

Women of Europe

Editorial

The number of women elected to the new European Parliament has increased. There were 26.5 % last time, and now there are 30 %. Sweden (50 %) heads the list followed by Finland (43.8 %) and, surprisingly, France (40.2 %). Yes indeed, this country which was the poor relation with regard to the number of women in Parliament is now among the front runners. What brought about this spectacular recovery? Was it the publication of European statistics? A marked trend throughout Europe? The thorough work carried out by women's organisations? The quota policies?

It is significant that France and Austria put forward 50.8 % and 49.7 % women in their lists. The first half of the German lists included 53 % women and the Austrian lists 49.15 %. Spain and Finland put 50 % women at the head of their lists (¹).

(¹) Statistics compiled by the European Women's Lobby.

Results of the European elections of 13 June 1999

Country	Seats	Women	% women
Sweden	22	11	50.0
Finland	16	7	43.8
France	87	35	40.2
Austria	21	8	38.1
Denmark	16	6	37.5
Germany	99	36	37.4
Netherlands	31	10	35.5
Spain	64	22	34.4
Ireland	15	5	33.3
Belgium	25	7	32.0
UK	87	21	24.1
Portugal	25	5	20.0
Greece	25	4	16.0
Italy	87	10	11.5
Luxembourg	6	0	0.0
Total	626	187	30.0

One comes, the other goes: snapshot of the Members of the European Parliament

Ms Jessica Larive (VVD, NL) had been a Member of the European Parliament for 15 years. She was in turn member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy, and the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy. At the same time, she continued to be a member of the Committee on Women's Rights. We asked her if she regretted anything

or if there was a project relating to gender which she did not see completed during this full parliamentary career.

Ms Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSOE, E) was elected. In her country she had been a regional member for Galicia and mayor of the small town of Ares. We asked her what was her main hope for equal opportunities.



Ms Jessica Larive

'During my first 10 years in office, important legislative work had to be done. Several areas closely affecting women had to be regulated: part-time work, parental leave and many others. Now, I think that the essential part has been done. What remains is to incorporate the equal opportunities dimension into all policies and projects (mainstreaming). For that reason, even if ideally it ought to be possible to disband the Committee on Women's Rights and it should be left to the Members of Parliament to see to it that the equal opportunities objective is achieved in all Community policies, in reality the Committee on Women's Rights cannot be dissolved. It must, more than ever, play its role as "guardian of the cause of women" and be ever more vigilant in order that equal opportunities become a reality in the Union. My personal wish is that the Committee on Women's Rights will become a real monitoring board consisting of men and women who also sit on all the other parliamentary committees and who thus have the necessary overview to follow-up mainstreaming.'



Ms Rosa Miguélez Ramos

'I simply hope that there will be as many women Members of Parliament as possible, for that is the best way of making mainstreaming — which, at this stage, is not much more than a pious wish — a practical reality. Only women themselves can ensure that their interests are furthered. This may sound pessimistic but that is the way of things. For example, I have been following the discussions on the Community action programme in support of restructuring the textile industry. The concern of the Members of Parliament was perfectly praiseworthy: need for new types of training, retraining, technical innovation, new processes, alternative economic activities, etc. But who looked after the specific needs of women, who are in the majority in the industry but also the least qualified and thus the most vulnerable? Male politicians, however well intentioned they may be, do not spontaneously concern themselves with the fate of women and their special requirements in a given situation. The problem is historical and cultural and it is up to us, the women Members of Parliament, to reverse the trend.'

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Meeting of Women Members of Parliament

This network, set up in 1978, is an offshoot of the Inter-Parliamentary Union – IPU, the worldwide organisation of parliaments of independent States, which dates from 1889. The IPU is a forum for parliamentary dialogue which seeks to encourage peace and cooperation between peoples and to consolidate parliamentary democracy.

Through it, women have tried to increase their visibility and their impact on national policies. They have opted for mainstreaming with the idea that women's interests are best served in that way. The permanent structure of the network is the Coordination Committee of Women Members of Parliament, but its work is carried out by the network of Women Members of Parliament in the national parliaments, irrespective of their political party.

