



Local & Regional  
Europe

#Power2Her

# Women in Politics

## Local and European Trends



**Observatory**

The European Charter for  
Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

# Women in Politics

## Facts and numbers

#Power2Her



### In Europe

**15%** of mayors are women.

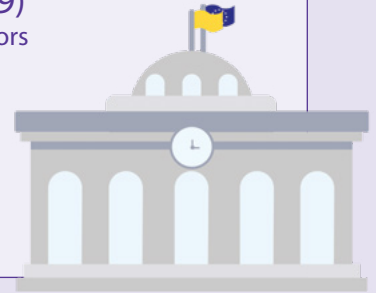
→ 10 years ago, they were **11%**.



#### Top 5 (2019)

% women mayors

Iceland **36%**  
 Sweden **32%**  
 Finland **31%**  
 Norway **28%**  
 Switzerland **27%**



**29%** of local councillors are women.

→ 10 years ago, they were **23%**.



#### Top 10 (2019)

% women in local councils

Iceland <b>47%</b>	Norway <b>39%</b>
Sweden <b>43%</b>	Belgium <b>39%</b>
Ukraine <b>42%</b>	Spain <b>36%</b>
France <b>40%</b>	Albania <b>35%</b>
Finland <b>39%</b>	Latvia <b>34%</b>

### Proportion of elected women (2019)

Intermediate level

Regional level

**29%**

**31%**

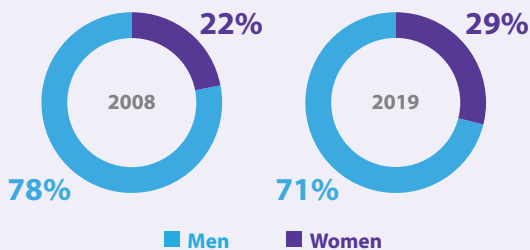


#### Top 3 (2019)

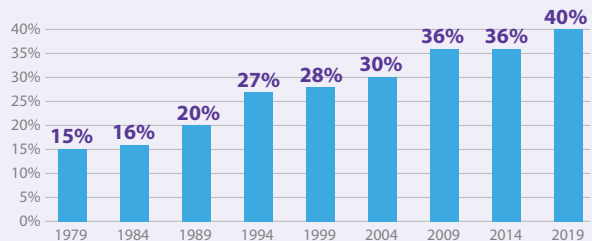
% elected women

France <b>50%</b>	France <b>49%</b>
Belgium <b>40%</b>	Sweden <b>48%</b>
Poland <b>25%</b>	Spain <b>45%</b>

### Women in National Parliaments



### Women in European Parliament | 40 years



**Will this gender gap stand the test of time?**

*At the current rate, it would take 107 years to close the gender gap.*



## CEMR and equality

Advancing gender equality in politics and, more broadly, in local life has always been a key focus for CEMR and its member associations. 2006 marked a decisive turning point, with the launch of the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

The Charter is both a political document and a practical instrument. It encourages local and regional governments to make a public commitment to equality and to implement the principles listed in the Charter.

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## The Observatory of the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life

The Observatory and its online platform were launched in 2012 to assist local and regional governments in developing local policies promoting gender equality, particularly by achieving the objectives of the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

The role of the Observatory is to support the development of equality action plans, disseminate good practices, monitor implementation and evaluate the Charter's impact in cooperation with the signatories.

The Observatory increases the Charter's visibility and promotes exchanges between the signatories. According to the website's most recent data, there are currently around 2,000 signatories from 35 countries.

The work of the Observatory is carried out by the CEMR Secretariat, the Standing Committee for Equality and a group of experts made up of national coordinators from the member associations.

## The Charter at a glance

**30** articles

proposing concrete measures to ensure equality of women and men

**4** steps

sign, plan, implement, monitor

**2,000** signatories

towns, cities and regions in 35 European countries

**1** online Observatory

to receive guidance and share good practices

## More information

[www.cemr.eu](http://www.cemr.eu)  
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[charter-equality.eu](http://charter-equality.eu)  
[twitter.com/cemr\\_equality](https://twitter.com/cemr_equality)

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**Author**

Sandra Ceciarini

**Document Researcher and Data Analyst**

Benoit Chambon

**Research Coordinator**

Nathalie Noupadja, *Head of Research and Studies*

**Thematic Coordinator**

Jaimie Just, *Policy Officer for Gender Equality and Diversity*

**Proofreader of the French version**

Axelle Griffon

**Copy Editor of the French version**

Emeline Jamoul, Plume Rouge

**French-to-English Translator**

Penny Yim-Barbieri

**Supervision**

Dr Angelika Poth-Mögele, *Executive Director of European Affairs*

**Direction**

Frédéric Vallier, *Secretary General*

**Communication and Design**

Pierre Vander Auwera, *Communication Advisor*

Jeremy Herry, *Communication Officer*

**Graphic Design and Printing**

Pitch Black Graphic Design

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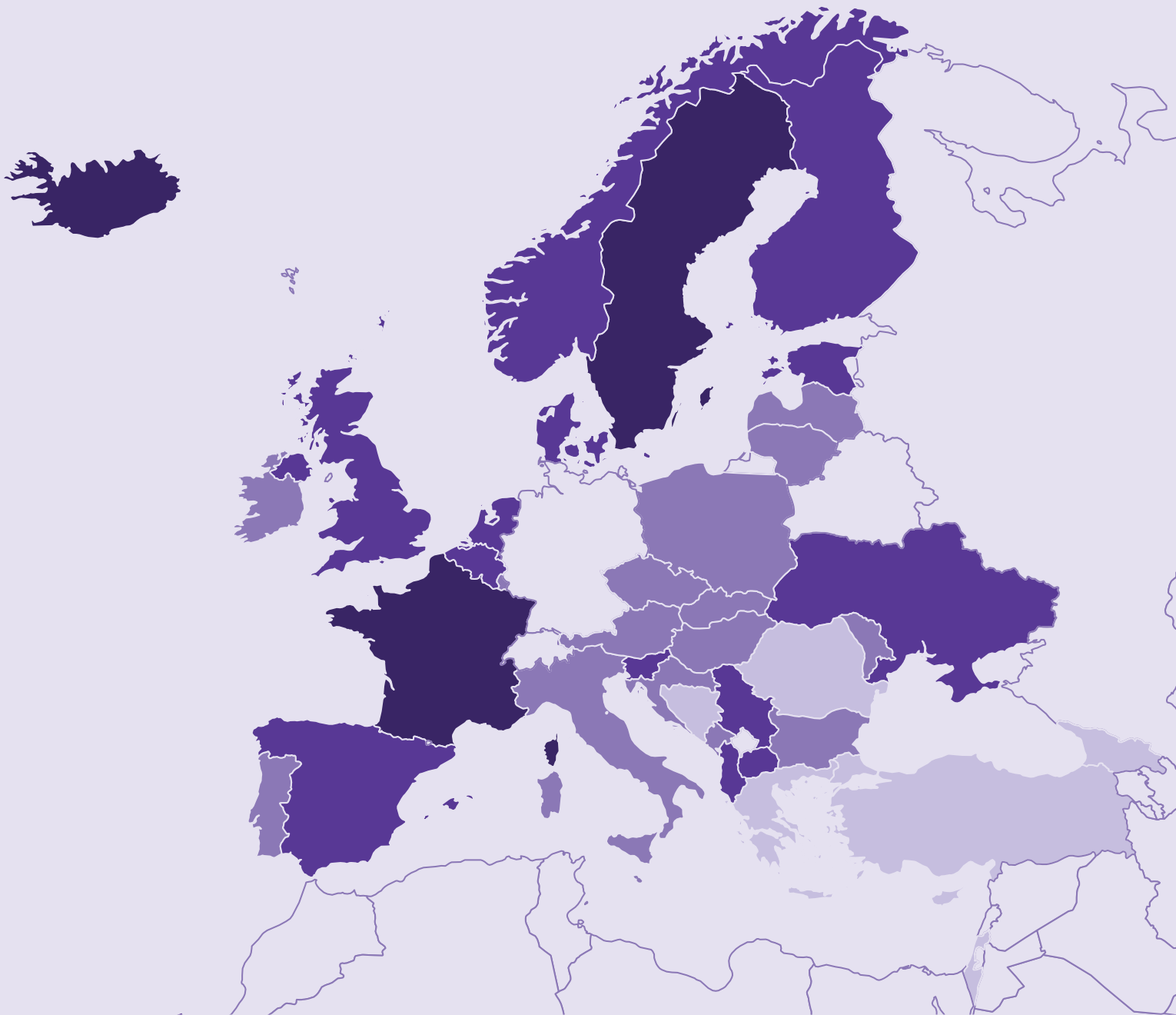


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## Women in politics

Share of women among all elected representatives  
in Europe (39 countries\*) | 2019



10-20% 20-30% 30-40% ≥ 40%

 European average = 34.1%

### Top 3

Iceland **46%**  
Sweden **44%**  
France **40%**

\*39 of the 41 countries studied for this publication, due to missing data for Germany and Switzerland.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the members of our associations as well as the staff and interns of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions whose contributions and analysis made this study possible.

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# Foreword

As this publication goes to press, the first ever woman President of the European Commission is taking up office. In her *Agenda for Europe (2019–2024)*, Ursula von der Leyen has made her commitment to gender equality and parity very clear.

The equal representation and influence of women and men in political life, at all levels of governance, is a prerequisite for a democratic society. Women's full and substantive political participation, both as citizens and in public office, is essential for good governance and policy making.

As shown by the popularity of initiatives such as *EU Panel Watch*<sup>1</sup> and *The Brussels Binder*<sup>2</sup>, it is no longer acceptable for the political sphere to be dominated by only one half of humanity.

While some progress has been made over the last ten years, women are still under-represented and the situation in local and regional government is of particular concern. In Europe today, only 15.4% of mayors are women.

The **average proportion of women in local councils remains stuck below 30%** (28.9%) and is only slightly higher in regional

assemblies (30.9%). At this rate, how many years will it take before a 50–50 gender balance is reached among women and men in politics?

If the goal of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is to be achieved, then action needs to be taken now. Efforts must be redoubled to recruit more women – of all ages and backgrounds – into politics. This requires **raising awareness** about gender equality, **tackling harmful gender stereotypes** and **championing the benefits of gender-balanced leadership**.

All this needs to be backed by adequate funding and political support for training and mentoring programmes to empower women candidates and break down the barriers they face on account of their sex.

Local governments are vital in this regard, both as the level of government that is closest to citizens and the matters of direct concern to them, but also as a launching pad to an elected office at regional, national and even European level. It is at the local level, as mayors and councillors, that political readiness can be demonstrated, political profiles shaped, networks built and skills honed.

<sup>1</sup> EU Panel Watch is a campaign advocating for greater diversity in political debates, collecting data on speaker representation at political events and conferences to draw attention to inequalities: [www.eupanelwatch.com/](http://www.eupanelwatch.com/)

<sup>2</sup> The Brussels Binder is an online database of women experts in various sectors that aims to bring more gender diversity to political debates: [brusselsbinder.org/](http://brusselsbinder.org/)

Over the course of this study, another inadequacy has popped up time and again: the significant **gaps in sex-disaggregated data** on elected officials at local and regional levels. If we are to meet the targets set out for women's equal representation, it is crucial to have the relevant data to track progress, draw comparisons across countries and evaluate the situation. How else can there be accountability?

important to us, but to put them into practice within our organisations. We count upon our national associations of local and regional governments to more broadly exemplify the change we are calling for in our societies. CEMR remains a supportive ally and partner to all who act in pursuit of true parity, offering the best and brightest women and men the possibility to lead on equal terms.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions and its Standing Committee for Equality seek not only to transmit the values that are



**Stefano Bonaccini,**  
President of CEMR



**Gunn Marit Helgesen,**  
Co-President of CEMR

# Introduction

Through this publication, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) would like to affirm its support for the fight for gender equality, particularly in local politics, with respect for diversity.

CEMR was one of the first European organisations to promote this message, beginning in the 1980s, and continues to do so along with its actions promoting good governance and sustainable development on our continent.

The primary objective of this 2019 CEMR study on women in politics is to **evaluate the progression of women's representation in decision-making** over a ten-year period and to present an overview of the current situation.

The compilation of this information is critical to strengthening CEMR's activities advocating for gender equality in local life overall, and for women in policy making specifically. With the start of a new term for the European Parliament and the European Commission in 2019, as well as the new multiannual financial framework and accompanying policies and programmes (2021–2027), **there is no better time to shine a spotlight on this issue at European Union (EU) level.**

The study aims to mobilise actors and decision-makers at all levels across Europe, in the institutions and organisations included in

the study, but also in the associations of local and regional governments, political parties, civil society organisations, as well as anyone interested in just and democratic governance.

Thanks to the contribution of its members and extensive research of the existing literature, CEMR is publishing data on women's participation in public life in all the countries where it has members. This information, although difficult to put together, provides us with **a detailed and comprehensive picture of the place of women in European politics** at all levels of policy making.

CEMR seeks to keep this issue on the political agenda and to do whatever is necessary to ensure it remains a key objective in future European gender equality strategies. This includes being backed by the corresponding funding and programmes. Furthermore CEMR seeks to persuade all levels of government, political parties and associations to act within the scope of their respective powers to tackle the obstacles women face in gaining access to positions of responsibility and leadership.

So how do things stand? What place do women occupy in politics in Europe?

Today, gender equality can be seen as a commonly held value and a clear objective, as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. It is

a value and a principle often cited in speeches and political strategies. In the EU, ever since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, **equality between women and men has been officially recognised as a fundamental right** and one of the member countries' shared values. In 2000, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, legally binding since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, declared that "equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas".

Unfortunately, *de jure* and *de facto* situations only very rarely coincide, especially in politics. In Europe, like elsewhere, women have been excluded from political life. It was not until the end of the First World War that a few European States began to grant women the right to vote and hold office.

Still, politics has remained a man's world. It was only recently that a movement for parity and the introduction of quotas for women managed to ensure a partial feminisation of the political class. This development was mainly the result of EU policies promoting equal opportunities and a concurrent global trend stemming from women's emancipation movements.

This publication gives us a much more thorough understanding of the **presence of women in politics in the 41 States in which CEMR has members**. This means that all the EU member countries are accounted for, as well as most of the Council of Europe's member countries<sup>1</sup>. Our analysis focuses attention on the state of gender equality in politics in the Scandinavian countries<sup>2</sup> and in Finland, true paragons in this field, as well

as in the EU Member States, the EU accession countries and the neighbouring countries to the east such as the Balkans, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Turkey and Israel.

This initiative attests to CEMR's political will to promote equality. It is this same will that prompted the organisation of European conferences of local elected women representatives, European projects to exchange best practice and, most importantly, the launch of the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life (drawn up by CEMR and its members in 2006) and its Observatory (also established and managed by CEMR).

In addition to the analysis of data regarding women's representation in politics at the local level, we also assess it in the national parliaments, the European Parliament and in the other institutions and representative bodies of local and regional governments in Europe.

To ensure our work was based on comprehensive and detailed analysis, the complete political, legal and structural context was taken into account: constitutional laws, voting regulations, other electoral means used by political parties, as well as structural, economic, social, cultural barriers, etc. that present genuine obstacles to the active and substantive participation of women in politics.

To further bolster our assessment, research and a comparative analysis of data spanning a period of around ten years was carried out. Examining all this information helps in understanding that while the principle of equality between

<sup>1</sup> List of the Member States of the Council of Europe: [www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/our-member-states](http://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/our-member-states)

<sup>2</sup> The notion of "Scandinavian countries" covers Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

women and men now has a firm foothold in Europe, it is far from being an engrained fact of life. The reality of the statistics tells **a story of intermittent movements and ups and downs in all the European countries**: further efforts are still required to build a society that is truly egalitarian.

In short, this study provides a global overview of the situation concerning the participation and representation of women in politics in Europe from the firm standpoint that gender equality in decision-making is a right, but also a highly political issue, essential to the positive advancement of our democracies. Good governance can only arise from just and healthy decisions taken by women and men together for the good of society as a whole.

As the European Section of the world organisation of local governments, the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), we also hope that this approach will be taken up on other continents, eventually producing, in view of 2030, a global map of women's participation in local politics.

The United Nations (UN) ranked gender equality as **one of the thematic and cross-cutting issues key to achieving sustainable development on our planet**. Gender equality is addressed under Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda and includes as a specific target: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life".

Our study aims to be an edifying piece of this legacy by helping policy makers to become aware of the importance of this issue, thereby providing instruments to act, seeing that it is only through women's equal participation in political life that real and substantial gender equality coupled with true democratic governance can be attained.

Our objective is also to encourage women themselves to take part in politics.



# Methodology





# Methodology

## Geographical scope

The geographical area of this study fluctuates according to the data studied.

At the local, intermediate, regional and national levels, this study is based on the situation in the **41 countries** where CEMR has members<sup>1</sup>:

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

Unfortunately, despite our extensive research and requests made to certain institutes of national statistics, we were unable to collect all the data necessary. Hence, we could not find reliable data on the situation of women:

- in Albania at the regional level in 2008,
- in Austria at the local level (except for the number of women mayors) in 2008,
- in Italy at the intermediate level in 2008,
- in Poland at the intermediate level in 2008,
- and in Ukraine at the intermediate level in 2008 and 2019 and at the regional level in 2008.

This missing information, particularly regarding 2008, therefore affects the calculation of any progress. To keep it simple for a comparative study, the data in question was subtracted from the 2019 average.

At the European level, we used the **28 member countries** for our analysis of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions.

For the Congress of the Council of Europe, which has 47 member countries, we selected **40 countries** (Israel is not included).

## References to groupings of countries

For the purposes of this publication, the terms “Europe” and “European average” refer to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

European Union refers to the 28 States who were members at the time of collecting data for the study.

In addition, to be able to compare data between different European regions, we chose to break them up geographically in such a way as to have sufficiently large country groupings. We therefore amalgamated them into the former Eastern bloc countries (former members of the USSR), the Balkan countries (former members of Yugoslavia), the Nordic countries, the countries of North-Western Europe and the countries of Southern Europe<sup>2</sup>.

It is important to note that these country groupings help us to measure regional trends, but that this is not necessarily indicative of an individual country’s particular situation.

<sup>1</sup> There are two exceptions. The association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK) is an observer member of CEMR, but we have not received data for the country; and the Swiss Association of CEMR is no longer an active member, but the data presented in this study were provided by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

<sup>2</sup> The former Eastern bloc countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine  
The Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia  
The Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden  
The countries of North-Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom  
The countries of Southern Europe: Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Turkey

## Temporal scope

Regarding the reference period between 2008 and 2019 used to track progress, specific results given are not necessarily a situational analysis corresponding to the exact years of 2008 and 2019.

On account of different electoral dates and to ensure the reliability of our data, the figures used are taken from the most recent elections (or those for which we found the most reliable data) with respect to our date of reference.

Thus, for example, our 2008 data sometimes date back to the 2004 elections, and the data referred to as “today’s” may have been from the 2014 elections.

In the majority of cases (65%), our data track a period of ten years or more (sometimes three terms). For the remaining cases, our data follow developments over an eight or nine-year period, but **always covering a minimum of two terms**.

There are two exceptions to this: in the case of France, where local elections are held every six years. The study therefore covers 2008 and 2014 (the next election is scheduled for 2020); in Poland, the study covers the elections at the intermediate level in 2014 and 2018.

## Questionnaire

In order to collect as much data as possible, we sent **a questionnaire** to each of CEMR’s member associations on the proportion of elected women in their country. The questionnaire was divided up into several parts, tailored to the situation of each country.

One section looked at the role of quotas in their country (presence, if any, of statutory quotas for each level, or of political parties with voluntary quotas).

A second section focused on the local level (date of elections, frequency of elections, number of local elected officials and number of women among them, number of mayors and number of women among them, and mayor of the capital in 2008 and in 2019).

Next, depending on the administrative structure of each country, there were additional sections pertaining

to intermediate and regional levels (date of elections, frequency of elections, number of elected officials for the level concerned and number of women among them, number of presidents at the level in question and number of women among them).

The last section dealt with the national level (date of elections, frequency of elections, number of members of parliament, number of women parliamentarians, identity of the president of the chamber (upper and/or lower chamber according to the country’s system) in 2008 and in 2019.

## Documentary research

After collecting all the data, we conducted **follow-up research** to complete any missing information (see bibliography for the complete list of sources). In this respect, we received invaluable assistance from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

We cross-referenced information using four different sources: the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) for information relating to quotas<sup>1</sup>, the EIGE Gender Statistics Database for the sub-national and national levels<sup>2</sup>, the Interparliamentary Union (IPU Parline)<sup>3</sup> for data on the national level, and the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Commission’s 2017 study for figures regarding the local and regional levels<sup>4</sup>.

Whenever data was found to be at odds, a more extensive study was carried out using other resources to determine the most reliable source. In the absence of a clear-cut finding, priority was given to the data gathered by the member associations.

## Data at European level

The **European Parliament** data were obtained from European Parliament’s website and DODS People’s online service.<sup>5</sup> They pertain to women elected to the Parliament in the 2009 and 2019 elections (to observe changes over a ten-year period). They do not consider any resignations following these elections and/or new appointments.

The **Committee of the Regions** (CoR) data was transmitted to us directly by this body. They relate to the composition

<sup>1</sup> [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)

<sup>2</sup> [eige.europa.eu/](http://eige.europa.eu/)

<sup>3</sup> [data.ipu.org/](http://data.ipu.org/)

<sup>4</sup> [rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e](http://rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e)

<sup>5</sup> [www.dodspeople.eu/](http://www.dodspeople.eu/)

of the Committee of the Regions in 2018 and in 2008. It is worth noting that there is generally an annual turnover in CoR members of around 20%, primarily the consequence of local election dates and the varying duration of mandates in the different countries.

As an example, for 2018, we used the information on CoR members (number of men/women [full and alternate] members by country) covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018. CoR terms of office are for five years. The year 2018 coincides with the sixth term, which runs from 26 January 2015 to 25 January 2020.

Still, the total number of members was lower than the total composition of the CoR (350 full members and 350 alternate members). This decrease is attributable to the fact that over the course of the year (2018), some members lost their mandate following local/regional elections in their home States and/or their term of office was for a different duration than the CoR's (shorter or longer than the 1 January to 31 December 2018 period). This resulted in a number of vacant seats.

We also obtained data directly from the **Congress of the Council of Europe**. The Congress is made up of two chambers: the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. After looking at the information received, in order to keep the focus of our analysis on the 2008–2018 comparison, we opted to use all of the Congress data, without making any distinction between the two chambers. The Congress data cover the 36<sup>th</sup> session of 2019 and the 15<sup>th</sup> session of 2008.

## Definition of the political offices examined

With regard to the **political bodies and offices chosen for analysis**, given the absence of a common terminology in Europe for certain bodies or specific jobs (such as mayor), our study and research has retained the nomenclature used in our 2016 study on local and regional governments in Europe<sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, in the case of the office of mayor or president of a sub-national level, we took care to base our observations on the role of women in equivalent positions. In some countries, this job is secured through an election (direct or indirect); in others, it is through appointment by a council of elected members.

Regarding the women elected at each sub-national level, we chose to consider only elected offices. For the offices at national level, we looked into the composition of the legislative body and whether members were elected or appointed. In the cases of a bicameral parliament (made up of two chambers), we used the lower chamber of these parliaments for our comparison with unicameral legislative bodies.

## Proportions and averages

We set out to assess the presence of women in politics at each level in Europe. We decided to use **the proportion** of women at each level, in each country. The absolute figures for mayors and presidents of sub-national levels are listed however in the country files.

To compare them, and to calculate the European averages (for the 41 CEMR countries), we decided to use a straightforward **average of the proportions**. We made this choice so that each country would be on an equal footing, regardless of its size and hence its total number of elected representatives. In other words, we examined the average share of women at each level of governance in Europe.

We used the percentage of total absolute figures in two situations.

The first case concerns the average number of women members of the European Parliament. For 2019, we decided to include Croatia in the average, even if it did not have any MEPs in 2009.

The second involves the “parity meter”, i.e. the proportion of elected representatives who are women at the subnational, national and European levels that is indicated in the upper right-hand corner of the country files.

This proportion could not be calculated for Switzerland and Germany since the necessary data for the total number of women local elected representatives were not available.

<sup>1</sup> [www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR\\_structures\\_and\\_competences\\_2016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_structures_and_competences_2016_EN.pdf)

## Country-specific methodological choices

Often, choices had to be made regarding the data being scrutinised. We have listed them in detail below.

- For Germany, to simplify the collection of statistics in a way acceptable to our member associations, the data on the local level pertain to municipalities (*Gemeinden*), towns (*[kreisfreie] Städte*) and counties (*Landkreise*). This also explains why we do not include data on the intermediate level (*Landkreise*) in Germany.
- For Austria, the collected data refer only to the *Landesregierungen*, since the data for the *Landesparlamente* were insufficient. With a governor at its head, the *Landesregierung* is the region's executive body. In almost all the regions, the regional government is elected by proportional representation. In all other cases, it is elected by a majority vote. The *Landesparlament* is made up of members elected by universal suffrage. Its duty includes designating the governor and regional government.
- In Latvia in 2008, there were no regions yet in the decentralised sense. The regions that then existed were territorial administrative divisions for planning purposes and the decision-making body for these entities was the development council of the planning area. The first elections for regions in Latvia date from 2009.
- For Portugal, we opted to not include the data on the 3,092 civil parishes (*Juntas de freguesia*). The data concerning the presidents and elected officials of these political bodies are imprecise and we were unable to obtain sufficiently reliable data. Consequently, only data on the 308 municipalities are given.
- In Switzerland, the Federal Statistical Office uses as basis a sample of 162 cities called "statistical cities". As a result, there are no data covering the whole of the country. Nevertheless, we did list the proportions of women in these statistical cities when the information originated from the official public source.
- In Serbia, the regional data only cover the autonomous province of Vojvodina as there is no data for the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija. The autonomous province of Vojvodina is one of Serbia's two regional entities. It is governed by a president who heads up the provincial government alongside the assembly

of the autonomous province. As for the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, it has been placed under an interim UN administration, in accordance with Resolution 1244 adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 10 June 1999.

Serbian national policy expressly states that the Republic of Serbia will never recognise the independence unilaterally proclaimed by Kosovo, and asserts that the future status of the southern Serbian province can only be defined in accordance with the appropriate principles and standards of the United Nations and other international organisations, while respecting the constitutional order of the Republic of Serbia. Considering these specific circumstances, no further information can be provided regarding the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija.

- For the United Kingdom, we treated the different Nations as regional entities. Consequently, we looked at the presence of women in the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland National Assembly. For England, we only used the data pertaining to the Greater London Authority's Assembly and excluded the data for the other combined authorities.

These combined authorities are structures that may be set up by local authorities in England<sup>1</sup>. Even though these entities are increasingly commonplace in England, we chose to not include them as part of the English regional level. We are aware that the Greater London Authority only covers a part of English territory, but it is the only one which, according to the UK Parliamentary report, can be fittingly compared with the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland National Assembly, even though its powers are distinctly more limited<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the first combined authority to have been established is Manchester, and only as recently as 2011. Thus, there is no corresponding data for 2008 and no figures to compare.

<sup>1</sup> UK Parliament article on this matter: [researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06649](https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06649)

<sup>2</sup> UK Parliament Briefing on this issue: [researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05817/SN05817.pdf](https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05817/SN05817.pdf)

## Progress

With respect to **measuring progress**, even though this can be done by mathematically calculating figures according to a precise formula ( $[\text{value in 2019} - \text{value in 2008}] / \text{value in 2008}$ ), we elected to simply use the **percentage point difference** for the proportion in question.

Despite its accuracy, the standard method for calculating change can sometimes lead to confusion and induce errors in understanding. For example, by applying the mathematical formula to the number of women mayors in Turkey, a progression of 256% in ten years is obtained. In this example, this corresponds to an increase of 2.3% (from 0.9% women in 2008 to 3.2% today).

Similarly, the evolution in the number of women mayors in Latvia computes to 11% over ten years, when it in fact corresponds to an increase of 2.4% (from 21.1% women in 2008 to 23.5% women today).

We therefore chose to symbolise any progression by indicating the differences in proportions of elected women in percentage points, thereby also ensuring that all the analyses were formulated using the same model.

## Gender-inclusive writing

For the French version of this study, we chose to respect the guidelines issued by the French Government's High Council for equality between women and men<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide\\_pour\\_une\\_communication\\_publique\\_sans\\_stereotype\\_de\\_sexe\\_vf\\_2016\\_11\\_02.compressed.pdf](http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide_pour_une_communication_publique_sans_stereotype_de_sexe_vf_2016_11_02.compressed.pdf) (in French only)





## Part 1

# The rise of women in politics?

Ten years of gains and setbacks





## Part 1

# The rise of women in politics?

## Ten years of gains and setbacks

### Women in local politics

What can be discerned from the data on gender equality in local life in Europe<sup>1</sup>? How many women have been elected? How many women are mayors? What changes have there been since 2008? While some progress has been achieved, efforts are still necessary to advance towards equality.

CEMR represents 100,000 European local and regional governments from EU countries, but also from countries across wider Europe, from Iceland to Georgia, from Portugal to the Baltics as well as Israel. It is largely through the precious help of all these CEMR member national associations that we have been able to compile detailed data on the situation of women in politics, particularly at local level. This information is invaluable as it is very difficult to obtain.

What do the data indicate as a whole? What trends do these statistics reveal?

#### Municipal councils (or equivalent)

In 2019, in the countries included in this study, **the average proportion of women local elected representatives was 29%<sup>2</sup>**, compared to 23.4% in 2008. This average roughly corresponds to the proportion of women in the national parliaments in Europe (26.9%) today but is lower than the proportion of women in the European Parliament (40.3%).

The countries with the highest representation of women at the local level in 2019 are:

- Iceland (47.2%)
- Sweden (43.1%)
- Ukraine (41.7%)
- France (40.3%)

In 2008, the country with the highest number was Ukraine (43%), followed by Latvia (42.3%), Sweden (42%) and Norway (37.5%).

**No country has reached perfect parity<sup>3</sup> at the local level**, although countries like Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden have attained parity in the European Parliament, where the numbers for elected women have even exceeded 50%<sup>4</sup>.

The Nordic countries<sup>5</sup> are among those with the highest number of women in local government, but with respect to the number of women members of the European Parliament and in their national parliaments, the proportion remains lower.

1 See methodology, p. 11: "Europe" refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

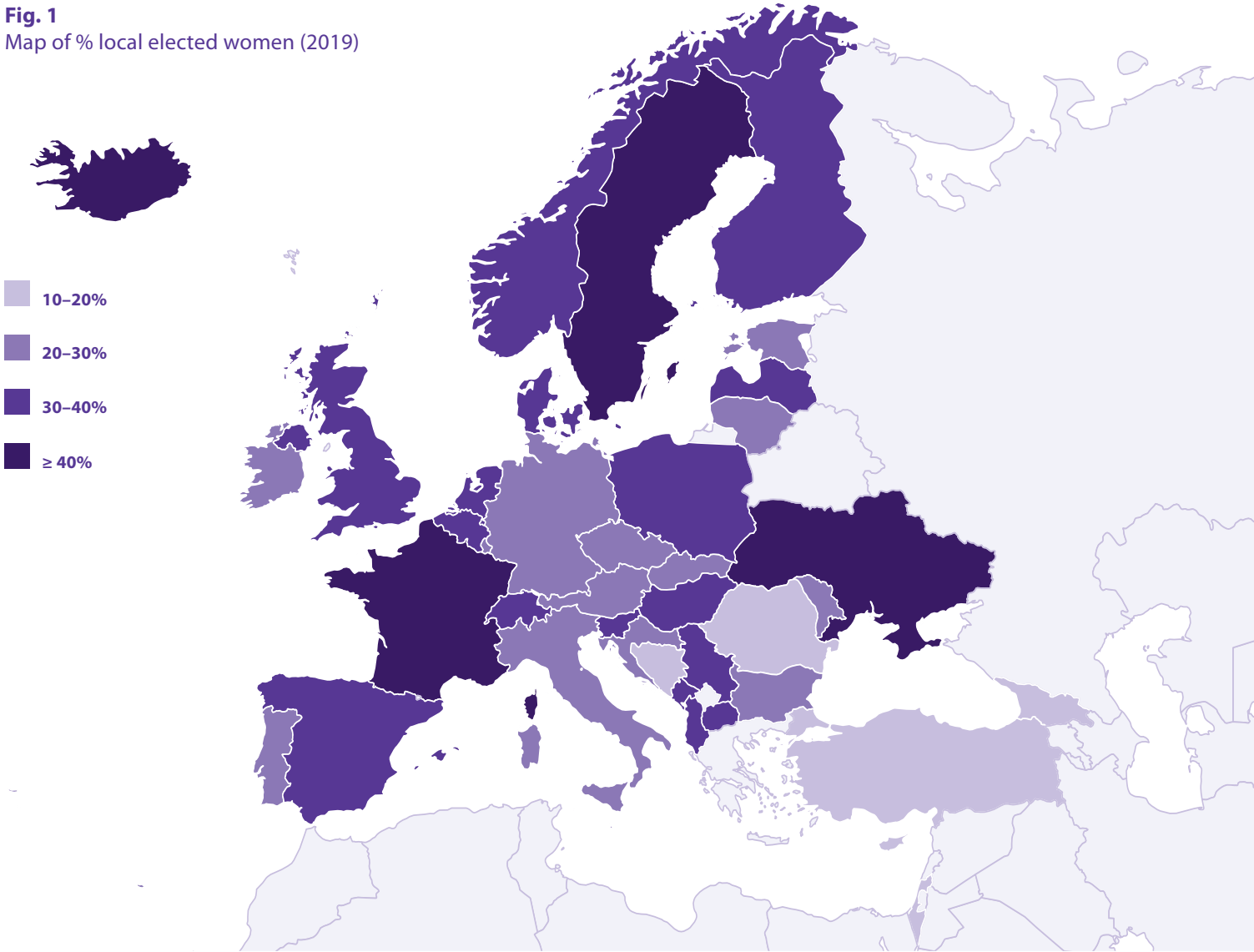
2 28.9% if the data from Austria are included, see methodology, p. 11.

