



Directorate General for Communication
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Public Opinion Monitoring Unit

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**8 March 2011: "100th anniversary of Women's day:
Fighting against gender discriminations in the EU"**

Eurobarometer Special (EB 75.1)

ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS

Coverage:	UE 27 (26724 European citizens)
Population:	Europeans aged 15years and over
Methodology:	Face-to-face (CAPI)
Fieldwork:	9 February-6 March 2011, carried out by <i>TNS opinion</i>

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GENERAL TRENDS

A first analysis has already been published on the 7 March 2011 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Women's day. In the first analysis, only the global results were available. The fieldwork survey was carried out by TNS Opinion from 9 February 2011 to 6 March 2011.

This final analysis includes some complementary analytical elements as well as a new section dedicated to the maternity and paternity leave.

Several key points can be drawn from the results of this survey:

- **Concerning all questions related to gender equality, one can observe that men and women tend to react in similar proportions.** One can certainly wonder whether this 100th anniversary of the International Women's Day should not be considered as a real social step forward that may contribute to tackling or effectively reducing the gender gap.
- **European trends must be completed by an analysis of national results that can sometimes turn out to be different.** Unlike other surveys and common stereotypes relating to gender equality, we do not find regional or logical trends except in Nordic countries.
- One of the main conclusions of this survey can be the fact that, **among all measures** to be taken to achieve equality between men and women, **Europeans favour encouraging measures rather than legal coercion.**
 - Thus, imposing quotas for women, either inside companies or on electoral lists during elections, is supported in both cases with an average of only 19%. The difference between men and women is only one percentage point.
 - However, in some areas, women are slightly more in favour of coercion measures than men:
 - **Financial penalties for companies** which do not respect equal pay between women and men (22% men, 27% women, [+5 percentage points])
 - **Financial penalties for political parties** which do not respect the balance between men and women (15% men, 19% women, +4)
- **There are contrasting opinions on the issue of maternity leave.**
 - According to 58% of the respondents, maternity leave has a negative impact on a women's career. It is again observed that men and women's opinion is nearly the same: 58% M, 59% W.

- The proposal put forward by the European Parliament to establish, maternity leave of 20 paid weeks at 100% of the salary, in all the Member States, is supported by 78% of Europeans (76% M, 79% W)
- **Both men and women are in favour of paternity leave** in the 11 countries where it does not exist yet. Indeed, 71% of men would ask for paternity leave if it existed in their country and 73% of women would encourage their partner to take it.

***N.B.:** Readers are reminded that survey results are estimates, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews (sample size usually used on a Member State scale), the real percentage, that is to say if the whole population had been interviewed, varies within the following confidence limits:*

Percentages observed	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Margin of error	+/-1.9 points	+/- 2.5 points	+/- 2.7 points	+/- 3.0 points	+/- 3.1 points

I. WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

A. Given equal qualifications and skills: do women face real obstacles to reach positions of responsibility?

- **In the analysis of possible obstacles faced by women, the difference between men and women is much more evident when compared to the other questions:**
 - 76% of European respondents think that women encounter significant difficulties in accessing positions of responsibility inside big companies: 78% of women and 72% of men follow this opinion.
 - 70% of European respondents think that these obstacles are relevant inside high levels of public administration, although only 66% of men are of this opinion, compared to 73% of women.
 - The analysis is the same concerning political parties: 69% of European respondents underline these serious obstacles (72% for women and 65% for men).
 - In two other activity areas, obstacles are considered as less significant but they are still a reality: SMEs (59%) and community organisations (49%).
- **The differences among countries are very significant** and apply to all domains in which women may access positions of responsibility: political parties (38 percentage points of difference), high levels of public administration (35 points), big enterprises (40 points), SMEs (37 points), and community associations (46 points).

In this regard, a **Baltic specificity** is observed. In fact, in all sectors, less respondents in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia compared to other countries consider that women face significant obstacles when reaching positions of responsibility.

- As far as sectors of big enterprises and SMEs are concerned, some differences can be seen relating to the accession date. Indeed, the European respondents from the pre-2004 EU countries consider much more than those from EU countries post-2004, that women face critical obstacles to reach decision-making positions.
- Between these two sectors, a gap of 9 percentage points splits the respondents in the Euro zone from the ones outside the Euro zone. The former are the most numerous group in thinking that women face significant obstacles.