The network publishes statistics on women in the national parliaments, which can be consulted on the Internet (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-f/world.htm>).

The network's objectives are:

- to increase the number of women Members of Parliament as delegates to IPU conferences;

- to encourage women Members of Parliament to hold key posts in the IPU;
- to disseminate more efficiently information on two aspects: the status of women in their own regions and the strategies and procedures developed in other countries in order to meet women's requirements;
- to study beforehand the themes to be discussed at IPU conferences from the point of view of women legislators and to alert their delegations to gender issues and thereby to further their aims at the plenary assembly;
- to identify the themes which they would like the IPU conference to discuss.

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PROPORTION OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT: WORLD CLASSIFICATION

The figures in the following table have been prepared by the Inter-Parliamentary Union from information supplied by national parliaments; 178 countries have been classified in decreasing order of the percentage of women. Here we list only a limited number of countries in order to include all the Member States of the European Union, which are in bold.

Single or lower house				Single or lower house				Single or lower house			
Position	Country	Elections	% women	Position	Country	Elections	% women	Position	Country	Elections	% women
1	Sweden	Sep. 1998	42.7	26	Guyana	Dec. 1997	18.5	"	Portugal	Oct. 1995	13.0
2	Denmark	Mar. 1998	37.4	27	United Kingdom	May 1997	18.4	50	United States of America	Nov. 1998	12.9
3	Finland	Mar. 1999	37.0	28	Turkmenistan	Dec. 1994	18.0	51	Slovakia	Sep. 1998	12.7
4	Norway	Sep. 1997	36.4	29	Uganda	June 1996	17.9	52	Guatemala	Nov. 1995	12.5
5	Netherlands	May 1998	36.0	30	Lithuania	Oct. 1996	17.5	53	Philippines	May 1998	12.4
6	Iceland	May 1999	34.9	31	Ecuador	May 1996	17.4	54	Mali	July 1997	12.2
7	Germany	Sep. 1998	30.9	32	Mexico	July 1997	17.2	55	Senegal	May 1998	12.1
8	New Zealand	Oct. 1996	29.2	33	Rwanda	Nov. 1994	17.1	56	Azerbaijan	Nov. 1995	12.0
9	Argentina	Oct. 1997	27.6	34	Latvia	Oct. 1998	17.0	"	Belgium	May 1995	12.0
"	Cuba	Jan. 1998	27.6	35	Salvador	Mar. 1997	16.7	"	Congo	Jan. 1998	12.0
11	Austria	Dec. 1995	26.2	36	United Rep. of Tanzania	Oct. 1995	16.4	"	Ireland	June 1997	12.0
12	Vietnam	July 1997	26.0	37	Dominican Republic	May 1998	16.1	60	Colombia	Mar. 1998	11.8
13	Mozambique	Oct. 1994	25.2	38	Suriname	May 1996	15.7	61	Israel	May 1999	11.7
14	Seychelles	Mar. 1998	23.5	39	Angola	Sep. 1992	15.5	"	Kazakhstan	Dec. 1995	11.7
15	Australia	Oct. 1998	22.4	40	Bahamas	Mar. 1997	15.0	63	Bolivia	June 1997	11.5
16	Monaco	Feb. 1998	22.2	"	Czech Republic	June 1998	15.0	64	Fiji	May 1999	11.3
"	Namibia	Dec. 1994	22.2	42	Eritrea	Feb. 1994	14.7	65	Cape Verde	Dec. 1995	11.1
18	China	1997-98	21.8	43	Zimbabwe	Apr. 1995	14.0	"	Italy	Apr. 1996	11.1
19	Spain	Mar. 1996	21.6	44	Jamaica	Dec. 1997	13.3	"	Saint Lucia	May 1997	11.1
20	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	Dec. 1997	21.2	"	Saint Kitts and Nevis	July 1995	13.3	"	Trinidad and Tobago	Nov. 1995	11.1
21	Switzerland	Oct. 1995	21.0	"	San Marino	May 1998	13.3	69	France	May 1997	10.9
22	Canada	June 1997	20.6	47	Venezuela	Nov. 1998	13.1	70	Syrian Arab Republic	Aug. 1998	10.4
23	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	July 1998	20.1	48	Poland	Sep. 1997	13.0
24	Luxembourg	June 1994	20.0				
25	Costa Rica	Feb. 1998	19.3					81	Greece	Sep. 1996	6.3

(Statistics validated for the year given or from the year given.)

