



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Brussels, 15 April 2019

190th MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS BUREAU

- 9 APRIL 2019 -

ITEM 6)

STRATEGY FOR A GENDER BALANCE IN MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE COR

Submitted by the Secretary-General

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

Bureau meeting: 190

Date: 09/04/2019

Item 6)

Strategy for a gender balance in Members' participation in the CoR

Type:

- Document for information / debate
- Document for decision
- Recommendation to the Assembly

Short description:

EU Member States have an obligation to promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields under the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020). The local and regional authorities within the Member States have a crucial role to play and can be key actors in addressing gender equality, notably through their control over public services and expenditure. However, women remain significantly underrepresented in local decision-making across the EU.

At the CoR, gender parity has been achieved for the first time among the chairs of the six commissions but the situation in general is far from satisfactory. With less than 21% of CoR members being female, CoR membership remains significantly less gender balanced than that of the European Parliament (37% women) and regional parliaments (29%).

Therefore, the present document contains recommendations on the possible actions to be considered at all levels.

The Bureau is invited to:

- discuss the recommendations, with the aim of finding a common approach

Remarks:

The present document corresponds to the one tabled by the President of the CoR at the Conference of Presidents' meeting on 5 February 2019.

**MEMO FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

– MEETING OF 5 FEBRUARY 2019 –

Item 8

Strategy for a gender balance in members' participation in the CoR

Background on Gender equality and EU policies

The EU Treaties, secondary legislation and mid-term strategies have made the equal treatment of women and men a key principle of the European Union across all policy fields ("gender mainstreaming"). In the current context, which is also framed by international agreements, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the Council of Europe's "Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023", EU Member States are committed to promote, inter alia, the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields by the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020).

This is also mirrored by the 2015 Council Conclusions on "Equality between women and men in the field of decision-making" and the European Commission's "Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019". The context suggests that EU institutions and authorities at all levels of government consider a broad range of legislative and/or non-legislative measures as well as the exchange of good practice to:

- improve the gender balance in decision-making bodies in all areas;
- encourage the setting of targets and timelines in accordance with national circumstances;
- take measures to eliminate individual, organisational and social obstacles that result in women's decisions not to enter politics.

Moreover, the 2015 Council Conclusions requests governments, political parties and the European and national parliaments to promote a balanced representation of women and men in the political sphere and to pay attention to their positioning on party lists, for example by introducing a "zipper" system, where male and female candidates would appear alternately on such lists, including with a view to the European Parliament elections in 2019, the nomination of a new European Commission in 2019, and nominations to high-level positions in the EU institutions. Alongside with the political and legislative work, the EU has been collecting data on gender equality through regular reports and publications by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE), which was inaugurated in 2007 in Vilnius. And last month the European Parliament adopted its Resolution on gender mainstreaming.

Facts and figures on gender equality in EU regions and cities

Local and regional authorities have a crucial role to play and can be key actors in addressing gender equality, notably through their control over public services and expenditure. However, women remain significantly underrepresented in local decision-making across the EU. According to EIGE, to date only 13% of elected mayors, 29% of members of regional parliaments and assemblies, and about 36% of members of regional governments are female. These data vary significantly both between and within member states and more recently, the European Commission's DG for Regional and Urban Policy has developed composite indicators to measure "female (dis)advantage" at regional level (see maps in the Appendix)¹.

EIGE provides not only data on "gender statistics" including on national, regional and local parliaments and assemblies and governments but hosts as well an online toolkit on gender-sensitive parliaments including regional parliaments and assemblies². Information provided suggests that there are a number of interesting cases of regions and cities, which make, for example, gender-balanced lists of political parties an obligation in the context of regional and municipal elections.

The situation in the European Committee of the Regions

We enter 2019, with gender parity for the first time among the Chairs of the 6 Commissions. At the level of Political Groups, one Political Group adopted a Code of Conduct in May 2018 with the goal of achieving internal gender parity in all bodies/positions. Identify goals to help achieve gender balance represent an important means to increasing the number of women members and alternates at the CoR.

There are also organisations which bring female elected members from the same political family together at European level. Many CoR political groups have direct access to such organisations (EPP Women; PES Women; European Women's Academy; ACRE Women) and there are broader commitments on equality from other Groups as well, particularly focused on the European Parliament. And at the level of the day-to-day work of the CoR, the Bureau's adoption in March 2018 of a no "male-only panel" policy for own, hosted and co-organised events and conferences was a further important step for non-statutory activities.

