



**Empowering Women and Girls through Education
Interparliamentary Committee Meeting
5 March, 09.00 - 12.30**

Debate

**State of Play
Contributions from National Parliaments**



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1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

According to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics:

- In the year 2001 the share of illiteracy among women was 2.8, while 2011. it was 1.3% (more than halved).
- The share of women with primary education or less in 2001 was 48.3%, while the year 2011 was 37.2%.
- The share of women with secondary education increased from 40.5% in 2001 to 45.9% in 2011.
- The share of highly educated among women increased from 11.2% in 2001 to 16.7% in 2011.
- The proportion of women among the students enrolled in institutions of higher education increased from 52.5% (academic year 2000/2001) to 56.5% in the academic year 2012/2013.
- Among graduates in the year 2000 were 55.6% of women, while in 2012 the share of women was 59.5%.
- Among the Master of Science in 2012 the share of women was 58.2%, while in 2000 this share was 46.2%.
- Among PhDs 2012, the share of women was 54.6% in contrast to 2000, when it was 46.8%.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

In the Republic of Croatia there is no gender gap when it comes to access to education and the level of illiteracy is negligible. In the age group from 15 to 24, it amounts to approximately 0.35%. The proportion of people who drop out of school and have no elementary school education is also falling continually, and in the general population it amounts to about 3.8%, with a more pronounced decreasing trend in the female population. The figures indicate the equal representation of girl and boy pupils in elementary and secondary schools, whilst at enrolment in university, there are still more girls. There are differences, however, in the selection of secondary schools and universities, which reflects the still present division of labour into male and female occupations.

In the Republic of Croatia, as in other European countries, there is a continually increasing trend in the education of women. The proportion of women who enrol (56.8%) and those who complete vocational and university studies (59.5%) is noticeably higher than the proportion of men in the total number of enrolled students and graduates from institutions of higher education. However, although women account for the majority of graduates, the selection of university still reflects the

existing division into male and female professions. Thus, women are still under-represented in university courses of computer science (15%), engineering (27%), architecture and civil engineering (37%), and men are extremely under-represented in studies related to the area of education (8.1%). However, the total proportion of women amongst graduates in the area of MST (mathematics, science and technology) in the Republic of Croatia is at 33.2%. The proportion of women amongst those with a master's degree is growing continuously, and in 2011 was at 56.9%, and in 2012 at 58.2%. The proportion of women with a doctoral degree is also increasing, and between 2010 and 2012 it rose by 4% (51% to 55%). In research and development jobs, the proportion of women is rising. Thus, in 2012, it stood at 50.6%, and there were 47.9% women with the status of researcher.

The proportion of men employed in the education system is falling, whilst the highest number relates to managerial and administrative functions. In 52 institutions in the higher education system, among 9 rectors only one is a woman, and out of 43 deans, 9 are women (20.9%). On the other hand, it is important to point out that of the 40 most important institutions in the science system, 11 are led by women (28%).

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

The changes to the legislative framework in the past few years have brought about progress in this area. So, for example, the aims of education and training in the Primary and Secondary Education Act of 2010, are defined in line with equality principles. The National Curriculum Framework for Pre-school Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education of July 2010 points out the importance of a non-discriminating approach in teaching plans and programmes and the elimination of inequality and prejudice. Pursuant to the National Framework Curriculum for Pre-school Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education inter-subject topics, interdisciplinary content and modules have been introduced, of which the following should be emphasized: Education and Training for Gender Equality. Extra-curricular education programmes for elementary and secondary schools with topics from the field of gender equality are mainly run in cooperation with NGOs whose programmes and projects are financially supported by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. The adoption of the new Elementary and Secondary School Textbooks Act in 2010 significantly improved the quality of textbooks and supplementary teaching materials, and the new Textbook Standards of 2013 prescribe that textbooks must "prepare both sexes for effective and equal participation in all areas of life" and "promote gender equality in an appropriate manner, using in equal proportions illustrations of characters of both genders, and using nouns of both grammatical genders, especially in naming professional qualifications, occupations and professions" Gender-sensitive linguistic standards are compulsory for the content of certificates and educational documents, as regulated by the Ordinance on the Content and Format of Grade Certificates and Other Public Documents and Educational Documents and Records in School Institutions.

A major step forward in the quality of comprehensive education for gender equality took place through the Curriculum of Civic Education and Training, because it defined for the first time the outcomes which are to be developed in this field for pupils at all levels of education, and which will contribute to raising awareness about stereotypes and prejudice in human relationships, and to a critical analysis of media content.

Since 2012, training has been conducted of teaching staff in the Health Education Curriculum. In the part relating to gender equality, emphasis is placed on the mental, sexual and physical health of pupils, the prevention of peer violence, respect for differences and responsible sexual behaviour and a healthy lifestyle.

The National Policy for Gender Equality 2011-2015 contains three aims in the critical area of Gender Sensitive Education. The first concerns the elimination of gender stereotypes, the second the education of teaching staff in gender equality, and the third the attainment of gender balance in the selection of occupations.

Scholarships are always equally available to all students, and every year the number of female students receiving scholarships rises. In 2009 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports awarded 63.7% of a total of 2422 scholarships to female students, and in 2013 a total of 2133 scholarships; 1540 or 72.2% were awarded to female students.

Progress in the education and training system is also visible in the use of gender neutral or gender sensitive language, and in the removal of stereotypes from texts or graphic and art illustrations.

In order to interest the entire population of pupils in traditional "male occupations, sought after on the labour market", in 2010 a promotion of grammar (gymnasia) secondary schools specialising in science or mathematics was conducted in the seventh and eighth grades of elementary schools through educational campaigns, encouraging interest in studying mathematics, natural and technical sciences, and encouraging optional inter-subject thematic lessons in the field of natural science.

By the Decision on Elements and Criteria for the Selection of Candidates for Enrolment in Secondary Schools in the 2012/2013 Academic Year the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for the first time applied special measures for enrolment in vocational schools, whereby the under-represented gender was given additional points needed for enrolment.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Despite legislation and the current strategies, traditional forms of behaviour and stereotypes are still present, which influence the choice of secondary school and (as already been said) which reflects the still present division of labour into male and female occupations.

That gender asymmetry in the labour market leads to the gender pay gap.

The process of introducing gender sensitive education at all levels, while eliminating gender stereotypes, and the systematic training of teaching staff in gender equality remains a national priority.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

As mentioned in the Cyprus National Report of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Four World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015:

Education is free from the age 5 8/12 - 18 (i.e. primary education and secondary – Gymnasium and Lyceum) and compulsory from the age of 5 8/12 until the age of 15 (i.e. primary education and secondary at Gymnasium level). So, there is allegedly equal access to education while there are over 40 State Institutes for Further Education. During 2011-2012, the number of Greek Cypriot girls in primary school was 20.384/42.391 (48%) and of Turkish Cypriot girls 36/90 (40%). The number of Greek Cypriot girls in secondary school was 24.384/46.443 (52.5%) and of Turkish Cypriot girls 10/23 (43%). The number of girls in technical school was 645/4088 (15.7%). With regard to higher education, the number of girls at University level (Bachelor, Master and PhD level) enrolled in Cyprus and abroad, including Cypriot Turkish speaking women and women with disabilities, for the academic year 2010-2011 was 25.939 (58%).

With regard to higher education, the number of women participating in tertiary education is increasing over time with women often outperforming men academically. Women seem to prefer to study courses in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences. The research project titled 'The gendered map of Cyprus tertiary education' (Koutselini, 2009-2011) notes among others that for the years 1992-2011, the mean number of female students in public and private institutions of tertiary education was higher, compared to that of male students. At both undergraduate and Master's level the mean number of women exceeded the mean number of men for the years 2005 - 2011, while at a PhD level the mean number of men was higher than that of women. Although there are fewer female students at the PhD level, as well as in competitive research institutions, the proportion of women researchers with a post-graduate degree increased over the time period 2006 – 2010. In addition, it seems that the proportion of women researchers in the fields of engineering and technology as well as medical sciences has increased in the last few years. In other fields, such as the natural sciences and the social sciences, the proportions of women remain relatively constant over time. For the period 1994 to 2011, the percentages of women students were higher in the sectors of Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, Philosophy, Health, Communication and the Arts in both public and private universities of Cyprus. The percentage of male students was higher in Engineering and Information Technologies.

Therefore, more needs to be done in order to break down gender role stereotypes and the preconceptions that women are only fit for specific types of jobs. To this end, the Cyprus Government has set up programmes geared towards attracting more women into the fields of science and technology, which are mostly dominated by men. Attempts have also been made to change social attitudes and perceptions related to gender-specific jobs, such as teaching in primary education. This is indeed one of the greatest challenges.

With regard to the representation of women in the sector of education, a woman was appointed as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2004. At present, the General

Director of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Acting Director of the Centre for Educational Research and Assessment, the Director of the Centre of Scientific Research and the Director of Secondary Education, are women, notwithstanding the fact that in 2011/12 approximately 83% of the teaching personnel at each level of education (pre-primary, primary and secondary) were women. Nevertheless, there is still continued gender-specific segmentation in educational subjects and a low representation of women in decision-making positions, including positions in tertiary education. The project 'The gendered map of Cyprus tertiary education' (Koutselini, 2009-2011) outlines that women comprise a minority in Cyprus Tertiary Education, as their number is smaller than that of men in all academic positions (professors: 22 women, 121 men; associate professors: 48 women, 138 men), while, though, women are the majority in the teaching assistant positions. During 2011/12 40.5% of the teaching and management personnel in tertiary education were women, while 49.5% were men.

With regard to activities on lifelong education and gender issues in a wider sense, the University of Cyprus as well as some private universities in Cyprus have very good work to exhibit: (a) The University of Cyprus has established a Centre for Gender Studies and a UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as of 2010 with a focus on research and training activities on gender issues and education with the establishment of a new Gender Studies postgraduate programme offered both in Greek and English, (b) The new Gender Studies postgraduate programme of the University of Cyprus that received its first students in the Fall semester of 2012, is currently organizing a series of public events which aim to intervene in the public sphere and introduce the dimensions of gender equality in issues of public health and intimate citizenship, (c) The University of Nicosia, which has a strong record of researching gender issues, such as 'Women Managers', 'Women Entrepreneurs', 'Women in the Tourist Industry', 'Women in Conflict', keeps supporting the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, which is an NGO aimed at making recommendations on policy and practices on gender issues as well as increasing awareness on gender issues in Cyprus civil society, (d) The Open University of Cyprus includes a gender perspective in its research projects while it provides the opportunity to women to continue their studies through distance learning, contributing in this way to the promotion of reconciliation between family and career, and (e) The Frederick University has established a committee for promoting an action plan on gender equality as well as a scientific committee on gender issues. One of the actions promoted was a conference on combating trafficking that took place in February 2014.

Furthermore, especially with regard to the aiming at the development of non-discriminatory education and training, it is worth mentioning that women in prison also receive education and training. Prison administration is continuously trying to increase the range of activities for inmates, such as various educational programmes, workshops and vocational training. In this way, female inmates have the opportunity to receive certificates in order to be able to work in relevant areas after their release. During the last two years under review, the school programmes have been enriched according to the preferences of detainees. As a result, the number of detainees attending school courses has been increased and therefore the prisoners are occupied for many hours of the day. Moreover, European programmes like FEFI (Formal Education for Female Inmates 2013-2015), and LeaP (Learning in Prison 2010-2012) came along to increase the chances for education and training within the prison. Yet, in August 2013, the prisons' department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, has prepared a special vocational programme for all the prisoners (men and women).

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The ongoing economic crisis is undermining continuous and quality education for girls and women. Scarcer economic resources have resulted in a significant drop in families' disposable income and hence less money for extracurricular education and/or academic activities. In some cases, and particularly for vulnerable groups of the population including immigrants or families with disabilities or for families living beneath the poverty line, children, and most often girls may drop out of school to take care of household chores and/ or the care of siblings. Unemployment has also had a very negative effect on continuous and quality education. In the absence of the prospect of a decent job, young people may lose their incentive to continue their education and/or academic career.

Another identifiable obstacle is the gap between acquired academic skills and knowledge and the needs of the labour market. In some countries severely hit by the economic crisis, the "brain drain" phenomenon has grown and many of the brightest and most intuitive minds have emigrated to other countries in search of better career prospects. This has had a very negative impact on tertiary education in particular, which is encountering tremendous difficulty in attracting high caliber and qualified academic staff in Universities. Scarcer resources have also meant less investment in education, in itself a negative development.

Gender segmentation in the labour market is also a problem as regards continuous and quality education. Gender mainstreaming in all segments of the market should be more vigorously pursued as the perception that certain jobs pertain to one sex rather than the other may discourage young people from pursuing an acquired skill or talent in the fear that they will be stigmatized in their work environment or be unable to live up to expectations.

Finally, the degree of involvement of relevant social partners, local and regional authorities, employers' federations and associations and civil society in general, is crucial in the formulation and implementation of gender mainstreaming in education and needs to be further promoted.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

As mentioned in the "Compilation of good practices to promote an education free from gender stereotypes and identifying ways to implement the measures which are included in the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education", (printed by the Council of Europe, 2014 pgs. 36-38), the following are actions implemented in Cyprus for further empowering of women and girls through education:

The Ministry of Education and Culture (M.O.E.C) has formed an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from all the Ministry's departments and services. This Committee oversees and coordinates all gender equality issues related to actions taken by the M.O.E.C. In order to bring the gender mainstreaming strategy into educational policies and schools, the Committee resulted to the development of an Action Plan which promotes gender equality (2014-2017). This action plan includes actions on gender equality awareness based on three objectives:

1. Inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of our educational system
2. Inclusion of the principle of gender equality in matters relating to teacher in-service training and
3. The empowerment of the family in promoting gender equality.

Examples of the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of our educational system are:

- The development of actions targeting all forms of stereotyping, and in particular that of eliminating the gap between men and women, falls within the framework of promoting this objective. The elimination of stereotypes is considered a key pillar of the elements and actions that characterize the active citizen. Setting active citizenship with emphasis on social solidarity and elimination of stereotypes in the educational process as one of the objectives of the school year 2013 – 2014 (M.O.E.C.)
- Launching a webpage dedicated to Gender Equality (Pedagogical Institute), which includes useful information, bibliography and material that teachers can use to ensure equal opportunities of both genders and promote gender mainstreaming in the learning process: http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=910&Itemid=383&lang=el
- Preventing and combating violence and delinquency in school and in the family (Department of Primary Education, General Secondary Education, Educational Psychology Service).
- The Pedagogical Institute in collaboration with the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training and the Directorates of Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, organized an Essay Contest about Gender Equality between the students of the 11th grade (school year 2013-2014).
- For the school year 2014-2015, the Pedagogical Institute in collaboration with the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training are organizing a Drawing Contest in Primary Education, titled “*All professions are for all, women and men*”, calling students and teachers to discuss and challenge, through paintings, existing gender stereotypes related to career decisions and ideas about gender and the workplace.
- Conducting surveys on the needs and aspirations of women of ‘diverse’ cultural backgrounds and of their children and creating educational/professional structures aimed at providing language skills and professional orientation (Pedagogical Institute, State Institutes of Further Education, Secondary General Education).
- Most research projects, concerning students and teachers in all levels of education, are collecting and processing statistical data broken down by gender (Ministry of Education and Culture, Pedagogical Institute, Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation).
- Implementing programmes in schools with the aim of promoting gender equality and respect among all children in class, irrespective of their background or gender (Educational Psychology Service).
- In order to promote discussion of educational and career choices in the classroom, to give girls and boys a better idea of the openings available in various sectors, particularly in occupations dominated by one sex, to encourage increased female participation in technical fields and the use of new technologies and to reshape Secondary Technical and Vocational Education with the aim of attracting female participation, special programmes are implemented (Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance and M.O.E.C. – Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Career Counselling and Educational Services).

