



Women in European politics – time for action



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European Commission

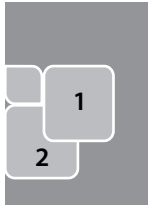
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The report was prepared by a team led by Andy Fuller (Alphametrics Ltd., UK). Research and data collection was coordinated by Nicole Fondeville-Gaoui with assistance from Liesbeth Haagdorens (both Applica Sprl., Belgium).

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Foreword

While the last few years have seen a general increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in Europe, this report, which takes most of its data from the European Commission database on women and men in decision-making, shows that the former remain very much in a minority in the political and economic spheres. In parliaments, governments and ministries and in the private sector too, power is still firmly in men's hands.

The European Union is committed to promoting gender equality in decision-making positions, to raising awareness of the gender gap in this area and to taking action to improve the situation. That is why the Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-10) lists equal participation of women and men in decision-making as one of its priorities.

2009 will be an important year for politics and for women in Europe: within a few months a new European Parliament will be elected, a new European Commission will be appointed, and various high-profile posts will need to be filled across the EU institutions. This year will therefore be an excellent opportunity for the Member States and all those in charge of putting forward, electing or appointing candidates to such posts to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality and fair representation of women in top positions at European level. I sincerely hope that this commitment translates into reality and that more women than heretofore will occupy these high-profile posts.

Greater participation by women in decision-making in the worlds of finance and the economy would help improve the way firms and institutions are managed and promote better governance globally. It could also be enormously beneficial in the current economic and financial situation.

Equal representation of women and men in positions of power is, I sincerely believe, a precondition for truly effective and accountable democracy and lasting economic prosperity. I therefore hope that this report will help to stimulate debate on this crucial issue. With more women involved, political debate will be wider in scope and more relevant to a greater number. I earnestly hope this opportunity will not be wasted.



Vladimír Špidla

Member of the European Commission
responsible for Employment,
Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Executive summary

Executive summary

Gender equality in all areas of life is a fundamental right and value of the European Union, enshrined in policy since the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Yet more than fifty years on, there remains a persistent under-representation of women in politics across Europe. With the 2009 European elections looming it is time to raise awareness of this democratic deficit and take action to promote change.

The European Commission identified equality in decision-making as one of the priority areas for action in its 2006 *Roadmap for equality between men and women*¹. With a year of opportunity at hand, this report aims to raise awareness of the extent of gender inequality in politics by analysing the current situation and investigating some of the reasons that the persistent deficit is proving so difficult to break down.

The report is split into two sections, the first – and main section – covers the gender balance in politics at all levels and examines the current situation of women as elected representatives, the extent to which they are selected as candidates for election, how this links to electoral success and some of the reasons behind the limited progress to date. The second, short section presents a brief analysis of the situation in some other areas, including business and public administration.

The report is, as far as possible, based on a quantitative analysis of the situation with the majority of data being drawn from the Commission database on women and men in decision-making², which covers senior positions at European, national and regional level for 34 countries – the 27 EU Member States, three candidate countries (Croatia, FYROM (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey), one potential candidate country (Republic of Serbia) and the remaining European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). The Commission database is updated quarterly for political data at European and national level and annually for all other topics. The figures used in this report were collected between May and October 2008.

Elected representatives: the gender balance in parliaments

- At European level, the members of the European Parliament comprise 31% women and 69% men. This is a better balance than in national parliaments but progress towards gender equality has stagnated and there has been little change since the 1999 elections. The 2009 elections represent an opportunity to take the next step forwards.
- In national parliaments across the European Union, slightly less than one in four members of parliament are women (24%). Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland are the only EU countries with more than 40% women in parliament.
- In regional and local assemblies there is considerable variation between countries in the level of female representation but there is a general correlation with the situation at national level. Notable exceptions are France and Latvia where the gender balance is significantly lower at national level than at regional/local level.

1 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=422&langId=en>

2 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm

Candidates: time to give women more opportunity

- A balanced choice of candidates for election ought to result in equality amongst elected representatives. Data from across Europe show that in general more women candidates results in more women being elected but that men still have a better chance of being elected. Extrapolation of results from the most recent national elections across Europe implies that, on average, an election with 50% women candidates would result in a parliament with just 39% women members or, putting it another way, there would need to be 63% women candidates to achieve parity in the final assembly!
- Positive action in the form of electoral gender quotas can help bring about rapid change but they are not a guarantee of success. Recent elections to the National Assembly in Slovenia were the first at national level subject to a gender quota for candidates. All parties respected the quota but despite a third of candidates being women, just 12 women were elected to the 90 member assembly (13%).
- The way in which political parties allocate candidates to winnable seats or distribute them on lists has a significant part to play in the limited success to date in electing more women from the available candidates. Some types of electoral system are more open to promoting favoured candidates than others and the result is that women candidates are too often left with a low chance of being elected.
- The re-election of incumbents severely restricts the rate of member turnover at each election. Estimates suggest that, on average, around two-thirds of members are re-elected on each occasion meaning that there are limited opportunities for new faces and, therefore, for change in the gender balance.
- At the last European elections in 2004 around two-thirds of the candidates were men and just one-third women. If the 2009 elections are to bring about any real progress in terms of gender equality then more women candidates need to be found.

Voters: the general public decides ... if they can be bothered

- Voters ultimately dictate which candidates are elected, even if their choice is sometimes limited, and the more people that vote, the more representative the elected assembly should be. Turnout for European elections is consistently lower than for national elections with the turnout in each Member State averaging 47% at the 2004 elections compared to more than 70% at recent national elections. A major effort is needed to stimulate interest ahead of the 2009 elections.
- Although many voters indicate that they would like to see more women in elected positions, there is no strong evidence to suggest that people actually vote on the basis of gender.

Nominated positions: an opportunity to increase the profile of women in politics

- A new European Commission will be nominated during 2009. Although the current Commission is actually the best ever in terms of gender balance (17 men and 10 women), some countries have never had a woman Commissioner. Since the first Hallstein Commission in 1958, a total of 142 different individuals have taken up positions as European Commissioners but just 19 of these (13%) were women.
- At national level the gender balance amongst national governments (75% men, 25% women) is very similar to that in the elected parliaments they represent (76% men, 24% women) indicating no particular effort to promote equality within the executive. However, there are exceptions – most notably in Finland, where the cabinet has a female majority, and Spain where there is parity.
- At regional level men preside over the executive branch of government in nine out of ten regions (91%) and chair a similar proportion of regional assemblies (88%).

Influence beyond politics

- The world of big business is still largely a male preserve. Across Europe less than 3% of the largest publicly listed companies are led by a woman and the boards of these companies comprise 89% men and just 11% women. The example of Norway, where women now account for 43% of the board members of large companies, shows how legislation to enforce gender equality can quickly turn this situation around.
- Amongst the largest publicly listed companies in the EU Member States, 38% have no women on the board and only 28% have more than one.
- In these times of financial crisis, monetary policy is largely in male hands. The governors of all central banks across Europe are men and the key decision-making bodies comprise 83% men and just 17% women.
- Amongst civil servants tasked with implementing policy and delivering public services in each country, the gender balance in senior positions is better than in some other areas with women holding a third of posts (33%) in the top two levels of the hierarchy. In the European institutions 22% of key administrative positions are held by women. The European Commission has made some efforts to address the situation through the application of targets for top-level positions but progress is slow.

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“I do not want you to look on your lady Member as a fanatic or lunatic. I am simply trying to speak for hundreds of women and children throughout the country who cannot speak for themselves.”

Nancy Astor, 1919. Extract from her maiden speech to the House of Commons following her election as the first woman Member of Parliament in the UK.

Introduction

When Nancy Astor became the first woman to serve as a member of parliament in the UK in 1919, she broke a tradition of men-only politics that had lasted some 600 years³. As she pointed out in her impassioned maiden speech, her presence in the House of Commons represented the first occasion on which the women of the country had someone of their own gender to speak for them, a sentiment that was no doubt repeated in parliaments across Europe at different times during the 20th century as women were gradually granted full suffrage. Ninety years on, women still account for fewer than one in five members of parliament in the UK, as they do in a further ten EU Member States. This level of imbalance is by no means remarkable – across the world, men account for more than four out of every five members of national parliaments.

Fifty years ago the European Union recognised the value of gender equality in its founding treaty and six Member States are among just eleven countries worldwide with at least 35% women in parliament⁴. More recently, the European Commission's Roadmap for Gender Equality (2006-2010) reiterated the importance of gender equality as a fundamental right and common value of the European Union and identified the promotion of equal participation of women and men in decision-making as a priority area for action. There remains much to do, and this year, 2009, is one in which there are major opportunities to bring about change at European level.

In June 2009 there will be elections for a new European Parliament – already women are better represented in the European Parliament (31%) than in many national parliaments of the EU (24%) but the level of female representation has largely stagnated since the 1999 European elections and it is time for the next step forwards. During the year Member States will also nominate candidates for the new Commission – some countries have only ever had male Commissioners so there is clear opportunity for change here. A number of other high-level posts within the EU institutions will also be renewed, giving further chances to promote women's participation in decision-making at European level.

With a year of opportunity at hand, this report aims to raise awareness of the extent of the gender imbalance in politics by analysing the current situation and investigating some of the reasons that the persistent deficit is proving so difficult to break down. It is split into two main sections, the first covering the gender balance in politics at all levels and the second presenting a brief analysis of the situation in some other areas, including business and public administration.

The report is, as far as possible, based on quantitative analysis of the situation with the majority of data being drawn from the Commission database on women and men in decision-making⁵. This database represents part of the commitment of the Commission towards collecting and maintaining reliable and comparable data on gender issues and is freely available for online consultation. Data on participation in politics are updated quarterly, with data for other domains being updated annually. Readers are also recommended to refer to the Commission report Women and men in decision-making 2007 – Analysis of the situation and trends⁶, which was published at the beginning of 2008 and includes analysis of some areas of decision-making not covered in this issue.

3 The first representative assembly in the UK is generally considered to be the Model Parliament of 1295, which evolved into two distinct Houses, the Commons and the Lords, some time during the 14th century.

4 IPU: Women in politics 2008, situation on 1 January 2008. http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnmmap08_en.pdf

5 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm

6 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/booklets/equality/pdf/ke8108186_en.pdf

Throughout the report, figures and tables are labelled using standard codes⁷ in place of country names as shown below. Values for EU aggregates are weighted averages based on the total numbers of men/women from constituent Member States unless otherwise specified.

Country codes

BE	Belgium	LU	Luxembourg	HR	Croatia
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	MK	FYROM (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
CZ	Czech Republic	MT	Malta		
DK	Denmark	NL	Netherlands	TR	Turkey
DE	Germany	AT	Austria		
EE	Estonia	PL	Poland	RS	Republic of Serbia
IE	Ireland	PT	Portugal		
EL	Greece	RO	Romania	IS	Iceland
ES	Spain	SI	Slovenia	LI	Liechtenstein
FR	France	SK	Slovakia	NO	Norway
IT	Italy	FI	Finland		
CY	Cyprus	SE	Sweden		
LV	Latvia	UK	United Kingdom		
LT	Lithuania				

⁷ For further information see <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm#pays>

Section I: Women in European politics

1. Introduction

As the only directly-elected body of the European Union, the European Parliament represents the democratic voice of its people and in June 2009 the citizens of each Member State go to the polls to elect a new set of national representatives to speak for them there.

Of the 495 million citizens of the European Union, just over half (51%) are women but in September 2008 only 245 of the 785 MEPs (31%) were women. Of course, each MEP represents all of his/her constituents, irrespective of gender, race, nationality or any other distinguishing criterion, so it is not the case that women are not represented, rather that they do not have the share of political power that would be expected given free and equal access. In other words, there is a democratic deficit.

It is not a right for women to be elected, but it is their right – as it is for every member of society - to have the opportunity and whilst it is now considered important to support the advancement of women in politics, the reality is that actions to support this do not match the political promises and change is painfully slow. In 1990, the UN Commission on the Status of Women set a target of 30% women in governments, political parties, trade unions, professional and other representative groups by 1995. But in that year, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, noted that globally women accounted for only 10% of the members of legislative bodies and a lower share of ministerial positions. The output of that conference – the Beijing Platform for Action – has since become the basis for efforts in all parts of the world to improve the lot of women and yet, thirteen years on, the voice of politics is still predominantly male, with women constituting just 18% of the members of national parliaments worldwide.

One of the difficulties in bringing about change in politics is that elections are infrequent – once every five years in the case of the European Parliament – so that there are few opportunities to refresh the composition of the parliament/assembly. Moreover, politics is often a career choice and the high proportion of incumbents standing for re-election each time further limits those opportunities, particularly when starting from a situation of severe imbalance. The introduction of gender quotas, whether legislative or voluntary, can help to speed up change but they are not without controversy – some would argue that such affirmative actions contradict the principles of equal opportunity – and they are also not always the quick fix they might appear to be. Quotas can quickly boost the number of women candidates but do not guarantee that these women are positioned fairly on candidate lists or in electoral districts where they have a reasonable chance of being elected. Further action may therefore be necessary to ensure a coincident increase in the numbers of women actually elected.

The 2009 European elections are an opportunity for the citizens of Europe to exercise their right to elect a new representative assembly for the next five years. In practice, there is already a higher share of women representatives in the European Parliament than in the majority of the national parliaments of EU Member States but there is still a long way to go to reach gender parity. As the political voice of a European Union that has been espousing equal opportunities for fifty years, there is surely a case for the European Parliament to set an example in promoting the participation of women in politics. The impetus for doing this cannot come only from the Parliament itself or from the voters – input is also needed from the political parties in all Member States which determine the selection of candidates.

This section of the report examines the current situation of women as elected representatives, the extent to which they are selected as candidates for election, how this links to electoral success and some of the reasons behind the limited progress to date. It also considers

women as voters and those who have reached the pinnacle of politics by being nominated by their peers for key positions in governments and other executive bodies.

In considering the problems that cause the persistent under-representation of women in politics, the report focuses on particular issues such as the re-election of incumbents, electoral systems and the role of political parties. However, the problem of women's under-representation in politics is multi-faceted and readers should not interpret that these are the only reasons for the lack of progress - cultural and other forms of societal discrimination are still rife. Actions from political parties, gender friendly electoral systems and similar are, therefore, only part of the solution and society as a whole still has much to do.

2. Elected representatives: the gender balance in parliaments

2.1. European level: progress towards gender equality has stagnated

Across Europe, parliaments remained a wholly male preserve until the beginning of the twentieth century when, in 1906, Finland became the first European country to introduce women's suffrage. But it was not until after the Second World War that many countries finally gave women the right to vote and stand in elections (Table 1). Although it is now almost universally accepted that elected representatives should reasonably reflect the composition of the population they represent, it remains the case that progress towards this aim in terms of gender has generally been slow. This section of the report looks at the current levels of female representation amongst elected bodies at different levels of authority – from European to local levels.

Table 1. History of full suffrage for women across Europe

1900s	Finland
1910s	Norway, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Poland, Luxembourg, Netherlands
1920s	Czech Republic, Slovakia, Iceland, Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom
1930s	Spain, Turkey
1940s	Bulgaria, France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, FYROM, Malta, Belgium
1950s	Greece, Hungary
1960s	Cyprus
1970s	Portugal
1980s	Liechtenstein

(Some countries implemented partial suffrage earlier but the dates shown represent the time when suffrage was granted without restriction)

Source: IPU: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>

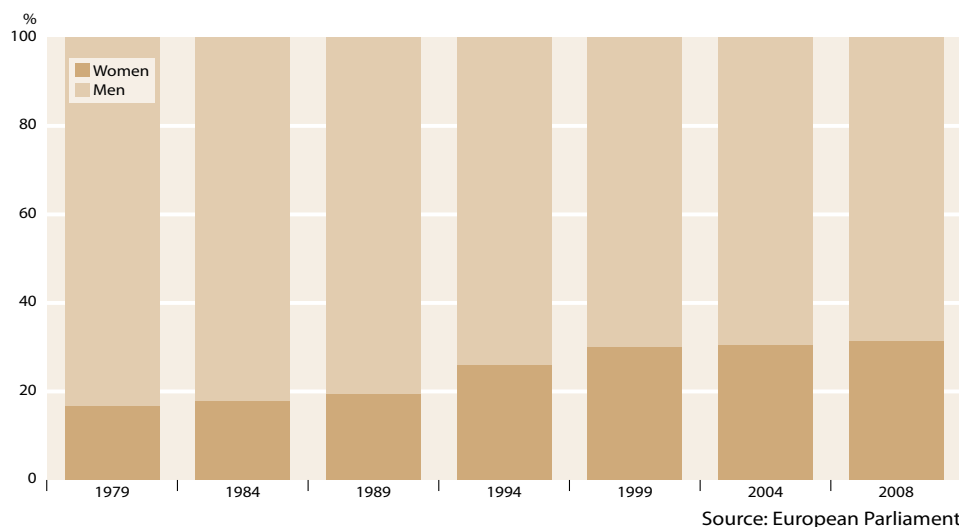
In the 2006 Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men⁸, the European Commission set out a strategy for accelerating progress towards gender equality within the European Union and noted that the European Parliament has been an important partner in progress to date. Within the European Parliament, it is certainly true that the representation of women has increased significantly from a little below 17% at the time of the first direct elections in 1979 to the current level of just over 31% (Fig.1), but this is still a long way short of parity. Moreover, progress has not been steady but concentrated in two major

8 See http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/roadmap_en.html

steps forward at the elections of 1994, when the proportion of women members of the European Parliament (MEPs) jumped from around 20% to nearly 26%, and again in 1999 when the 30% threshold was first reached. However, since that time, there has been little change. There were further elections in 2004 and the Parliament now includes elected representatives from twelve additional countries amongst its members, but the representation of women remains more or less static. The 2009 elections provide an opportunity to take the next step forwards.

