



On the road to gender equality:

gender balance in the European Economic
and Social Committee

STUDY



European Economic
and Social Committee



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Study

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Foreword

This study was commissioned by the Workers' Group (Group II) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in May 2019. I wish to thank the person that made the study possible in the first place and the Group II Secretariat, for their guidance and support during its elaboration. Special thanks to Ms. Cunha for her first steps in looking at gender balance. I also wish to thank the EESC members and personnel that kindly accepted to be interviewed, as well as the EESC members and delegates who took the time to respond to the survey.

Abstract

This study looks at the state of gender balance in the European Economic and Social Committee, both at the political (members) and administrative (staff) level, and considers the main factors influencing the gender composition of the Committee. Through the systematisation of data on the gender of EESC members and personnel, and information gathered in interviews and a survey, the study provides new and updated quantitative and qualitative information. It finds that there is a persistent and systemic gender imbalance among the EESC members, with some variations across the national delegations and the EESC Groups, among others. It reveals that, as regards the nominations procedures for the EESC members, very few Member States and national organisations establish gender parity/balance requirements and appear to be committed to gender equality in practice. Overall, information and clarity about the national nomination and appointment processes for becoming an EESC member could be improved in some Member States. The study makes a number of key recommendations to the Member States, the nominating organisations and to the EESC itself which, if implemented, would set the Committee on the path to gender balance among its members and personnel.

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List of abbreviations

CCMI	Consultative Commission on Industrial Change
CFREU	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
CoR	Committee of the Regions
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECO	Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
Group I	Employers Group
Group II	Workers Group
Group III	Diversity Europe Group
HR	Human Resources
HoU	Head of Unit
INT	Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NAT	Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
REX	Section for External Relations
SOC	Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship
TEN	Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN);
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFE	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UK	United Kingdom

Executive Summary

Introduction

Equality between men and women is one of the founding values of the European Union (EU). However, despite the progress made on gender equality in Europe in the last decades, significant gender inequalities persist. Women are still under-represented in many power domains, including within the EU itself. As women continue to demand their rightful place as equals in all aspects of society (including the corridors of power and influence) the EU institutions and their advisory/consultative bodies have increased their focus on gender balance due to its links with EU values and democratic legitimacy.

Only 28% of the 350 members who sit in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) are women. What lies behind this unsatisfactory statistic and how can women's representation in the EESC be improved in a lasting manner? This study analyses the gender composition of the EESC in the broader context of the ongoing discussion about the persistent lack of women's voices in decision-making in political, economic and social spheres, notably the EU institutions and other EU bodies. By doing so, it demonstrates the need for gender balance and gender equality as necessary components of democracy and justice.

Aims and Methodology

The EESC is intended to represent the voice of organised civil society in the field of European policymaking. Every year it produces on average 170 opinions and information reports, giving recommendations to the European institutions on a wide range of issues that impact on the lives of European citizens (EESC, 2019). However, the low-level of women among its members gives rise to legitimate concerns regarding whether it can effectively fulfil its mission.

This study is part of the EESC's own efforts to improve on the equal participation of men and women in the Committee and start paying attention to broader gender equality issues. It aims to analyse the state of gender balance in the EESC as well as the main factors that influence its gender composition, with a view to reducing the knowledge gap in this regard. Although it considers both the political level (members) and administrative level (personnel), it focuses mainly on the political level due to its close links with to democracy, representativity and the EU's governing system.

It explores the causes of the gender imbalance among the EESC members by looking at the processes involved in their selection and appointment, which allows for a better understanding of why this situation persists. Based on this analysis, it provides recommendations aimed at the relevant European institutions, the Member States and the nominating organisations with a view to encouraging a reflection on the composition of the EESC and encouraging them to take concrete and structural action leading to improved gender balance in the next EESC mandate (2020 – 2025) and beyond.

There is a lack of publicly available information about the gender breakdown of the EESC members and gender balance regarding the Committee's structures. Similarly, information regarding the processes behind the selection and nomination of the EESC members at the national level is not readily accessible. For the purposes of this study, this information had to be compiled using a variety of sources and the study combines different methodological tools to provide both

quantitative and qualitative data. Information regarding gender balance in the Committee was primarily obtained by using the EESC's online search engines - *EESC Members Page Search* and *EESC Document Search* – and internal documents. Through this process, it has been possible to compile data about the gender balance in the EESC by Member State and regarding the Committee's different structures, such as its three Groups (Employers, Workers and Diversity Europe).

A literature review revealed two previous studies, undertaken in 1997 and 2007, that comprehensively analysed appointment procedures in the EU 27 Member States. An online survey with 69 respondents and 12 face-to-face interviews of some members and personnel were used to complement and update this information. Obtaining the necessary information, particularly regarding the national nomination and appointment procedures, is highlighted as one of the challenges of this research.

In addition to the analysis of gender balance, the study provides an initial consideration of wider issues related to gender equality by looking at what consideration this is given in the national organisations and in the EESC itself: Is the principle of gender equality considered by national organisations and, if so, what activities do they undertake? How do members and personnel perceive work-life balance measures in the EESC? Are members and personnel trained on gender issues? How, if at all, does the EESC take account of the gender perspective in its work?

Main findings

Gender balance in the EESC – political level (Members)

The research reveals structural gender imbalance at all levels. Over two-thirds (72%) of EESC members are men. Half (14) of the Member States have national delegations with either a minority of women or with no women at all and only two have delegations with a majority of women. This gender imbalance in the national delegations is reflected in the composition of the three EESC Groups – at 35%, only Group II (Workers) has a gender composition of slightly more than one third of women. This imbalance also affects the composition of the EESC's bodies and structures. In the interviews and survey responses, the members indicated that greater attention to gender balance is necessary.

Table - Levels of gender balance per Member State			
	Member State	No. of Member States	No. of seats
All-male	Cyprus, Malta, Portugal	3	22
Minority of women	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	14	197
Majority of women	Croatia, Estonia	2	15
Gender Balance	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, United Kingdom	9	114 ¹

An analysis of the rapporteurs of the EESC's opinions in 2018 shows that these were overwhelmingly men: only 17% of the rapporteurs were women. Currently, men hold the EESC's key leadership positions i.e. the EESC President and the three Group Presidencies. Interestingly however, at the time of the research there was gender parity among the presidents of its sections and similar bodies. A comparison of the gender composition of the EESC in 2013 (during the 2010 – 2015 mandate), reveals only marginal improvement in its gender balance, going from 25% of women members in 2013 to 28% in 2019. As regards the Member States, some show little change in the gender balance of their delegations though this improved in eight countries and worsened in six.

Gender balance in the EESC – administrative level (personnel)

The considerations affecting gender balance among the EESC's staff are very different to those affecting its members. The research shows better female representation among the EESC personnel than among its members. There is almost gender parity among the EESC's middle managers (Heads of Units) and women hold the greater number of its 'Administrator' positions. However, a closer look at the Heads of Unit (HoU) posts reveals that six out of the seven HoU leading the sections' secretariats (and so responsible for the legislative work) are men. Men make up only 29% of 'Assistant' positions, meaning that a greater number and proportion of women are in lower and non-managerial positions. In terms of broader gender equality issues at the administrative level, the interviewed personnel were generally satisfied with the work-life balance measures available, but highlighted that more attention to horizontal gender segregation, the bias in staff evaluations, and protection against harassment, is required.

The processes behind - national nomination and appointment processes

To better understand the gender composition of the EESC, it is necessary to consider the nomination procedures for the selection of the members., There is, however, a lack of information and clarity regarding the national nomination and appointment procedures for becoming a member in some national organisations. According to the survey results and literature review, very few Member States and national organisations have formally established gender parity or balance requirements/quotas and, where these do exist, not all comply with their rules.

¹ The total number of members is 348 as at the time the data was obtained the German and Greek delegations were each down by 1 member.

Organisations represented in Group II seem to “consider” gender balance and diversity criteria more often than organisations represented in the other two Groups. However, the results show that that such “consideration” is not translated into gender balance in Group II either.

Beyond gender balance

While the focus of the research is the gender balance in the EESC, it also takes a brief look at some wider gender equality considerations relevant for the EESC. This information is based on the interviews and survey responses. According to the members, in general national organisations appear to give little consideration to the gender perspective. Whilst a few members did say that the principle of gender equality was established within their organisations, conversely, others mentioned that although their organisations were in favour of gender equality, there was little evidence of a willingness to implement changes either within the organisation or in its external work.

Members also raised several other issues during the interviews relating to sexism in the EESC, insufficient training and knowledge on gender issues, and difficulties regarding work-life balance. Additionally, the principle of gender mainstreaming does not seem to be effectively implemented in the EESC. There are no procedures in place for effective gender mainstreaming and thus, the inclusion of the gender perspective appears to be purely ad hoc and dependent on personal attentiveness/awareness of individual members.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study points to a persistent and systemic gender imbalance in the EESC, notably at the political level i.e. its members. While a number of factors contribute to this state of affairs, it is clear that a lack of formally established requirements/quotas regarding gender parity or, at least, gender-balance in the appointment processes at the national level is a major contributory factor. Moreover, more clarity on the criteria for the selection of members at national level would be desirable, particularly in some Member States. Even in cases where the Member State or national organisation may have a commitment to the principle of gender equality, this is not reflected in the selection/nomination of the EESC members.

Other factors not directly to do with gender balance but linked to wider gender equality concerns may also contribute to the lack of women among the EESC members. For instance, women's primary and unequal share of caring and domestic responsibilities may hamper their access to spheres of power and influence. In the EESC, some members referred to the need to improve the rules governing the functioning of members' activities in order to facilitate work-life balance.

In light of these findings, this study sets out a number of recommendations aimed at improving the gender balance in the EESC. As a starting point, the Council of the European Union should include a recommendation on gender balance/parity to the Member States regarding their national delegations of EESC members. The Member States should also ensure that the national organisations from which the EESC members are drawn, have in place policies on gender equality and that their nominations are gender balanced as far as this is possible.

This study could only provide a limited analysis of the gender composition of the EESC and its structures, and a corresponding overview of the state of play regarding gender balance within the Committee. The periodical collection and publication of data disaggregated by sex regarding the composition of the EESC and its structures, rapporteurs, and study groups preparing the EESC's opinions, is essential to provide concrete information regarding the Committee's gender balance. Such data would also allow for a monitoring of the evolution of the situation. Both the EESC and the European institutions, notably the European Parliament, have a role to play in this regard.

For the EESC to be truly effective in contributing to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union, it is essential that its members are genuinely representative and that the opinions they prepare take account of the diversity of our society. To this end, the EESC should adopt gender equality and diversity policies and ensure that these are mainstreamed throughout its work. The following tables summarise a number of key recommendations which, if implemented, would set the Committee on the path to gender balance among its members and personnel.

Recommendations: EESC members	Actors involved
1. Establish gender parity/balance requirements	Member States; national organisations
2. Recommend gender parity/balanced national delegations	Council of the European Union; EESC; EESC President; Group Presidents
3. Collect, systematise and make public data on gender	EESC; Member States; national organisations
4. Monitor and ensure accountability	EESC; European Parliament
5. Establish clear, transparent and participatory national nomination and appointment processes	Member States; national organisations; EESC; Council of the European Union
6. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies	EESC; national organisations
7. Implement gender mainstreaming	EESC

Recommendations: EESC personnel
1. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies
2. Tackle gender segregation and assure non-biased evaluations
3. Promote and implement work-life balance
4. Provide information and training on gender equality for all staff

Study

1. Introduction

“Where are the women?” is one of the questions that can spring to mind when looking at the boards or leading positions of many institutions and organisations. In the European Union (EU), women remain under-represented in the decision-making positions that shape politics, economics, and society (EIGE, 2019). Despite the progress of recent years, when it comes to power, the EU is, indeed, still far from reaching gender equality².

Given that women constitute half of the EU population, having an equal presence of women and men in power and decision-making positions is a matter of justice. However, when women are under-represented in democratic and governing institutions, it also becomes an issue of democratic legitimacy and functioning (Irigoiien, 2018).

According to Article 13 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), “the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity”. The EESC’s mission is to contribute to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union by enabling representatives of organised civil society from the Member States to express their views at European level (EESC, About, 2019). Its members are representatives drawn from Europe's social and economic - interest groups (EESC, About, 2019), and yet, women are hugely under-represented among the EESC members. Only 28% of them are women.

There is an increased interest in the question of democracy, representation and gender equality in the EU institutions, including their advisory/consultative bodies. This study aims to contribute to the debate on gender balance in the EU representative institutions, notably the EESC. Gender balance is often understood as having a ratio of 40-60% of women or men, whereas gender parity often refers to a 50-50 ratio of women and men. Gender equality is, however, far more complex than achieving those ratios established in the notions of gender balance and parity. Our societies are built on stereotyped social and cultural roles for women and men which determine different rights and dignity for women and men in diverse legal, social, economic and cultural situations, resulting in complex gender unequal societal systems (EIGE, 2019). The participation of women in all spheres of society on a level playing field with men is indispensable to change a society of gender inequality. In this context, this study frames gender balance and parity as a first step which contributes to the broader objective of gender equality. Tackling structural inequalities, unequal powered gender relations, stereotyped beliefs and sexism would be just some further steps to take in order to achieve gender equality.

The EESC has repeatedly expressed its commitment to gender equality³. Its recent own-initiative opinion on *Gender Equality Issues* calls on public institutions across the EU to promote gender equality with their policies and external actions and to introduce exemplary internal

² The European Institute for Gender Equality’s (EIGE) *Gender Equality Index* measures gender gaps between women and men in six core domains, including “power”; and it is precisely the domain of “power” which holds the lowest score in the Gender Equality Index. The Gender Equality Index is accessible online at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

³ Just to give a recent example, the EESC has dedicated its *2019 Civil Society Prize* to innovative initiatives and projects which aim to fight for equal opportunities for women and men and their equal treatment in all spheres of economic and social life.

measures in all of their policies and processes (Vareikytė, 2019, 4). It also recommends that the Member States nominate members on a gender parity basis (Vareikytė, 2019, 4). The EESC is, therefore, concerned about gender parity and balance in its own structures. The commissioning of this study is part of the EESC's own efforts to improve on the equal participation of men and women in the Committee and start paying attention to broader gender equality issues within the EESC.

This study also aims to address the knowledge gap regarding the EESC and its gender balance⁴. To that end, it analyses the gender composition of the Committee at the political level (members) and at the managerial and administrative level (personnel). Nonetheless, it focuses more on the political level, due to its closer connection to democracy and the EU governing system. The study is also intended to encourage a reflection among the Member States on the composition of their national delegations in advance of the next EESC mandate (2020-2025).

The study is structured as follows:

- First, it explains the methodology used to gather relevant information on which the study is based.
- Second, it describes its conceptual framework: it introduces the EESC, explores the links between democracy, gender balance and equality in the EU, and advances some of the reasons why gender balance benefits all, including the EESC and its members.
- Third, it analyses the state of gender balance in the EESC: at the political level (members), it examines the overall gender balance in the EESC's composition and its structures by considering the gender balance by Member States and in the Groups, Sections, Presidencies and Bureau, and among the rapporteurs of the EESC opinions. It also compares the current state of gender balance in the EESC, to that of 2013. In addition, it looks at the gender balance in the different personnel categories.
- Fourth, it analyses the processes behind, by investigating the national appointment procedures of EESC members. It also refers to some of the processes in the hiring and promotion of the EESC's personnel.
- Fifth, it moves beyond gender balance and examines other issues related to gender equality broadly in the EESC. It first analyses the different approaches towards gender equality in the national organisations involved in the nomination of the EESC members. It then refers to other aspects of gender equality, such as gender mainstreaming, in the EESC and its work.
- Sixth, the study provides a list of different best practices found in the EESC itself, in other EU institutions and some Member States.
- Finally, it provides the main conclusions of the research and presents a list of recommendations to improve the state of gender balance in the EESC and advance on other gender equality related issues.

⁴ Besides in-house publishing of some gender statistics, there is a gap of knowledge regarding the EESC and gender balance, in both political and personnel level, together with a lack of updated or clarified information regarding what criteria is used to select the members at national level.

2. Methodology

The study has used both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the principal aspects related to gender balance in the EESC. The combination of different methodological tools has provided information of a diverse nature which has, in turn, enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the matter.

Time-frame

The study focuses on the state of gender balance in the EESC in 2019. It provides the data on gender balance as of July and August 2019 regarding EESC members, and as of January 2019 regarding the EESC's personnel. It also considers the gender balance among the EESC members in 2013, through the analysis of an internal document - *Vademecum 2013*. The research was carried out between May and November 2019.

Quantitative data collection

The data was collected from the EESC's online search engines: the *EESC Document Search* for information on the opinions, rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs, and the *EESC Members Page Search* for information regarding the members and their gender⁵. As information on the gender balance of EESC members is not systematised or readily available, it had to be obtained by using the public search engine for EESC Members and then categorising the data by Member State, Group, Section, Presidencies and in the Bureau.

Unlike the European Parliament, the EESC does not provide information on the gender balance of its members for each of the terms of office so an historical analysis of EESC's gender balance was not envisaged. However, in order to provide a brief historical comparison of the state of gender balance in the EESC, an internal document showing the members of the EESC in 2013, (*Vademecum 2013*) was analysed. It was, therefore, possible to compare some information on gender balance in 2013 and in 2019. In addition, it was possible to collect and provide data on the gender balance of the EESC's Presidents since the Committee's beginnings as this information was available at the *EESC Media Library*⁶. Information regarding the Group Presidents from 1982 until the present was obtained by analysing internal documents.

Qualitative data collection

To understand broader aspects that can influence gender imbalance in the EESC, a number of face-to-face interviews were conducted and members were asked to anonymously respond to an online survey. The interviews and survey also served to identify good practices and to gather the views of some EESC members on the issues of gender balance, diversity, the overall appointment procedures and the functioning of the EESC.

1. Survey

An online survey was developed to better understand the processes behind the national nomination procedures. The survey was initially available between 24 June and 8 July 2019. In an attempt to secure responses from all Member States, a reminder was sent on 15 July,

⁵ The EESC Document Search and the EESC Members Page Search engines are accessible online at <https://dmsearch.eesc.europa.eu/search/opinion> and <https://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu>.

⁶ The EESC Media Library is accessible online at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/avdb/galleries/eesc-former-presidents>

encouraging responses from some specific Members States, with a deadline of 26 July for further responses. The survey was available in English and French. There were 69 responses in total, out of a possible 350.

The survey asked about appointment processes, selection criteria and gender balance, as well as broader gender equality and diversity issues, such as the gender perspective. The survey questions can be consulted in Annex 4. The number of survey responses by Member State can be consulted in Annex 5. Unfortunately, there were no responses from the delegations from Cyprus, Ireland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The following table summarises the responses obtained:

Survey responses by gender, Group and language	
	Responses
Men	34
Women	35
Group I	15
Group II	34
Group III	20
English	55
French	14

2. Interviews

The face-to-face interviews provided in-depth qualitative information. They served to understand the elements that could be impacting on the gender imbalance in the EESC and to gather different perceptions about the issue of gender balance among members and personnel. Ten interviews were conducted: 6 with members and 4 with personnel. The interviewee candidates were selected based on Group or personnel category membership, gender balance, geographical balance and diversity criteria (such as age and ethnic origin), with the guidance and assistance of the Group II Secretariat. Two members (a woman and a man) for each of the three Groups were interviewed. An email asking for their voluntary participation was sent to the selected candidates.

