PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN GREECE

Study and Policy Advice

Strasbourg, 26 May 2021

CEGGPAD(2021)5

STUDY AND POLICY ADVICE

This Study and Policy Advice focuses on the key findings of the study on participation of women in political life at the local level in Greece, and the related recommendations

Council of Europe

Centre of Expertise for Good Governance

2021

Funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented by the Council of Europe

Participation of Women in Political Life at the Local Level in Greece

Study and Policy Advice

Strasbourg, 26 May 2021

CEGGPAD(2021)5

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Prepared by

Dr Alenka Verbole
Ms Ismini Sioula-Georgoulea
Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia - ISIG
Regional Development Institute of Panteion University

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union.

The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union nor the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, internet, etc.) or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance.

https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/centre-of-expertise

© Centre of Expertise for Good Governance 2021

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Centre of Expertise for Good Governance helps Council of Europe member states deliver good governance and promotes European standards and best practice in this field. It continuously invests in research and expertise, develops practical tools, creates partnerships with national and international actors, and enlarges its offer of cooperation programmes adapting them to the specific needs of the beneficiaries. Being directly linked to the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), the Centre has ready access to high-level government officials from the 47 member States and a reservoir of knowledge.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR STRUCTURAL REFORM SUPPORT (DG REFORM)

The Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) helps EU member states carry out reforms to support job creation and sustainable growth. In particular, DG REFORM coordinates and provides tailor-made technical support to EU member states, in cooperation with the relevant Commission services. The objective is to help EU member states build more effective institutions, stronger governance frameworks and efficient public administrations. The work includes helping EU member states to:

- design and effectively implement structural reforms
- apply EU law (otherwise known as the Community *acquis*) in a timely manner
- use EU funds efficiently and effectively

The support is available to all EU member states, upon request and is notably provided through the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP). Support may be provided in particular – but not exclusively – in the context of EU economic governance processes. SRSP support for reform starts with a request for assistance from an EU member state and it is tailor-made to address the country's needs. It provides a unique combination of expertise (from the European Commission, EU countries, international organisations and/or the private sector) in order to strengthen the capacity of an EU member state to design and implement reforms.

INDEX

1 INTRODUCTION 8

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION 8
1.2 OBJECTIVES 9
1.3 METHODOLOGICAL NOTE 9
1.3.1 NON-EXHAUSTIVE LITERATURE REVIEW ON PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT LOCAL LEVEL. 9
1.3.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT LOCAL LEVEL. 9
1.3.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT LOCAL LEVEL. 10
1.4 STRUCTURE 11

2 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY 13

3 INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS IN GREECE: THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS 15

3.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE STAKEHOLDERS AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT16
3.2 THE CENTRAL LEVEL 17
3.2.1 GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY POLICY AND GENDER EQUALITY (GSDFPGE), 17
3.2.2 THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUALITY (KETHI) 17
3.2.3 OMBUDSMAN 18
3.2.4 MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY 18
3.2.5 THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GENDER EQUALITY 18
3.2.6 THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EKDDA) 18
3.2.7 HELLENIC AGENCY FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EETAA) 18
3.2.8 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE - SPECIAL PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY, YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS 19
3.3 THE REGIONAL LEVEL 19
3.3.1 INDEPENDENT OFFICES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CENTRAL UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF GREECE (KEDE) AND THE ASSOCIATION OF REGIONS (ENPE) 19
3.3.2 REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR GENDER EQUALITY 20
3.4 THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL 21
3.4.1 MUNICIPAL GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE 21

4 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE 22

4.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS 22
4.2 MAIN FINDINGS 25
4.2.1 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS 25
4.2.2 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS 25
4.2.3 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY 34

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 56

6 REFERENCES 60

6.1 CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLKITS 60
6.2 REPORTS ON GENDER EQUALITY 60
6.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS 60
6.4 STUDIES 61

7 ANNEXES 63

7.1 INTERVIEWS' TOPIC GUIDE – PRELIMINARY STUDY 63
7.2 INTERVIEWS' TOPIC GUIDE – FINAL STUDY 64
NATIONAL LEVEL **64**
REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVEL **65**
7.3 SURVEY ON PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT LOCAL LEVEL IN GREECE 66

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Respondents by institution and position 34
Table 2 - Role behaviours of elected women 37
Table 3 - Perceived (self-)confidence with the role of women elected representatives 38
Table 4 - Committees in self-government units where women are active by Position 39
Table 5 - Committees in the self-government units where women are active by Institutional level 40
Table 6 - Decisions relevant for the status of women from Committees 41
Table 7 - Evaluation of the women's participation in political life 42
Table 8 - Actions that could increase women presence and representation in political life by Institutional level 44
Table 9 - On gender definitions 46
Table 10 - "Gender equality action plan" in place in the municipality/region where you are serving/you are active 46
Table 11 - "Gender equality action plan" in place in the municipality/region where you are serving/you are active 47
Table 12 - Possible actions to promote and foster gender equality by gender 49
Table 13 - Structure in place 50
Table 14 - Challenges to mainstreaming by Institutional level 50
Table 15 - Challenges to mainstreaming by Gender 51
Table 16 - Option that best describes the situation with regards to gender mainstreaming in policymaking 52
Table 17 - Usefulness of cooperation patterns 52
Table 18 - Implemented cooperation patterns 53
Table 19 - Assessment of the present cooperation between different stakeholders in the municipality/region 53
Table 20 - Obstacles to gender mainstreaming 54
Table 21 - Obstacles to gender mainstreaming 54
Table 22 - Average assessment per item 55

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Men's opinions on the Challenges/Obstacles to be faced by women 35
Figure 2 - Women's opinions on the Challenges/Obstacles faced 36
Figure 3 - Perceptions on contribution of elected women to the Councils at municipal and regional level .. 38
Figure 4 - Committees in self-government units where women are active by Gender and Institutional level 39
Figure 5 - Evaluation of women's participation in political life by gender 43
Figure 6 - Actions that could increase women presence and representation in political life by Gender 45
Figure 7 - Possible actions to promote and foster gender equality 48

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

DG REFORM – Directorate General for Structural Reform Support, European Commission

EETAA – Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government

EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality

EKDDA – National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government

ENPE – Association of Regions

EU – European Union

GPSHRR – Greek Public Sector Human Resources Register

GSDFPGE – General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality

IMC – Inter-Municipal Cooperation

KEDE – Central Union of Municipalities of Greece

KETHI – Research Centre for Fender Equality

NAPGE – National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2016-2020)

NGOs – Non-governmental Organisations

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSCE/ODIHR - OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Centre of Expertise for Good Governance of the Council of Europe is implementing the "Technical Assistance Project on Delivering Good Governance in Greece – Part II: Provide Support for the Development of Inter-Municipal Cooperation" upon request of the Greek Ministry of Interior. The project is co-funded by the DG REFORM of the European Commission, and its aim is to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to deliver quality and efficient services in Greece, in particular through Inter-Municipal Cooperation. In September 2020, the Ministry of Interior requested to the Centre of Expertise to conduct a Preliminary Study, in order to provide some insights on the reasons for low participation of women in political life at the local level, and to assess whether there is ground to implement cooperation tools supporting direct or indirect gender mainstreaming policies. The project was subsequently extended, and the Centre of Expertise agreed with the Ministry of Interior to continue analysing the situation: this Study and Policy Advice builds upon the Preliminary Study, integrating it with additional insights and final recommendations.

Creating and improving conditions for a full and active participation of women in political (and public) life has been identified as a crucial element of good governance by the Council of Europe. In 2003, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the "Recommendation to the member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making", through which the member states committed themselves to promoting a balanced representation of women and men in political life, as a crucial way to strengthen and enrich their democracies. In the following years, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities also adopted Resolutions and Recommendations, stressing the attention that all the main Council of Europe institutions attach to participation of women in political life, also because it is of great relevance across all Europe. Data collected by the Council of Europe to analyse the participation of women in position of power at all levels have shown that in 2016, women made up on average only 19.4% of the heads of regional governments and only 13,4% of the mayors in the member states[1].

The importance of participation of women is also reflected in the 12 Principles of Good Governance of the Council of Europe[2], and in particular in Principle 1 on "Participation, Representation, and Fair Conduct of Elections", according to which all men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate bodies that represent their interests.

At the same time, good governance is key to achieving gender equality, firstly by acknowledging the different perspectives, needs and concerns of men and women, and secondly by designing and implementing public policies, programmes, services and budgets on a participatory basis, which will bring concrete benefits for all citizens, men and women, equally.

Through this Study and Policy Advice, the Centre of Expertise explored the challenges that women elected officials and in public administration face (in particular, in positions of responsibility) in the local and regional governments in Greece. For that purpose, it engaged with elected men and women who serve as Governors, Mayors, regional and municipal councillors, with men and women who serve as administrative staff in local

[1] *Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making: Analytical report - 2016 data,* Gender Equality Commission (GEC) (2017) Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e

[2] The 12 Principles are enshrined in the *Strategy on Innovation and Good Governance at local level*, endorsed by a Decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2008: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d3dc8

and regional government bodies, as well as with representatives who work in relevant national institutions. Furthermore, it looked at the institutional and legal frameworks and mechanisms that are currently in place in Greece to promote gender mainstreaming at the local and regional level, and explored how they are implemented and operating. The Centre also analysed how Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) could support promoting gender mainstreaming across the municipal borders with a view to providing better services to men and women living in the respective municipalities and regions.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The present Study and Policy Advice aims at identifying patterns, challenges and opportunities in the participation of women in political life at the local level in Greece. Moreover, it focuses on the potential role of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) arrangements to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming policies at local level.

In particular, the Study and Policy Advice aims to contribute to the following objectives:

- Empowering of elected women and women in public administration at the municipal and regional level;
- Increasing the participation of women in political life at the municipal and regional level;
- Exploring the nexus between gender equality and good governance;
- Exploring the potential of IMC in promoting gender mainstreaming.

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data for the purpose of this Study and Policy Advice, in order to acquire information related to the experiences of elected women as well as those of women in public administration at the local and regional level, in terms of their participation in political life, including the different challenges and obstacles they face. These were explored also through the eyes of men (elected men and men working in the administration), in order to take into account different gender-based realities. The following research components are part of the Study:

- Non-exhaustive literature review;
- Quantitative analysis of the participation of women in political life at local level;
- Qualitative analysis of the participation of women in political life at local level.

1.3.1 Non-exhaustive literature review on participation of women in political life at local level.

In order to contextualise the Study and to design the appropriate research tools, a non-exhaustive literature review was performed during the Preliminary Study. The following types of material were reviewed:

- Global reports on Gender Equality issues, within which information on the Greek national context was provided;
- Legal frameworks, within which information on both international and national legal settings was provided;
- Studies, such as relevant research and scientific articles.

1.3.2 Quantitative analysis of the participation of women in political life at local level.

In order to build a "snapshot" of the participation of women in political life at local level, a quantitative analysis was performed on the data retrieved from the Greek Public Sector Human Resources Register

(GPSHRR) of the Ministry of Interior[3]. This analysis can be consulted in the Preliminary Study, which was concluded in December 2020.

1.3.3 Qualitative analysis of the participation of women in political life at local level.

In order to deepen the understanding of the main patterns, challenges and opportunities that women face when participating in political life at local level, a qualitative mixed-methods approach was chosen. Such an approach consisted of the following two methods:

- In-depth interviews with qualified respondents;
- Large Survey on participation of women in political life at the local level in Greece.

1.3.3.1 In-depth interviews with qualified respondents.

During the last week of October 2020 and then between 26 February and 09 April 2021, 34 persons were interviewed by means of teleconference by the authors of this Study and Policy Advice. Interviews were carried out both in English and in Greek. The full anonymity of the interviewees is ensured. Collected data are used only in aggregate form, in compliance with Council of Europe privacy and ethical policies.

Qualified respondents were selected in cooperation with the Greek counterparts and according to criteria that allowed to collect feedback from a heterogeneous group of interviewees, representing the different levels of government (from central, to regional and municipal level) and at the same time expressing the diversity of the Greek context. At the local level, the respondents were representatives of ten different regions (Central Greece, Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Ionian Islands, Ipiros, Peloponnese, South Aegean, Thessaly, Western Greece, Western Macedonia) and sixteen municipalities (Agios Dimitrios, Agios Efstratios, Athens, Chalkida, Kalamata, Kallithea, Kerkira, Kifissia, Parga, Patmos, Penteli, Tilos, Trikala, Vrilissia, Zacharo, Zakynthos). This allowed to have a view of the situation in different regions and in different municipalities, from those smaller and more marginalised to more central and developed ones. In particular, qualified respondents belonged to the following categories:

- At municipal level:
  - Mayor / Deputy Mayor – 8 women, 1 man
  - Municipal Councillors – 2 women
  - Member of Staff – 4 women, 1 man
- At regional level:
  - Governor / Deputy Governor – 3 women, 3 men
  - Regional Councillors – 3 women, 1 man
  - Member of Staff – 1 woman
- At central level
  - Secretariat General for Family Policy and Gender Equality – 2 women
  - National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government – 2 women
  - National Council for Gender Equality – 2 women
  - Ombudsman – 1 man

The topic guides on the in-depth interviews conducted can be consulted in Annex 7.1 - Interviews' Topic Guide.

[3] Greek Public Sector Human Resources Register (GPSHRR) of the Ministry of Interior: http://apografi.gov.gr/mitroo.html . This registry constitutes an integrated information system which is continuously updated with micro-data for the elected officials and the employees of the Greek Public Administration.

1.3.3.2 Large Survey on Participation of Women in Political life at the local level in Greece.

In the first months of 2021, parallel to the in-depth interviews, an online survey was launched to collect data on the topic from a wider audience. The on-line survey was made accessible via weblink to elected representatives and civil servants in Greece. The link was distributed via email with the support of the Ministry of Interior among regional and municipal elected representatives as well as civil servants across all Greece. The survey was composed of both multiple-choices and open-ended questions. It was implemented on the Council of Europe on-line survey platform (SurveyMonkey based). Data were collected and used only in aggregate form and in full compliance with the Council of Europe privacy and ethics policy, thus preserving anonymity both at data collection and data elaboration phases. The text of the survey is listed in Annex 7.3 - Survey on Participation of women in political life at local level in Greece.

Within the period dedicated to data collection, a number of 1167 responses were collected. The 1167 individual records were downloaded from the Survey Monkey platform; however, following a completeness check, 170 records were discarded as they were completely empty or because respondents abandoned the survey after the indication of socio-personal data. Eventually, the questionnaires that provided (at least in part) answers to the substantial questions were 997 in total. Some of the respondents abandoned the survey at different points of the questionnaire, but it was decided to include their answers in the analysis for the sections they completed; therefore, the total number of respondents changes from section to section of the report. The analysis of data was performed using the SPSS statistical package (i.e., by means of frequencies and crosstabs). Since the sample of respondents is not statistically representative of the population (i.e., the totality of elected officials and civil servants), no significance coefficient has been calculated. The present Study and Policy Advice highlights the main trends that emerge from the processing and analysis of the responses collected, however the statistical results are not to be considered representative of the whole universe under study.

1.4 STRUCTURE

The Study and Policy A is structured in the following sections:

- Section 2 - GOOD GOVERNANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY
    - The aim of this section is to explore the possible nexus between good governance and gender equality at the local and regional level in Greece. The section also explores different gender concepts and their embeddedness in the national framework.

- Section 3 - INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS IN GREECE: THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS
    - The aim of this section is to look at the existing institutional and policy framework for gender equality at the local and regional level in Greece, and analyse how it impacts participation of women in political life. It also describes the different stakeholders involved in the promotion and implementation of gender equality principles at the local and regional level.

- Section 4 – PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE
    - The aim of this section is to look at where Greece stands/ranks at the moment in the wider European and global context regarding gender inequalities in political and public life, looking at some of the already recognised challenges and obstacles women face in their different roles, and the solutions sought to amend the situation. In addition, this section provides a thorough description of the key findings of the in-depth interviews and of the Large Survey.

- Section 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
    - The aim of this section is to summarise the findings of the study and, building on them, suggest possible follow up for consideration by the Greek government when further exploring opportunities and possibilities for the promotion and implementation of gender mainstreaming policies at different levels of governance.

2 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY

Greece has strong constitutional guarantees for equality between men and women[4]. The 1975 Constitution recognises that *"Greek men and women have equal rights and equal obligations"* (Article 4) and its 2001 revision requires the State to undertake positive measures to promote gender equality, including through affirmative actions[5]. Greece has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[6] in 1983, demonstrating the political will to adopt initiatives and measures to promote gender equality. In 2018, it has also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)[7]. With a view to the promotion of gender equality in Greek society at the local and regional level, there have been some significant changes in the past 10 years along with the recent reforms of the local government system. The 2010 and 2018 reforms of local government, namely the 2010 Kallikratis Programme and 2018 Cleisthenes I Programme, had among others also major impacts, both in terms of increasing the representation of women in decision making at the local and regional level through the amendment of gender quota, and in terms of introducing the gender equality issues and concepts in governance at all levels through legal provisions that among others provided also for the establishment of gender mechanisms at all levels.

The definition gender was "introduced" into the Greek legislation with the adoption of Law 4531/2018 on "Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and harmonisation of the Greek legislation"[8].

> *"The term "gender" shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men".*

There is no legally established definition of "gender equality" in Greece[9]. Other than that, Greece is using definitions given by international organisations, such as the Council of Europe:

> *"Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men. It means accepting and valuing equally the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society"[10].*

---

4 *End of mission statement by the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice* (2019): https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24471&LangID=E. The principle of gender equality, including positive measures in favour of women, where necessary is enshrined in Articles 4, 22, and 116 of the Greek Constitution.

5 Article 22 notes that "All employees, regardless of gender or other discrimination, are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value" and Article 116 proclaims that the "Adoption of positive measures for promoting equality between men and women does not constitute discrimination on grounds of sex. The State shall take measures for the elimination of inequalities actually existing, in particular to the detriment of women".

6 Law 1342/1983 on Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by Greece.

7 Law 4531/2018 on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and harmonisation of the Greek legislation.

8 Article 3 – Definitions, Paragraph c.

9 Materials prepared by the GSDFPGE, October 2020.

10 Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023), https://rm.coe.int/strategy-en-2018-2023/16807b58eb#:~:text=The%20focus%20for%20the%20period,access%20of%20women%20to%20justice

The concept of gender mainstreaming has been introduced into the Greek legislation only recently under the framework of the Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence Law (Law 4604/2019). The law defines gender mainstreaming as:

> *"the strategy for implementing substantive gender equality, which includes the incorporation of a gender perspective in the preparation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and budgets, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination"*[11].