B. Which of the following measures do you think would be most effective in ensuring women's access to positions of responsibility?

- In either the private or public sector, **both women and men give priority to encouraging measures.** When concerning the economic and political area:
 - 44% of European respondents (44% W, 44% M) consider that the most efficient measures consist of encouraging enterprises and public administrations to take measures to foster equality between women and men ("code of good practice") and to fight against stereotypes.
 - 30% (29% W, 31 % M) think that encouraging training and support measures will prompt women to take more responsibilities in enterprises.
 - Concerning the imposition of quotas by law, it is favoured by 19% of European respondents (20% W, 18% M) for boards of directors in enterprises and electoral lists (19% W, 18% M).

- As far as the national variations are concerned, relevant differences can be noticed especially on the **issue of the imposition of quotas.**
 - The gap among Member States on the establishment of quotas in the boards of directors in big enterprises and high levels of public administrations reaches 19 percentage points : 28% in Germany, 9% in Latvia.
 - Concerning the imposition of quotas by law in the elections, the differences are even more significant with a gap of 29 percentage points: 5% in Netherlands and 34% in Portugal.

C. For what reasons are women under-represented in politics?

- The answers of European respondents are very clear. **Women are under-represented in politics because the political world is dominated by men** who do not value the skills of women enough.
- 59% of European respondents think the same: 61% for women and 57% for men (- 4 percentage points).
- In second position but quite far behind is **the existence of persistent stereotypes**: 40% for men and 41% for women.
- The **other reasons** put forward by European respondents show a rather smaller rate of support:
 - In one out of three European respondents (28%), the measures in favour of parity between women and men in the political world are ineffective. Men (28%) and women (28%) share the same views in this analysis.
 - Just over a quarter of European respondents (26%) believe that women have little interest in this type of career and politics is not their priority. There is a difference of 3 percentage points between women (25 %) and men respondents (28 %).
- **Again, the national variations are huge.**
 - Concerning the predominance of men in politics, there is a difference of 26 percentage points: Cyprus 68% compared to Denmark 42%.
 - Regarding the existence of persistent stereotypes, the national variations show a difference of 36 percentage points: between 21% in Malta and 57% in Spain.

D. How can we encourage better political representation of women?

The acknowledgement of under-representation of women in politics is a fact. On this 100th anniversary of Women's day, what do European respondents think about the measures to take?

- **Similar to their views on the private sector, the respondents favour encouragement measures;**
 - Roughly one third of European respondents (30%; 30% W, 30% M) are in favour of training and support measures to encourage women to take part in political life.
 - 25% (24% W, 27% M) of European respondents see the parity of the electoral list drawn up by political parties as a measure which would contribute to a better representation of women in politics.

- **The binding measures obtained less than one fifth of the answers:**
 - The imposition of quotas by law during elections is considered as an efficient measure by 19% of European respondents (19% W, 18%M).
 - Introducing a system of financial incentives/penalties for political parties to make them respect the balance between women and men were viewed by 17% of the respondents (19% W, 15%M).
- At the level of Member States, the more coercive measures are more frequently reported by the respondents from the Euro zone (parity in the electoral lists and imposition of quotas).
- Finally, the imposition of quotas by law in the elections is cited by less than 1 person out of 10 in the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark.

E. What are the reasons for not participating in the elections?

- Questioned about the reasons that could discourage them from voting at the next local, national and European elections, **Europeans gave priority to a lack of confidence in politics in general:**
 - "A lack of confidence in political representatives" discouraged 29% of Europeans from voting at the European elections, 40% at the national elections and 34% at the local elections.
 - "The lack of information" was the second main view concerning the European elections (22%). This feeling of being ill-informed is less important for the national (12%) and local elections (16%)
 - The feeling that voting has no impact and that voting changes nothing, is shared more or less the same way on the three levels: European elections (19%), national elections (18%) and local elections (17%).

II. INEQUALITIES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

A. How to reduce the pay gap between men and women?

Eurostat statistics speak for themselves; even if it has slightly decreased, the pay gap between men and women at the European level was still at 17% when the survey was designed. How can we reduce this gap?

