

[**Fem** *Cities*]

FemCities Conference 2016

WOMEN IN POLITICAL
DECISION-MAKING
POSITIONS
AT LOCAL LEVEL

Luxembourg

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LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Égalité des chances



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[PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2016, 8.00 – 16.15 / 21.00

- 8:00** Registration/ Welcome café
- 9:00** **Opening speech**
Lydia Mutsch, Minister for Equal Opportunities
Welcome
Mayor of Bertrange, Frank Colabianchi
President of Conseil National des Femmes du Luxembourg (CNFL), Janine Reuland-Schneider
FemCities, Andrea Mautz, Deputy head of Women's Department Vienna (Austria) / FemCities coordination
Keynote
Tackling prejudices and traps – Successfully handling clichés and prejudices in media by women in politics – with a special focus on women who are mayors
Monique Leyenaar, Professor of Comparative Politics, Radboud University of Nijmegen, Netherlands
- 10:30** Coffee break
- 11:00** **Introductory remarks**
Cecile Hemmen, Mayor of Weiler-la-Tour and Member of National Parliament
European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life: Promotion of women in local decision making positions in Sweden, Luxembourg and Serbia
Jaimie Just, CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
Amelie Tarschys Ingre, SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)
Nicole Jemming, REGA (Réseau national des chargé-e-s à l'Égalité de chances entre femmes et hommes)
Rozeta Aleksov SKGO (Standing Conferences of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia)
Discussion
- 12:30** Lunch break
- 14:00** **Panel discussion with women mayors of European Cities**
Majlinda Bufi, Mayor of Roskovec (Albania), Michaela Höflsauer, Mayor of Lend (Austria), Simone Massard Stitz, Mayor of Sandweiler (Luxembourg), Angelika Schwarzmann, Mayor of Alberschwende (Austria), Christine Schweich, Mayor of Mondercange (Luxembourg), Jelena Trifunovic, Mayor of Svrlijig (Serbia)
Facilitation Claude Wolf (journalist and member of CNFL)
- 21:00** Closing of first conference day



FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2016 9.00 – 14.00

- 8:30** Welcome café
- 9:00** Introduction to topics in workshops / world café
“World café” – Tools for empowerment – how to increase gender equality efficiently in decision making on political level
Participants will have the chance of in-depth discussions in small groups at different desks. Participants will have the possibility of at least three “rotations” to other desks after 20 minutes of discussions and knowledge exchange.
Topics for in-depth discussions and practice exchange:
1. Networking a well known tool for empowerment – How to efficiently increase gender equality in decision making on local level
2. Structural measures by the state and/or by political parties (quotas, women's votum etc.) Would they be useful?
3. Decision for candidature – how networks and structural measures can support?
4. Language: Dealing with killer phrases, prejudices, „trolls“ and sexist attacks; use of gender sensitive language and its effects?
5. Gender experts in city administrations – how can they support?
6. Cooperation with NGOs
- Wrap-up session of the conference**
- 11:40** **FemCities networking**
Current and planned topics and projects – exchange on interests and needs FemCities Danube Region
Planning of next conference
- 12:00** Closing of conference



WELCOME/OPENING SPEECH BY LYDIA MUTSCH

Minister for Equal Opportunities Luxembourg

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In October 2017, local elections will take place in Luxembourg. As this is the case for many municipalities in Europe, women are still under-represented regarding political mandates.

To prevent unbalanced representation at local level, the Government's 2013 political program has formulated a clear and consequent strategy to restore equal representation of men and women in decision making.

As a country, Luxembourg is composed of 105 municipalities. Among 105 majors, there are just 13 women (or 12.3%). There is evidence that women are far away from a balanced decision making with their male colleagues.

Some say the number of inhabitants should also be included when considering those facts and figures. This is an interesting point of view. 12% represent 13 women among a pool of 105 majors. If we consider the number of inhabitants per municipality, the percentage would be much higher. Luxembourg counts 576.249 inhabitants (according to statistics

of 1.1.2016). Indeed, we are a very small country with most of communes having very few inhabitants.

At a glance, 178.500 (or 31%) men and women are living in a municipality with a woman on top. This is of course due to the fact that our capital "Luxembourg", as well as the second biggest town "Esch-Alzette" are ruled by a female major. Both count together 140.000 inhabitants. Of course, this average sounds better. Nonetheless, at local level women only hold 252 of 1125 political mandates. This is what we actually see in local politics despite some statistical calculations. Women continue to be a minority in decision making. Luxembourg government wants to change this.

The government's political agenda plans to rectify inequality between men and women in decision making wherever this is possible.

First, we are trying to achieve this at the level of public service itself. Every six months, Luxembourg government publishes the board balance of all public institutions and institutions with State participation regarding gender.

We now see that progress is ongoing and that we come closer to balance between men and women in this area. Indeed, in June 2016, percentage of women grow up from 25,66% to 32,24% depending on which institution we are looking at. In other words, among 865 mandates on board, women have taken over 222 mandates in 2016.