Whereas substantive gender equality[12] is defined as:

> *"gender equality, through which formal legal equality as well as the protective and corrective or remedial dimensions of gender equality are widened and guaranteed in practice, equal opportunities in every aspect of private and public life are ensured, discrimination and multiple inequalities are eliminated and the living conditions of women or citizens regardless of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity are substantially improved".*

In order to implement gender mainstreaming in practice, operationalising what substantive gender equality is, and what gender perspective implies, would be without doubt helpful to the local and regional governments. The definition of gender mainstreaming[13] by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for example, refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Furthermore, it underlines that equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality also implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. This is in particular relevant when looking at gender mainstreaming in public policies. Thus, "translating" gender perspective in the preparation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and budgets within the context of the local government would imply making men's and women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring of policies, programmes and projects in all political, economic and social spheres as well as assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies, programmes or projects, in all areas and at all levels.

The definition of gender mainstreaming developed by the Council of Europe in 1998:

> *"The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making"*[14],

adds another important dimension, namely the actors (stakeholders) involved in decision making, hence men and women in their different decision-making roles in public and political life. Thus, delivering good governance and public services to men and women is only possible in cooperation with them.

---

11 http://www.isotita.gr/en/law-4604-2019-substantive-gender-equality-preventing-combating-gender-based-violence

12 ibidem

13 https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming

14 *Gender mainstreaming - Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices* (2004), Council of Europe: https://rm.coe.int/1680596135

3 INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS IN GREECE: THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

As stated above, the two recent reforms of the Greek local government system in 2010 with the Kallikratis Programme[15] and in 2018 with the Cleisthenes I Programme[16] had an impact on the participation of women in positions of political responsibility and representation at regional and local level, introducing also important changes in the field of gender equality.

The first one, the Kallikratis Programme, while reorganising the regional and local government structures, reforming the administrative division and redefining the borders of the locally self-administrated units, also modified the electoral procedure and responsibilities related to the governing bodies. Among others, it foresaw the establishment of the Regional Committees on Gender Equality to mainstream gender into all programmes and implement specialised programmes focused on women.

Locally, all competencies in care, social services and welfare – including gender – have become direct responsibility of the new municipalities. The Kallikratis framework empowered the operation of public entities active in supporting vulnerable groups, therefore, it was expected to have a positive effect on the quality of services provided to citizens, especially to women. Gender equality policies became an explicit responsibility of the new municipalities via the creation of service units working on Social Policy and Gender Equality Policy (article 97).

Consequently, municipalities were obliged to set up Units for Social Policy and Gender Equality Policies by the end of 2012. These were to be in charge of preventing and combating violence against women, combating gender stereotypes, increasing the participation of women in employment, reconciling professional and private life, encouraging women's social and political participation and promoting women in decision-making.

As underlined in the "Resolution 404 (2016) on Women's Political Participation and Representation at Local and Regional Levels" of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe[17], *"achieving equality in political representation between men and women - who represent 50% of the world's population - is vital for the functioning and quality of representative democracy and a prerequisite of fair and equitable political participation"*.

[15] 3852/2010 Law on the "New Architecture of Self-administration and Decentralised Administration". Among others, it contributed to reducing the number of administrative district number of regions and municipalities (325). Emphasis was put on strengthening the remaining authorities in terms of autonomy of self-governance. At the same time, the programme aimed at reducing local government employees by 50%, from around 50.000 to 25.000 across the country. The law was adopted in May 2010 and was implemented following the November 2010 local elections comprising the constituting regional elections, which among others replaced provincial elections as they were held before in 2002 and 2006.

[16] 2018 Law 4555/2018 "Reform of the institutional framework of Local Government – Strengthening Democracy – Enhancing Participation – Improving Economic and Developmental Functioning".

[17] https://rm.coe.int/1680767272

In Greece, the new institutional framework also allowed the municipalities to set up specialised committees, such as Committees for Gender Equality (DEPIS) – advisory bodies which would bring together elected representatives, municipal employees, gender experts and representatives of local NGOs.

These changes became both an important incentive and a challenge for the development of gender equality actions at the local and regional level. One of the first issues to be tackled was to increase the participation of women in decision-making. Although the Law provided for quotas for women (one-third of candidates in national, municipal and regional elections), the results of the 2014 municipal and regional elections showed limited progress in this area.

Greece launched in 2010 a national integrated gender mainstreaming strategy within the framework of the National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality (2010–2013). Few years later, based on its foundations, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2016-2020) (NAPGE) was launched in 2017. Among others, NAPGE underlines that gender equality is not a «female issue» but a universal principle, as it is formulated by the UN Millennium Development Goals, the declarations and documents of the European Union and other International Organisations. Balanced participation of women in decision-making is one of the six strategic objectives of the NAPGE (2016-2020). The NAPGE draws attention to the limited and reduced presence of women in leading positions, decision-making bodies and all the political, social and economic institutions including the Parliament, the European Parliament, the Government, local and regional government, and so forth. A new NAPGE for the period 2021-2025 is currently being prepared, containing specific targets and indicators.

3.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE STAKEHOLDERS AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

There are many stakeholders involved in promotion and implementation of gender equality in Greece at different levels of governance ranging from decision makers, thus elected men and women, to members of the administration, researchers, gender equality activists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in particular those working on women's empowerment and gender equality issues, media and so on.

For example, the decision makers, men and women politicians at different levels of governance play a crucial role in promoting gender mainstreaming as they define policy priorities and initiate the gender policies, allocate funds and means for gender mainstreaming, and have power to create an enabling environment and conditions for gender mainstreaming. Men and women working in the municipal and regional level are responsible for the implementation of the policies, including gender mainstreaming, and can also play an important role in identifying and defining (gender related) policy issues and in drafting policies. There are often gender mechanisms (i.e., Committees for Gender Equality) established within the administration that have an essential role in the process. Researchers, different think-tanks, etc. are involved in detecting and defining policy issues as well as suggesting ways to solve them, thus helping to shape policies. The NGOs, pressure groups, gender activists, interest groups can identify issues and bring them to the attention of decision makers, but they also have as an important role as watchdog, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of gender mainstreaming in reality. Media can influence and shape the political agenda[18],

[18] *Gender mainstreaming - Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices*, Council of Europe (2004): https://rm.coe.int/1680596135

putting gender equality on the table, but they can also create, accelerate, disseminate or challenge gender stereotypes and prejudices (Verbole and Gaon, 2018)[19].

Below are listed some of the key stakeholders in Greece at various levels of governance.

3.2 THE CENTRAL LEVEL

3.2.1 General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDFPGE),

The General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality[20] is the governmental agency responsible to plan, implement, and monitor policies on equality between women and men in all sectors. It was founded in 1985 as an independent public service and today[21] it belongs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The GS has two Directorates, namely the Directorate of Planning, Standardisation and Policy Monitoring on Gender Equality and the Directorate of Social Protection and Counselling Services, and an Independent Department of European and International Cooperation. The Secretariat also implements co-financed programmes and co-funded actions of the respective Ministry.

It runs an Observatory on gender equality issues (established in 2015) providing a publicly available online platform which tracks and analyses statistical data from different sources on a broad range of policy areas. The Observatory is a useful tool for designing, implementing and evaluating policies concerning gender equality, through detailed gender-segregated data (GDDs) as well as advocacy purposes. Also, the Observatory supports the preparation and writing of Annual Reports on the Progress of Implementation of the National Gender Equality Action Plan (2016-2020) produced by the Secretariat. Annual Reports take into consideration data gathered from the local government, including the implementation of equality policies in the municipalities[22].

3.2.2 The Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)

The Research Centre for Gender Equality was founded in 1994 as a legal entity of private law and it is supervised by the Secretariat. It coordinates, promotes and conducts research and studies on gender issues and implements the national and European action programmes on women's counselling and their social and

---

19 Verbole, A. and I. D. Gaon (2018), *Gender Representation in Media throughout the Electoral Cycle: The Cases of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia*. Paper presented at the Gender Differentiation in Media Industries International Conference, Ljubljana: https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/2018/genmed-conference-booklet.pdf?sfvrsn=0

20 Formerly, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) that was located under the Ministry of Interior.

21 Pursuant to Article 4 of Presidential Decree 81/2019 (Government Gazette 119/A), the General Secretariat of Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior, which was set up in accordance with Article 27 of Law 1558/1985 (137/A), was transferred, in terms of responsibilities, positions, staff and supervised bodies, to the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, which was renamed Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Research Centre for Gender Equality, which was set up in accordance with Article 5 of Law 1835/1989 (76/A), as amended and in force, was also transferred, in terms of responsibilities, positions and staff, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Pursuant to Article 7 of Presidential Decree 84/2019 (Government Gazette 123/A), a General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality was established within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The services, in terms of responsibilities, staff and supervised organisations, of the General Secretariat of Gender Equality, which was set up in accordance with Article 27 of Law 1558/1985, were transferred to the new General Secretariat. The General Secretariat of Gender Equality, which was set up in accordance with Article 27 of Law 1558/1985, as well as the corresponding position of General/Section Secretary, were abolished. Following the Presidential Decree 2/2021 (Government Gazette 2/A), a Vice Minister for Demography and Family Policy was appointed under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, supervising the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality.

22 The questionnaire explores, among others, gender relevant structures established in municipalities, including gender mechanisms, resources available in a given locality and capacities available for gender mainstreaming. It also monitors the situation as relevant to development of municipal gender equality action plans.

employment integration. In July 2019, it was transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. KETHI has in the past engaged in training of women aspirants in cooperation with NGOs.

3.2.3 Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is an independent authority established in 1998 (Law 2477/1997). Among others, since 2010 (under its Equal Treatment Department) the Ombudsman deals with the equal treatment of women and men on issues such as access to employment, working conditions, and access to and provision of services by public institutions. The Ombudsman also publishes yearly reports on the progress achieved on gender equality. Among others, it also monitors the implementation of gender quota.

3.2.4 Ministerial Departments for Gender Equality

Apart from the General Secretariat and KETHI, the national gender mechanism includes also the ministerial departments for gender equality (Article 4 par. 1b of Law 4604/2019). It is worth mentioning the Department of Gender Equality at Work of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the only such operating department. Since its establishment, in 1984, it has the legislative initiative on the implementation of equal treatment and gender equality at work, in work life balance and in protection of maternity, always in collaboration with the GSDFPGE.

3.2.5 The National Council for Gender Equality

The National Council for Gender Equality was established in 2019 under the Law 4604 (Article 9) as an advisory body composed of 11 representatives (representatives from the Ministries of Interior and Justice, from KETHI, two academics specialised in gender studies, the presidents of the Equality Committees of KEDE and ENPE, two representatives of women organisations).[23] It is chaired by the Secretary General of the GSDFPGE. The Council became operational in October 2020. Its members discuss and evaluate existing gender equality policy, as well as propose policies and actions to the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality.

3.2.6 The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA)

The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government is the strategic agency for the training and education of public servants and local government employees. It was established in 1983, as a Legal Entity of Public Law and is supervised by the Ministry of Interior. Among others, it delivers general training on gender equality (relevant international and national legal framework on gender equality, gender inequalities in work place i.e., gender pay gap, sexual harassment and gender-based violence) on an annual basis, in collaboration with the Secretariat.[24]

3.2.7 Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA)[25]

EETAA's mission is to reinforce local government institutions so that they become instruments of planning and achieving regional and local development. More specifically, EETAA operates various databases for local governments such as: finances, human resources, public assets, social institutions and initiatives etc., and it has established and expanded cooperation networks for local government aiming at the dissemination of knowledge, experience, good practices and innovative ideas in Greece and across Europe. It also operates as the Intermediate Body of the Operational Programs of the National Strategic Plan for the financing of local development projects, supports innovative projects aiming at social cohesion and economic growth as well as at the development of local economy and employability, and promotes life-long learning. It has been also

[23] Representatives change every 3 years in order to ensure the representation of different organisations and experts on gender equality and gender-based violence.

[24] For more information please refer to: https://www.ekdd.gr/επιμόρφωση/συμμετοχή-στην-επιμόρφωση/αναζήτηση-προγραμμάτων-επιμόρφωσης/

[25] https://www.eetaa.gr/en_pages/index_en.php

operating as a certified centre of vocational training aiming to improve and bring up to date the professional skills of municipalities' employees.

3.2.8 Parliamentary Committee - Special Permanent Committee on Equality, Youth and Human Rights

It addresses gender equality as a specific topic.

3.3 THE REGIONAL LEVEL

The Law 4604/2019 also foresees that an Independent Equality Office is established in each Region, the Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE) and the Association of Regions (ENPE), while the Municipal and the Regional Equality Committees in each municipality and region respectively are upgraded.

3.3.1 Independent Offices for Gender Equality in the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE) and the Association of Regions (ENPE)

These agencies have the following competencies:

- To inform the Municipal and Regional Councils on the establishment of the Regional and Municipal Committees for Gender Equality, respectively.
- To cooperate with municipalities and regions to identify and implement local and regional projects and activities on gender equality.
- To cooperate with the relevant municipal and regional authorities to draw up Local and Regional Action Plans to promote Gender Equality in Employment.
- To cooperate with elected and candidate women in local authorities for the development of networks of partnerships with local bodies to enhance active participation of women in decision-making in local government, including the exchange of views and good practices regarding the promotion of participation of women in politics.
- To inform women of the activities of the Offices for Gender Equality, the GSDFPGE and other bodies active in the field of gender equality.

Finally, the Offices for Gender Equality of ENPE and KEDE should be staffed with at least two public employees of the regions and municipalities, respectively. The two offices would also play a key role in mainstreaming gender within the structures of their own organisations. Currently, the ENPE has an Equality Committee, while the Gender Equality Office at KEDE is no longer operational (GSDFPGE, 2020).

3.3.2 Regional Independent Equality Offices

The Regional Independent Equality Offices, to be established in each of the 13 regions, are to be responsible for the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in planning development measures at regional level, as well as implementing specialised programmes for women. They are supposed to make proposals to the Regional Councils on measures to promote effective gender equality in all areas of economic, political and social life. By early 2021, one regional Independent Equality Office has been established, but no personnel have been appointed yet.

The Independent Equality Offices are directly subordinated to the Regional Governor, with the following powers:

- To collect and process data on the integration of gender equality into regional policies, actions, and programmes.
- To evaluate the region's policies and actions for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality between men and women, and to draw up a Report to the Regional Governor (issued in December each year to the Regional Council).

- To cooperate with the Regional Committee on Gender Equality.
- To ensure the cooperation of the services of the region with the GSDFPGE, in order to facilitate at regional level the development of the actions and programmes related to the policies of the GSDFPGE and the guidance of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality.

3.3.2 Regional Committee for Gender Equality

Article 186, VI of Law v.3852/2010, as amended by Article 7 of Law 4604/2019, provides for the establishment of a Gender Equality Committee in each region. The Committee shall be established by decision of the Regional Council and shall consist of the following nine members:

- The Regional Governor, or an authorised regional adviser, as appointed by the relevant Regional Governor, as Chair.
- A representative of the municipalities of the region designated by the relevant Regional Union of Municipalities and a member of the Municipal Equality Committee of the municipality in question.
- An employee of the existing Service Unit for Social and Gender Equality Policies or of the Independent Gender Equality Office or the Directorate for the Internal Organisation and Operation or for Public Health and Social Care or for the Planning of the region concerned.
- A joint representative of the professional chambers of the concerned region.
- A representative of the Regional Education Directorate, based in the headquarters of the region.
- A common representative of higher education institutions in the region concerned.
- A common representative of the bar associations of the region concerned.
- A representative of a women/feminist organisation or non-governmental organisation acting on gender issues in the area designated by it.
- A representative of the GSDFPGE designated by the Secretary General for Gender Equality.

The responsibilities of the Committee are to:

- Consider the policies of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality with a view to mainstreaming gender equality into the policies of the region.
- Recommend and participate in the drawing up of a regional gender equality plan.
- Make proposals to the competent bodies of the region on the necessary measures to promote effective gender equality in all areas of economic, political, and social life.
- Cooperate with the Municipal Equality Committees, the competent departments of the region, the Independent Office for Equality of the Region and other structures and associations active in the field of promotion of gender equality and women's rights.
- Propose to the Regional Council the inclusion of projects in the Collective Project Decisions of the Region (SAEP) which promote the above measures and the relevant information and information measures for the public.
- Cooperate with the structures of the Network of GSDFPGE for preventing and combating violence against women, in the region, as well as with civil society actors.
- Seek to ensure and promote gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes through communication and awareness-raising activities in the region.

By early 2021, 7 out of 13 regions have set up Committees.

3.4 THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

3.4.1 Municipal Gender Equality Committee

Article 5 of Law v.4604/2019 (GG I 50) added to the competences of the social protection and solidarity area of municipalities also the competence to design, organise, coordinate and implement gender equality programmes, in accordance with the policies of the GSDFPGE and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, as well as initiatives to promote gender equality within their administrative boundaries.

In addition, the implementation of the "European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life" (also known as "European Charter for Gender Equality in Local Life") within the administrative boundaries of the municipalities has also been introduced[26].

In this context, with a view to mainstreaming the gender perspective in all the policies of municipalities falling within their remit, the Municipal Equality Committee was established in each municipality, as an advisory body to the Municipal Council. At the same time, this institution is also the junction of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality with the Administration, in order to implement equality policies, but with exclusive competences, which are listed below:

- In cooperation with the competent departments of the municipality, it participates in and supports the inclusion of gender equality in the municipality's policies, recommends and participates in the preparation of Gender Equality Action Plans at Local Level.
- Makes proposals and recommendations to the competent bodies of the municipality to take the necessary measures to promote effective gender equality in all areas of economic, political and social life.
- It cooperates with the Regional Committee on Gender Equality, the competent local authorities, as appropriate, and with structures and associations active in the field of promoting gender equality and women's rights at local level.
- It cooperates with the structures of the GSDFPGE Network for preventing and combating violence against women, as well as with civil society actors.

The Municipal Equality Committee shall be established by decision of the Municipal Council and shall consist of the following members:

- A Deputy Mayor or representative office or district/adviser as the Chair.
- A municipal councillor of the other groupings of the Municipal Council.
- An employee of the Social Service or the Unit for Social Policy and Gender Equality Policies of the municipality.
- A representative of the Parents' Associations of the municipality.
- A representative of the local professional/trade association or cooperative organisation.
- A representative of local female/feminist association or non-governmental organisation involved on gender issues.
- Two gender-equality experts.

