend „die Charta“) ⁽⁵⁾ unterzeichnet haben. Der Bericht wurde als Teil des Pilotprojekts ⁽⁶⁾ „Erstellung von Indikatoren zur Messung der Umsetzung der Europäischen Charta für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern auf lokaler Ebene“ verfasst.

Ziel dieser Studie war es, eine Reihe von Indikatoren zu erstellen und zu testen, mit denen die Umsetzung der Charta überwacht werden kann, um einen Überblick über die Situation der Geschlechtergleichstellung auf lokaler und regionaler Ebene in der Europäischen Union zu gewinnen. Insgesamt wurden 76 Indikatoren erstellt, die alle 30 Artikel der Charta einbeziehen. Die in diesem Bericht enthaltene Analyse basiert auf Informationen, die anhand unterschiedlicher Verfahren beschafft wurden, und zwar hauptsächlich anhand von Sekundärforschung, einer Online-Umfrage unter allen Unterzeichnergemeinden der Charta sowie im Rahmen persönlicher Gespräche mit Vertreterinnen oder Vertretern einiger dieser Gemeinden. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse verdeutlichen die wichtigsten Trends unter einer Stichprobe derjenigen Unterzeichnergemeinden, die sich am stärksten für die Charta und das Pilotprojekt engagieren.

Im Folgenden werden die wichtigsten Ergebnisse und Empfehlungen zusammengefasst.

Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse: Die Unterzeichnergemeinden der Charta waren ehrlich bemüht, die in den 30 Artikeln der Charta genannten Aktionen umzusetzen. Die Bemühungen waren jedoch nicht gleichmäßig über die verschiedenen Themenbereiche der Charta verteilt, und in einigen Bereichen wurden mehr Fortschritte als in anderen erzielt.

- ▶ **Gute Fortschritte** wurden in Bezug auf die Umsetzung der Charta im Bereich der *Demokratischen Verantwortung* erreicht. Dazu zählt die Existenz eines institutionellen Rahmens zur Förderung der Geschlechtergleichstellung auf lokaler und regionaler Ebene. Selbst wenn die Entscheidungsträger gewillt sind, sich mit Fragen der Geschlechtergleichstellung zu befassen, kann ein Mangel an finanziellen und personellen Mitteln die Umsetzung der Charta in verschiedenen Bereichen behindern.
- ▶ **Gewisse Fortschritte** wurden im Bereich der *Politischen Rolle*, der *Rolle als Arbeitgeber* und der *Rolle als Dienstleistungserbringer* erzielt. Die Unterzeichnerinnen und Unterzeichner der Charta haben sich dazu verpflichtet, die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in Entscheidungspositionen zu fördern und ferner sicherzustellen, dass ihre Beschäftigten ungeachtet ihres Geschlechts fair behandelt werden und dass die Bedürfnisse aller Bürgerinnen und Bürger bei Bereitstellung der Dienste lokaler und regionaler Behörden gleichermaßen berücksichtigt werden. Diese Verpflichtungen werden jedoch in unterschiedlich hohem Maße in die Tat umgesetzt.
- ▶ **Begrenzte Fortschritte** wurden im Bereich des *Öffentlichen Beschaffungs- und Vertragswesens* erreicht und zwar sowohl im Hinblick auf die politische Verpflichtung zur Gleichstellung der Geschlechter als auch in Bezug auf konkrete Maßnahmen zur Förderung des Gender Mainstreaming in diesem Arbeitsbereich.

5 Die Charta wurde im Jahr 2006 vom Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen Europas (CEMR) in Zusammenarbeit mit seinen nationalen Verbänden als ein Instrument zur Förderung des Gender Mainstreaming auf lokaler und regionaler Ebene in Europa erarbeitet. Bis zum heutigen Zeitpunkt haben 1309 Gemeinden aus 24 EU-Mitgliedstaaten die Charta unterzeichnet.

6 Ein Pilotprojekt im Sinne von Artikel 49(6) der Verordnung (EG, Euratom) Nr. 1605/2002 des Rates vom 25. Juni 2002 über die Haushaltsordnung für den Gesamthaushaltsplan der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (ABl. L 248, 16.9.2002, S. 1).

Offenbar gehen die lokalen und regionalen Behörden ihre Verpflichtung zur Umsetzung der Charta auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise an und es wurden erhebliche Unterschiede bezüglich des Umfangs der Umsetzung der Charta nicht nur innerhalb der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten, sondern auch zwischen ihnen festgestellt. Grund hierfür sind verschiedene Faktoren wie Kompetenzunterschiede, mangelnde Kapazitäten sowie die Art des institutionellen Rahmens. Zudem gibt es einige weitere wichtige Vorbedingungen für ein erfolgreiches Gender Mainstreaming, die nicht immer in ausreichendem Maße vorhanden sind.

Empfehlungen: Es ergeben sich die folgenden Empfehlungen für verschiedene Zielgruppen.

Entscheidungsträger auf lokaler, nationaler und europäischer Ebene

- ▶ Intensivierung der auf lokaler, regionaler, nationaler und europäischer Ebene bereitgestellten politischen Unterstützung zur Stärkung der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern auf lokaler und regionaler Ebene.

Gemeinden, die die Charta unterzeichnet haben

- ▶ Aufbau von Kapazitäten zur Umsetzung der im Rahmen der Charta eingegangenen Verpflichtungen im Bereich der Geschlechtergleichstellung.
- ▶ Aggregation und Analyse verfügbarer Daten zur Aufdeckung von Ungleichheiten zwischen Frauen und Männern.
- ▶ Aufbau von Kapazitäten für die Erhebung, Verarbeitung und Interpretation von Daten.
- ▶ Regelmäßige Überwachung der Umsetzung der Charta.
- ▶ Informations- und Erfahrungsaustausch zwischen Unterzeichnergemeinden zur gegenseitigen Unterstützung hinsichtlich der Vorgehensweise bei Gleichstellung der Geschlechter.
- ▶ Bereitstellung ausreichender finanzieller und personeller Mittel, um die im Rahmen der Charta eingegangenen Verpflichtungen zur Gleichstellung der Geschlechter umsetzen zu können.

Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen Europas (CEMR)

Kurzfristig

- ▶ Werbung für die Schulung und Abschlusskonferenz, um das Bewusstsein für die Charta und ihre Instrumente zu fördern.

Langfristig

- ▶ Kontinuierliche aktive Förderung der Geschlechtergleichstellung auf allen entscheidungspolitischen Ebenen in Europa.
- ▶ Förderung der politischen Unterstützung durch den Stehenden Ausschuss für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern auf lokaler Ebene.
- ▶ Entwicklung eines differenzierten Ansatzes zu den Unterzeichnergemeinden der Charta, der dazu beitragen könnte, die Fortschritte bei der Umsetzung ihrer Gleichstellungsziele zu beschleunigen.
- ▶ Bereitstellung von Informationen über von der EU bereitgestellte finanzielle Mittel zur Förderung der Geschlechtergleichstellung.
- ▶ Erwägung einer möglichen Änderung der Charta, um stärker hervorzuheben, dass die Geschlechtergleichstellung eine wichtige Funktion als Hebel der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung ausüben kann.



1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the situation of gender equality at local and regional level in Europe amongst the signatories to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. It is prepared as part of the pilot project (7) 'Development of indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life'.

1.1. Overall objectives of the pilot project

The primary objective of the pilot project, as defined in the Terms of Reference (p. 5) is:

to develop a new facility in order to help local authorities in the EU Member States to adopt or enhance their own gender equality policies. This new facility will be based on the charter and consist of a monitoring framework based on a set of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the charter over time at the level of each local authority that has signed it and committed itself to implement it.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- ▶ develop a monitoring framework for the Charter based on a set of indicators;
- ▶ monitor the implementation of the articles of the Charter at local level through the indicators;
- ▶ create the foundations for a self-sustainable follow-up of the indicators; and
- ▶ organise a conference to present the indicators and the results obtained under the first three objectives and to promote the Charter.

The pilot project covers 28 Member States. The time period runs from 2006 (when the Charter was developed) to the present day.

1.2. Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union

The European Union has a deep-founded commitment to creating equal opportunities for women and men, dating back to the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Gender mainstreaming has been central to the EU's approach to promoting gender equality between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself but a political strategy, based upon the realisation that no political area or subject is 'gender neutral'. It implies that gender concerns must be integrated into all policy decisions, legal frameworks, activities and programmes at all levels of government. It is a complex and ambitious strategy to promote equality between women and men.

From 1996 onwards, the European Commission's approach to creating equal opportunities for women and men has been to 'mainstream' the issue by integrating it into all major policy areas (8). In COM/96/0067, gender mainstreaming is defined as 'mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (gender perspective)'.

7 Pilot project according to the definition in Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1).

8 'Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all community policies and activities', COM/96/0067 FINAL, Brussels, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51996DC0067&from=EN>

The values of equality and non-discrimination are commonly shared amongst almost all the Member States of the European Union and the aim is to fully implement the gender mainstreaming obligation contained in the Lisbon Treaty into all European policies and programmes. A number of policy documents have placed gender mainstreaming on the European agenda, including, most recently:

- ▶ the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU;
- ▶ the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015;
- ▶ the European Pact for Gender Equality; and
- ▶ the Europe 2020 Strategy, which recognises that ‘policies to promote gender equality will be needed to increase labour force participation thus adding to growth and social cohesion’ ⁽⁹⁾.

1.3. The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life as a tool to support gender mainstreaming at local and regional level in Europe

To support the effective implementation of gender equality in the European Union, in 2004 the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) initiated a project aiming to portray a virtual town in which gender equality was fully achieved. The project consisted of collecting examples of good practices from different countries. It was supported by the European Commission and resulted in the publication of the brochure *Town for Equality*.

During the project, it became clear that there was a lack of expertise and instruments to introduce gender equality policies at local and regional level. Once the Town for Equality was virtually established, CEMR wished to encourage local and regional authorities to take a further step towards this reality by making a political commitment. This is how the idea of establishing the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life was born.

The Charter was developed by CEMR in collaboration with its national associations and launched in 2006 with European Commission support (through the Commission’s fifth community action programme for equality between men and women). To respond to growing demand for support amongst signatories, in 2011 CEMR established ‘The Observatory of the Charter’ with support from the Swedish Government through the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR).

The outcome of the Charter reconciles different visions of equality in Europe and gathers a summary of the proposals of all contributors. The Charter is composed of 30 articles covering local authorities’ different areas of responsibility. For each article, the Charter presents examples of measures that local authorities could implement to improve gender equality in their different areas of responsibility. However, signatories are free to choose the areas that they wish to focus on and to implement related actions. Due to the different national and local contexts, CEMR recommends that signatories gradually implement the commitments outlined in the Charter and draw up an action plan with specific priorities.

Although the Charter was drafted in 2006 and various strategies were implemented after the advent of the Charter, the core principles of the different instruments are closely aligned.

9 European Commission (2010), Europe 2020 Strategy, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

The Charter is divided into three chapters.

The first chapter introduces the six fundamental principles:

- ▶ equality of women and men;
- ▶ elimination of multiple discrimination and disadvantage;
- ▶ balanced participation of women and men in decision-making;
- ▶ elimination of gender stereotypes;
- ▶ gender mainstreaming; and
- ▶ properly resourced action plans/programmes to advance equality of women and men.

The second chapter of the Charter describes the steps local and regional authorities need to take to effectively implement the Charter. These include:

- ▶ drafting an equality action plan;
- ▶ developing an appropriate system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Charter;
- ▶ effectively disseminating information about authorities' commitment to gender equality by making the equality action plan and other relevant materials publicly available;
- ▶ informing CEMR that they have signed the Charter; and
- ▶ providing a contact person for future cooperation with CEMR.

The third chapter of the Charter presents the 30 articles, covering the following themes:

- ▶ democratic accountability;
- ▶ political role;
- ▶ general framework for equality;
- ▶ employer role;
- ▶ public procurement and contracts;
- ▶ service delivery role;
- ▶ planning and sustainable development;
- ▶ regulator role; and
- ▶ twinning and international cooperation.

1.4. Monitoring the implementation of the Charter and creating the basis for self-sustainable follow-up

To date 1 309 signatories from 24 EU Member States have signed the Charter. These countries include Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

To monitor the situation of gender equality in Europe and create the foundations for the self-sustainable follow-up of the indicators, the study team completed the following steps:

- ▶ monitoring the state of play of the Charter;
- ▶ developing a list of indicators;
- ▶ testing the indicators;
- ▶ populating the final list of indicators by a representative sample of signatories; and
- ▶ creating the foundations for the self-sustainable follow-up of the indicators.

These steps are briefly presented below.

Monitoring the state of play of the Charter

The study team first monitored the state of play of the Charter, its signature and its state of implementation across EU Member States. This assessment helped to identify those signatories which have developed indicators and are using them to monitor progress with regard to gender equality in local life.

Developing a list of indicators

The study team then analysed the Charter article by article and reviewed existing indicators available at local, national and EU level to assess their relevance and comparability. These indicators were used as a starting point to develop a long list of structural, process and outcome indicators ⁽¹⁰⁾. Whilst developing the list of indicators, the study team made a number of pragmatic decisions to ensure the feasibility of populating them with available data. For example, priority was given to structural and process indicators rather than to outcome indicators, and efforts were made to keep the number of indicators relatively small. The long list of indicators was discussed in an expert workshop that was held in Brussels in July 2014. Following the workshop the study team refined the list of indicators before testing them with a selected number of signatories.

Testing the indicators

The refined list of indicators was divided into four test kits that were sent to a small number of highly committed signatories to the Charter, forming a test panel. Local authorities were asked to provide an assessment of each indicator in the test kits and the results were analysed and presented in an expert workshop in October 2014, which led to the development of the final list of indicators.

Populating the final list of indicators by a representative sample of signatories

The final list of indicators was disseminated to all signatories to the Charter in order to ensure that indicators were populated by a sample of signatories. To increase the response rate to the survey, a small number of the most active signatories in matters of gender equality were directly targeted over the phone to respond to the survey. In total, the survey had a 20.38% response rate. The findings from the survey presented in Section 3 below thus reflect the situation in those local authorities that showed the highest level of commitment to the pilot project.

Creating the basis for the self-sustainable follow-up of the indicators, through the development of a monitoring toolkit

Overall, signatories to the Charter were able to reply to the vast majority of the indicators developed by the study team, as demonstrated by the small number of 'Don't know' responses that were given in the survey. This suggests that the selection of indicators has been done correctly and that they are understood by signatories.

In order to ensure the self-sustainable follow-up of these indicators, a toolkit has been developed. This toolkit aims to provide additional support to municipalities and regions on how to implement gender equality at local level. The monitoring tools (indicators and toolkit) will be disseminated to local and

10 Structural indicators reflect the state of the legal, budgetary and policy context in Member States and take account of legal instruments and institutional mechanisms. Process indicators reflect how legal, budgetary and political measures are translated into practice. This includes national strategies, policy measures, action programmes, training initiatives, campaigns and other activities aimed at realising gender equality in a country. Outcome indicators record the effects of safeguard measures on women and men.

regional authorities on the Observatory of the European Charter website (www.charter-equality.eu) as well as to the signatories to the Charter via the network of national coordinators. Material will also be provided on how to conduct training and capacity-building aimed especially at 'national coordinators' and member associations of CEMR. This material will include information on how to use the monitoring tools.