The declared objective is to attend 40% representation for every gender up to 2019. Therefore, we still need to gain another 124 mandates for women in order to close the gender gap.

Luxembourg government strongly supports the Commission proposed legislation aiming at attaining a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies. However, no legal binding decision is underway for economic boards at national level. However, legislation is on the table to tackle the gap regarding political mandates.

Before the end of the year, the parliament will vote a law in this sense. This new law foresee a legal binding 40% quota for next national elections taking place in October 2018. For next European elections a 50% gender representation is even foreseen. In case, political parties do not follow this recommendation, their financial subventions will be reduced according to a pro rata. Penalties are fixed by legislation

What about political strategy to bring more women into political mandates at local Level?

The municipalities are in the vast majority small towns with less than 3.000 people. We have actually two election systems at local level depending on population:

- Municipalities with less than 3000 inhabitants vote for persons (the so called "Majorzsystem");
- Municipalities with more than 3000 inhabitants vote for parties (the so called "Proporzsystem").

At local level, the system does exempt financing for elections. We may need a different approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The governmental program foresee that the partnership between the state and municipalities should be intensified in order to implement Equal representation of women and men

Thanks to a national awareness campaign, I would like to bring in a new dynamism for more equality and greater involvement of women at local level.

On international women's day on 8 March the ministry of equal opportunities launched a campaign running until the next elections including a variety of actions. Among those, I would like to bring forward the workshops and world cafés organized at local level to stick together candidates, interested women and potential candidates with local politicians in order to promote political participation of women. Debate among women and men at these local workshops were very constructive and enriching and my ministry is now putting all these points to fit into concrete measures during the next months.

Only if we continue to sensitizing, we may be able to achieve mentality change. I am convinced this will have a positive (gender) influence in politics, but also in our professional and family live.

The conference FemCities provides its valuable contribution to achieve this goal. Networking with women of other communes, countries, different cultural contexts help us broadening our horizon and strengthen mutual understanding.

On behalf of the Government and in my own name I am very thankful for your presence and your participation. I wish you intense and interesting debates and an enriching networking and a very pleasant stay in Luxembourg.

Thank you very much. ■

WELCOME WORDS BY ANDREA MAUTZ

Deputy head of Women's Department Vienna (Austria)/FemCities coordination

Distinguished guests,

Welcome also on my behalf to this international FemCities expert conference. Welcome to all partners that have been accompanying us as cooperation partners at FemCities for several years already and welcome to all wonderful experts joining and contributing to the conference this year.

My name is Andrea Mautz and I'm the deputy head of the department for Women's Issues of the City of Vienna and head of the division for basic research of the Womens' Department.

Our department is also responsible for the coordination of the FemCities network. In this function I want to thank our network partners in Luxembourg, the ministry for Equal Opportunities Luxembourg and the National Council of Women of Luxembourg (CNFL) for hosting the FemCities conference this year in their beautiful city and for organizing the FemCities conference in cooperation with the Women's Department Vienna.

For all who are not familiar with FemCities: What is the FemCities network? Put in a nutshell, the

FemCities network is a rather informal network of European municipal and city administrations that aims to promote women and gender equality. The network supports the exchange of successful models in the field of local and regional women's policy and enforces the lobbying for equality issues in Europe. Annually a FemCities conference is held together with a network partner. Next year there will be the 20th anniversary of FemCities.

FemCities Network partners are relevant administrations working on gender equality, equal opportunities and women issues in European cities and municipalities. Associate FemCities partners can become organisations other than administrative units of cities working on the same issues. If you are interested in becoming a network partner of FemCities please visit our website and download the network partner form.

A broad range of topics relevant for women in our cities have been discussed during all years – from gender pay gap, migrant women in European Cities, the role of city administrations in promoting womens' rights, tackling sexist advertising on local level and, last year, the effects of the economic

crisis on the employment of women. The topic of this years' conference is on „Women in local decision making positions“, we know, women still are under represented in decision making positions, especially in political decision making positions. Within the EU only 15% women are mayors of cities, 36% women are members of the municipal council. The conference aims to find strategies for enhancement of women in decision making positions – strategies like quotas, but also strategies going beyond.

We will have a lot of time for networking, for finding strategies and discussing recent developments. Even if we focus on local level, it will be hard to ignore the debate and results of the U.S. presidential elections. Still, there are similarities, but clearly also differences for women who are in decision making positions on local level in Europe.

But there is also reason for hope, having wonderful experts and representatives on local level and also national level participating at this conference, committed for making a change in the communities and municipalities we are living in. Thank you all for coming and sharing your expertise and experience. ■

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY CECILE HEMMEN

Mayor of Weiler-la-Tour and Member of National Parliament

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am one of those 13 women among 105 majors in Luxemburg representing 12.3% of women in decision making in local politics. I am also Member of the Chamber of Deputies (Parliament).

Following the 2009 parliamentary elections, women accounted for only 20% of elected MPs and 27% of ministers. Following the 2011 municipal elections, men hold 4 out of 5 seats on municipal councils.

