

# Gender equality in power and decision-making

Journalist Thematic Network



This publication is a collection of articles written by the members of the Journalist Thematic Network for the JTN meeting in Luxembourg, November 2015 in order to discuss gender equality in power and decision-making in the EU Member States. All the articles and photos of the journalists used for this publication are published upon agreement of their respective authors. The material contained in the publication does not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

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## ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Despite increasing efforts to boost women's representation in decision-making in the last decades, women remain underrepresented in positions of power across the EU. EIGE's study on 'Gender Equality in Power and Decision-Making' examines how women and men are represented in decision-making positions in the public, economic and social sectors in all 28 EU Member States between 2003 and 2014.

The findings show some positive trends, particularly in the political realm, with women's representation in decision-making steadily moving towards gender balance. However, the persistence of gender stereotypes and the internal culture of political parties continue to affect progress towards equal representation. This is clearly reflected in the figures which show that women hold only one in three high level political decision-making positions and are generally concentrated in ministries and parliamentary committees with socio-cultural functions, such as education, health and culture, while men dominate state functions such as defence, justice and foreign policy.

Men predominately control money, since in the financial sector, women are largely absent from decision-making positions, with only one in every 25 top jobs held by a woman. Men also dominate the governance of central banks and take up the majority of positions as presidents of boards.

In the media sector, there is an imbalance between the proportion of women graduating from university and the proportion of women occupying higher positions in the industry. The findings show that two thirds of university graduates in journalism and information are women, yet women hold only one third of the top decision-making positions in EU media organisations.

This collection of case stories written by members of EIGE's Journalist Thematic Network, introduce real stories behind the statistics and give a human face to the subject of gender equality in power and decision-making.

## MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT KAJA KALLAS

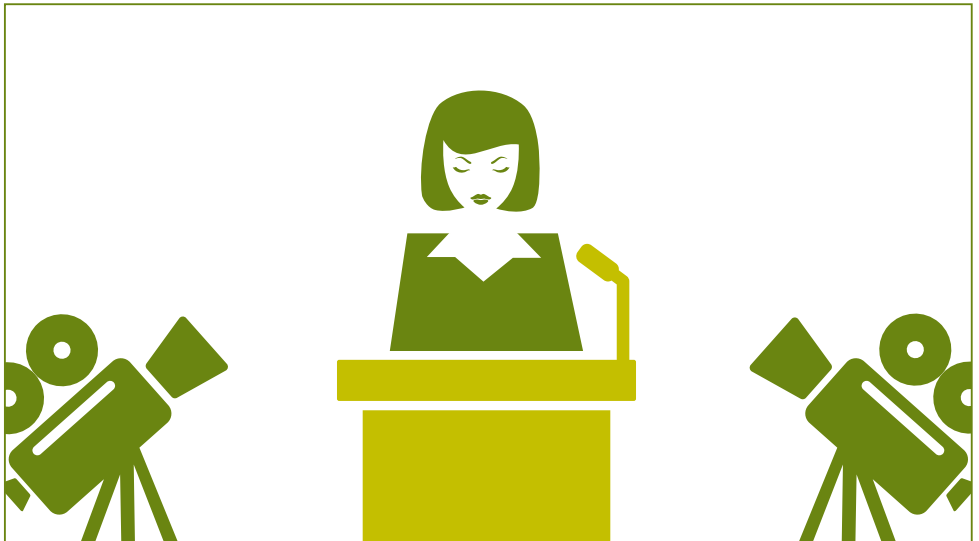
BY ANNA MARIA PENU

One of the most popular young Estonian female politicians, Kaja Kallas, entered politics in 2010. Only a year later she was elected as a member of Riigikogu, the Estonian National Parliament, and since 2014 she has been a member of the European Parliament. She is also Vice-Chairman of the Estonian Reform Party: a liberal party which has been governing Estonia for the last two decades.

“Working as an attorney-at-law, I did not face many more obstacles than men. Nobody asked whose daughter I was,” says Kaja Kallas. “Politics is a different story. Looking for a new Minister of Foreign Affairs, the media stressed female candidates’ family ties, but not those of the male candidates. I remember exactly how, when I started my political career, my older colleagues strongly recommended that I should not deal with women’s issues.”

Three years ago, an incident concerning a basic issue about women in decision making spaces took place on the Estonian political scene. After Kaja Kallas publicly criticised some of her party members’ statements in a famous corruption case, an older colleague, former Financial Minister Jürgen Ligi, fought back by stating that in most political reunions “her beautiful eyes have usually been above her closed mouth”.

“The fundamental problem for women in decision making spaces has to do with the fact that people do not take you seriously,” comments Kaja Kallas. “The media collaborates with this, trying to speculate over the real reason for your success: relationships, family ties or good looks. The reason is never your own worth. Nobody talks about men in these terms. Thus, it is pretty natural that it destroys self-confidence,





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which in the case of women is usually low already, when trying to enter the so-called men's playground. What is pretty interesting is that the main leaders in these kinds of debates are mostly women who do not believe in other women. Why?"

Also, Kallas stresses the fact that good looks may be a pretty considerable nuisance, because we all are acquainted with the negative saying: beautiful, but stupid. And in the case of women it is far too frequently applied.

"So, it seems that in order to be taken seriously you need to hide your femininity. I do not think that is the road to follow," says Kallas and notes that if you have children, being competitive is even harder – especially when they are little.