In-service training includes the promotion of awareness-raising and training on gender equality, the reflection of the educators' own identity, beliefs, values, prejudices, expectations, attitudes and representations of femininity/masculinity, as well as their teaching practice. It also aims to bring equality, diversity and the gender perspective into various areas. Examples of the inclusion of the principle of gender equality in matters relating to teacher in-service training and the empowerment of the family in promoting gender equality are:

- Training courses aiming to raise awareness on gender issues related to the gap between men and women in labour (1 - 3 days trainings) targeting to all teachers in Primary and Secondary Education, all career counsellors in Secondary Education and all inspectors in Primary and Secondary Education and parents (collaboration of the Pedagogical Institute, the Career Counselling and Educational Services of M.O.E.C and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance).
- Training of teachers and parents on issues related to active citizenship, multiculturalism, social inclusion/exclusion, identities and relationships between girls and boys, gender equality awareness through school based training seminars and programmes (Pedagogical Institute).
- Workshops for teachers (Primary and Secondary Education) organized by the Pedagogical Institute and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS).
- In-service training of teachers on issues related to prevention and combating delinquency (Department of Primary Education, Department of Secondary General Education, Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, the Pedagogical Institute).
- Organizing conferences/seminars on gender issues for teachers of all levels (Pedagogical Institute).
- Workshops for teachers and students aiming at the promotion of equality and inclusion (Career Counselling and Educational Services).

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Gender parity in education and the delivery of quality education is of primary concern for the House of Representatives. The House closely monitors the Government's contractual obligations through the exercise of parliamentary scrutiny in the two relevant Standing Committees, namely the House Standing Committee on Education and the House Standing Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities. Both these Committees deal with relevant gender-related issues and have amended legislation in line with the *acquis communautaire*, so as to improve the existing legal framework, whenever deemed necessary. This is work in constant progress and legislation enacted in these Committees has always reflected society's evolving needs, priorities and obligations.

Moreover, the House is also evaluating the Education Reform actually being pursued in the school system, in terms of the new material and content taught, but also with respect to the methodology applied. This Reform also encompasses specific measures within the school environment for the empowerment of girls and the gradual change of mentalities with respect to gender stereotyping.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

When we discuss the gender issue in education in Estonia, then we usually talk about problems with boys. Over the past ten years, the share of girls at different educational levels has been stable. They participate in education for longer and drop out more rarely than boys do. E.g., as compared to girls, twice more boys remain with basic education. The OECD wrote in its EAG2014 country note: "Women's and men's tertiary attainments differ markedly however: 45% of 25-64 year-old women had attained tertiary education, against an OECD average of 34%, while men's attainment was 28%, slightly below the OECD average of 30%". The education level of girls is rising constantly and differences with the education level of boys are increasing. Differences emerge in tertiary education. In higher education, the proportion of female students is 58 per cent, in Master's study, even 66 per cent. Therefore, in Estonia, possibilities to raise the education level of boys are sought more.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The main obstacles probably come from traditional values and gender-roles that see men and women in specific roles and jobs in the society. Thus, although women outperform men in their educational attainment in Estonia, the gender salary gap (in favour of men) is one of the highest in the OECD and the EU which, among other things, is probably related to the division of study fields and jobs as "those suitable for men and those for women".

The study process and teaching methods in general education are not sufficiently manageable and attractive for boys, which is why the dropout of boys increases in tertiary education both in terms of proportion and absolute figures.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

As regards girls, their smaller interest in specialties in natural and exact sciences stands out. 50% of male upper secondary school graduates accepted to the first academic level in the same academic year chose a specialty in natural and exact sciences while only 17.6 % of female upper secondary school graduates chose a specialty in natural and exact sciences. Through business study that has been introduced into the curricula of upper secondary schools, it is possible to expand the specialty choices of girls and their opportunities for equal competition in the labour market.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

The challenge of gender division in different fields remains a challenge. One indirect measure is to attract more male teachers to lower and upper secondary school where the share of female teachers is currently one of the highest in the EU and the OECD.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

In Finland the compulsory education covers 7 – 16 years old children and all Finnish girls go to school. Women are well-educated. In 2013 there were 31.3 % of men aged 15 years or older and 29.9 % of women aged 15 or older without any post-basic education degree. 70.1 % of women and 68.7 % of men had completed a degree after basic education. Ten years earlier, in 2003, the situation was different: at that time 62.0 % of men had a degree in comparison with 61.7 % of women. In ten years there has been a growth of 8.4 percentage points in the share of women aged 15 or older having some post-basic education degree. Currently there are in Finland more women than men who have completed a degree.

Without secondary education degree 2012:

20-24 years old: women 17% men 21%

25-29 years old: women 13% men 20%

30-34 years old: women 11% men 18%

Secondary education degree, without higher education degree:

20-24 years old: women 74% men 77%

25-29 years old: women 47% men 57%

30-34 years old: women 39% men 49%

Higher education degree:

20-24 years old: women 9% men 2%

25-29 years old: women 40% men 23%

30-34 years old: women 50% men 33%.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The main remedies should be investing in education, making education accessible to all children and adults regardless of their background and fighting discrimination and fostering equality and diversity in education. Each person should be able to fulfil his/her full potential as a learner and as a human being.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Although especially young women are highly educated in Finland, the educational fields are strongly divided into women's and men's fields. Over 76 % of those with education of technology and

transport sector education (completed university degrees) were men in 2012, while 72 % of those with education of health and social services sector were women. Also the humanities and education fields are female-dominated with a share of about 80 %.

Extensive renewal projects to promote gender equality are currently under way in the area of education and research policy. These include a set of measures to promote equality in education and a renewal of the national core curriculum. The set of measures to promote equality in education includes actions aimed to reduce horizontal segregation between fields of education and, more generally, to increase gender-awareness in education.

The National Board of Education decided upon a new national Core Curriculum for Basic Education in 2014. The new core curriculum states that basic education is gender conscious and thrives to equality of men and women, understanding of diversity of gender, questioning gender normativity and the traditional gender-based segregation of occupations and sectors. However gender stereotypes and segregation remains the biggest topic in Finland concerning equality.

The educational level of women is higher than that of men. However, this has not reduced the pay gap in the same proportion. The gender pay gap is partly related to the gender-based segregation of occupations and sectors. Pays and salaries in female-dominated branches and jobs are lower than those in male-dominated branches and jobs.

The Government and the central labour market organizations have taken on a commitment to promote equal pay. The tripartite Equal Pay Programme for 2006 – 2015 aims to reduce the gender pay gap approximately to 15 % by the year 2015 and to implement the principle of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value. The Programme includes actions on equality planning and pay surveys, de-segregation, the development of pay systems, measures to support women's careers, and calls for the social partners to establish agreements to reduce the pay gap. Also the reconciliation work and family responsibilities is an important action.

In 2010 an evaluation was carried out of the success and effectiveness of the Equal Pay Programme. According to the evaluation, the pay gap has narrowed; however, the progress has not been fast enough.

- 1** In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?
- 2** Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?
- 3** Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?
- 4** What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

- Questions 1 and 4

The 'Gender and Development Strategy 2013-2017' takes stock of France's efforts to promote education and training for girls and sets out the ends and the means to be tackled in the period up to 2017 in order to progress in that direction. This important document, in English, is available here: www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/Strategie_genre_GB_BDcle42f119.pdf

- Question 2

Two very interesting reports have considered the long-lived stereotypes about girls as compared with boys, these being cultural obstacles to true equality.

The first report, produced by the Commissariat général à la prospective (Forward Planning Commission), can be accessed via the following link: www.strategie.gouv.fr/sites/strategie.gouv.fr/files/archives/CGSP_Stereotypes_filles_garcons_web.pdf

The second of these reports is by the High Council for Gender Equality and can be accessed via this link: www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_hce2014-1020-ster-013.pdf

- Question 3

The French Ministry of Education has embarked on ground-breaking measures to combat inequalities, employing a variety of means including the experimental 'Equality ABCDs' and the Action Plan for equality between girls and boys at school. The latter is available here: www.femmes.gouv.fr/le-plan-daction-pour-legalite-entre-les-filles-et-les-garcons-a-lecole/

Germany
Bundestag

By: *Dr. Claudia Lücking-Michel*
Member of the Committee of Education, Research and Technology Assessment

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

- In Germany, equal access to primary, secondary and tertiary education for both sexes has already been provided during the last decades, and numbers show: girls and women today are even more successful than boys and men in school graduation as well as passing the first degree of higher education.
- Related to the Platform of Action on “Education and Training of Women”, the focus of empowering German women lies in increasing their share of leading positions in Academia as well as economy.
- Women in Academia: There are more women than ever working as professors at German institutions of higher education. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, around 10,648 women were employed as teachers and researchers in 2013. The number of women chairholders has increased from 8 to 19 per cent since 1995, although the numbers vary considerably between individual disciplines: in linguistic and cultural studies, around 30 per cent of professors are women. In engineering, women make up only around 9 per cent of professorships, and around 12 per cent in mathematic/natural sciences.
- Women in Economy: Women are underrepresented in leading positions of German companies. The proportion of men in German boardrooms is still at over 80 percent. According to the DIW economic think-tank, women occupy just 7 percent of executive board seats among the 30 largest companies on Germany's blue-chip DAX index.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

- It is true that worldwide, equal access to primary education for children of both sexes has been improved and that the share of children with primary education has risen, so that MDG 2 has been formally achieved.
- However, MDG 2 did neither cover the quality of primary education nor mention secondary education at all.
- Classes are often crowded, there is a lack of teachers and teaching material, and poor health and nutrition also are a crucial factor prohibiting successful education.
- Drop out rates in secondary education are still high, especially with girls and women who often abandon school for housework or unwanted pregnancy.
- According to the World Bank, while primary completion rate in low & middle income

countries has augmented to 91.1 % in 2012 (WDI, SE.PRM.CMPT.ZS), secondary school enrolment in low & middle income countries has only risen from 47 % in 1999 to 61% in 2012 (WDI, SE.SEC.NENR). This is far too little.

- Accordingly, Post-2015-SDG should not remain restricted to primary education and should define criteria for quality education for the primary and secondary level. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals suggested as Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This goal should even be expanded and include better technical vocational training in order to help bringing people into jobs.
- German development cooperation should enhance the use of vocational training and the dual education system as a means of cooperation.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

- **Women in Academia:** In order to increase the number of women professors at German institutions of higher education, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research together with the Länder started the Programme for Women Professors in 2007. The continuation of the programme was agreed upon in 2012, both rounds with a budget of 150 million euros. On the basis of a positive appraisal of their equality policies, universities and advanced technical and artistic colleges have the opportunity to receive funding for up to three tenure-track W2 and W3 professorships for women.
- The German Government has initiated other measures to improve equal opportunities at institutions of higher education as well as research institutes outside of higher education. Improvement of equal opportunities has been included as a central goal of all large-scale initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research: the Initiative for Excellence, the Higher Education Pact 2020, and the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation.
- A special focus lies on recruiting young women for STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) studies and jobs. Here, the National Pact for Women in STEM, started in 2008 as a joint initiative of the Federal Government and several partners from economy, media and science, aims at increasing young women's interest in scientific and technical degree courses and attracting female university graduates into careers in business. This has already led to notable success: In 2012, the number of female first-year students in STEM has risen by 57 percent compared to 2008.
- **Women in Economy:** The current grand coalition recently agreed to a compulsory gender quota in the non-executive boards of at least 108 listed German companies. A minimum of 30 percent of the positions in those boards must be held by women, from 2016.
- The law will apply to listed companies which have employee representation on their supervisory boards. Thousands of other medium-sized companies will be left to determine their own quota for executive and supervisory board positions.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

- The valuable expertise of highly qualified women often remains unutilized. We are still seeing a break following the successful completion of a doctorate degree: Around 44 per cent of doctoral candidates are women, but this drops to 25 per cent at the post-doctorate level (habilitation). In 2010, the number of women in leadership positions at research institutes outside of the higher education system totalled only 13 per cent. However, the numbers clearly vary between different research organizations.
- In order to augment women's share of leadership positions, German research institutions have been implementing the so-called cascade principle since 2006. This has been agreed upon as a precondition for receiving federal funds in the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation. Every institution sets its own goals for increasing the proportion of women at a specific qualification level. These targets should in each case be higher than the proportion of women at the level directly below.
- First success can be observed, but a speeding-up of the process is required by setting ambitious goals and setting standards for the recruitment of women, improving visibility of women's academic achievements through networks and even performance-related allocation of funds.
- Implementing equality also means improving the framework conditions for reconciling an academic career and a family. Here, universities and research organizations alike have started to offer child care facilities, often funded from budgets provided by the Federal Ministry. Still, there remains a lot to be done in order to meet the needs comprehensively.
- Forward-looking policy must create the preconditions necessary for women to be represented in all fields and at all levels, particularly in managerial positions. Different perspectives and approaches of both women and men must be utilized - in the interest of progress in areas such as education, research, industry, and society as a whole.
- The Committee of Education, Research and Technology Assessment of the Bundestag firmly supports equal opportunities as a universal guiding principle in all political decisions, measures, and activities. It is to be taken likewise into account in the development of programmes and measures, in the allocation of funding, and in implementation and evaluation procedures.

Germany
Bundestag

By: *Research Service of the German Bundestag¹*
Gregor Strate, Philipp Regele (intern) – Research Section WD 8 (Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, Education and Research)

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Education institutions play an important part in creating equality of opportunity, and thus help to widen opportunities to participate in society, as well as promoting social mobility. The education system is still characterised by social selectivity in educational access and participation. This is shown by the disparities in education participation between different social groups and regions. What follows is an overview, spanning different education sectors, of gender-specific disparities over the period since the publication of the first national education report in 2006. Sector-specific information on the participation of girls and women in education, on transitions, on qualifications and skills, and on education's effects on social inclusion is systematically contextualised, with discussion of relevant trends. It should be noted that no special support for women and girls in education and training has been necessary in Germany in the past ten years. The general-education school system, vocational training and higher education are success stories for women. While women are better placed than men in education, the situation in the labour market is very different.

To date, the national education reports have repeatedly identified clear gender differences in school enrolment, which are already pronounced when children start school and do not diminish – or do so only marginally – later in children's school careers. The number of children who start school early or late has fluctuated considerably over time, but what has remained constant is a clear gender difference favouring girls: it is more common for them to start school early, and it is much more rare for them to start school late. The gender difference in terms of the number of children starting school late remained roughly constant between 2004 and 2012, while the difference in the number starting school early narrowed. In the past 20 years, the proportion of girls attending academic secondary school (Gymnasium) has been consistently higher than the proportion of boys to do so, a trend which is also reflected in school-leaving qualifications. Today, girls are significantly more likely to obtain the higher-education entrance qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*). The 2006 education report already found that more girls obtained the higher-education entrance qualification than the lower secondary school-leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*). The proportion of female school-leavers attaining the higher-education entrance qualification rose (from 32 to 46%) between 2004 and 2012.

Although a lower proportion of young women than young men enter company-based training, they are significantly more likely to enter full-time school-based vocational training. In both of these sectors, the gender differences have widened over time. The percentage of training contracts which are terminated prematurely is consistently somewhat higher for women than men, and the gender difference has widened slightly over time. There is no gender gap when it comes to the successful

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completion of vocational training, with just under three quarters of all male and female trainees passing the final examination at the first opportunity. The unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 24 shows a clear advantage for women compared to men. Women are now more successful than men in terms of higher-education access and completion. This is reflected not only in the fact that a higher proportion of women than men are qualified to enter higher education, but also in the higher-education new entrant rate, where there has been a shift from a slightly higher proportion of men in 2005 to a significantly higher proportion of women by 2012. Women are also less likely to drop out of higher education than men. In terms of the graduation rate, women have increased their lead over men, which is likely to be related to a more favourable study pathway, but the picture is complicated by factors such as the type of higher-education institution attended and the chosen subject.