By March 2021, 263 out of the 332 municipalities (about 79,2%) have set up the Committee for Gender Equality (GSDFPGE, 2021).

[26] Based on the latest data of the GSDFPGE, 214 out of 332 municipalities had signed the Charter (64,5%).

4 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

4.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority[27], women in Greece in 2020 represented the 51,34% of the total population. In addition, women represented more than two thirds of the total population who attended no school or did not complete primary education, and among the population holding the highest educational level (Master/PhD), only 41.5% were women.

In 2018, the employment rate of women was 49% (the EU average was 67.4%), while that of men was 70.1%, and only one in four managers was a woman. In all occupations, women were paid less than men, with a gender pay gap of 12.5%. Greece had also the widest household and childcare gaps in the EU: 95% of women, compared with 53% of men, take care of children on a daily basis and the gap is even larger for domestic choirs - 85% of women compared with 16% of men take care of the household tasks (Kloka, 2019). In general, gender stereotypes[28] and traditional gender roles[29] [30] as well as patriarchal attitudes seem to be still much present in Greek society[31] [32].

Following the recent presidential election in January 2020, the Greek Parliament elected the first woman President of the Republic. At the same time, following the recent 2019 national, regional and local elections, there are only 2 women ministers in the new government (Minister of Culture and Sport and Minister of Education), 56 women (18,7%) in the Parliament[33], 19 women Mayors (representing 5,7% of all elected mayors) and one woman Governor (representing 7,7% of all Governors). Women represent 21,4% of regional and 19,2% of municipal councillors.

---

27 *Labour Force Survey – Yearly time series since 1981: Population, Education, Employment Status (1981-2020)* (2020), Hellenic Statistical Authority, https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO03/-

28 Gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination. Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Gender stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of boys and girls, women and men, their educational and professional experiences as well as life opportunities in general. Stereotypes about women both result from and are the cause of deeply ingrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women (*Gender Equality Glossary* (2016) Council of Europe, Strasbourg).

29 Gender roles refer to social and behavioural norms which, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Collectively, gender roles often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to women, men, girls and boys (see gender division of labour). Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. Like gender itself, gender roles can evolve over time, in particular through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities. (EIGE) https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1209

30 Meier, P., Lombardo, E., Bustelo M., Pantelidou Maloutas M. (2005), *Women in political decision-making and gender mainstreaming: obvious partners?*, The Greek Review of Social Research, 117, 2005, pp. 35-61: https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/ekke/article/viewFile/9556/9743.pdf

31 *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Greece adopted by the CEDAW Committee at its fifty fourth session* (2013),CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7: http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhsldCrOlUTvLRFDjh6%2Fx1pWCT%2BNJkQB%2BECOvrawUqlXuTO%2BAvPXlbccbOj2ZfuplkL0Z77Vj2QxpNZqRbHA7Mh1aw933FUzcf9mPklCt7Fss2

32 *GREECE: Comprehensive national review report Beijing+25* (2020), General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality,: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Greece.pdf

33 OSCE/ODIHR noted that gender equality was a marginal campaign topic within the framework of the 2019 parliamentary elections, and that ODIHR EAM interlocutors remarked that women candidates were not actively promoted by political parties and received less media attention. Despite the increased 40 per cent requirement for gender representation on party lists, the requirement was not consistently enforced, and its impact was limited. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/f/442168.pdf

Overall, this is far from the balanced participation of women and men indicated in the 2003 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe[34], which states that "*the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%.*"

In addition to seeing the percentage of elected women versus elected men, it is also interesting to see how many men and women run as candidates and how many then get elected. Data[35] show that in 2019, about 10,5% of all women candidates for the position of mayor got elected, representing 5,7% of all elected mayors. 8,3% of all women candidates for the position of Governor was elected, representing 7,7% of all elected Governors. At regional level, 42,1% of all candidates running for the position of regional councillors were women[36], but the percentages of the elected ones is reduced to 21,4%.

It should be mentioned that there is a gender quota that has been in place since 2001 for the local and regional election[37] (amended in 2018) and a quota for the national elections (since 2008[38] and amended in 2019)[39].

In 2018, under the Reform of the Local Government institutional Framework (Kleisthenis I Program (Government Gazette 133/A/19.07.2018) the 40% gender quota was enacted for municipal (art. 14, par. 4, pass. c), community (art. 16, par. 5) and regional elections (art. 120, par. 5, pass. c). A year later, the 40% gender quota was enacted also for the candidates of the European elections with the law 4604/2019 (art. 15, par. 2 of the "Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence" law). This modified the previous Article 34 of Presidential Decree 26/2012 which stated that at least one-third of political parties' candidate lists, both for national and constituency lists, must be filled with candidates of each sex:

"For the approval of the electoral lists of candidates of political parties, or the coalition of cooperating parties, the number of candidates from each sex must be at least equal to 40% of the total number of their candidates, respectively".

According to the OSCE/ODIHR 2019 Report, the 2019 amendment of the Electoral Code increased the requirement from one-third nationwide to 40 per cent in each constituency for parliamentary elections. It should be noted that in single-mandate and three-mandate constituencies, as well as in the case of repeated elections, gender quota is not applied. There are no legal provisions for the placement/ranking order of the candidates on the lists, which often leaves women in disadvantaged positions. There is no gender quota for Mayors nor Governors.

Recently, there has been a legislative proposal, under the framework of the amendment of the Electoral Law of the Local Government, to decrease gender quota to 33%, which was not finally accepted. At the time of

---

[34] *Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making* (2003), Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848

[35] *The gender aspect of the results of Municipal, Regional and European Elections in Greece 2019, 21st E-Bulletin* (2019), General Secretariat for Gender Equality (G.S.G.E.), Ministry of Interior: https://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Observatory-21st-e-bulletin-The-gender-aspect-of-the-results-of-the-Municipal-Regional-and-European-Elections-in-Greece-in-2019.pdf

[36] ibidem

[37] Law 2910/2001, Art. 75, § 1 requiring at least one third of candidates from each sex in the party ballots for local and regional elections. The sanction was non-registration of the party candidates' list. Dia Anagnostou (2014), *Fact Sheet on Greece*: https://blogs.eui.eu/genderquotas/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2015/04/Executive-summary-Greece-Anagnostou.pdf

[38] In 2008, Law 3636/2008, Art. 3., was adopted for the national elections, providing for at least one third of each party's candidates across the country, thereby diluting further the possibility for female candidates to be elected.

[39] In the European Elections in May 2014 the percentage was 30%, since 2018 the provision has been increased to 40%.

concluding this study the bill, which kept gender quota to 40% (both for municipal and regional elections), was to be discussed in the parliament.

Concerning women in administration, a bill voted in 2000 introduced a one third minimum of women to official advisory boards of state and local government. Data from the Regional Development Institute of Panteion University analysed for the purpose of this study shows a trend of masculinisation of public administration among the younger staff (20-30 years old) in public administration with more men than women employed in that age group, with the same pattern occurring among the staff above 60 years old. Within 40-50 years and 50-60 years old staff groups the percentage of men and women employed in the administration is about the same.

In spite of the measures and efforts mentioned above, there is still room for improvement. According to the latest *World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report* (2021)[40], that allows to track progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics, in 2020 Greece was ranked 98th among the 156 countries examined in the Report in the overall assessment of the *Gender Gap Index* – it should be noted that in 2006, when the Report was first launched, the country ranked 69th out of 115 countries[41]. In addition, in 2020 Greece ranked 115th in terms of women's political empowerment (in 2006 it ranked 87th).

With 52.2 out of 100 points, in 2018 Greece ranked last in the EU on the *Gender Equality Index*[42]. Gender inequalities are most pronounced in the domain of power, even though the score in this domain improved since 2010[43] (data reflected in the first edition of the Index of 2013).

Why is this so? The recent research by KETHI (2019) "*The right to elect and be elected: Studying and reporting perceptions on the participation and representation of women in political decision making"* showed that interest among women to engage in politics is very low. The Study also identified some of the main obstacles for women not engaging in politics, starting from being treated with mistrust because of their gender, politics being male dominated, women facing difficulties in balancing work and family life, because of lack of support from the political party and limited or no resources to run for elections[44].

Interestingly, 47.3% of women and 40.7% of men that have participated in the research have identified the unsupportive family environment as a basic inhibitory factor as regards women's political participation and representation (ibid). Also, the OSCE/ODIHR 2019 parliamentary elections report notes the ODIHR EAM interlocutors remarking that women candidates were not actively promoted by political parties and received less media attention than male candidates.[45] This reconfirms the presence of gender stereotypes and persistence of traditional gender roles in political domain. It should be also kept in mind that political parties are one of the key gate-keepers as regards women's participation in politics[46].

---

40 https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/in-full/gggr2-benchmarking-gender-gaps-findings-from-the-global-gender-gap-index-2021

41 https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2006

42 https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2020-greece

43 https://eige.europa.eu/sites/all/modules/custom/eige_gei/app/content/downloads/gender-equality-index-2013-2015-2017-2019-2020.xlsx

44 https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Greece.pdf

45 https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/f/442168.pdf

46 *Compilation of Venice Commission opinions and reports concerning gender equality* (2021), European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) CDL-PI(2021)002, Strasbourg.

4.2 MAIN FINDINGS

4.2.1 Key findings from the descriptive analysis

A statistical analysis of the data retrieved from the Greek Public Sector Human Resources Register (GPSHRR) of the Ministry of Interior in August 2020 was performed in the Preliminary Study, and can be consulted there.

4.2.2 Key findings from the in-depth interviews

The aim of the in-depth interviews was to cross-check and follow up on some of the issues identified during the desk study and the 2020 Preliminary Study. Among others, these included women's and men's personal experiences in political life in their different positions, their reflections on gender stereotypes and gender roles, gender related challenges they face in political and public life, their attitudes towards and knowledge of gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming in the local governance and similar. In-depth interviews also allowed to gain more insights in the role and responsibilities of some of the key stakeholders at all levels of governance as relevant to gender mainstreaming in governance, as well as for the further exploration of the gender mechanisms and their functioning, the enforcement of other obligations under the relevant gender legislation and related challenges.

Respondents were identified with the view to ensure that the study encompassed different municipalities and regions across the country, led by a man or a woman, in order to allow for comparison. To get insights into functioning of the regions and municipalities the interviews targeted men and women mayors and governors or their deputies, men and women regional and municipal councillors and men and women working in administration in municipalities or regions.

4.2.2.1 Personal aspirations and experiences in political life

Getting into politics

Why women decide to go into politics? The interviewed elected women (and men) ended up into politics because of their personal motives and aspirations to change things, to improve the quality of life in their communities and create a nice place to live in for themselves and their families. Pride in their place of origin was also an important motivating factor. Many interviewed women have started their political career quite young, often with the support of their peers. Most of them have been candidates on political parties' lists, but some have also run independently as they did not want to be associated with any political party.

"I did not want to be labelled by the political party", Interviewee J

Women who run independently have pointed out that the reason for that was the negative perceptions of public towards politics (*it is a dirty job*) and political parties. On the other hand, interviewed women that run with the political parties had different experiences in their political parties from being perceived as "a threat" and "a red flag" by men in the party and encountering the segregation along the lines "us" and "that woman". Overall, the interviews showed that women are interested in politics and that they can make it, but their "success" depends a lot on their self-determination, persistence, resilience, assertiveness and seizing the opportunities as well as their approach and attitudes towards dealing with encountered obstacles and challenges.

"Women have to be pushier than men", Interviewee A

"If a man has to make an effort, a woman elected must give much more to achieve the same position/thing", Interviewees J, C3

"If you really want it, you can get it", Interviewees B, G

"I was ready to challenge the established mentality, but this was not well received as the status quo has worked for the 'old mentality'", Interviewee I

And the men's point of view:

"Women are harder workers then men. They have to show that they are good, and better than men. They get elected not because they want glory, but because they want to do things", Interviewee C1

"Our society is a traditional one with traditional norms. There are expectations for women to perform domestic duties, regardless of their education level/status, professional career", Interviewee C5

"*In order for women to run for the office they must first solve their financial and time management related problems*", Interviewee K

It was pointed out on several occasions that women's political aspirations are hampered by gender (we do not want a woman mayor) and age-related stereotypes and prejudices (she is too young for such an important position of responsibility), the lack of an enabling environment (nurseries, day care centres for children under the age of two) as well as their own insecurities and fears of not being able to hold up to the "standards" (not saying the right things).

"I had to take a break from politics when I had small kids, but I came back", Interviewee H

"Women always have to face mistrust and stereotypical judgment, but they can prove their professionality and capacity. This is what helps most in overcoming the initial prejudices", Interviewee D

It seems that political parties have no strategy on creating a pool of potential women candidates, or even less to invest in their capacity building.

"Often, they come to women shortly before elections to ask them whether they would be willing to run on their lists (usually to meet the quota requirements). Many women are feeling disrespected by such approach", Interviewee B

"Men put their mothers and wives on the lists to fulfil the gender quota", Interviewee K

"Women had to be reassured that they will not be elected", Interviewee K

Gender quota as a measure aimed at accelerating the achievement of gender-balanced participation and representation was in most cases perceived as a positive measure towards providing women with equal opportunities to be nominated, and possibly elected. Many elected women have changed their views towards gender quota once realising that there is a need for a tool that will ensure equal opportunities for men and women to enter in politics.

"I was young, and I thought that the sky is the limit to my aspirations and ambitions. I thought that I was the only woman among the men in the Board of my party, because I was the best among all the women. But soon I have realised I was misguided. Not all the male members were equally fantastic. And I knew many women out there that were much more capable than some

of the men sitting in the Board. Before realising this, I was against gender quota, but this experience has changed my mind. We have to persuade women that quota is a positive thing", Interviewee H

"*When I was young, I was against gender quota, as I have not faced any discrimination myself. I have considered it artificial and not honorary for women. However, I have changed my mind as I have realised that incentives are needed to increase the number of women in politics", Interviewee J*

In the discussion, it was also pointed out that there is a need to introduce a gender quota for the Mayors, Deputy Mayors and public services (e.g. health centres, schools, etc.).

The interviewed men, and also a few women, expressed the opinion that gender quota is diminishing and humiliating for women or that there is no need for women quota. The criticism that gender quota are an anathema to meritocratic principles is quite common. A research in Sweden[47], for example, showed that the opposite can be true: quotas actually increased the competence of politicians. As per the research: "[…] mediocre men, whether candidates or leaders, were replaced with women."

Being a politician

Many of the interviewed elected women were not new to the political life. Several of them have been holding two or three mandates. Some shared a similar political path starting as engaged and/or concerned citizens, whereas others were involved with interest groups, then being elected in the position of municipal councillors and advancing over the years to the position of mayor or similar. Women working in public administration had experiences also as elected councillors and/or have been part of public administration for quite some time, over 20 years advancing in their role of responsibility.

Once elected, women once again face different challenges including stereotypes and prejudices.

"They told me I was elected accidentally and not to stay", Interviewee C

"If I was a man my 'political life' would be much easier and less stressful", Interviewee C

"Politics is full of stereotypes. For example, if a woman speaks in the meeting of the Municipal Council, men will say nothing against it, but they will think that she should not talk. It is very important to empower women to talk regardless of their political affiliation", Interviewee H

A couple of interviewees felt that being a woman mayor is easier in the communities that have already had a woman mayor. It is also interesting how women in positions of power establish themselves and "defend their turf". For instance, some elected women mayors build alliances and networks across the municipal borders in order to strengthen their positions and reach out to their male colleagues seeking their advice and support or building partnerships with them while others build strong support teams around them in public administration.

"Once in a position, having support of like-minded people (councillors and staff, peers) is crucial to ensure the delivery of services to the citizens", Interviewees A and B

[47] Besley T., Folke O., Persson T., Rickne J., (2017), *Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden,* American Economic Review 2017, 107(8): 2204–2242: https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20160080

> *"I have entered politics at the point when the political personnel (Municipal Councillors) changed, which made it possible for me to introduce a new way of working and thinking, a more participatory approach to governance", Interviewee B*

Many interviewees stressed the importance of gaining the trust of their fellow citizens. Once this is gained, it is very likely that women will get re-elected. Also, in smaller communities "knowing each other" has been perceived as a positive factor contributing to the participation of women in politics. However, it was also mentioned that women often consider other women as competitors rather than allies.

All women faced challenges in their daily lives in positions of power and have learnt to deal with them.

> *"Finding a balance between work and private life is no different for a woman politician, like for any other working woman. It is important to create boundaries", Interviewee A*

Also, some elected women have experienced not only harsh criticism, and discrimination (both by men and women), but also sexual harassment and violence.

> *"I have been severely criticised and looked down upon by men in recent years, but there was nothing I could not deal with. I have faced even bullying and sexual harassment and discrimination. There was nothing I could do to prevent it", Interviewee C6*

> *"I have been told I should stay home. 'We men know everything, we can do it, we don't need women', they told me", Interviewee P*

> *"One of the biggest challenges were women who were not supportive of my choice. They advised me to focus on my family", Interviewee V*

It should be recalled here that the gender quota requires 40% candidates of each gender on the lists, but the present gender quota formula does not guarantee women to get elected.

Most interviewees agreed that women in local council are very active, especially when they "feel safe" (confident).

> *"Women are active in the Municipal Council, they bring new energy. Their increased participation in politics has improved quality of life in our small community", Interviewees C and G*

However, one interviewee made a reference to a research that showed that many women do not talk in the meetings as they are afraid of making mistakes, of not saying the right thing, pointing out that this may not always be the case. In relation to that, several interviewees stressed how important it is for women councillors to be familiar with procedures in the Municipal Council.

> *"Women have the possibility to contribute, but they do not use their position often", Interviewee G*

It was also pointed out that both male and female councillors need training on how to be municipal/regional councillors, in addition to gender training.

4.2.2.2 Identifying and addressing gender issues/gender mainstreaming in the local governance

The Preliminary Study already showed that the local environments were not really enabling the empowerment of women and enhancing their participation in political and public life at the local level.

Overall, only few interviewees understood what gender is, what gender equality implies and how gender equality is or could be relevant to the local governance and Inter-Municipal Cooperation. Few interlocutors were gender blind, ignoring or failing to address the gender dimension of local governance.

On the other hand, some have had very good grasp of gender equality issues, either thanks to the training they have received or their educational background.

> *"We can see major gender inequalities in the labour market, in the unfair promotion in the work place, in gender pay gap, in unbalanced sharing of responsibilities in the domestic domain (the burden of household choirs and children upbringings is usually on women's shoulders) and women's efforts to balance work and private life (women are expected to take care of that). And there are still gender stereotypes", Interviewees G and D*

> "*I totally agree with the findings of the Preliminary Study. Girls in our community still face greater restrictions than boys*", *Interviewee O*

Many interviewees underlined the importance of creating an enabling environment for women to be able to "get out of the house", get out of their traditional gender roles (as mothers, care takers), educate themselves, get active in public as well as political life of their communities.