"This happens for various reasons," explains Kallas. "First of all, it is still widely believed that the most important role for women is to be a mother. Yes, it is an important role indeed, but it does not mean there cannot be any other ones. When I got pregnant, and was just elected to be a member of our national parliament, I received letters from women saying that only women who have grown up children should go into politics. For some reason no male politician has to meet these kind of requirements."

Kallas confesses that trying to link motherhood and political work is complicated. When reunions are held in the evenings, as a mother it is very difficult to attend. On the other hand, the more women there are in politics, the better these issues will be understood, and the more options there will be to find solutions together.

"It is important to be open and talk about the obstacles and short-comings women encounter, and then we can think of the solutions," Kaja Kallas concludes optimistically.

## SOROS WOULD GET MAD – MONEY IN VAIN OPEN LITHUANIA FUND PRAISED BY THE ‘POLITBURO’

BY AUDRONE URBONAITE

Six elbows rest on the table. Suited, significant looking, slightly younger than Brezhnev. What is it – a revolution anniversary celebration or the Belarus politruks’ meeting in Minsk?

No, these men are Darius Kuolys, Leonidas Don-skis, Alvydas Jokubaitis, Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Arūnas Sverdiolas and Gintautas Mažeikis – Lithuanian intellectuals, holding a meeting at the Open Lithuania Fund forum, dedicated to commemorate its 25th anniversary.

There are no women in this country. And even if they exist, they are only intended to serve: to call, to inform, to invite, to collect archive copies, to remember the date. To bring the soutane. To serve tea before filming. These are systematic symptoms of gender inequality in Lithuania. Damn disappointing. Individually, these people, who consider themselves intel-

lectuals, are intelligent – why hasn’t it come to any of their minds that society consists of women and men? And that the society is limping on one foot if its experiences and needs are represented by men only.

One of the main and most important goals after the establishment of the Open Lithuania Fund was to ensure the functioning of all the institutions that guarantee citizens’ equality. Thinking institutions included. G. Soros would get mad – money had been spent in vain.

The six philosophers, including the former education curator D. Kuolys, confirmed the obvious fact: patriarchal society is still a common standard. When summarising, representing the public and announcing findings, men effortlessly find themselves among leaders, authorities and public figures.





The united six literally confirmed who is dominating and making decisions in this country. The gender inequality mechanism is perfectly reflected at the event dedicated to diminish it. Friends, can't any of you remember Ainė Ramonaitė, Rūta Žiliukaitė, Jūratė Novagrockienė, Agnė Narušytė, Daiva Penkauskienė, Rima Kuprytė, Eglė Pranckūnienė, Virginija Būdienė, Giedrė Kadžiulytė, Natalija Arlauskaitė or Violeta Kelertienė? If you do not know who these women are – Google can fill in the education gaps.

Oh, and where had the first fund employees Diana Vilytė and Irena Veisaitė been hidden during the forum? Ah yes, they had been chatting with Jolanta Kryzevičienė on her late night, non-prime time show where they stated their cases into the darkness. That is it: only men can understand the real Open Lithuania Fund's reflections of modern society. Therefore, quickly bring in the longest table to comfortably rest all of the elbows and, please, turn on the brightest lights!

The most important action is to line up into an unbreakable wall so that it wouldn't occur to anyone that half of the population is women. The only female, philosopher Jūratė Baranova, was invited to the event; however, she was unable to attend due to previously scheduled engagements.

"The fund started its activities in Lithuania by supporting the emerging non-governmental organisations. Implementation of gender equality, protection of women from violence, and other equality programs have been important parts of the activity," said Diana Vilytė.

So, why didn't she join the conversation at the table? Did she think she ought to behave modestly and know her place? This is another symptom –

hopeless modesty. Not enough effort to make female intellectuals more visible and audible, weak presentation of professional women's opinion in the media are chronic problems in Lithuania. This once again reflects on the World Talent Report – out of 61 assessed countries, Lithuania is the 21st.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), operating in Vilnius, published statistics which show that women in the European Union countries occupy only one-third of the leadership positions, where decisions have an impact on quality of life for both genders.

Does this mean that women's intelligence is not sufficient enough for them to be equal decision makers? No matter what their *modus operandi* is, women have the right to be equally represented as they form half of the population. Even if they speak or act differently – they are half of the world. Given the fact that domestic work hasn't been shared evenly, one cannot draw a conclusion that men are more professional (they had more time for professional activity). If both genders had an equal voice, any problem could be analysed from different points of view, and everybody would benefit – men too. Because when only one gender speaks, it becomes responsible for absolutely everything while not fully understanding its implications.

Warm greetings to the local 'Politburo'.

## WOMEN AND DECISION MAKING IN SLOVENIA

BY DEJA CRNOVIĆ

According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2015, Slovenia is ranked number 9 out of 146 economies, with a score of 0.784. Although the political field is usually perceived as the field where changes towards gender equality take the longest due to instruments like gender quotas, the situation in the political field in Slovenia is statistically better than it is for women in decision making positions in the 20 largest companies.

Overall, the percentage of women in decision making positions is 22.2%, up from 12.4 in 2010. However, there are only 10% of female presidents of the board and 22% of female board members. When it comes to executive positions in the corporate world, only 15% of CEOs are women.

In Slovenia the principle of 40% representation of each sex applies only to the nomination or appointment of government representatives to management and supervisory boards of state-owned enterprises (executives and non-executives) and no sanctions apply if the principle is not respected.

The numbers look slightly more promising in the political field. There are currently 8 female ministers (50%, excluding prime minister) in the Slovenian government which is not subjected to gender quotas, and 30 female members of the parliament, which makes for 33% of all parliament members, the highest percentage of women since the first democratic elections held in 1990.







