

# **WOMEN IN POLITICS**

**A CEMR study**

**#Power2her**

**State of play and 10 years evolution (2008-2018)**

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Women in local and regional assemblies.....</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Women mayors .....	4
B. In local, intermediate and regional assemblies.....	6
1. In local assemblies .....	6
2. In intermediate and regional assemblies.....	7
<b>II. Women in national parliaments .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. Women in European institutions and organisations .....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. In the European Parliament .....	9
B. In European organisations .....	10
1. In the Policy Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions .....	10
2. In the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2018 only).....	10
3. In the Committee of the Regions.....	11
<b>IV. Women and quotas.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>V. Women in politics – Good to know.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Acknowledgements and copyright .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Contact .....</b>	<b>14</b>

# Introduction

For over 35 years, CEMR has been actively engaged in pursuing equality between women and men in local life. In 2006, CEMR launched the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in local life, which currently counts 1734 signatories. As part of its research work, CEMR published a first study on women in politics in 2008. After ten years, it was about time to see where we stand and analyse the progress made and the evolution at all levels of responsibility in Europe, from the local governments to the European Union institutions. In June 2018, CEMR organised a major conference in Bilbao on “equality, diversity, inclusion” and on that occasion, local and regional leaders, representing the diversity of CEMR members confirmed their commitment by adopting a new strategy together with an action plan.

Part of this strategy consists on continuing CEMR work in promoting women’s participation in decision making processes, and launching the campaign “Power2Her - European Elections 2019” with the following objectives:

- to advocate for equal representation and influence of women in decision-making
- to get more women into positions of power
- to give visibility to women in politics
- to generate evidence on women’s presence in decision-making positions and in politics at local, national and European level
- to advocate for real share of power, mixity and diversity in all decision-making bodies

As a part of this campaign, CEMR is conducting a comparative study covering ten years of development (2008-2018) on women’s representation at local, regional and national level across Europe, and within delegations representing local governments at European level. This document unveils first results but an update with new data after the European elections is planned. The final version of the study is to be published in September 2019.

Data was collected via different sources and the lack of disaggregated data explains the differences in terms of geographical coverage according to the level observed. For the local and regional level, we studied 29 out of the 41 countries where CEMR has members<sup>1</sup> (20 from the European Union): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Concerning the number of mayors, and the number of elected women at regional and intermediate levels, we unfortunately couldn’t get the datas in Ukraine, therefore we only present the result for the 28 other countries.

For the national level, we gathered data for all 29 countries studied. For the European level, the geographical coverage depends on the organisation or institution studied. For the European Parliament and the EU Committee of the Regions, we considered the 28 Member States of the EU. For the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, out of the 47 member states, we examined the 40 countries where CEMR has a member. and for the data concerning the Policy Committee of the CEMR, all 41 countries are presented.

While we strive with utmost care and concern to provide accurate and timely information, we cannot exclude the possibility of inadvertent factual or contextual inaccuracies, incompleteness or technical errors for which we apologise.

The flexibility needed in terms of geographical data is a result of the study: it is still very difficult, in 2019, to obtain data disaggregated by sex at local and regional level; something which must be addressed in the near future.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ccre.org/en/article/about\\_members](http://www.ccre.org/en/article/about_members)