In general, the gender balance amongst MEPs has improved through time for all countries (Table A.1 in annex), though there are some cases where the share of women MEPs in September 2008 is below the peak, most notably Austria (38% women MEPs after the 1999 elections but only 28% now) and Spain (33% and 26% at the same times). The allocation of MEPs by country is based on population size so that smaller countries have fewer MEPs and are therefore more likely to demonstrate extreme figures in terms of gender balance. This is demonstrated by the fact that Malta and Cyprus, which have only 5 and 6 MEPs respectively, are the only countries to have all male representation in the European Parliament whilst Luxembourg and Estonia, both of which have 6 MEPs, are the only countries to achieve gender parity. Amongst the remaining countries, the Netherlands, France and Sweden all have more than 45% women MEPs and fall well within the bounds of what could reasonably considered parity representation (both Sweden and the Netherlands have odd numbers of MEPs and just one more man than woman) whilst Poland and Italy are the only countries to have less than 20% women MEPs.

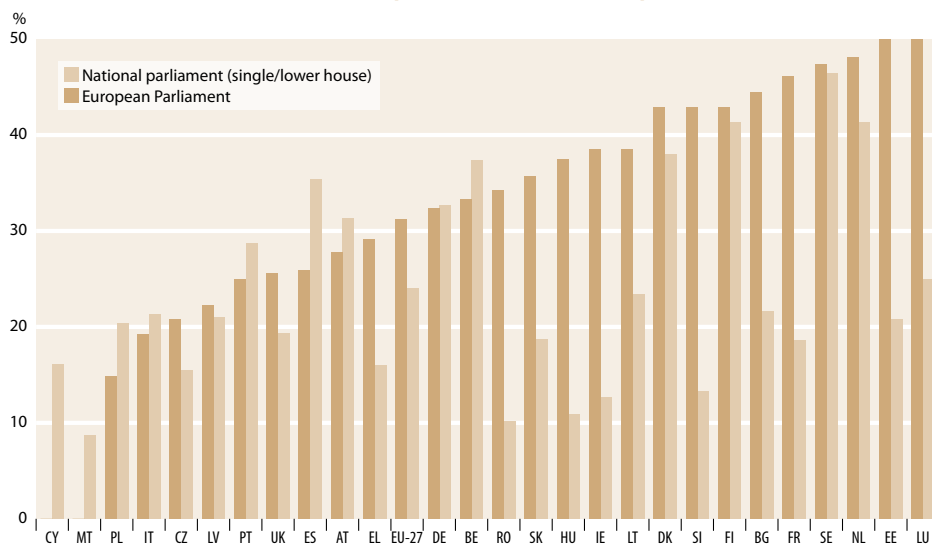
Figure 1. Gender balance amongst members of the European Parliament, 1979-2008



In the majority of countries, the level of female representation is higher in the European Parliament than in the single/lower house of the national parliament (Fig.2), with a difference of 25 percentage points or more in Estonia, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, and Slovenia. There is no single reason for this difference, but a combination of factors that affect each country differently. In some cases the electoral system may be one contributory factor. Although each Member State is free to specify the system used for electing its MEPs, it has to be a form of proportional representation and it is well documented that such systems, where there are multiple winners from each electoral district, tend to make it easier for women to be elected than the single-winner systems used in some countries at national and lower levels. Moreover, political parties may have different procedures for selecting candidates for European elections than for national elections (see box on UK case study), including the use of gender quotas.

The perception of the European Parliament may also affect the selection of candidates and voter behaviour. Although the European Parliament deals with a range of issues including environmental protection, consumer rights, equal opportunities, transport, and the free movement of workers, capital, services and goods, all of which have a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens, a recent survey reported that 51% of respondents were not interested in European elections⁹. It may be that this contributes to making it easier for women to be selected as candidates for European elections than for national elections where voters tend to vote for well known individuals – often the established, and mostly male, incumbents.

Figure 2. Representation of women in the European Parliament and in national parliaments, 2008 (end September)



Source: European Parliament; European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making

2.2. National level: still less than one in four members of parliament are women

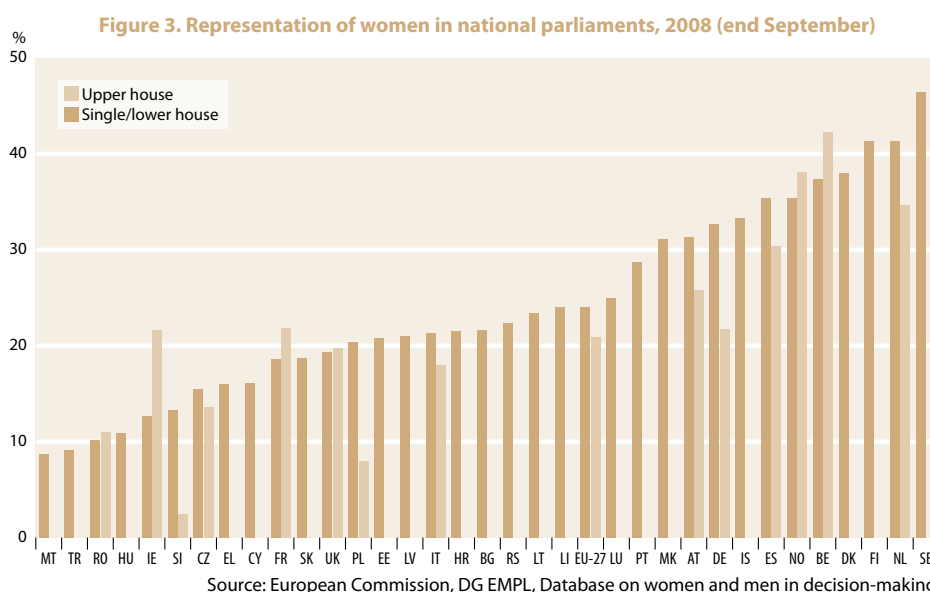
At national level, the representation of women in the single/lower houses of parliament of the EU-27 Member States has improved over the past decade from around 16% in 1997 to 24% in 2008 - an increase of less than one percentage point per year. It means that still more than three out of four members of the national legislatures across Europe are men. In the upper houses of parliament (where relevant) there has been a faster rate of increase in the influence of women but from a more male dominated starting point so that women now account for just below 20% of members compared to 8% in 1997.

Three countries have more than 40% women members of the single/lower house of parliament - Sweden (46%), the Netherlands and Finland (both 41%) – but the majority (17) of the EU Member States still have less than 25% women Members of Parliament (MPs) and Malta has less than 10% (Fig.3). Amongst the upper houses of parliament, the Belgian Senate is the only assembly to have more than 40% female representatives whilst the Polish equivalent has 8% and the National Council of Slovenia (Drzavni Svet) has only one woman amongst its 40 members (2.5%).

9 Special Eurobarometer 299: The European elections 2009. Fieldwork March-May 2008, published September 2008. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_299_en.pdf

Beijing follow-up indicators¹⁰

The proportion of women in the single/lower houses of the national/federal parliaments of the Member States and in the European Parliament					
	1984	1997	1999	2007	2008
Single/lower house of national/federal parliaments, EU-27 average	:	16.3%	:	23.6%	24.0%
European Parliament	17.3%	:	29.6%	31.2%	31.2%



Several legislative elections were held across Europe in the first nine months of 2008. Spring elections in Spain resulted in a significant increase of the proportion of women in the Senate (upper house) - from 24% to just over 30% - but a slight decline in the Congress (lower house) where women currently account for just over 35% of members. In Italy, the April elections saw more women elected to both houses, bringing the level of representation up to 21% in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and 18% in the Senate. However, elections held elsewhere had little impact on the gender balance in parliament – Malta still has less than 9% women in parliament and there were minimal changes in FYROM and the Republic of Serbia (around 31% and 22% women respectively). In Slovenia, the elections held at the end of September were the first be held at national level since the 2006 National Assembly Elections Act, which imposes a quota for candidates by gender (minimum 25% in the transitional period, 35% thereafter). The quota was well respected with women accounting for more than one third of candidates but the final result saw just one more woman elected compared to the previous, pre-quota, parliament and an overall membership of just 13% women and 87% men (see box on Slovenia).

10 At the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China in 1995, 189 states adopted the Beijing Platform for Action, which is considered as a milestone for the enforcement of women's rights across the world. The Platform for Action outlines twelve critical areas of concern where the violation of women's rights and gender inequality persist, and proposes strategic objectives and actions for each area. One of the areas of concern identified was the under-representation of women in the decision-making process. In response, the European Council proposed regular monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and, as part of this process, the Council of Ministers subsequently adopted two sets of indicators (in 1999 and 2003) related to women in decision-making.

A number of countries also held presidential elections in 2008 but there were no female candidates in any of them so that the citizens of Serbia and Cyprus and the parliament of the Czech Republic had no option but to elect, or re-elect, a male president. Since the Second World War only eight women have ever been elected or appointed (even temporarily) as the head of state of a European country, two of those being the current presidents of Ireland and Finland.

Table 2. Women elected or appointed head of European states since 1945

Country	Name	Function	From	To
Iceland	Vigdís Finnbogadóttir	President	01/08/1980	01/08/1996
Malta	Agatha Barbara	President	15/02/1982	15/02/1987
German Democratic Republic	Sabine Bergmann-Pohl	President of the People's Chamber	05/04/1990	02/10/1990
Ireland	Mary Robinson	President	03/12/1990	12/09/1997
	Mary McAleese	President	11/11/1997	(Ongoing)
Latvia	Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga	President	08/07/1999	07/07/2007
Finland	Tarja Halonen	President	01/03/2000	(Ongoing)
Serbia	Nataša Mičić	Acting President	30/12/2002	04/02/2004

Source: Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_women_heads_of_state

2.3. Regional and local levels: general correlation with the situation at national level

Below the national level, the implementation of public policy and decision-making varies between countries in terms of the number of different levels of organisation, scope of responsibility, degree of autonomy from national or other higher levels of authority, etc. Comparison between countries is therefore not straightforward and some levels do not apply across the board. In the Commission database on women and men in decision-making, regional authorities are considered to be those that are one step below the national level but above the local level, endowed with self-government and having a representative assembly. Regional assemblies exist in 23 of the 34 countries covered (19 of the EU-27 countries). The database does not cover decision-making at local level but the Council of European regions and municipalities has data on the composition of municipal councils for member countries¹¹.

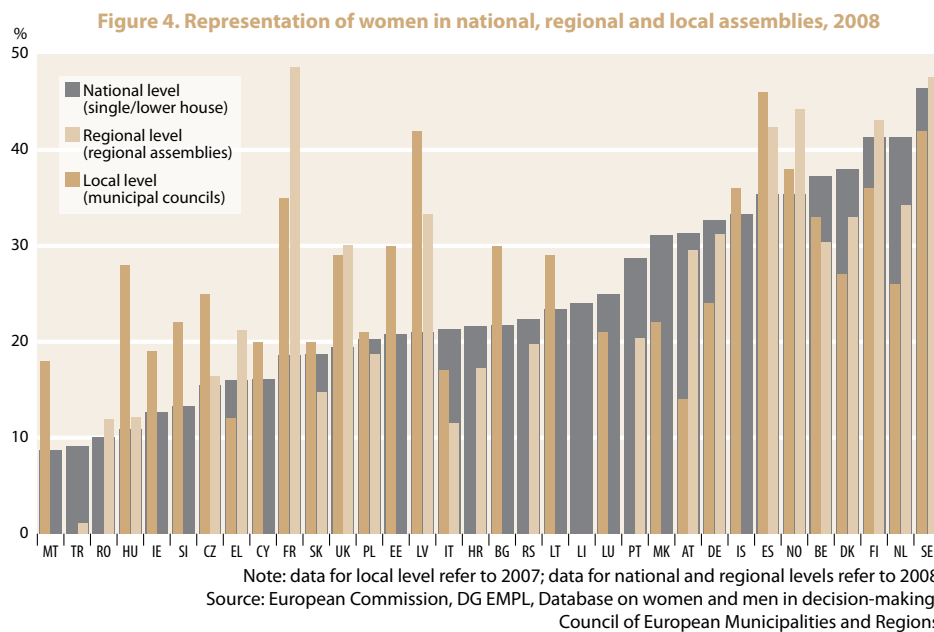
Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women in the regional assemblies of the Member States, where appropriate			
	1999	2007	2008
EU-15 average (13 countries with qualifying regions)	27.4%	34.0%	35.1%
EU-27 average (19 countries with qualifying regions)	:	30.2%	30.1%

In general, countries that have higher levels of female representation in the national parliament also demonstrate higher levels of representation in both regional and local

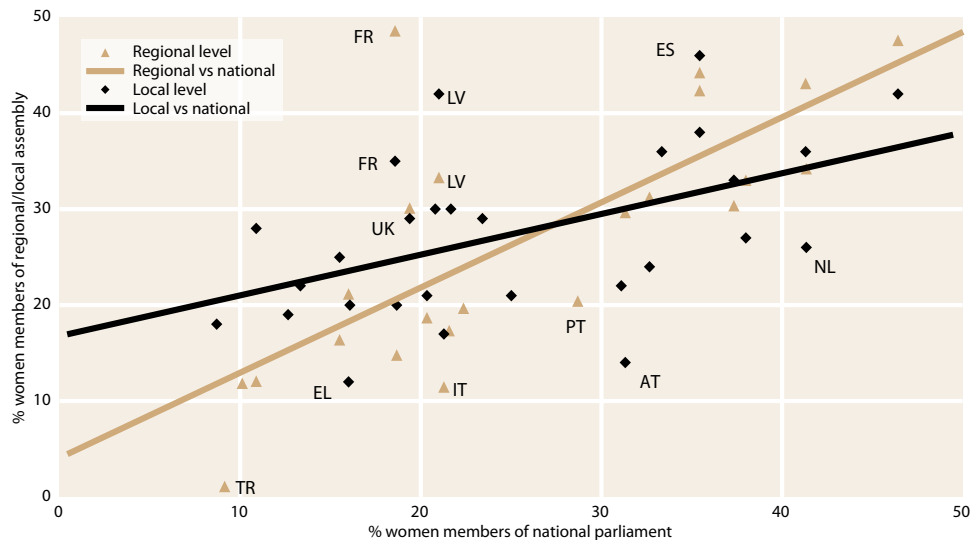
¹¹ Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Women in local politics in Europe - Figures from 34 European countries of CEMR's membership, February 2008.

assemblies (Fig.4 and Table A.2 in annex). However, there are also a number of countries that have below average shares of women in the national parliament but noticeably higher shares in the regional and/or local assemblies. In the United Kingdom, the regional assemblies of Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Greater London are all elected using different forms of proportional representation and together have over 30% women members whilst the national parliament continues to use a first-past-the-post system and has just 19% women members. In France, women also account for around 19% of members of the national parliament but as many as 49% in the regional assemblies and 35% at local level. Again, at least part of the reason for the difference lies in the different electoral systems employed at each level – a two-round first-past-the-post system at national level but a hybrid system including aspects of proportional representation at regional level. In Latvia too, the gender balance is much better in local (42%) and regional assemblies (33%) than in the national parliament (21%).



Despite such exceptions, there is a general correlation between the level of female representation in the national parliament and those in the regional and local assemblies, though the trend is less obvious at local than regional level (Fig.5). Looking at the data in this way helps to highlight some of the outliers when compared to the overall trends. On the positive side, with a better gender balance than expected, the French regions are a beacon of success but the French, Spanish and Latvian local authorities also do well. On the other hand, Turkish regions have just 1% women members and the local authorities in Greece, Austria and the Netherlands have lower levels of female representation than anticipated from the general trend.