Thus, I may say I have the privilege to belong to a minority!

Being a woman, I had to invest more energy than my male colleagues did in order to succeed. My personal experience is that women have to show up more competence at all level and in every area of action than men.

5 years ago, during municipal election period, I had to struggle a lot to tackle prejudice coming from seven other male candidates. As a woman and being a professional journalist, they sad, I

had an evident lack of competence to become major, considered a prestigious job and would fit better for men.

It took me some time to swallow these remarks coming from those I am working together nowadays.

Actually, today, I am the major and they are “my” councilors.

They apologized for their former behavior and I am happy to say we are working as a team in good harmony. However, I remember this experience as having been very unpleasant and it took most of my energy. What a waste!

Why do women still have to face such behavior and remarks and insults in the 21st Century? Is this not a shocking evidence?

Today I am proud not only to hold political responsibility, but also to chair the Parliamentary “Equal Opportunities Group”.

I am following very closely the political agenda

and measures taken by our minister in equality issues and all members of the Parliamentary group join in to support her with conviction for her efforts undertaken to implement positive actions, bringing regulations and laws on the table.

I may assure you that, at local level, all necessary steps are taken in view of the forthcoming elections in October. It is essential to do everything possible to make sure that women feel strong and fill in their candidature. It is and will be essential to ensure women’s place in all communal councils.

I wish you good luck for this conference and I am looking forward to the debates and networking sessions.

Thank you very much! ■

MONIQUE LEYENAAR, Professor of Comparative Politics, Radboud University of Nijmegen, Netherlands

TACKLING PREJUDICES AND TRAPS – SUCCESSFULLY HANDLING CLICHEES AND PREJUDICES IN MEDIA BY WOMEN IN POLITICS – WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON WOMEN WHO ARE MAYORS



Thank you for the invitation to speak here at the annual conference of FemCities. This conference on Women in Political Decision Making is of course very timely given what happened last week in the USA.



For the first time in history a woman was very close to acquiring the most powerful political position in a country. And not just in “a” country, but in the United States of America, one of the very few players in the international world order.

However, she did not succeed in breaking through the highest glass ceiling. Of course we have to wait for more in-depth analyses of the election results, but for all of us who have followed the campaign it is already crystal clear that sexism / resistance to women’s political leadership is one of the explanatory factors of Clinton losing the election. And not only this, given the statements of the president elect, Donald Trump, in his campaign, we can even expect a backlash in the next few years with regard to gender equality. And I am afraid that this could be the case in many more established democracies. The popularity of the far right, the call of fundamentalists for a revival of traditional family values is a threat to what was obtained in the previous decades with regard to equal opportunities and individual choices. Now more than ever it is important to address the on-going under-representation of women in politics as well as in other sectors, because the American election was again an example that reaching gender balance in politics is not just a matter of time.

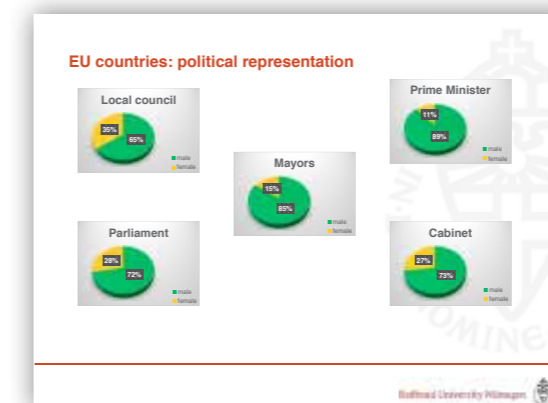
In my talk this morning I will address the following:

- Some general trends regarding the overall underrepresentation of women politics;
- The current situation at the national and local level in Europe
- Explanations for the underrepresentation of women in local politics: in general and I discuss the case of the Netherlands.
- The media as an obstacle for women’s political leadership
- And I finish with an optimistic note, the election of women as mayors of several large cities.

2. General trends

Let me start by saying that we, women, have come a long way.

We have to realise that in the old European democracies, political life with its institutional norms and practices, was established before women gained access to it. And for a long time, an all-male political leadership was taken for granted, and the few women in politics were strangers in a male order. Since then we have witnessed a gradual increase in the number of women cabinet ministers, legislators, mayors and local councillors. However only in a very few cases we find gender balanced political institutions. Despite substantial advancement in women’s social and economic status, politics in the established democracies is still male dominated, both at the local as well as at the national level.



Here we see the latest figures from the EU database on women in decision making positions. Starting with the political level we are discussing today we

find 35 percent women councillors and only 15 percent women mayors. For the national level there are 10 percent women prime ministers, only three out of 28, 27 percent women cabinet ministers and 28 percent women legislators.