1.4.1. Key issues affecting the implementation and analysis of the survey results

Whilst monitoring the implementation of the Charter, the research team faced the following challenges:

- ▶ **Difficulty populating indicators with available national and European data:** Over the course of the pilot project, available national data on the situation of women and men in Europe were mapped to assess the extent to which they could be used to populate the proposed indicators. This mapping demonstrated that it was difficult to populate the indicators with available national data for two reasons: first, national datasets measure similar phenomena but are not exactly the same, thus limiting their comparability; second, there is no clear correspondence between the level of signatory (local, intermediate or regional) and the disaggregation of the datasets at national level.
- ▶ On the other hand, available Eurostat data provided comparable information on the situation of women and men in Europe at local and regional level. However, whilst analysing Eurostat statistics at NUTS level it became clear that there is no clear correspondence between NUTS and the territorial levels of the signatories to the Charter. This data has therefore been used to provide contextual information that is relevant to the pilot project but not to populate specific indicators. Indicators presented in this report have been populated with administrative data collected by regional and local authorities through the survey.
- ▶ **Difficulty in guaranteeing the accuracy of the results as the survey is based on self-reporting:** In the absence of publicly available data on the implementation of the Charter by local and regional authorities in Europe, an online survey was developed to collect all available information. The survey was disseminated to all signatories through the network of national coordinators. The population of the indicators was based on self-reporting by signatories. The responses were checked and inconsistencies were clarified with signatories. However, the results of the survey have not been triangulated with other sources.
- ▶ **Difficulty in generalising on the basis of information collected through the survey:** The number of signatories varies significantly across Member States, as did the response rate to the survey. Taking this into account, the responses received cannot be considered as representative of the situation in each country. The responses and the analysis provided in this report represent the situation in the locality/region of signatories that participated in the survey. They provide an indication of the situation of signatories across the country if the survey has been completed by a significant number of them.

Taking these challenges into consideration, this report presents an overview of the situation of women and men at local and regional level amongst a representative sample of signatories to the Charter. It also provides interesting examples of the implementation of the Charter. The report does not provide a state of play in terms of the implementation of equality at the local level. Comparison between signatories is problematic because both the number of signatories and survey respondents vary significantly between Member States as well as their competences. The findings presented in this report need to be considered in light of these challenges.

1.5. Structure of the report

The report is organised as follows:

- **Section 2** presents the relevance of the Charter to the EU policy priorities in the field of gender equality;
- **Section 3** presents a summary of the monitoring results of local- and regional-level initiatives to promote gender equality in the European Union in the following areas:
 - ▶ institutional framework;
 - ▶ decision-making;
 - ▶ employment;
 - ▶ procurement;
 - ▶ service delivery in various areas; and
 - ▶ employment and working conditions within local and regional authorities.
- **Section 4** presents some conclusions and recommendations.



2. The relevance of the Charter to the EU gender equality policy agenda

Gender equality is a long-standing priority in the European Union. As discussed in Section 1.1 above, gender mainstreaming has been central to the EU's approach to promoting gender equality between women and men. In this context, the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life invites its signatories to promote gender equality and mainstream gender in various aspects of their work.

The following section explores the extent to which the main principles of the Charter are relevant to the EU gender equality policy agenda in the following fields: (i) gender equality in decision-making; (ii) equal participation in the labour market; (iii) gender mainstreaming in the services provided by local authorities; and (iv) equal opportunities in procurement and contracts.

2.1. Gender equality in decision-making

Across the EU, women are **underrepresented in decision-making positions**, in particular at the highest levels, despite the fact that they make up nearly half the workforce and more than half of new university graduates in the EU ⁽¹¹⁾. In order to stimulate the (otherwise slow) progress experienced across Europe in this area, the Commission has defined a set of key actions to be implemented in this area in the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015. In particular, it has considered initiatives to improve the gender balance in decision-making, including a proposal for a directive aimed at ensuring that the underrepresented sex represent 40% of non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies, with the exception of small and medium enterprises ⁽¹²⁾. The European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–2020) also recommends measures to promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields. The fourth objective of the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2017 also refers to achieving a 'balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making'. The strategy calls for a minimum representation rate of 40% of either women or men in all decision-making organisations. It also stresses the importance of identifying and analysing measures implemented to empower candidate or elected women, in order to encourage women's participation in elections at national, regional and local levels, both as candidates and voters ⁽¹³⁾. In this regard, the Charter is pivotal in encouraging the signatories to make a formal commitment to guarantee gender balance in elected, appointed and advisory positions in order to ensure the equal participation of women and men in the governance and public life of their region, municipality and local community.

2.2. Equal participation in the labour market

The **gender employment gap** has received substantial attention at EU level. In June 2014, the Council emphasised the need to measure women's economic rights and independence, including their access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources ⁽¹⁴⁾. There is ample evidence both in the academic literature and in policy reports that the **gender pay gap** is persistent

11 European Commission (2010), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2010) 491 final), 'Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015', Brussels, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:en:PDF>

12 European Commission (2012), 'Women on boards: Commission proposes 40% objective', available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1205_en.htm

13 Council of Europe (2014), Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2017, available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/Docs/Council_of_Europe_Gender_Equality_Strategy_2014-2017.pdf

14 Council of the European Union (2014), Council Conclusions on women and the economy: Economic independence from the perspective of part-time work and self-employment, 3323rd Council Meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, Luxembourg, available at: <http://www.gr2014.eu/sites/default/files/council%20conclusions%20on%20women%20and%20the%20economy.pdf>

in both the public and the private sector (15). Amongst the many risks associated with not addressing this issue are the important longer-term consequences of earning less money, with women in old age being more exposed **to poverty** than men, as they tend to receive lower pensions.

The European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–2020) addresses this issue and calls on Member States to take the necessary steps to close the gender gaps in employment and social protection and to reduce gender segregation in employment (16). These issues are also tackled by the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015 (17) as well as by the Europe 2020 Strategy, which sets an employment target of 75% for 20–64 year olds (both women and men) (18). In addition, a number of European directives are in place in the areas of equal pay, maternity/parental leave and equal treatment of women and men in the workplace to promote the equal participation of women and men in the labour market.

In some Member States, local authorities are major employers and thus should ensure that they concretely implement these commitments to gender equality in employment. In this respect, in Article 11 the Charter advocates the duty of the signatory as an employer to recognise both ‘the right to equality of women and men in regard to all aspects of employment, including work organisation and working conditions’ as well as ‘the right to the reconciliation of professional, social and private life and the right to dignity and security in the workplace’.

2.3. Gender mainstreaming in the services provided by local authorities

The role of a local authority in the provision of services is of crucial importance. There is a broad range of services provided at local level, which encompass a variety of gender-related issues such as education, health, childcare and violence. Several EU policy commitments have reiterated the need to tackle these different issues in specific policy areas. The EU commitment to gender mainstreaming has been strongly supported by the articles of the Charter under the ‘Service delivery role’ section (19). Some examples of EU-level instruments that encourage the integration of gender considerations in different policy areas are described below.

Ensuring that **education and training are equally accessible to women and men** and free from gender stereotypes is recognised as necessary in achieving a more gender-equal society. Education plays a fundamental role in enabling women and men to develop their potential and in accessing new opportunities. Several commitments have been made at international (20) and European (21) levels, aiming to eradicate gender stereotypes in curricula at all education levels and promote greater gender balance in career paths. However, in spite of the international commitments and positive change, education patterns

15 European Commission (2014), *Tackling the gender pay gap in the European Union*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/140319_gpg_en.pdf

16 Council of the European Union (2011), Council Conclusions on the European Pact for Gender Equality for the period 2011–20, 3073rd Council Meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, Brussels, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119628.pdf

17 European Commission (2010), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2010) 491 final), ‘Strategy for Equality between Women And Men 2010–2015’, Brussels, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:en:PDF>

18 European Commission (2010), Europe 2020 Strategy, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

19 A total of 11 articles have been developed under this chapter of the Charter, addressing different themes such as education and lifelong learning (Article 13); health (Article 14); social care and services (Article 15); childcare (Article 16); care of other dependants (Article 17); social inclusion (Article 18); housing (Article 19); culture, sport and recreation (Article 20); safety and security (Article 21); gender-based violence (Article 22) and human trafficking (Article 23).

20 Area B of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), available at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform

21 Council of the European Union (2008), Council Conclusions on eliminating gender stereotypes in society, 2876th Council Meeting – Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Luxembourg, available at: http://www.eu2008.si/si/News_and_Documents/Council_Conclusions/June/0609_EPSCO-Gender.pdf.

in the EU remain segregated according to gendered expectations⁽²²⁾. Article 13 of the Charter focuses on the strategic role of education and lifelong learning in achieving equality of opportunity between women and men and encourages signatories to implement specific actions aimed at challenging these stereotypes⁽²³⁾.

Inequalities in health are determined by social, economic and environmental inequalities in society, including the conditions within which people are born, grow, live, work and age⁽²⁴⁾. Inequalities in health are also influenced by the distribution of power, income and resources. Over the last few decades, it has become widely recognised that, along with factors such as socioeconomic status and ethnicity or migrant background, gender and sex play a significant role in determining people's access to healthcare, the consequences of disease and disability, and overall differences in health outcomes for women and men⁽²⁵⁾. Social determinants of health are likely to affect women and men differently, resulting in inequalities in health outcomes⁽²⁶⁾. In its resolution on reducing health inequalities, put forward in March 2011, the European Parliament highlighted common values and principles such as access to high-quality care, equality and solidarity⁽²⁷⁾. The Parliament also reiterated that gender has a direct and substantial impact on health. Article 14 of the Charter calls on signatories to implement a set of measures aiming at ensuring that both women and men enjoy the highest levels of good health. Amongst the actions recommended is the inclusion of the gender perspective in all issues related to the planning, resourcing and delivery of healthcare services.

Childcare (or care of dependant persons) is an important issue with regards to gender equality. Since women tend to take on a larger share of unpaid care work in families, having children often tends to have a negative impact on the economic situation of women, due to interruption of work or reduced working time (part-time work). Having access to affordable, good-quality childcare services could reduce this risk and support women and men in reconciling work and family life⁽²⁸⁾. The Europe 2020 Strategy also points out the importance of access to childcare facilities and provision of care for other dependants in increasing labour market participation and fostering inclusive growth⁽²⁹⁾. As such, the Charter (Article 16) encourages signatories to ensure that childcare provision is considered a priority, and that issues such as affordability, availability and quality of care are adequately taken into account. Furthermore, gender norms and institutions attribute caring responsibilities for dependants to women, and these caring responsibilities often underpin women's economic inactivity.

The Charter calls on signatories to take action to ensure that affordable, high-quality services are provided. Moreover, signatories are asked to provide support and opportunities to people assuming caring responsibilities, and to combat gender stereotypes in relation to care. In 2002, the Barcelona targets were

22 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2015), *Beijing + 20: The 4th review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0414886ENN.PDF>

23 Actions such as the revision of school and training curricula to ensure that women's and men's representations are free from gender stereotypes and that information related to the link between equal participation of women and men and the democratic process is provided to pupils; the promotion of non-traditional career paths for girls and boys, to challenge the gender-based division of society; and the promotion of a more gender-balanced representation of women and men in school management and governance bodies.

24 The Marmot Review (2010), *Fair society, healthy lives: Strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010*, London, UCL Institute of Health Equity, available at: <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

25 A. Iyer, G. Sen and P. Ostlin (2008), 'The intersections of gender and class in health status and health care', *Global Public Health*, Vol. 3, Supplement 1, pp. 13–24.

26 Ibid.

27 European Parliament (2011), European Parliament Resolution of 8 March 2011 on reducing health inequalities in the EU, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP/TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0081+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN>

28 European Commission (2013), Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Barcelona objectives: The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth*, Brussels, 29.5.2013, COM(2013)322 final, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2013/EN/1-2013-322-EN-F1-1.Pdf>

29 European Commission (2010), Europe 2020 Strategy, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

adopted by the European Council with the aim of increasing the availability of formal childcare arrangements ⁽³⁰⁾.

The Barcelona targets set two objectives, namely to provide childcare places to at least 33% of children under three, and to 90% of children aged between three and the mandatory school age.

Another important aspect is the existence of gender-related measures to improve the allocation of **social housing** (for example, prioritising single parents, elderly people, etc.). Policies that do not consider the specific needs of women and men in the attribution of social housing can have a negative impact on gender equality, especially considering that women often tend to have less financial resources to access housing and are usually amongst the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, single parents, etc.) ⁽³¹⁾. In June 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on social housing in the European Union. The resolution highlights the specific difficulties faced by women in exercising their rights to housing, particularly in times of economic crisis. It recommends that public authorities carry out systematic gender impact assessments and monitor the specific situation and needs of identified groups of women (homeless women, survivors of violence, etc.) ⁽³²⁾. Article 18 of the Charter reinforces these recommendations.

Leisure time is an important topic in terms of gender equality ⁽³³⁾. Gender roles impact on women's and men's **access to culture, sport and recreation**, and the division of labour into 'productive' and 'reproductive' spheres determines the extent to which both women and men are socially entitled to enjoy 'free time'. Sport is particularly important, as it is a social and cultural process in which social constructions of masculinity and femininity play a key role ⁽³⁴⁾. Overall, women and girls have less access to sports facilities and their participation rates are lower. In 2003, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on women and sport, emphasising the need to tackle gender inequality in access to and participation in sport (including violence against women in sport as a form of gender inequality) ⁽³⁵⁾. These preoccupations were reiterated in 2007. The Council Conclusions on gender equality in sport were adopted in May 2014 and emphasised the obligations of Member States in ensuring gender equality in sport ⁽³⁶⁾. In this context, Article 20 of the Charter encourages signatories to ensure equality in the provision of, and access to, these different types of activities.

Gender-based violence is an issue of crucial importance for gender equality and the European Union has been active in addressing this problem. Several EU policy commitments have tackled violence against women, recognising that gender-based violence is both a consequence and a cause of gender inequalities ⁽³⁷⁾. In 2009, the European Parliament adopted a resolution towards 'the elimination of violence against women' ⁽³⁸⁾. The Council of the European Union has been particularly active in addressing this issue and has adopted three Council Conclusions addressing violence against women. In 2014, under the

30 See http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/71025.pdf

31 Bernard, N. (2007), 'Femmes, précarité et mal-logement: un lien fatal à dénouer', *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP*, Vol. 25, No 1970.