However, the situation remains far from satisfactory in that there remain a number of national delegations which have no female members, no female alternate members and in one case no female politicians at all. Moreover, diplomatic persuasion efforts at the level of the President of the CoR have so far been ignored. Whilst recognising that it is of course for Member States to designate the Members of the CoR, **it needs to be understood that all-male silos are indefensible in communication terms and risk damage to the Institution's reputation.**

With less than 21% of CoR members being female, **CoR membership therefore remains significantly less gender balanced than the European Parliament (37% women) and regional**

¹ See: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panorama/pdf/mag67/mag67_en.pdf

² See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments>

parliaments (29%). Women rapporteurs of CoR opinions adopted between 2015 and April 2018 were even below that level.

Recommendations for those involved in nominations of new CoR members

- To call on nominating bodies at member state level put forward gender balanced list of candidate members taking into account the legal situation in each member states;
- To call on the Council to apply its own conclusions when considering nominations so as to take account of gender balance when nominating members and alternates in order to reach gender parity at the level of the membership as a whole;
- To communicate to all involved the proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure which will be made internally to make this political commitment into a reality.

Recommendations for action within the CoR

- that the ad-hoc Commission on the Rules of Procedure include provisions on gender balance in the future Rules of Procedure and that a Code of Conduct to be annexed to it foresees provisions, including sanction mechanisms, on gender-related behaviour concerning among other aspects the use of language, harassment, etc. (currently there are no such provisions);
- inviting National Delegations to submit further ideas during the course of 2019 for improving the situation for the next mandate, including in the context of the revision of the Rules of Procedure and the drafting of the Code of Conduct to be appended to it;
- that there is a political commitment that only new nominations of female Vice-Presidents until 50%-50% parity is reached are accepted (currently there are only two female VPs out of 29) and that gender parity in the list of Vice-Presidents is reached for the next CoR mandate from February 2020 onwards;
- that there is a political commitment to reach parity across CoR constituent and statutory bodies (i.e. the Chairs of the CoR Commissions, the members of the Bureau, etc);
- that there is a political commitment to reach gender-balance for rapporteurs over the next mandate;
- that there should be positive engagement of CoR members on 8 March each year, with specific communication actions to profile the work of female members/alternates. The CoR could become a place of an annual exchange of best practices in promoting gender equality, including in decision-making at local and regional level, and could also offer training opportunities for CoR members and other politicians on the issue;
- that gender-balance should also be applied for panels at conferences. All events held by the CoR or on its premises should be approved only if a balanced representation of both genders is ensured (not counting moderators);
- The CoR, through the political groups in the CoR, make full use of the European political parties that represents and supports female politicians.

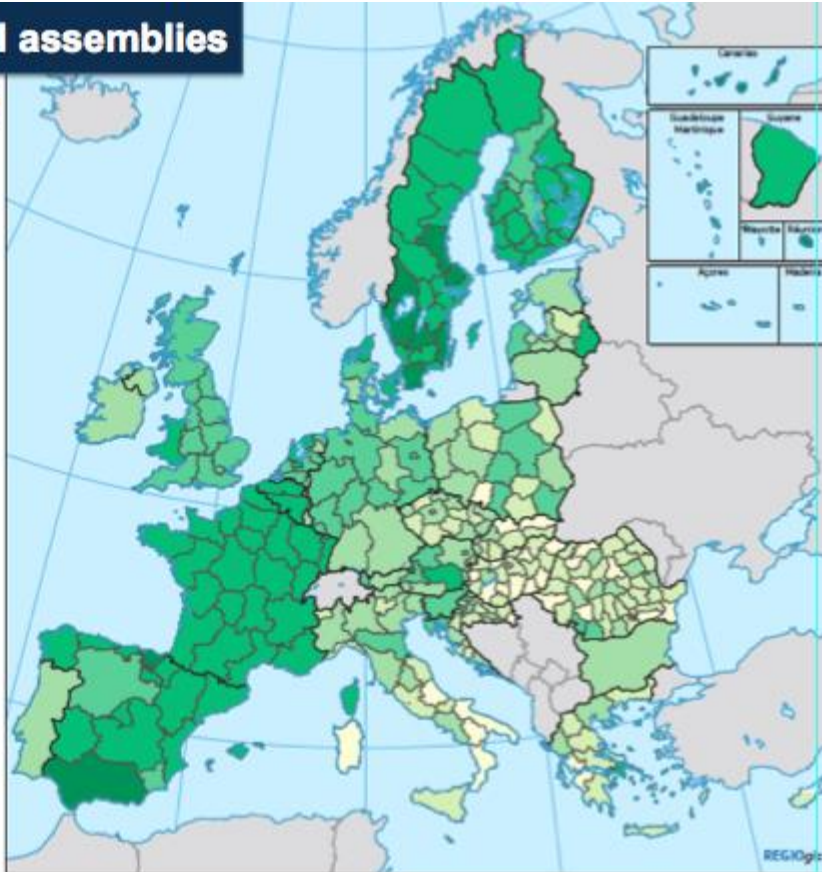
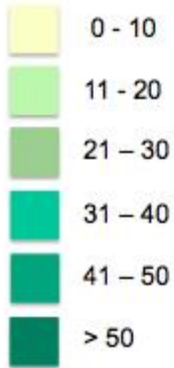
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APPENDIX