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Since the political field is changing in favour of gender equality, the media still has some catching up to do. Online monitoring project Meta Dekleta follows the percentage of women featured as experts on seven most watched TV news shows in Slovenia, and even though the trend is evident and shows that there are more and more women featured as experts, the percentage is still only at around 30, the lowest being 22% for 10 o'clock news on national television.

Moving away from numbers to more anecdotal evidence of media not always being on board when it comes to equal representation of genders, I would like to add some experiences of Alenka Bratušek, who served as the country's first woman Prime Minister between 2013 and 2014.

During her mandate the media appeared to have been caught up in her clothes, especially her shoes. A series of articles, claiming her clothes were inappropriate for her function, using expert knowledge of stylists, ensued. Other female politicians also faced stricter media attention which seems, since the new male prime minister has been sworn in, to have disappeared or at least become less common.

In an interview conducted after her mandate ended, asked why she thought she was unable to deflect some of the criticism aimed at her, she said: "Maybe also because I am a woman. Maybe we still look at it (being a female politician) differently in Slovenia. I hope you don't mind but I believe the media plays a big part in this game. I don't know why most of the media wrote about the kind of shoes I wore or how I was dressed, was it appropriate or not. So far I have

never noticed the media dabbling in whether a male prime minister wears appropriate shoes, a nice enough tie. When I was in Norway, where they also had a female prime minister, they told me that 20 or 30 years ago Norway was the same as Slovenia is today, maybe even worse. And that fills me with optimism that maybe even in Slovenia we will be able to establish a different relationship towards women in politics and that they will be perceived as something 'more normal' than we are today."

## ROMANIA: WOMEN DON'T BELIEVE IN THEIR CHANCES WHEN IT COMES TO A CAREER IN POLITICS

BY ISTVAN DEAK

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men regulates the equality of chances between women and men in Romania concerning their participation in decision making, through Chapter IV (articles no. 21 and 22) which stipulates an equitable and balanced representation of women and men within the decisional authorities of the social partners.

The good news is that 33% of the ministers in the new Romanian Government are women (7 out of 21). The bad news is that women still occupy a loose role in Romanian politics and decision making institutions.

Women don't believe in their chances when it comes to a career in politics. During the elections for the parliament last year, only 13.8% of the candidates were women (340

women, 2451 men). Less than 20% were elected. So only 68 women are members of the 588-seated parliament (less than 12%), which demonstrates that Romanian politics is not yet ready to overcome a patriarchal type of mentality, the decisional pyramid being occupied mostly by men.

The situation in the economic field is not better. Only 11.3% of women are CEOs in top companies in Romania, while the EU average is 21.2%. A recent study shows that in the biggest 79 companies listed at the Bucharest Stock Exchange only 55 out of 388 board members are women (less than 14%).

On the local scale the situation is worse. In Romania there are 3178 mayors. Only 116 are women, most of them in villages.





In county councils only 14.22% of the positions are held by women, 190 out of 1 336 places. In local councils, 10.8% of positions are held by women (4 011 of 38 625 of the local councilors are women). Only 11.9% of women are in charge of a Prefect Institution (5 women out of 42 positions).

A positive example is Ms Biro Rozalia, longtime deputy Mayor of the city Oradea (2001–2012), in the western part of Romania, near the border with Hungary. In 2012, the Hungarian minority party (UDMR) had the most women on the election list, but only Biro Rozalia, the president of the women's organisation, got a seat in the parliament. In early November she became the Vice President of the women's organisation of the European People's Party (EPP).

Biro Rozalia is fighting in Romania for gender equality and one of her successful initiatives in 2015 was that the Parliament declared the 8th of May as the 'Day of equal chances between men and women'.

"It's a foundation on which we can build to achieve the goal of the European Union for gender equality. They have already passed the stage of equal chances. Unfortunately, we are still facing the early levels of the gender equality development. I've chosen the 8th of May because 12 years ago, exactly on this day, the Ministry of Labour brought the first law concerning gender equality which later became the law 202 for equal chances between men and women," says Biro Rozalia.

She believes gender equality will help the economy. "A gender based investment plan shows that the European GDP would gradu-

ally increase by 2.4% till 2018 if we really try to cut the gaps between men and women. If gender equality would become a reality in the occupational field, we would have an increase of 12.4% for every European citizen until the end of 2030," says the senator.

## WE LEAD OUR TEAMS, BUT WITH SMALL CHILDREN IT WAS DIFFICULT

BY JANIK MILOSLAV

I want to introduce you to two women from Prague, Czech Republic. Although they do not know each other, they have quite a bit in common.

Both women are over forty and are pursuing successful professional careers. They manage relatively large teams, enjoy success in their positions and have colleagues that appreciate their work.

Kamila (43 years old) has worked in various positions in a few Czech media houses. She began her career working for a newspaper, then a magazine and has been leading a team of reporters for an online news website since 2009.

In the Czech Republic it is relatively ordinary for female journalists to hold senior positions in publishing houses, but women usually work

for various social magazines and supplements. Kamila is quite the exception. She works as an editor and head of a news department. "Yes, for a woman it may be an unusual position. However, women are definitely qualified for this kind of position in terms of talent, education and skill. At the same time, the work can be very time-consuming and sometimes it is necessary to work at night and on weekends. If a person has a family and small children, it can be difficult to do this," says Kamila, who heads a team of fifteen reporters.