As regards the personnel, one person per personnel category - Assistant, Administrator and Head of Unit - as well as one person from Human Resources, was interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and covered the following issues: the value ascribed to gender balance in the EESC, the appointment, recruitment and promotion processes, the functioning of the EESC, the gender perspective (i.e. implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming, knowledge of gender issues, etc.). The interviews also collected recommendations to improve the state of gender balance and overall gender equality issues within the EESC.

3. National nomination and appointment procedures

Information about national nomination and appointment procedures was drawn from the interviews, survey responses and a literature review. With regards to the literature review, the two most concise and systematised analysis of the appointment procedures are the studies by Van der Voort (1997) and Fonseca (2007)⁷. These authors have consulted institutional sources to find out

⁷ Following Van der Voort's categorisation, there are 4 different types of appointment procedures when looking at who has the main responsibility for the selection and nomination of the EESC members: 1) Heads of State/Governments – a nomination procedure in which the Head of State or central government holds the main responsibility- ; 2) Departments/individual ministers - a nomination

about the selection and nomination processes, and thus, their findings complement the information that this study has gathered through EESC members and delegates themselves⁸.

Women/Men categories

With regards to the categories of “women” and “men”, and in order to identify the number of female and male EESC members, attention has been paid to the sex ascribed to each name and the picture in the search engines. In addition, the survey provided respondents with the opportunity to identify themselves non-binarily with the option “other”. However, none of the respondents chose that option and preferred to identify themselves as either “woman” or “man”. The survey also asked about the age range and other identity attributes that respondents wanted to highlight, such as origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other. Some respondents mentioned belonging to an ethnic minority, having a disability, chronic disease, being part of the LGBT community or being atheist as some of their identity characteristics.

Limits of the research

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limits of this research. One of the most important challenges has been gathering and systematising the information about the national appointment processes of EESC members. The number of national organisations and Member States, as well as the complexity of the procedures to nominate EESC members in each country are considerable.

This research collected information about national appointment procedures by asking members in the survey and interviews, and therefore, official information from Member States, governments or/and national organisations has been obtained through secondary sources. That information has been complemented with the results of the mentioned previous academic works, but these are not recent, and it is possible that some Member States have modified their appointment processes since then. It was also difficult to access information about some national appointment procedures because there were no responses from members from some Member States.

In general, the lack of clarity together with the unsystematised information and the limited literature on EESC national appointment processes have been obstacles for this research. Collecting and systematising the information, as well as, working on further research on the EESC’s nomination and appointment procedures would help to increase our understanding. Moreover, even if significant efforts were made to include a wide range of voices, experiences and opinions of EESC members and personnel, due to the resources available and the time-frame of the research, it was not possible to consider them all.

procedure in which the responsibility accrues to one or few government departments, it is not the responsibility of the government as a whole - ; 3) Government and specific departments – the procedure involves both the government and individual departments-; and 4) Corporatist bodies - a nomination procedure in which the responsibility has been delegated to the national corporatist bodies- . According to Fonseca, the procedures of Finland, France, Poland, Portugal and Romania would fall into the category 1; Spain, Sweden, UK, Greece, Estonia, Czech Republic, Denmark and Belgium into the category 2; Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg into the category 3; and Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Slovenia into the category 4. Fonseca considers that Poland and the Czech Republic are hybrid cases and that they could fit into category 4 too; and adds that there is not enough information about the process in Hungary.

⁸ Therefore, this study refers to the findings of these authors to complete the information gathered from the surveys and interviews of EESC members and delegates.

3. Conceptual framework

3.1 Presentation of the EESC

Legal Basis

The EESC has always been an integral part of the EU: it was set up in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome. Its mission is set out in Article 13(4) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which states that "The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee...acting in an advisory capacity". Its functioning and composition are regulated by Articles 301 to 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Committee describes itself as "the voice of organised civil society in Europe".

The Committee delivers opinions to the European Parliament, Council, and Commission and ensures that civil society organisations have a say in Europe's development (EESC, 2017). In certain specifically mentioned areas the TFEU stipulates that a decision may be taken only after the Council or Commission has consulted the Committee⁹. The European Parliament, Council, and Commission may also consult the EESC in all cases in which they consider it appropriate. The Committee also has the right to issue opinions on its own initiative ("own-initiative opinions") in cases in which it considers such action appropriate.

Mission

The EESC's mission is to contribute to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level (EESC, 2019). In this regard, the Committee fulfils three key missions:

- helping to ensure that European policies and legislation tie in better with economic, social and civic circumstances on the ground;
- promoting the development of a more participatory European Union, which is more in touch with popular opinion;
- and promoting the values on which European integration is founded and advancing, in Europe and across the world, the cause of democracy and participatory democracy, as well as the role of civil society organisations¹⁰.

Members

The EESC's 350 members are representatives of Europe's socio-occupational interest groups, representing employers, workers, and other various interests representative of civil society, notably in socioeconomic, civic, professional and cultural areas. They come from all EU Member States and the number of EESC members per Member State is proportional to its population. The national governments nominate the members, who are then appointed by the

⁹ Some of these areas are: agricultural policy (Article 43); free movement of persons and services (Articles 46, 50 and 59); transport policy (Articles 91, 95 and 100); harmonisation of indirect taxation (Article 113); approximation of laws on the internal market (Articles 114 and 115); employment policy (Articles 148, 149 and 153); social policy, education, vocational training and youth (Articles 156, 165 and 166); public health (Article 168); and more (European Parliament, 2017).

¹⁰ EESC's three missions, in more detail, can be read at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/about>

Council of the EU for a renewable five-year term of office. When sitting in the EESC, the members are divided into three different groups of equal number: Group I – Employers, Group II – Workers, and Group III – Diversity Europe¹¹. Members themselves choose which group they wish to join.

Functioning

Internally, the EESC has six sections specialising in different policy areas:

- Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT);
- Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO);
- Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN);
- Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC);
- Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT); and
- External Relations (REX).

Most of the groundwork on opinions is carried out in the sections. Members participate in the sections depending on their areas of expertise and interest. The EESC also has a Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI), which monitors the EU industry's ability to anticipate and adapt to the impact of globalisation. The CCMI is composed of a mixture of EESC members and external delegates, appointed by the EESC Groups from among sectoral associations representing organised civil society at European level. The EESC has also established three specialist observatories: Single Market Observatory (SMO), Labour Market Observatory (LMO) and Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO). It also has a number of other special interest bodies such as the European Semester Group, which focuses on growth and employment, and the Fundamental rights and the Rule of Law Group, among other temporary and ad hoc groups (EESC, 2018, 14).

Every two and a half years, the EESC elects a Bureau that includes a President, two Vice-Presidents, the Presidents of the three groups and a variable number of members. Currently, the Bureau has 39 members. The Bureau has the political responsibility for the general management of the EESC and "shall ensure that the activities of the Committee, its bodies and its staff are in keeping with its institutional aims" (Article 9.7, EESC Rules of Procedure, 2019). The President represents the EESC in its relations with other institutions and bodies and directs all the work of the EESC. The two Vice-Presidents are responsible for the budget and communication, respectively (EESC, 2018, 14). The three posts of the 'presidency' are distributed among the three Groups and are rotated every two and a half years.

Opinions

The main task of EESC members is to prepare opinions, which are adopted in the EESC plenary. These are drafted in the sections by study groups. A study group generally has 6 members, drawn from the three groups in equal numbers. A rapporteur will be appointed with the responsibility of drafting the opinion, also taking account of the contributions from the other study

¹¹ Group III is made up of "other representatives and stakeholders of civil society, particularly in the economic, civic, professional and cultural field" (EESC, 2019).

group members. The rapporteur will also, generally, be responsible for presenting the key findings of the opinion and promoting it at the EU institutions, Member States and local level (EESC, 2018, 17),

The study groups generally meet twice, following which the draft opinion will be presented at the relevant section or the CCMI, which will adopt the opinion following a debate among the section members. Once adopted in the section, the draft opinion will then be presented for final adoption at the plenary session, in which all 350 members can vote. On average, the EESC delivers 170 advisory documents and opinions a year (of which about 15% are issued on its own initiative). All opinions are forwarded to the EU's decision-making bodies and then published in the EU's Official Journal.

The EESC's Secretariat

EESC members are assisted by the EESC's secretariat and personnel. Each of the three Groups also has its own secretariat to support the work of the Group's President and the members belonging to the Group. The EESC personnel is divided in different categories, mainly assistant, administrator, and Head of Unit (HoU). Technically, HoUs are administrators in a management position. The EESC also has an internship programme and the contribution of the interns is also relevant to the Committee's work.

3.2 Gender balance, democracy and the EU

In the last decades, and more recently in the last years, we have witnessed an increased interest in the EU's democratic legitimacy in general and its representativity, notably regarding gender balance. Different voices have been critical about the under representation of women in European political decision-making and management positions.

Already in the 90s, the EU showed concern regarding the need to improve the representation of women in political decision-making. In 1992, the *European Summit of Women in Power* organised by the Commission of the European Communities concluded with the signature of the *Athens Declaration* by 20 European women leaders (Eurogender, 2019). The *Athens Declaration* pointed at the democratic deficit in the EU, stemming from the “profound inequality in all public and political decision-making authorities” (Athens Declaration, 1992). In 1996, the European Council's *Resolution on the Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Decision-making* acknowledged that “women are still under-represented in decision-making bodies, in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres” and that “balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process is a requirement for democracy” (European Council, 1996). The Council recommended that Member States should take positive actions to improve gender-balanced representation. The European Commission and the European Parliament (EP), have also acknowledged that the imbalanced gender representation in political decision-making implies a democratic deficit that needs to be addressed (European Commission, 1999).

Concerns about improving female representation in EU decision-making persist and, in 2015, the European Council adopted *Conclusions on Equality Between Women and Men in the*

*Field of Decision-making*¹². Most recently, the European Commission (EC) President elect Ursula von der Leyen appointed a gender-balanced team of commissioners with 13 women (including herself) and 14 men¹³.

The debate on gender balance goes beyond the political realm. In 2017, the European Commission set an internal goal to have 40% of women middle and senior managers by 2019 (European Commission, 2017). The European Parliament publishes the data about the state of gender balance among Members of the European Parliament (MEP) in each legislature. Beyond that, in 2017 the EP published a report, *Women in the European Parliament*, focusing on its gender balance and broader gender equality issues, which provided the state of gender balance among its personnel. It showed that, even if women make up almost 60% of the EP Secretariat, gender balance was not reflected in management positions (European Parliament, 2017, 10). There seems to be agreement that achieving gender balance, both at the representative and political level, and at the personnel and managerial level within the EU's secretariat itself, is important for the EU's functioning and for democracy.

The European Parliament and Commission have been vocal about gender balance in the EU. As for the EESC, it is starting to work in the same direction by increasingly focusing on gender balance and broader gender equality issues, including gender mainstreaming. The EESC's own-initiative opinion on *Gender Equality Issues* addresses the question of "Women in power and decision-making" and calls on "public institutions and civil society organisations across the EU to promote gender equality with their policies and external actions and to introduce exemplary internal measures, such as promoting women in decision-making and mainstreaming gender equality in all of their policies and processes" (Vareikyte, 2019, 4). It also "calls on the Council to review its guidelines for the appointment of EESC members and recommends that the Member States put forward members on a gender parity basis" (Vareikyte, 2019, 4). The commissioning of this study is also an example of the EESC's efforts to improve gender parity, or at least balance, and pay attention to broader gender equality issues.

Outside the EU institutions, several civil society organisations have called attention to the unequal presence of women and men in EU decision-making bodies and positions. For example, the *European Women's Lobby* has been campaigning for a 50/50 European Parliament and gender-balanced EU institutions¹⁴. *Gender Five Plus*, the first European feminist think tank, has also called for a system of parity democracy in the EU as a way to ensure and strengthen the European project and democracy¹⁵. According to these organisations, the EU's democratic deficit does not only stem from its insufficiently democratic processes, but also from its systematic unequal representation of women in decision-making. If half of the population is persistently under-represented, the legitimacy and functioning of the democratic system are put into question.

Given that the EESC's mission is linked to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union, democracy and gender balance are matters of its concern¹⁶.

¹² The inclusion of women in decision-making is also part of the Council's European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020.

¹³ The names and profiles of the newly designated commissioners can be consulted at <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/interim/commissioners-designate>

¹⁴ More about the European Women's Lobby 50/50 campaigns can be seen at <https://www.womenlobby.org/-European-Parliament-50-50-Campaign-?lang=en>

¹⁵ More about Gender Five Plus parity democracy project can be seen at <https://www.genderfiveplus.eu/>

¹⁶ The EESC mission statement reads as follows: "Committed to European integration, the EESC contributes to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level". It can be consulted online at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/about>

One interviewed EESC member highlighted the links between gender balance and the EESC's missions:

“I think that the EESC should be the first institution that should follow gender balance because we are civil society representatives. We teach national organisations what the European values are, how to follow them, how not to undermine Europe’s idea [...] It is all linked, we should change our own gender balance”.

In addition, gender equality is a founding principle and an official goal of the EU which must be followed and addressed by all EU institutions and Member States. In this line, an interviewed member points out that:

“Gender balance is important for representation issues, the mission and values of the EESC, but also it’s a matter of complying with the EU Treaties. The EU has a commitment to gender equality, so balanced representation should be reflected in all bodies and issues”.

Indeed, the EU is legally compelled to ensure equality between women and men. In fact, although motivated by the fear of unfair competition among Member States, Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome (1957) already established the principle of equal pay for men and women for equal work or work of equivalent value, which spurred EU action on gender equality in the labour market for years (Irigoién, 2018, 4). In a ruling of 1976¹⁷, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) explicitly recognized the principle of gender equality in its economic and social dimension to be a "founding principle" of the now EU, which opened the way to spillovers beyond the workplace (Irigoién, 2018, 5). The principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and the obligation to ensure full equality in practice between men and women in working life, is now established in article 157 of the TFEU. Also, Article 8 of the TFEU establishes that “in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women” and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU) in its Article 23 states that “equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex”. Article 21 of the CFREU also refers to the principle of non-discrimination.

3.3 Why gender balance benefits all

Not only is gender balance important for democracy and the EESC's mission, achieving gender parity, or at least a gender-balanced institution, benefits all.

Achieving gender balance in the EESC would benefit the institution itself -and its members in particular- because it would increase its legitimacy. One of the members interviewed points out that improving gender balance would help the reputation and image of the EESC. The EESC's role has been questioned, particularly since the debate on European governance and consequent discussion on the representativeness of European civil society (Fonseca, 2007, 5). Its legitimacy has been questioned on the basis of “its size, appointment methods, composition, structure and

¹⁷ Defrenne v. Societe Anonyme Belge de Navigation Aérienne, 1976, C-43/75 [ECR 455].

representative capability” (Fonseca, 2007, 6). Some of these issues have consequences on gender balance and they will be addressed later.

Although engaging in the debate on representativeness and representation is not the purpose of this study, it is evident that improving gender balance within the EESC could help counteract some of the criticism¹⁸. Three of the members interviewed, both women and men, highlighted the importance of gender balance with regards to representation:

“I think gender balance is important for the EESC and it is even more important among the members because we’re supposed to represent civil society organisations in the EU”;

“I think that having gender balance it’s [sic] important in general. But if we are a consultative body that is supposed to represent organised civil society, I would say that it is even more important, because if women are half of the population... well, half [the]members should be women too”; and

“If we are civil society representatives and we react to civil society’s needs, there is an Eurobarometer survey that says that gender equality is an important issue for 90% of EU citizens, so we shouldn’t ignore it and we need to work on it”.

Gender balance provides benefits for all. As women represent half of the population, they also represent half of the talent, knowledge, skills, creativity, ideas, etc. Thus, not having an equal presence of men and women in EESC’s composition means that the Committee is not effectively using all the talent available in society. Having an equal presence of women and men can result in better, more representative, opinions and better outcomes of the EESC’s activities in general. Another interviewed member notes that:

“We need to explain that gender balance is not something against men, but something good for the Committee. It’s about including women and using all their talent, their knowledge and making the most out of it”.

In addition, it has been proven that having a critical mass of women in decision-making is necessary to introduce neglected or new issues of concern into the policy agenda¹⁹. Women as a group have interests and needs related to their own experiences (e.g. reproductive rights) that do not concern men to the same extent. The *European Women’s Lobby* gives a good example of this: because women have been the ones most affected by issues of reconciliation of work and private life, and have not been present enough in decision-making, reconciliation has long been seen as a private issue rather than a problem to be tackled by society (European Women’s Lobby, 2014, 20). This is currently changing thanks to the progressive access of women to political decision-making.

Another important benefit of gender balance is that it is linked to the representation of the diversity of EU citizens. Focusing on gender balance, should also mean that women and men in all their diversity are considered and included. For example, women of colour, lesbian and trans

¹⁸ There is some research focusing on the issue of representation and representativeness of the EESC, for example the work of Perez-Solorzano and Smismans, which can be found in this study’s bibliography.

¹⁹ Since Hanna Pitkin’s contributions on political representation, different research has focused on how women’s representation was necessary to introduce diverse topics of utmost importance for women (i.e. domestic violence) in the agenda. -Pitkin, H., F. 1967. The concept of representation. University of California Press.

women, migrant women, those belonging to religious minorities, as well as women with disabilities are to be rightfully represented²⁰.

4. The state of play: gender balance in the EESC

To improve gender balance and work towards greater gender equality, it is first necessary to understand the current state of gender balance and the aspects which need to be addressed. This part of the study analyses gender balance among EESC members and EESC personnel.

The issues that impact on the gender balance of each group - members and personnel- are very different and cannot be explored jointly. Whereas the appointment of members – and thus the responsibility for ensuring gender balance lies with the nominating organisations and ultimately the Member States. As regards the EESC's personnel, however, assuring gender balance falls within the responsibility of the EESC administration in its capacity as an employer. The two categories are therefore explored in separate sections. This study focuses more on gender balance among EESC members as this is closely linked to the abovementioned aspects of democracy, legitimacy, and representation in its capacity as an EU advisory body. It is also where we find greater gender imbalance in the EESC.

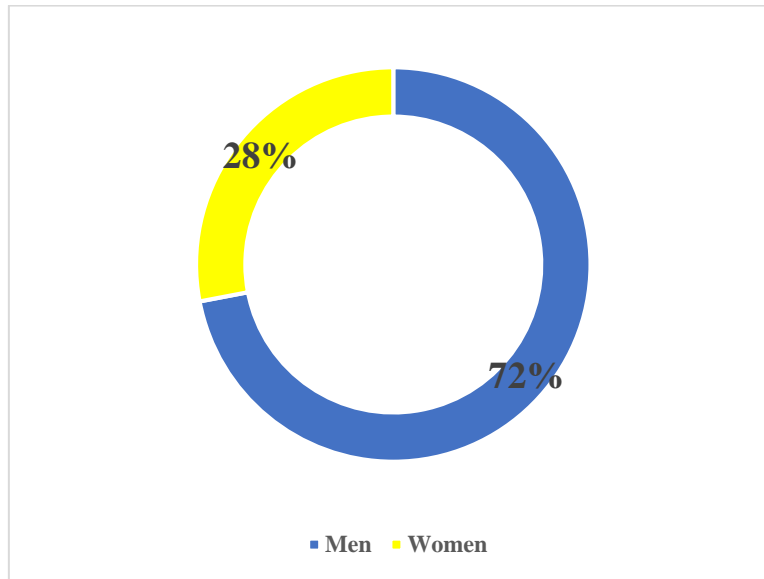
²⁰ In this sense, it is very important to always adopt an intersectional view which helps the understanding and responding to how sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics and identities. For more information about intersectionality, see EIGE's contributions at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1263>

4.1 EESC members

4.1.1 Overall gender balance in the EESC

Unlike the European Parliament, for example, the EESC does not provide information about the percentage of members that are women and men EESC²¹. To know the gender balance among EESC members one needs to go to the *EESC Members Page* and scroll down counting the number of women and men. By doing so, we observe that currently, as of August 2019, 72% of members are men, and 28% women²².

