



24 March 2017

GEC (2017) 5

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)

Third round of monitoring on the implementation of
CM Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on
balanced participation of women and men
in political and public decision making

Draft analytical report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making (hereafter referred to as the Recommendation). The governments of the member states committed themselves to report regularly to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on the measures taken and the progress made in achieving a balanced participation of women and men in political and public life, defined as a minimum representation of 40% of each sex.

Two earlier monitoring rounds took place in 2005 and 2008 and a [comparative study on the results of the first and second rounds of monitoring of the Recommendation](#) was published in 2010 (Council of Europe, 2010). For the third monitoring round, an online questionnaire was made available to all 47 Council of Europe member states in January 2016, and 46 of them participated in the survey. This report analyses the data gathered in 2016 and where possible, comparisons are made with data gathered in the two earlier monitoring rounds to identify evolutions and trends.

The main findings of the 2016 third monitoring round are:

Legislative Power

Only a few countries met the Recommendation's minimum target of 40% elected women and men in any of their legislative bodies. The average proportion of elected women stayed at around 25% and was consistent across the legislative assemblies surveyed. The proportions of countries within the 30-39.9% and the minus 20% categories remained stable between 2005 and 2016, which points towards a stagnation. Nevertheless, the country level evolutions show sharp increases or decreases in certain countries. The local level was particularly unstable in that respect. A better gender balance in assemblies was accompanied by a better gender balance among internal positions of power within the legislative branch as well.

Executive Power

The positions at the very top of the political power in 2016 in Europe were still almost exclusively male dominated: less than 10% of the countries met the 40% minimum target for each sex. The average proportion of women heads of state or in an executive body did not exceed 20%. A positive evolution was discerned only with regard to heads of national governments and regional governments when comparing 2005 and 2016; while the other functions remained more or less stable. While the local (mayors) and national executives were (highly) problematic, regional governments stood out as more promising, even though their composition was not gender balanced either.

The effects of electoral systems and gender quotas or parity systems - Proportional electoral systems were more favourable for a balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making bodies than majoritarian electoral systems. In 2016, the highest proportion of women members of the single/lower houses was found in countries using proportional list systems and the lowest proportion of women members was found in single majority systems. A number of countries have introduced gender quota legislation or parity systems between 2005 and 2016: five countries reported having them in 2005 and 17 in 2016, which

can be considered progress with regards to the implementation of the Recommendation. Such legislation, especially when it was strong, had a positive impact on achieving a better gender balance in a number of countries, at different levels (e.g. the data shows good results at the local level). Countries that only had political party quotas performed better in terms of gender balance in the lower/single houses than countries with quota legislation or legal parity systems, even when such legislation was combined with voluntary political party quotas. There was a strong correlation between the strength of the legislative quotas (measured in terms of quota percentage, whether they include a rank order for men and women, and whether they include sanctions and, if so, the type of sanction) and the percentage of women elected in national elections.

Countries with political party quotas, rules or regulations, either for national elections or for internal party decision-making bodies, had on average higher levels of women in national lower houses, party executives and among party members, than countries without such measures. Political party quotas for elections and for internal decision-making bodies have a positive impact in terms of gender balance. In the five countries that had quota legislation or parity systems both in 2005 and 2016, women's representation increased significantly. This seems to point at an effective impact of such measures overtime, notwithstanding interval fluctuations.

However, including gender equality principles in legal frameworks for political parties or in laws on the public funding of political parties did not seem to automatically lead to significantly better results. Furthermore, the impact of training women does not seem to lead to substantially higher numbers of them in national lower houses, party executives or as party leaders.

Judicial Power

Very few courts reached the 40% minimum target set by the Recommendation. High/supreme courts performed much better than constitutional courts in terms of gender balance. High/supreme courts witnessed a positive evolution between 2005 and 2016. This general trend should be read together with the sometimes significant increases and decreases in the number of women judges at the individual country level. In addition, the data shows no link between the appointment method (whether by the head of state, government, superior council of magistracy, or in another way) and gender balance among judges in high/supreme courts.

Diplomatic service

The number of countries where the various functions of the diplomatic service reached the 40% minimum target was very low, and in 2016 some countries had no women diplomats at all in some of these functions. However, there were great variations between countries and over time concerning the participation of women and men at different levels of the diplomatic service. Of the diplomatic functions included in the study, the number of minister counsellors had on average the higher number of women diplomats. Also, the gender balance in envoys and ministers plenipotentiary (second lowest rank) was relatively positive. The overall low proportion of women ambassadors was among the least gender balanced in the 2016 monitoring round, together with mayors and heads of state and government.

Council of Europe

Both the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions reached the minimum recommended target of 40% in 2016. Both bodies also showed major improvements compared to 2005. The average percentage of women in the Parliamentary Assembly, on the other hand, remained slightly below the 40% target. Almost half of the country delegations reached the 40% minimum target in 2016. As for the European Court of Human Rights, there was a small positive improvement in 2016, in comparison to 2005.

Based on the findings of this monitoring exercise, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) The commitment towards the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making bodies should be maintained and renewed;
- 2) To implement paragraph VI of the Recommendation, as regards setting targets to reach a gender balance, member states could adopt a double approach to meet the 40% minimum target: a 'problem-driven focus' on the most problematic areas to reach a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making; and an 'opportunity-driven focus' for those areas where progress has been made and where only an 'extra mile' is needed to reach the 40% minimum target set by the Recommendation;
- 3) For both strategies, gender quota laws or parity systems as well as political party quotas could be considered. Where gender quota laws already exist, member states should consider making existing gender quota laws stricter (for instance by increasing the quota percentage, imposing rank order rules, and/or introducing/strengthen the sanctions). Even in countries where gender quota laws exist the introduction of political party quotas should be considered;
- 4) In majoritarian systems, the switch to proportional representation could also be considered as a strategy;
- 5) Initiatives to include gender equality principles in legal frameworks for political parties and in laws on public funding of political parties should be supported. Efforts should also be made to ensure that these provisions are supported by an active commitment to bring more women into political parties, and a willingness to reflect on the existence of gender biases in the functioning, recruitment and selection practices within political parties;
- 6) Training should be organised not only for women candidates, but also for party leaders, executives and selectorates.

Finally, specific measures to achieve a gender balance in political and public decision making should be part of a larger strategy to promote equality between women and men in all areas. A gender balance in decision making cannot be reached if other areas of public and private life remain fundamentally unbalanced.

INTRODUCTION

The target and how to get there: [Council of Europe Recommendation Rec \(2003\)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making](#).

In 2003, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making (further referred to as the Recommendation). It includes eight recommendations addressed to the governments of member states so that they:

I. commit themselves to promote balanced representation of women and men by recognising publicly that the equal sharing of decision-making power between women and men of different background and ages strengthens and enriches democracy;

II. protect and promote the equal civil and political rights of women and men, including running for office and freedom of association;

III. ensure that women and men can exercise their individual voting rights and, to this end, take all the necessary measures to eliminate the practice of family voting;

IV. review their legislation and practice, with the aim of ensuring that the strategies and measures described in this recommendation are applied and implemented;

V. promote and encourage special measures to stimulate and support women's will to participate in political and public decision making;

VI. consider setting targets linked to a time scale with a view to reaching balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making;

VII. ensure that this recommendation is brought to the attention of all relevant political institutions and to public and private bodies, in particular national parliaments, local and regional authorities, political parties, civil service, public and semi-public organisations, enterprises, trade unions, employers' organisations and non-governmental organisations;

VIII. monitor and evaluate progress in achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public life, and report regularly to the Committee of Ministers on the measures taken and progress made in this field.

Importantly, balanced participation of women and men is defined by the Recommendation as follows: "the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%" (Appendix to Recommendation Rec(2003)3).

The Recommendation indicates three types of measures that member states are invited to consider in order to reach the target: 1) legislative and administrative measures to achieve gender balance in political and public decision making; 2) supportive measures to the same end; 3) monitoring the progress made.

Regarding the legislative and administrative measures to achieve gender balance in political and public decision making, the Recommendation lists 17 measures to be taken by member states. They include: constitutional/legislative reforms; administrative measures; action through the funding of political parties; the reform of electoral systems; obligations regarding appointments made by ministers, governments and public authorities to public committees, posts or functions and national delegations. They envision: restricting the holding of several elected political offices simultaneously; improving the working conditions of elected representatives; facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life; making selection, recruitment and appointment processes for leading positions in public decision making gender sensitive and transparent; de-penalising taking time off from employment for participating in political and public decision making.

Furthermore, the Recommendation attributes an exemplary role to public administrations in terms of gender-balanced distribution of decision-making positions and equal career development. It further refers to establishing, supporting and strengthening national equality machineries, including parliamentary committees, to implement gender mainstreaming.

Additionally, the Recommendation includes 24 supportive measures. These concern: supporting the programmes of women's and gender equality organisations that aim at stimulating a gender balance in political life and public decision making; setting up a data-bank of women willing to run for office; organising seminars and training on gender equality for key people in society (leaders and top officials) and media professionals (journalists). Women candidates and elected representatives should further be supported by setting up networks for elected women and by developing mentoring or work-shadowing programmes and information and communication technology training. Especially girls, young women and women from ethnic and cultural minorities should be encouraged for greater involvement. School curricula should therefore include training activities and youth organisations should ensure balanced participation of women and men in their decision making structures.

A wide variety of actors are called upon to implement these supportive measures: political parties; social partners (employers' and workers' organisations); enterprises and organisations, in particular those subsidised for providing public services or implementing public policies; the media. Campaigns should be used to: raise awareness of the importance of gender balance in political and public decision making among the general public, politicians, social partners and those who recruit and nominate political and public decision makers; and encourage a more equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the private sphere. Furthermore, research should be conducted about women's voting behaviour, and the conditions, measures and impact of gender balanced participation in political and public decision making.

The seven monitoring measures suggested to member states in the Recommendation require establishing independent monitoring bodies, the setting up of indicators and the gathering of gender-disaggregated data. The Recommendation puts forward ten indicators to measure progress:

- 1) the percentage of women and men elected representatives in parliaments and local assemblies, according to political party;
- 2) the percentage of women and men elected representatives in parliaments, compared to the number of candidates according to political party (the success rate);
- 3) the percentage of women and men in national delegations to nominated assemblies;
- 4) the percentage of women and men in national, federal and regional governments;
- 5) the number of women and men senior/junior ministers in the different fields of action (portfolios/ministries) of the national, federal and regional governments of member states;
- 6) the percentage of the highest ranking women and men civil servants and their distribution in different policy fields;
- 7) the percentage of women and men judges in supreme courts;
- 8) the percentage of women and men in bodies appointed by the government;
- 9) the percentage of women and men in the decision-making bodies of political parties at national level;
- 10) the percentage of women and men members of employer, labour and professional organisations, and the percentage of women and men in their decision-making bodies at national level.

Based on these indicators, reports on the measures taken and progress made should be submitted to parliaments and to the wide public. Gender-disaggregated statistics should be made readily accessible and the visibility and portrayal of women and men in the news and current affairs programmes should be analysed on a regular basis.

More than numbers: monitoring and reporting

As indicated, the governments of the member states committed themselves to report regularly to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on the measures taken and the progress made in achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public life. For this purpose, the former Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) organised two rounds of monitoring, in 2005 and 2008, using the same questionnaire to collect data from member states. The Gender Equality Commission (the Council of Europe body in charge of promoting gender equality, which replaced the CDEG in 2012) launched the third monitoring round in 2016, using a revised and extended questionnaire (see the Methodology section).

This report analyses the data gathered in 2016¹; where possible comparing it with data gathered in 2005 and 2008 in order to identify evolutions and trends. The analysis of the 2005 and 2008 data was published in a 2010 report prepared by the consultant Regina Tavares da Silva: '[*Parity democracy: A far cry from reality. Comparative study on the results of the first and the second rounds of monitoring of the Council of Europe Recommendation Rec \(2003\)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making*](#)', (further referred to as the 2010 Report).

¹ The data in this report refers to the situation on 1 January 2016, *except* for data on political representatives which refers to election day results.

The main aims of this report are to present and analyse the data collected in 2016, and more precisely to assess:

1. to which extent member states of the Council of Europe have reached the minimum target set by Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making: i.e. a minimum of 40% of each sex. This minimum target should be reached in each decision-making body in the political and public sphere in the 47 Council of Europe member states, including the judiciary and diplomatic services.
2. the evolution and trends of women and men's numerical representation in the key political and public decision making bodies of member states; i.e. a comparison and analysis of developments between 2005 and 2016.
3. the efforts of member states to achieve a gender balance in decision making, including the types of measures taken and their impact.

Even though the current report focuses mostly on the number of women and men in political and public decision making, it should be noted that the Recommendation goes far beyond increasing the numbers of women in political and public decision making, but rather aims at achieving gender equality and a more structural change in the way our democracies function. This is evident from the eight key recommendations put forward, the legislative, administrative and supportive measures, and the scope of the monitoring. In this sense, the Preamble of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 points to the fact that a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making is "*a matter of the full enjoyment of human rights and of social justice, and a necessary condition for the better functioning of a democratic society*". Hence, the numbers of women in political and public decision making bodies are not just numbers: they are a key indicator of gender equality and women's full enjoyment of their human rights and, at the same time, a condition for gender equality, social justice and true democracy.

The balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making is also an indicator of, and a condition for, the inclusiveness of these areas. The Preamble of the Recommendation states that the realisation of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making "*would lead to better and more efficient policy making through the redefinition of political priorities and the placing of new issues on the political agenda as well as to the improvement of quality of life for all*", and it is "*needed for the development and construction of a Europe based on equality, social cohesion, solidarity and respect for human rights*".

In short, numbers are not just numbers. They tell us about the extent to which political and public decision making is open to women, and hence about how democratic and fair they are.

METHODOLOGY

The data collected for this third monitoring round focused on the situation of women and men in different areas of public and political decision making. An online questionnaire was made available to all Council of Europe member states in January 2016. The data collection was finalised in September 2016. In total, 46 member states of the Council of Europe participated in the survey.

The 2016 questionnaire, adopted by the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), was a revised version of the questionnaire used in 2005 and 2008, and identical for all countries. It was divided into five main parts:

- 1) Legislative power
- 2) Quota rules applied to elections
- 3) Executive power
- 4) Judicial power
- 5) Diplomatic service

The present analysis offers an overview of women and men's representation in each of the different sectors in 2016. If and where possible, the report compares 2016 data to the previous monitoring rounds (in 2005 and 2008), to offer a comparison over time. When data from 2005 and 2008 are used in the present study, they were drawn from the 2010 report and should be credited as such.

By comparing data available for the three monitoring rounds, the present study can put the findings of 2016 into perspective and offer a more longitudinal analysis of women and men's presence in public and political decision making. This over-time analysis is conducted by comparing the results of 2016 directly to the results of 2005 ('percentage of women in 2016 – percentage of women in 2005') for the different bodies. Such an over-time comparison is very useful, but it also has some limitations. Firstly, a comparison over time is obviously only possible for countries that provided information in both monitoring rounds. Secondly, it should be clear that a comparison between 2005 and 2016 can never reveal any real long term trends over an 11-year period, because this report compares two moments (or 'snapshots') in time. Therefore, the changes in women and men's presence revealed in our comparisons do not reflect interval fluctuations.

Most of the Tables and Figures in the core of this report reflect percentages rather than absolute numbers. Only in cases where percentages could not be calculated, due to an overall low number of cases, absolute numbers are preferred. Absolute figures for 2016 are provided in the tables included in the Appendix.

The number of countries that took part in the 2016 monitoring cycle is typically (much) larger than the number of countries included in 2005 and 2008. This is partially due to differences in response rates (36 countries completed the questionnaire in 2005, 42 in 2008 and 46 in 2016), but is also linked to the fact that the 2010 report only included data for countries that responded in both rounds (2005 and 2008). In the current report, however, countries who did not respond in 2005 and/or 2008 were not included in the Tables and

Figures, because this would lead to a significant loss of data. Instead, countries that have at least one entry in either 2005, 2008 or 2016 were selected for the Tables and Figures

The tables in this report include average percentages for each monitoring round. The average percentages for 2005 and 2008 are based on the results in the 2010 report. The average percentages for 2016 have been calculated on the basis of data from all the countries that replied to a specific question in 2016. Due to the different response rate in 2005, 2008 and 2016, average percentages for each year are calculated on the basis of different sets of countries, and can therefore not be (easily) compared.

