



# REALIZING GENDER EQUALITY IN PARLIAMENT

## A GUIDE FOR PARLIAMENTS IN THE OSCE REGION



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IN PARLIAMENT**

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IN THE OSCE REGION**



*Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament. A Guide for Parliaments in the OSCE Region*

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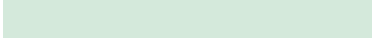
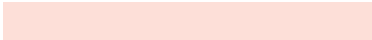



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# Executive Summary

In the past 20 years, a growing community of international organizations, practitioners and academics have championed a new norm of gender-sensitive parliaments. A gender-sensitive parliament “values and prioritizes gender equality as a social, economic and political objective and reorients and transforms a parliament’s institutional culture, processes and practices, and outputs towards these objectives”.<sup>1</sup> Across the OSCE participating States, women’s representation in parliament ranges from near parity to less than 15 per cent. In this guide, the ODIHR presents the achievements of these parliaments in reaching this international norm.

While no parliament is fully gender-sensitive yet, this guide celebrates and learns from good practice in the OSCE region, and aims to inspire parliaments where gaps remain. It does this by considering parliaments’ key functions—representation, legislation and oversight—from a gender perspective. Parliaments realize their representative function by reflecting the public’s diverse experiences in decision-making. Diverse experience can only be represented by a diverse parliament identified across gender, race and ethnicity, class, age, religion, disability and geography. Parliaments exercise their legislative function by introducing, debating, amending and passing laws that enact public policy. Oversight is often interchanged with scrutiny but is achieved

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Childs and Sonia Palmieri, “Gender Sensitive Parliaments: Feminizing Formal Political Institutions”, in Marian Sawer, Lee Ann Banaszak, Jacqui True and Johanna Kantola (eds.), *Handbook on Feminist Governance* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, forthcoming).

through systematic monitoring of activities across all aspects of public policy (laws, regulations, programmes).

**On representation**, the guide notes good practice in terms of guaranteeing gender balance in leadership positions and across all parliamentary committees and delegations (commonly referred to as “descriptive representation”<sup>2</sup>). This has been achieved through rule changes and clear political commitments. However, unwritten rules and conventions have also been effective in improving gender balance in some parliaments, suggesting that institutions can also be responsive when there is political will (particularly in political parties). Either way, gender balance is sustained when there is regular monitoring of MPs’ participation in parliamentary activities and when the data collected is disaggregated by a range of indicators including gender, ethnicity, age and disability. Collecting and publishing this data is one of many important steps required in tackling deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and attitudes that continue to hamper women’s equal participation in parliament.

Gender-sensitive representation requires recognition of parliaments as gendered workplaces<sup>3</sup> where change is critically needed in two areas: supporting members and staff in balancing work and family responsibilities, and preventing all forms of violence against women in parliamentary workplaces. Parliaments need to be more accommodating of MPs’ and staff members’ family responsibilities, including care labour, which extends beyond children to elderly relatives and those with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> Infrastructure changes—such as childcare facilities and family rooms—have been put in place in a few parliaments; less common is financial support for the care of dependents outside parliamentary buildings (be they children or elderly parents). This research also found that flexible working arrangements had become more normalized in some parliaments with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the quick adoption of remote working practices. These were more the exception than the rule. The guide finds that the parliaments that have made systematic and holistic changes to their working arrangements are those that were already influenced

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2 Lena Wängnerud, “Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 12, 2009, pp. 51–69, <<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839>>.

3 See Josefina Erikson and Tania Verge (eds.), special issue of *Parliamentary Affairs* (Hansard Society/Oxford University Press, 2020).

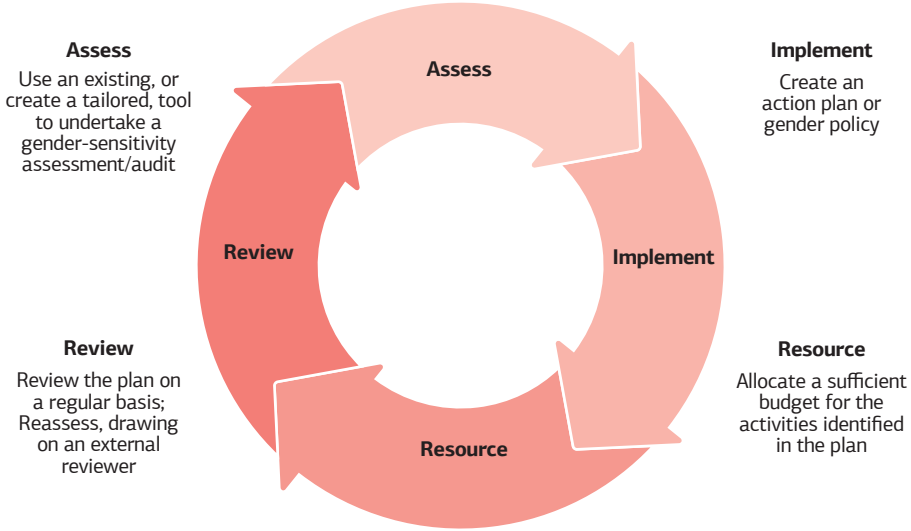
4 Pia Rowe, “Essential part of life or essentially ignored? Combining care labour with parliamentary duties”, *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, 2021.

by a strong gender equality culture. Much more work is required in addressing the avalanche of allegations of sexism and sexual misconduct in parliaments around the world, including in the OSCE region. With the #MeToo movement demonstrating that sexual harassment has occurred in the highest political circles, the guide presents options for the establishment of policies and mechanisms to ensure that all parliamentarians and political and parliamentary staff feel safe at work, at all times.

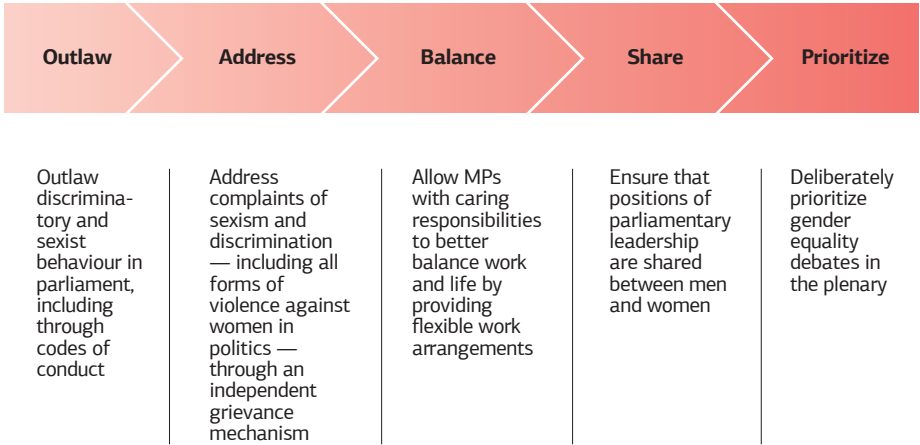
**On legislation,** gender-sensitive practices remain limited. Too few parliaments are required to conduct gender impact assessments, whether they take the form of gender budgeting or audits of draft legislation based on gender analysis. In part, this is because many of the resources required to undertake sound gender assessments of legislation are time- and money-intensive. Too few parliaments have the internal capacity and expertise required to conduct gender impact assessments with resources that are insufficiently allocated to, and within, parliaments. Parliaments rarely have the political will to analyse policies, laws and programmes from a gender perspective. While OSCE parliaments see consultation with gender experts as a relatively normal part of their democratic practice, there has been little attempt to cultivate and formalize relationships with diverse sources of gender expertise. Parliaments are unlikely to consider that their own administrative departments could benefit from the employment of gender specialists so as to improve the quality, and contestability, of the advice they receive and in turn use in their assessment of legislation.

**On oversight,** good practice is clear in the establishment of parliamentary bodies that have some responsibility for gender-sensitive scrutiny and, in some parliaments, in formalizing that role in the rules of procedure. Positive steps have also been made in the creation of bespoke tools to support gender-sensitive oversight of legislation and piloting initiatives that result in gender impact assessments. There is still some confusion, however, about the potential outcomes of these processes; parliaments more commonly expect oversight to uncover deficits in the number of women involved (in leadership, in economic participation) rather than a more nuanced understanding of power imbalances, the unpaid care burden (on men or women or others) or the potential for gender-based violence. The scope of impact that parliaments are investigating when they conduct gender-sensitive oversight needs to be broader.

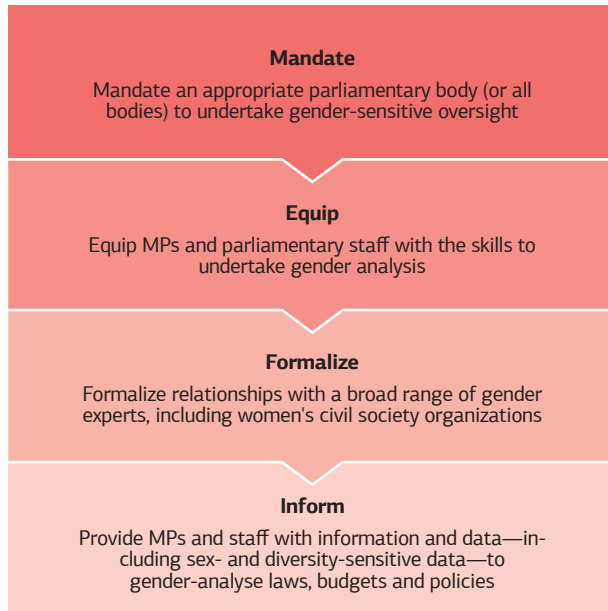
Making parliaments gender-sensitive is a **continuous process** that is summarized in these four steps:

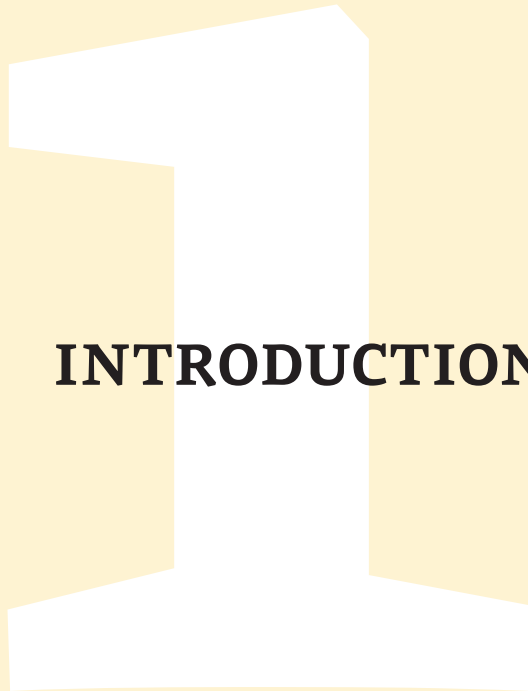


Gender-sensitive representation can be improved through the following five steps:



Improving gender-sensitive lawmaking and oversight requires these actions:





**INTRODUCTION**

# 1. Introduction

Across modern democracies, including those in the OSCE region, women have been present in many parliamentary chambers for over a century. While rarely constituting a majority of those chambers, women's presence has become increasingly normalized in these formal institutions of representative democracy. This has not, however, been achieved by chance: it has taken considerable political mobilization, often by women thinking strategically and acting collectively.

Modern societies have recognized that gender inequality—evidenced across a range of social, economic, cultural and political indicators—remains a fundamental impediment to progress and prosperity. This long-standing recognition is evidenced in the 1991 OSCE Moscow Document, which states:

*full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law. [Participating States] recognize that the full development of society and the welfare of all its members require equal opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women.*<sup>5</sup>

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5 “Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE”, 3 October 1991, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14310>>.

Eradicating gender inequality is appreciated today as a priority undertaking of international organizations and many democracies. Additionally, taking proactive measures to abolish sex- and gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality (including equality of opportunities and equality of results) is also a legal obligation that States have undertaken, including through UN treaties (such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and regional instruments (such as the European Court of Human Rights case law).

National parliaments, as essential democratic institutions, are uniquely placed to champion progress towards, and full achievement of, gender equality in politics and indeed in all spheres. This crucial role for parliaments has also been well entrenched in international conventions and commitments. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, for example, required governments to report “on a regular basis, to legislative bodies on the progress of efforts, as appropriate, to mainstream gender concerns” (paragraph 109).<sup>6</sup>

In the ensuing decades, the concept of “gender-sensitive parliaments” (GSP) has become the clearest expression of parliaments’ responsibility to promote and achieve gender equality. International parliamentary organizations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have been at the forefront of these efforts, having produced an evidence base as well as political texts that encourage further action in support of gender sensitivity around the world.<sup>7</sup> Today, a number of intergovernmental entities, including the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations system, have also dedicated resources to support the removal of barriers to women’s full and effective participation in parliament.

At the same time, a number of academics have taken an interest in GSP, lending their gender and politics expertise to these international organizations and specific parliaments as advisers and “critical friends”.<sup>8</sup> The interaction between

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6 UN, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 15 September 1995, <[https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf)>.

7 IPU, *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice* (Geneva: IPU, 2011); CPA, *Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change* (London: CPA, 2020).

8 See, for example Marian Sawer and Sonia Palmieri (eds.), “New Critical Actors: Gender-Focused Parliamentary Bodies”, *Politics, Groups and Identities*, Vol. 9, 2021; Sarah Childs, *The Good Parliament* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2016).



academics and practitioners has led to further reflection on the ultimate goal of a GSP, prompting a new definition:

*a GSP values and prioritizes gender equality as a social, economic and political objective and reorients and transforms a parliament's institutional culture, processes and practices, and outputs towards these objectives.<sup>9</sup>*

To be gender-sensitive, parliaments need to do more than add women, gender equality policies and practices to their existing structures; they need to transform into institutions that continually work to eliminate gender inequality. Accordingly, parliaments need to change their internal culture, structures and procedures—both formal and informal—to create organizational environments that are conducive to the achievement of gender equality. Selectively working on some aspects of gender sensitivity (for example, representation) will not achieve gender equality as a social, economic and political objective.

This is where still more institutional mobilization, strategy and action are required.

The OSCE has long recognized the need to act and mobilize in support of gender equality. In 2004, through Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04, “OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality”, ODIHR was authorized to:

*assist in the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to promote women's rights, to increase the role of women at all levels of decision-making, and to promote equality between women and men throughout the OSCE area.*

[ODIHR will]

*... assist participating States in developing effective measures to bring about the equal participation of women in democratic processes and will assist in developing best practices for their implementation.<sup>10</sup>*

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9 Childs and Palmieri, *op. cit.*, note 1.

10 OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 14/04, “OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality”, Sofia, 7 December 2004, <<https://www.osce.org/ministerial-councils/268646>>.

Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/09, “Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life”, further called on participating States to:

*consider possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and especially in decision-making. ...*

[and to]

*develop and introduce where necessary open and participatory processes that enhance participation of women and men in all phases of developing legislation, programmes and policies.*<sup>11</sup>

In 2021, the OSCE region boasts strong representation of women across the parliaments of its participating States, ranging from near parity to a little less than 15 per cent. In fact, the OSCE regional average (29.6 per cent) is higher than the global average (25 per cent).

### **1.1. Purpose**

In 2020, ODIHR undertook a study of good practices and lessons learned on the gender sensitivity of national parliaments in the OSCE region. Undertaken in co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and all national parliaments of OSCE participating States, *Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament* builds on previous studies produced by the OSCE on structures on women MPs (2013) and gender-sensitive lawmaking (2017). This practical guide is intended to support the full range of parliamentary actors—from parliamentary leadership teams, members of parliament, and political and parliamentary staff, to parliamentary practitioners and civil society organizations dealing with gender equality issues—in transforming these institutions into gender-sensitive parliaments.

The research serves two purposes: first, updating international knowledge on gender-sensitive parliamentary good practice; and second, designing an OSCE region-specific tool that would support OSCE participating States in achieving

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11 OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 7/09, “Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life”, Athens, 2 December 2009, <<https://www.osce.org/ministerial-councils/268646>>.

full gender sensitivity by transforming their parliamentary culture, outputs and outreach.<sup>12</sup> *Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament* continues to build on the IPU's 2011 collection of good practice in gender-sensitive parliaments.<sup>13</sup> While not as global in scale, this study presents a unique and OSCE-specific comparative analysis with the IPU's report, noting that, while some progress has been made in certain areas, there is still room for improvement in many others.

This guide also continues ODIHR's efforts to promote women's political participation and to further advance the gender sensitivity of parliaments by developing a step-by-step and OSCE region-specific guide to gender-sensitive parliaments. At the end of the sections 2-6, the guide presents actions to be taken by parliaments. Section 7 of the guide then provides a clear set of strategies to gender-sensitize parliaments as a workplace, to gender-sensitize law-making and oversight and to continue to improve parliaments' overall gender sensitivity.

## 1.2. Methods and data analysis

This guide was developed on the basis of a survey (hereinafter referred to as "the OSCE survey" or "the survey") distributed to all parliamentary chambers across 56 OSCE participating States (excluding the Holy See). Designed in late 2020, the survey referred to similar instruments used by other parliamentary organizations (CPA, IPU) and was distributed to parliamentary administrations (rather than individual members of parliament) between December 2020 and March 2021. The data reported in this guide is accurate as of January 2021.

Responses were received from 52 parliamentary chambers across 46 participating States (including responses for both chambers in the case of seven bicameral parliaments), with good representation across the whole OSCE region. Responses were received from parliaments with the highest and lowest representation of women (see Appendix A for a full list of responses). In the case of seven bicameral parliaments, both chambers submitted responses. Secondary data sources were also used, including publicly available reports on gender audits in parliaments. Prompted by the responses provided outlining certain positive developments, ten parliaments were asked to respond to additional

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12 In accordance with Childs and Palmieri's GSP definition.

13 IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7.

questions that formed the basis of case studies presented throughout the guide. These case studies elaborate good practices such as new rules of procedure to improve gender-balanced leadership (Montenegro), formalizing the women's caucus in the rules of procedure (Albania), pilot trials of parliamentary gender impact assessments (Georgia), bespoke manuals on gender-sensitive oversight (North Macedonia), explicit, and resourced, agreements to promote gender equality in parliament (Andorra), and successive improvements in codifying and legislating against sexual harassment in parliament for both MPs and staff (Canada).

This guide is based on an essentially descriptive, rather than analytical, study. Explanations for why certain parliaments are more likely to engage in gender-sensitive practice, based on their political or electoral system, the percentage of women in parliament or the state of parliamentary development, for example, were not canvassed. The survey instrument focused on the rules, mechanisms and cultures that generate gender-sensitive, rather than diversity-sensitive, parliaments<sup>14</sup> (see Appendix B). As such, the guide captures the level of gender sensitivity across OSCE parliaments and the positive changes that have been made towards gender equality—as distinct from other important aspirations of equality along age, ethnicity or disability lines—wherever these changes may have taken place. One observation is that good practices are found across the full spectrum of parliaments throughout the OSCE region. On the basis of this observation, which suggests there is no single factor that supports GSP efforts, it is likely that GSP change occurs where there is sufficient political will, irrespective of the political system, parliamentary composition or state of development of a parliament.