Women in regional assemblies

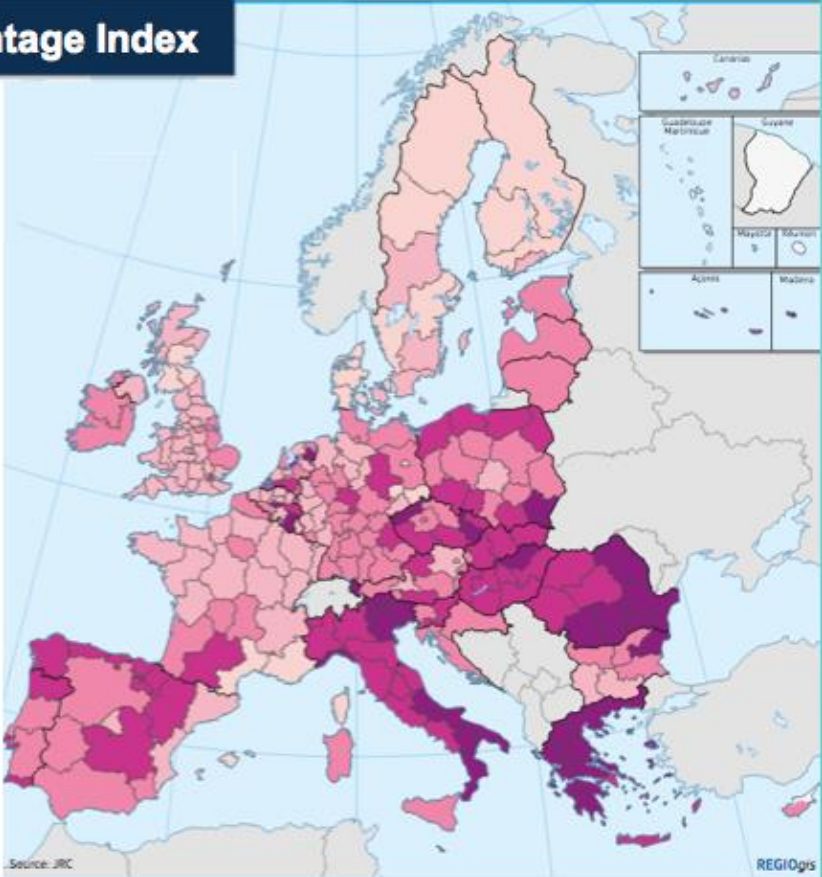
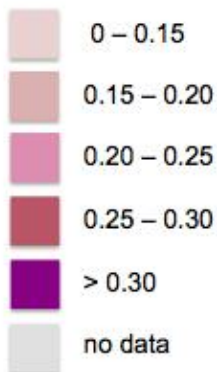
in % of members in 2017



European Commission,
7th Cohesion Report, 2017

Female Disadvantage Index

Composite indicator,
index 0 - 1



Source: European
Commission, DG
REGIO/JRC,
December 2018
(Panorama Magazine
no 67, p 36-37)