

Gender-sensitive Parliaments

Domain 1 – Gender equality laws and policies

This domain maps out the legislative framework in respect of gender issues, such as laws on equal treatment that have a comprehensive approach to rights and explicitly include gender as one of the possible discrimination factors.

Equality between women and men is one of the fundamental principles of the EU, with the principle of gender equality reinforced by legislation (both general and specific) that obliges Member States to ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment for women and men, and to combat all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the EU and most European countries have begun approving laws on gender equality in a variety of areas, such as sexual harassment, equal pay, equal access to resources and services, work-life balance, and gender-based violence (European Commission, DG JUSTICE: 2015). The European institutions have often been among the first to approve such laws, setting a positive model for Member States.

Although all EU Member States have some kind of gender equality law, this basic legislative framework needs regular update and monitoring, while some gender issues need continuous political attention. In addition, while national laws may be quite advanced in their references to rights' recognition and gender issues, their application may meet practical and cultural obstacles. Efforts should be made, therefore, to collect information on the actual implementation of laws and policies.