32 European Parliament (2013), European Parliament Resolution of 11 June 2013 on social housing in the European Union, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0246+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN>

33 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2013), *Gender Equality Index: Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/node/340>

34 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2005), *Gender and sport: Mainstreaming gender in sports projects*, Bern, available at: http://assets.sportanddev.org/downloads/9_gender_and_sport_mainstream_gender_in_sports_projects.pdf

35 European Parliament (2002), European Parliament Resolution on women and sport (2002/2280(INI)), available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2003-0269+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN>

36 Council of the European Union (2014), Council Conclusions of 21 May 2014 on gender equality in sport (2014/C 183/09), available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XG0614%2809%29&from=EN>

37 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2015), *Beijing + 20: The 4th review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0414886ENN.PDF>; European Parliament (2013), European Parliament Resolution of 6 February 2013 on the 57th session on UN CSW: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0045+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN>

See additional information at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/index_en.htm

38 European Parliament (2009), European Parliament Resolution of 26 November 2009 on the elimination of violence against women, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2009-0098+0+DOC+XML+VO//EN>

Greek Presidency, the Council reminded Member States and the EU of their commitment towards the eradication of gender-based violence and their obligation to ensure good reporting and adequate funding to fight against gender-based violence ⁽³⁹⁾.

Article 22 of the Charter tackles gender-based violence and calls on signatories to recognise the unequal power relations that are both a cause and consequence of gender-based violence. Signatories should implement different types of actions, including providing assistance and support to victims, taking into account the different needs of women; providing training to professionals who provide support to victims; organising prevention through awareness-raising campaigns; and ensuring coordination between the different service providers for victims (police, health and housing authorities).

2.4. Equal opportunities in procurement and contracts

Lack of equal opportunities in procurement and contracts may be caused by a number of factors, including equality failures in procurement practice and the conduct of contracting authorities (i.e. direct or indirect discrimination on several grounds, including gender), as well as a failure to implement the duty to ensure that parties awarded contracts, loans, grants or other benefits promote and respect non-discrimination policy ⁽⁴⁰⁾. In addition, lack of gender equality in procurement and public contracts may derive from equality failures in society at large. Public procurement has the potential to support the fight against discrimination and promote gender equality and social inclusion ⁽⁴¹⁾.

Recently, public authorities have introduced the principle of 'equal opportunities' in relation to public procurement, in line with **Directive 2014/24/EU** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing **Directive 2004/18/EU**. Recital 98 of the directive states that 'Contract performance conditions might also be intended to favour the implementation of measures for the promotion of equality of women and men at work, the increased participation of women in the labour market and the reconciliation of work and private life ...' ⁽⁴²⁾.

Article 12 of the Charter encourages signatories, in particular local bodies, to promote equal opportunities and gender equality in relation to public procurement.

39 Council of the European Union (2014), Council Conclusions on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation, Luxembourg, available at: http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15107_en.htm

40 Erica Howard (2005), 'Anti race discrimination measures in Europe: An attack on two fronts', *European Law Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, pp. 468–486.

41 Ruth Nielsen (2005), *Discrimination and equality in public procurement*, Law Department, Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, available at: <http://arbetsratt.juridicum.su.se/Filer/PDF/klaw46/discrimination.procurement.pdf>

42 See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32014L0024>



3. Monitoring the implementation of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

This section examines the extent to which signatories to the Charter have made efforts to address gender inequalities in the areas listed below.

- ▶ First, it presents the institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality at local and regional level amongst the signatories to the Charter.
- ▶ Second, it analyses the measures that signatories have introduced to promote gender equality in decision-making, employment, procurement and service delivery in various areas. It also analyses signatories' internal procedures to promote equal employment and working conditions within local and regional authorities.

It primarily presents data from the survey of indicators that the study team conducted. However, it also provides information collected through the first stage of the study (while monitoring the state of play of the Charter and testing the indicators), as well as interesting examples that have been collected through desk research, the Observatory of the European Charter website and telephone interviews with signatories.

Two sets of investigation were carried out to analyse the survey results:

- ▶ a quantitative analysis was performed for each article, based on the total number of responses at local, intermediate and regional level in order to identify major trends;
- ▶ a qualitative analysis was also performed for certain specific indicators, based on interesting examples identified within some local authorities.

Wherever significant differences exist, responses throughout the section are presented by country for the six Member States where the study team received more than 30 responses: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Signatories have also been grouped into three categories (large, medium, small) depending on their size. The team also explored if certain patterns exist amongst signatories of similar sizes across Europe.

The results presented below reflect the situation amongst a sample of the most committed signatories that have actively participated in the pilot project.

3.1. Institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality

As discussed in Section 1, gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important strategy in the achievement of equality between women and men. The European Union has shown strong political commitment to gender mainstreaming, followed by a number of Member States who have integrated commitments to gender mainstreaming into their legislative and policy framework. Gender mainstreaming is a policy commitment in most Member States ⁽⁴³⁾.

43 See <http://eige.europa.eu/content/news-article/new-report-institutional-mechanisms-for-the-advancement-of-gender-equality>

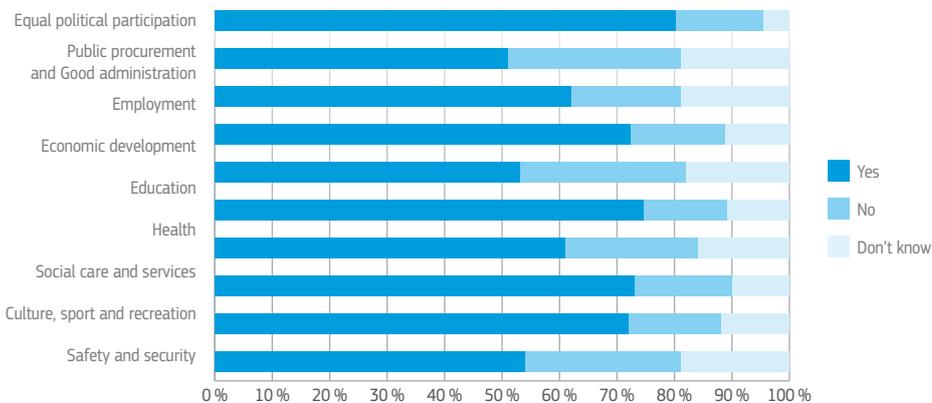
Formal commitments to mainstream gender exist at local and regional level

The majority of survey respondents amongst the signatories to the Charter have made formal commitments to mainstream gender into various policy areas at local and regional level (176 of 261 signatories, or 67%). According to the survey, the formal commitment of signatories ranges from a specific piece of legislation to a formal decision, action plan or policy to promote gender equality.

Commitments to gender mainstreaming appear to be stronger in certain policy areas

As indicated in Figure 3.1 below, commitment to promote gender equality appears to be stronger in the areas of equal participation of women and men in political and civil life (80% of responses were positive). This is closely followed by education, social care and services, culture, sport and recreation, and employment (in these areas, 72% of responses were positive). The area with the lowest positive responses is formal commitment to promote gender equality in public procurement and contracts (51%). Signatories belonging to small, medium and large local and regional authorities were equally likely to have introduced formal commitments, and significant variations did not emerge amongst Member States that provided over 30 responses to the survey.

FIGURE 3.1 EXISTENCE OF A FORMAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY (N=267) (H11)

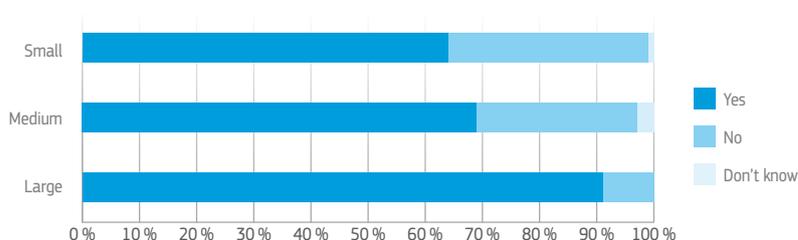


The key question, though, is to what extent formal commitments to mainstream gender into various policy areas are put into practice and whether signatories have taken the necessary steps to strengthen the institutional framework to support the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Dedicated bodies in charge of gender equality exist in the majority of authorities responding to the survey

As indicated in Figure 3.2 below, 76% of survey respondents confirmed the existence of a dedicated body specifically in charge of gender equality policy within the local authority. Dedicated bodies were more likely to be found in large signatories (72 of 79 signatories, or 91%) than in medium (48 of 69 respondents, or 70%) and small (47 of 74 respondents, or 75%) ones.

FIGURE 3.2 EXISTENCE OF A DEDICATED BODY SPECIFICALLY IN CHARGE OF GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (N=222) (ARTICLE 1, 1.2)



There is no standard way of coordinating gender equality work within local and regional authorities as a number of factors affect the existence of relevant structures, including the size of the signatory authority and its competences in relation to gender equality in different areas. A number of interesting examples of how to coordinate gender equality work within local or regional authorities have been identified, such as the existence of a dedicated body that can either advise citizens of the municipality on issues related to gender equality and equal rights, or which can coordinate the municipality's gender equality actions. In some cases it can play a dual role.

Over the course of this project a number of interesting examples emerged from different countries. These are summarised in the panel below.

The **MUNICIPALITY OF ETTERBEEK (BELGIUM)** is providing a 'Service on equality of women and men', which is in charge of implementing gender equality policies in the municipality, with a special focus on the question of preventing gender-based violence. This service is working on implementing a number of projects in collaboration with associations, such as training and awareness-raising, especially in schools but also for elderly people ⁽⁴⁴⁾.

The '**OFFICE FOR WOMEN' (CASAL DE DONES) IN THE TOWN OF IBIZA (SPAIN)** is a public service directed by the Department of Sports, Youth and Equality Policy of the City Council of Ibiza.

The Office for Women has been established with the aim of providing an open space for exchange between citizens, employees working in the field of social care services, associations, public services, private companies, etc. The office is open around five hours a day and offers information on social services, economic subsidies, associations, public and private services, possibilities for training and leisure activities, and issues relating to care of dependants. The aim of the office is to promote the active participation of women in society and culture by promoting equal rights ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

The **COUNTY COUNCIL OF VÄRMLAND (SWEDEN)** has established a 'Strategic Group on Gender Equality' composed of a team of eight staff (including human rights experts, evaluators and strategists). The group systematically coordinates the general work on gender equality in the county council. The county has established several objectives on how to improve gender equality in their service provision (especially healthcare services), in their role as an employer, and at a political level by ensuring an equal balance of women and men in decision-making positions and in public procurement ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

44 See <http://www.etterbeek.irisnet.be/nos-services/egalite-femmes-hommes>

45 See http://www.eivissa.es/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=575&Itemid=604&lang=es

46 See <http://www.liv.se/Om-Landstinget-i-Varmland/Mal-uppdrag-och-uppfoljning/Jamstalldhet-och-jamlikhet/>

Despite strong commitments, important preconditions for effectively mainstreaming gender are not in place

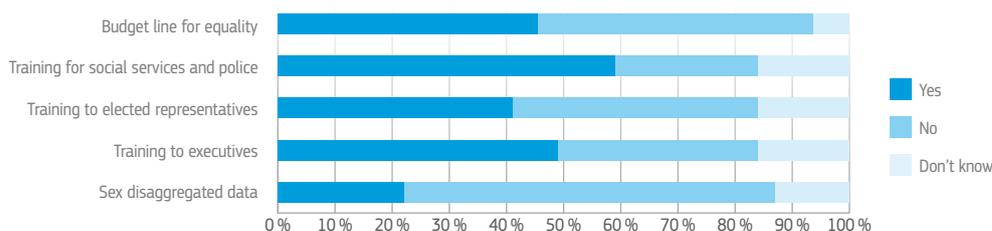
To effectively mainstream gender considerations into the policymaking process, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) suggests that a number of preconditions need to be met:

- ▶ financial resources need to be allocated to ensure the implementation of formal commitments;
- ▶ awareness needs to be raised about the relevance of gender considerations in various aspects of work;
- ▶ capacity needs to be built to ensure that relevant actors have the necessary knowledge and skills to identify needs and develop gender-sensitive policies and programmes; and
- ▶ data need to be systematically disaggregated by sex to monitor progress in achieving gender equality in various areas.

As indicated in Figure 3.3 below, despite strong commitments to mainstream gender in various policy areas, important preconditions are often not in place to ensure the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. At a first glance, the results might appear relatively encouraging. However, it is important to note that these results have been provided by those local and regional authorities across Europe that are most committed to gender equality, namely the ones who have signed the Charter and agreed to participate in the monitoring survey. In addition, when survey respondents were prompted to provide concrete examples of their actions in certain areas, it became clear that the initiatives they were referring to were only marginal in practice. For example, in practice, gender equality training for executives referred to a very short presentation (sometimes lasting only 10 minutes) that was part of a wider course.

Taking these two issues into consideration, an overview of the survey responses is presented below.

FIGURE 3.3 EXISTENCE OF PRECONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE GENDER MAINSTREAMING (N=238) (HI3, HI4, HI5, ARTICLE 1, I.3)



Regarding funding earmarked to promote gender equality, **less than half (45%) of the survey respondents confirmed that a specific budget line is in place to promote gender equality**. Most respondents indicated that a dedicated budget line does not exist, although this does not necessarily mean that no funds are earmarked to address gender equality issues (e.g. gender equality can be mainstreamed in other funding streams). Larger authorities were almost twice as likely to have specific budget lines in place to promote gender equality than medium- and small-sized ones.

In addition to resources, policymakers need to have the necessary skills and knowledge in order to ensure the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. A recent report published by EIGE suggested that one of the main reasons why gender is not mainstreamed is due to knowledge and capacity gaps ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

47 Katerina Mantouvalou, Aleksandra Duda and Pat Irving, *Gender training: Mapping, research and stakeholders' engagement*, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender%20Training%20-%20Summary%20of%20findings.pdf>

Gender equality training should be delivered to make policymakers and other actors at local, regional, national and EU level more aware of gender equality issues, to build their gender competences and to enable them to promote gender equality goals in their work at all levels.

The majority of signatories confirm that training is offered in the areas of countering stereotypes and gender-based violence (for social and police services) (60% and 59% of respondents respectively). In addition, 45% of signatories provided a positive response to the provision of training on gender assessment and evaluation tools. Large signatories were more likely to provide gender equality training to their staff than medium- and small-sized ones.

The provision of gender equality training to elected representatives and executives shows a slightly lower positive response rate, with 41% and 49% of respondents indicating that training is available for elected representatives and executives respectively. No significant differences were identified between countries or signatories of different sizes in this area.

An interesting example of a training initiative to promote gender equality amongst elected representatives emerged from Hungary. It is summarised in the panel below.

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The **HUNGARIAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (TÖÖZS)** collaborates with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) in a project called 'Manorka', which aims to strengthen capacities, overcome social and economic disparities and reinforce bilateral relations between Norway and Hungary in the most important areas of municipal operation.