I LEGISLATIVE POWER

1. Lower/single houses

1.1. Numbers and evolution

Table 1. Percentage of women elected to single/lower houses

Member state	2005		2008		2016		Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
	Woman president	% Women	Woman president	% Women	Woman president	% Women	
Albania						22.9%	
Andorra						35.7%	
Armenia		5.3%		8.4%		9.9%	+4.6
Austria		33%		25.8%	√	33.3%	+0.3
Azerbaijan		10.5%		11.2%		16.8%	+6.3
Belgium		34.7%		37.3%		39.3%	+4.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina		16.1%		11.9%		21.4%	+5.3
Bulgaria					√	18.8%	
Croatia		21.1%		21.6%		20.5%	-0.6
Cyprus		16.1%		16.1%		17.9%	+1.8
Czech Republic		16%		15.5%		19.5%	+3.5
Denmark		36.9%		38%	√	38.3%	+1.4
Estonia	√	19.8%	√	20.8%		23.8%	+4
Finland		38%		41.5%	√	41.5%	+3.5
France		12.3%		18.5%		26.9%	+14.6
Georgia						12%	
Germany		32.8%		32.2%		36.5%	+3.7
Greece	√	13%		16%		18.3%	+5.3
Hungary	√	9.1%	√	11.2%		10.1%	+1
Iceland	√	33.3%		33.3%		39.7%	+6.4
Ireland		13.9%		13.3%		22.2%	+8.3
Italy		6.8%		21.1%	√	31.1%	+24.3
Latvia	√	18%		21%	√	20%	+2
Liechtenstein		24%		24%		20%	-4
Lithuania		20.6%		22%	√	23.4%	+2.8
Luxembourg		20%		23.3%		28.3%	+8.3
Malta						10.1%	
Monaco		20.8%		25%		20.8%	0
Montenegro						13.6%	
Netherlands		34.7%	√	41.3%	√	39.3%	+4.6
Norway		37%		37.9%		39.6%	+2.6
Poland						27.2%	
Portugal		25.2%		28.3%		33%	+7.8
Republic of Moldova						20.8%	
Russian Federation						13.6%	
San Marino						16.7%	
Serbia					√	34.4%	
Slovakia						20%	
Slovenia		13.3%		11.1%		35.6%	+22.3
Spain		36%		35.1%		39.7%	+3.7
Sweden		46.4%		46.4%		43.6%	-2.8
Switzerland	√	26.5%		28.5%	√	32%	+5.5
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"		20%		31.7%		35%	+15
Turkey		4.4%		9.1%		14.7%	+10.3
Ukraine		4.9%		8.4%		11.3%	+6.4
United Kingdom		19.7%	√	19.8%		29.5%	+9.8
Average/Total	6	21.8%	4	23.7%	10	25.6%	

Note: For information concerning women presidents of single/lower houses, see Table 5.

Table 1 provides an overview of the proportion of women in single/lower houses in 2005, 2008 and 2016. The results show that in 2016, out of the 46 countries that provided data, only two (4% of countries) met the 40% minimum recommended target (Finland and Sweden). In 2005, only one country - and in 2008, three countries (out of 34) - reached the minimum target. In 2016, about one third of the countries (i.e. 17 out of 46 countries) featured a proportion of women representatives of over 30%, similarly to the findings in 2005 (with nine out of 34 countries).

In 2016, five countries had a proportion of women representatives very close to the target, at over 39% (i.e. Belgium, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain). Yet, the number of countries with less than 20% of women representatives decreased only slightly. In 2005, the situation was the worst (with 15 out of 34 countries), but both in 2008 and in 2016 about one third of the countries participating in the monitoring exercise had a proportion of women legislators below 20% (i.e. 12 out of 34 countries in 2008, and 14 out of 46 countries in 2016).

In 2016, the average of women's representation in national lower house/single parliaments was 25.6%. Between 2005 and 2008 there was an increase of women in single/lower houses in about two thirds of the countries that participated in the 2005 and 2008 monitoring rounds. Between 2005 and 2016, there was an increase in all the countries that participated in the 2005 and 2016 monitoring rounds except for four.

Almost all the countries surveyed witnessed an increase in the representation of women in lower/single houses in the last decade (2005-2016). In two countries (Italy and Slovenia) the increase was substantial (over 20 percentage points). These countries were among those with the lowest numbers of women in 2005, and reached more than 30% of women in 2016. However, other countries with remarkably low numbers of women members of Parliament in 2005 (Armenia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Ukraine) witnessed only a minor increase in 2016. Liechtenstein and Sweden witnessed a slight decrease, while Sweden presented the highest percentage of women members in its lower/single house (43.6%).

The 2010 Report concluded that there was a positive development in the 2005-2008-period (Council of Europe, 2010, page 14). This conclusion was based on the fact that there had been an increase in the number of countries reaching the 40% minimum target between 2005 and 2008, and on the increase of the overall average percentage of women in parliaments. In 2016, the average percentage of women in the lower/single houses showed a slight increase since 2005; the proportion of countries reaching the 40% minimum target remained stable over time; and the proportion of countries in the "promising" 30%-40% range also remained stable. Proportionally, more countries witnessed an increase in the proportion of women in the lower/single houses, but approximately the same proportion of countries remained below 20%. Hence, overall the 2016 findings point at stagnation: the positive development that was reported in 2010 (based on the 2005 and 2008 monitoring rounds) did not substantiate over time. Given that the percentages of women in single/lower houses are generally seen as a key indicator of women's political representation, this is a key finding.

The 2010 Report attributed the positive evolution to "the effect of the recommendation itself and of its guidelines, a growing awareness of the importance of women's equal participation as a democratic requirement, the impact of the electoral system of quota laws or regulations,

as well as other factors, including a simple natural evolution" (Council of Europe, 2010, page 14). The 2016 monitoring round, on the other hand, warrants that a positive evolution is not a given. Stagnation and even setbacks can occur even when the same conditions are in place.

1.2. Electoral systems

Besides collecting data about the presence of women and men in public and political decision making, the 2016 questionnaire also gathered information on the type of electoral systems used in Council of Europe member states. Based on the questionnaire, eight types of electoral systems were identified:

- Plurality-majority – simple majority or first past the post: 4 countries
- Plurality-majority – absolute majority (two round system): 1 country
- Proportional representation – open lists: 16 countries
- Proportional representation – closed lists: 11 countries
- Proportional representation – other: 5 countries
- Semi-proportional representation system – open lists: 2 countries
- Semi-proportional representation – closed lists: 5 countries
- Semi-proportional representation – other: 0 countries

For each type of electoral system, the percentage of women elected in single/lower houses was calculated (see Table 2). Some categories included only a limited number of countries. France was, for instance, the only country in the 'two-round majority' category; Greece and Lithuania were the only two countries with a semi-proportional, open list system. The interpretation of the results in Table 2 needs to take this situation into account, as some percentages are based on only one or two countries.

Table 2. Percentage of women elected in single/lower houses by electoral system

	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016
Proportional representation: closed list	19.5%	19.2%	26.6%
Proportional representation: open list	30.5%	28.2%	27.5%
Proportional representation: other list	30.3%	25.8%	27%
Semi-proportional: closed list	19.5%	22.4%	21.1%
Semi-proportional: open list	4.9%	12%	20.9%
Semi-proportional: other list	11.1%	16%	
Simple majority or first past the post	13.9%	18.9%	19.3%
Two rounds majority	16.3%	18.5%	26.9%

Electoral systems matter greatly to achieve a gender-balanced representation of women and men. It is well established that proportional list systems in general offer more opportunities for the representation of a diverse group of elected politicians than majority systems (Norris 2004; Matland & Studlar 1996). Candidate lists in proportional list systems are more likely to be representative of the entire population and to include candidates who can represent a diversity of social backgrounds, including women. Parties in majority systems, on the other

hand, select candidates who they believe can win over the ‘median voter’. In general, this tends to benefit men and outgoing representatives in general.

Looking into different types of proportional systems, according to research, the effect of open or closed lists is found to be conditional. When the party leadership is more strongly in favour of gender equality than the party voters, closed list are favourable for women because in this case the party leadership has more power in deciding who gets elected. In contrast, when the party leadership is not in favour of gender equality, open lists are more favourable for women’s representation, especially when the voters are less biased against women (Norris 2004; Leyenaar 2004).

In 2016, the highest percentages of women members of single/lower houses were found in countries with proportional list systems (around 27%); and the lowest, in countries with a simple majority system (19.3%). This confirms the results from both the 2005 and the 2008 monitoring. The percentage of women elected in the two-round majority system was exceptionally high; but given that this category only included one member state with a parity system (France), a strong conclusion cannot be drawn. The overall findings show that electoral system design is important, but not all that matters for establishing gender equality in parliaments. In addition, even under proportional rules, the minimum target of 40% of women was not reached (Dahlerup & Leyenaar eds. 2013).

The findings regarding the effect of open or closed lists were not clear-cut either. In the case of proportional systems, open lists seem more favourable, as they presented the highest percentages of women elected to the single/lower houses in 2005, 2008 and 2016 (27.5%). However, when applied to semi-proportional systems, open lists did not lead to a higher percentage of women, compared to closed lists (i.e. 20.9% and 21.1% respectively in 2016). This confirms previous findings that the effects of closed or open lists are neither straightforward nor automatic.

1.3. Gender quotas/parity systems

Table 3. Percentage of women in lower/single houses, by gender quota type (2016)

	Average % Women
Countries with both quota laws/parity systems and political party quotas	26.3%
Countries with quota laws/parity systems only	25.3%
Countries with political party quotas only	28.8%
Countries without any type of quotas or parity system	23.1%

Note: Information on political party quotas was collected for the five parties with the highest seat share in the lower/single house elections.

Besides electoral systems, gender quotas or parity systems can have a major impact on the gender balance in political representation. Gender quotas can take many forms (Krook 2009). The difference between gender quotas and parity systems is that gender quotas are temporary measures providing for a minimum proportion of the under-represented sex (usually women) to be included among candidates to an election. Parity systems are not temporary and aim at reaching 50/50, the equal representation of women and men in decision making bodies.

Another basic distinction refers to quota laws or parity systems that are legally binding for all political parties, on the one hand, and political party quotas that political parties adopt voluntarily, on the other hand. Based on a combination of these two forms of quotas, the following classification can be made:

- Countries with quota laws/parity systems and political party quotas (5): Croatia, Ireland, Montenegro, Norway, Slovenia.
- Countries with quota laws/parity systems only (15): Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine.
- Countries with political party quotas only (13): Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.
- Countries without any type of quota or parity system (11): Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Slovakia.

It follows from this classification that some form of quota/parity system has been implemented in 75% of the member states reporting on it (33 out of 44).

Table 3 is very revealing with regard to the impact of gender quotas. Most importantly, it shows that the differences in the percentages of women elected to lower/single houses in countries with and without gender quota laws depends on the types and strength of the quota. In 2016, the average percentage of women elected in countries without any type of gender quotas was 23.1%; in countries with both types of gender quotas, it was 26.3%; and in countries with quota laws/parity systems, it was 25.3%. The fact that there is only a two-percentage point difference between countries with legally-binding gender quotas and countries without any type of quota shows that there seems to be a glass ceiling for women's political representation that even some types of legislative quotas do not seem to break. As it is discussed below, this interesting finding can at least partially be explained by the design of the quotas. The strength of the quota legislation or parity system is therefore found to be more important than just their mere existence.

The finding that the difference (two percentage points) between countries with legally-binding gender quotas and countries without such quotas is rather small in terms of women's representation speaks to the literature on legal quotas adapting to the country's 'acceptable minimum', i.e. legal quotas are set at the minimum level acceptable for the least willing party, thereby potentially discouraging any additional efforts by political parties that would have gone further otherwise (Dahlerup & Leyenaar, 2013).

Table 3 shows that the biggest gap in women elected in the single/lower house was between countries with political party quotas (28.8%) and countries without any quotas (23.1%). Moreover, political party quotas produce (slightly) higher percentages of elected women (28.8%) than countries with quota laws or parity systems (25.3%). The explanation may be that political parties that are committed to gender balance set the target relatively high and implement these voluntary party quotas more effectively (Meier, 2012).

Table 4 shows an important increase in the number of countries reporting the introduction of gender quota legislation or a parity system between 2005 and 2016, which is a positive evolution as regards the measures suggested by the Recommendation: five countries in 2005 and 17 in 2016.

The data also points to the above finding concerning gender quota laws or parity systems: their impact and effectiveness greatly depends on their design and in particular on:

- The minimum level of the target for candidates of each sex on electoral lists (quota percentage).
- The presence of a rule on rank order (no, yes).
- The presence and strength of sanctions for non-compliance (no sanction, financial penalty or lists not accepted when they do not comply).

Table 4. Member states with gender quota laws/parity systems for national elections, their design and their effectiveness (2005 and 2016)

Year	Member state	Quota percentage	Rank order	Sanctions	% Women elected
2005	Armenia	5%	No	No	5.3%
	Belgium	50%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	34.7%
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	33%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	14.3%
	France	50%	No	Yes, financial penalty	12.3%
	"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	30%	No	Yes, lists not accepted	20%
2016	Albania	30%	Yes	Yes, financial penalty	22.9%
	Armenia	25%	No	Yes, lists not accepted	9.9%
	Belgium	50%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	39.3%
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	21.4%
	Croatia	40%	No	Yes, financial penalty	20.5%
	France	50%	No	Yes, financial penalty	26.9%

	Georgia	30%	No	No	12%
	Greece	33%	No	Yes, lists not accepted	18.3%
	Ireland	30%	No	Yes, financial penalty	22.2%
	Montenegro	30%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	13.6%
	Poland	35%	No	Yes, lists not accepted	27.2%
	Portugal	33%	Yes	Yes, financial penalty	33%
	San Marino	33%	No	Yes, lists not accepted	16.7%
	Serbia	33%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	34.4%
	Slovenia	35%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	35.6%
	Spain	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	39.7%
	"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	35%

The correlation between the design of quotas and the percentage of elected women is strong. Stronger quota laws or parity systems lead to better gender balance in the lower/single houses. Hence, having a gender quota law is not a decisive factor for reaching gender balance in elected assemblies if that quota law is weak. In this case, it may actually have no effect at all and in practice discredit the policy. It is the design of gender quotas that matters.

Gender quotas can be fashioned in such a way that they can almost guarantee an outcome, i.e. that the proportion they set for women candidates is almost the same as the proportion of women elected. Looking at the cases of Serbia, Slovenia and Spain in 2016, the percentages of women elected to the single/lower houses almost reached or even slightly exceeded the target set by the quotas. This was however not the case in Belgium or in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the number of elected women did not reach the target set by the gender quota law. In Belgium, 39.3% of the members of the single/lower house were women, which is indeed high, comparatively speaking, but lower than the target included in the quota law (which is 50%). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21.4% of the members of the single/lower house were women (lower than the 33% set by the quota law).

In addition, notwithstanding the overall finding that the design of gender quota laws is crucial in determining the levels of women elected in national parliaments, there exists some variation, even among countries with strict quota regulations. The most common explanation for this is that effective quota rules do not necessarily increase the legitimacy of these rules. Because gender quotas imply a radical redistribution of power positions, the legitimacy of such measures often remains controversial among political elites and parties, both in countries with and without (strict) quota regulations. Contestations of the legitimacy of gender quotas (e.g. whether they answer to notions of democracy and equality) explain to an important extent why the expected changes in women's political representation do not always occur (Meier 2008; Erzeel & Caluwaerts 2013). When the legitimacy of quotas is, on

the other hand, high, political elites and parties support complementary initiatives aimed at the active recruitment of women candidates and at preparing them for political office, which in turn increases the electoral success of these women (Davidson-Schmich 2006).

Looking at the evolution over time, it is positive to see that in all five countries which had quota legislation or parity systems both in 2005 and 2016, women's representation has increased significantly: from around five percentage points in Armenia and Belgium, to seven points in Bosnia and Herzegovina and around 15 percentage points in France and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". This seems to point at an effective impact of such measures overtime, notwithstanding interval fluctuations.

1.4. Positions of power within lower/single houses

Table 5. Percentage of women presidents and deputy speakers of single/lower houses (2016)

	% of Parliaments
Women presidents of the single/lower house	22.2%
Women deputy speakers of the single/lower house	50%

Looking at a second more qualitative layer of descriptive representation, observing whether gender balance is achieved with regards to internal positions of power within parliaments is key. This concern relates to the glass ceiling phenomenon we know foremost from the literature on women's participation in the labour market, but which is valid also to analyse women's participation in political institutions. Table 5 shows that according to the 2016 data, only 22.2% of the single/lower houses surveyed had a woman president, while half of them had a woman deputy speaker.

Table 1 above showed that the single/lower houses with the highest percentage of women members are not always the ones with women presidents, and vice-versa. Sometimes countries with critically low percentages of women members have a woman presiding over their single/lower houses – for instance, the Hungarian parliament in 2005 and 2008 had a woman president, but 90% of its members were men. Nevertheless, on average, assemblies with a woman president have a higher percentage of women representatives: 31.2% compared to 24.3% in assemblies with a man president. The latter is an indication of how the glass ceiling in lower/single houses can be cracked. In general, higher numbers of women representatives also increase the possibility to reach a gender balance in internal positions of power such as the presidency of the lower/single house.

The same holds for other powerful positions in elected assemblies, such as the presidency of parliamentary committees. Table 6 indicates the percentage of women presidents of parliamentary committees. There is again a strong correlation between the percentage of women representatives and the percentage of women presidents of committees. Assemblies with higher percentages of women also have higher percentages of women presidents of parliamentary committees.