Figure 1: Overall Gender balance in the EESC (2015-2020)



4.1.2 Gender balance by Member State

The number of EESC members per Member State was established in the Treaty of Nice. Table 1 below shows the number and percentage of female and male members by Member State.

²¹ The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) provides data on gender and the European Parliament : https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_parl_wmid_eurparl/bar. Additionally, the European Parliament itself publishes the percentage of women and men MEPs by electoral term and member state. See for example the 2019 elections results at <https://election-results.eu/mep-gender-balance/2019-2024/> and the 2014 elections results at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/gender-balance.html>

²² All the numerical data about the gender composition of the EESC members is based on data obtained from a search of the EESC's Members Page carried out on 20 August 2019.

Table 1- Gender Balance by Member State					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Austria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Belgium	11	1	12	92%	8%
Bulgaria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Croatia	3	6	9	33%	67%
Cyprus	5	0	5	100%	0%
Czech Republic	7	5	12	58%	42%
Denmark	5	4	9	56%	44%
Estonia	2	4	6	33%	67%
Finland	6	3	9	67%	33%
France	14	10	24	58%	42%
Germany	21	2	23 ²³	91%	9%
Greece	9	2	11 ²⁴	82%	18%
Hungary	6	6	12	50%	50%
Ireland	8	1	9	89%	11%
Italy	20	4	24	83%	17%
Latvia	4	3	7	57%	43%
Lithuania	5	4	9	56%	44%
Luxembourg	3	2	5	60%	40%
Malta	5	0	5	100%	0%
Netherlands	9	3	12	75%	25%
Poland	16	5	21	76%	24%
Portugal	12	0	12	100%	0%
Romania	14	1	15	93%	7%
Slovakia	6	3	9	67%	33%
Slovenia	6	1	7	86%	14%
Spain	16	5	21	76%	24%
Sweden	5	7	12	42%	58%
United Kingdom	14	10	24	58%	42%

Analysis of EESC members by Member State, reveals that there are some Member States with no women members at all, some with a minority of women and some that have gender parity among their members. Six Member States have less than 10% of women members: Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal, and Romania. In addition to these, another four Member States have less than 20% of women members: Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Slovenia. This means that 10 Member States (36%) have less than 20% of women members among their national

²³ Germany has a total of 24 seats allocated to however the total of German members when the data was consulted on the EESC Members Page was 23.

²⁴ The total seats allocated to Greece is 12. However, the total number of Greek members when the data was consulted on the EESC Members Page was 11.

delegations. Figure 2 shows the state of gender balance by Member State, with a red line where the level of parity is.

Figure 2: Gender balance by Member State (2015-2020)

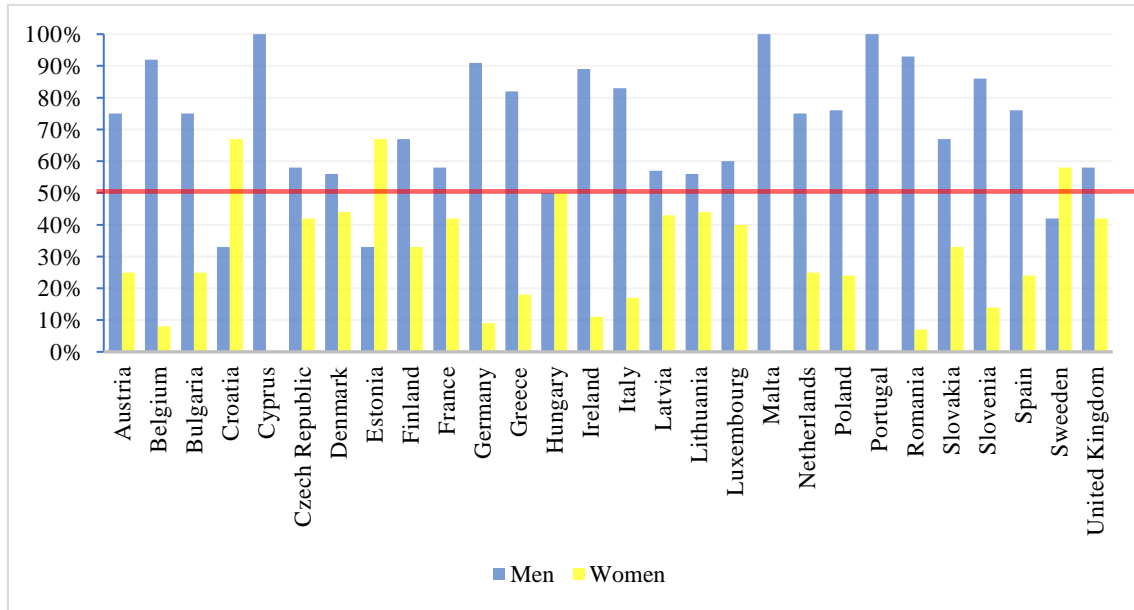


Figure 2 shows that currently only Hungary has a national delegation with gender parity and that the majority of the Member States are below the gender parity line. Table 2 categorises Member States according to the level of gender balance in their national delegations.

Table 2- Levels of gender balance per Member State

	Member State	Number of Member States	Number of seats
All-male	Cyprus, Malta, Portugal	3	22
Minority of women	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	14	197
Majority of women	Croatia, Estonia	2	15
Gender Balance	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, United Kingdom	9	114 ²⁵

²⁵ The total number of members is 348 as at the time the data was obtained the German and Greek delegations were each down by 1 member.

Table 2 shows that 3 Member States have an all-male delegation. In total, 13 Member States have national delegations with either no women or with a minority of women members. Those two categories constitute the majority (219) of the seats at the EESC. There are 2 delegations with more women than men and they account for 15 seats. It is interesting to note that among the 9 Member States with a gender-balanced delegation, only Sweden has more women members than men. The rest of the gender-balanced delegations all have a majority of male members.

It is also striking to note that many of the Member States that do not have gender-balanced delegations have already adopted various gender balance requirements at national level to ensure the equal or balanced representation of women and men in different power and decision-making fields, such as in Parliaments and other representative bodies, in politics and political parties, in market-listed companies, etc. These Member States include Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Croatia and Poland (Vareikyte, 2019, 13). However, gender balance requirements do not seem to apply to all decision-making positions, to different civil society organisations and the EESC.

4.1.3 Gender balance by EESC Groups

Figure 3 shows gender balance in each of the EESC's three Groups (Group I – Employers, Group II – Workers, and Group III – Diversity Europe).

Figure 3: Gender balance by Group (2015-2020)

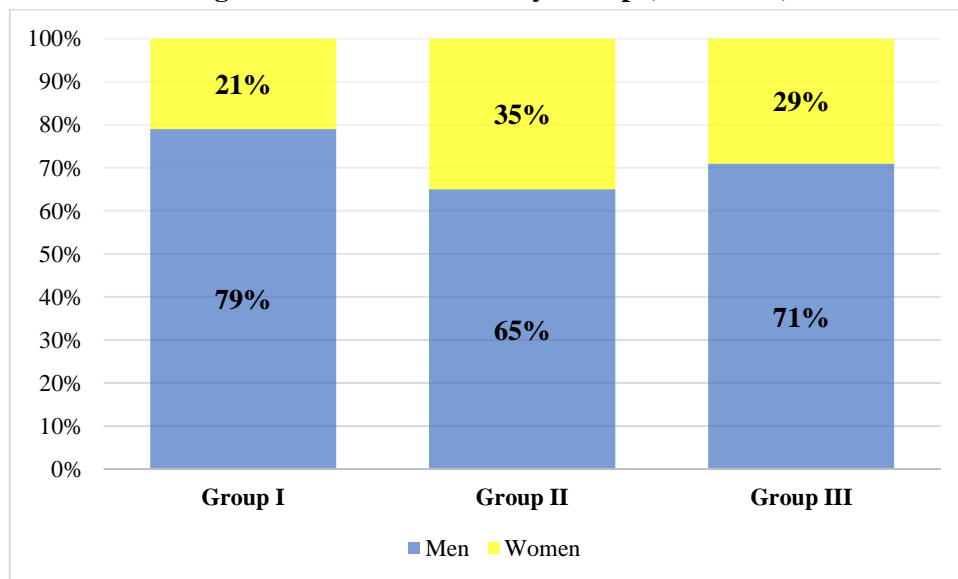
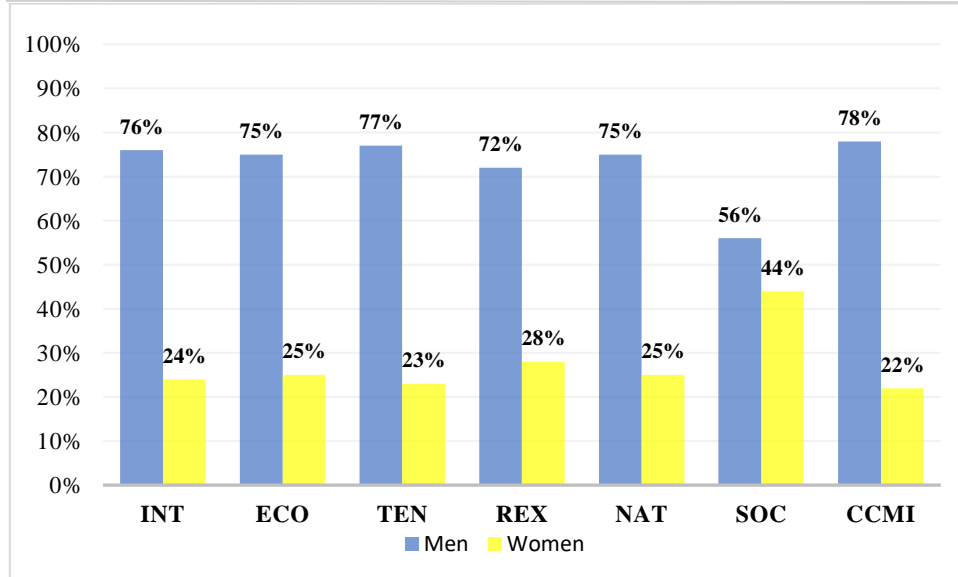


Figure 3 shows that none of the Groups is gender-balanced. Group II shows a slightly better gender balance than the others, and yet it is far from being balanced and even further from having parity. Group I has the worst gender balance, with almost 80% of male members.

4.1.4 Gender balance by EESC Sections

Figure 4 illustrates the gender balance of each section and the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI).

Figure 4: Gender balance by Sections and CCMI (2015-2020)



The section with the biggest share of women is the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC). It is also gender-balanced, with 56% of men and 44% of women. This is not by chance, as social-related areas usually have a greater proportion of women than men. The Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI) has the lowest share of women with only 22% of women members. However, the other sections have similar percentages of women and men members.

4.1.5 Gender balance in Presidencies and the Bureau

The EESC's political organisational chart 2018-2020 provides information on the number of women and men members leading the EESC, its Groups and sections. Table 3 shows the gender balance in the EESC's Presidencies and its Bureau.

Table 3- Gender balance in EESC Presidencies and in the Bureau			
Presidencies	Number		
	Men	Women	Total
EESC President	1	0	1
Group Presidents	3 ²⁶	0	3
Sections, CCMI and Observatories	5	5	10
Questors	2	1	3
Bureau members	25 (64%)	14 (36%)	39 (100%)

Table 3 shows that there is a greater gender balance in top EESC positions than in the overall total of EESC members. Since the last mid-term renewal of the EESC Presidency and

²⁶ For the first half of the 2015-2020 mandate, the President of Group II was a woman.

Bureau (April 2018), the EESC’s leadership has more women in key roles. According to the EESC’s 2018 Annual Activity Report, for the first time in its history, both EESC Vice-Presidents are women. Parity has been achieved among the posts of Presidents of the Sections, CCMI and Observatories (EESC, 2018, 14).

The EESC President and the Group Presidents, which constitute the 4 top positions within the Committee, are currently all held by men. Table 4 shows the gender balance of EESC Presidents since its establishment in 1958 until 2019 (EESC Media Library, 2019).

Table 4 – EESC Presidents from 1958 to 2019					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
EESC Presidents	28	4	32	88%	12%

Table 4 shows that there have only been 4 women leading the EESC in all its history. These numbers are in line with other EU institution’s leadership positions, which have been held by men. In 2019, for the first time, a woman was appointed as President of the European Commission and the European Parliament has only had two women as Presidents since its establishment.

Table 5 shows the gender balance of EESC Group Presidents from 1982 until the current mandate 2018-2020²⁷.

Table 5 – EESC Group Presidents from 1982 until 2020		
	Number	
	Men	Women
Group I	8	0
Group II	7	1
Group III	5	3
Total	20	4
	Percentage	
Total	83%	17%

Table 5 reveals that there have only been 4 women Group Presidents since 1982 and that there have been none in Group I and only one in Group II. In total, only 17% of Group Presidents have been women. Both Tables 4 and 5 show that the EESC’s key leadership positions have been held by men through the years.

4.1.6 Gender balance among Rapporteurs

The rapporteur is responsible for drafting the opinion, taking on board the contributions from the other members of the Study Group. Members put forward their request to become the rapporteur of an opinion and the selection of the rapporteur is a process of negotiation among the Group Presidents. In some cases, a co-Rapporteur is also appointed. The rapporteur/co-rapporteur can select an expert of their choice to assist them with the preparation of the opinion.

²⁷ Special thanks to Ms. Trojansky from Group II’s Secretariat who collected the data on EESC Groups Presidents.

Table 6 shows the gender balance among rapporteurs in 2018:

Table 6 - Gender Balance among rapporteurs in 2018							
Plenary Session	Total Opinions	Number				Percentage	
		Men	Women	Men (corap.)	Women (corap.)	Men rap.	Women rap.
531st	10	8	2	4	0	80%	20%
532nd	16	15	1	3	1	94%	6%
533rd	11	8	3	3	1	73%	27%
534th	17	13	4	5	2	76%	24%
535th	12	10	2	3	1	83%	17%
536th	22	19	3	2	1	86%	14%
537th	34	27	7	9	2	79%	21%
538th	49	42	7	6	3	86%	14%
539th	29	23	6	4	3	79%	21%
Total	200	165	35	39	14	83%	17%

The EESC produced a total of 215 opinions in 2018 (EESC, 2019, 20). However, the table only shows the 200 opinions that had a rapporteur. The remaining 15 opinions were adopted in different forms, such as simple letters to the requesting EU institution, signed by the EESC President. The Table shows that 83% of rapporteurs were men, and only 17% were women. Given that currently, the gender composition of EESC members is 72% men and 28% women, we observe an even greater gender imbalance among rapporteurs. According to the members interviewed, the benefits of being a rapporteur are the increased visibility, the greater control over the content of the opinion, the ownership of the document and the opportunities to expand their networks while promoting the opinion. However, members note that the biggest disadvantage is that being a rapporteur is time consuming and it is unpaid²⁸.

4.1.7 Gender balance in study groups, panels and other settings

Numerical data on the gender balance in the EESC's study groups was not analysed in this study. However, the decision-making processes to select the study group members and rapporteurs were raised as an issue both in the interviews and in some of the survey responses. Considering that the study groups are the day-to-day work of the EESC, it is relevant to look at their gender composition in this study.

The usual procedure to assign members to study groups and designate rapporteurs starts with the publication of the 'New Works' which lists the new opinions (referrals and own-initiative) that the EESC will prepare, as well as other activities requiring the members' participation. Members can then express their interest to their Group to be part of a particular study group, also indicating if they wish to be the rapporteur or president of the study group. The Group Presidents and Vice-Presidents will then select which of their members should be part of the study group, as well as their Group's candidate for rapporteur or president. Each Group has its own specific rules for selecting its study group members but often expertise and geographical balance will be taken

²⁸ However, there is a monetary allowance for coming to the meetings in Brussels.

into consideration. The final decision regarding the composition of the study groups, including the rapporteur, co-rapporteur and president is made by the three Group Presidents.

According to one interviewee, gender balance seems to be considered by Group II in the selection of its study group members. As the EESC does not appear to compile data on the gender balance of study groups or among the rapporteurs, the differences between the Groups and the overall gender balance in study groups cannot be directly checked. In fact, some of the recurrent issues raised by the members in the interviews and the survey were the need to increase the transparency of all EESC procedures, including its internal procedures, as well as to monitor and keep track of the gender balance of study groups and among rapporteurs. Some of the members interviewed noted that it has been very important to display the reasons that members give when they apply for a study group. Both the interview and survey responses suggest that setting clear and transparent rules on the selection of rapporteurs and study group members is key, as well as monitoring compliance with those rules and procedures. Of course, having more women members in the first place would help to improve the gender balance among rapporteurs and in study groups.

Besides the gender composition of the study groups, many of the members pointed out the need to consider gender balance when organising panels and conferences and when inviting external speakers. Some also mentioned that the work done by organisations such as *EU Panel Watch*²⁹, and *The Brussels Binder*³⁰ has increased their awareness on the issue. In March 2018, the EESC's Bureau adopted a decision³¹ to support the campaign #NoWomenNoPanel initiated by Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society³². However, it would appear that EESC members are not generally aware of this Bureau decision and it has not been effectively implemented³³ as the following quote of an interviewee illustrates:

“We still have all-male panels in our Committee and also when we organise events in Member States. This is even worse for me, because when you go to a Member State to talk about European values you should lead by example and you shouldn't be organising an event where there are no women's voices”.

Whilst a statistical analysis of the gender balance of EESC study groups has not been possible, from the responses obtained from the members there appears to be a demand for greater clarity and transparency in the EESC's decision-making processes, especially regarding the selection of members and rapporteurs for study groups, as well as to have gender balance in organised panels, conferences and also among the invited external speakers.

²⁹ See EU Panel Watch: <https://www.eupanelwatch.com/>

³⁰ See The Brussels Binder: <https://brusselsbinder.org/>

³¹ The Bureau Decision was taken at the 658th meeting of the EESC Bureau on 13 March 2018. The decision reads: “No women no panel. The Bureau has decided that the EESC will participate at this initiative”.

³² According to the EC, “No Women No Panel is a campaign with a goal to raise awareness on having gender balance in panels and public events. Commissioner Mariya Gabriel committed to ensuring that for every panel or public event she is invited to there should be at least one other woman panellist” (EC, digital single market, 2018). More information about the campaign can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/commissioners-support-no-women-no-panel-campaign>

³³ In fact, after the decision, the 273rd meeting on 19 March 2018 of the Management Board, which was established to implement the Bureau's decisions, concluded that with regards to the “No women no panel” initiative, “more information was needed in order to be able to implement this decision”.