One of the main focus areas of the project is equality between women and men at local level. This part of the project aims to support the implementation of gender policies at local level by learning from Norwegian experiences, with a particular focus on supporting women in political decision-making positions at local level and improving initiatives in favour of work-life balance. These objectives echo the National Social Inclusion Strategy recently adopted in Hungary, which requires municipalities to develop new equality plans in order to implement effective actions at local level.

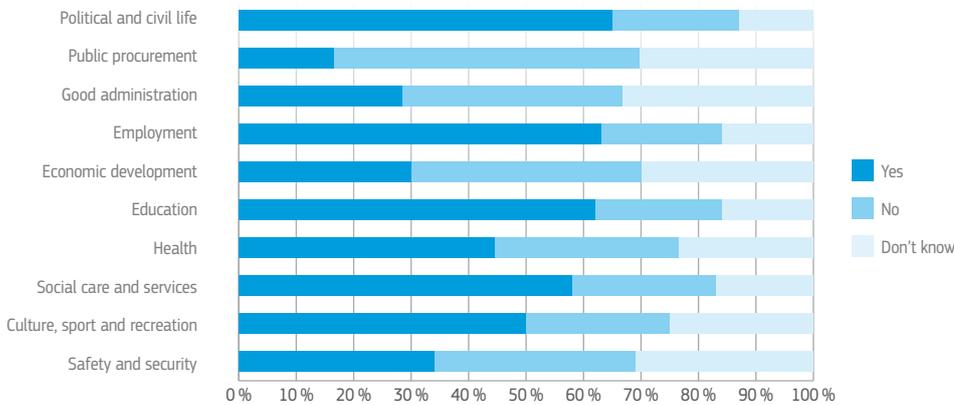
In the framework of the project, a working group of around 40 elected women representatives was established. Meetings and workshops were also organised to exchange knowledge and experiences about initiatives aiming to improve work-life balance at local level. These initiatives included supporting women's employment, reintegrating young mothers into the job market after maternity leave, analysing childcare systems, and preventing gender stereotypes ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

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To effectively mainstream gender, sex-disaggregated data are necessary to uncover the different needs of women and men as well as the different impact policies have on them. **Obtaining sex-disaggregated data remains an area where improvements are necessary.** However, some policy fields are more advanced than others. Indeed, sex-disaggregated data are available in the localities of 65% of the survey respondents in relation to equal participation in civil and political life. This is closely followed by data on employment, education and social care and services. The policy areas in which fewer sex-disaggregated data are available amongst signatories are as follows: safety and security (only 34% of responses are positive), closely followed by economic development and good administration and consultation. In public procurement and contracts, 53% of respondents indicate that sex-disaggregated data are not available.

48 See http://www.charter-equality.eu/exemple-de-bonnes-pratiques/capacity-building-on-gender-equality.html?ref_id=170

FIGURE 3.4 EXISTENCE OF SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA BY POLICY AREA (N=267) (HI3)



The following panel presents an example of how sex-disaggregated data have been used in Italy to identify inequalities between women and men.

Based on sex-disaggregated statistics, several **Italian** municipalities and provinces have developed **'gender audits' to support the implementation of local and regional gender equality policies**. By using sex-disaggregated data, municipalities have been able to identify the needs of different groups of citizens, how local public administration can respond to these needs, and how well the local or regional administration has reached gender equality objectives internally.

For example, the municipality of Castel del Piano in the province of Grosseto provides an overview of statistics disaggregated by the demographic situation of its citizens in the area of employment. Based on these figures, the municipality produced an insightful analysis into issues related to work-life balance and realised that the municipalities had to strengthen its efforts to support women entering the labour market ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

3.2. Measures to promote gender equality in decision-making

Even though a number of EU Member States have a policy commitment to increase gender balance in all decision-making bodies, women remain underrepresented as decision-makers, especially at the highest levels ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

49 See http://www.charter-equality.eu/exemple-de-bonnes-pratiques/capacity-building-on-gender-equality.html?ref_id=170

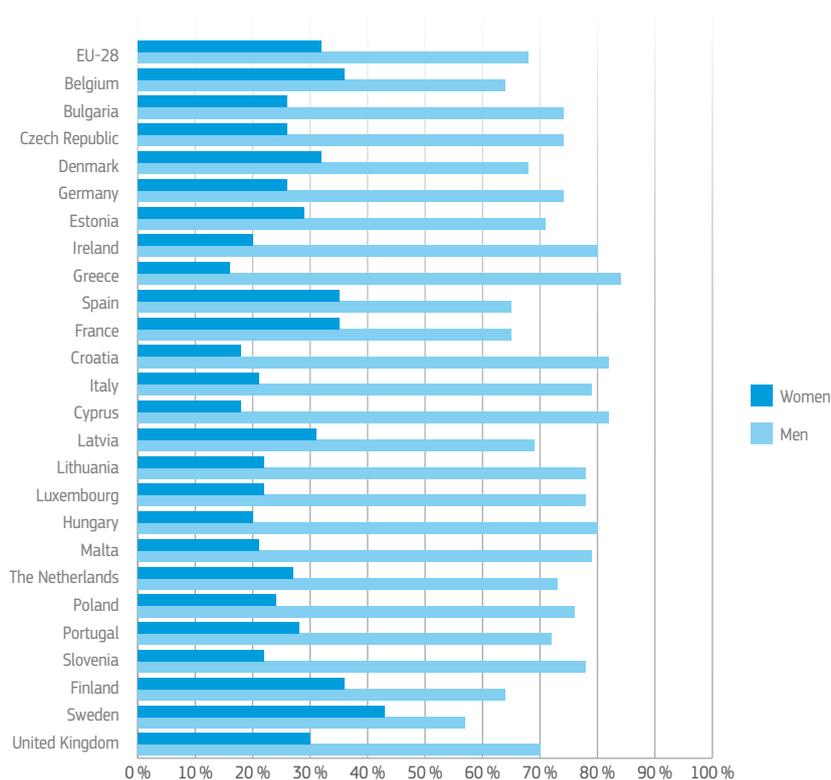
50 European Commission (2010), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2010) 491 final), 'Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015', Brussels, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:en:PDF>

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING INSTITUTIONS AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL: A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

Recent data on women and men in decision-making suggest that women also remain underrepresented in decision-making institutions at local and regional level ⁽⁵¹⁾. In 2013, the average proportion of women mayors in the 24 Member States considered in the study was 12%. Sweden was the only country where the share of women mayors reached 31%. In Greece and Romania, this share was lower than 5% (2% and 4% respectively). There were no women mayors in Cyprus.

With regard to women elected as members of the municipal council (or the equivalent body), the average proportion of women was 26.8% ⁽⁵²⁾. The figure above presents the proportion of women and men members of municipal councils.

FIGURE 3.5 PROPORTION OF WOMEN AND MEN MEMBERS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILS (2013)



Source: European Commission, Database on Women and Men in Decision-Making.

The lowest shares were found in Croatia (18%), Cyprus (18%) and Greece (16%).

The share of women members of municipal councils was over 30% in only seven Member States. These were (in decreasing order) Sweden (43%), Finland (36%), Belgium (36%), France (35%), Spain (35%), Latvia (31%) and the United Kingdom (30%).

51 DG Justice's database on women and men in decision-making (WMID) is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm

52 No data were available for Austria, Romania and Slovakia.

At regional level, the average share of women presidents of regional assemblies was 17.8% ⁽⁵³⁾. The 14 Czech regions were all presided over by a man, as were the 42 regions of Romania and the 8 regions of Slovakia. By contrast, half of the two regions of Portugal and the four regions of the United Kingdom were presided over by a woman. Furthermore, 31% of the presidents of the German regional assemblies were women.

With regard to the share of women amongst the members of regional assemblies, in 2013 the average share was 28.6%. The lowest share was found in Hungary (11%) and in Italy, Romania and Slovakia (women represented 15% of members in these three Member States). The highest shares were found in France (49%), Sweden (47%) and Finland (45%) ⁽⁵⁴⁾.



The Charter contains six articles (Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) that commit signatories to ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in terms of participating in the political and public life of their region, municipality and local community.

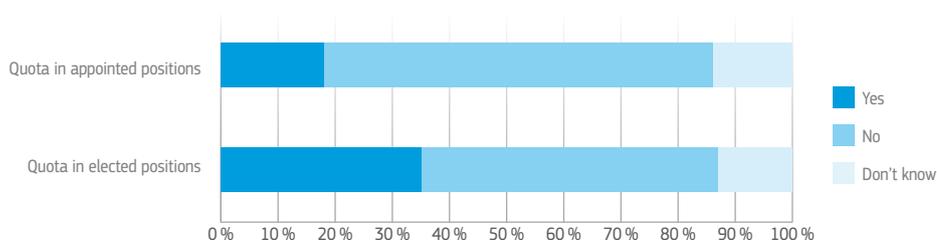
Formal commitments to promote gender equality in political and civil life exist in the majority of signatories

As discussed in Section 2.1 above, the vast majority of signatories have made formal commitments to promote gender equality in political and civil life in their policy documents and/or action plans. However, in practice, as discussed below, limited steps have been taken to ensure equal participation in decision-making for women and men.

Quota systems that go beyond national law to promote a more equal representation of women and men in elected positions are rarely used

Evidence provided through the survey suggests that signatories have taken limited steps to ensure that women and men have a genuine equal opportunity to participate in decision-making. Approximately one out of three signatories has implemented a quota system that goes beyond national law to promote women’s participation in elected positions, and this percentage drops considerably for appointed positions (18%).

FIGURE 3.6 EXISTENCE OF QUOTAS IN ELECTED AND APPOINTED POSITIONS (N=266) (ARTICLE 2, I2.1)



53 Due to the absence of a regional-level local authority, data are not applicable in Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia.

54 See DG Justice’s database on women and men in decision-making (WMID) at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/index_en.htm

Specific actions are rarely implemented to encourage a more equal participation of women and men in local elections

The Charter specifically requires signatories 'to take all reasonable measures' in support of the principle of gender-balanced representation. When considering the existence of specific actions to encourage women to participate in local elections, the responses to the survey suggest that few specific actions have been implemented to encourage the participation of women in local elections. Those signatories that do organise specific actions have mostly developed activities aimed at including the gender dimension within civic education (52 respondents, amongst which 14 were from Sweden and 10 from Italy), followed by awareness-raising campaigns (49 respondents, with a majority of Italian local authorities (18) implementing similar actions). The least common activities carried out are training sessions targeting local political parties. These have been developed by 33 respondents (9 from Spain).

The French law to improve gender balance in decision-making positions at local level provides an interesting example in relation to the equal participation of women and men in political life. This is described in the panel below.

The French law to improve gender balance in decision-making positions at local level came into force in 2014 and builds upon the previous law adopted in 2000. The law requires that governing councils of local authorities (*conseils départementaux* and *conseils régionaux*) with more than 1 000 inhabitants present a list of candidates with an equal number of women and men candidates. The law also requires political parties to organise their list according to a 'zipping system', i.e. alternating women and men candidates ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

The **ILE DE FRANCE REGION (FRANCE)** has made additional efforts to implement parity at higher decision-making levels and has also extended the quota system to the selection of Vice-Presidents (positions for which no quota is imposed by the law). There are 15 Vice-Presidents in the regional council of Ile de France, 8 of whom are women ⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Women remain underrepresented in elected and appointed positions in the majority of local authorities

The need for specific measures to encourage the participation of women in elected and appointed positions is confirmed by the indicators showing the proportion of elected and appointed women, respectively. As shown in the table below, women elected and appointed to local authorities are usually underrepresented compared to men. In particular, elected women are underrepresented in more than 90% of cases, whilst the proportion of appointed women is lower (over 70%).

TABLE 3.1. SHARE OF WOMEN IN ELECTED AND APPOINTED POSITIONS IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (ARTICLE 2, 12.3)

Measurement unit: Number of local authorities	<=25 %	>25 % – <=50 %	>50 % – <=75 %	>75 %
Elected	23	56	7	1
Appointed	11	30	10	6

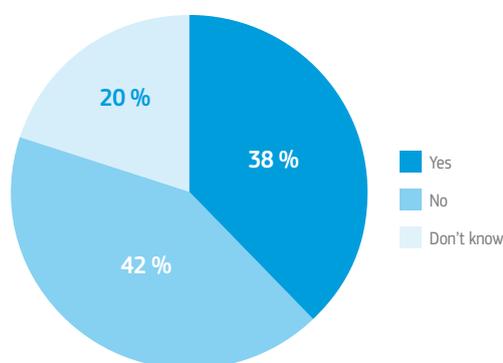
55 See <http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/decouvrir-l-assemblee/role-et-pouvoirs-de-l-assemblee-nationale/les-institutions-francaises-generalites/l-egal-acces-des-femmes-et-des-hommes-aux-mandats-electoraux-et-fonctions-electives2>

56 Information provided through direct contacts with the official in charge of equal opportunities in Ile de France.

Formal commitment to ensuring gender balance in advisory bodies exists in less than half of the signatories

A formal commitment to ensuring gender balance in advisory bodies is very important in achieving the Charter’s objective of equal participation of women and men in the governance and public life of their local or regional authority. The survey suggests that almost 40% of respondents (96 out of 255) have a formal commitment to ensure gender balance in advisory bodies.

FIGURE 3.7 FORMAL COMMITMENT TO ENSURE GENDER BALANCE IN ADVISORY BODIES (N=255) (ARTICLE 3, I3.1)



Women are underrepresented in the advisory bodies of most local authorities that provided data

When considering the share of women and men in advisory bodies (summarised in the table below), although a large number of respondents confirmed the existence of commitments to support gender balance in advisory boards, the actual number of women involved in advisory bodies set up by local authorities is usually smaller than the number of men. In particular, 80% of the respondents highlight that women are in a minority on advisory boards. However, it should be noted here that a significant number of local authorities could not provide data to populate the indicator, making it difficult to monitor the needs in this area.

TABLE 3.2. SHARE OF WOMEN IN ADVISORY BODIES SET UP BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (ARTICLE 3, I3.2)

Measurement unit:	<=25 %	>25 % – <=50 %	>50 % – <=75 %	>75 %
Number of local authorities				
Appointed	10	12	7	1

In some cases signatories have taken specific measures to increase the representation of women in advisory bodies. The following panel presents the experience of Bristol's Women's Commission in the UK.

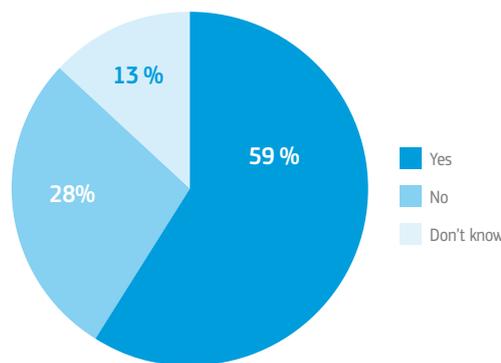
In **Bristol City Council (United Kingdom)**, women make up 51% of the population but only 36% of Bristol's 70 councillors. Women are underrepresented on all public decision-making bodies in the city.