Table 6. Percentage of women presidents of parliamentary committees, compared to percentage of women in single/lower houses (2016)

Member state	% Women presidents of committee	% Women in single/lower houses
Albania	37.5%	22.9%
Andorra	50%	35.7%
Armenia	16.7%	9.9%
Austria	38.5%	33.3%
Azerbaijan	13.3%	16.8%
Belgium	32.4%	39.3%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14.3%	21.4%
Bulgaria	26.1%	18.8%
Croatia	17.2%	20.5%
Cyprus	18.8%	17.9%
Czech Republic	16.7%	19.5%
Denmark	40%	38.3%
Estonia	18.2%	23.8%
Finland	37.5%	41.5%
France	55.6%	26.9%
Georgia	6.7%	12%
Germany	43.5%	36.5%
Greece	15.4%	18.3%
Hungary	11.8%	10.1%
Iceland	50%	39.7%
Ireland	30.4%	22.2%
Italy	14.3%	31.1%
Latvia	37.5%	20%
Liechtenstein	0%	20%
Lithuania	20%	23.4%
Luxembourg	23.1%	28.3%
Malta	0%	10.1%
Republic of Moldova	44.4%	20.8%
Monaco	20%	20.8%
Montenegro	21.4%	13.6%
Netherlands	41.7%	39.3%
Norway	25%	39.6%
Poland	23.3%	27.2%
Portugal	25%	33%
Russian Federation	13.3%	13.6%
San Marino	16.7%	16.7%
Serbia	37.5%	34.4%
Slovakia	15.8%	20%
Slovenia	25%	35.6%
Spain	17.9%	39.7%
Sweden	46.7%	43.6%
Switzerland	35.7%	32%
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	28.6%	35%
Turkey	11.1%	14.7%
Ukraine	25%	11.3%
United Kingdom	16.7%	29.5%
Average	25.6%	25.6%

Only eight countries out of 46 (17%) reached the 40% minimum target, with between 40% and 60% of women presidents of parliamentary committees: Andorra, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands and Sweden. Another eight (17%) fell within the 30-39.9% category. The countries with more than 30% of women presidents of parliamentary committees were outnumbered by countries with less than 20% of women in that position: 19 out of the 46 countries (41%), two of which had no women presidents of parliamentary committees (Liechtenstein and Malta).

2. Upper houses

2.1 Numbers and evolution

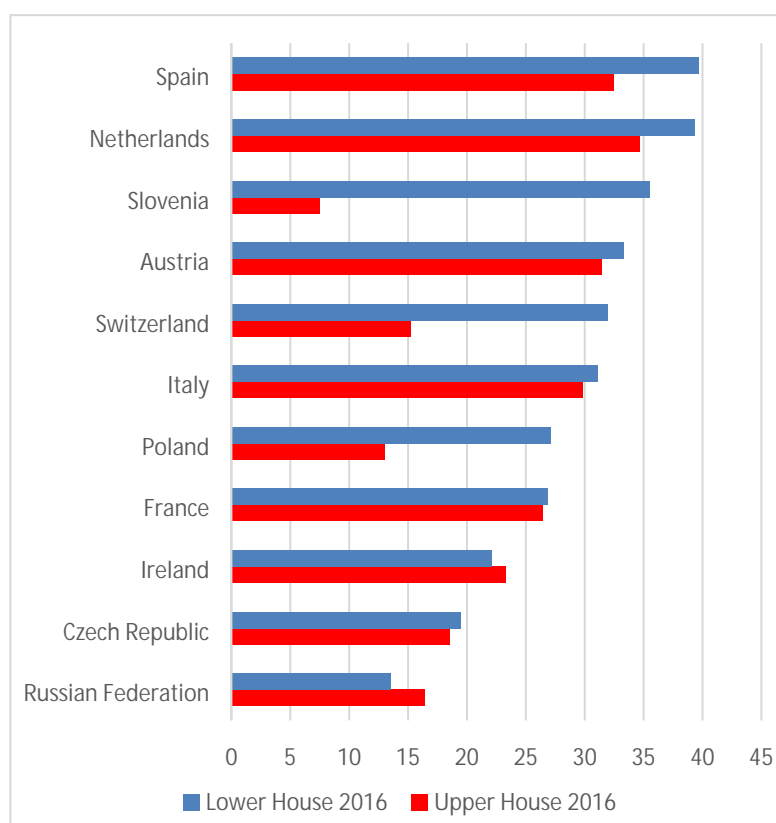
Table 7. Percentage of women elected and appointed to upper houses

Member state	2005		2008		2016		Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
	% Women elected	% Women appointed	% Women elected	% Women appointed	% Women elected	% Women appointed	
Austria	27.4%		31.7%		31.5%		+4.1
Belgium	37.8%		40.8%				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.7%		13.3%			13.3%	
Czech Republic	12.3%		13.6%		18.5%		+6.2
France	16.9%		21.9%		26.4%		+9.5
Germany		18.8%		21.7%			
Ireland	16.7%	18.2%	21.7%	36.4%	23.3%	73.7%	+6.6 elected +55.5 appointed
Italy	7%	14.3%	18%	14.3%	29.8%		+22.8
Netherlands	32%		34.7%		34.7%		+2.7
Poland					13%		
Russian Federation					16.5%		
Slovenia					7.5%		
Spain	24.8%	20%	30%	21.8%	32.5%	31.6%	+7.7 elected +11.6 appointed
Switzerland	23.9%		21.7%		15.2%		-8.7
United Kingdom						25.6%	
Average	20.6%	17.8%	24.7%	23.6%	22.6%	35.8%	

Table 7 shows the percentages of women elected and appointed to upper houses of Parliaments. The results indicate that in 2016 none of the upper houses of the 13 member states for which we have data reached the 40% minimum target. In 2008, only one country did (Belgium). In 2016, two countries (15%) had more than 30% of women. Six countries (46%) had less than 20% of women members. The exception was Ireland, where women were overrepresented (73.7%) but only among the appointed members.

Compared to 2005, women's numerical participation increased in all upper houses in 2016, with the exception of Switzerland. The increase was substantial both for women elected and appointed to upper houses. Italy, for instance, witnessed an important increase of 22.8 percentage points for women elected members in the upper house. The increase among women appointed members is however most significant in the two countries where it took place (Ireland and Spain). Given that only four of the member states for which we have data appoint members to their upper house, firm conclusions cannot be drawn. Nevertheless, the findings seem to suggest that the feminisation of upper houses is to a certain extent a top-down process.

Figure 1. Comparison of percentage of women elected to lower and upper houses (2016)



Note: Figure 1 compares the percentage of women elected to lower houses with the percentage of women elected (not appointed) to upper houses of parliament.

Figure 1 shows that in all countries concerned the percentages of women elected to the national lower houses of parliaments were higher than in the upper houses, except for Ireland and the Russian Federation. Given that upper houses often have less power than lower houses, this can be considered as a good sign, as it suggests that women are not systematically discouraged or directed to the assemblies holding less power.

3. Regional Parliaments

3.1 Numbers and evolution

Table 8. Percentage of women elected to regional parliaments

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Austria	29%	30.6%	32.5%	+3.5
Azerbaijan	2.2%	2.2%	15.6%	+13.4
Belgium	30%	23.3%	42%	+12
Bosnia and Herzegovina	19.3%	21%	19.4%	+0.1
Czech Republic			19.9%	
Germany	31.7%	33.8%	31.5%	-0.2
Greece			21.2%	
Iceland			44.1%	
Italy	13.3%	10.5%	17.7%	+4.4
Portugal	11.7%	20.2%	22.3%	+10.6
Republic of Moldova			2.9%	
Russian Federation			14.4%	
Serbia			31.6%	
Slovakia			15.7%	
Spain	37%	41.7%	44.5%	+7.5
Switzerland	25.5%	26.2%	25.6%	+0.1
United Kingdom			33.7%	
Average	22.7%	23.3%	25.6%	

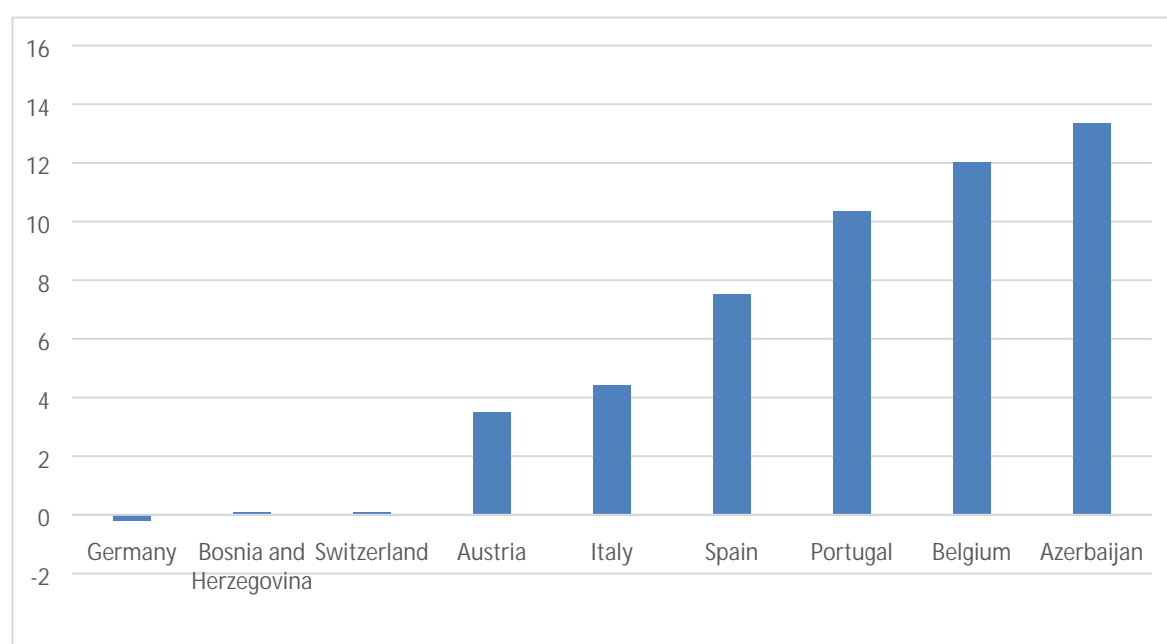
The trends highlighted with regard to lower houses/single parliaments also apply to the regional level. Firstly, only three countries out of the 17 countries which submitted data, (18%) met the 40% minimum target in regional parliaments, as shown in Table 8: Belgium (42%), Iceland (44.1%) and Spain (44.5%). The same three countries almost reached the 40% minimum threshold in the single/lower houses. In 2016, four of the 17 countries (23.5%) were in the range between 30% and 39.9% of women members of regional parliaments (Austria, Germany, Serbia and United Kingdom). With the exception of the United Kingdom, all these countries were in the same range of women representation in the national single/lower houses. The seven countries (41%) with less than 20% of women in their regional parliaments in 2016 were also the countries with low levels of women in the single/lower houses (i.e. also below or only slightly above 20%): Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Slovakia. A remarkable exception was Italy, with only 17.7% women in the regional parliaments in 2016,

but with 31.1% of women in the national lower house at that time. An important difference between women's representation in regional and national parliaments was also found in the Republic of Moldova. This country had the lowest percentage of women in regional parliaments among the countries surveyed (2.9%), while having 20.8% women in the national parliament. In the countries where the percentage of women in regional parliaments is higher than the percentage of women in the national single/lower houses (i.e. Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Russian Federation, Spain and United Kingdom), the difference is marginal (i.e. it never exceeds five percentage points).

Secondly, the average percentage of women in regional parliaments in 2016 was 25.6%, which was identical to the national single/lower house average. This seems to contradict the theory that women are directed toward less powerful institutions, in this case the regional parliaments (Celis and Woodward 2003). Not all regional parliaments are less powerful than national ones (and for example, we observe a gender balanced participation in Belgium and Spain, where regional parliaments are rather powerful), but some are (e.g. when they have a more limited level of budget control and breadth of responsibilities). Obviously, in such instances higher levels of women in regional parliaments would be positive as such, but would also be an illustration of women being more easily elected in less powerful institutions.

Another, more positive reason discussed in the literature for a potentially higher number of women in regional assemblies compared to national ones concerns the newness of the institutions, whereby periods of institutional (re)structuring can offer opportunities for the women's movement to push for the inclusion of new, previously marginalised, actors and perspectives, and the adoption and institutionalisation of policy innovations that promote gender equality. (Chappell 2002; Vickers 2010).

Figure 2. Changes in percentage points of women elected to regional parliaments in selected countries (2005-2016)



Note: Only countries for which data were available for both 2005 and 2016 were included in Figure 2.

Thirdly, and also with regard to the evolution of the proportion of women in regional parliaments (see Figure 2) there are no patterns that sharply contrast with the national evolution. About half of the countries concerned (four countries) remained more or less stable or increased slightly, while five countries (Azerbaijan, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain) substantively increased (between 4.5 and 13 percentage points).

3.2 Gender quotas/parity systems in regional parliaments

There are eight countries with gender quotas/parity systems for regional parliaments. In Italy, some regions have adopted gender quotas, but not all. The presence of women in regional assemblies in Belgium and Spain reached the 40% minimum target (with a percentage of 42% and 44.5% respectively).

A similar method as the one used to analyse national gender quota laws was used to assess the presence and effectiveness of gender quotas in regional parliaments in the countries and elections where quota legislation was in place:

- The minimum level of the target for candidates of each sex on electoral lists (quota percentage)
- The presence of a rule on rank order (no, yes)
- The presence of sanctions for non-compliance and their strength (no sanction; financial penalty; lists not accepted when they do not comply).

In Belgium and Spain, the percentage of women in regional assemblies reached and even went beyond the 40% minimum target, which is an indication that strong gender quotas, especially when the target is set high, as is the case in the three countries concerned, are very effective.

Table 9. Member states with electoral gender quota laws at the regional level (2016)

Member state	Quota percentage	Rank order	Sanctions	Average % women elected
Belgium	50%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	42%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	40%		No	19,4%
France	50%	Yes	Yes, financial penalties	(missing)
Greece	33%		No	21,2%
Italy	40%	Yes	Yes, other	17.7%
Portugal	33%		No	22,3%
Serbia	33%		No	31,6%
Spain	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	44.5%

II. EXECUTIVE POWER

1. National executives

1.1 Numbers and evolution

Table 10. Countries with women heads of state or heads of government (2016)

Member state (out of 45)	Women heads of state	Women heads of government
Croatia	√	
Germany		√
Latvia		√
Lithuania	√	
Malta	√	
Norway		√
Poland		√
United Kingdom	√	√

Table 11. Overall percentage of women heads of state and government

	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016
Heads of state, elected by the citizens	13.3%	10%	9.5%
Heads of state, appointed by parliament	7.7%	0%	7.7%
Heads of government	0%	5.1%	12.2%

Note: the last entry (heads of government) applies only for cases when the head of state was not also the head of government

Tables 12 and 13 clearly indicate that heads of state or governments in Europe were still almost completely male in 2016. The 40% minimum target was very far from being achieved. In total, women made up 9.5% of the heads of state elected by the citizens, 7.7% of the heads of state appointed by parliament, and 12.2% of the heads of government (when the head of state is not the head of government).

In addition, in 2016 a majority of member states (18 out of 32 countries, 56%) reported not having a woman deputy prime minister or vice-president, as shown in Table 14. The average proportion of women deputy prime ministers or vice-presidents was 27.8%, which is higher than many of the averages for the different levels of power. In countries where more than one position was available, a gender balance among the deputy prime ministers or vice-presidents was only reached in one country (5.8% of countries): Serbia, with a 50-50 distribution. Obviously, reaching a gender balanced distribution is easier when there are more of such posts available. But even in Italy, where there are 11 such positions, or in Azerbaijan with six of them, there were no women deputy prime ministers or vice-presidents. The Russian Federation, with eight deputy prime ministers or vice-presidents, counted only one woman.

Table 12. Number of women deputy prime ministers/vice-presidents (2016)

Member state	Number of women in total
Albania	0/1
Andorra	2/10
Armenia	0/1
Azerbaijan	0/6
Belgium	0/4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0/2
Bulgaria	2/3
Croatia	0/2
Czech Republic	0/2
Georgia	0/2
Greece	0/1
Hungary	0/1
Ireland	1/1
Italy	0/11
Liechtenstein	0/1
Luxembourg	0/1
Malta	0/1
Republic of Moldova	1/4
Monaco	1/5
Montenegro	1/6
Netherlands	0/1
Poland	0/3
Portugal	76/230
Russian Federation	1/8
Serbia	2/4
Slovakia	1/3
Slovenia	0/3
Spain	1/1
Sweden	1/1
Switzerland	2/6
Turkey	0/5
Ukraine	1/6
Total	93/336 = 27.7%

Rather similar to percentages of elected women in national lower/single house (25.6%), the average percentage of women senior and junior ministers was 23% (Table 15). The same countries were above and below the average both with regard to the number of elected representatives and to ministers. There were, however, exceptions, such as Albania and Lithuania, with a higher than average proportion of women ministers, even though they had a less than average proportion of women in the national lower/single house. Belgium, Poland and the United Kingdom showed a less than average proportion of women ministers while having a more than average proportion of women in the national lower/single house.