> *"Gender quota is not enough. Compensation should be introduced, since women's role in society is multifaceted", Interviewee J*

> *"The most important priority should be the enhancement of social services. I believe that by taking off women's shoulders the burden of care for children and elderly, their involvement in the market place in general and in the political life specifically would increase. These are often financed by the EU, but after the termination of the funding they are not absorbed by the local administration", Interviewee K*

> *"Unemployment affects women more than men and an unemployed woman will not participate in political life. Employers should be addressed since many of them are hesitating to hire women due to a possible future pregnancy. Financial relief, coverage of the insurance contributions of the employer or some form of tax deduction in order to hire women could be offered to promote women's participation", Interviewee W*

> *"Women in our community have no training, no education and are not activated", Interviewee A*

> *"Awareness must be raised among men. They must be sensitised", Interviewee I*

Low representation of women in political life has been also identified as one of gender inequalities. Gender-based violence, violence against women and domestic violence were identified as a big concern as well as the feminisation of poverty. Some also felt that the policies are gender blind.

"There are no policies designed taking into account women's needs and interests", Interviewee G

Youth were identified as important stakeholders, and several interviewees stressed the importance of engaging young people in the local communities' affairs under the framework of promotion of active citizenship. Also, a need for role models was pointed out.

"We need role models like Melina Mercouri and Margaret Papandreou at all levels", Interviewee G

"Visibility (in media) gives women self-confidence and it helps them to achieve their goals", Interviewee I

The issue of information, regarding its lack or necessity, came up in many interviews. In particular, as lack of dissemination of information from the central government to the local authorities; or as a need for awareness raising campaigns targeted to the local population (including children at schools).

"Better dissemination of information and closer cooperation among stakeholders is much needed", Interviewee Q.

In order to raise awareness among children, we organised a competition among students for the design of the new logo of the Regional Committee for Gender Equality. More actions in school should be initiated, in that way the next generation would face less stereotypes", Interviewee T

The discussion evolved also around the issue of women as "citizens" participating in public consultations. It was observed that they are interested more in practical issues, i.e. when neighbourhood affairs are discussed (design of squares and schools and similar), while they are less interested in political issues (i.e., discussion on democracy).

Several interviewees felt that municipalities should support the establishment and work of women's association (NGOs) that assist women to become active citizens and also contribute to raising their awareness about the many possible roles that women can play in the local community.

"Through participation in women's associations, women can build their capacity and that could lead to their active involvement in politics", Interviewee D

4.2.2.3 Institutional and legal framework to mainstream gender: Gender Action Plan(s) and gender mechanisms

The interviewees, except for a few, agreed that gender inequalities exist and persist, and characterise the society they live in. Both at the regional and municipal level attempts are being made to address inequalities, however not necessarily as gender inequalities per se, but rather as issues that are being part of a greater marginalisation/underdevelopment problem, except for one or two cases. Also, it seems that in general there is little discussion on gender equality going on in municipalities and regions. Only in one of the municipalities involved in the interviews, gender equality is often discussed and is seen as a priority for the local government.

"No, people are not interested", Interviewee I

"There is a lot of hypocrisy regarding social issues". Interviewee J

"It is the first time that the issue of gender equality is addressed in our Municipality", Interviewee O

Among gender issues, violence against women, sexual harassment and gender inequalities in the employment sector (including entrepreneurship and business) are most widely recognised by the interviewees as an issue. A few interviewees also mentioned women's underrepresentation in politics, and a couple of others thought of gender inequalities as related to the provision of services by the municipalities and regions to its citizens, thus men and women.

Regarding the gender mechanisms at the local and regional level, awareness among the interlocutors varied. Some understood the concept of gender mechanisms and were able to identify them, while others have mixed them with service units. In some of the municipalities, Gender Equality Committees have been recently established, in many cases as a result of a strong "push" from the Secretariat. In most cases these newly established Committees are not operational yet and many interlocutors mentioned the difficulty in assembling them caused by the pandemic. In one of the municipalities, however, the recently established Committee has been very proactive, already drafting the municipal gender equality action plan, and another municipal council started to identify possible topics for discussion in the Municipal Committee. In one of the municipalities, they were not aware of the mandatory legal obligations under Kallikratis law.

"We tried to establish the Municipal Committee for Gender Equality, however there was too much resistance from some councillors", Interviewee G

"*The role of the Committee for Gender Equality is diminished by colleagues in the Municipality. This Committee, while it may see strange to our society, is absolutely necessary. Men do not like to hear about equality", Interviewee* Z

The 2018 monitoring report by the Secretariat concluded that the "*municipalities' replies suggest that the functioning of the DEPIS often depends on facts and issues of a timely and urgent nature, and that there is no systematic commitment on the part of the political leadership to plan and implement gender-specific actions*". The report recommended to further explore the *"question whether differences in the frequency of meetings of the different DEPIS are linked to the degree of commitment of the political leadership to equality issues or to other operational reasons"*. On a positive note, the report observed that *"regular meetings of the DEPIS facilitate the introduction of a gender perspective into the functioning of the municipality"*. Relations between different elected stakeholders may also influence the work of the Committees. In some other areas, the Municipal Committee that is chaired by the Deputy Mayor does not get much support from the Mayor.

Most of the municipalities and regions involved in the interviews by the study have not yet developed a gender action plan. In addition to the lack of expertise on gender equality issues which would allow for development of local and regional equality action plans and its implementation, thus gender mainstreaming, lack of funds was also identified as a challenge, and the fact that there are no funds foreseen for gender mainstreaming at the local level. Some municipalities were able to access EU funding or funds at the national level. It was also observed that some region and /or municipalities are not aware of their obligations under the law as relevant to gender mainstreaming in the local governance.

"The Region does not have its own gender action plan. It follows a general framework provided by the State. Gender Equality policies are a matter of the central State – there is not a decentralisation of policy in order to implement tailored local policies. Regions and municipalities have limited powers and they do not have the right to implement specific policy. They just have the

power to inform and to establish the council, reporting directly to the central State", Interviewee C3

Quite a number of municipalities, as mentioned earlier, has signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life[48] that formally commits Europe's local and regional governments to the principle of equality of women and men. The signatories are expected to draw up an Equality Action Plan that sets out priorities, actions and resources allocated to implement municipality's/region's commitments. However, neither the regions nor the municipalities have developed a regional or municipal gender action plan (all 13 regions have signed the Charter). Some have started the process, hired a consultant to assist them with the drafting of the document and tried to make it as participatory as possible. However, they claim a lack of support from the gender mechanisms at the national level, human resources and funds.

"It is a difficult process, we got some academics involved, the Secretariat is absent in this process. Before they (the General Secretariat) were much more present as well as KETHI. We are left to ourselves, there are no gender awareness campaigns, no conferences, nothing", Interviewee C

In terms of cooperation with stakeholders at municipality/region level and cooperation with institutions at the national level as relevant to gender mainstreaming, the experience of interviewees varied from not existing to cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, academic institutions, NGOs, different ministries, commercial chambers, various associations.

With regards to the contributions of KEDE, ENPE and the Secretariat to gender mainstreaming in local governance the interviewees provided diverse feedback. From no cooperation to a satisfactory one, in particular with the Secretariat, the interlocutors expressed either the need for central coordination on the implementation of gender equality policies, or their satisfaction with the existing cooperation.

Some municipalities and regions cooperate very closely with the Secretariat, and there seem to be developments at the regional level:

"All Regional Committees have decided to have a joint meeting with the Secretary General once a month, in order to exchange good practices and ideas", Interviewee Q

One of the regions mentioned the following positive experience:

"An initiative that aims to guarantee a gender-neutral language[49] in public administration and public documents. A gender-neutral approach in official documents is highly important. Even more so, such initiatives should target also 'daily' life and language so to efficiently counteract the traditional stereotypes around gender roles (e.g., men are the providers, while women are housewives)", Interviewee C1

Most of the interviewees saw Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) as providing huge opportunities to organise joint gender trainings for different target groups from elected officials to administration as well as citizens and other stakeholders:

[48] The Charter proposes concrete methods by which equality of women and men can be pursued in different fields of competences: political participation, employment, public services, urban planning, etc. https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf

[49] Words that do not identify a gender, in opposition to words that are gendered (like "policeman", they have "man" in them). Gender-specific terms fail to recognise the women who are in these very occupations.

"Collaboration between municipalities would be most helpful, we lack human resources and fund for trainings, we see huge possibilities through the IMC", Interviewee D

"We are interested to join a programmatic agreement of gender equality, but only after an analysis identifying common issues and interest is carried out to ensure that the exercise is worth the efforts. I want to know what we will work on and with whom will I work", Interviewee A

"We have been identifying problem and prioritising issues in our municipality with the view to the possible Inter-Municipal Cooperation, but gender equality always ends up at the bottom of the list. I do not know whether the councillors believe that all gender inequalities are resolved or they do not understand what great opportunity is to cooperate with other municipalities", Interviewee C

"Cooperation with the regional level, in the past, has proven useful specifically when training on gender equality issues were offered not only to the public administration employees but to all citizens. These trainings and workshops were a great opportunity for many women to become aware of the gender equality issues", Interviewee G

"It is an excellent idea, brining municipalities together to carry out gender awareness raising programs, and there are also the EU funds available for that", Interviewee H

"An Inter-Municipal Committee on gender equality could be established. It would communicate with the Regional Committees", Interviewee N

"An Inter-Municipal Network on gender equality issues should be established", Interviewee P

On the other hand, a need for "centralised guidance" was mentioned among the interlocutors:

"Proposals and actions should derive from a central level (the Ministry) - if a scaled adoption of them is needed, the regions could coordinate the municipalities, as it is for example for matters of Civil Protection", Interviewee B1

"The Gender Equality Committee of the Union of Municipalities should inform and coordinate the Municipal Committees for Gender Equality", Interviewee K

"The Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality should implement a strategy in order to create facilities such as the one funded by our Region, a project for the training of trainers for the empowerment of women who want to fund and organise a business of their own", Interviewee I

4.2.3 Key findings from the Survey

The respondents

977 respondents filled in (at least in part) the online questionnaire. Out of these, 722 (72,4%) declare to operate at the municipal level and 275 (27,6%) at the regional level.

With reference to the position, 294 respondents are elected officials (i.e., 254 at the municipal level, 40 at the regional level) and 703 respondents work as civil servants (i.e., 468 at the municipal and 235 at the regional level).

The following table illustrates the distribution of respondents by position (i.e., elected official, civil servant) and by administration level in which they operate (i.e., municipal level, regional level).

Table 1 - Respondents by institution and position

Institution	Position		Total
	Elected official	Civil servant	
Municipal level/administration	254	468	722
	86,4%	66,6%	72,4%
Regional level/administration	40	235	275
	13,6%	33,4%	27,6%
Total	294	703	997
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

For what concerns the socio-personal description of the respondents that are elected officials: 49% are women, 54,1% are more than 50 years old, 74,8% have a higher education degree. A total of 57,7% of respondents who are elected representatives declare to be serving their first mandate, while 7,7% are beyond their third term. The majority (62,8%) of elected representatives served for a period between 1 and 5 years. The covered roles declared by respondents who are elected representatives are as follows:

- Governor/deputy governor 8 (2,7%)
- Regional councillor 32 (10,9%)
- Mayor/deputy mayor 53 (18,0%)
- Municipal councillor 201 (68,4%)

Most of the elected officials (55,7%) reached their position being elected as independent candidates and about one third (27,9%) declared to have been supported by a political party. About half of the remaining respondents (i.e., 20 out of 47) mention their inclusion in, and the support of, independent municipal lists or combination of lists.

For what concerns the socio-personal description of the respondents that are civil servants: 75,2% are women, 42,2% are more than 50 years old, 83,8% have a higher education degree. A total of 17% of respondents who are civil servants declare to be in service for more than 20 years and 12,2% for less than 1 year. The covered roles declared by respondents who are civil servants are as follows:

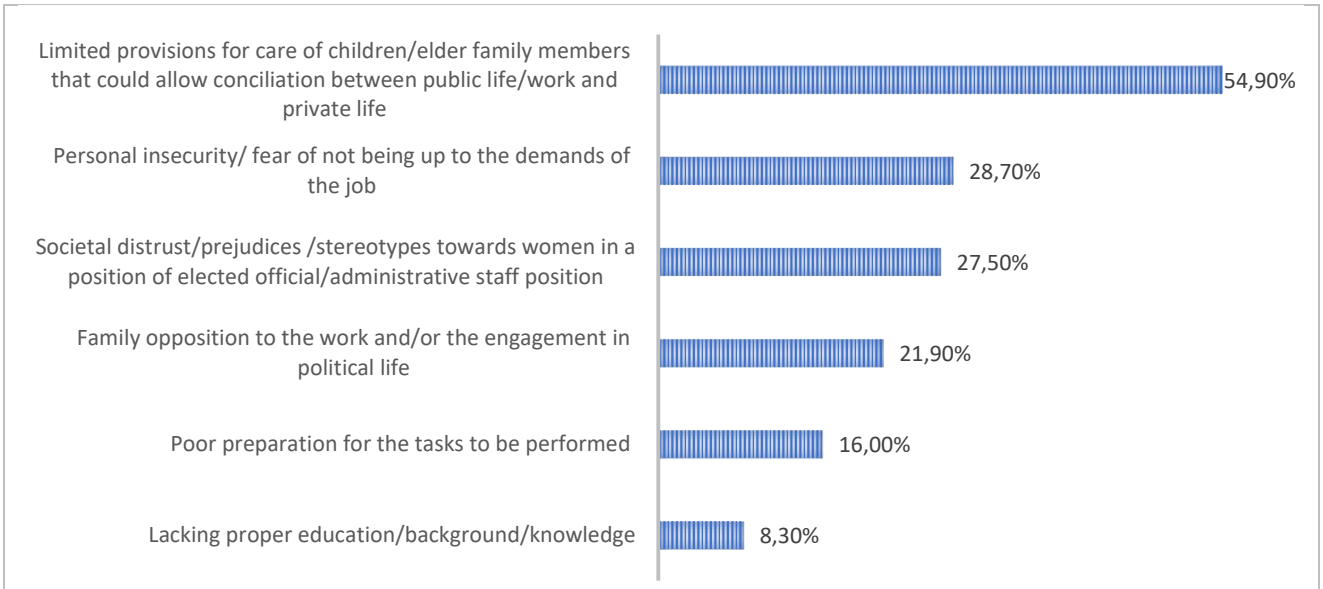
- Senior Civil servant at regional level 81 (11,5%)
- Junior Civil servant at regional level 124 (17,6%)
- Employee with a fixed/indefinite contract at regional level 33 (4,7%)
- Senior Civil servant at municipal level 198 (28,2%)
- Junior Civil servant at municipal level 146 (20,8%)
- Employee with a fixed/indefinite contract at municipal level 121 (17,2%)

For what concerns the placement in the current position, 42,8% of civil servant respondents declare to have passed an exam /competition, while 18,3% cover the current position due to a promotion. 8,8% declare that the current placement was due to an ad hoc opening. The remaining 30% of respondents who are civil servants mention different courses of action such as decisions from the mayors, successful applications, court decisions, confirmation after a fixed term; some of them (about 20) mention specific programs/initiatives (e.g. an OAED Program) through which they achieved the position.

Opinions on challenges/obstacles to be faced by women

All male respondents to the survey (i.e., n = 324) were requested to express their opinion about the possibility that a woman in their own professional position may face some suggested challenges and obstacles. The following table illustrates the replies, as follows:

Figure 1 - Men's opinions on the Challenges/Obstacles to be faced by women

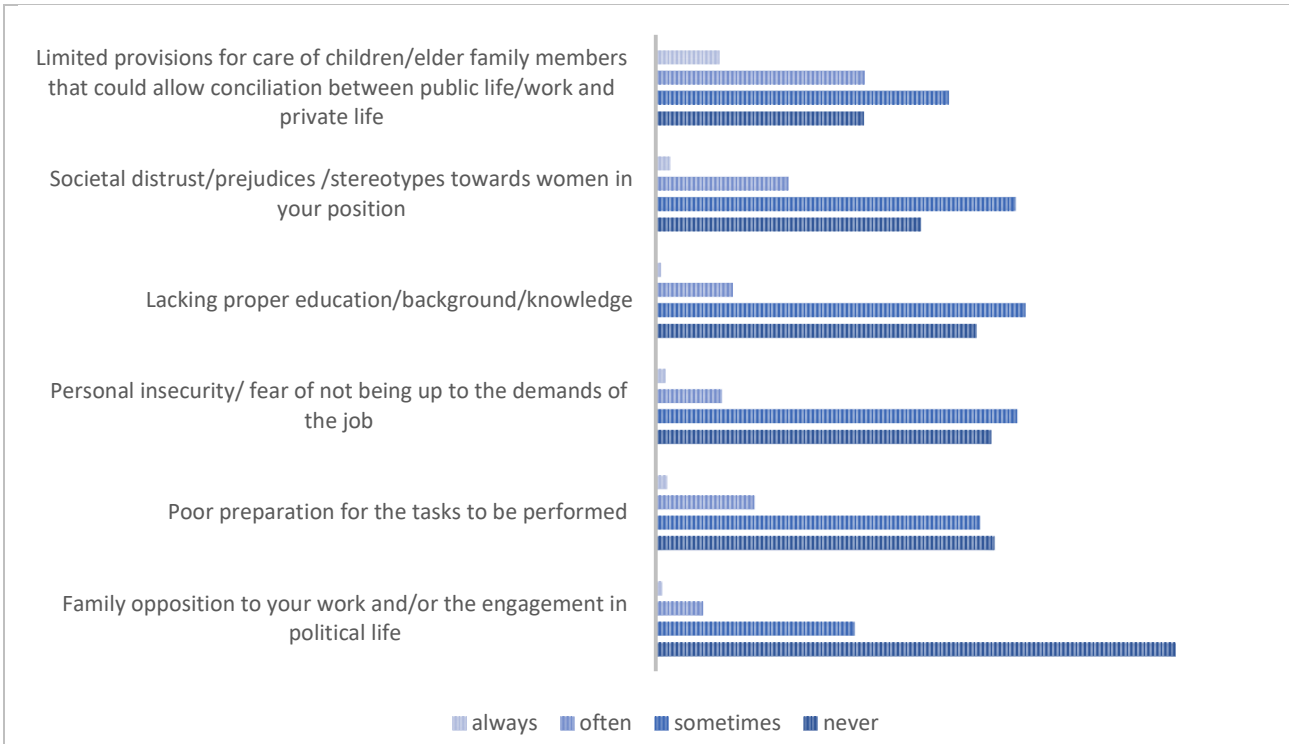


Possible challenges/obstacles	N.	%
Societal distrust/prejudices /stereotypes towards women in a position of elected official/administrative staff position	89	27,5%
Family opposition to the work and/or the engagement in political life	71	21,9%
Limited provisions for care of children/elder family members that could allow conciliation between public life/work and private life	178	54,9%
Poor preparation for the tasks to be performed	52	16,0%
Lacking proper education/background/knowledge	27	8,3%
Personal insecurity/ fear of not being up to the demands of the job	93	28,7%

More than half of the respondents recognise as a real obstacle the lack of provisions for family members in need of care. For what concerns obstacles related to prejudices, stereotypes, and family opposition, they are envisaged by less than a quarter of the male respondents as being significantly challenging. The remaining proposed challenges are perceived by a minority of the respondents.