### **1.3. Structure of the guide**

This guide is structured into seven sections, including this introduction. The second section considers the idea of gender-sensitive representation, expressed as more than the number of women in each parliament, but also the workplace culture and environment for all parliamentary building occupants. The third section delves deeper into the question of gender-sensitive legislation and the mechanisms and supports required to achieve it. This is followed by a discussion of gender-sensitive oversight. Each of these sections on representation,

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14 On diversity-sensitive parliaments, see Childs, *op. cit.*, note 8.

legislation and oversight reports on the survey findings and highlights good practices in text boxes and case studies. Each section concludes with recommendations for concrete actions that parliaments can take.

In Section 5, the guide considers opportunities and strategies for parliaments to improve their gender sensitivity, such as self-assessments and audits, and recommends a series of parliamentary reforms. Finally, in Section 7, and on the basis of the research findings, the guide presents the steps that parliaments need to take to fully achieve gender sensitivity.



**GENDER-SENSITIVE  
REPRESENTATION**

## 2. Gender-sensitive representation

Parliaments, ideally, reflect the diversity of the society they represent. Calls for gender-sensitive representation are based on arguments for justice and effectiveness. Justice arguments suggest that diverse groups should be present in political institutions because it is fair. Effectiveness arguments suggest that diversity of representation in political institutions improves policy, legislation and political processes. Contemporary research has found that a woman's entry into politics is compounded by intersectional identities and power dynamics; an ethnic-majority woman, for example, is more likely to overcome barriers to political participation than, for example, an ethnic-minority woman with a disability.<sup>15</sup>

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15 Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identify Politics, and Violence Against Women of Colour", *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1991, pp. 1241–1299; Sarah Childs and Melanie Hughes, "'Which men?' How an Intersectional Perspective on Men and Masculinities Helps Explain Women's Political Underrepresentation", *Politics @ Gender*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2018, pp. 282–287; Pamela Paxton, Melanie Hughes and Tiffany Barnes, *Women, Politics and Power* (London and New York: Rowman, 2020).

See also ODIHR, *Guidelines on Promoting the Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2019), <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/414344>>, which also highlights intersectionality.

Every woman's right to participate fully in all facets of public life has been a consistent theme of international conventions, resolutions and declarations since the second wave of the women's movement (in the 1970s). The following are only a few of those:

- The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) affirms the right of women "to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government", calling on States Parties to ensure women's equal rights to vote, stand for election and take part in formulating policy, including through the adoption of temporary special measures (Articles 3, 4 and 7c). These standards are further developed in General Recommendations 23 (Political and Public Life) and 25 (Temporary Special Measures).
- In 1990, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution E/RES/1990/15 recommended a target of 30 per cent women in leadership posts by 1995, and 50 per cent by 2000.
- The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action reported little progress on the 1990 ECOSOC target, and established women's participation in decision-making as a critical area of concern, setting a target of "gender balance" in legislative, executive and administrative bodies.
- The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation 3 (2003), which defined gender balance as "representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life [that] should not fall below 40%".
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) establishes gender equality as both a goal and a means of implementing the Agenda, and includes Target 5.5, to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- A 2016 IPU Resolution "strongly urged parliaments to set a deadline by which at least 30 per cent of parliamentarians should be women and to set a further deadline by which that proportion should reach 50 per cent".



- The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Agreed Conclusions 2021 (E/CN.6/2021/L.3) and 2006 (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15) and General Assembly Resolution 66/130 (2011) further call on States to promote women's political participation. In 2021, the CSW set a "goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions".

The OSCE adopted a comprehensive framework on women's participation in public and political life, including the following commitments:

- Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04, "OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality"; and
- Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/09, "Women's Participation in Political and Public Life".

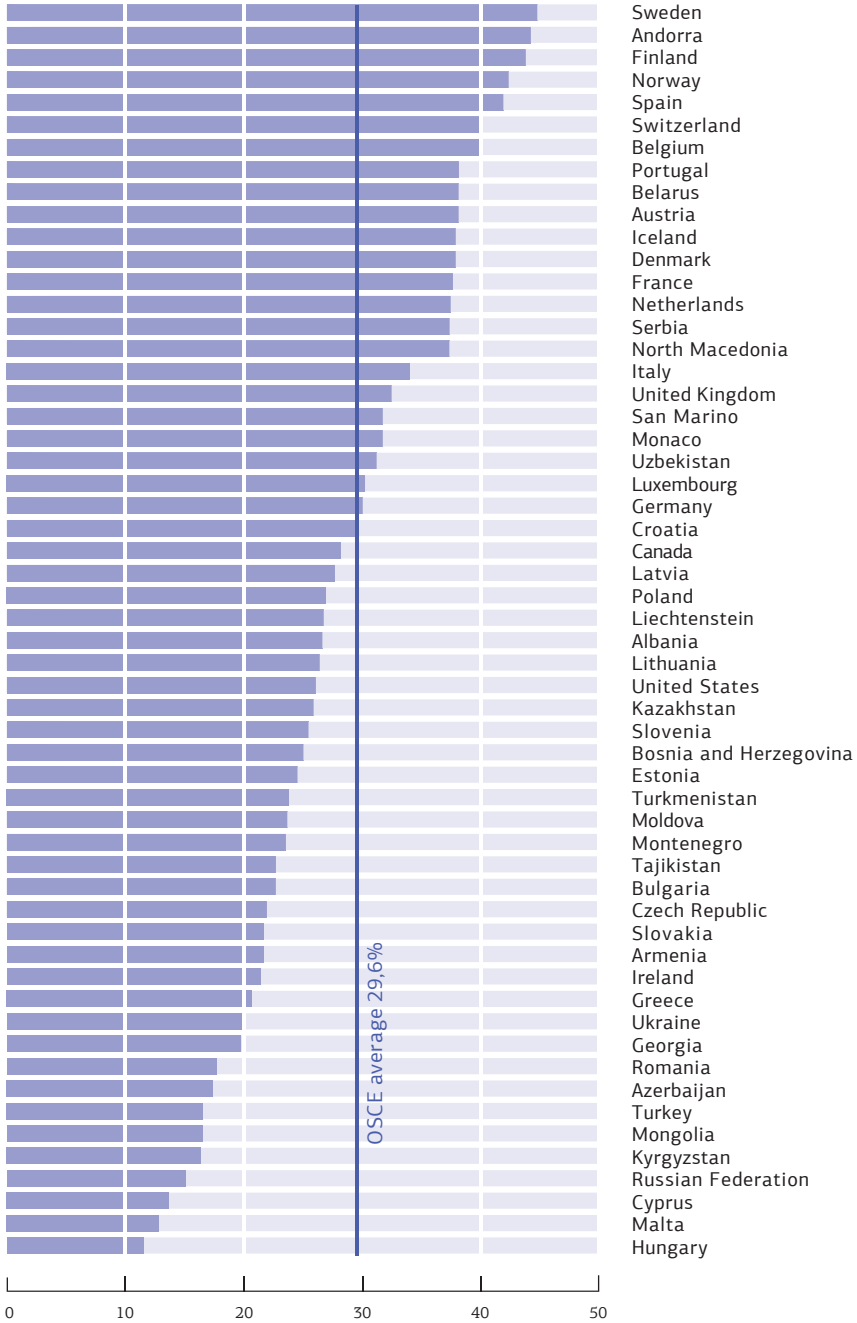
The equal rights of women and men to vote and stand for election are now entrenched in national constitutions and electoral laws. Some OSCE participating States have adopted temporary measures to increase women's political participation. This section explores the extent to which OSCE parliaments reflect the gender diversity of their societies and identifies good practice in ensuring that all women and all men are equally represented across every aspect of the parliamentary experience.

## **2.1. Parliamentary membership and leadership**

Parliaments in the OSCE region show significant variation in the extent to which they have been able to achieve gender balance, from just under 15 per cent to near parity. In 2021, lower houses or single chambers in the OSCE have, on average, matched the 1990 target of 30 per cent women's representation, but they remain far from achieving the most recent international targets of 50 per cent (see Figure 1).



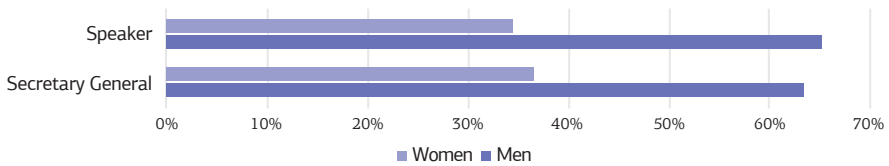
Figure 1. Percentage of women in lower or single houses of parliament across the OSCE



Source: IPU, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, January 2021, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking>

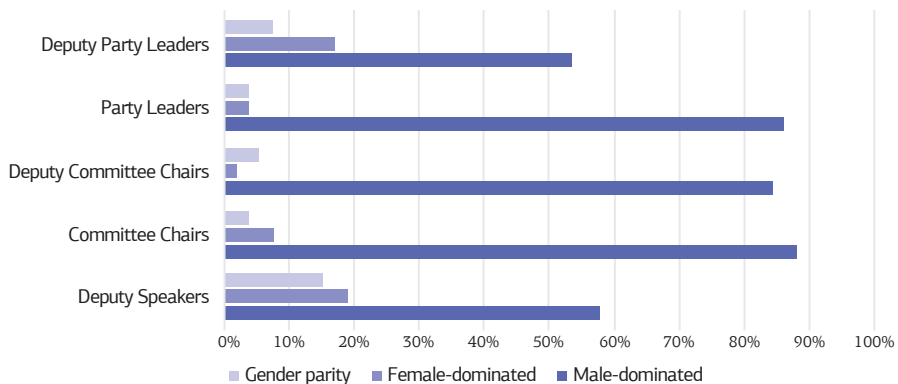
Parliaments were asked to explain the gender composition of specific parliamentary leadership positions. Responses for the two leadership positions held by one person only — speaker and secretary general (head of the parliamentary administration) — specified whether the position was held by a woman or a man. In both cases, men were more likely to hold the positions of speaker (65 per cent) and secretary general (64 per cent) (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Gender composition of parliamentary speakers and secretaries general**



Responses for collective positions (such as committee chairs) were categorized as either “male-dominated” (whereby the breakdown showed that more men than women held those positions), “female-dominated” (more women than men held the positions) or showing “gender parity” (where men and women held the positions in equal numbers) (see Figure 3). Again, more men than women were likely to hold each of the positions of committee chair (89 per cent male-dominated), deputy committee chair (85 per cent male-dominated), party leader (87 per cent male-dominated), deputy party leader (54 per cent) and deputy speaker (58 per cent male-dominated).

**Figure 3. Gender composition in parliamentary leadership positions**



Women were more likely to be present in greater numbers in deputy roles: deputy speakers and deputy party leaders. A little less than one in five parliaments responding to the survey (19 per cent) had more women than men as

**Box 1. Good practice in gender-balanced leadership in Albania**

An unwritten convention was developed at the Parliament of Albania whereby one of the Deputy Speakers has been elected from the under-represented sex in six of the past nine legislatures since the establishment of a pluralist democratic system.

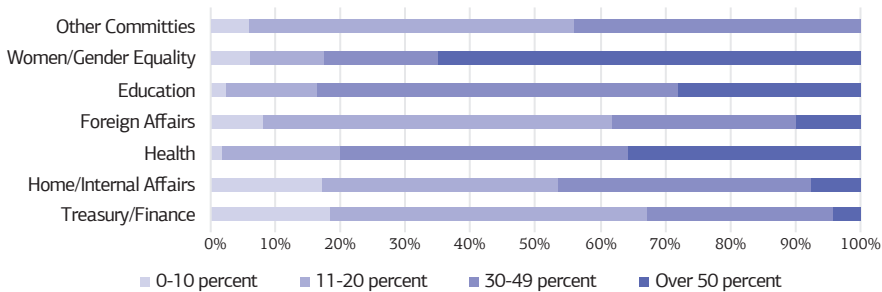
deputy speakers, and an additional 15 per cent of parliaments had the same number of women and men in the role. Likewise, a quarter of the responding parliaments had a significant proportion of women (more than 50 per cent) as deputy party leaders. Women’s parliamentary leadership has benefited from both formal rule changes (see Case Study 1) and unwritten conventions (see Box 1).

**2.2. Parliamentary committees**

Parliaments were asked to provide the percentage of women and men across specific committee portfolios.<sup>16</sup> Responses were categorized by four percentage ranges for women only: between 0 and 10 per cent, between 11 and 29 per cent, between 30 and 49 per cent and above 50 per cent.

Women are most likely to constitute the majority of the membership (that is, more than 50 per cent) of women’s or gender equality committees (44 per cent of responding parliaments), health committees (32 per cent) and education committees (24 per cent). Women are least likely to constitute the majority of members in treasury or finance committees (4 per cent of responding parliaments) and home or internal affairs committees (6 per cent); indeed, women remain significantly under-represented on these committees. This confirms the earlier findings of Lena Wängnerud and the IPU that women tend “to sit in substantial numbers on committees dealing with social issues”.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 4. Representation of women across parliamentary committees**



16 While the survey asked parliaments to disaggregate responses for “women, men and others”, no responses for “others” were received.

17 IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7., p. 22.

### Case Study 1:

#### Amendments to the rules of procedure to achieve gender balance in Montenegro

In December 2020, the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the following amendments to its rules of procedure, which aim to improve gender balance in parliamentary leadership positions. Article 18(4) stipulates that at least one Vice-President of the Parliament must be elected from the under-represented sex; Article 34(5) requires that, in the process of determining the composition of each committee, including the positions of chair and deputy chair, care must be taken to ensure the participation of the under-represented sex; and Article 210(3) requires the same course of action in relation to the composition of parliamentary delegations.

The amendments were suggested during a wider review of the rules of procedure, for which all parliamentary committees were encouraged to submit proposals. The Gender Equality Committee took advantage of this opportunity to submit specific recommendations related to gender balance among MPs in leadership and decision-making positions. While a growing number of women had been elected to the Parliament, they remained under-represented in parliamentary leadership positions, rendering debates male-dominated.

The gender balance recommendations were supported by MPs from all political parties and attracted significant media coverage. Several factors facilitated the adoption of the amendments, including:

- **Robust institutional structure.** The adoption of the amendments benefited from the work of a permanent Gender Equality Committee that continues to play an active role in reviewing new legislative bills, including a gender analysis of the budget.
- **Reliance on an existing action plan.** The Committee based its argument for the recommendations on an existing Gender Action Plan that it had developed with the support of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and ODIHR in 2016. The Action Plan clearly laid out priorities and activities needed to gender-sensitize the Parliament, including the need for greater gender balance.
- **Holistic review opportunity.** The Committee took advantage of a broader review of the rules of procedure rather than having to initiate its own separate reform process.
- **Changing social norms around women's political leadership.** Reflecting positive changes in the social roles of women in Montenegro, female MPs have become more accepted—both within and outside the Parliament—as legitimate political actors.

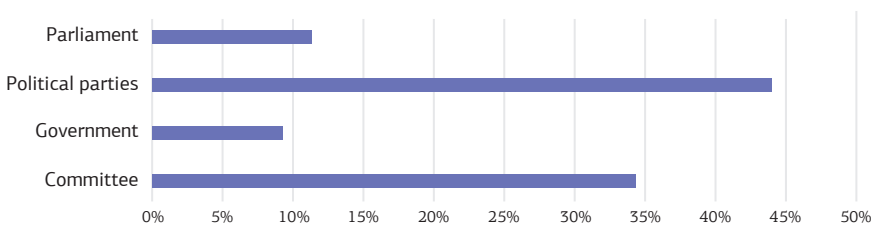
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The persistent effect of institutional and cultural barriers to women’s entry into politics impacts their ability to be represented in substantive majorities across all committees and, further, to have the longevity of experience nominally required to become committee leaders. This notwithstanding, it is interesting to consider the question of how MPs are selected as both committee chairs and committee members, and whether there are mechanisms in place to guarantee women MPs’ presence in committee work, in part to ensure that women are present in a more diverse range of committees, but also to ensure that the work of all committees benefits from a more diverse range of experiences and views from its members.

Forty-four per cent of responding parliaments indicated that committee chairs were most likely to be nominated by political parties, and 10 per cent reported that committee chairs were nominated by the current government (see Figure 5). Just over a third of the parliaments responding noted that committee chairs were determined by the committee itself (35 per cent) or, more rarely still, by an executive body of the parliament (e.g. a bureau or presidium). The high rates of selection by parties (including those represented in the government) suggests that women’s appointment as chairs is determined more by unwritten rules and conventions within political parties than by transparent parliamentary process. A case in point is the Parliament of Albania, where, by unwritten convention, four of the eight parliamentary committees were presided over by women in the 2017–2021 legislature, including the National Security Committee.

**Figure 5. Body responsible for nominating committee chairs**



Recognizing a systemic bias in favour of men’s participation in chamber activity would be a key step in reorienting parliamentary culture towards gender equality. Very few of the responding parliaments had instituted rules (either legislative or procedural) requiring a minimum level of women’s participation as committee chairs or members. Rules were seen as important in cementing the gender parity already informally achieved in the Parliament of Andorra

(see Case Study 2), as stated in their response to the survey: “[At] this moment, all the parliamentary groups are working on a draft law on [gender] equality. The political will is that this draft introduces a specific formula to promote the parity” (also see the example of Montenegro in Case Study 1). The overwhelming majority of parliaments responding to the survey (92 per cent) had not reviewed their procedural rules to increase opportunities for women to speak or participate in the chamber.

Some parliaments noted that women were able to make a substantial contribution to the work of committees, but indicated that this was not the result of whole-of-parliament processes. The House of Representatives in Belgium, for example, has a specific rule requiring that at least one woman sit on the Committee for Social Emancipation and that the Committee’s Bureau (supporting unit) be chaired by a woman. This deliberate appointment of women, however, does not apply to other committees of the House of Representatives.

### **Case Study 2:**

#### **Cementing a gender equality culture in the Parliament of Andorra**

The Andorran Parliament has adopted several innovative measures and resolutions to advance gender equality. In January 2015, it endorsed the Agreement to Promote Gender Equality in Parliament, which mandates gender parity representation in parliamentary positions, committees, and delegations; the integration of gender-related indicators to assess the impact of legislative initiatives; gender-sensitive budgetary analysis; and awareness-raising activities on gender issues. In 2019, the Parliament approved an amendment to its rules of procedure that permits remote voting (with the Speaker’s approval) for MPs in cases of pregnancy, maternity, serious illness or hospitalization that prevents their physical presence. The 2015 Agreement was developed by an ad hoc committee that was established by the Speaker. Both the Speaker and MPs supported the recommendations of the committee.

These initiatives are considered reflective of current norms and practices in Andorran society. The Andorran Parliament achieved gender parity in its membership without recourse to an electoral gender quota. Women are well represented in executive positions across both the public and private sectors. MPs are typically not career politicians but rather individuals who join the political arena for a limited amount of time.