Gender balance in politics seems still far away in all levels of government: 100 years of women’s suffrage has not resulted in equal political representation. Only in a very few cases, and mainly only with regard to cabinet positions, we find equal numbers of women and men. Examples are the Spanish cabinet of 2008 and the French cabinet appointed in 2012. In this context a positive note is that some male politicians now openly declare to be in favour of a gender balanced cabinet. It now has become a campaign issue: I refer to Justin Trudeau from Canada who promised and when he won indeed appointed as many women as men in his cabinet, but also Jeremy Corbyn from the Labour Party in the United Kingdom who announced last week that in his next cabinet he would also opt for gender balance. But in Europe we also witness stagnation and sometimes even drops in women’s presence in politics.

For a long time the expectation was that women’s political representation would increase gradually through a constant, maybe even irreversible process towards permanent gender balance. But this appeared not to be true. In a world perspective, one-third of the elections to national parliaments in 2010 resulted in a drop in women’s representation and in 19 per cent of the elections there is stagnation. Let me give some examples. In Denmark, women’s share of the seats in parliament has remained unchanged at 37–39 per cent through five elections between 1998–2011. For the local councils there is stagnation at 26–28 per cent for the period 1989–2005. Germany also experienced stagnation between 1998–2009, resulting in a stable and disappointing 31–33 per cent women in the Bundestag. And in my own country, the Netherlands, the local level shows hardly any progress since 1990 with only 25–27 per cent of councillors being women.

Why women in the 21st century are not

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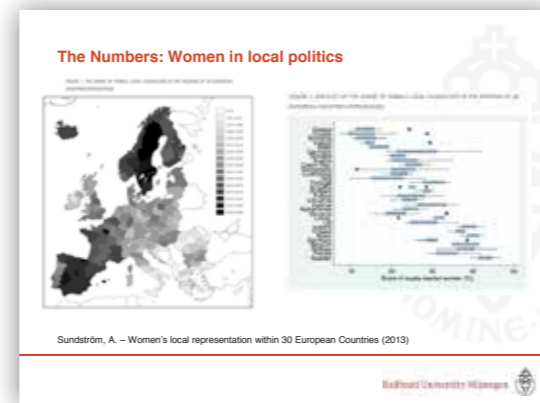
participating in political decision making on equal terms with men has fascinated scholars for more than 40 years. Given the large amount of empirical research we know now that:

- at country level, institutions matter, such as electoral systems and party systems. For example in countries with an electoral system that includes legislative gender quotas we find high percentages of women legislators; that social and economic conditions of women matter: like women's position on the labour market and in the educational system, but also the conditions for balancing work-life and that cultural indicators matter, like religion and general attitude towards gender equality;
- at party level, that party ideology is important with leftist parties being more favourable to women in top positions than the more right-wing parties; that the presence of strong women's sections helps women to gain access and that certain recruitment and selection processes are more favourable to women;
- at the individual level, that a support structure and the feeling of personal impact, as well as individual ambitions matter;
- at the level of society, that the dominant as well as the specific discourses on women as politicians are important. How the media for example frame women's political leadership may have a large impact on the chances of those women not only to become elected, but also to succeed as mayor or cabinet minister!

Each of us can use this analytical framework for explaining the specific situation in her own country. It is clear however that for each case impact and interaction varies and that no single indicator can explain either very low or very high levels of women politicians.

Let us now look more closely to the local level, women in the local councils and women as mayors.

Among the EU Member States the number in the local councils varies between 18 percent in Greece and Cyprus to more than 30 percent in ten countries



with Sweden and France at the top, with 44 and 40 percent women councillors. Overall a picture that is not very different from that of the representation of women in the legislatures. However the share of women mayors is disappointing, this varies much more and ranges from 0 percent in Cyprus to 37 in Sweden. In 18 of the 28 EU countries the percentage of women mayors is less than 15 percent.

Most theories about level of decision-making and gender representation tell us to expect a higher representation of women at the local level than at the national level. This is because local policy areas are of particular concern to women and local politics is viewed as more women-friendly because of its proximity to work and home. Furthermore compared to legislative or ministerial office, competition for local office is supposed to be less fierce. Male party leaders are more willing to make room for new candidates, among which women.

However using the EU database women in decision making we see a different pattern: in 8 countries the share of women in the local councils is indeed higher (2 percent or more), but in 11 countries the percentage of women councillors is lower than in the parliament. In four countries the difference is even quite large: France with 26 percent of women MPs and 40 percent of women councillors; Latvia with 16 percent MPs and 31 percent councillors and Hungary with 10 percent women MPs and 30 percent women councillors. The fourth country is my own, the Netherlands, but here we see the

reversed picture: a much higher share for women in the parliament than in the local councils. I already mentioned it: since 1990 the share of women in the councils has stagnated. In 1990 it was 25 percent and now it is 27, so hardly any increase in almost thirty years.

In order to understand the situation in your own country, let me say a few things about the reasons for the Dutch stagnation.