Kamila notices small differences between men and women in the workplace, "I do not feel many differences in the workplace. Maybe just that it's harder for me since I have three children at home. Of course, men could be in that situation as well," says Kamila. Although the focus of Kamila's work is on politics, women's





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issues such as children and family are also of importance to her.

Kamila does not think that she should be treated differently at the workplace due to her gender. “Sometimes I hear some sentences with sexual overtones, but it’s nothing serious, because the sentence of a sexual nature can sometimes be heard in regards to men too,” she says.

Compared to her colleagues – men – Kamila has experienced certain disadvantages throughout her career. She has three children and has spent in total more than 6 years on maternity leave. After returning to work, Kamila was able to modify her work schedule, but she was not in a leading position at that time. “My boss understands that my schedule needs to be more flexible. I do not work on Christmas, for example,” Kamila says.

Another example of a successful Czech woman is Jana (46 years old), who works in a high position in a large international company that creates software and computer systems. Jana’s position is noteworthy due to the fact that the industry is not typically dominated by women.

Jana is one of five managers in the company who are in charge of large projects. She says that the beginning of her career was difficult, but that her experience has changed over time. “I think it is because of my experience and proven ability. My current position was achieved to a considerable extent by my willingness to invest the time required for the job as well as overtime. This, however, was only possible when my children did not need me at home. In addition, I have a very tolerant man who supports me,” says Jana.

## SEARCHING FOR THE WOMEN IN PRIVATE COMPANIES

BY MARÍA R. SAHUQUILLO

When Consuelo Castilla started out with her headhunting company, she was one of the few women to lead a business. It was Spain during the eighties and there was overall inequality. “I remember going to meetings and being asked about my boss... It was me and a whole group of ties,” she tells us. Today Ms Castilla, who is 60, is the president of the MC group, a human resources company which searches for talented professionals for other companies.

The situation has changed a lot since the eighties, when Ms Castilla began. However, even though the presence of inequality has decreased, it continues to a lesser degree. Spain occupies the 23rd position in the ranking of 27 OECD countries, only ahead of Japan, Italy, Greece and Korea. Only 17.32% of women are at the top. These numbers give an x-ray view of the managerial skeleton, which is far removed

from the reality of society, where women make up 60% of university graduates and 45% of employed individuals. And all this in spite of the parity objective introduced by the government in 2007 with the law of equality. This objective, however, is only a recommendation. In Spain there are no obligatory quotas.

Ms Castilla assures us that in spite of the data the situation is slowly evening out. “Some years ago companies would ask clearly for a list of male candidates. Today they simply look for good professionals; sometimes specifically female candidates,” she says. Various studies have revealed that companies with balanced leadership teams are more effective, also obtaining better economic results. “Women are more practical, we get to our emotions immediately, we don’t have such big egos, we contribute many things,” the headhunter insists.





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However, she recognises that her achievements are less valued. “Women with top qualifications, previous experience in other companies and ascending careers are wanted, but more is demanded of them than of a male candidate,” Ms Castilla admits. The headhunter also recognises that companies pay attention to other details, “If we are talking about a position on a board of directors and the woman is of an age to begin a family, companies will think twice about hiring her,” she says. Ms Castilla sits on several of these boards, and doesn’t believe that the answer is to establish an obligatory quota. But it should be a recommendation, and awareness campaigns should be put into action. “The important thing is for them to try us.”

With a degree in psychology and having specialised in business and human resources, she recognises that if you want to progress and ascend in the business world, it has a high price at a personal level. She knows this from experience: Castilla has two children and three grandchildren. Therefore, the well-known headhunter adds a few more obstacles to the famous glass ceiling, some are self-imposed by women, some through fear and others due to personal choices confronted with a type of business structure which has a lack of flexibility, long hours and the increase of presence in the work place. “Some women are not prepared to pay the price in terms of family and personal costs that an important position in management demands,” she adds.

## DECISION MAKING: DO I CHOOSE OR AM I CHOSEN?

BY MARINA LALOVIC

My name is Marina, I'm 34 and I'm a journalist. I'm Serbian but I decided to move to Italy in 2000.

My professional profile currently emphasises two important aspects. I'm a woman and I'm a migrant. Being a female migrant actually means belonging to two diversity groups nowadays. Decision making never represented a key aspect during my career. Instead, most of the time I had to prove that I was at the same level with the locals and focus more on my belonging to a migrant minority group. Being a female journalist in Italy doesn't represent an exception. Even while preparing this particular article, I found out that all of my bosses were actually women but the general directors were men.

If we take a look at the politics of the Berlusconi era, a very negative impact on what women should represent in this particular field can be

seen. Women were more considered for their physical aspects than professional capability. But it seems that this era has come to an end, considering that these kinds of stereotypes have been overcome.

Specifically, thanks to Maria Elena Boschi: the young, beautiful and very capable current Italian Minister of Constitutional Reforms and Relations with Parliament. In regards to the media, from the last voting of the Board of Directors at Rai (Italian public broadcaster) came a new and unexpected name: the young female journalist, Monica Maggioni. It should be underlined though that she has been voted as a President at RAI, and not as a General Director. So practically she still doesn't have executive power. Anyhow, it was quite a new step for what regards women and decision making within Italian public broadcasting companies. Other examples of







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women in decision making positions in media are Bianca Berlinguer, a director of the third Rai channel news programme (TG3) as well as Paola Marchesini, current director of Radio Rai 2.

What does decision making represent for me as a female journalist and as a migrant in Italy? I'm a host/moderator at Radio Rai 3 and my personal professional environment is made up mostly of women.