Despite these significant achievements, gender inequalities within the Parliament remain. For instance, the president of each parliamentary group is male. Accordingly, the Parliament intends to pass an ambitious law on effective equality between men and women. If passed, the law will further institutionalize a culture of gender equality by requiring a variety of additional measures across both the public and private sectors. For instance, gender quotas will be introduced for boards of directors. The draft law was introduced to the Parliament by the government and championed by the Secretary of State on Equality Issues. It is expected to be endorsed by MPs from all political party groups.

### **Box 2. Good practice in gender-monitoring requirements in the United Kingdom**

In 2018, the UK Parliament ran a gender-sensitive parliamentary audit, with the support of the IPU. The report reached the following conclusions:

“13. We consider that it would be appropriate for a parliamentary body to monitor the gender breakdown of MPs and peers and those in leadership positions, and to publish the results. We recommend that the Women and Equalities Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights should consider exercising their existing power to meet jointly to carry out this task on an annual basis.”

“39. The number of questions, speeches and interventions in both Houses should be measured by gender using data from the Official Report, in order to analyse whether members from one gender are disproportionately represented. In the light of the findings, consideration should then be given to possible steps that might be taken to ensure that any barriers to intervening are addressed, including the method by which parliamentarians indicate they want to speak.”

### **2.3. Institutional monitoring of parliamentary presence and participation**

Institutional monitoring—or the tracking of all positions and activities by members of parliament by using indicators such as sex, length of parliamentary tenure, ethnicity, disability and so forth—can have a significant impact on the composition of parliamentary leadership positions and parliamentary activity more broadly. Very few OSCE parliaments reported such institutional monitoring—the Parliament of Sweden being an exception here, noting that, by convention rather than formal rule, it practised “gender monitoring”. The most prominent form of institutional monitoring was reported on those proposing legislative amendments (just 4 per cent of responding parliaments). Disconcertingly, between 13 and 21 per cent of parliaments considered gender monitoring of each category of parliamentary activity as “not applicable”.

### **2.4. Family-friendly parliaments**

A new theme of research has presented parliaments as “gendered workplaces”, exploring both the formal rules as well as the informal norms and practices that support MPs in doing their jobs.<sup>18</sup> A critical finding of this research is that parliaments need to implement

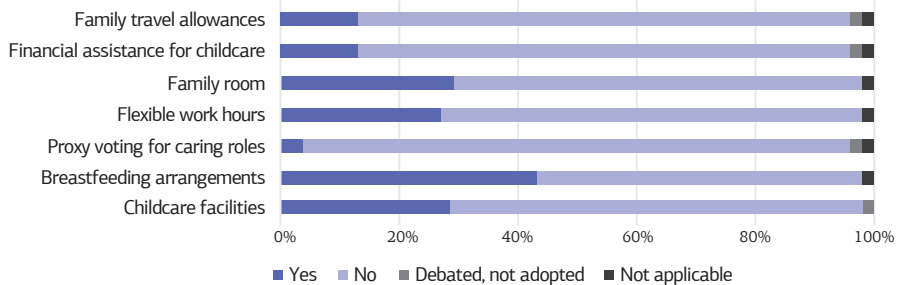
institutional measures that support individuals with caring responsibilities and better balance work and family life if a diverse cohort of parliamentarians is to be recruited and retained. These might range from improved infrastructure arrangements, such as childcare facilities and family rooms, to family-friendly

18 Josefina Erikson and Cecilia Josefsson, “The Parliament as a Gendered Workplace: How to Research Legislators’ (UN)Equal Opportunities to Represent”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2020, pp. 1–19; see also endnote 6.



working conditions, such as parental leave, proxy voting, remote voting and/or more flexible working hours and arrangements, to financial measures such as subsidies for childcare or family travel.

**Figure 6. Measures implemented to support the caring responsibilities of parliamentarians**



The most prevalent family-friendly parliamentary provisions are related to infrastructure (see Figure 6). These include arrangements that allow for breastfeeding (43 per cent of responding parliaments), family rooms (29 per cent) and childcare facilities (29 per cent). The prevalence of each of these family-friendly arrangements is significant given that each of these was less commonly evident a mere decade ago, although it is interesting that some parliaments still considered that these were “not applicable”.<sup>19</sup>

A much less common form of support was financial. Subsidies for childcare assistance or family-related travel (for example, from the family home to the capital) were implemented in only 14 per cent of responding parliaments.<sup>20</sup> An exception here is the Parliament of Canada, which in 2018 revamped its policy to provide for further travel allowances for family members to commute between constituency and Parliament.<sup>21</sup> In Sweden, MPs benefit from childcare and parental leave sub-

19 The IPU found that family rooms were available in only 6 per cent of the parliaments surveyed; childcare, in 20 per cent; and breastfeeding arrangements, in 28 per cent. See IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 91.

20 This finding corroborates research on the Parliament of New Zealand, where improving family travel entitlements was considered a privilege that would differentiate—too favourably—parliamentarians from the “everyday, hardworking” population. See Sonia Palmieri and Kerry Baker, “Localising Global Norms: The Case of Family-Friendly Parliaments”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2020, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsaa050>>.

21 The *Members’ Allowances and Services Manual* (<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/MAS/mas-e.pdf>) was amended further to the 2016 report of the House of Commons Procedure Committee on family-friendly parliaments.

### Box 3. Good practice in family-friendly parliaments in Canada, Estonia and Iceland

#### Canada, House of Commons:

A childcare facility within close proximity of Centre Block, open to parliamentarians, Parliament Hill employees and certain employees whose work supports Parliament, has been made available to members since 1982. Called Children on the Hill, the non-profit day-care centre offers 34 places.

**Estonia:** The building of the Riigikogu, Estonia's Parliament, houses a children's room where children from five to ten years of age can play, read books, study or watch TV or DVDs. As there is no supervision, parents (MPs or officials) have to take care of their own children. The children's room has a kitchenette and some workplaces (desks and Wi-Fi).

**Iceland:** Breastfeeding has been allowed in the chamber and from the speaking lectern (as portrayed in a YouTube video entitled "Icelandic politician breastfeeds baby while delivering speech in parliament and no one cared"). The parliamentary cafeteria has high chairs, a changing facility was set up in the bathroom of the speaker when a former speaker had a baby, and a family room was set up when two parliamentarians were pregnant at the same time. Party group leaders divide up responsibilities, with flexibility, ensuring that late sitting hours need not impact negatively on members with caring responsibilities.

sidies available to the general population (approximately 13 months' leave with 90 per cent of their salary); in addition, the Riksdag, Sweden's Parliament, provides an additional subsidy to compensate for MPs' higher than average salaries.

The OSCE survey also found that family-friendly working conditions were not as well implemented as infrastructure arrangements.

For MPs who are parents, pregnancy and early-years childcare is increasingly being recognized as an issue for parliaments to attend to. Proxy voting arrangements, for example, whereby MPs are able to instruct other MPs to vote on their behalf, were almost non-existent, although these do seem to have become a more common feature of Westminster parliaments—Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom—in recent years. In Andorra, an amendment was made to the rules of procedure in 2019 to allow MPs to cast their vote remotely under circumstances that would prevent an MP's usual ability to attend the Parliament, such as pregnancy, parental leave, serious illness or hospitalization (see Case Study 2).

Family-friendly measures have also been instituted on an as-needed basis in, for example, the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech Republic, which noted, "Although, there are not any specific measures, the Office of the Chamber of Deputies always communicates individually with MPs [known to be] taking care of small children [or] breastfeeding, and makes arrangements to enable them to perform all [their] duties". Other parliaments rely on family-friendly provisions that apply to the whole population rather than establishing parliamentary-specific measures, as is the case in Serbia: "While there is no specific legislation that refers to women MPs, the Labour Law provides for

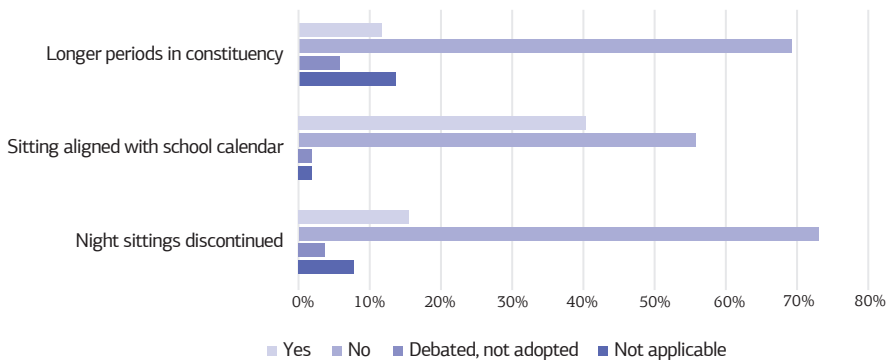
arrangements to enable them to perform all [their] duties". Other parliaments rely on family-friendly provisions that apply to the whole population rather than establishing parliamentary-specific measures, as is the case in Serbia: "While there is no specific legislation that refers to women MPs, the Labour Law provides for

breastfeeding breaks. Employers must allow women employees who return to work within the year of her child's birth to have one or more daily breaks during working hours lasting for 90 minutes in total or to work 90 minutes shorter so that she can breastfeed her baby, where she works for six or more hours."

Specific to parliaments, however, are their working hours, which are usually long and unpredictable. Votes can happen at irregular intervals in some parliaments, sometimes requiring MPs to remain in the parliamentary building late into the night. Three good practices that have been implemented in certain parliaments to encourage more family-friendly hours are discontinuing night sittings (outside of particularly urgent situations), aligning parliamentary sittings/sessions with the school calendar and allowing parliamentarians to spend longer periods in their constituency and thereby with their families.

These three measures have been adopted in some—but not the majority—of the parliaments responding to the survey (see Figure 7). The most popular measure is aligning sittings with the school calendar (40 per cent of responding parliaments), followed by discontinuing night sittings (15 per cent). While only 12 per cent of responding parliaments indicated that they allowed MPs to spend longer periods in their constituency, a further 13 per cent of parliaments explained that this was not a measure that applied to their parliamentary system. Again, there was little change from similar findings in the IPU report.<sup>22</sup> The Storting, Norway's Parliament, explained that its current family-friendly sitting schedule is the result of several reviews since the 1990s, which have consistently aimed to increase predictability in MPs' work schedules (see Box 4).

**Figure 7. Flexibility in parliamentary sitting schedules**



22 IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 91.

#### Box 4. Good practice in reviewing working hours in Norway

The Presidium of the Parliament has examined the working conditions for MPs several times since the 1990s. In order to give MPs a better chance to plan their working schedule, the Presidium has focused on the predictability of plenary sittings and debates. Until 2006, sittings ended at 3 p.m., and if necessary evening sittings were held from 6 p.m. One of the arguments for this break was that parents should be able to spend time with their children/family before the evening sitting. However, when the Parliament experienced a large number of short evening sittings, the break was reduced by one hour (from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.).

In 2011/2012, the Storting decided that sittings should be held without an afternoon break. It was considered to be better for MPs—and also more family-friendly – to avoid (late) evening sittings altogether. The Presidium now determines whether there will be a break followed by an evening sitting from 6 p.m. or no evening sitting. Where the Presidium determines that an evening sitting is required, an announcement is made in advance in the weekly programme. Many MPs go home to their constituencies at weekends.

Recently the Storting decided that sittings on Fridays should start at 9 a.m. (instead of 10 a.m.), making it more likely for sittings to end earlier. This decision was taken largely out of consideration for the many MPs who have to travel long distances. In order to maximize predictability in MPs' schedules, voting times are fixed on Tuesdays at 3 p.m. and Thursdays at 2 p.m. This principle is subject to change in the busy weeks before the Christmas and summer breaks.

While some OSCE parliaments have longer experience in establishing more family-friendly working hours (for example, Norway and Sweden), the 2020 survey responses also indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in the institution of more hybrid arrangements to enable remote participation. Changes necessitated by the pandemic illuminated how parliaments can function differently and in more family-friendly ways. In Andorra and Canada, for example, specific resolutions were passed to allow for hybrid arrangements,<sup>23</sup> while proxy voting was introduced in the United States House of Representatives as a result of the pandemic (the US Senate had, at the time of writing, debated but not yet adopted such a measure). In Albania, an OSCE study conducted in 2020 confirmed women MPs' satisfaction with working from home.

Reviews of hybrid arrangements have also been initiated and/or completed. In the United Kingdom, a review of the “hybrid parliament” by Jessica Smith and Sarah Childs, leading gender scholars working on gender-sensitive parliaments, recommended that, “where there is no meaningful detriment to the overall effectiveness of the House of Commons, Members should be free and entitled to decide how they participate, whether in person or re-

23 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian House of Commons established a system for virtual voting. See Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, *Carrying out Members' Parliamentary Duties: The Challenges of Voting During the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Ottawa: Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons, 2020), <<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/431/PROC/Reports/RP10833363/procrp07/procrp07-e.pdf>>.

### Case Study 3: Forum on a Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament in Ireland

The Irish Forum on a Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament was launched by the Speaker, Seán Ó Fearghaíl, in March 2021. The initiative was sparked by the continued low number of women representatives in the Oireachtas, Ireland's Parliament, following general elections in February 2020, and the perception that it had become an unattractive workplace for women.

Speaker Fearghaíl personally selected and invited all of the Forum's 15 members (11 women and 4 men, including one person of colour). Members include representatives of the House, the Senate, the women's parliamentary caucus and eminent persons from academia, the private and non-governmental sectors, as well as parliamentary staff. A retired MP was invited to chair the Forum. The Forum is envisioned to act as an idea-generating entity rather than an implementing body.

The Forum intends to compile recommendations that would create a more inclusive, family-friendly parliamentary workplace. The terms of reference asked the Forum to focus on three areas:

- (i) Generating a family-friendly and inclusive workspace for elected MPs and for parliamentary staff;
- (ii) Ensuring adequate support and budget for gender-related activities at the Parliament; and
- (iii) Enhancing the diversity and inclusiveness of the parliamentary community, and strengthening the representation of marginalized groups including persons with disabilities.

In achieving these objectives, the Forum will consider relevant provisions of the Constitution, Standing Orders of the houses, the working arrangements (including sitting times) of the Parliament, policies, procedures and processes of the houses and international parliamentary best practice.

The Forum's initial meetings (held in the first half of 2021) focused on its strategic vision and objectives, work plan and calendar of activities; the rationale for the current sitting times, and the constitutional requirement of physical presence at the Parliament as a precondition to vote, which hinders flexible family-friendly work practices; and the challenges facing parliamentary staff. Future meetings will hear from a range of organizations, including the National Women's Council of Ireland, the national LGBT Ireland organization and the National Youth Council of Ireland. The Forum is expected to report its findings and recommendations to the Speaker by the end of October 2021.

motely".<sup>24</sup> The Parliament of Sweden noted in its response to the OSCE survey that an inquiry into MPs' experience of the more flexible working arrangements instituted during the pandemic was expected to include a gender perspective "since many MPs have had a positive experience in being able to work from home".

<sup>24</sup> Jessica Smith with Sarah Childs, *The Remotely Representative House? Lesson Learning from the Hybrid Commons* (London: Centenary Action Group, 2021), <<https://www.centenaryaction.org.uk/publications/remotely-representative-parliament>>.

## 2.5. Violence-free parliaments

A second critical finding of research that frames parliaments as gendered workplaces is that many parliamentarians and staff do not feel safe at work, with good reason. An avalanche of allegations of violence—predominantly against women—in the parliamentary workplace have been raised in the last decade and increasingly in the wake of the #MeToo movement. Studies conducted by the IPU (2016, 2018) found widespread incidences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation.<sup>25</sup> Most commonly, the studies found that women MPs faced psychological violence (82 per cent of the women who took part in the 2016 study, and 85 per cent of the women taking part in the 2018 European study). No less concerning, between 20 and 25 per cent of respondents were sexually harassed, and 58 per cent in the 2018 European study had been the target of online abuse. Academic researchers have also extensively documented the multifaceted experiences of violence faced by women parliamentarians and political and parliamentary staff.<sup>26</sup>

The international normative framework is also evolving to increasingly recognize violence against women in politics. In 2018, the UN Secretary-General described gender-based violence as a major obstacle to women's political participation in parliament (Report A/73/301), and shortly afterward, the UN General Assembly called upon national legislative authorities and political parties to adopt codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms, or revise existing ones, committing legislative authorities and political parties to zero tolerance of sexual harassment, intimidation and any other form of violence against women in politics in its Resolution on the Intensification of Efforts to Prevent and Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (A/Res/73/148, para. 7). In 2019, the IPU produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament.<sup>27</sup>

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25 IPU, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians* (Geneva: IPU, 2016); IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe* (Geneva: IPU, 2018).

26 For example, in their 2016 article "Violence against women in politics: A defence of the concept", Mona Lena Krook and Juliana Restrepo referred to "the graphic photos and threats" received by a former Italian speaker of parliament, Laura Boldrini, the gendered "on-line abuse" directed at the Norwegian prime minister, the "rape threats over Twitter, including a case that went to trial", directed at various female MPs in the United Kingdom, as well as intimidation practices deployed "to prevent Muslim women from becoming candidates, including abuse, insults, and pressures on their families". See also Mona Lena Krook, *Violence against Women in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

27 IPU, *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament* (Geneva: IPU, 2019).

In response to both the documented experience of violence and the evolving normative framework, parliaments are beginning to take measures to ensure the safety of those who work in these institutions. As a first step, parliaments have commissioned—or have undertaken themselves—inquiries into the extent of the problem, seeking expert recommendations. In the United Kingdom (and, outside the OSCE region, in Australia and New Zealand), independent inquiries were established into bullying and harassment in the wake of serious allegations.<sup>28</sup> So-called commitment pledges, for example, now in effect in the European Parliament and the Canadian and Icelandic parliaments, require MPs to publicly declare that they will not engage in any form of sexual harassment. Training for Members and staff is provided in the European Parliament, and failure to sign the pledge prevents a Member of the European Parliament from being appointed as a rapporteur or a member of an official delegation.<sup>29</sup>

Codes of conduct are also becoming more prevalent (see Box 5). Canada was one of the first legislatures in the world to enact anti-harassment and anti-sexual harassment codes of conduct and the first Westminster legislature to introduce a sexual harassment code that covers incidences between elected MPs (see Case Study 4). Researchers have identified criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of codes of conduct aiming to eliminate violence against women in parliament.<sup>30</sup> These include:

- Evidence-based development, including robust data collection on the nature and extent of the problem, definition and application of underpinning principles such as gender-based violence and intersectionality;
- Consultation with experts on gender-based violence for the development, implementation and monitoring of the respective code;
- Avoidance of language that blames victims/survivors;

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28 In the United Kingdom, see Gemma White QC, “Independent Inquiry Report on Bullying and Harassment of MPs’ Parliamentary Staff”, July 2019. In New Zealand, see Debbie Francis, “Independent External Review into Harmful Behaviour within the Parliamentary Workplace”, May 2019. In Australia, see Kate Jenkins, “Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces”, 2021.

