Women and Media Industries in Europe

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In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing and as a result of the conference the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was created. It sets out the objectives for national and international action for the advancement of women. The European Council committed the EU to the principles of the BPfA in the same year. The BPfA's strategic aims in relation to women and media are broad (Area J). The aims are to: a) increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through media and new technologies of communication; and b) promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

By 2012, the area of women and the media was one of two, out of the total of 12, areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, which had not been reviewed. To remedy the situation, the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) initiated a project to monitor how the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action in the area of women and media were realized in the EU countries. EIGE is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality.

The research project called *Women and Media Industries in Europe* began in 2012. It was led by a consortium of European scholars (see below).

Objectives, Data and Methods

The aim of the research project was to explore three key issues in relation to gender and media, the first being the problem of women's inclusion in decision-making positions within media industries, the second looking at the policies and mechanisms to support the promotion of gender equality and the third looking at how women are represented in the media. The empirical research was divided into two sub-projects. The first one explored media organisations and gender equality policies while the second one monitored media contents.

The project covered all 28 EU Member States and looked at 99 major media industries across Europe including public and private sector broadcasters (TV and radio) as well as a number of major newspaper groups. In addition, 65 women media professionals were interviewed for the project. In terms of media monitoring, researchers monitored 7 days of fact-based TV programmes across 56 TV channels in each member state. The data was collected in 2012-13.

While the publication based on the monitoring of television channels is still on the process, this depiction will concentrate on the findings of the organisational analyses in the following. The report *Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations* was published in 2013 by EIGE. It comprises an analysis of the position of women in major media organisations in every 28 EU countries at both strategic and operational levels, maps policies of the governments and organisations to improve gender equality in the media and proposes three indicators which could be used to measure the extent to which the European media industry is advancing the gender equality agenda.

Findings

Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations showed that women hold less than one-third of all senior, decision-making positions in the surveyed European organisations. The analyses also show that women comprise just over one in five deputy board positions, and just over one-quarter of all 'ordinary' board seats, excluding the CEO position. At both strategic and operational levels, women were more likely to occupy decision-making positions if they are employed in public service of mixed-funded organisations than in the private sector. Women occupy around one-third of all counted positions in public service broadcasting organisations and around one-quarter of positions in the private sector.

When considering gender equality plans, diversity policies and codes, just under half the organisations in the survey have some kind of equality policy which at least mentions gender, although less than one in five organisations have a policy which is explicitly focused on gender. A similar number have formal mechanisms in place to monitor their gender and/or equality policies and nine organisations have an Equality or Diversity Department. In terms of practical measures, the most frequently mentioned measure related to sexual harassment although fewer than 25 % of organisations mentioned this, followed by a dignity at work policy (19 %) and a maternity leave policy (17 %). Only six organisations support structured training programmes for women. Public service and mixed-funded organisations were significantly more likely to have developed formal gender and equality structures than the private sector organisations.

Thus the results of the study show that women are underrepresented within the decision-making structures of some of the major media industries across EU and that few organisations appear to be working proactively to initiate codes and mechanisms to explicitly support and enhance women's career aspirations. Interviews with senior women suggest that one of the most important influences on women's likelihood to succeed into senior posts is the culture which exists in the organisation, more especially that promoted by the leadership team.

In the Nordic countries, the top decision-making positions of media organisations were monitored in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The sample included three Danish and Finnish, and four Swedish organisations. Due to the small number of private media organisations surveyed in each EU country, generalisations should not be made on a country level. However, if the results are interpreted as indicative, it seems that there were clearly more women in average in top decision-making positions in the Nordic countries, than in the European countries and it seems that women's situation is the strongest in Sweden in the Nordic media organisations.

Women formed a half of the top positions of the media regulatory authorities in

Nordic countries while the European average was 30 %. Like in the other European countries, there were not much legislation to promote gender equality especially in the media in Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

Outcomes

Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations proposes three indicators to measure the extent to which media organisations are promoting a gender equality agenda in the workplace.

- Indicator 1 – proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations.

- Indicator 2 – proportion of women and men on boards of media organisations.

- Indicator 3 – level of adoption of policies, plans and measures to promote gender equality in media organisations where policies include general equality and equality plans, processes for measuring the implementation and monitoring of such policies, and practical measures such as training programmes for women.

The Council of the European Union has adopted the report's conclusions and acknowledged the indicators.

Publications of the Project

Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations. European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013. http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/advancing-gender-equality-in-decision-making-in-media-organisations-report
Gender Equality and the Media. A Challenge for Europe. (Eds.) Karen Ross & Claudia Padovani. Routledge Studies in European Communication Research and Education Series. Forthcoming.

Consortium of the Project

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