3 Perfect parity: 50% - 50%.

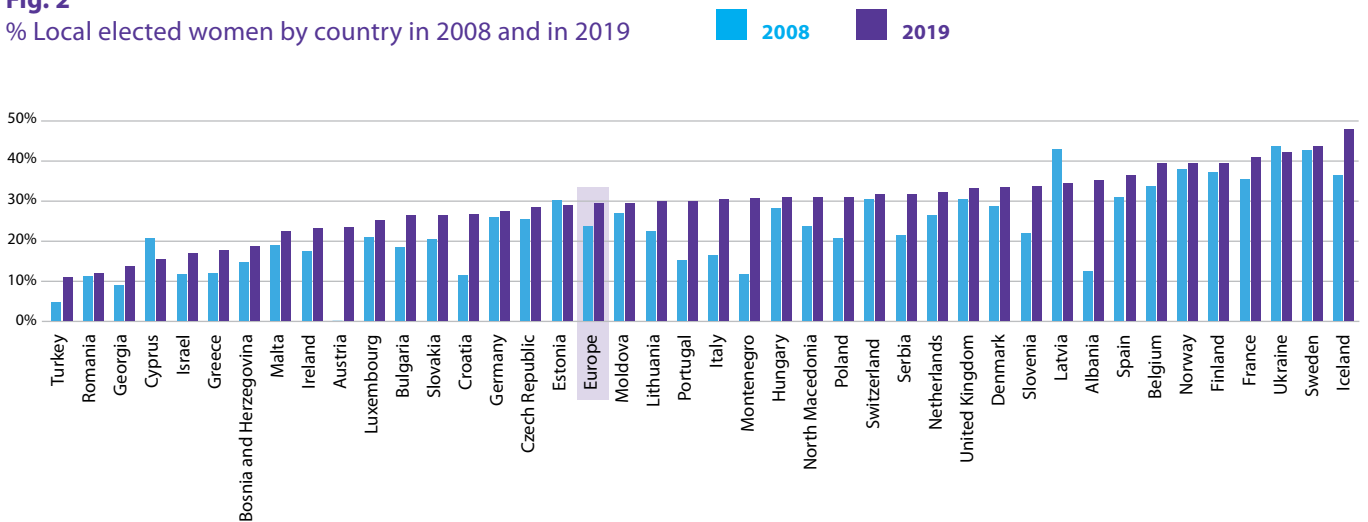
4 This was the case in Sweden (55%) and Finland (53.8%) following the 2019 European elections.

5 See methodology, p. 11: please note that the "Nordic countries" in this case encompass a region in Northern Europe delineated by CEMR solely for the purposes of this study that includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden whereas the notion of the "Scandinavian countries" only covers Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

**Fig. 1**  
Map of % local elected women (2019)



**Fig. 2**  
% Local elected women by country in 2008 and in 2019



Today, there are four countries in Europe that can boast more than 40% women elected at the local level: France, Iceland, Sweden and Ukraine. In 2008, there were only three: Ukraine, Latvia and Sweden. Seventeen countries<sup>1</sup> now have between 30% to 40% women on their municipal councils. Ten years ago, there were only seven.

Today, there are thirteen countries<sup>2</sup> where women account for 20% to 30% of the municipal councils (or equivalent). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Romania and Turkey, the proportion of women local elected representatives remains below 20%. This was the case for fourteen countries<sup>3</sup> in the study in 2008. These included Turkey and Georgia, where women did not even attain 10% representation among local elected representatives.

In terms of upward trends in the proportion of women elected to local office, Albania can vaunt the biggest percentage increase, going from 12.3% to 34.8% (+22.5%). Montenegro is in second place, going from 11.4% in 2008 to 30.2% (+18.8%) in 2019, followed by Croatia, which went from 11.3% to 26.3% (+15%), and lastly, Portugal, which saw an upturn from 15% to 29.4% in the number of women elected to public office in the municipalities (+14.4%).

Some countries witnessed a decline in the proportion of women elected at local level: Latvia went from 42.3% to 34% (-8.3%), Cyprus went from 20.3% to 15.3% (-5%), Ukraine went from 43% to 41.7% (-1.3%), and Estonia went from 29.8% to 28.6% (-1.2%).

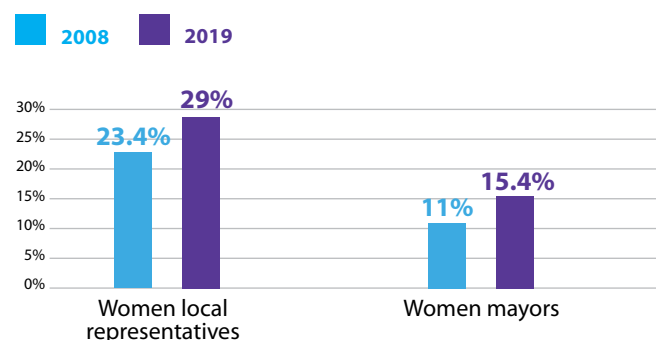
Lastly, it should be noted that, today, **the average proportion of women elected at local level in the European Union countries (28.9%) is nearly identical to that of women in non-EU countries (28.8%)**. Still, there has been more significant headway made over the last ten years in countries outside the European Union (+7.2% compared to +4.9% for the EU countries<sup>4</sup>).

### Mayors (or equivalent)

The number of women local elected officials is a good indicator of the degree to which women’s opinions are represented in the day-to-day life of their city. However, the number of women elected mayors is a noteworthy gauge of their making inroads as leaders, occupying positions of political power, making policy and wielding influence.

Yet, **the proportion of women mayors remains a great deal lower than that of women elected to municipal councils**, and this disparity tends to be growing further. In Europe<sup>5</sup>, on average, there are 13.5% fewer women mayors than women municipal councillors (while women account for 28.9% of local officials elected today, only 15.4% of mayors are women, on average, in Europe).

**Fig. 3**  
Average proportion of local elected women in Europe in 2008 and in 2019



1 Finland (39%), Norway (39%), Belgium (39%), Spain (35.8%), Albania (34.8%), Latvia (34%), Slovenia (33.3%), Denmark (32.9%), United Kingdom (32.8%), Netherlands (31.7%), Serbia (31.2%), Switzerland (31.2%), Poland (30.4%), North Macedonia (30.4%), Hungary (30.4%), Montenegro (30.2%) and Italy (30%)

2 Portugal (29.4%), Lithuania (29.4%), Moldova (29%), Estonia (28.6%), Czech Republic (28%), Germany (27%), Croatia (26.3%), Slovakia (26.1%), Bulgaria (26%), Luxembourg (24.8%), Austria (23%), Ireland (22.8%) and Malta (22%)

3 Malta (19.7%), Bulgaria (18.2%), Ireland (17.2%), Italy (16.2%), Portugal (15%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (14.5%), Albania (12.3%), Greece (11.8%), Israel (11.6%), Montenegro (11.4%), Croatia (11.3%), Romania (10.9%), Georgia (8.7%) and Turkey (4.4%)

4 See methodology, p. 11: the data for Austria were not included in calculating overall progression.

5 See methodology, p. 11: “Europe” refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

Three countries stand out regarding their number of women mayors: Iceland (36.1%), Sweden (32.1%) and Finland (30.5%). Today, these are the only three countries where the proportion of women mayors exceeds 30%.

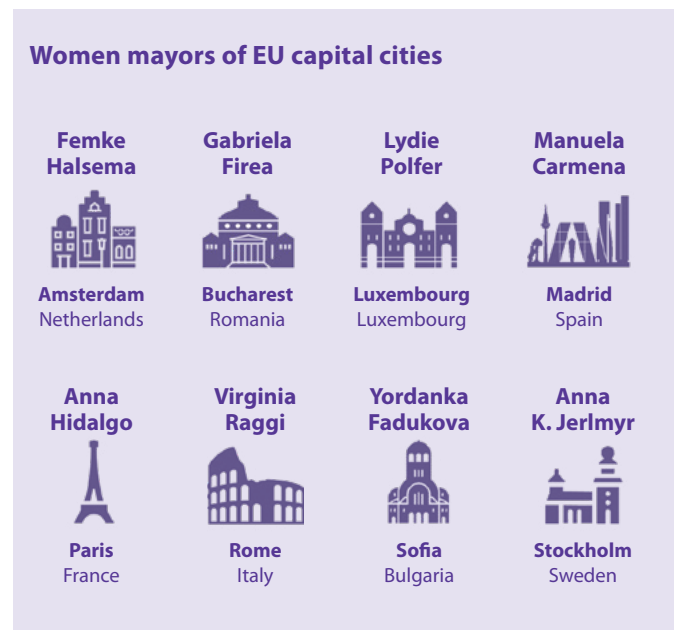
In 2008, none of the countries had gone beyond this threshold. The three countries with the highest proportion of women mayors in 2008 were Sweden (26.9%), Iceland (26.6%) and Switzerland (24.9%).

There are ten countries in Europe now where more than 20% of the mayors are women<sup>1</sup>. In particular, a large number of **Central European countries have been quite successful in increasing their proportion of women mayors.**

Among the countries that made important headway in the proportion of women mayors, three countries recorded gains of more than 10%: Ukraine (from 5.7% to 23%), Albania (from 1.6% to 14.8%) and Estonia (from 4% to 15.2%). Among the countries that already had more than 15% women mayors in 2008, the significant advances in the Netherlands (from 17.2% to 26.8%) and Iceland (26.2% to 36.1%) are worth noting.

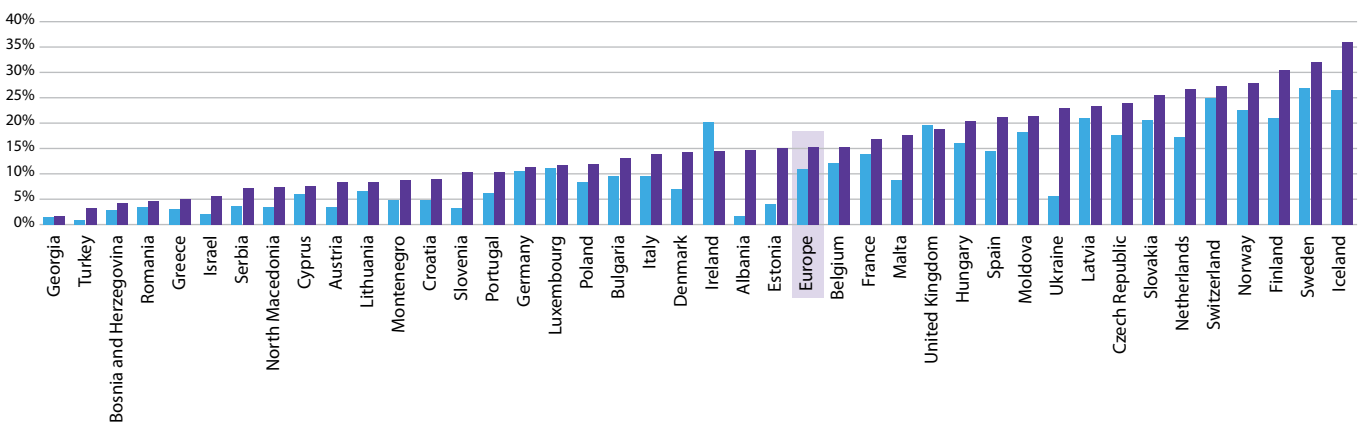
In terms of proportions, two countries have fewer women mayors now than in 2008: Ireland, which dropped from 20.2% to 14.5%, and the United Kingdom, where the proportion of women mayors decreased from 19.7% to 18.8%.

The percentage of women who are mayors of capital cities is similar to the average of the percentages of mayors at local level in general. Of the 41 countries in the study, a woman is the head of the capital in only 8 of them<sup>2</sup>: Bulgaria (Sofia), France (Paris), Italy (Rome), Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Norway (Oslo), Netherlands (Amsterdam), Romania (Bucharest) and Sweden (Stockholm).



**Fig. 4**

% Women mayors by country in 2008 and in 2019



<sup>1</sup> Norway (28%), Switzerland (27.4%), Netherlands (26.8%), Slovakia (25.5%), Czech Republic (24%), Latvia (23.5%), Ukraine (23%), Moldova (21.5%), Spain (21.3%) and Hungary (20.4%)

<sup>2</sup> Data last updated: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

There were also eight women mayors of capitals in 2008: in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo), Cyprus (Nicosia), Czech Republic (Prague), Denmark (Copenhagen), Iceland (Reykjavik), Ireland (Dublin), Poland (Warsaw) and Sweden (Stockholm).

Of the 41 countries studied, fourteen introduced mandatory quotas at the local level<sup>1</sup>. These countries have more women elected at the local level (31.5% versus 27.7% in countries with no quotas) but, more importantly, have witnessed greater progression on average (+8.7% compared to +3.9%).

Yet, these same countries have fewer women mayors (12.7% versus 16.8% in other countries) even though their numbers have undergone a greater increase since 2008 (+5.5% versus +4.1% in other countries)<sup>2</sup>. It should also be noted that the eight countries with the most women elected at the local level (more than 35%) are either Nordic countries or countries with mandatory quotas: Iceland, Sweden, Ukraine, France, Finland, Norway, Belgium and Spain.

### Intermediate assemblies (or equivalent)

Of the 41 countries in this study, the intermediate level of only five of them could be studied (out of the seven that have an intermediate level<sup>3</sup>) owing to a lack of available information.

Despite the small sample, data in these countries show that the intermediate level tends to lag behind the local and regional levels in terms of equality between women and men councillors.

Regardless, the proportion of women councillors (29.3%) remains much higher than the proportion of women presidents (9.4%) at the intermediate level. In both cases, there clearly has been progress since 2008: the percentage of women presidents increased from 5.2% (27 of the 511 posts are held by women) to 9.5%<sup>4</sup>. There was an 11% increase in the proportion of women councillors.

It is also interesting to look at regulations directed at a more gender-balanced representation. France, the leading country in this category, enforces a law on 'alternate' parity (obligation to alternate women and men on the electoral lists)<sup>5</sup>.

**Fig. 5**

% Women elected representatives and leaders in 2019

	Councillors			Leaders		
	Local	Intermediate	Regional	Local	Intermediate	Regional
<b>Belgium</b>	39%	39.7%	43.2%	15.4%	18.2%	0%
<b>France</b>	40.3%	50%	49%	16.9%	8.2%	16.7%
<b>Hungary</b>	30.4%	12.7%	na	20.4%	0%	na
<b>Italy</b>	30%	19.2%	20.4%	14%	8.7%	10%
<b>Poland</b>	30.4%	24.7%	28.3%	12%	11.8%	6.3%
<b>Average</b>	34%	29.3%	35.3%	15.8%	9.4%	8.2%

1 Albania (30%), Belgium (50%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (33%), France (50%), Greece (40%), Moldova (40%), Montenegro (30%), North Macedonia (40%), Poland (35%), Portugal (40%), Serbia (33%), Slovenia (40%), Spain (40%) and Ukraine (30%)

2 More information on quotas is provided under Part 2) of this study on p. 39.

3 The two countries where the intermediate level was not studied are Germany and Ukraine. See methodology, p. 11.

4 To facilitate the comparison of data between 2008 and today, Italy's data have not been included in the averages of the proportions from 2018.

5 More information on quotas is provided under Part 2) of this study on p. 39.

### Regional assemblies (or equivalent)

In Europe<sup>1</sup>, 26 countries also hold regional elections<sup>2</sup>. Women are solidly represented in some countries: France (49%), Sweden (48.2%), Spain (45.4%), Finland (45%), Norway (44.4%) and Belgium (43.2%). In six other countries<sup>3</sup>, 30% to 40% of policy makers elected at the regional level are women. Only four countries attained these numbers in 2008<sup>4</sup>.

Nine countries<sup>5</sup> reached 20% to 30% of women elected to the regional level, i.e. four more countries than in 2008. Finally, there are five countries<sup>6</sup> with less than 20% elected women at the regional level, or five fewer countries than in 2008.

The same observation concerning the comparison between the percentages of women mayors and women local councillors applies here: **proportionally, there are fewer women presidents of regions than women elected to the regional assemblies.** In France, the country with the best showing with respect to regional councillors (49%), women presidents account for only 16.7%; in Finland, the latter only account for 21.1% compared to 45% women regional councillors.

**The European average for women elected representatives at the regional level is 30.9%<sup>7</sup> while the average for women regional presidents is 18.4%.**

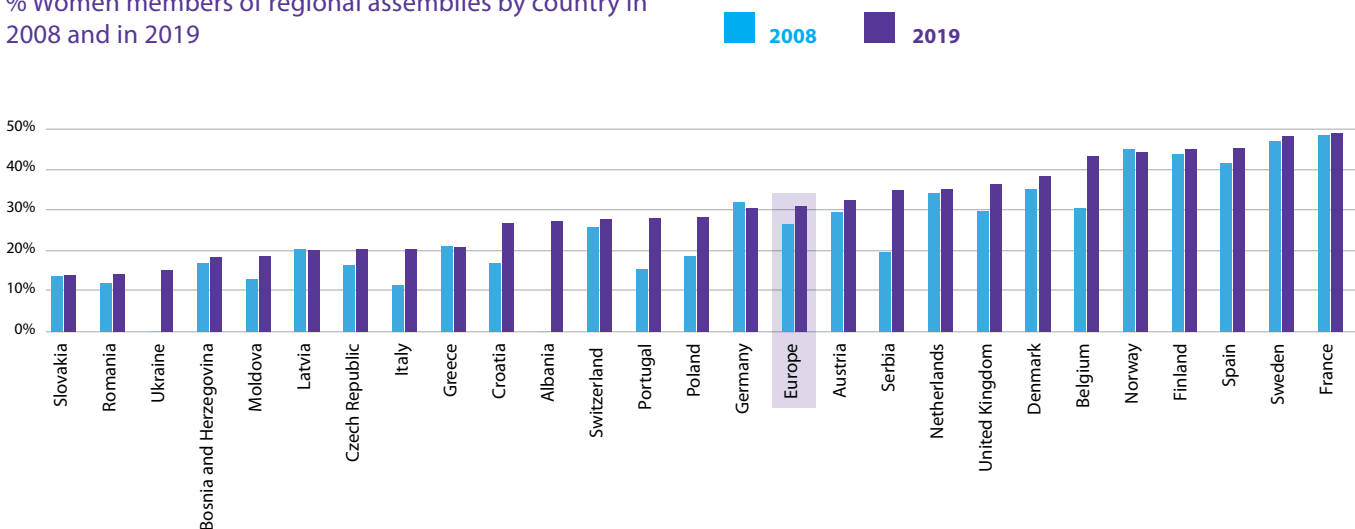
In 2008, there were no women regional presidents in six countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Serbia and Slovakia. In 2019, slight progress is discernible with women regional presidents occupying 2 out of 10 posts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 out of 16 posts in Germany and 1 out of 16 posts in Poland.

Using the proportion of women regional councillors in 2008 for comparison, progress can be observed in Serbia (increase of 15.3%), Belgium (increase of 12.9%), Portugal (increase of 12.5%) and Croatia (increase of 10%).

Four countries saw a decrease in the number of women representatives in their regional assemblies: Germany (-1.4%), Norway (-0.6%), Greece (-0.3%) and Latvia (-0.2%).

**Fig. 6**

% Women members of regional assemblies by country in 2008 and in 2019



1 See methodology, p. 11: "Europe" refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

2 See methodology, p. 11: the nomenclature used for the regional level is the one used in the CEMR study *Local and Regional Governments in Europe: Structures and Competences*: [www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR\\_structures\\_and\\_competences\\_2016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_structures_and_competences_2016_EN.pdf)

3 Denmark (38.5%), United Kingdom (36.5%), Netherlands (35.2%), Serbia (35%), Austria (32.5%) and Germany (30.5%)

4 Denmark (35.1%), Netherlands (34.2%), Germany (32%) and Belgium (30.4%)

5 Poland (28.3%), Portugal (27.9%), Switzerland (27.7%), Albania (27.4%), Croatia (26.9%), Greece (20.9%), Italy (20.4%), Czech Republic (20.3%) and Latvia (20.2%)

6 Moldova (18.6%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (18.3%), Ukraine (15.1%), Romania (14.3%) and Slovakia (13.9%)

7 See methodology, p. 11: "Europe" refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.



## Women in national politics

The Croat President, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, the Estonian President, Kersti Kaljulaid, the Slovak President, Zuzana Čaputová, the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, and the Serb Prime Minister, Ana Brnabić, are all stateswomen and Heads of State. This section, which focuses on the national parliaments as assemblies elected by universal suffrage (i.e. by the citizens), shows that despite the foregoing examples, **gender equality is no more respected at State level than it is at local level.**

In 2018 and 2019, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Ukraine all celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women obtaining the right to vote in legislative elections<sup>1</sup>. Several countries also celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first women getting elected to the national parliaments.

One hundred years later (for some countries), an average 28.5% of members of parliamentary assemblies in Europe are women<sup>2</sup>. This average is much lower than the proportion of women in the European Parliament (40.3%), but roughly equivalent to that of women elected at the local level (29%).

The data on Europe that we were able to compile show that the proportion of women elected to the lower or unicameral chamber<sup>3</sup> in each country rose in comparison to the European average since 2008 (from 21.9% to 28.5%).

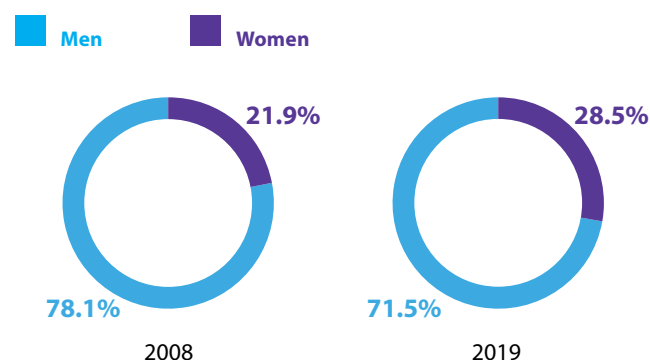
It is interesting to note that for the fourteen countries with a bicameral parliament<sup>4</sup>, the proportion of women MPs is higher for the lower chamber (31.3%) than for the upper chamber (25.9%) and that forward progress over a ten-year period is also more substantial in the lower chamber (+9%) than in the upper chamber (+6.5%).

Today, the five European countries with the highest proportion of seats in the lower or unicameral chamber held by women are:

- Spain (47.4%)
- Finland (47%)
- Sweden (46.1%)
- Belgium (42.7%)
- Norway (41.4%)

**Fig. 7**

Average proportion of women elected to the lower or unicameral chamber in Europe in 2008 and in 2019



In 2008, the five top-ranked countries in this regard were Sweden (47.3%), Finland (41.5%), Norway (37.9%), Denmark (37.4%) and Belgium (36.7%).

Compared to 2008, the data on women in the national parliaments show **forward movement in several countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans**: in addition to France, which increased by 21.2% in terms of proportion of women elected (from 18.5% to 39.7%), Albania went from 7.1% in 2008 to 27.9% (+20.8%), Serbia went from 20.4% to 37.2% (+16.8%), Italy went from 21.3% to 35.7% (+14.4%), and Montenegro went from 11.1% to 23.5% (+12.4%).

All these countries except for Italy had a quota system in place for their national elections. Furthermore, the ten countries with the highest share of women elected to the lower chamber or single house are either Nordic countries or ones with mandatory quotas.

In the European Union member countries, the proportion of women in the lower or unicameral chamber of parliament (29.1%) is higher than that of the non-EU countries (27.1%). However, the increase over ten years is much higher in the countries outside of the EU (+8%, compared to +5.9% for the countries within the EU).

That being said, this trend reverses for the upper chamber in countries with bicameral parliaments: an increase of 8% in the EU countries and a drop of 3% in the non-EU countries.

<sup>1</sup> For an exhaustive list, please consult the following website : [archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm](https://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm)

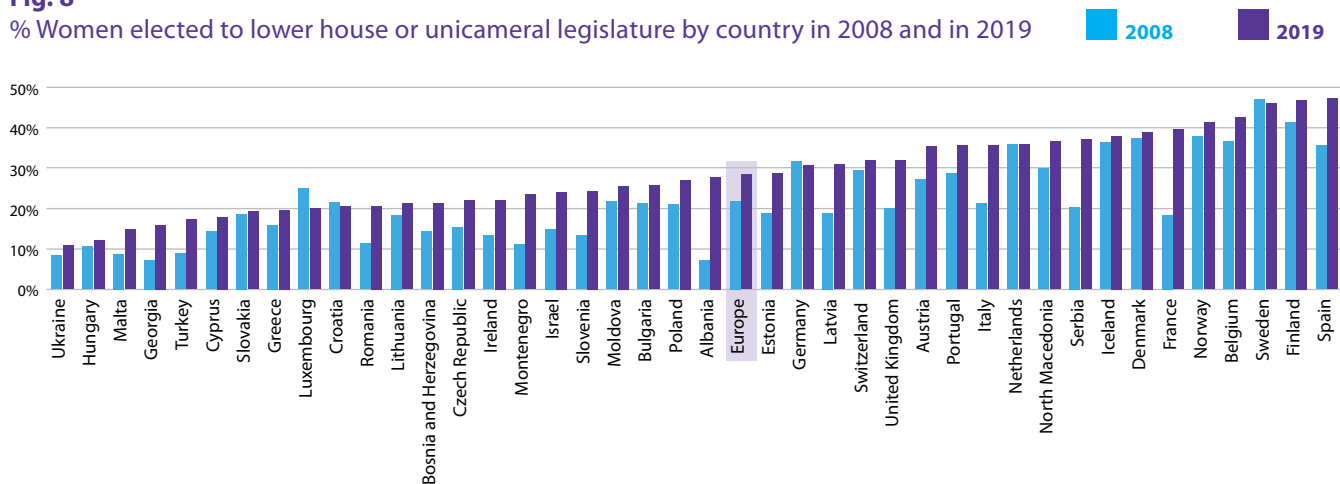
<sup>2</sup> See methodology, p. 11: "Europe" or "European average" refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

<sup>3</sup> See methodology, p. 11, on the comparison between the chamber of representatives under a unicameral political system, a "single house", and the lower chamber when there is a bicameral parliament.

<sup>4</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom

**Fig. 8**

% Women elected to lower house or unicameral legislature by country in 2008 and in 2019



Proportionally speaking, the countries showing the lowest number of women elected to the lower or single chamber of parliament today are: Ukraine (10.9%), Hungary (12.1%), Malta (14.9%), Georgia (16%) and Turkey (17.3%). It should be noted that the proportion of women elected in Turkey and Georgia did increase (by 8.5% and 8.7% respectively).

In other countries, the percentage of women members of parliament dropped in comparison to 2008: this occurred in Luxembourg (-5% of women elected), Sweden (-1.1%), Croatia (-1%) and Germany (-1%).

**With respect to the presidency of the parliamentary chambers, women barely make a mark.** Only nine countries had a woman president in the lower or unicameral

chambers in 2008. Today, there are ten. At the level of the upper chambers, there has been a more promising development: in the fourteen countries concerned, the number of women presidents has doubled, going from two to four.

To conclude, parity between women and men in the parliaments does not exist anywhere in Europe, even in countries like France, Spain or Sweden where women are present in numbers almost equal to, or sometimes even greater than, men in the government. Parity is not yet a reality.



### Making headway in the Balkans

While the Balkan countries cannot claim to have the highest proportions of elected women at the local and regional levels, it is the group of countries<sup>1</sup> that has shown the strongest gains over the last decade. The share of women in the municipal councils in the Balkans rose from 16.5% in 2008 to 29.2% in 2019 (an increase of 12.7%). Today, they can take pride in having more elected women at the local level than the Southern European countries and the former Eastern bloc countries. The proportion of women with seats on the municipal councils is moving closer to that of the North-Western European countries (35.7%).

At the national level, the proportion of women elected to the lower chamber or single house of parliament today

is 27.4%, which amounts to an increase of 10.5%, the biggest gain among the groups of countries studied. Again, this proportion is higher than the one in the former Eastern bloc countries and the Southern European countries. It may be postulated that credit for these figures goes to the quotas adopted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia at the local level, and in Croatia at the national level (i.e. in all the Balkan countries).

While these advances are positive, the figures should nevertheless be treated with caution since the proportions as a whole remain a long way away from parity. With regard to women mayors, the Balkan countries have progressed more sluggishly: the proportion of women mayors has only risen from 3.5% to 8.8%. Furthermore, the gap between the number of women elected at the local level and the number of women elected mayors is widening.

<sup>1</sup> For the list of countries included in each regional group as defined in this study, see methodology, p. 11.

## Women in the European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP), elected for the first time by universal suffrage in 1979, chose Simone Veil as its first president, an exceptional woman who worked extensively for equality. What place do women occupy today in the assembly elected by European citizens? Today, the percentage of women MEPs exceeds 40% and some countries even send more women than men to this European parliamentary assembly.

Of the 31 presidents who have presided over the European Parliament since 1958, only two were women: Simone Veil (1979–1982) and Nicole Fontaine (1999–2002). Between 1952, date of its creation as the common assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, with six member countries, and 1979, when the first elections by direct universal suffrage were held, with nine member countries, only 31 members of parliament (MEPs) were women.

Over the years, the number and percentage of women MEPs have risen steadily. **Today, the percentage of women MEPs is higher than the European average for the national parliaments and local and regional councils.**

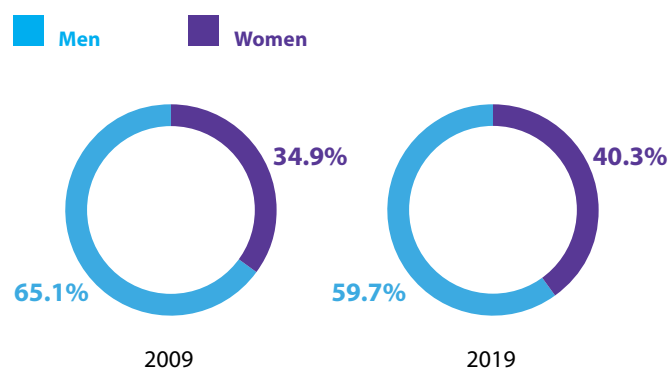
In an EP report on gender equality adopted in December 2018, the European Parliament called on the political parties to ensure a gender-balanced selection of candidates in the upcoming elections<sup>1</sup>. The European Union does not require parity of its member countries, which organise elections to the European Parliament in accordance with their own regulations.

Of the 28 Member States, 10 introduced rules in support of a gender-balanced representation for the elections to the European Parliament<sup>2</sup>. For example, all-male electoral lists are prohibited in Romania.

Following the May 2019 elections, women now account for 40.3% of the assembly elected by European citizens for the 2019–2024 term. In the preceding term (2014–2019), there were 37% women members and prior to that (2009–2014), 34.9%.

Fig. 9

Average proportion of women MEPs in 2009 and in 2019



In the May 2019 European elections, the 28 member countries elected 303 women out of a total of 751 MEPs. This shows an increase in the number of women in keeping with the slight uptick in the preceding elections but fails to achieve parity. However, two countries elected more women than men in the last elections: Sweden (55% of its members are women) and Finland (53.8%).

Seven countries<sup>3</sup> did achieve parity by electing exactly 50% women and 50% men. It is worth noting however that Denmark (6 of 13 members are women), Finland (7 of 13 members are women) and Ireland (5 of 11 members are women) might very well have achieved parity were it not for the uneven number of their country's representatives.

For the 2009–2014 legislative term, 34.9% of the members of the European Parliament were women. The proportion of women elected therefore increased by 5.4%. In 2009, the following countries sent the most women to the Hemicycle, electing more than 40% women MEPs: Finland (61.5%), Sweden (55.6%), Estonia (50%), Netherlands (48%) and Denmark (46.2%).

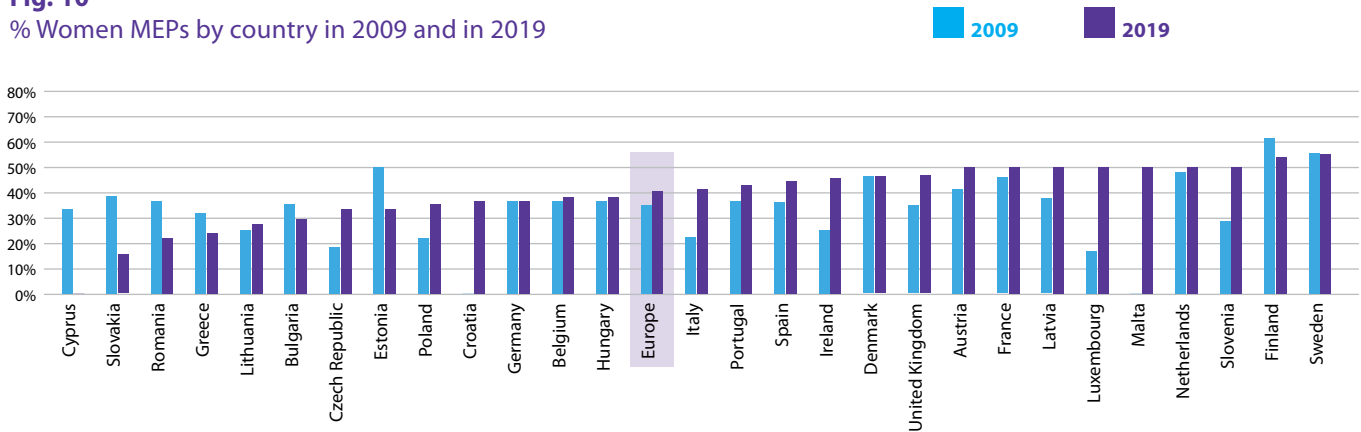
1 [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0429\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0429_EN.pdf)

2 Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain

3 Austria, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands and Slovenia

**Fig. 10**

% Women MEPs by country in 2009 and in 2019



It is noteworthy that Malta did not have any women members in 2008, but today they make up half of its delegation. Luxembourg previously only had one woman among its six members, but today women represent half of its members.