All women respondents in the sample (i.e., n = 673) were requested to report how often (i.e., never, sometimes, often, always) they personally encountered the same challenges and obstacles. The following table reports on the provided answers:

Figure 2 - Women's opinions on the Challenges/Obstacles faced



Encountered challenges/obstacles	Never	Some Times	Often	Always
Societal distrust/prejudices /stereotypes towards women in your position	231 34,3%	313 46,5%	116 17,2%	13 1,9%
Family opposition to your work and/or the engagement in political life	452 67,2%	173 25,7%	42 6,2%	6 0,9%
Limited provisions for care of children/elder family members that could allow conciliation between public life/work and private life	181 26,9%	255 37,9%	182 27,0%	55 8,2%
Poor preparation for the tasks to be performed	295 43,8%	282 41,9%	86 12,8%	10 1,5%
Lacking proper education/background/knowledge	279 41,5%	322 47,8%	67 10,0%	5 0,7%
Personal insecurity/ fear of not being up to the demands of the job	292 43,4%	314 46,7%	58 8,6%	9 1,3%

By analysing the two sets of answers (i.e., perceived challenges/obstacles by male respondents and reported experiences with challenges/obstacles by women respondents), it appears that women experiences with the challenges/obstacles are in general less frequent than what men expect. It may be argued that men tend to resort to biased ideas and prejudices in expressing themselves about the challenges women face in work and socio-political participation (i.e., the analysis may suggest that men tend to declare what is perceived to be "politically correct" in identifying the problems faced by women).

On the other side, it is possible to advance the hypothesis that women underrate their own negative experiences, because they do not want to present themselves as "victims", and this is once again a yielding to the "political correctness" which prescribes describing women as "strong" and "prepared" for all extra-family tasks.

Women in local government

The respondents were requested to refer to the local government unit – municipal or regional – where they are serving and to share their estimation with reference to role performances of elected women, their self-confidence, and their contribution to the overall performances of the Councils.

For what concerns the behaviours associated with the role, the assessment was targeted to the frequency of attendance to the Council's meeting, of taking the floor and of proposing topics for the agendas.

The regular attendance at Council meetings is considered as "normal", since more than 90% of the respondents, both at the municipal and regional level, see elected women frequently or very frequently present.

The following table illustrates the estimation of the role-related performance of women at both levels of administration under focus (i.e., municipal, and regional), as follows:

Table 2 - Role behaviours of elected women

	Respondents' institution level		
	Municipal	Regional	Total
Elected women are present *frequently or very frequently* during the Council's meetings	93,1%	93,9%	93,3%
Elected women take the floor *frequently or very frequently* during the Council's meetings	73,1%	83,7%	76,0%
Elected women propose topics *frequently or very frequently* for the agenda of the Council's meetings	55,1%	65, 9%	58,0%

For what concerns the frequency with which women take the floor during the meetings, on the contrary, is perceived as less frequent: 76% of the respondents say this happens frequently or very frequently, but 83,7% at the regional level and just 73,1% at the municipal level.

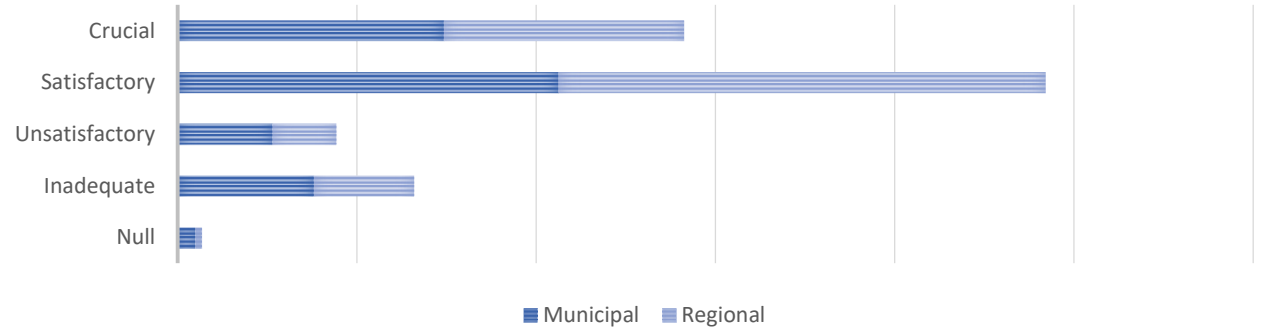
The perceived contribution of proposals offered by elected women to the Council's agendas appears to be lower: just 58% of the respondents perceive proposals as frequent or very frequent, but only 55% at the municipal and 65,9% at the regional level.

In general, it seems that the performances of elected women in the regions are more appreciated by those serving there, compared to the judgment directed to women elected in the municipal Councils by those serving at that level.

This impression is confirmed when respondents are requested to evaluate the women's contribution to the overall performances of the representative bodies.

The contribution of elected women to the Councils' performances is generally highly appreciated: 74,6% of the respondents evaluate this contribution as "satisfactory" or even "crucial". Once more, the appreciation is slightly higher (i.e., 81,1 %) for respondents serving at the regional level and evaluating the contribution to the regional Councils, than the opinion of respondents operating at the municipal level and evaluating the performances of the local Councils (72,2%). The following table illustrates the distribution of answers regarding the perceived contribution of women to the council, for both institutional levels under focus (i.e., municipal, and regional), as follows:

Figure 3 - Perceptions on contribution of elected women to the Councils at municipal and regional level



Estimate of the current contribution of elected women to the overall performance of the Council	Respondents' institution level		
	Municipal	Regional	Total
Crucial	212	72	284
	29,7%	26,8%	28,9%
Satisfactory	304	146	450
	42,5%	54,3%	45,7%
Unsatisfactory	76	19	95
	10,6%	7,1%	9,7%
Inadequate	109	30	139
	15,2%	11,2%	14,1%
Null	14	2	16
	2,0%	,7%	1,6%
Total	715	269	984
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The analysis suggests that women respondents are less "laudatory" than men in recognising women's contribution: in fact, just 70,7% of them subscribe the judgement of "satisfactory" or "crucial", compared to the 82,6% of men in the sample.

Elected women are generally perceived as self-confident and feeling comfortable in their role. On a rating scale ranging from 1 (i.e., feeling not comfortable) to 5 (i.e., feeling very comfortable), the average rate is around 4, for all the respondent "categories": serving at the regional level *vs.* serving at the municipal level, men *vs.* women.

However, examining the frequencies of the answers, we can note that the rates "4" and "5" are slightly less frequent among women than among men. The following table illustrates the distribution of answers according to the gender of respondents, for what concerns the perceived (self-)confidence with the role of women elected representatives, as follows:

Table 3 - Perceived (self-)confidence with the role of women elected representatives

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
1 (not comfortable)	3	5	8
	,5%	1,6%	,8%
2	19	8	27
	3,0%	2,5%	2,9%
3	156	56	212

	24,7%	17,7%	22,4%
4	244	129	373
	38,7%	40,8%	39,4%
5 (very comfortable)	209	118	327
	33,1%	37,3%	34,5%
Total	631	316	947
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

For what concerns the active role of women in different Committees operating within self-government units, respondents perceive women as active in (more or less) all Committees. It is worth noting that negative answers do not necessarily mean that women are inactive or absent, but sometimes mean that the mentioned Committee is not present in the relevant self-government unit.

For what concerns the assessment provided by the two types of respondents (i.e., elected representatives and civil servants), it seems that elected officials give a higher estimate of women contribution inside the areas "traditionally" considered as a female expertise field, while civil servants, more than elected officials, recognise women active in the "technical" areas usually considered "male domains". The following table illustrates the distribution according to the position of respondents, as follows:

Figure 4 - Committees in self-government units where women are active by Gender and Institutional level

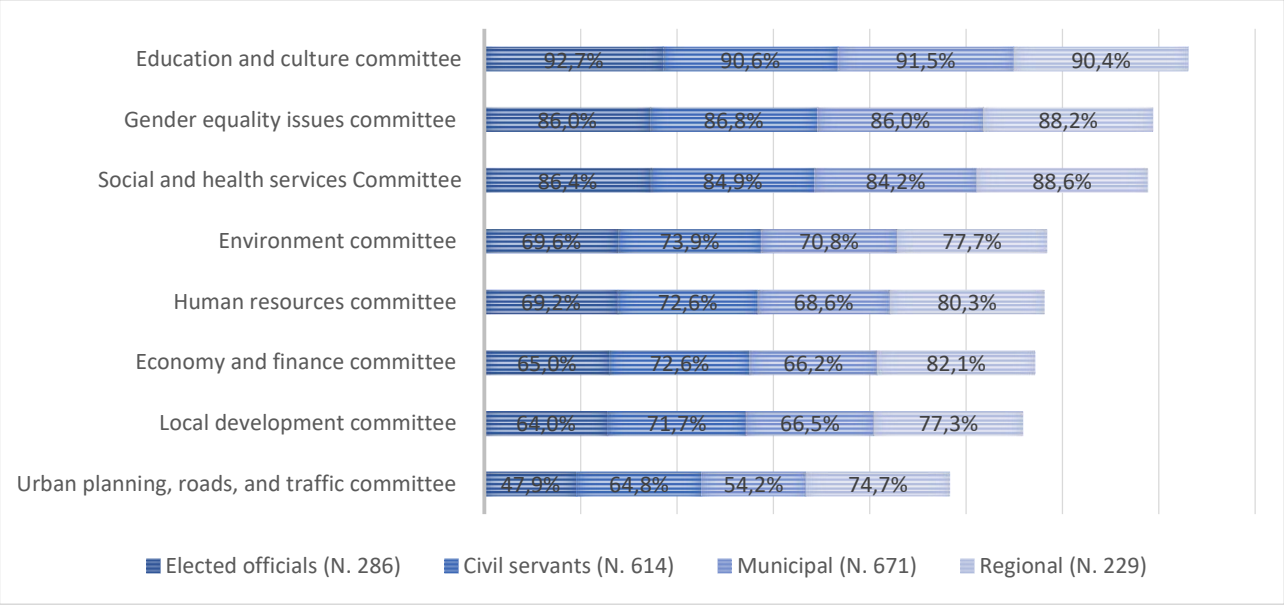


Table 4 - Committees in self-government units where women are active by Position

	Position		Total
	Elected official (n=286)	Civil servant (n=614)	
Social and health services Committee	247	521	768
	86,4%	84,9%	85,3%
Education and culture committee	265	556	821
	92,7%	90,6%	91,2%
Gender equality issues committee	246	533	779
	86,0%	86,8%	86,6%

Economy and finance committee	186	446	632
	65,0%	72,6%	70,2%
Local development committee	183	440	623
	64,0%	71,7%	69,2%
Environment committee	199	454	653
	69,6%	73,9%	72,6%
Urban planning, roads, and traffic committee	137	398	535
	47,9%	64,8%	59,4%
Human resources committee	198	446	644
	69,2%	72,6%	71,6%

Analysing the answers in a comparative perspective according to the institutional level of respondents (i.e., municipal, or regional), it can be noted that respondents acting at the municipal level recognise women active in the "Education and culture committee" in a proportion slightly higher than people working at the regional level. On the contrary, respondents operating at the municipal level perceive a lower level of women's activity in all the remaining committees. The difference between the two institutional areas (i.e., municipal, and regional) is especially notable for the domains of "urban planning", "economy and finances", "human resources" and "local development". However, as already mentioned above, it may be that such distribution is due to the absence of such Committees at the level of municipal administrations, rather than an actual lower presence of women within Committees.

The following table illustrates the distribution of answers according to the administration/institutional level of respondents (i.e., municipal, regional):

Table 5 - Committees in the self-government units where women are active by Institutional level

	Institutional level		Difference Municipal-Regional
	Municipal (n=671)	Regional (n=229)	
Social and Health Services Committee	565	203	-4,4%
	84,2%	88,6%	
Education and culture committee	614	207	1,1%
	91,5%	90,4%	
Gender equality issues committee	577	202	-2,2%
	86,0%	88,2%	
Economy and finance committee	444	188	-15,9%
	66,2%	82,1%	
Local development committee	446	177	-10,8%
	66,5%	77,3%	
Environment committee	475	178	-6,9%
	70,8%	77,7%	
Urban planning, roads, and traffic committee	364	171	-20,4%
	54,2%	74,7%	
Human resources committee	460	184	-11,8%
	68,6%	80,3%	

Analysing the answers distributed according to the institutional level of respondents' activity, some interesting points can be noticed, as follows:

- Committees dealing with more "technical" issues (i.e., finance, local development, environment, urban planning) seem less interested in gender issues, or at least less able to produce outputs relevant for the socio-economic status of women.
- Generally speaking, the end results of the Committees' work are not evaluated as relevant for the socio-economic status of women: decisions from the "gender issues" Committee are positively appreciated by around 48% of the total sample, but for all the other Committees the appreciation is definitely lower.
- Respondents operating at the regional level and evaluating the operations of regional Committees tend to be more "moderate" in their evaluations: the percentages of those assessing the Committees' outputs as "always" or "never" relevant for gender issues are systematically lower than the percentages at the municipal level and, obviously, the percentages of "not always" are systematically higher.

The insights are illustrated within the following table:

Table 6 - Decisions relevant for the status of women from Committees

	Option	Institutional level		Difference Municipal-Regional
		Municipal (n=631)	Regional (n=211)	
Social and Health Services Committee	Yes	173	52	2,8%
		27,4%	24,6%	
	Not always	383	142	-6,6%
		60,7%	67,3%	
	Never	75	17	3,8%
		11,9%	8,1%	
Education and culture committee	Yes	229	67	4,5%
		36,3%	31,8%	
	Not always	323	127	-9,0%
		51,2%	60,2%	
	Never	79	17	4,5%
		12,5%	8,1%	
Gender equality issues committee	Yes	307	97	2,7%
		48,7%	46,0%	
	Not always	251	97	-6,2%
		39,8%	46,0%	
	Never	73	17	3,5%
		11,6%	8,1%	
Economy and finance committee	Yes	137	51	-2,5%
		21,7%	24,2%	
	Not always	362	135	-6,6%
		57,4%	64,0%	
	Never	132	25	9,1%
		20,9%	11,8%	
Local development committee	Yes	157	57	-2,1%
		24,9%	27,0%	
	Not always	345	129	-6,5%
		54,7%	61,1%	
	Never	129	25	8,6%
		20,4%	11,8%	
Environment committee	Yes	167	53	1,3%

		26,5%	25,1%	
	Not always	331	124	-6,3%
		52,5%	58,8%	
	Never	133	34	5,0%
		21,1%	16,1%	
Urban planning, roads and traffic committee	Yes	126	47	-2,3%
		20,0%	22,3%	
	Not always	327	126	-7,9%
		51,8%	59,7%	
	Never	178	38	10,2%
		28,2%	18,0%	
Human resources committee	Yes	166	57	-0,7%
		26,3%	27,0%	
	Not always	343	131	-7,7%
		54,4%	62,1%	
	Never	122	23	8,4%
		19,3%	10,9%	

Regardless of the activity of the women elected in the representative bodies, also the general participation of women in the overall political life is better evaluated for the regional than for the municipal level: 66,8% of the respondents serving at the first level evaluate the women's political participation "definitely adequate" or "satisfactory", compared with 58,4% of respondents serving at the second level, as shown by the following table:

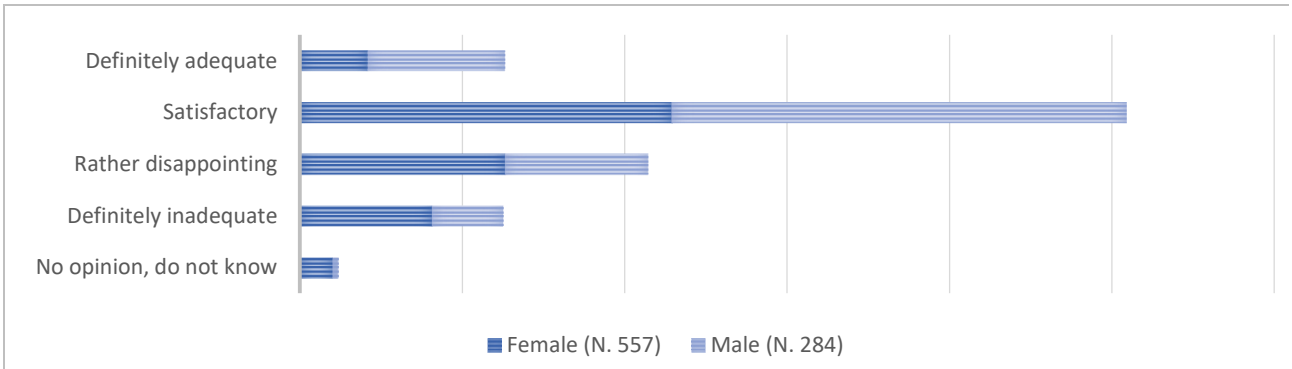
Table 7 - Evaluation of the women's participation in political life

	Respondents' institution level		Total
	Municipal	Regional	
Definitely adequate	68	27	95
	10,8%	12,8%	11,3%
Satisfactory	300	114	414
	47,6%	54,0%	49,2%
No opinion, don't know	18	7	25
	2,9%	3,3%	3,0%
Rather disappointing	154	37	191
	24,4%	17,5%	22,7%
Definitely inadequate	90	26	116
	14,3%	12,3%	13,8%
Total	630	211	841
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It must be stressed that women respondents tend to be more critical than men in evaluating the participation of women in political life.

