

PREVENTING AND COMBATTING SEXISM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN UKRAINE



A Guide for Women and
Men in Local Politics

The Congress



Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Foreword

Equal participation for women and men in politics and at all levels of decision-making has been widely acknowledged as essential to more prosperous and stable societies. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges gender equality and strong institutions as two of its 17 goals.

A particularly significant area where equal participation should be pursued is local government because it is often an entry point for women into politics and local decision-makers are at the forefront of responding to citizen needs with policy solutions that might be later adopted at the national level. However, many obstacles hinder the active involvement of women in local politics. Sexist discourse, attitudes and violence against female candidates and local elected representatives is an important obstacle to the participation of women and the advancement of their political careers.

Recognising the negative impacts of sexism in achieving equality between women and men, the Council of Europe has made preventing and combatting gender stereotypes and sexism its first strategic objective in its current Gender Equality Strategy. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is working towards balanced representation of women and men, including through its Recommendation and Report on preventing and combatting sexist violence in politics and encouraging local and regional authorities to take appropriate measures in their institutions and administration.

Preventing and combatting sexism requires a concerted effort on the part of local and regional elected representatives with the support of public administration at all levels, law enforcement bodies, and civil society. Effective structures, mechanisms and policies need to be put in place to promote equality within public institutions.

In Ukraine, the political representation of women remains low despite the significant progress made in the early elections to the Verkhovna Rada in 2019. In the spirit of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the right of citizens to participate in the affairs of a local authority, the guide aims to equip local decision-makers and candidates in Ukraine with the knowledge necessary to recognise and address sexism in their institutions, thereby enhancing women's political participation and representation at local and regional levels.



Andreas Kiefer

Secretary General

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
of the Council of Europe

Introduction

Women who seek and hold local elected office are pioneers in advancing human rights in an area still heavily dominated by men. Among the many barriers they face, sexism plays a major role in limiting their ability to fully and freely exercise their civic duties.

This guide provides practical advice to both local authorities and national associations of local and regional authorities, and to possible targets of sexist violence (including sexist speech and sexual harassment) and gender-based discrimination such as female candidates and local office holders. It offers guidance on how to recognise, prevent and combat sexism through practical measures before, during and after elections. The guide includes examples of good practices on awareness raising, codes of conduct and regulations to be adopted by municipalities *inter alia*, as well as some examples of sanctions against perpetrators and remedies for those targeted by sexist behaviour. It also provides a general overview of the concrete measures intended to address the underlying causes of sexism by enhancing gender equality in local government.



Sexism is defined by the Council of Europe as “any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline”.¹ Widespread and prevalent in all sectors and all societies, sexism is rooted in historically unequal power relations between men and women which lead to discrimination and prevent the full advancement of women in society.²

Sexist attacks targeting representatives of local and regional authorities and civil servants and sexist behaviour within and among these authorities is a major barrier to elected women’s effective participation in local government (note: this guide does not address sexist policy or behaviours that local bodies may enact towards their citizens). Local government is a particularly important area where this problem should be addressed because of the impact local decision-makers have on the daily lives of citizens in key areas such as housing, security, transport, and the economy.

Local government is often an arena for policy innovation and problem-solving, where policymakers identify and pilot test solutions before they are introduced at a national scale. Local politics is also often a gateway for women to enter politics. Barriers such as

sexism against female candidates and local office holders can deter women from entering or advancing in their political careers. Women's equal participation and representation at this level of public decision-making is vital to ensure that the needs and issues of the entire population are adequately addressed as well as to localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³

This practical Guide aimed at combatting sexism and promoting gender equality in local government has five concrete objectives:

- To advance political and human rights and achieve SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls);
- To enable local authorities and national associations of local and regional authorities to address a key problem, create tolerant and supportive workspaces and advance gender equality in society;
- To empower local elected women to be effective in their roles by eliminating a major obstacle;
- To contribute to creating a secure and empowering environment for aspiring women to compete for local elected office; and
- To advance popular perceptions of legitimacy, representativity and effectiveness of local government

Women in Local Government: Laws, Policy and Current Statistics



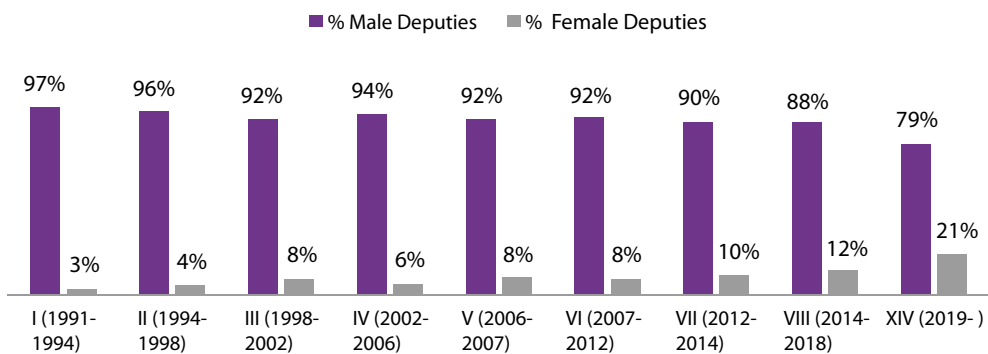
Political empowerment of women and enforcement of gender parity at the highest levels of governance continues to be one of the most important challenges for achieving gender equality in Ukraine. This is one of the commitments taken by Ukraine in the context of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5. Gender equality. Task 5.4. Ensure equal opportunities for representation at all levels of decision-making in political and public life). Political representation remains low, despite significant progress during the last special elections when women's representation in the Verkhovna Rada jumped from 12,5% to 20,5%. Despite this recent improvement, Ukraine remains below the European average (28,5% for Europe – OSCE member countries including Nordic countries).⁴

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ukraine ranks 101st among 192 countries.⁵ Similarly, Ukraine places 88th out of 189 countries covered by UNDP's 2019 Human Development Report and 83 out of 152 on the World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap Index of political empowerment.⁶ While Ukraine's normative framework for combatting sexism has strengthened in the past two decades, there are notable gaps in domestic legislation and policy as well as in international commitments. In particular, Ukraine is among the few Council of Europe (CoE) states that has not ratified the CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the "Istanbul Convention" of 2011). The implementation of normative frameworks (especially at the local level) remains a challenge.

This situation is reflected at the local level. Challenges to gender equality exist at all levels of local government. Women's representation in city councils of regional centres dropped by nearly 10% from 28% to 18,1% between 2010 and 2015.⁷ In 2020 considerable differences prevailed in the representation of women between different oblasts and local councils. Some oblast councils have fewer than 10% women representatives (one of the lowest being the Odessa oblast council at 9,5%)⁸ while others have more than double (for example 20,3% in Chernihiv oblast council)⁹. Regarding local councils in regional centres, in 2020 female deputies comprised only 18% of all seats (558 women deputies out of a total of 3,181). The local councils in regional centres with the highest number of women were Mariupol (35.8%), Kramatorsk (34.4%), Berdyansk (34.3%) and Severodonetsk (33.3%). On the other hand, the lowest numbers of women were in Cherkasy City Council (10%), Bila Tserkva City and Ivano-Frankivsk City Council (9.5% each), and Uzhhorod City Council (only 8.3%).¹⁰

Women's Representation in the Verkhovna Rada (1990-present)

source: International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) & Official Website VRU



As of 2017, women were mayors in only 8 of 144 cities of regional significance and satellite cities, and only 14 of 146 mayoral cities. Women headed 76 of 394 village councils (19,3%) and held 32,1% of seats in village councils.¹¹ The Constitution and laws of Ukraine guarantee equality of women and men in all spheres of life and the country has ratified all key international treaties on gender equality and women's rights, nevertheless, specific mechanisms to comply with these obligations require reinforcement, including counteracting discrimination and sexism.