Only four out of 43 countries (9%) met the 40% minimum target of the Council of Europe: Georgia, Lithuania, Spain and Switzerland. Furthermore, nine countries (20%) were within the 30%-39.9% range. The countries with more than 40% women were again largely outnumbered by the countries with less than 20% of women. The latter were 21 countries, which represented almost half (49%) of the countries surveyed.

Table 13. Percentage of women senior and junior ministers (2016)

Member state	% Women
Albania	37.5%
Andorra	35.3%
Armenia	12.5%
Azerbaijan	26.7%
Belgium	22.2%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22.2%
Bulgaria	10.5%
Croatia	15%
Czech Republic	9.1%
Denmark	17.6%
Estonia	29.4%
Finland	14.3%
France	35.7%
Georgia	48.5%
Germany	10.5%
Greece	39.6%
Hungary	18.2%
Iceland	9.1%
Ireland	33.3%
Italy	21.6%
Latvia	31.3%
Liechtenstein	18.8%
Lithuania	40%
Luxembourg	28.6%
Malta	27.8%
Republic of Moldova	8.7%
Monaco	19.6%
Montenegro	0%
Netherlands	17.6%
Norway	35%
Poland	39.4%
Portugal	17.1%
Russian Federation	31.6%
San Marino	21.1%
Serbia	11.1%
Slovakia	14.3%
Slovenia	14.3%
Spain	43.5%
Sweden	25.6%
Switzerland	58.9%
Turkey	25%

Ukraine	4.8%
United Kingdom	6.3%
Average	26.7%

The average proportion of women ministers in national governments (26.7%) was close to the proportion of women in the national lower/single houses (25.6%) and hence did not point to an extra discriminatory barrier for women when moving toward this level of executive power.

1.2 Quota legislation or parity systems for the national government

Only two of the countries for which data is available (46 in total for this question) had quota legislation or a parity system for their national government: Albania and Belgium. In Albania, the target was 30% and in Belgium, the law guaranteed the representation of persons from both sexes in the different governments of the country. In terms of the effect of the quota legislation or parity system at this level, while Albania almost reached the 40% target, Belgium was still rather far from it with 22.2% women representatives. In Belgium, the impact seemed stronger regarding regional governments (for which the parity law also applies) and which comprised a third of women (see Table 17).

2. Regional executives

Table 14. Heads of regional governments

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Austria	22.2%	11.1%	0%	-22.2
Azerbaijan	0%	0%		
Belgium	20%	0%	0%	-20
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0%	0%	7.7%	+7.7
Czech Republic			0%	
Denmark			60%	
France			23.1%	
Germany	0%	0%	18.8%	+18.8
Greece			15.4%	
Italy	10%	10%	10%	0
Republic of Moldova			100%	
Portugal	0%	0%	0%	0
Russian Federation			4.7%	
Serbia			0%	
Slovakia			0%	
Spain	5.3%	5.3%	21.1%	+15.8
Switzerland			19.2%	
Ukraine	0%	0%		
Average	6.4%	2.9%	17.5%	

As shown in Table 14, regional governments also remained male dominated, even more so than national governments. In 2016, women made up on average only 17.5% of the heads of regional governments. Moreover, only the regional governments in Denmark reached and outnumbered the 40% minimum target, with 60% of women heads of Danish regional governments. The small number of regions in some countries do not allow for broad conclusions. However, the sharp drops in Austria and Belgium in 2016, compared to 2005, can be highlighted, as well as the sharp increase for Germany and Spain, and the high number of countries where none of the regional governments had a women head (i.e. five out of the 16 countries (31%) that responded to this question). Arguably, this serious gap may be due to lack of political will among regions lacking incentives to achieve gender balance, mostly embedded in their own electoral and internal political party dynamics. The latter produces male over-representation at the level of the individual regional governments and, taken together, also at the country level.

Table 15. Percentage of women in regional governments

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Austria	27.1%	32.4%	31.2%	+4.1
Azerbaijan	0%	4.8%		
Belgium	37.8%	31.6%	33.3%	-4.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8.8%	6.7%	14.6%	+5.8
Czech Republic			19.4%	
Denmark			39.5%	
Germany	22.4%	22.4%	37.5%	+15.1
Greece			21.2%	
Italy	13.7%	17.2%	32.9%	+19.2
Republic of Moldova			38.1%	
Portugal	13.3%	11.8%	22.8%	+9.5
Russian Federation			73%	
Serbia			7.7%	
Spain	32.4%	39.7%	44.4%	+12
Switzerland	19%	19.2%	24%	+5
Average	19.4%	20.6%	31.4%	

The average percentage of women in regional governments in 2016 was 31.4% (as shown in Table 15), which is still below the 40% minimum target. Considering all figures for the three reference years, only Spain and only once (in 2016) reached the 40% target for women members of regional governments. Hence, in 2016 only one of the 14 countries (7.1%) for which we have data reached the target. In 2016, Spain counted 44.4% women regional ministers - in 2005 and 2008 Spain also had the highest percentages amongst the countries surveyed. Furthermore, in 2016, six out of the 14 countries for which we have data fell in the 30%-39.9% category (43%). Only three countries (21.4%) had less than 20% women members in their regional governments.

The comparison between 2005 and 2016 at the regional level is predominantly a positive one, with important increases in Germany, Italy and Spain. Only Belgium witnessed a decrease between 2005 and 2016. Whereas in the 2005-2008 period national governments performed better than regional ones in terms of women's participation (2010 Report: 24) and the evolution was also more positive at the national level, in 2016 regional governments performed substantially better (23% women ministers in national governments compared to 31.4% in the regional governments where data is available). The percentage of women in regional executives is also higher compared to other levels, as it also exceeds the percentage of women in regional parliaments (25.6%).

3. Local executives

3.3 Gender balance among mayors

Table 16. Percentage of women mayors

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016
Albania			14.8%	
Andorra			28.6%	
Armenia	2%	0%	1.9%	-0.1
Austria	2%	3.9%	6.6%	+4.6
Azerbaijan			1.2%	
Belgium	8.5%	9.6%	12.4%	+3.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.4%	2%		
Bulgaria			12.8%	
Croatia	3.9%	5.3%	8.7%	+4.8
Cyprus	3%	6.1%	0%	-3
Czech Republic	0%	16.5%		
Denmark	7.7%	8.2%	12.2%	+4.5
Estonia	13.3%	14.2%	16.4%	+3.1
Finland	13.4%	14.3%	19.1%	+5.7
France			16%	
Georgia			0%	
Germany	7.5%	7.5%		
Greece	2%	3.1%	4.9%	+2.9
Hungary	14.4%	15.9%	20.2%	+5.8
Iceland	19.2%	26.9%	24.3%	+5.1
Ireland	20.2%	11.4%	19.4%	-0.8
Italy	9.6%	9.8%	13.9%	+4.3
Latvia	36.4%	14.3%	23.5%	-12.9
Liechtenstein	0%	0%	9.1%	+9.1
Lithuania	5%	8.3%	5%	0
Luxembourg	10.2%	11.2%	11.4%	+1.2
Malta			17.6%	
Republic of Moldova			20.6%	
Monaco	0%	0%	0%	0

Montenegro			17.4%	
Netherlands	18%	20.9%	22.7%	+4.7
Norway	17.1%	22.6%	28.3%	+11.2
Poland			10.7%	
Portugal	5.2%	6.9%	7.5%	+2.3
Serbia			5.5%	
Slovakia			22.1%	
Slovenia	5.7%	3.3%	7.5%	+1.8
Spain	12.5%	14.9%	19.1%	+6.6
Sweden	32.1%	26.9%	36.6%	+4.5
Switzerland	25%	11.6%		
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			4.9%	
Turkey	0.6%	0.6%	2.9%	+2.3
United Kingdom			15.3%	
Average	10.2%	10.2%	13.4%	

Table 16 shows that none of the 39 countries that reported data on this issue reached the minimum target of 40% women mayors. Only one country (2.5%) had over 30% women mayors in 2016 (Switzerland), which was also amongst the countries with higher numbers of women mayors in 2005 and 2008. The large majority of countries surveyed (30 out of the 39 countries for which we have data, or 77% of them) had less than 20% women mayors, 38% had less than 10% and three had no women mayors (Cyprus, Georgia and Monaco). Given the overall high numbers of mayors, these findings are solid and strikingly low. It confirms the conclusion that especially the top ranks of political and public decision making were overwhelmingly male, a finding that was also noticeable at the national level, in particular in relation to the poor representation of women as Heads of State or Heads of Government.

The comparison between the 2005 and 2016 data at the country level revealed only minor changes, which indicates stagnation at a low level. An exception is Norway, where women's representation increased by 11.2 percentage points. Compared to executives at the national and regional level, the heads of states and mayors performed the worst in terms of the participation of women. This may again be explained by the centralisation hypothesis (Hinojosa 2012): when gender equality policies are centralised they can be enacted more efficiently. In contrast, when local party branches are in charge, many more can decide not to, or inefficiently, implement them.

3.4 Gender balance among local councillors

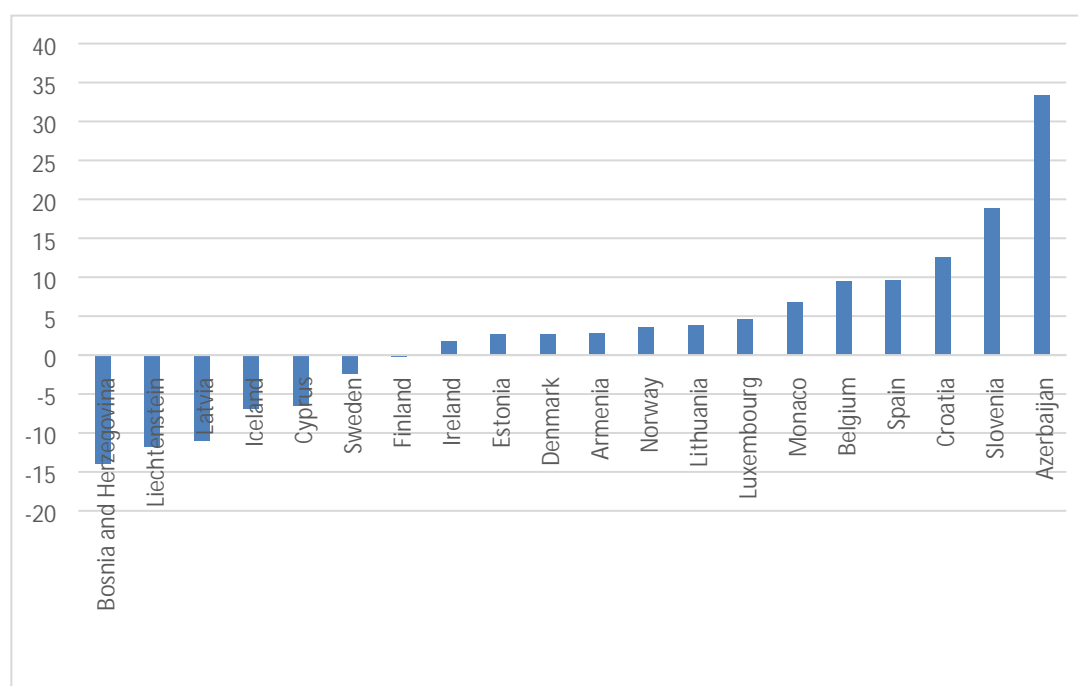
Table 17. Percentage of women local councillors

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	6.6%	7.7%	34.8%	+28.2
Andorra			40%	
Armenia			9.4%	
Azerbaijan	1.7%	0%	35%	+33
Belgium	26.5%	33.6%	36%	+9.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	16.7%	16.8%	2.8%	-13.9
Croatia	10.7%	10.7%	23.3%	+12.6
Cyprus	20.4%	20.3%	13.9%	-6.5
Denmark	27%	27.3%	29.7%	+2.7
Estonia	28.4%	29.6%	31.1%	+2.7
Finland	36.4%	36.4%	36.2%	-0.2
France			40%	
Georgia			1.7%	
Germany	24.4%	24.4%		
Greece			18.1%	
Iceland	31.2%	36.5%	24.3%	-6.9
Ireland	18.9%	17.9%	20.7%	+1.8
Italy	16.9%	2.2%		
Latvia	42.3%	19.2%	31.3%	-11
Liechtenstein	28.3%	27.4%	16.5%	-11.8
Lithuania	20.6%	22.2%	24.3%	+3.7
Luxembourg	17.8%	23.6%	22.4%	+4.6
Malta			22.6%	
Republic of Moldova			28.9%	
Monaco	33.3%	28.6%	40%	+6.7
Montenegro			26.2%	
Netherlands	16%	26%		
Norway	35.5%	41.7%	39%	+3.5
Poland			27.4%	
Portugal			29.9%	
Serbia			5.5%	
Slovakia			24%	
Slovenia	13%	21.7%	31.8%	+18.8
Spain	26%	30.9%	35.6%	+9.6
Sweden	42.4%	41.6%	40%	-2.4
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			29.1%	
Turkey			13.3%	
United Kingdom			25%	
Average	23.5%	23.7%	26%	

Women constituted on average 26% of local councillors in 2016 (Table 17). Four out of the 35 countries for which there is data (11%) reached the 40% minimum target for the local level in 2016. These countries were Andorra, France, Monaco and Sweden. In the two previous monitoring rounds, the number of countries reaching the target was two out of 23 countries (9%). So the results in 2016 presented only a minor increase in the number and percentage of countries reaching the target. Again, there was a rather substantial group of countries (22%), i.e. eight out of 35, in the range of 30%-39.9% of women representatives at the local level. Also eight out of the 35 countries (23%) featured percentages of women representatives below 20%: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Liechtenstein, Serbia and Turkey.

The average proportion of women councillors is significantly higher than the average of women mayors (13.4%) but lower than the proportion of women in regional governments (31.4%), the latter representing an exception to most other figures stagnating at approximately a quarter of women representatives.

Figure 3. Changes in percentage points of women local councillors over time (2005-2016)



The evolution of women councillors at the municipal level per country over time (2005-2016) is less stable than the national and regional legislative level (see Figure 3). Even though about half of the countries remained stable over time, the local level featured the strongest drops in the representation of women, together with some steep increases. The local level seems to be the most unstable one when comparing the 2005 and 2016 situations as snapshots for the 22 countries where data is available. This may be partly explained by the centralisation hypothesis: when efforts to improve women's representation are centralised they can be enacted more efficiently (Hinojosa 2012). In contrast, when local party branches are in charge, the implementation and success of such efforts depends on the goodwill of local parties, which leads to varying results.

3.5 Gender Quotas at the Local Level

The seven countries with electoral gender quota laws or parity systems for local elections have a significantly higher average percentage of women municipality councillors: 33.9%, compared to 24.7% in countries without gender quotas.

As for the previous analysis, three criteria were used to assess the presence and effectiveness of gender quotas at the local level in the countries and elections under study:

- The minimum level of the target for candidates of each sex on electoral lists (quota percentage).
- The presence of a rule on rank order (no, yes).
- The presence of sanctions for non-compliance and their strength (no sanction; financial penalty; lists not accepted when they do not comply).

Table 18. Member states with electoral gender quota laws/parity systems for local elections (2016)

Member state	Quota percentage	Rank order	Sanctions	Average % women elected
Belgium	50%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	36%
France	50%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	40%
Italy	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	(missing)
Montenegro	30%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	26.2%
Slovenia	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	31.8%
Spain	40%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	35.6%
Ukraine	30%	Yes	Yes, lists not accepted	(missing)

Note: gender quotas do not necessarily apply to all local elections in each country.

Given that all the countries implementing gender quotas or parity systems at the local level have strong gender quotas (with high minimum levels and strict sanctions) as Table 18 above shows, it is unclear whether it is the fact of having gender quotas or rather their strength that produces this outcome. Nevertheless, given that it is foremost their strength that explained the variation in the impact of gender quota legislation at the national level, chances are that also at the local level it is the strength of the quota legislation that is most decisive. It should be noted, that the proportion of women elected to local councils is in all cases lower, (i.e. between 25% and 40%) than the targets set by the legislation (i.e. between 30% and 50%). In addition, of the four countries that reached the 40% minimum target at the local level (Andorra, France, Monaco and Sweden) only France did so with a parity system.

In total, the analysis of the national, regional and local executive power shows that the positions at the very top of the political hierarchy at the executive level in 2016 in Europe were still almost exclusively male-dominated. In all the executive functions where the minimum target of 40% set by the Recommendation is applicable, not even 10% of the respondent countries met that target. Moreover, the comparison between 2005 and 2016 shows that percentages of women in executive positions have increased in some cases (notably for regional governments), but not in a systematic way. Whereas averages of national (senior and junior ministers) and regional executives are close to each other, especially the presence of women as heads of state and government, as well as mayors, remains problematic.

III POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Representation of women in political parties

Table 19 gives an overview of the percentages of women party leaders and women lower house party spokespersons across Europe. Member states were asked to provide this information for the five parties with the highest seat share in lower house elections. This means that the data provided in Table 19 cannot be generalised to all political parties present in a country, and certainly not to smaller parties. Table 19 also indicates the number of parties for which information was provided by each country. The overall picture shows that political parties in Europe are still largely led by men, which may partly explain the lack of gender balance in the composition of other decision-making bodies for which political parties have a large influence. In 26 countries, out of a total of 43 (60%), we found no woman party leader. In 20 countries out of 40 (50%), all party spokespersons for the lower houses were men. The average percentages of women party leaders and women party spokespersons were low, and amounted only to 14.8% and 18%, respectively.

Table 19. Percentage of women party leaders and party spokespersons (2016)

Member state	Number of parties included	% Women party leaders	% Women party spokespersons lower house
Albania	5	0%	0%
Andorra	4	0%	0%
Armenia	5	40%	0%
Austria	5	20%	20%
Belgium	5	20%	40%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	0%	20%
Bulgaria	3	33.3%	100%
Croatia	5	0%	0%
Cyprus	5	0%	25%
Czech Republic	5	0%	0%
Denmark	5	40%	20%
Estonia	5	0%	40%
Finland	5	0%	0%
France	5	20%	0%
Georgia	5	20%	0%
Germany	5	60%	0%
Greece	5	20%	0%
Hungary	5	0%	20%
Iceland	5	20%	0%
Ireland	4	0%	40%
Italy	3	0%	0%
Liechtenstein	4	0%	
Lithuania	5	0%	50%
Luxembourg	5	40%	0%
Malta	2	0%	20%
Republic of Moldova	5	0%	
Monaco	3	0%	0%

Montenegro	5	0%	0%
Norway	5	40%	20%
Poland	5	0%	40%
Portugal	1	100%	
Russian Federation	4	0%	20%
San Marino	5	40%	0%
Serbia	5	0%	20%
Slovakia	5	0%	0%
Slovenia	4	0%	20%
Spain	5	0%	25%
Sweden	5	60%	0%
Switzerland	5	40%	60%
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	5	0%	100%
Turkey	4	0%	25%
Ukraine	5	0%	0%
United Kingdom	5	60%	0%
Average		14.8%	18%

Despite the lack of women as party leaders and party spokespersons, women are more frequently present among party executives (the governing bodies of political parties), party members and party candidates for national elections, as can be seen in Table 20. This means that, even though women have not always been able to break the glass ceiling in political parties, they are - at least to a certain extent - integrated in the different layers of the parties' organisations. However, in most cases women's presence among party executives, party members and party candidates still does not reach the minimum recommended target of 40%.

Party executives are governing bodies in charge of the daily operations of parties, they usually include the party leader and deputy leaders, as well as party officials who manage thematic areas (such as the secretary of public relations or the secretary of organisation). Party executives can be very powerful bodies, not the least because they make important day-to-day decisions and often play a crucial role in the recruitment and selection of party candidates for elections (Lovenduski & Norris 1993; Kittilson 2006). On average, women made up 27.1% of party executives in the 33 countries that provided this information. In six countries (18%), women achieved considerable progress by making up more than 40% of party executives. This was the case in Estonia, France, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In an additional seven countries (Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain), women held between 30% and 39.9% of party executive positions. In 10 countries (30%), the percentage of women in party executives was situated between 20% and 29.9%. In the remaining nine countries (27%), women made up less than 20% of party executives.

Only 18 countries provided information on the presence of women and men among political party members. Nevertheless, we can conclude, based on the data gathered, that women were integrated throughout parties, albeit not to the same extent in every country. Front runners were Estonia, Ireland, Republic of Moldova and San Marino, where parties had on average more than 40% women members. The average percentage of women party members was nevertheless only 27.5%, which is still well below the 40% minimum target.

Academic research on the recruitment and selection of women in political parties furthermore suggests that the presence of women among party executives and party members is linked to the presence of women candidates for elections. It is suggested that women, when they are part of the internal organisation and leadership of political parties may support to a greater extent than men the adoption of rules for the improvement of gender balance and represent a new pool of experienced women candidates (Kittilson 2006). The same seems to be confirmed on the basis of the findings in Table 20. Overall, percentages of women among party executives and party members correlate (moderately) with percentages of women candidates for national elections: countries with higher percentages of women among party executives and members also tend to have higher percentages of women among electoral candidates.

Table 20. Presence of women in political parties (2016)

Member state	% Women in party executives (average)	% Women members (average)	% Women party candidates for national elections (average)
Andorra		36.3%	
Armenia	25%	5%	
Belgium	30.2%		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14.1%	14.3%	36.9%
Bulgaria	28.2%		
Croatia	14%	18%	33.3%
Cyprus			19.4%
Czech Republic	20.4%		24%
Denmark	25.7%	37.5%	33.4%
Estonia	45%	42.3%	27.1%
Finland			45%
France	43.8%		39.1%
Georgia	27.3%	14.2%	11.9%
Greece	11.8%		35%
Hungary	14%	27.2%	
Iceland	47.6%	39.5%	49.4%
Ireland	34.9%	40.4%	35.1%
Italy	35%	25.3%	
Liechtenstein	36.1%		25.9%
Lithuania	21.6%	17%	
Luxembourg	32.9%		34%
Malta	20.5%		13.1%
Republic of Moldova	16.7%	48.6%	40.2%
Monaco	8.3%	8.3%	

Norway	48.1%		
Poland	18.6%	27.4%	41.5%
Russian Federation	15.6%		
San Marino	24.7%	41.1%	34.9%
Serbia	25%		37.5%
Slovakia	17.4%		
Slovenia	34.8%		44.4%
Spain	30.2%		48.8%
Sweden	41%		43.4%
Switzerland	50%		36.3%
Turkey	29.6%	37.1%	26%
Ukraine	5.8%	14.8%	15.8%
Average	27.1%	27.5%	33.3%

Note: Percentages are average percentages, calculated on the basis of the answers received from the member states for the five parties with the highest seat shares in lower house elections.

2. Measures related to gender equality adopted by political parties

As mentioned before, the Council of Europe Recommendation on gender balance in decision making addresses political parties as key actors in the establishment of gender equality (paragraph VIII of the Recommendation). Supportive measure 27 recommends member states to inform political parties of the different strategies used in the various countries to promote the balanced participation of women and men in elected assemblies; and encourages them to implement one or more of these strategies and to promote the balanced participation of women and men in positions of decision making within the party structures. Including gender equality in their legal frameworks and adopting gender quotas for elections and party bodies are crucial ways for political parties to contribute to achieving a gender balance. Furthermore, both the legislative and administrative measures and other supportive measures suggested by the Recommendation include concrete actions related to political parties, such as the use of public funding of political parties to encourage them to promote gender equality; the need to develop and support leadership and media training for women considering entering political decision making; and women candidates' use of information and communication technologies.

The data gathered in 2016 showed that a number of countries have taken measures to encourage political parties to advance gender equality, as shown in Table 21: one third of the countries included gender equality provisions in the legal framework applying to political parties, and almost one quarter included rules on gender equality in the law on the public funding of political parties.

In addition, political parties themselves have adopted measures. In 2016, parties in over 40% of the member states had introduced electoral gender quotas, which is positive given that this report shows that party quotas, presumably due to their strong designs, tend to be more efficient in producing higher numbers of elected women, compared to weak gender quota laws or parity systems (see discussion above). Furthermore, political parties have adopted gender quotas for internal party bodies in over 50% of member states. While gender quotas were a rather widespread strategy in 2016, other strategies were also used. For example, in one third of the countries, parties provided training for women candidates.

Table 21. Presence of rules and measures related to gender equality in political parties

	% of countries with rules/measures related to gender equality
Gender equality in legal framework for political parties	32%
Rules on gender equality in law on public funding of political parties	23%
Political party quotas for elections	42%
Political party quotas for party decision making bodies	56%
Political parties organising training for women candidates	30%

Table 22 examines the role that rules and regulations of political parties may play in fostering women's presence in national lower houses of parliament and in political parties as party leaders, party executives and party members. The existence of gender equality in legal frameworks for parties and the existence of gender equality rules in laws on the public funding of political parties do not seem to achieve much progress. Table 22 shows that countries with such rules present similar, and sometimes even lower, levels of women in lower houses of Parliament and party organisations. This is probably linked to the fact that such measures risk being symbolic gestures. If they are not linked to more binding rules and regulations, they risk remaining empty measures not contributing to (and even hindering) women's overall presence in political decision making.

The presence of political party quotas, rules or regulations for elections and for party decision-making bodies are more effective. Countries where party quotas, rules or regulations exist (either for elections or for internal party bodies) tend to have higher levels of women in national lower houses of parliament, party executives and among party members. The fact that party quotas also foster women's membership of political parties can be explained by the fact that by adopting party quotas, political parties demonstrate their 'women-friendliness' to audiences in or outside the party. In addition, by adopting measures to promote gender equality they can create a women-friendly image for themselves, which may in turn encourage more women to join their ranks.

Finally, the provision of trainings for women candidates plays a moderate role. In general, countries where political parties organise such trainings have only slightly higher levels of women in national lower houses or among political party leaders. The impact is stronger for party executives and party members. The reason for this could be that training constitutes 'soft' measures for addressing women's under-representation (Lovenduski and Norris 1993). They do not force political parties to fundamentally change their recruitment and selection procedures, nor do they encourage parties to critically reflect upon the existence of gender biases or male privilege in candidate recruitment and selection processes. Also, such measures do not change the position of the party's electorate about what constitutes a 'good' candidate, and whether or not this notion is biased in favour of male candidates.

Table 22. Gender-sensitivity of political parties

	% Women in national lower houses	% Women party leaders	% Women in party executives	% Party members
Political parties' framework provides for gender equality				
Yes	21.6%	11%	27%	20.6%
No	27.4%	18%	27.1%	30.9%
Rules on gender equality in law on public funding of political parties				
Yes	19.6%	4%	24.4%	20.3%
No	26.3%	16%	26.5%	29.6%
Political party quotas, rules or regulations for elections				
Yes	28%	20%	34%	35%
No	23.5%	14%	21.5%	21.4%
Political party quotas, rules or regulations for party decision making bodies				
Yes	28.6%	16%	32%	35%
No	20.5%	18%	18.9%	17.1%
Political parties providing training to women candidates				
Yes	26.5%	16%	30%	33%
No	25.2%	16%	26%	25%

In sum, the findings for political parties show that, although some positive examples can be detected in some countries, overall political parties are still male-dominated organisations, largely led by men. Also, the percentage of women in party executives or as party members and candidates remains well below the 40% minimum target. Regulations adopted by political parties to improve women's presence seem to produce mixed results. The best results are generated by party quotas for elections or internal party decision making bodies. This is in line with the findings in other parts of the report: when parties voluntarily adopt strong measures to improve the gender balance, they are usually also (very) effective. Other measures, such as the adoption of the principle of gender equality in legal frameworks or the provision of trainings for women, are important measures on a symbolic level, but they do not seem to automatically translate into a higher presence of women at all levels in political parties.

IV. JUDICIAL POWER

1. Gender balance in high/supreme courts

Table 23. Percentage of women judges in high/supreme courts and appointment methods

Member state	Appointment method	% Women 2005	Appointment method	% Women 2008	Appointment method	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania					HS	25%	
Andorra					SCM	33.3%	
Armenia	SCM	21%	HS	0%	HS	23.5%	+2.5
Austria	O	17.5%	HS	24.6%	HS	31.7%	+14.2
Azerbaijan	O	12.5%	O	12%	HS	16.2%	+3.7
Belgium	HS	20.4%	HS	16.7%	HS	22.2%	+1.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	O	20%	HS/HG	47.2%	O	49.1%	+29.1
Bulgaria					HS	76.9%	
Croatia	SCM	50%	O	46.2%	SCM	38.1%	-11.9
Cyprus	HS	7.7%	HS	7.7%	HG	30.8%	+23.1
Czech Republic	HS	23.3%	HS	27.1%	HS	20%	-3.3
Denmark	HG	26.3%	O	21.1%	O	30%	+3.7
Estonia	O	15.8%	O	15.8%	O	21.1%	+5.3
Finland	HS	33.3%	HS	31.6%	HS	27.8%	-5.5
France					HG	24.8%	
Georgia					O	38.5%	
Germany	O	20.5%	O	20.5%	O	31.5%	+11
Greece	SCM	2%	SCM	17.6%	HS	45.1%	+43.1
Hungary	HS	71.9%	HS	57.3%	HS	46.5%	-25.4
Iceland	O	22.2%	HS	22.2%	HS	11.1%	-11.1
Ireland	O	33.3%	O	25%	HS	40%	+6.7
Italy		9.6%	O	4.8%	SCM	7.1%	-2.5
Latvia	O	48.7%	O	56.3%	O	70%	+21.3
Liechtenstein	O	20%	O	10%			
Lithuania	O	20%	O	21.6%	O	31.4%	+11.4
Luxembourg	HS	42.9%	HS	46.9%	HS	69.4%	+26.5
Malta					O	27.3%	
Republic of Moldova					HS	43.3%	
Monaco	HS	0%		28.6%	HS	11.1%	+11.1
Montenegro					SCM	68.4%	
Netherlands					O	25.7%	
Norway	HG	31.6%		36.8%	HS	35%	+3.4
Poland					O	28.7%	
Portugal		1.7%	SCM	1.7%			
Russian Federation					O	35.9%	
Serbia					O	56.8%	
Slovakia					HS	55.7%	
Slovenia	O	35.1%		41.5%	O	38.7%	+3.6
Spain	HS	1.1%	SCM	8%	SCM	13%	+11.9
Sweden	O	43.8%	O	43.8%	O	29.4%	-14.4
Switzerland	O	22%	O	23.7%	O	31.6%	+9.6
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"					SCM	31.8%	
Turkey	O	22.4%	HS/SCM	36.1%	HS/SCM	45.3%	+22.9
Ukraine		12.2%	O	21.3%	O	28.9%	+16.7
United Kingdom					O	8.3%	
Average		23.6%		25.8%		33%	

Note: The appointment methods indicated are the following: appointed by the head of state (HS), by the head of government (HG), by the superior council of magistracy (SCM), or in another way (O).

Out of the 43 member states for which data is provided in Table 23, the percentage of women in high/supreme courts of eight of them (18.6%) fell between the 40%-60% range, as set by the Recommendation. These are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia and Turkey. Four countries had over 60% women judges in their high/supreme courts (Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg and Montenegro). Furthermore, 13 countries (30%) had between 30% and 39.9% women judges in their high/supreme court. About half of the countries studied had a percentage of women judges within the 30%-60% range, which outnumbers the six countries (14%) with a percentage of women judges below 20%. Furthermore, in contrast to previous monitoring rounds, all countries under consideration in 2016 had some women judges in their high/supreme courts. This is clearly a positive evolution.

Six of the countries (14%) witnessed an important increase in the proportion of women judges in 2016 compared to 2005, with a 43.1 percentage point increase in Greece; a 29.1 percentage point increase in Bosnia and Herzegovina; a 26.5 percentage point increase in Luxembourg; a 23.1 percentage point increase in Cyprus; a 22.9 percentage point increase in Turkey and a 21.3 percentage point increase in Latvia. In addition, these six countries belong to the group of countries with more than 30% women judges in their high/supreme courts. One country (Hungary) witnessed a decrease of over 20 percentage points from 71.9% to 46.5%. Whereas the 2010 Report stated that progress in numbers of women's presence as judges in the high/supreme courts in the 2005-2008 period, was "too small to be significant" (2010 Report: 41), the analysis of the 2016 data can confirm that progress was continued and increased in significance.

When comparing the average percentage of women according to the appointment method, there seems to be no clear-cut link. Countries where judges are appointed by the head of state (HS) have on average 35.3% women judges, while countries where the head of government (HG) appoints them have 27.8% women judges. Countries where the superior council of magistracy (SCM) appoints judges had on average 32% of women judges, and countries where another entity appoints them (O) have 34.9% of women judges. It should be taken into account that the number of observations for some appointed methods is very limited (i.e. only two for HG), so these conclusions have to be treated with caution.

