Overview of gender equal sharing of political, professional and social responsibilities

At the political level, local and regional authorities put into practice gender parity. But in spite of that, the male character of authority still stands, in particular as regards Heads of executive Councils and Members of Parliament, as a matter of fact, the law applicable to these specific positions is not constraining, or only weakly so.

Proportion of men in local and national political Assemblies and in executive Councils, prior to and after the adoption of gender parity laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No legal constraint</th>
<th>Partial legal constraint or incentives</th>
<th>Strict legal constraint</th>
<th>No legal constraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>66 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>57 %</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>65 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>65 %</td>
<td>66 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>65 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>63 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>61 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>61 %</td>
<td>62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>61 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>59 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>59 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women’s participation to Boards of Directors in large companies: the law has set an objective of 40% by 2017

Proportion of women as members of Directors or Supervisory Boards of French major listed companies (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Less than 30 %</th>
<th>30 % - 39 %</th>
<th>40 % - 49 %</th>
<th>50 % - 59 %</th>
<th>60 % - 69 %</th>
<th>70 % - 79 %</th>
<th>80 % - 89 %</th>
<th>90 % - 100 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>61 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>65 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>66 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Incom plete set of data (5% of intercommunal Councils were not covered then).

The 2008 Constitutional reform broadened the scope of gender parity beyond the field of politics, opening the door to new laws gender equal access to professional and social responsibilities.

First designations to positions of responsibility in the public service: the law has set a target of 20% women designated to such positions by 2013, and 40% by 2017.

Proportion of men and women at the level of board of directors in France’s communication and cultural institutions in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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E-mail: haut-conseil-equalite@pm.gouv.fr

Updated on September 2018
Encourage and obtain the enforcement of gender parity in those decision-making bodies. Sweden, Cuba, Finland, Rwanda. Achieve a genuine power-sharing articulating both “quantitative” and “qualitative” parity.

In France, women only won the right to vote in 1944 (Decree, 21 April 1944) and the proportion of male Members of Parliament still stood at 73% in 2016. Yet, France has been the first country which adopted a legislation aiming at electoral gender parity, in 2000. Since 2008, gender parity has extended beyond politics, and is now enforced in the professional and social fields, where power issues are also significant.

**Key Acts on gender parity**

- Constitutional amendment 1999 (8/7/1999): Articles 3 and 4 of the French Constitution were modified: the Article 3 was complemented with: “The Law encourages equal access by men and women to electoral mandates and elected positions”. Article 4 specified that “political parties and groupings contribute to the implementation of this principle”. Act 2000 (6/6/2000): established the legal obligation of submitting gender equal lists of candidates for plurinominal polls; set up a financial penalty (withholding part of the public financial support) for political party whose list of parliamentary candidates does not comply with the party obligation (the differential among both sexes shall not exceed more than 2%).

- Act 2007 (31/1/2007): established a rule of strict alternation by sex in the order of presentation for the lists candidates to local elections (= 3,500 inhabitants) and introduced the legal obligation of gender parity in local and regional executive Councils.
- 

It also increased the financial withholding for those political parties escaping the obligation of designating a gender equal number of candidates to the Parliamentary elections of 2012.

Constitutional Amendment 2008 (23/7/2008): Includes in the first article of the Constitution “The Law encourages equal access by men and women to electoral mandates and elected positions, as well as to positions of responsibility in the professional and social areas”.

- The Prime Minister, by a circular dated 23/6/2012, moved the deadline as relates to first designations to positions of responsibility to 2017.
- Vallaud-Belkacem Act 2014 (4/8/2014) set a double target for the public service due to be reached by 2023:
  - Board of Directors of companies whose workforce ranges above 250 employees
  - Board of Directors and Supervisory Board of public corporations and companies
  - Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Economic, social and environmental regional Councils; consultative bodies
  - Board of Directors of companies whose workforce ranges above 250 employees
  - Public federations

- Fioraso Act 2013 (22/7/2013): enlarged the objective of gender parity to the lists of candidates to local and regional executive Councils.

- Constitutional amendment 2019 (3/7/2019): established the legal obligation of submitting gender equal lists of candidates to the Parliamentary elections: 40% of women among civil servants designated for the first time to positions of responsibility/management, based on an initial target of 20% in 2013.
- 40% in all Boards of Directors or Supervisory Board or equivalent organs in public corporations, selection panels, industrial relations bodies.

It established a rule of strict alternation by sex in the order of presentation for the lists candidates to local elections (= 3,500 inhabitants) and introduced the legal obligation of gender parity in local and regional executive Councils.

Challenges and prospects

More than a decade after the enforcement of the first gender parity Acts, major issues remain at stake today:

- Encourage and obtain the enforcement of gender parity in those decision-making bodies where it is not yet rooted (professional, economic and social bodies).
- Achieve a genuine power-sharing articulating both “quantitative” and “qualitative” parity. Beyond the 50/50 representative power-sharing among women and men, one must assess the effective roles and positions shared among women and men. Who is the President or the Secretary of An Association? 1. Who holds the portfolio of Finance of Family Affairs in a Town council? 2.

In the context of the law on real equality between women and men of 4 August 2014, the High Council for Gender Equality provided recommendations to the Government in order to achieve quickly the parity requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List system</th>
<th>Voting for a single candidate</th>
<th>Bosnian system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Direct list system (one woman and one man or paired candidates) for Departmental elections | - President: No legal constraint | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Expanded the rule of strict alternation by sex to local and intercommunal elections in order to reinforce parity: it shall apply on lists of candidates to local polls in cities above 1,000 inhabitants, as well as to intercommunal council elections. | - Legislative: Financial penalties i.e. withholding public support to non-compliant parties (number of candidates by sex exceeding a +/-25% range) | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Delisted the financial penalty for political parties escaping parity rules (legislative polls) | - Legislative: Financial penalties i.e. withholding public support to non-compliant parties (number of candidates by sex exceeding a +/-25% range) | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Enlarging or accelerating the enforcement of the rule for a gender balanced representation in a number of public corporations, private companies or sports federations: - Board of Directors and Supervisory Board of public corporations and companies | - Zenhäuser “Shading Committee: strict alternation by gender” | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Economic, social and environmental regional Councils; consultative bodies | - Board of Directors of companies whose workforce ranges above 250 employees | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Sports federations | - Public institutions in the field of cultural cooperation | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Public institutions in the field of cultural cooperation | - Local and intermunicipal Executive Councils | - Presidents: No legal constraint
| - Local and intermunicipal Executive Councils | - Executive Councils | - Presidents: No legal constraint

**Parity democracy: from the international to the national level, from the political to the economic stage**

The word “parity” is used as meaning both the international and European claim for a gender equal power sharing, along with its national regulations enforcing or encouraging a gender equal distribution of candidates or seats in any decision-making Assembly, be it political, economic or social.

In France, women only won the right to vote in 1944 (Decree, 21 April 1944) and the proportion of male Members of Parliament still stood at 73% in 2016. Yet, France has been the first country which adopted a legislation aiming at electoral gender parity, in 2000. Since 2008, gender parity has extended beyond politics, and is now enforced in the professional and social fields, where power issues are also significant.

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