4.1.8 Gender balance comparison: 2013 and 2019

Although information regarding gender balance per EESC mandate is not publicly available, this study has been able to make a comparison of the current state of gender balance among EESC members with the situation in 2013. For that, the study analyses the information found in the EESC's *Vademecum* for 2013, a document available to all its members and personnel.

The *Vademecum* lists the members by Group and Member State, shows the composition of the Bureau, and the presidents of the Groups and Sections. The following tables and figures show a comparison of the state of gender balance among EESC members in 2013 and 2019³⁴.

Figure 5: Comparison of the state of gender balance in the EESC in 2013 and in 2019

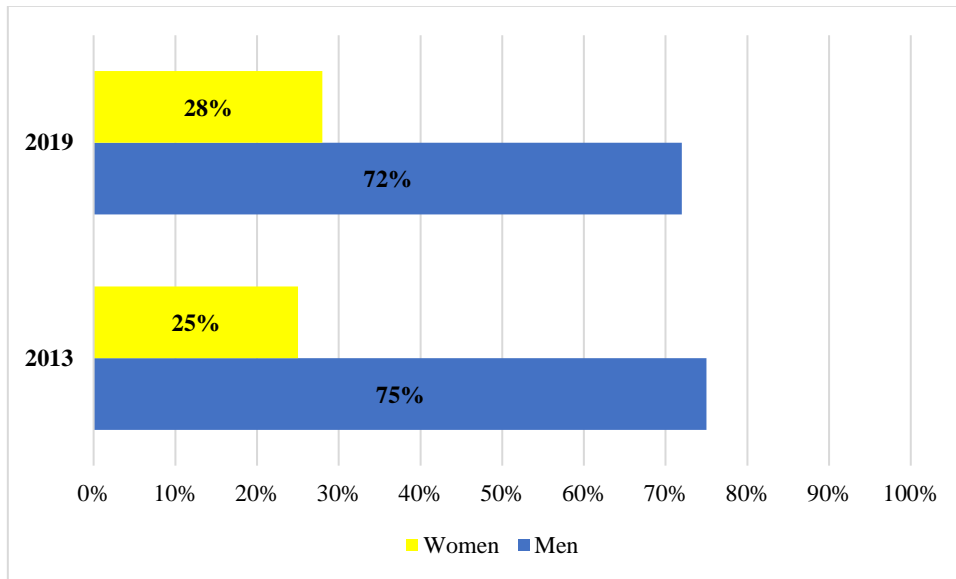


Figure 5 shows that there has been a very slight improvement on the overall gender balance of the EESC since 2013. The percentage of women members has increased by 3%: from having 25% of women members in 2013, the EESC has 28% of women members in 2019.

³⁴ Tables with the numerical information can be found in the Annex.

Table 7 compares gender balance among the EESC members by Member State in 2013 and in 2019. Some Member States have maintained the same percentage of women and men members, while others have moved towards more gender balance or increased gender disparities. Member States that have improved the percentage of gender balance are coloured in green, whereas those where the percentage of gender balance has worsened are coloured in red.

Table 7- Comparison of gender balance per Member State 2013- 2019				
	2013		2019	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Austria	75%	25%	75%	25%
Belgium	92%	8%	92%	8%
Bulgaria	75%	25%	75%	25%
Croatia	33%	67%	33%	67%
Cyprus	100%	0%	100%	0%
Czech Republic	58%	42%	58%	42%
Denmark	33%	66%	56%	44%
Estonia	29%	71%	33%	67%
Finland	67%	33%	67%	33%
France	75%	25%	58%	42%
Germany	83%	17%	91%	9%
Greece	75%	25%	82%	18%
Hungary	83%	17%	50%	50%
Ireland	67%	33%	89%	11%
Italy	96%	4%	83%	17%
Latvia	71%	29%	57%	43%
Lithuania	56%	44%	56%	44%
Luxembourg	67%	33%	60%	40%
Malta	60%	40%	100%	0%
Netherlands	67%	33%	75%	25%
Poland	71%	29%	76%	24%
Portugal	100%	0%	100%	0%
Romania	93%	7%	93%	7%
Slovakia	100%	0%	67%	33%
Slovenia	100%	0%	86%	14%
Spain	76%	24%	76%	24%
Sweeden	58%	42%	42%	58%
United Kingdom	63%	27%	58%	42%

Table 8 compares the different levels of gender balance by Member State in 2013 with that in 2019. It shows that Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands and Poland have worsened the gender balance of their national delegations, by increasing the number of men in their national delegations. On the contrary, some Member States improved the state of gender balance from 2013 to 2019 (Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom). However, some of these Member States still have highly gender imbalanced delegations, such as Italy and Slovenia.

Table 8 - Comparison of the different levels of gender balance per Member State 2013-2019		
	2013	2019
All-male	Cyprus, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia	Cyprus, Malta and Portugal
Minority of women	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, and United Kingdom	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain
Majority of women	Croatia, Estonia	Croatia, Estonia
Gender Balance	Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, and Sweden	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, and United Kingdom

Tables 7 and 8 show that many Member States maintain the gendered composition of their national delegations, which in many cases have a minority of women members. This is the case for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain which had a minority of women members from 2013 to 2019. They also indicate that some Member States, specifically Cyprus and Portugal, maintained an all-male national delegation through the analysed years. Finally, Malta did not have an all-male national delegation in 2013, but it does in 2019.

Figure 6: Comparison of gender balance per Group 2013-2019

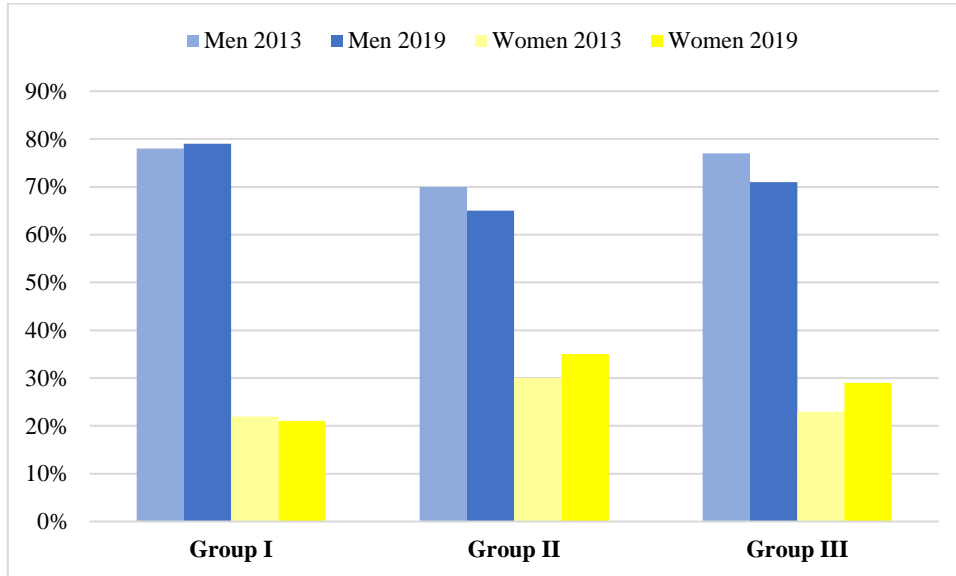


Figure 6 shows that the gender balance among Group I members worsened slightly from 2013 to 2019. The percentage of women members decreased by 1%, from having 22% of women members in 2013 to 21% in 2019. Gender balance improved slightly in both Groups II and III. Group II increased the percentage of women members from 30% in 2013 to 35% in 2019 and Group III increased the percentage of women member from 23% in 2013 to 29% in 2019.

Table 9- Comparison of gender balance in presidencies 2013- 2019

	EESC President		Group Presidents		Sections and CCMI Presidents	
	Man	Woman	Men	Women	Men	Women
2013	1	0	3	0	5	2
2019	1	0	3*	0	3	4

Table 9 shows the number of women and men in the EESC presidencies in 2013 and 2019. It illustrates that the EESC President and Group Presidents continue to be all men, in 2013 and in 2019³⁵. There has been an improvement in gender balance among the Section/CCMI Presidencies. In 2013, only two Sections/ CCMI were chaired by women, whereas in 2019, four are chaired by women. In addition, it is important to note that since 2018, and for the first time in EESC’s history, two EESC vice-presidents are women: Isabel Caño Aguilar from Group II and Milena Angelova from Group I (EESC, 2018).

³⁵ *Group II had a woman President from 2015 until the beginning of 2019 however, she was replaced by a man when she stood down to pursue other professional interests.

Figure 7: Comparison of gender balance in the Bureau 2013-2019

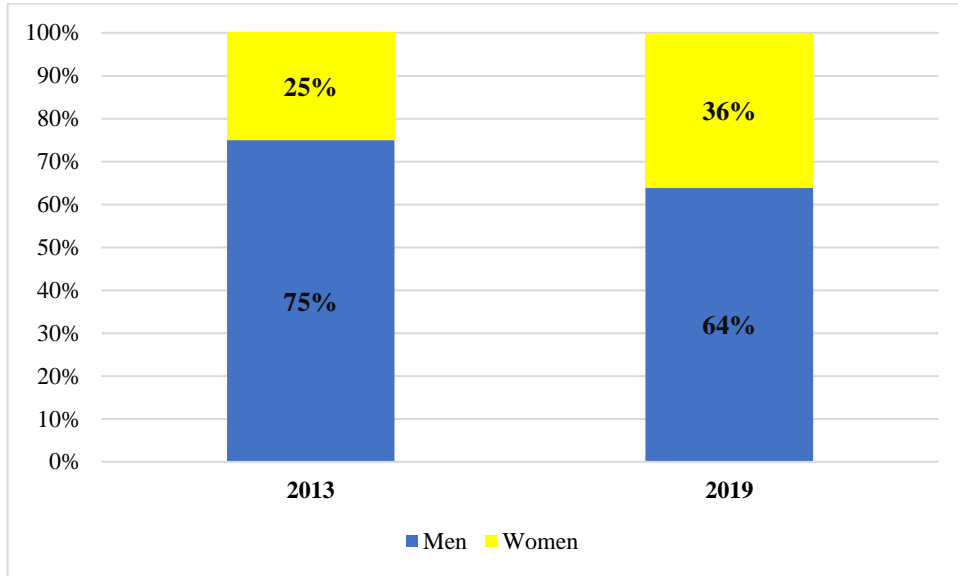


Figure 7 compares the state of gender balance in the Bureau in 2013 and in 2019 and shows that there has been an improvement. The percentage of women members in the Bureau was 25% in 2013 and reached 36% in 2019.

The analysis shows that the state of gender balance in the EESC has slightly improved since 2013, with a slight increase in the overall percentage of women members in the EESC, as well as an increase in Groups II and III. Gender balance also increased in the Section/CCMI Presidencies and in the Bureau. However, the state of gender balance in Group I decreased slightly. As regards the Member States, there were some improvements in the gender balance of their national delegations while in others, it worsened.

4.2 EESC personnel

The gender composition of the EESC’s personnel differs from that of its members. The nature, selection mechanisms, and categories are completely different. It is important to note that as regards the EESC personnel, there is an employer and employee relationship between the EESC and its staff and that the staffing issues are also regulated by the Staff Regulations of the EU institutions³⁶. This study looks at the gender balance among the EESC personnel in the three different categories: assistant, administrator and Head of Unit (HoU). Technically, HoU are administrators in a management position.

Table 10- Gender balance among EESC personnel

Function	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Assistant	108	264	372	29%	71%
Administrator	112	173	285	39%	61%
Head of Unit	24	22	46	48%	52%

³⁶ The Staff Regulations are accessible online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01962R0031-20190101>

Table 10 shows the gender balance among the EESC personnel as of January 2019³⁷. It reveals that overall there is greater gender balance among the EESC personnel than among EESC members. However, men make up only 29% of assistant positions, meaning that a greater number and proportion of women are in lower and non-managerial positions. There is almost gender parity among the EESC's HoUs, although in Directorates B and C, which are in charge of the legislative work of the EESC, 6 out of the 7 HoUs leading each Section's Secretariat (REX, ECO, etc.) are men. Also, the level of Director is the highest position in the EESC's administrative ladder and the EESC has 5 Directors, and 2 more additional Directors³⁸ who work for the Joint Services with the Committee of the Regions (CoR)³⁹. 4 out of the 7 Directors are women⁴⁰. However, two of these women are acting *ad interim* and, at the time of this study, they had not been permanently confirmed in these posts.

When comparing it with the EU institutions' personnel, the EESC is well-positioned with regards to gender balance by personnel categories and in the management. For example, in comparison to the gender composition of the European Parliament's personnel, the EESC seems to be doing better, although the available data for the European Parliament's personnel is from 2017 and 2018⁴¹. It would be interesting to see if the European Parliament has improved its gender balance and has achieved the targets that its Bureau established for 2019 (European Parliament, 2017, 17). To give just some examples, at the end of 2017, only 15% of Directors-General, 30% of Directors and 36% of HoU in the European Parliament Secretariat were women (Mlinar, 2018, 16).

In the European Commission, President Juncker set a target of having at least 40% of women occupying the European Commission's middle and senior managers positions by the end of his mandate in 2019. As of 7 March 2019, the proportion of women managers reached 39% at all levels, 37% at senior management level and 40% at middle management level (European Commission, 2019). It would also be interesting to have an updated public study on the current gender composition of the European Commission's personnel⁴².

Many reasons could explain the greater gender balance among the EESC personnel compared to the gender balance found in other EU bodies. The employees interviewed, including a human resources employee, point to different factors. First, the fact that it is a small institution with a big share of its personnel working or coming from the field of translation - a sector traditionally occupied by women - impacts on the share of women among the personnel and in the managerial ladder. In fact, out of the 703 EESC employees, 215 work in translation. Translation is a "feminised" area, which means that the majority of translators are women⁴³. The field of translation is still "feminised" because it has been traditionally perceived as a passive task

³⁷ The data on the EESC personnel was facilitated by the Human Resources and Finance Directorate. The efforts and transparency of the Human Resources team in this regard are to be thanked and commended.

³⁸ Of which one is a man and one is a woman.

³⁹ The EESC and the CoR agreed to share some of their services at the request of the European Parliament and they operate jointly the logistics and translation services.

⁴⁰ As of July 2019.

⁴¹ Specific data on the gender balance among the European Parliament's personnel are available in the two following documents, completely referred in the bibliography: *Women in the European Parliament* (2017) and *Report on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament* (2018).

⁴² In 2013, the European Commission published a report showing the percentages of women and men in different administrative positions. It would be interesting to make an updated report on this issue. The report is entitled *Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union 2013* and it can be consulted at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d585cda9-7e08-43e8-8bda-487dba4651b5>

⁴³ Different work sectors, areas, professions or occupations are considered "feminised" or "masculinised" when there is a majority and non-balanced presence of women or men.

in comparison with the active work of writing, which has been traditionally done by men (Fernández, 2014, 163). Therefore, translation has provided a back-door route for women to take part in the literary field, to acquire the cultural capital that they were previously denied (Fernández, 2014, 163). In the EESC, among the 215 employees working in translation, 154 are women and 7 of them are in management positions.

While it is important to remember that the mechanisms governing the composition of the EESC's members and its personnel are very different, it appears that the state of gender balance among the personnel is better than that among its members. Additionally, the EESC's personnel gender balance seems to be well-positioned in comparison to the EU institutions. There are more women in the lower positions, such as assistants and administrators, and almost gender parity among the HoU and higher management.

5. The processes behind

Many different factors contribute to the current composition of the members and personnel of the EESC. This part differentiates between the appointment procedures of the EESC members and the hiring and promotion of the EESC personnel due to its different processes and rationale behind. Again, the focus is placed on the EESC members, due to its closer links to democracy, legitimacy, and representation.

5.1 EESC members

5.1.1 Appointment procedures

According to Article 300(2) of the TFEU “The Economic and Social Committee shall consist of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed, and of other parties’ representative of civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas”. And Article 300(4) TFEU also notes that “The Members of the EESC [...] shall not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the Union's general interest”. These articles are rather broad and do not mention any aspect related to gender equality. However, as outlined above, gender equality is a founding principle and an official goal of the EU. In this regard, although there are no direct references to gender equality (nor balance) in the Articles regulating the EESC, the Committee is also bound by the EU’s principle of gender equality.

Usually, national governments consult diverse national organisations of employers, workers and other entities representative of civil society in the composition of the national delegations. According to the interviewees, often, the organisations of employers and workers which would belong to Group I and II in the EESC, respectively, are more easily identified than the other entities representative of civil society which would belong to Group III. However, the processes and actors involved vary greatly for each Member State. The Member States then send their nominations to the Council which appoints the members by qualified majority.

Due to the complexity and diversity of the selection, nomination and appointment procedures of EESC members, an entire study solely on this topic would be needed to address the issue in detail⁴⁴. This study focuses on the major aspects of the appointment procedures that impact on gender balance. For that, it has used different sources of information; mainly, a literature review and the information gathered through the survey and interviews.

The survey of EESC members and delegates developed for this study has provided new information on the appointment processes of EESC members. This has provided the opportunity not only to gather updated information on the national procedures, but also to gather information on the role, functioning and selection criteria of concrete national organisations such as confederations of workers or employers, trade unions, specific civil society groups/organisations, etc. It has also provided information on whether gender balance is a requirement or is taken into

⁴⁴ In fact, it would be advisable to develop a study solely on the topic of national nomination and appointment processes to becoming a member of the EESC. The existing comprehensive studies on this topic are not updated and there might be a gap of knowledge in this area.

consideration at the level of Member States and at the level of the organisations that propose candidates.

5.1.2 National appointment procedures: gender balance per Member State

This part provides a brief explanation of the national appointment procedures in each Member State and focuses on the consideration given to gender balance and/or the existence of gender balance criteria, as well as consideration given to other diversity elements, when there are any.

Austria: In Austria, the pre-established civil society organisations select their candidates and the Federal Government formally nominates. The Social Partners (organisations) are asked by the Federal Chancellery to nominate members. The Chancellery must inform the National and Federal Councils, who approve the list (Fonseca, 2017, 18-19). Respondents in Group I note that there are no concrete or formal criteria to become a member, except for having some knowledge of EU matters. They note that there are no formal criteria of gender balance. A respondent notes that gender balance is not considered when presenting their candidates; however, another respondent of Group I points out that “gender balance and age are taken into account”. With regards to Group II, the respondent notes that gender balance is considered, usually mirroring the share of their members as established in the status. The criteria of mirroring the gender share of an organisation might cause problems to achieving gender balance because many organisations, such as trade unions, are still very masculinised (Colgan and Ledwith, 2007)⁴⁵. The respondent further notes that there is the “intention” to build a list considering diversity, although acknowledges that more attention is put to gender balance. There is no specific information on the procedures and criteria for Group III. Only 3 out of 12 Austrian members are women.

Belgium: the candidates are selected jointly by the Central Economic Council and the National Labour Council, which are both advisory bodies that contribute to elaborate positions and proposal related to economic life, welfare, competitiveness and labour relations (Fonseca, 2007, 19). Then, the Ministers of Labour and Economy approve them (Fonseca, 2007, 19). The known selection criteria are to be members of the organisations belonging to the mentioned Councils, be legitimate, active and with influence in their socio-economic field (Fonseca, 2007, 19). A respondent from Group III notes that he was appointed due to his “expertise, experience and time allocation” and that gender balance is considered “as much as possible” because the available expertise and the vacancies need to be considered. Only 1 out of 12 Belgium members is a woman.