For me decision making currently means having the possibility to work in the journalistic field like everybody else, and not necessarily covering migration issues and stories. That means working at the same level as my colleagues. During the beginning of my career, I was always collaborating on projects which included migration issues. However, being a migrant doesn't necessarily mean that you're an expert in migration. The highest level of integration I obtained by working at Rai (Italian Public Broadcaster) is the show on foreign affairs I currently host.

While belonging to two different minority groups you actually discover how ridiculous it is to consider women as a diversity/minority group. So the question is: does being a woman and being a migrant imply the same diversity values?

Decision making, in my opinion, doesn't imply directing a newspaper or the media, but having the possibility to do the job you've been studying for and being able to live thanks to that particular work. Decision making for me means a possibility to choose and not to be chosen.

## A POWERFUL STORY OF AN EXCEPTIONAL WOMAN

BY SONA WEISSOVA

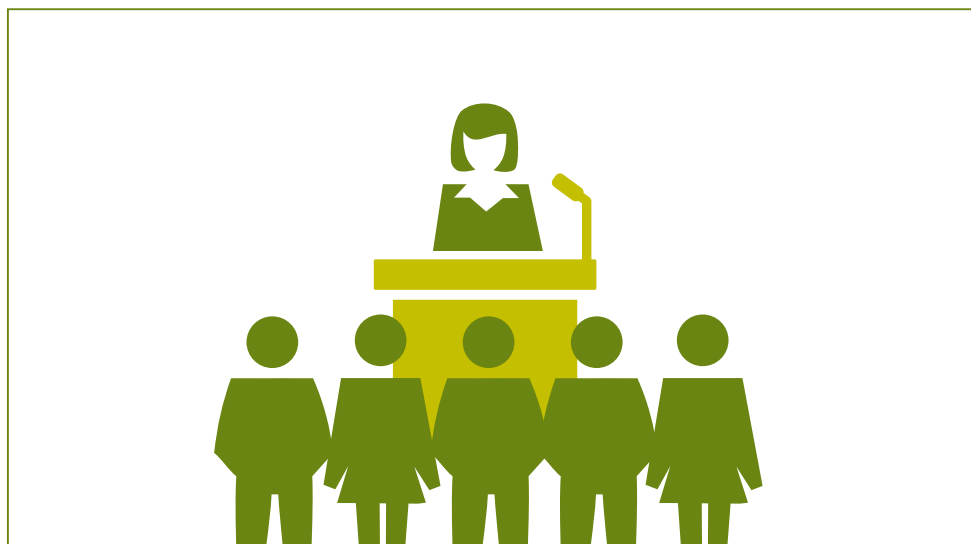
She refused to go with the crowd and stood up against the system – reported abusive machination in municipal finance and thus she was fired from her job. Later, she won the prestigious award, the ‘White Crow’, for people who defend truth, justice and the public interest. She did not give up. Nowadays, she is a mayor of Ruské, a small village in the east of Slovakia. This is a powerful story of an exceptional woman – Erika Lakatošová.

“In August 2009, I noticed that the mayor stole money from village resources without a reason. He did not offer any evidence as to why he took the money,” remembers Erika Lakatošová (45), who worked at that time as an accountant on the village council. She made an official complaint. “I spoke with a lawyer. He said that if I did not do it (make the complaint), I would be an accomplice. I had to make a complaint. In

our country, it was a really hard decision,” says Lakatošová. In Slovakia, there are still a lot of people who will not report machination with public money and who will not stand for the public interest.

For four long years there was no official judgement on her case. In February 2010, she was fired and could not find a job in a village with 630 inhabitants. She was unemployed for 2 years and had to take social benefits – “It was a really hard period, I would not wish this situation on my worst enemy. There were a lot of slanders. In my small village, the former mayor’s word was law and he was really powerful. My word meant nothing. I had to fight for my truth.”

She tried hard and looked for strong evidence. At that time, non-state organisations awarded her with a prestigious award called the White Crow.





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After 4 years, the court made a verdict – the municipal board had to return her the money from the time that she was unfairly fired. Then she ran for mayor in municipal elections in 2014. She won, and today, she uses the money from the judgement for reconstruction of municipal houses.

Lakatošová says that the beginnings as the mayor were hard. She had to work from early morning till late at night – the financial conditions of village resources were not good. Today, it is better, but she still has to work hard. Being the mayor is not easy. “Sometimes, I have to work at night – for example when old people have troubles or when there is no electricity in the village – I have to be on the phone and looking for solutions. It is 24 hour work. I have a husband and two daughters. They are still behind me – they were during the court hearing and also today, when I am a mayor.”

Nowadays, in Slovakia, there are approximately 670 mayors from 2973 villages and towns. Sociologist Olga Gyárfášová of Comenius University in Bratislava thinks that the lower in the Slovak political structures we go, the more women we could find. But it is worse and worse when we go higher in political structures – at the parliament, there is only 20% female representation – and in the government, there is not a single woman.

## SEXISM IN FRANCE: THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

BY SYLVIE BRAIBANT

So, year after year, with humour and grace, French feminists increase their activities and performances against the sexism wrapped up with Christmas presents in vain. A perpetual tune of the same old repetitive clichés. First, an iron pinned on the Macholand website. A well-known brand recommends buying this product, for “a dream Christmas for HER”. Macholand does take a stab, saying “seriously – baking, electronics and multimedia: take the drugs away. Immediately!”