Among the most significant positive developments, the Czech Republic and Poland respectively increased their number of women from 4 out of 22 to 7 out of 21 and from 11 out of 50 to 18 out of 51.

For some countries, there was a decrease in the number of women elected to the European Parliament even when the total number of members was rather high: Cyprus fell from 2 to 0 (out of six members), Slovakia fell from 5 to 2 (out of 13 members), Romania fell from 12 to 7 (out of 33 members initially and 32 today) and Greece went from 7 to 5 (out of 22 then and 21 now).

With respect to the European Parliament's political groups, only the group of the Greens–European Free Alliance reached parity among their representatives with a percentage of 52.7% women (39 out of 74); the group Renew Europe was close behind with 47.2% (51 out of 108).<sup>1</sup>

It would therefore seem that the groups that identify with the idea of parity and advocate gender equality also present a more balanced representation. The groups newly formed in the European Parliament also appear to offer new opportunities for women to join and get elected. Do age and the level of experience of members make any difference regarding the balanced composition of groups?

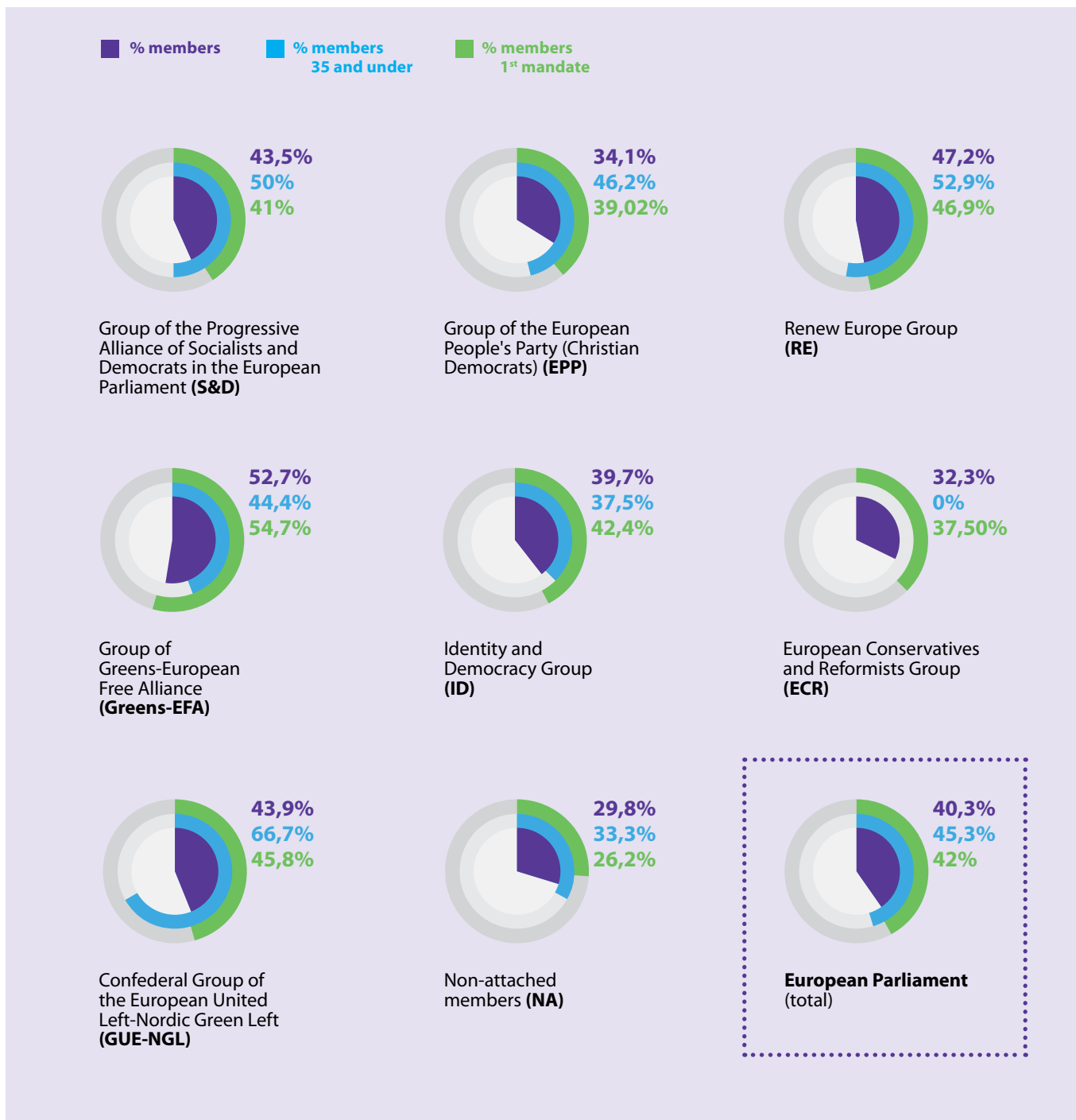
According to the figures provided by the European Parliamentary Research Service, there are 86 new MEPs aged 35 or under, 39 of whom are women (45.3%). By cross-referencing this number with the one on political group affiliation, we can see that the groups recruiting the highest number of young candidates – women and men – have the largest proportion of women overall (with the exception of the Greens/EFA). In three of the eight groups the majority of the women are aged 35 or under: GUE/NGL (66.7%), Renew Europe (52.9%) and S&D (50%).

Looking further into the political groups (and by extension, the national political parties that they represent), a close study of the proportion of newly elected MEPs reveals a pattern. The three groups with the largest share of women elected to the EP for the first time (Greens/EFA [54.7%], Renew Europe [46.9%] and GUE/NGL [45.8%]) are also the groups with the highest proportions of women members overall.

In a future edition of this study, it might be worthwhile to look at the role of political parties at other levels of government, analysing what constraints and opportunities they offer women running for elected office, and considering factors such as seniority and their openness to younger people as candidates.

<sup>1</sup> The other groups, in descending order of proportion of women members, are: the Confederal Group of the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (43.9%); the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (43.5%); the Identity and Democracy Group (39.7%); the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (34.1%); the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (32.3%) and the Non-attached members (29.9%).

**Fig. 11**  
Women members of the EP by political group (2019)



## Women in the Committee of the Regions

What is the situation for women in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European advisory body established by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and representing local and regional governments in the 28 EU member countries?

When the Committee of the Regions was first being established, the elected women representatives of CEMR adopted a resolution at the Dublin Conference in 1995<sup>1</sup> that addressed the new body, calling on it to take equality into account in the appointment of members and to create a working group to that end. This last goal was achieved seeing that the CoR did set up a working group chaired by Rosemary McKenna, who was also Chair of CEMR's Committee of women local and regional elected representatives at the time.

Nevertheless, equality among the delegates is still not an accomplished fact. According to figures covering the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 to 31 December 2018 (coinciding with the current 2015–2020 term)<sup>2</sup>, only 24.2% of the Committee of the Regions delegates (members and alternates) are women. This percentage puts the EU's representative body of local and regional governments considerably behind the European Parliament (40.3%) and below the proportion of women elected at the local level (28.9%) and at the regional level (30.9%).

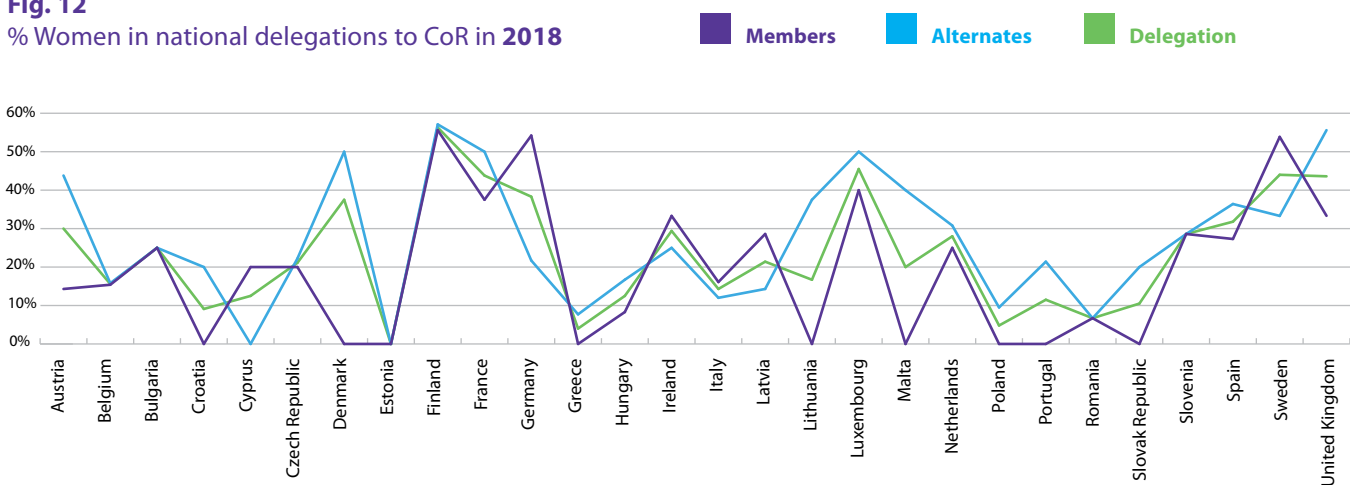
### In total (members and alternates)

Taking into account the delegations as a whole (members and alternates together), the total proportion of women has risen by 3.1% since 2008 (21.1% of delegates were women).

This increase is tied to the rather substantial advances made in countries like France, which went from a total of 25% women (14 out of 56) to 43.8% women (21 out of 48); Germany, which went from a total of 21.2% women (11 out of 52) to 38.3% women (18 out of 47); and Denmark, which went from a total of zero women in 2008 (there was only one delegate) to 3 women out of 8 delegates.

Conversely, there are countries where the overall number of women declined: Belgium, which went from 22.6% (11 women out of 58) to 15.6% (7 out of 45), and Estonia (from 4 women out of 14 to 0 out of 12). In 2018, three other countries only had one woman in their entire delegation<sup>3</sup>.

**Fig. 12**  
% Women in national delegations to CoR in 2018



<sup>1</sup> CEMR's European Conference of women elected representatives of local and regional governments held in Dublin on 6–8 July 1995. The resolution is available from the European archives at the European University Institute in Florence: [archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/40218?item=CCRE-643](https://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/40218?item=CCRE-643)

<sup>2</sup> More information on the Committee of the Regions statistics can be found in the methodology, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Croatia (1 out of 11), Cyprus (1 out of 8) and Greece (1 out of 25).

### Full members

In 2008, 17.3% of full members were women; today, this figure has reached 21.6%. In **2008**, the three countries with the most women members (excluding alternates) were Sweden (8 out of 13), Finland (6 out of 11) and Luxembourg (2 out of 6). In **2018**, the delegation with the biggest share of women was Finland (5 out of 9), followed by Germany (13 out of 24) and Sweden (7 out of 13).

**Most delegations showed progress in 2018 compared to 2008.** In the case of some countries, the gains were substantial: Germany (+35%) and France (+26.7%), but also Latvia, Ireland, Spain and the Czech Republic, which could all report increases ranging from 13.7% to 16% in the number of their women members.

There were eight countries that named fewer women in 2018 than in 2008, the majority of which were from Eastern or Southern Europe, but also including Sweden (a slightly different case but still trending downwards in terms of women delegates, whether as members or alternates).

Within certain delegations, there was a sharp drop in the number of women who were full members. **Eight countries simply did not appoint any women members at all in 2018:** Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and Slovakia. It is troubling to note that, in the cases of Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, there were already no women members in 2008 even though their delegations

were, and still are, rather large (21 delegates for Poland in 2008 and 2018; 13 and 12 delegates for Portugal; and 10 and 9 delegates for Slovakia). One other country showed similar results, but with a slight difference: Denmark, which only had one delegate in 2008 and two in 2018.

### Alternate members

In 2008, 24.9% of alternate members were women; today, this figure has reached 26.9%. Their number increased however to a lesser degree (+2%) than the number of women members (an increase of 4.3%).

**The gap existing between the proportion of women members and the proportion of women alternate members has therefore been partly bridged** (a difference of 5.3% compared to 7.6% in 2008).

Two countries do not have any women alternates: Estonia (whose delegation of six members and six alternates does not include any women) and Cyprus (zero out of three alternates).

It should be noted that the majority of the eight countries with no women members have tried to compensate for this by designating women alternates, but the end result is still a far cry from parity. The sole exception: Denmark, which named three women (out of six alternates).



### CoR recommendations to improve women's representation

In April 2019, the Committee of the Regions Bureau adopted a strategy for the gender-balanced participation of members in the CoR<sup>1</sup>.

To improve the representation of women in the CoR, the Bureau approved these recommendations regarding the nomination of representatives<sup>2</sup>:

- “To call on nominating bodies at member state level to put forward a gender-balanced list of candidate members taking into account the legal situation in each member state;

- To call on the Council to apply its own conclusions when considering nominations so as to take account of gender balance when nominating members and alternates in order to reach gender parity at the level of the membership as a whole;
- To communicate to all involved the proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure, which will be made internally to make this political commitment into a reality.”

1 [webapi2016.cor.europa.eu/v1/documents/cor-2019-00269-06-01-nb-tra-en.docx/content](http://webapi2016.cor.europa.eu/v1/documents/cor-2019-00269-06-01-nb-tra-en.docx/content)

2 [mempportal.cor.europa.eu/Handlers/ViewDoc.ashx?doc=COR-2019-00269-00-00-PV-TRA-EN.docx](http://mempportal.cor.europa.eu/Handlers/ViewDoc.ashx?doc=COR-2019-00269-00-00-PV-TRA-EN.docx)



## Women in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The Congress, which is tasked with fortifying local and regional democracy in the Council of Europe's 47 member countries<sup>1</sup>, is a strong and informed proponent of gender equality. In total, women accounted for 43% of representatives, members and substitutes, in the Congress in 2019. This same statistic was 37% in 2008<sup>2</sup>.

Of all the institutions studied in this publication, the Congress' figures are the most egalitarian. It is worth noting that the Congress adopted a resolution in 2008 on quotas, which **required that all delegations be comprised of at least a minimum of 30% of the under-represented sex**<sup>3</sup>. This means that any increase in women representatives between 2008 and 2019 is also linked to this regulation.

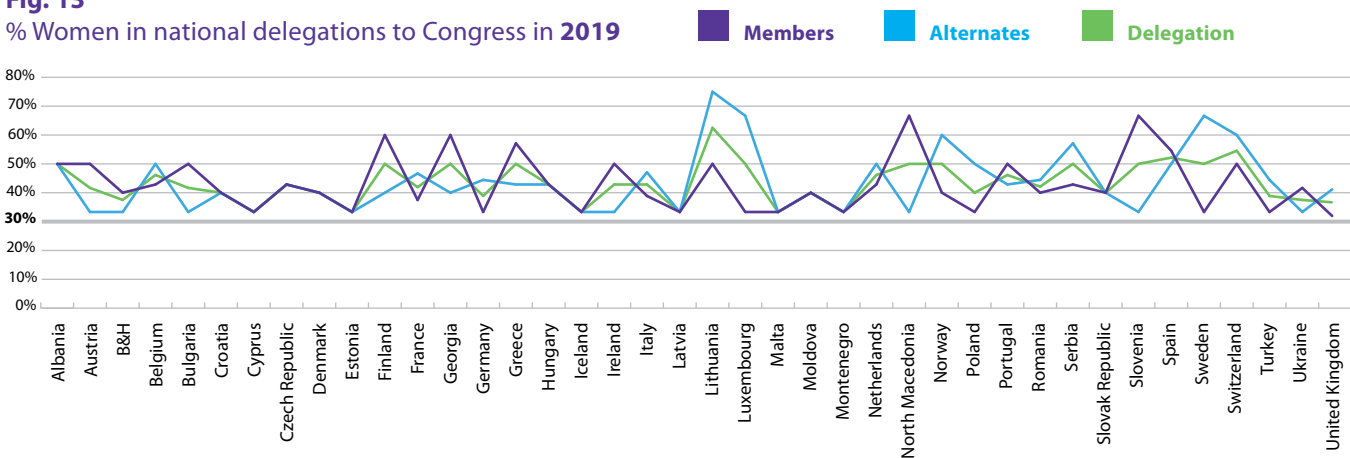
### Member representatives

Today, the percentage of women member representatives in the Congress is 41.6%; in 2008, it was 29.3%.

Some countries have made remarkable progress: North Macedonia had no women among its member representatives in 2008 and now has two (out of a total of three). Greece, which today has four women among its seven member representatives, only had one in 2008. Lithuania had none in 2008 whereas today, women now account for 50% of their member representatives. Similarly, in 2008, Poland had no women member representatives (compared to 4 out of 12 today). Moreover, women accounted for less than 30% of member representatives in sixteen of the country delegations at the time. Today, all of the delegations are made up of more than 30% women member representatives.

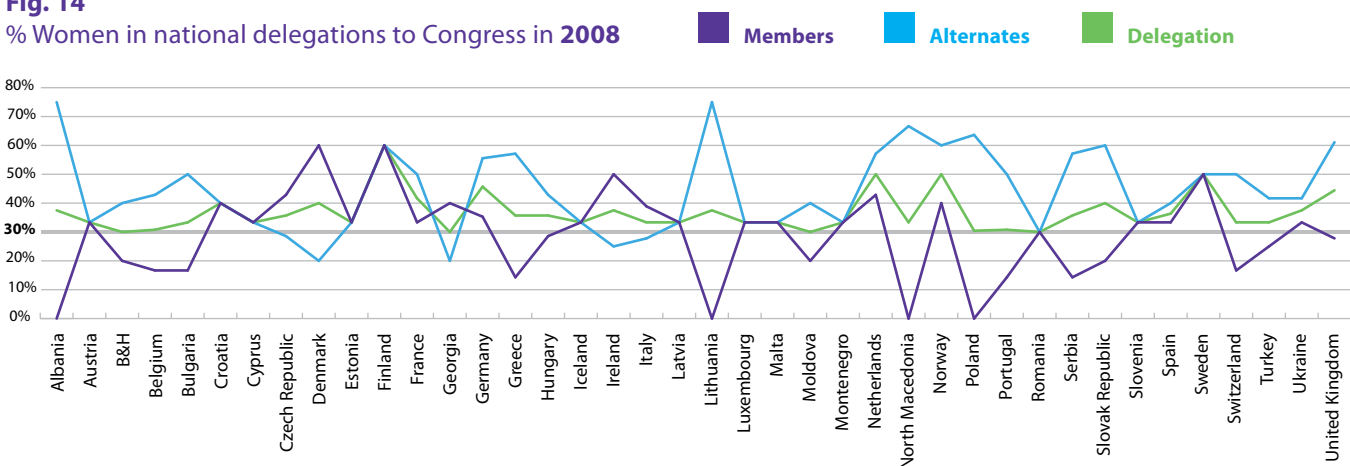
**Fig. 13**

% Women in national delegations to Congress in 2019



**Fig. 14**

% Women in national delegations to Congress in 2008



<sup>1</sup> [www.coe.int/en/web/portal/47-members-states](http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/47-members-states)

<sup>2</sup> See methodology, p. 11: this analysis is based on data from the 15<sup>th</sup> session in 2008 and the 36<sup>th</sup> session in 2019.

<sup>3</sup> [www.coe.int/en/web/congress/gender-equality](http://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/gender-equality)



### Substitutes

Among the Congress substitutes, there has been a decrease in the proportion of women, going from 47.2% in 2008 to 45.1% today. **The disparity between the share of women among the member representatives and the substitutes has been greatly reduced** (a difference of 17.9% in 2008 compared to 3.5% today).

This drop can be explained by the fact that women substitutes are no longer used to compensate for the absence or very low proportion of women member representatives. In 2008, some countries like Albania, Lithuania, North Macedonia and Poland had a very large number of women as substitutes (75% for Albania and Lithuania, 66.7% for North Macedonia, and 63.6% for Poland), which meant that the full delegation had more than 30% women

even though none of these women delegates were member representatives. Today, all the countries have delegations made up of more than 30% representatives and substitutes.

Today, 29 of the national delegations boast more than 40% women<sup>1</sup>. In 2008, this was only the case for ten delegations<sup>2</sup>.

Nonetheless, when considering the delegations as a whole, some countries still fall short in naming women: United Kingdom (from 16 women member representatives out of 36 to 13 women substitutes out of 35), or even Germany (from 16 women member representatives out of 35 to 14 women substitutes out of 36).



### The Congress' initiatives promoting gender equality

In 2016, the Congress adopted a resolution on "Women's political participation and representation at local and regional levels" (Rapporteur: Inger Linge, Sweden)<sup>3</sup> that invited local governments to:

- "work towards compliance with the Committee of Ministers recommendation on balanced participation to ensure that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life does not fall below 40%;
- evaluate and report progress in achieving balanced participation in political and public life by developing gender-disaggregated statistics and tools for gender monitoring of nominations and elections analysing their evolution."

<sup>1</sup> All of the delegations except for: Turkey (38.9%), Germany (38.9%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (37.5%), Ukraine (37.5%), United Kingdom (37.1%), Cyprus (33.3%), Estonia (33.3%), Iceland (33.3%), Latvia (33.3%), Malta (33.3%), Montenegro (33.3%)

<sup>2</sup> Finland (60%), Norway (50%), Sweden (50%), Netherlands (50%), Germany (45.7%), United Kingdom (44.4%), France (41.7%), Croatia (40%), Denmark (40%) and Slovakia (40%)

<sup>3</sup> [rm.coe.int/168071a27c](https://rm.coe.int/168071a27c)

## Women in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions

CEMR began championing the issue of gender equality more than 30 years ago. It organised the first European conference of local and regional women elected representatives in Pisa in 1983, at the initiative of Fausta Giani Cecchini, Mayor of Pisa at the time and later president of the province. She was one of the first to set in motion actions aimed at achieving gender-balanced representation within CEMR, alongside two British women, Josephine Farrington, member of the Lancashire County Council, and Doreen Fleming, member of the Fenland District Council.

CEMR managed to shine a spotlight on women's participation in local politics by organising a series of conferences: in Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle (1986), Antwerp (1988), Heidelberg (1992) and Dublin (1995). This last conference brought together more than 600 women from 32 countries including, for the first time, many women elected representatives from the Central and Eastern European countries. CEMR established its Standing Committee for Equality, made up of local and regional women elected representatives, in 1992.

In 1996, CEMR undertook a vast project to delve further into the presence of women in local politics under the Fourth Community Action Programme for equal opportunities. This provided the opportunity to organise many national seminars in the run-up to local elections (1996–2000) and, for the first time, to compile data on women's participation in European local politics. Another European project, "The Town for Equality"<sup>1</sup>, resulted in CEMR's publishing a manual of best practice for equality in European towns.

Even though the issue of equality had long been part of CEMR's political agenda, the women elected representatives realised that they lacked the political tool necessary to help towns enact gender equality policies. This is how the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life came into being in 2006. It was a huge undertaking that called for the participation of CEMR members and many elected representatives and experts, all contributing to the construction of a true European vision of equality between women and men at local level.

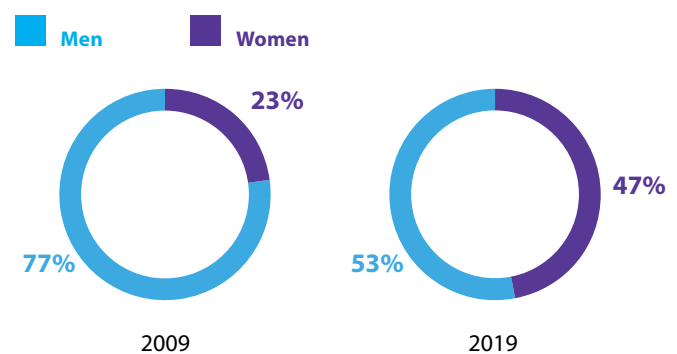
The success of the Charter led in turn to the creation in 2012 of the Observatory of the European Charter for Equality<sup>2</sup> to support the implementation and monitoring

of the Charter as well as to facilitate the exchange of good practices among local and regional governments.

The Charter's success in combination with high-level commitment from CEMR's leadership, inspired a statutory engagement to promote equality. In 2013, its Policy Committee approved the revision of the organisation's Statutes, introducing a rule requiring the participation of at least 40% of the under-represented sex in the Policy Committee and 30% in the Executive Bureau and the Financial Management Committee. The Rules of Procedure adopted in 2015 stipulate that CEMR must aim to ensure a balanced representation of women and men on its statutory bodies and that all the national delegations should include a balanced representation of both sexes in accordance with the seats available. A delegation's failure to respect this rule may lead to a restriction in voting rights.

CEMR's Policy Committee, which is the organisation's governing body comprised of national delegations designated by the national associations, is currently made up of 47% women, or 65 women out of 137 full members. In 2008, there were 23.2% women, or 33 out of 142 full members.

**Fig. 15**  
Proportion of women in CEMR's Policy committee



CEMR's Executive Bureau can now proudly proclaim perfect parity with nine women and nine men, whereas in 2008, it had four women and fifteen men. In 2012, CEMR elected its first woman president, Annemarie Jorritsma, Mayor of Almere and President of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

Men too have been engaged in the exchange of ideas for gender equality, and the Standing Committee for Equality, currently chaired by Emil Broberg (Sweden), has set as its

<sup>1</sup> [www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/town\\_for\\_equality\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/town_for_equality_2005_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.charter-equality.eu](http://www.charter-equality.eu)

goal a society based on equality, equal participation and diversity. This issue has become an integral part of the work and policy debates of CEMR, which remains committed and continues to actively contribute to global discussions on gender equality through its world organisation, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

The data put together in this publication demonstrates that, despite advancements, there is still much work to be done in Europe. Yet, many efforts have paid off: the results in CEMR and in the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, both which adopted clear and binding measures, are proof that rules aimed at a balanced representation can have a positive impact.



### **The European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life**

The European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life has emerged as the most innovative and effective tool in promoting women's participation in local life. With it, CEMR demonstrated a pioneering commitment.

This document, while reaffirming the fundamental principles of gender equality and its legal foundations, outlines for the first-time ideas for local policies that take into account the everyday needs of women and men and the specific competences of local governments.

The Charter invites its signatories to commit to the progressive implementation of measures for equality.

To date, it has been translated into 28 languages and signed by nearly 2,000 local and regional governments in 35 European countries.

In 2014, the European Commission supported a project enabling CEMR to develop indicators to evaluate the implementation of the Charter and set up an effective system to monitor its application<sup>1</sup>.

The European experience with the Charter inspired a similar project in Africa led by UCLG Africa, with support from the world organisation (UCLG) and its European Section (CEMR) and PLATFORMA<sup>2</sup>, to draw up and launch a Charter designed to promote equality of women and men in African local governments.

For the list of signatories of the European Charter for Equality, see the Atlas of the Observatory: [www.charter-equality.eu](http://www.charter-equality.eu)

<sup>1</sup> [indicators.charter-equality.eu/](http://indicators.charter-equality.eu/)

<sup>2</sup> [platforma-dev.eu/](http://platforma-dev.eu/)



## Part 2

# From paper to practice:

what is holding back equality  
and how to move forward





## Part 2

# From paper to practice:

## what is holding back equality and how to move forward

### Striving for equality in Europe and beyond

An analysis of the state of gender equality in politics, particularly at the local level, was undertaken to identify success stories and any persistent shortcomings, accomplishments as well as remaining hurdles. Our findings indicate that the policies and supporting measures of the EU and other institutions and international organisations active in this area must be pursued.

#### The European Union

The European Union (EU) has initiated a series of broad-based steps and is the instigator of certain advances in the area of gender equality. Legislation, changes in case law and successive transformations of the Treaties have all contributed to promoting the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in the EU.

Gender equality is one of the founding values of the European Union, as can be seen in Article 2 and in Article 3, paragraph 3, of the Treaty on European Union (EU Treaty). Furthermore, Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (FEU Treaty) reiterates that one of the EU's missions is the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men in all its actions.

This concept, also referred to as gender mainstreaming, consists of **systematically taking into account the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men** in all Community policies and

actions. This global and cross-cutting approach involves mobilisation efforts across all policy areas<sup>1</sup>.

In 2006, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was created to make equality between women and men a reality in the EU. Another of the Institute's tasks is to provide technical assistance to the European institutions by collecting, analysing and disseminating data and methodological tools. It also conducts studies and analyses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues.

EU initiatives promoting gender equality in politics have been less wide-reaching in recent years. Still, there have been programmes dedicated to equal opportunities between women and men, in particular what is currently called the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, which has received funding under the last multiannual financial frameworks.

The goal of this programme is to finance projects that seek to achieve gender equality and to prevent violence against children, women and other at-risk groups (Daphne I - III). It should be stated however that despite the will to broadly establish gender mainstreaming, it did not obtain the hoped-for results.

To ensure a successful outcome for this type of policy, it would be judicious for the European Commission to also introduce positive actions, along with a commensurate budget, to nurture and work in tandem with mainstreaming policies. A lack of resources has been responsible in part for the failure of gender mainstreaming in recent years.

<sup>1</sup> [eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51998DC0122&qid=1455813708847&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51998DC0122&qid=1455813708847&from=EN)

Indeed, this entire process is dependent on the political will of the decision-makers, which has often been lacking. Lastly, it would be interesting to analyse the potential impact that the accession of thirteen new member countries in 2004 might have had in this regard.

The European Commission's reduced commitment is also evident in the fact that, in spite of requests from the European Parliament and a majority of the member countries, the Commission did not propose any new strategy during its 2014–2019 term in follow-up to the one from 2010–2015, but simply issued a working document prepared by Commission staff entitled "Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019"<sup>1</sup>.

The European Parliament repeated its request in its 3 February 2016 resolution "New Strategy for gender equality and women's rights post-2015"<sup>2</sup>. During their term (July 2017–December 2018), the presidency trio of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria had also underscored the need for a high-level strategy, such as implementing the ambitious global approach of the Beijing Declaration<sup>3</sup>, but this went unanswered by the European Commission.

Currently, the EU is bound by its international commitments, particularly the UN's Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup> and the Council of Europe's Strategy for gender equality for 2018–2023. The EU Member States are committed as well, through the European Pact for equality between women and men (2011–2020)<sup>5</sup>, to promoting, among others, the equal participation of women and men in decision-making in all areas and at all levels. This commitment is reflected in several Council conclusions, particularly the one from 2018 pertaining to the Gender Action Plan 2016–2020 (GAP II)<sup>6</sup> on EU external actions.

### Council of Europe

At European level, it was in 1989, in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of the Central and Eastern European countries that the Council of Europe established a working group on parity democracy. The former Soviet-bloc countries were aspiring to greater democracy at a time when the Western European countries

were analogously questioning the functioning of their democracies. Amidst these events, the marginal presence of women in politics was seen by the Council of Europe as being at odds with the democratic ideal. This realisation became one of the cornerstones of this institution's important and steadfast commitment.

### The international community

If we look at the global picture, it is only relatively recently that the disparity in numbers between women and men in policy making has come to be viewed as a challenge to democracy. At the close of the UN's first world conference on women in Mexico in 1975, an action plan was adopted that stated that the increased and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making would speed up development and foster peace.

In 1995, the fourth world conference on women was held in Beijing. This event marked a new chapter in the fight for equality between women and men at the global level with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>7</sup>. The international community asserted that women's rights were in fact an integral part of human rights and promoted specific actions accordingly to ensure respect for these rights.

In this regard, the global family of local and regional governments has not been idle and it should be recalled that, in 1998, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)<sup>8</sup> approved the Worldwide Declaration on women in local government<sup>9</sup>. This text affirmed that "the right to vote, to be eligible for election and to hold public office at all levels are human rights that apply equally to women and men".

1 (SWD(2015)0278): [ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/commission-staff-working-document-strategic-engagement-gender-equality-2016-2019\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/commission-staff-working-document-strategic-engagement-gender-equality-2016-2019_en)

2 (2016/2526/RSP): [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0042\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0042_EN.html)

3 The fourth world conference on women was organised by the UN and held in Beijing, China from 4–15 September 1995.

4 [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

5 [www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119630.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119630.pdf)

6 [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/11/26/gender-action-plan-council-adopts-conclusions/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/11/26/gender-action-plan-council-adopts-conclusions/)

7 [www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf)

8 IULA is one of the two founding organisations of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), which was created in 2004 following the merger of IULA with the United Towns Organisation (UTO).