First, the Christian Democratic Party dominates local politics, a party less inclined to select women than the more secular parties. Second, the majority of Dutch local communities are in rural areas, where the effects of the new women's movement on gender roles have been less pronounced than in the larger cities. We still find a strong correlation between the size of the local community and the percentage of women councillors, with the percentage higher in the larger cities. Third, the party system at local level is more fragmented, resulting in many different parties which win only a few seats. As women candidates are often placed lower on the lists, fragmentation is disadvantageous to their chance of election. Fourth, the merging of local communities into larger ones has had a negative effect on the selection of women, because local party organizations also had to merge. And this means that more local party activists are competing for fewer positions which often turns out negatively for women. Fifth, it is often the national party executive that actively promotes the selection of women, but they have very little say in the actual candidate selection process for the councils. Sixth, over time local, independent, parties that participate only in the election in one municipality have gained influence. Local lists tend to nominate fewer women for councils than the nationally-based local parties, because they have neither women's sections nor a tradition of affirmative action for women. A final reason is a shortage in the availability of women candidates. From a survey among local councillors we learn that relatively more female than male councillors quit their job or decide not to stand for re-election. Reasons are that the council-work is too time-consuming and not rewarding enough. At the start women are enthusiastic, they have concrete ideas and willing to enter local politics in order to get some things done. But during their first term as councillor many of them become disappointed in

what they actually can get done.

All these reasons explain the meagre share of women councillors. Help from the government, for example training programs or subsidies for parties who recruit women as candidates, has not resulted in a substantial greater share.

Turning to all European countries again, recent cross-national studies of local councils come up with even more specific explanations for the underrepresentation of women at the local political level. Let me mention three: election aversion, corruption, and the role of the media. Before I discuss these factors let's take a closer look at women as mayors, as city leaders.

Mayors

While the position of councillor is an elected position in all of our countries, we find an abundance of city leadership models across Europe, depending on history and political culture. In some countries the mayor is the person who is head of the largest party in the council, he or she can be directly elected or appointed by the central government. Not only the selection varies over Europe, but also the degree of power and autonomy of mayors. In the context of this talk we cannot discuss all different models, but what mayors do have in common is that for the public, the population, he or she is the most well-known local politician and viewed as an important local political leader.

The overall share of women mayors is 15 percent which is well below the other political offices.

Apart from the more general obstacles, recent cross-national research of local councils in 18 European countries shows that the level of corruption is relevant: in communities where levels of corruption are high, the number of women elected is low. Corruption indicates the existence of all kinds of arrangements that benefit the already privileged, which in most countries tend to be men (Sundström & Wangnerud, 2016). The authors of this study, Sundström & Wangerud argue that the advancement of women in local politics is dependent on uncorrupt institutions that signal that women who come forward will receive equal treatment. The second study I mention here focuses not so much on the chances to be elected, but on the question

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of candidate emergence. The authors, Kristin Kanthak and Jonathan Woon from the University of Pittsburgh, USA (2015) conducted an experimental study and found that women are more election averse than men. The fact that representatives are chosen through elections is enough to dissuade women from putting themselves as candidates. The authors argue that election aversion may have to do with feelings of trust and honesty: a lack of trust in others to campaign honestly; a lack of trust in the accuracy of the electoral system to select the best representative or an unwillingness to lie in the campaign or to constantly say that you are the best!

So women candidates more often than men want to serve only in an uncorrupt environment. Furthermore they still feel uncomfortable with campaigning.

If there are potential candidates present I would like to hear from you whether you recognise this.

The third study deals with the media and how the media portrays women political leaders. Donatella Campus from the University of Bologna wrote a very important book on media, gender and political leadership (Women, Political Leaders and the Media, 2013). Her study shows us how media coverage reinforces gender stereotyping and influences the public evaluations of women leaders' candidacies and performance. These days the media is a dominant factor in politics. The media not only selects the news and determines the political agenda in this way, they also frame the news and make or break individual politicians.

The constant attention of the media is a big challenge for today's political leaders and it appears for women to be so even more. Although the amount of news coverage is about the same for women and men political leaders, the scope still differs. Campus shows that women political leaders receive more coverage regarding their physical appearance, personal characteristics and family, than about their political experience, knowledge and policies. She talks about the double bind that women who are political leaders are confronted with.

Women political leaders and the media

The double bind of women political leaders:
A double bind is an emotionally distressing dilemma in communication in which an individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages, and one message negates the other.

Effects of mediatisation and personalisation:

- Simple messages: one-liners
- Appearances in entertainment shows:
 - the need to be 'witty'
- A confrontation with another female politician is then described by the media as 'catfights' or as 'screaming bitches'
- Overexcited attention to appearance & clothes

"Take care to look well, because when a male minister is looking tired 'he works hard', but when a female minister looks tired, 'she cannot cope'."



If they show their emotional side, they are viewed as unfit for the job; if they hide their emotions, act professionally and do not talk about their families, they are viewed as unsympathetic. When male political leaders speak about their wife and children and their own role as husband and father, they touch upon emotional feelings and are evaluated positively. When female leaders do so, this has a different, negative, connotation. It remembers the public of the fact that she spends most of her time away from her family so she cannot be a good mother and wife. It is for this reason that women political leaders are more reluctant to answer personal questions than male leaders.