We will start with washing-up liquids. Offering washing-up liquid as a present is puzzling enough... Unless it is one with an evocative scent of sweets to entice customers, featuring labels and slogans that are reminiscent of another kind of activity entirely: “you have to pump it until it squirts”, “everyone knows that rubbing creates real pleasure”. Cue a chain of

reactions on Twitter, including those of a very angry Pascale Boistard, French Secretary of State for Women’s Rights.

The brand’s explanation for these cleaning products, first stated on the website for the French department store BHV, boasts about the underlying concept: “Washing up? Not always a glamorous activity. Quality, audacity, seduction and comedy are the key words, giving our daily lives an amusing and surprising boost. They bet that it can stop housework being a chore with humour, playfulness and a touch of design, all made in France.”

Second-degree marketing? Others are uninterested... One national chain of supermarkets in France is now proposing a new type of approach to advertising that reverses clichés, in which we see little girls handling drills and little





boys rocking dolls. Figures from the Conservative Right who are close supporters of the 'Manif pour tous' (French 'March for all' movement) have called for a boycott of this new eruption of 'gender', a detestable word these days in modern-day France. Yet even the Left can sometimes stray.

On 21 December 2015, a radio station invited Michel Sapin, the French Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, to comment on the results of the Spanish general election: "I will build on the image that you have given. You say that on the evening of the election in Spain, the only people on the television were women and young people who you had never seen before. Maybe this is because making a political commentary that night was difficult. So they sent women and young people. And the bosses, as you called them, were doing their accounts, because the Spain of today is not easily governed." In short, while the kids and the women provide entertainment, the middle-aged men deal with all the serious stuff.

Let's not forget the following. From their seats in Brussels, three European Commissioners – two women and one man – have been banging their fists on the table in an attempt to draw attention to this piece of everlasting evidence: European women still receive lower pay than their male counterparts. This is particularly the case as you climb up the hierarchy, where women receive 16% less than men, which equates to two months' salary. What about at TV5 MONDE, I hear you ask? Even if, at the top of the – overwhelmingly male – hierarchy, the gap between men and women's salaries is smaller than the European average stated by the European Commissioners, this gap continues to widen, increasing from

9% to 11% in the two years between 2012 and 2014. If we apply the formula presented by the European Commissioners, the author of this article has received one and a half months' less salary than her male colleagues.

## WOMEN AND DECISION MAKING

BY EDITH STOHL

Recently I had to make the decision as to whether or not to become the leader of the Women in the Media network in Vienna, Austria.

The network was established in 1999 when a group of women working in different media industries like newspapers, magazines, radio and television as well as in different fields like news, current affairs, politics, economics, arts, etc. got together to discuss their situation. I was one of maybe one hundred and fifty. The large number of women getting together made it clear that all of them wanted something to happen.

A group of us became active and decided to establish a network where we could exchange information on what our workspace situations were, how we were treated by bosses and colleagues, what we were earning, how much input was expected, what positions would become vacant, etc.

We established a regular monthly get-together every third Thursday in a restaurant we chose which was owned by a woman. In our meeting we established a formal structure with a president, a treasurer, a host for the meetings and we planned some workshops. The meetings were very well received and women became aware of their situation compared to others – especially if they worked as freelancers.

After a while we had a really good networking platform and the information exchange was excellent. We started a mentoring programme, a prize for female journalists once a year, and a negative prize for discriminating behaviour towards women. In this way, we got to know the journalistic world in Vienna. Women from other parts of the country tried to do the same in their region and a woman in the Media network was established in Salzburg.





Different, specialised networks began to branch off from our network, such as: Freelance Women in the Media, the Women's Network at ORF – Public Austrian Radio and Television, the Journalistic Institute for Further Knowledge, Female Journalists Congress, etc. With all that specialisation the interest for our network started to deteriorate, although our network had become sort of influential and our women got leading positions in their field.

We thought of ourselves as being a successful network but lacked women's interest in our network. The reasons we thought so were described above and the new networking instruments like Facebook, etc. were used. The woman who established the network thought about the future and whether there would be one for the network or if we should just forget about it and let the younger generation do whatever they thought would be good for them. This was the situation last summer and after months of discussions we were almost ready to forget about our story. That was the moment when a group of young journalists happened to come and asked us to be part of the network with lots of new ideas on how to transfer networking into new times.

As most of the founding members were just ready to let the youngsters do their thing, I was asked by both sides whether I could lead the network in this transitional period. Although every one of us has plenty to do, whether it is on the job or in private, it always takes some volunteers to manage the extra little bit which is always more than you expect it to be. My heart beats for women and their equal rights in all areas and I think that we established the brand Women in the Media network in Vienna.

I decided to become the leader of this network and I hope that the transformational process will be successful.

It seems that the time is right for that. One of my first actions was a meeting with representatives of the Women in the Media network in Western Austria and Salzburg area. This network already had gone through a transitional period and the young representatives were very motivated and had some good ideas as to how networking can work in our times. So there is a good chance that we can work together and learn from each other and support each other. And this, after all, is the essence of a network.

## I NEVER FELT ANY DISCRIMINATION UNTIL I WENT INTO POLITICS

BY SUSANA VENCESLAU

My name is Maria de Belém Roseira, I'm 66, and I'm currently a candidate for President of the Republic in Portugal after a long political career in which I had very diverse positions. This was not a life project and I never imagined myself running for this position.

Some define their professional path because of a career with higher levels. I, on the other hand, have been invited to various positions and functions because I showed every time that I'm very professional.