9 [women.uclg.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Worldwide\\_Declaration\\_Women\\_in\\_LG\\_ENG\\_1998\\_IULA.pdf](http://women.uclg.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Worldwide_Declaration_Women_in_LG_ENG_1998_IULA.pdf)





## SDG 5 | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- **5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life;
- **5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

These actions are perfectly in line with the UN Member States' commitment to achieve the 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** adopted by the UN in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda. Through these goals, the UN acknowledges the essential role of women in the planet's sustainable development, as seen in Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". This goal serves as a cross-cutting thread underpinning all the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Equality at risk: setbacks and possible causes

In 1791, Olympe de Gouges, a French writer turned political activist, wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. This text called for the full legal, political and social assimilation of women. Unfortunately, the French Revolution did not augur much immediate progress for women or their situation, although the activism and actions of women like Olympe de Gouges did have an impact on feminism and the women's rights movements that followed.

It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that there began to be forward momentum in Europe regarding women's rights: from economic and civic participation to standing for election and sexual and reproductive autonomy. Economic, social and cultural advancements contributed to the emancipation of women in Europe. This movement accelerated after World War II and at the onset of the student protests in the 1960s that took place alongside the women's rights movements.

Yet women's rights are still widely trampled on today and **previous achievements are at risk of being reversed**. Women and men are still not on an equal footing in the economic, social and political arenas. In Europe, women's employment rate is 11% lower than men's and the average gap between wages is 16%. Even before the added difficulties of gaining access to decision-making posts and integrating boards of directors in large companies, women are more likely than men to be victims of poverty and represent almost 85% of single-parent households in the EU<sup>1</sup>.

The violence that still prevails in relations between women and men and the cases of femicide now reported daily are a wake-up call to society regarding the gravity of the situation. In 2011, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). To date, this Convention has been signed by 40 countries taking part in this study and 31 of them have also ratified it.<sup>2</sup> The European Union also signed it in 2017 and negotiations for its ratification are underway. Nevertheless, there is strong opposition to the Convention in some countries, where it is seen as going against the "traditional" concept of family.

<sup>1</sup> [www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Briefing-Gender-and-Poverty-final.pdf](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Briefing-Gender-and-Poverty-final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The following countries, members of the Council of Europe, have signed the Istanbul Convention but have not yet ratified it: Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Moldova, Slovakia, United Kingdom and Ukraine. Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation have not signed the Convention.

Besides domestic violence, **women in politics are often subject to harassment and violence** as well. A poll conducted among women members of parliaments published in 2016 shone a light on the fact that “at least 50% of the respondents (from different countries, backgrounds, ages, positions and parties) had received insults or threats on account of their sex and/or because they worked in politics”<sup>1</sup>.

Why these setbacks?

The rise of populism and the extreme right, self-appointed guardians of traditional ideals of the couple and families, have resulted in a backslide on women’s rights. There has been a growing subtext that defending and mobilising for equality are no longer a high-priority combat given the advancements of the last few decades.

Equality issues have been disappearing from political agendas and even sexual and reproductive health rights have been called into question in Europe. In light of these developments, the role of civil movements is essential and political actions, particularly those undertaken by local governments, can prove vital to this issue, and to all other questions touching on matters of human rights.

However, in closing out these thoughts on the recent reversals in women’s rights, it should be pointed out that there have been positive steps forward as well when it comes to public denunciation and condemnation of crimes and harassment against women, who have endured these aggressions in silence for so many years, and which is no longer tolerated.

Following several high-profile cases of sexual abuse and harassment that have come to light in the past decade, women and **women elected representatives have broken the silence regarding the rash of abuse and harassment they have to contend with in the political world.**

Many French women legislators, from different levels and political parties, shared their experiences in a series of interviews in 2011<sup>2</sup>. They made public a litany of offenses: from lewd jokes and inappropriate remarks to unwanted advances and “lecherous paternalism”<sup>3</sup>, not to mention the constant questioning of their competences and continual interruptions.

Then in 2016, several women politicians (from municipal councillors to former ministers) again testified to having been subject to harassment and/or assaults from men while exercising their duties and feeling that they could not talk about it.<sup>4</sup>

Amidst the backdrop of the #MeToo movement, which exploded after the Harvey Weinstein scandal in 2017, an unprecedented wave of women spoke out, telling of their experiences. In Germany, according to a 2018 HuffPost survey<sup>5</sup> of 95 young women lawmakers, 1 out of 3 have experienced sexual harassment. Many stated that they are not taken seriously, even as 70% think that their male colleagues are taken more seriously. Others declared that they were not listened to during discussions, that they were interrupted or not given the chance to speak. They also denounced meetings and networks reserved exclusively for men.

In the United Kingdom as well, women politicians and journalists opened up about the rampant sexism in British politics<sup>6</sup>. The website [www.labourtoo.org.uk](http://www.labourtoo.org.uk) was set up to anonymously collect stories of harassment, abuse and assault within the Labour party.

A #Metoo blog<sup>7</sup> was even set up for the European Parliament and other European and national institutions to collect testimonies of sexual harassment: improper comments, unwanted contact or sexual assault. It is an initiative that has allowed countless women to speak freely. The hope produced by the progress being made in women’s representation in the European Parliament must bring with it additional means for combating these intolerable situations.

These responses and movements demonstrate that such behaviour is unacceptable and is tolerated less and less. The time has come to put an end to any impunity for the perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse.

1 Source: Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP). *Social Media: Advancing Women in Politics?* (2016).

2 [www.liberation.fr/france/2011/05/31/etre-une-femme-politique-c-est-pas-si-facile\\_739455](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2011/05/31/etre-une-femme-politique-c-est-pas-si-facile_739455) (in French only)

3 [www.liberation.fr/france/2011/05/31/d-accord-parce-que-tu-as-de-jolis-yeux\\_739454](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2011/05/31/d-accord-parce-que-tu-as-de-jolis-yeux_739454) (in French only)

4 [www.lalibre.be/international/harcelement-sexuel-dans-le-monde-politique-francais-l-omerta-est-levee-5732e64435708ea2d562adc5](http://www.lalibre.be/international/harcelement-sexuel-dans-le-monde-politique-francais-l-omerta-est-levee-5732e64435708ea2d562adc5) (in French only)

5 [www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/umfrage-der-huffpost-junge-politikerinnen-beklagen-sexismus-in-parteien/20900062.html](http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/umfrage-der-huffpost-junge-politikerinnen-beklagen-sexismus-in-parteien/20900062.html) (in German only)

6 [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.12458](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.12458)

7 [metoep.com/](http://metoep.com/)

## Being a woman in politics

Where do we stand when it comes to women's participating in politics? What obstacles do women encounter when they choose to engage in a life of politics in Europe? The number of women who take part in politics or who seek to do so is telling.

The obstacles faced by women in politics are structural, sociological and cultural. There can be a number of determining factors for women aspiring to stand for election: the selection process and electoral system, self-confidence, culture and historical inertia, work-life balance considerations, limited access to funding and the media. It should be mentioned that young male candidates also have to contend with similar hurdles in terms of securing financial resources, going through the candidate selection process and getting registered on the electoral lists.

The impediments to women's participating in decision-making are also cultural and sociological. This aspect is explored in the article, "The Invisible Woman – On the Imagery Associations of Political Power" (*La femme invisible – Sur l'imaginaire du pouvoir politique*)<sup>1</sup>.

The authors expound on the power of social perceptions and underline that "while women are at a great disadvantage in gaining admittance to the political arena, this owes less to the resistance of male politicians and more to **causes that are in fact more entrenched, structural**

**and perennial.** The depiction of masculine and feminine identities and relations between men and women, and more importantly, how politics are represented (portrayed as a potent male activity and domain), all work together to inculcate in the mind the idea of women's political illegitimacy".

Women who engage in politics also must deal with the difficulty of **reconciling their public and private lives.** The European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) Gender Equality Index 2017<sup>2</sup> measured inequalities, including a gender breakdown of leisure time, which is determined primarily by the amount of time spent by women and men on household chores and caring for dependents (children, the elderly, ill family member).

On average, in Europe, **only one out of three men take care of the cooking and household chores compared to eight out of ten women.** To boot, political meetings are often scheduled at times when women often take care of domestic tasks, in the evening. To manage an active public life, women are under pressure to rearrange their lives; if they are unable to do so, many give it up.

There are also **financial obstacles.** A woman who wishes to take part in an electoral campaign must be able to finance it. The search for funding, securing access to public funds to finance the operational costs of the parties and campaigns are all necessary stops along a convoluted path.

### Self-confidence

So, if equal opportunities truly exist (which could be and is debated), why are women less compelled than men to stand for election? Many factors influence any decision to enter politics. Sociological and behavioural factors can help in understanding the obstacles that are less tangible than economic or institutional considerations.

There is a growing field of study that analyses the behaviours of women and men with respect to self-esteem and the degree to which this affects how they undervalue their abilities, which can in turn trigger in women self-censure, self-limitation or even effacement.

Taking an example from the business world, certain studies<sup>3</sup> show that because of this confidence gap, women not only negotiate their wages differently than men, but less frequently and, on average, they ask for 30% less than their male colleagues.

Already in school, female students have the tendency to undervalue their test results compared to male students, who tend to overestimate them.

1 Dervuille. G. & Pionchon. S., *La femme invisible. Sur l'imaginaire du pouvoir politique* (2005); *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 78(2), 5-5; [journals.openedition.org/mots/369#xd\\_co\\_f=NzMzZmM0NGMtYjlmYy00NmM4LTgwZjU0tMTA3ZTBiMGRIY2Ex~](https://journals.openedition.org/mots/369#xd_co_f=NzMzZmM0NGMtYjlmYy00NmM4LTgwZjU0tMTA3ZTBiMGRIY2Ex~)

2 [eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/time](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/time)

3 In particular, *Women Don't Ask - Negotiation and the Gender Divide* by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever (2003); *The Confidence Gap* (2014) by Brenda Major; and *The Emergence of Male Leadership in Competitive Environments* (2014) by Ernesto Reuben et al.

According to a handbook published by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), women must disproportionately use their own resources to finance a campaign.<sup>1</sup>

**Limited access to the media** is another hindrance to women's engaging in politics. Women candidates often deplore the unequal treatment they receive; differences in the amount of on-air time granted and stereotypical or even misogynistic treatment harm their visibility.

In France, the country's audio-visual council (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* - CSA) noted a disturbing decrease in women politicians invited as media guests in 2018<sup>2</sup>. This report pointed out that the proportion of women on the air, on television and on the radio, was only 39% in 2018, even though women corresponded to 51.6% of the population.

Broken down by category, women accounted for 47% of hosts and announcers (a drop of 1% since 2017), 38% of journalists/columnists (a 2% drop), and only 27% of political guests. This underrepresentation is all the more troubling since our study clearly shows that, in France, women account for 40.4% of elected officials.

In addition to this quantitative study, the CSA also conducted an analysis of broadcasters combating gender bias and violence against women in their programming. In 2018, out of 27 television channels, only 10 (37%) granted more airtime to programmes of this type than in 2017.

All these widespread impediments and obstacles facing women add up to a mountain of difficulty for those who wish to engage in politics: stand for election, unlock the entrance to power, play a political role and continue to exercise it after attainment.

## Tools and rules for women in politics

Clearly, even though it is a true legislative ideal, full equal opportunities remain aspirational for the time being. Hard measures, such as laws, and softer ones like voluntary commitments, all aim to help bring about real equality.

Among the tools and rules intended to support women's participation in politics, the most well-known and widely used mechanism is the use of quotas, also referred to as "rules for gender balanced representation". Quotas lay down requirements that each sex be represented by at least a given minimum proportion, whether on a list of candidates, in an assembly or as part of a government.

A growing number of countries currently use this mechanism. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, **127 countries around the world have introduced laws or rules establishing quotas**, either legislatively, electorally or internally in the case of political parties.<sup>3</sup>

Quotas can be voluntary or mandatory. Voluntary quotas are used by parties to effect change internally or in elections, without any legislative or regulatory measures. They can also be required statutorily or under electoral legislation (the case in Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Slovenia and Spain). Quotas can be introduced at all levels of the political system: at the federal, national, regional or local level.

Finally, quotas can also be used to reserve a set number of seats for one gender or another in elections. This is to ensure that a given percentage or a minimum number of candidates elected are women.

So, given their increasing success, can it be said that quotas are effective?

Such an assertion would amount to a hasty and wishful conclusion, particularly in the case where the analysis, content and scope of the quotas as well as various outside parameters and factors particular to each country are not duly taken into account.

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties* (2014): [www.osce.org/odihr/120877?download=true](http://www.osce.org/odihr/120877?download=true)

<sup>2</sup> Lexpress.fr with AFP: *Le CSA déplore une baisse des femmes politiques invitées dans les médias* (8 March 2019): [www.lexpress.fr/actualite/medias/le-csa-deploire-une-baisse-des-femmes-politiques-invitees-dans-les-medias\\_2065993.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/medias/le-csa-deploire-une-baisse-des-femmes-politiques-invitees-dans-les-medias_2065993.html). Consulted on 30 August 2019 (in French only).

<sup>3</sup> [www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-overview](http://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-overview)

Each situation is different and warrants a thorough analysis. Nevertheless, if it is merely a question of making a cursory broad-based evaluation of the impact of quotas, it can be said that **they appear to have had a positive effect on the proportion of women elected representatives.**

In this study, there are fourteen countries<sup>1</sup> where mandatory quotas have been used at the local level. These countries span the continent, from Western Europe to the Balkans.

With respect to the effectiveness of these quotas, between 2008 and today, these fourteen countries increased their proportion of women elected at the local level from 22.8% to 31.5% (i.e. an increase of 8.7%), whereas in the countries without quotas, this proportion rose from 23.7% to 27.7% (+4%) over the same period. In Ukraine, where quotas are only applied at the local level, the proportion of women there has today reached 41.7%, whereas it seems to have stalled at 10.9% in the lower chamber of parliament.

At the regional level, the eight countries in the study<sup>2</sup> with mandatory quotas increased their average, going from 28.5% elected women to 34.8% (+6.3%). In the countries

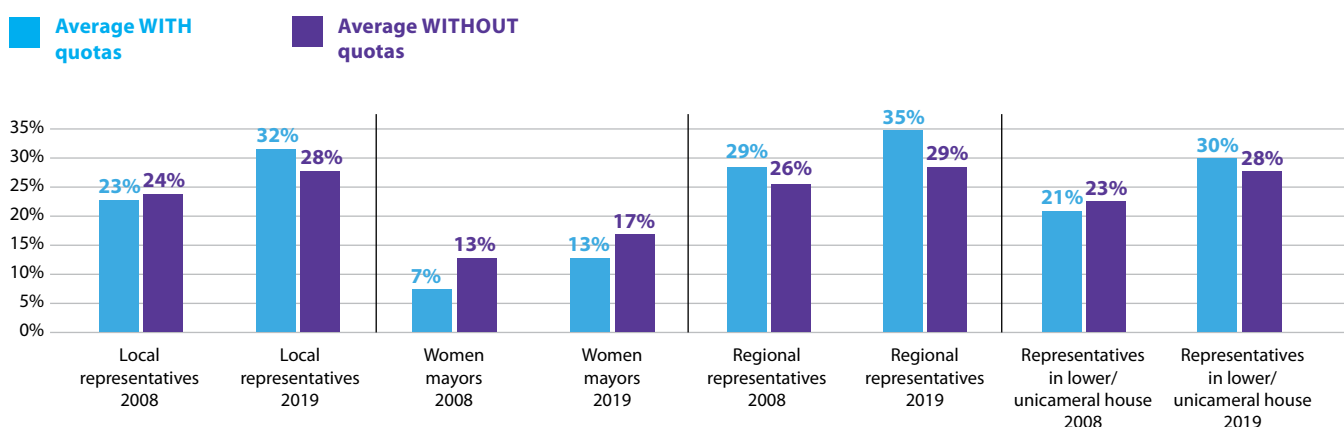
without mandatory quotas, this proportion increased from 25.5% to 28.5% (+3%). It is interesting to note that in Moldova, the proportion of women at the local level (29%), where quotas are applied, is clearly higher than the proportion at the regional level (18.6%), where there are no quotas, particularly since the European average shows more women at the regional level (30.9%) than at the local one (29%).

Lastly, for the sixteen countries<sup>3</sup> with mandatory quotas at the national level<sup>4</sup>, the proportion of elected women increased from 20.9% to 29.5% (+8.6%). In the countries without mandatory quotas, this proportion went from 22.5% to 27.8% (+5.3%).

These figures tell us two things. The **countries with quota requirements have experienced greater progress since 2008** and, where the average proportion of women elected representatives that year was lower or equivalent at the local and national levels to that of the countries without quotas, this average proportion is now clearly higher.

**Fig. 16**

Impact of quotas on the average proportion of elected women in Europe



<sup>1</sup> Albania (30%), Belgium (50%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (33%), France (50%), Greece (40%), Moldova (40%), Montenegro (30%), North Macedonia (40%), Poland (35%), Portugal (40%), Serbia (33%), Slovenia (40%), Spain (40%) and Ukraine (30%).

<sup>2</sup> Since the data for Albania and Ukraine are incomplete, they have been excluded from the European average at regional level.

<sup>3</sup> Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain

<sup>4</sup> See methodology, p. 11, on the comparison between the chamber of representatives under a unicameral political system, a "single house", and the lower chamber when there is a bicameral parliament.



### A closer look at the Nordic countries<sup>1</sup>

The countries with quotas have on average more women elected representatives at the local and national levels. However, there is another group of countries that merits greater scrutiny, especially since there are no statutory mandatory quotas in these countries.<sup>2</sup>

The study shows that the five Nordic countries can boast results well above the European average. This group of countries comes closer than any other in the study to parity.<sup>3</sup>

At local level, 40.2% of municipal councillors are women (11.2% higher than the European average). However, it is the proportion of women mayors in the Nordic countries that showed the sharpest gain even though it was already the regional grouping in the study with the highest proportion of women mayors in 2008 (20.9%). Today, that number is 28.2% (+7.3%). This amounts to 12.8% more than the European average.

At the national level, women represent on average 42.4% of members in the lower or unicameral chamber. That is 13.9% higher than the European average. Any progression at this level however appears more sluggish now given the impressive results coming out of these countries a decade ago (an increase of only 2.3% more women in the parliaments).

Finally, it should be noted that, if these countries' showings were to be excluded, the average proportion of women local elected representatives for the countries without quotas would drop to 24.6% (-2.9%), and the same figure at national level would drop to 24.2% (-3.6%).

Quotas seem to have had a very positive impact on the presence of women in politics. However, the unique situation in these countries has been extensively studied. A number of socio-economic, institutional and cultural factors as well as activities and campaigns led by political parties and the women's movement proved instrumental in attaining such results.

However, there are also other types of quota. Many political parties across Europe have set up voluntary quota systems. The study identified 58 such parties in 23 of the 41 countries examined.

The countries with the best results are the ones with statutory obligations and voluntary quotas used by some political parties. When comparing the data from countries

with only mandatory quotas to those using only voluntary quotas, better results can be seen in the former<sup>4</sup>. This may be due to the fact that, in the countries with voluntary quotas, only a small percentage of the political parties choose to have recourse to them.

## Quotas

### The French case

Following the 2008 departmental elections, only 13% of elected representatives were women. In 2018, the proportion on women rose to.....

# 50 %

<sup>1</sup> See methodology, p. 11: please note that the "Nordic countries" in this case encompass a region in Northern Europe delineated by CEMR solely for the purposes of this study that includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> Only Finland uses mandatory quotas to decide the composition of its regional councils.

<sup>3</sup> For the list of countries that make up each regional grouping, see methodology, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> For the local level: increase from 25.2% to 32.6% (+7.4%) women elected representatives in the countries with only mandatory, and no voluntary, quotas compared to an increase from 24% to 28.5% (+4.5%) in the countries with only voluntary quotas.

For the national level: increase from 19.5% to 28.4% (+8.9%) women elected representatives in the countries with only mandatory quotas compared to an increase from 23% to 27.8% (+4.8%) in the countries with only voluntary quotas.



In France, the law on parity of June 2000 required parties to establish lists with an equal number of each gender, which led to a clear increase in the number of women in all the bodies elected using proportional representation: the European Parliament, the Senate, the municipal and regional councils. A comparative analysis of the numbers for women in municipal elections, before and after the parity law, proves this measure's effectiveness. Indeed, in local elections for municipal councils of more than 3,500 inhabitants, the percentage of women rose from 21.7%<sup>1</sup> in 1995 to 35% in 2008 and then to 40.3% in 2019.

One note of interest here is that, despite a larger proportion of women elected to the municipal councils, when it comes to women mayors, the percentage in the countries with mandatory quotas is lower (increase from 7.3% to 12.7% women mayors) than in the other countries (increase from 12.7% to 16.8%).

Notwithstanding these results, the introduction of quota systems can sometimes be controversial. The principle of quotas can be defended by underlining that their purpose is to remedy the hindrances that women face when they decide to enter the world of politics. The experience of women is vital to a healthy political life and democracy. For this reason, quotas contribute to the democratisation of politics and also make the nomination or selection process more transparent.

Conversely, the principle of quotas can be viewed as running counter to the principle of equal opportunities; quotas are believed to be undemocratic as it is the voters who must decide.

To be effective, quotas must prescribe sanctions in the case of non-compliance. In certain countries, sanctions are final and without appeal, e.g. in the case of the rejection

of lists in Belgium. Other countries use financial sanctions, particularly against parties that do not comply, even though it is known that certain parties would prefer to pay a financial penalty rather than present women.

Be that as it may, other tools and rules exist that promote the participation of women in politics.

The ranking on electoral lists is an additional challenge for women candidates. Often, even with quotas, women are listed at the bottom, the most difficult position for getting elected. A judicious solution is the introduction of zipper lists, which systematically alternate between women and men electoral candidates.

In many decision-making bodies, consideration must be given not only to the question of women's representation, but also to how they can accede to the highest decision-making offices, like the Bureau, the vice presidencies, the most important committees, etc. Still, as has been corroborated by our analysis of the data on the presence of women in local life, **while it may be easier today to get elected to an assembly, it is more difficult to become its president.**

To work on questions pertinent to women, the beneficial value of having a dedicated place of their own to discuss issues – a forum for exchange and advice – is evident. One possible option is the creation of a body, such as a committee, for women within the parliament or municipal council. In Germany, women parliamentarians in the Bundestag set up an informal non-partisan network as a place to meet and discuss different topics from the standpoints of women.



### Fraudulent practices:

In the most recent European elections, there was a discernible rise in relatively dishonest practices, the intent of which was to lessen the impact of laws strengthening gender equality. In Belgium, for example, the first two candidates on each list must include both genders, and the lists must alternate men and women.

The Vlaams Belang political party nevertheless managed to circumvent this practice by immediately replacing after the election a certain number of women, who were elected as a result of their positions on the lists, with men appearing lower on the lists. In this way, the party did not strictly adhere to the alternating system and managed to avoid sanctions from the electoral authority.

<sup>1</sup> French Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General for Local Authorities. "Local Governments by the Numbers" (*Les Collectivités Locales en chiffres*), 1995 Edition. [www.epsilon.insee.fr/jspui/bitstream/1/43814/1/dgcl\\_CL\\_1995.pdf](http://www.epsilon.insee.fr/jspui/bitstream/1/43814/1/dgcl_CL_1995.pdf) (in French only).



### **The Association of Basque Municipalities' (EUEDEL) good practice to encourage women elected representatives**

#### ***Recommendations for the political parties in local elections***

Virginia Woolf Basqueskola Sarea<sup>1</sup>, the network for Basque women mayors and local councillors, organised meetings with the political parties prior to the local elections held in May 2019. The objective was to hold exchanges with party officials on how to boost women's participation in the upcoming local elections.

VW Basqueskola presented recommendations on ways to fortify women's participation in local politics, such as the adoption of electoral lists alternating women and men and measures to ensure good work-life balance.

#### ***A mentoring programme for newly elected women***

Veteran women elected officials shepherd newly elected women during their first term, providing advice, e.g. on the way to exercise power and how to strengthen leadership qualities. They help them adapt to their new role, back their decisions, advise them in seeking resources and build their confidence as they take on their new duties and responsibilities.

Receiving mentoring from women peers with similar experiences, who have prevailed in winning a political mandate and have worked in what can sometimes be a hostile arena – local politics – can make all the difference.

Training is a real consideration for women in politics, at every stage of their journey: preparation, candidacy, elections and during the exercise of their political mandate. Training is also critical at different levels: it can be helpful to women in overcoming a lack of self-confidence or uncertainties. It can also be fundamental

in dealing with more concrete issues, helping them to manage situations particular to the “political profession” – which can prove beneficial to men too – and that only experience can make easier.

<sup>1</sup> [www.virginiawoolfbasqueskola.eus/](http://www.virginiawoolfbasqueskola.eus/)



# Conclusion and Recommendations





# Conclusion and Recommendations

This study, *Women in Politics: Local and European Trends*, substantiates our conviction that the pathway to equality on our continent is open, but the journey is far from complete and the definitive way forward is still being plotted. Despite some gains, women remain heavily under-represented in politics - at all levels.

Women make up half of humanity, yet account for only 34.1% of political decision-makers in Europe.

**We must continue to strive for equality between women and men, with women and men and at all levels,** for the same rights and obligations. A dialogue must be encouraged, with open discussions between the two sexes, where everyone is able to recognise the particularities and needs of a society in which people's roles are evolving and changing. It is a matter of resolving the issue of equality together.

As for Europe's local politicians, over the last ten years, the share of elected women has gradually but steadily increased (from 23.4% to 29%). A minimum threshold also appears, as the average proportion of local elected women in 2019 does not fall below 10% for any of the countries studied, which was not the case in 2008. Unfortunately, this progress is not mirrored when looking at the share of women mayors—an area in which most countries made only slight gains. The average proportion of women mayors today, at 15.4%, remains approximately half that of women elected to municipal councils.

Another promising development emerges when analysing representative bodies of local and regional government that differentiate between principal and substitute members, such as the CoR, the Congress and CEMR. There is a positive trend of bridging the gap between the two kinds of members and a lessening of the "compensation" phenomenon where more women are nominated as substitutes to compensate for a lack of women nominated as principal members.

The five Nordic countries are justifiably considered model societies for gender equality, even if perfect equality has not been achieved there either. If we delve into the ways in which equality has evolved in these countries, we can see that the situation of women has undergone a long progression. Men there have contributed to the debate on equality and introduced appropriate policies as true participants in a real culture of equality. We can infer from the Nordic example that, like Rome, equality is not built in a day.

In Central and Eastern Europe, there have been encouraging indicators and a clear political willingness to support gender mainstreaming in various countries. This holds true in the Balkans where several countries have shown very encouraging trends regarding women's participation in political power. This development is quite evident for example in certain pre-accession countries and/or in the countries that have recently renewed their institutions (particularly the countries of the former Yugoslavia). Progress can be seen at different levels in these States and even within international bodies like the Congress of the Council of Europe. **The implementation of policies promoting equality seems to be an incontestable step towards good governance** and the galvanising role of international institutions in this area is undeniable.

Among the European Union countries, a trend is discernible in those that have set the objective of equal representation in politics as a fundamental priority of democratic renewal. Yet, equality between women and men still needs to be attained in other sectors of society in these countries.

In conclusion, the overall analysis of women's participation in politics at all levels in Europe attests to the effectiveness of quotas, as seen in the figures, and indicates encouraging progress. The combat for equality has therefore made it past a crucial stage: graduating from political discourse to genuine policy initiatives and measures fostering equality. Quotas seem to be emerging as a sure and effective instrument for securing this change.

Yet, reality is ever-present to remind us that **quotas alone are not enough to overcome the inequalities between women and men** in acceding to decision-making positions or, at any rate, establishing a state of long-term equality. There are many factors that influence the participation of women in politics and accompanying support measures are necessary and helpful in eliminating gender-based obstacles.

To this end, the role of CEMR and other European organisations is crucial. CEMR must ensure that equality remains a priority on the political agenda of the European Union and other institutions. It will be undertaking

initiatives aimed at the new European Parliament and the new European Commission for the 2019–2024 term. At the same time, it must not overlook equality as a high priority on its own agenda and continue its work promoting the European Charter for Equality, raising awareness and fostering exchanges of experience and good practices.

# Recommendations

**Based on the findings of the study and the knowledge acquired carrying it out, we propose the following recommendations:**

## Dissemination

- 1** Promote and disseminate as widely as possible the results of this unique research, which offers a comprehensive vision of women's participation in politics in Europe, including at the local level. CEMR will need to adopt a wide-reaching dissemination strategy to publicise the results and present them to the actors and institutions concerned at European level as well as to its own members.

## Policy

- 2** All the European institutions and all the consultative bodies should be called on to adopt and implement policies, programmes, projects and financing conducive to making the equal participation of women and men in decision-making a reality.
- 3** All local, regional and central governments, political parties and civil society organisations should organise and support initiatives to empower women ahead of local elections through practical training on how to overcome the tangible and intangible obstacles they encounter while pursuing their aspirations to become leaders.
- 4** All political parties should be invited to commit to achieving gender balanced representation and to revise their hiring, selecting and nominating processes accordingly. Gender balance must be respected when filling top decision-making positions.

## CEMR and its members

- 5** The CEMR member associations should ensure there is a balanced representation of women and men in the political leadership of their organisations by 2030, in accordance with the aim of achieving SDG 5.
- 6** The CEMR Standing Committee for Equality, and the role it plays, should be strengthened. Its duties of advising and monitoring the implementation of gender mainstreaming in CEMR needs to be bolstered; its main objective should be ensuring that the question of equality between women and men remains a policy priority on CEMR's European and international agenda.

## Other studies

- 7** It is necessary to improve and standardise the collection and analysis of data, disaggregated by age and sex, on the representation of women and men in decision-making in view of monitoring candidacies and elections at the local, regional, national and European levels.
- 8** The next European Union multiannual financial framework (2021–2027) should provide funding for conducting new in-depth qualitative and quantitative studies in this area in all the European countries. Ideally, further studies could help identify topical trends and any promising developments that offer women and men the means to experience the positive effects of shared power.
- 9** Women's impact on policy making should be studied to analyse different styles in leadership and the possible contrasts in the way in which women and men "practice" politics. Are resources allocated differently? What are their political priorities? Is there more effective governance?

## Next steps

- 10** CEMR will monitor the progression of women in politics and will regularly provide updated information. Its Standing Committee for Equality should examine the study and the proposed recommendations and establish other objectives and concrete measures to be taken, particularly within the organisation and by its members. All this will be included in CEMR's multiannual strategy for 2020-2030 which is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

# Country Files

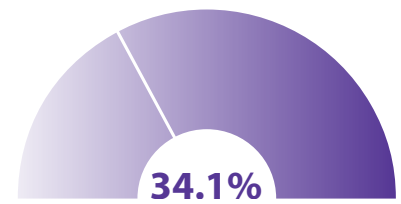






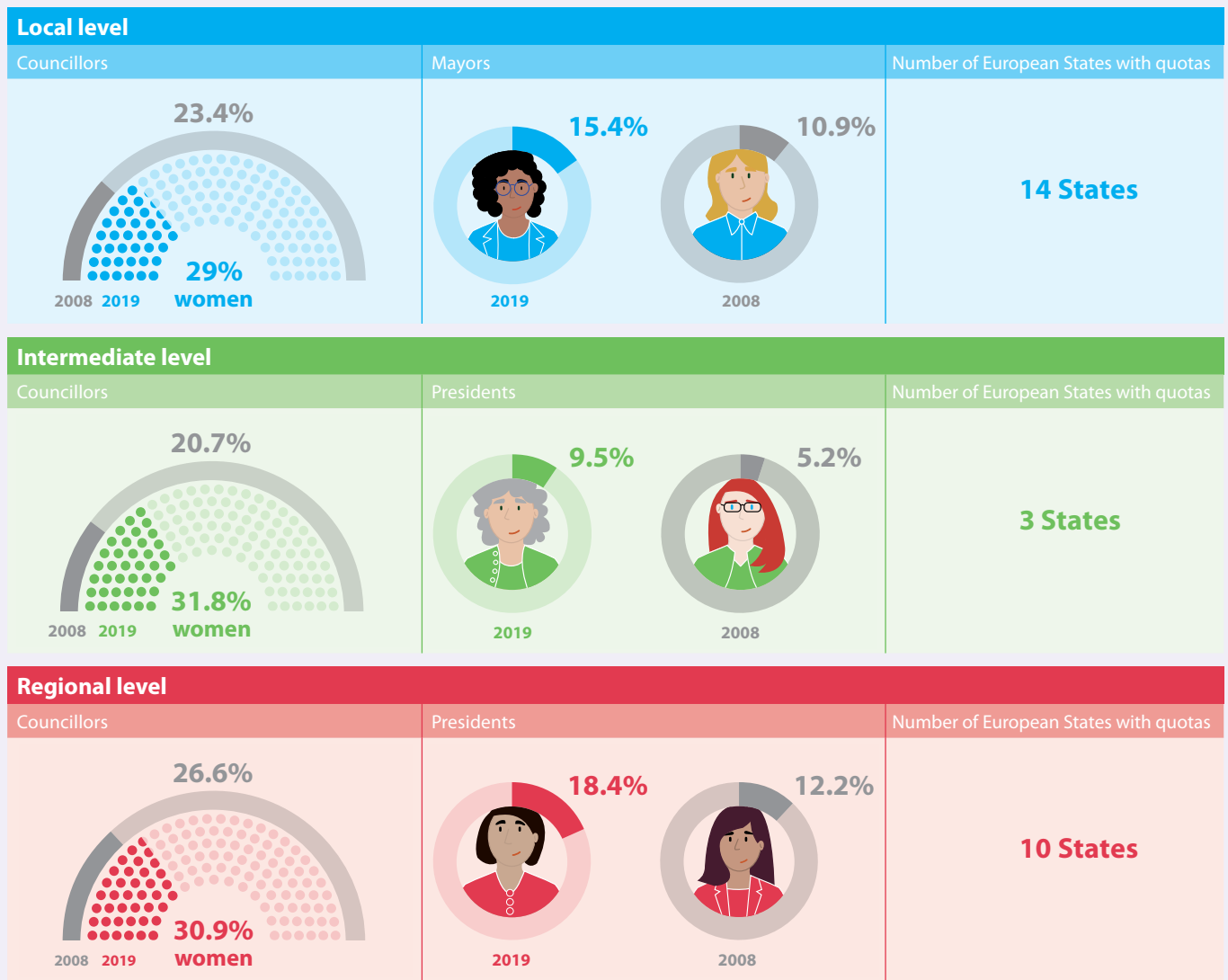
# Europe

41 countries<sup>1</sup>



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	28.5%	21.9%
Upper house	25.9%	19.3%

## European level

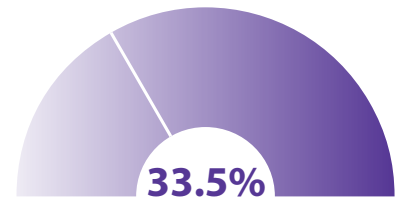
	2019	2009
European Parliament	40.3%	34.9%

<sup>1</sup> See methodology p.11: "Europe" refers to the 41 countries taking part in this study.