Bristol Women's Commission has established a task group focusing on women's representation in public life. This aims at assessing women's involvement in public life in Bristol. A gender audit of public meetings was also carried out, which recorded not only women's attendance at meetings but also how often women spoke during the meetings. The Women's Commission also commissioned an audit of women on decision-making boards across the city to understand the barriers to women becoming a councillor.

More than half of the signatories have a formal commitment to cooperate and consult on equality issues with public and private sector actors, and in practice they do so on a regular basis

The introduction of a formal commitment to cooperate and consult on equality issues shows the efforts of local authorities to actively engage with relevant partners in order to actively address gender equality issues. In the survey, almost 60% of the respondents (159 out of 264) confirmed that such a formal commitment was in place.

FIGURE 3.8 EXISTENCE OF A FORMAL COMMITMENT TO COOPERATE AND CONSULT WITH PARTNERS ON EQUALITY ISSUES (N=264) (ARTICLE 5, I5.1)



When asked about the extent of cooperation, a high number of signatories (50%) confirmed that they regularly or always cooperate with the public and private sector, employer organisations, trade unions or equality bodies on issues relevant to gender equality. Another 36% collaborate with partners on an occasional basis, whilst only 3% never consult their partners on gender equality issues.

A third of the signatories have a formal commitment to increase the gender balance in the consultation process (Art. 7. I7.1), but data are inconclusive about the practices in this area

With regard to consultation processes, Article 7 of the Charter aims to improve citizens' participation in the local decision-making process. Women and men should be informed of the local authority's policies that might affect them, and should be able to voice their opinion and concerns about these policies.

In this spect, 34% of respondents confirm that a formal commitment – in the form of legislation, formal decisions, action plans or policies – are in place in order to increase the gender balance in the consultation process. However, conclusive monitoring results are not available to assess the extent to which this commitment is implemented in practice.

3.3. Measures to promote gender equality in employment

Since 2002, concrete progress has been made towards closing the gender gap in employment at EU level, with women’s employment rate increasing from 58% in 2002 to 63% in 2013. However, it still stands well below men’s employment rate, which is at 75%.

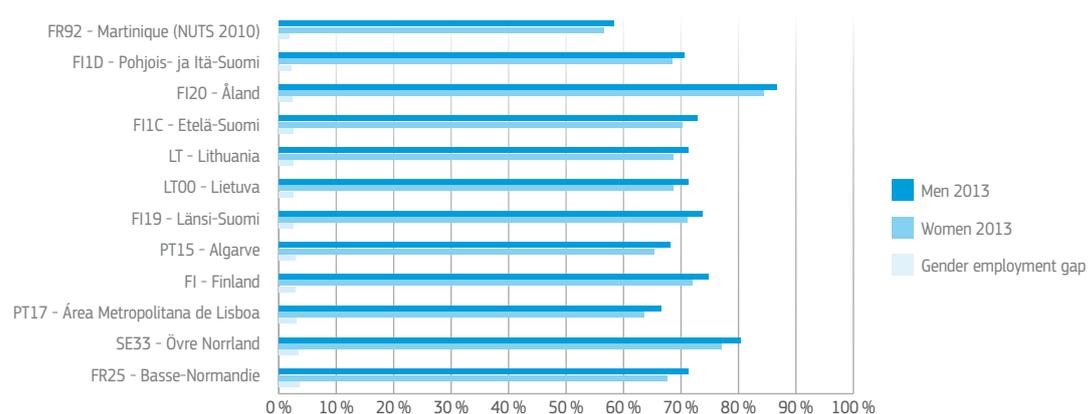
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THE GENDER EMPLOYMENT GAP AT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL: A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

Eurostat data compiled for the 258 NUTS 2 regions of the 24 Member States considered in the study indicate that gender gaps in the labour market are also significant at regional level, in terms of employment (and unemployment) rates.

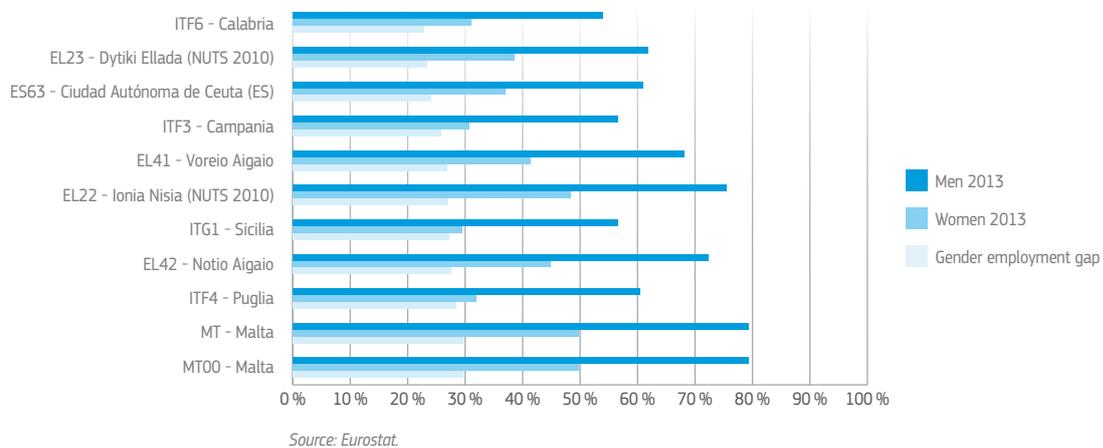
The employment rates of women and men show great variations at regional level across the EU. In all NUTS 2 regions considered in the study, women’s employment rates are lower than men’s, although the gender employment gaps are different. The graphs below presents the NUTS 2 regions with the lowest and highest gender employment gap.

FIGURE 3.9 NUTS 2 REGIONS WITH THE LOWEST GENDER EMPLOYMENT GAP (2013)



Source: Eurostat.

FIGURE 3.10 NUTS 2 REGIONS WITH THE HIGHEST GENDER EMPLOYMENT GAP (2013)



Overall, the regions where the gender gap between women’s and men’s employment rates is the lowest are also the ones that register a higher general employment rate at regional level, whereas most regions that register the highest gender employment gap are also the ones with a low rate of employment.

Another important finding is that, when women work, their employment patterns tend to differ from those of men. In all NUTS 2 regions included in the analysis, rates of women’s part-time employment were higher than those of men. There is also a tendency for women and men to be employed in different occupations, with women underrepresented in the police, for example, whilst in childcare and healthcare women make up the vast majority of the workforce. This gender segregation in the labour market is caused by gender bias based on stereotypical, biological and social differences between women and men.

Between 2006 and 2013 employment rates decreased in 121 out of the 258 regions included in the analysis, with 19 regions registering a decrease of more than 10 percentage points. This decrease was more marked for men than for women: for men, a decrease of more than 10 percentage points was recorded in several regions across southern Europe, mainly Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, whereas for women, such a decrease was recorded only in one region of Greece.

Similarly, between 2006 and 2013, whilst unemployment rates increased in a large majority of NUTS 2 regions (all NUTS 2 regions except 76 located in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland), this increase was more marked for men than for women: the average increase for men was 3.1%, whereas for women it was 1.9%. Similarly, men’s unemployment rates increased by more than 20% in 10 NUTS 2 regions, whilst such a large increase was registered for women in only two NUTS 2 regions (one in Greece and one in Spain). As a result, the gender unemployment gap decreased between 2006 and 2013.

In the first stages of the economic crisis, sectors of employment in which men predominate received the hardest hit; in the following stages, the effects spread to sectors employing more women, such as services and the public sector. In addition, austerity measures related to the economic crisis – in particular reduced public support for childcare services and in-work benefits – have made it more difficult for women to access, and remain in, the labour market ⁽⁵⁷⁾.



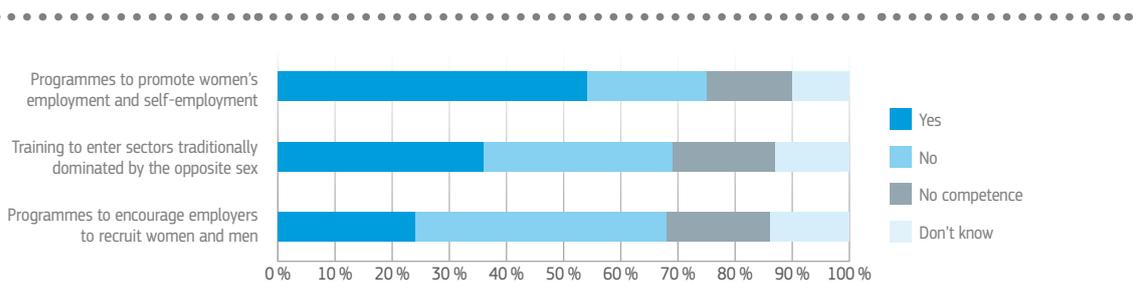
57 European Women’s Lobby (2012), The price of austerity: The impact on women’s rights and gender equality in Europe, available at: <http://www.womenlobby.org/news/ewl-news/article/ewl-publishes-report-on-impact-of?lang=en>

The Charter has one article (Article 27) that commits signatories, in relation to their activities and services in the field of economic development, to take ‘appropriate actions’ to advance equality between women and men. Article 27 also proposes a number of actions that signatories can implement to support economic development and gender equality. These are phrased as potential actions in recognition of the fact that most signatories will have limited ability to influence the rate and the quality of women’s employment outside of their own workforce.

Narrowing the gender employment gap does not appear to be an important area of intervention for local and regional authorities, despite persisting inequalities in this area

Specific programmes aimed at encouraging employers to recruit women and men are implemented in less than a quarter of signatories (23.9%), whilst just over a third of signatories (36.3%) confirmed the existence of training programmes to encourage women and men to gain skills and qualifications to enter sectors of the labour market traditionally dominated by the opposite sex (e.g. police, public healthcare and childcare). On a more positive note, 54% of signatories confirmed the existence of programmes to promote women’s employment and self-employment.

FIGURE 3.11 EXISTENCE OF ACTIONS TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S AND MEN’S EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT (N=220) (ARTICLE 27, I27.2)



Programmes aimed at promoting women’s employment and self-employment were more likely to be found in large signatories (48 out of 71 signatories, or 67.60%) than in medium and small ones (33 out of 55 respondents (60%), and 20 out of 59 respondents (33.90%), respectively).

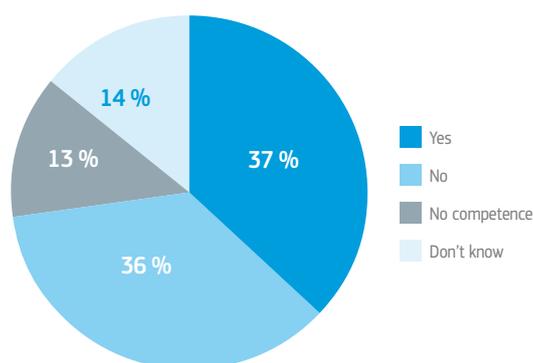
The following panel provides an example of positive action at local level in the city of Rennes.

Aware of the importance of childcare and other social services in enabling women to access and stay in work, the **CITY OF RENNES (FRANCE)** launched the ‘Time Office’ project in 2002 with the specific aim of facilitating work–life balance, strengthening the quality of public services and improving life for all citizens by integrating a gender dimension. The Time Office evaluated the quality of urban planning in Rennes and started to support local initiatives aiming to reduce inequalities in relation to access to services, including time constraints. For instance, the municipality has adapted opening hours and developed innovative services that better correspond to the needs of users (such as one-stop service centres, provision of services in areas of work, and childcare facilities with non-standard opening times). Finally, the Time Office regularly organises debates and conferences to raise awareness of time-related issues ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

58 For additional information, see http://www.charter-equality.eu/exemple-de-bonnes-pratiques/time-office.html?ref_id=166

The Charter also contains an article (Article 6) that commits signatories to conduct activities and campaigns to raise awareness of the detrimental role played by gender stereotypes in achieving equality between women and men in employment. However, only one third of signatories had policies in place to achieve parity between women and men in functions traditionally dominated by the other sex.

FIGURE 3.12 EXISTENCE OF POLICIES TO REACH PARITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN FUNCTIONS TRADITIONALLY DOMINATED BY THE OTHER SEX (N=236) (ARTICLE 6, 16.2)



Several Swedish municipalities provide positive examples in this respect, as explained below.

Six municipalities – **ESKILSTUNA, ARJEPLOG, BORÅS, JÖNKÖPING, MALMÖ, UMEÅ** and **VÄNERSBORG (SWEDEN)** – are involved in a project aiming to attract more men to work in the childcare sector. This project includes opportunities to meet and exchange knowledge and also involves visits to high schools to inform students on what it is like working in the childcare sector. The project was implemented in the framework of the *Program för Hållbar Jämställdhet*, or H&J (Programme for Sustainable Gender Equality), a national programme on gender equality initiated by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) ⁽⁵⁹⁾.

3.4. Measures to promote gender equality in service delivery

Service delivery is an important area of intervention for local authorities. It is also very broad and addresses a wide range of issues, such as gender stereotypes in education, sports, culture and other leisure activities; the impact of gender on the provision and delivery of social services, housing and healthcare; and issues related to safety and security, such as gender-based violence and human trafficking. Analysis of survey findings shows that progress has not been the same across the 11 articles of the Charter covered under this area of intervention.

59 Sveriges Kommuner och Landstig, 'Kompetenta medarbetare i den bästa förskolan', 24 April 2015, available at: <http://skl.se/demokratiledningstyrning/manskligarattigheterjamstallldhet/barnetsrattigheter/nyhetsarkivbarnetsrattigheter/arkivbarnetsrattigheter/kompetentamedarbetareidenbastaforskolan.5282.html>

3.4.1. Education and lifelong learning

Good progress has been made in recent decades to ensure equal access to education and training for women and men.

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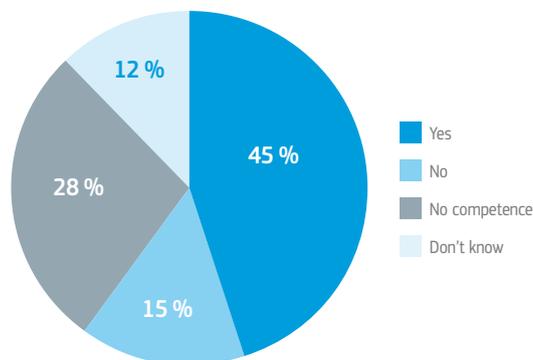
EDUCATION AND TRAINING: KEY TRENDS FOR WOMEN AND MEN

There are now slightly more women than men graduating from tertiary education. However, education patterns in the EU remain segregated according to gendered expectations: girls and women tend to be overrepresented in subjects linked to women’s traditional roles, such as health or teaching, whereas boys and men are still concentrated in areas traditionally associated with men, such as science or technology ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

.....

The Charter has one article (Article 13) which focuses on the strategic role of education and lifelong learning in achieving equality of opportunity between women and men. Education is a right to which both women and men should have equal access. The article recognises that specific gender stereotypes related to the roles of women and men in society might hinder this right and calls on signatories to implement specific actions aiming at challenging those stereotypes.