Figure 5. Representation of women in regional and local assemblies compared to the national parliament, 2008



Experience at local and regional level is often considered an important stepping stone to political participation at national and European level and although there has been an improvement in the inclusion of women in the political debate at local level, women that make it to the top of the local hierarchy are few and far between. A long time-series of data from France provides a good example.

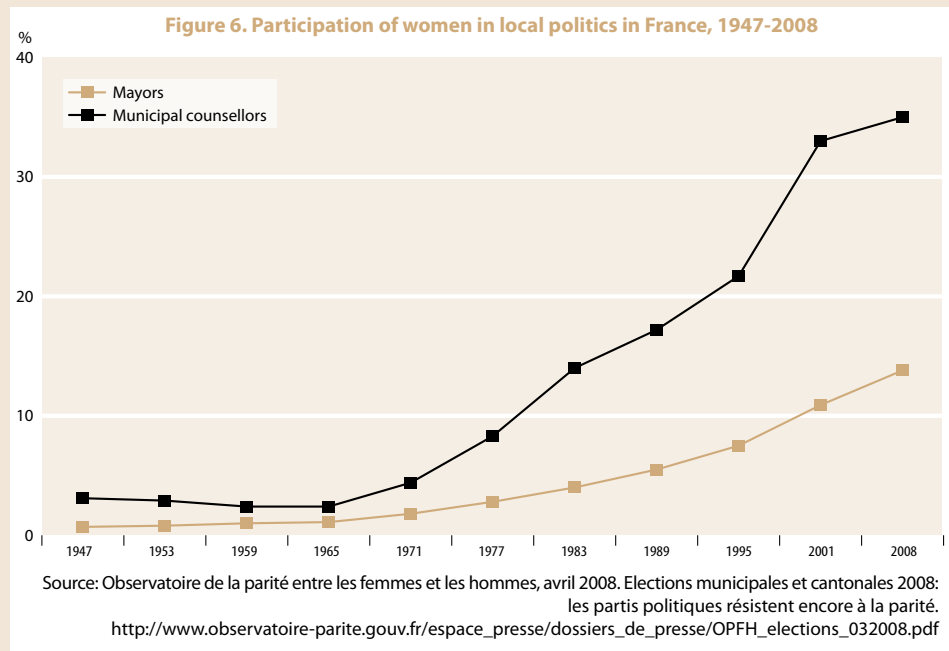
France: women's participation in local politics

In France, women were granted the right to vote and stand for election in 1944 but it took until the 1980s before they were accepted into local politics in any significant numbers, finally accounting for more than one in ten members after the 1983 municipal elections (Fig.6). There were further small increases in the numbers of women elected through the rest of 1980s and 1990s but the most dramatic change occurred in the 2001 elections following the implementation of the parity law in the previous year, which required equal representation of men and women amongst candidates. That brought the share of women on municipal councils up to 33% but since that time, despite the parity law for candidates, there has been little change with the 2008 elections resulting in 35% women councillors. The difference between the share of candidates and elected representatives may in part be related to the positioning of candidates on lists – at the recent elections 84% of the candidate lists put forward by the different political parties had a man at the top¹².

Although there has been a clear improvement in the representation of women in local politics, albeit slower than hoped, there is still a marked deficit at the top of the hierarchy. A poll carried out in 2001 following the introduction of the parity law found that 65% of respondents would like to see a woman mayor in their town¹³ but after the 2008 elections, women accounted for less than 14% of mayors elected across France. Again, there appears to be a clear link to the candidate selection process since men were placed at the top of 77% of candidate lists.

12 Observatoire de la parité entre les femmes et les hommes, avril 2008. Elections municipales et cantonales 2008: les partis politiques résistent encore à la parité.
http://www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr/espace_presse/dossiers_de_presse/OPFH_elections_032008.pdf

13 <http://feminist.org/news/newsbyte/uswirestory.asp?id=5254>



The picture coming from France is by no means unusual – across the EU in 2007, around 87% of mayors were men and just 13% women and in many countries there were less than 10% women leaders at local level (Fig.7). There are, however, notable exceptions in Latvia and Sweden, where women account for 39% and 30% respectively. A detailed breakdown of the French data indicates that women are more likely to be elected as mayors of the smaller communes and across the European Union it is certainly the case that the prominent positions as leaders of large cities continue to be dominated by men. The majority of EU countries have no major cities run by a woman mayor (Table 3) and only four of the twenty-seven EU capitals have a female leader (Copenhagen, Dublin, Nicosia and Warsaw).

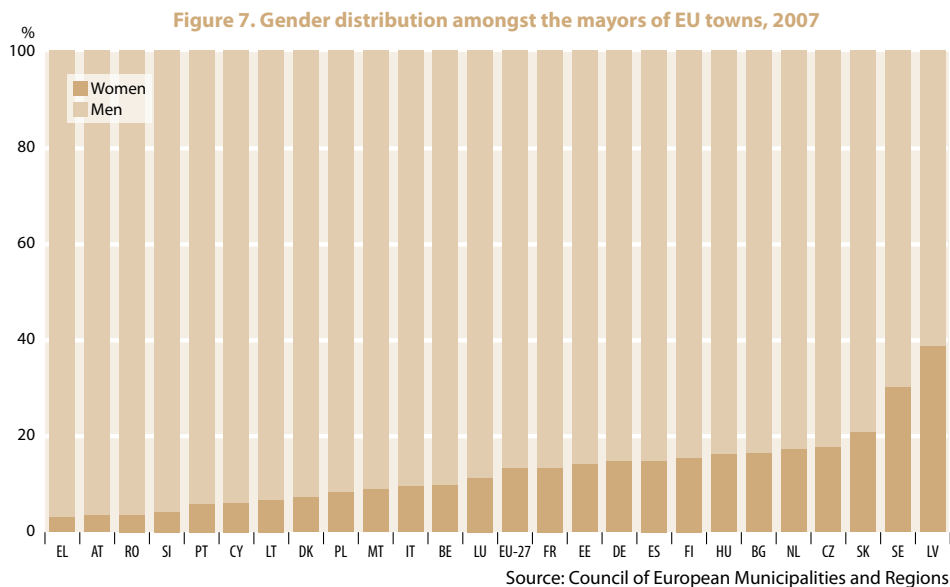
Table 3. EU countries with major cities run by women mayors

More than one ¹⁴	Germany (5), Spain (5), France (3), Italy (3)
One ¹⁵	Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, Poland, Finland
None	Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom

Sources: City Mayors http://www.citymayors.com/directories/eurocities_sites.html; websites of cities; data collected August 2008

14 Germany: Bochum, Bonn, Dortmund, Dresden, Frankfurt am Main; Spain: Córdoba, La Laguna, Tenerife, Gijón, Valencia; France: Lille, Montpellier, Rouen; Italy: Genova, Milano, Napoli

15 Copenhagen, Dublin, Nicosia, Warszawa, Espoo



The analysis above shows some positive trends in the reduction of the deficit for women at all levels of politics but it also demonstrates how the lack of a coherent approach within a country – in particular the use of different electoral systems - can lead to different results at each level.

3. Candidates: time to give women more opportunity

One of the keys to achieving representative assemblies is to ensure equal representation amongst the candidates and the way that they are presented to voters. This section examines the extent to which women participate as electoral candidates, the use of legal and voluntary candidate quotas to promote equality, and some of the reasons that they may not work as effectively as hoped.

3.1. *More women candidates usually means more women elected but a man has a better chance*

Until quite recently, a history of cultural subjugation limited the number of women willing to put themselves forward to participate in the political process, with politics seen as a male domain. But in Europe in the twenty-first century, when discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexuality or any other facet of human life is generally considered unacceptable by society as a whole, it is no longer realistic to use this as a major excuse for the continued deficit in women's representation. That is not to deny that pockets of resistance still exist but, amongst the younger generation in particular, attitudes have changed and across Europe as a whole, it does not explain why the key decisions that affect the daily lives of roughly equal numbers of male and female citizens are taken by politicians that number three men for every one woman.

At first sight, getting more women into elected assemblies ought to be straightforward – provide the voters with an equal number of suitable male and female candidates and, unless there is some bias in the voting, then a similar balance amongst the elected representatives ought to result. However, the reality is somewhat different and there are a

number of factors that over-ride the candidate balance and which have so far limited the election of women:

- Most parliaments are currently imbalanced, with many more male than female members
- Politics is often a career choice and many incumbents seek re-election
- Incumbents are more likely to be (re)elected than new candidates – given a choice of candidates from the same political party, voters tend to choose the well-known ones (usually the incumbents)
- Most voting systems, of which there are many, do not give all candidates an equal chance of being elected
- Political parties want to achieve the best result possible for their party and are liable to exploit the vagaries of electoral systems to the advantage of favoured candidates, especially incumbents.

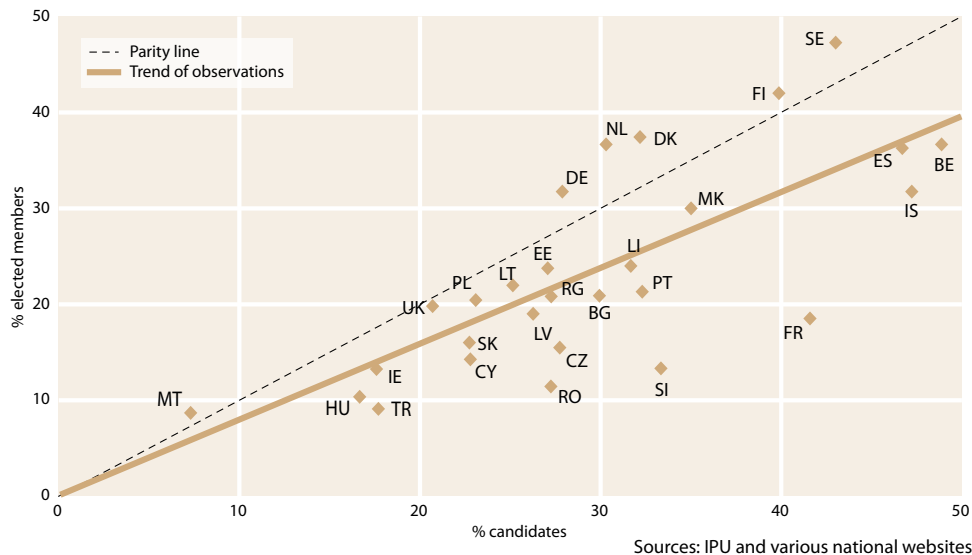
In other words, ensuring a better balance amongst candidates is only a start. In practice, only a part of the elected membership is refreshed at each election so that when an assembly starts from a state of imbalance only a part of the problem can be addressed. It is often said that certain types of electoral systems better support the election of women. This is of course not the case – the electoral system in itself does not favour any one person or gender, but some systems are more open to the promotion of candidates preferred by the party faithful and when the incumbents and other favoured candidates are mostly men, the chances of women being elected are much reduced, even when present in equal numbers amongst candidates.

Nevertheless, without equal representation amongst candidates it would be unrealistic to expect equality in the elected assembly so, despite the additional barriers ahead, the first step in promoting female representation must be to promote more women candidates. Figure 8 below shows the relationship between the share of women candidates and the share of women elected to the lower/single house of national parliaments at the most recent election in each country (to end September 2008). As would be expected, more women candidates generally results in more women being elected but it is striking how far the trend line deviates from parity.

Indeed, extrapolation of the trend implies that an election with 50% women candidates would result in just 39% women members or, putting it another way, there would need to be 63% women candidates before equality was achieved in the final assembly! Interestingly, the 2007 elections in Belgium (49% candidates; 37% elected) and the 2008 elections in Spain (47% candidates, 36% elected) both gave results very close to the projected result with 50% women candidates. However, there are of course exceptions on either side of the trend – the most recent elections in Slovenia, France and Romania all saw far fewer women elected than would be expected from the fairly high shares of candidates, whilst in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Sweden more women were elected compared to the general trend and the final results were even ahead of the parity line.

Figure 8. Share of women elected as members of national parliaments compared to the share of women candidates

(Most recent election to the lower/single house of parliament in each country - from June 2004 to September 2008)

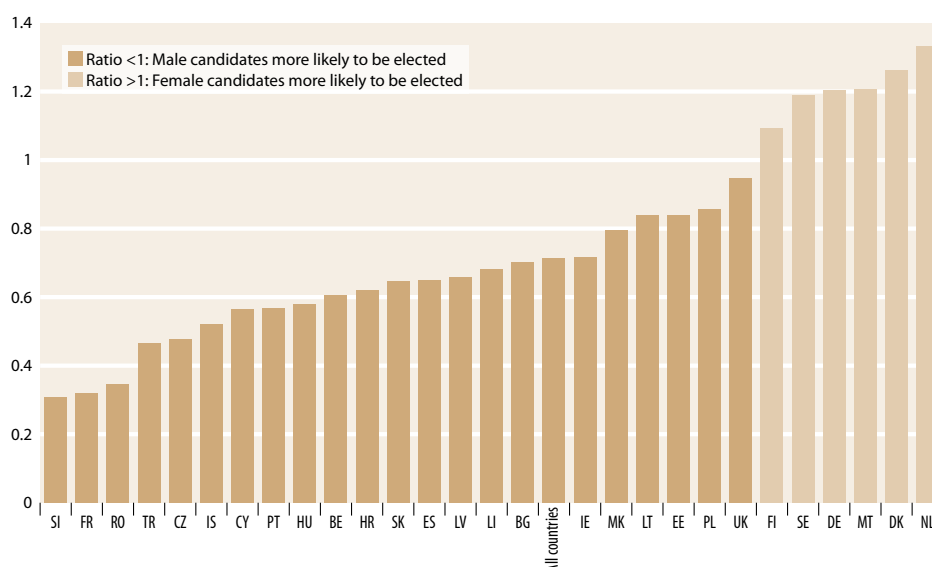


Whatever the gender balance amongst candidates, if all candidates have an equal chance of being elected then the outcome of the election should be an assembly with a similar balance. At the most recent national election in each of twenty-eight European countries¹⁶, a total of more than 96,000 candidates stood for election, including around 70% men and 30% women. But this distribution was not maintained amongst the 6,850 successfully elected candidates who comprised 77% men and 23% women (Table A.3 in annex). Overall, one in every thirteen male candidates was elected but only one in eighteen women. So not only were there fewer women candidates, but each one of those had less chance of being elected – the chance of a woman candidate being elected was around 72% of the chance for a male colleague (Fig.9). Male candidates were favoured in 22 of the 28 countries covered and the extent to which female candidates were disadvantaged is quite extreme in some cases – in the most recent elections in Slovenia, France, Romania, Turkey and the Czech Republic, a male candidate was more than twice as likely to be elected than any female opponent. On the other hand, in Denmark and the Netherlands, more than one in four women candidates were elected compared to one in five men.

¹⁶ Data on the gender breakdown of candidates standing for parliamentary elections was sought for all 34 countries covered by the Commission database but was not found for EL, IT, LU, AT, RS, NO.

Figure 9. Share of candidates elected to national parliaments by gender: ratio women/men

Most recent election to the lower/single house of parliament in each country - from June 2004 to September 2008
 Ratio = share of female candidates elected / share of male candidates elected



3.2. Quotas can help the move towards gender parity but are not a guarantee of success

One way to improve the gender balance amongst candidates is to apply affirmative action in the form of quotas that require parity, or a minimum percentage of each gender, amongst the list of candidates put forward for election. Gender quotas can be applied through the law (legislative quotas) or adopted voluntarily by political parties (voluntary quotas) and are currently in use in nearly half of the world’s democracies, even though there remains much controversy over their use. Proponents of quotas tend to see them as a potential quick fix to the current state of imbalance and the only reliable means of breaking down persistent barriers to the integration of women. Opponents tend to see quotas themselves as a form of discrimination, think all candidates should be selected on merit and believe that the course of time will naturally erode any current imbalance in the system. In the European Union there are currently five countries with legislative quotas applicable to elections for the national parliament (lower/single house), fourteen with party quotas and eight with no quota system (Table 4).

Table 4. Types of electoral gender quotas applied to national elections in the EU

Legislative quotas	Belgium, Spain, Portugal, France, Slovenia
Party quotas	Sweden, Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Malta
No quotas	Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovakia, Cyprus, Ireland

Note: Countries with party quotas are those where at least one of the three largest political parties has adopted a gender quota system within the party statutes.

An extensive analysis of how gender quotas are applied in Europe was published in 2008 by the European Parliament and the report includes a comprehensive discussion on the arguments for and against quotas, an assessment of their effects and recommendations for future action¹⁷. One of the key observations made is that although quotas have led to rapid improvements in women’s representation in some cases, there are also cases where the impact to date has been disappointing (see box).