Bulgaria: according to a respondent from Group III, it is the Council of Ministries and the Prime Minister who select the EESC members by nomination. It seems that for the other groups, the Economic and Social Councils of Bulgaria submit the candidates' names to the Government, which officially nominates them (Fonseca, 2007, 20). There is no criteria regarding gender balance. However, according to one respondent, her organisation has set in its statutes and its internal rules that gender proportions need to be respected. The Economic and Social Councils of Bulgaria have set other criteria for nomination as an EESC candidate, such as, previous experience in other committees, commissions or diverse organisations of cooperation, membership in the Councils of Bulgaria, experience of social dialogue, awareness of the EESC

⁴⁵ One should question and reflect upon on why there are still many organisations whose members are mainly men. However, due to time and resources limits this report cannot analyse this issue.

procedures and practices, and good command of English and French (Fonseca, 2007, 20). Only 3 out of 12 Bulgarian members are women.

Croatia: the respondents note that the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a Decision on the procedure for appointing members to the EESC. The Decision defines which organizations can nominate candidates at the invitation of the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System, which is responsible for coordinating the nomination and appointment process. For Groups I and II only representative associations have the right to nominate candidates to the EESC, while for other civil society organizations, the Government Council for Civil Society Development issued a public invitation/call on its website to apply to become an EESC member. It seems that for Group III, a Committee composed of representatives of the Civil Society Development Council, the Office for Associations and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs reviewed the applications, interviewed the candidates and selected them. It is not clear if there was a review and interview of candidates for members of Group I and II. It seems that the organisations identified in the Decision would propose their candidates⁴⁶. No gender balance criteria are mentioned. As some organisations have only one EESC member, they note that gender balance cannot be considered. A respondent in Group II notes that although there are provisions regarding gender equality within her trade union, gender balance is not a requirement to be on the list of candidates. Candidates of Group II must meet the following criteria: experience in the field of EESC scope, professional experience, personal motivation, knowledge of a foreign language and communication skills, availability to participate in meetings, knowledge of EU institutions and decision-making practices in the EU, and respecting the principle of gender equality. The current Croatian delegation is exceptional in the EESC as it has 6 women out of 9 members.

Cyprus: there were no respondents from Cyprus. According to Fonseca, in Cyprus, there is a long tradition of tripartite cooperation and major decisions on labour and social issues are taken after consultations with the Labour Advisory Body - a high-level Committee chaired by the Minister of Labour and composed of representatives of employers' and workers' organisations. Each organisation nominates its candidate and sends its proposition to the Minister who formally appoints them (Fonseca, 2007, 20)⁴⁷. The criteria mentioned are the suitability of the members and their ability to constructively contribute to the EESC. No gender balance criteria are mentioned. The Cypriot delegation is composed only of men, none of the 5 members is a woman.

Czech Republic: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks for the proposals of the workers' and employers' representative organisations which are present at the National Economic and Social Council (Fonseca, 2007, 21). According to respondents, the nomination for members of Group III is slightly different, different Ministries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs consult big NGOs networks for candidates. For nominations in the current term, the governmental Council for NGOs made a public call, gathered applications and organized a hearing of candidates and a voting session. There does not seem to be any specific and written criteria for the selection of candidates, and thus, there are no gender balance criteria either. Respondents in Group II note that candidates need to have certain skills such as language knowledge, expertise in certain issues and

⁴⁶ The organisations that have been identified by the respondents are: for Group I: 1) Croatian Employers Organisation; 2) Croatian Chamber of Commerce; and 3) Croatian Chamber of Trade and Crafts. For Group II, representatives of the three strongest Union Confederations.

⁴⁷ According to Fonseca the Cypriot organisations that would be represented are: for Group I: The Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) and Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE); for Group II.: Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK) and Pancyprrian Federation of Labour (PEO); and for Group III: Cyprus Farmers Association (EKA) and Cyprus Consumers Association (KSK).

communication skills. Although there is no written rule on gender balance, respondents in Group II note that “gender balance and regional balance are considered”. Some respondents point out that different diversity criteria are not considered. 5 out of 12 Czech members are women.

Denmark: the government decided on the organisations to be represented in the Danish delegation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks civil society organisations to nominate representatives. There does not seem to be any requirement on gender balance (Fonseca, 2007, 22), and respondents acknowledged that they weren’t sure about any specific requirement, including gender balance. Some of the organisations nominate one candidate and no gender balance aspect is considered. 4 out of 9 Danish members are women.

Estonia: The Ministry of Social Affairs through a Working Group chooses the representative organisations and asks them to nominate their candidates (Fonseca, 2007, 22). According to respondents in Group II, civil society organisations are always consulted. A respondent in Group III notes that there was a public competition for civil society organisations organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs, where their applications were evaluated. Some of the required criteria mentioned are: be a member of a representative organisation, have experience for highly relevant matters for Estonia, motivation, competence, and ability to participate at the EESC. Estonia and Croatia are the only two delegations that have a majority of women members, although the number of seats that they have is relatively small. Some respondents note that they have more women members because the staff of the national organisations is composed of mostly women. 4 out of the 6 members of the Estonian delegation are women.

Finland: the government asks key employers', workers' and civil society organisations to nominate their candidates. According to respondents, civil society organisations are asked to suggest candidates and alternatives, which need to be men and women, to the government. Some organisations nominate just one member and they note that gender balance is not possible. According to the respondents and Fonseca’s findings, gender balance is legally required when civil society organisations nominate their candidates. However, the current gender composition of the Finnish delegation is not gender-balanced, only 3 out of the 9 members are women.

France: respondents mention different institutional bodies which would be involved in the appointment process in France. With regards to members of Groups I and II, the Committee on the European and International Social Dialogue, part of the Labour Ministry, and the General Secretariat for European Affairs, an inter-ministerial structure, are mentioned. Trade unions and employers organisations that are members of the mentioned Committee, which are considered representative, are asked to propose candidates. For Group III, different ministries collect candidatures by consulting civil society organisations (Fonseca, 2007, 23). Respondents note that gender balance is considered and some of the respondents in Group II note that their organisations have established a gender parity rule and that they give special attention to inclusion and diversity aspects. 10 out of the 24 French members are women.

Germany: The Federal Ministry of Economics coordinates the process, although different ministries are also involved. Federal Ministries ask organisations to submit their candidates and the final approval is made by the Federal Cabinet (Fonseca, 2007, 24). According to respondents in Groups I and II there is no gender balance criteria. However, a respondent from Group I acknowledges that having regional and intersectional representation is one of the criteria used.

They mention that skills, readiness, competence and trust are considered in order to be nominated by the organisations. Only 2 out of the current 23 German members are women.

Greece: The Ministry of Economy and Finance asks the representative civil society organisations (employers' organisations for Group I, trade unions for Group II and professional, farmers, SMEs, consumer and other organisations for Group III) to put forward their candidates (Fonseca, 2007, 24). The selection criteria mentioned are expertise and language knowledge and the position that members have within their national organisations is also considered. Respondents in Group I and II note that there are no rules with regards to gender balance and that gender balance is not considered. A respondent notes that diversity is not considered either. Only 2 out of the current 11 Greek members are women.

Hungary: The Ministry of Social Affairs asks civil society organisations to nominate representatives. For members from Groups I and II there is a Hungarian forum where trade unionists and employers meet to form opinions and members are chosen from this forum⁴⁸. According to Fonseca, members of Group III are chosen through a public call for Hungarian NGOs (Fonseca, 2007, 25). There were no survey respondents from Group III. All respondents note that gender balance is not considered and that only capabilities, talent and skills are considered. 6 out of the 12 Hungarian members are women.

Ireland: in Ireland, the “Social Partnership” is composed of four pillars: Employers, Trade Unions, Agriculture, and Community & Voluntary. The Department responsible for connecting the Government and the Social Partners, invites each pillar to nominate three representatives (Fonseca, 2007, 26). According to the respondent each organisation has its own selection criteria, and organisations tend to choose candidates who are on the boards or have had important positions beforehand, which for historical and structural reasons tend to be men. As Fonseca explains, the Government’s memorandum on the EESC nominations has a clause (art. 4) on gender balance and the inclusion of a member from Northern Ireland. In 2006, two out of the four pillars did not respect gender balance claiming that the selected persons were “the most appropriate representatives with more experience, knowledge and time to contribute most effectively to the work of the EESC” (Fonseca, 2007, 26). Currently, only 1 out of the 8 Irish members is a woman. This means that Ireland is not currently respecting its own gender balance rules either.

Italy: The Minister of Economy for Group I, the Minister of Labour and Social affairs for Group II, and other Ministers for Group III, identify the representative civil society organisations and ask them to provide their candidates. Language knowledge, professional experience and suitability for the function are considered for the appointments. Some respondents note that the most important requirement is to have knowledge of EU affairs and some note that the political role of the member is considered. A respondent from Group II notes that: “The Ministry of Labour for the first time three years ago asked to consider gender balance in the nomination of representatives for the EESC. This was very important, but our trade union was the only one that respected this “invitation” from the Government”. The respondent further notes that her trade union can nominate two members. Other Italian respondents note that their organisations do not discriminate and that they embrace the principle of gender equality. However, only 4 out of the 20 Italian members are women.

⁴⁸ According to Fonseca, this “forum” would be the *National Council for the Reconciliation of Interests*.

Latvia: According to a respondent of Group II, the Ministry of Economy approved the received nominations by the different representative civil society organisations and informed the Cabinet of Ministers; afterwards, the Parliament approved the appointments. However, the respondent notes that the process might change soon as it will be the State Chancellery which will coordinate it. It seems that there are not strictly established criteria (Fonseca, 2007, 27), but EU and language knowledge and work experience are considered. There are no requirements with regards to gender balance. 3 out of the 7 Latvian members are women.

Lithuania: The Ministry of Economy coordinates the process and it asks selected representative civil society organisations to put forward their nominations. According to a respondent in Group II, the selection consists of three stages: evaluation of the administrative compliance of the proposals and the suitability of the organization; organization scoring; and the face to face interviews with candidates⁴⁹. The Ministry of Economy then submits the list of selected candidates for approval by the Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs the EU Council about the representatives of Lithuanian organizations proposed by the candidates. A respondent in Group II notes that gender balance is considered when nominating members. According to Fonseca, there are no rules with regards to gender balance (Fonseca, 2007, 28). 4 out of the 9 Lithuanian members are women.

Luxembourg: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacts the relevant employers' and labour organisations asking them to submit their respective candidate and the government confirms the list of candidates⁵⁰. The respondent notes that given that each organisation has the right to only one seat, the question of gender is not discussed and that there are no written rules on the overall gender balance. 2 out of the 5 Luxembourgian members are women.

Malta: For Group III, there is an independent Civil Society Committee (CSC), which is divided into 12 sectors, within the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development. The elections for appointment on EESC for Civil Society take place through a secret vote by CSC members. The names of the candidates with the highest number of votes and the runner-up are submitted to the Minister for European Affairs for confirmation and approval. A respondent notes that most of the CSC representatives are men and they lobby for male representatives, and thus, it can be very difficult for women to get a high number of votes. For Groups I and Group II, candidates are chosen by reaching an agreement between various Employers' representative organisations and various Workers' representative organisations. There is no criteria regarding gender balance. The Maltese delegation is composed only of men. Out of the 5 Maltese members, none is a woman.

Netherlands: The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands, the institution where social partners meet, coordinates the process. It asks the representative trade unions, employers' organisations and various groups to nominate their candidates. Respondents note that neither gender balance nor diversity are taken into consideration for the appointments. A respondent points out that their organisation looks for a candidate who is a good lobbyist and knows EU and Dutch politics. Another respondents notes that the (Dutch) Social and Economic Council wants

⁴⁹ According to Fonseca the specific Ministries and bodies that are involved in the process are the Tripartite Council, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Justice, the National Consumer Rights Protection Board under the Ministry of Justice, and the European Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁰ According to Fonseca these organisations are the Chamber of Trade, the biggest trade unions - OGB-L, CGFP and LCGB, the Crafts Chamber and the Farmers' Association. They represent the largest organisations taking part in the National Economic and Social Committee.

the Dutch delegation to be, as far as possible, a good reflection of civil society. However, only 3 out of 12 Dutch members are women.

Poland: According to the respondents, members of Group I and II are selected by the organisations that are part of the Council for Social Dialogue and members of Group III by organisations that applied and were selected by the Council for Public Interest. According to Fonseca, the established selection criteria are fluent knowledge of Polish, proven advanced knowledge of at least one foreign language (English, French or German), higher education degree, and at least 2 years' experience within the representative organisations (Fonseca, 2007, 30). There are no gender balance requirements. One of the respondents in Group III notes that her organisation has gender balance rules, such as keeping gender balance within its board and that while they focus on competence for the nominations, gender is also considered. For another respondent in Group I, there would be no need for any gender balance requirement because the process works very well, and it is transparent. Only 5 out of the 21 Polish members are women.

Portugal: The selection and nomination process is coordinated by the EU Department of the Prime Minister's Office together with the EU Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Civil society organisations may be invited to present their candidates. The National Economic and Social Committee, where the majority of the invited organisations sit, is consulted and involved in the process too. The final decision on the selected candidates is taken directly by the Prime Minister (Fonseca, 2007, 30). Respondents note that only knowledge of EU affairs and languages are considered, and that gender balance is not one of the requirements to present their candidates. A respondent from Group II notes that gender balance is considered and that his organisations takes part in activities related to gender equality. The National Portuguese delegation is composed of only men members. None of the 12 Portuguese members is a woman.

Romania: The Government asks the Economic and Social Council to submit its proposals for the candidates for Groups I and II. Within the Economic and Social Council, representatives of the trade unions and employers' confederations present their candidates. None of the Romanian members of Group III responded to the survey and thus, it is not possible to know whether the Government directly appointed the representatives of Group III, or if they are appointed through the Economic and Social Council or other procedure (Fonseca, 2007, 31)⁵¹. Respondents acknowledge that no gender balance criteria is applied. They mention professional experience in international affairs as the criterion considered for selecting the candidates. Only 1 out of the 14 Romanian members is a woman.

Slovakia: The Government asks the following two bodies - the *Triparta* (composed of Government's, employees' and employers' representatives) and the Economic and Social Council of Slovakia - to put forward their proposals. Each institution sends its proposal to the Minister of Social Affairs who submits the final list to the Government (Fonseca, 2007, 32). There are no specific selection criteria, having a fair representation of the three socio-economic groups and the

⁵¹ According to Fonseca, "The representatives of the third group were directly appointed by the Government who also took the final decision on the complete list of candidates. In the future terms, the Economic and Social Council will make proposals for the Romanian candidates for the 3rd group and will have a consultative role". Fonseca adds that with regards to Group III, social partners recommended that the candidates represent 5 out of the 6 fields approved at the Economic and Social Council: academic and professional associations, consumer protection, human rights, health, social services, environment and rural middle-sized organisations.

competence of the candidates are considered (Fonseca, 2007, 32). There were no respondents from Slovakia. Only 3 out of the 9 Slovakian members are women.

Slovenia: The Government's Office for European Affairs coordinates the procedure and the Government makes the official nomination. The Slovenian Economic and Social Council submits candidates for Group I and II and the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry and the Centre of non-governmental organisations each submit one candidate for Group III (Fonseca, 2007, 32). According to the available information, gender balance is not considered in the appointment process (Fonseca, 2007, 32). Only 1 out of the 7 Slovenian members is a woman.

Spain: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs asks the representative national and regional trade unions and employers' organisations to designate their candidates. For Group III candidates, the Ministry directly contacts different organisations, such as consumer and disabled people's organisations, and turns to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for contacting the representative organisations within its scope of action (Fonseca, 2007, 33). A respondent from Group I notes that the main sectors in Spain must be represented among the appointed members of their Group, but that gender balance is not considered. Respondents in Group II note that within their organisations, in addition to analysing the technical profile of the candidate, gender balance is considered because at least one of the three members that they nominate, needs to be a woman. A respondent from Group II notes that gender balance is considered in the nominations of their organisation but that there is no established rule. Only 5 out of the 21 Spanish members are women.

Sweden: Different Ministries identify the organisations to be invited to send their proposals for candidates. For Group II, the Ministry of Employment was in charge of the appointments. For Group III, the same Ministry opened a public call where interested organisations were encouraged to apply. According to the respondents, the Ministry of Employment asked the organisations to submit both male and female candidates and gender balance was specifically requested. The general selection criterion was to have knowledge of EU affairs. A respondent in Group II notes that diversity in general is also considered, as it is within their organisation, they try to have members of different backgrounds and ages. 7 out of the 12 Swedish members are women.

United Kingdom: The Foreign Secretary has overall responsibility for the selection and nomination process. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office receives and reviews the applications for members of Group III and the Department for Trade and Industry for Groups I and II members. There are some guidelines for the application process which all organisations need to consider. The guidelines state that candidates must have relevant experience on EESC areas, professional qualifications, motivation, research or communication skills, time availability for preparing and attending the meetings, familiarity with EU institution and decision-making and with basic IT applications. Guidelines state that candidates should be representative of the UK population, in what regards gender, ethnicity and disability (Fonseca, 2007, 34)⁵². For Group II, the Trade Union Confederation (TUC) puts forward the nominations. According to a respondent in Group II diversity is also considered. 10 out of the 24 English members are women.

⁵² Some of the criteria are mentioned by s from the United Kingdom and others are referred by Fonseca.

5.1.3 National appointment procedures: gender Balance, diversity and other selection criteria

This section further analyses the selection criteria used in national appointment procedures, focusing on gender balance and diversity aspects. The analysis shows that the majority of Member States, the governmental institutions or bodies, and national organisations involved in the appointment processes for the EESC members do not consider gender balance. In fact, according to the available information, only 5 Member States (Sweden, Finland, France, United Kingdom and Ireland) specifically ask the nominating organisations to take gender equity, parity or balance into consideration in their proposals. However, how they consider gender balance and the outcomes regarding the gender composition of their national delegation differs. For example, although Finland and Ireland have rules on gender balance, their delegations are not gender-balanced. On the other hand, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom do have gender-balanced delegations. Survey respondents from these Member States note that their organisations were asked to consider gender parity or balance and to present both female and male candidates.

Table 11 below provides an overview of the appointment processes described above and shows whether gender balance, diversity and/or other criteria are considered. It reflects the two levels where gender balance criteria can be established: at the level of national delegations, through governmental requirements on having a gender-balanced national delegation, and at the level of the national organisations responsible for submitting candidates. The term “government” refers to that first level: it is intended to include all the governmental, institutional or official bodies that are responsible for the final appointment of EESC members at the Member State level, such as the Prime Minister, a Minister, the Ministries or other bodies, etc. The term “rule” refers to the rules and/or guidelines that are used by Member States or the organisations to nominate and appoint a gender-balanced delegation. Finally, the term “consider” is used when respondents indicated that their government or organisation considers gender balance when making up the list of proposed EESC members/candidates.

