

WOMEN'S LOBBY

Life's Quality and Competitivity
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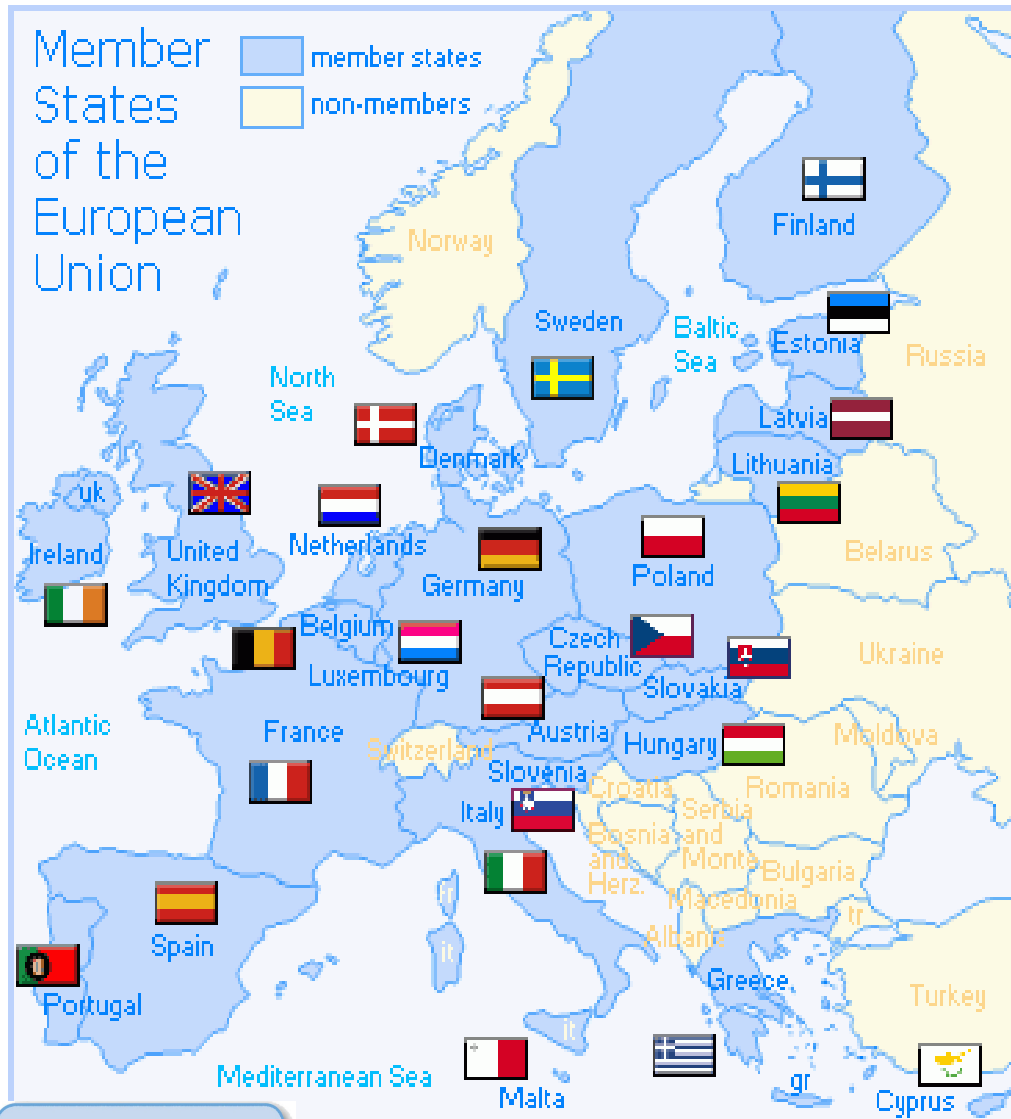




European Women's Lobby

- **Established in 1990**
- **Membership based women's organisation from 28 countries - 25 in the EU and 18 European Wide International organisations**
- **4000 members - largest umbrella organisations of women's associations in the European Union (EU)**

Europe



Ewl

EU25 Member States:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

Candidate Countries:

- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Romania
- Turkey

Application Pending:

- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Population

third largest population bloc in the world after China and India, with more than 450 million inhabitants.