17 Electoral gender quotas and their implementation in Europe, European Parliament, 2008.

Slovenia: quotas not such a quick fix

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the country was transformed from a single-party socialist state to a multi-party democracy, the political arena in Slovenia has been dominated by men and in the National Assembly the level of female representation languished between 8 and 13%. However, in recent years parliament has adopted legislative quotas specifying a minimum share of each sex amongst candidates for election at all levels:

Year	Legislative quota
2004	40% for European Parliament elections
2005	40% for local elections (20% for the first election after adoption: 2006)
2006	35% for the National Assembly (25% for the first election after adoption: 2008)

To date, quotas have been well respected by all parties at all elections since the adoption of each of the relevant laws:

Year	Election level	Implementation
2004	European	All parties respected the 40% quota – 42 of 91 candidates (46%) were women
2006	Local	All parties more than respected the 20% quota - just under 33% of the 26,721 candidates were women compared to 21% at the previous (pre-quota) elections in 2002
2008	National Assembly	All parties respected the 25% quota – around a third (33%) of nearly 1200 candidates were women compared to a quarter (25%) in the 2004 election

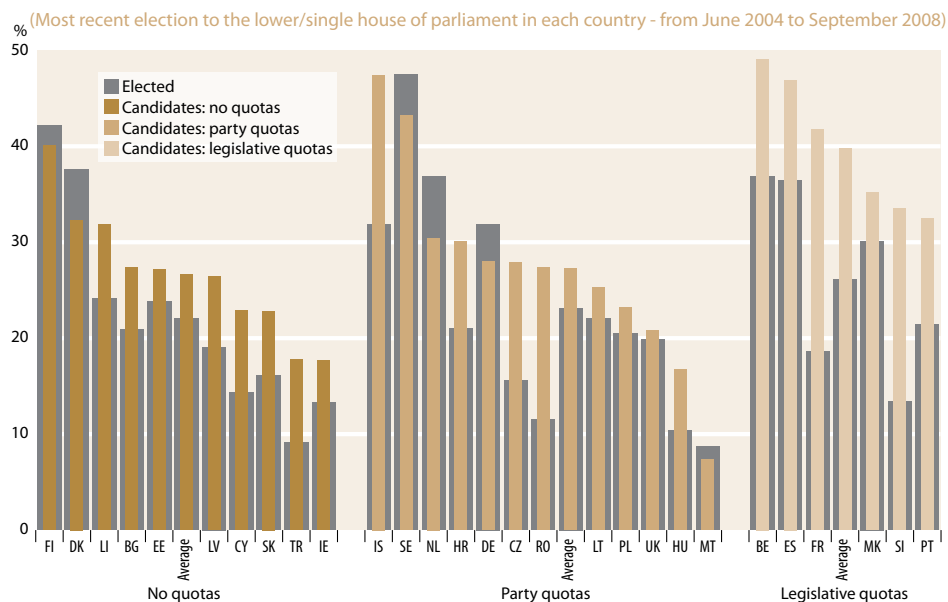
However the results have not wholly lived up to expectation:

- The 2004 European elections, which were the first held in Slovenia, were successful in terms of the numbers of women candidates put forward and subsequently elected, such that Slovenia ranks amongst the top one third of EU Member States in terms of the share of women MEPs. The law insists that for European elections at least one of each gender is in the first half of each list (for 7 seats). Nevertheless, of the thirteen party candidate lists, a woman was at the top of only three and these were all lists of smaller parties that actually won no seats. All the women that did get elected therefore came from lower positions on the list and could have missed out had the party won fewer votes.
- The first local elections subject to the legislative quota resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of women councillors elected compared to the previous situation but still there are more or less four male councillors for every one woman. Again, the law requires at least one of each gender in the first half of each party list but the fact that the share of women elected (22%) did not come closer to the share of candidates (33%) tends to suggest that they were not often put in the highest positions.
- Finally, in the recent national elections, despite a substantial improvement in the number of women candidates, just one additional woman was elected to the National Assembly and the share of 13% keeps Slovenia firmly in the lowest tier amongst EU Member States (23 out of 27). The reason, as all too often, was simply that women candidates were not placed in winnable constituencies.

Election level	Last pre-quota result	First post-quota result
European	-	42.9%
Local	13.1%	21.5%
National Assembly	12.2%	13.3%

Figure 10 shows the share of women candidates and elected members of national parliaments across Europe by type of quota system. It can be seen that although legislative quotas on average result in higher levels of female representation amongst candidates, they are no guarantee of success and there are countries with party quotas (Sweden and the Netherlands) or no quota system at all (Finland and Denmark) that have achieved final results better than, or as good as, the best of those with legislative quotas (Belgium and Spain). Moreover, on average there is virtually no difference between countries with party quotas (27% candidates, 23% elected) and those with no quota (27% candidates, 22% elected). It is often said that most of the countries with the highest levels of female representation have some kind of quota system. In fact, in Europe at least, most of those with the lowest levels also have quotas in place and the validity of the statement depends much on where the line is drawn.

Figure 10. Share of women candidates and elected members of national parliaments by type of quota system



3.3. Do electoral systems and political parties give women an equal chance?

It seems that the reality is that quotas work sometimes, but not always, and it should not be forgotten that some of the best results have been achieved without any quotas at all (even if it may have taken many years and with implicit government support). So what prevents quotas from working? Almost certainly, the most important factors are the allocation of candidates between electoral districts and/or the position of each candidate on lists (where relevant). All political parties want to win elections and even though many parties promise action on improving the representation of women, the bottom line is that their electoral strategy will always focus on maximising the number of candidates elected ahead of any other issues.

Quotas are hardest to apply in single-winner systems where each party nominates a single candidate per constituency so that it is not possible to offer individual voters any choice by gender. Even if an overall quota is applied, the party is still at liberty to allocate candidates between constituencies and put favoured candidates into “safe” seats where votes for the party are generally secure. In multiple-winner systems where candidates are selected from party lists, usually by some form of proportional representation, then the order of candidates on the list significantly influences who is elected. In completely closed lists, voters effectively choose only which party they want to support and candidates are elected based on their position in the list

and the proportion of votes received by the party. Even in the most open list systems, where voters select individual candidates who are then elected purely on the basis of the total number of votes received, analysis of voter behaviour indicates that those near to the top of the list have an advantage over those at the bottom. There is a variety of list based electoral systems and most fall somewhere between the extremes of fully open or fully closed and offer considerable scope to influence who is elected from the full complement of candidates. In short, although quota systems can dramatically improve the gender balance amongst candidates, if they are to succeed in getting more women elected they need to be applied in a way that pays careful regard to the intricacies of the electoral system.

Action to control the financing of political parties can also help to promote women's participation – there is some evidence to suggest that women benefit when the spending of political parties is set within limits and there is public financing. Indeed, if parties are at least partially funded through the public purse then it becomes much more practical to impose sanctions, or funding cuts, in the case that gender quotas are not fairly applied.

Political parties: the key factors for women's participation in politics?

The progressive introduction of equality legislation over the past two or three decades ought to mean that women are now free to participate in politics on equal terms with men. However, in practice there remain persistent barriers to women's full participation in the democratic process. The analysis above shows how the historical predominance of men and electoral systems combine to restrict the rate at which women are integrated into political life.

Managing the work-life balance is a difficult issue for women and men in all walks of life but legislation is increasingly forcing employers to adopt flexible working arrangements that accommodate both work and family commitments. Yet the way that parliaments and political parties operate still requires politicians to work long and irregular hours – for example, late night debates in parliament and party meetings in the evenings when at least one parent needs to be at home to look after children. At the time of the French local elections in 2008, many incumbent women councillors decided not to stand for re-election, stressing difficulties to balance their professional and family lives with political assignments¹⁸.

Access to a political career is often facilitated through personal contacts and networks and sometimes women lack these resources because of the background of male predominance. Interviews with German female politicians suggest that recruitment to political parties that do not have quota rules is often restricted to women from families with a history of political involvement and a background of the social elite¹⁹. There are also indications that the recruitment of candidates for the French local elections is influenced by gender - male candidates generally have strong links to a political party whilst a large number of female candidates are drawn from the civil society²⁰.

Currently few major political parties (those with representatives in the national parliament) have a woman leader and it is interesting to note that the countries with more than one major party led by a woman also tend to be those with the best gender balance in parliament (single/lower house) - of the top-ten ranked countries across Europe, eight have at least two parties led by women, whilst of the bottom ten only France has more than one (see table below and Fig.2).

18 Charlotte Rotman, Parité blues, Libération, vendredi 7 mars 2008 <http://www.libeorleans.fr/libe/2008/03/socit-les-femme.html>

19 Brigitte Geissel, Germany: successful quota rules in a gendered society, in Electoral Gender Quota systems and their implementation in Europe, European Parliament, September 2008.

20 Observatoire de la parité entre les femmes et les hommes, 2001 l'odyssée paritaire: rencontres avec des élus municipales, Janvier 2008.

Women leaders of major political parties across Europe

Number of parties led by women	Countries
None	Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, United Kingdom, FYROM, Serbia, Turkey
One	Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Iceland
Two	Germany, France, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Austria
Three	Finland, Sweden
Four or more	Belgium, Denmark, Norway

Source: Wikipedia (various country-specific pages), September 2008

3.4. Re-election of incumbents restricts the rate of change

Political parties therefore have an important role in determining the composition of elected bodies, to the extent that they can override the effect of quotas. At election time, voters will always tend to support someone that they know of and most of the time that will be the incumbent member. As a result, incumbents seeking re-election will tend to be favoured by the party and benefit from any strategy to ensure electoral success for the party.

Research shows that across Europe there is an average incumbent retention rate of 66% for parliamentary elections²¹. In other words, two thirds of the members are unchanged after each election and only one-third of seats are taken by new candidates, which means that there is limited opportunity to change the composition of the members at each election. Since elections to parliament are infrequent, typically every four or five years, if the incumbent retention rate remains as high as it has done in the recent past then for countries where women are still poorly represented today it could, in theory, take 25 years or more for the gender balance to approach parity even under the best case scenario (see box).

In parliaments and other elected assemblies, opportunities to bring about significant change in the composition of the membership, whether in terms of political affiliation or gender, come only periodically – at the time of elections. This, in itself, is a factor in the rate at which change can occur because even when there is an underlying concord in the desire to increase female representation, the bottom line is that come election time, political sentiment has the last word and if the political mood favours a party that has less commitment to equal representation of women then the balance may shift backwards.

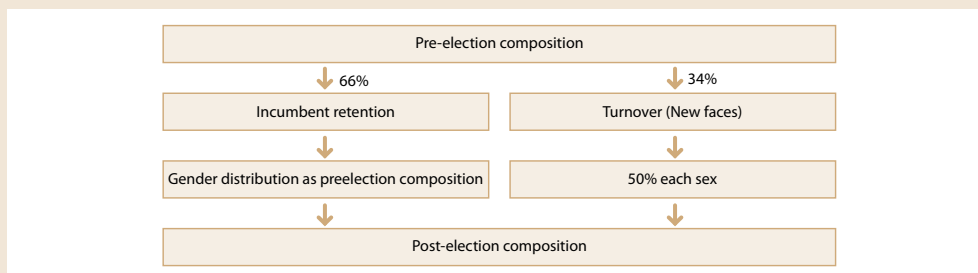
One solution to the problem of incumbent retention at infrequent elections could be to impose term-limits, where elected members are only allowed to be re-elected a fixed number of times, thereby increasing turnover, or even prohibiting immediate re-election, which would immediately bring zero retention and 100% turnover. However, this type of approach can reduce the effectiveness of the legislature by excluding experienced policy makers and is unlikely to be voted in by the current incumbents. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the rate at which women can be integrated into of political decision-making will remain slow unless the incumbency problem is addressed. Of course, once there is a good gender balance in an elected assembly then retention of incumbents can help to maintain that balance but this situation has not been reached in many assemblies.

21 Average of incumbent retention rates for the lower/single house of parliament in 18 European countries, calculated from data presented in: Schwindt-Bayer, L.A., 2005. The incumbency disadvantage and women's election to legislative office. Electoral Studies: Vol. 24, Issue 2, June 2005.

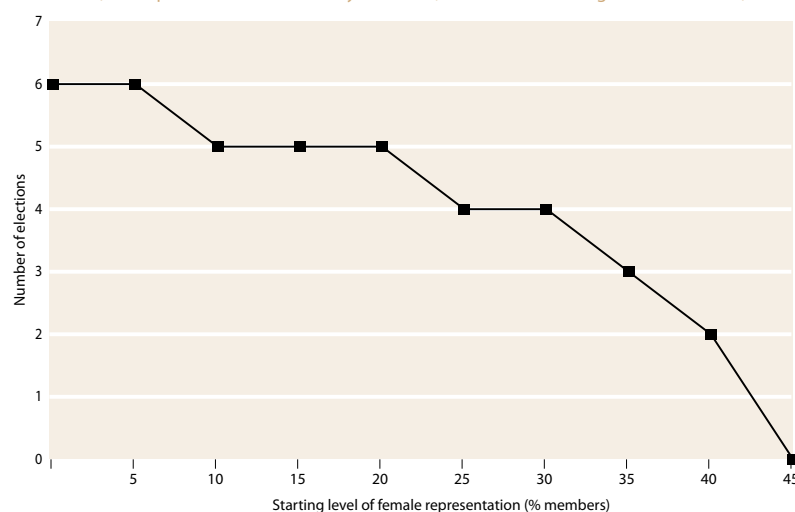
Re-election of incumbents: modelling the problem

Politics is often a career choice so that at each election many members of the existing assembly are likely to stand for re-election. As candidates who have already been successful and who are known to the electorate, incumbents are also liable to be favoured by the party machinery come election time. Analysis of election results from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s shows that in European parliamentary elections an average of 66% of incumbents are re-elected. High incumbent retention rates mean low turnover rates – when two thirds of the members are re-elected then there is only room for one third new faces. With infrequent elections, the rate at which the composition of the assembly can change is severely restricted, particularly when starting from a state of imbalance.

Even in the best case scenario when women candidates take 50% of all available seats (i.e. the one third not taken by incumbents) the restricted turnover means that it can take several elections – and therefore many years - to bring about real change. According to this model (see figure) it would take 5 elections, which typically means 20 or 25 years, before an assembly with 20% women members would reach a near-parity level of 45% female representation. And that is the best case – if the gender balance amongst new faces remains in favour of men then the number of elections needed to being about levels of representation anywhere near to parity increases dramatically. Given that the most recent national elections in twenty-eight European countries had, on average, only around 30% women candidates, the significance of this problem becomes all the more apparent.



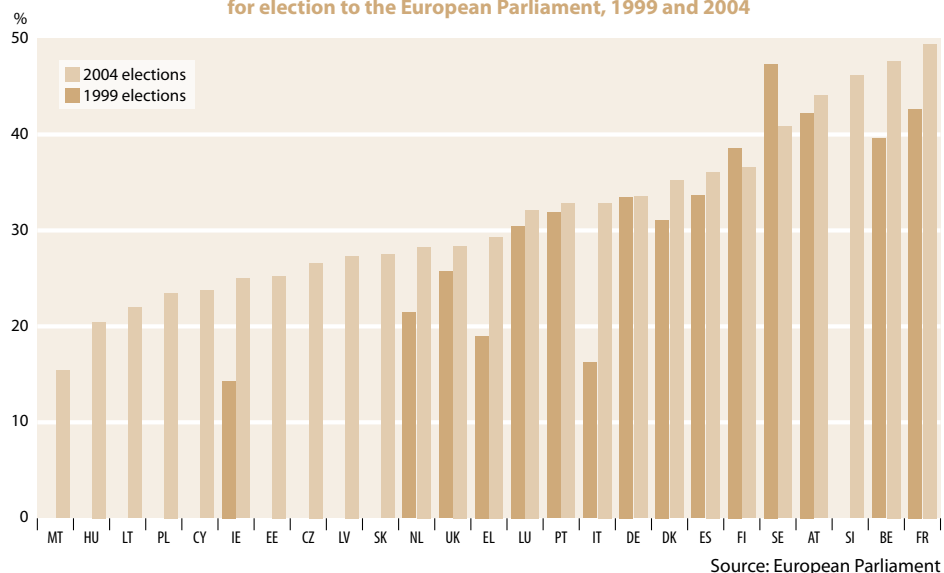
The incumbency problem: number of elections needed to achieve 45% women in parliament
(Assumptions: 66% incumbency retention; 50% women amongst new members)



3.5. Candidates for the European Parliament: more women needed

At the 2004 European elections a total of nearly 10,000 candidates stood for election within the twenty-five EU Member States at that time. Of these, 66% were men and 34% women – a better gender balance than in the previous elections in 1999 when there were 71% men and 29% women candidates from the then fifteen member countries (Fig.11 and Table A.4 in annex). In 2004 five countries had more than 40% women candidates but at the same time there were still five countries where men still occupied more than three out of every four positions on candidate lists. Despite the higher number of women candidates in 2004 the composition of the elected parliament was hardly changed after the election with 70% men and 30% women members. It is clear that if the gender balance in the European Parliament is to improve then more women than ever need to stand for election in 2009.