UKRAINE'S LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

International & Regional Commitments

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030

SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (BPfA) of the 4th World Conference for Women (1995)

- Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making
- Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership
- Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies
- Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects
- Generate and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1980) & CEDAW Optional Protocol

Eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights

Ukraine-EU Association Agreement (2014)

Ensure equal opportunities for women and men in multiple sectors, including decision-making

National Law and Policy

Constitution of Ukraine¹²

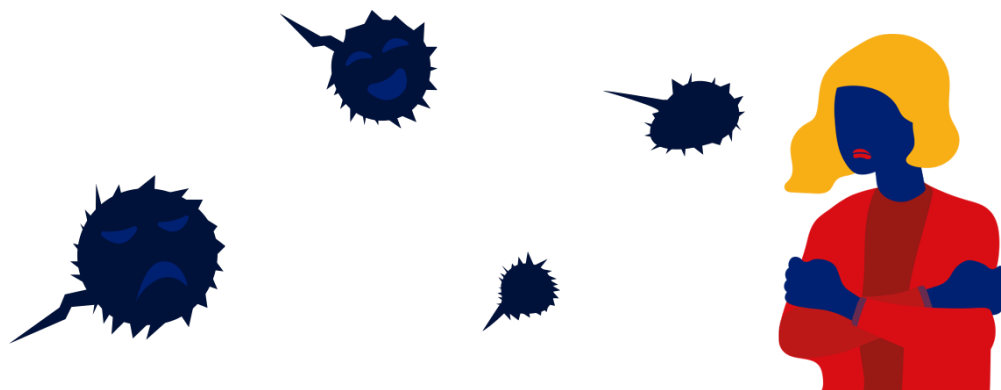
Article 24. Citizens have equal constitutional rights and freedoms and are equal before the law.

There shall be no privileges or restrictions based on race, colour of skin, political, religious and other beliefs, sex, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics.

	<p>Equality of the rights of women and men is ensured: by providing women with opportunities equal to those of men, in public and political, and cultural activity, in obtaining education and in professional training, in work and its remuneration; by special measures for the protection of work and health of women; by establishing pension privileges, by creating conditions that allow women to combine work and motherhood; by legal protection, material and moral support of motherhood and childhood, including the provision of paid leaves and other privileges to pregnant women and mothers.</p>
<p>Electoral Code of Ukraine (2019)¹³</p>	<p>The new Electoral code contains provisions on gender quotas and on implementation measures and sanctions (see below for detail).</p> <p>Article 47 defines that electoral commissions, media and news agencies, state authorities and local self-government agencies, citizens' associations, other persons disseminating information on elections, apart from pre-election campaigning, are obliged to comply with principles of objectivity, impartiality, balance, credibility, completeness and accuracy of information, avoid discrimination and sexism.</p>
<p>The Law of Ukraine "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men" (2005)¹⁴</p>	<p>Contains definitions of equal rights and opportunities for women and men, gender-based discrimination, positive actions, sexual harassment, etc. Article 3 stipulates that "state policy on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men is aimed at achieving gender equality; preventing gender-based discrimination; applying the principle of positive actions; ensuring equal participation of women and men in socially important decision-making".</p>

<p>The Law of Ukraine On the Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine (2013)¹⁵</p>	<p>Contains key definitions and requires anti-discrimination reviews to ensure compliance.</p>
<p>State Social Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men (until 2021) (Decree of the CMU 11.04.2018 No. 273)¹⁶</p>	<p>Institutional mechanisms for gender equality The document includes a list of activities which should be carried out by local self-government bodies.</p>
<p>National Action Plan (NAP) on implementation of UNSCR 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” (Decree of the CMU 24.02.2016 No. 113)¹⁷</p>	<p>The document includes a list of activities reinforcing to enhance women’s participation in peacekeeping and security. Prevention on conflict and violence. Promotion of a culture of non-violence, etc.</p>
<p>National Action Plan on implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the periodic report of Ukraine on the implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women until 2021 (Decree of the CMU of 05.09.2018 No. 634-p)¹⁸</p>	<p>The document includes a list of activities reinforcing implementation of gender equality policy, fighting stereotypes and combating discrimination, which should be carried out by local self-government bodies.</p>
<p>Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of 29.01.2020 No. 56 “On approval of Methodological recommendations on introducing regulations about ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in labour relations to collective and other agreements”¹⁹</p>	<p>Defines sexism based on the provisions of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe CM/Rec (2019) and the Order provides examples in labour and political sphere.</p>

Recognising sexism in local government



Sexist behaviour²⁰ in local government can be direct or indirect, including written, verbal, physical, electronic or other forms of expression. Sexist behaviour and sexual harassment may be physical and/or psychological and can involve obvious and active actions such as physical assault or openly discriminatory comments, or passive and subtle actions such as persistent teasing or regularly “forgetting” to include female councillors in meetings and decision-making processes. These actions may be single incidents or repeated behaviours over a period of time. Sexual harassment is defined by the person targeted by the behaviour, not the person engaging in that behaviour – claiming “it was a joke” or “I didn’t mean to offend” do not excuse the behaviour. Sexist comments do not need to be targeted at an individual to be harmful. For example, a male council member who makes a derogatory statement about women’s inferiority could be recognised as committing an act of harassment against female council members because it contributes to a hostile work environment for women in the council.

In the context of local government, the perpetrators of sexist speech and sexual harassment can include fellow council members, members of council staff and administrative staff, other elected officials and staff from other levels of government. It can also include constituents and community members. Perpetrators may include both men and women and may be known to the target or not. Social media can be a vector for encouraging sexism aimed at women in local government, when users express derogatory comments, ridicule, etc. in these spaces.

Sexism against women in politics is common in Ukraine. Although no data exists specifically regarding local elected Ukrainian women, a recent survey of Ukrainian women politicians at different levels of government and political activity found that sexism is widespread. The most common types of violence were: Humiliation through social networks and mass media – 62%, Psychological violence – 59%, Sexism – 59%, Verbal abuses – 58%, Sexual harassment – 47%.²¹

Women who are active in political life regularly face sexist bias, ridicule, humiliation and gender-based discrimination. According to UNDP research, “Rather than focusing on women’s professionalism and competence, their colleagues, the media and the general public often instead fixate on their personal attributes, superficialities such as clothing and hairstyles and their roles as mothers and wives.”²² There are many reported examples at all levels of governance.

During the 2019 elections at central level, there were widespread cases of female politicians being ridiculed or shamed for breaking their roles as mothers and homemakers.²³ Women’s competency for public office was regularly questioned or trivialised. A female councillor elected in the 2015 local elections explained some of the sexist reactions she faced during her campaign: “Usually, people roll their eyes when they see a female candidate standing for office. [They often ask] ‘why are you running for office?’ and ‘you are a future mum; how would you combine a political career and motherhood?’”²⁴ In another local-level example, a woman elected in 2015 stated that she was not taken seriously at first despite her extensive professional experience: “Many times I was silenced because men often perceive [women councillors] as incompetent and not professional. [...] Being a woman in office requires two or three times as much work to get people to respect and listen to women’s ideas.”²⁵

Mass media and social networks often play a negative role in the proliferation of sexism against female politicians. According to a 2019 study, abusive posts against female politicians in Ukraine typically included allegations of moral misconduct, inadequate intelligence and professional incompetence as well as profanity and xenophobic rhetoric.²⁶ Rather than focusing on women’s professionalism and competence, their colleagues, the media and the general public often fixate on women’s allegedly incompatible roles as mothers and wives as well as personal attributes such as physical appearance and superficialities such as clothing and hairstyles.