In the labour market, however, women face a different situation. A lower proportion of women than men are integrated into the labour market, which is reflected in their share of both the economically active population and the non-active population, although the gender difference in the latter has narrowed over time. While there have certainly been positive trends in women's employment status in the period under consideration, the same cannot be said of the income trend. The difference in equalised net income has increased in recent years. The picture is similarly weighted in men's favour, in every category, in a comparison of gross monthly income for full-time employment broken down by level of educational attainment: the largest gender disparities exist for people with a high level of education, to the detriment of women compared to men. The differences in men's and women's income levels are clearly not related solely to the occupational position achieved, but are also connected to the industries and occupations in which men and women are active. Less favourable labour-market conditions often prevail in a range of occupations perceived as being typical women's jobs. Among people of working age, the at-risk-of-poverty rate is, overall, somewhat higher for women than men. A breakdown by level of educational attainment makes clear, however, that the higher at-risk-of-poverty rate primarily affects women with a higher level of education. In summary, it can be concluded that the disadvantages which women once faced in terms of educational enrolment and attainment have clearly been successfully offset across the various education sectors, and this has opened up new and additional opportunities for women in terms of educational and economic participation. However, the differences which still exist in terms of employment opportunities and occupational positions within companies and organisations appear to have a detrimental impact on women's income and employment stability across various life phases. The findings for higher education are inconclusive, as the gender disparities here differ depending on the subject and the type of training or higher-education institution.

Overall, however, the gender differences in the higher-education participation, drop-out and graduation rates have widened, in women's favour. Men are still at an advantage in the labour market, however (see Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2014: pp. 212-214).

In scientific occupations, in particular, there is an imbalance in favour of men. The Federal Government is therefore taking targeted measures – also in view of the recommendations issued by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – with the aim of encouraging girls to consider a wider range of occupations and breaking down traditional conceptions of gender roles. For example, an annual Girls' Day has been held since 2001 to inform girls about the MINT sectors (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences and technology) in particular, which they rarely consider. Another field of action is promoting changes within companies to prevent career interruptions in the future and to improve women's opportunities for professional advancement. This was the aim of the initiative "Changing corporate cultures – preventing career interruptions". The results of the project, published in the autumn of 2012, show that more flexible working practices alone are not enough to bring about a lasting change in corporate culture. The necessary changes in corporate culture should be directed at both women and men, so that both

genders can benefit from them equally (see Federal Government 2014: p. 13).

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

“Too many children are still denied their right to primary education. Between 2000 and 2011, the number of children out of school declined by almost half – from 102 million to 57 million. However, progress in reducing the number of children out of school has slowed considerably over time. Stalled progress means that the world is unlikely to meet the target of universal primary education by 2015. The poorest children are most likely to be out of school. Children and adolescents from the poorest households are at least three times more likely to be out of school than children from the richest households. Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both primary and lower secondary age groups, even for girls living in the richest households” (United Nations 2013: p.5). More than half the world’s out-of-school children live in sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty is the biggest single factor keeping children out of school. This is shown by the data collected through household surveys in 63 developing countries between 2005 and 2011.

Children and adolescents from the poorest households are at least three times as likely to be out of school as their richest counterparts. Location of residence also matters. Rural children are nearly twice as likely to be out of school as urban children. Across the 63 countries, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both primary and lower secondary age groups. The gender gap in school attendance widens in lower secondary education, even for girls living in better-off households. Increased access to schooling is a necessary first step towards universal primary education.

But children must also complete primary school to master, at a minimum, basic literacy and numeracy skills. Among the 137 million children who entered first grade in 2011, 34 million are likely to leave before reaching the last grade of primary school. This translates into an early school leaving rate of 25 per cent – the same level as in 2000. The persistence of early school leaving is a key obstacle to achieving universal primary education. Children who start school late are more likely to drop out before completing their education. Data from household surveys in 22 developing countries (conducted between 2005 and 2010) show that 38 per cent of students starting primary school were at least two years older than the official entry age. Children from poorer households are more likely to delay the start of their education for a number of reasons, including poor health and nutrition and the risks associated with travelling long distances to school. Girls are less likely to start school than boys, but once enrolled, they are more likely to reach the last grade of primary school, except in Western Asia and Eastern Asia (see United Nations 2013: pp. 15-16).

In developing regions overall, the gender parity index (or GPI, defined as girls’ school enrolment ratio in relation to boys’ enrolment ratio) at each level of education is close to or in the range of 0.97 and 1.03, the accepted measure for parity. However, a closer look reveals significant gender disparities among regions in all levels of education. Considerable progress has been made over time in primary education. But girls continue to face high barriers to schooling in Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, the net enrolment rate for girls has risen substantially – from 47 per cent to 75 per cent between 1990 and 2011. Over the same period, the rate for boys rose from 58 per cent to 79 per cent. Although more girls are now in school in sub-Saharan Africa, only 93 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys. Eastern Asia is the only developing region where girls have greater access to primary school than boys.

Only two out of 130 countries with available data have reached the target of gender parity in all levels of education. An analysis of gender disparities in school participation at the country level shows that girls are not always at a disadvantage. But in general, disparities affecting girls are more extreme than those affecting boys. Girls in many countries are still being denied their right to education, especially at the primary and secondary level. The overall picture changes at the tertiary level of education. In nearly two thirds of countries (62 per cent), enrolment of women at the highest levels of education exceeds that of men. In countries with low enrolment rates, men generally outnumber women. Yet the opposite is true in countries with high enrolment rates. In general, the most extreme gender disparities in tertiary education are found in countries with low levels of enrolment. Eight out of 10 countries with extreme gender disparities (GPI below 0.7) have gross enrolment ratios below 10 per cent (United Nations 2013: pp. 18-19).

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Education is a key to capabilities (a “transformative factor”) in almost all areas of life. The guiding principle of a life course perspective on gender equality means that girls and boys, women and men, should be equally able to choose and take up educational opportunities – in all phases of their lives. The encouragement of gender-typical choices, e.g. in the decision on what occupation to pursue, or the institutional or symbolic exclusion of a gender from an education sector is not compatible with this guiding principle, nor are the differences in attitude – rooted in a traditional understanding of gender roles – towards the training for personal service occupations and the training for scientific or technical occupations or skilled trades. Given the difficulties which girls experience in making use of their higher levels of qualification in the labour market, it is important to ensure both genders have equal capabilities in this first phase of education. For women, the decision to pursue a typical “women’s” occupation which has a low level of professionalisation, or to start a family, has negative impacts on their future education and employment opportunities in both the short and long term. However, it is unacceptable for education decisions to systematically lead women or men to professional dead ends, or for parenthood to result in a downward spiral of educational disadvantages. The life course perspective means that education opportunities must also be open to women and men equally in later phases of their lives, whether in addition to qualifications they have already obtained, or as a “second” or “third” chance at educational opportunities which young women and men, for different reasons, miss or are too late to take up earlier in life. Seven sets of measures have therefore been recommended:

1. Gender mainstreaming and gender-conscious pedagogy should be systematically anchored across the board in education policy and in education institutions; this would bring together a number of important individual recommendations relating to the achievement of equal educational opportunities. If a lasting difference is to be made, it is important for gender competence to be imparted in the training of educational staff, equipping them to shape gender interactions, particularly as regards “doing” femininity, in a considered and professional manner in schools and training institutions. Widespread gender training for education partners is also recommended, especially in the field of career and training guidance. One aim of gender mainstreaming is to achieve a more balanced gender ratio among educational staff, and to impart the skills required for gender-conscious pedagogy.
2. With regard to the first phase of education, it is important to reduce the difficulties faced by

young women in transitions in the education system or from education or training into the world of work.

3. It is recommended that it be made easier to combine training and family life, with three priorities for action:
 - a support programme to implement the right to part-time training, which should include administrative coordination, a coordinated approach to the award of financial support, the provision of qualified advice, and support from external educators;
 - urgently needed support for part-time training, and in particular support under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) for part-time higher education; more generally, parents who are trainees must be included in all measures which companies take as part of a family-centred personnel policy, and the interests of student parents must be taken into account in education planning and the evaluation of higher-education institutions;
 - a separate, low-threshold means for low-skilled mothers with a migrant background to gain an initial qualification.
4. The vocational education system, which is divided into a dual branch and a school-based branch, should be unified and standardised with the goal of creating uniform nationwide standards in vocational training. This will contribute to the professionalisation and improvement in status of personal service occupations, which are regarded as “women’s” occupations and suffer from a low degree of professionalisation. When women’s occupations become “more attractive”, one result is an increase in the proportion of male workers in these occupations.
5. In general, career options must be opened up, going beyond the traditional choices for each gender. Programmes like “Girls’ Day” and measures to encourage pupils to choose non-traditional subjects as their main subjects at upper secondary level should, as contributions to encouraging people to choose non-traditional careers (more women in MINT occupations, more men in personal service occupations), be expanded, made permanent and be systematically evaluated, as should mentoring programmes to support minorities in non-traditional fields.
6. Education opportunities in adulthood should be available to women and men equally, both in obtaining follow-up and advanced qualifications, or in obtaining initial qualifications not gained earlier in life (“second chance”). “Entitlements” to education options would enable financially supported phases of education to be spread across the life course without disadvantages. In this context, it must be possible for women to combine training and family life in all phases of life. Various types of measures are necessary. Drawing on the work of the Expert Commission on Financing Lifelong Learning (2004), the Expert Commission tasked with drawing up these recommendations proposes the introduction of “financial support for adult education”, with the gender perspective being incorporated in the assessment of entitlement (e.g. appropriate consideration of full-time school-based initial training), and with a family component. It also recommends, as a flexible approach to entry requirements, that recognition of skills and “capital” acquired outside formal learning environments be developed further – also in response to the EU’s calls for greater links between informal, non-formal and formal learning. The effects of recognition procedures on women and men must be examined. Another recommended step is the removal of age limits for admission to training and for entitlement to grants, support under the Federal Training Assistance Act,

etc., to expand the possibilities for people, e.g. even after a period of employment, to complete a bachelor's degree after vocational training, or a master's degree after a bachelor's degree.

7. Further research is needed, both to evaluate current measures – as such evaluations are either non-existent or no systematic comparison has been undertaken – and to identify examples of best practice. Evaluation criteria should be developed via research to form the future basis for formative and comparative evaluations. Closer links should be developed between empirical, quantitative education research and qualitative gender research focusing on micro-processes (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2011, pp.101-102).

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1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Considering the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹ as well as the Millennium Development Goal with regard to the empowerment of women and girls through education, *and as far as the situation in Greece over the past ten years is concerned, it first needs to be mentioned that girls and women are not under-represented in any level of education including pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education.* It can securely be concluded based on statistical data available at the Hellenic Statistical Authority that access for girls and women in education in Greece has long been ensured.

Nevertheless, as will be elaborated in Question 3, *particular measures have long been taken to ensure access to education for girls and women belonging to vulnerable social groups* as well as those who have been affected by the socioeconomic crisis in the last five years. Additionally, *lifelong education and training* has been one of the main priorities in the Greek education policy following international and E.U. strategic objectives.

However, there are some interventions having been implemented throughout the latest ten to fifteen years which should be mentioned:

1. The Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), in cooperation with the Departments of Education, Environmental Education and School Vocational Orientation, implemented, during the years 2003-2004, intervention programmes aiming at the promotion of equality for school vocational orientation.

KETHI has also implemented a programme (2002-2006) aiming at the promotion of gender equality among male and female students of Secondary Education, and among male and female students of Initial Vocational Training.

2. The Pedagogical Institute, authority competent for the teaching material used in schools:

- has taken steps so that women do not appear in offensive stereotypes in Inter-thematic Integrated Curriculum Frameworks (2004)
- has established a Committee for Equality, consisting of members of the Institute itself (2001)
- has introduced, already since 2000, balanced treatment of the sexes in comprehensive curricula.

3. In the context of the project “Training Teachers on the Utilization of New Information and Communication Technologies in Education”, a total number of 76,000 teachers were trained during the school years 2001-2003, 59% of which were women and 41% men.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The Hellenic Parliament has not dealt specifically with the obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education. In the frame of their competences the Hellenic Parliament Committees, on

European Affairs, on Gender Equality, Youth and Human Rights and on Cultural Affairs, closely follow current issues and developments in the field of education inside the EU, being in close cooperation with the government. In this context, they are regularly briefed by the competent Ministers and government officials, as well as independent Authorities dealing with the aforementioned issues. Besides, the annual report (2013) of the Special Permanent Committee on Gender Equality, Youth and Human Rights deals with a number of issues in the field of education, including proposals for targeted measures, such as the upgrading of Higher Education (with an emphasis on research and scholarships) and its connection with growth and innovation.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

Along all the above-mentioned in question 1, the elimination of educational disparities (for both men and women) has been at the core of the education policy. As a result, several measures combined with special programmes have been taken for *the inclusion in the educational process of vulnerable social groups* such as migrant students, Roma children and the children of Muslim minority in Thrace, wherein issues of access of girls to education may arise.

1. Education of vulnerable social groups

a. The Educational Priority Zones

The said measure has been in effect since 2010 (Law 3879/2010) by the Ministry of Education to contribute positively to combating segregation and its consequent effects in certain schools, is that of the Educational Priority Zones (ZEP).

The Educational Priority Zones action is implemented in geographical regions where the basic school integration indicators are low. The said Zones enhance a holistic approach which aims to connect school units with local social agents through the implementation of educational, social and cultural actions.

One of the actions through which the educational support offered to students will be implemented is that of support from specialized staff (psychologists, social workers).

b. The education of migrant students

Foreign (migrants / refugees) students enjoy the right to free education exactly as natives do. Every child living in Greece is entitled to education regardless of their parents' / guardians' legal status in the country.

It is worth mentioning the Law 2413/1996 on "Greek education abroad and intercultural education" and the programme "Education of Immigrant and Repatriate Students" (1997-2015). The main aim of the programme is to combat school dropouts so that equal access to education and social inclusion are ensured, with interventions starting from preschool education.

c. The education of the Roma pupils

Roma children are entitled by law to the same schooling as all other Greek citizens. The Programme "Education of Roma children" (1997-2015) places a particular emphasis on preschool education and early enrollment in the 1st grade of primary school to achieve regular attendance and the reduce students' dropping out of school.

d. The education of the children of the Muslim minority in Thrace

The basic aim of the Programme "Education of the Children of the Muslim Minority in Thrace" (1997-

2015) is to upgrade the education of the children of the minority and to foster their integration into society.

It is worth stressing that since academic year 2006-2007 a 0.5% quota for the admission to Universities and Higher Technical Educational Institutes of students who are members of the Muslim minority in Thrace has been introduced.

2. Second Chance Schools

In accordance with Law 2525/1997, young learners beyond the 18th year of their age, not having completed compulsory education (primary and compulsory secondary) may attend Second Chance Schools having thus the opportunity to obtain the relevant certificate and to evenly integrate into social, economic and working life. According to Ministerial Decision 260/16-1-2008, Second Chance Schools of the country are considered Adult Education Schools in the field of Lifelong Learning.

3. Evening Upper Secondary Schools

Pursuant to Law 4186/2013, adults as well as underage individuals employed in the family business, upon their parents or guardians' solemn declaration, are eligible to enroll in Evening Upper Secondary Schools.

4. Parents Schools

Parents Schools have been operating by the Institute for Youth and Lifelong Learning in order to provide training programmes on family issues as well as psychological support and health education for vulnerable social groups.

5. Vocational Training Institutes are not graded within the official educational system. These institutes are supplementary to the educational system. As the statistical data show, women's participation in public Vocational Training Institutes, is increased and wider than that of men (9776 women and 7681 men).

6. A project titled "Strengthening and improving civil service skills of women in Central Administration, public entities, private entities and Local Administrations to engage in senior positions" has been designed by the General Secretariat on Gender Equality (GSGE) in cooperation with the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government. The project is currently implemented and includes 18 Training Programs for the training of Boards, 38 Empowerment Workshops and 2 Awareness Workshops (Central Macedonia-Thessaloniki and Crete- Heraklion).

