

Gender-sensitive Parliaments

Domain 3 – Oversight of gender equality

This domain explores the activities carried out by the parliament to oversee gender equality in government action, to monitor the implementation of international conventions and agreements, ; to monitor the gender impact of legislation and arrange gender-oriented stakeholder consultation.

Oversight of government action is one of the core functions of parliaments and a crucial issue for transparent and non-corrupt democracy. Oversight can be defined as any activity that involves examining the expenditure, administration and policies of the government. Oversight activities include, for example, questioning ministers, holding public hearings, reviewing reports from government departments, and examining audit reports (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics: 2016). Overseeing the executive's actions in respect of gender equality specifically allows parliaments to effectively foster that equality while simultaneously increasing their own gender-sensitivity (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics: 2016).

Read more about the oversight functions of gender equality

The oversight function requires sufficient capacity and appropriate mandates for gender mainstreaming. Such mandates can include powers for gender equality mechanisms to review and propose recommendations for amendments to budget bills, evaluate government budget plans from a gender perspective (*ex ante* gender budgeting), review government/public expenditure from a gender perspective (*ex post* gender budgeting), and issue gender reports or statements as part of the budget bill.

The core functions of oversight committees include monitoring the implementation of gender equality legislation and ensuring that laws do not directly or indirectly discriminate against women and girls, as well as monitoring adherence to international gender equality obligations (OECD: n.d.) and gender equality recommendations addressed to Member States by the European Commission. Another relevant element of the oversight function is to ensure gender-oriented stakeholder consultation, together with equal involvement of men and women in the oversight activities.

Further information on the [parliament function of oversight](#) can be found on the knowledge platform of AGORA.