I have a degree in law and have exercised an extensive range of functions, from a technical legal expert, legal advisor, manager of a TV channel or vice provider of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Lisbon, to Minister of Health. As the Minister of Health I integrated the XIII Constitutional Government in 1995 with Antonio Guterres as Prime Minister.

What I usually say is that I never felt any discrimination until I went into politics. There is a prejudice against women in the exercise of policy. They are much more scrutinised and are great objects of attention in order to identify any failure. And whenever a fault is identified, this failure is overvalued immediately and used to try to justify that women are not prepared for these types of functions.

Women are much more judged than men regarding the decisions they make and it comes from a very old division of roles. We are very far from achieving a society and a civilisation in which women are regarded, in terms of hierarchy, just as men.

I remember when I was appointed Minister for Equality, in 1999, at a time when equality was already seen as a political priority in most Euro-







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pean countries. However, when I was invited, it was considered that the position had been created on purpose for me, something that would not have happened if they had chosen a man.

In fact, all governments appoint several deputy ministers, most of them with no power to rule over anything, but the question of the office's existence is never raised.

I was chosen as the Minister of Equality after being Minister of Health and it's as the health minister that I best realised the importance, negatively speaking, of inequality, since poorer people with less financial capacity and less literacy have more difficulty claiming their rights in the system.

I think we have to face discrimination naturally, not letting it control our lives, while we denounce it the very moment it happens.

The best way to face discrimination is always to walk ahead and not let it bother us. One must be critical, argue and not accept a lack of respect. On the other hand, in my political work and my life in general, family support has always been very important and my family always naturally faced every opportunity that came my way. For me, it is very important that my family works as a balancing factor.

Now, as a candidate for the presidency of the Republic, I hope to add some sensitivity to the functions and with this sensitivity identify different priorities. It is not because I'm a woman that I act differently than men, but a result of the fruit of my experiences that I can take a different look and find different priorities.

## WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS, CALL A WOMAN!

BY BARBARA MATEJČIĆ

With the great economic crisis, an interesting trend is emerging: In Germany, more women are in top leadership positions for firms deeply entrenched in financial problems. Although this is also a trap, it is a clear sign that gender equality may actually be realised in the near future.

There are two questions I am often asked by journalists says the Luxembourg Minister of Health and Equal Opportunities Lydia Mutsch: What is it like being a woman in politics and how do I balance family and work.

To the first question, I say that I can't answer independently of gender, but I refuse to answer the second one as I think it is a question which can be asked of any employed person, not just specifically women. But journalists never ask my male colleagues in politics how they manage to balance family life and work. If I were to answer,

for example, that due to my great husband whose good organisation and care for the house and the children allows me to be successful in my work, I would probably be declared a monster who neglects my family.

This statement is often heard from male businessmen, according to the Luxembourg Minister of Health and Equal Opportunities, Lydia Mutsch at an EU press meeting held at the end of November in Luxembourg. When she first started out in the late 1980's as a young politician from the socialist side, Lydia Mutsch didn't want to be placed on the committees where women are usually delegated – education, culture, social work, and health. She wanted to be active in economics, technical professions, and finance, which were highly dominated by men, as they are today. As an experienced politician, she nevertheless found herself in a department





often granted to women in political distributions. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Equal Opportunity are two separate and equal ministries, because in Luxembourg no exception is made for a single person to lead two or more Ministries. The Equal Opportunity ministry is quite small, consisting of only 13 employees and has been in existence for the past 20 years. Some of the ministry's primary goals are educational work regarding awareness and breaking stereotypical roles of boys and girls which will inherently influence their eventual career choices. Towards this purpose, they often work with children in school. They are also active in the work force and in employment, where the main objective is to achieve equal pay for the same job, considering that women are still paid less than men for doing the same job.

The ministry also advocates against violence, particularly domestic violence in the family. Luxembourg has set the goal that by the year 2019, a quota of at least 40% of women would be represented as leaders of public companies. To achieve that aim, there is more work required in other spheres. Let us note that of 19 members of the Luxembourg government, which is rooted in traditional heritage, only five are women, showing us that there is a long road ahead of us to changing gender relations.

In Luxembourg, journalists from the European Union member countries reported on the new report of gender equality in decision making processes, as conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), headquartered in Vilnius. It was also an occasion for a press meeting with Minister Mutsch. The report covers the status of EU member countries in political, economic, and social decision-making

from a gender based perspective, from 2003 to 2014. The report focuses on the stable participation of women in politics, though very slowly increasing in numbers, taking into consideration the average value of EU countries.

Women may be found in political bodies with a social-cultural foundation, such as Education, Health and Culture, even though key positions there are more often occupied by men, while in the areas of Justice, Defence and Foreign policy, men are significantly dominant. In 2014, women held 42% of ministerial positions in the social cultural ministries at the EU level and only 19% in the ministries of external affairs, finance and defence. When observing gender equality in political bodies such as the European Parliament, national governments and local political gatherings, the average EU shows that gender balanced participation which is a 40–60% ratio of either women or men, with the desired parameters of 50/50, have yet to be attained.

In all these political bodies, women were averaging less than 40%. Women in the national parliament represented 28% in 2014, which was in fact a jump forward from 22% in 2003. Representation at the European Parliament was at 37% in 2014. But if we are to exclude Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands from that computation, countries where development is often synonymous with gender equality, this number drastically falls. EU member states who have implemented the quota have, on average, 29% women in parliament, which is still a far cry from 40%, but represents a 10% increase since 2003. Thirteen EU countries have at least 40% women participants in parliament, while Estonia and Latvia managed to reach full gender equality – 50%.