# Albania

**CEMR member**

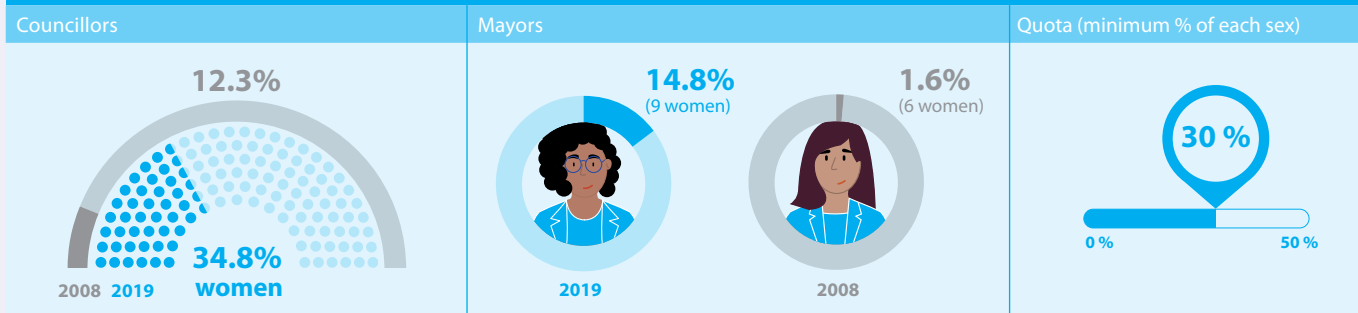
- Albanian Association of Municipalities (SHBSH)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

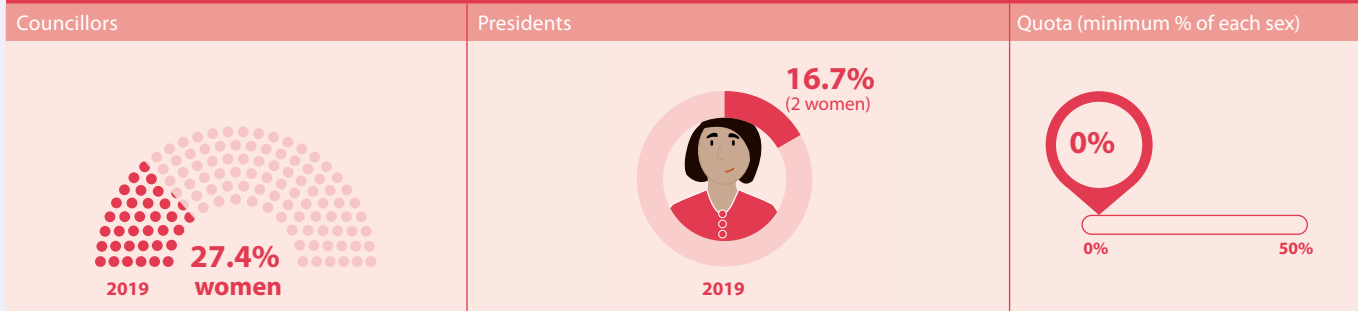
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 61 municipalities (*bashkia*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 12 regions (*Qarku*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

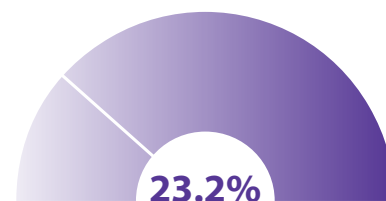
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	27.9%	7.1%

<sup>1</sup> No elections prior to 2014.

# Austria

## CEMR members

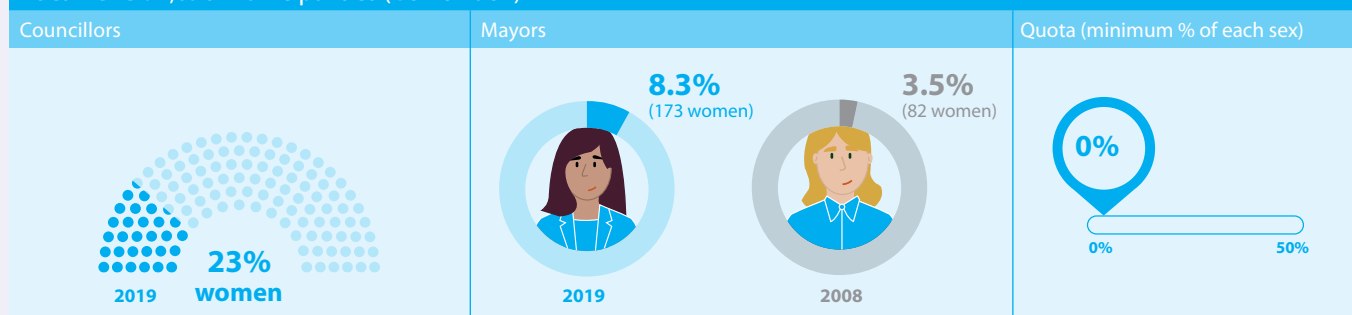
- Austrian Association of Municipalities (GEMEINDEBUND)
- Austrian associations of Municipalities (STÄDTEBUND)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

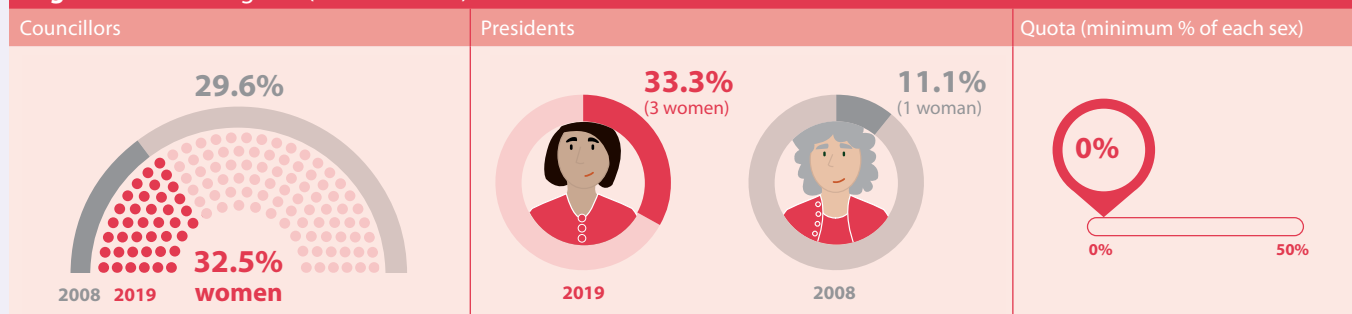
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 2,096 municipalities (*Gemeinden*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 9 regions (*Bundesländer*)<sup>2</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	35.5%	27.3%
Upper house	32.8%	25.8%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	9 women MEPs out of 18	7 women MEPs out of 17

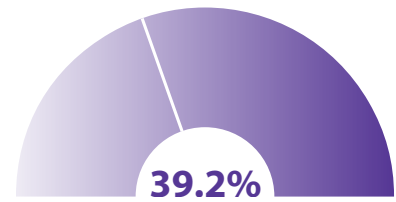
<sup>1</sup> No data available for women municipal councillors in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The data only assesses the figures for the *Landesregierung* as there is not sufficient data available on the constituencies of the *Landesparlamente*.

# Belgium

## CEMR members

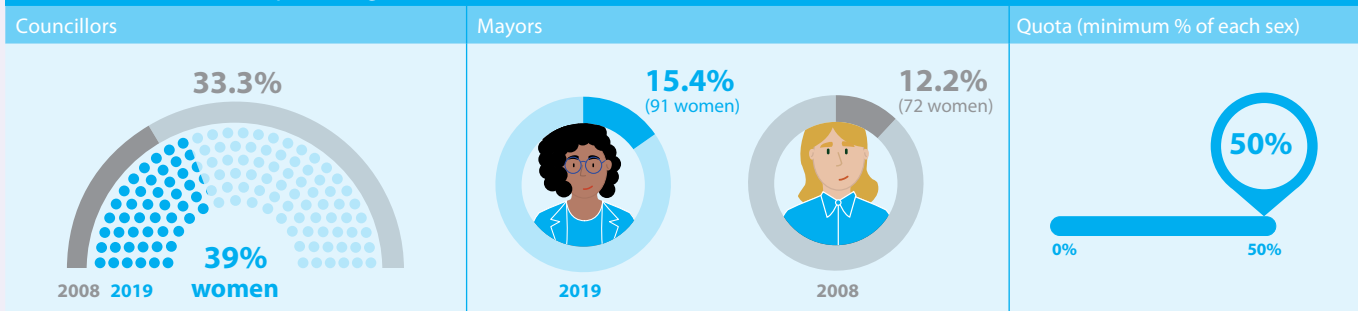
- Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (BRULOCALIS)
- Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)
- Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

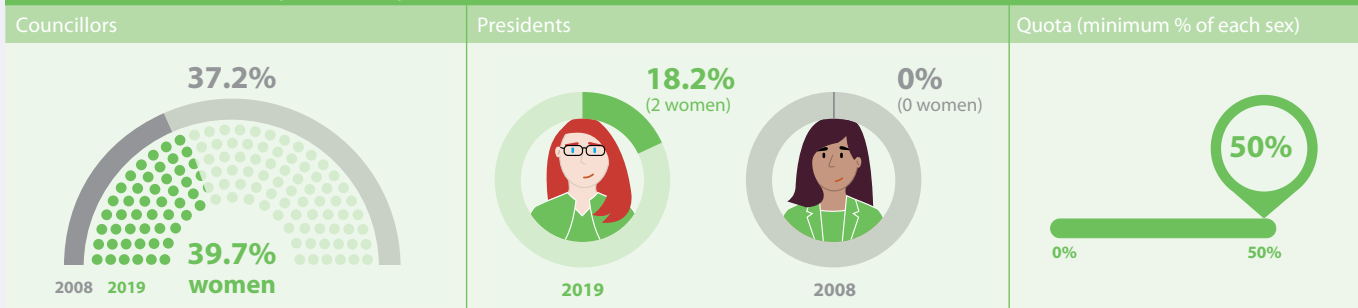
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 589 municipalities (*gemeenten, Gemeinden*)



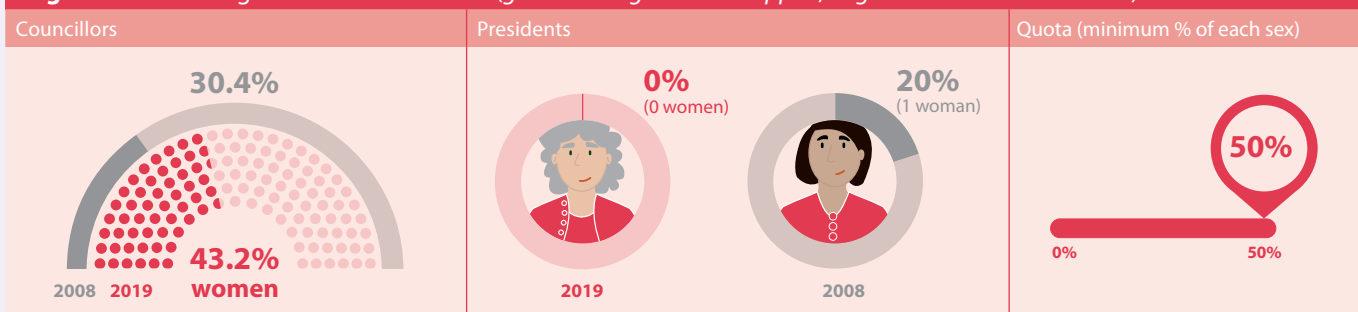
European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Intermediate level: 10 provinces (*provincies, Provinzen*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 20.7% (2008) 31.8% (2019) | Presidents: 5.2% (2008) 9.5% (2019)

### Regional level: 3 regions + 3 communities (*gewesten + gemeenschappen, Regionen + Gemeinschaften*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	42.7%	36.7%
Upper house	46.7%	32.4%

## European level

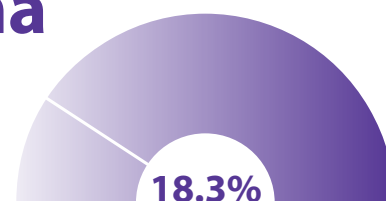
	2019	2009
European Parliament	8 women MEPs out of 21	8 women MEPs out of 22



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

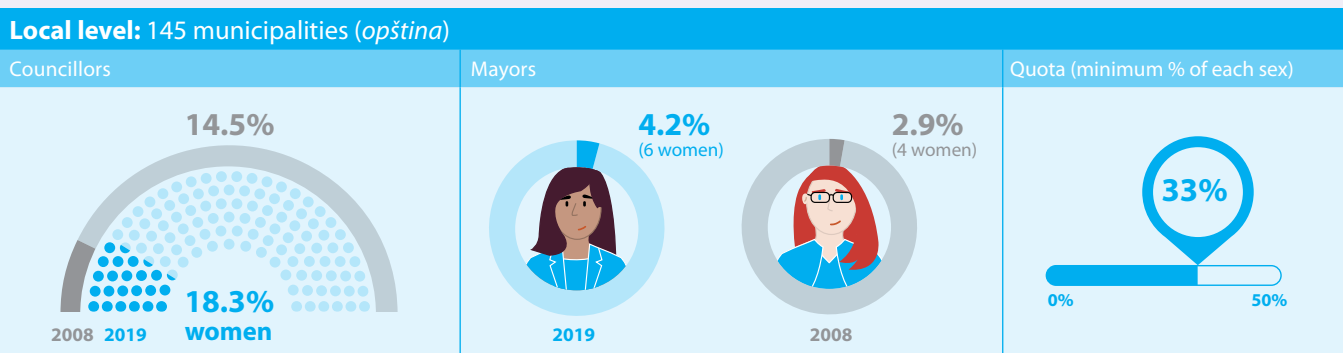
## CEMR members

- Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH)
- Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS)

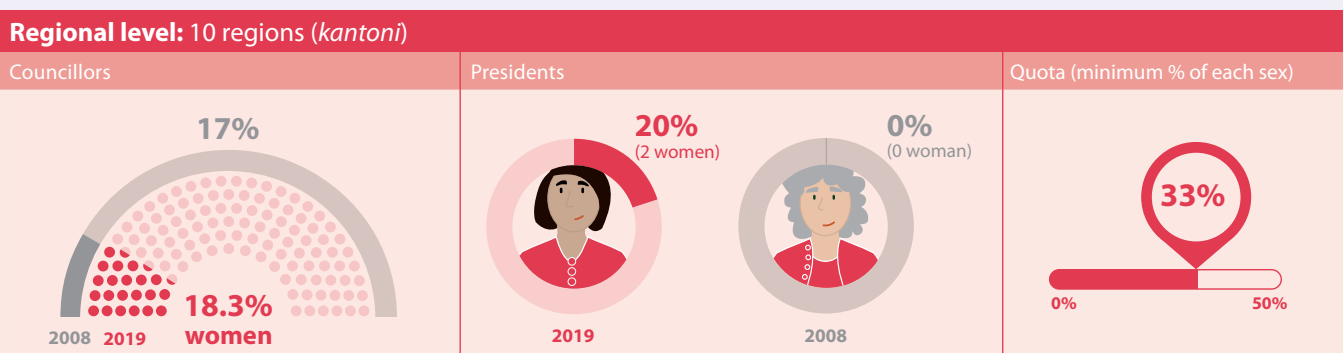


Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

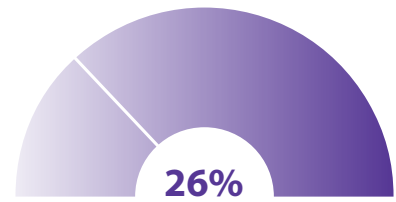
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	21.4%	14.3%
Upper house	13.3%	13.3%



# Bulgaria

**CEMR member**

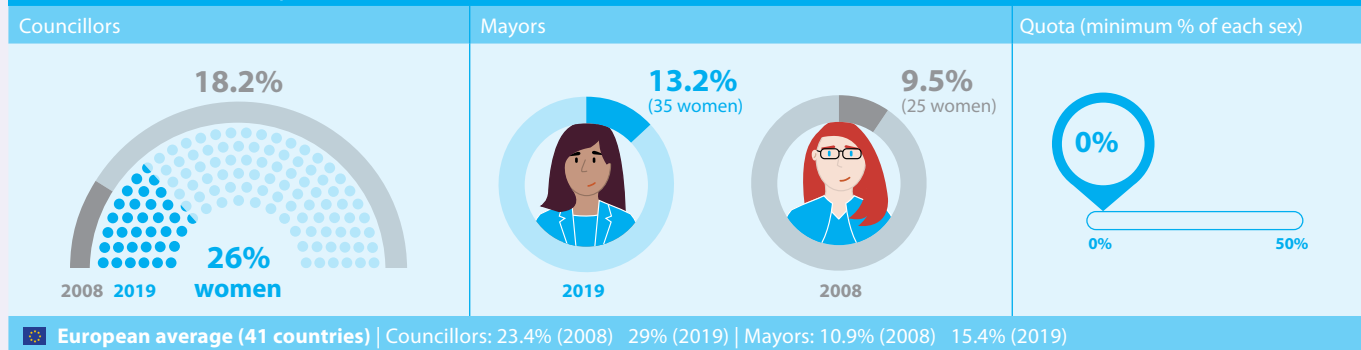
- National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 265 municipalities (*obshtina*)**



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	25.8%	21.3%

## European level

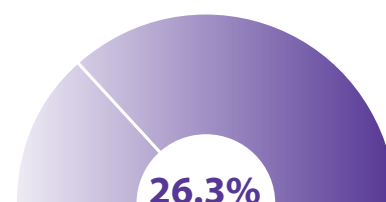
	2019	2009
European Parliament	5 women MEPs out of 17	6 women MEPs out of 17



# Croatia

## CEMR member

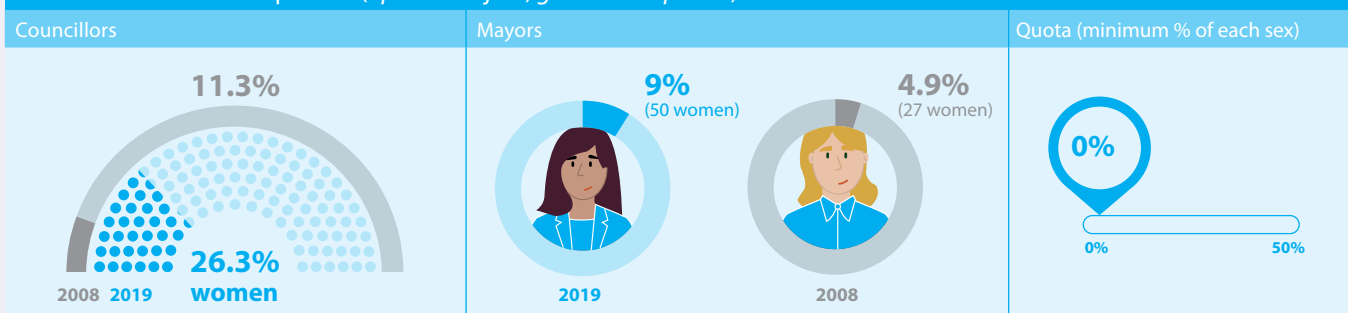
- Croatian county Association (HRVZZ)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

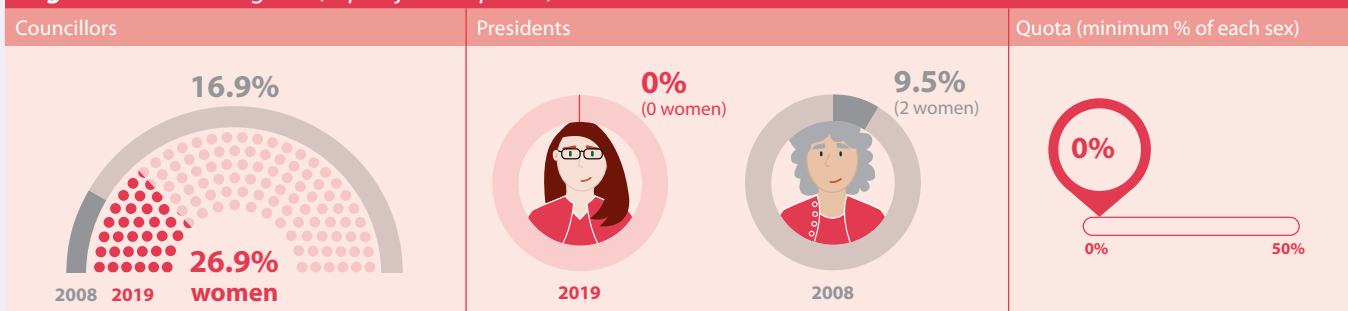
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 555 municipalities (*općinsko vijeće, gradska skupština*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 21 regions (*županijska skupština*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	20.5%	21.6%

## European level

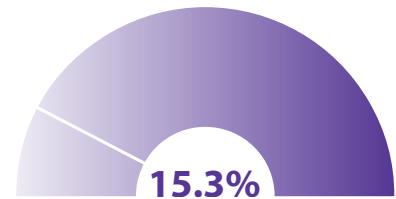
	2019
European Parliament	4 women MEPs out of 11



# Cyprus

**CEMR member**

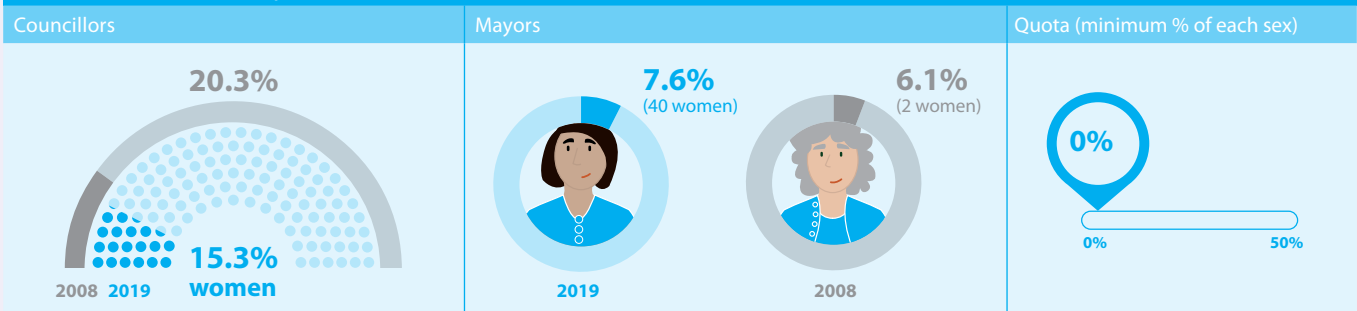
- Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level:** 380 municipalities (*koinotites* and *dimoi*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	17.9%	14.3%

## European level

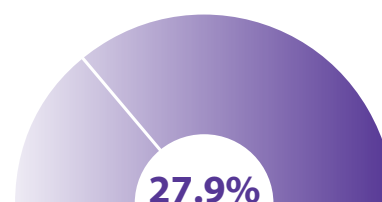
	2019	2009
European Parliament	0 women MEPs out of 6	2 women MEPs out of 6



# Czech Republic

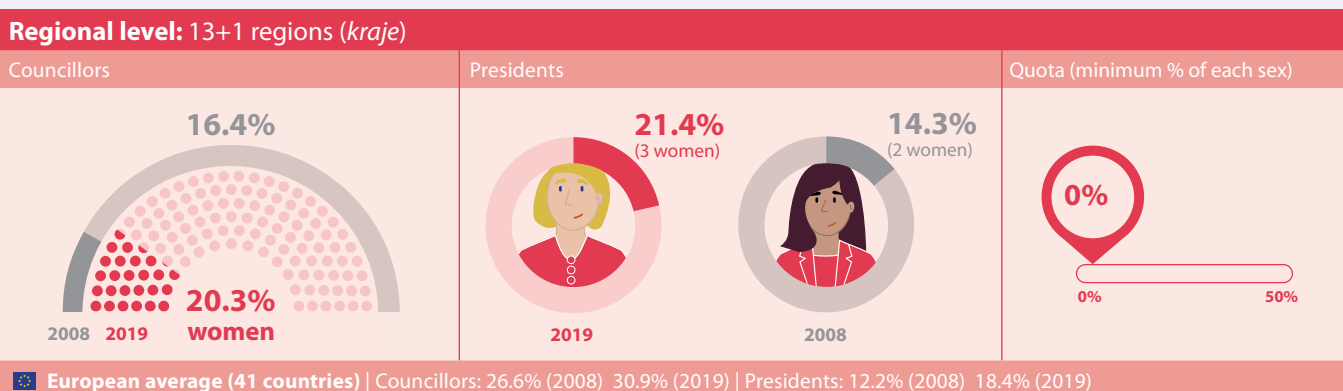
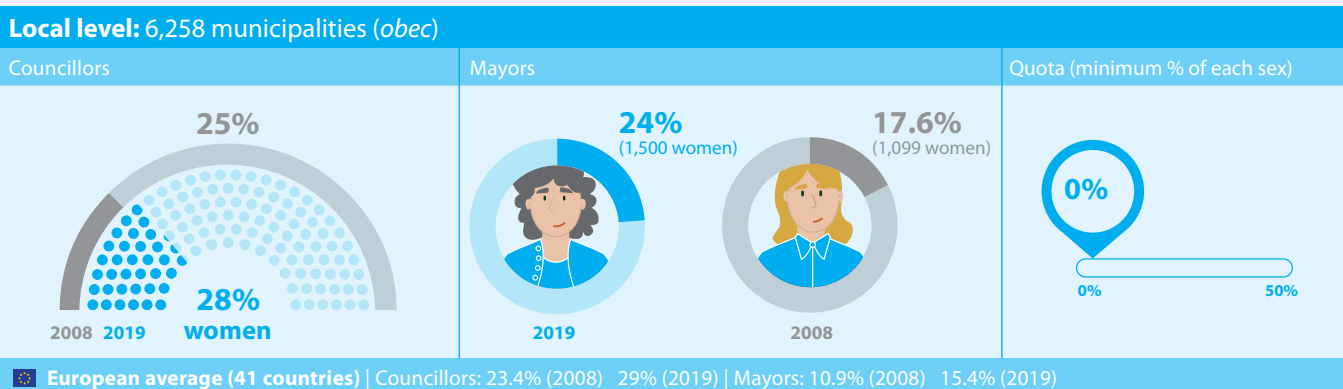
**CEMR member**

- Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	22%	15.5%
Upper house	14.8%	14.8%

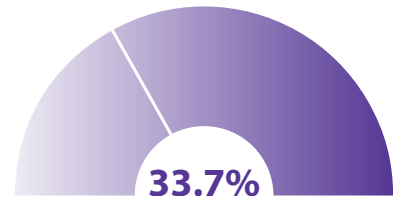
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	7 women MEPs out of 21	4 women MEPs out of 22

# Denmark

## CEMR members

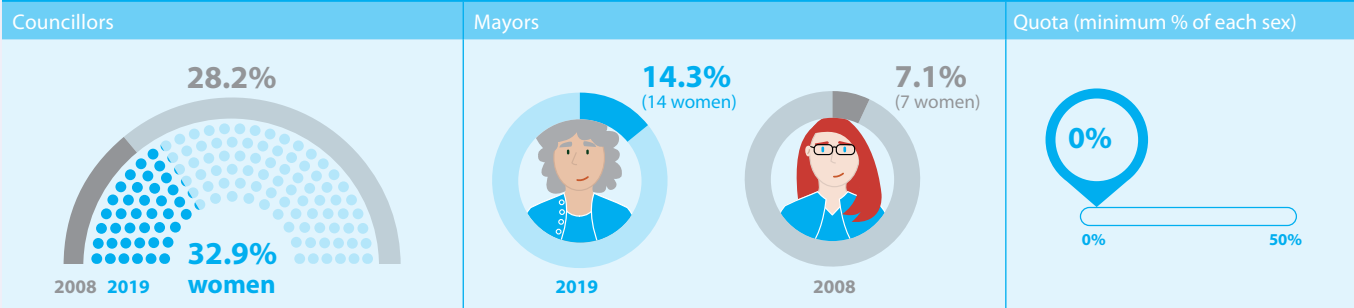
- Danish Regions (DANSKE REGIONER)
- Local Government Denmark (KL)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

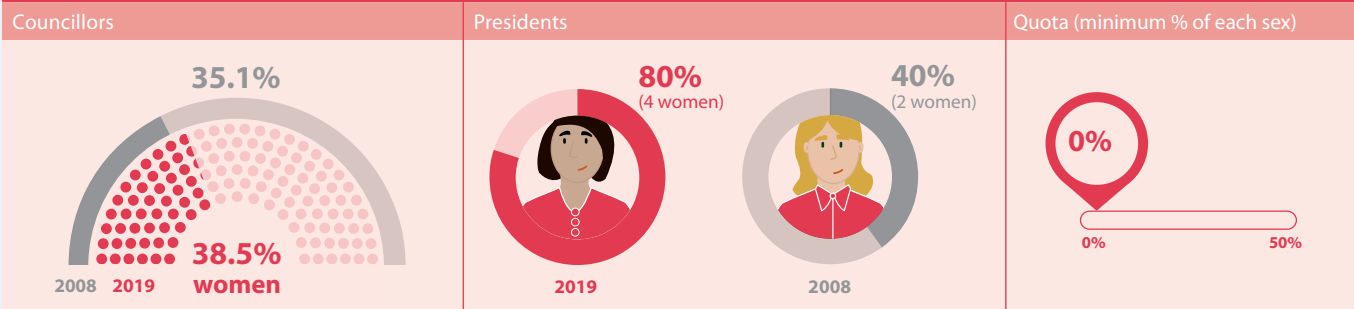
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 98 municipalities (*kommuner*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 5 regions (*regioner*)



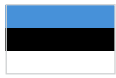
European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	39.1%	37.4%

## European level

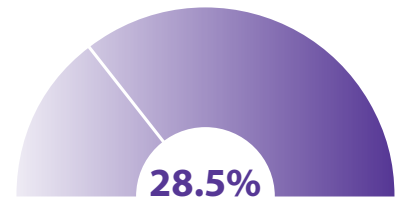
	2019	2009
European Parliament	6 women MEPs out of 13	6 women MEPs out of 13



# Estonia

**CEMR member**

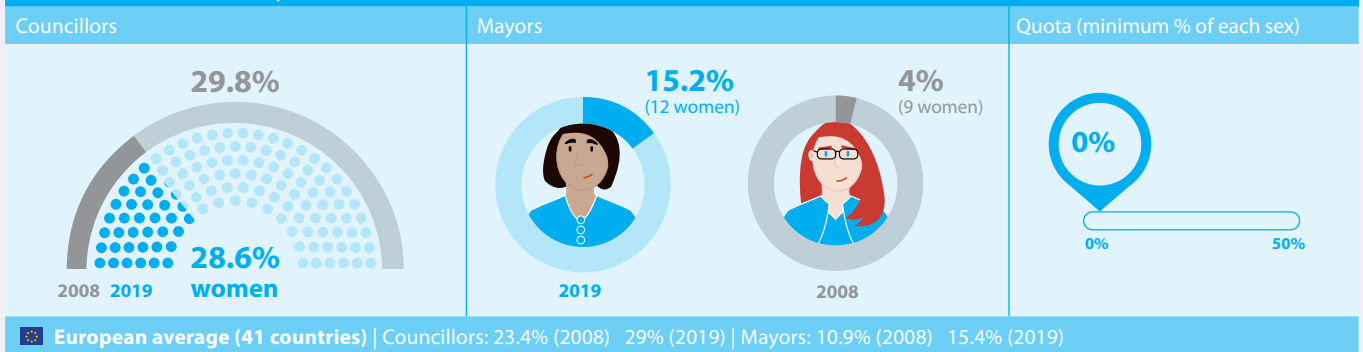
- Association of Estonian Cities and municipalities (AECM)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 265 municipalities (*vald* and *linn*)**



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	28.7%	18.8%

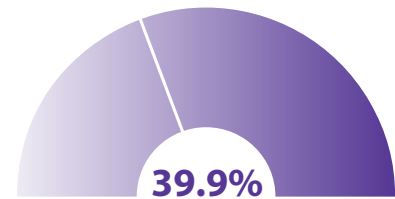
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	2 women MEPs out of 6	3 women MEPs out of 6

# Finland

## CEMR member

• Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA)

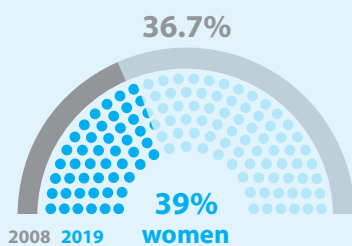


Proportion of women among all elected representatives

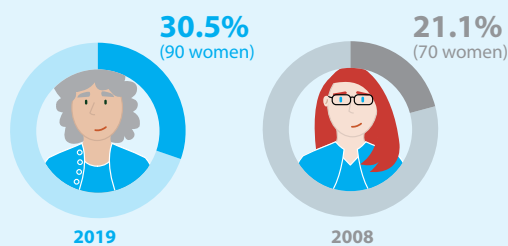
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 311 municipalities (*kunta*)

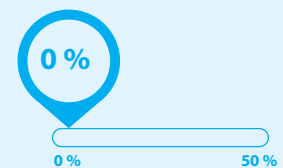
Councillors



Mayors<sup>1</sup>



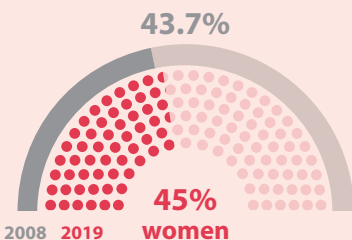
Quota (minimum % of each sex)



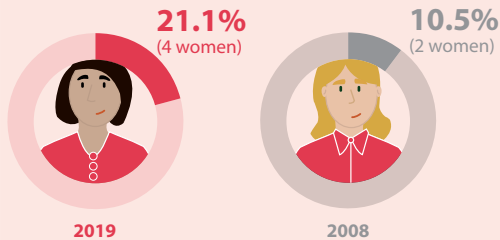
 European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 19 regions (*maakunta*)<sup>2</sup>

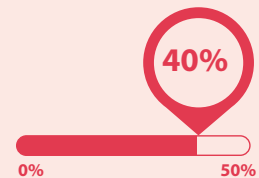
Councillors



Presidents



Quota (minimum % of each sex)



 European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	47%	41.5%

## European level

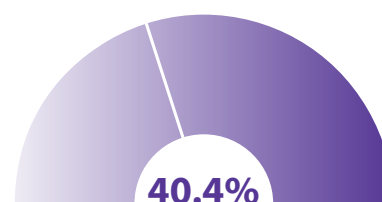
	2019	2009
European Parliament	7 women MEPs out of 13	8 women MEPs out of 13

- The chairpersons of the executive boards of the municipalities are the Finnish equivalent of mayors (*kunnanhallituksen puheenjohtaja*). The share of female chairpersons is currently 31% and in 2009 it was 21%. Municipal elections were held in 2008. The share of female chief executive officers (*kunnanjohtaja*) is currently 25% and was 14.3% in 2008. Both are nominated by the municipal councils.
- In Finland there is one sub-national governmental level, the municipalities. Rural municipalities and cities have the same status. There are 18 Regional Councils which are joint municipal authorities. The Autonomous Region of the Åland Islands has a special status. The political bodies of the regional councils are nominated on the basis of the results of the municipal (local) elections and a quota is applied according to the Gender Equality Act. In Åland Islands the members are elected in direct elections.