The three remaining Awareness Workshops will be planned and implemented the first semester of 2015.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

It should be pointed out that the economic crisis has altered the focus of policies, creating new priority areas for gender equality policies. As a consequence of the economic crisis, gender gaps intensify especially in the labour market.

However, the national strategy for the promotion of gender equality has been aligned to respond to emerging challenges and social priorities. A newly designed and reality-informed policy frame for gender equality was timely included into the Partnership Agreement for Greece for the programming period 2014-2020.

There is a range of 8 *strategic priorities*, among which: the promotion of equal access of women to the job market, the promotion of social inclusion of women, the prevention of female poverty and all forms of gender-based violence, the gender mainstreaming in social and health protection issues, the support of the family institution, the promotion of equal participation of women in public life and the processes of political, social and economical decision making, fighting against gender-based discrimination and stereotypes. *All these objectives should be achieved through the implementation of actions on education and empowerment of women and girls.*

The Hellenic Parliament Committee on Gender Equality, Youth and Human Rights has included in its work programme, among others, the following topics (December 2014): *Youth vocational education and training*, as well as *Education system: Promoting inclusive education-Addressing failure at school and dropout*.

Considering the abovementioned (in questions 1,2 and 3), it could be argued that *remaining challenges would include improving girls' and women's access to vocational training, science and technology*, as well as *reducing drop-out rates among Roma girls in primary education* in order to achieve their higher participation in secondary and higher education. Additionally, *increasing the lifelong learning and training of girls and women* who belong to vulnerable social groups can potentially increase their employment chances and thus their quality of life.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

In the Hungarian higher education **legally there is no differentiation between women and men.**

The paper “Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Hungary” contains a chapter (fifth chapter) on Gender equity and equality in education and provides answers to the questions.

“Legislative context

... there is a broad range of relevant regulations. Hungary, as a member of the UN, the European Union and the Council of Europe, has effected the relevant international conventions in various laws, e.g. Decree-Law No 11 adopted in 1964, which promulgated the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and thus recognized gender equality in education. In accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action, several laws were adopted with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities, including some that focus on eliminating gender inequalities, among others, in education:

- the Act on Promoting Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities, adopted in 2003, some of its provisions concerning education and training
- the Act on Public Education was amended in 2003 with the prohibition of discrimination
- the Equal Treatment Authority was established in 2004
- the Council for Women’s and Men’s Social Equality was established in 2006
- regulations on textbook adoption amended in 2006
- the National Strategy for Promoting the Social Equality of Men and Women (2010-2021) was adopted in 2010 in line with EU priorities
- the National Social Inclusion Strategy (2011-2020) was adopted in 2011.

Gender equality is provided in the Fundamental Law of Hungary (adopted in 2011).

The referred document also describes - on the basis of Education data, - the situation in Early School Leaving as well as that in Higher Education, the proportion of females among students, supporting the arguments with relevant tables.

In tertiary education the number of women is higher and according to statistics their performance is above men’s performance, they achieve better results, higher grades and more scientific degrees. However, in certain fields of study (engineering, informatics, natural sciences and mathematics) the proportion of women is lower than the proportion of men.

The number and proportion of women in higher education in Hungary			
Academic year	Total number of students	Number of women among students	Proportion of women (%)
2005/06	424 161	246 919	58,21
2006/07	416 348	241 402	57,98
2007/08	397 704	228 617	57,48
2008/09	381 033	214 515	56,30
2009/10	370 331	207 531	56,04
2010/11	361 347	199 580	55,23
2011/12	359 824	197 521	54,89
2012/13	338 467	184 651	54,56
2013/14	320 124	175 548	54,84
2014/15	306 524	166 931	54,46

Source: Data collection on higher education statistics, 2005-2014

2 **Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?**

Although within the EU, including Hungary, legally there is no differentiation between women and men and equality is attained, the improvement of policies may be beneficial. Further actions could be taken in following cases:

1. Accomplishing equal economic independence of women and men closing the employment and pay gaps, considering issues of women and poverty and women and health;
2. Enhanced facilitation of the reconciliation of professional, private and family life;
3. Facilitating the reduction of the disproportional presence of women and men in political and economic decision-making and in the sciences;
4. Taking measures to efficiently combat and prevent violence;
5. Facilitating the elimination of gender stereotypes;
6. Laying the professional foundations for the inevitable changes necessary to achieve the goals of gender mainstreaming (training, institution system, gender budgeting etc.)

3 **Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?**

In order to achieve gender mainstreaming, the Hungarian government passed a Resolution with the title of 'National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality – Guidelines and Objectives 2010-2021' (Gov. Res. No. 1004/2010. (I. 21.)). Published by: Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

The **Strategy (Gov. Res. 1004/2010. (I. 21.))** describes guidelines and objectives.

In order to implement the long term objectives of such Strategy, the Government ordered the

elaboration of the implementation measures for the first two years (2010-2011) and the identification of the relevant indicators along the objectives amongst which one is laying the professional foundations for the inevitable changes necessary to achieve the goals of gender mainstreaming (training, institution system, gender budgeting, gender aggregated data collection).

The National Strategy describes the tasks as follows: “5. Facilitating the elimination of gender stereotypes 5.1 Eliminating gender-based stereotypes in education Strategic guidelines and objectives:

- Regular revision of the National Core Curriculum by depicting stereotype free gender identity and competences ensuring equal social opportunities as a need of the students and as an educational asset.
- Facilitating the development of further training systems for all the professions taking part in education: education administrators, experts of public education and teachers. The objective is to support the implementation of gender sensitive curricula.
- Educational services should include the gender approach and its promotion in order to encourage the gender equality issue to appear in related professional consultations.
- Developing further the application of gender-based criteria when textbooks and curricula are approved.
- The issue of gender equality should appear as a horizontal aspect when educational materials are developed for public education.
- Promoting the establishment of a research base for higher education which is responsible for establishing the knowledge background for the innovations and developments of gender education policy, for developing and publishing an information base and for working out further strategic recommendations for education policy.
- Widening adult education and lifelong learning, introducing training for a second chance, integrated into the education system (e.g. through the establishment of a female academy).”

According to the **Government edict 423/2012. (XII. 29.) on the Higher Education Admittance Procedure**, paragraph (1) of Article 24 ensures that applicants on maternity leave, and applicants receiving certain form of pregnancy / maternity allowance during the time period of the admittance procedure (that is, between the application deadline and the decision on admittance) are entitled for 40 extra points in the ranking system of applications, in order to support their admittance in higher education. (In the ranking system, applications are ranked on a scale of 0 – 500 points.)

According to the **Government edict 1/2012. (I. 20.) on the Student Loan System**, paragraph (2) of Article 16 ensures that the borrower can apply for suspension of payment installments at the Student Loan Center, for the time period of being on maternity leave, or receiving certain form of pregnancy / maternity allowance.

The master level degree program on Gender Studies is offered since 2009, with two available specializations: Gender Studies Research and Gender Studies Expert.

To support students with small children, since 2014, those with at least one year of student status, and a child of age at most one year are entitled for maternity allowance. The base of the calculation of the amount of the allowance is the minimum wage (101 500 HUF) in the case of bachelor level studies, and the minimum professional wage (118 000 HUF) for students on master level or doctoral studies. Graduated students are also entitled for the same allowance, even without employment status, if their child is born within one year of graduation / completion of studies.

The **“Day of Girls” action plan** is a series of events, including open days held at companies,

universities, research centers, job exhibitions organized for the interested girls, as well as mentor projects, and some of these events are international programs. The first event in this series was an open day, organized by the Association of Women in Science for girls in their 10th grade and 11th grade studies on April 26th 2012, providing an opportunity to visit certain companies. Furthermore, the “Day of Girls” plan provides information about career opportunities, focusing on practice-oriented education, so the participating girls are given the opportunity to join, and experience a typical day of work. The purpose of the “Day of Girls” action is to strengthen the self-confidence of girls, to increase their trust in their skills and abilities, and through these, to change their view about the world of work. In the long term, the goal of this action is to change the current trends of career choices among girls, so they will be able to conquer new fields of employment.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

The principle of equal opportunities between women and men is guaranteed in the Hungarian higher education system, therefore **preparation of further steps to eliminate discrimination are not necessary**. Taking into consideration that in the legal sense there is no discrimination, **a possible progress – regarding education – could be the change of social attitudes towards careers based on science-related education** (mathematics, informatics, engineering, natural sciences).

“Gender equality is not addressed as a specific problem in the Hungarian school education system because the requirement for gender equality has been met by the Hungarian education policy – as described above. (...) Gender inequalities in education are not present as macro-level social inequalities in Hungary but as differences in learning pathways, attitudes to learning, values held by and the aims of learners. In terms of labour market opportunities, women are at a disadvantaged, compared to men, but the situation is the opposite at school (Education in Hungary 2006). In the past decades educational disadvantages concerning women have been eliminated....”

For further information see: *“Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Hungary”, Chapter 5 on Gender equity and equality in education.*

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

The full review of the implementation by Italy of all the **objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** is contained in the National reports of Italy (2014) (v. [Response of the Italian Government to the UNECE Questionnaire on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(1995\) and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly](#)).

Here some highlights: in Italy, according to the latest data available from the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), in 2011, the incidence of public spending in education and training on GDP was up 4.2% and places our country in a low position if compared to other EU countries.

Despite the further containment of expenditure recorded in 2012, **Italy has nevertheless improved its results without sacrificing the principle of equity in the education system.**

Italy is characterized, in fact, by having achieved high rates of schooling of the population: the level of education related to primary and secondary school stands at around 100%, the rate of schooling of 14 -18 year-old youth, calculated considering only those enrolled in upper secondary school grade II, reaches 93%.

Among these data, the **percentage of women amounts to 48.1% in kindergarten, 48.4% in primary school, 47.9% in first grade secondary school degree and 48.8% in the second grade of the secondary school.**

These percentages are influenced by **two external factors** that affect the figure for women: every year an average of 106 men is born every 100 women, and the prevalence is recorded alike up to adulthood. Men also have a greater irregularity in schooling and consequently the annual number of members of the male gender is increased by those who repeat a year more frequently than what occurs among female students.

Gender differences in education levels are relevant in all generations. In particular, a **higher education of women** is noted among young people aged 20-24: a proportion of graduates reaching 60.8% for men and 66.9% for women.

Young Italian women are showing a greater propensity than men of the same age to continue their studies beyond secondary school: high school female graduates who enrol in a university course are about 64 out of 100, while male graduates are only 52 out of 100, a lower figure than their female counterparts. Among young people aged 25-29, the percentage of those who have obtained an academic degree is 17.6% among men compared to 28.2% among women. However it should be noted that the percentage of women is lowest among enrolments in courses such as engineering – or other degrees oriented towards mathematics, and highest in academic courses related to teaching, education and languages. By contrast, statistics for the over-sixties seem to differ greatly from the outline above, as men over sixty who have earned a secondary school diploma or a university degree are, respectively, 14.1% and 7.2%, while women of the same age cover solely the 8.7% and 3.6% respectively.

Further, an **equality index for Italy** in the sector of **knowledge** (in a scale of 1-Inequality and 100-

Equality, see also <http://eige.europa.eu/content/gender-equality-index#/domain/knowledge?country=IT>) is calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), concerning the **Educational attainment and segregation** (Italy has a score of 31.3%, compared to an EU-27 average of 57.2%) and **Lifelong learning** (score of 32.9%, compared to an EU-27 average of 41.8)².

For what concerns the **Millennium Development Goals Indicators** (and in particular Goal 3, **Promote gender equality and empower women**) the UN shows a table of the time series of the Italian position updated at July 2014 (<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>). In summary, the Index of **Gender Parity in primary level enrolment** has been fixed around the value, varying from 1 of the 1990 to 0,99 of the 2011 (latest available data). Same thing for the Index of **Gender Parity in secondary level enrolment**. As regards the Index of Gender Parity in tertiary level enrolment, Italy shows an increasing value going from 0,96 of the 1990 up to 1,42 of the 2012 (latest available data).

- 2 **Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?**
- 3 **Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?**
- 4 **What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?**

Obstacles, actions and challenges in the levels of secondary education

According to the latest [ISTAT surveys on education e training](#) (2013), in Italy, **the percentage of female pupils enrolled in public or charter and private schools of each level, is almost 50%**. Further, the female pupils repeating the year are about 1/3 of the total male and female students.

An aspect on which the Committee on Culture Science and Education of the Italian Chamber of Deputies was concentrated recently, has been the phenomenon of school drop, considered an obstacle to quality of school. A special [consultation was held from 23 April 2014 to 10 June 2014](#), in order to give an evaluation to steps to reaching the objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy of *early school leavers* (boys and girls from 18 and 24 years old without a degree or higher qualification, and who are not in formation). In Italy, [the Eurostat indicators](#) record a **steady reduction in the rate of abandonment** (dropped from 20,6% in 2006 to 17% in 2013), but, at the same time, they indicate a level still too high compared to the 12% of European average in 2013 and, above all, compared to the objective of 10% within 2020. In this regard, even in official document of the Government, the National objective set for the year 2020 is 16% of *early school leavers*.

[According to statistics of the Ministry for education](#) (June 2013), in particular, the risk of dropping out of school is higher (61,7% in the first degree of the secondary school, year 2011/2012) in the male population of students. The proportion of pupils at risk of dropping for causes of poverty (or family contexts with low participation in social life) is 0,24% on the total for male pupils, compared to 0,16% for female pupils. In the upper secondary school, this proportion rises at 1,47% for male

² A more complete framework of the policy initiatives by years in Italy, in the sector of knowledge is offered by the EIGE at this link:

<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/policy-initiatives/search?t=&c%5b%5d=332&d%5b%5d=1057&df%5bvalue%5d%5byear%5d=&dt%5bvalue%5d=&lv=1063>

pupils (1,24% for female), with higher rates in the Regions of the South and in the Islands.

One of the most important **action** indicated at the conclusion of the above mentioned consultation is the effective realization of the **students Registry** integrated with regional data, directed to a more **effective monitoring of data**.

In the Italian context, by the way, there is a peculiar **gender difference** between boys and girls enrolled in educational path, as result from data of [Programme for international Student Assessment - PISA 2009](#) realized every three year by OECD. This survey measures results of scholastic systems in a compared framework, particularly referred to competence of 15 years old pupils in reading, math and science. In fact, **performances in math are significantly lower for girls compared with boys**, while there is a gap of opposite sign, even wider, in reading competences.

As for gender equality actions, joining the **Convention of Istanbul** on school education measures (art. 14), Italy has approved the decree 93/2013 (Law 119/2013), whose article 5, par. 2, point c), provides that in the **extraordinary Action Plan against sexual violence and gender** must be contemplated the finality of promotion of an **adequate training of school staff** against violence and gender discrimination. In particular, the Action Plan has to promote awareness, information and training of students, in order to prevent violence against women and gender discrimination, including the issue in textbooks as part of the teaching program in the curriculum and extracurriculum of schools, indicated in the **national guidelines** for kindergarten, first cycle of education, higher schools and technical and vocational schools.

With regard to this aspect, a significant initiative has been taken in January 2013 by Italian Ministry of Labour and social politics with responsibility for Equal Opportunities, and the Ministry for education, that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the institution of the "**National week against violence and discrimination**", to be taken each October in every school, in order to discuss specific themes on gender violence, violence against children, juvenile pornography on internet and bullying among students.

The mentioned Convention of Istanbul contains (art. 15) further provisions on the **training of professionals** who come into contact with facts of gender violence or *stalking*. These aspects are regulated by art. 5, par. 2, point e), and by art. 5-bis, par. 5, of the mentioned decree 93/2013 (Law 119/2013).