The negative impacts of sexism in local government include diminishing an elected woman’s ability to express an opinion or influence public policy by isolating her, not taking her opinions seriously or overtly disbelieving her because of her gender. Women targeted by sexism or working in sexist environments may lose out on opportunities to advance their political careers (media coverage, training, leadership of influential committees, etc.) and may even decide to drop out or not run for a second term of office. The impacts are not limited to the targeted individuals themselves. Witnesses of sexism and sexual harassment both within local government structures and in the community may be afraid to express support or intervene for fear of personal backlash. They may become divided and conflicted amongst themselves, resulting in expensive and distracting mediation or litigation processes and less effective governance overall.

Examples of sexist and harassing behaviour

- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo.
- Persistently criticising, demeaning or ridiculing a person.
- Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work.
- Excluding or isolating someone.
- Verbal threats or abuse.
- Physical threats or assault.
- Calling someone derogatory names.
- Teasing or joking about a person.
- Playing pranks, vandalising or hiding personal belongings or work equipment.
- Displaying offensive posters, cartoons, images or other visuals.
- Making aggressive or threatening gestures.
- Unwelcome invitations or requests.
- Unwelcome physical contact.
- Publicly ridiculing or disciplining.
- Blocking applications for leaves, training or promotion.

Compiled from CUPE. <https://cupe.ca/stop-harassment-guide-cupe-locals-1>

KEY DEFINITIONS

Sexism: Any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline, with the purpose or effect of: i. violating the inherent dignity or rights of a person or a group of persons; or ii. resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or socio-economic harm or suffering to a person or a group of persons; or iii. creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; or iv. constituting a barrier to the autonomy and full realisation of human rights by a person or a group of persons; or v. maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Gender-based discrimination: Is a situation in which the individual and/or group of individuals is deprived of recognition, realisation or exercise of rights and freedoms or privileges in any form established in the Law of Ukraine “On preventing and combating discrimination in Ukraine”.

Sexual harassment: Verbally expressed sexual actions (threats, intimidation, scurrilities) or physical actions (touching, patting) which humiliate or offend persons in the state of work, service, material or other subordination.

Gender-based violence: Actions aimed against individuals on the basis of sex, or on the grounds of customs and traditions prevalent in the society (stereotyped attitudes to social functions (status, obligations, etc.) of women and men) or actions, and threats thereof in public and private life, related to persons of the same sex, affecting them disproportionately and causing physical, sexual, psychological or economical damage or suffering.

Indirect discrimination: Situation in which, as a result of the implementation or application of formally neutral regulations, evaluation criteria, rules, requirements or practices a person and/or groups of persons because of their specific features have less favourable conditions or the situation compared to other persons and/or groups of persons, except when their implementation or application has legitimate, objectively reasonable aim, which is achievable in appropriate and necessary way.

Direct discrimination: Situation in which the person and/or group of persons for their specific features are treated less favourably than another person and/or a group of persons in a similar situation, except when such treatment has legitimate, objectively reasonable aim, which is achievable in appropriate and necessary way.

Incitement to discrimination: Orders, instructions or appeals to discrimination in relation to persons and/or group of persons for their specific features.

Oppression: Unwanted to a person and/or group of persons behaviour, the purpose or consequence of which is the humiliation of their human dignity because of specific features or creation for such person or group of persons of tense, hostile, abusive or humiliating atmosphere.

The definition of sexism is taken from Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 27 March 2019 <https://rm.coe.int/cm-rec-2019-1-on-preventing-and-combating-sexism/168094d894>; all other definitions are taken from the Law of Ukraine “On the Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine” (2013).

Combatting Sexism through Practical Measures



Solutions for ending sexism require engaging diverse groups of people as well as leveraging processes and institutions. This section presents the main areas of action where practical measures can actively contribute to combatting sexism in local government. It begins by looking at how different stakeholders can take appropriate action. This includes discussions of how local government authorities can make better-informed decisions through data and research and how they can improve co-operation with civil society. This section also looks at methods for enhancing capacity of candidates and aspirants as well as how working with men (including young men) can strengthen outcomes. It discusses standards and transparency measures that help local governments enhance their responsiveness to issues of sexism and offers ideas on how networking and engaging new technology facilitates solutions.

Next, Section IV considers ways in which state processes and institutions can be adapted to improve their ability to respond to and prevent sexism and discrimination at the local level. The section begins with codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for local authorities and progressively examines possible institutional solutions from local to regional to national levels. It closes with an overview of possible sanctions and remedies, and a note on resource planning.

All interventions discussed here can be targeted at different phases of the electoral cycle (pre-, during and post-election) or can be overarching across the electoral cycle as a whole.

Entry Points for a Multi-Stakeholder Strategy to Combat Sexism

Ending sexism in local government requires the involvement of many different actors working in multiple areas. This section presents how core actors (local government authorities) can improve the quality and impact of their actions in combatting sexism. It reviews how local government can work with other key groups, including civil society, to enhance responses. Other target groups, such as male counterparts in local bodies and female candidates and aspirants, can also be supported to better contribute to a constructive environment.

Improving informed decision-making

Evidence-based approaches help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.²⁷ Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and other documentation and research (surveys, data collection, etc.) are essential tools for local and regional councils to identify the nature of the issue in their institutions and set a baseline to measure improvement. Local government authorities can introduce these measures at multiple levels, generally for their institutions and more specifically around significant policies and procedures. Data collection should be consistent and ongoing for local authorities and should always be gender disaggregated. Some data such as reporting on sexism during campaigning and polling would be specific to electoral periods. All data, documentation and assessments should be conducted in a timely fashion to ensure that their results can meaningfully feed into decision-making processes. These findings may guide local authorities in improving internal processes and structures as well as being useful for reducing sexist practices among external actors, such as political parties. EIA are commonly used to assess new or proposed changes to policy. Evidence-based approaches have the added value of creating a written record of equality considerations taken into account and enhancing institutional transparency.

EXAMPLE OF EIA AND DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS



Ukraine. The “Gender Portrait of the Zhytomyr City Council” analyses and uses infographics to present gender-disaggregated data of the city council, such as the number of women and men among deputies, among heads and deputies of departments, specialists in structural units, etc., as well as their age and level of education.²⁸ The page on the official Zhytomyr City Council website “Equal opportunities” presents gender statistics as well as relevant legislation, information on combatting domestic violence, projects on gender equality and anti-discrimination.²⁹



United Kingdom. For over a decade, dozens of local authorities across the UK have used EIA to meet their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).³⁰ This Act requires all public authorities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex and gender as well as other protected characteristics. While each locality adopts its own procedures, in general EIA in the UK involve a screening evaluation to come to a decision about whether and why further analysis is – or is not – required. If further analysis is required, a full assessment questionnaire is completed and the report is made public.


EIA questions may include gender analysis of the proposed policy, referral to relevant public data, consultation with community actors, data collection and evidence. Resulting recommendations are based on whether the proposed policy will meet the council's responsibilities in relation to equality and human rights. Examples of EIA forms, guidance and reports can be viewed at <https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200041/equality-and-diversity/1305/community-and-or-equality-impact-assessments-incorporating-health-considerations>

Setting targets and tracking progress through co-operation with civil society organisations

Accurate data and documentation allow local authorities to set targets for improvement over time. Setting ambitious yet realistic targets for decreasing the prevalence of sexism and increasing gender equality within local elected bodies establishes a tangible roadmap to improvement. Targets should be based on solid data and developed collaboratively in consultation with multiple stakeholders, both state and non-state depending on the context. To ensure compliance, unmet targets can be set to automatic policy changes, for example failure to meet a target could automatically trigger budget increases on spending for equality measures. Collaboration between local bodies and civil society organisations (CSOs) can be especially helpful in this. CSOs may contribute testimony, research and documentation to track progress against targets. They may also enhance awareness raising about local authority targets and progress, which promotes confidence and perceived legitimacy by the population.

EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION TO SET TARGETS AND TRACK PROGRESS ON COMBATTING SEXISM

 **Ukraine:** In Ukraine there are several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that perform gender-specific monitoring in different areas. For example, the monitoring “Gender Sensitivity Index for Media” has been conducted by Volyn press club in co-operation with press-clubs of other oblasts since 2017.³¹ The Index includes the number of women represented in media materials, in which areas, how often women are invited as experts. It is analysed at subnational levels. Elections have also been monitored to track progress against targets. For example, the Ukrainian Women’s Fund performed a gender-specific monitoring of the 2019 early parliamentary elections,³² and the Ukrainian Women’s Consortium and Committee of Voters of Ukraine conducted gender-monitoring of local elections in 2015.³³ Local government policy and practice may be similarly analysed by NGOs to track progress in ending sexism and advancing equality.

 **Ukraine:** The working group for the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and CSOs was established in 2019. The group was organised to promote gender equality at all stages of elections, to discuss ways to support and protect women-candidates, to co-operate with parties, to carry out trainings, etc. Such joint efforts provide an opportunity not only to hear each other but to develop specific response

mechanisms and immediately find implementation partners. CSOs and Local Authority working groups could be proposed to serve a similar function in promoting collaborative solutions and responses for equality.



France: A French example in the area of education could be adapted to other areas of local authority. In France, the Hubertine Auclert Centre publishes analyses of sexist representations in school textbooks (history, mathematics, and French language). An evaluation grid is available as well as a practical guide for textbooks to be used as tools for equality. In November 2017, the Centre launched its website on stopping cyber-sexism. Working with specialised organisations to evaluate local government policy and resources is useful to set targets and track progress.

Equipping candidates and aspirants to navigate local politics

Sexism is a deterrent for many women that are considering entering local politics. To overcome this, aspirants and candidates must understand the recourse available to them and trust that officials will protect them by sanctioning harmful behaviours both online and offline. This may include offering targeted information sessions, public service announcements and briefings during campaign periods. Strategic communications by official actors involved is also helpful, including statements of policy and intent by electoral bodies, police and security actors, local authorities and political parties.

Mentoring programmes facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experience, perspectives and skills within local government by providing an opportunity for elected women at all levels to learn from each other to progress in their own careers. Similar to networking strategies, mentoring and sponsorship programmes pair emerging women leaders with both men and women with longer experience in their field. This strategy helps combat sexism by equipping newly elected women with the tools and resources needed to exercise their duties free of harassment.

EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CANDIDATES AND ASPIRANTS



Ukraine: There are several active leadership schools for women in politics that focus on empowering women leaders from different areas and sectors through new knowledge and skills to pursue career development, increase women's leadership roles in political parties, government agencies and NGOs, and improve women's participation in community decision making. Notable examples are: the Academy of Women's Leadership under the DOBRE Programme (2017-2021), the Union of Women of Ukraine's School of Women's Political Leadership, the Centre for Gender Culture's Women's Leadership Studio, and others. In 2019, Leadership Schools for Women Candidates for Local Council Deputies were organised in 15 oblasts with support from the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The schools include training in strategic planning, project management, developing communication skills as a tool for organisational development, and training in debate skills.³⁴



Portugal. The 'From Women to Women' programme in Portugal aimed to increase young women's participation in politics. Older women active in politics provided twelve months of mentoring to 30 young women aged 16-30, who also took part in training activities on gender equality, democracy, political systems, and other topics, and visits to political institutions. Young women belonging to minority ethnic and cultural groups were particularly encouraged to apply.³⁵

Working with men to combat sexism and promote gender equality

Constructive engagement with men (including young men) must be a part of any solution to combat sexism. Male counterparts in local government can learn to better understand what constitutes harmful sexist behaviours, avoid engaging in them and promote gender equality instead. Capacity building activities can promote collaborative design and implementation of policies to sanction sexist behaviour and sexual harassment. Practical measures to engage with men to cease contributing to cultures of sexism in local government include training, dialogue initiatives and mentoring programmes designed to raise awareness of personal bias and sexist behaviour and identify strategies to overcome them. These may be organized by specialised third-party actors (CSOs, etc.) or directly by the local bodies themselves. Similarly, local elected representatives (women and men) who want to contribute to improved policy responses may benefit from targeted training or comparative studies of responses in other regions or countries. Beyond training and education, strategies to promote men's engagement against sexism and for equality may include party pacts and personal commitments, incentive programmes, recognition and training in skills to intervene and respond in harmful situations. Mentoring programmes can also be used in different ways, for example by mentoring incoming male representatives on how to actively contribute to gender equal and sexism-free local government. "Reverse mentoring" is another strategy whereby women active in local politics provide gender sensitivity training to regional or national level officials.

EXAMPLES OF WORKING WITH MEN TO COMBAT SEXISM AND PROMOTE EQUALITY

Global – Barbershop Initiative (HeForShe). Barbershop events encourage men and boys to become actively engaged in promoting gender equality by better understanding how gender inequality limits the ability of individuals, businesses, and communities to reach their full human, economic and social potential. Barbershop events provide men with tools to address this inequality and become agents of change. The Barbershop Initiative offers a range of tools in three areas: 1. Leadership sessions 2. Workshops 3. Increasing engagement. These resources are targeted at audiences of men across a range of levels, starting with the highest levels of leadership. Toolkits and resources are available free online at <https://www.heforshe.org/en/barbershop>

Caribbean states. Parliamentarians have identified the following good practices:

In legislative and oversight functions

- Assessing legislation and budgets through an intersectional gender lens to consider the potential impacts on diverse groups
- Advocating for laws and initiatives that will positively impact women and help build the political will to pass them
- Consulting with women's groups to seek feedback on proposed legislative initiatives (not just those explicitly related to gender equality) and integrating the results into decision-making

In meetings (including committees, plenary, and in the constituency)

- Chairing meetings in a way that encourages equitable participation by all members (e.g. inviting those who have not spoken to contribute)
- Listening respectfully when each member of the group is speaking

In the media and online

- Leveraging social media as a tool to keep informed about the work of gender equality advocates and joining discussions on pertinent topics
- Challenging gender stereotypes and bias when they emerge on online platforms or through interview questions

In everyday life

- Learning about key gender equality issues and sharing knowledge with others
- Encouraging other men to become allies
- Using gender-sensitive language (i.e. communication that demonstrates respect for women and does not make them invisible) and draw attention to harmful uses of language in day-to-day conversations.

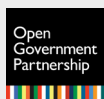
<https://www.parlAmericas.org/en/gender-equality.aspx>

Setting standards and introducing transparency measures

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe identified transparency and open government as priorities in preventing corruption and promoting public ethics.³⁶ The principles of open government are directly connected to the government's willingness to address sexism and promote gender equality. Specifically, open government increases the availability of information about governmental activities, supports civic participation, promotes government integrity and leverages new technologies for transparency and accountability. These actions contribute to closing gender gaps on information, access and participation and allow women and gender advocates to have a greater say in how government services are provided and to hold officials accountable.³⁷

These are equally important measures for preventing and combatting sexism in local and regional bodies. Local and regional bodies should publish key documents and information, promote public consultation processes, and support the monitoring and implementation of transparency measures around issues relating to sexism and sexual harassment within the institutions and surrounding women's political participation. Standards of behaviour may be agreed upon and formally established to prevent harmful sexist incidents from occurring within the institutions. Training may be offered to promote widespread understanding and awareness of new standards of behaviour.