- According to Europeans, **the salary gap must first be solved with encouragement and incentive measures rather than with binding measures** :
 - *Looking at the encouragement measures:*
 - The priority one (29%; 30% W, 29%M) in order to fill the pay gap consists of promoting a better mix between men and women in all kinds of jobs (nurses, secretaries, airline pilots etc.).
 - For one European in four (24%; 22% W, 26% M), transparent pay scales within companies must be the priority.
 - *Looking at the binding measures:*
 - Financial penalties for companies which do not respect equal pay are favoured as the first priority by 24% of Europeans (27% W, 22% M).
 - In the case of disrespect of equal opportunities in access to promotion, 16% of Europeans (16% W, 15% M) are primarily in favour of financial penalties.
- **At the level of Member States, we observe significant differences** which vary from 19 to 32 percentage points. Slight variations can also be noticed between the countries of the Euro zone and the countries outside the Euro zone as well as between EU countries pre-2004 and the ones post-2004/2007.

B. How is it possible to better reconcile private and professional lives?

Women with more than one child have even more difficulties in reaching this goal. A recent Eurostat statistic shows that, at the European level, the employment rate for women without children is 75% whereas it is only 54% for women with three or more children. In contrast, the employment rate for a man without children is 80% and 85% for a man who has three or more children.

- For 37% (37% W, 36% M) of European respondents, the priority must be given to making childcare outside the home easier to access.
- 30% (30%W, 30%M) of respondents give priority to the development of flexibility within companies and public services.
- Finally, 29% of respondents (30%W, 29%M) encourage a balance between women and men in the sharing of domestic tasks and in the care of children and dependents.
- Again, differences among Member States are very significant depending on the issue: 26 percentage points for childcare and 28 points for the flexibility and a balance between men and women in the sharing of domestic tasks.

C. Which are the reasons for women's precarious situation?

The Eurostat data shows this very clearly: women are more exposed than men to precarious situations: in 2008, the employment rate for men was 73% compared to only 59% for women (- 14 percentage points). Part-time working was accounted by 8% for men and 31% for women (+23 percentage points). The risk of poverty was 16% for men and 17% for women.

- Once again, at European Union level, there is practically an equal balance between the answers of men and women in the analysis of the reasons of precarious situations:
 - More importantly, women are facing financial, economical and social difficulties because of their **precarious work** (seasonal work, temporary work etc.). This is what 34% (34% W, 33% M) of European respondents think.
 - A similar proportion of European respondents (34%) mention the multiplication of **one-parent families** (34% W; 34%M).
 - Career breaks and/or part time working due to family obligations was cited by 31% (33% W, 30%M) of European respondents
 - The pay gap is mentioned by 26% (26% W, 25% M) of the respondents.
 - The last reason for instability for the respondents is the imposition of part-time working (20%; 20% W; 20%M).

- **At Member States level, great differences are observed between the respondents from the EU countries pre-2004 and the ones post 2004-2007.** Indeed, the first ones list "Career breaks and/ or part-time working due to family obligations and the impact on the amount of pension" above everything else and "The rise in one-parent families". On the other hand, they consider "insecure work" (seasonal or temporary work, etc.) as less important.
- The rise in one-parent families and the salary gap between women and men are the two causes indicated in the first place by the respondents from the Euro zone.

III. MATERNITY LEAVE AND PATERNITY LEAVE

A. Maternity leave

The European Parliament has recently expressed a favourable approach towards a maternity leave in all the Member States, which would last at least 20 weeks and those concerned, would be paid 100% of the salary.

Due to the diversity of the social systems in the European Union, the analysis of the results can only be done at Member States' level by looking at the annexes. This table presents the results of the question, the number of weeks of maternity leave as well as the level of payment.

In 11 countries, the maternity leave is equal to 20 weeks or more. The leave is paid at 100% of the salary in only 3 countries. In the others, the reimbursement varies from 55% to 90%.

Regarding the 16 countries where the maternity leave is less than 20 weeks long, those concerned are paid at 100% of the salary in 12 out of the 16 countries.

In the analysis of the results, some answers may be surprising if put in relation with the legislations in force. Indeed, it seems that some contradictions in the answers may be caused by a lack of knowledge of the current national legislation.