Obstacles, actions and challenges in the levels of tertiary education

As regards the level of tertiary education, women record a higher preparation. However, according to the [Europe 2020 indicator Tertiary educational attainment](#)³ - that requires a strategy's headline target to increase to at least 40% in 2020 the share of the 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education - Italy is at the bottom level of the European ranking, with a rate of 22,4%, in 2013 (considering only women, the rate rises to 27,2%). Moreover, the National target for 2020 set in the last Government papers stops at 26%.

In the [latest Report AlmaLaurea \(2014\) on the profile of graduates](#)⁴ in 2013, there are **remarkable percentage differences** between men and women who have reached a tertiary education level: it is confirmed the structural female prevalence (women are 60% of total), especially in certain subject

³ I.e. the share of the population aged 30-34 years who have successfully completed university or university-like (tertiary-level) education with an education level ISCED 1997 (International Standard Classification of Education) of 5-6.

⁴ The survey involves almost **230.000 graduates** who completed studies in 2013 in one of the **64 Universities** in the research consortium AlmaLaurea.

areas⁵.

Comparing the main European countries, such as France, for example, the tertiary education indicator level is already at 44,1% in 2013 (considering only women 48,5%), and in Germany 33,1% (only women 34%). Both these countries have set a target within 2020 up to the 40% (respectively 50% and 42%).

Women in Italy have more brilliant performance of study compared to men, both in terms of regularity and school grades. The percentages of graduation are 45% women against 40% men (with a degree mark on average 103,3 on 110 against 101), in every educational path and under equal condition, such as social origin or pre-university studies. Nevertheless, as the Almalaurea Report points out, **women have more difficulties in the professional employability** in the labour market, so they must have more qualifications.

According to the Almalaurea Report, moreover, the obstacles and challenges in order to reach a more satisfying level of tertiary education are represented by the persisting economic crisis: [time series of ISTAT](#) shows that, in 2013, the unemployment rate in Italy has exceeded 12% (compared to an unemployment rate in Europe of about 11%), in sharp deterioration compared to the average of the previous three years, while the youth unemployment rate is about 40%.

In 2014, rates are even worse: according to the [latest monthly surveys of ISTAT](#) referred to the month of November 2014, the male unemployment rate, that is 12,5%, remains unchanged in quarterly terms, while is growing in trend terms (+0,6 points); the female unemployment rate (14,6%) increases both compared to the previous month (+0,3 percentage points) and on an annual basis (+1,3 percentage points). Inactivity rates decrease among men (-0,2%), remaining unchanged among women, so the conditions of economic instability for the future and temporary jobs affect have significant effects on choices and behaviours of students and their families.

⁵ Women are 94% of the subscribers who reach graduation in the subject area of teaching, 85% in the linguistic one, 83% in psychological one, while they represent just the 25% and the 35% in the subject area, respectively, of engineering and of the scientific field.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Since their adoption, Italy has firmly supported the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action (BPfA) and has reaffirmed its commitment to the effective implementation of these tools through the promotion of policies and actions. The first Plan of Action for the implementation of the BPfA was adopted in 1997. It took the form of a Prime Minister's Directive, which was addressed to all members of the Italian Government and focused on the key concepts of "empowerment" and "mainstreaming". In that light, a number of national institutional mechanisms on gender equality have been established over the years. In particular, in 1996 the institutional position of the minister for equal Opportunities was created to promote and coordinate Government action aimed at ensuring the full implementation of gender equality policies and coordinating, in collaboration with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government policies with specific regard to the objectives included in all twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. Besides, the National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, which was established by Legislative Decree n. 198 of 2006, is considered the Italian legal framework on gender equality and women's empowerment.

For what specifically concerns promoting equal opportunities in education, the National Operational Programmes (NOPs), managed by the Italian Ministry of Education, has to be mentioned. The education plans 2007-2013 titled "Learning Environments" and "Skills for Development" ensured compliance with the principle of equality between men and women in all courses and built monitoring and data collection systems in order to confirm the attention paid to the issue and to ensure unfettered gender equality in the vocational education and training. Moreover, the European Commission funded projects within the 7th Framework programme for research which have been coordinated and co-funded by Italy, as follows: PRA.G.E.S. (2009) - "PRActising Gender Equality in Science"; WHIST (2009) - "Women Careers Hitting the Target"; STAGES (2012) - "Structural Changes to achieve gender equality in science"; TRIGGER (2013) - "TRansforming Institutions by Gendering contents and Gaining Equality in Research".

Italy has achieved full literacy for girls. In basic education, school attendance rates for girls and boys are now equivalent and, in most levels of secondary schools, girls actually do better than boys, and there has been a marked tendency of Italian women to continue their studies, especially higher education. According to the latest data made available from the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)⁶, in Italy the percentage of women amounts to 48.1% in kindergarten, 48.4% in elementary school (6-10 years of age), 47.9% in middle school (11-13) and 48.8% in upper secondary school (14-18 years of age)⁷. The survey also show that young Italian women are more likely than men of the same age to continue their studies after the age of 18: 64% of girls graduating from upper secondary education go to the university, as opposed to 52% of boys. In the 25- 29 age bracket, the percentage of those who have obtained an academic degree is 17.6% for men and 28.2% for women.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the

⁶ Up to 2012.

⁷ These data are related to the overall school attendance level of the Italian population: primary and secondary school attendance stands at around 100%, the attendance rate for 14-18 year-olds, taking into account only upper secondary students, reaches 93%.

main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

In this parliamentary term, two bills were introduced to foster a gender mainstreaming approach in all education material. In the Senate: *"Introduzione dell'educazione di genere e della prospettiva di genere nelle attività e nei materiali didattici delle scuole del sistema nazionale di istruzione e nelle università"* (A.S. n. 1680). In the Chamber: *"Introduzione dell'educazione alle differenze di genere nelle attività didattiche delle scuole del sistema nazionale di istruzione e nelle università"* (A.C. n. 2585). They stress the importance of eliminating gender stereotyping, which is considered the cause of enduring obstacles to achieving gender equality. As regards the education process, they draw from the relevant European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2013 and stress the need for special career guidance in primary and secondary schools and higher education institutions, in order to inform young people about the negative consequences of gender stereotyping and encourage them to study for and embark on careers that have in the past been considered exclusively for boys or for girls. It has also been emphasised – with reference to the Chamber Bill *"Disposizioni per la promozione e il sostegno dell'imprenditoria femminile"* (A.C. n. 669) – that the "mainstreaming" of a gender perspective should be a global and across the board strategy. This initiative aims at the establishment of a strategic fund for women-led small and medium-sized enterprises and the financing of training and innovative paths for young business women.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

In order to monitor and implement the Beijing Platform for Action, every year an Italian Government delegation accompanied by observers from the Italian Parliament and the main NGOs participate in the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Italy replies to the surveys carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for the drafting of the biannual Reports on the implementation of each area of the Beijing Platform for Action chosen by each Presidency of the EU Council.

Moreover, Italy has been taking several measures to ensure equal opportunities in access to education and training for women and girls, such as: training education provider on gender equality and equal opportunities; supporting innovative strategies in middle and upper secondary schools to provide business, scientific and technological education guidance to a greater number of girls; providing lifelong learning for adult women aimed at giving them working skills; a Code of Self-regulation for Textbook Publishers to ensure equal representation of women and men in schoolbooks. In particular, Italy is focusing on the access to and participation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): although the number of women taking up a career in sciences has increased in the past 25 years, a gender gap is still present. As mentioned above, the TRIGGER project is funded by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme for Research and aims at addressing various sides of gender inequality in science. Launched in 2013, it is a four-year programme involving five universities from different EU countries (Czech Republic, France, Italy, UK, and Spain) as co-funders

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

A career in sciences will continue to be a key challenge to be tackled in the near future. The percentage of Italian women obtaining an academic degree is higher in academic courses in the field of teaching, education and foreign languages and is lower in such faculties as engineering,

mathematics, science and technology. Only a small fraction of these women achieve leadership positions.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania⁸ defines equal opportunities as one of the guiding principles of the education system: the education system must be socially fair, ensure equality for individuals irrespective of gender, race, ethnic background, language, origin, social position, religion, beliefs or convictions, assure each person access to education, in particular general education, and primary qualifications, and create conditions for improving qualifications held or acquiring new qualifications.

In Lithuania, equal opportunities for everybody to get education are ensured by general education schools. Pre-primary, primary, basic and secondary education is among the top priorities of the education policy and forms the basis for life-long learning.

In Lithuania, a nearly equal number of women and men receive general education. At the beginning of the 2013–2014 academic year, 551,638 people, of whom women made up 51%, studied at all levels of education. Primary schools had more boys (65.7%) than girls (32.8%). Basic schools included more boys (56.2%) than girls (43.8%). However, more girls (52.9%) than boys (47.1%) completed secondary education.

Student women and men in higher education made up 58% and 42%, respectively. At higher education institutions, women accounted for the largest proportion of students in medicine and veterinary (78% and 75% respectively), pedagogy (75%), humanities (74%), and social sciences (70%). Meanwhile, men dominated in engineering (89%), informatics (88%), and transport services (87%).

Within the age group from 20 to 24, 92% of women and 88% of men had completed upper secondary education. Higher education institutions produced 39 thousand specialists, of whom 63% were women. The majority of teaching staff at general education schools were women (87%). Female academic staff made up 69% at colleges, 68% at vocational schools, and 51% at universities.

According to the *Adult Education Survey* carried out in 2011, 44% of women and 34% of men aged 25–64 took advantage of different forms of education. Accordingly, 30% of women and 21% of men attended learning courses, seminars, and conferences; 22% of women and 17% of men were undertaking self-learning. The most popular fields of education among women were social sciences, business and law (35%), and education (17%).

According to a survey on research and development (R&D), the number of women with a scientific degree engaging in R&D (in the government and higher education sectors) totalled 3.8 thousand (49% of all researchers with a scientific degree), while men made up 4 thousand (51%). Male researchers with a scientific degree accounted for a larger proportion of brainpower in technical (71%) and physical (67%) sciences, while female researchers with a scientific degree dominated in biomedical (natural) and social sciences (63% and 60% respectively) and humanities (58%). Most women with a scientific degree were between 35–44 years of age (37%), while men held most

⁸ *Valstybės žinios* (Official Gazette) No 23-593, 1991, No 63-2853, 2003.

scientific degrees in two age groups between 35–44 and 55–64 (26% each). (Data provided by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics)

In Lithuania, equality between women and men is a horizontal priority in all policy areas. Alongside the specific measures aimed at women's advancement and *de facto* equality between women and men, there are consistent frameworks for concrete actions in all areas. The legal framework for this dual approach is established by the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adopted in 1998. The Law prohibits any discrimination — direct or indirect — on the grounds of sex, sexual harassment, harassment on the grounds of sex, and an instruction to directly or indirectly discriminate against persons on the grounds of sex. The Law sets out preconditions for gender mainstreaming. All central and municipal institutions and agencies must guarantee that equal rights for women and men are ensured in all the legal acts drafted and enacted by them. They must also draw up and implement programmes and measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men and must support the programmes of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), dealing with gender equality issues.

In 1996, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Programme for the Advancement of Women. The scope of this first programme was fully in line with the critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action: Human Rights of Women, Economic and Social Status of Women, Women and the Environment, Women's Health and Family Planning, Women and Education, Women in Decision Making, Violence against Women and Girls, Women and Mass Media, Institutional Mechanisms, etc. The Programme created a framework for concrete actions to be taken in all critical areas.

The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has been continuously carried out since 2003. The National Programme is aimed at implementing equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of activity and ensuring gender mainstreaming. All ministries implement concrete measures of the Programme. Most measures are implemented together with women's NGOs. The measures are financed through the national budget and the EU structural funds.

The Programme seeks to address gender equality problems in employment, education and science, health care, environmental protection, national defence, decision making, and implementation of the EU and international commitments to gender equality.

The Programme goals for 2015–2021 in the area of education and science are to encourage women and men to choose such fields of study and professions that are not traditional to women or men; to encourage men to pursue higher education; and to encourage non-discriminatory approach to women and men in textbooks and other learning material.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

A key to success is dynamic interaction between educational institutions and the public when creating smart society. Therefore, the education policy and foreseen directions of educational transformations must mobilise the education community and all the people for constant and targeted development aimed at achieving personal success and the success of the entire country and ensuring equal opportunities.

It is necessary to develop alternatives to the education system, which are affordable, attractive and

valuable to social groups that are hardly involved in learning now: preschool children, high-risk young people, adults and rural residents. It is essential to create a wider range of incentives and provide access to education for persons of any age regardless of the place of residence, even in remote rural areas, to develop the ability of each person to place oneself in the world of activity, and to enable each person to formalise knowledge and competencies held.

We believe that the education system needs more alternatives focusing on individual capacity building and personal development. A part of the public has limited access to education, in particular higher education. A part of young people are unable to attend non-formal education schools for lack of funds. Adult education is also underdeveloped due to the lack of funds.

It is necessary to develop the integrity and complementarity of formal and non-formal education and introduce open and flexible learning methods; to create an opportunity for self-learning, if need be; to strengthen motivation for learning by linking lifelong learning with learners' choices and putting in place a system of financial support; to develop the integrity of lifelong learning and work experience, in particular through practice, internships, and professional training.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

Lithuania does not have programmes dedicated exclusively to female early school leavers. Such programmes are implemented with respect to all children regardless of gender. In 2005, Lithuania launched a project *Return of Early School Leavers* supported from the EU Structural Funds and it has been implemented up till now. The aim of the project is to improve and coordinate preventive actions, to address the problem of school dropouts and to increase the number of people with basic education. Project activities are also aimed at addressing the problem of school absenteeism by increasing the availability of pedagogical-psychological assistance, ensuring adequate infrastructure, developing new training programmes (modules), introducing special classes for children who often miss classes or do not learn, developing prevention (return) models, improving assistance to children with learning difficulties, improving competencies of teachers and educational assistance specialists and upgrading their working environment, analysing problems and the efficiency of programmes being implemented. As part of implementing this project, a model of prevention of general school dropouts and their return to school was created together with recommendations for its implementation. The model has been implemented in practice.

The *National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021* sets new goals in the area of women and girl empowerment through education. During 2015–2021, women and girls will be encouraged to choose non-traditional education and professions and a non-traditional image of women and men will be promoted in textbooks and other learning material.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

People in Lithuania are increasingly adopting a more modern and more positive attitude towards women and gender equality but the process is slow. Women's attitude towards gender equality is more positive than men's. The improvement in attitudes and behaviour with respect to women is more visible in the spheres addressed by Government-approved programmes.

The slowest change has been recorded in the attitude towards women's role in society and in the family, which is probably still heavily influenced by discriminatory patriarchal stereotypes. The

traditional sharing of domestic responsibilities in the family is also changing too slowly.

One of the key remaining challenges is a small number of women in highest positions in education.

The Parliament will propose that Government should develop assistance programmes to advise girls and women on non-traditional education or a choice of profession as well as career opportunities in science, technologies and other fields.

The Parliament also believes that the media can make a positive contribution to gender equality, for example, by presenting a non-discriminatory image of women and men both in the information provided and advertisements. It is necessary to educate society about gender equality, promote good practices, and project a non-discriminatory image of women and men.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Unfortunately in the Grand - Duchy of Luxembourg there is no disaggregation of statistical data by sex concerning education and training. However, the figures below show that the participation of girls and boys in post-primary and higher education was More or less balanced during the last 10 years.

During the 2000/2001 school year, girls accounted for 48.6 % of students in post-secondary education. In 2013/2014, the percentage rose to 49.6 %.

The success rate after N years (= theoretical program duration) is more important for female students , especially in secondary education , where the difference is 11.6 % and in technical secondary education where its 12.6 %. In the occupational scheme, the difference is only 2.1 %, still.

After N + 2 years, the difference was only 2.5% in secondary education and 3.2% in the occupational scheme while in technical secondary education it amounts to 10.2%.

Regarding enrolment at the University of Luxembourg, young women totalled 47.6% of students in the academic year 2006/2007 (48.3% for Luxembourg nationals) and 50.7 in during the academic.