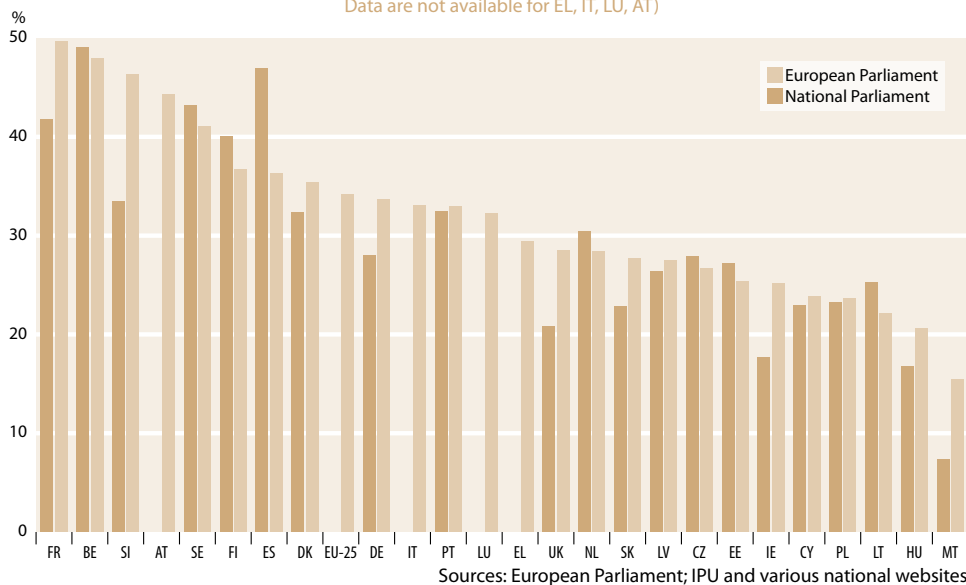
Figure 11. Representation of women amongst candidates for election to the European Parliament, 1999 and 2004



As seen earlier (Fig.2), the current gender balance amongst elected representatives in the European Parliament (31% women and 69% men) is generally better than in the single/ lower house of national parliaments (24% women and 76% men across EU-27 countries). However, this difference is hardly evident when considering candidates for elections at national and European level. Taking into account only those countries where both national and European data are available, there was an average of 34% women candidates at the 2004 European elections and 33% women at the latest national elections. However, there are some noticeable differences within individual countries (Fig.12) that may reflect the different candidate selection methods and electoral systems employed for national and European elections.

Figure 12. Women candidates at the 2004 European elections and the most recent national election

(For national parliaments data refer to candidates at the most recent election to the lower/single house of parliament in each country - from June 2004 to September 2008. Data are not available for EL, IT, LU, AT)



Making progress through positive action: a necessary but insufficient condition?

A spotlight on recent experiences in the United Kingdom

It is only just over ten years since positive action measures seemed to be securing major breakthroughs in women's political representation in the United Kingdom. Not only had women dramatically increased their representation in the 1997 national parliament, jumping to an 18% share of all MPs, twice the level in 1992, but in 1999 the first elections for the newly formed devolved assemblies for Wales and Scotland women achieved unprecedented levels of representation at around 40% for each body. For the UK, used to languishing at the bottom of league tables measured by international records of women's representation, this step change seemed to signal the breakthrough needed to bring sustained and effective transformation.

Today, in 2008, the situation looks quite different. There have been some notable continued advances, particularly in Wales where women briefly had a majority in the assembly and among Labour MPs in 2005, but in 2007 the share of women fell in the regional assembly elections, particularly in the Scottish Parliament, and attention has now turned to the next general election where current predictions are for a significant fall off in female representation, even from the current low level.

There is in fact little mystery behind what happened to secure these significant changes in women's representation. The explanation lies in a combination of two factors, the adoption of positive action measures and a favourable swing of the political cycle towards parties adopting positive action. (Positive action refers to measures that discriminate positively in favour of women - and not only the adoption of positive rhetoric towards women candidates - or other equality measures such as gender proofed selection criteria or gender balanced shortlists.) The positive action measures adopted to promote the selection or ranking of female candidates in

the UK were only used by some of the contending parties. Moreover, each party made its own choice over how to promote women candidates for different elections, including different choices at different times and for different elections.

In practice three main types of positive action measures for the selection or ranking of women candidates have been adopted: **all women shortlists**, where party members select their (single) candidate from an all women list of prospective candidates; **twinning**, where for each constituency choosing a man, another constituency chooses a women; and **zipping**, where women and men are given alternative slots on a regional list of candidates.

The Labour Party adopted the practice of allowing all women short lists in selecting constituency candidates for the 1997 general election and as a result female representation among MPs almost doubled (Table A) and 35 of the 65 additional new female Labour MPs were selected from all women shortlists²². In 2001, when all women shortlists were not used following a successful challenge to their use under the sex discrimination legislation, the share of female Labour MPs dropped slightly. The policy was readopted for the 2005 election after the passing of the 2002 Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act and a further small increase in the share of women MPs resulted.

Table A: Proportion of women MPs in the House of Commons by party, 1983 - 2005

%	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005
Labour	4.8	9.2	13.7	24.2	23.1	27.5
Conservative	3.3	4.5	6.0	7.8	8.4	8.6
Liberal Democrat	-	4.5	10.0	6.5	9.6	16.1
Other	-	8.7	12.5	10.0	13.8	10.0
Total	3.5	6.3	9.2	18.2	17.9	19.8

Source: Fawcett society (2006) who quote www.parliament.uk

The twinning policy used to select constituency candidates for the Labour Party for the first Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly elections in 1999 was particularly effective (Table B). A significant part of this success was due to the absence of sitting representatives seeking re-election

Zipping has had some impact on European parliamentary elections, resulting in the Liberal Democrats increasing their female share to 50% in 1999. However, this policy has been abandoned due to opposition from within the party.

Table B: Proportion of women amongst elected members in the devolved assemblies of the UK

%	1998	1999	2003	2007
Scottish Parliament	-	37.2	39.5	34.1
Welsh Assembly	-	38.3	50.0	46.7
Northern Ireland Assembly	13.0	-	16.7	16.7

Sources: ECHR 2008, Squires 2003, <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/>

So why did this breakthrough not provide a platform for continued improvement?

Four factors can be identified that may have acted to put a break on further progress:

- First, even though the 2002 legislation allows for positive action for a temporary period, most political parties have not taken advantage of this dispensation.

22 Choose a winner: Selecting political candidates, Equal Opportunities Commission, June 2003

- Second, getting women selected as candidates or highly ranked in regional lists is only part of the problem. Where women are unevenly represented among the candidates, what matters is whether they are in the right parties and in the right constituencies or regions to be elected. The increase in women's representation at the 1997 election came about partly because of Labour's all women shortlists but also because of the major swing in the vote towards Labour.
- A third problem is that women have not made much headway in representation at local level where their share remains stuck at 25-30% of all councillors. Experience in local government is an important pathway into a political career at regional or national level and in fact more women candidates have local government experience than do men (60% compared to 54%)²³. The Labour Party does have a policy of ensuring women are candidates in at least 50% of seats that fall vacant but men still outnumber women and, more importantly, the share of vacant seats is very low. At the current rate of progress, the Centre for Women and Democracy reckons that equality of representation at local level will take until 2026²⁴. Even more disappointing is the low share of women as leaders of local councils, 14% in 2007/8, down from nearer to 17% in 2004²⁵.
- Fourthly, progress can expect to be slow the longer it takes to reform ways of working that create barriers for women or cause stress in their work and family life. Progress has been made in the shares of women in cabinet positions but few have survived in high office for a long period. Women's willingness or enthusiasm to pursue a career in politics will depend in part on whether they perceive there to be reasonable working conditions and opportunities once elected.

Awareness of the need to act is spreading

The different approaches of the parties clearly have an important part to play in the overall integration of women into politics in the UK. Perhaps the most positive element in the current political landscape is that the Conservative party (currently the second largest party) has not only been increasing efforts to select women candidates but also to do so in winnable seats. For the 2009 European elections both Conservative and Labour parties have used some form of zipping, particularly for candidates other than incumbent MEPs.

4. Voters: the general public decides ... if they can be bothered

4.1. Major effort needed to increase voter interest in the European elections

Getting people to exercise their democratic right and participate in elections is not always easy. Elections to the European Parliament represent a unique chance for the citizens of Europe to influence the direction of policy making at a supra-national level and yet many do not take that opportunity. At the first European elections in 1979, voter turnout was around 63% but it has fallen at each subsequent election, reaching a low of 45% at the most recent elections in

23 Linsley et al. 2006, Women in the Chamber; Barriers to female representation in local politics. The New Politics Network.

24 Women in the 2007 Local Elections in the English Metropolitan Authorities, Centre for Women & Democracy, Nov. 2007.

25 Sex and Power 2008. Equality and Human Rights Commission. 2008. www.equalityhumanrights.com

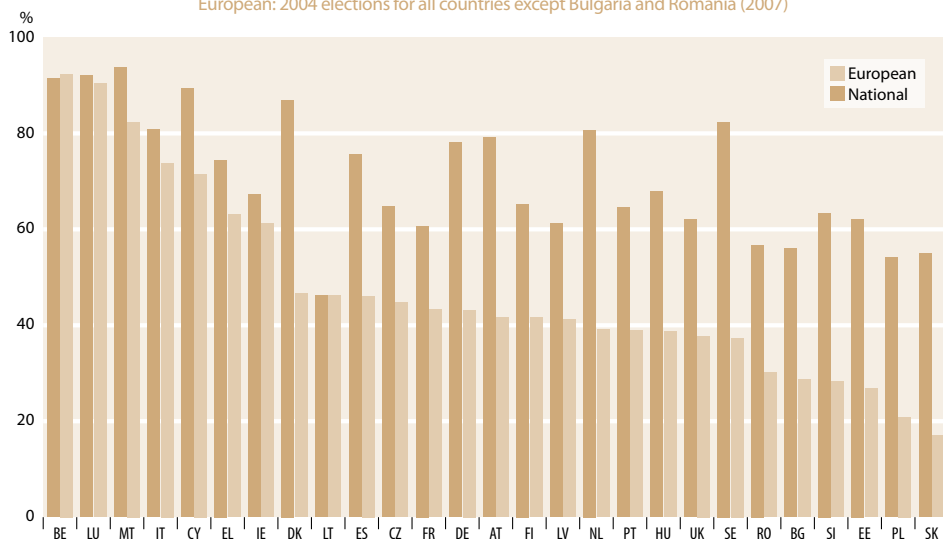
2004. In the new Member States the average turnout was just 26% in 2004 compared to 49% in the EU-15 countries. This pattern was continued in 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania held their first European elections following accession to the EU on the 1st of January 2007.

Voter turnout is consistently lower for European than national elections with the average turnout rate for the most recent national elections in EU countries (to end September 2008) being just over 70% compared to 47% for European elections (Fig.13). Although advance polls are not always a reliable indicator of voter behaviour come election day, a Eurobarometer poll carried out in all EU countries during Spring 2008 found that only 30% of respondents would definitely vote at the 2009 elections²⁶. Less than half of respondents (46%) claimed to be “interested” in the elections whilst a slight majority (51%) said they were “disinterested”. Interestingly, the poll found a higher proportion of women to be disinterested in the elections (53%) than men (47%) and this was reiterated when asked about the likelihood of actually voting, though the differences are small and may not be reflected come election time. When asked to rank on a scale from 1 to 10 the likelihood of actually voting then, at the extremes, a slightly higher proportion of women said that they definitely would not vote (15% women, 13 % men) and slightly more men said that they definitely would vote (31% men, 29% women).

As the Eurobarometer concludes, it seems that a major communications drive is necessary to improve public awareness about the European Parliament in order to encourage more citizens to participate in its election and ensure a representative parliament.

Figure 13. Voter turnout at the most recent national and European elections

National: most recent election to the lower/single house of parliament in each country - from June 2004 to September 2008
 European: 2004 elections for all countries except Bulgaria and Romania (2007)



Sources: European data: <http://www.euractiv.com/>;
 National data: IPU Parline database <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>

4.2. Gender based voting? Probably not

There is no consistent evidence to suggest that voters make their selections on the basis of gender. There are some indications that women with higher levels of education are more likely to feel strongly about getting more women into positions of power but at voting time factors

26 Special Eurobarometer 299. The 2009 European elections. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_299_en.pdf

such as party allegiance, whether the candidate is already known to the voter and the perceived competence of the candidate are more important. Even though many national and pan-European surveys have shown strong support for a better gender balance in elected assemblies, there is no evidence to indicate that voters actively try to support this desire by making a gender-based candidate selection.

In 2007 France had the opportunity to elect a female president for the first time and the chance to get a woman into such a position of power could have been a major incentive for voters without rigid political views to vote on the basis of gender. However, opinion polls during the campaign showed that the usual issues of policy and competence in public affairs remained the primary concerns for the majority of voters and there was no evidence to suggest particular support from female voters²⁷.

Information on voter turnout by gender is limited, though IDEA International has managed to compile data for twelve countries around the world²⁸, including Finland, Iceland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The data indicate that for these European countries there is very little difference (1-2 percentage points) in the turnout by gender, though there was a slightly larger gap at the 2003 parliamentary elections in Finland where turnout was 4 percentage points higher for women than men.

So the issue of mobilising voters does not seem to be linked to gender. Improving the gender balance in elected assemblies is not a question of getting more women to vote, it is more about having more women candidates and ensuring that the political parties give them a better chance of being elected. If political parties can commit to equal representation and at the same time there is concerted national and European action to promote a more rapid erosion of gender stereotypes and attitudes towards women in power, then there are real opportunities for change.

5. Nominated positions: an opportunity to increase the profile of women in politics

Appointments to government and other political executives provide an opportunity to override the gender imbalance that still remains in many elected assemblies and to put women into high profile positions where their presence in the public eye can act as a catalyst to encourage more women to participate in politics. Such appointments are sometimes seen by the public and the media as being symbolic, yet if political leaders want to demonstrate that women belong in government they need to ignore such criticism and take positive steps to appoint more women in key positions. Across Europe, appointments at European, national, regional and local levels show mixed efforts to date.

5.1. European level: some progress in the European Commission

Executive power in the European Union resides with the European Commission, which is a cabinet government comprising one member (Commissioner) from each of the EU Member States, though in the early days the larger countries had two members. Since the first Hallstein Commission in 1958, a total of 142 different individuals have taken up positions as European Commissioners after being nominated by their respective national government and, of these, just 19 (13%) were women.

27 CEVIPOF, Le baromètre politique français, Les femmes et l'élection présidentielle, Hiver 2006. IFOP, Les français et le second tour de l'élection présidentielle, 28 avril 2007.

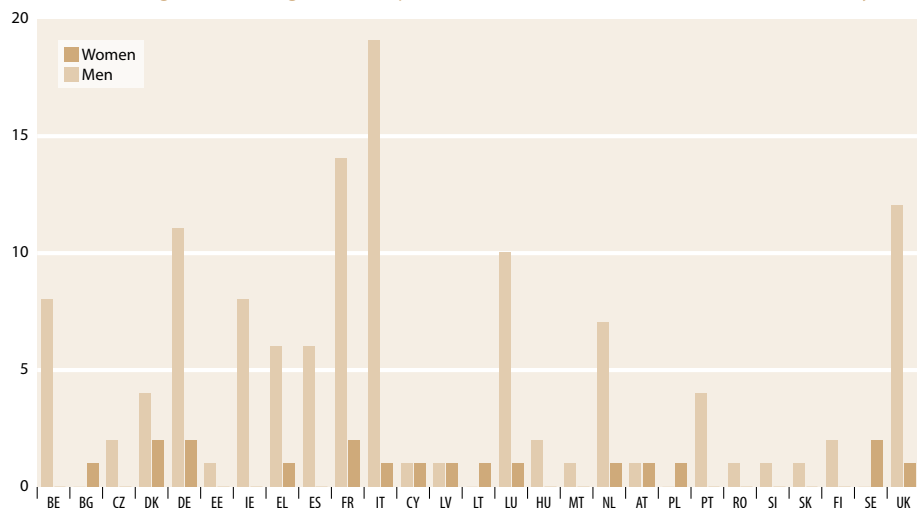
28 <http://www.idea.int/gender/vt.cfm>

The first woman Commissioner was appointed under the second Delors Commission in 1988 – thirty years after the Commission came into being in its current form. The Santer Commission in 1995 was the first to include significant numbers of women Commissioners (5 of the 20 members). Currently, following two mid-term changes during 2008, the Commission comprises 10 women (37%) and 17 men (63%) – the most gender-balanced Commission to date.