# France

## CEMR members

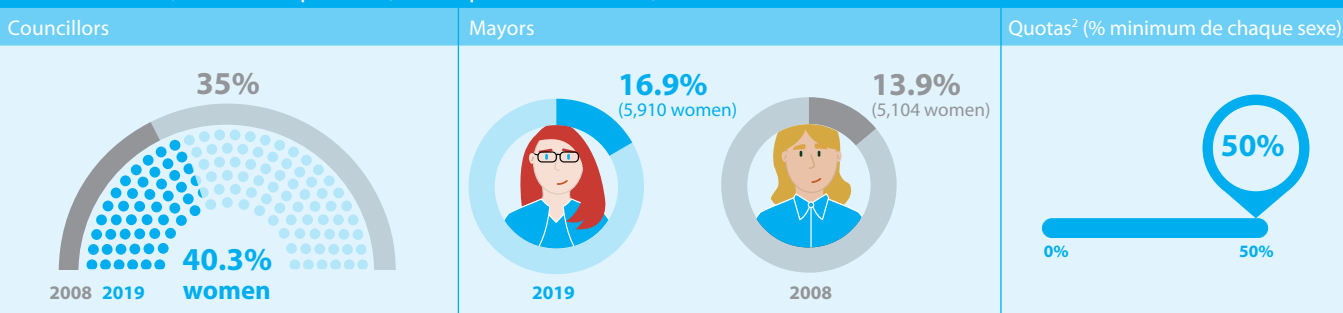
- French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE)
- French Association of Mayors (AMF)<sup>1</sup>



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

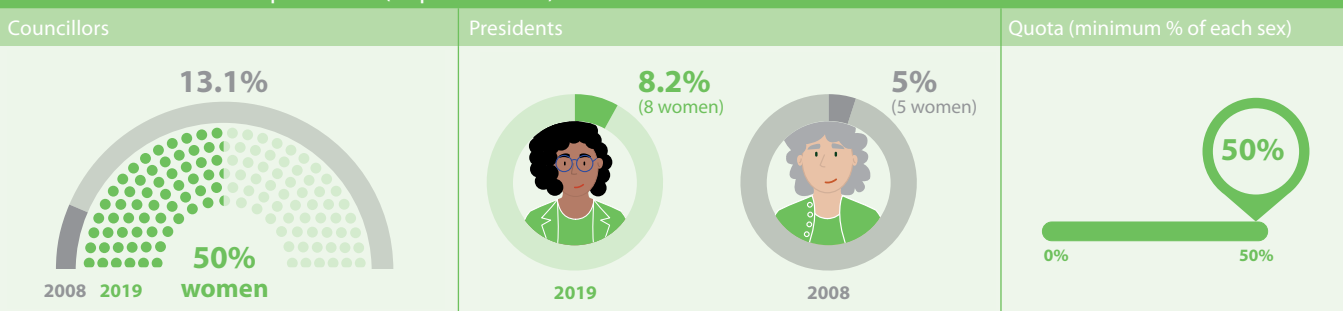
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 36,658 municipalities (municipalités and villes)



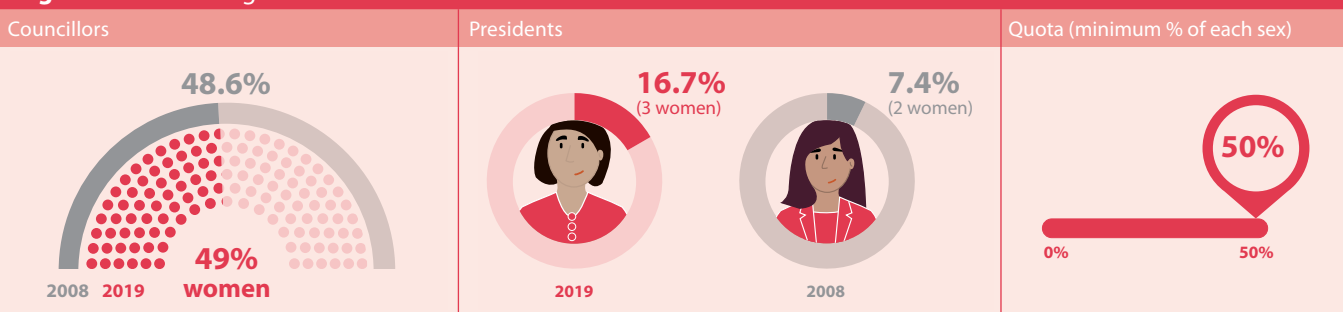
European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Intermediate level: 99 provinces (départements)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 20.7% (2008) 31.8% (2019) | Presidents: 5.2% (2008) 9.5% (2019)

### Regional level: 13 regions



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	39.7%	18.5%
Upper house	32.2%	22.7%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	37 women MEPs out of 74	33 women MEPs out of 72

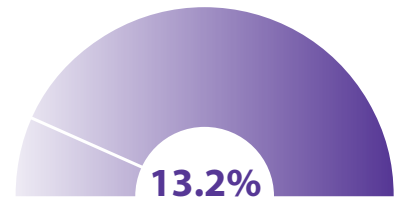
<sup>1</sup> Associate member under an agreement with AFCCRE.  
<sup>2</sup> Applied to municipalities with more than 1,000 inhabitants.



# Georgia

**CEMR member**

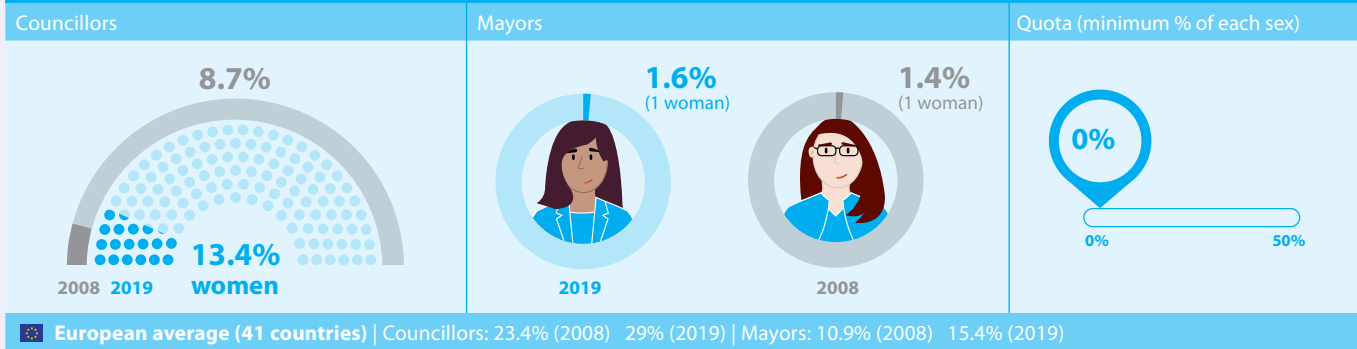
• National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 64 municipalities (*municipaliteti* and *tvitmmartveli qalaqebi*)**



## National level

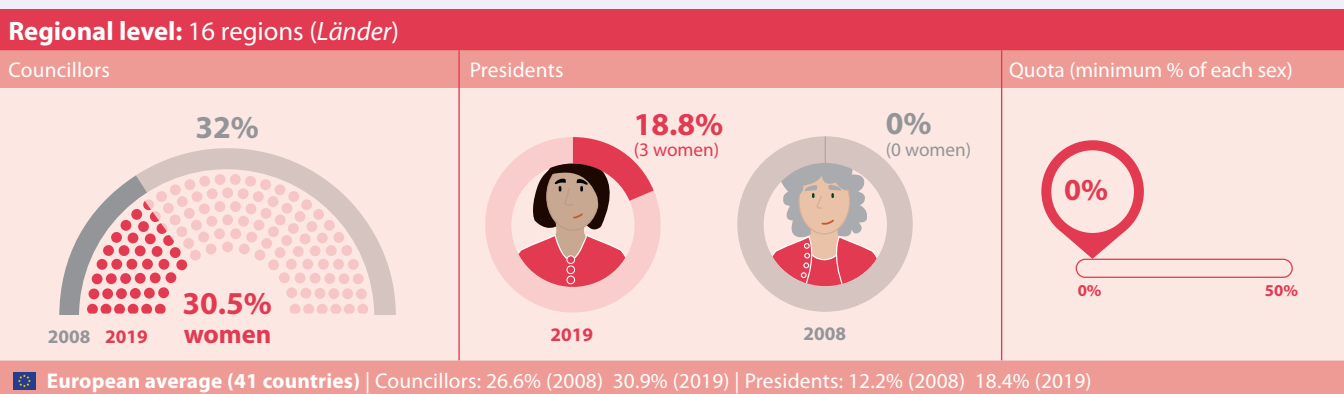
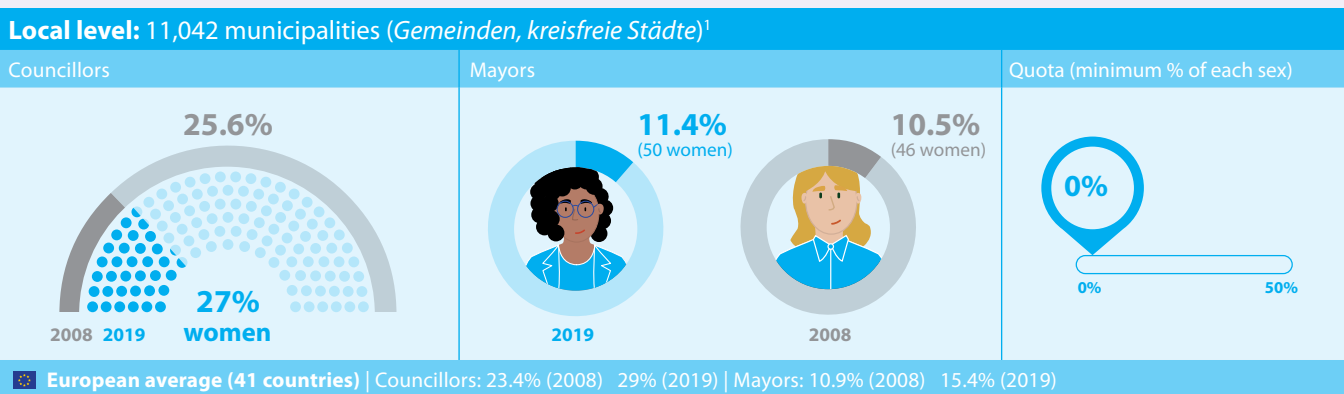
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	16%	7.3%

# Germany

## CEMR members

- German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (RGRE)
- German County Association (DLT)
- Association of German Cities (DST)
- Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB)

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	30.7%	31.8%

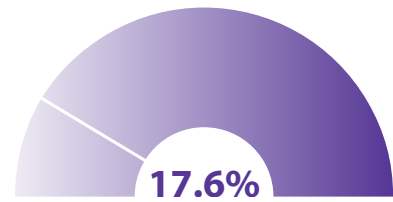
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	35 women MEPs out of 96	36 women MEPs out of 99

<sup>1</sup> For reasons of simplification and data availability, the German local level consolidates municipalities (*Gemeinden*), towns and cities (*kreisfreie Städte*) and counties (*Landkreise*). 437 entities were taken into account for this study.

# Greece

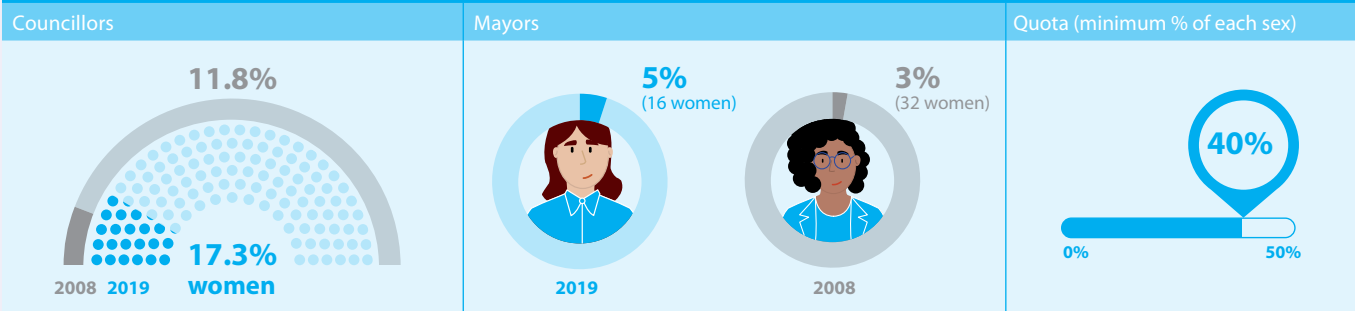
**CEMR member**  
 • Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

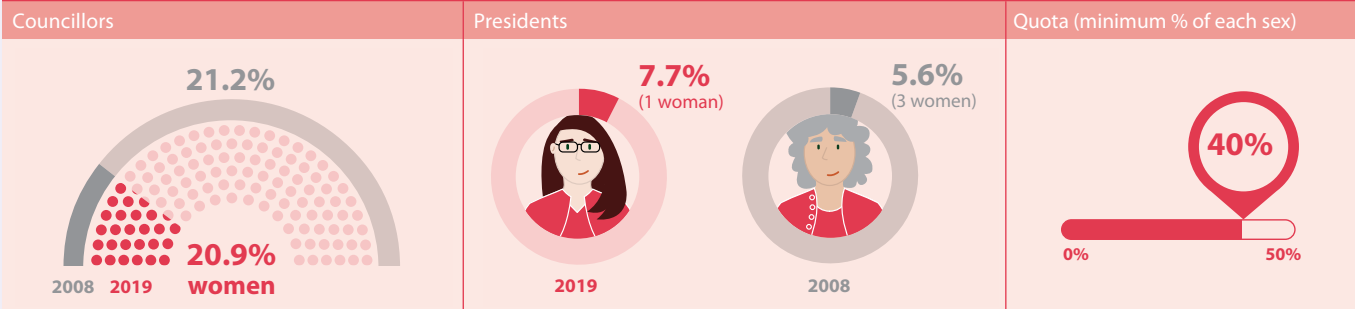
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 332 municipalities (*dimos*)



**European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 13 regions (*periphéria*)



**European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	19.7%	16%

## European level

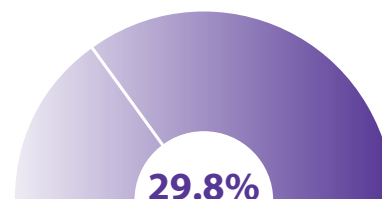
	2019	2009
European Parliament	5 women MEPs out of 21	7 women MEPs out of 22



# Hungary

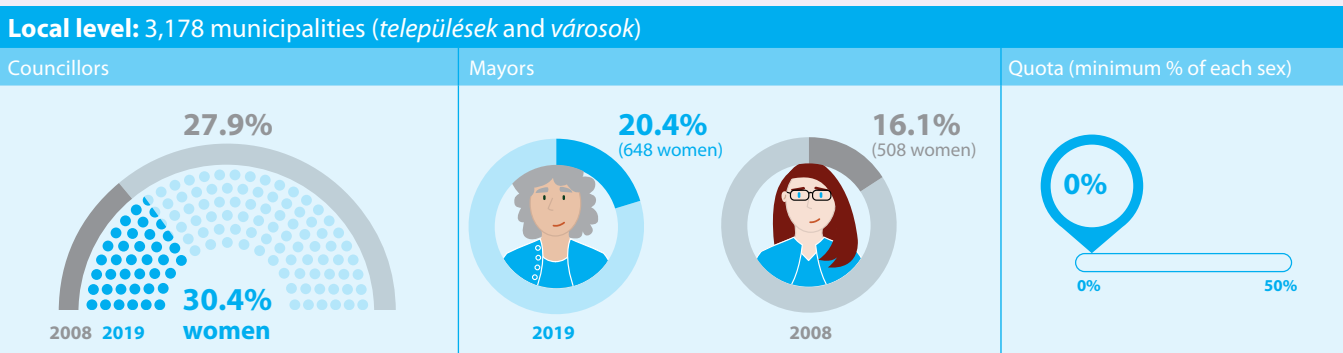
**CEMR member**

• Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ)

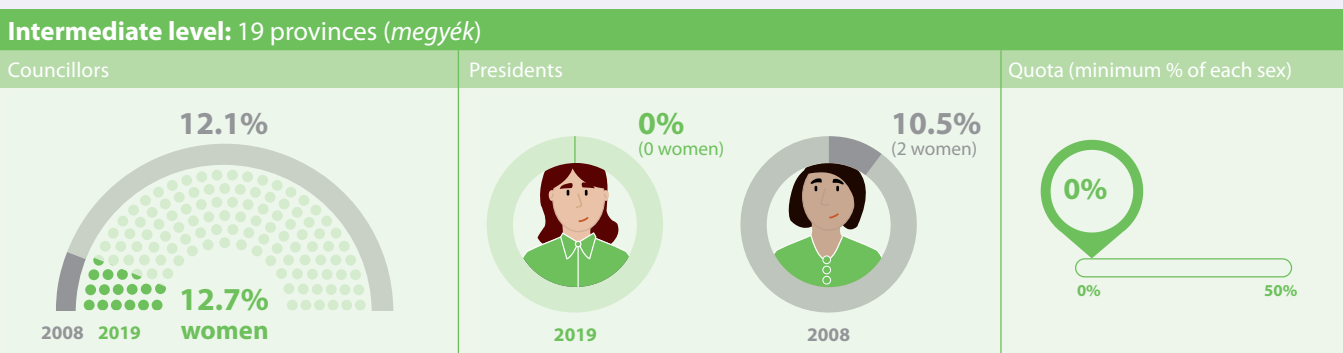


**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level



**European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)



**European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 20.7% (2008) 31.8% (2019) | Presidents: 5.2% (2008) 9.5% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	12.1%	10.6%

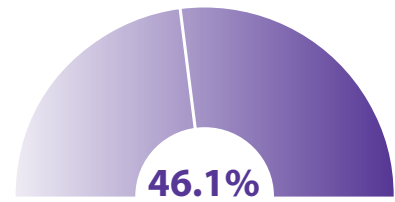
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	8 women MEPs out of 21	8 women MEPs out of 22

# Iceland

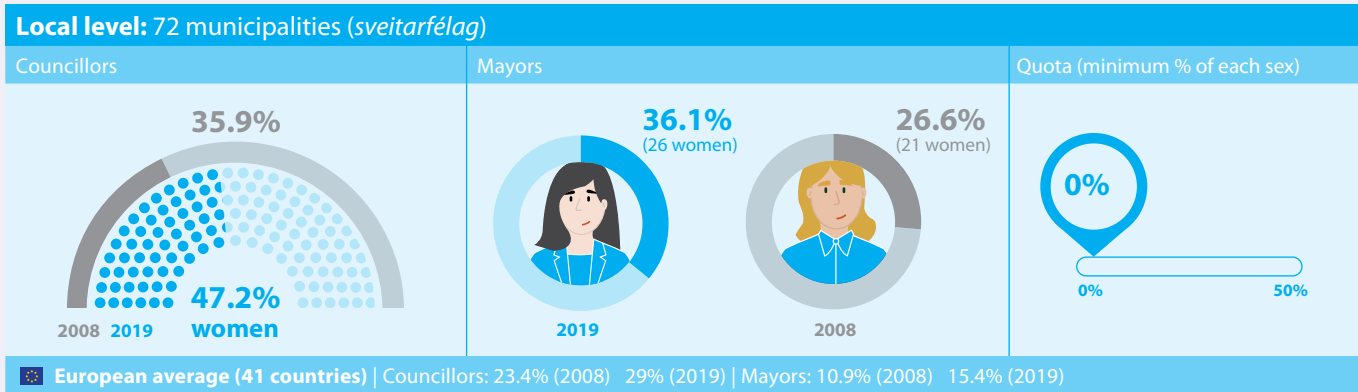
**CEMR member**

- Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (SAMBAND)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level



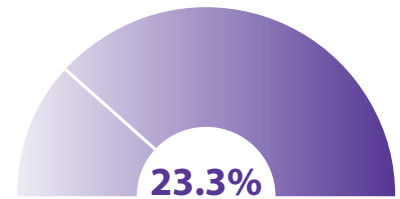
## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	38.1%	36.5%

# Ireland

**CEMR member**

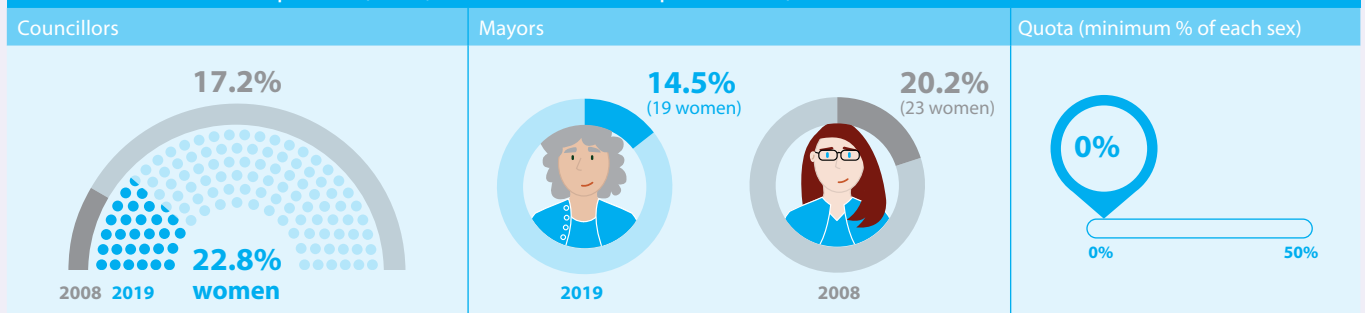
- Local Government Management Association (LGMA)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 131 municipalities (cities, councils and municipal districts)**



**European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

**Regional level: 3 regions<sup>1</sup> (region)**

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	22.2%	13.3%
Upper house	30%	20%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	5 women MEPs out of 11	3 women MEPs out of 12

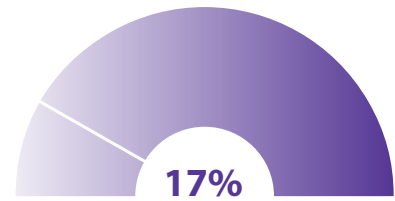
<sup>1</sup> No direct elections at regional level.



# Israel

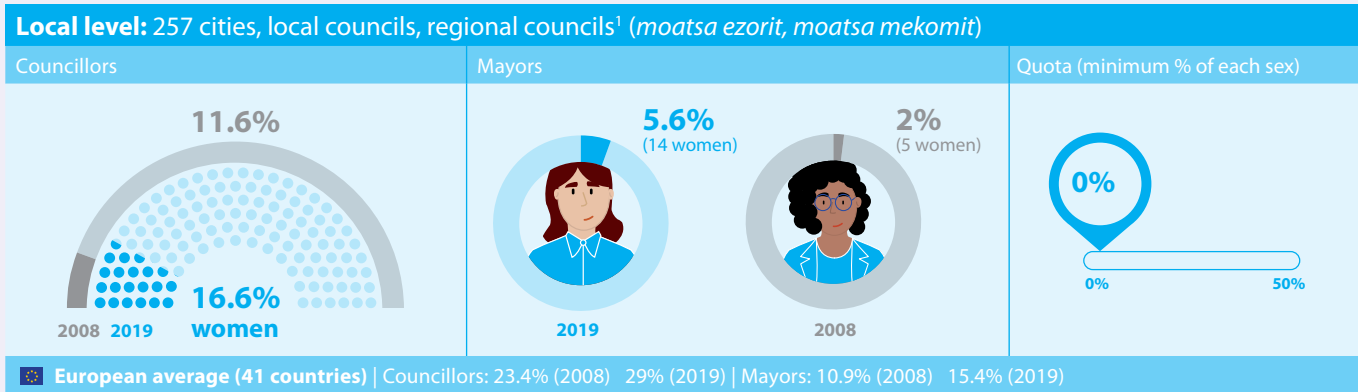
**CEMR member**

- Union of Local Authorities in Israel (MASHAM)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level



## National level

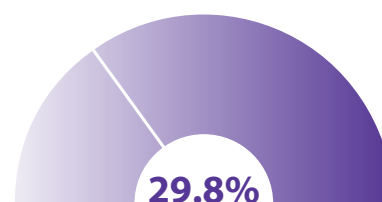
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	24.2%	15%

<sup>1</sup> The law distinguishes between three types of local authorities: regional councils, which represent the rural areas of Israel, local councils with 20,000 inhabitants or less and municipalities in urban centres with 20,000 inhabitants or more.

# Italy

## CEMR member

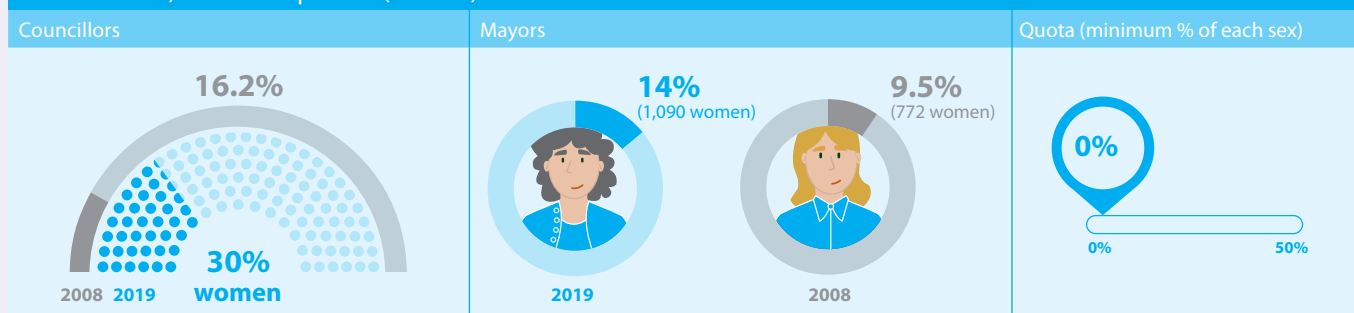
- Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)



**29.8%**  
Proportion of women among all elected representatives

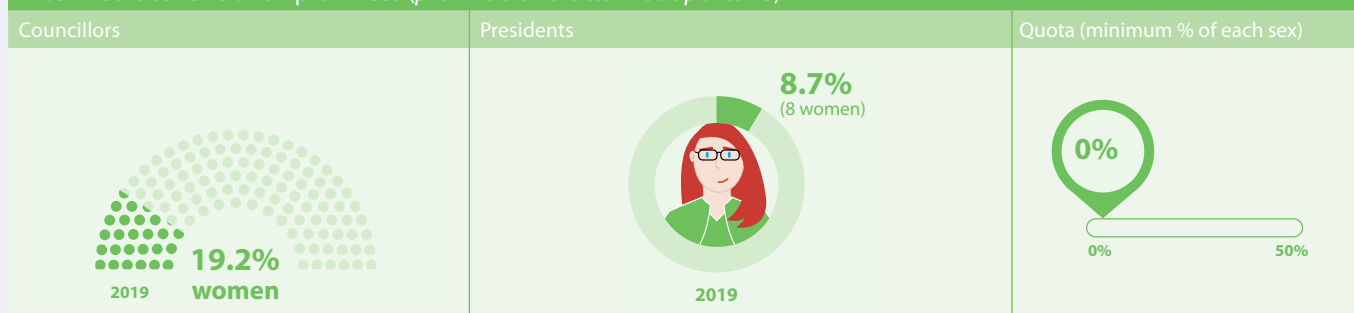
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 7,954 municipalities (*comuni*)



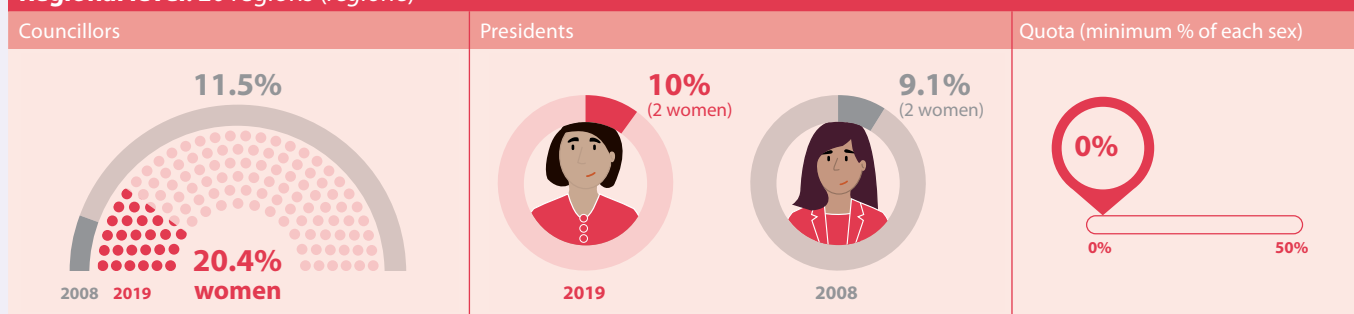
European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Intermediate level: 107 provinces (*provincia* and *città metropolitane*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 20.7% (2008) 31.8% (2019) | Presidents: 5.2% (2008) 9.5% (2019)

### Regional level: 20 regions (*regione*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	35.7%	21.3%
Upper house	35.2%	17.4%

## European level

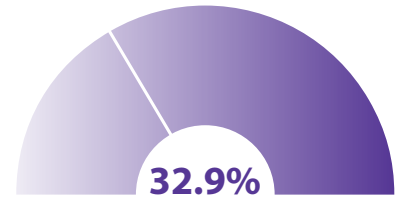
	2019	2009
European Parliament	30 women MEPs out of 73	16 women MEPs out of 72

<sup>1</sup> No data available for 2008.