Table 11- Appointment Procedures and Gender Balance, Diversity and other selection criteria

Member States	Government		National Orgs. Group I		National Orgs. Group II		National Orgs. Group III	
	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider
Austria				●		●		
Belgium								●
Bulgaria							●	
Croatia								
Cyprus								
Czech Republic						● ●		
Estonia								
Finland	●							
France	●				●	●		
Germany			●					
Greece								
Hungary								
Ireland	●							
Italy		●						
Latvia								
Lithuania						●		
Luxembourg								
Malta								
Netherlands								
Poland								●
Portugal						●		
Romania								
Slovakia								
Slovenia								
Spain				●		● ●		
Sweden	●					● ●		
UK	● ●					● ●		

● Gender Balance
 ● Diversity
 ● Other: regional and sectorial balance

Within the 3 Groups (Employer, Workers, Diversity Europe), some organisations have established rules to ensure gender balance and others “consider” gender balance when nominating members. These are mainly organisations falling within Groups II and III. However, the fact that some respondents state that their organisations do “consider” gender balance, does not guarantee

that the final composition of the members they nominate and the members per group are gender-balanced⁵³.

Some respondents from Group II state that diversity criteria, such as age, different background or origin are also considered. Only two respondents mentioned that their organisations have formally established gender parity or gender balance criteria in the nomination process: a French respondent from Group II and a Bulgarian respondent from Group III. It is interesting to note that some German respondents from Group I note that their organisations have a rule on regional and sectorial balance and Spanish respondents of the same Group that they consider sectorial balance. Some members of Group II in Spain also note that they consider sectorial balance. This suggests that having a balance in certain aspects is a concern for some organisations, however, Table 10 demonstrates that gender balance is not normally considered.

Some respondents indicate that as their organisations have the right to only one seat, they do not consider the gender of the candidate. What current statistics show is that in the majority of cases, that one seat is given to a man, and among those that have the right to 3 seats and therefore, nominate 3 members, they often propose 2 men and 1 woman. When scaling these to the level of the whole Committee, the result is a notable gender imbalance. In addition, according to the findings in some interviews and survey responses, many of the national organisations have a fewer number of women members or affiliates and male-dominance within the organisations would often result in a lower level of commitment towards gender balance and broader gender equality issues.

5.2 EESC personnel

Different factors explain the existing gender balance among the EESC personnel. As explained, the fact that it is a small institution with a large proportion of employees in translation and that it is of consultative nature, impacts on gender balance. In addition, some of the processes behind the hiring and promotion in the EESC might have helped the current state of gender balance.

The hiring and promotion of the personnel is regulated differently, taking into account competence and years in service respectively. With regards to hiring, competence is the first and most important criteria. Only when the level of competence is equal, will the underrepresented gender in the category have priority in the hiring. This applies to both men and women. As has been seen, there are categories where men are the underrepresented gender and therefore, when equal competence is shown, they are prioritised. Also, a person from Human Resources is always present in the interview and for every vacancy gender inclusive language is used.

For promotion within the same category, the main factor considered is the years in service. According to the personnel interviewed, there are two ways to pass from the assistant category to administrator: one is through a competition procedure and the other is through an internal procedure called “certification”. To prepare for the “certification” process and tests, the employee needs to have the approval of the HoU. One interviewee noted that, given the wide discretion of HoUs on deciding if a person is “up to certification” or not, biased evaluations can occur and , better mechanisms to avoid bias would, therefore, be beneficial. With regards to Directors, some

⁵³ For example, this is the case of the Austrian members of Group I. Although a respondent note that gender balance is considered in the nomination process of the organisation, only 1 out of the 4 Austrian members of Group I is a woman.

of the interviewees note that having a solid career experience and good contacts are important to achieve that position.

One of the aspects that might need to be addressed relates to horizontal gender segregation, an issue raised by some interviewees . Horizontal gender segregation inside the EESC can be understood as the fact that women’s presence is predominant in some specific areas, traditionally seen as “feminine”, and on the contrary, that men’s presence is predominant in other specific areas, traditionally seen as “masculine”, such as logistics and legislative work. For example, when looking at the presence of women and men per area of assignment in the EESC, we observe that there are more men in management in the areas of logistics and legislative work and more women in communication and translation⁵⁴. Horizontal gender segregation is a reality that persists in all the Member States and across diverse institutions, bodies and public and private organisations. It is widely recognized as problematic because of its impact on perpetuating unequal gender power relations (EIGE, 2018). In this sense, future work lines might be focused on improving the process behind the hiring and promotion to help tackle horizontal gender segregation.

⁵⁴ As of January 2019, and according to the data provided by the Human Resources and Finance Directorate, there are 15 administrators in management positions in the Directorate of Legislative Work and out of those, 10 are men and 5 women. In the Translation Directorate, there are 3 administrators in management positions and out of these, 3 are women and 1 is a man.

6. Beyond gender balance

Moving beyond gender parity and balance, this section constitutes a preliminary approach to broader issues related to gender equality in the EESC. It addresses gender equality issues with regards to EESC members and personnel. With regards to EESC members, it first focuses on diverse gender equality issues in national organisations involved in the nomination processes for EESC members, second on the EESC itself, and third on gender mainstreaming.

6.1 EESC members

6.1.1 Gender equality in national organisations

The majority of the survey respondents acknowledged that gender balance and other diversity criteria are not considered in the nomination processes of their national organisations. But behind the concrete aspect of gender parity, balance and diversity, when asked about other aspects broader than gender balance, such as the gender perspective of members, survey respondents and interviewees noted that these are not generally considered within their national organisations either.

However, a small number of survey respondents mentioned that gender equality is one of the principles to which their national organisations are attached to, for example, some of them have formally established the principle of gender equality in their organisations' statutes. Some respondents from Group I mentioned that their organisations often organise conferences or events related to issues such as women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. Some respondents of Groups II and III mentioned that specific training on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and other related issues are organised by their national organisations. A few mentioned that their organisations have anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policies in place. Two respondents noted that their national organisations actively encourage women and ethnic minority candidates to apply to become an EESC member. One respondent from Sweden notes that the decisions of the Executive and Steering Committees of her national organisation always have a gender equality analysis in the annex. Conversely, some members mentioned that although their national organisation claims to be in favour of gender equality, there is little real commitment to implement changes within their organisations and in their external work.

Additionally, one interviewee suggested that there should be more representatives coming from women's and feminist organisations in Group III.

Given the central role of national organisations in the composition of the EESC and the impact that it has in the final functioning of the EESC, further research and actions can be targeted at national organisations' role in the appointment of EESC members and their commitment to gender equality. The next section focuses on different issues related to gender equality in the EESC.

6.1.2 Gender equality in the EESC

This section focuses on broader aspects related to gender equality in the EESC raised by the members interviewed: sexism, training on gender, and work-life balance.

Sexism

Following the European Parliament's new *Rules of Procedure*, particularly in relation to preventing and combating all forms of harassment, in March 2019 the EESC adopted in a *Code of Conduct* to ensure strict adherence to ethical standards, non-discrimination, equal opportunities and dignity in the workplace (EESC, 2019). The adoption of a *Code of Conduct* can be seen as a positive step because it tries to address inadequate behaviours, such as harassment or sexist attitudes, which still prevail in our societies, including in the workplace and in the EU institutions themselves⁵⁵. During the in-depth interviews some of the members talked about cases and experiences of sexist attitudes in the EESC, for example:

“It was just me and another colleague from X and the rest, 12-14 were men. She was the rapporteur at that time, and no one left her speaking. It was difficult for us to take the word, to speak, they wouldn't let us. I wouldn't believe it if someone would have told me this story, but now I know that these situations can happen, because it happened to me”.

A male member noted that:

“we should work on those subtle things. They come from attitudes that I would say, the people that have them might not want to consciously undermine the other, but they're doing it because of their whole cultural background. There are definitely sexist attitudes towards women in the Committee, and that should be addressed”.

Another quote reads as follows:

“in Group X we can see sexist behaviours. However, that doesn't mean that all members respect and understand those behaviours. But at the same time, that doesn't mean that those members have the power to change things either, and this is why it is so important to have clear rules that actually promote gender equality.”

Training on gender

According to the interviewees, there is no training for members on diverse gender equality issues. Some members pointed out that:

“this needs education, awareness, consciousness. A smartly developed training might help, and broad policy which states that these attitudes are not acceptable”.

In fact, in the line with the broader structural elements that impact on different aspects of gender equality, one of the members interviewed said that:

“I think this is a deep structural problem, a deep cultural problem. We all underline that we respect gender equality and currently in our President's cabinet there are more women, but when we look deeper into the Committee's structures, we see that it is all very male-dominated, like culturally, when it comes to dividing tasks, with the way of doing things, the approach...”.

⁵⁵ See for example the experiences harassment, sexism and other, of many staff in the European Parliament in the MeTooEP website: <https://metooep.com/>

Work-life balance

The issue of work-life balance was also raised by the members in the interviews. It seems to be difficult to have good work-life balance while being a member of the EESC. Some note that:

“In this institution, something like work-life balance doesn’t exist. I do not know if that’s even possible to make, because it requires you to travel to Brussels. I always try to do work also from home. I use technologies, like Skype or other, and I do as many things as I can without travelling to Brussels”.

And another says,

“I think if we had more modern, flexible procedures to work, it would allow greater equality, especially gender equality. For example, some years ago I was trying to have full custody of my children, I almost got it. If I had them with me in my house, I would have had to leave this, to quit. I would resign. That’s normally the dilemma faced by women, because they are expected to take care of the children. The archaic rules insist on flying here physically, to be here, instead of being able to participate and being flexible. We should reimburse members for participating, for Skyping into a meeting and not for buying flights and room hotels. It would be like a fraction of the costs.”

The EESC and many of its members are aware of the prevailing inequalities and seem willing to work on gender equality in the EESC. At the time of writing this report, some EESC women members are working to come up with innovative solutions that would help gender equality in the EESC.

Externally, the EESC is also increasingly contributing to the cause of gender equality. In the last years, apart from the mentioned own-initiative opinion on *Gender Equality Issues*, the EESC has issued other opinions tackling different aspects of gender equality, such as the exploratory opinion on *The situation of women with disabilities* requested by the European Parliament and the exploratory opinion on *Women and Transport* requested by the European Commission. Besides this, EESC’s Civil Society Prize for 2019 has focused on the empowerment of women and the fight for gender equality, by honouring innovative initiatives and projects, which aim to fight for equal opportunities for women and men and their equal treatment in all spheres of economic and social life (EESC, 2019).

6.1.3 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination (EIGE, 2019). It is the EU’s official policy approach regarding gender equality since the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and it has its current legal basis in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Shreeves, 2019)⁵⁶. Despite the ongoing discussions around the (in)effective implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming by EU

⁵⁶ According to the author of the report, Shreeves: “Gender mainstreaming was established internationally as the major global strategy for gender equality at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where the concept was promoted by the EU. It became the official policy approach in the European Union and its Member States in the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), and the legal basis was strengthened in Article 8 TFEU.

institutions and Member States, it is important to note that the principle of gender mainstreaming must be implemented by all EU institutions, including the EESC⁵⁷.

The incorporation of the gender perspective in the EESC's opinions and the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming in all the Committee's work was also raised during the interviews. The interviewees have mentioned that the implementation of gender mainstreaming is not systematised in the work and Opinions of the EESC, its application depends greatly on the gender sensitivity and knowledge of the rapporteurs. As one of the interviewed has noted:

“this depends very much on the rapporteur and the study groups and in the end the plenary. [...] We haven't had, for the moment, any structure or process for this, it depends on the members. I think that there is the intention to work on this, to make specific proposals on issues like how to incorporate better the gender mainstreaming in the opinions, that would be perfect”.

Another interviewee also said that:

“we have no procedures, we have some dedicated chairs, mostly women, that try to ensure that gender equality is considered in our work” and added: “I really hope that we try to implement this [gender mainstreaming] better, that we share the gender dimension when we prepare documents, when we discuss policies, to assure that include gender not only inside our institution but also when we speak about the solutions”.

An example that might indicate this inefficient implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming and lack of the gender perspective among rapporteurs is that from the 215 opinions and resolutions adopted in 2018 in the EESC, only 33 mention “gender”⁵⁸. Some of the interviewed members pointed to the lack of knowledge around gender issues:

“I feel like it is mentioned as a topic but without any education on what it means or how to address it. I would say that there is a huge lack of expertise about it. There's never a discussion about how to create equality and seeing it as a positive thing. I see gender equality discussions being framed as superficial equality outcomes”.

6.2 EESC personnel

Beyond gender balance, there are different issues connected to gender equality among the EESC personnel.

Discussing the reasons behind the better gender balance overall among the EESC personnel, some of the factors that interviewed personnel mentioned are that the EESC is a good place to work, with many effective work-life balance measures and reasonable and flexible working hours. Although it depends on the Section in which the personnel are located, interviewees stated that often, they work from 9 to 5 and they have flexible starting and leaving schedules, as well as the possibility of teleworking when the tasks allow it. The European Commission offers interinstitutional programmes and courses on women's leadership and empowerment and the EESC's personnel is informed about the possibility to apply.

⁵⁷ It is not the purpose of this research to address the debates around the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming.

⁵⁸ The number of opinions and resolutions of 2018 and mentioning “gender” have been found using the EESC document search at: <https://dmsearch.eesc.europa.eu/search/opinion>

In 2017, an *Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Diversity* was approved, where 25 measures were suggested, and the dimension of equal opportunities, diversity and an inclusive working environment was confirmed as a core value of the EESC and embedded in all HR processes (Directorate E- EESC, 2017, 7). In addition, there are formal procedures in place to tackle conflict and harassment, such as the network of confidential counsellors who are available to staff in the event of conflicts at work, including harassment (Directorate E- EESC, 2017, 7). The role of the confidential counsellors is to listen, provide information and support colleagues in complete confidentiality (Directorate E- EESC, 2018, 28). According to one of the interviewed personnel, given that different rules apply to personnel and members, controlling working conflicts between these two groups might be complex: adopting the *Code of Conduct for EESC members* was the first step in trying to ensure respectful relations in this regard. Another interviewee noted that greater protection should be provided to the victims of harassment, that harassment should be condemned, and harassers penalised. Diverse awareness-raising campaigns have been developed in the EESC with the view to promoting respectful workplace relations (Directorate E- EESC, 2018, 28).

7. Best Practices

This section outlines some of the best practices found in the EESC itself, with regards to its members and personnel, respectively. It also gives some of the best practices found in the EU institutions and elsewhere.

7.1 EESC Members

While there are areas in which the EESC can improve with regards to gender balance and gender equality, there are some best practices that the EESC has implemented internally that are worth mentioning. One good practice relates to an internal working procedure, precisely, to making public the reasons that each member provides when he/she applies to be a member or a rapporteur in a study group. Making this public increases the transparency of the procedure and enables greater monitoring of the correct implementation of the processes. Another good practice relates to the adoption of the *Code of Conduct*, which was an important step for the EESC to start developing mechanisms to try to prevent or address inadequate behaviours.

7.2 EESC Personnel

With regards to EESC's personnel, some of the best practices relate to different HR procedures, which have had a proven positive impact on gender balance and equality in the EESC. Some of these are, for example, to always have an HR personnel, trained on gender issues, in the interviews, to use inclusive language and encourage both male and female candidates to apply, to formally establish and apply the rule that says that with the same level of competence, skills, and knowledge, the underrepresented gender in that category is prioritised, and general work-life balance measures.

7.3 EU institutions and others

We can find other best practices in the EU institutions, other organisations and some Member States. Some organisations also provide tools that could be useful to the EESC. In addition, EIGE collects and shows many different good practices found across the EU on various gender equality issues. The following bullet points provide a list of best practices found in the EU institutions, Member States and different bodies and organisations.

- **Collect, systematise and publicise data on gender balance:** The European Parliament collects and systematises information on the gender of the MEPs for each term. It makes publicly available the historical gender composition of the Parliament through easy and accessible graphs, information sheets and reports⁵⁹.
- **Set clear targets to move towards gender parity:** the European Commission sets clear targets and has worked towards having at least 40% of women as middle and senior managers by the end of President Juncker's mandate in 2019. Establishing targets can help the gender balance with regards to EESC members, in its internal structures and procedures, and with regards to its personnel.
- **Establish parity in leadership positions:** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has established a team of commissioners which has almost reached gender parity, with 13 women (including herself) and 14 men.
- **Sweden's gender balance requirements:** Sweden has experience on active gender equality policies and with regards to the appointment of EESC members, it requires national organisations to always provide female and male candidates and assures that the national delegation is gender-balanced. Other Member States can learn from the Swedish best practice in this regard.
- **Participatory and open procedures:** for the election of EESC members belonging to Group III - Diversity Europe - some Member States (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Sweden) opened a public call for applications where specific requirements and criteria were established. Although an open call is not the only solution to choose members for Group III, the participatory spirit, transparent process and formally established criteria can help to improve the national appointment procedures and the gender-balanced composition of members.
- **Encourage diversity:** according to a survey respondent, the UK's *Trade Union Congress* (TUC) actively seeks to nominate members who are diverse and tries to nominate one member coming from an ethnic minority and an equal number of women and men.
- **Say no to all-male panels:** The European Commission's Directorate-General Connect (DG Connect), already committed itself in 2015 to always include women speakers in the events that they organise, to refuse invitations to speak in all-male panels or conferences, and to try to ensure diversity and a better representation of women in events organised by

⁵⁹ Besides the data on gender and the European Parliament provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) which can be consulted at https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_parl_wmid_eurparl/bar; the European Parliament itself makes public its percentage of women and men MEPs by electoral term and member state. See for example the 2019 elections results at <https://election-results.eu/mep-gender-balance/2019-2024/> and the 2014 elections results at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/gender-balance.html>

others outside the EU⁶⁰. *The Brussels Binder's Toolkit* might also be helpful as a practical guide to improving gender balance at conferences⁶¹.

- **Tackle harassment:**
 - **Develop policies, rules and guidance documents on harassment:** The European Parliament has adopted internal rules on harassment (European Parliament, 2014), and has also written a guide for members of the European Parliament on *Zero Harassment in the Workplace*⁶².
 - **Adopt an EESC resolution and specific anti-harassment commitments:** the European Parliament has adopted a Resolution on *Combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU: European Parliament*, which condemns all forms of sexual violence and physical or psychological harassment⁶³.
 - **Training on anti-harassment:** the European Parliament proposed mandatory anti-harassment training for members of Parliament and although it was not approved by the plenary, the training has been developed and some members have applied to participate (De la Baume, 2019).
- **Training on gender:** EIGE has collected some best practices on gender training provided by diverse institutions, Member States, and national and local governments across the European Union which can serve as inspiration for the EESC. Some of the training relates to understanding gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessments and gender budgeting⁶⁴.

8. Conclusions

This study has tried to address the knowledge gap regarding gender balance in the EESC. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, it has provided new and updated information on the state of gender balance among the EESC's members and its personnel, and the different factors that impact on the final gender composition of the EESC.