# I. Women in local and regional assemblies

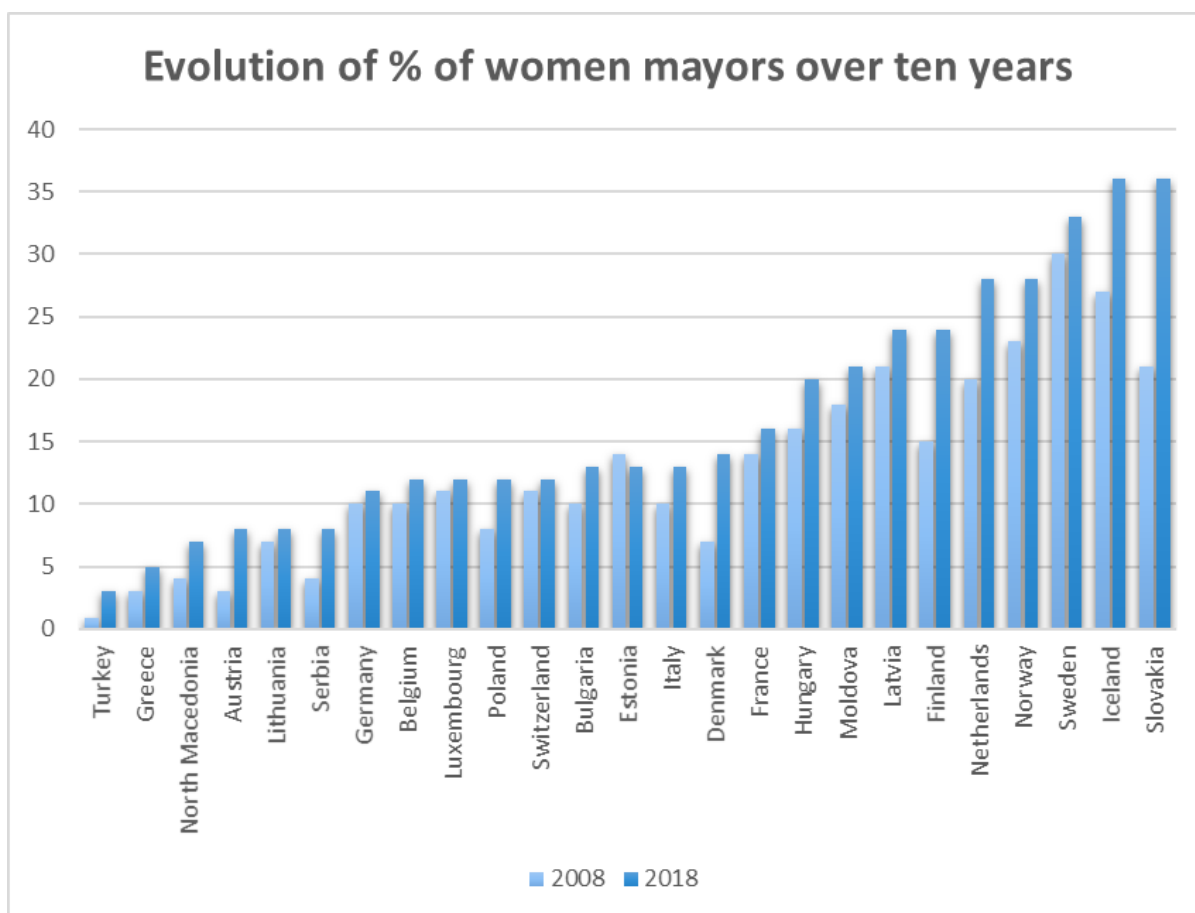
## A. Women mayors

**In EUROPE**  
**16%** of mayors are women  
 10 years ago, they were **13%**...

**Top 5 countries**  
 % of mayors who are women

- Iceland: **36%**
- Slovakia: **36%**
- Sweden: **33%**
- Netherlands: **28%**
- Norway: **28%**

Figures demonstrate the average proportion of women mayors in 2008 and 2018 from 28 countries of CEMR membership (20 from the European Union): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.



**This study shows: in 10 years, the percentage of women mayors has increased more than that of women councillors.**

There has been a 27% increase in the number of women mayors over ten years.

A small step back was observed for one country: Estonia, where the percentage of women mayors went from 14% to 13%. Luxembourg, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden registered an increase of around 10%.

An important step ahead has been witnessed in Turkey, where women had accounted for less than 1% and now count for 3% of mayors. The number of women mayors has also more than doubled in the following countries: Austria, Finland, Denmark, Serbia, and Slovakia.