Several questions have been asked on the issue of maternity leave:

1. A common maternity leave of 20 weeks paid at 100%?

- After presenting the *pros* (an essential social progress) and *cons* (high cost for the finances of the relevant countries) to the European respondents, nearly 8 people in 10 (78%) consider that maternity leave of 20 weeks paid at 100% of the salary would be a good thing.
 - 34% of respondents declare that this would be a "very good thing" and 44% think that this would be "quite a good thing".
 - Only 12% of the respondents think the opposite.

- 6% think that this would be neither a good nor a bad thing and 4% have not expressed their opinion.
- **There are slightly more women (79%) than men (76%) who consider that a maternity leave of 20 weeks, paid at 100% of the salary would be a good thing.**

2. A longer maternity leave or a better paid one?

Europeans have been asked to give their preferences on a longer maternity leave even if less paid and on a shorter maternity leave but paid at 100% of the salary.

- 43% of the respondents are in favour of longer maternity leave, even if it is less paid:
 - A difference of 5 percentage points is observed between men (41%) and women (46%).
 - In addition, it is noticeable that respondents with a higher level of education prefer an extension of the maternity leave without the full payment (100%) of the salary (48% versus 38% of the ones with less diplomas).
- **30% of the respondents would prefer a shorter maternity leave but paid at 100% of the salary.**
- Finally, 1 out of 5 Europeans (20%) spontaneously answered that they **do not want any change**.

3. Does the maternity leave have a negative impact on the career of women?

- Most respondents think that maternity leave has a negative impact on the career of women. This is the opinion of 6 out of 10 Europeans (58%), versus 38% of respondents who think the opposite, whereas 4% do not have any opinion on this issue.
- The answers of both women and men are quite similar. 59% of women think that maternity leave has a negative impact on their career compared to 58% of men.
- A real divergence of opinion is observed due to the age of the respondents. 61% of the 55 years and over think that maternity leave has a negative impact on the career of women whereas 50% of 15-24 years old has this same view.

B. Paternity leave

1. Paternity leave, under which conditions?

As it is with the maternity leave issue, national legislations are very different from one another. For a detailed analysis per country, it is better to refer to the table which is inserted in the annexes.

- **In the 11 countries where paternity leave does not exist** (Germany, Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Sweden) the establishment of **paternity leave** (2 weeks on average, either fully or partially paid) **is equally supported by men and women**. Indeed 71% of men would take one if it existed in their country and 73% of women would encourage their partner to ask for one.

- In these 11 countries, men who had negatively answered to this question were asked to explain under which conditions they would decide to take paternity leave. It is interesting to note that the answers were distributed quite equally in thirds:
 - A little less than one third (32%) would change opinion if they had the assurance that this would not affect their professional career.
 - 31% declare that they would take paternity leave if it was fully paid.
 - A little more than one third of the respondents (33%) have reconfirmed their refusal to take paternity leave under any financial conditions.

Finally, one can notice that a little more than 1 in 10 men (12%) answered that this is not applicable or they do not feel involved.

IV. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Fighting violence against women has been a constant concern for the European Parliament for many years. These crimes remain too often unpunished.

The suppression of these acts is first of all under the competences of national legislations. However, according to the European Parliament, this does not deny the fact that an action from the European Union is also needed in this field. The responses of Europeans clearly show that they equally share this major concern with the European Parliament.

A. Which strategies must the EU take to fight violence against women?

The European respondents were questioned about which priority actions the EU should adopt in this field.

- Two out of five European respondents (39%, 38%W, 39%M) believe the first priority is to consider the **best-practice sharing** among police authorities from the different Member States to support the victims.
- Secondly, the respondents (26%, 28%W, 24%M) mention the setting up of a **European-wide free phone number** for women seeking help and advice.
- Less than one out of five Europeans (19%, 18%W, 20%M) believe that the **European information campaigns** constitute a priority measure to eliminate violence against women.
- Finally, 10% (10%W, 10%M) of Europeans give priority to the setting up of a **European observatory on violence** against women.

B. Should the proscription to approach the victim be extended to all EU countries?

Someone who is guilty of violence against a woman is very often proscribed to approach the victim again. Currently, this prohibition applies only within the territories of the concerned Member State. Should this be extended to all the other EU Member States?

For the Europeans, the answer is not ambiguous at all: 89% of the respondents (90%W, 88%M) consider that a restraining order in one country - a court decision which prevents someone who is guilty of violence from approaching his victim - should be extended to all EU Member States.

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