FIGURE 3.13 EXISTENCE OF SPECIFIC MEASURES TO ELIMINATE GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ALL FORMS OF EDUCATION (N=242)



The responses to the survey indicate that **the need to tackle gender stereotypes in education has been recognised by less than half (45%) of the local authorities** (which have implemented specific measures to eliminate gender stereotyping in the field of education). Whilst 28% of signatories did not have competences in this area, 15% of those signatories with competences in the field of education indicated that they had no measures in place to tackle gender stereotypes in education.

60 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2015), Beijing + 20: The 4th review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0414886ENN.PDF>

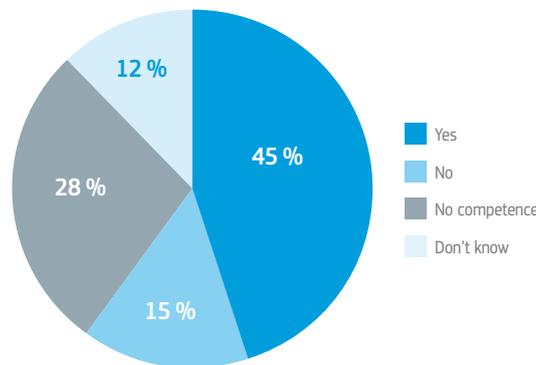
The following panel describes some of the measures that have been implemented at local level, including initiatives that focus on changing children’s perceptions of different professions, and training programmes aimed at combating gender stereotypes amongst education providers.

The **CITY OF ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE (LUXEMBOURG)** implemented a gender-sensitive strategy to tackle gender stereotyping in education. The initiative involved the inclusion of gender-sensitive pedagogy in childcare services and mandatory training on gender equality for staff working in education. Different types of training targeting different professionals were developed, including ‘gender4kids’ training (mandatory for all pedagogical staff working in childcare services in the city) and gender-diversity management training (mandatory for all managers and their assistants working in educational services) ⁽⁶¹⁾.

3.4.2. Health

Although European women tend to live longer, women and men have different health risks, health records and access to healthcare due to physical differences and different lifestyles. In order to provide good-quality healthcare services, these differences should be considered in planning and delivery ⁽⁶²⁾.

FIGURE 3.14 EXISTENCE OF SPECIFIC MEASURES TO ENSURE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOOD HEALTH FOR WOMEN AND MEN (N=241) (ARTICLE 14, I14.1)



Ensuring that both women and men enjoy the highest level of good health is therefore important. The Charter has one article (Article 14) which calls on signatories to implement measures aimed at ensuring that both women and men enjoy the highest levels of good health.

However, according to the results of the survey, **less than half of the Charter’s signatories (44.8%) have implemented measures to ensure that both women and men enjoy the highest level of health**. A total of 14.5% of signatories do not have such measures in place and a significant number of local authorities do not have competence in this area (28.2%).

The use of gender-disaggregated statistics to assess the use of health services by women and men is an interesting example of such a measure. This has been used in the Swedish municipality of Gothenburg, as described in the following panel.

61 For additional information, see <http://www.charter-equality.eu/good-practices/role-de-prestataire-de-services-en.html>
 62 See http://ec.europa.eu/health/population_groups/gender/index_en.htm

The hospital of **SAHLGRENKA IN GOTHENBURG (SWEDEN)** used gender-disaggregated statistics to identify gaps in the care received by women for the treatment of specific diseases, such as cardiac intensive diseases and hip fractures. The hospital realised that women and men were treated differently due to lack of scientific and evidence-based knowledge of women’s symptoms, and that this different treatment had negative consequences for women’s health. Based upon this analysis, the hospital recognised the need to make changes to the whole ‘hospital chain’ to make sure that women and men receive equal treatment ⁽⁶³⁾.

3.4.3. Social care and services

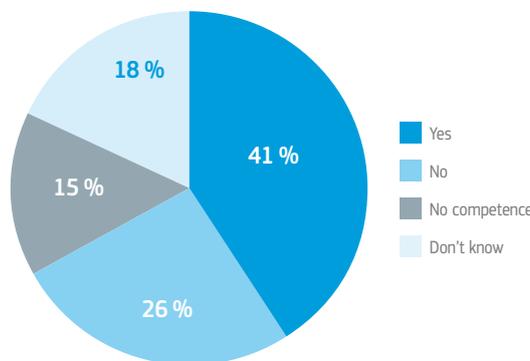
Gender is an important factor influencing women and men’s preferences and needs in relation to social care and services. Due to a number of factors, including the fact that women are overrepresented in the at-risk-of-poverty group in most EU Member States, on average women tend to use social care and services to a larger extent than men ⁽⁶⁴⁾.

However, social care and services have long been planned and delivered without taking into account women’s and men’s different access to and control over resources and their resulting needs. The integration of a gender perspective into social care and services could improve action in these areas and help reduce gender inequalities.

Article 15 of the Charter calls on signatories to integrate a gender perspective into the planning, resourcing and delivery of social care and services, including by making social workers aware of how gender relations may impact on their actions.

According to the survey, **less than half of the signatories (41%) have implemented specific measures taking account of the impact of gender on the planning and delivery of social care and services.** This percentage is rather low, bearing in mind that social care and services fall within the competence of a large majority of municipalities and intermediate-level local authorities.

FIGURE 3.15 EXISTENCE OF SPECIFIC MEASURES THAT INCORPORATE GENDER CONCERNS IN THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES (N=243) (ARTICLE 15, I15.1)



63 For additional information, see: <http://www.charter-equality.eu/good-practices/role-de-prestataire-de-services-en.html>

64 European Commission (2009), *Gender mainstreaming active inclusion policies*, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

3.4.4. Childcare

The unequal distribution of unpaid domestic work, and especially of childcare responsibilities, has negative impacts on women's social and economic participation ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

Article 16 of the Charter calls on signatories to ensure that childcare provision is considered as a priority and that issues such as affordability, availability and quality of care are adequately dealt with. This is in line with the 2002 Barcelona targets, as mentioned above.

Only a limited number of respondents provided a valid answer to the corresponding indicators: 20 respondents provided a valid answer regarding the percentage of children under three cared for in formal arrangements on a part-time or full-time basis, while 28 provided a valid answer with regards to the percentage of children between three and the mandatory school age.

Due to the limited data availability **it is not possible to assess the extent to which the Charter's signatories have met the Barcelona targets. However, some positive patterns emerge.**

A larger proportion of children are cared for in formal care structures on a full-time basis (over 30 hours a week) than on a part-time basis (fewer than 30 hours a week). Based upon a limited number of valid responses (20 out of 268 respondents), 35.5% of children aged under three were in full-time care compared to 25% in part-time care. Full-time childcare is, however, more often provided to children between three and the mandatory school age (59.6%) than to children below the age of three.

Patterns of childcare provision vary across Member States. For example, in Greece, childcare usually seems to be provided on a part-time basis (fewer than 30 hours per week), whereas in Portugal and France childcare is more often provided on a full-time basis (with some exceptions).

This difference could be linked to funding provided to parents/local authorities. In some Member States, such as Finland, subsidised childcare is provided to all children, whereas in others the net costs borne by parents are relatively high and thus limit their capacity to put their children into full-time care.

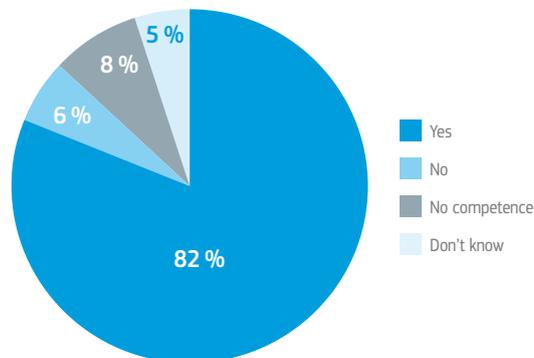
Another discernible pattern is that, on average, signatories provide childcare services with opening times that are adapted to different employment patterns. Whilst only a few signatories were able to provide information on opening hours, 85% of signatories that responded to the survey recorded opening times of over 8 hours a day, and up to 12 hours in certain local authorities.

TABLE 3.3 OPENING HOURS OF CHILDCARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THREE YEARS AND BETWEEN THREE AND THE MANDATORY SCHOOL AGE (ARTICLE 16, I16.1 AND I16.2)

Opening hours of childcare facilities			
Measurement unit: Number of local authorities (local level)	Less than 8 hours	Between 8 to 10	More than 10 to 12
Children under three years	4	13	11
Children between three and mandatory school age	6	14	13

65 European Commission (2015), 'Peer Review on Making Work Pay for Mothers, St Julian's, Malta, 18–19 May 2015', available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=2204&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>

FIGURE 3.16 EXISTENCE OF PUBLICLY RUN OUT-OF-SCHOOL SERVICES (N=222) (ARTICLE 16, I16.3)



The need for parents to make childcare arrangements does not end when the child reaches school age, given that childcare facilities must also be in place to ensure that children are cared for between the end of their school day and their parents' working day and during school holidays. In most Member States, school hours are usually shorter than a full-time working day; school holidays are also longer than parents' annual leave. Thus working parents need additional facilities and services to care for their children both after school and during school holidays. Survey respondents reflected on the extent to which signatories have taken this need into account and suggested that the majority of respondents have implemented measures to provide out-of-school services.

3.4.5. Care of other dependents

Besides caring for children, women are often also expected to care for other adults who might, because of their specific situation, lack part or all of their autonomy and require special care (elderly parents, adults or children with a disability, etc.). An EU-wide survey looking at reasons for inactivity shows that care responsibilities are amongst the main factors accounting for women's economic inactivity (to a smaller extent, this is also true for men) ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

The Charter recognises that caring for other dependents is a responsibility that disproportionately falls on women, and that this responsibility may hinder their equal participation in distinct spheres of society. In Article 17, the Charter calls on signatories to take actions to ensure that affordable, high-quality services are provided, and that appropriate support is available to people assuming caring responsibilities.

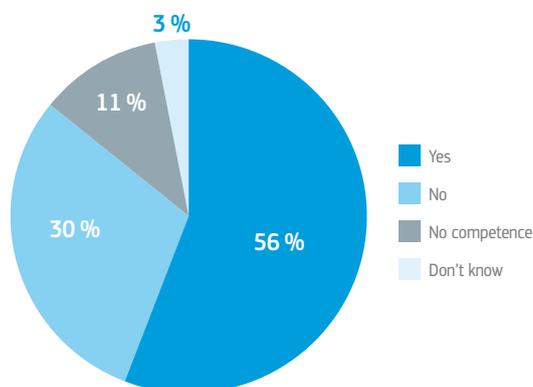
According to the results of the survey, **services for dependants are being implemented amongst the majority of signatories** (56%). In addition, **the majority of signatories are taking measures to support persons who assume full-time or part-time care responsibilities**, with 53% of respondents indicating that they have put in place support mechanisms to help such carers.

Whilst research indicates that more and more men are taking care of their parents, and more and more men wish to be involved in such caring activities ⁽⁶⁷⁾, gender-based stereotypes often impede men from taking on these roles. To improve gender equality, there is therefore a need to actively encourage men to take a larger share of caring responsibilities within society. However, the results of the survey indicate that only 27% of signatories have launched such awareness-raising campaigns.

66 Barbara Janta (2014), *Caring for children in Europe: How childcare, parental leave and flexible working arrangements interact in Europe*, RAND Corporation (RR-554-EC).

67 European Commission (2012), *European strategies and insights: Study on the role of men in gender equality*, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/130424_final_report_role_of_men_en.pdf

FIGURE 3.17 PROVISION OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR DEPENDENT PEOPLE (N=230) (ARTICLE 17, I17.1)



3.4.6. Social inclusion

WOMEN AND POVERTY: A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

EU-wide data show that women are more severely affected by poverty than men⁶⁸. Women are overrepresented in the low-income population and are more at risk of in-work poverty (even if there has been some convergence between women and men since 2006). Older women (due to their lower lifetime earnings and limited social security contributions) and single mothers (due to their obligations to combine childcare with employment) are two groups at particular risk of poverty.

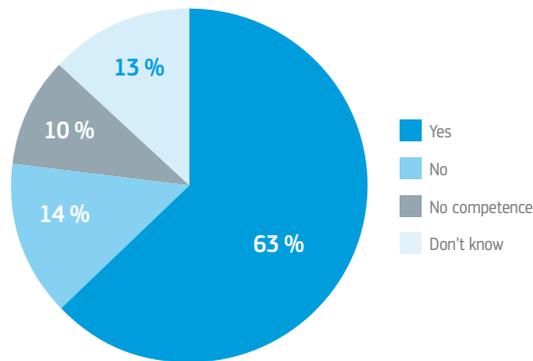
Article 18 of the Charter focuses on this aspect of inequality and calls on signatories to implement actions to ensure that women and men are equally targeted by measures aiming to fight poverty and social exclusion, and that those measures include a gender perspective.

This is an area where a majority of signatories appear to be fulfilling their obligations. According to the results of the survey, the average percentage of women amongst persons benefiting from local authority-managed programmes against poverty and social exclusion was 61% (compared to 39% of men). Whilst there is a wide variation in the proportion of women beneficiaries in different local authorities (ranging from 30% to 90%), in all local authorities but four, the percentage of women beneficiaries was higher than the percentage of men beneficiaries.

A significant majority of local authorities (63%) also have specific programmes in place focusing on the specific needs of women and men from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (e.g. migrants, minorities, the isolated elderly). A relatively small number of respondents had not developed specific programmes.

68 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Women and men in the EU – Facts and figures, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-men-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>

FIGURE 3.18 EXISTENCE OF SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES FOCUSING ON THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND MEN FROM SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS (N=229) (ARTICLE 18, I18.2)

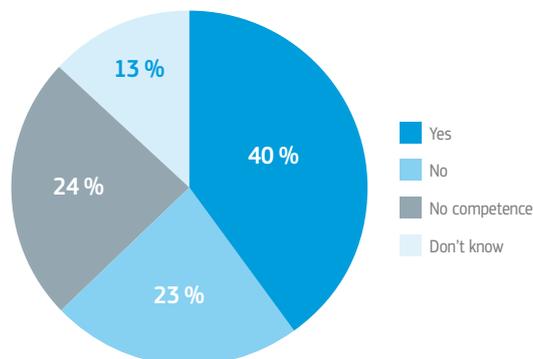


3.4.7. Social housing

Policies that do not consider the specific needs of women and men in the attribution of social housing can have a negative impact on gender equality, especially considering that women often tend to have less financial resources to access housing, and are usually amongst the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, single parents, etc.).

Article 19 of the Charter calls on signatories to take into account these gender inequalities in the design of their housing policy and in allocating social housing. This is consistent with the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in June 2013, which highlighted the specific difficulties faced by women in exercising their rights to housing and recommended that public authorities carry out systematic gender impact assessment in relation to their housing policies (69).