29 Marian Sawer, “Dealing with toxic parliaments”, *Inside Story*, 1 March 2021, <<https://inside-story.org.au/dealing-with-toxic-parliaments/>>.

30 Cheryl Collier and Tracey Raney, “Canada’s Member-to-Member Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment in the House of Commons: Progress or Regress?” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2018, pp. 795–815; Tracey Raney and Cheryl Collier, “Privilege and Gendered Violence in the Canadian and British House of Commons”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2021. See also Gabrielle Bardall, “An overview of policy responses and solutions to violence against women in politics”, *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2020, pp. 299–301.

- Applicability to everyone working in parliament, including members, ministers, political staff, parliamentary staff and parliamentary workers;
- Establishment of an independent complaints handling and redress mechanism;
- Mandatory in-person training for all parliamentary workers including members of parliament; and
- Regular opportunities to review the respective code and grievance process and amend them where necessary, and inclusion of public disclosure provisions.

**Box 5. Good practice in policies and procedures on sexism, sexual assault and harassment in Ireland, Italy, Slovenia and the United Kingdom**

**Ireland:** A survey was conducted in 2019 on the prevalence of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. The Dignity and Respect Statement of Principles and Policy sets the standards of respect, dignity, safety and equality that apply to everyone in the parliamentary community—defined as members of the houses, the staff employed by members and by political parties, interns and those on work placements, political correspondents working in the houses and the staff of the houses of the Oireachtas Service. Members are asked to adopt the policy voluntarily. Information and awareness training on the policy was provided in 2019 and 2020.

**Italy, Senate:** The Senate has not adopted a code of conduct but has taken ad hoc measures when necessary. For example, when in 2015 two male senators displayed disrespectful and sexist behaviour towards a female colleague, the Bureau disciplined the male senators and banned them from taking part in the business of the Senate for five sitting days.

**Slovenia:** The Code of Ethics for Deputies of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates that deputies must act in a decorous, respectful, tolerant and non-discriminatory manner. At sessions of the National Assembly, meetings of working bodies, working and other meetings, deputies must act in a manner that does

not disturb the work of their colleagues and other participants, must foster democratic dialogue and must not be offensive. Based on the Decree on Measures for Protecting Workers' Dignity at Work in State Administration, a special adviser was appointed to assist and provide information on measures available to protect individuals from sexual and other harassment. The role of the adviser is to inform the affected person of the procedures available and help them seek professional support, where necessary.

**United Kingdom:** The UK Behaviour Code states: "Whether you are a visitor or working in Parliament at Westminster or elsewhere, there are clear guidelines in place on how you should be treated, and how you should treat others: Respect and value everyone – bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated; If you have experienced bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it and/or seek support by contacting the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) Helpline; Recognise your power, influence or authority and don't abuse them; Think about how your behaviour affects others and strive to understand their perspective; Act professionally towards others; Ensure Parliament meets the highest ethical standards of integrity, courtesy and mutual respect; Speak up about any unacceptable behaviour you see; Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously, independently and with effective sanctions." negatively on members with caring responsibilities.



## Case Study 4:

### Policies and codes to address and prevent sexual harassment in Canada

The Canadian Parliament has been a pioneer in terms of enacting legislation, policies and codes of conduct to cover harassment. Even before the #MeToo movement, in 2014, the House of Commons Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment was introduced. The following year, the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment was adopted, and subsequently amended in 2018–2019. The 2015 Code pays specific attention to sexual harassment, including from a perspective of gender-based violence and, subsequent to amendments in 2018–2019, includes mandatory anti-harassment training.

Post-#MeToo, the Canadian Parliament passed Bill C-65, amending the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, and the Budget Implementation Act. The passage of this legislation led to further policy changes reflected in the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy (2021) and the Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Senate Workplace.

The Senate policy is the result of a parliamentary inquiry. In 2019, the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration was mandated to review the 2009 Senate Policy on Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace. The Subcommittee consisted of five members, including the female chair, Senator Raymonde Saint-Germain. The Committee heard from 19 witnesses, including senators, Senate employee representatives, academics, lawyers, representatives of the Canadian Human Rights Commission and other experts in the fields of workplace harassment and workplace health and safety. The Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and the Library of Parliament provided technical support. The Subcommittee's report, entitled *Modernizing the Senate's Anti-Harassment Policy: Together let's protect our healthy worklife*, recommended the preparation of a new, rather than a revised, anti-harassment policy, based on the findings and recommendations contained in the report.

The new policy takes a very comprehensive approach in its applicability, covering senators; the Senate Administration's Executive Committee; directors, managers and supervisors of the Senate Administration; employees of the Senate Administration; staff of senators; independent contractors who are contracted by a senator or the Senate Administration; and students, interns and volunteers working in the offices of senators or the Senate. It addresses harassment prevention, and includes processes for filing informal and formal complaints, investigating and reporting, making appeals and communicating findings. More specifically, the policy:

- Requires the appointment of an impartial third party for grievance investigation to ensure the impartiality of the complaint process;
- Adopts a broad and updated definition of harassment covering more types and forms of harassment;
- Introduces measures to protect victims and witnesses of harassment from reprisal, as well as strengthens confidentiality procedures;
- Identifies and requires remedial, corrective or disciplinary measures;
- Requires all senators and Senate employees to undertake mandatory training on various types of harassment;
- Introduces a new process for filing a harassment complaint and an improved decision-making matrix that takes into account the positions held by the complainants and respondents;

- Deliberately uses gender-sensitive language, removing allusions to “bad faith,” “conflict,” “severity” and “circumstances and context” with the objective of encouraging victims of harassment to bring forward their complaints; and
- Increases the budget allocated to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

The policy was aligned with federal regulations on workplace harassment and violence prevention passed in 2020, which also apply to parliamentary entities. The revised Senate Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy came into force in August 2021. The Policy is subject to regular three-year reviews to be conducted jointly by the Subcommittee and the Senate’s Policy Health and Safety Committee. These committees will jointly conduct workplace assessments and make periodic recommendations regarding changes, where required.

## 2.6. What can parliaments do to advance gender-sensitive representation?

Parliaments can:

- Adopt measures that support fifty-fifty gender balance in parliament in line with the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/09 on women’s participation in political and public life, which “calls on the participating States to ... consider possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and especially in decision-making”, and the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Agreed Conclusions 2021, “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” (E/CN.6/2021/L.3), such as:
  - The adoption of shared leadership, either by establishing co-leadership positions, or rotating the positions between men and women;
  - Internal rule changes to increase the number of women appointed to parliamentary leadership positions (including committee chairs and leadership positions in the bureau or board);
  - Internal rule changes to guarantee a proportional and equitable distribution of women parliamentarians across all committees—not just those relating to social issues—and parliamentary delegations, including to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly;
- Strengthen policies and measures that will enforce gender balance also among parliamentary staff, horizontally and vertically;
- Introduce a monitoring and reporting system that captures all MPs’ participation across the full range of parliamentary activity; harmonize indicators by referring to databases managed by international organizations (such as

the European Institute for Gender Equality); regularly review and publish diversity-disaggregated data; and take action to redress instances of diversity imbalance in participation;

- Proactively promote a healthy work–life balance, making the everyday job of a parliamentarian more attractive to all by:
  - Ensuring that allowances and parliamentary travel entitlements are provided to parliamentarians equitably and transparently, with equality of participation as one of the goals of a fair system of allowances and expenses;
  - Supporting all parliamentarians with caring responsibilities (be they newborns, school-aged children, elderly or special-needs dependents) by offering them alternatives to chamber duty and voting, such as paid parental leave and carer’s leave, flexible working arrangements (including remote voting), a proxy vote or vote pairing;
  - Fully resourcing family-friendly arrangements so as not to increase the care burden of individual MPs;
- Ensure that policies and practices on work–life balance are equally available to parliamentary staff;
- Commit to and enforce zero tolerance of all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination in the parliamentary workplace by:
  - Developing a code of conduct through sound and robust data collection using internationally accredited and harmonized indicators;
  - Reflecting an understanding of the causes and preventions of gender-based violence, and the importance of intersectionality, in the provisions of the code of conduct;
  - Ensuring that the code of conduct applies to every person who works in the parliament;
  - Establishing independent mechanisms for complaints handling and redress;
  - Providing confidential access to assistance for victims;
  - Ensuring remedies as well as disciplinary sanctions against perpetrators;
  - Mandating anti-sexism and anti-harassment training for all parliamentary workers; and
  - Reviewing the code and grievance process regularly, and publicly disclosing (e.g. in aggregate, quantitative form) actions taken by the parliament and the independent complaints mechanism.

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# **GENDER-SENSITIVE LAWMAKING**

## 3. Gender-sensitive lawmaking

Across the OSCE region, international mechanisms and national legal frameworks confirm the principle of equality before the law. To ensure such equality in legislation, the policymaking process and the process of drafting, debating and adopting legislation need to also bear in mind the diverse and potentially diverging interests of women and men, and of different minority groups.

Lawmaking includes developing, drafting, introducing, debating, amending, adopting and publishing public policies and laws, and is a fundamental function of every parliament. Gender-sensitizing this process ensures that the governing rules and structures of our societies do not perpetuate gender-based discrimination but rather actively work to advance equality for all. Without institutionalized processes and resources, laws can have harmful impacts on different groups in our societies. This section considers good practices in OSCE parliaments in gender-sensitive policymaking and lawmaking, and the necessary requirements for quality assessment and review.

When the IPU considered gender-sensitive lawmaking in 2011, it found that there were “very few examples of how to strategically assess a piece of legislation from a gender perspective”.<sup>31</sup> A decade later, this has become a key area of focus for a number of organizations supporting parliaments, not least of which is ODIHR.

### 3.1. Gender impact analysis and use of data

Legislation becomes gender-sensitive when it is subject to gender analysis, based on review of quality data that is disaggregated by sex and other intersectional indicators, and when it has been the subject of consultations with beneficiaries and gender experts across various disciplines, not least of which is the specific subject matter of the draft law. Such gender analysis ideally also

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<sup>31</sup> IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 31.

### What is gender-sensitive legislation?

Gender-sensitive legislation (GSL) is a central part of mainstreaming gender considerations into the legal system. It refers to the integration of a gender perspective into all components of the legislative process—design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the substance and the form of legislation—in order to achieve the ultimate objective of equality between women and men. Similar to other gender-mainstreaming endeavours, GSL is not a goal in itself but a means of achieving equality.

The introduction of GSL typically involves several stages. First, it requires a **thorough analysis of the status quo from a gender perspective** and of the possibly distinct needs and priorities of women and men in relation to the law under consideration. This analysis, commonly dubbed a “gender-based analysis”, aims to systematically identify the key issues contributing to gender inequalities so that they can be properly addressed by the law in question. It can be described as an analysis of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, and decision-making powers between women and men. This analysis typically draws on the existing evidence base on gender distinctions within a particular sector and may also require new data collection.

Second, it includes an **analysis of the likely impact of the law on its target groups**, and of whether the needs and priorities of women and men, identified as part of the initial analysis, are addressed by the law.

Third, based on the findings of the previous steps, a GSL process requires **the integration, if applicable, of gender-focused interventions**, perspectives or considerations into the law in question.

Finally, a sustainable GSL process includes the **development of gender-sensitive indicators** that would enable regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the law towards its stated gender objectives.

Source: ODIHR, *Making Laws Work for Men and Women: A Practical Guide to Gender-Sensitive Legislation* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2017)

includes budgetary assessments. This is, of course, improved when the process by which laws are drafted are subject—by law—to gender impact assessments, as in the case of Canada and Estonia (see Box 6). The European Commission defines a gender impact assessment as follows:

Gender impact assessment is the process of comparing and assessing, according to gender relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development *resulting* from the introduction of the proposed policy. Gender impact assessment is the estimation of the different effects (positive, negative or neutral) of any policy or activity (...) in terms of gender equality.<sup>32</sup>

32 See “Gender Impact Assessment”, EIGE, <<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment>>.

### Box 6. Good practice in gender-sensitive lawmaking in Canada and Estonia

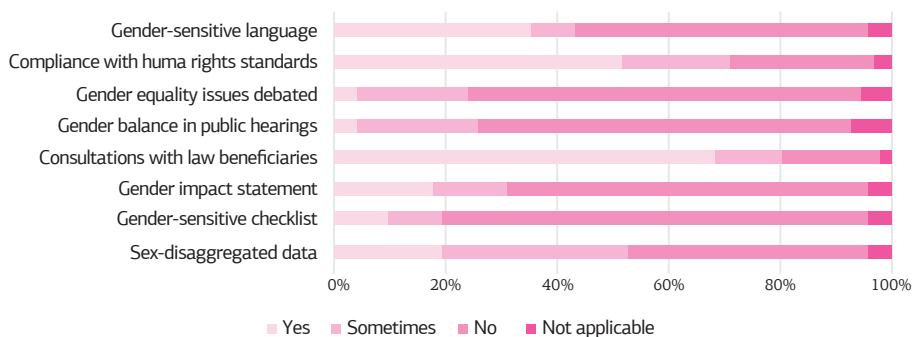
**Canada:** There are several federal laws that specifically require that the federal government apply gender-based analysis or gender-based analysis plus. For instance, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act came into force in 2002 and requires (in Section 94(2)(f)) that the annual report tabled by the minister in each house of Parliament include a gender-based analysis of the impact of the Act. The Canadian Gender Budgeting Act, which came into force in 2018, states (in Section 3) that if a budget plan tabled in Parliament does not include details on the impacts in terms of gender and diversity of the new measures described in the plan, the Minister of Finance must table, before each house of Parliament, a report describing those impacts within 30 sitting days of the tabling of the budget plan. In addition, the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board must, once a year, make available to the public analyses of impacts in terms of gender

and diversity of tax expenditures (for the Minister of Finance) and government expenditures (for the President of the Treasury Board) that they consider appropriate. The Impact Assessment Act, which came into force in 2019, requires that the “intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors” be considered in the impact assessment of a designated project.

**Estonia:** Draft laws submitted to the Riigikogu are always accompanied by an explanatory memorandum that contains a separate chapter on impacts. A checklist is used in developing and drafting the proposed law, including the following questions: Does the draft law affect the daily lives of women and men? Are there differences between men and women in this area (rights, responsibilities, opportunities, responsibilities, resources, participation, norms or values related to gender roles? Where the answer to these questions is “yes”, relevant gender statistics are used.

In the 2020 OSCE survey, parliaments were asked whether specific mechanisms were used to ensure that the legislation they pass is gender-sensitive, such as checklists, impact statements, sex-disaggregated data and/or compliance checks with human rights standards (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Parliamentary mechanisms to ensure that legislation is gender-sensitive**



The most common response is that laws were made more gender-sensitive through consultation with their key beneficiaries (69 per cent of responding parliaments). A good practice in this regard was presented by the US House of Representatives, which had recommended in 2021 that a new method be devised to survey the diversity of witness panels at committee hearings, and that all committees include, in their oversight plan, “a discussion of how the committee’s work will address issues of inequities on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or national origin”.<sup>33</sup> Other relatively common measures adopted by OSCE parliaments are compliance with human rights standards and the use of gender-sensitive (and diversity-sensitive) language that specifically avoids sexist, racist, ableist or other discriminatory language.

More technical and resource-intensive mechanisms for gender-sensitive legislative review, such as gender-sensitive checklists, gender impact assessments and sex-disaggregated data, were less frequently reported, although there were some positive examples provided of certain parliaments’ use of these mechanisms (see Box 7).

**Box 7. Good practice in gender-sensitive legislative assessment in Andorra and Georgia**

**Andorra:** The 2015 Agreement to Promote Gender Equality in the Parliament required the establishment of indicators to ensure that legislative initiatives could be evaluated from a gender equality perspective and a statistical plan that monitors these gender indicators.

**Georgia:** In 2017, a gender impact assessment methodology was piloted in the Parliament to assess the impact of certain policies and legislative proposals on women and men, and their contribution to gender equality more broadly. The pilot considered drug policy reform, amendments to the Labour Code, amendments to the Criminal Code on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Law on Taxation of Small Enterprises, a draft law on

water resources management and a draft law on physical education and sport. The pilot recommended that a gender-sensitive explanatory note be presented for all draft legislation, as well as an indication of the organizations and/or experts involved in the preparation of the draft law.

The Parliamentary Budget Office of Georgia determines the gender relevance of each proposed budgetary measure through the Gender Relevance Index. The Index aggregates a measure of relevance by assessing five categories of gender equality: equal capacity to establish an independent private and public life, equal capacity to participate in the social and political sphere, equal capacity to live and work in safe and secure environments, equal capacity to enjoy personal independence and equal capacity to enjoy physical independence. Sex-disaggregated data is used in considering the draft budget.

33 See “Tri-Caucus Chairs Announce New Initiative to Promote Diversity of House Committee Witnesses”, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, 12 December 2019, <<https://chc.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/tri-caucus-chairs-announce-new-initiative-to-promote-diversity-of-house>>.



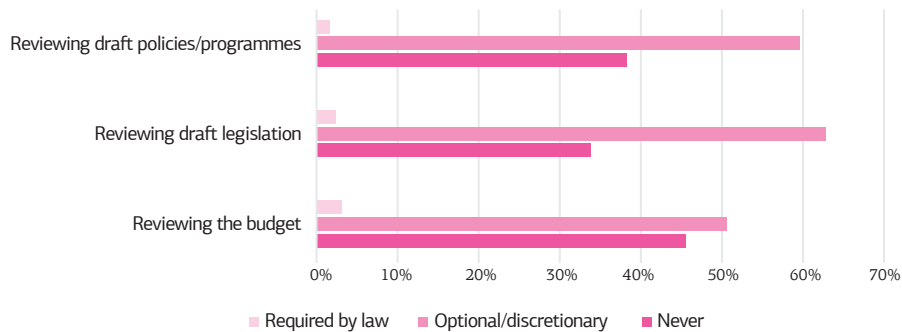
**Box 8. Good practice in creating bespoke gender analysis tools in North Macedonia**

In the Plan of Activities on Gender Sensitivity for 2020 and 2021, adopted by the Assembly's Committee for Equal Opportunities in January 2020, the Assembly expects to develop its own mechanism for gender impact assessment in the preparation, review and oversight of laws, such as a checklist for gender-sensitive legislative scrutiny.

More concerning is the survey's finding that very few parliaments are required by law to use sex-disaggregated data in their consideration of legislation. Where they are, it is more likely to be in relation to the budget (3.5 per cent of responding parliaments) than reviewing draft policies and programmes (1.5 per cent) (see Figure 9). A good practice was provided by the Parliament of Iceland, which noted that, by law, budget preparations in each ministry require a gendered impact of the budget, and that all draft laws are now subject to gender analysis, based on sex-disaggregated data.

As an optional or discretionary activity, OSCE parliaments responded that they were more likely to use sex-disaggregated data when they were reviewing draft legislation (63 per cent) than when reviewing budgets (51 per cent). However, more than a third of the parliaments responding to the survey never use sex-disaggregated data in any aspect of the legislative process. This, discouragingly, represents a finding of little change from the now decade-old 2011 IPU report.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 9. Use of sex-disaggregated data**



<sup>34</sup> IPU, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 57.