## WOMEN MAYORS OF EU CAPITAL CITIES

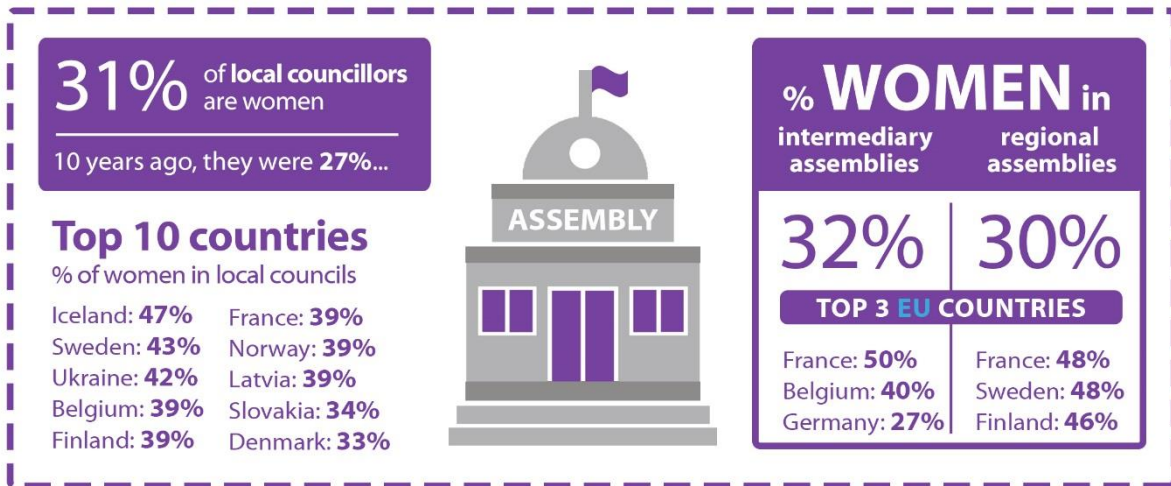


We have also considered the number of women mayors in the 28 capital cities of the European Union.

**This study shows: women are major local leaders in the North, South, East as well as West of Europe.**

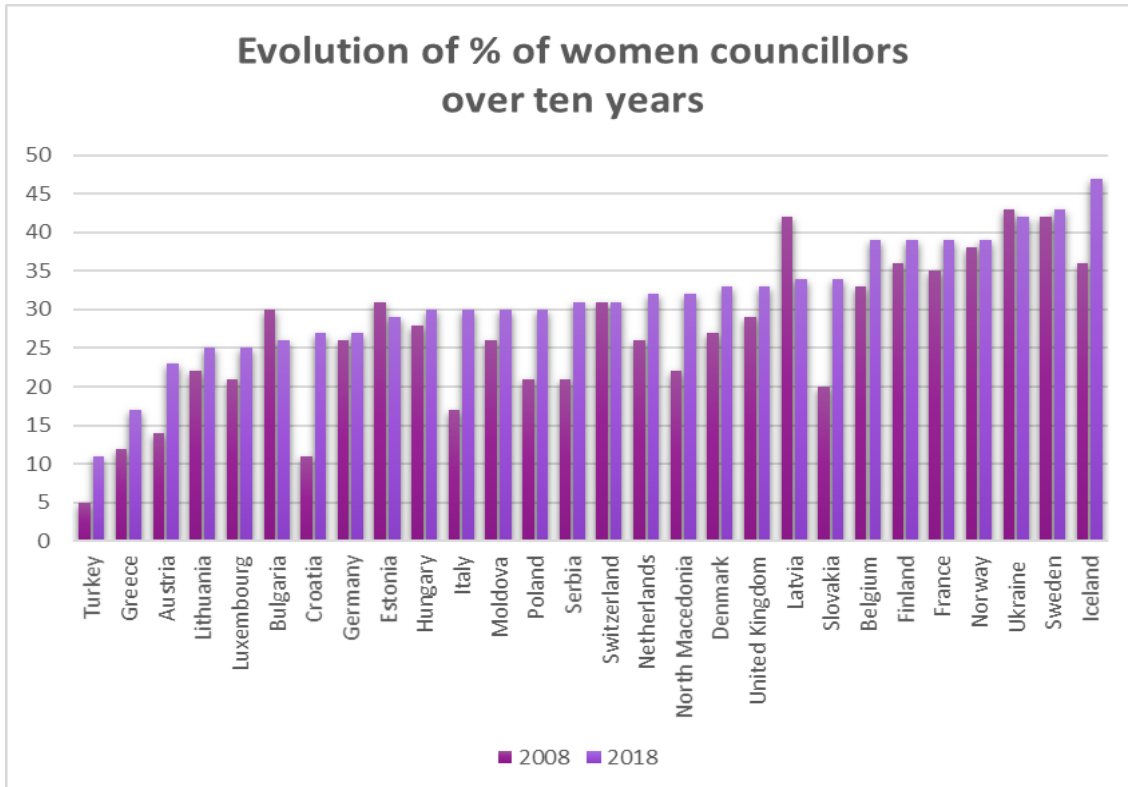
Eight capitals (i.e. 28%) have a woman mayor: Sofia (Bulgaria), Paris (France); Rome (Italy), Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Bucharest (Romania), Madrid (Spain), and Stockholm (Sweden).