Around 73% of male respondents give an appreciation of "definitely adequate" or at least "satisfactory", while just about 54% of female respondents express the same evaluation, as highlighted by the following table:

Figure 5 - Evaluation of women's participation in political life by gender



Evaluation of the women's participation in political life	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Definitely adequate	47	48	95
	8,4%	16,9%	11,3%
Satisfactory	255	159	414
	45,8%	56,0%	49,2%
No opinion, do not know	23	2	25
	4,1%	,7%	3,0%
Rather disappointing	141	50	191
	25,3%	17,6%	22,7%
Definitely inadequate	91	25	116
	16,3%	8,8%	13,8%
Total	557	284	841
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Regardless of the assessment on the current level of political participation of women, some actions can be implemented to improve the current situation. Respondents were presented with potential actions and were asked to select the ones they perceive as most efficient in terms of increasing the presence and representation of women in political life.

Analysing the answers with reference to the institutional level where respondents operate, the order of endorsement is the same for the two institutional levels, even if the percentages are slightly different. The actions perceived to be most efficient, in order of choice, are:

- Availability of services to help the balance between family tasks and political life.
- Education and training on political participation and engagement.
- Education/training on procedures and bureaucratic formalities in the political/professional activities.
- Strategy in political parties on creating a pool of potential women candidates.

It must be said that all the proposed actions receive a high acceptance: the lower percentage of positive answers is 64,5%, at the regional level, for gender quotas in the Councils. The following table illustrates the distribution of the actions deemed to increase the presence and representation of women in political life, according to the institution level in which the respondents operate (i.e., municipal or regional):

Table 8 - Actions that could increase women presence and representation in political life by Institutional level

	Respondents' institution level [50]		Total
	Municipal	Regional	
Gender quotas in candidate lists	440	137	577
	72,8%	67,5%	
Gender quotas in elected Councils	440	131	571
	72,8%	64,5%	
Strategy in political parties on creating a pool of potential women candidates	488	172	660
	80,8%	84,7%	
Availability of services to help the balance between family tasks and political life	560	189	749
	92,7%	93,1%	
Education/training on political participation and engagement	564	179	743
	93,0%	88,0%	
Education/training on procedures and bureaucratic formalities in the political/professional activities	529	175	704
	87,6%	86,2%	
Support to the establishment and work of women's Associations	472	148	620
	78,1%	72,9%	
Improvement of the expertise on gender equality issues	519	177	696
	83,4%	85,1%	
Respondents Total	604	203	807

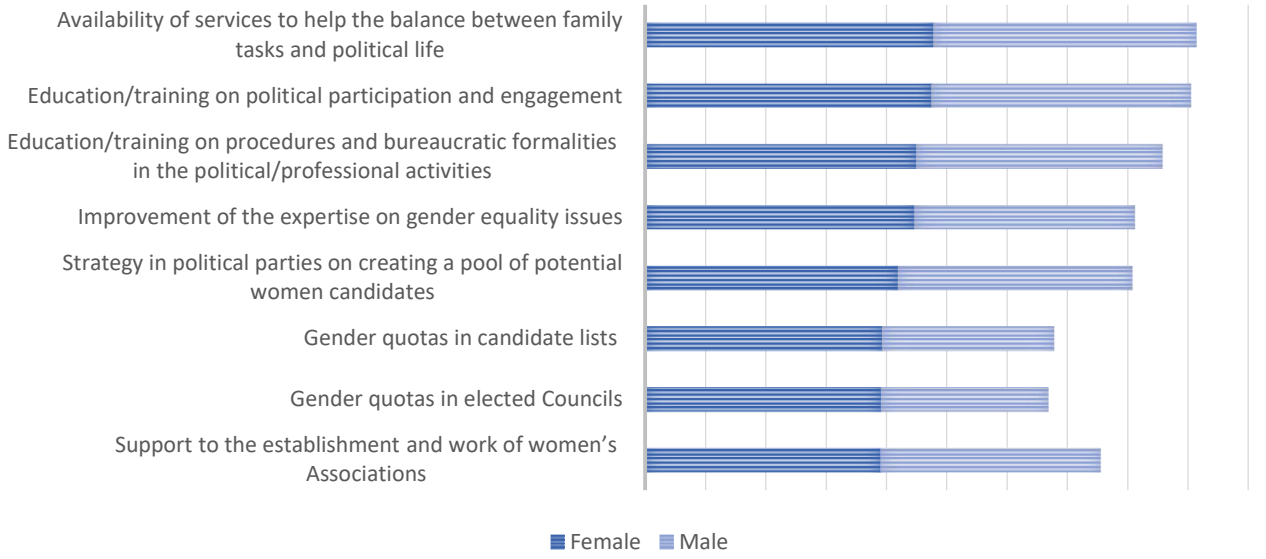
Moreover, analysing the answers according to the gender distribution of respondents, suggests that men tend to be less "confident" in the positive effects of all the suggested actions. In this sense it is worth noting that the differences between women and men answers are around 10% for each action, with women showing a higher acceptance for all the proposals.

The pattern of male opinions mirrors, in some way, the pattern of opinion they expressed when describing the possible challenges and obstacles to be faced by women in their professional and political life. It is worth mentioning that "gender quotas" are the less subscribed actions, receiving slightly more than 50% of the positive answers.

Women, on the contrary, in addition to the obvious request for services "to help the balance between family tasks and political life", claim for actions that can provide a sound basis for an effective engagement, such as "education and training initiatives" (i.e., both for political life and for professional tasks), which collect more than 90% of endorsements/preferences and "expertise in gender equality issues", which reach 89,4% of approvals. Gender quotas and support to women's associations show the lowest level of acceptance, which in any case goes over 70% of the women's answers. This is in line with what was identified through the in-depth interviews. The following table illustrates the distribution of answers around potential action to increase women participation and representation in political life, according to the gender of respondents:

[50] Percentages are calculated on the respondents' totals.

Figure 6 - Actions that could increase women presence and representation in political life by Gender



Actions that could increase women presence and representation in political life	Gender [51]		Total
	Female	Male	
Gender quota in candidate lists	426	151	577
	78,6%	57,0%	
Gender quotas in elected Councils	424	147	571
	78,2%	55,5%	
Strategy in political parties on creating a pool of potential women candidates	454	206	660
	83,8%	77,7%	
Availability of services to help the balance between family tasks and political life	518	231	749
	95,6%	87,2%	
Education/training on political participation and engagement	515	228	743
	95,0%	86,0%	
Education/training on procedures and bureaucratic formalities in the political/professional activities	488	216	704
	90,0%	81,5%	
Support to the establishment and work of women's Associations	443	177	620
	78,1%	72,9%	
Improvement of the expertise on gender equality issues	491	205	696
	89,4%	73,0%	83,9%

Knowledge of gender issues in local governance

The term "gender" refers to either of the two sexes (male and female), when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.

Two possible definitions of "gender" were proposed to the interviewees, asking them to indicate their level of agreement with each of the two. Theoretically, the first proposed definition (i.e., "Gender" describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth) is not accurate, while the second proposed definition is considered to be embracing of the complexity of the concept and reflecting international standards and values on the matter (i.e., "Gender" refers to the roles and

[51] Percentages are calculated on the respondents' totals.

responsibilities of men and women that are socially constructed in our families, our societies, and our cultures).

The analysis of the answers show an unexpected high level of agreement with the first statement ("totally agree" and "agree" come from the 75% of the respondents) and an equally unexpected low level of agreement with the second statement ("totally agree" and "agree" sum up to 38,4% of the respondents).

Almost paradoxically, men seem to share the correct definition (43% agree) more than women (36,1% agree), as illustrated in the following table:

Table 9 - On gender definitions

"Gender" describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth	Respondents' gender		Total	"Gender" refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are socially constructed in our families, our societies, and our cultures	Respondents' gender		Total
	Female	Male			Female	Male	
Totally agree	132	92	224	Totally agree	36	36	72
	24,4%	33,2%	27,4%		6,7%	13,0%	8,8%
Agree	266	123	389	Agree	159	83	242
	49,2%	44,4%	47,6%		29,4%	30,0%	29,6%
Disagree	99	33	132	Disagree	197	88	285
	18,3%	11,9%	16,1%		36,4%	31,8%	34,8%
Totally disagree	44	29	73	Totally disagree	149	70	219
	8,1%	10,5%	8,9%		27,5%	25,3%	26,8%
Total	541	277	818	Total	541	277	818
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is interesting to know that the age variable (i.e., age cluster of the respondents) seems more relevant in shaping the opinion about the meaning of "gender" as 54,6% of the respondents who are over 60 years old agree with the "socially constructed" content of the definition and 37,7% of the same age group reject the "biological differences" content. All younger age groups recorded lower percentages for both the cases: this sounds once more a little paradoxical, since the hypothesis would had been that younger respondents could be more aware of the socially accepted definition.

Given the above level of information, it is not surprising that about half of the sample does not know whether a "gender equality action plan" is operational, but this percentage goes up to 64,1% among respondents that provided answers for the regional level, while 37,2% of respondents referring to the municipal level answer that such a plan does not exist at their territorial/institutional level. The following table illustrates the answers regarding the existence of an action plan, according to the institutional level of respondents:

Table 10 - "Gender equality action plan" in place in the municipality/region where you are serving/you are active

	Respondents' Institutional level		Total
	Municipal (n=611)	Regional (n=206)	
Yes	150	34	184
	24,5%	16,5%	22,5%
I do not know	234	132	366
	38,3%	64,1%	44,8%
No	227	40	267
	37,2%	19,4%	32,7%

Here, the respondents' gender does not differentiate the level of information, while the younger age groups sound more informed, since the "do not know" answers are lower in the age groups from 20 to 40 years of age. Of course, there is no way to ascertain whether the answers correspond to factual reality, as there is no information on the residence of the respondents. Again, this result is aligned with the findings of the in-depth interviews.

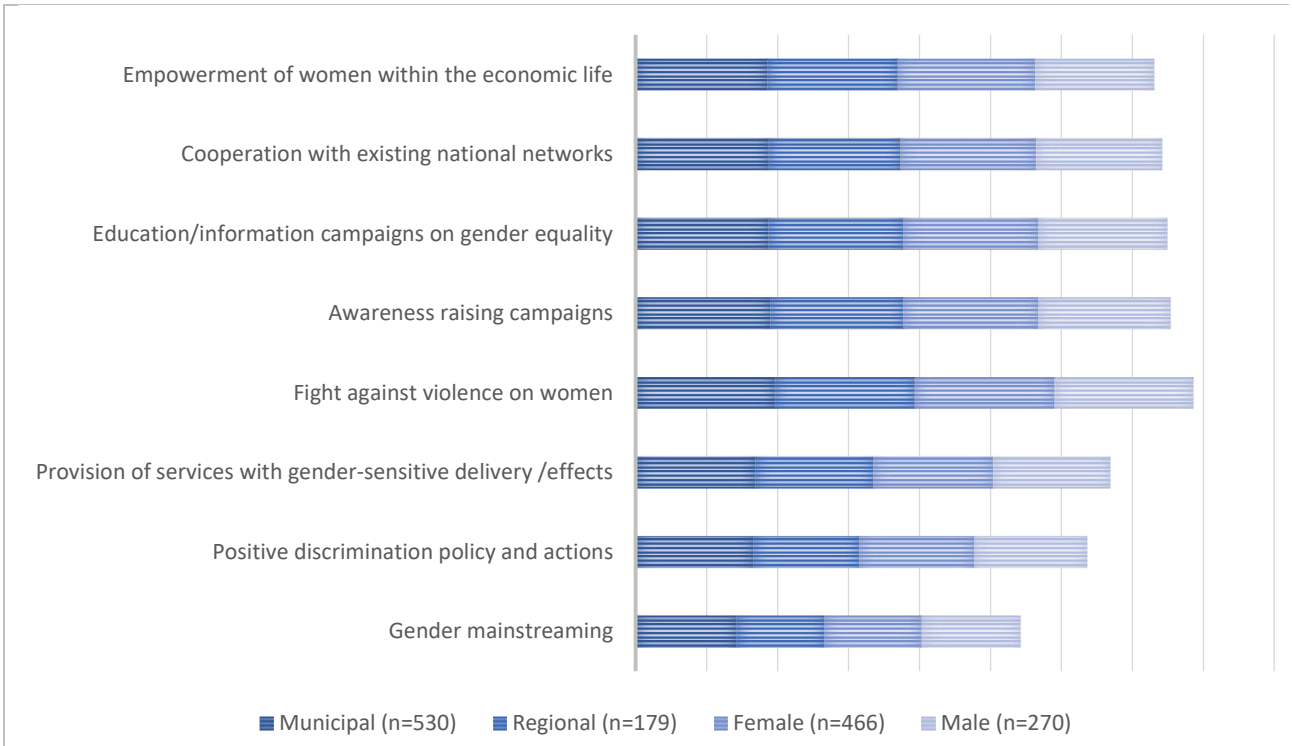
Table 11 - "Gender equality action plan" in place in the municipality/region where you are serving/you are active

	Age group					Total
	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years	more than 60 years	
Yes	3	26	68	67	20	184
	13,0%	25,7%	21,6%	22,3%	26,0%	22,5%
I don't know	7	32	160	134	33	366
	30,4%	31,7%	50,8%	44,5%	42,9%	44,8%
No	13	43	87	100	24	267
	56,5%	42,6%	27,6%	33,2%	31,2%	32,7%
Total	23	101	315	301	77	817
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Local administrations, both at the regional and the municipality institutional level, can implement a range of actions, within or outside a specific plan, to promote and foster gender equality.

Every action has a different level of effectiveness, and the respondents were requested to evaluate the utility of some actions that could be implemented by the self-government unit they are operating in, as illustrated by the following table:

Figure 7 - Possible actions to promote and foster gender equality[52]



Possible actions	Opinions	Respondents' Institutional level	
		Municipal (n=530)	Regional (n=179)
Gender mainstreaming	Definitely useful /useful	71,0%	62,0%
	Useless/ definitely useless	28,8%	38,0%
Positive discrimination policy and actions	Definitely useful /useful	82,6%	74,9%
	Useless/ definitely useless	17,3%	25,1%
Provision of services with gender-sensitive delivery /effects	Definitely useful /useful	84,3%	82,9%
	Useless/ definitely useless	15,7%	17,1%
Fight against violence on women	Definitely useful /useful	98,1%	98,5%
	Useless/ definitely useless	1,8%	1,5%
Awareness raising campaigns	Definitely useful /useful	94,9%	93,5%
	Useless/ definitely useless	5,2%	6,5%
Education/information campaigns on gender equality	Definitely useful /useful	93,5%	94,9%
	Useless/ definitely useless	6,5%	5,0%
Cooperation with existing national networks	Definitely useful /useful	93,8%	92,5%
	Useless/ definitely useless	6,1%	7,5%
Empowerment of women within the economic life	Definitely useful /useful	92,7%	92,0%
	Useless/ definitely useless	7,4%	8,0%

According to the respondents, all actions are useful to achieve gender equality, with a very slightly lower appreciation from people operating at the regional level.

[52] The graph reports on the Definitely useful / useful answers

Comparing the actions, the most useful – and highly likely the most needed one - seems to be the fight against the violence on women: unfortunately, everywhere in the world this seems to be the most serious problem that women face. Consistently, the other useful actions point to awareness raising and to education/information, that is to contents that can change attitudes and behaviours among the overall population/ at society level.

It is interesting to know that "gender mainstreaming" receives the lowest utility rating (which in any case is still higher than 68% in the total sample). It may be suggested that such answer depends on the difficulty to identify concrete situations and choices at institutional level that might activate a gender mainstreaming path / process.

Analysing the answers in a comparative way, according to the respondents' gender, the order of "priorities" does not change, but what stands out is the fact that women systematically evaluate all actions "more useful" than men do (apart for the "gender mainstreaming" actions, whose low rating likely depends on what was already mentioned above).

Particularly striking is the difference between male and female opinion about the usefulness of empowerment of women within the economic life, stressing the awareness and resentment of women for the wages gap and the discriminations in the professional careers, as shown in the following table:

Table 12 - Possible actions to promote and foster gender equality by gender

	Opinions	Respondents' gender	
		Female (n=466)	Male (n=270)
Gender mainstreaming	Definitely useful /useful	68,5%	69,7%
	Useless/ definitely useless	31,5%	30,4%
Positive discrimination policy and actions	Definitely useful /useful	81,4%	79,3%
	Useless/ definitely useless	18,6%	20,8%
Provision of services with gender-sensitive delivery /effects	Definitely useful /useful	84,6%	82,6%
	Useless/ definitely useless	15,3%	17,4%
Fight against violence on women	Definitely useful /useful	98,5%	97,8%
	Useless/ definitely useless	1,5%	2,2%
Awareness raising campaigns	Definitely useful /useful	95,5%	93,0%
	Useless/ definitely useless	4,7%	7,0%
Education/information campaigns on gender equality	Definitely useful /useful	95,5%	90,7%
	Useless/ definitely useless	4,5%	9,3%
Cooperation with existing national networks	Definitely useful /useful	95,8%	88,9%
	Useless/ definitely useless	5,1%	11,1%
Empowerment of women within the economic life	Definitely useful /useful	97,0%	83,7%
	Useless/ definitely useless	3,0%	16,3%

To implement actions toward the gender equality, the national legal framework provides for a set of institutions that have such actions as their responsibility. It must be stressed that, since there is no information on the residence of the respondents (i.e., in order to ensure compliance with privacy-related issues), there is no way to ascertain whether the answers about the presence of those institutions correspond to factual reality. Nevertheless, the replies represent an important indicator of the perception among respondents of the institutions that are considered an 'authority' in terms of gender mainstreaming. It is

however possible to draw some interesting indications by selecting the answers about specific structures according to the territorial level of activity of the respondents.

Our respondents are either elected officials or civil servants in municipal or regional administrations, and they are supposed to be informed about the structures/institutions operating in their self-government unit. Nonetheless, the relatively high proportion of people, at both institutional levels, who declare that they do not know if the indicated structures are actually present is striking.

Table 13 - Structure in place

Structure in place (respondents operating at regional level, n=199)	Yes	I do not know
Regional Independent Office for Gender Equality	13,1%	64,8%
Regional Committee for Gender Equality	30,7%	53,3%
Structure in place (respondents operating at municipal level, n=590)	**Yes**	**I do not know**
Municipal Committee for Gender Equality	40,3%	31,0%
Unit on Social Policy and Gender Equality	22,40%	63,9%
Gender Focal Point	36,4%	36,1%
Union of Municipalities	29,5%	55,8%
Association of Regions	23,2%	63,7%

Actions aimed at achieving gender mainstreaming must contrast social situations, beliefs and attitudes that constitute important challenges against the goal.