Figure 14 below shows the number of different individuals that have been European Commissioners by country and it can be seen that some Member States have yet to embrace gender equality in their nominations.

Figure 14. Numbers of different individuals nominated as European Commissioners by country

(Counts refer to the number of different individuals nominated as Commissioners since the first Hallstein Commission in 1958, including mid-term changes. The same person nominated to successive Commissions is counted only once.)



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_Commissioners_by_nationality

At the very top level, twelve men have been President of the European Commission, but not one woman and although as many as 36 different people have been vice-president there was not a single woman amongst this group until the appointment of the current First Vice-President, Margot Wallström from Sweden in 2004²⁹. In 2009 a new Commission and President will be appointed so there is a fresh opportunity – particularly for those countries that have not done so before – for governments to nominate women Commissioners. Additionally, if the Lisbon Treaty is ratified then two new high profile positions of EU Foreign Minister and permanent President of the European Council will need to be filled.

The President, or speaker, of the European Parliament is the leader of one of the most powerful legislatures in the world and, therefore, an extremely high profile political post. The form of the Parliament and the extent of its powers have changed through time but, since it first sat in 1958, a total of 26 different people have been president, including just 2 women. The first female president to be appointed was Simone Veil, who chaired the first fully elected parliament from 1979 until 1982. Twenty years later, Nicole Fontaine (1999-2002) became the second woman to be chosen as leader by her peers³⁰.

29 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_European_Commission

30 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_European_Parliament

Beijing follow-up indicators

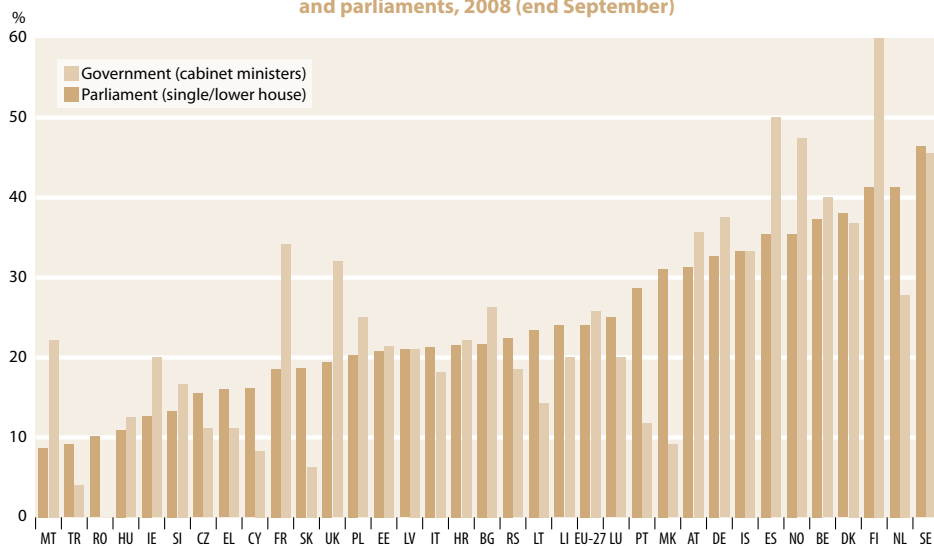
The proportion of women members of the national/federal governments and the proportion of women members of the European Commission (Members of the national governments include senior and junior ministers)

	1994/1995	1999	2004	2007	2008
National governments (EU-15 average)	16.2%	24.2%	23.1%	27.2%	28.8%
National governments (EU-27 average)	:	:	20.4%	24.1%	24.8%
European Commission	5.6%	25.0%	28.0%	29.6%	37.0%

5.2. National level: some women in prominent positions

Across Europe, the gender balance amongst all appointed members of national governments (75% men, 25% women) is very similar to that in the elected parliaments they represent (76% men, 24% women). In general, those countries with the best gender balance in parliament also have a good gender balance in the cabinet – of the eleven European countries with more than 30% women in parliament, nine also have at least 30% women cabinet members, with FYROM and the Netherlands being the only exceptions (Fig.15). In Finland there is actually a female majority (60%) in the government and there is parity, or close to it, in Spain and Norway. The governments (cabinet ministers) of the United Kingdom, France and Malta also include a significantly higher share of women than in the parliament. In contrast, the Romanian cabinet is entirely male and women are under-represented in Turkey, Cyprus, Slovakia, Lithuania, Portugal and FYROM.

Figure 15. Representation of women in national governments and parliaments, 2008 (end September)



Source: European Commission, DG-Empl, Database on women and men in decision-making

There have been a number of government changes during 2008 that contributed to a slight improvement in the gender balance of all EU governments compared to 2007. In Belgium the new government appointed in March saw the proportion of women cabinet members rise to 40%, almost double the previous level (21%) and the Spanish cabinet appointed in April went even further, achieving a parity government for the first time.

Following these changes, Belgium and Spain join Finland (60%), Norway (47%) and Sweden (45%) in a small group of countries with at least 40% women amongst cabinet ministers. However, when junior ministers³¹ are also taken into account (not applicable in all countries) the picture changes slightly (Fig.16).

In contrast to these positive developments, there were also some regressive changes during 2008, notably in Italy where the new government included fewer women (15%) than its predecessor (21%). In Malta the March elections persisted the predominance of men in parliament (91% of members) and amongst government ministers (87%), though there is a slightly better balance amongst the nominated positions in the cabinet with 2 of the 9 ministers being women (22%). Elsewhere, elections in Serbia and a government reshuffle in FYROM resulted in very little change to the gender balance.

Of the twenty-seven single/lower houses of parliament in the EU Member States, men preside over twenty-four (89%) and women just three (11%) in Estonia, Hungary and Austria. And amongst the thirteen EU countries with a bicameral parliamentary system there is a woman president/speaker of the upper house only in two countries (15%) - the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Outside the EU, in Norway the Odelsting (the lower house division of the unicameral Storting) is chaired by a woman and, following the elections in May 2008, the Serbian National Assembly currently has strong female representation amongst the leadership with the president and three of the six vice-presidents being women.

Figure 16. Gender balance in national governments (senior and junior ministers), September 2008



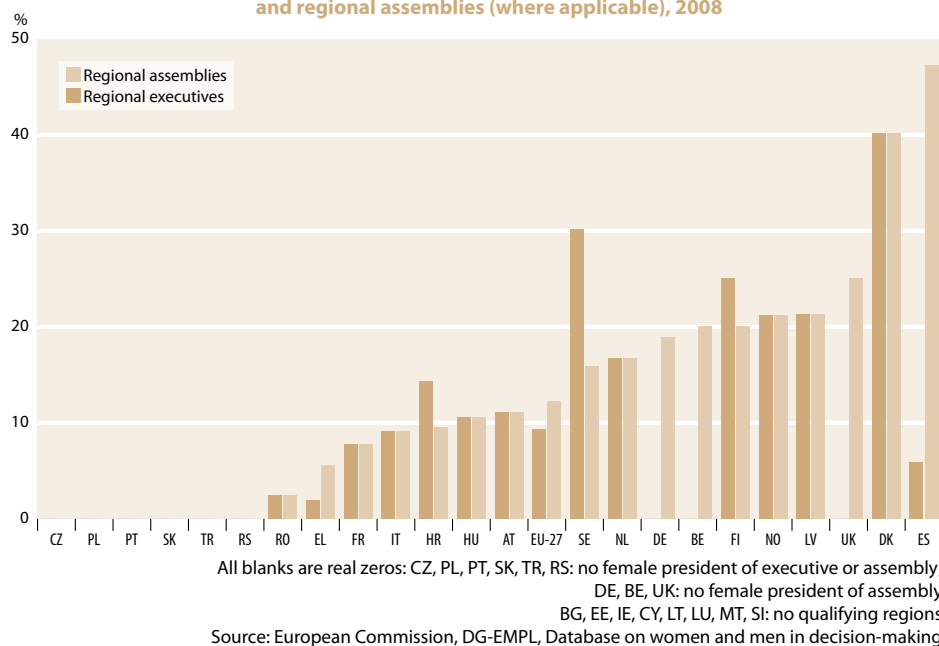
Source: European Commission, DG-EmpI, Database on women and men in decision-making

31 Junior ministers are members of the government without a seat on the cabinet.

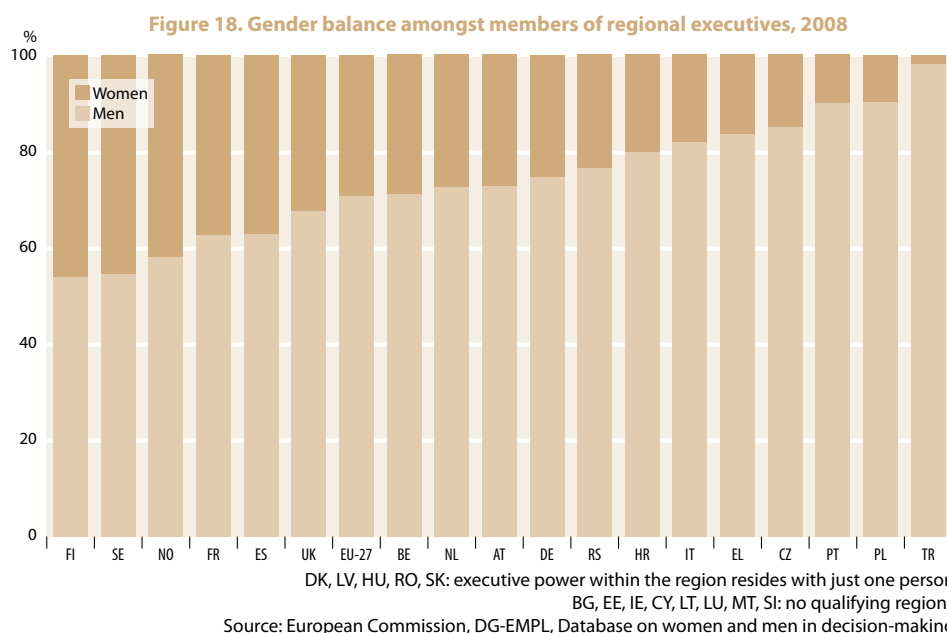
5.3. Regional and local levels: few women with executive power

At regional level, women preside over the executive branch of government in less than one in ten regions (9%) across the EU and in seven of the nineteen Member States that have regional authorities endowed with self-government all regional executives are led by men (Fig.17). Men also chair most (88%) of the regional assemblies in the EU with women presiding over just 12%, though Spain (47% - 8 of 17 regional assemblies chaired by a women) and Denmark (40% - 2 of 5 regions) are notable exceptions.

Figure 17. Women leaders of regional executives and regional assemblies (where applicable), 2008



Although the gender balance amongst regional leaders is poor, the situation is slightly better if all members of regional executives are counted, with a 70:30 male-female split across the EU (Fig.18). In Finland, Sweden and Norway the balance is better than 60:40 but in the regional executives in Poland and Portugal the balance is 90:10 in favour of men. In Turkey there are 18 women out of a total of 891 people (2%) with executive power at regional level.



Information on the distribution of executive power at local level is patchy but those figures that are available indicate a rather uneven picture. In Slovakia and Bulgaria more than 60% of the members of municipal executives are women, whilst in Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Poland the figure is only 12-18% and it falls to just 4% in Denmark³². In France, the shock wave of the “parity revolution” has extended to certain local executive functions – namely deputy mayors (26.4% were women in 2001) and vice-presidents of regional councils (34.6% were women in 2004)³³.

Overall, there are some isolated cases where women are well represented in positions of political power but in general, men continue to dominate – there is clear gender imbalance in executive governments at all levels and most noticeably in leadership positions. Until more women are nominated for these key roles then there is limited chance for change to propagate down through the system and for the level of female participation in politics to increase.

32 Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Women in local politics in Europe - Figures from 34 European countries of CEMR's membership, February 2008. http://www.ccre.org/docs/pisa_women_in_local_politics_figures.pdf

33 Mariette Sineau, France : « parité » under the law, in Electoral Gender Quota systems and their implementation in Europe, European Parliament, September 2008.

Section II: Influence beyond politics

The main focus of this report is to raise awareness of the persistent gender imbalance amongst politicians at all levels and the need for action to address this situation. But politics is just one aspect of society in which women remain under-represented in positions of influence. This section therefore takes a brief look at the gender balance amongst decision-makers in some other key areas – particularly in business and in public administrations. Information on the situation in further areas can be found on the website of the Commission database on women and men in decision-making³⁴ and in the Commission report *Women and men in decision-making 2007 – Analysis of the situation and trends*³⁵.

1. Big business – women still excluded from the inner circle

Large companies listed on the stock exchanges around Europe play a substantial role in business across the globe and in the economies of the countries in which they are registered and operate. Control of these companies lies in the hands of exclusive groups of selected individuals and this section looks at the extent to which women have managed to infiltrate this traditionally male dominated inner circle of the business world.

Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women among the presidents/chairpersons of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted firms on the national stock exchange			
	2003*	2007	2008
EU-15 average	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%
EU-27 average	2.2%	2.9%	2.9%
The proportion of women among members of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted firms on the national stock exchange			
	2003*	2007	2008
EU-15 average	7.0%	8.9%	9.4%
EU-27 average	7.8%	10.3%	10.8%

* 2003 EU-27 averages include 2004 data for CZ, LT, MT and PL.

The Commission database on men and women in decision-making collects data on the president and members of the board or highest-decision making body³⁶ of the largest companies in each of 33 European countries and provides an unparalleled sample of 740 companies with a minimum of 10 per country³⁷. Data collected in October 2008 demonstrate that women are still largely excluded from the top of the business world.

34 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm

35 http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/gender_equality/publications_en.cfm

36 Corporate governance systems vary between countries. In countries with a unitary (one-tier) system the board of directors is counted (including executive and non-executive members). In countries with a two-tier system only the supervisory board is counted.

37 The Commission database covers 34 countries (EU-27 plus HR, MK, TR, RS, IS, LI and NO) and collects data on companies that are the domestic constituents (nationally registered according to ISIN code) of the blue-chip index maintained by the stock-exchange in each country. Blue-chip index here refers to an index of the shares of the largest companies (by market capitalisation) and/or the most traded shares on the exchange. In each country a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 50 companies are covered. In the case that the main blue-chip index has less than 10 domestic constituents then the next largest companies on the stock exchange are added to the list. Companies from Liechtenstein tend to be listed on the Swiss stock exchange but none feature in the SLI blue-chip index so none are included in the sample. The full sample therefore covers 33 countries and comprises 791 companies, but details of board members by gender were not available for 51 of these.

Within the European Union, 97% of large companies are chaired by a man and only 3% by a woman. In the non-EU countries covered - Croatia, FYROM, Turkey, Iceland and Norway – the picture is marginally better with 94% men and 6% women, so that overall across Europe less than 4% of large companies have a woman leader. Moreover, men still take 9 out of every 10 places on company boards with women accounting for just under 11% of board members in the EU and very slightly more when all of the countries covered are taken into account. This is an improvement compared to the situation in 2003 but considering that women account for around 44%³⁸ of the employed population in the EU it is abundantly clear that in most countries large companies have failed to fully embrace the concept of gender equality in the workplace.

There are, of course, significant variations between the countries studied. In fifteen EU Member States none of the companies covered by the sample are led by a woman (Table 5), including some where female representation in other areas is generally above average (Sweden and the Netherlands). The newer Member States generally do better than the older ones – twelve of the EU-15 countries are in the group with no women leaders and women are best represented as company leaders in Bulgaria (17%) and the Czech Republic (15%).