But still, few women reach the top leadership position in government. In 2005, Angela Merkel reached the chancellor's position, which was the first time in German history. After that, seven female EU member states had female presidents until 2014, including Jadranka Kosor in Croatia. But in the same period, only Finland and Sweden showed stable, high quota female participation among the administrations at a rate of 40%. When women reach the top of an organisation, they are often treated to public and media suspicion of their capabilities and are subject to discriminating comments, as experienced by former premier Jadranka Kosor and current Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović.

Although in recent years Croatia has managed to record a positive trend in affirming and advancing women in politics, the recent parliamentary election turned back the clock to the 1990s in regards to the political participation of women, according to the ombudsperson for gender equality Višnja Ljubičić. Namely, women politicians on the candidate lists were represented by a participation of 42%, which is the highest at parliamentary elections so far, but in spite of that, the eight assemblies of the Croatian Parliament consisted of 128 men and only 23 women, respectfully 85% men and only 15% women. That is the lowest representation of women in the Croatian Parliament.

The ombudsperson confirms this, as well as Jolanta Reingarde, researcher at the European Institute for Gender Equality, who worked on the report: on the whole, at EU level there is a solid pyramid structure in the decision making processes, including Croatia, but women are not participating enough in party hierarchy.

#### Norway is leading

The situation is most discouraging in the financial sector: In principle, very few are selected as managing boards of directors. The Central European Bank has never been led by a woman, and only three national banks are led by women. It is interesting to note that the European Employers Association last year requested the European Commission to discontinue enforcing gender quotas in company management, claiming that quotas may impair the competency of European companies. But reality proves otherwise, and Jolanta Reingarde claims that economic data show how increasing the number of women improves business. At any rate, in 2007 Norway was the leading country in the world introducing a 40% ratio of women as company managers, followed by Belgium, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands and Spain with no diminishing of economic competency.

The lower you go in the hierarchy, the more women are present. Similar situations exist in other public sectors, warns the ombudsperson, which the report confirms. Women are meeting the glass ceiling problem everywhere. They may climb in the hierarchy up to a certain limit, but in rare cases do they reach the very top. "By no means are women less capable, nor do men have any biological advantage to reaching top leadership positions of public and political decision making. It is a structural problem," thinks ombudsperson Ljubičić.

Jolanta Reingarde specifically explained how long this road may be, based on multi-year trends. If participation of women in the actual decision making processes continues to increase at this pace, by 2065 women may participate at the ratio of 40%. This ratio of 40% is so frighteningly slow, particularly when women already consist of nearly half of the labor force and more women graduate from university than men. Considering that women are generally taking care of young children and the home in EU countries, society appears to be



burdened by a number of prejudices and processes of political and economic stereotypes regarding women and it seems we will be waiting another half century to reach a relative degree of equality.

We must take into consideration the historically tedious progress regarding the process of improving equality, despite the positive legislation supporting it. For example, from 2003 to 2014, the report indicates that the percentage of women in key positions in large companies in the EU increased from 9% to 20%. Even though the situation in the higher education sector is a bit better, it is still not completely satisfactory. There are many more women graduates, including those PhDs recently employed at EU universities, of which 44% are women. However, when observing the hierarchy and the gender of those placed in the higher positions, female representation consists of only 20% among the permanent and extraordinarily appointed professorships.

Research conducted in the top hundred largest companies in Great Britain has shown that women are being placed in directorial positions for firms which have been doing poorly in business for years. That in itself is a very risky situation since if these female directors do not pull the companies out of their problems, the prejudice is confirmed that women are not capable of successful management. Thus, the expression coined by Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam, "glass cliff": It is easy to fall off it, accidentally or otherwise, but when Ivo Sanader resigned from the prime minister's position, he placed a woman in the leading position of the country.

The New York Times speculated that Hillary Clinton would not be so successful if the USA were not in an economic crisis. Hillary Clinton has made further progress in the American presidential race than any other woman to date, and after losing the Democratic Party candidacy, she warned voters about limited options for women: "Even though we did not succeed in breaking the highest and hardest "glass ceiling", thanks to you there are almost 18 million cracks. The light shines through them like never before and it gives us the hope that next time it will be somewhat easier. Cracks occur every time we hear news which, although it sounds like they are talking about a new human species, still bring joy: reports of the first woman corporate director in the car industry, the first woman Nobel prize winner for mathematics, the first woman president of International PEN, the first woman to be chief editor of the Guardian, the first woman leading Oxford University ...". But 2065 is still far away.

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## **About the European Institute for Gender Equality**

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was set up to strengthen and promote equality between women and men in the European Union. With sound expertise and knowledge, as well as an extensive online library and wide collection of publications and resources, EIGE is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. By providing evidence based research, comparable and reliable gender statistics, tools and expertise, EIGE supports policy makers to integrate a gender equality perspective in their work and make equality a reality.

## **About the Journalist Thematic Network**

The Journalist Thematic Network (JTN) helps EIGE communicate clear and relevant messages that reach beyond the realm of experts and policy makers. By hosting biannual meetings with journalists and engaging them on important topics such as 'Women and climate change', 'Gender-based violence' and the 'Gender gap in pensions', the Network is able to make complicated subjects more accessible to a broader audience and helps EIGE's vision for gender equality reach every corner of Europe and beyond. Members of the Journalist Thematic Network are predominately journalists from major national news outlets across the European Union.

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