According to respondents across both institutional levels under focus (i.e., municipal, and regional), the most challenging issues are related to “traditional” attitudes and rather established gender stereotypes, that channel most of the responsibilities of domestic life/caregiving activities on the female components of the family/household.

On the opposite side, both groups see the “gender blindness” of the policies as a minor challenge, if compared with the other. Generally, the features of societal organisation (i.e., labour market, professional stands, political legal frameworks, service systems) are considered less "heavy" in hindering gender mainstreaming than stereotyped attitudes and beliefs.

It can be stressed here what appears to be yet another paradoxical stance: although the fight against the violence on women was proposed as the most useful action toward achieving gender equality, in this section the violence is not perceived as the main challenge against gender mainstreaming, as illustrated by the following table:

Table 14 - Challenges to mainstreaming by Institutional level

	Respondents’ institutional level	
	Municipal (n=611)	Regional (n=206)
Women often consider other women as competitors rather than allies	300	107
	49,1%	51,9%
The present election system does not give equal opportunities to women to get elected, despite the gender quota for the candidate lists	183	61
	30,0%	29,6
Gender stereotypes	314	116
	51,4%	56,3
“Gender blindness” of the policies	178	59
	29,1%	28,6
Gender inequalities in labour market, promotion in workplaces, pay gap	237	87
	38,8%	42,2

Unbalanced/Lack of sharing of responsibilities between men and women in the domestic/private domain	325	113
	53,2%	54,9
Gender-based violence, violence against women, domestic violence	262	94
	42,9%	45,6
Lack of services with gender-sensitive delivery and /or effects	201	73
	32,9%	35,4

Looking at the differences in opinions according to the respondents' gender, it may be noticed that, in general, women stress more than men the challenging character of all the proposed possible difficulties: no instance collects less than 40% of female answers, while the minimum male designations reach 17,8% (for gender blindness of policies) and 18,9% (for unfairness of the electoral system).

As for the order of importance, women single out in the first place "traditional attitudes" (i.e., unfair responsibility burden and stereotypes) more than men, who in turn "blame" women as competitors rather than allies of their "sisters".

This attitude is recognised also by women, but gets the third place for importance, while in the fourth position women place the gender-based violence, as illustrated by the following table:

Table 15 - Challenges to mainstreaming by Gender

	Respondents' gender	
	Female (n=466)	Male (n=270)
Women often consider other women as competitors rather than allies	264	143
	56,7%	53,0%
The present election system does not give equal opportunities to women to get elected, despite the gender quota for the candidate lists	193	51
	41,4%	18,9%
Gender stereotypes	306	124
	65,7%	45,9%
"Gender blindness" of the policies	189	48
	40,6%	17,8%
Gender inequalities in labour market, promotion in workplaces, pay gap	239	85
	51,3%	31,5%
Unbalanced/Lack of sharing of responsibilities between men and women in the domestic/private domain	319	119
	68,5%	44,1%
Gender-based violence, violence against women, domestic violence	257	99
	55,2%	36,7%
Lack of services with gender-sensitive delivery and /or effects	197	77
	42,3%	28,5%

The number of those who state the non-existence of challenges or who honestly declare that they do not understand what is being discussed is very low.

Equally low is the number of those who received some gender training: 79 women (16,5% out of the 479 who filled in the questionnaire up to this point) and 19 men (7,9% out of 242).

Reflecting on cooperation

Coming to evaluate the implementation of the gender mainstreaming approach in policymaking, the perceived performance of the local administrations does not seem particularly satisfying: among the total number of those who filled in the questionnaire also for this last section, less than 20% perceive the policymaking activities as fully implementing a gender mainstreaming approach.

Female respondents tend to be more critical toward the local policymaking, since about a quarter of them do not see any gender mainstreaming implementation.

Respondents operating at the regional level are slightly more "optimistic" toward a partial implementation, while the share of those who resort to the "not implemented" option is higher at the municipal level. The table below illustrates the expressed opinions regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming policymaking, according to the institutional level of respondents and of their gender:

Table 16 - Option that best describes the situation with regards to gender mainstreaming in policymaking

	Respondents' Institution level		Respondents' Gender		Total
	Municipal (n=576)	Regional (n=194)	Female (n=507)	Male (n=263)	
Gender mainstreaming is fully implemented	112	38	78	72	150
	19,4%	19,6%	15,4%	27,4%	19,5%
Gender mainstreaming is partially implemented	323	122	307	138	445
	56,1%	62,9%	60,6%	52,5%	57,8%
Gender mainstreaming is not implemented	141	34	122	53	175
	24,5%	17,5%	24,1%	20,2%	22,7%

To those who consider gender mainstreaming "not implemented", suggestions were requested on the usefulness of possible cooperation choices so as to allow to better organise actions towards this goal.

Total autonomy of the local organisation (either municipal or regional) is the less accepted option, even if subscribed by about three quarters of the respondents.

On the other side, national institutions are generally considered to be the better partnership choice, particularly by the respondents operating at the municipal level and even more by female respondents.

Possible contributions from civil society organisations gain more trust than municipal and/or regional administrations and, not surprisingly, that trust is expressed more by women than by men. The table below illustrates the distribution of answers regarding the usefulness of cooperation for gender mainstreaming, according to institutional level and gender of respondents:

Table 17 - Usefulness of cooperation patterns

	Respondents' institutional level		Respondents' Gender		Total
	Municipal (n=139)	Regional (n=34)	Female (n=121)	Male (n=52)	
Gender mainstreaming should be implemented within the municipality/region in autonomy	101	25	88	38	126
	72,7%	73,5%	72,7%	73,1%	72,8%
Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with national institutions	127	30	112	45	157
	91,4%	88,2%	92,6%	86,5%	90,8%
Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with other municipalities/regions	114	24	100	38	138
	82,0%	70,6%	82,6%	73,1%	79,8%
Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with civil society organisations	125	28	109	44	153
	89,9%	82,4%	90,1%	84,6%	88,4%

Considering the instances of implemented gender mainstreaming policies, respondents were requested to indicate which choice of cooperation has been put into practice (at their institutional level/within their institution).

Autonomous implementation seems to be the dominant model, both at the municipal and at the regional level; women and men respondents share this same observation.

The second most frequent option, at the regional level, is the cooperation with national institutions, while at the municipal level the civil society organisations contribute the most to policymaking in the domain of gender mainstreaming.

Cooperation between municipalities and/or regions is the least "popular" choice, but in any case, covers about half of the cases, as shown by the table below:

Table 18 - Implemented cooperation patterns

	Respondents' institutional level		Respondents' Gender		Total
	Municipal (n=428)	Regional (n=152)	Female (n=375)	Male (n=205)	
Gender mainstreaming is implemented within the municipality/region in autonomy	291	97	249	139	388
	68,0%	63,8%	66,4%	67,8%	66,9%
Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with national institutions	248	87	208	127	335
	57,9%	57,2%	55,5%	62,0%	57,8%
Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with other municipalities/regions	199	77	177	99	276
	46,5%	50,7%	47,2%	48,3%	47,6%
Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with civil society organisations	267	83	222	128	350
	62,4%	54,6%	59,2%	62,4%	60,3%

The cooperation between different stakeholders gets a positive evaluation (excellent or satisfactory) from about the 40% of respondents, even if about the same proportion delivers a negative assessment (insufficient or poor).

The municipal level is more critical than the regional one, which in turn present the highest share of respondents who do not feel like expressing an opinion.

Analysing the expressed evaluations according to the respondents' gender, we find women definitely more unsatisfied than men, as shown in the table below:

Table 19 - Assessment of the present cooperation between different stakeholders in the municipality/region

	Respondents' institutional level		Respondents' Gender		Total (n=753)
	Municipal (n=567)	Regional (n=186)	Female (n=496)	Male (n=257)	
Excellent	20	8	8	20	28
	3,5%	4,3%	1,6%	7,8%	3,7%
Satisfactory	209	66	158	117	275
	36,9%	35,5%	31,9%	45,5%	36,5%
I do not know	110	51	120	41	161
	19,4%	27,4%	24,2%	16,0%	21,4%
Insufficient	165	39	159	45	204
	29,1%	21,0%	32,1%	17,5%	27,1%

Poor	63	22	51	34	85
	11,1%	11,8%	10,3%	13,2%	11,3%

Apart from the institutional cooperation, the success of gender mainstreaming depends on a series of factors connected with the institutional structure and with the population's attitudes.

A list of possible obstacles to gender mainstreaming was proposed to respondents, which were requested to evaluate the respective "heaviness" using a five-point scale, where 1 means "not an obstacle at all" and 5 means "full obstacle".

Among the full sample of those who filled in the questionnaire up to the last questions, the share of those that consider each factor not hindering the gender mainstreaming approach is roughly the same and includes slightly more than a third of the respondents.

In general, features of the institutional structure and societal attitudes are weighted as (not) having the same effect in hampering gender mainstreaming.

Table 20 - Obstacles to gender mainstreaming

NOT AN OBSTACLE AT ALL (level 1)	Respondents Institutional level		Respondents' Gender		Total
	Municipal (n=558)	Regional (n=184)	Female (n=487)	Male (n=255)	
Lack of knowledge/acknowledgment of gender issues	193	62	162	93	255
	34,6%	33,7%	33,3%	36,5%	34,4%
Lack of relevant legal framework	210	58	166	102	268
	37,6%	31,5%	34,1%	40,0%	36,1%
Lack of relevant procedures	209	64	169	104	273
	37,5%	34,8%	34,7%	40,8%	36,8%
Lack of competence/ competent staff	195	63	156	102	258
	34,9%	34,2%	32,0%	40,0%	34,8%
Lack of time/resources	188	74	162	100	262
	33,7%	40,2%	33,3%	39,2%	35,3%
Lack of relevant application areas (i.e. not relevant for the functions the municipality /region performs)	200	74	177	97	274
	35,8%	40,2%	36,3%	38,0%	36,9%
Lack of interest/participation from the citizens	179	61	158	82	240
	32,1%	33,2%	32,4%	32,2%	32,3%
Lack of cooperation between institutions /administrations	207	64	174	97	271
	37,1%	34,8%	35,7%	38,0%	36,5%

On the opposite side, considering the assessment of the factors that, according to the opinion of the sample, obstruct the most the gender mainstreaming approach, all proposed instances get a rate of "5 – full obstacle" from a sample share around or above 20%, with no significant difference between genders and between institutional levels.

Table 21 - Obstacles to gender mainstreaming

A FULL OBSTACLE (level 5)	Respondents Institutional level		Respondents' Gender		Total
	Municipal (n=558)	Regional (n=184)	Female (n=487)	Male	
Lack of knowledge/acknowledgment of gender issues	120	39	123	36	159
	21,5%	21,2%	25,3%	14,1%	21,4%

Lack of relevant legal framework	78	25	80	23	103
	14,0%	13,6%	16,4%	9,0%	13,9%
Lack of relevant procedures	82	30	85	27	112
	14,7%	16,3%	17,5%	10,6%	15,1%
Lack of competence/ competent staff	82	28	76	34	110
	14,7%	15,2%	15,6%	13,3%	14,8%
Lack of time/resources	82	28	77	33	110
	14,7%	15,2%	15,8%	12,9%	14,8%
Lack of relevant application areas (i.e. not relevant for the functions the municipality /region performs)	56	21	53	24	77
	10,0%	11,4%	10,9%	9,4%	10,4%
Lack of interest/participation from the citizens	96	40	90	46	136
	17,2%	21,7%	18,5%	18,0%	18,3%
Lack of cooperation between institutions /administrations	95	36	93	38	131
	17,0%	19,6%	19,1%	14,9%	17,7%

The resulting assessment pattern does not highlight among the respondents any factor to be considered hindering of the gender mainstreaming but, in a sense, reinforces the already expressed belief that the notion of "gender mainstreaming" is not well understood by the population.

Another finding strengthens this interpretation: comparing the average assessment per item, allows to observe that the means are comprised between 3.00 and 3.45, i.e. they are around the middle point of the scale and the standard deviation is around 1.

Table 22 - Average assessment per item

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
lack of relevant application areas (i.e. not relevant for the functions the municipality/region performs)	742	3,00	1,156
lack of relevant legal framework	742	3,10	1,167
lack of competence/ competent staff	742	3,12	1,207
lack of time/resources	742	3,15	1,184
lack of relevant procedures	742	3,35	1,077
lack of cooperation between institutions/administrations	742	3,37	1,102
lack of interest/participation from the citizens	742	3,40	1,119
lack of knowledge/acknowledgment of gender issues	742	3,45	1,151

If the concept implies the integration of a gender perspective into all the policies, measures and programmes, an assessment of "full obstacles" assigned to items such as the "lack of interest from the citizens" or "lack of acknowledgement of gender issues", would be expected, since these are attitudes that prevent to adopt the gender mainstreaming approach. On the other side, an assessment of "not an obstacle at all" assigned to items such as "lack of relevant legal framework", "lack of relevant areas" or "lack of relevant procedures", would be as well expected, since all the areas of institutional activity, as well as all the legal framework provisions and established procedures can be approached (theoretically) pursuing the purpose of promoting/achieving equality between women and men and contrasting gender discrimination.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Study and Policy Advice aimed at identifying patterns, challenges and opportunities in the participation of women in political life at local level in Greece, focusing also on the potential role of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) arrangements to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming at local level. The following paragraphs summarise the main findings of the Study and Policy Advice, which corroborate the analysis already made through the Preliminary Study in 2020.

Greece has strong constitutional guarantees for equality between men and women as well as a relevant legal framework promoting gender equality. However, there is still room for improvement, in particular with respect to the implementation of legal provisions promoting gender mainstreaming in local governance, including greater involvement of women in political life. This is particularly relevant also in light of Principle 1 on "Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation" of the 12 Principles of Good Governance of the Council of Europe[53], according to which all men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate bodies that represent their interests.

The number of women in political life in Greece is slowly increasing. Women participate in political life in municipalities and regions both as elected officials (i.e., Governors, Mayors, regional and municipal councillors) as well as staff in the public administration, at different levels of responsibility.

Their interests and reasons for engaging in and with politics differ, as do their experiences concerning their involvement in the municipal and regional governments. They all face obstacles and challenges that are usually stemming from gender and age stereotypes, including society's traditional views on gender roles. This may impact their self-perception, attitudes, aspirations, and self-assertiveness as well as society's perceptions of the role of women in politics.

Women, and men may not recognise gender stereotypes and inequalities as such, due to a limited understanding of gender issues, and they might face and address them in different ways and with different levels of success. Women and men also differ in terms of identifying the possible obstacles hindering the involvement of women in politics. In general, women often miss the skills, knowledge and self-confidence relevant to local governance.

At the same time, there is lack of an enabling environment which would contribute to creating conditions for the empowerment of women and enhancement of their participation in political and public life, including a properly formulated gender quota. Among the numerous stakeholders involved in promotion, implementation and enforcement of gender equality, political parties are one of the key gate-keepers to women's political participation.

The legislation has introduced compulsory institutional mechanisms for gender equality at all levels of governance, in order to mainstream a gender equality perspective in the work and activities of regions and municipalities. However, in about one third of municipalities and half of the regions these mechanisms have not yet been established. In many cases where Gender Equality Committees and Independent Equality Offices were established, it was noted that they lack guidance, political support, gender expertise, and funds to carry out their tasks - which include, among others, the drafting of gender action plans aiming to address gender inequalities and their implementation.

[53] Decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2008), https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d3dc8

The gender inequalities in society reflect on the participation of women in politics, and low participation of women in governance reflect on the quality of life in the communities.

To conclude:

- Gender differences and inequalities persist both as regards the representation of women in the elected positions as well as in posts within the public administration.
- Greece has established a strong legal and institutional framework for advancing gender equality, however there is still room for improvement. **The implementation of the legal provisions can be further enhanced**.
- There are different stakeholders involved in the promotion, implementation and enforcement of gender equality in Greece at different levels of governance. They may have a varying degree of understanding of gender equality issues in local governance, as well as different levels of knowledge of gender relevant legislation and its implications for local government. **Cooperation among stakeholders should be further improved**.
- Municipalities and regions do not have a clear vision on how to mainstream gender in political and public life in practice, nor the necessary capacities and resources to design it and later on implement it. Furthermore, men and women within municipalities and regions normally have differing views on what are the main obstacles and what could be the possible solutions.
- Different regional and municipal gender mechanisms are still not in place and therefore **there is a need to strengthen political will, build capacities and provide resources to set them in motion**.
- Gender mainstreaming requires that efforts are made to broaden women's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making.
- **Gender equality training (including both men and women) can be a tool to enhance the role of women in political and public sphere. Available training might need to be revised, updated and further disseminated**. Men and women are partners and allies in mainstreaming gender in local governance as well as society as whole.
- **Awareness raising campaigns organised centrally** could be used to engage more men and women in the process of gender mainstreaming country-wide. Such activities may be considered in schools. Learning, strengthening, and developing skills and capacities are crucial to women's empowerment and enhancement of their participation in political and public life.

Based on the findings described above, some recommendations are formulated here below. They can be considered by the relevant bodies within the Greek government, in particular when further exploring opportunities and possibilities for the promotion and implementation of gender mainstreaming at different levels of governance, in order to strengthen the participation of women in political life.

Concrete actions could include:

- The creation of **an inter-institutional mechanism to register and monitor the gender distribution of elected representatives** at municipal and regional level after each electoral process.

- **Continued support** from the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality to **municipalities and regions** in order to establish and keep operative their **Gender Equality Committees**.

- Conducting a periodical **countrywide assessment of the socio-economic situation of women and their engagement in political and public life** at the local and regional level. This should also include:
  - A mapping of the existing knowledge of gender issues of different relevant stakeholders;

- A mapping of the challenges men and women face in receiving quality public services responding to their needs (gender analysis).

- Use of a **dual-track approach to gender equality at all levels**: this consists in combining the promotion, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of **gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes**, with **specific actions** to improve the participation of men and women at local (i.e., municipal and regional) level in general and in the decision-making process in particular. To this purpose, the *Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit*[54] of the Council of Europe could be helpful.

- **Set clear priorities and objectives** aiming at encouraging the participation of women in political life and creating a gender-sensitive culture across the public administration. This should also include the **identification of adequate funding resources**.

- Ensure that appropriate and accountable **mechanisms to monitor and evaluate (M&E) the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies** are in place, including the development of tools for M&E of the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) at all levels (in particular for the NAPGE 2021-2026 which is currently being finalised).