20 official languages

All member states are governed by parliamentary democracy. Seven constitutional monarchies which nevertheless rely on parliamentary government:

1957 six sign the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic community

May 1, 2004 biggest enlargement of the EU since the dawn of European construction

Areas of work of EWL



- **European gender equality policies**
- **Violence against women**
- **Women's human rights**
- **Economic and social justice for women**

- **Women in decision-making**
- **Women's diversity**
- **Women's rights at international level**



EWL Structure

EWL Member organisations

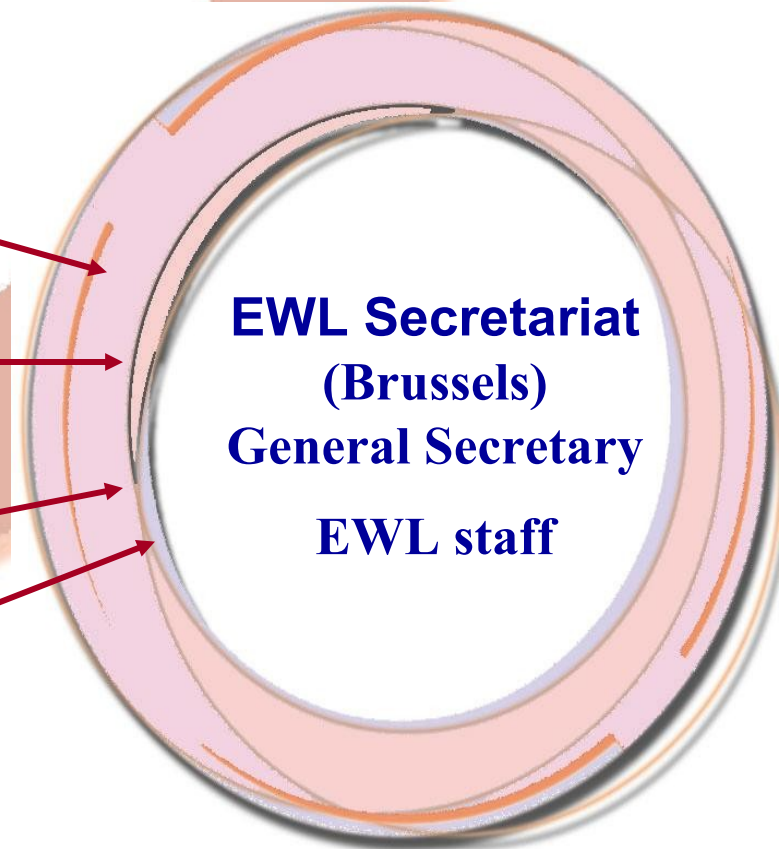
National Co-ordinations
of women's NGOs

European Member organisations

EWL General Assembly
(≈102 delegates)

EWL Board of Administration
(33 elected members)

EWL Executive Committee
1 President, 2 Vice Presidents
1 Treasurer, 3 members



European Women's Lobby

EWL

**EWL Member
organisations**

EWL Board members

**EWL Executive
Committee**

**EWL Secretariat
(Brussels)**

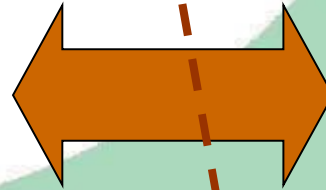
Influence EU Policy

**State governments and
parliaments
EU parliamentarians**

**European Parliament
(Women's Rights'
Committee)**

**EU Commission
(DG: Employment
and Social Affairs)**

**The Council = ministers
from member states**



Life quality and competitiveness to be achieved through gender equality

- Despite great progress in the last century, **real equality between women and men has not been achieved**, even within the European Union
- Equality between women and men is a **prerequisite for life quality and for competitiveness**
- The aim of gender equality is to **eliminate the discrimination that are harmful or that simply limit the freedom** of individuals to choose their life priorities

Why working on gender equality?

- **Gender inequality is a social issue**
- The issue is the sharing of power and resources between two social groups: women and men
- Gender equality and discrimination have a collective, social and political character - must be treated as such
- Discrimination and inequalities = a cost in terms of life quality of individuals with deep consequences for productivity and social well being
- To work for gender equality is an investment

Why working working on gender equality?

Realising gender equality implies action on different fronts and in different areas.

- If women continue to carry most of the burden of the –unpaid- care and householdwork, it will be impossible to reach equality in employment.
- The image of women carried in the media and in advertisement very often suggests that their looks is far more important than what they have to say.
- Violence against women is the first cause of death and injury worldwide, it is very costly for society and not enough is done to counteract this phenomenon.