FIGURE 3.19 EXISTENCE OF GENDER-RELATED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING (N=234) (ARTICLE 19, I19.1)



69 European Parliament (2013), European Parliament Resolution of 11 June 2013 on social housing in the European Union, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0246+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

The evidence gathered from the survey suggests that less than half of respondents (40%) have implemented relevant measures in this field (70).

One positive example is provided by the Austrian city of Graz, as described in the panel below.

The **CITY OF GRAZ (AUSTRIA)** is implementing a thorough system to allocate social housing in a fair way, targeting citizens from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. This system gives extra 'points' to single mothers, providing them with a higher chance of accessing social housing. The city of Graz also has a special housing project for single mothers only.

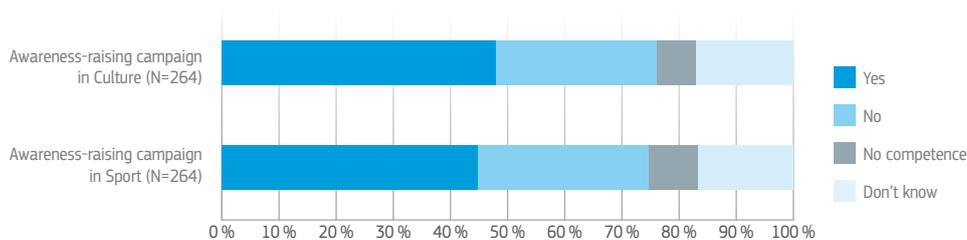
3.4.8. Culture, sports and recreation

Gender roles impact on women's and men's access to culture, sport and recreation. Women and girls overall have less access to sport facilities and their participation rates in sport are lower.

Article 20 of the Charter highlights the importance of culture, sports and recreation for the wellbeing of women and men, and reiterates the need to ensure equality in the provision of and access to these different types of activities.

The survey findings confirm that awareness-raising campaigns in both sports and culture have been implemented by 45% of signatories. On the other hand, the number of signatories indicating that no such initiatives are in place is also rather high, both in sport and culture (nearly a third of all respondents).

FIGURE 3.20 EXISTENCE OF AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS AND ACTIONS TO TARGET GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SPORTS AND CULTURE (ARTICLE 20, I20.1)



70 We found discrepancies between the number of respondents who stated that they lacked competence in the area of indicator 19.1 and those who provided the same answer related to the general competence of their local authority in matters of housing. The number of local authorities that were lacking competence in housing (in general) was higher (74) than the number of 'No competence' responses provided to indicator 19.1 (56). However, as this article is optional, this discrepancy might be explained by the fact that some respondents who lacked competence in this area might have chosen not to provide an answer.

The following panel provides an example of positive action taken by a French municipality in order to promote the role of women in both sport and culture.

.....

The **CITY OF SURESNES (FRANCE)** has organised several cultural events to promote the role of women in cultural professions, such as promoting women composers when organising concerts, organising expositions to promote women painters, organising a conference inviting women writers to promote women's role in literature, running activities on the theme of non-sexist literature at the municipal library, etc.

In the area of sports, the municipality has decided to allocate municipal subsidies only to sports clubs which have women and men teams. Following this, several women teams were created in different sports (football, basketball and rugby). As a result, the number of women involved in sports increased from 35% in 2013 to 38% in 2014, a percentage above the national average in France as a whole (36%). Amongst girls aged between 6 and 18 years, the percentage is 47% ⁽⁷¹⁾.

.....

Data provided about the average share of women and men with managerial roles in cultural and sports associations managed by local authorities show that the participation rate of women and men in cultural associations is almost equal, but that improvements are still needed to reach gender balance in sports associations. On average, almost half of the managerial roles in the largest cultural associations were held by women (45.8%), but the percentage of women with managerial roles in the largest sport associations was less than 30% (29.8%).

3.4.9. Safety and security

Local authorities have an important role in ensuring the safety and security of their residents. However, due to certain specific characteristics, women and men might not face the same problems with regards to safety and security.

This is emphasised in Article 21 of the Charter, which calls on signatories to undertake a gender analysis of crime statistics in order to develop adequate strategies to tackle gender-related security problems.

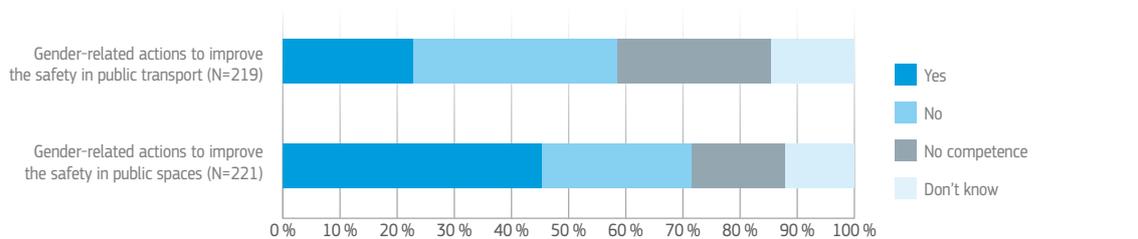
The main observation stemming from the survey is that **only a few local authorities collect data on the share of women and men victims of crime, disaggregated by type of crime**. However, this finding should be treated with caution since the collection of crime-related data is often not considered feasible at local level, especially for some smaller municipalities.

Similarly, **a small number of signatories (22%) seem to be implementing actions aiming to improve the safety of women and men in public transport**.

The **trend appears more positive when considering measures aimed at improving women's and men's safety in public spaces in general**. Nearly half of all signatories (45%) confirmed that such actions had been implemented by their local authority.

71 For additional information, see <http://www.charter-equality.eu/good-practices/role-de-prestataire-de-services-en.html>

FIGURE 3.21 EXISTENCE OF GENDER-RELATED ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC SPACES (ARTICLE 21, I.21.2, I.21.3)



One positive example of such a measure is provided by the city of Kalmar in Sweden.

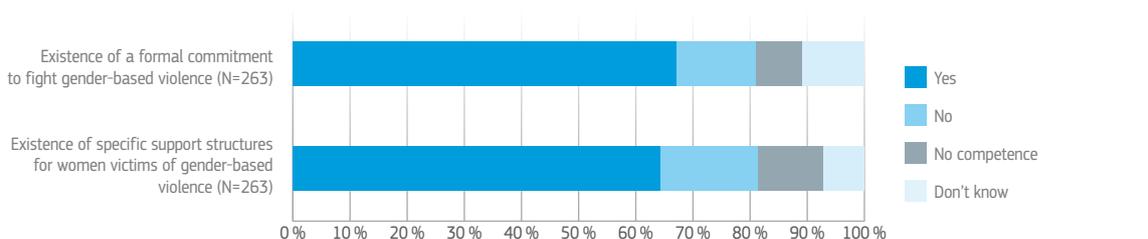
Based on the result of a study analysing women and men’s feeling of safety in public spaces, the **MUNICIPALITY OF KALMAR (SWEDEN)** introduced a new system of ‘night stops’ for buses. This new approach allows passengers to tell the bus driver where they wish the bus to stop. This reduces passengers’ walking distance from the bus stop to their home and increases the overall feeling of safety amongst citizens.

3.4.10. Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence has been recognised as one of the most extreme manifestations of the uneven balance of power between women and men. It is also one of the main causes of the persistence of gender inequalities in society. As mentioned above, several EU and national commitments have tackled this issue. Article 22 of the Charter echoes this commitment by calling on signatories to implement different types of actions in order to tackle gender-based violence.

This seems to have had positive consequences at local level both in terms of formal commitments and concrete actions. Indeed, a relatively large majority of respondents (67%) have adopted a formal commitment to fight gender-based violence. This commitment is concretely implemented by most of the local authorities. According to the results of the survey, 64% of the Charter’s signatories provide specific support structures for women victims of violence.

FIGURE 3.22 EXISTENCE OF A FORMAL COMMITMENT AND SPECIFIC SUPPORT STRUCTURES TO FIGHT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (ARTICLE 22, I.22.1, I.22.5)



The following panel describes the support structures that are made available to women victims of violence in Athens.

.....

The **CITY OF ATHENS (GREECE)** provides shelter homes for women victims of abuse and/or violence. Specialist staff provide women and children with holistic support services such as protection, legal advice and information. Beyond the immediate assistance to women and their children, the shelter also promotes prevention of gender-based violence by raising awareness amongst the population in general.

.....

The survey also indicates that 69% of the signatories have established a coordination agreement between the different actors involved in the fight against violence against women. Furthermore, a large majority of local authorities implement actions aimed at preventing gender-based violence (74% of signatories).

However, **a less positive trend is found when considering the existence of a budgetary line allocated to the fight against gender-based violence in the local authority.** Only 42% of signatories have such a specific line in their budget. On the other hand, this trend might be explained by the fact that if local authorities are the direct service providers in relation to support structures for women victims of violence, they might receive their funding from another administrative institution, and are therefore dependent on a higher level authority.

3.4.11. Human trafficking

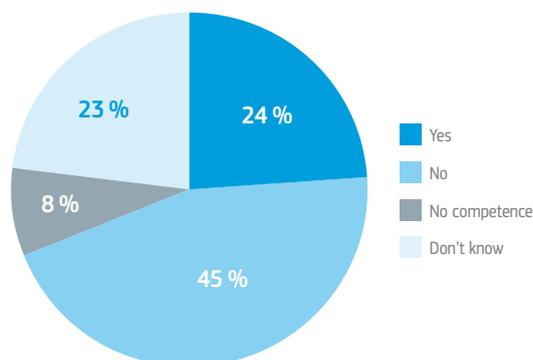
Article 23 of the Charter enjoins signatories to recognise that women and girls are disproportionately affected by trafficking. Signatories are called upon to take actions to prevent trafficking, such as awareness-raising campaigns and training for professionals in charge of identifying and supporting victims.

The answers to the survey seem to indicate that local authorities are competent in matters of prevention of gender-based violence in general, but not in matters of human trafficking. This would explain the relatively low number of signatories (25%) that confirm the existence of specific actions aimed at preventing human trafficking.

3.5. Measures to promote gender equality in procurement

Procurement and contracts are two important aspects of local authorities' competences. The role of public authorities, in particular local bodies, in promoting equal opportunities and gender equality in relation to public procurement is recognised by the Charter under Article 12. The insertion of gender equality clauses in contracts or funding agreements was confirmed by 24% of the signatories.

FIGURE 3.23 INSERTION OF GENDER EQUALITY CLAUSES IN CONTRACTS/FUNDING AGREEMENTS (N=264) (ARTICLE 12, I12.1)



The city of Stockholm is an interesting example in this respect.

STOCKHOLM COUNTY COUNCIL (SCC) (SWEDEN) set general requirements for all companies and sub-contractors with whom the Council signs agreements in the healthcare sector to guarantee the provision of good healthcare on equal terms regardless of gender. For instance, care givers obtaining public contracts or agreements with the Council have to respect the SCC's equality policy which includes, amongst other things, taking part in ongoing quality work and providing equal treatment for women and men in healthcare. Furthermore, as part of the evaluation of activities, all relevant key figures and statistics should be reported, disaggregated by gender and age.

The SCC follows the guidelines published by the Swedish Municipalities and Counties (SKL) ⁽⁷²⁾. These are included in a more comprehensive document about the legal possibilities of imposing gender equality requirements in public procurement. In particular, SKL recommends conducting a feasibility study before signing contracts with external operators. This study should assess the feasibility of integrating a gender equality perspective in a particular service and identify whether the service has specific impacts on women and men. Local authorities are invited to evaluate the link between the public service in question, the gender equality objectives set by the authorities and whether the procurement may be used to support these objectives. Finally, the guidelines suggest including indicators and specific evaluation criteria in the study to better assess public procurement from a gender perspective.

3.6. Measures to promote equal employment and working conditions within local and regional authorities

In some Member States, local authorities are large employers and thus should ensure that they concretely implement gender equality commitments in their role as an employer.

Article 11 of the Charter states the duty of the signatory as an employer to recognise both 'the right to equality of women and men in regard to all aspects of employment, including work organisation and working conditions' as well as 'the right to the reconciliation of professional, social and private life and the right to dignity and security in the workplace'.

72 Program för Hållbar Jämställdhet (2012), Upphandling för jämställdhet, available at: <http://www.jamstall.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Upphandling-f%C3%B6r-j%C3%A4mstalldhet-pdf.pdf>

The article is comprehensive and refers to a number of measures which the signatory should put in place, such as (i) reviewing relevant policies and procedures relating to employment; (ii) opposing sexual harassment in the workplace; and (iii) reflecting the social, economic and cultural diversity of the local population within the workforce.

A total of 157 respondents confirm the existence of a **formal commitment to ensure gender equality in the management of personnel**. This represents nearly 60% of the respondents. It is important that the commitment to gender equality in employment is formalised in order to create awareness amongst employees as well as the general public.

The real question, though, is how this formal commitment translates into specific actions to ensure that women and men are treated fairly in recruitment procedures, career advancement and protection from harassment.

More than half of the survey respondents suggested that guidelines exist on fair recruitment procedures (148 out of 264 respondents, or 56%).

There are different ways to guarantee that gender equality is ensured when recruiting potential employees. Below is an example from the local authority of Frankfurt am Main in Germany.

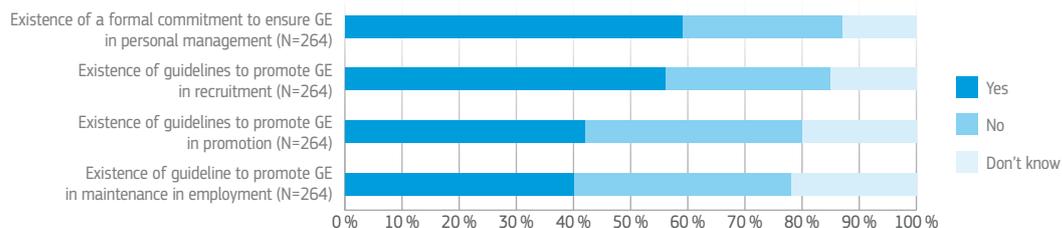
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The local authority of **FRANKFURT AM MAIN (GERMANY)** has adopted a formal commitment to undertake sustainable actions aiming at enhancing gender equality in the following fields: women’s leadership, recruitment and training; working hours; parental leave; work and care (children or/and the elderly); data collection and evaluation; working environment; sexual orientation; representation; and public-private partnerships. This formal commitment came into force in April 2014 and the local authority plans to implement it until 2021. Biannual reports will be made to monitor developments. This formal commitment is part of the Women’s Advancement Plan adopted by the local authority of Frankfurt.

.....

Guidelines are less likely to be used to ensure the fair treatment of women and men in career advancement procedures. There is nearly an equal split between the number of respondents saying that they do not have guidelines to promote gender equality in either ‘promotion’ or ‘maintenance in employment’ (101 and 100 responses respectively) and the number of respondents that confirm they do have guidelines in place (111 for promotion and 106 for maintenance in employment).