EXAMPLES OF STANDARD SETTING



Global – The Open Government Partnership. 78 countries (including Ukraine) and a growing number of local governments—representing more than two billion people—along with thousands of civil society organisations are members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). In April 2020, the OGP launched a new phase focused on local government, called “OGP Local”. At all levels of government OGP recommends the following actions to promote gender equality and end sexism:

- Proactively invite and positively encourage women’s organisations, gender networks, and leaders to participate in government multi-stakeholder forum;
- Work with gender advocates to conduct an analysis of government action plans to identify where people of different genders have disproportionate levels of access or potential benefit, and then use that analysis to mainstream gender considerations into specific OGP commitments; and
- Consider a new commitment that uses open government to address a specific gap in women and girl’s services or policy needs.

Many more examples of open government recommendations for promoting gender equality can be found at <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/actions-for-a-more-inclusive-open-government-partnership/>

Also see: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-local/>



Canada. Canada has chosen to explicitly integrate gender in its open government action plan. For the first time ever, the Government of Canada undertook a gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) assessment of its open government plan in order to examine how various intersecting identity factors might impact the effectiveness of Canada’s open government work. Based on this review and feedback from a multi-stakeholder process and feminist and inclusive peer review, the Government of Canada produced its 10 National Action Plan Commitments for 2018-2020. See <https://open.canada.ca/en/content/canadas-2018-2020-national-action-plan-open-government>

Leveraging regional and national gender equality networks

Gender equality networks are powerful tools for women in local government to gain fresh ideas and perspectives both about overcoming shared problems (such as sexism) as well as improving policy solutions for their constituencies. Such networks provide a fora for advice and career support, build confidence and help people gain different perspectives. There are many examples of networks for local elected women worldwide, ranging from national associations that bring together women at specific levels of government (for example, national networks of women mayors) to networks spanning global regions or groupings (for example, the Forum of Women Mayors in South East Europe,³⁸ the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network,³⁹ the Federation of Canadian Municipalities⁴⁰ and the Network for Locally Elected Women of Africa – REFELA, in its French acronym).⁴¹

EXAMPLES OF GENDER EQUALITY NETWORKS



Ukraine. Several networks exist in Ukraine:

The Parliament Inter-Fraction Caucus on Equal Opportunities. Members include both men and women members of the Parliament (MP). The Parliament Caucus makes common statements against sexism and organises thematic events. The Regional Inter-Fraction Caucus on Equal Opportunities is the regional counterpart and exists in different regional councils of deputies across the country.

Ukrainian Women's Democratic Network: created in 2017, its main objective is to consolidate women MPs of different levels and different political parties to influence political decision-making at all levels, from national to local. The network has officially registered units in 17 regions of Ukraine.

Civil Alliance for Women's Political Action: launched in the spring of 2018 by 150 women's organisations in Ukraine, the network advocates for women's political rights and for achieving gender balance in governmental institutions of all levels.

Ukraine Women's Congress: launched in 2017, the Ukrainian Women's Congress brings together hundreds of active and successful women and men from politics, business, NGOs and the media to unite them around the idea of ensuring gender equality and to form gender policy goals for the Verkhovna Rada, government, private sector, civil society and media.

<http://womenua.today/en>

The Network of Women-Leaders in Local Self Government: developed by the DESPRO co-operation project offers trainings for women-representatives of local self-government (heads, officials and *starostas*⁴² of amalgamated territorial communities) where they have the opportunity to master effective communication techniques, develop teamwork skills, learn the basics of negotiation practices with the particular emphasis on introducing changes at the local level.

<https://despro.org.ua/en/e-learning/network-of-women-leaders-in-local-self-government/>

Integrating new technologies

Although social media and other new technologies can transmit and amplify harmful sexist messages, they are equally potent as tools for educating and awareness-raising. Webinars, online rallies and Q&A sessions can offer women in local politics the opportunity to both share experiences on a peer-to-peer basis as well as to reach out to the public and raise awareness of the harmful effects of sexism against women in politics. Podcasting is another useful tool. Podcasts can be used to offer more in-depth information on challenges and opportunities. There are numerous examples of podcasting to promote public information such as the 2018 #НеЦінаПолітики / #NotTheCostofPolitics promoted by NDI to publicly advocate against violence against women in politics. Podcasts can also be used to focus on more targeted audiences such as local women councillors/aspirants and male politicians.

EXAMPLES OF LEVERAGING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO END SEXISM IN GOVERNMENT



Ukraine - Gender Museum. Located in Kharkiv, the museum offers a broad range of interactive materials on its website to promote accessibility. Museum online resources include content on landmarks in the history of gender equality in the country as well as information about International Women's Day, the fight against sexism, surveys and public information materials.⁴³



Ukraine. The CSO "Council of Women Initiatives" created a series of short videos about the problem of sexism and procedures for combatting sexism and discrimination, which are available on YouTube.⁴⁴



Europe. The Council of Europe's online Human Rights Channel presents a range of helpful information on how to end sexism. Accessible in multiple languages, the resources available include information on understanding sexism, videos, statistics, examples and recommendations. It also includes an interactive quiz to test users' knowledge and personal perceptions around sexism. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-channel/stop-sexism>

Global. Many podcasting examples to promote women's political participation and reduce sexism exist in other parts of the world, for example the Canadian "No Second Chances"⁴⁵ podcast follows the political journeys of 12 female ministers, and helps listeners understand how gender played a role in both low and high points of their careers. "The 23%: Conversations with Women in Government" is a podcast that talks to women leaders about what motivated them to run for office, lessons they've learned along the way and the policy battles they're facing ahead.⁴⁶

Institutional channels for combatting sexism within local government

The law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men (2005) and the Law of Ukraine On the Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine (2013) as well as the other national policies listed in table above provide a basic framework for combatting sexism in local government. Applying this framework in practice is an ongoing challenge and opportunity for enhancing local governance. Determining the responsibilities and institutional authorities for combatting sexism in local government is critical to effective implementation. Responsibility can be assigned to one or more institutional actors, in addition to the measures for political parties, discussed above.

Codes of conduct and ethical guidelines

Local government codes of conduct establish consistent standards of behaviour for members of local councils in how they conduct themselves with their elected colleagues, with staff and with the public. Written codes of conduct help ensure that members of local government share a common basis for acceptable conduct. They enhance public confidence in institutions and elected officials.

Local council codes typically represent an additional set of rules to supplement existing regional or national legislation or policy. Some global jurisdictions (such as the Province of Ontario, Canada⁴⁷) require local governments to establish codes of conduct for local elected officials and certain boards. They may also mandate these codes to include specific matters, including sexism and discrimination. Local government codes of conduct may also be introduced because the issues related to responsible conduct of individual elected officials fall outside the mandates of existing offices responsible for government oversight. Alternately, they may be adopted as a first line of action in a broader hierarchy of government oversight.

Codes of conduct should include clauses to ensure women and men's equal participation by specifying guiding principles and specific practices that constitute prohibited sexist and discriminatory behaviour. These should include non-criminal sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying (including cyber bullying and social bullying), hate speech and disrespectful behaviours. Including these behaviours in codes of conduct is essential because they provide a basis to sanction perpetrators and they boost public awareness and multiparty unity on the topic.

Codes of conduct may also contain rules following a finding of misconduct. Codes may include rules regarding enforcement, or they may reference other governing policy. In some cases, codes of conduct may be supplemented by by-laws that establish local-level accountability officer positions to handle complaints and enforcement. Complaints of violation of codes of conduct may be made by members of the public, staff as well as other members of the local council. Codes of conduct may accommodate both formal and informal complaints.