March by the women of the world

In 1995, the Quebec Women's Federation organised a march by women against poverty. In 2000, it plans a march by the women of the world. Why? 'Violence against women is a daily occurrence and women continue to become poorer in the world. For that reason it is essential that solidarity be worldwide so that, everywhere, women will be determined to fight for equality, development and peace', its representatives declare. 'The march by the women of the world is a specific marshalling project enabling us to mark the entry of women into the new millennium and to show their determination to change the world!'

During these national marches which will end with national rallies, the participants will have cards signed to mobilise men and women everywhere. Women from different countries will assemble in front of United Nations offices in every major region of the world. A large worldwide rally will end the march before the UN in New York on 17 October 2000.

March by the women of the world
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Daphne adopted

On 27 May last year, the Council of Ministers (Youth), with Ms Christine Bergmann, German Federal Minister, as President, adopted the Daphne programme on violence against children and women. For the period 2000-04, the programme will have a budget of EUR 20 million, or EUR 5 million less than the Commission had proposed. Ms Bergmann stated that she was very satisfied that the ministers had reached agreement on

this taboo topic and had allocated funds for new projects to organisations which are active on the ground.

The Daphne programme is based on Article 152 of the Amsterdam Treaty, namely the protection of public health in the broad sense. Thus it comes under the co-decision procedure and will be transmitted to the EP for first reading.

Matrimonial and parental matters – a proposal for a regulation

The European Commission has proposed that a Council regulation replace a convention relating to parental and matrimonial matters signed in Brussels on 28 May 1998. The regulation introduces modern, uniform rules relating to the annulment of marriage, divorce and separation. It also aims to facilitate rapid and automatic recognition by the Member States of decisions adopted in another Member State.

It lays down provisions relating to the parental responsibility of the two spouses in the event of divorce or separation by simplifying recognition and implementation of these decisions.

The form selected for this instrument, namely a regulation, is justified by the need to apply strictly defined and harmonised rules to jurisdiction and the recognition of decisions. Otherwise, cross-border recognition of decisions would simply not function,' Anita Gradin, former Member of the Commission, explained.

This convention is being changed into an EU legal instrument as a result of the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty.

Statistics

On average, women earn 25 % less than men

This is the conclusion of a survey on full-time employees ⁽¹⁾ conducted in the EU by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

These averages reflect structural differences: women and men do not hold the same posts. In the population surveyed, one third of the women are office employees as against only 10 % men; 47 % men are workers as against 18 % women and, on average, manual workers are better paid than white-collar workers. Women who work are younger on average: 44 % are under 30 years old as against 32 % for men. Fewer older women work and many women stop work to bring up their children.

Thus women tend to have less seniority and are less likely to hold management posts.

Lastly, education levels vary: 51 % of women did not go beyond primary or secondary education – men 29 %; 36 % of men completed secondary (technical) education – 29 % of women.

But even if the salary differences in groups of people with the same characteristics in statistical terms are studied, women are systematically less well paid. The salary gap stands at about 15 %. For example, in the category 'senior management' the inequality is particularly striking in 10 of the 15 Member States because 'there are very few women at the highest level of the hierarchy'. The report also refers to the differences in overtime paid mainly to manual workers – men in the majority – while the staff in the retail trade where pay is low consists mostly of women.

GROSS SALARIES FOR WOMEN AS A % OF SALARIES FOR MEN ⁽¹⁾

(full-time remuneration, bonuses excluded)

Germany ⁽²⁾	89.9
Denmark	88.1
Sweden	87.0
Luxembourg	83.9
Belgium	83.2
Finland	81.6
Germany ⁽³⁾	76.9
France	76.6
Italy	76.5
Spain	74.0
United Kingdom	73.7
Austria	73.6
Ireland	73.4
Portugal	71.7
Netherlands	70.6
Greece ⁽⁴⁾	68.0

⁽¹⁾ Statistics for 1995, except for France (1994) and Austria (1996). As structural differences change very slowly, these figures should reflect the present situation.