2. Gender balance in Constitutional Courts

Table 24. Percentage of women judges in Constitutional Courts

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania			25%	
Andorra			25%	
Armenia	0%	0%	22.2%	+22.2
Austria	21.4%	28.6%	35.7%	+14.3
Azerbaijan	11.1%	22.2%	22.2%	+11.1
Belgium	0%	8.3%	16.7%	+16.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22.2%	44.4%	44.4%	+22.2
Bulgaria			41.7%	
Croatia	30.8%	46.2%	23.1%	-7.7
Cyprus			30.8%	
Czech Republic	35.7%	33.3%	13.3%	-22.4
France	30%	0%	40%	+10
Georgia			33.3%	
Germany	25%	25%	31.3%	+6.3
Hungary	9.1%	0%	18.2%	+9.1
Italy	6.7%	6.7%	20%	+13.3
Latvia	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	+14.3
Liechtenstein	10%	0%		
Lithuania	22.2%	22.2%	18.2%	-4
Luxembourg	44.4%	44.4%	33.3%	-11.1
Republic of Moldova			0%	
Montenegro			28.6%	
Poland			20%	
Portugal	30.8%	23.1%	38.5%	+7.7
Russian Federation			16.7%	
San Marino			0%	
Serbia			40%	
Slovakia			36.4%	
Slovenia	44.4%	33.3%	55.6%	+11.2
Spain	16.7%	16.7%	18.2%	+1.5
Sweden	44.4%	47.4%		
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			44.4%	
Turkey	13.3%	14.9%	0%	-13.3
Ukraine	14.3%	11.1%	6.3%	-8
Average	22%	21.6%	19%	

Out of the 32 countries which provided data on the gender composition of Constitutional Courts (see Table 24), seven reached the 40% minimum target in 2016 (22%). These countries are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Latvia, Serbia, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Seven more countries (21.8%) were situated within the 30%-39.9% range. Nine countries (28%) had less than 20% women judges in the Constitutional Court. But, in contrast to the high/supreme courts discussed above, three

Constitutional Courts had no women judges (Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Turkey). Similar to the evolution of the number of women judges in high/supreme courts, a majority of the respondent countries (13 out of 19, or 68%) have witnessed a positive evolution in women's presence in Constitutional Courts in 2016 compared to 2005 (although the absolute numbers of judges in the different courts are small and results should be interpreted with caution). Some countries show important increases: in Armenia, the Constitutional Court went from no women to 22% in 2016; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of women judges in the Constitutional Court rose from 22.2% in 2005 to 44.4% in 2008, a level that was also observed in 2016. On the other hand, two Constitutional Courts also witnessed important decreases in the proportion of women judges. The Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic had 35.7% women judges in 2005 and only 13.3% in 2016; the Turkish Constitutional Court that already had a low percentage of 13.3% in 2005 was left with no women in 2016.

In conclusion, the findings show *some* positive evolutions in 2016 compared to 2005. A majority of countries witnessed an increase in the percentage of women judges in their high/supreme courts as well as in Constitutional Courts. However, still very few courts in 2016 reached the 40% minimum target set by the Recommendation: eight of the high/supreme courts and five of the Constitutional Courts. Especially the presence of women judges in Constitutional Courts remains low, and this is a point of concern for the future.

V. DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

1. Gender balance among ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary

Table 25. Percentage of women ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania			24.4%	
Andorra			57.1%	
Armenia	2.9%	5.3%	10%	+7.1
Austria			24.7%	
Azerbaijan	2.6%	3.7%	1.7%	-0.9
Belgium	10.8%	14.3%	12.9%	+2.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17%	23.7%	13.3%	-3.7
Bulgaria			17.3%	
Croatia	9.1%	11.3%	27.8%	+18.7
Cyprus	25%	17.6%	12.5%	-12.5
Czech Republic	10.7%	7.2%	18.1%	+7.4
Denmark			24.4%	
Estonia	29%	21.2%	18.6%	-10.4
Finland	24.7%	25.7%	42.5%	+17.8
France			22.1%	
Georgia			15.6%	
Germany	4.7%	6.4%	13.4%	+8.7
Greece			27.3%	
Hungary			15%	
Iceland			29.3%	
Ireland	12.5%	9.1%	16.7%	+4.2
Italy	8.3%	8%	8.3%	0
Latvia	15.2%	19.6%	22.4%	+7.2
Liechtenstein	33.3%	22.2%	37.5%	+4.2
Lithuania			31.6%	
Luxembourg	5.6%	15%	27.8%	+22.2
Malta			25%	
Republic of Moldova			12.9%	
Monaco	0%	9.1%	56.3%	+56.3
Montenegro			17.6%	
Netherlands			28.2%	
Norway	18.1%	28%	36.4%	+18.3
Poland			15.3%	
Portugal			11.8%	
Russian Federation			0%	
San Marino			25.3%	
Serbia			15.9%	
Slovakia			11.3%	
Slovenia	19.4%	22.6%	29.5%	+10.1
Spain			10.3%	
Sweden	35.4%	29.4%	38.5%	+3.1
Switzerland	8.3%	10.7%	14.9%	+6.6
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			13.2%	
Turkey	10.2%	9%	16%	+5.8
Ukraine			4.3%	
Average	14%	15.1%	13%	

Table 25 shows that in 2016, out of the 45 countries with data on the number of women ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary (the highest positions in diplomatic service), only three reached the 40% minimum target (7% of countries). These were Andorra, Finland and Monaco. Four more countries were situated within the 30%-39.9% range (9%). The largest was the group of countries with less than 20% women ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary: 24 out of the 45 countries (53%), including one country (Russian Federation) with no women ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary at all.

When turning to a country-level comparison between 2005 and 2016, very important increases can be noticed in four member states. Monaco moved from having no woman ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary in 2005 to having 56.3% of them in 2016. Luxembourg went from 5.6% of women ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary to 27.8% in 2016. Notwithstanding these sharp increases, the overall picture is not positive. Of the five indicators regarding diplomatic services included in the questionnaire, the ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary featured the lowest overall percentage of women. The fact that it concerns the highest diplomatic grade increases the importance of this finding.

2. Gender balance among envoys and ministers plenipotentiary

Table 26. Percentage of women envoys and ministers plenipotentiary

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania			21.4%	
Armenia			25%	
Austria			45.2%	
Bosnia and Herzegovina			33.3%	
Croatia	28.6%	46.7%	47.1%	+15.5
Cyprus	15.4%	12.1%	12.1%	-3.3
Czech Republic	0%	0%		
Denmark			50%	
Georgia			25%	
Germany	56.5%	4.8%	9.8%	-46.7
Hungary			14%	
Ireland	14.6%	11.4%		
Italy	5.9%	5%	7.3%	+1.4
Latvia			100%	
Luxembourg	22.2%	6.3%		
Malta			0%	
Monaco	0%	0%	0%	0
Montenegro			0%	
Netherlands			20.8%	
Portugal			19.3%	
San Marino			37.5%	
Serbia			0%	
Slovakia			16.7%	
Slovenia	31.3%	38.6%	66%	+34.7
Spain			10%	
Sweden	28.6%	50%	44.4%	+15.8
Switzerland	14.3%	11.4%		
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			50%	
Average	19.8%	16.9%	27.3%	

24 countries provided information about the percentage of women envoys and ministers plenipotentiary in Table 26. Five of these countries (21%) met the 40% minimum target in 2016: Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Sweden and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Two countries (8.3%) featured a representation of women above the 40% target. In Latvia, all envoys and ministers plenipotentiary were women, and in Slovenia, 66% of them were. Two countries (8.3%) were situated in the 30%-39.9% category. The most populated category is the one with less than 20% women envoys and ministers plenipotentiary: 10 out of the 24 countries (42%), including three with no woman envoy and minister plenipotentiary. In two countries, important changes occurred between 2005 and 2016: Slovenia witnessed a drastic increase over time (+ 34.7 percentage points), whereas in Germany there was a steep decrease (-46.7 percentage points).

3. Gender balance among minister counsellors

Table 27. Percentage of women minister counsellors

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016
Albania			35.3%	
Andorra			0%	
Austria			33.3%	
Azerbaijan			0%	
Belgium			20%	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	35.1%	41.7%	61.5%	+26.4
Croatia	44.3%	37.5%	60.4%	+16.1
Cyprus	5.6%	8.3%	27.7%	+22.1
Czech Republic	26.7%	29.7%		
Denmark			31.1%	
Estonia	50%	0%		
Georgia			16.7%	
Germany	8.2%	13%	17.6%	+9.4
Greece			42.6%	
Hungary			28%	
Iceland	11.5%	9.1%	7.7%	-3.8
Ireland	19.5%	20.2%	34.8%	+15.3
Italy	9.7%	0%	16%	+6.3
Latvia			43.6%	
Liechtenstein			57.1%	
Luxembourg	40.7%	40.7%		
Republic of Moldova			0%	
Monaco	100%	66.7%		
Montenegro			83.3%	
Norway	39%	36.8%	52.2%	+13.2
Poland			18.9%	
Portugal			33.8%	
Russian Federation			3.1%	
Serbia			17.4%	
Slovenia			50%	
Spain			25.5%	
Sweden			45.2%	
Switzerland	12.9%	20.3%	26.1%	+13.2

"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			42.1%	
Turkey			33.3%	
Ukraine			12.5%	
Average	31%	24.9%	30.5%	

In 2016, seven countries out of the 32 for which data were available (22%) met the 40% minimum target regarding women minister counsellors. As shown in Table 27, these are Greece, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Three countries (9%) featured an over-representation of women: Montenegro (83.3%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (61.5%) and Croatia (60.4%); while six countries (19%) were within the 30%-39.9% range. The most populated category was the one with less than 20% of women: 11 countries (34%) had less than 20% women minister counsellors, including three with no woman at all (Andorra, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova).

Compared to 2005, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cyprus witnessed an important increase (of 26.4 percentage points each) in 2016. The number of women minister counsellors decreased (slightly) in only one country (Iceland). Given the limited number of countries for which data was available for both 2005 and 2016, no conclusions can be drawn about the evolution at the average level. Of all the positions in the diplomatic service included in this report, minister counsellors featured the highest overall percentage of women, which correlates with the fact that this is also the lowest hierarchical function considered.

4. Gender balance among general consuls

Table 28. Percentage of women general consuls

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016
Albania			33.3%	
Andorra			0%	
Armenia			0%	
Austria			38.4%	
Azerbaijan	0%	0%	0%	0
Belgium	17.6%	30.2%	17.6%	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23.1%	43.5%	16.6%	-6.5
Bulgaria			11.7%	
Croatia	21.1%	16.7%	33.3%	+12.2
Cyprus	25%	20%	37.5%	+12.5
Czech Republic	16.7%	17.6%		
Denmark			28.6%	
Estonia	37.5%	50%	66.6%	+29.1
Finland	28.6%	57.1%		
France			14.6%	
Georgia			16.6%	
Germany	8.5%	7.5%	18.2%	+9.7

Greece			21.6%	
Hungary	12.5%	10.7%	10%	-2.5
Iceland			17.3%	
Ireland	33.3%	16.7%	66.7%	+33.3
Italy	6%	12%		
Latvia	50%	72.7%	100%	+50
Luxembourg	0%	0%	0%	0
Malta			0%	
Republic of Moldova			0%	
Monaco	100%	9.4%	0%	-100
Montenegro			0%	
Netherlands			16.6%	
Norway	12.5%	27.3%	44.4%	+31.9
Poland			18.9%	
Portugal			41.9%	
Russian Federation			2.3%	
San Marino			18.2%	
Slovakia			25%	
Slovenia	0%	20%	80%	+80
Spain			33.7%	
Sweden	16.7%	22.2%	57.1%	+40.4
Switzerland	5%	6.3%	25%	+20
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"			57.1%	
Turkey	4.7%	3.4%	12.2%	+7.5
Ukraine	100%	7.7%	28.6%	-71.4
Average	24.7%	21.5%	25.9%	

In 2016, four out of the 39 countries for which we had the number of women general consuls (10%), fulfilled the 40% minimum target (as shown in Table 28). They were: Norway, Portugal, Sweden and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Also, four countries (10%) featured a representation of women general consuls beyond 60%: Latvia (100%), Slovenia (80%), Ireland (66.7%) and Estonia (66.6%). Five other countries (12.8%) fell within the 30%-39.9% range. Similarly to the minister counsellor's position, the most populated category was the one with less than 20% women. 21 countries reported having less than 20% women general consuls (54%), amongst which eight had no women general consuls at all.

In three countries, the upward trend in 2016, compared to 2005, was remarkably sharp: Slovenia went from having no woman general consul to having 80%. Latvia went from 50% to 100% and Sweden went from 16.7% to 57.1%. The downward evolutions are also important in two countries: Monaco went from all general consuls being women to having none, and Ukraine went from having only women general consuls to just 28.6% of them.

To sum up, although the analyses show a lot of variation amongst countries concerning the respective presence of women and men in the diplomatic service overall, one important conclusion is that the number of countries having reached the 40% minimum is still very low. Even in 2016, some countries had no women diplomats in some of these functions. It is particularly striking that for all four functions considered; the most populated group of countries was the one scoring below 20% of women. In addition, the proportion of women declines as we climb up the diplomatic hierarchy. Compared to the other diplomatic functions, ambassadors have a particular negative record: the average percentage of women ambassadors is as low as 13%. This data clearly demonstrates the "glass ceiling" in the diplomatic sector.

VI. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In addition to the data collected by means of a questionnaire completed by the member states, this section presents additional data on the presence of women and men in Council of Europe bodies, including the Parliamentary Assembly, the Chamber of Local Authorities, the Chamber of the Regions (which make up the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities) and the European Court of Human Rights. Data from 2016 are again compared to data from 2005 and 2008 (based on the 2010 report) to assess whether or not the composition of these bodies has evolved towards a more balanced participation of women and men.

1. Gender balance among delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Table 29 presents the percentages of women representatives and substitutes to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The number of member states in the three rounds of monitoring is not exactly the same. Serbia and Montenegro appeared as one country in 2005 and as two separate member states in 2008 and 2016 (Council of Europe, 2010). Data for Bulgaria were provided in 2008 and 2016, but not in 2005 (Council of Europe, 2010).

The average percentage of women representatives and substitutes to the Parliamentary Assembly in 2016 (Table 29) is 35.7%. This is an increase from 26.2% in 2005 and 29.3% in 2008. The developments in individual member states show that the percentage of women representatives had improved in 34 out of 47 member states between 2005 and 2016. However, despite the improvements in the majority of the countries, there are also cases where women's presence has worsened. In three countries the percentage of women representatives and substitutes to the Parliamentary Assembly dropped in 2016 compared to 2005 (Denmark, Georgia and Slovenia). In six member states, there were no changes.

In relation to the recommended minimum target of 40% representation of each sex, some significant improvements took place between 2005 and 2016. The minimum target was reached in 21 countries in 2016, compared to only six countries in 2005 and 12 countries in 2008.

Table 29. Percentage of women representatives and substitutes to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	25%	37.5%	37.5%	+12.5
Andorra	25%	50%	75%	+50
Armenia	12.5%	25%	37.5%	+25
Austria	33.3%	41.7%	41.7%	+8.4
Azerbaijan	25%	25%	25%	0
Belgium	28.6%	7.1%	35.7%	+7.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	20%	30%	30%	+10
Bulgaria		54.5%	25%	
Croatia	22.2%	40%	28.6%	+6.4
Cyprus	25%	25%	50%	+25
Czech Republic	35.7%	50%	50%	+14.3
Denmark	50%	40%	30%	-20
Estonia	33.3%	50%	33.3%	0
Finland	50%	40%	60%	+10
France	5.6%	20%	38.9%	+33.3
Georgia	60%	20%	40%	-20
Germany	30.6%	27.8%	44.4%	+13.8
Greece	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	+14.3
Hungary	14.3%	7.1%	28.6%	+14.3
Iceland	50%	16.7%	66.7%	+16.7
Ireland	12.5%	12.5%	20%	+7.5
Italy	11.1%	19.4%	47.2%	+36.1
Latvia	20%	33.3%	50%	+30
Liechtenstein	25%	50%	50%	+25
Lithuania	25%	37.5%	37.5%	+12.5
Luxembourg	33.3%	33.3%	50%	+16.7
Malta	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0
Republic of Moldova	22.2%	20%	50%	+27.8
Monaco	25%	20%	25%	0
Montenegro		16.7%	50%	
Netherlands	21.4%	28.6%	35.7%	+14.3
Norway	30%	40%	40%	+10
Poland	16.7%	25%	16.7%	0
Portugal	28.6%	28.6%	35.7%	+7.1
Romania	10%	20%	25%	+15
Russian Federation	11.1%	11.1%		
San Marino	25%	25%	50%	+25
Serbia		38.5%	57.1%	
Serbia and Montenegro	21.4%			
Slovakia	20%	10%	40%	+20
Slovenia	66.7%	50%	16.7%	-50
Spain	33.3%	37.5%	41.7%	+8.4
Sweden	41.7%	58.3%	58.3%	+16.6
Switzerland	16.7%	33.3%	25%	+8.3
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	33.3%	20%	33.3%	0
Turkey	8.3%	20.8%	25%	+16.7
Ukraine	8.3%	16.7%	25%	+16.7
United Kingdom	19.4%	20%	25%	+5.6
Average	26.2%	29.3%	35.7%	

2. Gender balance among delegations to the Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe

2.1 *Gender balance in the Chamber of Local Authorities*

Table 30 presents a general overview of the percentage of women in the Chamber of Local Authorities in 2005, 2008 and 2016, distinguishing between the presence of women as members and as substitutes. The results show that overall the presence of women has increased considerably over time. The average percentage of women has gone up from 24% in 2005 to 37.2% in 2008 and 44% in 2016. This means that the 40% minimum recommended target was reached in 2016. Looking more closely at the two categories separately (members and substitutes), this reveals an even more interesting picture. Whereas the increase between 2005 and 2008 was mostly the result of an increase in the percentage of women substitutes (Council of Europe, 2009), the increase in 2016 was the result of an increase in the percentage of women members. The fact that the percentage of women both as members and as substitutes reaches parity (almost) is reason for optimism.