# Latvia

**CEMR member**

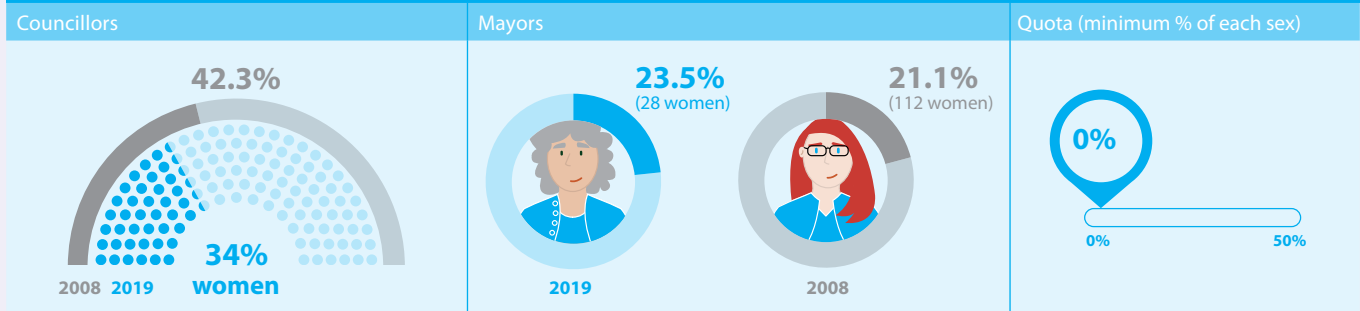
• Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

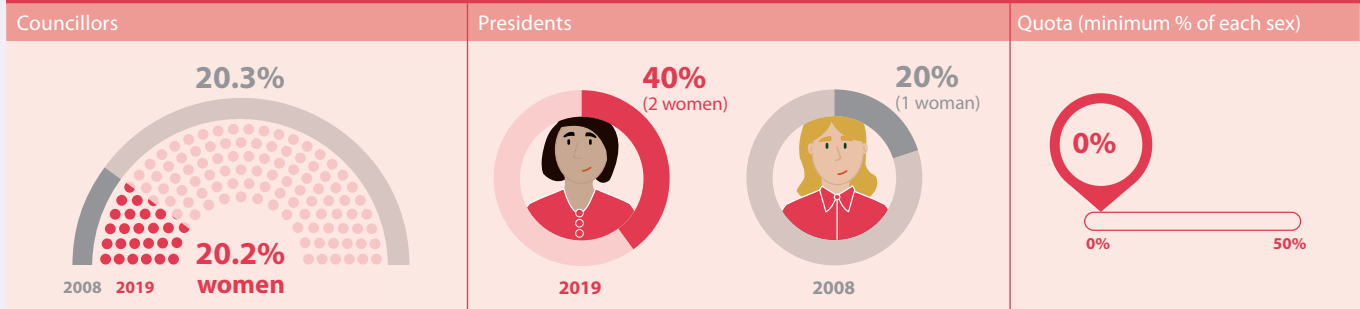
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 119 municipalities (*novads and pilsēta*)



 **European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 5 regions<sup>1</sup> (*plānošanas reģiona*)



 **European average (41 countries)** | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	31%	19%

## European level

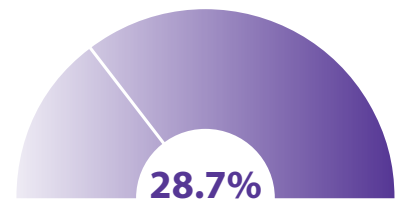
	2019	2009
European Parliament	4 women MEPs out of 8	3 women MEPs out of 8

<sup>1</sup> Regions as a territorial unit were introduced in Latvia in 2009; the data concerning the regions are from 2009.

# Lithuania

**CEMR member**

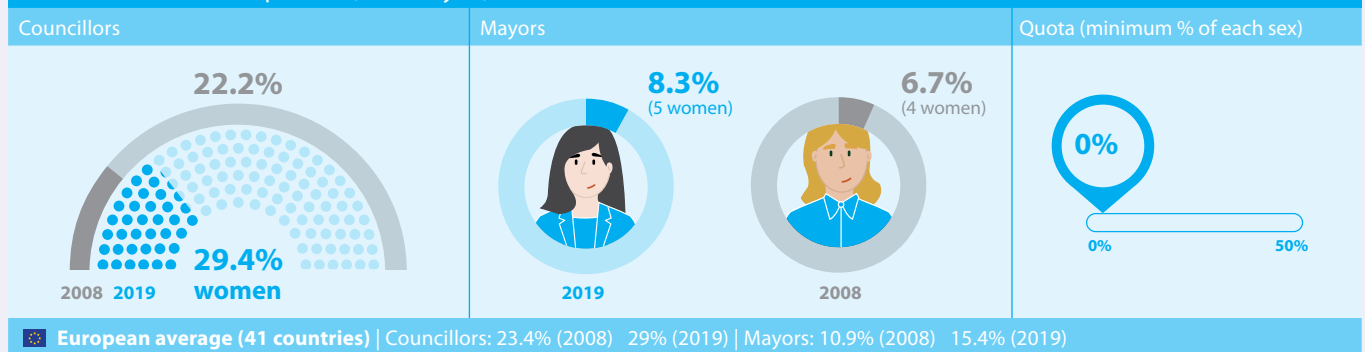
- Associations of Local Authorities in Lithuania (LSA)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 60 municipalities (*savivaldybė*)**



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	21.3%	18.4%

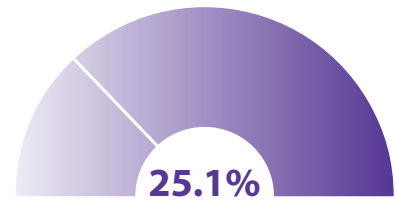
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	3 women MEPs out of 11	3 women MEPs out of 12

# Luxembourg

**CEMR member**

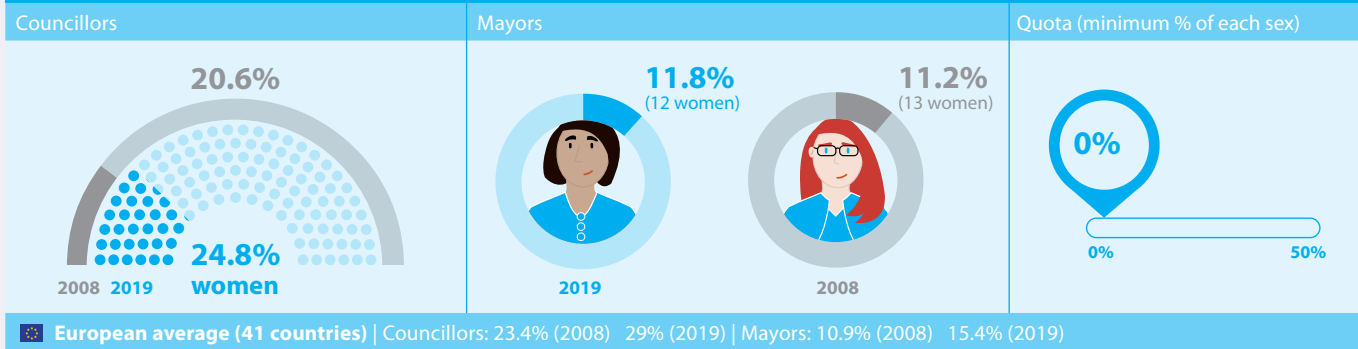
• Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level:** 102 municipalities (*municipalités, Gemengen, Gemeinden*)



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	20%	25%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	3 women MEPs out of 6	1 women MEPs out of 6

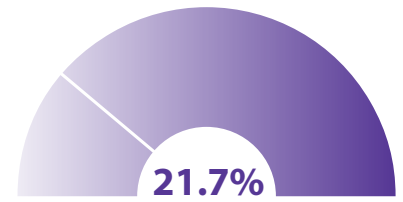




# Malta

**CEMR member**

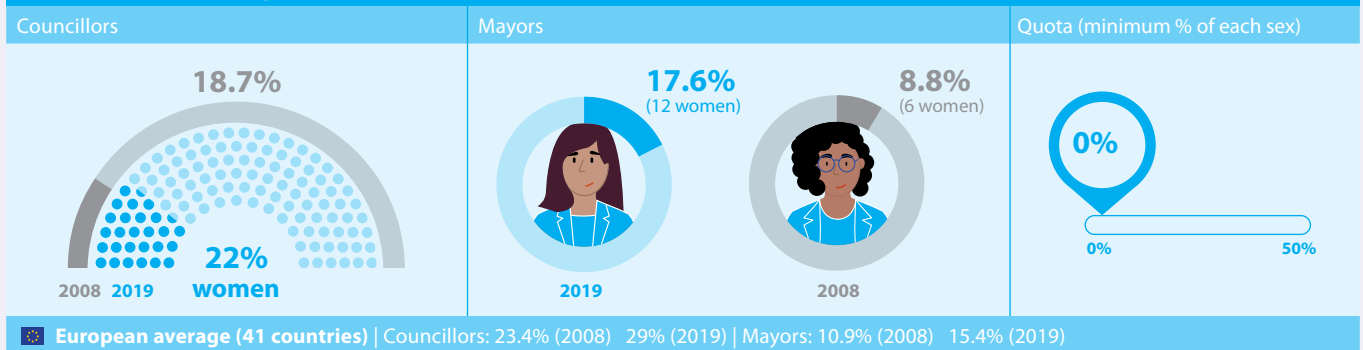
- Local Councils Association (LCA)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 68 municipalities (*kunsill lokali*)**



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	14.9%	8.7%

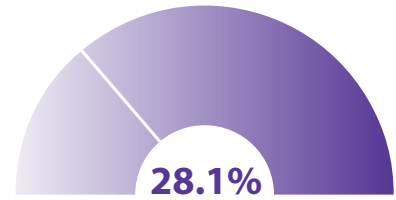
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	3 women MEPs out of 6	0 women MEPs out of 5

# Moldova

**CEMR member**

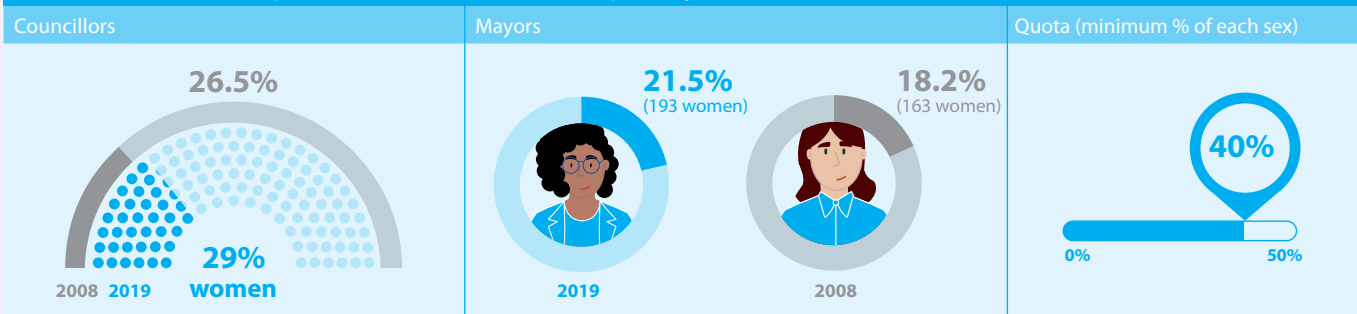
- Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

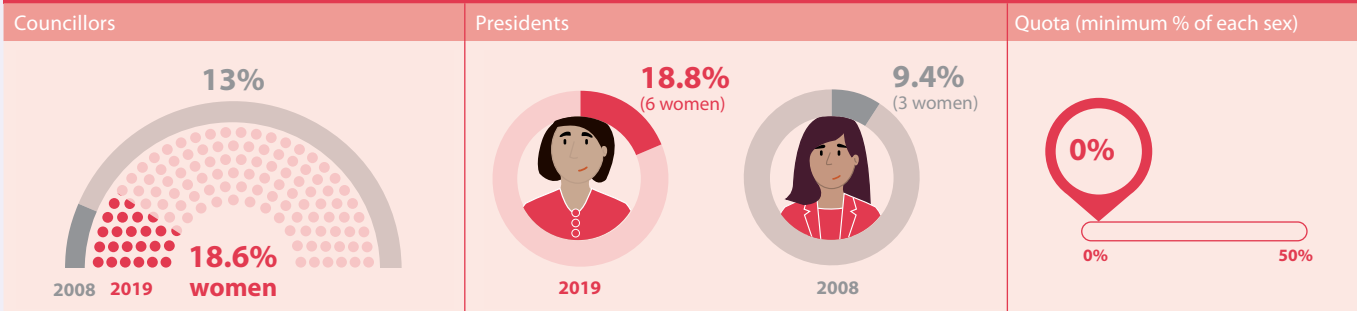
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 898 municipalities (*sate, commune, municipii, orașe*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 35 regions (*raioane*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

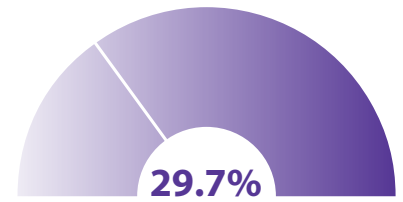
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	25.7%	21.8%



# Montenegro

**CEMR member**

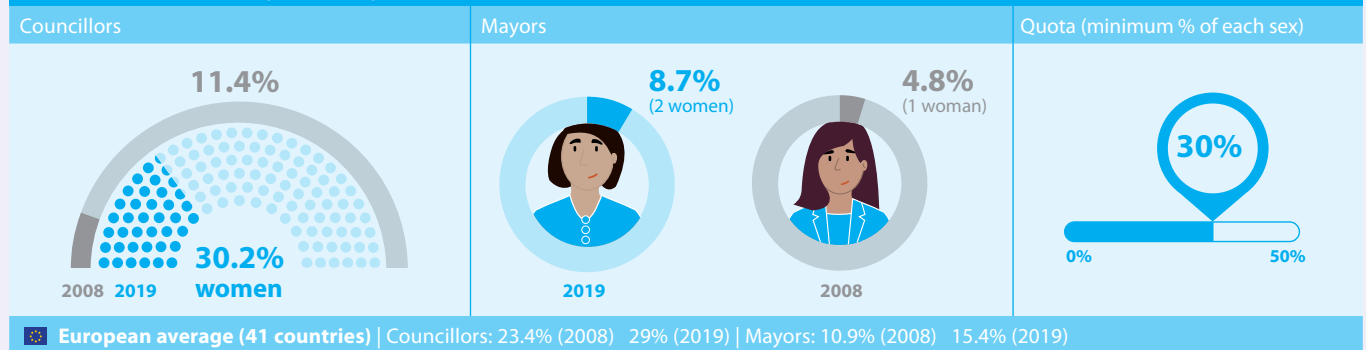
- Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 24 municipalities (*opština*)**



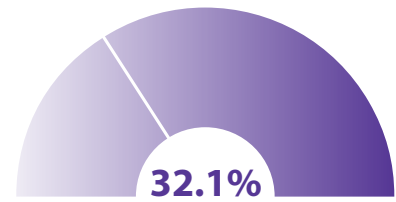
## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	23.5%	11.1%

# Netherlands

## CEMR members

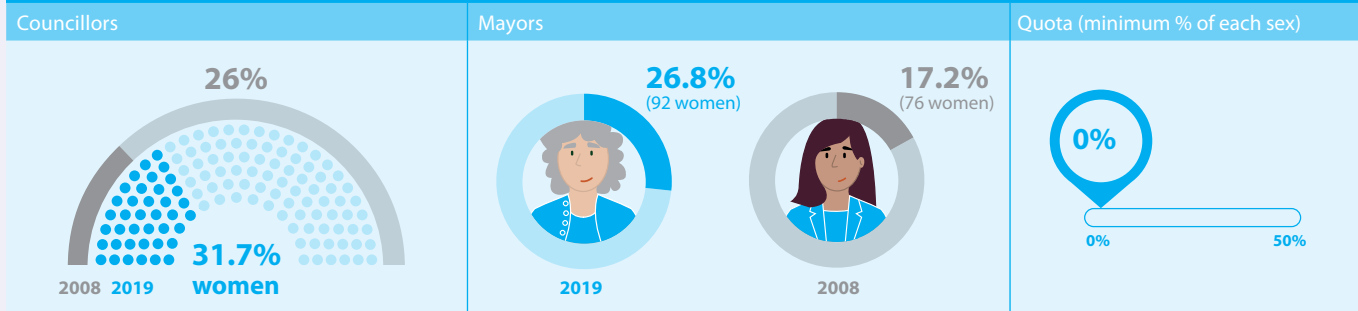
- Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO)
- Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

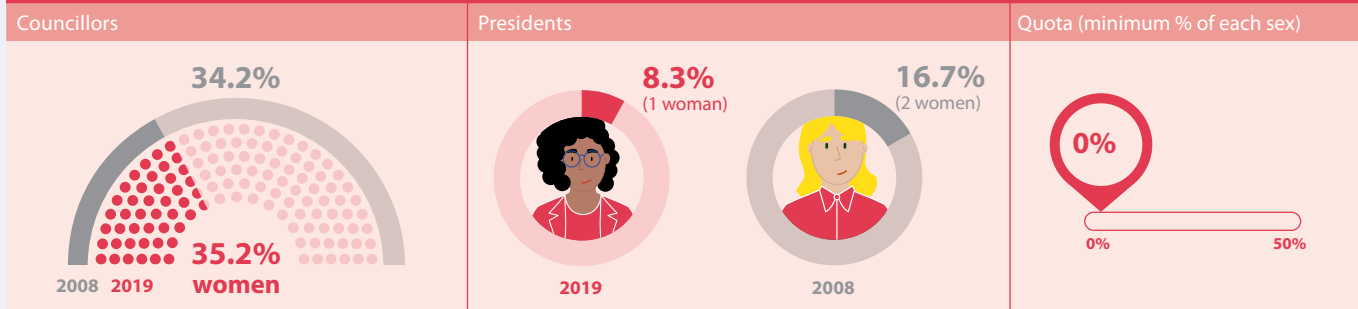
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 390 municipalities (*gemeenten*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 12 regions (*provincies*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	36%	36%
Upper house	38.7%	35.1%

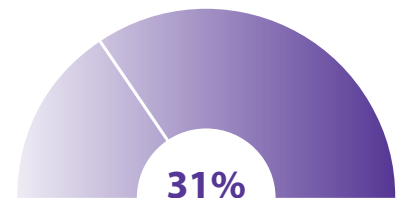
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	13 women MEPs out of 26	12 women MEPs out of 25

# North Macedonia

## CEMR member

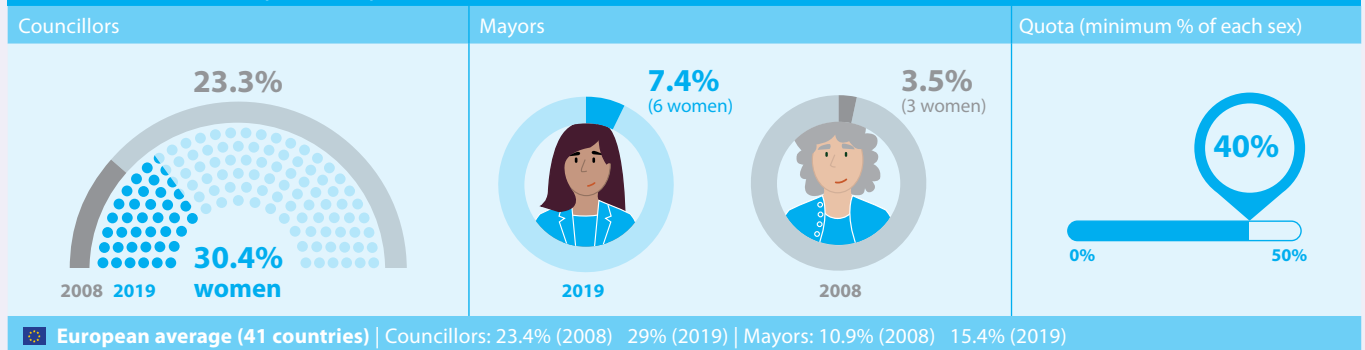
- Association of Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia (ZELS)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level

**Local level:** 81 municipalities (*opština*)



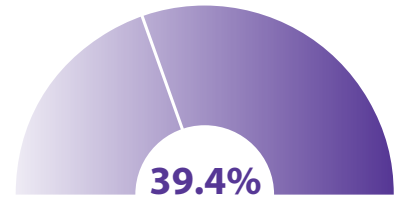
## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	36.7%	30%

# Norway

**CEMR member**

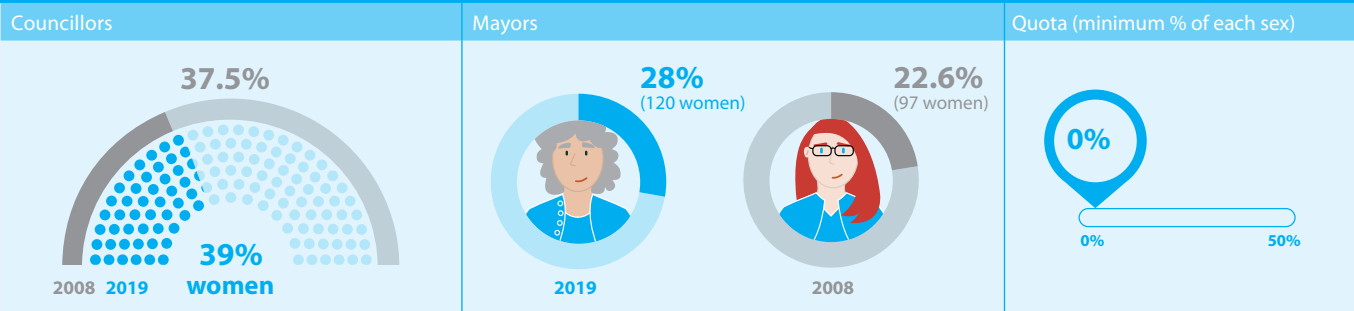
• Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

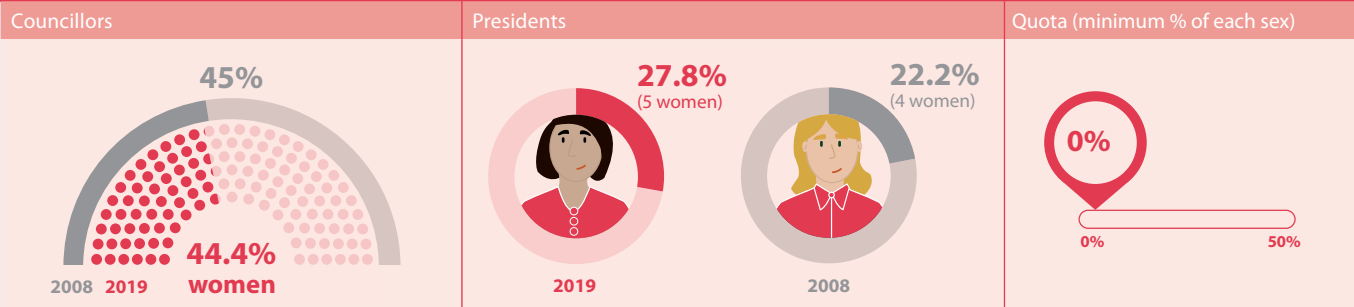
## Sub-national level

### Niveau local: 422 municipalities (*kommune*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008), 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008), 15.4% (2019)

### Niveau régional: 18 regions (*fylkeskommune*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

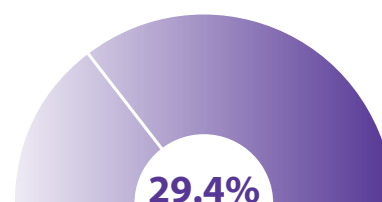
## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	41.4%	37.9%

# Poland

## CEMR members

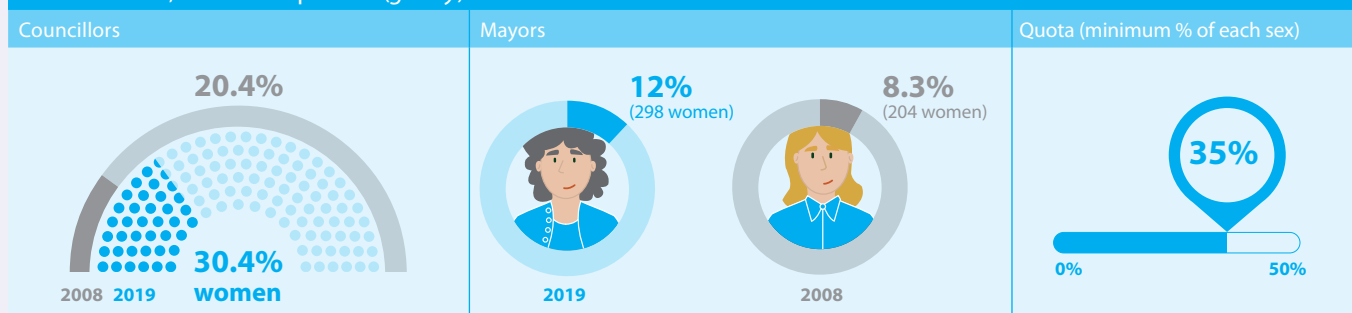
- Association of Polish Counties (ZPP)
- Association of Polish Cities (ZMP)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

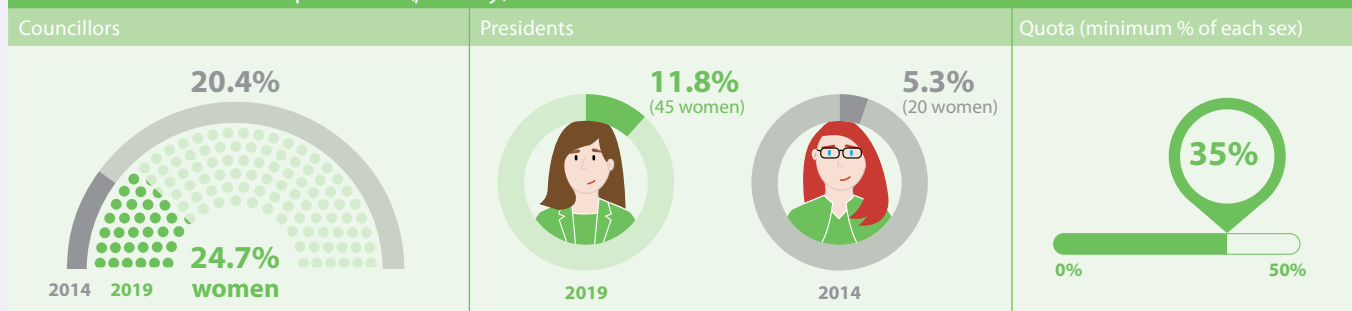
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 2,477 municipalities (*gminy*)



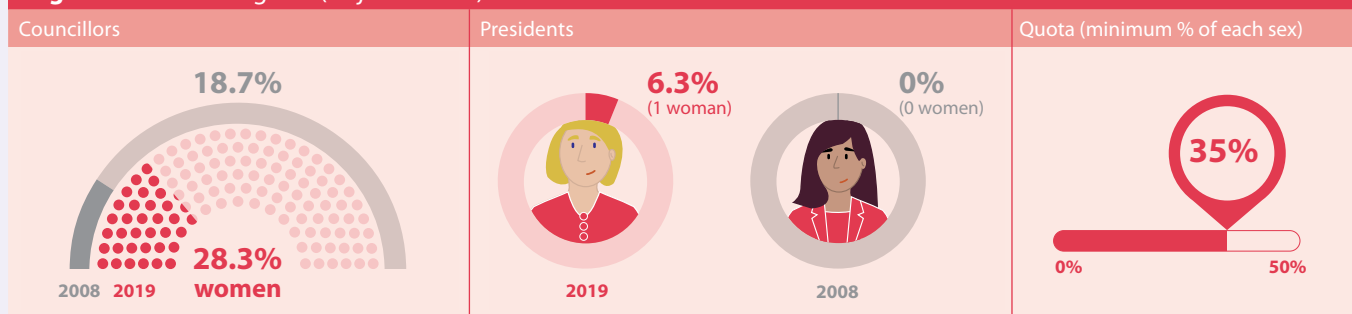
European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Intermediate level: 380 provinces (*powiaty*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 20.7% (2008) 31.8% (2019) | Presidents: 5.2% (2008) 9.5% (2019)

### Regional level: 16 regions (*województwo*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	27.2%	21%
Upper house	14%	8%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	18 women MEPs out of 51	11 women MEPs out of 50

<sup>1</sup> No data available prior to 2014 regarding the number of representatives at regional level.

# Portugal

**CEMR member**

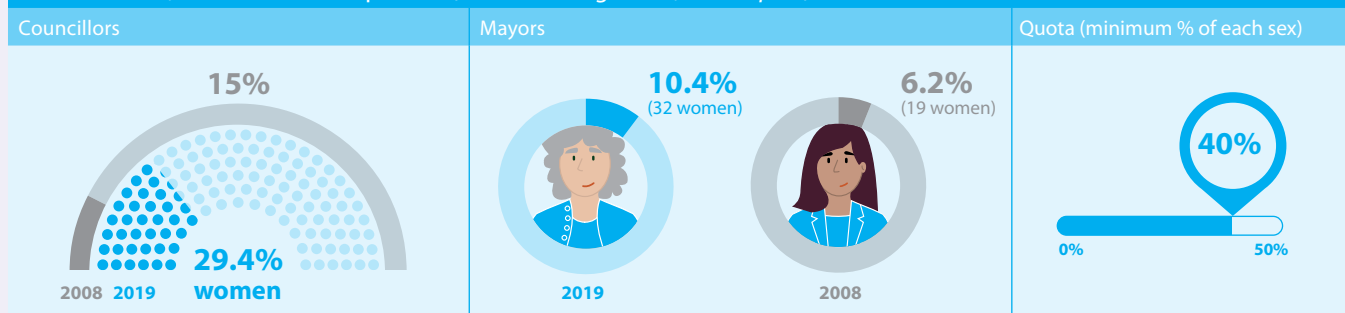
• National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

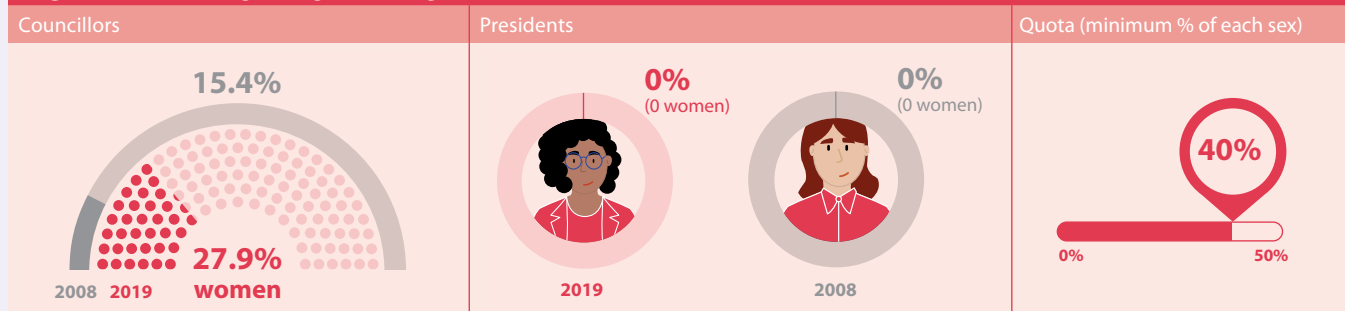
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 3,092 + 308 municipalities (*Juntas de Freguesias, municípios*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 2 regions (*governo regional*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	35.7%	28.7%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	9 women MEPs out of 21	8 women MEPs out of 22

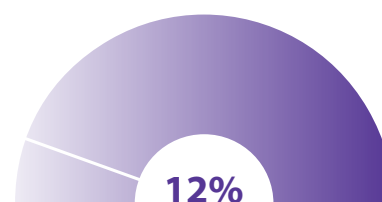
<sup>1</sup> The data compiled here refer only to the 308 municipalities, as the data of the *Juntas de Freguesias* are incomplete or imprecise at certain levels.