The research indicates a systemic and persistent gender imbalance, notably among the EESC members currently only 28% of whom are female. The majority (14) of national delegations are composed of less than 40% of women members and in three delegations there are no women at all. The gender composition differs between the three Groups, however, none of the Groups achieves neither gender parity nor balance. Group II has the highest proportion of female members (35%), followed by Group III (29%) and then Group I (21%). With regards to the EESC' Sections, in which most of the Committee's work is carried out, SOC (Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship) has, by far, the biggest share of women (44%), followed by REX (Section for External Relations) - (28%). The CCMI (Consultative Commission on Industrial Change) has the lowest share of women (22%), closely followed by TEN (Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society) (23%). With regards to the gender composition in Presidencies and the Bureau, although there is gender parity among the Presidents of the Sections, CCMI and the Observatories P, there is no gender balance among Group

⁶⁰ See DG Connect's pledge on: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/blog/all-male-panels-tech-we-say-no>

⁶¹ The Brussels Binder's Toolkit is a practical guide to improving gender balance at conferences and it is accessible online at: <https://brusselsbinder.org/toolkit/>

⁶² The guide is accessible online at: https://www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/brochure-mep-0-harassment_en3.pdf

⁶³ The European Parliament Resolution of 26 October 2017 on Combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU (2017/2897(RSP)) is accessible online at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0417_EN.html?redirect

⁶⁴ EIGE's best practices on gender equality training can be found at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices>

Presidents and in the Bureau. Finally, by analysing the gender balance among the rapporteurs in the last year (2018), we observe that only 17% of them were women.

A comparison of the current state of gender balance among EESC members with that of 2013, shows that it has slightly improved as the percentage of women members has increased from 25% to 28%. Although gender balance has increased in Groups II and III, as well as in Section Presidencies and in the Bureau, it has slightly worsened in Group I. The same is true of the Member States - some have improved the gender balance of their national delegations while in others, it has deteriorated.

As regards the administrative (personnel) level, the state of gender balance in the EESC is different. The presence of women and men varies per personnel category: 71% of “Assistants”, 61% of “Administrators” and 52% of “Heads of Unit (HoU)” are women. Men make up only 29% of Assistant positions, meaning that a greater number and proportion of women are in lower and non-managerial positions. There is almost gender parity among the EESC’s HoUs, although in Directorates B and C, which are in charge of the EESC’s legislative work, 6 out of the 7 HoUs of the Section’s Secretariat are men. At the senior management level, 4 out of the 7 Directors are women⁶⁵. However, two of these women are acting *ad interim* and, at the time of this study, they had not been permanently confirmed in these posts.

Various, but different, factors help to explain the state of gender balance among the EESC’s members and its personnel. As regards the members, these factors are linked, to a large extent but not only, to the processes behind the national nomination and appointment of EESC members.

The main factors that lead to the gender imbalance at the EESC’s political level can be summarised as:

- No Council recommendation to the Member States on gender parity/gender balanced lists of proposed EESC members;
- Lack of formally established gender parity or, at least, gender-balanced requirements by the majority of Member States and national organisations. Even when gender parity/balance requirements are formally established by Member States and national organisations, often these are not respected in practice.
- Lack of transparent procedures and criteria in some Member States and national organisations for the nomination and appointment of EESC members.
- National organisations that can only nominate one member often propose a man, and those that can nominate 3 often propose 2 men and 1 woman. When scaling these to the level of the whole Committee, the result is a notable gender imbalance. Information obtained from some interviews and survey responses, suggests that many of the national organisations have a fewer number of women members or affiliates and that male-dominance within the organisations would often result in a lower level of commitment towards gender balance and broader gender equality issues.
- Some interview and survey responses also pointed to a general lack of commitment towards gender equality by governments/Member States and national organisations.
- The fact that gender stereotypes persist and that women continue to have the disproportionate responsibility for caring and domestic responsibilities, might hamper

⁶⁵ As of July 2019. 5 Directors are of the EESC and 2 are of the Joint Services with the CoR (translation and logistics).

their access to the circles of power and influence. In the EESC, some members have suggested that better rules governing the functioning of EESC members' work could facilitate work-life balance.

The study also shows that national organisations involved in the nomination of EESC members have different approaches towards gender equality. Some have developed broad gender equality and anti-harassment or non-discrimination policies, provide gender training to their members or organise conferences on the issue, among different actions. Other national organisations are not actively involved in advancing gender equality.

The study finds that the state of gender balance among the EESC personnel is better than that among its members and several factors could explain this. It is important to note that unlike the selection processes for the members, the EESC staff are covered by an employment relationship and corresponding recruitment procedures which can foster gender equality. For example, a person from Human Resources, trained on gender issues, is always present in recruitment interviews and every vacancy is written with gender inclusive language. Additionally, when the level of competence, skills and knowledge is equal, the underrepresented gender in the category is given priority in the hiring process.

Finally, as regards some broader gender equality considerations the study finds that there are no procedures in place to effectively implement gender mainstreaming or take account of the gender perspective in the EESC's internal work. Members are not systematically provided with training on gender equality or diversity in general and on how to use more inclusive language. This therefore relies on the individual awareness and willingness to consider such matters by some of its members. However, the Committee recently adopted a *Code of Conduct* for its members and some female members are taking the lead in fostering a dialogue on broader gender equality and diversity aspects within the EESC.

9. Recommendations

This final section sets out key recommendations to achieve a more gender balanced EESC in the future and improve its commitment towards advancing on broader gender equality issues.

9.1 EESC members

Table 12 summarizes the main recommendations with regards to EESC members and the actors which should implement them.

Table 12- Recommendations regarding EESC members	
Recommendations	Actors involved
1. Establish gender parity/balance requirements	Member States; national organisations
2. Recommend gender parity/balanced national delegations	Council of the European Union; EESC; EESC's President; Group Presidents
3. Collect, systematise and make public the data on gender	EESC; Member States; national organisations
4. Monitor and ensure accountability	EESC; European Parliament
5. Establish clear, transparent and participatory national nomination and appointment processes	Member States; national organisations; EESC; Council of the European Union
6. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies	EESC; national organisations
7. Implement gender mainstreaming	EESC

1. Establish gender parity/balance requirements

- Member States and national organisations should provide a gender parity or at least, a gender-balanced, list of proposed EESC members and alternates. For that, establishing and implementing gender parity/balance requirements or quotas is key. Where an organisation can only nominate one member, they should encourage the member to nominate an alternate of the opposite sex. They should also ensure that other diversity criteria are considered in the list of proposed members.

2. Recommend gender parity/balanced national delegations

- The Council of the EU should recommend that Member States/national delegations should provide a gender-balanced, and where possible gender parity, list of proposed members. It should also recommend that other diversity criteria are considered.
- The Council of the EU should not accept all-male lists of proposed members.
- The EESC President and the Group Presidents should ask the Council of the EU to recommend that Member States/national delegations provide a gender parity or at least, a gender-balanced, list of proposed members.
- The EESC President and Group Presidents should actively encourage national organisations to make gender balanced, and where possible gender parity, nominations. They should also encourage national organisation to consider diversity in the list of proposed members.
- Existing EESC members should also actively encourage and advocate for a gender parity/balanced list of proposed members by their national organisations.

- National organisations should actively encourage applications from women to become EESC members, including applications from a diverse range of women, such as women of ethnic and religious minorities, with a disability, LGBT, etc.

3. Collect, systematise and make public the data on gender

- The EESC should collect and systematise information about the gender composition of its members (overall, by Member States, Groups, Sections, Presidents and other key positions in the Committee, etc.) This information should be publicly available in an easy, clear and accessible way, for example in a report published on its website.
- The EESC should systematically carry out a survey of all new members in order to gather information about gender and diversity among its members.
- The EESC should continue to publish studies and other documents that contribute to the advancement of gender equality. Initiatives in line with its 2019 Civil Society Prize focusing on women's empowerment should also be encouraged and continuously implemented.

4. Monitor and ensure accountability

- National organisations should review their selection and nomination processes to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.
- National organisations whose membership is mostly male should review their processes and actions to understand the under-representation of women in their organisations and explore ways of achieving a more representative and gender-balanced composition of members.
- As the European Parliament is responsible for monitoring and approving the EESC's budget implementation (the "discharge procedure"), it should monitor and review the Committee's progress on gender balance and other gender equality aspects, such as harassment and sexism in the EESC. The European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control's 2018 "Questionnaire to the European Economic and Social Committee" had very few questions on gender balance and equality.
- The EESC should also internally monitor its progress on gender balance and adopt mechanisms to also monitor broader gender equality aspects.

5. Establish clear, transparent and participatory national nomination and appointment processes

- Member States' governments should establish clear and transparent procedures for the nomination of EESC members and should inform the EESC about their national appointment procedures. The requirements that potential EESC members should meet should be formally established, be clear, accessible and publicly available.
- National organisations should also establish clear and, as far as possible, transparent procedures for the nomination of national EESC members.
- The EESC should develop guidelines on the recommended criteria, such as the desired competences and skills of EESC members so that national delegations and organisations have clear guidance on what it is needed and expected to effectively carry out their functions in the Committee.

- The EESC should establish participatory and transparent mechanisms for its internal and day-to-day functioning. A fair and transparent process for the composition of study groups and on the selection of rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs should be ensured through formally established rules and democratic attitudes which assure its compliance.
- Considering the high age average and the poor state of diversity and gender balance among the EESC members, the Council of the EU should consider establishing a limit of the number of EESC mandates in order to ensure a reasonable turnover of EESC members and that younger generations can contribute to shaping the future of the European Union and its policies.

6. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies

- The EESC should adopt a policy to ensure the gender-balanced representation and participation in events, conferences and panels. EESC members should also refuse to participate in all-male events, conferences or panels.
- The EESC should develop and implement a comprehensive gender equality policy which addresses gender stereotypes, sexism, sexual harassment and any kind of violence against women (including digital violence), horizontal and vertical segregation, work-life balance, and other issues, in addition to gender parity and balance in the EESC.
- The EESC should provide training on gender equality, intersectionality and the gendered aspects of different policy areas (i.e. energy and gender, taxation and gender, etc.) for members and personnel and develop awareness-raising campaigns.
- The EESC should adopt a 'zero-tolerance' policy against harassment. Where there is a breach or suspected breach of the *Code of Conduct*, the EESC President should apply the procedures and sanctions established in the Code in a timely and effectively manner in order to ensure the protection of the members and personnel.
- The EESC should strengthen and provide the necessary resources to support internal groups or persons working on the advancement of gender balance, gender equality and other related issues, in the Committee.
- The EESC should review its ways of working, rules and procedures and establish mechanisms to allow for work-life balance. Allow and encourage the use of technologies, such as Skype or other means, to assist online to the meetings.
- National organisations should commit to the principle of gender equality and, consequently, adopt all the necessary measures to assure gender parity or at least gender balance in their organisations, as well as, other measures intended to advance gender equality within their organisations and in their work.

7. Implement gender and diversity mainstreaming

- The EESC should ensure that gender mainstreaming and an intersectional approach is effectively implemented in all EESC opinions, decisions and other documents. It should also create mechanisms to monitor progress in this regard.
- The EESC should use an inclusive language in its opinions and communications and provide training to members and staff on how to use the inclusive language.

9.2 EESC personnel

Table 13 summarizes the main recommendations with regards to EESC personnel.

Table 13- Recommendations regarding EESC personnel
1. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies
2. Tackle gender segregation and ensure non-biased evaluations
3. Promote and implement work-life balance
4. Provide information and training on gender equality for all staff

1. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies

- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and ensure that the mechanisms to prevent and react against harassment of any kind at work, including sexual harassment, protect the EESC's personnel effectively and in a timely manner. Monitor and review if the mechanisms in place function effectively.
- Increase awareness about the benefits of creating diverse teams, with men and women, of different nationalities, ages, backgrounds, origins and with different attributes, among the EESC personnel.
- Implement participatory mechanisms to listen to the different needs among the EESC personnel.

2. Tackle gender segregation and ensure non-biased evaluations

- Tackle vertical and horizontal gender segregation by focusing on increasing the number of men in 'Assistant' positions and the number of permanent women Directors and on having a gender parity and balanced composition of the personnel within all areas of work.
- Ensure that the process of accessing the internal promotion mechanism, the "certification", is non-biased and based on objective and fair criteria.

3. Promote and implement work-life balance

- Keep providing good work-life balance measures and continuously improve the tools, ways of working and mechanisms that facilitate the joint responsibility for caring and domestic work by female and male personnel.
- Establish measures to facilitate the caring for elderly relatives/dependents, especially considering that the majority of EESC personnel are "expats" and their caring obligations might have some particularities.

4. Provide training and information on gender equality for all staff

- Train EESC personnel in management and non-management positions, on different gender and intersectionality related issues, to increase the understanding and awareness of gender issues and other inequalities within and beyond the EESC.

- Include information on gender equality, such as the EESC's commitments to gender equality, and tools to implement gender mainstreaming in the members' work in the information package provided to all new members.

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11. Annexes

11.1 Annex 1: Tables of the state of gender balance in the EESC

Table - Overall Gender Balance at the EESC		
	Number	Percentage
Men	250	72%
Women	98	28%
Total	348 ⁶⁶	100%

Table - Gender Balance by Member State					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Austria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Belgium	11	1	12	92%	8%
Bulgaria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Croatia	3	6	9	33%	67%
Cyprus	5	0	5	100%	0%
Czech Republic	7	5	12	58%	42%
Denmark	5	4	9	56%	44%
Estonia	2	4	6	33%	67%
Finland	6	3	9	67%	33%
France	14	10	24	58%	42%
Germany	21	2	23 ⁶⁷	91%	9%
Greece	9	2	11 ⁶⁸	82%	18%
Hungary	6	6	12	50%	50%
Ireland	8	1	9	89%	11%
Italy	20	4	24	83%	17%
Latvia	4	3	7	57%	43%
Lithuania	5	4	9	56%	44%
Luxembourg	3	2	5	60%	40%
Malta	5	0	5	100%	0%
Netherlands	9	3	12	75%	25%
Poland	16	5	21	76%	24%
Portugal	12	0	12	100%	0%
Romania	14	1	15	93%	7%
Slovakia	6	3	9	67%	33%

⁶⁶ On 20 August 2019 the total number of members found in the *EESC Members Page* was of 348 as indicated in the page: “found 348”.

⁶⁷ The total seats allocated to Germany according to the European Parliament’s *Fact Sheets on the European Union- The European Economic and Social Committee* referred in the bibliography, is 24. However, the total of German members when the data is consulted in the *EESC Members Page* is 23.

⁶⁸ The total seats allocated to Greece is 12. However, the total of Greek members when the data is consulted in the *EESC Members Page* is 11.

Slovenia	6	1	7	86%	14%
Spain	16	5	21	76%	24%
Sweden	5	7	12	42%	58%
United Kingdom	14	10	24	58%	42%

Table - Levels of gender balance per Member State			
	Member State	Number of Member States	Number of seats
All-male	Cyprus, Malta and Portugal	3	22
Minority of women	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	13	197
Majority of women	Croatia, Estonia	2	15
Gender Balance	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, United Kingdom	9	114

Table - Gender balance by section and other bodies					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
INT	105	34	139	76%	24%
ECO	95	32	127	75%	25%
TEN	99	29	128	77%	23%
REX	98	38	136	72%	28%
NAT	73	24	97	75%	25%
SOC	61	77	138	56%	44%
CCMI	40	11	51	78%	22%

Table - Gender balance by Group					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total⁶⁹	Men	Women
Group I	93	24	117	79%	21%
Group II	77	42	119	65%	35%

⁶⁹ Again, these are the total numbers per Group that appear as “found” in the EESC Members Page on 20 August 2019.

Group III	79	32	111	71%	29%
Table - Gender balance in Presidencies and in the Bureau					
			Number		
Presidencies	Men	Women	Total		
EESC President	1	0	1		
Group Presidents	3	0	3		
Sections, CCMI and Observatories Presidents	5	5	10		
Questors	2	1	3		
Bureau members	25 (64%)	14 (36%)	39 (100%)		

Table – EESC Presidents from 1958 to 2019					
	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
EESC Presidents	28	4	32	88%	12%

Table – EESC Group Presidents from 1982 until 2020			
	Number		
	Men	Women	
Group I	8	0	
Group II	7	1	
Group III	5	3	
Total	20	4	
	Percentage		
Total	83%	17%	

Table - Gender Balance among rapporteurs in 2018							
Session	Total Opinions	Number				Percentage	
		Men	Women	Men (corap.)	Women (corap.)	Men rap.	Women rap.
531st	10	8	2	4	0	80%	20%
532nd	16	15	1	3	1	94%	6%
533rd	11	8	3	3	1	73%	27%
534th	17	13	4	5	2	76%	24%
535th	12	10	2	3	1	83%	17%
536th	22	19	3	2	1	86%	14%
537th	34	27	7	9	2	79%	21%
538th	49	42	7	6	3	86%	14%
539th	29	23	6	4	3	79%	21%
Total	200	165	35	39	14	83%	17%

Table - Gender balance among EESC personnel

Function	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Assistant	108	264	372	29%	71%
Administrator	112	173	285	39%	61%
Head of Unit	24	22	46	48%	52%

Table - Appointment Procedures and Gender Balance, Diversity and other selection criteria

Member States	Government		National Orgs. Group I		National Orgs. Group II		National Orgs. Group III	
	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider	Rule	Consider
Austria				●		●		
Belgium								●
Bulgaria							●	
Croatia								
Cyprus								
Czech Republic						● ●		
Estonia								
Finland	●							
France	●				●	●		
Germany			●					
Greece								
Hungary								
Ireland	●							
Italy		●						
Latvia								
Lithuania						●		
Luxembourg								
Malta								
Netherlands								
Poland								●
Portugal						●		
Romania								
Slovakia								
Slovenia								
Spain				●		● ●		
Sweden	●					● ●		
UK	● ●					● ●		

- Gender Balance
- Diversity
- Other: regional and sectorial balance

11.2 Annex 2: Tables of the state of gender balance in the EESC in 2013

Table - Overall Gender Balance in the EESC in 2013

	Number	Percentage
Men	262	75%
Women	88	25%
Total	350	100%

Table - Gender balance by Group in 2013

	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Group I	91	26	117	78%	22%
Group II	86	36	122	70%	30%
Group III	85	26	111	77%	23%

Table - Gender Balance in Presidencies and the Bureau in 2013

	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Presidencies					
EESC President	1	0	1	-	-
Group Presidents	3	0	3	100%	0%
Sections and CCMI Presidents	5	2	7	71%	29%
Bureau					
Bureau members	30	10	40	75%	25%

Table - Gender Balance by Member State in 2013

	Number			Percentage	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Austria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Belgium	11	1	12	92%	8%
Bulgaria	9	3	12	75%	25%
Croatia	3	6	9	33%	67%
Cyprus	6	0	5	100%	0%
Czech Republic	7	5	12	58%	42%
Denmark	3	6	9	33%	66%
Estonia	2	5	7	29%	71%
Finland	6	3	9	67%	33%
France	18	6	24	75%	25%
Germany	20	4	24	83%	17%
Greece	9	3	12	75%	25%
Hungary	10	2	12	83%	17%

Ireland	6	3	9	67%	33%
Italy	23	1	24	96%	4%
Latvia	5	2	7	71%	29%
Lithuania	5	4	9	56%	44%
Luxembourg	4	2	6	67%	33%
Malta	3	2	5	60%	40%
Netherlands	8	4	12	67%	33%
Poland	15	6	21	71%	29%
Portugal	12	0	12	100%	0%
Romania	14	1	15	93%	7%
Slovakia	9	0	9	100%	0%
Slovenia	7	0	7	100%	0%
Spain	16	5	21	76%	24%
Sweedn	7	5	12	58%	42%
United Kingdom	15	9	24	63%	37%

11.3 Annex 3: Comparison Tables of the state of gender balance in the EESC in 2013 and 2019

Table - Comparison of the state of gender balance in the EESC 2013- 2019

	Men	Women
2013	75%	25%
2019	72%	28%

Table - Comparison of gender balance per Group 2013-2019

	Group I		Group II		Group III	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2013	78%	22%	70%	30%	77%	23%
2019	79%	21%	65%	35%	71%	29%

Table - Comparison of gender balance in the Bureau 2013-2019

	Men	Women
2013	75%	25%
2019	64%	36%

Table - Comparison of gender balance per Member State 2013- 2019

	2013		2019	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Austria	75%	25%	75%	25%
Belgium	92%	8%	92%	8%
Bulgaria	75%	25%	75%	25%
Croatia	33%	67%	33%	67%
Cyprus	100%	0%	100%	0%
Czech Republic	58%	42%	58%	42%
Denmark	33%	66%	56%	44%
Estonia	29%	71%	33%	67%
Finland	67%	33%	67%	33%
France	75%	25%	58%	42%
Germany	83%	17%	91%	9%
Greece	75%	25%	82%	18%
Hungary	83%	17%	50%	50%
Ireland	67%	33%	89%	11%
Italy	96%	4%	83%	17%
Latvia	71%	29%	57%	43%
Lithuania	56%	44%	56%	44%
Luxembourg	67%	33%	60%	40%
Malta	60%	40%	100%	0%
Netherlands	67%	33%	75%	25%

Poland	71%	29%	76%	24%
Portugal	100%	0%	100%	0%
Romania	93%	7%	93%	7%
Slovakia	100%	0%	67%	33%
Slovenia	100%	0%	86%	14%
Spain	76%	24%	76%	24%
Sweeden	58%	42%	42%	58%
United Kingdom	63%	37%	58%	42%

Table - Comparison of the different levels of gender balance per Member State 2013-2019

	2013	2019
All-male	Cyprus, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia	Cyprus, Malta and Portugal
Minority of women	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, and United Kingdom	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain
Majority of women	Croatia, Estonia	Croatia, Estonia
Gender Balance	Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, and Sweden	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, and United Kingdom

Table - Comparison of gender balance in presidencies 2013- 2019

	EESC President		Group Presidents		Sections and CCMI Presidents	
	Man	Woman	Men	Women	Men	Women
2013	1	0	3	0	5	2
2019	1	0	3	0	3	4

11.4 Annex 4: Survey questions

English Survey:

Information about the respondent:

- Gender: male; female; other
- Age range: 18-30; 30-45; 45-60; 60-75; 75+
- Group I / Group II / Group III
- Member State
- Number of mandates at the EESC
- Other identity attributes that you want to highlight (origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other identity attributes)

Block I - Appointment process

1. Could you describe your country's procedure for selecting its representatives at the EESC? What are the institutions involved and what is their role in the process?