## B. In local, intermediate and regional assemblies



### 1. In local assemblies

Figures demonstrate the average proportion of women councillors (in municipalities, cities or towns) in 2008 and 2018 from 29 countries of CEMR membership (20 from the European Union): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.



**This study shows: in 10 years the proportion of women elected as municipal councillors in Europe has increased by 15% on average.**

There has been a 15% increase in the number of women municipal councillors over ten years. The most noticeable evolution in terms of elected women in municipal councils is in Croatia (+145%) and in Turkey (+120%). Six countries saw a positive evolution and achieved more than 40% representation: Italy, Slovakia, Austria, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Greece.

Four countries showed a negative trend with fewer women councillors after 10 years: Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Ukraine. Switzerland has remained at more or less the same level and five countries register a positive evolution of less than 10%: Sweden, Norway, Germany, Hungary, and Finland.

## 2. In intermediate and regional assemblies

**30%** of members of **regional assemblies** were women (2018)

Figures show an average composition of elected women at the regional and intermediate level in 2018, from 28 countries of CEMR membership: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Ukraine, with regional and intermediate tiers of governance is also concerned, but there is no data currently available. Not concerned by the regional level: Bulgaria, Estonia, North Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg.

**32%** of members of **intermediate assemblies** were women (2018)

5 countries<sup>2</sup> of the study are concerned:

- Belgium (40%)
- France (50%)
- Germany (27%)
- Italy (19%)
- Poland (24%)

Country	Percentage of women councillors	Percentage of women in regional assemblies	Percentage of women in intermediate assemblies
France	39	48	50
Belgium	39	42	40
Germany	27	31	27
Poland	30	29	24
Italy	30	18	19

**This study shows: Italy is the only three-tier government country in the study where the percentage of women local councillors is higher than the proportion of women members in its intermediate and regional tier assemblies.**

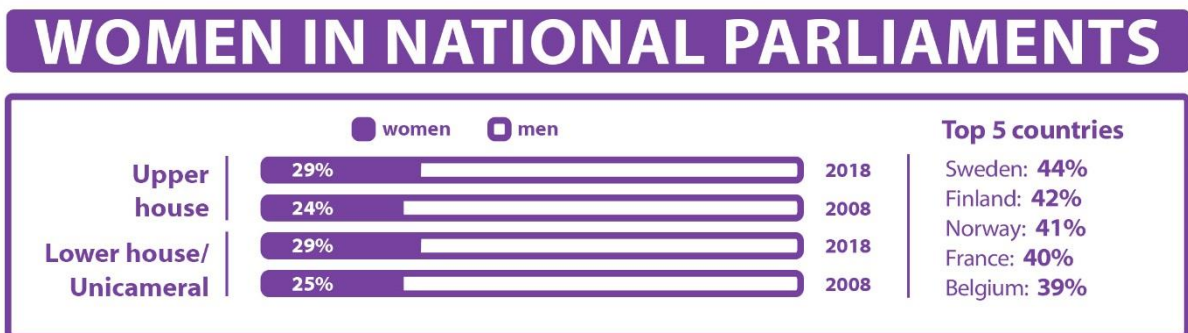
In 2018, 30% of regional councillors were women (seven countries are not concerned by the regional level: Bulgaria, Estonia, North Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Lithuania, and

<sup>2</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> country concerned by the study is Ukraine but no data is currently available.