## Case Study 5: Parliamentary gender impact assessments in Georgia

Since 2017, the Parliament of Georgia has undertaken gender impact assessments (GIAs) to assess the impact of certain policies and legislative amendments on gender relations and equality in the country. GIAs have been applied to drug policy reform, amendments to the Labour Code, amendments to the Criminal Code on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Law on Taxation of Small Enterprises, a draft law on water resources management and a draft law on physical education and sport.

These GIAs resulted in practical recommendations that were integrated into draft legislation. For instance, in the context of the legislation on domestic violence, the GIA recommended that criminal, rather than administrative, liability should be imposed on offenders who violate protective orders. In the context of the Labour Code, the GIA recommended that employers undertake measures to strengthen the safety of pregnant and nursing women in specific occupations. In the context of physical education, the GIA recommended promoting equal participation of boys and girls in school sport activities, and allocating state budgets accordingly.

GIAs are carried out by the Gender Equality Council (GEC), which was established in 2004 and was converted into a standing body of the Parliament in 2010. The GEC's primary objective is to advance systematic and co-ordinated parliamentary activities on gender equality, mainstream gender issues into legislation and undertake various awareness-raising and capacity-building activities on gender issues. In 2021, the Council included ten MPs—six women and four men—including opposition and coalition parties.

The GEC has benefited from the support of international partners, such as the US Agency for International Development, the German development agency GIZ, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute. These organizations assisted the Council in its development of the GIA process in 2017 and delivered a range of capacity-building activities to sensitize MPs and staff regarding the GIA objectives and process.

Between 2017 and 2021, eight GIAs were conducted, and the GIA methodology is now publicly available on the parliamentary website (in Georgian). To date, the GIA process has been undertaken by an internal parliamentary working group comprised of MPs, staff members from relevant committees and the budget office, with the guidance of an external expert. The working group directs inquiries to different ministries and organizations, conducts desk reviews of all available data and invites submissions from relevant experts. Each GIA takes around two months, and culminates in the publication of recommendations from the working group.

Several lessons from the GIA implementation process can be noted:

- *Need for institutionalization.* The decision on whether a GIA is carried out is currently taken by the Council, with the agreement of the relevant legislative committee. Since GIAs are not mandatory, committees can choose not to have them commissioned as part of their legislative inquiries, relying instead on the GEC to advocate for their need and importance.
- *A mindset shift is required.* While significant advancements have been made in promoting gender equality in Georgian society and Parliament, political will is required to make this area a priority. Gender issues are often overlooked, and are typically promoted by donor organizations.

- *Need for internal gender equality skills-building and external support.* The GIA process is rigorous and time-consuming. It requires expert knowledge—both in the GIA methodology and the subject matter of the assessment. Parliamentary committees are typically understaffed and lack gender equality expertise. With all eight GIAs undertaken to date having been driven by external experts, parliamentary committees have not had the opportunity to build their own internal capacity in running a GIA process. The cost of external consultants adds to the overall cost of GIAs, a further challenge to universal mainstreaming of the impact assessment process across all legislative bills.
- *Lack of sex-disaggregated data.* While GIAs are dependent on a strong, robust evidence base, not all relevant data is sex-disaggregated in Georgia, rendering accurate gender analysis extremely difficult.

Despite these challenges, the GEC is keen to continue and expand the GIA process. Moving forward, the Council will seek to institutionalize the GIA methodology—first, by developing clear criteria by which to determine appropriate cases for GIAs, and second, by amending the rules of procedure so that the criteria and their fulfilment are institutionalized.

### 3.2. Stakeholder relationships between parliaments and gender experts

A second critical aspect of gender-sensitive legislative review considers the nature and diversity of relationships parliaments establish with external sources of gender expertise. Gender experts can be individuals who have done extensive research or who have considerable experience working on specific gender equality issues. This expertise provides a valuable evidence base and sheds light on potential and demonstrated areas of gender discrimination and/or gender-differentiated outcomes. Establishing relationships with a wide range of gender experts, including gender experts with experience in working with ethnic minorities or people with disabilities, ensures that parliaments have access to robust evidence and advice across diverse issue portfolios, and allows for a wider and deeper contestation of political ideas.

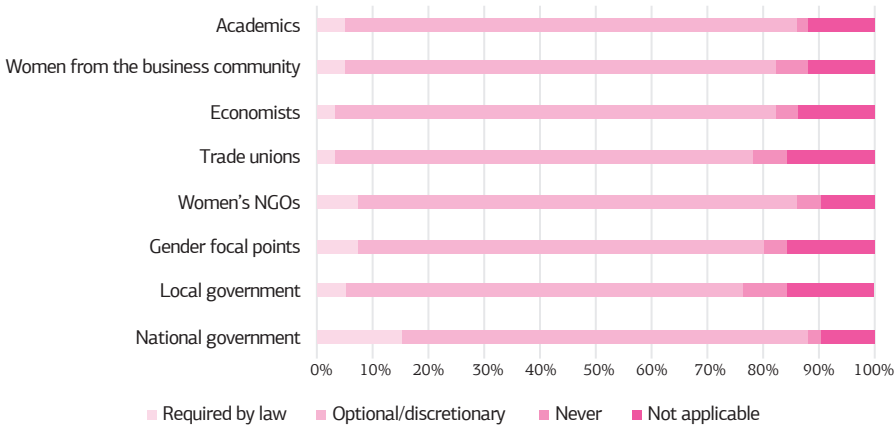
On a positive note, OSCE parliaments have documented engagement with an extensive range of gender experts from academia, trade unions, and national and local governments (see Figure 10). Relationships with gender experts are largely informal, with only between 10 and 17 per cent of all responding parliaments defining their relationships with either academic gender experts, women’s media commentators or NGOs as “formal” (see Figure 11). Formal relationships were defined in terms of the regularity of contact or where a collaborative agreement had been reached.

Where parliaments have established formal relationships (that is, in legislation), these tend to be with “the usual suspects” (see Figure 10): national institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality



(so-called gender machinery, such as human rights and equal opportunities commissions) (16 per cent of responding parliaments), gender focal points (8 per cent) and women’s NGOs (8 per cent). The Chamber of Deputies in Romania, for instance, provided the example of its Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which works in tandem with the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, responsible for the implementation of a national strategy on equal opportunities and elimination of gender-based violence. The Parliament of Montenegro has organized an annual “women’s parliament” in which civil society and the women’s movement are invited to participate. Similarly, the Federal Assembly of Switzerland has been organizing “women’s sessions”, at the conclusion of which participants submit a list of demands to the Federal Assembly. OSCE parliaments were more likely to respond that specific relationships were “not applicable” (for example, in the cases of local government machinery, women-focused trade unions or gender focal points).

**Figure 10. Relationship building with external sources of gender expertise**



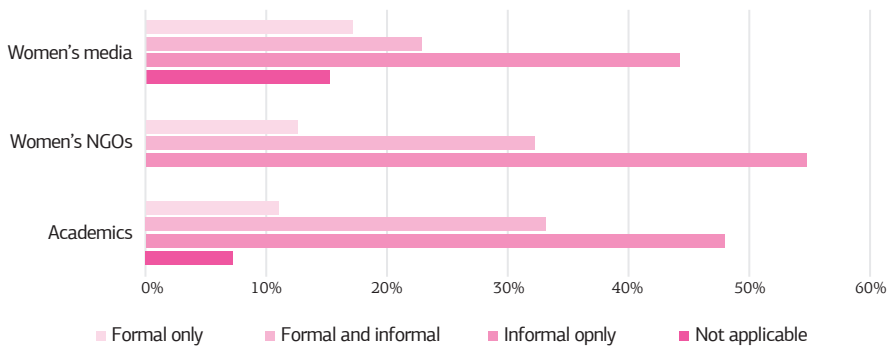
The Parliament of Georgia stated that gender stakeholders’ participation was ensured by “creating informal working groups with academic gender experts, participants from local non-governmental and international organizations”.

### Box 9. Good practice in relationship building with gender experts in Armenia

Armenia: On 8 March 2019 a platform for collaboration was established between the Parliament and civil society organizations that promote equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Since then, periodic

meetings on specific issues have been held by the platform, with participants from both the Parliament and civil society expressing their satisfaction with this process. The leading civil society organization in the platform receives funding from international donors at the Parliament's recommendation.

Figure 11. Formality of relationships with external gender expertise



### 3.3. In-house gender expertise

Parliaments were asked whether gender expertise—in the form of individuals and policy commitments—was present across various areas of their administration, from human resources, professional development and training to security and public broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The presence of in-house gender expertise signals a parliament's acceptance and understanding that all areas of its organization, administration and procedure are gendered, meaning that power relations can disproportionately affect the work of some (usually women) over others (usually men). In-house expertise legitimizes and supports a parliament's reorientation of its activities towards the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination.

And yet, overwhelmingly, OSCE parliaments considered that individual gender experts were “not applicable” in most areas of the parliamentary administration, and most particularly in broadcasting (90 per cent of responding parliaments), IT (88 per cent) and security (88 per cent). Gender experts were instead most likely found in human resources departments (27 per cent), in research (21

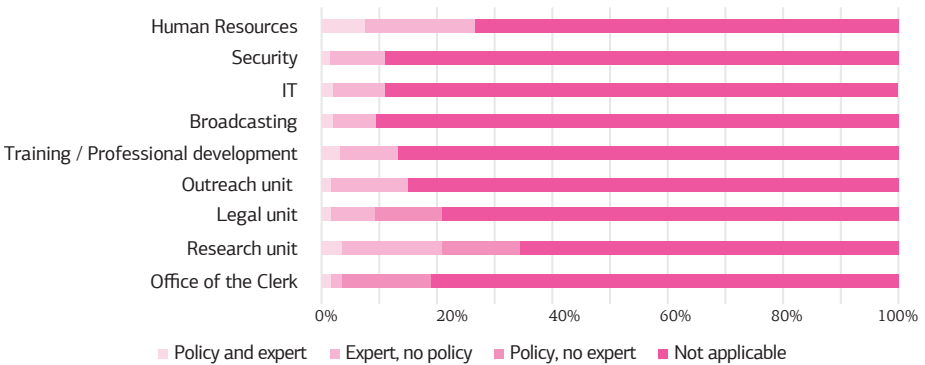
**Box 10. Good practice in building in-house gender capacity in Italy and North Macedonia**

Italy, Chamber of Deputies: The Human Resources Unit ensures the training of employees on gender equality and on the analysis of the gender impact of public policies.

North Macedonia: Two staffers have been engaged as trainers on gender topics for orientation sessions for new MPs, and one of them has held training on gender issues in the Assembly’s oversight role, organized by the Parliamentary Institute and UN Women.

per cent), in outreach units (15 per cent ) and in professional development/training (13 per cent). It is not clear from the responses presented in Figure 12, however, whether these gender experts merely sit in these areas and apply their expertise more generally across the work of parliament, or are specific to these units, indicating that further research is required. Gender policies were mostly seen as relevant in the office of the secretary general, legal units and research units.

**Figure 12. In-house parliamentary gender expertise**



**3.4 What can parliaments do to advance gender-sensitive lawmaking?**

Parliaments can:

- Improve their understanding of the gendered impacts of government-initiated legislation and budgets by:
  - Requiring, by law, comprehensive government data broken down by multiple demographic indicators including sex, and continue to advocate for more inclusive data collection practices;
  - Designing, based on existing templates and toolkits, bespoke GSL frameworks that suit their own parliamentary context, including a checklist and guidance on how to use it;

- Requiring, by law, that all government policies and legislation be reviewed and assessed before and after for their gender impact and compliance with national obligations under relevant international normative frameworks, requiring that assessment reports be made available to the public and submitted directly to the parliament, and considering the appropriateness of sanctions for non-compliance with impact assessments;
  - Establishing and formalizing stakeholder relationships with gender experts across diverse policy areas from academia, civil society organizations and the private sector, and drawing on this expertise in legislative and budgetary deliberation; and
  - Requiring, by law, the practice of gender-responsive budgeting to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact of all policy measures, specifically by studying any budget cuts and advocating against cuts to programmes or initiatives meant to support women and gender equality.
- Requiring, by law, and formalizing the mandatory practice of targeted public consultations so that women and representatives of minority groups could be involved in consultation proceedings on legislation that may affect them (consultation strategies need to adapt their timing and methods of consultation accordingly, by enhancing outreach for particularly marginalized groups, conducting smaller or larger, local or regional, or online or offline events, depending on the respective groups and their needs—translation and interpretation also need to be planned);
- Improve their understanding of the relevance of gender equality across all portfolio areas, by:
    - Piloting and/or formalizing gender mainstreaming in areas like the environment and national security, traditionally seen as gender-neutral; and
    - Formalizing and resourcing relationships with a broad range of gender experts across all policy sectors;
  - Improve internal capacity for gender analysis by:
    - Hiring gender experts across the parliamentary administration, including in non-traditional areas such as communications and broadcasting and information technology; and
    - Ensuring that all MPs have access to sex- and diversity-disaggregated data collected and analysed by independent sources such as the parliamentary research service or library, think tanks, academia and civil society organizations.



**GENDER-SENSITIVE  
OVERSIGHT**



## 4. Gender-sensitive oversight

Given that parliaments are often influenced by the executive and political developments taking place in political parties, oversight activities are essential for improving the quality of legislation and programmes and in strengthening the overall position of parliaments. This section is concerned with the effectiveness of parliamentary mechanisms in undertaking gender-sensitive oversight.

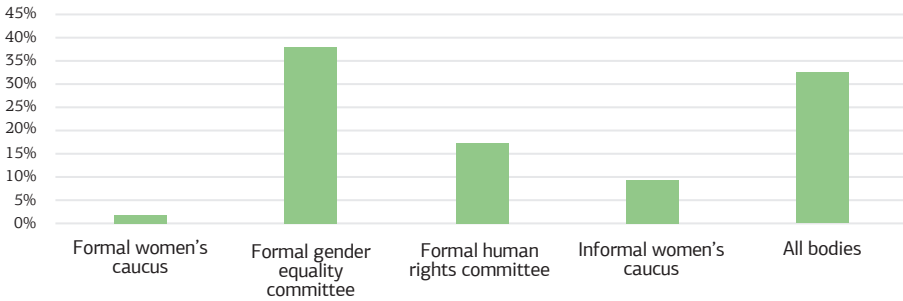
Gender mainstreaming is a key tool not only for advancing gender equality but also for effective oversight, for which both men and women MPs bear responsibility. Gender mainstreaming oversight involves asking questions about the impact that government policies, programmes, budgetary allocations and expenditures will have or have had on women and girls as well as on men and boys. It assesses whether gender-blind or gender-biased assumptions have been made about the beneficiaries of a process or policy, who the process or policy target is, and whether all groups will benefit equitably. Ultimately, and with a parliamentary majority, gender-sensitive oversight might lead to the downfall of governments that have been shown to perpetuate gender inequality.



### 4.1. Parliamentary bodies focused on gender equality

Parliaments have a crucial role to play in regulatory policy and oversight, mainly due to their general oversight of the executive, but also as they are the ultimate authority for approving legislation. Gender-sensitive oversight requires, in the first instance, strong, accountable and politically legitimate parliamentary bodies. These bodies are themselves dependent upon the parliament’s recognizing that its deliberations contribute substantively and symbolically to the overall work of the parliament. In the 2020 survey, OSCE parliaments noted that the most common body responsible for gender-sensitive oversight was a committee on gender equality (38 per cent of responding parliaments), followed by a dedicated human rights committee (17 per cent). The IPU study also found “a tendency to review gender equality through human rights committees” rather than other portfolio committees.<sup>35</sup>

**Figure 13. Bodies most responsible for gender-sensitive oversight**



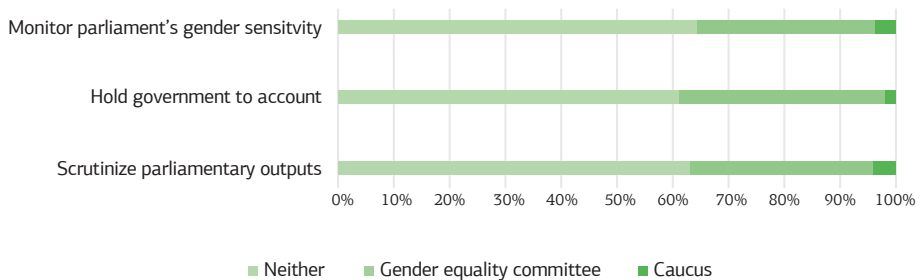
Gender equality is largely the responsibility of gender equality committees as opposed to women’s caucuses, but over 30 per cent of responding parliaments indicated that the responsibility lay with all parliamentary bodies (see Figure 13). Where all parliamentary bodies shared responsibility for gender-sensitive oversight, it was not usually enshrined in either legislation or the rules of procedure. For many years, the Parliament of Sweden has demonstrated good practice in shared responsibility for gender mainstreaming across all parliamentary bodies, noting that, “while gender equality is referred to the

35 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Committee on the Labour Market, gender sensitive oversight of legislation is mainstreamed across all committees”.

Gender equality committees are more likely than caucuses to undertake specific gender-sensitive actions such as monitoring and reviewing the parliament’s overall gender sensitivity or holding the government to account (see Figure 14). Women’s caucuses, conversely, are rarely responsible for undertaking these specific activities, which speaks to their informal nature and relative lack of institutional legitimacy: women’s caucuses are rarely mandated to be able to hold government to account in OSCE parliaments.

**Figure 14. Gender-sensitive oversight strategies of caucuses and committees**



**Box 11. Good practice in gender-sensitive committee inquiries in Albania and Portugal**

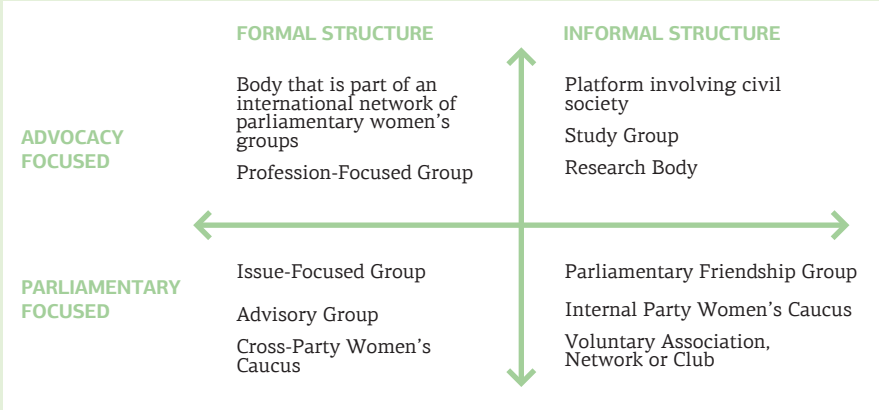
Albania: The Parliamentary Subcommittee on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, in co-operation with other parliamentary committees and subcommittees, as well as the Women MPs Alliance, has organized hearings with representatives from state institutions, civil society and local associations regarding the functioning of the inter-institutional co-ordinated referral mechanism set up at the local level to address gender-based violence; they have also organized hearings regarding civil society proposals to prevent sexual violence. A hearing was also held to present

and discuss a letter from UN Women on the implementation of international obligations in the prevention of gender-based violence in elections.