EXAMPLES OF CODES OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES



Europe. The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life establishes a formal commitment by local and regional governments to use their powers and partnerships to achieve greater equality for their people. To assist in the implementation of these commitments, each signatory authority undertakes to draw up an Equality Action Plan, which sets out its priorities, actions and resources and undertakes to engage with all of the institutions and organisations in its territory, in order to promote the achievement of real equality in practice. Over 80 Ukrainian amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) have joined the Charter. As of February 2020, 64 Ukrainian cities passed the final Charter signing stage and more than 20 are in the process of joining it. One of the first cities in Ukraine to join the Charter was Vinnytsia. The Vinnytsia Programme on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, "ATC for equality", was approved by the local council until 2023 and allocated a budget. One of the programme's tasks is to create conditions for balanced representation in electoral bodies and authorities (not less than 40% for each gender).

See: https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf and "ATC for equality" (Vinnytsia) <https://cutt.ly/Nyv9KxQ>



Canada: Provincial governments provide various resources to assist local governments to develop their codes of conduct. These include model documents and companion guides, reports on best practices across the province or between other provinces and links to other helpful material.

Model Code of Conduct: https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/be9aba85/files/uploaded/MODEL_CODE_OF_CONDUCT_Aug2018_FINAL.pdf

Companion guide to developing code of conduct: https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/be9aba85/files/uploaded/Companion_Guide_Aug2018_FINAL.pdf

Local government ethics resources: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/conduct-of-locally-elected-officials/responsible-conduct>



Ukraine: In 2018, the Ministry for Community and Territorial Development created an Equal Rights and Opportunities Code of Conduct. The Ministry also has its own Gender Strategy 2019-2021 (adopted in September 2019).⁴⁸

Accountability Officers and Ethics Standards Boards


Enforcement of codes of conduct may be overseen by accountability officers or ethics standards boards. These officials must ensure that all parts of codes of conduct are equally protected, which may require supplemental training regarding gender provisions in cases where these are newly introduced.

Globally, there are various types of accountability officer roles that may enforce gender provisions at the local level. These are usually established under local by-law and may include:⁴⁹


- *a municipal Ombudsperson.* The municipal Ombudsperson's function is to investigate, in an independent manner, decisions and recommendations made and acts of the administration of a municipality, local boards and certain municipal corporations. The municipal Ombudsperson is a separate office from the national or regional Ombudsperson, who also may also have a role with respect to local government;
- *a closed meeting investigator.* A local government (municipality or other) may appoint an investigator to investigate, in an independent manner, complaints about closed meetings. Should the local government not appoint an investigator, the Ombudsperson at the next jurisdiction level would be expected to serve in that role;
- *an Integrity Commissioner.* Integrity Commissioners report to local councils. Their role is to independently apply the code of conduct and associated procedures, rules and policies governing ethical behaviour of local government members. They may issue periodic watchdog reports or investigate specific complaints. If a Commissioner's inquiry into an ethics complaint finds a violation of the code of conduct, the local council may impose a penalty at their discretion.


In contrast to creating an individual role to oversee ethics, many countries establish Local Government Standards Panels or Boards to administer justice and resolve complaints relatively quickly and to provide the local government sector with guidance and benchmarks about acceptable standards of behaviour.⁵⁰ Under this model, local councils choose to elect an independent standards board on a periodic basis (annual or other) that is representative of political representation as well as of local diversity (sex, race, religion, etc.). Standards Boards have the authority to make binding decisions to resolve allegations of minor misconduct and to deal with complaints about council members having allegedly committed a breach of one or more of the provisions of their code of conduct. To be effective, they must establish clear procedures for filing complaints, both for internal and external actors. Standards boards may have the authority to apply sanctions and temporarily or permanently suspend council members who are found guilty of non-criminal sexual harassment and other prohibited behaviours. Appeals to local standards boards may be made to higher authorities, such as the Ombudsperson.

EXAMPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS AND ETHICS BOARDS

 **Austria.** In 2011 an advisory board on anti-sexism to the Austrian Advertising Council was installed including qualified gender experts in order to counteract gender-discriminatory advertising and to raise awareness of the advertising industry for a non-discriminatory portrayal of the sexes.

Out of 278 complaints received in 2012, more than half dealt with “gender discriminatory advertising” (53.41%). The anti-sexism Advisory Board reviewed these complaints and provided its opinion to the Council. In 13 cases (7.39%), the Council called for immediately stopping the campaign. Similar models can be applied for local government.

 **Canada.** The Integrity Commissioner for the city of Vaughn, Ontario filed a Code of Conduct Complaint Investigation Report to the city council following receipt of a complaint with allegations of sexual assault, harassment and reprisal by a deputy mayor and a councillor (2017). Referencing the provisions of the municipal code of conduct that protect against sexual harassment, the report documented the investigation and recommended sanctions (reprimand and suspension of remuneration for 90 days), corrective actions (apology to the complainant and the city) and the suspension or removal of some procedural powers. Ultimately, the deputy mayor and councillor resigned.⁵¹

 **Ukraine.** Although there are currently no accountability officers to deal with issues of sexism and discrimination within local government in Ukraine, there are several avenues for seeking recourse for harms committed by outside actors, including in media and advertising:

1) Complainants may submit an application to the Expert Council for Prevention and Combating Gender Discrimination. The Ministry of Social Policy and certain regional state administrations have an advisory council. The Council is composed of representatives of executive authorities, CSOs and experts. It reviews applications concerning sexist advertising and gender-based discrimination. The Council delivers an opinion, based on the results of review, and a case may be transferred to court.

<https://www.msp.gov.ua/documents/5640.html>

2) If sexist or degrading materials have been published in the mass media, a complaint may be filed to the Commission on Journalism Ethics. The Commission shall give its decision on acts committed, based on the results of review, and send it to the mass media that committed offence. <http://www.cje.org.ua/ua/code>

3) The Industrial Gender Committee for Advertising conducts examinations of discriminatory content in advertising. The Committee considers complaints about discriminatory advertising from citizens and provides expert opinions upon the request of state authorities. When receiving a complaint, the Committee examines it for two weeks and delivers an expert opinion. If an advertisement has been found to be discriminatory, the Secretariat requests that such advertising be withdrawn from circulation by the advertiser. In nearly 50 per cent of cases the advertiser changes or withdraws the advertisement upon the Committee's request. <http://uam.in.ua/gkr/>


Strengthening national associations of local and regional authorities to respond


Associations of local and regional authorities give voice to the needs of local government at a national or regional level and promote local needs. These associations can play important roles in responding to sexism and harassment in local government in several ways. They can collect appropriate data, monitor progress, raise awareness, advocate for improvements, educate local councils about solutions at the council level and set standards for their members. Associations of local and regional authorities may require capacity building support directly to achieve some of these goals.

EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS' RESPONSE TO SEXISM



Ukraine: *The Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)* was founded in 1992. As of September 2019, the AUC unites 833 members (cities, villages, ATCs) and has its own Gender Equality Committee. Its main tasks are the exchange of experience and successful practices, conducting trainings, internships etc. The AUC provides e-learning courses on gender equality, gender-responsive budgeting and other related content to its members. <http://2.auc.org.ua/page/sektsiya-z-pitan-zabezpechennya-rivnikh-prav-ta-mozhliivostei-zhinok-i-cholovikiv>


 **Ukraine:** The *Association of Amalgamated Communities (Hromadas, ATCs)*, was founded in 2016 and currently counts 491 ATCs. Their platform on gender equality provides consultancy, expert support and other services to its members. It studies and implements best practices, including foreign experience in its members communities. The major areas of action of the gender platform are gender-responsive budgeting, gender-disaggregated statistics, gender passports and the development of women's leadership. <http://surl.li/brmn>

 **Australia:** Local Government Managers Australia, Queensland (LGMA Queensland, founded in 1957) supports local government advocacy, collaborative learning and professional development. The LGMA offers an in-depth Framework for Action to Promote Gender Balance in Senior Management in Local Government. The Framework is an internal guidance document outlining the vision, strategic priorities and mechanisms to assist in integrating gender awareness through local government organisational cultures and management, as well as within the LGMA itself. It includes guidelines on implementation, monitoring, reporting and review. https://www.lgprofessionalswa.org.au/Documents/Gender%20Balance%20Framework/LGMA%20Gender%20Balance%20Framework_Nov2015_B.pdf

Responses through the National Office of the Ombudsperson

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson) exercises parliamentary control over observance of human rights and freedoms. The Ombudsperson receives, via petitions, information about rights violations, including human rights, non-discrimination and gender equality.⁵² The Ombudsperson is currently active in providing assistance in bringing Ukrainian legislation and administrative practice in compliance with European standards (in particular in the field anti-discrimination) and in ensuring appropriate and efficient implementation of legislation for preventing and counteracting discrimination. In light of this, the Ombudsperson office is well-placed to engage in supporting actions to end sexism and harassment in local government through a variety of actions. Specifically, the Office of the Ombudsperson may advance monitoring and the publication of research, recommendations and opinions on the topic. The Ombudsperson may directly handle complaints or appeals as well as offer legal assistance. They provide advisory support to local and regional authorities on how to reduce sexism. The Ombudsperson's office is also mandated to work with civil society towards these goals, including supporting the work of human rights defenders and co-operating with civil society on awareness raising activities. The national Ombudsperson has regional offices with similar powers.⁵³

EXAMPLES OF OMBUDSPERSON ACTIONS TO STOP SEXISM AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

 **Ukraine:** In 2019, the Ombudsperson considered 385 appeals of citizens reporting over 420 cases of discrimination (including 44 cases of gender-based discrimination) and launched 61 legal proceedings. The Ombudsperson considered reports on cases of gender-based discrimination and documented

multiple cases of public sexist insults towards women-politicians from men-politicians, violation of their human dignity, and mistrust of their professionalism.⁵⁴



Croatia: Croatia has a dedicated Ombudswoman for Gender Equality who acts in an independent manner, monitors the enforcement of the Gender Equality Law and other regulations on gender equality and reports to the Croatian Parliament at least once a year. One initiative of this office was working with the Croatian radio and television (HRT). The HRT training centre, in co-operation with the Office of the Gender Equality Ombudsperson, introduced training programmes for editors and journalists on the elimination of stereotypes and of content that presents men and women in a sexist, offensive or degrading manner in the media.

Sanctions, Enforcement & Remedies

In Ukraine, the framework for recourse in cases of sexism and discrimination includes the following:

Article 22 of the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men” defines that a person who thinks that she/he is a victim of sexual discrimination or became an object of sexual harassment shall have the right to appeal to the state authorities, public authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, local self-government agencies and its officials, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and/or take legal actions under the procedure determined by law.

In addition to the legal provisions guaranteeing women’s protection against gender-based discrimination to be applied in case of sexual harassment, there are special regulations ensuring protection from sexual harassment.

If a person seeking legal assistance reports about sexual harassment committed against him/her, it is necessary to identify the specific type of actions and whether they constitute an offense as stipulated by Article 154 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. If actions are limited to scurrilities or sexually explicit jokes, unwanted invitations or remarks, unwelcome touching or patting humiliating and offensive to a person, there are grounds to apply the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men” on sexual harassment and compensation for the distress. If the actions involved coercion to engage in acts of a sexual nature, it is necessary to analyse if the actions constitute a crime as stipulated by Article 154 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. In this case the most efficient mechanism is recourse to the court to claim compensation for damage, caused by sexual harassment – material or moral (for example, unlawful dismissal).

Remedies for individuals targeted by sexist behaviour vary from fairly simple corrective measures to criminal justice, depending on the severity of the problem. This guide does not discuss criminal violations.

Globally speaking, several principles should be taken into consideration when developing appropriate sanctions and appeals processes. Sanctions for violations of prohibited

behaviours should be commensurate with the severity of the violation, up to and including suspension of council members. More minor violations may be sanctioned with measures such as public apologies, public censure, fines or required training or service. For sanctions to be effective, there must be a clear set of guidelines on appropriate behaviour and identification of specific behaviours defined as sexist. These may be set in local government regulations or internal code of conduct. Sanctions must be mutually agreed upon by the signatories of the code of conduct. Appropriate institutions should also be involved in ensuring enforcement, including the office of the Ombudsperson and/or local ethics boards or accountability officers where they exist.

In addition to any sanctions levied against the perpetrator, in any given country the local or national accountability infrastructure (e.g. office of the Ombudsperson or a local ethics board) may provide a remedy or compensation to the person targeted. Recourse may be in the form of financial compensation such as general damages for the loss of the right to be free from discrimination and violations to personal dignity. It can also include special damages to compensate the target of the sexist behaviour for money, opportunities or other losses that took place because of the discriminatory or harassing behaviour.

Non-financial remedies are also options for victims of sexist discrimination. These could benefit the individual person through actions such as protections against further action by the perpetrator and public apologies. It can also involve public interest remedies, which are designed to have an impact on the broader community, including other people who could have been affected by the discrimination. These remedies can raise awareness or educate about the issue in order to promote a better understanding of the problem of sexism and discrimination and prevent it from happening in the future. Examples of public interest remedies for sexist behaviour in local government include changing internal policy to afford better protections, developing/improving internal human rights complaint procedures, introducing educational programmes or posting ethics codes publicly in the local government offices.

EXAMPLE OF TRANSPARENT PROCEDURES FOR ENFORCING CODES OF CONDUCT



Canada: Transparent and accessible complaints procedures aid in effective enforcement of codes of conduct. The City of Barrie set forward clear procedures on filing complaints about violations of codes of conduct and publishes them on their website, summarised as follows:

Informal Complaints

Any individual who has identified or witnessed behaviour or activity by a member that appears to be in contravention of the Code may address their concerns in the following manner:

- Advise the member that their behaviour or activity contravenes the Code;
- Encourage the member to stop the prohibited behaviour or activity;
- If applicable, confirm to the member your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his or her response to the concern identified;

- Keep a written record of the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information, including steps taken to resolve the matter;
- If not satisfied with the response received through the informal process, an individual may proceed with a formal complaint through the Integrity Commissioner.

Formal Complaints

Any individual who has identified or witnessed behaviour or activity by a member that appears to be in contravention of the Code may address their concerns through the formal complaint process:

- All formal complaints must be made using the City's Complaints Form / Affidavit.
- The complaint must include an explanation as to why the issue raised may be a contravention of the Code and any evidence in support of the allegation must be included with the Complaints Form/Affidavit; Complaints must include information on witnesses as well as the specific details of the case and be filed with the Integrity Commissioner.

The Integrity Commissioner will determine whether the matter is a complaint with respect to non-compliance with the Code and/or a violation of other codes including a Criminal Matter or a violation of codes on Discrimination or Harassment.