FIGURE 3.24 MEASURES TO PROMOTE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS WITHIN LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (ARTICLE 11)



.....

A good example of developing skills that can help in job progression can be found in the actions of the **REGIONAL COUNCIL OF PICARDY (FRANCE)**. The council undertook a 'gender mapping' of different professions to develop a reference leaflet for different jobs, highlighting what skills are needed for different positions. By underlining the similarities between different professions, the reference leaflet aims to promote transferability of skills between jobs in which women or men traditionally predominate ⁽⁷³⁾.

.....

When considering the actual share of women and men as level-1 administrators (indicator 11.3) and as administrators in general, 62 local authorities in the survey provided a valid answer to this question. On average, women represent 45% of level-1 administrators (the figure is 55% for men). However, there are some variations between local authorities in the same Member States, which makes it difficult to establish country-specific trends.

With regard to the share of women and men employed as administrators at all levels, data were provided for 60 local authorities. It is interesting to note that the average share of women and men is inverted. On average, women represent 55% of administrators at all levels, whereas men represent 45%. It therefore appears that there are more women in lower administrative positions.

The gender pay gap exists in both public and private sectors, with several negative consequences on women's (and especially elderly women's) economic situation and wellbeing. In the survey, **50% of the respondents indicated that there are no measures in place to assess the gender pay gap amongst employees.**

Broadly, three steps have been recognised as useful in helping to prevent and reduce harassment. The first step is to develop a written sexual harassment policy and procedures; the second is to distribute the sexual harassment policy; and the third is to educate the workforce and train supervisors ⁽⁷⁴⁾. **Half of the respondents in the survey confirm the existence of a policy against sexual harassment.**

Reconciling work and private life is key to the promotion of gender equality. Women tend to be most affected by a lack of work-life balance as they are often still in charge of most household tasks, even when working full-time. A number of projects funded by the European Commission suggest that to achieve reconciliation between work and private life, the environment must be equally supportive of a work-life balance for men ⁽⁷⁵⁾. A number of incentives exist in this respect, such as part-time work, flexible contracts, working times and locations, availability of childcare facilities, care for the elderly and other dependants, or tax incentives to reconcile work and family responsibilities.

In the survey, 62% of respondents confirmed the existence of policies or other measures in addition to national statutory provisions to support/promote the reconciliation of social, private and working life amongst employees.

The survey also looked at the share of women and men employees in the local authority who benefited from specific work-life balance policies, including parental leave, flexible working schemes and part-time work. Overall, women are the main users of these policies and the share of men making use of these measures does not extend beyond 30%.

73 For additional information, see http://www.charter-equality.eu/exemple-de-bonnes-pratiques/guide-on-gender-equality-in-the-workplace.html?ref_id=160

74 European Commission (2013), *Harassment related to sex and sexual harassment law in 33 European countries*, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/your_rights/final_harassement_en.pdf; *Guide on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace*, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-beijing/documents/publication/wcms_157626.pdf

75 European Commission (2006), *Reconciliation of professional and private life: Exchange of good practices*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2011&langId=en

In total, 62 local authorities provided valid data about the share of women and men amongst employees who were on parental leave. On average, women represented approximately 79% of local authority employees on parental leave, whilst men represented 21%. However, these figures should be treated with caution as the national legal framework differs significantly between countries. Furthermore, the figures do not take into consideration the length of the parental leave.

With regard to the share of employees who were making use of flexible working schemes, 39 local authorities provided valid data that revealed a similar tendency. Indeed, on average, women represent 73% of the employees who work under a flexible working scheme, whereas men represent 27% of those making use of such a scheme. Lastly, 60 local authorities provided data with regard to the share of women and men working part-time. Overall, part-time work is much more common amongst women, even within local authorities that have signed the Charter. On average, 84% of part-time employees are women (men represent 16%). It is important to note that data collected on employees working part-time do not enable one to assess the extent of involuntary part-time work. In addition, part-time work is often used as a way to address shortcomings in childcare services.

TABLE 3.4 SHARE OF WOMEN AND MEN BENEFITING FROM FLEXIBLE WORKING-TIME ARRANGEMENTS

	Number of local authorities that provided comparable data	Share of women	Share of men
Parental leave	62	80%	20%
Flexible working scheme	39	74%	26%
Part-time	60	84%	16%



4. Conclusions and recommendations

Launched by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 2006, the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life has been signed by 1 309 local and regional authorities in 24 Member States in the European Union. It has a total of over 1 480 signatories in a total in 32 countries in Europe. The aim of this study was to develop and test a number of indicators to monitor the implementation of the Charter in order to gain an overview of the situation of gender equality at local and regional level in the European Union.

The analysis drawn in the previous sections is based on information gathered through different methods, mainly desk research, survey results and some interviews with signatories to the Charter. The findings of such analysis present the main trends in a sample of the most committed signatories to the Charter and the pilot project. They reveal that real efforts to implement the actions listed under the 30 articles of the Charter have been taken, but that efforts have not been equal across the board. Indeed, progress has been more substantial in some areas than in others.

Based upon the analysis presented above, the main findings are as follows.

- ▶ **Good progress has been made towards the implementation of the Charter in the area of *Democratic accountability*.** This refers to the existence of an institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality at local and regional level. Progress in this area seems to be more apparent than in others, both in terms of commitment and implementation.
- ▶ **Some progress has been made in the areas of *Political role, Employer role and Service delivery*.** Signatories to the Charter have made policy commitments to promote equality between women and men in decision-making, to ensure that their employees are treated fairly, irrespective of their gender, and to ensure that the needs of all citizens are equally taken into consideration in the services provided by local and regional authorities. However, the degree to which these commitments are implemented varies. In spite of a relatively high level of compliance with the Charter in the area of equal participation of women and men in political and civil life, more action needs to be taken in order to promote gender equality in the area of political representation. Once again, commitments to ensure gender equality seem to be in place in the area of *employer role*, but their concrete implementation is limited. Specific issues such as the gender pay gap amongst local authority employees, and sexual harassment, are addressed only to a limited extent (both in terms of commitment and implementation).
- ▶ The service delivery role is an important area of intervention for local authorities. It is also very broad and addresses a wide range of issues, such as gender stereotypes in education, sports, culture and other leisure activities; the impact of gender on the provision and delivery of social services, housing and healthcare; and issues related to safety and security, such as gender-based violence and human trafficking. Analysis of survey findings shows that progress has not been the same across the 11 articles covering this area of intervention. A large number of signatories have taken action to tackle persisting gender stereotypes in *education and lifelong learning* as well as in relation to *culture, sport and recreation*. Most also recognise the specific needs of women and men from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups in programmes to tackle *poverty*. Actions towards mainstreaming gender concerns in *health, social care and services* and *housing and social inclusion* appear to be more limited. The majority of respondents provide *childcare* services adapted to different employment patterns, but the majority of children are enrolled on a part-time basis. Publicly run services for the *care of other dependants* are in place in the majority of local authorities. A relatively high proportion of signatories have implemented actions to improve women's and men's *safety and security*, especially in public spaces.

A large majority of respondents have adopted a formal commitment to fight *gender-based violence* and this commitment is concretely implemented by most of the local authorities (e.g. support structures are provided to women victims of violence; coordination agreements between the different actors involved in the fight against violence against women are in place; awareness-raising actions are organised). However, a less positive pattern is found when looking at the existence of a budgetary line allocated to the fight against gender-based violence. Local authorities' competences in matters of *human trafficking* also appear limited, as is their capacity to implement preventative actions to tackle this issue.

- ▶ **Limited progress has been made in the areas of *Public procurement and contracts***, both in relation to gender equality policy commitments and to concrete actions to mainstream gender in this area of work. Specific gender equality commitments in the area of *Public procurement and contracts* have been only partially adopted and only a few signatories have inserted gender equality clauses into contracts or funding agreements. As described in earlier sections of this report, articles requiring local authorities to adopt formal policy commitments were more likely to be implemented than those requiring specific measures involving redistribution of resources between women and men or substantial changes in the policy cycle process (for example, by introducing gender analysis in all phases of this process).

Local and regional authorities seem to deal with their commitment to the Charter in different ways and great variations in the extent of its implementation have been noted. This variation reflects the fact the signatories to the Charter are encouraged to choose a number of areas to focus on, depending on their size, competences, specific capacities, legal framework and the local or regional context.

Signatories to the Charter have shown strong commitment to promote gender equality and mainstream gender in different aspects of their work. However, due to a number of different factors, such as different competences and lack of capacity, the institutional framework and other important preconditions to mainstream gender equality are not always sufficiently in place.

To effectively mainstream gender considerations into the policymaking process, a number of preconditions need to be met:

- ▶ **awareness** needs to be raised about the relevance of gender considerations in various aspects of work;
- ▶ **capacity** needs to be built to ensure that relevant actors have the necessary knowledge and skills to identify needs and develop gender-sensitive policies and programmes;
- ▶ **data** need to be systematically disaggregated by gender to monitor progress in achieving gender equality in various areas; and
- ▶ **financial resources** need to be allocated to effectively mainstream gender.

The survey results suggest that these preconditions are not in place amongst over half of the signatories and this often results in an unequal implementation of the Charter in different areas.

Even if there is a political will to work on gender equality issues, lack of financial and human resources often plays an important role in the degree to which the Charter is implemented. This is often linked to the institutional framework at national level and the access to financial support and capacity-building. The outcomes for gender equality are not regularly measured, and when data are available they remain weak. There remains an urgent need for gender-disaggregated data to be collected at local and regional level.

The following key recommendations emerge from the preceding analysis. These have been divided into three categories targeting different groups:

- ▶ policymakers at local, national and European level;
- ▶ signatories to the Charter; and
- ▶ the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

These recommendations are discussed in turn below.

Recommendations for policymakers at local, national and European level

Enhanced political support is needed at local, regional, national and European levels to boost equality between women and men at local and regional level.

Political commitment has been identified as an essential factor influencing the level of implementation of the Charter.

Recommendations for signatories to the Charter

1. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO BUILD CAPACITY IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THEIR GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS UNDER THE CHARTER.

The relevance of gender considerations in different policy areas, as defined in the Charter, is not always clear to signatories. This is demonstrated by the low level of activities in some areas (e.g. procurement and contracts). Inequalities need to be closely monitored to uncover obstacles that hinder gender equality at local and regional level in different areas of work.

2. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO AGGREGATE AVAILABLE DATA AND ANALYSE THEM TO UNCOVER INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN.

Several signatories indicated that information is recorded in administrative forms about women and men in different areas. However, when they were asked to provide actual data to assess the extent to which inequalities persist, they were not able to do so. This suggests that signatories might be recording information but that they do not aggregate data in a statistical form or analyse them to design future policies in this area.

3. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO BUILD CAPACITY ON HOW TO GATHER, PROCESS AND INTERPRET DATA.

Several signatories indicated that the monitoring survey was difficult to understand and requested further explanations and definitions of certain indicators. Capacity-building for local and regional authorities in the areas of gathering, processing and interpreting data is therefore needed.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO PERIODICALLY MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER.

The pilot project developed a number of indicators that have been understood and populated by a significant number of signatories. This tool can provide the basis for a self-sustainable follow-up of the indicators. The periodicity of the assessment can vary from every three to five years, depending on the willingness of the signatories to participate in the exercise. If a significant number of signatories populate the indicators in each Member State, cross-country comparisons would be possible and the quality of the analysis would be improved. EU-level synthesis of the responses will be valuable only if a significant number of signatories commit themselves to monitoring progress.

5. MUTUAL LEARNING IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO SUPPORT SIGNATORIES IN ENHANCING THEIR WORK ON GENDER EQUALITY.

The interesting examples quoted in this report indicate that examples of positive action exist in different localities and that there is significant scope for local and regional authorities to learn from each other.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THEIR GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS UNDER THE CHARTER.

Several signatories indicated that the even though they have strong commitments to equality, in practice limited resources are allocated to ensure its effective implementation and the sustainability of activities. Without sufficient human and financial resources, the commitments cannot be systematically implemented. Ad hoc activities to promote gender equality might exist but these cannot have transformative effects if they are not systematic.

CEMR member associations can play an important role in promoting the Charter and gender equality by organising activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and training in their local area.

Recommendations for the CEMR

The CEMR has a long history of promoting gender equality at local and regional level. The launch of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, in 2006, represented a milestone in this respect. Since the launch of the Charter, the CEMR has taken a number of important measures to support its implementation, for instance 'The Observatory of the Charter', launched in 2012, and its website www.charter-equality.eu. These aim to monitor the implementation of the Charter, providing a platform for exchanging information, promoting knowledge-sharing amongst signatories and providing different kinds of support.

Moreover, the CEMR is actively working on raising awareness and promoting gender equality at local and regional level, both through its network of member associations in different European countries and through its work with the Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, composed of elected representatives from the local and regional level.

However, the results of this study clearly show that more needs to be done to strengthen capacity and promote the implementation of gender equality policies at local and regional level. In this regard, the CEMR intends to undertake concrete actions in two phases:

In the short term:

1. ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE FINAL CONFERENCE AND THE TRAINING SESSION IN ORDER TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHARTER AND ITS TOOLS.

The final conference and the training session provide excellent opportunities to promote the Charter and its tools. The CEMR will actively promote both events in order to ensure a high number of participants, especially from their member associations (representatives of the Standing Committee for Equality and the network of national coordinators) and from the signatories to the Charter.

In the long term:**2. CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY WORK TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE IN EUROPE.**

The CEMR needs to continue to actively work to promote gender equality at local and regional level through its network of member associations. The CEMR must also continue to advocate amongst European institutions for further recognition of both the important role of local and regional governments in strengthening gender equality and the need for further support for this work in order to ensure continuity and progress.

3. ENHANCE POLITICAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN LOCAL LIFE.

The CEMR needs to continue its work on strengthening political support for gender equality through the Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. In the short term, the CEMR intends to organise a meeting with the Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, in conjunction with the final conference of the pilot project. Amongst others themes, this meeting will focus on the pilot project results and the overall objectives and actions of The Observatory of the Charter, so as to further promote the Charter and its monitoring tool.

4. IMPLEMENT A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH TO THE SIGNATORIES OF THE CHARTER WHICH MAY HELP TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS.

Based on the results of the Observatory (March 2012– March 2015), the pilot project and an internal assessment, the CEMR needs to present a new differentiated approach towards the signatories to the Charter. This tailored approach should take into consideration the signatories' needs and the level of implementation of the Charter. It could be presented on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Charter, in 2016.

5. PROVIDE INFORMATION ON FUNDING.

In order to address the lack of financial capacities, the CEMR and its member associations could provide further information on available funding at European level.

6. CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF AMENDING THE CHARTER IN ORDER TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT GENDER EQUALITY CAN PLAY AS A LEVER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

References to economic development are limited in the Charter and there is scope to increase the emphasis the Charter places on the benefits which gender equality can produce for job creation and economic development.

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