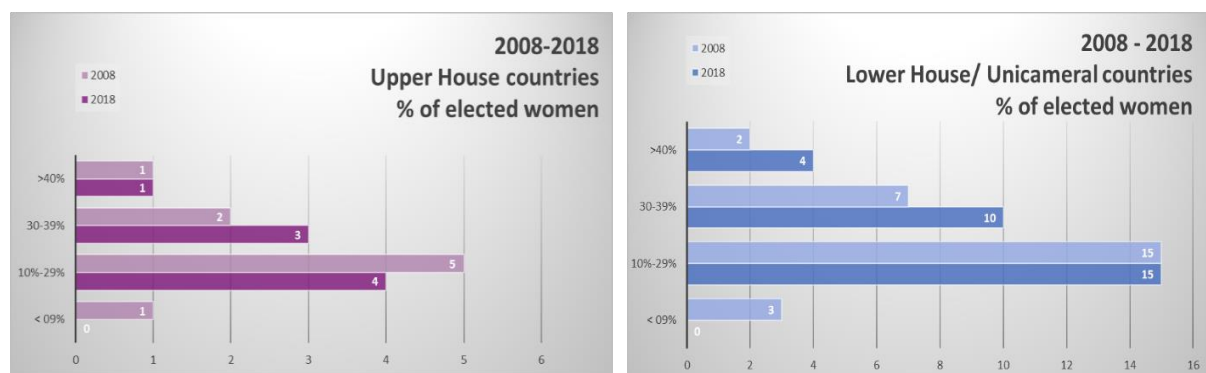
Luxembourg). The greatest representation of women at this level (between 32% and 48%) was in: France, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Belgium, and Denmark.

In 2018, women made up 32% of elected members in intermediate assemblies. Five countries are concerned by intermediate assemblies: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Poland. Women are equally represented in the *Conseil départemental* (France, 50%) and in Belgium 40% are represented in the *Conseil provincial/ provincieraad*. Less than 30% of the representatives in the *Kreistag* (Germany, 27%) are women, 24% in the *rada powiatu* (Poland), and less than 20% in the *consiglio provincial* (Italy, 19%).

## II. Women in national parliaments



The study demonstrates the evolution of women's representation in national parliaments from 29 countries of CEMR membership (20 EU) over ten years (2008-2018): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Respondent countries with upper house are Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, the United-Kingdom<sup>3</sup>.



**This study shows: although there was not a clear geographical trend at the local level with regard to representation of women, high proportions have been identified in the national parliaments of many Western European countries.**

In 2008, the greatest representation of women (between 37% and 47%) was in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium. The lowest percentages were between 7% and 10%.

<sup>3</sup> Germany is also concerned but no data for the upper house is available.



In 2018, the greatest representation of women (between 39% and 44%) was in Sweden, Finland, Norway, France, and Belgium. The lowest percentages were between 11% and 16%.

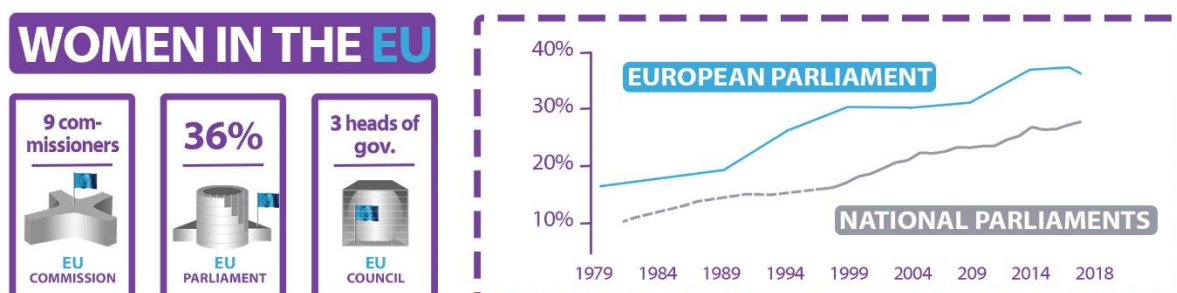
2008-2018: In ten years' time, the Lower House/ unicameral countries saw a 16% average increase in women representatives, and a 21% increase in the Upper House of the nine bicameral national parliament countries.