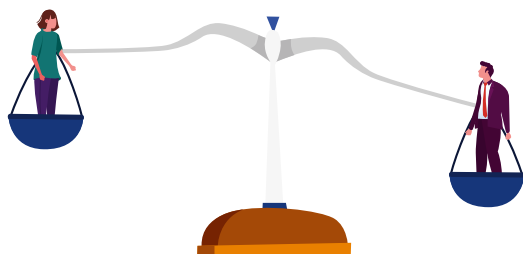
See: <https://www.barrie.ca/City%20Hall/MayorCouncil/Documents/Code%20of%20Conduct%20Complaint%20Procedure%20-%202008%202019.pdf>

Ensuring adequate resources

In order to offer effective remedies as well as to advance the other measures suggested in this guide, local governments should ensure adequate funding to support the measures described above. Strong institutional responses to sexism within local government require dedicated funds and human resources. For example, staffing of accountability positions, training and awareness-raising, processes to develop and adopt codes of conduct and investigation and reporting cannot be adequately implemented unless sufficient and consistent resources are allocated to them.

In Ukraine, there are resources dedicated to public engagement on this topic however little information is available regarding funding allocations for dealing with internal complaints. Note that these resources are needed for internal measures to combat sexism in local government and are separate from resources required for public policy responses to sexual harassment and violence (i.e. funding for protective measures and medical needs).

Promoting gender equality in local level government through concrete measures



Although the focus of this guide is to identify specific strategies for combatting sexism in local government, it is equally important to address the root causes of sexism by promoting greater gender equality in local government. This final section provides a brief overview of some key measures for promoting gender equality in local government.

Adopting Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for local government

Temporary Special Measures (TSM) are “aimed at accelerating the improvement of the position of women with a view to achieving substantive equality with men, and to effect the structural, social and cultural changes necessary to correct past and current forms and effects of discrimination against women, as well as to provide them with compensation for inequalities and harm suffered.”⁵⁵

Gender quotas (the most well-known form of TSM) have been proven effective at increasing women’s representation in elected bodies, worldwide. Gender quotas can be either legislated or voluntary. There are two forms of legislated quotas: candidate quotas and reserved seats. As the name implies, candidate quotas guarantee more equitable gender balance among candidates but do not ensure that the target will be met. Reserved seat quotas set aside a designated proportion of seats for the under-represented sex, thereby guaranteeing a minimum level of representation. Before the adoption of Ukraine’s new Electoral Code, gender quotas at the local level were established on a voluntary basis. Recent electoral reform in Ukraine has introduced legislated candidate quotas at the local level. It has also modified the electoral system in use at local levels, which also impacts the effectiveness of quotas. Going forward, Ukraine will use multi-member electoral districts for local elections. Multimember systems are expected to facilitate greater minority representation. Coupled with the new quota rules and stronger enforcement measures, these are promising measures to increase women’s representation in local government.

Specifically, under the new electoral system voted in late 2019,⁵⁶ members of city councils in cities with more than 90,000 voters and in oblast councils will be elected under a mixed open list proportional representation (PR) system. A 40% legislated candidate quota will apply, specifically this means that each group consisting of 5 candidates in regional party lists and the single/national list must include at least 2 women-candidates.

Elections of members of smaller local councils will be conducted under a multi-member majoritarian electoral system in which voters will participate under a single non-transferable vote (SNTV system). The candidate quota threshold is 30% for these localities.

During local elections in 2020 the Central Electoral Commission will not register parties who fail to comply with the quota rule. Despite these advances, candidate quotas (such as those in the recent law) cannot guarantee the election of women to office and do not overcome the challenges of sexism that women face after they are elected. These measures must be reinforced by others to actively combat sexism and sexual harassment in local government.

Quotas are only one kind of TSM that can be adopted to enhance women's representation. Other approaches include:

- special media and advocacy campaigning;
- capacity development programmes for women candidates and elected officials;
- campaign financing support for women running for office;
- voluntary party quotas.

Other structural reforms and policies

In addition to legislative changes to electoral laws and systems, there are many initiatives that can be taken at the local level to enhance gender equality and accordingly, combat sexism. These include measures taken directly by local governments as well as measures by national or regional bodies to govern local authorities. Briefly, these include:

Introduce term limits. Term limits for councillors promote turnover and open new space for women to compete. Term limit proposals can be implemented with significant lead time, to allow sitting members to achieve their policy goals.

Promote gender equal workspaces for local councillors. This may include instituting parental leave programmes, providing childcare or covering the costs of childcare for local councillors, allowing remote attendance of meetings and enhancing the use of technology in workplace accommodation and reviewing meeting times (avoiding evening meetings) in order to allow members with family care duties to attend.

Adopt policies on gender equality in leadership roles. Local councils may adopt policies to promote gender equality through council activities, including ensuring balance on any committees and equal representation in leadership roles.

Proactive recruitment. Local authorities should publicly promote gender balanced recruitment ahead of election periods, to encourage equal representation. This may include targeted awareness raising and information sessions.

Gender focal point. Identifying a gender focus point or diversity committee within local government can be a mechanism to advance monitoring and new initiatives.

In many amalgamated communities in Ukraine (ATCs), according to the law "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men", an authorised person (co-ordinator) on

ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men, preventing and combatting gender-based violence is appointed. Provision of an authorised person on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men may be approved by a session of the ATC council. The provision defines the authorised person, his / her mandate and rights. Gender advisors may also be invited on voluntary basis to provide assistance. Most of Ukraine's regional state administrations have gender advisors.

Training. Regular training activities for local councillors, online and in-person, can help improve the ability to recognise and combat sexism as well as to become better equipped to develop responsive local policy that advances equality in the community as well as in the institution.

Use Gender-Inclusive Language in public documents. The European Union defines gender-inclusive language as “a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language or gender-fair language. The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid word choices which may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning by implying that one sex or social gender is the norm. Using gender-fair and inclusive language also helps reduce gender stereotyping, promotes social change and contributes to achieving gender equality.”⁵⁷ The principle of gender-inclusive language should be applied to public documents as well as internal policy and communication at all levels of government. An example of a way to achieve this is in Greece where the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) developed a Guide on gender-inclusive language in public documents. Similarly, following a survey carried by an NGO, Cyprus produced a booklet/guide aimed at overcoming language sexism in public service documents. The information was subsequently shared in workshops organised by Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality and the national mechanism for women's rights.⁵⁸

For further examples, refer to:

Gender in Local Government: A Sourcebook for Trainers (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2008) https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/pdf/Source_BK_9-May.pdf

Manual for Gender Equality at The Local Level. (OSCE 2015).

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Conclusion

Ending sexism in local government requires a concerted effort on the part of local elected representatives in partnership with civil society, law enforcement and regional and national authorities. Starting with reliable data, clear targets and shared understanding of the scope and nature of the problem, local authorities can adopt a range of strategies to address the existence of sexism and promote gender equality in local politics.

Local and regional authorities can demonstrate their commitment to ending sexism by developing adequate structures and policies to combat sexism and promote equality within their institutions. Allocating sufficient resources and staffing structures of accountability ensures that these commitments are applied and enforced. By dedicating themselves to transparent practices and creating gender-inclusive institutional cultures, local governments build public trust and are more able to successfully fulfil their roles.



Notes

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Preventing and combatting sexism in local politics is essential for guaranteeing equal participation for women and men and ensuring that their perspectives are represented in local policies.

This guide presents concrete measures for combatting sexism at local level and ensuring that women play an active and meaningful role in the decision-making process. It is intended for use by local authorities and their national associations as well as possible targets of sexist violence and gender-based discrimination such as female candidates and local office holders.

Combatting sexism in local government requires a concerted effort from all levels of governance in partnership with law enforcement bodies and civil society. Practical steps such as collecting reliable data, raising awareness, and building capacities can create a shared understanding of the scope and nature of the problem. Altogether, clear targets and commitment on the part of public authorities, accompanied by sufficient resources for ensuring accountability will lead to transparent structures, a gender-inclusive institutional culture and greater equality.

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