2. How did your own organisation manage to have representatives at the EESC?

Block II – Selection criteria and gender balance

3. What are the selection criteria to be appointed as a representative? Are the criteria formally established (concrete policy, rule...)?

4. Does your organisation take into account gender balance building the list of representatives? If yes, how? Is the requirement of gender balance formally established (concrete policy, rule...)?

5. Does your organisation take into account diversity building the list of representatives? (i.e. origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other identity attributes)? If yes, how? Is the requirement of diversity formally established (concrete policy, rule...)?

Block III- Beyond gender balance

6. Beyond gender balance, does your organisation consider that representatives are gender-sensitive? (i.e. be trained on gender issues, experience with gender in their area of expertise) If yes, how? Is it formally established (concrete policy, rule...)?

7. Do you have any other comments on the members appointment procedures?

8. Do you have any other comments on gender balance and gender equality in the EESC?

French survey:

Information sur le/la répondant.e :

- Genre : masculin ; féminin ; autre
- Age : 18-30 ; 30-45 ; 45-60 ; 60-75 ; 75+
- Groupe I / Groupe II / Groupe III
- Etat membre
- Nombre de mandats au CESE
- Autres attributs d'identité que vous souhaitez mettre en évidence (origine, âge, handicap, orientation sexuelle, religion ou tout autre attribut d'identité)

Bloc I - Processus de nomination

1. Pourriez-vous décrire la procédure de votre pays pour la sélection de ses représentant.es au CESE ? Quelles sont les institutions impliquées et quel est leur rôle dans le processus ?
2. Comment votre propre organisation a-t-elle réussi à avoir des représentant.es au CESE ?

Bloc II - Critères de sélection et équilibre entre les sexes

3. Quels sont les critères de sélection pour être nommé membre ? Les critères sont-ils formellement établis (politique concrète, règle...) ?
4. Votre organisation prend-elle en compte la parité hommes-femmes en établissant la liste des membres ? Si oui, comment ? L'exigence d'équilibre entre les sexes est-elle formellement établie (politique concrète, règle...) ?
5. Votre organisation prend-elle en compte la diversité en établissant la liste des membres ? (origine, âge, handicap, orientation sexuelle, religion ou tout autre attribut d'identité) ? Si oui comment ? L'exigence de diversité est-elle formellement établie (politique concrète, règle...)?

Bloc III - Au-delà de la parité hommes-femmes

6. Au-delà de la parité hommes-femmes, votre organisation considère-t-elle que les membres soient sensibles au genre ? (C'est-à-dire, être formé.es aux questions de genre, expérience de la problématique hommes-femmes dans leur domaine de compétence) Si oui, comment ? Est-il formellement établi (politique concrète, règle...) ?
7. Avez-vous d'autres commentaires sur les procédures de nomination des membres ?
8. Avez-vous d'autres commentaires sur l'équilibre entre les sexes et l'égalité des sexes au sein du CESE ?

11.5 Annex 5: Tables with survey results per Member State and recommendations

Table - Number of survey responses per Member State	
Austria	3
Belgium	1
Czech Republic	3
Denmark	2
France	9
Germany	2
Greece	2
Hungary	4
Netherlands	2
Portugal	3
Romania	2
Spain	4
Sweeden	4
UK	4
Italy	5
Latvia	1
Bulgaria	1
Croatia	3
Cyprus	-
Malta	2
Luxembourg	1
Finland	2
Estonia	3
Ireland	-
Slovakia	-
Slovenia	-
Poland	3
Lithuania	1
No valid answers	2
Total	69

Table - Recommendations for EESC members	
Recommendations	Actors involved
1. Establish gender parity/balance requirements	Member States; national organisations
2. Recommend gender parity/balanced national delegations	Council of the European Union; EESC; EESC's President; Group Presidents
3. Collect, systematise and make public the data on gender	EESC; Member States; national organisations
4. Monitor and ensure accountability	EESC; European Parliament
5. Establish clear, transparent and participatory national nomination and appointment processes	Member States; national organisations; EESC; Council of the European Union
6. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies	EESC; national organisations
7. Implement gender mainstreaming	EESC

Table 12- Recommendations for EESC personnel
1. Adopt gender equality and diversity policies
2. Tackle gender segregation and assure non-biased evaluations
3. Promote and implement work-life balance
4. Provide information and training on gender equality for all staff

11.6 Annex 6: Figures

Figure 1: Overall Gender balance in the EESC (2015-2020)

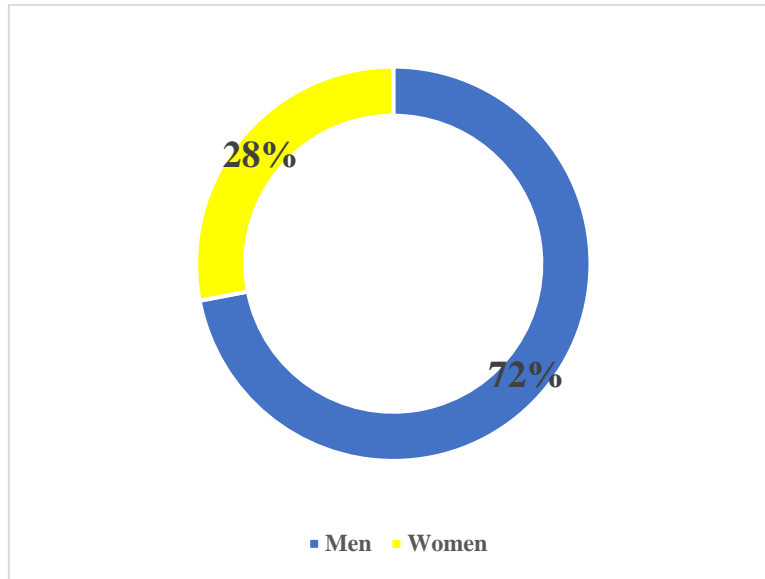


Figure 2: Gender balance by Member State (2015-2020)

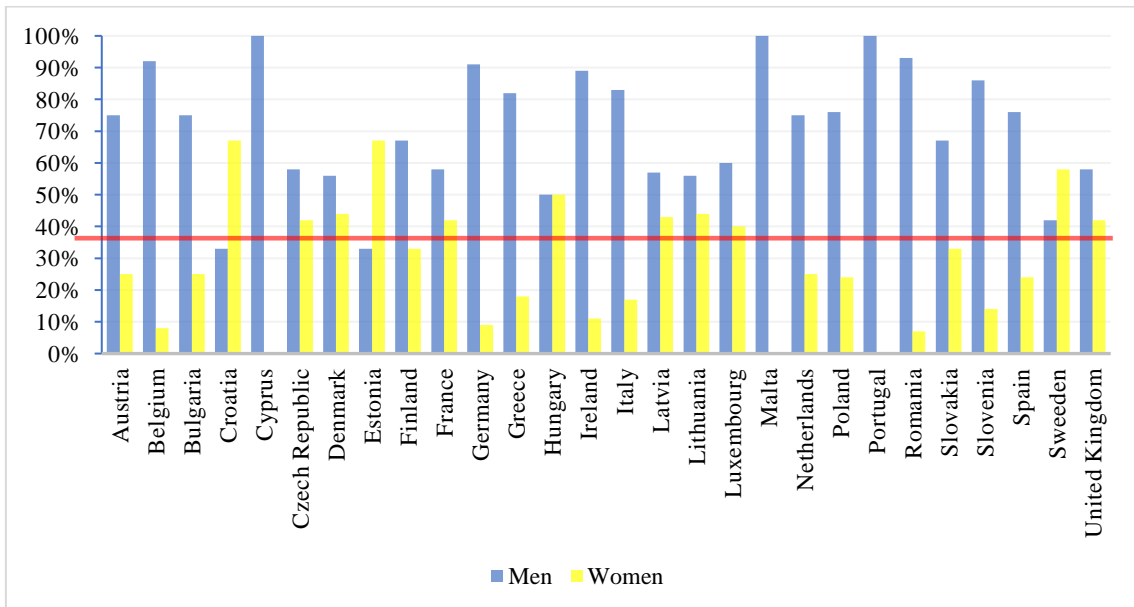


Figure 3: Gender balance by Group (2015-2020)

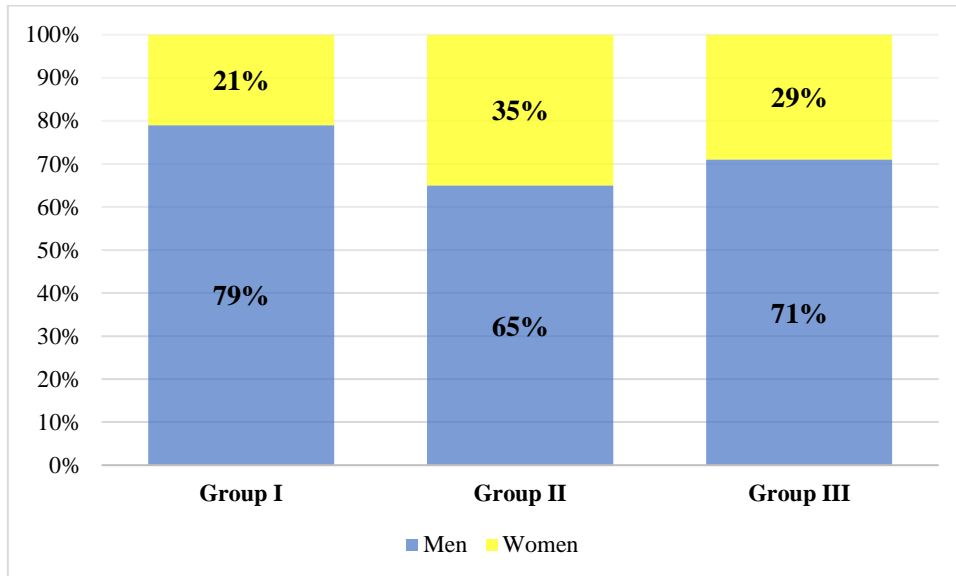


Figure 4: Gender balance by Sections and other bodies (2015-2020)

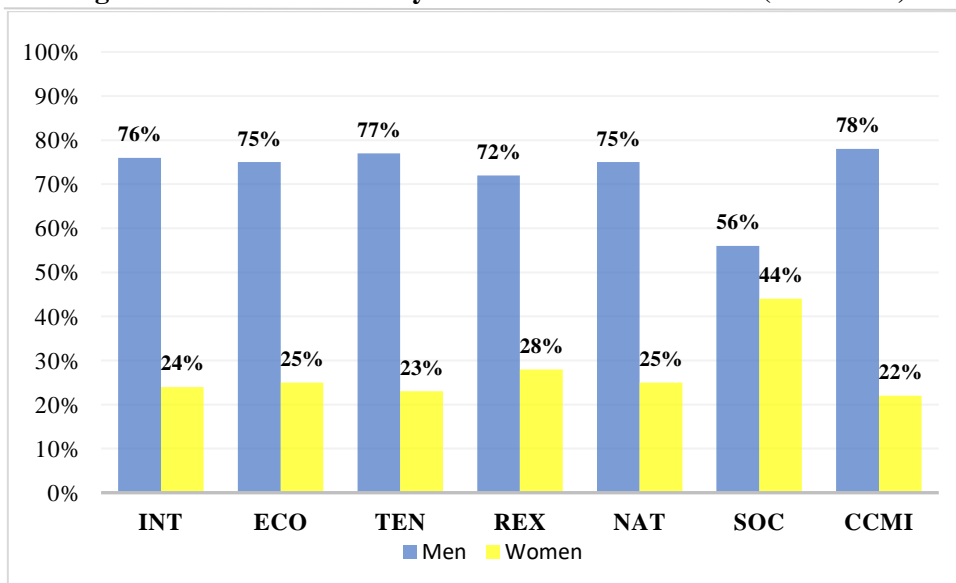


Figure 5: Comparison of the state of gender balance in the EESC 2013-2019

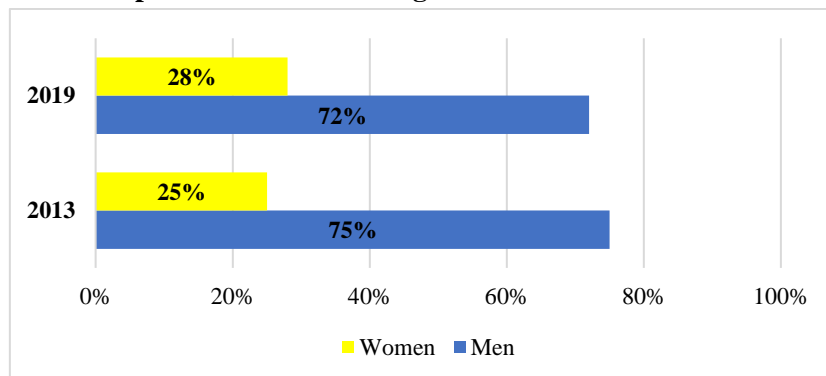


Figure 6: comparison of gender balance per Group 2013-2019

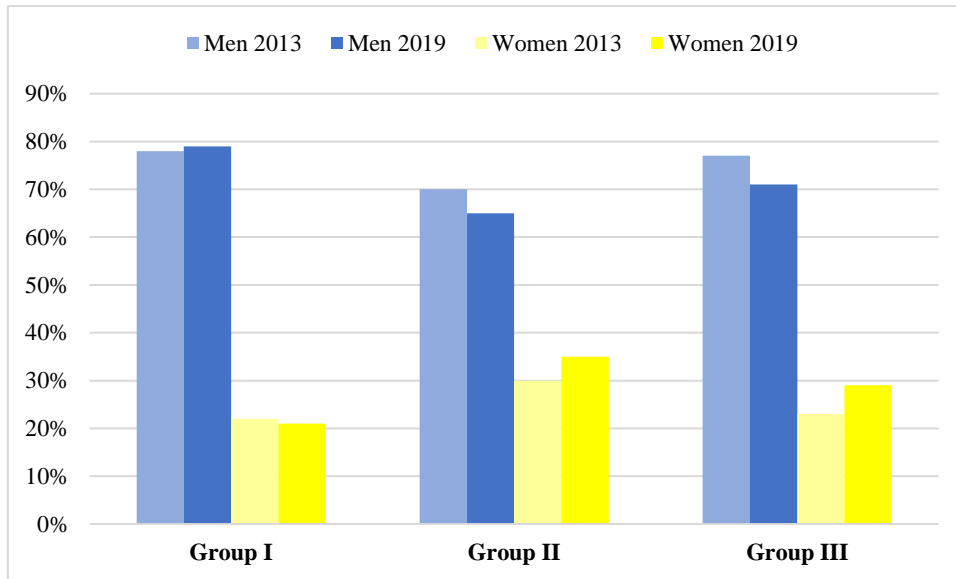
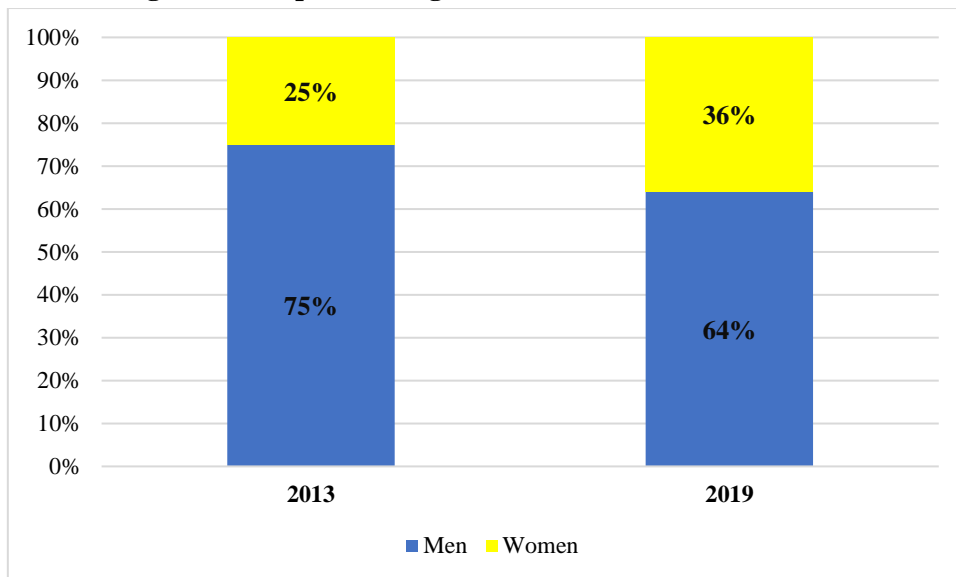


Figure 7: comparison of gender balance in the Bureau 2013-2019





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