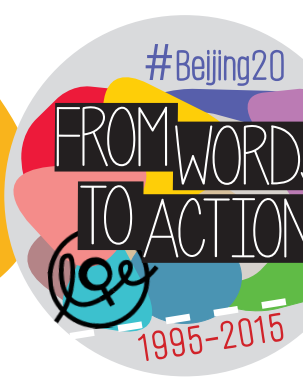




WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

"If media are a mirror of society as they should be, they certainly need to reflect better the fact that gender equality is a fundamental human right."
International Federation of Journalists, Gender Equality in Journalism.



During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviours, especially of children and young adults. Books, newspapers, magazines, photography, sound recordings, films, radio, television, the Internet, and other social media, convey messages, values, beliefs. All forms of media have shaped and will continue to strongly influence our view of the world. All over the world, the media could provide an important contribution to advance the status of women and has already proven to play a great role in creating awareness and connecting women. However women still suffer from a serious lack of visibility in the media. Moreover, the persistence of gender stereotyping and discrimination in the media impedes the realisation of equality between women and men. It is still men who make the news, tell the news and are the news. The growing eroticisation of violence and objectification of women in the media must be a societal concern. The rapidly

increasing spread and impact of the media, especially in digital form, make ensuring the protection of human dignity in media content all the more essential.

The media is a cornerstone of democratic societies, just as gender equality is. We must at the same time secure freedom of press and expression, and counteract stereotypical and sexist representations of women and women's issues.

BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and the new technologies of communication.
- Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.



FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

As underlined by EIGE, while women have considerably outnumbered men in university-level and practice-based journalism programmes (68% of graduates in journalism), the ownership, control and organisational culture of the media remains largely masculine. Women are still significantly under-represented in the decision-making structures of media organisations (32 % of all senior positions) and the pay gap between female and male media professionals is still very high (estimated at 17 % across the EU).

In the EU, women account for only 24% of people that we hear or read about in the news. Moreover, while men are asked to speak as experts, women continue to be considered as victims or readers or watchers belonging to the general public. Women's image in the media is very much stereotyped and reductive. Only 4% of the

news coverage is against stereotypical portrayal. Only 16% of photos in European newspaper show women over 45 years of age (according to the project "You can't be what you can't see"). Women are only 32% of principal TV characters. When at least one writer on a film is a woman, the number of female characters rises from 30 to 40 per cent (Media Smarts). Less than 9% of sports coverage is devoted to women's sports. And women are more than twice as likely to be portrayed in (semi-)nudity in adverts.

The objectification of women and girls in video games, music video clips and lyrics, movies, adverts, children's TV programmes, and magazines, should be considered a very serious issue. Two-thirds of young people turn to the media when they want to learn about sex. 80% of boys between 14 and 18 years old and 45% of girls watched a pornographic movie in the past year.



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

ACTIONS

- In 2010, the EWL exchanged with cosmetics industries across Europe to raise awareness on the impacts of gender stereotypes in advertising and call for self-regulation mechanisms.
- EWL website and social media promote women's views, opinions and actions in Europe!
- In 2014, as part of its 50/50 Campaign on parity democracy, the EWL explored the relationship between sexist stereotypes and ownership in the media and the participation of women in politics.



WOMEN AND THE MEDIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



The European Union has made slow progress in ensuring that the principle of gender equality, which was enshrined in its founding Treaties, applies and is implemented with regard to the media industry. While the EU prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in all spheres of society, equal treatment between women and men is not guaranteed in the areas of media and education, and the EU Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) doesn't address stereotypes and gender inequality in the media.

In 2013, the EPSCO Council of Ministers adopted Conclusions on Women and the Media and took note of the first indicators

prepared by EIGE. However, those indicators mainly concentrate on women's participation and decision-making in the media. We lack data about the link between women's rights and participation and gender stereotypes and the media.

In 2013, the European Parliament approved a report on 'eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU', which stresses the need to run special courses on gender stereotypes in the media for national advertising standards committees and self-regulatory bodies to raise awareness of the negative influence of gender-discriminatory images.

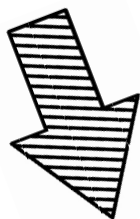


GOOD PRACTICE

- In Luxembourg: every Tuesday, newspapers dedicate their sports section to women. Ahead of national elections, some organisations proposed workshops for female candidates to make better use of social media.
- In Bulgaria, there is a code of conduct in the newspapers.
- Estonia sees TV channels and magazines specialised in gender issues.
- Different EU countries participate in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) which maps the representation of women and men in news media worldwide.

CHALLENGES

- Women who write on the Internet and participate in social media, on blogs and other online forums, meet increasing hostility and harassment. This organised, sexist harassment threatens the empowerment of women and is a way to silence women's voices in the public sphere. Moreover, cyber hate has both short and long-term harmful effects on women's quality of life and mental health, and weakens the potential for active participation in society, while trivialising negative views on all women and girls.
- Advertisements reinforce gender stereotyping, objectification, and hypersexualisation of women's body. Excessive use of Photoshop creates fake examples of female beauty, which can negatively influence girls and women's self-image.
- Advertisers, TV and movie studios legitimise the abundance of female stereotypes with economic arguments. Today, the most desirable part of the audience consists of males aged 18 to 34. TV writers and producers are more inclined to create shows aimed at men, and to give key roles to men. Media executives therefore argue that the economics of the industry make it impossible to avoid stereotypes of women. It is urgent to question the economics of gender stereotyping in all forms of media (Media Smarts).
- What appears in the news and what is left out of the news matters. There is a need for more awareness and education to help people, especially youth, to critically look at the role and content of the media, from a women's rights and gender equality perspective.



OUR DEMANDS **Mirror, mirror on the wall... a fair and equal representation of women in the media.**

- **Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender in the area of media and education.**
- **Fully mainstream gender equality and women's rights into all European policies and programmes related to the media and information society, including the communication tools of the European institutions and agencies.**
- **Develop, fund and encourage training programmes on women's rights, anti-discrimination and gender stereotypes for media professionals.**
- **Create a European Media Monitoring Group with a specific gender equality branch to fight gender stereotyping and misrepresentation of women.**
- **Promote more diversity in female role models and the way women are portrayed in the media, and a diversified and realistic picture of the skills and the potential of women in society, as well as of the diversity of women's identities.**
- **Introduce a code of conduct for journalist which stresses gender equality.**
- **Develop research and comparable data on women and the media, and databases with expert women, from diverse backgrounds and identities.**
- **Create awareness campaigns for children and young people, to prevent stereotypes in cartoons, cyber harassment, and promote positive images.**
- **Follow-up concretely on the 1997 European Parliament Resolution calling for the prohibition of all forms of pornography in the media, as well as the advertising of sex tourism.**