⁽²⁾ New Länder, East Berlin included.

⁽³⁾ Former Länder.

⁽⁴⁾ Industry only.

⁽¹⁾ In all sectors of the economy, with the exception of agriculture, education, health, personal services and public administration.

Women of Europe on the web

Since 1 June, DG X (Information for Women) has had a site on the Internet. To date its main communication tool has been the *Women of Europe* newsletter with a circulation of around 25 000, which, from now on, will be available in an electronic version. A data bank including associations and specialised NGOs will be available shortly.

DG X (Information for Women) has two objectives: to disseminate information on Union policies relating to women and to act as an intermediary between the Commission and women in the Member States.

The address of the site:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/women/index_en.html

Information campaign for women – call for proposals

The European Commission is launching a call for proposals in order to encourage public and private organisations to submit information and communication projects for women. Among these objectives is the aim to encourage women to take a more active part in the democratic debate and the dissemination of information to target publics in the applicant countries. Deadline for the submission of projects: 16 August 1999.

Further information on:

Infofemmes@dg10.cec.be

The complete text of the call for proposals is available on-line, OJ C 163:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/lex/en/oj/index.html>

Opinion poll on gender and electoral choices

Various American studies show that men and women have different political priorities and that these are reflected in their electoral choices. The Centre for the American Woman in Politics (CAWP) is one of the first research institutes to have conducted surveys on the matter in the middle of the 1980s. It emerged from them that women are generally:

- less militaristic;
- most often opposed to the death penalty;

- more concerned about the environment;
- more social;
- less racist.

The CAWP worked with a European body, 'European database: women in decision-making', on a study on this theme in Europe. The study took the form of an opinion poll carried out on the Internet and questionnaires, in Germany and Belgium, two Member States with federal political structures and comparable electoral systems. Other specific groups will also be surveyed. The survey will be finished in July 1999 and an analysis of the results will be published in October. The study has the support of the EU (fourth action programme on equal opportunities for men and women).

<http://www.db-decision.de/news/news-english.htm>

Conferences

Mainstreaming of equal opportunities

A conference on this theme will be held in Athens from 16 to 18 September 1999. Maria-Niki Koutsileou, Secretary-General for Equality in Greece, and Margareta Winberg, Swedish Minister for Equal Opportunities, will open the debate. The conference will be organised by the Council of Europe.

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Seminar: 'Violence against women'

For some years, violence against women has stopped being a taboo subject and is now discussed openly. Attention has been switched to the perpetrators of the violence. In some countries, centres offer therapy for violent men.

This policy has led to a study of the causes and mechanisms of male violence. However, research is only in its early stages. Those working on the matter have few opportunities to exchange views within a European framework. A seminar on this theme will be organised by the Council of Europe – Equality Section, Directorate of Human Rights – on 7 and 8 October 1999. It is aimed at research workers and practitioners in the field and will not be open to the public.

Publications

Women and men in the towns of Europe

This report is the product of seminars organised by the committee of the local and regional elected representatives of the CCRE (Council of European Municipalities and Regions). The work has several objectives. The first is to provide statistics by sex on the elected representatives in the countries of the Union. Various countries have gaps in their statistics on sex. Generally, the same countries fall well behind with regard to women in the decision-making process. The second objective is to use statistics and comparisons between the countries of the Union, to gain an insight into the reasons for the differences in the various countries and to disseminate information on strategies which tend to achieve balanced representation. The third objective is to measure, on the basis of practical analyses, the change brought about by the reduction in the number of men on town councils. Women making use of full citizenship is one of the factors of a revolution which has not yet been completed. The resistance that continues to be encountered on the road to parity in public decision-making comes from the fact that, by their presence, they help to question the old order with its impact on public and private life.

This document can be obtained from:

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