The data from the Labour Force Survey shows that boys are more commonly prone to dropping out than girls.

The data collected in the course of our investigations confirm this: in 2011/2012, students leaving the school system without a diploma or certification were predominantly male (59.9% against 40.1 % girls). This trend is even more marked when considering permanent dropouts, that is to say those who are either working, are subject to social inclusion measures, or are unemployed (62.4 % boys and 37.6% girls).

Thus, by comparing school-leavers in the reference population, boys are overrepresented among early school-leavers.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

On an international level, a multitude of obstacles still prevent the access of girls and women to education: family poverty, health and safety issues, gender discrimination and even the legal framework of education.

Although progress has been noted since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, many challenges remain. That is why Luxembourg is committed to strengthening the role of women.

To ensure the best possible results in terms of gender equality, women's rights and empowerment

of women, Luxembourg supports at international level, both maintaining of a specific objective in this area and mainstreaming in all the objectives that will form the context of post-2015.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

If in terms of qualifications, equality between men and women is reached in Luxembourg, the choice of studies still differs greatly by gender: in science, technology and communication (jobs of the future), male students predominate with 71%, in human sciences, arts, education sciences the situation is reversed: 66.5% of students are women.

Faced with the reality that the choice of studies and professions are still often dependent on gender-related stereotypes, Luxembourg places a particular emphasis on the diversification of career choices and undertakes, in this context to combat stereotypes and prejudices at the level of career guidance. To achieve this goal, awareness and ongoing training projects concerning gender policy particularly aimed at professionals will be carried out.

Another project to be noted in this context is the annual organization of the Girls' Day - Boys' Day to raise awareness in young people concerning said atypical roles and occupations.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

As the level of education of young women is very high in Luxembourg and the transition of women into the labour market is usually no problem, the main challenge in Luxembourg is to maintain these qualified women on the job market and promote their presence in positions of responsibility.

Indeed, today the gender balance is such that 36% of women work part-time against 6% of men. Women represent less than 20% in economic decision-making.

That is why the government elected in 2013 has set very ambitious targets in its program concerning economic and political decision-making. For the first time in history, Luxembourg aims to achieve the specific percentage of 40 % of the under-represented sex (neutral formulation, in the large majority of cases regarding women) by 2019 on the electoral lists for parliamentary and European elections as well as on the boards of public institutions and companies in which the state holds financial interests.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Due to compulsory enrolment, the enrolment rate for primary and lower-secondary schools in Poland has remained at a stable level of nearly 100%. There are no differences between girls and boys as regards access to and receiving of education and training. Nevertheless, Poland undertakes actions to improve the level of education and training of women and girls. The actions undertaken yield both quantitative and qualitative results.

According to the data of the Education Information Centre subordinate to the Ministry of National Education, as at September 30th, 2013, in the children and young people group, the share of girls among graduates of schools between primary and post-secondary level amounts to 49.8%. At the primary school level, this share amounts to 48.6%, at the lower-secondary level – 48.9%, while in basic vocational schools – 33.8%. At the upper-secondary level, the share of girls in general secondary schools amounted to 62.3%, in specialised secondary school – 62.3%, while in technical secondary schools – 40.7%. The share of women in the group of adult graduates of schools between the primary and post-secondary level amounted to 59%.

As regards qualitative results of undertaken actions, it is worth mentioning that the share of graduates who passed exams confirming vocational qualifications and post-graduate exams in the overall number of graduates in 2008 amounted to 57.4% – for women this value attained the level of 62.1% – while in 2012 both values increased to 68.1% and 70.7%, respectively.⁹

The qualitative effects of undertaken actions are also visible in the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study assessing 15-year-old students' knowledge¹⁰ in three areas: reading and interpretation, natural sciences and mathematics. These results have shown that differences in educational attainment of Polish girls and boys are similar. The results were as follows:

- the average mathematics test result in 2009 amounted to 495 pts overall – 497 pts for boys and 493 pts for girls. In 2012, the average result amounted to 518 pts – 520 pts for boys and 516 pts for girls. In 2012, Poland took 4th place in the EU and 8th place among OECD countries with a result at the level of 518 pts.
- girls and boys have also noted similar results in the reasoning in natural sciences test: in 2009, the average result amounted to 508 pts – 505 pts for boys and 511 pts for girls, while in 2012 the average result attained the level of 526 pts – 524 pts for boys and 527 pts for girls. In 2012, Poland took 3rd place in the EU and 5th place among OECD countries with a result at the level of 508 pts.
- larger differences have been shown in the reading and interpretation test results: in 2009, the average result amounted to 500 pts overall – 476 for boys and 525 for girls, while in 2012 it amounted to 518 pts – 497 for boys and 539 for girls. In 2012, Poland took 3rd place in the EU and 6th place among OECD countries with an average result at the level of 518 pts.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the

⁹ "Human Capital in Poland in 2012", www.stat.gov.pl
¹⁰ Ibidem

main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

In Poland, the share of women at all levels of education is similar. This applies to the primary, secondary and tertiary level, as shown in the statistical data presented in point 1 and 3.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

A gender analysis of the educational structure indicates that women are better educated than men and more often attain higher education (in 2012, 25.4% of women has held a diploma of higher education, as compared to 17.5% of men)¹¹.

For many years, Poland has observed a tendency where women pursue higher education more often than men. However, a difference was also observed in the number of men and women pursuing technological studies. In the academic year 2012/2013, women comprised 58.7% of all students, but only 35.3% of students at technical universities. Among others, the “Girls to Technical Universities” project, implemented by the Perspektywy Education Foundation and the Conference of Rectors of Polish Technical Universities, has contributed to closing these gaps.¹² since 2008 (with a pilot part implemented in 2007). The effects of actions undertaken already show results. Despite the decrease in the overall number of students in Poland due to the demographic decline, the number of students at technical universities has increased from 301 thous. in the academic year 2007/08 to 316 thous. in the academic year 2013/2014. During that time, the share of female students at public technical universities has increased from 30.7% to nearly 37%. A positive trend has also been noted with respect to the share of women on post-graduate studies at technical universities which in the academic year 2012/2013 amounted to 38.5% of the overall number of post-graduate students at these universities.

The Ministry of Science and Higher Learning also implements initiatives and introduces new regulations supporting women in the attainment of higher education and during their scientific careers. Some of these measures are aimed at both women and men, while some are targeted specifically at women. These include such measures as:¹³

1. Scholarships for the best students – pursuant to changes introduced by the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning, the best students and post-graduate students may receive several scholarships, such as the rector’s scholarship, the minister’s award or a scholarship for outstanding young scholars, at the same time.
2. Diamond Grant – is a programme of the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning as part of which exceptionally gifted students may receive special funding to conduct advanced scientific research. The first Diamond Grants were awarded in 2012. So far, 73 young female researchers have received them.
3. Top 500 Innovators – since 2011, the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning has implemented a training programme for persons conducting scientific studies and commercialising their results. The subject matter of 9-week internship and training programmes implemented at the best universities in the world includes the cooperation between science and economy, scientific research management and commercialisation of

¹¹ “Human Capital in Poland in 2012”, www.stat.gov.pl

¹² “Women as Engineers 2014”, www.dziewczynynapolitechniki.pl

¹³ “Science is for Women”, www.nauka.gov.pl

test results. Programme participants may take a look at how foreign companies operate as well as meet with entrepreneurs and venture capital representatives. So far, 320 persons have undertaken internships abroad, many of which were entrepreneurial and talented women.

4. For Women in Science – is a competition organised by L’Oréal Poland, the Polish UNESCO Committee and the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning. The competition has been organised for 14 years. It is addressed to young female scientists conducting research in the area of life sciences. It is aimed at the promotion of women and their professional achievements as well as the popularisation of science. So far, the list of laureates included 65 women from various academic centres in Poland who have been awarded one-year scholarships; additionally, the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning has covered each laureate’s travel expenses to a selected science conference abroad, organised anywhere in Europe.
5. More women in Polish and international representative bodies. In order to ensure that women are represented in bodies deciding on matters related to science and higher learning, the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning has created, inter alia, regulations pursuant to which the Polish Accreditation Committee (PAC) and the Central Committee for Degrees and Titles must observe the “principle of honesty, impartiality and transparency of undertaken actions and seek to equalise the share of women and men in its operations”. Women have a legally guaranteed share in the composition of the PAC at the level of at least 30%.
6. Girls of the Future. Following in Maria Skłodowska-Curie’s Footsteps – is a competition organised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning and “ELLE” magazine, aimed at supporting female students pursuing such fields of study as exact sciences, technology, life sciences and mathematics, who are conducting independent scientific research or engaging in scientific projects. So far, awards have been granted to 21 women.
7. Maternity or parental leaves do not interrupt a scientific career – due to new regulations, female scientists who take maternity and parental leaves do not lose their right to apply for grants. In the case of persons under 35 years of age or those who received their PhDs no later than 5 years prior to applying for a grant, time spent on maternity or parental leaves is not counted as cessation of scientific activity.
8. Nurseries and pre-schools at universities – with respect to this issue, the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning has taken patronage over the “Mom at the University” campaign aimed, inter alia, at supporting parents studying and working at universities, adapting academic spaces to the parents’ needs and establishing nurseries and pre-schools at universities. In the “Organisation and animation of actions for the academic community” competition, non-governmental organisations could apply for grants for, e.g., workshops and the promotion of solutions supporting student parents.
9. Platform – is a support programme for scientists-parents returning to work after a break related to childcare as well as pregnant women and women returning following childbirth, who conduct scientific research. It is implemented by the Foundation for Polish Science and financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning and the European Union.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan

to address them?

The Sejm and Senate are not currently undertaking independent actions towards the promotion of the share of women and girls in education and training. Nevertheless, within their auditing competencies, they are monitoring actions undertaken by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Learning, while within their legislative competencies, they work on draft legal acts initiated, *inter alia*, by these two ministries. An example of the latter actions may be the recent works on amending the Act – Higher Education Law aimed, *inter alia*, at facilitating access to higher education for adults as part of lifelong learning.

Portugal
Assembleia da República

By: *Isilda Aguincha*
Member of the Committee on Education, Science and Culture

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Portugal has not seen any relevant differences in the last ten years as regards the number of men and women enrolled in primary and secondary education.

Since 2008, there has been a trend of gradual reduction in the drop-out rate in education and training, which has been more marked from 2010. Over the past six years, the drop-out rate in education and training in Portugal fell by 16.5 percentage points (pp) and it is particularly evident in males, for whom the decrease reached 18.5 pp (compared with 14.3 pp in the female population).

In secondary education, where it is possible to choose different areas, we find that girls and boys go for different types of education. The greater affinity of girls for regular education (55%) - particularly for science-humanities courses (where the feminisation rate is 55.4%, compared with 39% in technology courses) - as well as for specialised artistic studies and modular training (67.3% and 54.7%, respectively), with less focus on vocational courses (42.2%).

In all types of education, completion rates for women are better than for men, especially in the regular education, where the difference is more than 54 pp.

With regard to school performance and according to what the latest PISA (2012) results show, comparison of the mean scores between boys and girls in the evaluation of mathematics, boys recorded better performances than girls, with the difference being 12 points.

When it comes to reading, the leadership changes and girls do conspicuously better than boys, with a difference of 40 points between them.

In the realm of science, girls are again in the lead but are only two points ahead of the average scored by boys.

Regarding higher education, the number of women enrolled in this level of education has been consistently higher than that for men. This phenomenon is reflected in the high feminisation rate of the population with tertiary education: 60 of every 100 people with higher education are women and 40 are men.

Girls are predominant in all areas except for the engineering, manufacturing industries and construction. The very high feminisation of the fields of education and health and social protection is emphasised.

Women are still poorly represented in information and communication technology (ICT) in terms of both enrolments and graduates.

However, at European level, Portugal is one of the countries where a higher proportion of women opt for the areas of mathematics, science and engineering (17.1%).

2 **Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?**

Actions in education must be favoured to underpin policies for equality, and it is important to strengthen intervention in this area, particularly by including the issue of equality between men and women as one of the structuring principles in the guidelines for pre-school education, primary and secondary education, not to mention the labour market.

3 **Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?**

The Fifth National Plan for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination 2014-2017 (*V PNI*) contains some measures to promote equality between women and men and many of them are already being implemented, namely to:

- produce teaching resources in all media platforms to foster gender equality and citizenship: develop the *Guião de Educação, Género e Cidadania* (Guidance on Education, Gender and Citizenship) for secondary education and a *Referencial de Educação para a Igualdade de Género* (Education Standard for Gender Equality);
- promote the dissemination and application of the teaching resources produced;
- incorporate the topic of gender equality as one of the structuring principles of the guidelines for pre-school, primary and secondary education;
- incentivise the introduction of the topic of gender equality in initial and continuing training programmes for education professionals;
- mainstream equality between women and men in the organisation and running of schools;
- introduce the category of Gender Studies in the funding lines of the FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology);
- prepare a study on women's participation in ICT courses.

4 **What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?**

The 19th Constitutional Government has undertaken several actions in the context of citizenship and the promotion of gender equality, since its programme enshrined a commitment to implement public policies in this area, including through the implementation of National Plans.

In the *Grandes Opções do Plano* (Major Options of the Plan), too, the Government has been reaffirming its commitments regarding the implementation of public policies on equality. It has stressed the mainstreaming of gender equality in central and local government policies, investment in the area of education and intervention in the area of employment equality.

The Fifth National Plan for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination 2014 -2017 (*V PNI*) belongs to the commitments pledged by Portugal in various international forums, in particular in the context of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Union European and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (*CPLP*). Given their obvious importance, special emphasis is given to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the European Pact for Gender Equality between Women and

Men (2011-2020), the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010 -2015 and the Europe 2020 strategy.

At the parliamentary level, the Subcommittee on Equality, which operates under the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees, is responsible for exercising its legislative powers of monitoring and oversight and political control in these areas.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

In 2014, Romania has issued the National Report for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the context of the 20th anniversary of the 4th World Women Conference and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 2015.

Regarding the progresses acquired by our country in the implementation of specific areas B and I of the Declaration and Platform for Action, mention should be made that the Romanian Parliament adopted the National Education Law no 1/2011 introducing the principles of non-discrimination and gender balance in the education of school pupils, students and adults.

In Romania, the state ensures citizens equal opportunities of access to all levels and forms of secondary and higher education as well as lifelong learning without any form of discrimination, and the governing principles are those of equity and of ensuring equal opportunities. No age ethnicity, sex, social origin, political or religious affiliation, sexual orientation or other types of discrimination are allowed in higher education, excepting only the affirmative measures as provided by law. The Legislation on adult vocational education stipulates that "Adults have equal access to training without age, sex, race, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation discrimination."

Sequent to the coherent, continuous and non gender discriminative implementation of the measures for increasing and sustaining school pupil attendance, an increasing trend of enrollment with higher percentages of females is observed. High school graduation rates with or without high school final examination diploma, keep an increasing trend in recent years, both in the total number of graduates and considering gender; the percentage of girls graduating secondary education with final examination degree is higher than that of boys.

A series of Guidelines meant for teachers in primary and secondary education was developed where didactic recommendations are promoted in order to give a greater importance to the gender dimension in school practice. The main objective of the Guidelines is to provide tools and counseling for teachers in primary and secondary education in order to apply these activities in the classroom, to value the differences and promote gender partnership.

A Compendium for teachers has been issued to capitalize gender education, containing some basic concepts for understanding the gender perspective in education: gender identity, gender socialization, stereotypes, preconceived ideas, role models and gender partnership. It offers a set of specific tools for self-assessment and evaluation of schools from a gender perspective and a set of indicators to assess textbooks relevant to gender.

Programs for the training of secondary education teachers that include gender dimension and equal opportunity topics (equal access to education and training, active participation of women in education / school decision, the observance of the equal opportunities concept) were organized.