Other consequences of the dominant role of the media in politics and of the focus on persons rather than on parties or policies are the preferences of journalists for simple, black and white messages, for one-liners. For female political leaders who want to explain their considerations and choices, this is not a simple task. Furthermore women political leaders are now frequently asked to perform in entertainment shows. Advantages are the high ratings and a broader public, but disadvantages are the personal questions and the need to 'be witty'. And thirdly, there is the tendency of the media to describe conflicts among two women politicians as 'catfights' and as 'screaming bitches', while they do not use comparable descriptions for two males debating a political issue.

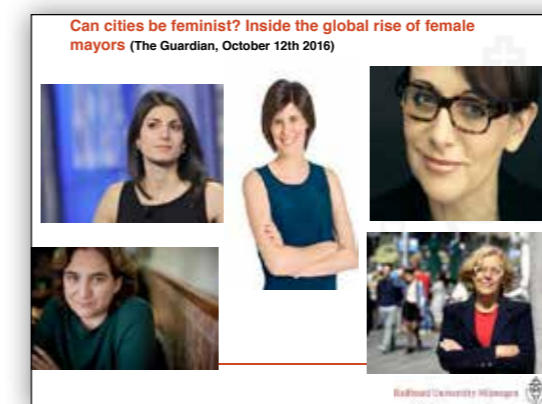
Many studies show that the press still uses the frame of 'being a woman'. Women political leaders

are still asked all the time 'what will change now that a woman is in command'. Surveys among women politicians still show a majority of women who are saying that the press treats them differently from men. And this hasn't changed over time. As Campus also points out, they especially mention the overexcited attention for physical appearance and clothes. One of my respondents, a female cabinet minister, decides, when a journalist tells her she looks so tired, to go to the hairdresser each Friday morning before the cabinet meeting: "Take care to look well, because when a male minister is looking tired 'he works hard', but when a female minister looks tired, 'she cannot cope'." The lesson is to make time to 'do your hair and your lipstick' because the press is around 24/7!

As for the previous findings, I am curious whether the politicians in our midst recognize this double bind and how they tackle this.

Mayors of large cities

Can cities be feminist? Inside the global rise of female mayors (The Guardian, October 12th 2016)



In order to conclude on a more positive note, what do we see here? Do you know who they are? Mayors of large cities who have been recently elected: Chiara Appendino was elected this summer as mayor of Turin, she is 32 years old. Virginia Raggi is the mayor of Rome, also elected this year. Both women were candidates for the Five Star Movement Party. In the right upper corner we find Adrina

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Krnacova, the mayor of Prague since 2014 who represents ANO 2011 also an outsider party. In the left corner there is the picture of Ada Colau, who is the mayor of Barcelona since 2015 for Podemos. In the right corner we find Manuela Carmena elected as mayor of Madrid in 2015. She is a retired lawyer and was a candidate for Ahora Madrid a movement consisting of all types of groups with a radical platform and using new forms of participative democracy. What do they have in common: they are candidates for so-called outsider, relatively new, parties; several of them get elected because they promise to 'clean up politics', to fight corruption and they pursue issues like banning cars from the centre and improving services. They bring with them a set of experiences different in important ways from those of many of their male colleagues. An example: If you've never tried to put a buggy on a bus, you don't really understand what many women's experience of public transport is.

In short the election of these women as mayors signal a desire for change, something that our established democracies need desperately now that more and more of our citizens turn their back to traditional politics. As such our failing democratic institutions may create opportunities for a new generation of political leaders, for agents of change: women.

Thank you! ■

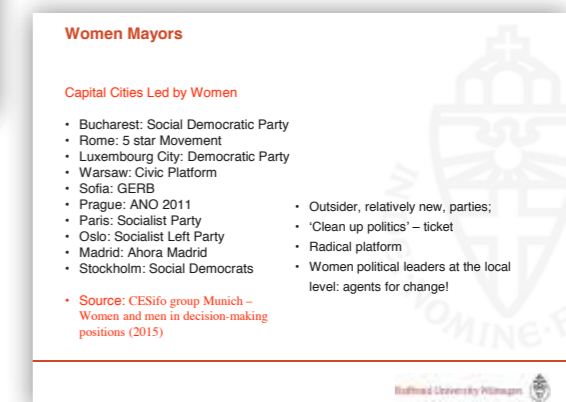
Women Mayors

Capital Cities Led by Women

- Bucharest: Social Democratic Party
- Rome: 5 star Movement
- Luxembourg City: Democratic Party
- Warsaw: Civic Platform
- Sofia: GERB
- Prague: ANO 2011
- Paris: Socialist Party
- Oslo: Socialist Left Party
- Madrid: Ahora Madrid
- Stockholm: Social Democrats

- Outsider, relatively new, parties;
- 'Clean up politics' – ticket
- Radical platform
- Women political leaders at the local level: agents for change!