Table 30. Percentage of women members and substitutes of the Chamber of Local Authorities

	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Members	26.3%	25%	39%	+12.7
Substitutes	21.7%	49.3%	49.6%	+27.9
Average	24%	37.2%	44%	

Tables 31 and 32 take a closer look at the situation in individual member states. Table 31 shows the percentage of women members, and Table 32 the percentage of women substitutes. In 2016, 22 countries (46.8%) reached the minimum target of 40%. Compared to 2005, the percentage of women members of the Chamber of Local Authorities improved in 24 countries (Table 31). The increases in the proportion of women members are sometimes substantial and significant. In seven countries, for instance, the percentage of women members went up by 50 percentage points. In opposition to these positive developments, some negative developments also occurred. In 11 member states, the proportion of women members decreased between 2005 and 2016, and in some of these countries it did so rather dramatically. In ten countries, the presence of women in 2016 remained the same compared to the situation in 2005. All in all, the cross-national and over time comparisons reveal a great deal of fluctuation in the presence of women members in the Chamber of Local Authorities. An important explanation for this fluctuation is the fact that a low number of positions is allocated to each member state, meaning that changes in the actual numbers of women or men can lead to big variations in the percentages for these groups. Nevertheless, it seems important to monitor these fluctuations in the future, to consider what other underlying causes may play a role.

Table 31. Percentage of women members of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	0%	0%	50%	+50
Andorra	0%	0%	0%	0
Armenia	0%	0%	0%	0
Austria	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%	+33.4
Azerbaijan	66.7%	0%	33.3%	-33.4
Belgium	0%	0%	33.3%	+33.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0%	0%	50%	+50
Bulgaria	40%	20%	60%	+20
Croatia	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%	-33.4
Cyprus	0%	0%	50%	+50
Czech Republic	50%	50%	50%	0
Denmark	50%	66.7%	0%	-50
Estonia	50%	50%	50%	0
Finland	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%	-33.4
France	11.1%	11.1%	33.3%	+22.2
Georgia	50%	50%	50%	0
Germany	11.1%	22.2%	44.4%	+33.3
Greece	25%	25%	50%	+25
Hungary	25%	25%	50%	+25
Iceland	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0
Ireland	50%	50%	50%	0
Italy	44.4%	33.3%	33.3%	-11.1
Latvia	100%	50%	33.3%	-66.7
Liechtenstein	0%	0%	50%	+50
Lithuania	0%	0%	50%	+50
Luxembourg	0%	0%	33.3%	+33.3
Malta	0%	0%	0%	0
Republic of Moldova	0%	50%	33.3%	+33.3
Monaco	50%	0%	0%	-50
Montenegro		33.3%	33.3%	
Netherlands	50%	50%	50%	0
Norway	50%	50%	33.3%	-16.7
Poland	0%	0%	16.7%	+16.7
Portugal	0%	0%	50%	+50
Romania	20%	25%	40%	+20
Russian Federation	11.1%	22.2%	55.6%	+44.5
San Marino	100%	0%	50%	-50
Serbia		0%	50%	
Serbia and Montenegro	0%			
Slovakia	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Slovenia	50%	50%	100%	+50
Spain	16.7%	50%	16.7%	0
Sweden	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%	-33.4
Switzerland	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	0%	0%	33.3%	+33.3
Turkey	16.7%	16.7%	44.4%	+27.7
Ukraine	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	+16.6
United Kingdom	55.6%	33.3%	33.3%	-22.3
Average	27.8%	24.1%	38.2%	

Table 32 equally shows some positive results. The average percentage of women substitutes of the Chamber of Local Authorities reached the minimum target of 40% in 2008, and continued to do so in 2016 (with an average of 47.9% women substitutes, to be precise). Also at the individual country level, more than half of the countries (20 out of 38, or 53%) had at least 40% of women among the substitutes for the Chamber of Local Authorities. This is also a positive trend compared to 2005, when only 14 out of 41 countries (34%) reached the minimum target, but a similar trend compared to 2008 (see also Table 30).

Table 32. Percentage of women substitutes of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	0%	50%	100%	+100
Andorra	0%	100%	100%	+100
Armenia	0%	50%	100%	+100
Austria	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0
Azerbaijan	66.7%	100%	66.7%	0
Belgium	0%	50%	33.3%	+33.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0%	30%	0%	0
Bulgaria	40%	100%	0%	-40
Croatia	66.7%	0%	50%	-16.7
Cyprus	0%	0%	100%	+100
Czech Republic	50%	33.3%	33.3%	-16.7
Denmark	50%	50%	0%	-50
Estonia	50%	0%	0%	-50
Finland	66.7%	50%	50%	-16.7
France	11.1%	66.7%	66.7%	+55.6
Georgia	50%	50%	66.7%	+16.7
Germany	11.1%	55.6%	25%	+13.9
Greece	25%	66.7%	33.3%	+8.3
Hungary	25%	66.7%	33.3%	+8.3
Ireland	50%	50%		
Italy	44.4%	33.3%	66.7%	+22.3
Latvia	100%	0%		
Lithuania	0%	100%		
Luxembourg	0%	0%		
Malta	0%	100%	0%	0
Republic of Moldova	0%	50%	100%	+100
Monaco		100%	100%	
Netherlands	50%	33.3%	33.3%	-16.7
Norway	100%	66.7%	0%	-100
Poland	0%	83.3%	50%	+50
Portugal	33.3%	100%	33.3%	0
Romania	20%	33.3%	60%	+40
Russian Federation	44.4%	33.3%	66.7%	+22.3
Serbia		66.7%	66.7%	
Serbia and Montenegro	0%			
Slovakia	0%	50%	50%	+50
Slovenia	0%	0%	0%	0

Spain	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	+16.6
Sweden	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	0
Switzerland	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%	+33.4
Turkey	16.7%	33.3%	55.6%	+38.9
Ukraine	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	+16.6
United Kingdom	22.2%	66.7%	44.4%	+22.2
Average	27.7%	49.3%	47.9%	

2.2 Gender balance in the Chamber of Regions

Women's presence in the Chamber of Regions as either members or substitutes reached the minimum target of 40% in 2016, as shown in Table 33. In 2016, 41.7% of members and substitutes were women, compared to 29.4% in 2005 and 38.4% in 2008. Two elements, however, are important to note. Firstly, women's presence has increased over time, but the sharpest increase took place between 2005 and 2008, and not between 2008 and 2016. In fact, women's overall presence in the Chamber of Regions in 2016 was only marginally higher than their presence in 2008. Secondly, and more importantly, evolutions in women's presence differ if we compare the percentage of women as members with their percentage as substitutes. Whereas the percentage of women substitutes decreased between 2008 and 2016, the percentage of women members actually went up by 14.6 percentage points since 2008 and by 23.3 percentage points since 2005.

Table 33. Percentage of women members and substitutes of the Chamber of Regions

	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Members	20.8%	29.5%	44.1%	+23.3
Substitutes	38%	47.3%	39.2%	+1.2
Average	29.4%	38.4%	41.7%	

The increase shown in Table 33 is also noticeable in Table 34 displaying percentages of women members by individual member states. Table 34 demonstrates that in 2016, 22 out of 38 countries (or 58%) had 40% or more women members in the Chamber of Regions. These positive developments are also apparent if we consider the final column in the table. A large majority of 28 countries (78%) witnessed an upward trend in the percentage of women members. Eight countries stagnated and no countries experienced a downward trend.

Table 34. Percentage of women members of the Chamber of Regions

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	0%	0%	50%	+50
Andorra	0%	0%	100%	+100
Armenia	50%	50%	100%	+50
Austria	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Azerbaijan	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Belgium	25%	50%	50%	+25
Bosnia and Herzegovina	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	0
Bulgaria	0%	0%	0%	0
Croatia	50%	0%	50%	0
Cyprus	0%	100%	0%	0
Czech Republic	0%	33.3%		
Denmark	33.3%	50%	100%	+66.7
Estonia	0%	0%	0%	0
Finland	100%	100%	100%	0
France	22.2%	33.3%	42.9%	+20.7
Georgia	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Germany	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	0
Greece	0%	0%	66.7%	+66.7
Hungary	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Ireland	50%	50%		
Italy	11.1%	44.4%	33.3%	+22.2
Latvia	0%	0%		
Lithuania	0%	0%	50%	+50
Luxembourg	100%	100%		
Malta	0%	100%	100%	+100
Republic of Moldova	0%	0%	50%	+50
Monaco			100%	
Netherlands	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Norway	33.3%	33.3%	100%	+66.7
Poland	16.7%	0%	50%	+33.3
Portugal	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Romania	20%	50%	40%	+20
Russian Federation	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	+11.1
Serbia		33.3%	33.3%	
Slovakia	0%	0%	50%	+50
Slovenia	0%	0%	0%	0
Spain	50%	16.7%	66.7%	+16.7
Sweden	33.3%	33.3%	50%	+16.7
Switzerland	0%	33.3%	66.7%	+66.7
Turkey	16.7%	33.3%	22.2%	+5.5
Ukraine	33.3%	33.3%	50%	+16.7
United Kingdom	22.2%	12.5%	33.3%	+11.1
Average	19.8%	30.5%	49.4%	

Compared to Table 34, the results in Table 35 on the percentage of women as substitutes in the Chamber of Regions show more stagnation. Although the average percentage of women substitutes still reached the minimum target of 40% in 2016, this percentage was comparable to the average percentage of women substitutes in 2005 (39.6%) and lower than the average percentage of women substitutes in 2008 (51.9%). There is also considerable variation at the individual country level. Compared to 2005, 18 countries out of 44 (40.9%) witnessed an increase in the percentage of women substitutes in 2016, 9 countries (20.5%) witnessed a decrease and 17 countries (38.6%) stagnated. In 2016 a total of 23 countries (48.9%) reached the minimum target of 40% women substitutes.

Table 35. Percentage of women substitutes of the Chamber of Regions

Member state	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
Albania	0%	100%	0%	0
Andorra	0%	100%	0%	0
Armenia	0%	50%	0%	0
Austria	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0
Azerbaijan	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Belgium	0%	33.3%	33.3%	+33.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	50%	50%	100%	+50
Bulgaria	0%	20%	40%	+40
Croatia	33.3%	66.7%	66.7%	+33.4
Cyprus	0%	50%	50%	+50
Czech Republic	0%	25%		
Denmark	0%	0%	66.7%	+66.7
Estonia	50%	50%	50%	0
Finland	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	0
France	44.4%	37.5%	14.3%	-30.1
Georgia			0%	
Germany	33.3%	55.6%	50%	+16.7
Greece	25%	50%	50%	+25
Hungary	0%	25%	50%	+50
Iceland	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%	+33.4
Ireland	0%	0%	50%	+50
Italy	50%	33.3%	33.3%	-16.7
Latvia	50%	50%	33.3%	-16.7
Liechtenstein	50%	100%	50%	0
Lithuania	50%	50%	100%	+50
Luxembourg	50%	50%	33.3%	-16.7
Malta	50%	0%	50%	0
Republic of Moldova	33%	33.3%	0%	-33
Monaco	50%	100%	0%	-50
Montenegro			33.3%	
Netherlands	25%	75%	50%	+25
Norway	0%	50%	66.7%	+66.7
Poland	33.3%	40%	50%	+16.7
Portugal	50%	25%	50%	0

Romania	20%	40%	20%	0
Russian Federation	44.4%	62.5%	37.5%	-6.9
San Marino	50%	100%	50%	0
Serbia		50%	50%	
Serbia and Montenegro	50%		33.3%	-16.7
Slovakia	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	0
Slovenia	50%	50%	50%	0
Spain	33.3%	75%	40%	+6.7
Sweden	0%	75%	50%	+50
Switzerland	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	0
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	0
Turkey	33.3%	50%	33.3%	0
Ukraine	33.3%	50%	33.3%	0
United Kingdom	37.5%	55.6%	22.2%	-15.3
Average	39.6%	51.9%	40.2%	

3. Gender balance in the European Court of Human Rights

Finally, Tables 36 and 37 give an overview of the presence of women judges in the European Court of Human Rights. In 2016, out of the 47 judges of the European Court of Human Rights, 16 were women and 30 were men², bringing the percentage of women judges to 34.8%. This percentage is comparable to the 33.3% of women judges present in 2008 and (slightly) higher than the 27% of women judges present in 2005.

As for the composition of the Court, a positive improvement can also be noticed, especially in comparison to the situation in 2005. In 2016, the President of the Court was a man, but the 40% minimum target was reached and even exceeded in 2016 for vice-presidents, section presidents and section vice-presidents. The vice-presidency is gender-balanced. Among the five section presidents and five section vice-presidents, there were each time three women. Women have become visible among all leading posts and in both lower and higher ranks except the highest one.

Comparing the average in Table 36 with data on women in the judiciary at the national level, it is similar to average data regarding high and supreme courts (33%) but significantly higher than the average for Constitutional Courts (19%).

² One post was vacant at the time covered by the data collection.

Table 36. Percentage of women judges in the European Court of Human Rights

% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
27%	33.3%	34.8%	+7.8

Table 37. Composition of the European Court of Human Rights

	% Women 2005	% Women 2008	% Women 2016	Comparison 2005-2016 in percentage points
President of the Court	0%	0%	0%	0
Vice-Presidents	0%	0%	50%	+50
Section presidents	0%	20%	60%	+60
Section vice-presidents	0%	40%	60%	+60

Overall, the results for the presence of women and men in Council of Europe bodies showed some positive results. Positive developments were related to the fact that the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of the Regions reached the minimum recommended target of 40%. This increase was mostly the result of an increase in the presence of women as members, rather than substitutes. This is a positive development, compared to previous years. The presence of women in the Parliamentary Assembly and among judges in the European Court of Human Rights is still below 40% but higher than 30%. With a small effort, these average percentages could, on the short term, be increased to 40%.

CONCLUSIONS

*Legislative power**Table 38. Legislative power – summary table*

	Countries reaching the 40% target in 2016	Average % women in 2016	Evolution 2005-2016
Lower/single houses	2 (4%)	25.6%	+
Upper houses	0	22.6% (elected) 35.8% (appointed)	+ +
Regional parliaments	3 (18%)	25.6%	+

As Table 38 recapitulates, only a few countries met the Recommendation's minimum target of 40% representatives of each sex in any of their legislative bodies in the third monitoring cycle to review its implementation. None of the upper houses of parliament for which we have data reached the target, only two lower/singles houses and three of the regional parliaments did. The average proportion of women stayed at around one quarter, and is strikingly consistent across the legislative assemblies surveyed.

Both the lower/single houses of parliament and the regional parliaments counted on average 25.6% women. The appointed senators counted the highest number of women within their ranks (35.8%), which compensates for the relatively lower proportion of elected senators (22.6%). These findings speak to three main scholarly concerns. Firstly, the similarity of the averages in the various legislative bodies contradicts the idea that women would be more easily directed – or would more easily find their way - to less powerful institutions such as the upper houses. Secondly, the finding that, overall, women were not particularly better represented in regional parliaments, which tend to be newer institutions compared to national parliaments, contradicts the idea that women predominantly find inroads in new institutions. Changing older institutions through establishing a gender balance therefore seems neither more nor less difficult than changing new institutions. Thirdly, the relatively highest proportion of women among the appointed senators confirms the theory that the more centralised or top-down the inroad for women is into politics, the more women we find.

The analysis also shows that, additionally, between one fifth and one third of countries fell within the 30-39.9% category: one third of the lower/single house and 23.5% of the regional parliaments. But only 15% of the upper houses fell within the +30% category. Countries in this category may reach the 40% target in the short term. There were, however, still also a substantive amount of countries that were far from the 40% minimum target and for which that goal will not be reached in the near future without strong incentives and policy measures. No less than one third of the lower/single houses of parliament, 40% of the senates and 41% of the regional parliaments counted less than 20% women representatives. Furthermore, these countries had this strong male over-representation already a decade ago. Achieving change towards gender balance in these countries seems particularly difficult. Overall, the proportion of countries that were situated in the 30+ category remained rather

stable. The similarities in the +30% and the -20% categories between the 2005 and 2016 data point to stagnation.

These signs of stagnation and slightly positive trend should however be read together with the country level evolutions showing sharp increases or decreases in certain countries. This warrants against the often-voiced idea that the evolution towards gender balance is linear: setbacks are possible for a wide variety of reasons related to country- and party-specific contexts and a positive evolution is not a natural given.

When turning to internal decision-making positions within the legislative power, 22.2% of the countries studied had a woman president of the single/lower house of parliament and 50% had a deputy speaker of the single/lower house. The average percentage of women presidents of parliamentary committees in the lower/single house was 25.6%; while only 17% of the countries reached the minimum target of 40% women parliamentary committee presidents. While this is still a serious imbalance, it shows that on average the proportion of women members and parliamentary committee presidents is similar, which is a good sign. Although it is not the case that all countries with high proportions of women in the single/lower houses have more women presidents, deputy speakers or presidents of parliamentary committees, the data collected has shown that higher numbers of women representatives increase their ability to reach these positions of power.