Portugal: The Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees has a Subcommittee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, which is responsible for monitoring, among other things, issues related to gender. The Subcommittee holds hearings periodically with some national entities in the area of gender equality, promotes events such as debates or conferences on the subject and can be given the responsibility of preparing legislative processes that involve gender-sensitive matters.

### Women’s parliamentary bodies as gender-mainstreaming mechanisms

A 2013 ODIHR comparative study devised the following typology of women’s parliamentary bodies:



**Formal parliamentary-focused groups** such as cross-party women’s caucuses, advisory groups or issue-focused groups are those established and recognized by the parliament, which may be provided with resources (including parliamentary staff, a budget and/or meeting rooms). They are primarily concerned with the review of policy and legislation from a gender perspective, supporting the introduction of amendments to such legislation or advocating for women’s substantive representation in parliament. These groups tend to restrict their membership to women.

**Formal advocacy-focused groups** are those that may be similarly resourced by the parliament (although not to the same extent as parliamentary-focused groups) and run as formal groups with clear leadership structures and meeting rules. They are more concerned with advocacy on a specific issue or profession, or with similar parliamentary groups in other countries (e.g. an international network of women’s parliamentary bodies). These bodies may include the participation of men.

**Informal parliamentary-focused groups**, such as voluntary associations, clubs or networks, or parliamentary friendship groups can be differentiated in that they are generally not provided with resources from the parliament (but may attract some funding from international or non-governmental organizations). They have less rigid meeting rules and leadership structures (e.g. they may rotate their leadership positions) but are still focused on parliamentary activities, such as legislative reviews. These bodies may include the participation of men.

**Informal advocacy-focused groups** tend to be composed of women and men, have a non-hierarchical leadership structure, meet infrequently on an as-required basis and have no resources provided by the parliament. They are primarily focused on gathering information, writing letters and conducting general advocacy. Platforms involving civil society and research or study groups are usually very well connected with civil society (and other) organizations outside parliament.

Source: ODIHR, *Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2013)

## Case Study 6: Formalizing the Women's Alliance in Albania

The Albanian Women's Alliance (WA) was originally established in 2009 as an informal group of female MPs. Between its founding and 2019, its members successfully advocated for gender equality in parliamentary proceedings and in legislative bills, including the introduction of electoral gender quotas at the municipal level. Despite this success, the WA's informal status limited its ability to play a more structured role in parliamentary processes: the WA was not able to collaborate with various committees and did not have a dedicated voice in parliament. Resources (including technical staff) available to the WA as an informal body were also limited and considered insufficient in pursuing its agenda.

In 2019, amendments to the rules of procedure recognized the WA as a voluntary body that acts for the advancement of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all parliamentary activities.<sup>1</sup>

This transformation in its status was the result of significant mobilization and engagement by both female and male MPs showcasing the WA's inclusiveness and representativeness. While the female Deputy Speaker of Parliament played a key role in pushing forward these amendments, it was fully supported by the Speaker and all MPs. The formalization of the WA was also accompanied by other gender-sensitive developments in the Albanian Parliament, such as the adoption of a Code of Conduct<sup>2</sup> and enactment of new legislation on the prevention of gender discrimination.

In 2021, the WA was composed of 36 women MPs from all political groups represented in the Assembly and continued to implement activities in support of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. These included the preparation of a Strategy on Gender-Sensitive Parliament and a first-of-its-kind Plan of Action on Gender Mainstreaming.

As a legally recognized entity, the Women's Alliance enjoys:

- *An allocation of parliamentary resources.* The Alliance has been provided with support staff and a limited budget.
- *Enhanced access to external financial support.* The WA is now entitled to apply for financial support from donor organizations, which can more readily support a formal and permanent association, compared with an informal group.
- *A more co-ordinated voice in Parliament.* Formal recognition has changed group dynamics, increasing collaboration and gender awareness among its members. As a result, the WA has amplified the voice of women in the parliamentary process.
- *Stronger planning and organizational responsibilities.* As a formal entity, the WA is now responsible for developing a detailed and budgeted action plan for all its planned activities. A clear agenda and structured calendar of activities has facilitated more strategic collaboration with other parliamentary bodies, including committees.
- *Greater legitimacy in the work of Parliament.* The WA's new legal recognition has boosted its status in Parliament. Parliamentary committees more readily accept proposals put for-

1 See Article 40(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Albania, available in Albanian only at <<https://www.parlament.al/Files/sKuvendi/rregullorja.pdf>>.

2 Assembly Decision No. 61/2018, Code of Conduct of the Parliament of Albania, available in Albanian only at <<https://www.parlament.al/Files/RaporteStatistika/Kodi%20i%20Sjelljes.pdf>>

ward for consideration by the Alliance, and it is also easier for the Alliance to engage MPs in its work on gender impact assessments of key legislative bills and budgetary allocations, and gender-sensitive post-legislative scrutiny.

The Alliance still faces a number of challenges. First, in order to sustain its activities, the Alliance has to apply for external funding, since the resources that are allocated to it by the Parliament are limited. Second, all WA activities are undertaken by its members on a voluntary basis, imposing a significant burden on their busy schedules. Third, co-ordination with the Gender Equality Subcommittee and other bodies of the Assembly on the implementation of the Plan of Action and ongoing monitoring of gender equality issues could be improved.

Moving forward, the Alliance seeks to examine the effectiveness of its activities in the past few years, undertake a current needs assessment, prioritize gender-related interventions that it seeks to promote and develop a strategic—yet realistic—action plan that would amplify the impact and sustainability of its interventions. This will include more focus on gender impact assessments as well as strengthening the public profile of the Alliance in the media.

OSCE parliaments were also asked whether political parties had their own gender equality mechanisms. While the majority of parliaments did not respond to this question given that political parties are usually outside their scope of authority, responses (presented in Box 12) indicated two different scenarios: in the first, there is the sense that it is parties on the left of the political spectrum that are interested in establishing gender equality mechanisms (as noted in the response from the Parliament of Poland); in the second scenario, all political parties accept the importance of gender equality and have established some kind of mechanism to promote it. The parliaments of Iceland and Finland, for example, have established all-party feminist networks, where MPs of all genders can participate. The most commonly cited gender-mainstreaming mechanism was electoral gender quotas, even though quotas have been designed to

**Box 12. Good practice in gender mainstreaming across all political parties in Canada, Norway and Switzerland**

Canada: The following parties have gender-mainstreaming mechanisms: Quebecer Bloc: Statute and Regulations 2019 (includes a brief paragraph about harassment); Conservative Party of Canada: National Council Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Volunteers, Campaign Staff and EDA Staff; Liberal Party of Canada: Safe Campaigns Training, Code of Conduct for Events, and a Respectful Workplace Policy; New Democratic Party of Canada: Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence, and an Equity Statement; and the Green Party of Canada: Members' Code of Conduct.

Norway: Seven out of nine political parties represented in Parliament have some form of quotas regarding nominations to electoral lists and/or appointments to councils, boards, delegations and so forth. Five parties have formal mechanisms: the Social Democratic Party (Arbeiderpartiet), the Conservative Party (Høyre), the Centre Party (Senterpartiet), the Christian People's Party (Kristelig Folkeparti) and the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti).

Switzerland: Every political party in Switzerland has a formal or informal women's network, although it is not always clear if concrete financial contributions are dedicated to these networks.

deliver descriptive representation and have no direct mechanism to affect the gender mainstreaming of parliamentary outcomes.<sup>36</sup>

#### **Tips for MPs: Mainstreaming gender equality in oversight activities**

##### **Why should I get involved?**

Gender mainstreaming means assessing policies, laws and programmes for their differential impact on men and women and on boys and girls. Ensuring that this is an aspect of all oversight work is important in promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

Considering existing laws and policies to identify if, or where, they may be discriminatory allows MPs to develop recommendations that remedy those problems.

##### **What do I need?**

- A “gender lens” — always keep a lookout for possible gender discrimination when investigating any policy issue.
- Data on all policy areas, disaggregated by sex (and other variables of social inclusion such as age, ethnicity, disability, gender identity and sexual orientation).
- Research and input from civil society organizations, specialized gender units, universities and think tanks, private sector organizations/corporations, trade associations and the media.

##### **How can I contribute effectively?**

- Undertake a self-assessment of the parliament’s capacity for gender mainstreaming.
- Develop, and systematically use, a gender-mainstreaming checklist:
  - Who is the target of a proposed policy, programme or project? Who will benefit? Who will lose out?
  - Who makes the decisions? Have women and men been involved in the development of a solution to address the issue?
  - How are resources distributed? Who provides the resources? Who uses the resources? How are the resources procured?
  - Does the intervention maintain or challenge existing gender relations?
- Ask questions in committee hearings or during plenary debates:
  - Have gender equality advocates been consulted in the development of the policy?
  - Has a gender impact assessment been made of the (reviewed or proposed) policy?
  - Has the data used to inform the policy analysis been disaggregated by sex?
  - What are the social and economic costs to both men and women of the policy or law under review?
  - Are the recommendations made on the policy or law gender-specific, gender-neutral or gender-blind?
- Publicize any discovered instances of gender discrimination:
  - Speak with the minister responsible.
  - Lobby for change within your own party.
  - Network with members “across the floor”.
  - Raise the issue with the media.

Source: IPU/UNDP, *Global Parliamentary Report: Parliamentary oversight: Parliament’s power to hold government to account* (Geneva/New York: IPU and UNDP, 2017)

<sup>36</sup> See Venice Commission and ODIHR, “Guidelines on Political Party Regulation”, 2nd edition, 14 December 2020.

## 4.2. Gender mainstreaming as an oversight strategy

The 2017 IPU/UNDP *Global Parliamentary Report* on oversight noted that gender mainstreaming required MPs and their support staff “to develop their own expertise in this area”<sup>37</sup>. It presented, as good practice, a Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee report on the status of women that presented an online course called “Introduction to Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)”.

### Box 13. Good practice in gender-sensitive oversight in Italy

Two committees of the Chamber of Deputies have undertaken inquiries related to gender equality. The Constitutional Affairs Committee inquired into existing policies on equality between women and men,<sup>1</sup> and the Labour Commission investigated the gender impact of social security legislation and the impact on existing disparities in terms of pension treatments between men and women.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 “Indagine conoscitiva sulle politiche in materia di parità tra donne e uomini”, Istat, 25 October 2017, <[https://www.istat.it/it/files/2017/10/A-Audizione-parit%C3%A0-di-genere-25-ottobre\\_definitivo.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2017/10/A-Audizione-parit%C3%A0-di-genere-25-ottobre_definitivo.pdf)>.
- 2 “Resoconto stenografico: Seduta n. 13 di Mercoledì 6 luglio 2016”, Italia, Camera dei deputati, 6 July 2016, <[https://www.camera.it/leg17/1079?idLegislatura=17&tipologia=indag&sottotipologia=c11\\_pensionistici&anno=2016&mese=07&giorno=06&idCommissione=11&numero=0013&file=indice\\_stenografico](https://www.camera.it/leg17/1079?idLegislatura=17&tipologia=indag&sottotipologia=c11_pensionistici&anno=2016&mese=07&giorno=06&idCommissione=11&numero=0013&file=indice_stenografico)>.

There is scope, however, to mainstream other oversight functions, including written and oral questions to the executive, public hearing processes or parliamentary debates on the reports of independent oversight officials such as an auditor-general or ombudsperson. Oversight also includes strategies to censure, and expel, the government through motions (and votes) of confidence. The IPU/UNDP report provided MPs with tips on gender mainstreaming these activities.

## 4.3. Impact of gender-sensitive oversight

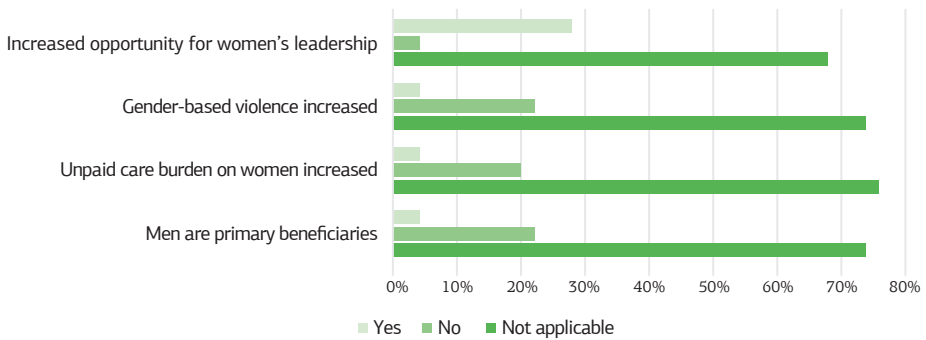
Based on the survey results, parliaments are not clear on the purpose of gender-sensitive oversight—that is, what might be gained by a review of policies, legislation and programmes from a gender perspective. Parliaments were asked whether gender-sensitive oversight activities had led to the following potential findings: first, whether the law, policy or programme had led to increased opportunities for women’s leadership in its specific settings/sector, or whether it had led to an increase in reporting on gender-based violence, or to stronger detection of unpaid care burdens on women or to a realization that the policy, law

37 IPU/UNDP, *Global Parliamentary Report* (Geneva/New York, 2017), p. 33.



or programme primarily benefited men (see Figure 15). The most prominent finding on this question was that these potential impacts were “not applicable”—that is, when parliaments undertook gender-sensitive oversight of laws, policies and programmes, none of these specific potential impacts were discovered. Parliaments did not volunteer alternative impacts found as a consequence of gender-sensitive oversight.

**Figure 15. Findings of gender oversight conducted on a specific law, policy or programme**



The responses also indicated that reviews were most likely to identify a need for more women's leadership than, for example, an adverse impact on gender-based violence or unpaid care burdens. This suggests that, in the first instance, gender-sensitive reviews have been undertaken on legislation related to women's leadership, or that gender equality is primarily conceptualized as an issue of numbers of women. While women's representation and leadership are important aspects of gender equality, there are many other indicators of gender inequality. There is scope to support parliaments in creating tools that encapsulate this broader understanding of gender equality and diversity.

## Case Study 7: The women's parliamentary caucus in Mongolia

The informal women's caucus of the Parliament of Mongolia was founded in 2012 and has promoted women's representation in politics, women's health and the fight against violence against women and children

- *Women's representation in politics.* In the last two parliamentary elections (2016 and 2020), female MPs won just over 17 per cent of the parliamentary seats (13 out of 76). While this represents a significant increase compared with previous elections, there was concern that women remain under-represented compared with the global and regional averages (25.8 and 21 per cent, respectively). In 2016, the women's caucus contributed to the organization of a national forum on women's participation at the decision-making level as part of a UNDP-implemented capacity-building project for local self-governing bodies. The forum brought together 529 individuals, including female MPs, women from rural areas, women from civil society organizations and academics. The objective of the forum was to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation in elections.
- *Women's health.* Initial caucus discussions focused on the quality of maternity hospitals, bringing together officials from Mongolia's Ministry of Health, hospital administrators and representatives from nearly 20 local Mongolian health-related civil society organizations. The discussion addressed the insufficient number of maternity places in hospitals, the decreasing number of maternity healthcare professionals and the inadequacy of medical training capacity. Drawing on these findings, the caucus secured funding for the establishment of a maternity hospital. In its subsequent meetings, the caucus developed, introduced and secured the passage of legislation to ban smoking in hospitals and introduced an amendment to the law on social insurance (focusing on children with disabilities).
- *Violence against women and children.* According to a study<sup>1</sup> by the UN Population Fund and the National Statistics Office in Mongolia (2018), one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, and one in ten women experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15. With COVID-19 pandemic quarantine measures in place, children and women are at greater risk of violence when they are unable to leave their home. The caucus has been an active force on these issues since its establishment. It initiated a review of the Law against Family and Domestic Violence, and in December 2020 it supported the global White Ribbon Campaign.

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1 National Statistics Office/UNFPA, *Breaking the Silence for Equality. 2017 Study on Gender-based Violence in Mongolia* (Ulaanbaatar, 2018)

#### 4.4. What can parliaments do to advance gender-sensitive oversight?

Parliaments can:

- Ensure that there is a formal body tasked with gender-sensitive oversight that has parliamentary legitimacy and is sufficiently resourced to report on its examination of legislation to the key political organs of the parliament;
- Mandate all parliamentary bodies with the responsibility for gender mainstreaming, and ensure adequate capacity, tools and resources;
- Allocate time in the order of business for special debates on gender equality or gender-specific questioning of ministers; monitor the participation of women and men in these debates, and where there are gender gaps in participation, encourage men to play their full role;
- Offer MPs, parliamentary and political staff professional development courses in gender analysis, gender impact assessments and gender-sensitive public consultations;
- Where gender-based discrimination and inequality is uncovered, including in the implementation of laws or policies, ensure that all parliamentarians are able to:
  - Communicate with the minister responsible;
  - Raise the matter on the floor of the house or through other appropriate parliamentary action;
  - Take the issue up with the designated parliamentary leader and/or women's parliamentary body tasked with responsibility for gender equality;
  - Network with members "across the floor" to propose new legislation or amendments;
  - Raise the issue with the media, women's organizations and/or party leadership;
  - Engage gender experts to support the drafting of amendments or new legislation to remedy the discrimination.



**TOOLS FOR IMPROVING  
PARLIAMENTARY  
GENDER SENSITIVITY**

# 5. Tools for improving parliamentary gender sensitivity

All parliaments have some room for improvement when it comes to gender equality. Further political mobilization, strategy and action are required in supporting parliaments to change their internal culture, structures and procedures so that their institutional environments are conducive to the achievement of gender equality.

This section focuses on the internal processes, procedures and activities that need to be introduced and/or developed to ensure that parliaments become more gender-sensitive institutions. In particular, it focuses on the extent to which OSCE parliaments have introduced and/or prioritized gender-sensitive reforms designed to deliver gender equality outcomes across parliaments' key functions.

## 5.1. Parliamentary assessments and tools

Gender-sensitive reviews support parliaments in understanding where improvements can be made, and help in the construction of roadmaps for implementing reforms. A first step is usually a stock-taking exercise that involves discussion among multiple actors in the parliamentary workplace: MPs and political and parliamentary staff, including those who keep the building operating.

veloped and disseminated a gender-sensitive assessment methodology. So too have the CPA, EIGE and the OECD; more recently, UN Women called for a more tailored tool to support gender-sensitive parliamentary action in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Section 8 for suggestions for further reading).

The 2020 OSCE survey found that just over 30 per cent of the responding parliaments had conducted some kind of gender-sensitive assessment or audit. In addition to those supported by the IPU, assessments and audits were undertaken in Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia (with support from the OSCE), and in Canada and Moldova. The Parliament of Ireland reported that it was conducting an assessment on inclusiveness and gender sensitivity (see Case Study 3).

