GENDER EQUALITY AND MEDIA

GOOD TO KNOW

- The media play an important role both in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes and in shaping opinions and attitudes.

- In 2015, women worldwide held only 27% of top management positions in media organisations.

- Only around 1 in 4 people who are heard or read about in the news in Europe are women.

- In news (print, radio and television) only 9 % of stories evoke gender (in)equality issues and just 4% of stories challenge gender stereotypes.

- There is a 12% gender gap in women's internet use worldwide.

- Gender equality and media is a topic of interest and standard-setting for member States, international organisations and media organisations.

The Council of Europe has been very active on the topic of gender equality and media.The Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media is the framework for the work of the Council of Europe on gender equality in media. A Handbook to guide the implementation of this recommendation was published in 2015. The Istanbul Convention, Article 17 provides guidance on the role of media and ICTs in combatting violence against women.

WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DO ABOUT IT?

- Committee of Experts on Media Pluralism and Transparency of Media Ownership (MSI-MED) *(2017),* Study on media coverage of elections with a specific focus on gender equality

- Committee of Ministers (2016), Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors

- Background study to this paper prepared by Melissa Morbeck (2016), Encouraging the participation of the private sector and the media in the prevention of violence against women: Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention. A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

- Gender Equality Commission (GEC) (2014), Gender Equality and the Media at National Level: Compilation of good practices from member states

- Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2014), Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media

- Conference on Media and the Image of Women of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission organised in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Beurs van Berlage, Damrak (4-5 July 2013)

- Report of the 1st Conference of the Council of Europe Network of National Focal Points on Gender Equality: Media and the Image of Women (2013)

- Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) (2013), Women and Journalists First: A challenge to media professionals to realise democracy in practice, quality in journalism and an end to gender stereotyping

- Committee of Ministers (2013), Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media

- Gender Equality Commission (2015), Handbook on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on gender equality and media

- Blion R. and Lapeyronnie L. (2012), Gender Issues: Equality in the media: Guide for Journalists

- Committee of Ministers (2011), Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)7 on a new notion of media

- Parliamentary Assembly (2010), Recommendation 1931(2010) on Combating sexist stereotypes in the media

- Committee of Ministers (1984), Recommendation CM/Rec(84)17 on equality between women and men in the media

GENDER EQUALITY ASPECTS

▪ The media have a great impact on shaping behaviours and opinions, but they have a responsibility in terms of promoting human rights, including gender equality. Improving gender equality aspects in the content of media improves the quality of media.

▪ <u>Gender stereotypes:</u> the media should fight against sexist gender stereotypes and use language and images that do not denigrate women. Non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men can be a key factor in promoting and strengthening awareness of gender equality and in preventing and eradicating gender-based discrimination, sexism and violence against women.

▪ Media content is invariably male dominated and women are absent and represented only in certain roles, for example 83% of experts in the news in Europe are men. Women and their concerns' should be increased in visibility throughout media content. Women should be presented increasingly as experts of their subjects, not just as eye witnesses or talking about their personal point of view, very often portrayed as mothers, victims, escorts, wives etc.

▪ The media coverage during election periods influences public perceptions of candidates and therefore impacts on how people vote. Usually women candidates are given less visibility and presented in a different way. Women politicians tend to be portrayed in accordance with a number of stereotypes that have nothing do to with the office they are running for. They are frequently asked about and analysed from a politically irrelevant point of view (e.g. the way they are dressed, whether they are mothers).

▪ <u>Gender equality exits within the media professions:</u> gender imbalance and lack of parity is apparent particularly in relation to media ownership, on the boards of media organisations, in senior decision-making positions and occupying more unsecure jobs with lower wages. Equal opportunities and treatment of women and men media professionals should be ensured, including women's equal access to decision-making and senior posts.

▪ Women journalists can encounter specific safety issues both in the media outlets as well as when working in the field, including (sexual) harassment and receive high levels of online abuse also.

▪ Member states have implemented different legislation and policies in relation to media content, ranging from legislation to encouraging self-regulation of the media.

DO NOT FORGET

▪ Member states should adopt an appropriate legal framework to ensure that there is respect for the principle of human dignity and the prohibition of all discrimination on grounds of sex, as well as of incitement to hatred and to any form of gender-based violence within the media (Council of Europe <u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1</u>).

▪ The media should also have self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct to condemn and combat sexist imagery, language and practices.

▪ It is crucial to train media professionals on the gendered nature of information and on gender-sensitive media reporting.

▪ To enhance media literacy of the public on the gender issues. There should be a complaint procedure regarding content contrary to gender equality and the public should be aware of it and how to use it.

GOT INTERESTED?

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO (2012), <u>Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content</u>

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO (2009), <u>Getting the balance right: Gender equality in journalism</u>

- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has published different reports on women and the media in EU countries: <u>Beijing Platform for Action, EIGE reports and publications</u>

- Global Media Monitoring Project conducted five series of research since 1995 on women's presence, gender bias and stereotyping in news media content. The fourth research was conducted in 2015 in 144 countries around the world and resulted in a global and four regional reports <u>Global Media Monitoring Project 2015 Regional Report - Europe</u> (co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication).

- <u>Women and media</u> is one of the 12 strategic objectives of the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995.

Sources for this factsheet:

- <u>Council of Europe – Gender Equality website: Women in Media</u>
- <u>United Nations Women – Infographic: Women and the Media</u>