Gender equality

Equality between women and men is

- **a fundamental right**
- **an integral and inseparable component of human rights**

Human rights of women are

- **inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights**

Human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health

Can we quality
and competitiveness?

Quality and competitiveness are complementary concepts
Quality is measurable

Quality includes
Quality is essential for competitiveness

- The “competitiveness model” is getting stronger today, but is it fully compatible with the search for higher life quality and the realisation of the compatibility between quality and competitiveness?

The flexicurity model, combining life quality and competitiveness?

- At EU level and in all countries, introduction of the **flexicurity model** in employment: combining flexibility for more competitiveness and security
- While the discourse combines the 2 aspects, in practice, the **competitiveness model dominates**
- Could have **negative impact on women's employment and life quality** given that women are often employed in atypical work that lacks a decent level of security

Impact of gender inequality on quality of life – Care issues (1)

- Women have careers, jobs, professional responsibilities - at the same time women continue to be responsible for the care of children and dependents, housework = **"double life burden"** for women
- **Lack of real choice** for women to reconcile work and family life
- **Heavy consequences of care responsibilities on the involvement of women in paid work** (gender paid gap, imposed part time work, part time pensions etc)

Impact of gender inequality on quality of life – Care issues (2)

- **Gender stereotypes** reinforce the division of responsibilities and labour between women and men, both at home, at work and in society.
- **Impact on life quality for women**= time gap: counting unpaid work, women working part time work more than men in full time employment + impact on women's health
- **Men not involved in care issues**, stereotypes about full time employment and taking leave.

The impact of violence against women on life quality and productivity

- VAW= an expression of male domination and inequality between women and men
- **VAW=first cause of death of women** worldwide, on average, at least 1 in 3 women is subjected to intimate partner violence
- **Costs:** Sweden = **320 million euro/ year** (study 2006), UK =600 euro/year/inhabitant (study 2004)
- **VAW= before all a human's rights problem seriously impacting on the life of victims but also economic aspect.**

Tools for achieving competitiveness and life quality: parity democracy

- **Power sharing**
- **Participation on an equal basis - 50/50**
- **Deconstruct the white male norm**
- **Reconstruct a multifaceted female norm**

A tool for:

- **Full and real democracy including all citizens**
- **Integrating women's voice and needs in decision and policy making.**

Tools for achieving competitiveness and life quality: Gender mainstreaming (1)

- Relatively **young concept** – adopted at the 4th World Conference on Women – Beijing Platform for Action – 1995
- Integrated into **EU texts**: Treaty of Amsterdam – Article 3; NAPS for employment; new regulations structural funds; Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010); EU Presidencies mainstreamed gender into different Council meetings (education, internal market, research and development)
- A **strategy** that turns attention to the **systems and structures that create and maintain inequalities between women and men** and actively seeks to make a difference in terms of real change
- Important to maintain a **dual strategy**: specific actions + gender mainstreaming
- A **process** with the ultimate outcome of equality between women and men in all areas of life

Tools for achieving competitiveness and life quality: Gender mainstreaming (2)

- **A strategy that turns attention to the systems and structures that create and maintain inequalities between women and men and actively seeks to make a difference**
- **A tool that could allow a higher quality of life, by integrating a gender equality aspect in all policies = deconstructing existing assumptions and structures that maintain obstacles for a full and equal participation of women and men in all aspects of life in the public and the private domain**

Gender mainstreaming

Requires:

Political Willingness

Several sets of actors

Many levels of decision-making

Public and private sectors

Several areas of relevance to prioritise

Complete change of focus for decision-making –
participatory

Gender mainstreaming

Examples

- Women still do on average **2/3 of the housework**, even if they also have a job outside the house;

GM approach

- good quality care services that are accessible and affordable;
- measures to encourage men to engage in unpaid work/care of family members and dependants
- Women **earn only 76%** of men's gross hourly pay (EU average) for the same job

GM approach – definition of working patterns women and men/ titles/classification

- Men hold **76% of parliamentary** seats in the EU;

GM approach – gender parity on election lists; structural barriers to women's participation

Closing remarks

- **Inequalities between women and men are costly for individuals and for society as a whole
= missing opportunities, health costs, economic costs**
- **While the political discourse combines striving for improving life quality for all, the practice much focuses on competitiveness with detrimental to women**
- **Tools / policies as parity democracy or gender mainstreaming help striking a better balance**
- **Current environmental challenges should also force us to think more in terms of quality of life**

To invest in equality between women and men will increase life's Quality and contribute to Competitivity

www.womenlobby.org