Executive power

Table 39. Executive power positions – summary table

	Countries reaching the 40% target 2016	Average % women 2016	Evolution 2005-2016
Heads of state, elected by citizens		9.5%	+/-
Heads of state, appointed by parliament		7.7%	+/-
Heads of national government		14.6%	+
Heads of regional governments	6.2%	17.5%	+/-
National deputy prime ministers/vice presidents	5.8%	22.9%	
Senior and junior ministers national governments	9%	23%	
Regional governments	7.1%	31.4%	+
Mayors	0%	13.4%	+/-
Local elections	11%	26%	+

The overall conclusion of the analysis about the executive power, and especially when it concerns heads of states, heads of governments and mayors, is that positions at the very top of the political hierarchy at the executive level in Europe were still almost exclusively male dominated in 2016. For all of the executive functions, less than 11% of the respondent countries met the 40% minimum target. The average proportion of women heads of state or in an executive body did not exceed 20%: of the countries studied, 9.5% of the heads of states were women when elected and 7.7% when appointed by parliaments. Women represented 14% of the national heads of governments, 17.5% heads of regional governments, as well as 13.5% of the mayors and 26% of local councillors.

Heads of national government, regional governments and local councillors showed a positive evolution when comparing 2005 and 2016; while the other functions remained more or less stable.

The situation appears especially worrying for the number of women mayors: in 2016 their average percentage was extremely low (13.5% on average) and none of the countries reached the minimum target of 40%. Furthermore, in 2016 only 2.5% of the countries had over 30% of women mayors and no less than 77% of the countries had less than 20% women mayors. Taken together, these findings highlight the top level of the local executive as very resistant to change. An important explanation may again be found in the centralisation hypothesis. Strategies for reaching a gender balance in political office are said to work better when in the hands of few (at the national level) than in the hands of many (at the local level). The latter increases the opportunities for political dynamics and strategies that favour those who are already in power (i.e. predominantly men), which also waters down the eventual efforts of national party leaders striving for gender balance.

The averages of women's presence in executive functions rise with the number of executive functions in the countries, but seem to be to some extent inversely proportional to the level of power, except for the local level (mayors) and notwithstanding large difference between the power attributed to the different levels among member states. 22.9% of the deputy prime ministers/vice presidents and 23% of the senior and junior ministers of the national governments were women, and 31.4% of the members of regional governments were women. The regional executives also stand out when looking at other findings. 43% of regional governments were situated within the 30-39.9% range, whereas this was only the case in 20% of the countries regarding senior and junior ministers. Furthermore, one fifth (21.4%) of the regional governments had less than 20% women, whereas this was the case in almost half (49%) of the countries when it concerns senior and junior ministers. The analysis also showed that 22% of local councils in eight countries fell within the 30-39.9% category but 23% of local councils counted less than 20% women representatives. The analysis also showed that the level of local councils was particularly unstable. Hence, while the local and national executives are (highly) problematic, the regional governments stand out as more promising (even though there is no gender balance there either). It should be further studied as to whether these findings can be interpreted as suggesting that there are more women in regional governments than in national governments because the first are less powerful.

The average proportion of women ministers in national governments (23%) is very close to the proportion of women in the national lower/single houses (25.6%) and hence do not point to an extra discriminatory barrier for women when moving upwards on the political ladder. What is striking, however, is that there were proportionally more women on average in regional governments (31.4%) than in regional parliaments (25.6%). This finding contradicts the reasoning that there are more women at the regional than the national level because the first is less powerful. More research is needed to understand these patterns.

Assessing measures related to electoral systems and political parties to reach gender balance

One of the measures suggested in Recommendation Rec(2003)3 calls on member states to reform their electoral systems in order to reach gender balance. Furthering women's participation in political decision making can be done by increasing the proportionality of the electoral system, changing the ballot structure (open or closed), including rules on gender equality in the laws on public funding of political parties, and through the implementation of gender quotas legislation or parity systems. The Recommendation also strongly calls upon political parties to take different types of measures to reach a gender balance. Both member states and political parties are encouraged to introduce parity systems or gender quotas. Political parties can also take other steps, such as including gender equality in their legal framework, implementing gender quotas for their internal decision-making bodies and providing training for women politicians.

Regarding the effect of electoral systems, findings confirmed the expected result that proportional systems are clearly more favourable for a balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making bodies than majoritarian electoral systems. In 2016, the highest proportion of women members of the single/lower houses was found in countries using proportional list systems (27.5% with open lists; 26.6% with closed lists and 27% with other lists). The lowest proportion of women members was found in single majority systems (19.3%). Also as expected, the effect of open or closed lists was not clear-cut. In the case of proportional systems, open lists were slightly more favourable than closed lists (27.5% compared to 26.6%). In the case of semi-proportional systems, they produced slightly lower levels of women (20.9% compared to 21.1%). Overall, with respect to women's participation, the proportionality of the electoral system seemed of more importance than the openness of the ballot structure.

Table 40: Percentage of women in lower/single houses, by gender quota type – summary table (2016)

	Average % women
Countries with both quota laws/parity systems and political party quotas	26.3%
Countries with quota laws/parity systems only	25.3%
Countries with political party quotas only	28.8%
Countries without any type of quotas or parity system	23.1%

Note: Information on political party quotas was collected for the five parties with the highest seat share in the lower/single house elections.

Gender quotas or parity systems are considered to be a direct tool to increase women's participation and a fast track to gender balance. As shown in the above table, countries that applied both gender quota laws and political party voluntary quotas had only slightly more women representatives in the lower/single houses than countries with none of these measures (26.3% and 23.1%, respectively). A second surprising finding is that countries that only had political party quotas performed better than countries with quota laws or parity systems, even when they also have voluntary political party quotas. The first group of countries (with only voluntary political party quotas) counts on average 28.8% women in the lower/single houses; while the group of countries with gender quota laws or parity systems reached only 25.3% of women and countries with both types, 26.3%.

These findings can be explained by the 'acceptable minimum' hypothesis: when the different political parties have to agree upon gender quota (i.e. in the case of establishing gender quota laws- their design will be adapted to the least willing party). This decreases the efforts of the most willing party, which put their quota target higher only when they can design the measure as they wish, as in the case of voluntary political party quotas, and do not experience a downwards pull by gender quota laws that set the target lower than they would.

Why do all gender quota laws or parity systems not produce significantly higher percentages of women legislators? The answer is because only strong quota laws or parity systems work. The analysis has shown a strong correlation between the strength of the quotas (measured in terms of quota percentage, whether they include a stipulation on rank order of men and women, and whether or not they include sanctions and the type of sanction), and the percentage of women elected in national elections. Also for regional parliaments and local councils, there is a relation between strong quotas and better performance in terms of gender balance (notwithstanding that a comparison could not be made with weak quotas on these policy levels because they did not exist). In sum, this implies that if well designed and strong enough, gender quotas legislation or parity systems are an effective tool to establish gender balance in political decision making.

Countries where party quotas existed, either for national elections or for party decision making bodies, had on average higher levels of women in lower houses, among party executives and among party members than countries without such measures. These measures are effective tools in fostering women's representation. Including gender equality elements in legal frameworks regarding parties or in laws on the public funding of political parties however did not seem to automatically lead to better results. Countries that have adopted such rules did not, on average, present significantly higher levels of women in national elected assemblies or political party organisations. Here too, the conclusion is that such measures, in order to be effective, need to be strong enough and be complemented with additional measures that put words into practice. Otherwise, such measures risk remaining merely symbolic gestures rather than real mechanisms for change.

Finally, countries that organised training for women candidates had only slightly higher levels of women in national lower houses, among party executives or as party leaders. The fact that training seemed to be less effective than gender quotas for elections or internal party bodies is linked to two reasons. Firstly, training for women constitutes a ‘soft’ measure to address women’s under-representation in politics. It does not systematically address underlying gender biases in recruitment and selection processes; for instance, it does not change the consideration of the party selectorates as to what constitutes a ‘good’ candidate, nor do they challenge informal practices that benefit men more than women. In order to tackle these structural barriers caused by informal rules and practices, training and gender awareness campaigns need to target first and foremost the party selectorates and leadership. Secondly, training for women may be less effective than gender quotas in increasing women’s presence in numbers, but it can still be useful to strengthen the position of women at a later stage, i.e. once they are selected as candidates or elected as representatives.

Judicial Power

Table 41. Judicial power – summary table

	Countries reaching the 40% target 2016	Average % women 2016	Evolution 2005-2016
High/supreme courts	8 (18.6%)	33%	+
Constitutional Courts	7 (22%)	19%	+/-

Very few courts reached the 40% minimum target set by the Recommendation: eight (18.6%) of the high/supreme courts and five (22%) of the Constitutional Courts. However, the high/supreme courts performed much better than the Constitutional Courts as far as gender balance is concerned. The first counted on average 33% women, while the latter only 19%. The high/supreme courts moreover witnessed a positive evolution between 2005 and 2016: the majority of countries saw an increase in the percentage of women judges and in 2016 none of the high/supreme courts included in the study had only male judges. The percentage of women judges in the Constitutional Courts also increased slightly in the majority of countries. Furthermore, 30% of the high/supreme courts were situated in the 30-39.9% women-judges range –an important signal of potential increase of countries reaching the 40% minimum target- and only 14% had less than 20% women judges. Only 21.8% of the Constitutional Courts were situated within the 30-39.9% women-judges range, which is less than the 28% with less than 20% women judges. Moreover, some Constitutional Courts counted no women.

These general trends should however be read together with the sometimes significant increases and decreases in the number of women judges at the individual country level. Finally, concerning women judges in the high/supreme courts, the analyses showed no link with the appointment method (by head of state, government, superior council of magistracy, or in another way).

*Diplomatic service**Table 42. Diplomatic service – summary table*

	Countries reaching the 40% target 2016	Average % women 2016	Evolution 2005-2016
Ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary	3 (7%)	13%	+/-
Envoys and ministers plenipotentiary	2 (8,3%)	27.3%	+
Minister counsellors	7 (22%)	30.5%	+/-
General consuls	4 (10%)	25.9%	+/-

Notwithstanding that the analyses showed a lot of variety amongst the countries and over time concerning gender balance in the diplomatic service, some general conclusions can be drawn. The number of countries where the various functions of the diplomatic service reached the 40% minimum target was very low and in 2016 some countries had no women diplomats in some of these functions. Of the diplomatic functions included in the study, the minister counsellors (the lowest grade analysed) counted on average the most women diplomats (30.5%), the highest number of countries in the 30-39.9% women range (31%) and the least in the minus 20% category (34%). Also, the women envoys and ministers plenipotentiary performed relatively well, with an average of 27.3%, which was a significant progress when compared to 2005 (19.8%). However, regarding this function, only 8.3% of the countries were situated in the 30-39.9% range and 42% had less than 20% women envoys and ministers plenipotentiary.

The overall low proportion of women ambassadors (13%) was among the worst indicator in terms of gender balance found in the 2016 monitoring round, together with the ones regarding mayors and heads of state and government. Furthermore, the analyses showed the same pattern for the general consuls, with very few countries in the 30-39.9% range - where one may expect that in the near future at least some countries will reach the 40% minimum target-, and many more countries in the less than 20% women category: 9% countries with 30-39.9% and 24.7% with less than 20% women ambassadors. The diplomatic service therefore remains male dominated, especially regarding its highest functions.

*Council of Europe**Table 43. Council of Europe – summary table*

	Countries reaching the minimum 40% target in 2016	Average % women 2016	Evolution 2005-2016
Parliamentary Assembly	21 (45.7%)	35.7%	+
Chamber of Local Authorities	Members: 22 (46.8%) Substitutes: 20 (53%)	44%	+
Chamber of the Regions	Members: 22 (58%) Substitutes: 23 (48.9%)	41.7%	+
European Court of Human Rights		34.8%	+

The results regarding gender balance in the Council of Europe bodies analysed showed some positive developments. Both the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of the Regions had on average 44% and 41.7% of women respectively. Hence, both reached the minimum recommended target of 40%. At the individual country level, 46.8% of the member states reached the 40% target for the members of the Chamber of Local Authorities and 58% reached the target for the members of the Chamber of the Regions. Both bodies also showed important improvements compared to 2005. The average percentage of women in the Parliamentary Assembly, on the other hand, remained slightly below the 40% threshold (35.7%). Almost half of the countries reached the 40% minimum target in 2016. With a small effort by individual member states, this average percentage could, on the short term, be increased to 40%.

As for the European Court of Human Rights, a small positive improvement could be noticed in 2016, in comparison to 2005. In 2016, out of the 46 judges in office at the European Court of Human Rights at the time of reporting³, 16 were women and 30 were men, bringing the percentage of women judges to 34.8%.

³ One post was vacant at the time of reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making was adopted nearly one and a half decades ago. It may be time to 'renew the vows'. While overall positive evolutions can be discerned when comparing the levels of participation of women and men in political and public decision making in 2005 and 2016, many countries also feature 'stability' at a level below the 40% minimum standard, as well as sharp decreases - sometimes even leading to the complete absence of women in some political and public decision-making arenas. Regressing on the levels of representation of women in political and public decision making is a real threat. The commitment towards the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making bodies should hence be maintained and strengthened.

However, the sometimes sharp increases in some countries or areas also illustrate that progress – and even a significant one – can always be achieved. Given the wide variations in women's and men's presence in decision-making bodies across Europe and the different national contexts, the Recommendation leaves it to member states to set targets linked to a time scale with a view to reaching balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making (paragraph VI of the Recommendation). This strategy acknowledges and takes into account institutional, political and cultural specificities, as well as levels of political will. The 2016 monitoring round could be used by member states to identify the problematic areas (and decide upon the targets and the time frame for meeting them), and the areas where the 40% minimum target is closer to be reached (with the relevant measures that could contribute to reaching the target).

In light of paragraph VI of the Recommendation, member states are encouraged to adopt a double approach when setting their targets and timeframe to meet the 40% minimum target:

1. a problem-driven approach, focusing on the most problematic areas as regards gender balanced participation in political and public decision making in their country. Notwithstanding that the identification of problematic areas is country specific, in many countries the situation with regard to executive positions, and especially the low number of women mayors, is far from reaching the 40% minimum target;
2. an opportunity-driven approach, for those areas where progress has been made and where only an 'extra effort' needs to be accomplished to reach the 40% minimum target set by the Recommendation.

The analyses show that in many countries and sectors, the level of women's participation is within the 30%-39.9% range. Therefore, some targeted measures could make a difference to reach the 40% minimum threshold.

For both the problem-driven and opportunity-driven strategies, strict gender quota laws or parity systems and party quotas could be considered.

As stipulated in paragraph 3 of the Appendix to the Recommendation, which lists legislative and administrative measures concerning parity thresholds for candidates in elections, member states should consider making gender quota laws more strict, for instance by increasing the quota percentage, imposing rank order rules and/or introducing/strengthening the sanctions. In countries where gender quotas have generated the most effective results, the minimum level of the target for candidates of each sex on electoral lists was set high (50%-50%), rules on rank order were adopted, and strict sanctions for non-compliance were present. Another option would be to argue in favour of the (re-introduction of political party quotas (even in countries where gender quota laws or parity systems exist) to create a competition dynamic among political parties. Party quotas are useful, given the risk that gender quota laws set the general minimum at the level of the least willing party. If the most willing party adopts gender quotas, this may create competition among political parties, incentivising also less willing parties to adopt party quotas.

In majoritarian systems the switch to proportional representation may also be considered as a strategy. Initiatives to include gender equality principles in legal frameworks for political parties and in laws on public funding of political parties should be supported, as they show the willingness of political parties and governments to tackle the unequal representation of women and men in politics. At the same time, when such commitments are made, care should be taken to ensure that these provisions do not remain 'empty vessels'. In order for such measures to be effective, they need to be supported by an active commitment to bring more women to the party and –more importantly- by a willingness to reflect on the existence of gender biases in the functioning of recruitment and selection practices within political parties. One recommendation would be to not only organise training sessions only for women candidates, but also for party leaders, party executives and party's selectorates. Such training sessions would not only focus on ways to recruit women candidates, but also on identifying, tracking and amending existing gender stereotypes and biases in how parties recruit, select and support candidates, and in the practices and criteria that drive the selection of men and women candidates (differently). In order to support their attempts to reflect on their recruitment and selection processes, political parties could consider relying on internal or external gender equality experts.

Arguably, both types of strategies (problem-driven and opportunity-driven) require not only different measures, but also a different discourse. For the first strategy, a sense of emergency needs to be generated; while the second strategy rather points at the good progress made and encourages the continuation of efforts.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that achieving a gender balance in political and public decision making also depends on the adoption of general gender equality policies in all fields, including economic independence, education, media, stereotyping, and combating violence against women. A gender balance in decision making cannot be reached if other areas of public and private life remain fundamentally unbalanced.

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