• Source: CESifo group Munich – Women and men in decision-making positions (2015)



EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN LOCAL LIFE: PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING POSITIONS IN SWEDEN, LUXEMBOURG AND SERBIA

JAIMIE JUST, CEMR Policy Officer – Gender Equality and Diversity

PRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN LOCAL LIFE

First, I would like to provide an overview of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and its work, followed by an introduction to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life – one of the main tools in CEMR's action promoting equality of women and men.

Then I will present the Indicator Toolkit produced in the framework of a European Pilot Project from 2014-2015 to assess the level of implementation of the Charter by signatories across Europe. The brief presentation will conclude with CEMR's current priorities and activities in the field of gender equality.

CEMR is the oldest, broadest European association

of local and regional governments. It brings together the national associations of local and regional authorities from 41 European countries and represents, through them, over 130,000 cities, towns and regions. CEMR is the European section of the world organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

CEMR's work is organised around two main pillars:

- Influencing European policy and legislation in all areas having an impact on subnational government;
- Providing a forum for debate between local and regional authorities via their national representative associations (ex/ SALAR in Sweden, SKGO in Serbia, SYVICOL in Luxembourg)

CEMR's history of working for gender equality goes all the way back to 1983. In the beginning, CEMR was focused on promotion of women's participation in decision-making processes and organised gatherings of elected women from all over Europe. In 1992, a Standing Committee of elected women representatives was formed as a body of CEMR with the purpose of exchanging experiences and challenges, sharing good practices and monitoring policies of CEMR and the EU from the perspective of women.

Following a 2011 decision by the CEMR Policy Committee in Brussels, the CEMR Committee of elected women representatives of local and regional authorities became the Standing Committee for Equality of women and men in local life. Currently chaired by Ibon Uribe (Mayor of Galdakao and representative of the Association of Basque Municipalities), the Standing Committee for Equality is composed of elected representatives nominated by the national associations of CEMR that have expressed their interest in participating in the work of the Committee. Its role is to decide on the overall objectives and to oversee the work of the Observatory.

After the year 2000, CEMR implemented a project to create a virtual city that serves the interests of women and men equally. This project was named "Town for Equality" and experiences

were collected from all over Europe. After this, and in order to promote gender equality at the local and regional level, CEMR launched the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life in 2006 with support from the European Commission. The Charter is both a political document and a practical instrument. It encourages local and regional governments to make a public commitment to equality and to implement the principles listed in the Charter. It proposes concrete methods by which equality of women and men can be pursued in different fields of local and regional competences, such as: political participation, employment, public services, urban planning, etc. The Charter consists of the following parts:

PART 1: Presentation of basic rights and values concerning equality of women and men

PART 2: Guidelines on how to implement the Charter and its commitments

Part 3: 30 articles covering different areas of local and regional competences and examples on how to implement gender equality in each respective area.

Today the Charter has over 1,600 signatories in 33 countries in Europe and it has been translated into 28 languages. Years after release of the Charter, it was necessary to establish a systematic way

PRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN LOCAL LIFE

to collect data and monitor its implementation. In 2011, the CEMR Executive Board decided to establish the Observatory of the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life, which was then launched in 2012 along with an online platform. The role of the Observatory is to support the development of action plans, monitor implementation and evaluate the impact of the Charter in cooperation with signatories.

From 2014-2015, CEMR received support from the European Commission to undertake a pilot project to develop indicators to measure the implementation of the Charter across Europe.

The resulting Toolkit, now available in 22 languages, features 76 indicators to aid local and regional authorities in conducting a self-assessment of the situation of women and men in their territory. The CEMR Toolkit of indicators covers several transversal elements (data, training, etc.) and all 30 articles of the Charter. Comprehensive, flexible, and free to use, the

Toolkit empowers local and regional authorities to gain a better understanding of which priority areas to focus on and to assess the impact of their equality initiatives.

Type of indicators

- Horizontal indicators: cover cross-cutting issues that are relevant for the Charter in general.
- Core and Optional indicators: indicators that measure the implementation of the Charter by article.

3 categories of indicators

- Structural (e.g. formal commitment) – adoption of an action plan
- Process (e.g. actions implemented) – providing trainings
- Outcome (e.g. share of women and men) – share of women/men elected

The work of the Observatory is carried out by the CEMR Secretariat, the Standing Committee

for Equality and an expert group of national coordinators from member associations. The expert group supports the Observatory's activities in monitoring the implementation of the Charter by maintaining contact with the signatories and disseminating information related to the Charter, as well as contributing to the technical aspects of CEMR's work on equality in semi-annual meetings.

CEMR is currently drafting a policy paper and multi-annual action plan for adoption in 2017 based on 10 Key Priorities adopted at the December 2016 Policy Committee meeting.