Where gender-sensitive reviews have taken place, they have often benefited from the guidance of international and regional parliamentary organizations. Indeed, collectively, these organizations have responded to a burgeoning demand from parliaments around the world for gender-sensitive reviews. This is very encouraging, and represents a deliberate shift in the narrative of parliamentary strengthening, which now more systematically treats gender equality as a central pillar of democracy. Improving the way parliaments understand and respond to gender inequality is central to effective democratic practice.

### **Case Study 8: Parliamentary gender audits in Moldova**

The 2006 Law of the Republic of Moldova on Ensuring Equal Chances between Women and Men requires the Parliament to (a) adopt gender-sensitive laws and regulations, (b) monitor gender impacts of the adopted regulations and (c) hold other state institutions accountable to promote and implement gender equality in their activities.

In line with these commitments, the Department of Assistance and Strategic Development of the Parliament of Moldova carried out a gender audit in 2015, with the support of the UNDP Moldova Programme “Improving the Quality of Moldovan Democracy through Electoral and Parliamentary Support”. The audit aimed to analyse the status of the Parliament in terms of its operational and institutional culture from a gender perspective, identify critical gaps and challenges, and provide recommendations to gender-sensitize the Parliament.

The gender audit was led by an international gender equality expert. Forty-two meetings were held with 71 individuals, including 15 MPs, who represented all five parliamentary factions. In addition to face-to-face meetings and consultations, 21 questionnaires were completed by members of the Parliamentary Secretariat, and consultations were held outside the Parliament with a range of civil society organizations and development partners. Based on the audit recommen-

dations, a five-year Gender Equality Action Plan was laid out in 2017, outlining the Parliament's commitments to gender equality and detailing a clear set of objectives and processes that are set to achieve the commitments. The Action Plan included specific recommendations for various parliamentary factions, Secretariat units and standing committees, as well as recommendations for amending the rules of procedure.

In the absence of any monitoring mechanism, many recommendations are yet to be implemented. Capacity-building activities, such as training on gender-responsive budgeting, have been sporadic. A dedicated gender equality committee or subcommittee at the Parliament has not yet been established, although members of the Committee on Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities usually participate in gender equality activities.

Several lessons can be noted:

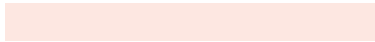
- *Insufficient parliamentary buy-in.* While MPs and parliamentary staff readily collaborated with the audit process, there have been no parliamentary champions that “own” the gender equality agenda and build on the original findings. The audit exercise was in fact perceived as a donor-driven initiative, with little internal buy-in.
- *Lack of institutional structures.* No formal institutional body was established within the Parliament to implement the Action Plan. The informal Women's Platform—a cross-party women's caucus—was established in 2015, but with limited capacity and resources. While the audit recommended the establishment of a subcommittee on gender equality and women's rights as part of one of the existing standing committees, this has not yet been implemented.
- *Competing parliamentary priorities.* Commitments to the Action Plan were not met following the election of a new parliament in 2019. Other financial and political priorities have taken precedence, including the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021.

## 5.2. Impact of parliamentary reviews

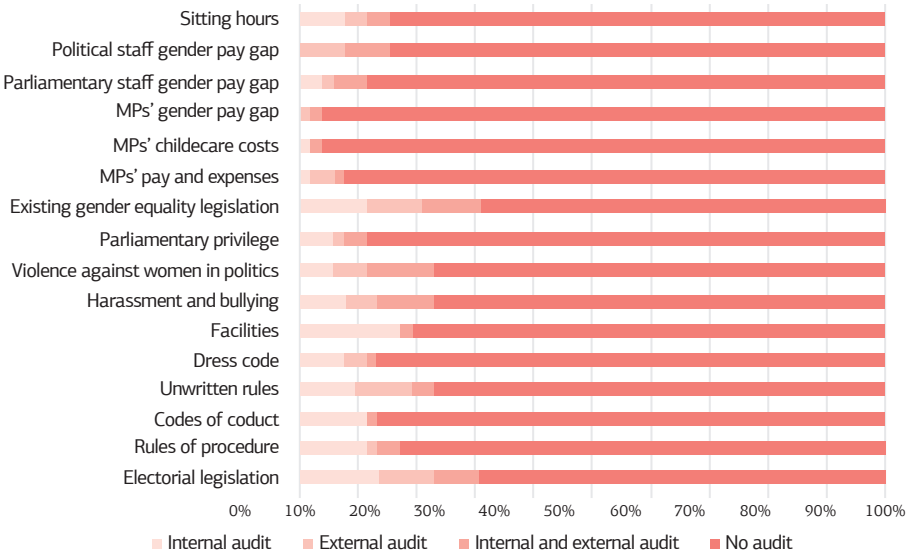
OSCE parliaments were asked to specify the areas covered in any gender-sensitive review undertaken either as an internal or external audit (see Figure 16). While, overall, it seems that OSCE parliaments have preferred internal audits to a review conducted by an external party, it also appears that parliaments have focused heavily on evaluations of legislative frameworks—including electoral legislation and rules of procedure—and facilities. The Parliament of North Macedonia, for example, formally reviewed its rules of procedure with the support of ODIHR and has established discussion forums internally to consider how the recommendations can be best implemented (see Case Study 10).<sup>38</sup> Significantly less frequent have been reviews of salaries and any potential pay gaps that may exist between men and women MPs, parliamentary staff or political staff.

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<sup>38</sup> North Macedonia: Comments on the Law and Rules of Procedure of the Assembly from a Gender and Diversity Perspective”, ODIHR, 9 November 2020, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/473490>>.

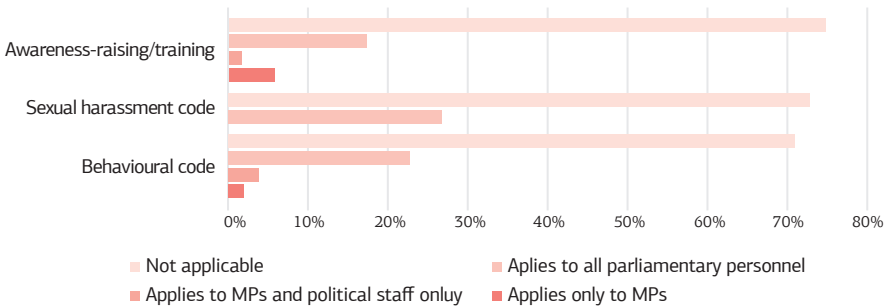


**Figure 16. Nature of gender-sensitive parliamentary reviews**



The issue of violence against women in politics, including sexual assault, harassment and bullying, is increasingly acknowledged and widely regarded as a critical issue for parliaments to address (see also Section 2.5 of this guide). Indeed, the IPU and Council of Europe’s 2018 report<sup>39</sup> into violence against women in European parliaments was cited as having a “catalytic effect” on internal parliamentary reviews on the issue. This study showed, encouragingly, that reviews of sexual harassment have resulted in codes that apply to MPs and to political and parliamentary staff (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17. Results of gender-sensitive assessments**



39 IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe* (Geneva: IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2018)



### 5.3. Opportunities for review

While gender-sensitive reviews or assessments can be catalysed by incidents of inappropriate behaviour and crimes (such as sexual assault or harassment, and even, in some parliaments, murder), they can also be initiated by more institutionalized internal parliamentary processes such as the execution of a gender equality policy or action plan (see Table 1 on Sweden). Gender-sensitive training of parliamentary workers can also provoke the need for a more comprehensive review of parliamentary gender sensitivity. Reviews themselves create an environment conducive to gender equality reform.

#### Case Study 9:

#### Developing bespoke tools for a gender-sensitive Parliament in North Macedonia

The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia has achieved significant progress in terms of the number of women MPs (39 per cent in 2021). In 2019, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, ODIHR and other international partners, the Assembly initiated an institutional change process intent on identifying gaps and setting realistic goals towards an independent, efficient and more citizen-responsive Assembly. Improving the Assembly's gender sensitivity was a key part of this institutional change process.

As a first step, a gender audit was conducted in 2019, the results of which informed the Assembly's Action Plan on Gender Sensitivity for 2020 and 2021. The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men adopted the Action Plan in January 2020. The entire process was supervised and led by the Assembly's Secretary General (a position similar to a chief of staff).

In line with the Action Plan, the Assembly committed to producing new briefing materials—what would become a manual on gender-sensitive parliaments—for new MPs, the latest convocation of which was elected at the July 2020 parliamentary elections. To ensure that the manual met the specific needs of the Assembly, four experts—including the adviser to the Assembly's Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men and the head of the Research Unit of the Assembly's Parliamentary Institute—collaborated on these materials. While the manual also drew on the international publications produced by ODIHR, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Institute for Gender Equality, the authors of the manual adapted key concepts and practices to the national context and the particularities of North Macedonia's parliamentary system, as well as the legislative priorities of the newly elected parliament. The manual was also peer-reviewed by retired MPs.

The manual provides a general introduction to key international and national gender equality standards and institutions, and includes checklists and boxes with advice for MPs and staff on the key parliamentary functions of representation, lawmaking and oversight.

The Action Plan on Gender Sensitivity has had real impact on the Assembly of North Macedonia. The manual has been distributed to all MPs and now serves as a basis for professional development training for both MPs and staff, including training to be conducted in autumn and winter 2021. The 2020 induction course for MPs was the first time this training included sessions on gender equality, resulting in a 30 per cent increase in MPs' requests for gender analysis, or gender policies, from the Parliamentary Institute (a research unit within Parliament).

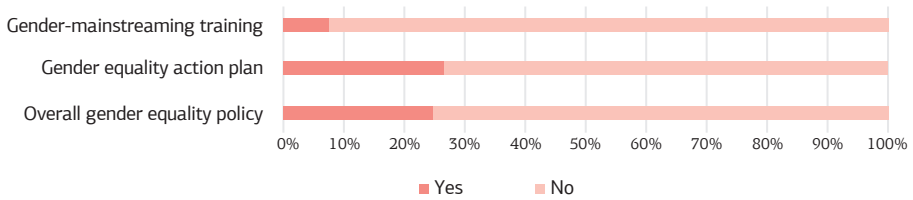
**Table 1: Four successive action plans in the Swedish Riksdag<sup>40</sup>**

Plan No.	Years active	Short overview
1	2006–2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riksdag board appoints a Reference Group for Gender Equality Issues, with representatives from all political parties, tasked with “promoting measures and activities to promote equal opportunities among members of parliament”;</li> <li>• Seminars on gender equality regularly organized, including at the Almedalen (annual political summit)</li> <li>• Publication of reports and interview studies</li> </ul>
2	2010–2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of activities set out in the 2006–2010 Action Plan</li> </ul>
3	2014–2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the Action Plan is “to highlight differences in the conditions for male and female MPs to perform their duties, and to carry out initiatives to even out existing differences and gaps” and “to increase knowledge and raise awareness of the significance of power and influence”</li> </ul>
4	2018–2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall goal of the programme is to work for a gender-conscious parliament, and this will be carried out by a working group consisting of one representative from each political party. Specific objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Ensuring that there is an equal gender distribution in various bodies and contexts;</li> <li>o Integrating gender equality work into activities and various processes;</li> <li>o Developing an internal culture that is characterized by respect and equal resources for both women and men;</li> <li>o Facilitating a balance between official duties and family responsibilities; and</li> <li>o Enabling the participation of both women and men in gender equality work.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> Lenita Freidenvall and Josefina Erikson, “The speaker’s gender equality group in the Swedish parliament – a toothless tiger?” *Politics, Groups and Identities*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2020, pp. 627–636; and “Gender equality work in the Riksdag”, Riksdag, <<https://www.riksdagen.se/en/how-the-riksdag-works/the-work-of-the-riksdag/gender-equality-work-in-the-riksdag/>>.

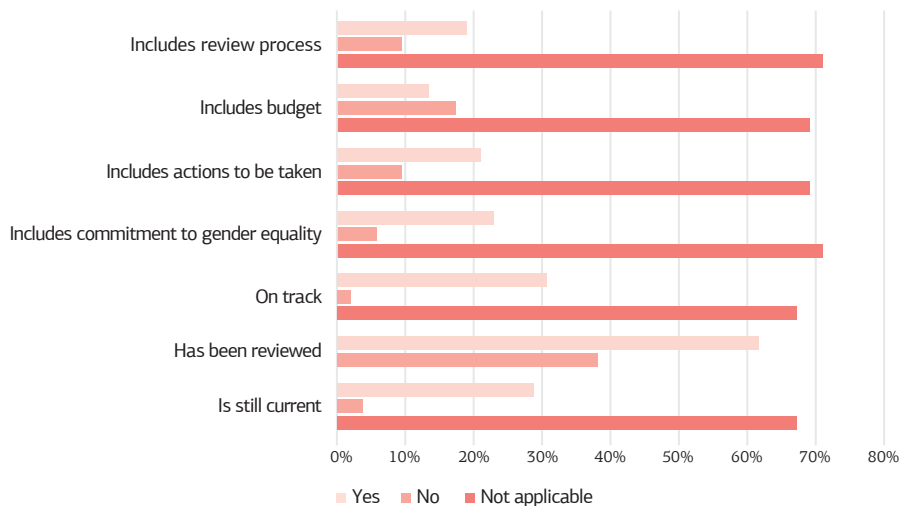
Responses to the OSCE survey found that policies, action plans and training modules were infrequently instituted by parliaments (see Figure 18), although, on a more positive note, the parliaments of Romania and Georgia indicated that they were establishing training centres where these kinds of issues were expected to be more frequently canvassed.

**Figure 18. Catalysts for gender-sensitive reviews**



The 2020 survey asked those OSCE parliaments that had instituted a gender equality policy or action plan to explain in more detail some of the key elements of the policy or plan, and whether it was still current (see Figure 19). While over 60 per cent of the policies reported by OSCE parliaments had been reviewed, just over 30 per cent were on track to meet targets. More of these parliaments' gender equality policies had no associated budget (17 per cent) than those that did (13%).

**Figure 19. Nature of parliamentary gender equality policy or action plan**

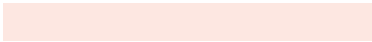


Responses to this question suggest that parliaments have very diverse approaches to drafting, implementing and reviewing gender equality policies. Ideally, however, these policies should have a stated commitment to gender equality and adequate budgets to implement a series of actions in specific time frames. All policies should be regularly monitored and reviewed.

#### **5.4 What can parliaments do to improve their gender sensitivity?**

Parliaments can:

- Use established evaluation guides to run gender-sensitive self-assessments or audits; implement any resulting recommendations for change; and publish the assessment or audit report to promote interparliamentary lesson learning.
- Develop a gender equality policy that sets out:
  - A clear commitment to gender equality;
  - A rationale and strategic direction for the parliament;
  - Concrete actions to be undertaken with designated:
    - Time frames and indicators to measure progress; and
    - An adequate budget to support the actions to be taken, including a provision for the recruitment of gender specialists across different areas of the parliamentary administration that will support policy implementation and review;
  - An evidence-based gender-sensitive curriculum for gender awareness training seminars for all members of parliament, and induction for new members; and
  - A review mechanism to ensure that the policy is monitored regularly by an appropriate parliamentary oversight mechanism.



A large, white, stylized number '6' is centered on a solid orange background. The number is composed of two main parts: a large, open '6' shape and a smaller, solid '6' shape nested inside it. The text 'LESSONS LEARNED' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the middle of the larger '6' shape.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

## 6. Lessons learned

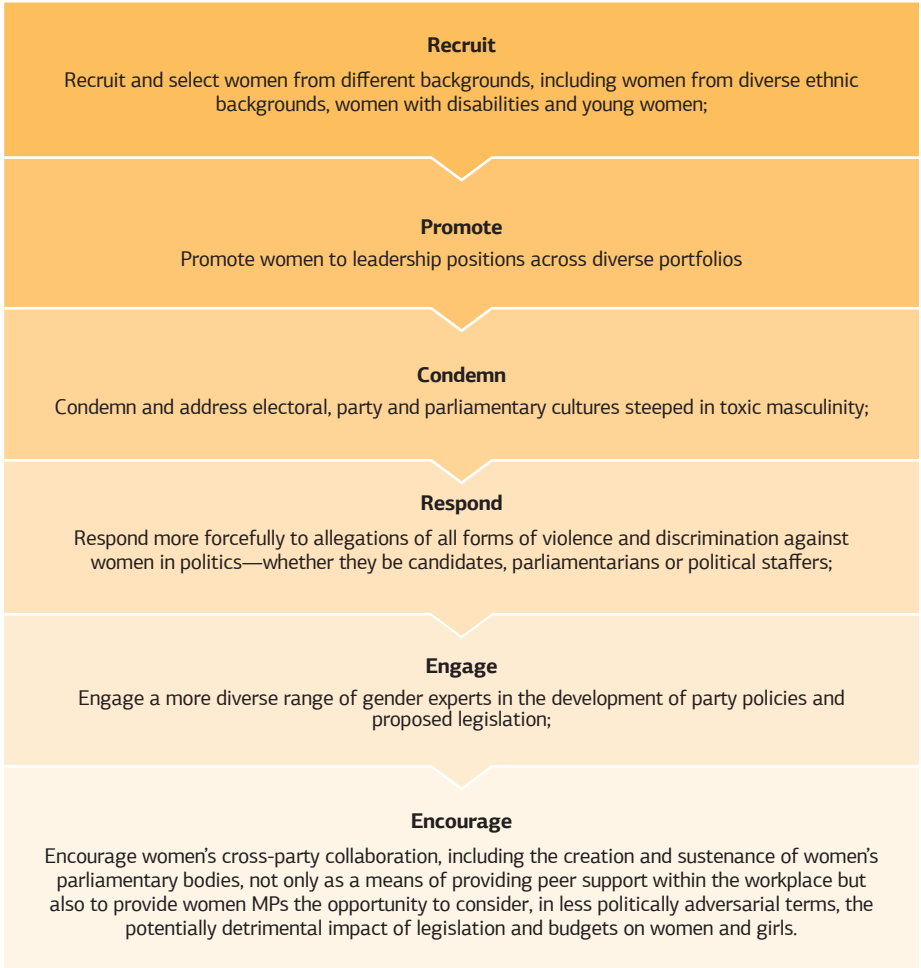
In the past 20 years, the concept of gender-sensitive parliaments has become a more accepted and established part of the international democratic normative framework. This framework has asserted that parliaments have a fundamental role in the global and national achievement of gender equality: indeed, they have a democratic duty to embrace their role as champions of gender equality.

While parliaments have accepted that mandate in principle, many still have some room for improvement in the way they approach gender equality as a primary objective of their work. Across the OSCE, gender sensitivity could be better understood as a more holistic, institutional approach to achieving gender equality rather than a more limited interpretation that looks to merely increase the numbers of women within parliaments.