Table 5 - Women heads of large companies

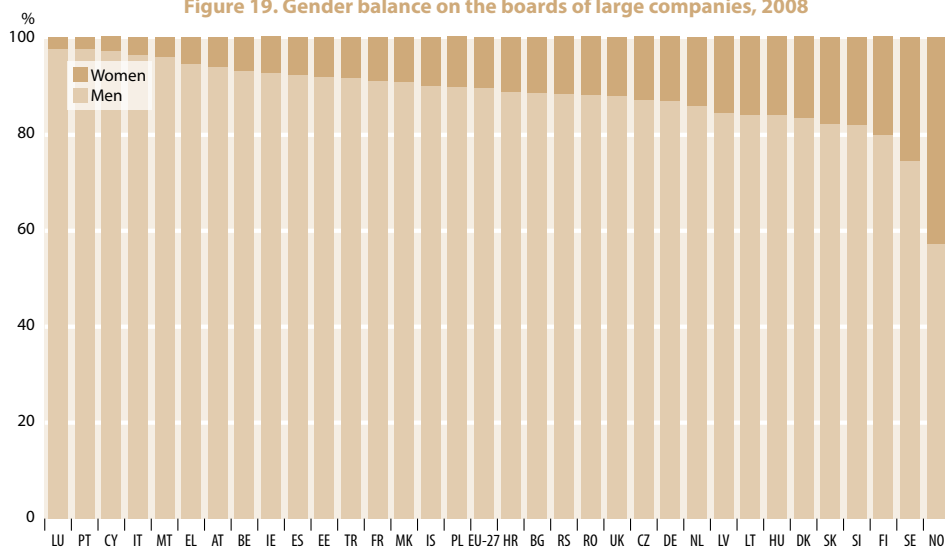
% large companies	Countries
More than 10%	Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Iceland, Norway
5 -10%	Italy, Estonia, Malta, Romania, Turkey
Less than 5%	Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Hungary, Ireland
None	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, FYROM, Serbia

A similar pattern emerges when considering all board members – the average level of female representation for EU-15 countries is lower than for the new Member States. Boards continue to be almost totally dominated by men (>95% of members) in Luxembourg, Portugal, Cyprus, Italy and Malta (Fig.19) but there is some evidence of progress in the north of Europe where women make up 20% of boards in Finland, 26% in Sweden and, most noticeably of all, 43% in Norway where a legal quota has forced companies to take action to implement gender equality at board level. In Norway it is a legal requirement that public limited companies (ASA) have a minimum of 40% of members of either sex on their board and if they fail to do so then sanctions may be applied, including closure of the company. Around 500 companies fall within the scope of the law and, despite the success of the quota apparent from the sample, it is interesting to note that since the quota regulations came into force at the beginning of 2006 nearly 200 companies have re-registered as ordinary limited companies (AS), to which the regulations do not apply. Of course, some movement between categories of company is normal and around 140 companies have made the opposite move over the same period, but some observers suggest that some smaller, owner run companies may be making the change specifically to avoid having to bring outsiders onto the board simply to meet the equal representation requirements.³⁹

38 Source: Community Labour Force Survey (2007 data)

39 See <http://www.aftenposten.no/english/business/article2587146.ece>

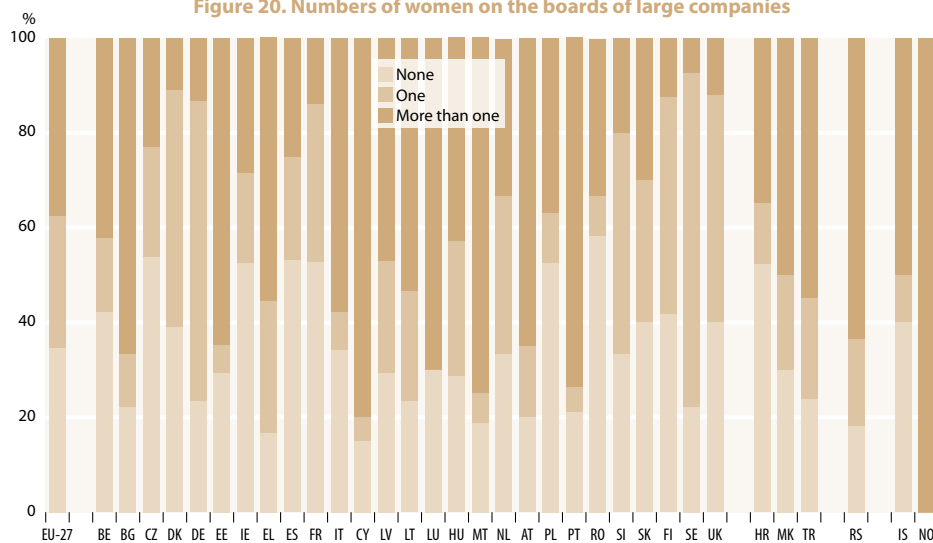
Figure 19. Gender balance on the boards of large companies, 2008



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making

According to the 2008 Commission data covering 33 countries, the average board of a large company in Europe had ten members and all too often there was not one, or just a single, isolated, female voice contributing to the decision-making process. Nearly four in ten (38%) of the companies covered in the EU countries had no women on the board meaning that the remaining six had at least one female board member (62%), but less than a third of companies (28%) had a board that included more than one woman. Only in Denmark (50%), Germany (63%) and Sweden (70%) did at least half of the companies studied have more than one woman on the board (Fig.20). However, outside the Union, all of the nineteen Norwegian companies covered by the sample had at least two women on the board thanks to the equal representation law.

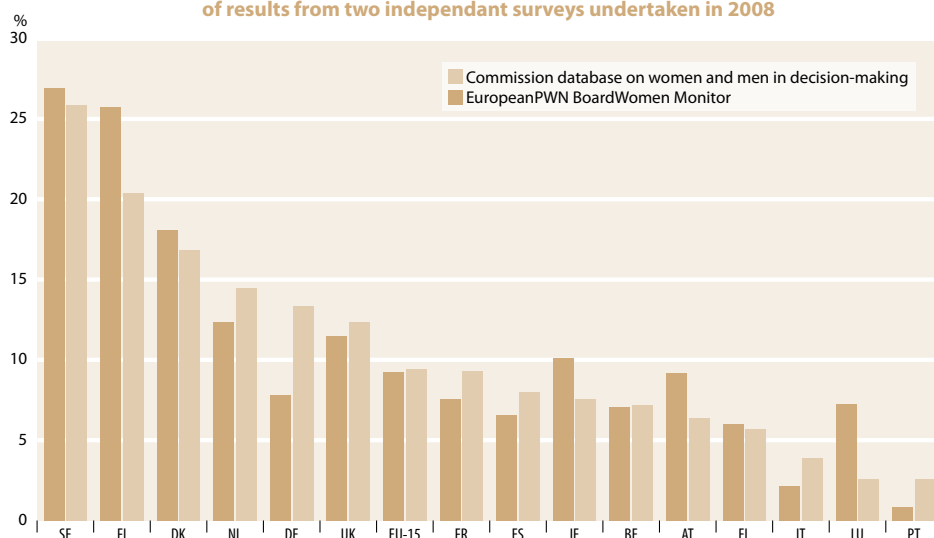
Figure 20. Numbers of women on the boards of large companies



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making

It is interesting to compare the results from the Commission database with another study addressing the same issue - the EuropeanPWN BoardWomen Monitor 2008, published by the European Professional Women's Network (EPWN)⁴⁰. The bi-annual EPWN study is based around companies that are members of the FTSEurofirst 300 Index⁴¹ and covers a total of 340 companies from 17 countries. Overall results indicate that women account for 9.7% of board members compared to 11.5% in the Commission data. However, these figures cannot be directly compared because of the different coverage. Taking EU-15 countries only as a fairer comparison, the figures are reassuringly close with 9.3% in the EPWN data (311 companies) and 9.4% in the Commission data (384 companies), though there are inevitably some differences for individual countries (Fig.21) presumably as a result of the different number of companies covered in each case.

Figure 21. Women board members in large companies from EU-15 countries - comparison of results from two independent surveys undertaken in 2008



2. High finance – another difficult area for women to penetrate

In these times of crisis within the world's financial systems the interventions of central banks, which have such a key role in setting monetary policy and controlling the financial system of each country, are of particular interest and relevance to all citizens. For the past three years the governors of all European central banks have been men. Denmark is the last country to have had a woman governor and Bodil Nyboe Andersen (1995-2005) is one of only six women to have ever taken such a position in Europe (Table 6).

40 http://www.europeanpwn.net/files/3rd_bwm_2008_press_release_1.pdf

41 The FTSEurofirst 300 Index is derived from the FTSE Developed Europe Index and covers largest 300 companies from the EU-15 countries plus Switzerland and Norway. The EPWN sample supplements this list as necessary in order to ensure a minimum of 6 companies per country. Note that the high numbers of large companies from the United Kingdom, Germany and France together make up 50% of the total sample and therefore contribute a significant weight to the overall results.

Table 6 - Female governors of European central banks

Period	Position	Name	Country
1995-2005	Governor of the National Bank	Bodil Nyboe Andersen	Denmark
1993-1994	President State Banking Supervision	Katalin Botos	Hungary
1992-2000	Governor National Bank	Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz	Poland
1990-1995	Governor of the National Bank	Maria Schaumayer	Austria
1967	President of the German National Bank	Grete Wittkowski	German Democratic Republic
1950-1958	President of the German National Bank	Greta Kuckhoff	

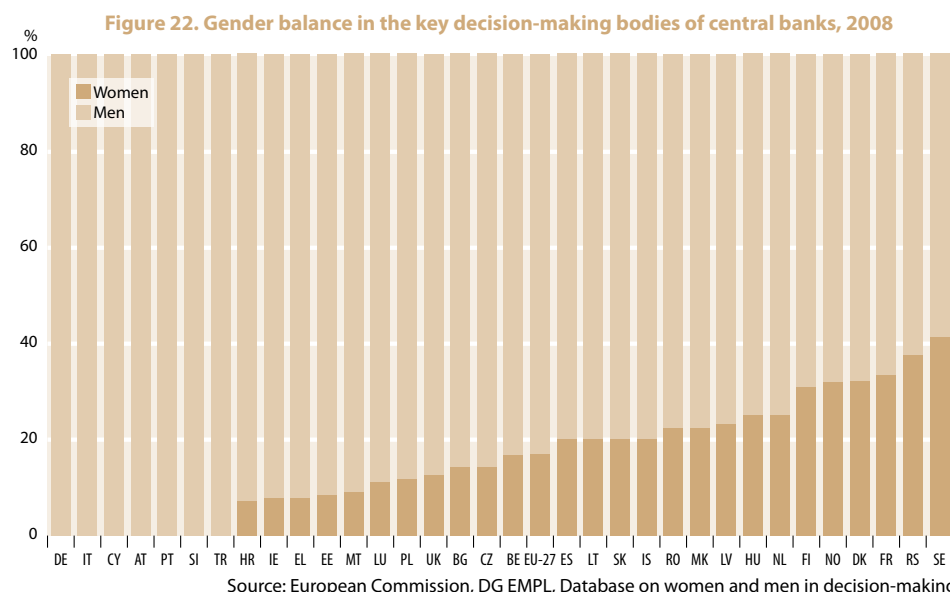
Source: *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership* (<http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/>)

Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women among Governors of the Central Banks*			
	2003	2007	2008
National banks, EU-15 average	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
National banks, EU-27 average	:	0.0%	0.0%
The proportion of women among members of the decision-making bodies of the Central Banks			
National banks, EU-15 average	17.6%	16.7%	18.2%
National banks, EU-27 average	15.6%	16.0%	16.9%

*In 2007 and previous years only the "highest" decision-making body of each central bank was included. Since the allocation of responsibility between different decision-making bodies varies in each central bank, the data did not have a wholly consistent coverage. 2008 data covers all decision-making bodies that are formally constituted within the statutes of the bank and which have the power to take decisions, without referral to a higher authority, that set or influence national policy, determine the policy/strategy of the bank or the framework within which it operates (statutes), or control the overall function of the organisation (day-to-day management/administration). Individuals who are members of more than one of these bodies are only counted once.

It is not only the top positions that are dominated by men - women are also very much underrepresented in most of the key decision-making bodies of central banks. In the EU as a whole, men account for 83% of the members of bank boards and similar bodies and women just 17%. This appears to be a slight improvement compared to 2007 but the change is equally likely to be related to the underlying data since the coverage of the decision-making bodies is different in each year (see table above). In six EU Member States - Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Portugal and Slovenia – and in Turkey, the decision-making bodies of the central banks are entirely comprised of men. At the other end of the spectrum, the central banks of three Member States - Finland, Denmark and France – have 30% or more women decision-makers, as do those of Norway and the Republic of Serbia, but only in Sweden does the share rise above 40% (Fig.22).



3. Public administration – more women putting policies into practice

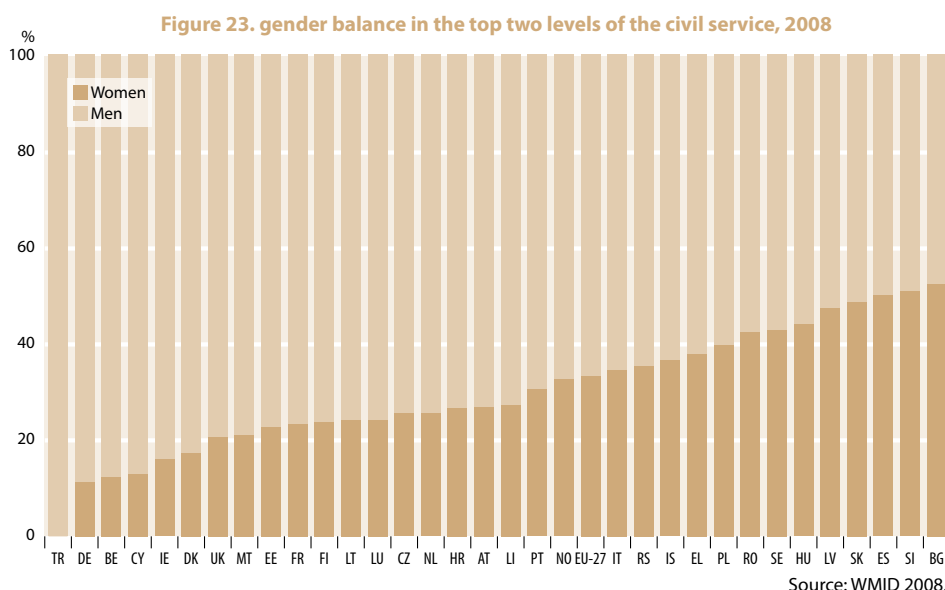
Civil servants working within government departments control the delivery of public services in each country. By taking practical responsibility for implementing legislation and other political decisions, senior civil servants have a significant influence on the way in which government policies ultimately affect the daily lives of citizens.

Beijing follow-up indicators

Proportion of the highest ranking women civil servants (levels 1 and 2 combined)			
	2003	2007	2008
EU-15 average	20.7%	30.5%	30.5%
EU-27 average*	24.8%	32.9%	33.2%
European institutions	13.9%	19.5%	21.8%

* 2003 figure includes 2004 data for CZ, EL, LT, MT, PL; 2007 figure includes 2006 data for NL

In 2008, women occupied one in three positions in the top two levels of the civil service in the EU Member States compared to one in four in 2003, but the extent to which women are involved at this senior level varies considerably between countries (Fig.23). There are five EU countries where women are so well represented in the top ranks of the civil service that gender parity has effectively been achieved – Latvia, Slovakia, Spain, Slovenia and Bulgaria all have 47-52% women in senior positions and Romania, Sweden and Hungary are not far behind with 42-44% women in top jobs within ministries. On the other hand, men still occupy 83-89% of senior positions in Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, Belgium and Germany. Turkey has no women in the top two tiers of the civil service.



Considering each of the top two levels separately shows that women are least well represented at the most senior level of public administrations. In 2008, women occupied just over 34% of positions in the second tier of the hierarchy across the EU but only 29% of the top level and the difference is very pronounced in some countries – for example in Slovakia women are underrepresented at the top level (13%) but predominate at the next level down (75%) and in both Germany and the Netherlands all of the top level positions are taken by men. However, this pattern is not repeated in all countries and women are relatively better represented in the most senior positions in Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia and Finland.

Table 7. Representation of women amongst the top-two levels of civil servants, 2008

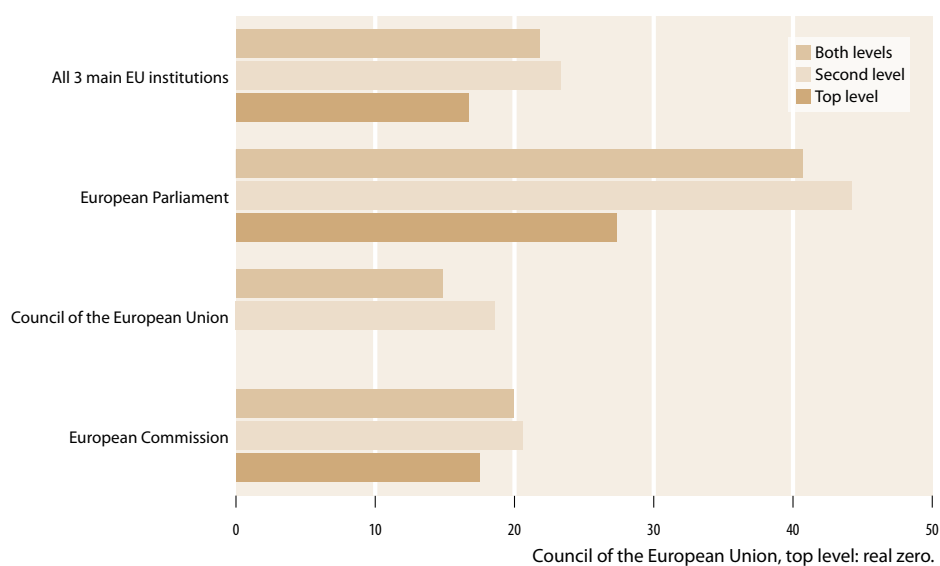
	Level 1	Level 2
>50%	Spain, Slovenia	Latvia, Bulgaria, Slovakia
40-50%	Iceland, Romania	Liechtenstein, Poland, Romania, Swede, Hungary, Slovenia
30-40%	Latvia, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Hungary	Serbia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway
20-30%	Lithuania, Luxembourg, Italy, Bulgaria, Ireland, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Serbia, Greece	Malta, Estonia, United Kingdom, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria
10-20%	Portugal, Belgium, Austria, France, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark	Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, Belgium
<10%	Malta, Cyprus, United Kingdom	
None	Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Germany, Turkey	Turkey

Note: Within each group countries ordered by decreasing share. Shares exactly on the border between groups promoted to the higher group.