Sweden, with proportionally the highest number of women in the *Riksdag* (Swedish Parliament), fell slightly back after 10 years, as have a number of Western countries such as Luxembourg, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. For Finland, no change in the proportion of women representatives was seen over 10 years.

A remarkable evolution can be observed in Eastern countries like in Moldova, Croatia, and Serbia. Notwithstanding further room for evolution, some countries did not see much change among their women representatives in the national parliaments, such as in Hungary, Turkey, and Ukraine.

### III. Women in European institutions and organisations

#### A. In the European Parliament



35% women MEPs in 2009

36% women MEPS in 2018

?% women MEPS in 2019

**This study shows: only one percentage point of change in 10 years.**

The graph illustrates the average representation of women in the EP.

## B. In European organisations

Local gov. in Europe Representative associations and institutions		Full members	Substitutes	All
	Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)	47%	48%	47%
	Council of Europe   Chamber of Local Authorities	40%	22%	32%
	Council of Europe   Chamber of Regions	42%	19%	29%
	Committee of the Regions	/	/	24%

CEMR focused on the CEMR delegations nominated by the national associations of local and regional governments, on the national delegations of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, comparing both Local Authorities and Regions Chambers, and the national delegations of the Committee of the Regions.

### 1. In the Policy Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions

The CEMR Policy Committee is composed of national delegations nominated by the associations of local and regional governments. It approves the budget and the annual work programme, decides on the main policy positions, etc.

**This study shows: quotas make a difference.**

After the establishment of a minimum 40% representation of each gender within the delegation, the number of women almost doubled in 10 years within the leadership of the CEMR (23% to 42%).

### 2. In the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2018 only)

The data concerns 40 out of the 41 CEMR member countries, as Israel is not part of the Council of Europe. We do not yet have the data for 2008. In 2018, 31% of all members of the Congress (both chambers) were women, with a slightly higher proportion of women within the Chamber of Local Authorities than in the Chamber of Regions (32% vs 29%).

**This study shows: at local level, there is no clear European geographical trend in terms of nomination of women within the delegations.**

In the Chamber of Local Authorities, more than half of the national delegations have between 40% and 67% of women serving as full members in 2018. Notably, no delegation was made up of women only while four countries had zero women as full members within their delegation (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Latvia, Malta, and Norway).

In the Chamber of Regions, 19 delegations had at least 40% women serving as full members. Three delegations had only women as full members (Lithuania, Malta, and Norway) and three delegations had only men as full members (Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Estonia).

### 3. In the Committee of the Regions

The data concerns the 28 EU member states (except in 2008, when Croatia was not yet a member). The figure illustrates an average percent of women in national delegations (including alternates). In 2008, women made up 21% of the national delegations; today that figure has increased to **24%**.

**This study shows: in 10 years, the evolution is minor.**

18 countries have nominated more women in their delegations in 2018 than in 2008 (from +4% to more than +50% in some); among which five countries have doubled their proportion of women representatives (France, Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania, Denmark, and Portugal). Positive change was observed regarding the Danish and Portuguese delegations which, in 2008, counted no women at all, whereas in 2018 each had nominated 2 women to their delegations, representing 9% and 17% respectively.

More than one third of the national delegations (10) count fewer women after ten years: from -3% to -71% and even -100% (the Estonian delegation counted four women in 2008, and none were designated in 2018).

## IV. Women and quotas



In the 2008 departmental elections in France, only **13%** of elected representatives were women. In 2018, this figure climbed to **50%**! How did such remarkable change happen over ten years to achieve parity at the departmental level in France?

**This study shows: gender parity laws matter, at local level as well.**

In France, the electoral law of May 17, **2013**<sup>4</sup> established new procedures for how local councillors are elected. It introduced a “mixed gender pair”<sup>5</sup> (one man/one woman) and calls for strict parity in candidate lists for municipalities over 1000 inhabitants.

These measures, including use of the “zipper” system, has had a profound impact improving women’s presence in elected office, as has legislation that provides for financial penalties when parity among candidates is not respected by political parties<sup>6</sup> in national elections.