As far as the level of education is concerned, in preschool /infant education the number of women teachers is the highest (99.7 %) followed by primary education (88.1 %) and special primary and secondary education (88.6 % and 82.2 %). In middle school and high school women represent about

70 % of all teachers. The lowest percentage is recorded in vocational education (52.7 %). With regard to gender in higher education, the percentage of women teachers is significant (48.5% in the academic year 2012-2013), although it decreases with advancing in rank. A similar situation can be observed in the case of the students in science, mathematics and technology where there are fewer women than men. However, on the whole, the enrollment rate in higher education, the average attendance and graduation rates with or without final graduation examination degree is higher among women than it is among men.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The European Commission Communication "Annual Growth Survey for 2014" pointed out that during the economic crisis, the overall level of investment in education and training had declined in several EU countries, including Romania. As the costs of education and training were considered to be too high, in combating the effects of socio-economic crisis and recovery measures taken, the financing of education was on the overall low (investment in schools and other infrastructure elements, teacher salary level, coverage with qualified personnel, etc.). Thus, the main obstacle for lifelong education was the financial one (52.5%). The investments of the employers in the continuous training of employees have significantly decreased and the percentage of employees who accused inconsistencies between the training program and the work program as well as lack of support from the employer, indirectly expressed the difficulties they had encountered in participating, even on their own account, in life long learning.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

In the framework of the general process of promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in all areas and at all levels, the Department for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Ministry of Labor issued the National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for the period 2014 - 2017. The strategic document makes an assessment of the status of balance between women and men in Romania and establishes, at national level, the critical areas, where it is necessary to promote more vigorously the values and principles of equal opportunities and treatment between men and women and non-discrimination on grounds of sex, that is to say: education, employment, balanced participation of women and men in decision-making, integrated gender approach in all policies and programs and gender-based violence.

For the area of intervention - *Education*, the specific objective of *Fighting against gender stereotypes in the education system*, the *Strategy* provides, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research, the following specific activities: assessing of analysis at the level of school education on gender perspectives in education, by elaborating questionnaires to identify the degree of promotion of the gender perspective in the educational process and the level of valuing the gender perspective in schools (primary, secondary, high school); organization of awareness campaigns and information among students in pre-university education in order to increase awareness and informing them about the significance and importance of the right to non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all; the inclusion in the complementary set of criteria for external evaluation of the quality of education institutions of criteria on balance between women and men; development of continuous training of teachers in the field of balance between women and men (continuous training programs, other professional and personal development activities).

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Concerning the specific area of activity equal opportunities and treatment between men and women and fight against all discrimination forms on grounds of sex, it is obvious that Romania values the role and place of women in society. It is important that women living in the Romanian society know their rights and, above all, are aware of the importance of access to and exercise of these rights. The elimination of gender stereotypes, of the sexist socio-cultural patterns and of the barriers that still are in the way of the full development of the personality of the women and men certainly are measures of a healthy democracy for any society and active factors of guaranteeing the development of an intelligent and sustainable economy.

Undoubtedly, education has a crucial impact on the formation of values, attitudes and patterns of individual and collective future. Whether it is learnt in the formal or informal educational system, from personal experiences or from those around them, it is important to be aware that in order for the society to function democratically, cohesive and effective, it is essential to use at the maximum degree the creative potential of both women and men.

Be it on the individual level or at the community level, there are always successful female role models to be promoted to a much greater extend as examples of social affirmation and inspiration for how women and girls can successfully meet social challenges.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Work of Spain in this area is channelled through the MDG Achievement Fund. [Work focused on women and girls inside Spain will be addressed in our response to Questions 3 and 4].

The MDG Achievement Fund was established in 2007 through a landmark agreement signed between the Government of Spain and the UN system. With a total contribution of approximately USD 900 million, the MDG-Fund has financed 130 joint programmes in eight thematic windows, in 50 countries around the world.

The MDG-F's work is rooted in the recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are vital for the realization of human rights for all. In order to achieve gender equality, it is necessary to build a society in which women and men share equally in the distribution of power and influence and have equal access to education, health, decent work and livelihoods.

As a result, the MDG-F pioneered a dual strategy to strengthen women's rights and promote gender equality, with 13 programmes that directly bolstered women's representation in decision-making processes, increased women's capabilities, improved their access to resources and opportunities, and reduced their vulnerability to violence and conflict. Our work also improved legal systems to respect women's rights, particularly those of marginalized indigenous and ethnic minority groups. As the indirect approach in our dual strategy, a gender perspective was incorporated into programmes across all our other thematic windows.

These programmes were designed to address gender equality in a broad and holistic manner, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls, and supporting efforts towards MDG 3, achieving gender parity in education.

Among our successes focused on educational issues: In Ethiopia, the MDG-F targeted 100,000 adolescent girls and women with literacy training, business skills and access to credit to increase their economic opportunities, as well as HIV/AIDS and reproductive health education. And in Bangladesh, 24,000 people received awareness training on gender-based violence, including journalists, employers, judges, prosecutors, government officials, sex workers and many others.

Results of our work:

- 630,000 women and girls gained access to violence prevention and protection services.
- 24,000 women increased their income and 3,000 took on public decision-making positions.
- More than 1,500 public institutions and nearly 450 private organizations strengthened their capacities to work more responsively towards gender equality.

[Click here for a complete report](#) of the indicators and results achieved by the MDG-F's 13 joint programmes on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this

is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?

The feminization of poverty and discrimination against women remains universal and unquestionable, despite the progress made in recent decades in the implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Resolution 1325 "Women, Security and peace" as reference pillars to reduce inequality in the world.

Inequality is alarmingly exacerbated by situations of double or multiple discrimination that occurs where gender is combined with other forms of bias based on race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, disability or any other status or personal or social circumstance.

Moreover, economic crises have a particularly negative impact on women in terms of resources and effective access to fundamental rights.

Inasmuch as Spain and educational matters are concerned, it is on the other hand true that girls outscore boys in academic performance in all phases of the educational system from primary to university. Specifically, in high school, 52.4 % of girls of the relevant age attained their degree; whereas their male classmates remained at 47.6 %. In obtaining a university degree, the differences are very similar: 78.9 % of women attained their degree against 74.3 % of men. This is proven by the latest available data from the Ministry of Education¹⁴.

And three more data, drawn from the same official source, and also favourable to young Spanish women compared to their male counterparts:

- 42.2 % of Spanish women between 25 and 34 are in possession of a university degree, compared to just over 37 % of men.
- Young Spanish women enjoy a lower level of early employment (7.4 % versus 11.5 % of men at ages between 16 and 19), as is indicated by a higher figure of exclusive dedication to study.
- Finally, young Spanish women combine more assiduously work and study at ages (20-24) where such combination can even be advisable (21 % versus 18.6 % in men). These percentages are comparable to the age group between 25 and 29 years (20.3 % versus 17.2 % of men)¹⁵.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

Actions in this field can be classified under the next two headings: Measures adopted on the so-called Equal Opportunity Plans and actions taken on the educational sphere.

1. Measures on Equal Opportunity Plans.

Definition, planning and coordination of these policies have come from the hand of Equal Opportunity Plans, implemented since 1988.

Last year the Government of Spain considered it a priority to boost an even more effective equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women and for that purpose adopted the so-called Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014-2016.

¹⁴ *Facts and Figures - 2014/2015 School Year*, <http://goo.gl/jPqaIS>

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, <http://goo.gl/jPqaIS>

In its preparation the main policy instruments adopted by the EU in this area have been taken into account, such as the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 and the Europe 2020 Strategy, together with the content of the reports and the various non-legislative proposals adopted by the Congress of Deputies and the Senate (both on Committee or Plenary sittings).

This Plan is the instrument defining government responsibilities, objectives and priority measures in order to eliminate gender discrimination and to achieve equal opportunities for both women and men.

It addresses, in particular, three main strategic objectives: reduce inequalities in the business and employment fields, with special emphasis on the pay gap; foster an easier combination of personal, family and professional life; and eradicate violence against women. To these another three can be added: improving the participation of women in political, economic and social spheres; promote equal opportunities between women and men through the education system; and fully integrate the principle of equal treatment and opportunity in all government policies and actions.

Also to be mentioned is the establishment of mechanisms for cooperation – within the national Government and also with respect to regional ones – with a view to promoting educational models with a “gender perspective”. Regional governments have in turn adopted Plans for Equal Opportunities of their own. All regional plans and initiatives are based on a common generic objective, namely the creation and transmission of values, attitudes and patterns of personal and collective reference that contribute to gender equality, the integral development of girls and women and their full personal autonomy.

2. Actions on the Educational Sphere.

Three specific actions can be identified, the so-called Intercambia Network being particularly relevant.

A. The Intercambia Network.

The broad consensus on the need to address gender issues, with a special awareness of the educational world and the governmental commitment thereto bore fruit by the setting up of the Intercambia Network in 2005. All regional governments also take part in this Network, through their Ministries of Education and Equality Bodies.

One of the most significant achievements of the Network has been the creation of the Intercambia website, named “Educar en femenino y en masculino”. This site is intended to serve as a virtual platform for the dissemination of all educational initiatives related to equal opportunities between women and men as it targets all professionals in the educational community, researchers and members of associations, etc., both at the national and the international level.

Intercambia has been translated into 15 languages and it features a large cast of resources including teaching, bibliographic, statistical and legislative materials structured into sections for easier accessibility.

B. Other Activities and Programmes.

- *Irene Awards: “Peace begins at home”*

These awards are the initiative of the Government of Spain to contribute, from the classroom to the prevention of violence against women in order to identify and disseminate experiences that are being developed in Spanish schools.

The first edition of the Irene Awards took place in 2006 and up to their 2009 edition they were called on an annual basis. The awards are aimed at teachers and, in general, education professionals who carry out work in schools financed with public funds. Since their 2009 edition, potential winners are also students.

- *Intercambia Day*

Held since 2005 with the aim of sharing experiences, projects and co-educational materials developed by the equality bodies and the education departments of regional governments.

As a result of these meetings, an annual guide is drafted containing abstracts of coeducational materials and experiences, developed by each organizing government.

- Specific initiatives in schools

Among the initiatives in this regard is the so-called "Girls' Day", that takes place in various technology universities, with the aim of attracting female secondary education students to the world of engineering and technology, and which has been held in several regions of Spain (such as Aragon, Asturias, Catalonia and Madrid).

Its main objective, also pursued in other countries, is to get the girls who attended consider studying engineering in their academic choices: on the relevant day, women engineers and women scientists expose their experience and what moved them to entering areas of study that have historically been "men's fields".

C. Publications, Reports and Research Work.

The Ministry of Education promotes and disseminates research and innovation in education and gender, either through publications, research awards or educational innovation reports.

More info .: <http://goo.gl/DjR8eB>

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Four are the main problems identified in our country, certainly some of them common to many other EU nations.

1. Few Spanish girls choose technological studies.

According to the document from the Ministry of Education: Facts and Figures - 2009/2010 school year, 56.2% of female secondary education students took humanities and social science subjects versus 42.8% of males. While only 38.6% of female secondary education students took technology and science subjects versus 53.5% of males.

And as far as the university is concerned, science and technology studies continue to fill up mainly with male students. According to the Ministry of Education, women only attain 26.1% of all Architecture and Engineering degrees¹⁶.

2. Young Spanish women suffer from greater difficulties in accessing the labour market than young men do.

¹⁶ Datos básicos del sistema universitario español - Curso 2013-2014, <http://goo.gl/pKJoJS>

Abovementioned sources from the Ministry of Education show that only 64.3% of Spanish women aged between 25 and 29 had a job in 2013 (that age group being the one where access to employment should be widespread): in contrast with that figure, and in that same year, 72.2% of their male counterparts had instead accessed the labour market¹⁷.

3. Young Spanish women fall in greater numbers in labour or study idleness situations.

The same sources prove that the percentage of Spanish young women neither studying nor working in 2013 substantially increases as of the age of 19, whereas it remains almost equated to the equivalent of young men in the age group between 16 and 19.

For the age group between 25 and 29 that figure more than doubles the one applicable to men in the same situation in the age group (9% of women compared to 4.4% of men)¹⁸.

4. Spanish working women earn lower wages than their male counterparts.

Again according to those same official sources, in turn drawing data from the National Institute of Statistics, net pay gap, which begins being moderate between male and female workers with primary and lower education (79.6 versus 66.1 out of 100), grows substantially among men and women of secondary education (almost doubling, with 99.2 versus 76.8 for upper secondary education). Fortunately, the gap narrows again among workers with university qualifications (131.7 vs. 116.6 in men and women respectively)¹⁹.

To combat this situation the Government of Spain will approve in the coming months a Plan against Wage Discrimination intended to correct the gender pay gap, and avoid and break the glass ceiling preventing women to achieve relevant decision making positions.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, <http://goo.gl/jPqaIS>

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, <http://goo.gl/jPqaIS>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, <http://goo.gl/jPqaIS>

Sweden
Riksdag

By: *Gunilla Svantorp*
Member of the Committee on Education

- 1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?
- 2 Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?
- 3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?
- 4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

Introduction

Average levels of education levels in Sweden have increased since the year 2000, especially among women aged between 25 and 44 years. Among this age group, 51 per cent of women had a post-upper secondary education in 2012 compared with 36 per cent in the year 2000. Data on how the population's educational levels have changed in Sweden since the year 2000 are presented in the table below.

Table Educational levels of the population

Educational level	2000		2012	
	W	M	W	M
<i>25-44 years</i>				
<i>Pre-upper secondary</i>	11	14	9	11
<i>Upper secondary</i>	52	54	38	47
<i>Post-upper secondary</i>	36	31	51	39
<i>No data available</i>	1	1	2	3
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Number</i>	1,193	1,244	1,206	1,252
<i>45-64 years</i>				
<i>Pre-upper secondary</i>	27	31	14	19
<i>Upper secondary</i>	44	42	47	49
<i>Post-upper secondary</i>	29	25	38	31
<i>No data available</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Number</i>	1,121	1,138	1,203	1,223

Source: Statistics Sweden, Education register

The Education Act and national curricula stipulate that education for children and young people is to

be designed in accordance with fundamental democratic values, the equal worth of all people and gender equality. The curricula also lay down that schools are to help to ensure that pupils' study choices are not limited by gender, and thus counteract traditional gender patterns. For many years, girls have generally had higher grades and better performance at compulsory and upper secondary school level. One of the challenges that Sweden faces, in addition to promoting gender equality efforts, is to motivate boys to study to the same extent as girls. For example, 75 per cent of boys complete upper secondary school, compared with just over 80 per cent of girls.

At higher education institutions, there are also problems as regards gender equality. Among other things, the occurrence of gender-based education choices continues to be a problem. Education in health and medical care, as well as social care is the most common choice for women and is most dominated by women, with 83 per cent women and 17 per cent men (in the 2012/13 academic year). The gender distribution in health and medical care education has barely changed since the mid-1980s. The most male-dominated choice for men is technology and manufacturing, where 69 per cent are men and 31 per cent women. However, the gender distribution within this field of education has evened out since the mid-1980s, with the share of women increasing by 17 percentage points.²⁰

For a number of years, the share of women in basic level and advanced level education has been greater than the share of men. For example, the gender distribution among those starting higher education in the 2012/13 academic year was 58 per cent women and 42 per cent men. These shares remain basically unchanged since 2001. Of the total number of graduates in the 2012/13 academic year, 63 per cent were women and 37 per cent men.²¹

In postgraduate education and among those defending their doctor's theses, the gender distribution is more or less even. At the same time, 76 per cent of professors in Sweden's higher education institutions are men.²² The proportion of women professors is increasing, but there is still quite a way to go before the objective of equal career opportunities at universities and university colleges has been reached.

Initiatives based on the Beijing Platform in the field of education

This section presents a number of initiatives taken by the Swedish Government based on the Beijing Platform during the period 2004-2014.