- Identify the most suitable actions to **reinforce gender mainstreaming with targeted, women-specific policies and programmes** in order to reach the set priorities. As an indication, these could include:
  - identification of best practices in Greece and in Europe;
  - promotion of role models;
  - provision of training at local level[55] (e.g. these could focus on: gender mainstreaming; drafting of a gender action plan; relevant institutional and legal framework; etc.);
  - assessment of the effectiveness of existing measures (e.g. gender quota) to promote participation of women in political and public life;
  - analysis of alternative measures to ensure that women have realistic chances of being elected (possibly also opening a discourse with political parties to advance women's political participation);

- Use **Inter-Municipal Cooperation** [56] and/or other **cooperation tools in order to support municipalities with limited resources** (financial and human resources, gender expertise, etc.). These tools could be tailored in order to allow municipalities to work jointly on different activities, such as:
  - developing joint gender-sensitive policies;
  - developing joint facilities and services that could indirectly boost participation of women in public and political domain (i.e., care for children and elderly and similar);
  - promoting gender mainstreaming activities, including training;
  - organising awareness raising activities (e.g. in schools, in order to address stereotypes related to civil participation);
  - enhancing the collaboration of women councillors and women working in public administration across municipal boundaries (e.g., creating regional networks of "gender

[54] *Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit*, Council of Europe, 2020: https://rm.coe.int/civil-participation-in-decision-making-toolkit-/168075c1a5

[55] For a useful reference, Chapter 4 of the *Toolkit on Modern and Effective Human Resources Management* of the Council of Europe: https://rm.coe.int/hrm-modern-and-effective-human-resources-management/1680746cb9

[56] *Toolkit Manual on Inter-Municipal Cooperation*, Council of Europe, 2010: https://rm.coe.int/1680746ec3; *Handbook on Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Greece*, Council of Europe, 2020: https://www.ypes.gr/politikes-kai-draseis/diadimotiki-synergasia

champion women councillors", or creating women's caucuses in the municipalities bringing together women across the political spectrum to promote gender equality);

- sharing good practices and expertise among the municipalities and regions on implementing gender equality policies and cooperation between different stakeholders;
- develop joint proposals to secure funding from the national level, the EU or other donors;
- strengthening the cooperation with local civil society organisations which promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Centre of Expertise for Good Governance is available to provide any further assistance.

6 REFERENCES

6.1 CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLKITS

Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit (2020), Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/civil-participation-in-decision-making-toolkit-/168075c1a5

Handbook on Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Greece (2020), Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://www.ypes.gr/politikes-kai-draseis/diadimotiki-synergasia

Toolkit Manual on Inter-Municipal Cooperation (2010), Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/1680746ec3

Toolkit on Modern and Effective Human Resources Management, Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/hrm-modern-and-effective-human-resources-management/1680746cb9

6.2 REPORTS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Compilation of Venice Commission opinions and reports concerning gender equality (2021), European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), CDL-PI(2021)002, Strasbourg.

Gender mainstreaming - Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices, (2004) Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/1680596135

Gender Equality Glossary (2016) Council of Europe, Strasbourg https://edoc.coe.int/en/gender-equality/6947-gender-equality-glossary.html

Gender Equality Index 2020: Greece (2020), European Institute for Gender Equality: https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2020-greece

Gender Equality Index Data from 2010 to 2020, (2020) European Institute for Gender Equality: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/all/modules/custom/eige_gei/app/content/downloads/gender-equality-index-2013-2015-2017-2019-2020.xlsx

Global Gender Gap Report 2006 (2006), World Economic Forum: https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2006

Global Gender Gap Report 2021 (2021), World Economic Forum: https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/in-full/gggr2-benchmarking-gender-gaps-findings-from-the-global-gender-gap-index-2021

6.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Greece adopted by the CEDAW Committee at its fifty fourth session (2013), CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7: http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhsldCrOlUTvLRFDjh6%2Fx1pWCT%2BNJkQB%2BECOvrawUqlXuTO%2BAvPXlbccbOj2ZfuplkL0Z77Vj2QxpNZqRbHA7Mh1aw933FUzcf9mPklCt7Fss2

Constitution of Greece as revised by the parliamentary resolution of April 6th 2001 of the VIIth Revisionary Parliament (2001): *https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/gr/gr220en.pdf*

European Charter for the equality of women and men on local life (2006), The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Brussels: https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf

Law 1342/1983 on Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by Greece (1983) Athens

Law 3852/2010 on the New Architecture of Self-administration and Decentralised Administration (2010) Athens

Law 4531/2018 on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and harmonisation of the Greek legislation (2018) Athens

Law 4555/2018 on Reform of the institutional framework of Local Government – Strengthening Democracy – Enhancing Participation – Improving Economic and Developmental Functioning (2018) Athens

Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence (2019) Athens: http://www.isotita.gr/en/law-4604-2019-substantive-gender-equality-preventing-combating-gender-based-violence/

National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2016 – 2020) (2018), General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Ministry of Interior, Athens: http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/National-Action-Plan-for-Gender-Equality-2016-2020.pdf

OSCE/ODIHR Greece Early Parliamentary Elections 7 July 2019 Election Assessment Mission Final Report (2019), OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/f/442168.pdf

Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making (2003), Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848

Resolution 404 (2016) on Women's political participation and representation at local and regional levels, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe: https://rm.coe.int/1680767272

Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level (2008), endorsed by Decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d3dc8

6.4 STUDIES

Besley T., Folke O., Persson T., Rickne J., (2017), *Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden,* American Economic Review 2017, 107(8): 2204–2242: https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20160080

Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making: Analytical report - 2016 data (2017), Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe, Strasbourg: https://rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e

Dia Anagnostou (2014), *Fact Sheet on Greece - based on her paper for the Workshop on Legal Struggles and Political Mobilization around Gender Quotas in Europe*, September 2014, Florence: https://blogs.eui.eu/genderquotas/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2015/04/Executive-summary-Greece-Anagnostou.pdf

End of mission statement by the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (2019), Athens: https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24471&LangID=E

Greece: Comprehensive national review report Beijing+25 (2020) General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Athens: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Greece

Labour Force Survey – Yearly time series since 1981: Population, Education, Employment Status (2020), Hellenic Statistical Authority, https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO03/-

Kloka M. (2019), *Inequalities in Greece: High youth unemployment, tax evasion and the ongoing impacts of the economic crisis on vulnerable people hold back Greece's progressive legislation to tackle inequalities*, Make Europe Sustainable For All: https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.3.a-report-GR.pdf

Meier, P., Lombardo E., Bustelo M., Pantelidou Maloutas M. (2005), *Women in political decision-making and gender mainstreaming: obvious partners?*, The Greek Review of Social Research, 117, 2005, pp. 35-61: https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/ekke/article/viewFile/9556/9743.pdf

The gender aspect of the results of Municipal, Regional and European Elections in Greece 2019, 21st E-Bulletin (2019), General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Ministry of Interior, Athens: http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Observatory-21st-e-bulletin-The-gender-aspect-of-the-results-of-the-Municipal-Regional-and-European-Elections-in-Greece-in-2019.pdf

Verbole A., Gaon I. D. (2018), *Gender Representation in Media throughout the Electoral Cycle: The Cases of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia*. Paper presented at the Gender Differentiation in Media Industries International Conference, Ljubljana: https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/2018/genmed-conference-booklet.pdf?sfvrsn=0

7 ANNEXES

7.1 INTERVIEWS' TOPIC GUIDE – PRELIMINARY STUDY

A – ON INTERVIEWEE'S PROFILE AND BACKGROUND

- Age
- Profession
- Position
- Years of service

B – ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL/CITY COUNCIL /REGIONAL COUNCIL

- Career path up to the present position
- Personal achievements
- Personal challenges
    - Challenges and opportunities faced by women in such positions
- Women's participation at Council meetings (i.e. challenges and opportunities for participation)
- Women's participation in specific Committees, Commissions, Taskforces
- Women's participation in policymaking
    - Focus on gender-specific policies

C – ON AWARENESS OF GENDER ISSUES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ON GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES

- Impact of local governance on men and women daily life
    - Focus on strategies/policies/actions
- Identifying gender equality issues at local/regional level
- Inclusion of gender issues in local/regional policy agenda
- Gender mainstreaming
    - Focus on strategies/policies/actions
- Implementing gender mainstreaming
    - Local/regional Gender Plan
    - Local/regional Programmes and Bodies directly dealing with gender issues
- Assessment of gender mainstreaming strategies/policies/actions implemented

D – ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION (IMC)

- Assessment of overall level of cooperation
    - Focus on cooperation among "same level" cooperation (i.e. municipality-municipality, region-region)
    - Focus on inter-institutional cooperation (i.e. municipality-region; municipality/region-national authorities)
    - Focus on cooperation within municipalities/regions associations
- On opportunities and challenges of (inter-municipal) cooperation on gender issues
- On cooperation on gender issues and gender mainstreaming

E – ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON GENDER ISSUES

- Specific training
    - Focus on participation and/or delivery

- Personal skills/capacities
- Views on gender equality/inequalities
    - Personal experiences
- Suggestions/insights on mainstreaming gender in policy making at municipal/regional level

7.2 INTERVIEWS' TOPIC GUIDE – FINAL STUDY

NATIONAL LEVEL

A – ON INTERVIEWEE'S PROFILE AND BACKGROUND

- Institution/Position
- Years of service

B – ON PERSONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

- Assessment of the current level of participation of women
- Identifying approaches to continue increasing representation of women, including from the interviewee's institution
- Addressing gender stereotypes and traditional views
- Importance of training: personal views, focus on topics and methodology, how to implement it

C – ON AWARENESS OF GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- Focus on limited understanding of gender issues at municipal/regional level: possible actions to address this
- Regional/Municipal Committees on Gender Equality not established in many regions and municipalities: reasons and how the institutional vacuum is dealt with

D – ON COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES

- IMC as a tool to support municipalities
    - Possible steps/actions at the level of engagement of the interviewee
-

E – CONCLUSIONS

- Questions or additional remarks from the interviewee

REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVEL

A – ON INTERVIEWEE'S PROFILE AND BACKGROUND

- Institution/Position
- Years of service

B – ON PERSONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

- Career path up to the present position
    - Personal achievements
    - Personal challenges
- Challenges and opportunities faced by women in such positions
- Women's participation at Council meetings (i.e. challenges and opportunities for participation)
- Women's participation in specific Committees, Commissions, Taskforces
- Addressing gender stereotypes and traditional views

C – ON AWARENESS OF GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- Identifying gender equality issues at municipal/regional level
- Inclusion of gender issues in municipal/regional policy agenda
- Gender mechanisms at municipal/regional level
- Implementing gender mainstreaming: vision, funding
    - Municipal/Regional Gender Plan
    - Local/regional Programmes and Bodies directly dealing with gender issues
- Assessment of provision of gender-sensitive services provided to citizens at local level

D – ON COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES

- IMC as a tool to support municipalities
    - Cooperation among different stakeholders at municipal/regional level
    - Cooperation with other institutions providing support to gender mainstreaming
    - Possible steps/actions at the level of engagement of the interviewee

E – TRAINING

- Available training on gender issues

E – CONCLUSIONS

- Questions or additional remarks from the interviewee

7.3 SURVEY ON PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AT LOCAL LEVEL IN GREECE

A – RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Age

- < 20 years
- 20 – 30 years
- 30 – 40 years
- 40 – 50 years
- 50 – 60 years
- 60 years

Education

- Mandatory Education
- Secondary Education
- Technical Education
- Higher Education

Institution

- Regional level/administration
- Municipal level/administration

Position

Elected official:

- Governor/Deputy Governor
- Mayor/Deputy Mayor
- Regional Councillor
- Municipal Councillor

Civil servant:

- Senior civil servant at regional level
- Junior civil servant at regional level
- Temporary contract at regional level
- Senior civil servant at municipal level
- Junior civil servant at municipal level
- Temporary contract at municipal level

How long have you been in your present position?

- Indicate number of years:

(FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS ONLY)

Is this your first mandate?

- Yes
- No
    - If not, which one is it:

How did you get in your current position?

(FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS ONLY)

- Political party support
- Independent candidate
- Other (please specify)

(FOR CIVIL SERVANTS ONLY)

- Exams - Competition
- Ad hoc opening
- Promotion
- Other (please specify)

Gender

- Male
- Female

(FOR WOMEN ONLY)

As a woman in your position, how often do you encounter/are subject to the following challenges or obstacles? (NEVER; SOMETIMES; OFTEN; ALWAYS)

- Societal distrust/prejudices/stereotypes toward women in your position
- Family opposition to your work and/or the engagement in political life
- Limited provisions for care of children/elder family members that would allow conciliation between public life/work and private life
- Poor preparation for the tasks to be performed
- Lacking proper education / background / knowledge
- Personal insecurity/ fear of not being up to the demands of the job
- Other (please specify)

(FOR MEN ONLY)

Thinking about a woman occupying your job position, how likely do you think she is to encounter/would be subject to the following challenges or obstacles: (YES/NO)

- Societal distrust/prejudices /stereotypes towards women in a position of elected official/admin staff position
- Family opposition to the work and/or the engagement in political life
- Limited provisions for care of children/elder family members that could allow conciliation between public life/work and private life
- Poor preparation for the tasks to be performed
- Lacking proper education / background / knowledge
- Personal insecurity/ fear of not being up to the demands of the job
- Other (please specify)

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Please reply to the following questions by referring to your direct knowledge of the local self-government unit where you are serving/you are active: EITHER Municipal OR Regional

How would you estimate the current contribution of elected women to the overall performance of the Council?

- Crucial
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate
- Unsatisfactory
- Null

Are elected women present during the Council's meetings?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- From time to time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

Do elected women take the floor during the Council's meetings?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- From time to time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

Do elected women propose topics for the agenda of the Council's meetings?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- From time to time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

Do elected women seem comfortable in their role?

- (1: not comfortable – 5: very comfortable)

Are elected women active in committees, such as: (YES/NO)

- Social and health services committee
- Education and culture committee
- Gender equality issues committee
- Economy and finance committee
- Local development committee
- Environment committee
- Urban planning, roads and traffic committee
- Human resources committee
- Other (please specify)

Have the committees' decisions been relevant to the socio-economic status of women? (YES/NOT ALWAYS/NEVER)

- Social and health services committee
- Education and culture committee
- Gender equality issues committee
- Economy and finance committee
- Local development committee
- Environment committee
- Urban planning, roads and traffic committee
- Human resources committee
- Other (please specify)

How would you rate the level of women participation in political life at the local level you represent/in which you are active (i.e. municipal or regional)

- Definitely adequate
- Satisfactory
- No opinion, do not know
- Rather disappointing

- Definitely inadequate

In your opinion, would the following actions increase the presence and representation of women in political life? (YES/NO)

- Gender quotas in candidate lists
- Gender quotas in elected Councils
- Strategy in political parties on creating a pool of Potential women candidates
- Availability of services to help the balance between family tasks and political life
- Education / training on political participation and engagement
- Education / training on procedures and bureaucratic formalities in the political / professional activities
- Support to the establishment and work of women's Associations
- Improvement of the expertise on gender equality issues
- Other (please specify)

KNOWLEDGE OF GENDER IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Please reply to the following questions, considering the flowing definition:
GENDER EQUALITY means an equal visibility, empowerment, and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life (Council of Europe)

Please provide your level of agreement with the following definitions of "gender": (Totally Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Totally Agree).

- "Gender" describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth"
- "Gender" refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are socially constructed in our families, our societies, and our cultures"

Is there a gender equality action plan in place in the municipality/region where you are serving/you are active?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

In your opinion, how would you evaluate the efficiency of the following actions that your local government unit could implement for promoting gender equality? (Definitely Useless, Useless, Useful, Definitely Useful)

- Gender mainstreaming
- Positive discrimination policy and actions
- Provision of gender-sensitive services / effects
- Fight against violence on women
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Education/information campaigns on gender equality
- Cooperation with existing national networks
- Economic Empowerment of women

Are the following structures active in your local government unit to mainstream gender equality? (Yes/No/I do not know)

- Regional Independent Office for Gender Equality
- Regional Committee for Gender Equality
- Municipal Committee for Gender Equality
- Unit on Social Policy and Gender Equality
- Gender Focal Point
- Union of Municipalities
- Association of Regions
- Others: please name them
- There are no such structures

What are, in your opinion the main challenges related to gender mainstreaming at the level of local government in which you serve/you are active?

- Women often consider other women as competitors rather than allies
- The present election system does not give equal opportunities to women to get elected, despite the gender quota for the candidate lists
- Gender stereotypes
- "Gender blindness" of the policies
- Gender inequalities in labour market, promotion in workplaces, pay gap
- Unbalanced/Lack of sharing of responsibilities between men and women in the domestic/private domain

- Gender-based violence, violence against women, domestic violence
- Lack of gender-sensitive services and /or its impact
- I do not understand what this means
- There are no challenges
- Other (please specify)

Have you received any gender training?

- Yes: by whom/which institution
- No

REFLECTING ON COOPERATION

Please reply to the following questions, considering the flowing definition:

- **GENDER MAINSTREAMING is "the (re)organisation, improvement, development, and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making." (Council of Europe)**

Which of the following options best describe the situation in your local government unit with regards to gender mainstreaming in policy making?

1. Gender mainstreaming is not implemented
2. Gender mainstreaming is partially implemented
3. Gender mainstreaming is fully implemented

If the 1) option is selected: Would the following options be useful in your local self-government unit? (YES/NO)

- Gender mainstreaming should be implemented within the municipality / region in autonomy
- Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with national institutions
- Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with other municipalities / regions
- Gender mainstreaming should be implemented in cooperation with civil society organisations
- Other (please specify)

If the 2) or 3) option is selected: Are the following options used? (YES/NO)

- Gender mainstreaming is implemented within the municipality/region in autonomy
- Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with national institutions
- Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with other municipalities/regions
- Gender mainstreaming is implemented in cooperation with civil society organisation
- Other (please specify)

How would you assess the present cooperation between different stakeholders that are responsible for promoting, enforcing, and implementing gender mainstreaming in your municipality/region?

- Insufficient
- Poor
- Satisfactory
- Excellent
- I do not know

In your experience, how much does each of the following factors represent an obstacle to gender mainstreaming? (from 1: not at all – to 5: fully)

- lack of knowledge/acknowledgment of gender issues
- lack of relevant legal framework
- lack of relevant procedures
- lack of competence/ competent staff
- lack of time/resources
- lack of relevant application areas (i.e. not relevant for the functions the municipality/region performs)
- lack of interest/participation from the citizens
- lack of cooperation between institutions/administrations
- Other (please specify)

Is there something you would like to share with us concerning the topics we proposed in this questionnaire, that was not touched upon in the questions above?