<sup>4</sup> Law n° 2013-403, 17 may 2013

<sup>5</sup> “Binome paritaire”

<sup>6</sup> See Law n° 2000-493, 6 june 2000, and Law 4 august 2014

Thanks to the figures from the CEMR study in 2008, we can compare the number of women elected at local level before, and after the law came into force:

- Municipal elections (the lists of candidates must be composed "alternating candidates of each sex" since 2007):
  - o In **2008** there were **35%** elected women in municipal councils
  - o In **2018** (from 2014 elections) there were **40%** elected women in municipal councils
- Departmental elections (binomial election by canton, each pair to be composed of a man and a woman since 2013):
  - o In **2008** the number of elected women was **13%**
  - o In **2018** the number of elected women reached **50%**

## V. Women in politics – Good to know

**5 GENDER EQUALITY**

**SDG 5 | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

- **5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life;
- **5.C** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

**Will this gender gap stand the test of time?**

At the current rate, it would take **107 years** to close the gender gap.

**For democracy's sake: Europe needs more women to run for election!**

**VOTE**

According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 report<sup>7</sup>, at the current rate, it would take **107 years** to overcome the gaps in women's political representation.

At the international level, nations have agreed to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG5 which aims to: "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life and adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels".

**This study shows: at the current rate of evolution, the situation has changed to only a slight extent over 10 years and leaves much to be desired. All tiers of governments need to take action now to increase women's political representation and achieve equal representation and reach the SDG5.**

<sup>7</sup> <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/>

## Conclusion

10 years after CEMR published its first study on Women in Politics, its update brings forward evidence on the real state of play of women's presence in politics.

The CEMR has a long tradition of advocating for gender equality and this study demonstrates that despite the progress made, we need to continue to act to ensure real equality of women and men in politics.

In particular the study shows that:

- In 10 years, the percentage of women mayors has increased more than that of women councillors and quotas make a difference, at local level as well. Within the CEMR, the statutory rules applied to the main decision-making body allow to reach equal representation between women and men.
- Women can be major local leaders in the North, South, East as well as West of Europe: there is not a clear geographical trend at the local level, while high proportions have been identified in the national parliaments of many Western European countries.
- Do European politics matter for women? In 10 years, only one percentage point of increase can be noticed within the European Parliament, and the evolution of the proportion of women in the national delegations in the Congress of the Council of Europe and in the Committee of the Regions is ambivalent (CoR).
- At the current rate of evolution, the situation has changed to only a slight extent over 10 years and could be much better. All tiers of governments need to take action now to increase women's political representation and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 5.

All modern democratic countries are representative democracies, we vote for our representatives, politicians, who should represent us, who speak and act in our name. While women are a majority among citizens, they are a minority among elected representatives.

Equality of women and men constitutes a fundamental right. It is an essential value that underpins democracy, and yet despite that, women remain heavily under-represented in politics - at all levels. The representation of women matters, not only because democracy matters. We should acknowledge the important role that women play in our society, in all parts of our life.

Diversity in political representation is crucial, also beyond women, towards minorities and youth.

History has shown that too little will change if the laws don't change. In countries where equality laws have been established, things have changed at a fast pace. Do we need to wait 107 years to close the gender gap?

## Acknowledgements and copyright

The information presented in this document has been compiled by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The study is primarily based on research carried out by the national associations from 29 countries of CEMR's membership and the Secretariat in particular Bela Tskhelishvili, interim policy officer; Jaimie Just, policy officer; Nathalie Noupadja, head of research and studies; and the communication team. CEMR wishes to thank the associations again, as their support provided the valuable evidence presented in this publication (<http://www.ccre.org/en/associations/index>).

CEMR wishes to thank the Committee of Regions and in particular Madam Diliانا Raeva, for providing data from 2008 and 2018 on women's presence in the national delegations of the Committee of Regions.

In addition to the data provided by the national associations, other information sources have also been used such as the internet and in particular the websites of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities - Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress>), The European Parliament (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/gender-balance.html>), the Committee of the Regions (<https://cor.org>), and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE: <https://eige.europa.eu>).

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