In the three main EU institutions – the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament – women comprise just below 22% of senior administrators, more than 2 percentage points higher than in 2007. However, this is not a consistent improvement – proportion of female administrators on the staff of the Council of the European Union declined to 15% whilst the equivalent shares for the European Commission and the European Parliament increased to 20% and 41% respectively. As the European Commission has a large staff relative to the other institutions it contributes the major part of the overall figures.

As in the case of national administrators, women are less well represented in the very top level of the European hierarchy compared to the tier just below (Fig.24). Overall, just fewer than 17% of top level positions are held by women compared to just over 23% of second tier positions. This discrepancy is most prominent in the Council of the European Union where there are no women at all in the eleven top-level positions. Although the European Parliament does well overall, there is still a discrepancy between the two levels with women accounting for only one in four (27%) of the top posts compared to nearer to half (44%) of second tier positions.

Figure 24. Share of women civil servants in the two highest ranking administrative positions in the three main European institutions, 2008



Statistical annex

The majority of data used in this report are taken from the Commission database on women and men in decision-making so that the data underlying graphs and aggregate figures can be accessed online at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm.

This annex includes tables that either present data not included in the Commission database or give additional detail to data that can be found there.

Table A.1 Share of women members of the European Parliament by country, 1979-2008 (%)

	Jun-79	Jun-84	Jun-89	Jun-94	May-00	Jan-06	Sep-08
BE	25.0	16.7	20.8	32.0	32.0	29.2	33.3
BG	-	-	-	-	-	-	44.4
CZ	-	-	-	-	-	20.8	20.8
DK	25.0	43.8	37.5	43.8	37.5	37.5	42.8
DE	14.8	19.8	33.3	35.3	28.4	32.3	32.3
EE	-	-	-	-	-	33.3	50.0
IE	6.7	6.7	6.7	26.7	33.3	38.5	38.5
EL	-	8.3	0.0	16.0	20.0	29.2	29.2
ES	-	10.0	15.0	8.0	32.8	33.3	25.9
FR	22.2	19.8	22.2	29.9	42.5	42.3	46.0
IT	12.3	9.9	13.6	12.6	11.5	17.9	19.2
CY	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0
LV	-	-	-	-	-	22.2	22.2
LT	-	-	-	-	-	38.5	38.5
LU	33.3	33.3	50.0	33.3	33.3	50.0	50.0
HU	-	-	-	-	-	37.5	37.5
MT	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0
NL	20.0	28.0	28.0	32.2	35.5	44.4	48.2
AT	-	-	-	33.3	38.1	33.3	27.8
PL	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	14.8
PT	-	8.3	16.7	8.0	20.0	25.0	25.0
RO	-	-	-	-	-	-	34.3
SI	-	-	-	-	-	42.9	42.9
SK	-	-	-	-	-	35.7	35.7
FI	-	-	-	62.5	43.8	35.7	42.8
SE	-	-	-	45.4	45.5	57.9	47.3
UK	13.6	14.8	14.8	18.4	24.1	25.6	25.6

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Women in Politics: 60 years in retrospect*; European Commission, DG EMPL, database on women and men in decision-making

Table A.2 Gender balance in national parliaments, regional assemblies and in the European Parliament, 2008

	National parliaments						Regional assemblies (where relevant)						European Parliament					
	Single/lower house			Upper house			No. members			% members			No. members			% members		
	Men	Women	% members	Men	Women	% members	Men	Women	% members	Men	Women	% members	Men	Women	% members	Men	Women	% members
EU-27	5 379	1 704	75.9	24.1	1 874	495	79.1	20.9	17 158	5 167	76.9	23.1	540	245	68.8	31.2		
BE	94	56	62.7	37.3	41	30	57.7	42.3	405	123	76.7	23.3	16	8	66.7	33.3		
BG	188	52	78.3	21.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	55.6	44.4		
CZ	169	31	84.5	15.5	70	11	86.4	13.6	751	123	85.9	14.1	19	5	79.2	20.8		
DK	111	68	62.0	38.0	-	-	-	-	206	68	75.2	24.8	8	6	57.1	42.9		
DE	400	194	67.3	32.7	54	15	78.3	21.7	1 822	569	76.2	23.8	67	32	67.7	32.3		
EE	80	21	79.2	20.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	50.0	50.0		
IE	145	21	87.3	12.7	47	13	78.3	21.7	-	-	-	-	8	5	61.5	38.5		
EL	252	48	84.0	16.0	-	-	-	-	1 478	313	82.5	17.5	17	7	70.8	29.2		
ES	226	124	64.6	35.4	183	80	69.6	30.4	1 197	507	70.2	29.8	40	14	74.1	25.9		
FR	469	107	81.4	18.6	268	75	78.1	21.9	1 877	912	67.3	32.7	42	36	53.8	46.2		
IT	496	134	78.7	21.3	264	58	82.0	18.0	1 187	136	89.7	10.3	63	15	80.8	19.2		
CY	47	9	83.9	16.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0	100.0	0.0		
LV	79	21	79.0	21.0	-	-	-	-	667	222	75.0	25.0	7	2	77.8	22.2		
LT	108	33	76.6	23.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	5	61.5	38.5		
LU	45	15	75.0	25.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	50.0	50.0		
HU	344	42	89.1	10.9	-	-	-	-	862	104	89.2	10.8	15	9	62.5	37.5		
MT	63	6	91.3	8.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0	100.0	0.0		
NL	88	62	58.7	41.3	49	26	65.3	34.7	573	196	74.5	25.5	14	13	51.9	48.1		
AT	125	57	68.7	31.3	46	16	74.2	25.8	452	134	77.1	22.9	13	5	72.2	27.8		
PL	368	94	79.7	20.3	92	8	92.0	8.0	562	105	84.3	15.7	46	8	85.2	14.8		
PT	164	66	71.3	28.7	-	-	-	-	98	20	83.1	16.9	18	6	75.0	25.0		
RO	293	33	89.9	10.1	122	15	89.1	10.9	1 425	169	89.4	10.6	23	12	65.7	34.3		
SI	78	12	86.7	13.3	39	1	97.5	2.5	-	-	-	-	4	3	57.1	42.9		
SK	122	28	81.3	18.7	-	-	-	-	412	61	87.1	12.9	9	5	64.3	35.7		
FI	118	83	58.7	41.3	-	-	-	-	1 209	521	69.9	30.1	8	6	57.1	42.9		
SE	187	162	53.6	46.4	-	-	-	-	1 653	787	67.7	32.3	10	9	52.6	47.4		
UK	520	125	80.6	19.4	599	147	80.3	19.7	322	97	76.8	23.2	58	20	74.4	25.6		
HR	120	33	78.4	21.6	-	-	-	-	917	159	85.2	14.8						
MK	82	37	68.9	31.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
TR	497	50	90.9	9.1	-	-	-	-	3 192	35	98.9	1.1						
RS	191	55	77.6	22.4	-	-	-	-	117	23	83.6	16.4						
IS	42	21	66.7	33.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
LI	19	6	76.0	24.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
NO	82	45	64.6	35.4	26	16	61.9	38.1	787	348	69.3	30.7						
All countries	6 412	1 951	76.7	23.3	1 900	511	78.8	21.2	22 171	5 732	79.5	20.5						

Dates of data collection: National parliaments - Aug-Sept-08;
Regional assemblies - Jul-Sep 08; European Parliament - 29 Aug-08
Sources of data: Websites of national parliaments and regions; direct contacts
with national/regional authorities; European Parliament

Table A.3 Gender balance amongst candidates and elected representatives at recent elections to national parliaments (single/lower house)

	House of parliament	Date of last election	Candidates				Elected				Quota type		
			Total	Men	Women	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total	Men	Women		Men (%)	Women (%)
EU-27	(totals include only countries with data on candidates and elected)		71 997	48 860	23 137	67.9	32.1	5 936	4 505	1 431	75.9	24.1	
BE	Chamber of representatives (Chambre des représentants)	Jun-07	1 776	908	868	51.1	48.9	150	95	55	63.3	36.7	L
BG	National assembly (Народно събрание)	Jun-05	3 121	2 270	851	72.7	27.3	240	190	50	79.2	20.8	N
CZ	Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká sněmovna)	Jun-06	4 985	3 602	1 383	72.3	27.7	200	169	31	84.5	15.5	P
DK	Parliament (Folketing)	Nov-07	808	548	260	67.8	32.2	179	112	67	62.6	37.4	N
DE	Bundestag	Sep-05	3 648	2 631	1 017	72.1	27.9	614	419	195	68.2	31.8	P
EE	State Council (Riigikogu)	Mar-07	975	711	264	72.9	27.1	101	77	24	76.2	23.8	N
IE	Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives of Ireland)	May-07	466	384	82	82.4	17.6	166	144	22	86.7	13.3	N
EL	Hellenic Parliament (Βουλή των Ελλήνων Vouli ton Ellinon)	Sep-07	:	:	:	:	:	300	252	48	84.0	16.0	P
ES	Congress of Deputies (Congreso de los Diputados)	Mar-08	8 448	4 503	3 945	53.3	46.7	350	223	127	63.7	36.3	L
FR	National Assembly (Assemblée nationale)	Jun-07	7 639	4 462	3 177	58.4	41.6	577	470	107	81.5	18.5	L
IT	Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei Deputati)	Apr-08	:	:	:	:	:	630	496	134	78.7	21.3	P
CY	House of Representatives (Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων Vouli Antiprosopon / Temsilciler Meclisi)	May-06	487	376	111	77.2	22.8	56	48	8	85.7	14.3	N
LV	Parliament (Saeima)	Oct-06	1 024	755	269	73.7	26.3	100	81	19	81.0	19.0	N
LT	Parliament (Seimas)	Oct-04	1 193	893	300	74.9	25.1	141	110	31	78.0	22.0	P
LU	Chamber of Deputies (Chambre vun Députéierten)	Jun-04	413	:	:	:	:	60	48	12	80.0	20.0	P
HU	National Assembly (Országgyűlés)	Apr-06	2 804	2 337	467	83.3	16.7	386	346	40	89.6	10.4	P
MT	House of Representatives (Il-Kamra tar-Rapprezentanti)	Mar-08	260	241	19	92.7	7.3	69	63	6	91.3	8.7	P
NL	Second Chamber (Tweede Kamer)	Nov-06	683	476	207	69.7	30.3	150	95	55	63.3	36.7	P
AT	National Council (Nationalrat)	Sep-08	:	:	:	:	:	183	133	50	72.7	27.3	P
PL	Diet (Sejm)	Oct-07	6 187	4 759	1 428	76.9	23.1	460	366	94	79.6	20.4	P
PT	Assembly of the Republic (Assembleia da República)	Feb-05	2 931	1 984	947	67.7	32.3	230	181	49	78.7	21.3	L
RO	Chamber of Deputies (Camera Deputaţilor)	Nov-04	9 997	7 273	2 724	72.8	27.2	332	294	38	88.6	11.4	P
SI	National Assembly (Državni zbor)	Sep-08	1 200	800	400	66.7	33.3	90	78	12	86.7	13.3	L
SK	National Council (Národná rada)	Jun-06	2 340	1 808	532	77.3	22.7	150	126	24	84.0	16.0	N
FI	Parliament (Eduskunta)	Mar-07	2 004	1 205	799	60.1	39.9	200	116	84	58.0	42.0	N
SE	Diet (Riksdag)	Sep-06	5 469	3 117	2 352	57.0	43.0	349	184	165	52.7	47.3	P
UK	House of Commons	May-05	3 552	2 817	735	79.3	20.7	646	518	128	80.2	19.8	P
HR	Croatian Assembly (Hrvatski Sabor)	Nov-07	3 585	2 512	1 073	70.1	29.9	153	121	32	79.1	20.9	P
MK	Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (Sobranie)	Jun-08	1 540	1 001	539	65.0	35.0	120	84	36	70.0	30.0	L
TR	Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)	Jul-07	18 265	15 032	3 233	82.3	17.7	550	500	50	90.9	9.1	N
RS	National Assembly (Narodna skupština)	May-08	:	:	:	:	:	250	196	54	78.4	21.6	L
IS	Assembly of All (Alþingi)	May-07	756	399	357	52.8	47.2	63	43	20	68.3	31.7	P
LI	Diet (Landtag)	Mar-05	60	41	19	68.3	31.7	25	19	6	76.0	24.0	N
NO	Great Assembly (Storting)	Sep-05	:	:	:	:	:	169	105	64	62.1	37.9	P
All countries	(totals include only countries with data on candidates and elected)		96 203	67 845	28 358	70.5	29.5	8 439	6 502	1 937	77.0	23.0	

Data refer to the most recent election in each country (to end September 2008). Numbers elected may therefore differ from the current situation shown in Table A.2 due to mid-term changes.

Sources of data: IPU Parlinfo database; various national websites
Quota types: L = legislative quota, P = party quota, N = none

Table A.4 Gender balance amongst candidates for elections European Parliament, 1999 and 2004

	1999					2004				
	Total	Men	Women	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total	Men	Women	Men (%)	Women (%)
EU-25	-	-	-	-	-	9,958	6,568	3,390	66.0	34.0
EU-15	6,445	4,606	1,839	71.5	28.5	6,907	4,268	2,639	61.8	38.2
BE	187	113	74	60.4	39.6	193	101	92	52.3	47.7
CZ	-	-	-	-	-	267	196	71	73.4	26.6
DK	206	142	64	68.9	31.1	142	92	50	64.8	35.2
DE	526	350	176	66.5	33.5	537	357	180	66.5	33.5
EE	-	-	-	-	-	95	71	24	74.7	25.3
IE	42	36	6	85.7	14.3	44	33	11	75.0	25.0
EL	290	235	55	81.0	19.0	133	94	39	70.7	29.3
ES	675	448	227	66.4	33.6	399	255	144	63.9	36.1
FR	802	460	342	57.4	42.6	1,906	964	942	50.6	49.4
IT	1,819	1,524	295	83.8	16.2	1,615	1,084	531	67.1	32.9
CY	-	-	-	-	-	59	45	14	76.3	23.7
LV	-	-	-	-	-	245	178	67	72.7	27.3
LT	-	-	-	-	-	241	188	53	78.0	22.0
LU	82	57	25	69.5	30.5	84	57	27	67.9	32.1
HU	-	-	-	-	-	254	202	52	79.5	20.5
MT	-	-	-	-	-	26	22	4	84.6	15.4
NL	191	150	41	78.5	21.5	276	198	78	71.7	28.3
AT	225	130	95	57.8	42.2	168	94	74	56.0	44.0
PL	-	-	-	-	-	1,584	1,212	372	76.5	23.5
PT	135	92	43	68.1	31.9	122	82	40	67.2	32.8
SI	-	-	-	-	-	91	49	42	53.8	46.2
SK	-	-	-	-	-	189	137	52	72.5	27.5
FI	140	86	54	61.4	38.6	227	144	83	63.4	36.6
SE	243	128	115	52.7	47.3	377	223	154	59.2	40.8
UK	882	655	227	74.3	25.7	684	490	194	71.6	28.4

Sources: European Parliament;
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/election/listcand/cceu01.htm>
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2004/ep-election/sites/en/yourvoice/>
 IPU, Women in Parliament in 2007: the year in perspective

European Commission

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Prepared for the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, this report aims to raise awareness of the extent of gender inequality in politics by analysing the current situation and investigating some of the reasons that the persistent deficit is proving so difficult to break down. The report is split into two sections, the main section covers the gender balance in politics at all levels and examines the current situation of women as elected representatives, the extent to which they are selected as candidates for election, how this links to electoral success and some of the reasons behind the limited progress to date. The second section briefly analyses the situation in some other areas, including business and public administration. This report is targeted at stakeholders in gender equality, Member States, EU and international Institutions, social partners, media, NGOs, academics and companies.

This publication is available in printed format in English, French and German.

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