Education for children and young people

Between 2004 and 2008, the National Agency for School Improvement²³ had the task of implementing measures for greater gender equality, and as a consequence of the 2006 appropriation directions, gender equality was identified as one of five prioritised development areas. Among other things, the agency produced a number of books, films and other gender equality material for use in schools.²⁴

In order to promote women's and men's equal opportunities in education, the Government earmarked funding for the period 2002-2005 for education in gender equality and gender studies for teaching staff at compulsory schools – 'gender education specialists'. During this period, approximately 255 gender education specialists received training.

According to the Government's latest follow-up report on the Beijing Platform²⁵, the new Education

²⁰ Statistics Sweden, SCB (2014).

²¹ Swedish Higher Education Authority (2014).

²² Statistics Sweden, SCB (2014).

²³ National Agency for School Improvement 2003-2008.

²⁴ Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (2009).

²⁵ Ministry of Education and Research (2014).

Act, which came into force in 2011, stipulates that education is to be designed in accordance with fundamental democratic values and human rights, including all people's equal worth and gender equality. The new curricula which were implemented in the autumn term 2011 also set out that everyone working in schools shall help to ensure that pupils' study and career choices are not limited by gender or by social and cultural background. Schools should also take action to counteract traditional gender patterns and to promote equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. Teaching in schools should also be characterised by a gender equality perspective. In 2008, the Government appointed a delegation for gender equality in schools, whose reports serve as an important basis for current gender equality efforts in the education system.

Since 2009, the National Agency for Education has received a number of assignments from the Government concerning measures for greater gender equality and to counter sexism and discrimination in the education system.²⁶ The assignment reported by the National Agency for Education in January 2015²⁷ shows that the National Agency for Education has, among other things, carried out two major initiatives under the assignment;²⁸

- A higher education-based skills development course was offered - *Core values and equal treatment in theory and practice* - in which approximately 2100 staff at pre-schools and schools participated. The knowledge that the course contributed to the most is what a norm-critical approach involves.
- Followed up and developed the National Agency for Education's understanding of how violations and discrimination arise and can be countered, among other things by means of far-reaching work with core values.

Higher education and other adult education

The Higher Education Act stipulates that gender equality between women and men shall always be taken into account within higher education activities. According to the appropriation directions, higher education institutions are obliged to counteract unequal gender distribution when recruiting to programmes and courses where the gender distribution is uneven. As regards equal opportunities in higher education, the Government gave the National Agency for Higher Education the assignment in 2004-2008 to review gender differences in study choices within different teacher training courses. Among other things, the agency examined why men dominate among the students who drop out, which institutions implement strategies to attract more men to their courses, and the factors that influence women and men to choose the teaching profession.

In order to promote gender equality in higher education, the Government appointed a delegation in 2009 with the task of supporting initiatives and proposing measures to promote equal opportunities in higher education. The delegation's proposals led, among other things, to a review of the objectives for recruitment of women professors. In addition, the delegation awarded approximately SEK 47 million to 37 different gender equality projects. Thereafter, the Swedish Council for Higher Education was given the assignment of receiving the final reports from all the projects that had received support from the delegation. The Council noted in its report that there are still major shortcomings as regards gender equality in higher education in Sweden.

In its report about the projects, the Swedish Council for Higher Education recommends, for example, that the decision-making procedures in the academic sector should be reviewed, that clear and

²⁶ These assignments are U/2011/7067/S U2011/263/S (partially), U2012/7365/S and U2013/5044/S.

²⁷ Presentation of Renewed assignment to strengthen the core values of schools and work with discrimination and degrading treatment, File no. U2011/567/S, U2011/2649/S.

²⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (2014).

transparent guidelines should be introduced in all procedures in the academic sector and that all universities and university colleges should work with gender mainstreaming. In addition, the Council proposed that a national survey of gender equality in higher education institutions should be carried out.

As regards counteracting illiteracy among women, the local authorities are obliged to offer basic adult education corresponding to compulsory school level. The local authorities are also obliged to offer Swedish for Immigrants for adults without a knowledge of the Swedish language. Within Swedish for Immigrants, courses in writing and reading for those who are illiterate are also organised.²⁹

In order to improve women's opportunities for vocational education, technology and in-service training, the following initiatives have been taken during the period 2004-2008:

- The Higher Vocational Education Act (2001:239) states that vocational education that entitles the student to a government grant must contribute to changing traditions around gender-based professional choices.
- In 2007, the National Agency for School Improvement allocated funds to 29 municipalities so that they could organise summer classes in technology for girls in order to increase girls' interest in technology.
- The National Agency for Higher Education was tasked with proposing measures to achieve a more even gender balance on teacher training programmes.
- In 2005, the National Agency for School Improvement implemented a project designed to increase awareness of gender equality issues and to promote equal conditions for both women and men.

Since 2008, the following initiatives to enhance gender equality have also been taken:³⁰

- In 2006, an extra allowance was introduced within the study support system to make it easier for people with children to study.
- In 2013-14, SEK 32 million were earmarked (by the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems and the Swedish Research Council) for distribution to research that was assessed to contribute to developments and progress for practical gender equality efforts within academia, industry and the public sector.
- In 2008, the Government gave the National Council for Adult Education the assignment of taking gender equality initiatives within popular education with a special focus on entrepreneurship among women. The assignment included initiatives targeted at women from Sweden's national minorities. Since 2008, this project has helped to enable women to influence their own lives and encourage commitment to participating in developments in society. The initiative has also led to newly established companies, new employment and continued studies, as well as greater confidence and less social exclusion among the participants.

The Government's priorities

According to information from the Gender Equality Department at the Ministry of Health and Social

²⁹ Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (2009).

³⁰ Ministry of Education and Research (2014).

Affairs, gender equality has high priority in all levels of education. Work is under way in the Swedish Government Offices to draw up priorities for gender equality work in the current electoral period.

Below follows and account of a selection of gender equality objectives in the field of education, which were presented in the Government's budget bill for 2015.³¹

Education for children and young people

As regards education for children and young people, the Government writes in its recent Budget Bill that gender equality efforts in schools shall be pursued on an ongoing basis and shall be a natural part of daily life. Stereotypical gender norms, bullying and discrimination shall be actively combated. A point of departure for pre-schools and schools is that children and pupils are given the opportunity to test and develop their abilities and their interests regardless of gender or gender identity.

The Government is also working to integrate a gender equality perspective into the objectives for education for children and young people, partly in order to further define gender equality policy within the area, and partly to intensify the Government's work with gender mainstreaming. The Government therefore intends to review how the objectives for this area of activities can be formulated from a gender equality perspective and which indicators can be linked to the objectives.

Adult education

As regards municipal adult education and vocational higher education, the Budget Bill sets out that these are to help to break traditions as regards gender-based education and career choices. The Government intends to review the objectives for how the areas of activities can be formulated from a gender equality perspective, and which indicators can be linked to the objectives.

According to the Higher Education Act, equal opportunities between women and men shall always be observed and promoted in activities. The Government states that it presupposes that the higher education institutions are working actively with these issues and that women and men are given equal opportunities to pursue an academic career. All forms of discrimination are to be combated.

The Government intends to follow developments within the area closely, with the ambition of further increasing gender equality in higher education.

In addition, the Government states that it is problematic that men choose not to continue with higher education to a greater extent than women. It is important that the higher education institutions aim for an even gender distribution when recruiting students, especially within courses with a particularly uneven distribution, such as certain teacher training and healthcare courses, as well as technical and natural science courses.

The Government also stresses that it is important that the higher education institutions create equal career opportunities and opportunities to qualify oneself, both within education at research level and later in one's research career. The Government is also monitoring the extent to which the higher education institutions are observing the recruitment objectives for new professors that have been adopted by the Riksdag.

Research

According to the Government's objectives, all research policy should be pursued from a gender equality perspective. Research funding should, for example, be gender aware, with the aim of ensuring that outcomes are gender neutral. Men and women should also have the same opportunities to access research findings and all researchers should have the same opportunities

³¹ This section is based on information in the Budget Bill for 2015.

and conditions for accessing research infrastructures.

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The Budget Bill for 2015.

1 In the light of the 2015-review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Millennium Development Goals, how has your country advanced education and training of women and girls over the past ten years?

Education and training system in the Republic of Serbia is based on the following general rules:

- Equality and education accessibility;
- Good quality and balanced education and training;
- Full observance of the right of the child, student and a grown-up person;
- Education and training, which meets the needs of various students;
- Equal opportunities of education and training in accordance with the needs and interests;
- Accessibility of all levels of education to children, students and grown-up persons with developmental disabilities and disabled persons.

One of the basic goals of education and training in the Republic of Serbia is development and observance of racial, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, and age related equality, tolerance and respect of diversity. Law on the foundations of education and training system as well as the Law on textbooks, dating from 2009, contain anti-discriminatory provisions including gender-based discrimination and bring to notice ban of discrimination, and the same stems from bylaws adopted on the basis of the above mentioned laws.

The general democratization of the society in Serbia in the recent years brought about the need for changes in the educational system, regarding amendments and alteration of the contents and positions relating to women's rights, gender and sexual orientation. According to Education Strategy in Serbia in 21st century, the education system in Serbia in the 21st century is to secure the foundation of life and development of each individual, and thereby of women, and the development of knowledge based society.

By the complete embracing the role of education in economic, cultural social, political democratic and any other kind of development and advancement of strategic, cooperative and competitive capacity and position of Serbia in contemporary world, particularly in the European Union and based upon the current state of education in Serbia, the following long term key goals for education development criteria have been established:

1. Raising the quality of the education process and result, up to the maximum attainable;
2. Increased inclusion of Serbian population from all educational levels starting from preschool education and training up to creating the conditions for lifelong education;
3. Reaching and maintenance of education relevance by aligning the education system structure with immediate and developmental needs of individuals and economic, cultural, research, education, public, administrative and other systems;

4. Increased efficiency and use of educational resources.

In the process of determining the necessary changes and full reform implementation, the Ministry of education, science and technological development relies on the scientific research results and available empiric data in the field of education. The first step was to conduct research of the situation of the overall educational system in Serbia, and the teaching quality. Based on results obtained, it was concluded that 1.5 million children and young people were covered by some kind of education, from preschool up to university level, with over 100,000 tutors, teachers and lecturers/professors. There are 2,384 public kindergartens, 1,106 primary schools, 608 secondary schools, and 86 faculties, which makes the number of 4,000 educational and training institutions in Serbia. These data were the starting basis for new the solutions in a basic law on education – *Law on the foundations of education and training system*, which provides for the preconditions of non-segregated inclusion of all children (boys and girls) in education and their continued education.

This law especially highlights timely inclusion in pre-school education of all children, regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity etc. Girls, equally as boys, are included into free preparatory pre-school programme, the duration of which is extended from six to nine months. Enrolment of children belonging to minority groups is additionally facilitated, and they are enabled to communicate in their mother tongue.

In cooperation with the World Bank a detailed concept of inclusive education was developed, since the Law enables the children and adults with developmental disabilities or physical disabilities, regardless of their financial situation, gender, place of abode, to have access to all levels of education and institutions.

This kind of approach enabled access to increased number of children with developmental disabilities in pre-school institutions and increased quality of education and training process. At the same time it represents fulfillment of another of the Dakar Convention goal relating to lifelong education.

Education Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2020 endorsed the commitment for lifelong education and it also provided for part-time and free attendance of secondary education.

2 **Whilst the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, this is not the case for all levels of education: what does your Parliament believe are the main obstacles to achieving continuous and quality education, both inside and outside the EU?**

- Social-economic status of families belonging to marginalized groups,
- Gender stereotypes,
- Lack of services and insufficient school buildings in rural areas,
- Inadequate programmes aimed at skills development required for integration in the labour market,
- Lack of financial means for improvement of education quality, etc.

When it comes to girls from Roma community, special attention should be paid to child begging

issue and early marriages, considering the fact that these are often the main causes for early drop-outs.

3 Which specific actions are currently being implemented in your country to further empower women and girls through education?

The projects and other activities contributing to improvement of women's rights and gender equality in the field of education implemented in the Republic of Serbia as follows:

- "Prevention of Gender based violence" Project – carried out in 2013 as an integral part of the joint United Nations programme „Integrated response to violence against women" carried out by UNICEF, UNDP and UNWOMEN, and funded by UN TRUST FUND;
- Violence prevention Unit was established as a special structural unit (in cooperation with UNICEF), in the Ministry of education, science and technological development. The unit is tasked with steering the implementation of previously mentioned project in 50 primary and secondary schools where a research has been carried out upon which the workshops were set up dealing with the topic of gender-based-violence prevention and protection of children against sexual violence. The research was carried out on the sample group of 22 000 students and on 3000 employees;
- Proposals for amending the contents relating to women issue in curricula have been forwarded to the Institute for advancement of education and training;
- The representative of the Ministry of education participated in drafting the Strategy and Action plan for protection of women against violence;
- *School without Violence* Project. Carried out together with UNICEF. Last year the programme was extended, adding the component relating to gender based violence;
- *Safe childhood Project*, with MOI component. One component is devoted to violence prevention (peer group, electronic, family);
- SOS line was introduced in order to report violence in school – officially established in December 2011. 60 counselors, volunteering on these tasks were trained for work on the SOS line, and are available online, during working hours, every day between 7.30-16.30 during an academic year;
- Data base development is in progress in order to introduce integral, aligned records of the reported violence in educational and training system and monitor efficiency of the established procedures on the level of educational training system, and develop indicators for recognizing children - victims of people trafficking and exploitation(in cooperation with MOI, and the Center for the protection of victims of people trafficking);
- The programmes for vocational advanced training of employees in educational institutions were accredited and they were listed among the programmes to be approved by the minister, and employees trainings were carried out;
- The role of educational system in the protection of students against domestic violence "programme was carried out in 4 school administrations (Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi

Sad) 200 employees were trained in recognizing and response in situations of domestic violence and work with children – victims of exploitation or people trafficking;

- Programme: “M-training for violence prevention“ Project- training held for 200 employees on the subject of work with youths.

4 What are the remaining challenges for your country with regards to the empowerment of women and girls through education and, if applicable, how does your Parliament plan to address them?

The still existing problems that need to be addressed through the educational system are, mainly, violence against women, situation of Roma women, eradication of gender-based stereotypes. Namely, violence against women and domestic violence is still evident. When it comes to Roma girls and boys enrolled in primary and secondary schools, there is a low rate of their finishing school, especially among girls. Gender stereotypes existing to varied degree in various segments of the society contribute to negative trends, predominantly in discrimination and violence against women.

In order to find the most efficient response to all these problems, it is essential to start from the primary education, even from the pre-school education. In this regard it is necessary to continue the introduction of men and women equality, mutual respect, non-violent problem solution and prevention of violence against women, with the special view to women belonging to marginalized groups, like Roma women, in all curricula and at all educational levels.

Up to now the National Assembly has undertaken activities aimed at strengthening gender equality. For instance, the competent committees held a series of public hearings, round-table meetings, and field meetings, on the topic: Combating domestic violence, National implementation of UN CEDAW committee Recommendations and COE CAHVIO Convention, Situation of Roma women, The Role of the gender equality mechanisms and the relevant authorities' following the appropriate protocols when dealing with cases of violence against women in the family or partnership, Women's Entrepreneurship.

In this and the previous composition of the National Assembly a major increase in the participation of women parliamentarians was secured (34% as of today). It resulted in setting up of the Women's Parliamentary Network which brings together women members of parliament from different parliamentary groups, from both position and opposition parties who contribute to strengthening gender equality through their activities.

In 2013 Serbia ratified COE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which implies a commitment to undertake a series of activities for the purpose of strengthening the gender equality through educational system.

The National Assembly will, by virtue of its legislative and, particularly, supervisory function of the Government performance, using appropriate instruments at its disposal, undertake the activities aimed at aligning regulations and taking other measures in order to implement the Convention and to advance legislation and practice for the sake of strengthening gender equality through all segments, including educational system.