Specifically, the OSCE survey that provides the basis for this publication has uncovered that there is more progress to be made in terms of the resource-intensive strategies required to achieve gender equality across the core functions of representation, lawmaking and oversight. Regular, better-resourced and transparent gender monitoring of all aspects of parliaments' work would encourage—and institutionalize—a more systematic approach to gender equality within OSCE parliaments. Today many more parliaments may assert that gender equality is “uncontroversial” or “unquestionable”—and, indeed, some OSCE parliaments have benefited from an existing culture that values gender equality and that has clearly resulted in gender-equal representation. But without clear commitments and formal mechanisms—indeed, the development of gender equality institutions and action plans—gender inequality within par-

liaments, and more widely across societies, will not be eradicated any time soon. There is much more that parliaments can and should do to monitor, and then encourage and promote, women’s empowerment and gender equality. Data is critical in this change process.

While the research that this guide has drawn upon focused on the role of parliaments, it is clear that political parties also need to step up in terms of their approach to gender equality. While increasing the number of women elected to parliament has been an integral first step in establishing gender-sensitive parliaments, political parties must do more to:





At the same time, this guide recognizes that OSCE parliaments will tailor solutions to gender inequality within their specific institutions and societies. These include amendments to rules of procedure and new codes of conduct (Albania), pilot trials of parliamentary gender impact assessments (Georgia), bespoke manuals on gender-sensitive oversight (North Macedonia), explicit, and resourced, agreements to promote gender equality in parliament (Andorra), and training manuals for parliamentarians to undertake gender analysis and to codify and legislate against sexual harassment in parliament (Canada).

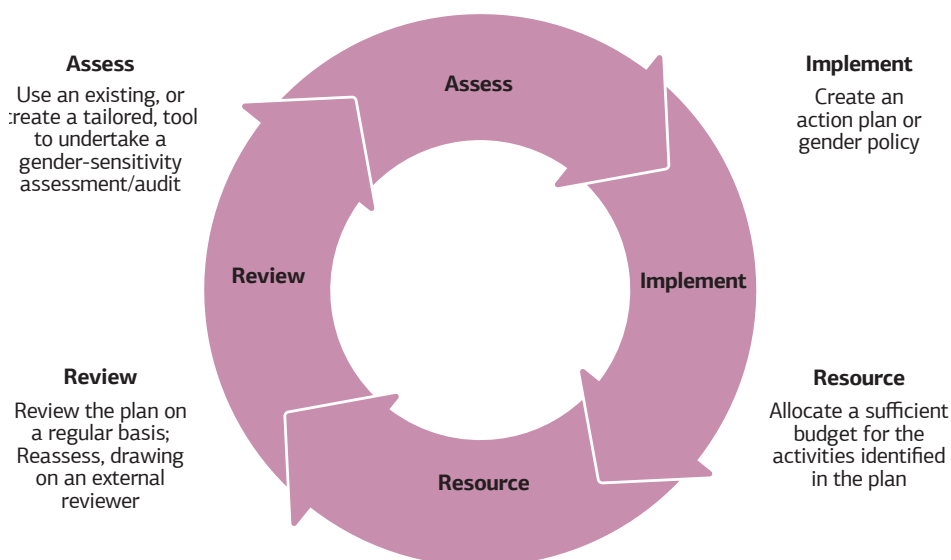
Gender-sensitive parliaments are those that actively and continuously commit to ensuring that everything they do works to eradicate gender inequality. Parliaments need to be supported by a range of diverse actors in prioritizing gender equality for all.



**FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION:  
HOW TO GENDER-SENSITIZE  
PARLIAMENTS**

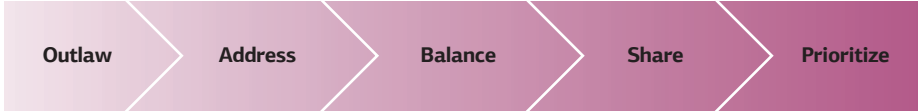
# 7. From research to action: how to gender-sensitize parliaments

## Improving parliaments' overall gender sensitivity





### Improving gender-sensitive representation



**Outlaw**  
 Outlaw discriminatory and sexist behaviour in parliament, including through codes of conduct

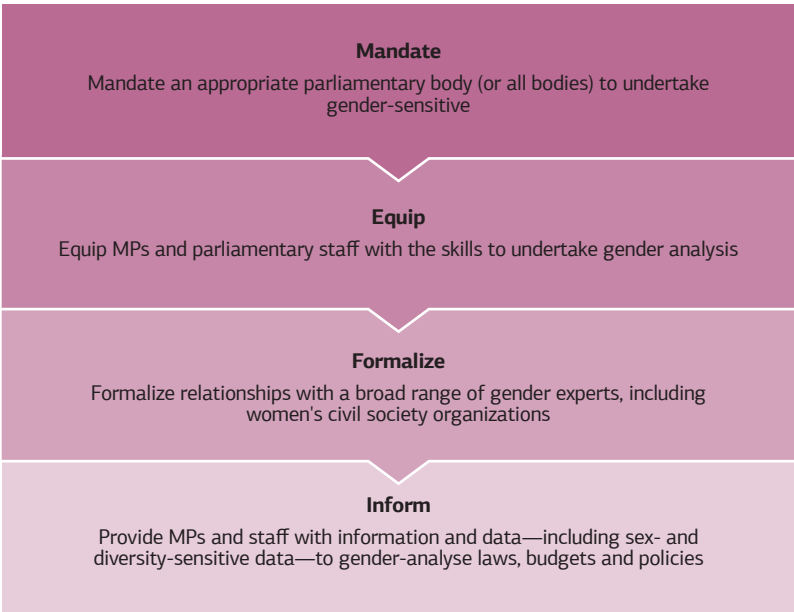
**Address**  
 Address complaints of sexism and discrimination — including all forms of violence against women in politics — through an independent grievance mechanism

**Balance**  
 Allow MPs with caring responsibilities to better balance work and life by providing flexible work arrangements

**Share**  
 Ensure that positions of parliamentary leadership are shared between men and women

**Prioritize**  
 Deliberately prioritize gender equality debates in the plenary

### Improving gender-sensitive lawmaking and oversight



**Mandate**

Mandate an appropriate parliamentary body (or all bodies) to undertake gender-sensitive

**Equip**

Equip MPs and parliamentary staff with the skills to undertake gender analysis

**Formalize**

Formalize relationships with a broad range of gender experts, including women's civil society organizations

**Inform**

Provide MPs and staff with information and data—including sex- and diversity-sensitive data—to gender-analyse laws, budgets and policies





# Further reading

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, *Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change* (London: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 2020)

EIGE, *Gender equality in national parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament: 2019 results from EIGE's Gender-sensitive Parliaments tool* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019)

EIGE, "Gender-sensitive parliaments", 2019, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments>

IPU, *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice* (Geneva: IPU, 2011)

IPU, *Plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments* (Geneva: IPU, 2012)

IPU, *Guidelines for Women's Caucuses* (Geneva: IPU, 2013)

IPU, *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit* (Geneva: IPU, 2016)

IPU, *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament* (Geneva: IPU, 2019)

IPU, *Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, 2021*, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking>

IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe* (Geneva: IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2018)

ODIHR, *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2011)

ODIHR, *Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2013)

ODIHR, *Making Laws Work for Women and Men: A Practical Guide to Gender-Sensitive Legislation* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2017)

OECD, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life* (Paris: OECD, 2016)

ParlAmericas, *Multi-party Caucuses for Gender Equality: A Handbook for Parliamentarians in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Ottawa: ParlAmericas, 2018)

UNDP, *Scrutinising Legislation from a Gender Perspective: A Practical Toolkit* (Suva, Fiji: UNDP, 2017)

UN Women, *A Primer for Parliamentary Action: Gender Sensitive Responses to COVID-19* (New York: UN Women, 2020), <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/a-primer-for-parliamentary-action-gender-sensitive-responses-to-covid-19>>

**Reports by parliaments**

- 2019 Independent External Review into Bullying and Harassment in the New Zealand Parliamentary Workplace - Final Report, New Zealand House of Representatives
- 2019 Report 97 - Regulations Respecting the Non-Attendance of Members by Reason of Maternity or Care for a New-Born or Newly-Adopted Child, Canadian House of Commons Procedure Committee
- 2018 UK Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit. Report of the gender-sensitive Parliament audit panel to the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission, UK House of Commons
- 2018 Report 64 - Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment Between Members, Canadian House of Commons Procedure Committee



# Appendix A: Responding chambers of parliament

Albania	Liechtenstein
Andorra	Lithuania
Armenia	Luxembourg
Azerbaijan	Malta
Belarus, House of Representatives	Moldova
Belgium, House of Representatives	Mongolia
Belgium, Senate	Montenegro
Bosnia and Herzegovina, House of Representatives	Netherlands, House of Representatives
Bosnia and Herzegovina, House of Peoples	North Macedonia
Bulgaria	Norway
Canada, House of Commons	Poland, Sejm
Canada, Senate	Poland, Senate
Croatia	Portugal
Cyprus	Romania, Chamber of Deputies
Czech Republic, Chamber of Deputies	Romania, Senate
Denmark	San Marino
Estonia	Serbia
Finland	Slovakia
Germany, Bundestag	Slovenia
Georgia	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland, National Council
Iceland	Switzerland, Council of States
Ireland, Dáil Éireann	Turkmenistan
Italy, Chamber of Deputies	Ukraine
Italy, Senate	United States of America, House of Representatives
Latvia	United States of America, Senate

# Appendix B: Survey instrument

## 1. GENDER-SENSITIVE REPRESENTATION

1. What is the gender composition of the parliamentary leadership?		
	Number of men	Number of women
Speaker/President		
Deputy Speaker / Deputy President		
Committee chairs		
Deputy chairs of committees		
Party leader / Leaders of party caucuses		
Deputy party leader /		
Deputy leaders of party caucuses		
Secretary General / Clerk		
Other leadership positions, please specify:		

2. How are committee chairs chosen?		Please tick
Nominated and elected by the committee		
Nominated by the government majority / ruling party and endorsed by the committee		
Other, specify:		

3. Please indicate if there are any formal rules requiring a minimal level of women's participation as committee chairs or committee members and, if so, what percentage this rule is set at.			
	YES	NO	Percentage
Rule setting level of women's participation as committee members			
Rule setting level of women's participation as committee chairs			

4. Has the parliament reviewed the procedural rules to increase opportunities for women parliamentarians to speak or participate in the chamber?

YES

NO

**If yes, please provide details on lessons learned and good practice:**

5. Does the parliament monitor the participation rates of male and female parliamentarians in any of the following activities?

	YES	NO	If YES, what is the % for women:	Not applicable
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Participation in debates on draft legislation

Proposing amendments on draft legislation

Proposing motions of censure or no confidence

Proposing bills independently of the party (private bills)

Asking questions (to government)

Answering a question (as part of the government)

**If yes, please provide lesson learned or good practice:**

6. What percentage of the following committees' members are female and male?  
*Provide data on all that apply.*

	% Female	% Male
--	----------	--------

Treasury/Finance Committee

Home/Internal Affairs Committee

Health Committee

Foreign Affairs Committee

Education Committee

Women and/or Gender Equality Committee (or other committee responsible for gender equality / women's issues)

Other committees overall

7. Do parliamentary sitting times accommodate the needs of parliamentarians with family (or caring) responsibilities? *Tick all that apply.*

YES NO Debated but not adopted

Night sittings discontinued

Sittings aligned with school calendar

Longer periods in electorate/constituency (e.g. at least two weeks at a time)

Other, please specify:

**If yes, please explain all that apply. Please also explain if proposed changes have been debated but not yet adopted:**

8. Have any measures been implemented to support the needs of parliamentarians in fulfilling their caring roles? *Tick all that apply.*

YES NO Debated but not adopted

Childcare facilities provided in parliament

Arrangements for breastfeeding mothers

Proxy voting for parliamentarians with care responsibilities

Flexible working hours

Family room

Financial assistance provided to parliamentarians for childcare

Travel allowances for family members provided for commuting between constituency and parliament

Other, also in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please specify:

**If yes, please explain all that apply. Please also explain if proposed changes have been debated but not yet adopted.**

## 2. GENDER-SENSITIVE LEGISLATION

9. When considering proposed legislation—including the budget—does the parliament ...  
Tick all that apply.

YES NO Sometimes

Have access to relevant sex-disaggregated data?

Use a checklist or other practical tools for gender-sensitive legislative scrutiny?

Require a gender impact statement or gender analysis of draft laws?

Provide opportunities to consult with relevant beneficiaries of draft laws?

Ensure gender-balanced representation of key groups at public hearings?

Require that gender equality issues be reflected in the debate in the chamber?

Monitor for compliance with international human rights and gender equality standards, including CEDAW and other UN treaties and, if applicable, standards from international organizations?

Require that legislation be written in gender-sensitive language?

**Please provide concrete examples of good practice and lessons learned, and also of challenges or barriers:**

10. How often are the views of the following individuals or groups consulted in parliamentary committee reviews of legislation? Tick one out of four answers for all that apply.

YES NO Sometimes

Government gender equality machinery / institutional mechanism

Local government gender equality machinery / institutional mechanisms

Relevant line ministry gender focal points / gender officers

Women's civil society / non-governmental organizations

Trade unions that represent female-dominant workforces

Economists aiming to improve women's labour participation and conditions

Women business owners (and their associations)

Academic gender experts

**Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:**

11. Does your parliament incorporate sex-disaggregated data when ...

	Required by law	Optional/ discretionary	Never
Reviewing the budget (including additional or urgent budgets)?			
Reviewing draft legislation?			
Reviewing drafts of government policies and programmes?			

**Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:**

12. Please indicate below the types of relationships your parliament has with the following groups. Please select all links that apply for each group.

	Formal	Required by law	Optional/ discretionary	Never
Academic gender experts				
Women's civil society / non-governmental organizations				
Women's media outlets				

**Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:**

13. Please indicate below whether there is gender expertise (gender equality experts present, and gender equality policies in place) in the following units and services of the parliament. Tick all that apply.

	Gender equality experts present	Gender equality policies in place
The office of the Secretary General / Clerk		
Parliamentary research unit		
Parliamentary legal unit		
Parliamentary outreach (public affairs) unit		
Parliamentary training / capacity-building unit		
Broadcasting unit		
Information technology unit		
Security unit		
Human resources unit		

**Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:**

### 3. GENDER-SENSITIVE OVERSIGHT

14. Which, if any, of the following bodies does your parliament have?  
Please tick all that apply from the list below.

A formal parliamentary women's caucus or network (funded by parliament)

A formal women's (or gender equality) committee (funded by parliament)

A formal human rights committee (funded by parliament)

An informal parliamentary women's caucus or network (not funded by parliament)

A formal or informal group of male MPs advocating for gender equality

None of the above

15. Which of these bodies is MOST responsible for gender-sensitive oversight by the parliament? Please tick ONLY one.

A formal parliamentary women's caucus or network (funded by parliament)

A formal women's (or gender equality) committee (funded by parliament)

A formal human rights committee (funded by parliament)

An informal parliamentary women's caucus or network (not funded by parliament)

A formal or informal group of male MPs advocating for gender equality

All parliamentary bodies have this responsibility

Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:

16. If your parliament has a formal women's caucus OR a formal women's (or gender equality) committee, is it responsible for the following? Please tick all that apply.

	Women's caucus	Gender equality committee
Scrutinizing the work (outputs) of parliament, e.g. laws, budgets, representation		
Holding to account the responsible government minister/department dealing with gender equality and women's issues		
Monitoring and evaluating parliament as a gender-sensitive institution		
If other, please specify:		

17. How many of the political parties (or party groups) represented in your parliament have their own gender equality mechanisms?

*Please tick as many that apply from the list below.*

	Number of parties
Formal party-specific women's networks or organizations (funded by the party)	
Informal party-specific women's networks or organizations (not funded by the party)	
Other gender equality mechanisms, please specify:	
None of the above	

Please provide examples of good practice and lessons learned:

18. Thinking of a specific law, policy or programme that has been subjected to gender-sensitive oversight, did the review findings indicate:

	Yes	No
Men were the primary financial, social or cultural beneficiaries of the law, policy or programme?		
The law, policy or programme increased the existing unpaid care burden on women?		
The law, policy or programme increased the likelihood of gender-based violence?		
The law, policy or programme increased the opportunity for women's leadership and voice?		



#### 4. IMPROVING PARLIAMENT'S GENDER SENSITIVITY

19. Has there been any parliamentary review (e.g. self-assessment or audit) of the parliament's gender-mainstreaming processes and gender sensitivity? Please tick.

Yes

No

Don't Know

**If yes, please provide details on lessons learned and outcomes of the review:**

20. Does your parliament have: *Please tick all that apply.*

Yes

No

An overall gender equality policy/strategy?

A gender equality action plan, with concrete activities, time frames and indicators that measure change?

Obligatory gender-mainstreaming training for all new staff and MPs?

**If your parliament has a gender equality policy, strategy or action plan, please go to the next question. If not, please go to question 22.**

21. If your parliament has a gender equality policy or action plan:  
*Please tick all that apply.*

Yes

No

Is it current (as of today)?

Has it been reviewed and revised in the last three years?

Is it on track to achieve its targets?

Does it include:

A commitment from the parliament to achieving gender equality?

An outline of different gender equality actions to be achieved, with time frames?

A dedicated budget for gender equality activities?

A review process to monitor and evaluate change?

**Please provide details on lessons learned, best practice and outcomes:**

22. Has your parliament instituted any of the following codes of conduct or training activities to define gender-sensitive relations between MPs, between MPs and parliamentary staff, and between MPs and their staff: *Please tick all that apply.*

	Between MPs	Between MPs and parliamentary staff	Between MPs and their staff
A behavioural code of conduct that refers to sexist language and sexist behaviour			
A parliamentary sexual harassment code of conduct or policy			
Information and training activities to promote awareness of sexism, sexual harassment and gender bullying			

**Where codes of conduct or training is in place, please provide details on lessons learned and best practice:**

23. Has a review on gender sensitivity been undertaken of any of the following? *Please tick all that apply.*

	Internally (by parliament)	Externally (e.g. by academic or gender equality machinery)
Electoral legislation		
Parliamentary standing orders / rules of procedure		
Parliamentary behavioural codes of conduct		
Unwritten rules and conventions, e.g. the use of masculine language		
Parliamentary dress code		
Facilities (e.g. toilets, artwork, office space)		
Sexual harassment and bullying (whether perpetrated by MPs or fellow parliamentary staff)		
Violence against women in politics (in all its forms)		
Whether rules and/or laws regarding parliamentary privilege/immunity can be used by parliamentarians to protect an MP accused of harassment or violence		
Existing gender equality legislation		
MPs' pay and expenses		
Provision for MPs' childcare costs		
The gender pay gap for MPs		
The gender pay gap for parliamentary staff		
The gender pay gap for MPs' / party caucus staff		
Parliamentary sitting hours		

**If your parliament has a gender equality policy, strategy or action plan, please go to the next question. If not, please go to question 22.**

24. Finally, please describe below any good practices from your parliament that ensure gender sensitivity in the operations and outputs of the parliament.



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