
CYPRUS NATIONAL REPORT



OCTOBER 2019

GENDER AND MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality has been entrenched as a principle in the Republic of Cyprus since its establishment in 1960. According to Article 28 of the Constitution, every person shall enjoy all the rights and liberties without any direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the ground of their sex. Following the 2004 accession to the European Union, a number of gender equality laws were introduced into the legal framework, as part of harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire*. Gender mainstreaming is largely influenced by EU directives and international conventions for the promotion of gender equality, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Istanbul Convention on violence against women. Despite the above, Cyprus has achieved limited concrete results in gender equality. The latest Gender Equality Index by EIGE (2017) shows Cyprus' score to be below the EU-28 average, with considerable room for improvement, especially in the domains of time and power. In order to reach full gender equality, a more targeted and holistic approach is needed. The media has been recognised as key in challenging gender stereotypes and inequality in Cyprus. Policies and measures to tackle gender stereotypes in and through the media have historically been included across National Action Plans on gender equality, and NGOs and other organisations have implemented a number of initiatives to address gender bias in the media. However, there is still room for improvement as gender inequality in the media has proven systematic and persistent.

EVIDENCE

The most recent GMMP Cyprus survey (2015) demonstrated that women remain severely under-represented in the media, with their overall presence in the news media at 19%. The 2010 survey had put the figure at 15%, revealing a less than 1% year-on-year increase. The rise of electronic and social media did not result in a more gender-balanced representation. On the contrary, the results revealed that women's representation on Twitter and generally online reached a mere 7%. Overall, men are over-represented as news subjects and journalists both in traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers) with a representation rate of 81%, as well as in digital media (Twitter and online) with a representation of 93%. Several research projects have indicated that gender stereotypes remain dominant within Cypriot media. Both subtle and blatant stereotypes are present in the news (GMMP 2015). There is also a lack of alternative media representations that challenge gender stereotypes. According to EIGE's report, barriers to career development and wage imbalances are still dominant in the media sector. Men hold most of the positions in strategic management (chief executive officers and board members) by 86%. Women are also

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underrepresented, but not as heavily (37%) in operational decision-making (chief operating officer, other operational managers, heads of directorate/unit and heads of department), as operational managers are not as powerful as strategic managers (Gazi & Demetrakopoulou 2016). Media professionals are segregated by gender, by subject matter and choice of media. According to the 2015 GMMP, Cyprus women are more likely to be radio announcers, a medium considered a complementary source of news. Newspapers, on the other hand, are heavily male-dominated. The vast majority of front-page journalists are men (88%). On television, women represent 46% of presenters and reporters as compared to 54% men. 56% of women reporters report on social and legal issues. Only 19% present financial news & 11% politics and government. A lack of gender-related policy and monitoring hinders gender-balanced portrayal in media organisations. Other than maternity leave, no other mechanisms exist to ensure gender balance within Cypriot media (Gazi & Demetrakopoulou 2016).

- **Sustainable monitoring** has yet to be incorporated via a formal mechanism, so the landscape remains under-explored in terms of women's representation and portrayal in the media. Complaints about sexist content have seen no follow up / monitoring to identify whether the outlet has conformed to the relevant going forward. Reports of online hate speech have not resulted in adequate information and data. Sustainable funding for monitoring media content could, at the very least, provide useful data that can be the basis for the development of relevant policies to tackle the issues.

- **Exploration of working conditions of women in the media**
The working conditions of women in the media industry is an under-explored field. Although a number of research studies have revealed patterns of gender inequality in the media, such as underrepresentation in leadership positions (EIGE, 2013), and gender segregation in media subjects (GMMP, 2015), we lack sufficient coverage of topics like the gender pay gap, sexual harassment at work and work-life balance.

- **National policies to enhance the visibility of women in the media.** Policymakers need to take positive measures in order to enhance the visibility of women in the media. Although there are sporadic, mainly EU-funded actions, to promote women in the media, these are unsustainable and receive no financial support from the government. National policies should draw on successful projects in order to design policies and enrich their actions to promote women in the media. The two latest action plans include training of media professionals. However, more diverse methodologies need to be in place.

- **More engagement and training of citizens**
Citizens can play a key role in combating sexism in the media both by using the reporting mechanisms available and by casting a critical eye on media content. Therefore, lifelong learning programmes that train media audiences in recognising discriminatory content as well as a wider dissemination of the existing reporting mechanisms could enhance the active role of citizens via social media and other platforms of citizen journalism.

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Existing Good Practices linked to the issue (URL and contact details)	Links to BPfA	Links to the Agenda 2030
<p>The Cyprus Radio Television Authority was established by the Radio and Television Stations Law, 7(I) of 1998, as an independent body to regulate radio and television. The aim is to safeguard the public interest and ensure that the media operates according to the Code of Conduct. Article 30 of the Radio and Television Organizations Law 7(I)/1998 (as it has been amended) states that “the Authority shall ensure that the broadcasts don’t contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality. Additionally, the following regulations of the Radio and Television stations Regulations 2000 (10/2000) provide that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [...] in regards to entertainment programs, “broadcasting of programs that insult the dignity of the two sexes is prohibited[...]”. Regulation 26(I); - Concerning mainly News Broadcasts, Regulation 24(1)(e) states that special provisions need to be made regarding reportages, about violence against children, women or elders”. 	<p>Strategic objective J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media</p>	
<p>Cyprus Advertising Regulation Organisation (CARO) CARO is an independent non-profit body established by advertisers, advertising agencies and media organisations. It is a member of the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA). CARO’s role is to ensure that ads aired in Cyprus are legal, decent, honest and truthful in accordance with the Cyprus Advertising Code. They handle complaints on advertising across all media, and provide confidential copy advice before an ad is aired. CARO advises members regarding gender sensitivity in ads, and disseminates “A guide to progressive gender portrayals in advertising”, published by the World Federation of Advertisers.</p>	<p>Strategic objective J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media</p>	