# Romania

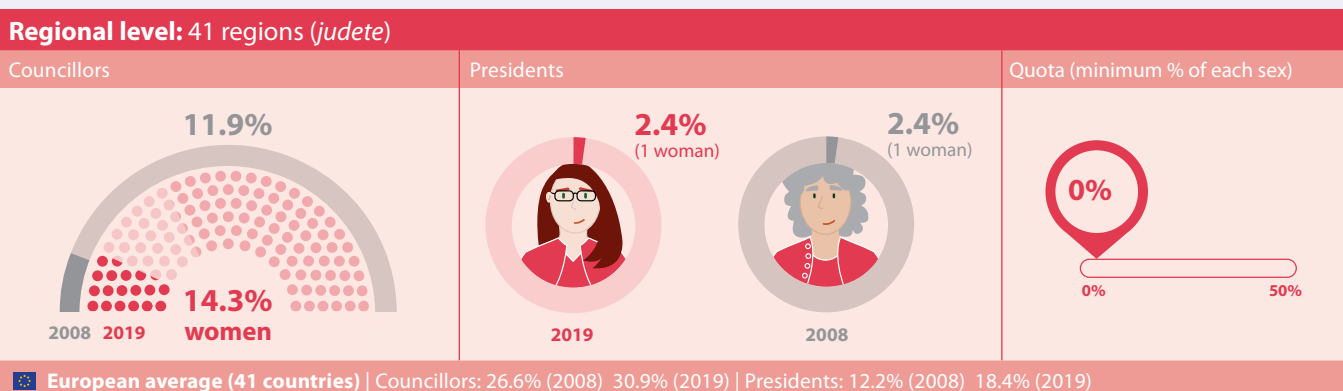
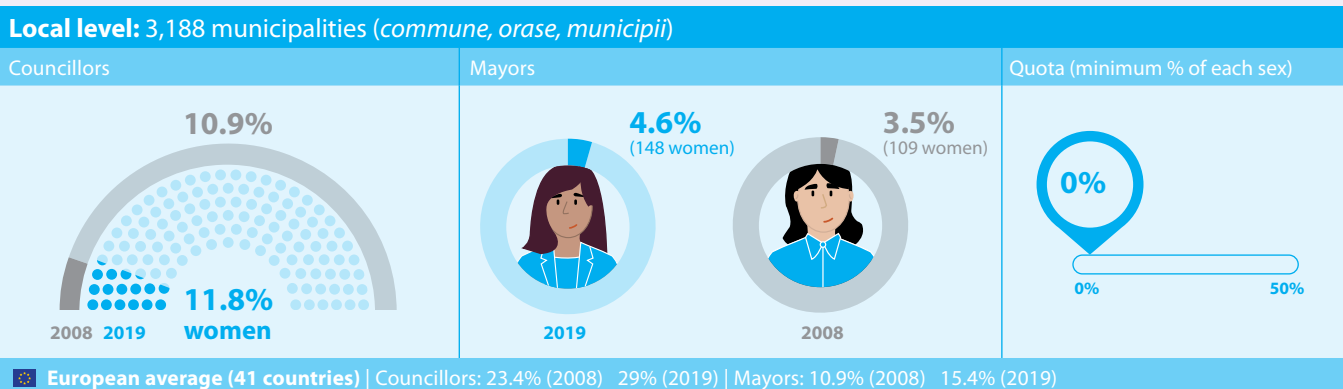
## CEMR members

- National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR)
- Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR)
- Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	20.7%	11.4%
Upper house	14.8%	5.4%

## European level

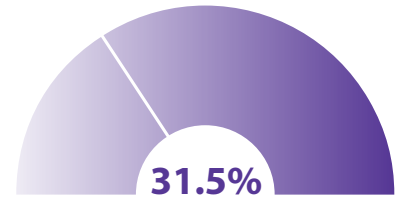
	2019	2009
European Parliament	7 women MEPs out of 32	12 women MEPs out of 33



# Serbia

**CEMR member**

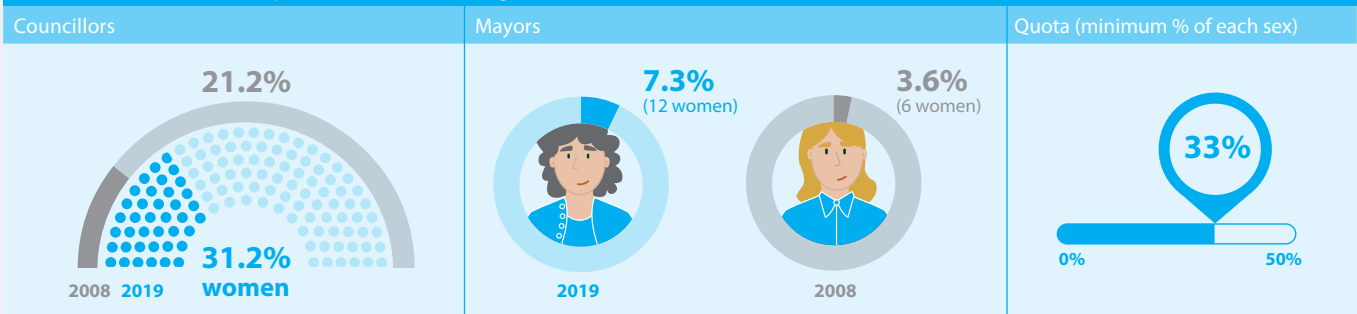
- Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia (SKGO)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

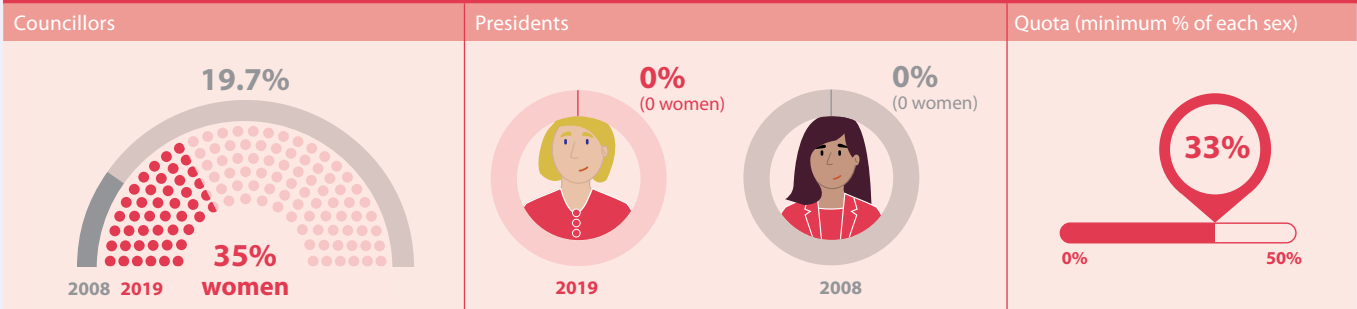
## Sub-national level

### Local level: 174 municipalities (*obstina* and *grad*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 2 regions (*Autonomna Pokrajina*)<sup>1</sup>



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

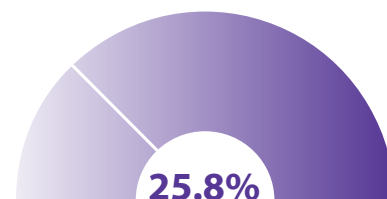
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	37.2%	20.4%

<sup>1</sup> The data only include figures for the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. No data are available for the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo.

# Slovakia

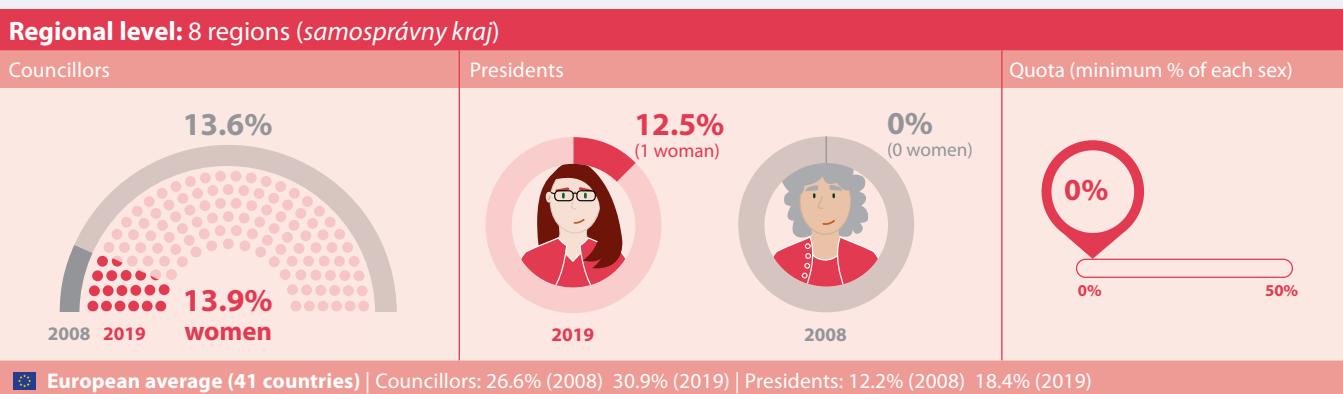
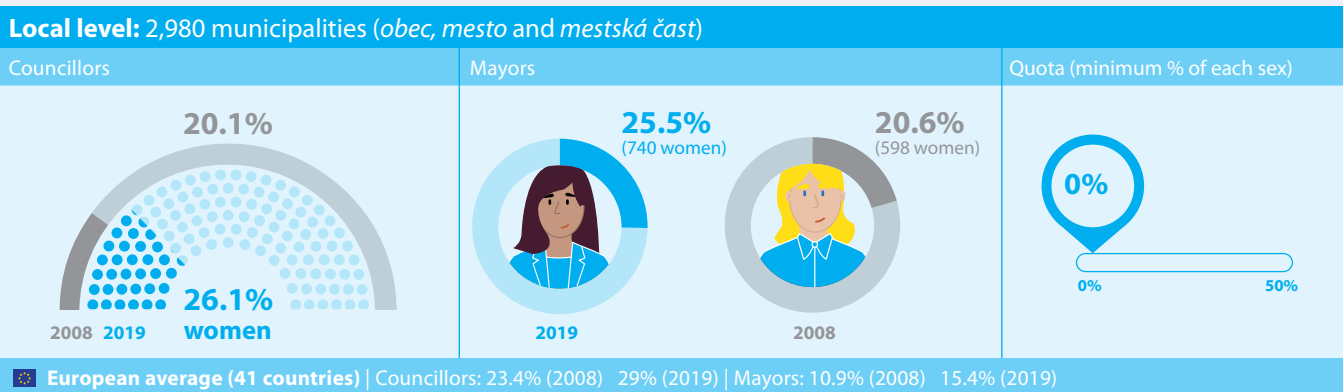
## CEMR member

- Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS)



Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	19.3%	18.7%

## European level

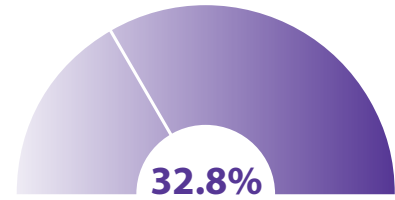
	2019	2009
European Parliament	2 women MEPs out of 13	5 women MEPs out of 13



# Slovenia

## CEMR members

- Slovenian Association of Urban Municipalities (ZMOS)
- Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS)

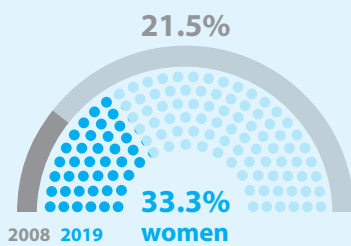


Proportion of women among all elected representatives

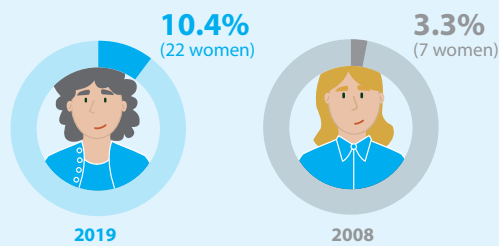
## Sub-national level

Local level: 212 municipalities (*občin*)

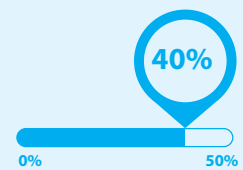
Councillors



Mayors



Quota (minimum % of each sex)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	24.4%	13.3%
Upper house	10%	2.5%

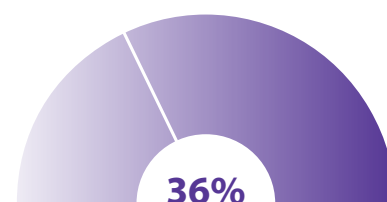
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	4 women MEPs out of 8	2 women MEPs out of 7

# Spain

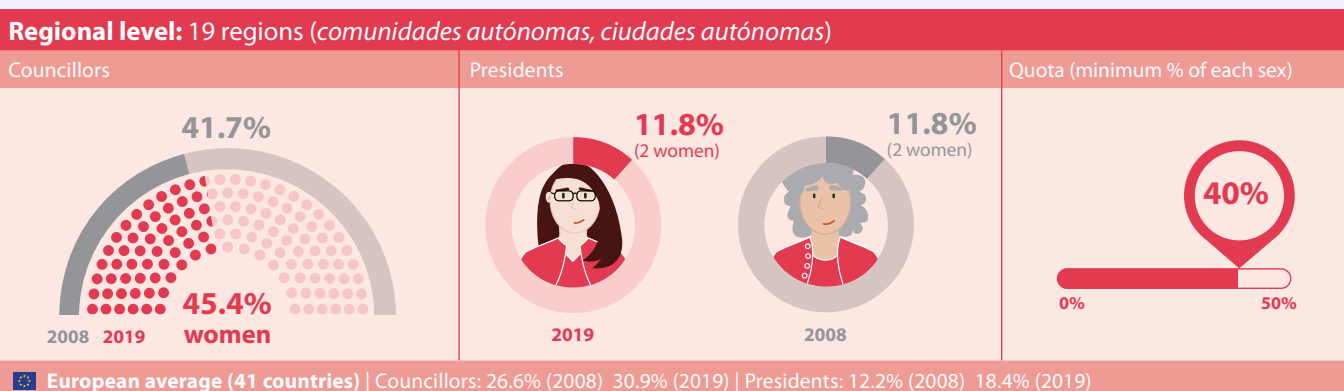
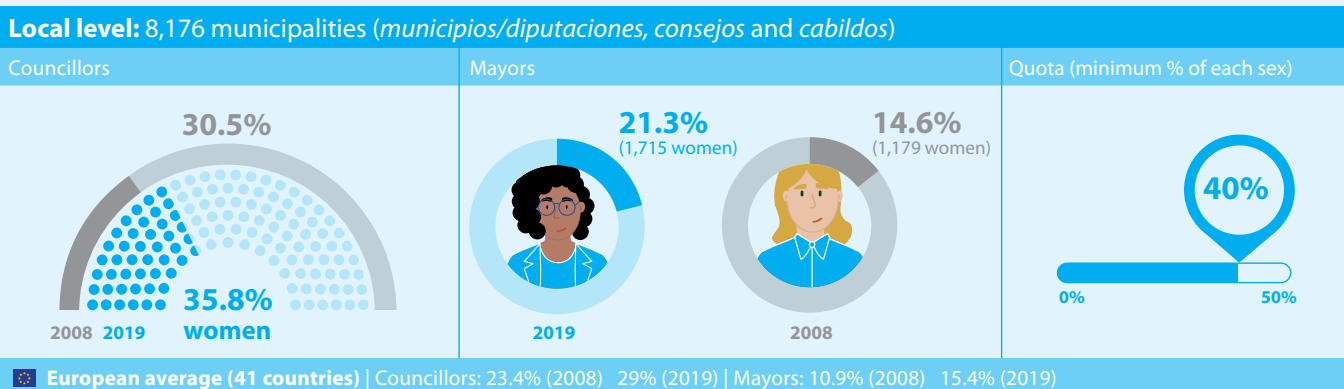
## CEMR members

- Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)
- The Association of Basque Municipalities (EUEDEL)



**36%**  
Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	47.4%	35.7%
Upper house	39.2%	31.6%

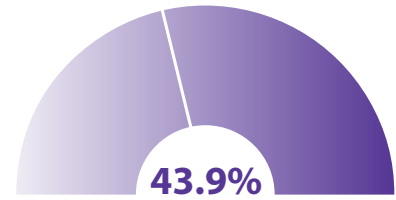
## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	24 women MEPs out of 54	18 women MEPs out of 50

# Sweden

**CEMR member**

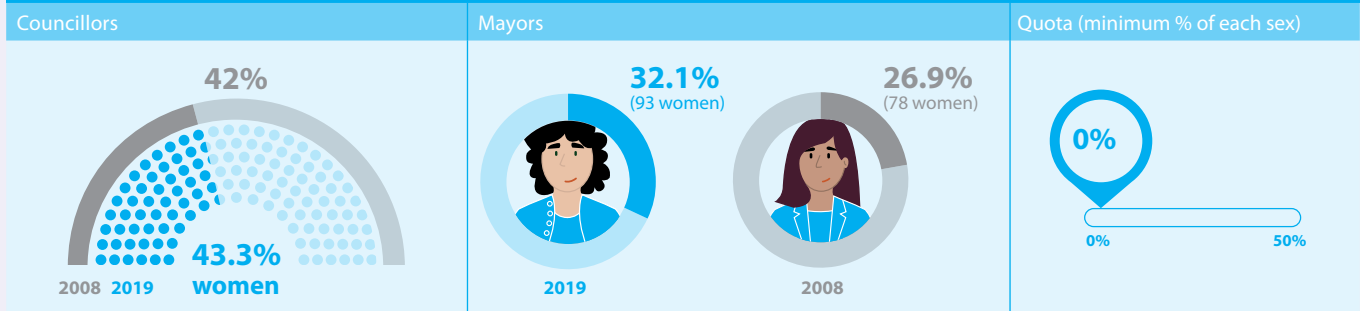
• Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

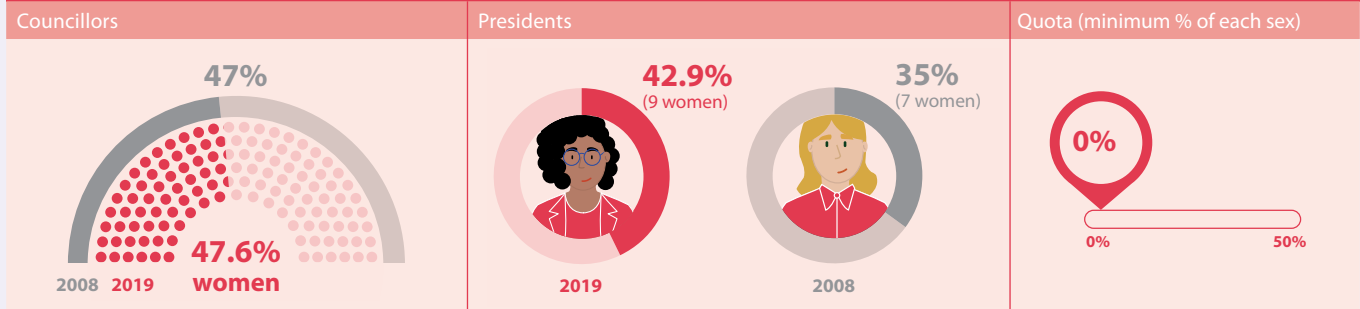
## Sub-national level<sup>1</sup>

### Local level: 290 municipalities (*kommuner*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019) | Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)

### Regional level: 21 regions (*regioner*)



European average (41 countries) | Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019) | Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)

## National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	46.1%	47.3%

## European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	11 women MEPs out of 20	10 women MEPs out of 18

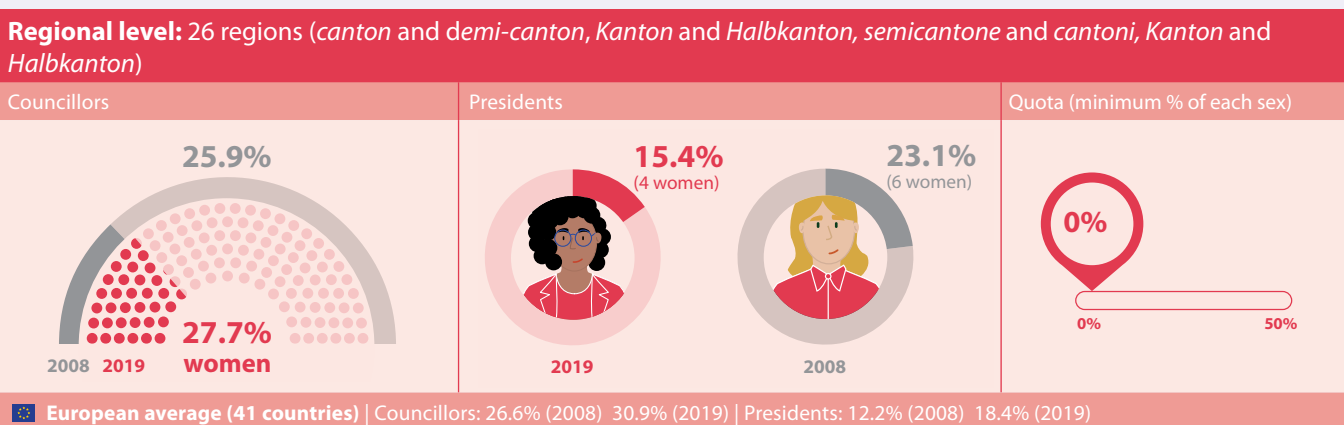
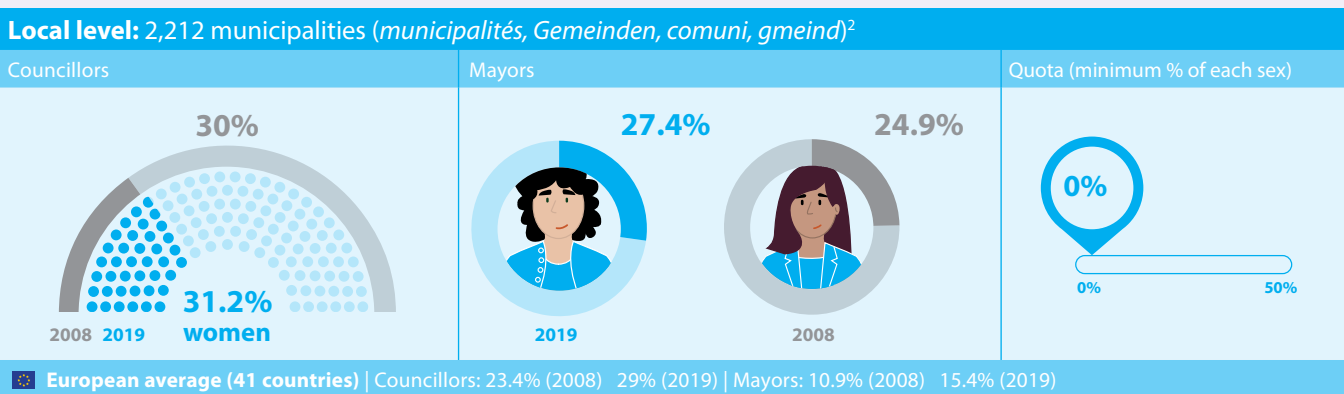
<sup>1</sup> This data was updated after completion of the study.

# Switzerland

## CEMR member

- Swiss Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (ASCCRE)<sup>1</sup>

## Sub-national level



## National level

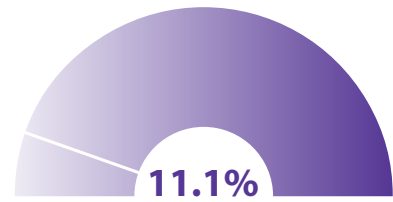
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	32%	29.5%
Upper house	15.2%	21.7%

<sup>1</sup> The Swiss Association of CEMR is no longer an active member, but the data presented in this study were provided by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.  
<sup>2</sup> Figures represent data collected from the 162 “statistical cities”; data for each individual municipality are not available.

# Turkey

**CEMR member**

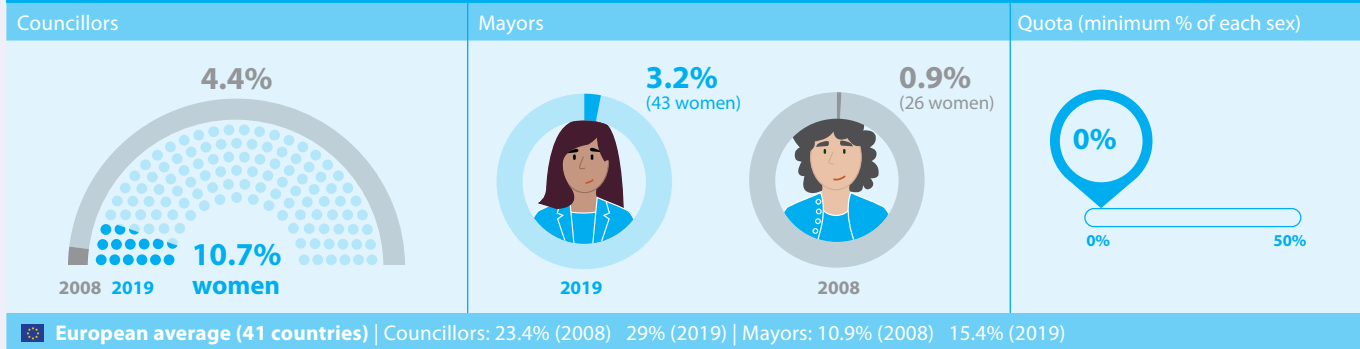
- Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level:** 19,725 municipalities (*köy, belediye and ilözelidaresi*)



## National level

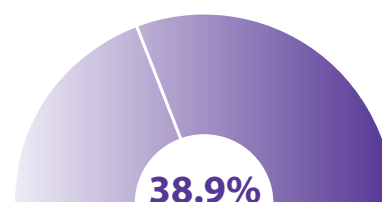
	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	17.3%	8.9%



# Ukraine

**CEMR member**

- Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)



**Proportion of women among all elected representatives**

## Sub-national level

**Local level: 10,855 municipalities (*rada*)**

Councillors	Mayors	Quota (minimum % of each sex)
<p>43% 2008 2019 <b>41.7% women</b></p>	<p><b>23%</b> (2,354 women) 2019</p> <p><b>5.7%</b> 653 women 2008</p>	<p><b>30%</b> 0% 50%</p>
<p><b>European average (41 countries)   Councillors: 23.4% (2008) 29% (2019)   Mayors: 10.9% (2008) 15.4% (2019)</b></p>		

**Regional level: 24 regions + Crimea (*oblasti*)**

Councillors	Presidents <sup>1</sup>	Quota (minimum % of each sex)
<p><b>15.1% women</b> 2019</p>	<p><b>16.7%</b> (4 women) 2019</p>	<p><b>30%</b> 0% 50%</p>
<p><b>European average (41 countries)   Councillors: 26.6% (2008) 30.9% (2019)   Presidents: 12.2% (2008) 18.4% (2019)</b></p>		

## National level

	2019 <sup>2</sup>	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	21.1%	8.4%

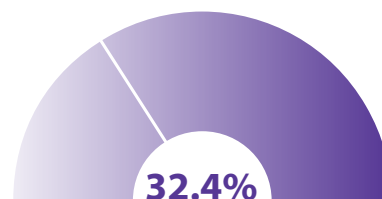
<sup>1</sup> No data available concerning women regional presidents in Ukraine for 2008.

<sup>2</sup> This data was updated after completion of the study, following the elections in July 2019.

# United-Kingdom

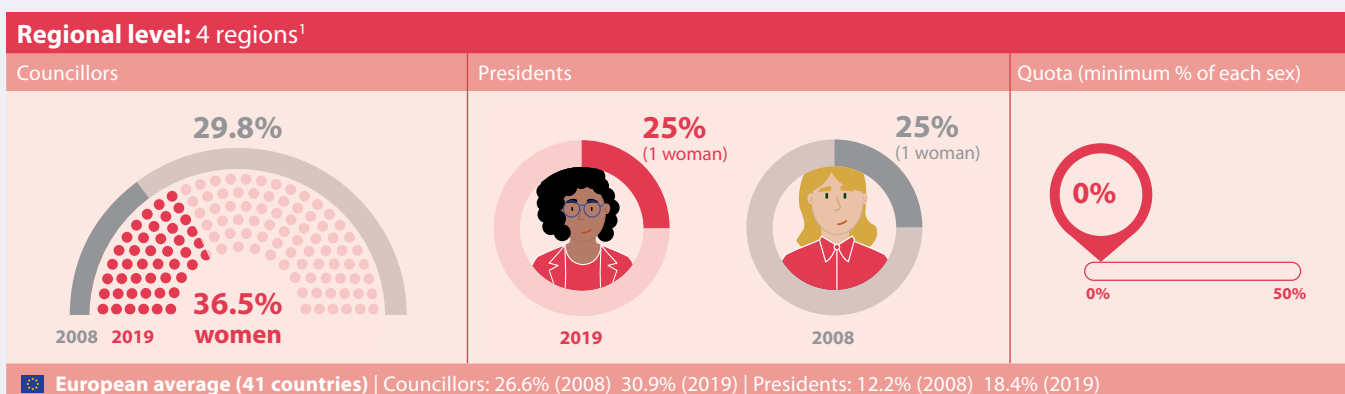
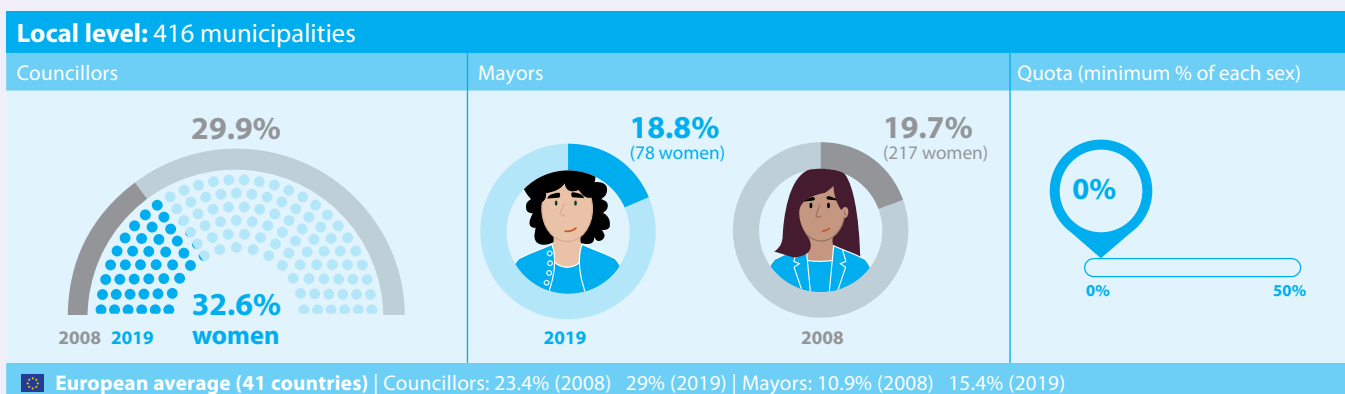
## CEMR members

- Local Government Association (LGA)
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)
- Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)



**32.4%**  
Proportion of women among all elected representatives

## Sub-national level



### National level

	2019	2008
Unicameral/ Lower house	32%	20%
Upper house	26%	19%

### European level

	2019	2009
European Parliament	34 women MEPs out of 73	25 women MEPs out of 72

<sup>1</sup> The regions considered for this study are the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). The regional governance body considered in this study for England was the London Assembly (part of the Greater London Authority).

# List of CEMR Member Associations

<b>Albania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Albanian Association of Municipalities (SHBSH)</li> </ul>	<b>Kosovo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK)</li> </ul>
<b>Austria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austrian Association of Municipalities (GEMEINDEBUND)</li> <li>Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (STÄDTEBUND)</li> </ul>	<b>Latvia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS)</li> </ul>
<b>Belgium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (BRULOCALIS)</li> <li>Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)</li> <li>Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW)</li> </ul>	<b>Lithuania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (LSA)</li> </ul>
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH)</li> <li>Association of Local Authorities of the Republic of Srpska (ALVRS)</li> </ul>	<b>Luxembourg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL)</li> </ul>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)</li> </ul>	<b>Malta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Councils' Association (LCA)</li> </ul>
<b>Croatia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Croatian County Association (HRVZZ)</li> </ul>	<b>Moldova</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM)</li> </ul>
<b>Cyprus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM)</li> </ul>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM)</li> </ul>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR)</li> </ul>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO)</li> <li>Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)</li> </ul>
<b>Denmark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Danish Regions (REGIONER)</li> <li>Local Government Denmark (KL)</li> </ul>	<b>North Macedonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS)</li> </ul>
<b>Estonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (AECM)</li> </ul>	<b>Norway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</li> </ul>
<b>Finland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA)</li> </ul>	<b>Poland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Polish Counties (ZPP)</li> <li>Association of Polish Cities (ZMP)</li> </ul>
<b>France</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE)</li> </ul>	<b>Portugal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)</li> </ul>
<b>Georgia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)</li> </ul>	<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR)</li> <li>Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR)</li> <li>Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR)</li> </ul>
<b>Germany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (RGRE)</li> <li>German County Association (DLT)</li> <li>Association of German Cities (DST)</li> <li>German Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB)</li> </ul>	<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia (SKGO)</li> </ul>
<b>Greece</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)</li> </ul>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS)</li> </ul>
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ)</li> </ul>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (ZMOS)</li> <li>Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS)</li> </ul>
<b>Iceland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (SAMBAND)</li> </ul>	<b>Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)</li> <li>Association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL)</li> </ul>
<b>Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)</li> </ul>	<b>Sweden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)</li> </ul>
<b>Israel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federation of Local Authorities in Israel (MASHAM)</li> </ul>	<b>Turkey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB)</li> </ul>
<b>Italy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)</li> </ul>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)</li> </ul>
		<b>United Kingdom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Association (LGA)</li> <li>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)</li> <li>Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)</li> <li>Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)</li> </ul>

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## Authors

This publication was authored by Sandra Ceciarini (International Advice) and Benoît Chambon, Research and Studies Intern, and coordinated by Nathalie Noupadja, Head of Research and Studies, and Jaimie Just, Policy Officer for Gender Equality and Diversity.

## Contact us

### **About the study**

*Nathalie Noupadja*

Head of Research and Studies

E-mail: [nathalie.noupadja@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:nathalie.noupadja@ccre-cemr.org)

Tel.: +32 2 213 86 92

[www.cemr.eu](http://www.cemr.eu)

### **About CEMR and its gender equality and diversity mission**

*Jaimie Just*

Policy Officer – Gender Equality and Diversity

E-mail: [jaimie.just@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:jaimie.just@ccre-cemr.org)

Tel.: + 32 2 500 05 49

[www.charter-equality.eu](http://www.charter-equality.eu)



**Local & Regional  
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**Observatory**

The European Charter for  
Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

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**100,000** local and regional governments

**16** committees and expert groups

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\*Associate, observer and invited members

## CCRE-CEMR

www.cemr.eu  
twitter.com/ccrecemr  
Tel. +32 2 511 74 77  
info@ccre-cemr.eu

## Observatory

www.charter-equality.eu  
twitter.com/cemr\_equality  
Tel. +32 2 500 05 32  
contact@charter-equality.eu



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