Among the priority areas for work are:

- Closing the gap in sex-disaggregated data;
- Promoting greater participation and influence of women in decision-making; and
- Strengthening political support for gender equality at all levels

CEMR is organising a European citizenship conference that will take place in Bilbao, Spain

in June 2018. The three thematic pillars of the conference are Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. These represent core values of the European Union and areas of opportunity for innovative action at local and regional levels. The aim of this conference is to bring together member associations, signatories of the Charter, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and academia to discover and share ideas and experiences on the transformation of the social landscape in Europe generally, and specifically in regard to the European Charter for Equality. ■

AMELIE TARSHYS INGRE, SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)

WOMEN IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Dear colleagues,

First of all many thanks to the organizers of this conference!

More women in politics, that's what this conference and this panel are all about. Conditions differ from one country to another, and at the same time it is the same old problem everywhere. We have a lot of wonderful men in politics, but they tend to take up too much place. To get more elbow-room for women, we must look around and learn from the experience in different places.

So my task is to report on Sweden. Ten million people, 290 municipalities, 21 county councils and regions who all are members of the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, SALAR.

We do have a good tail-wind for feminism up in the north, but still many there are many imbalances. We have a strong system of local self-government in

Sweden that is based on direct income taxes. This differs us for some of the other European countries but is very important for the local democracy. We pay around 20 percent of our income to the municipality and around 10 per cent to the county council or region.

In return, the municipalities take care of the pre-schools, schools, elder care and local infrastructure and the county councils and regions are responsible of health care and local transportation. That means a lot of public employees. Most local employees are women, many in jobs that are paid less than the jobs in the private sector. So gender issues start already there.

Besides fighting with the central government on a lot of different issues, the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, SALAR, with a staff of 450 is also the biggest employer organization in the country as our members are the employers of more than one million people.

When it comes to politics the situation is not so bad.

- The five biggest cities are led by women - Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Uppsala and Linköping.
- 38 % of the mayors are women.

And then the female share continues along the same line:

- 37 % of all chairmanships in the municipalities
- 42 % of the full time remunerated elected
- 45 % of the part time remunerated elected
- 43 % of all elected in the municipalities.

This could be worse, and not so long ago it was of course worse.

Today quotas in politics are very much debated around the world. I was recently at the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. My colleague, Inger Linge, presented a report on Women's political participation and representation at local and regional level. The report invites local and regional authorities to ensure that representation of women in any decision-making body does not fall under 40 % and encourages them to develop gender-disaggregated statistics to monitor and evaluate the evolution of elections. It is important to have the numbers and to be able to compare them. The report also calls on government to consider adoption of legislative reforms to implement quotas for candidates in elections and to revise the electoral system where it has a negative impact on woman's political participation.

**IN SWEDEN:
NO QUOTAS – BUT A POWERFUL NORM**

But in Sweden we don't have quotas. So how did we get where we are today?

There were many forces at work, but not so much legal compulsion. There have never been any formal quotas set in law. But there has been some useful competition between the political parties. It started out when one of them proclaimed that every second candidate on its ballots would be a woman. It took some time to reach that goal but the idea proved contagious, so women in other parties followed suit. After a decade or so they had all fallen into line.

But of course there have been setbacks. In the end of the 1980s some women thought the gender balance in politics was going in totally the wrong direction. So around 20 women who called themselves the "support stockings" met and had secret meetings in a basement room in one of the suburbs of Stockholm. They were led by three media savvy women who were very active in the debate. The "support stocking" women were very worried about the situation so they threatened to create a women only ballot in the election. All the political parties were very afraid and the result was a dramatic increase of women on all the ballots of the political parties. I know a bit about it because my mother was one of these women.

Not that everybody complied gleefully with the rule. There were pockets of resistance here and there. There was the usual harping about the lack of competent women. But after some time ballot parity had become the established norm, and you could say shame to deviant party organizations.

And it was a very contagious norm. Even outside

WOMEN IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL

politics. When I watch television programs abroad I am often surprised by the all-male panels invited to discuss various issues. Grey suits everywhere. Quite boring. In Sweden, I am happy to report, no TV journalist would any longer dare to present four same-sex experts on any issue whatsoever brought up for discussion.

The norm is quite powerful.

Now, a very important reason for the gender shift in Sweden is the electoral system.

As you may know we have proportional representation (PR), and the ballots for various political bodies – parliament, regional council and municipal council – are all determined at meetings where all party members are entitled to vote, or sometimes the elected representatives of the local party organizations.

Proportional representation makes it easier to enforce gender balance principles. Where you have single-candidate constituencies the balance can only come about in the whole parliament or the whole council, and it doesn't. Whether the majority system is first-past-the-post as in Britain or organized in two successive rounds as in France, the gender outcome is regularly skewed.

NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

Another thing that promotes gender balance in Sweden is the way ballots are determined, always at party nomination meetings where either all members

have a right to vote or in some cases representatives of local party organizations.

This is different in many places.

In some countries you choose someone to top the list, and that person is then entrusted with the task of selecting all the others. This may be good for team-building and loyalty, perhaps, but not so good for gender balance.

The technique where every second candidate is a man and every second is a woman has come to be called the "zipper" model. You know, zippers, two sides that meet when you get dressed. Not a bad principle, but zippers can get stuck in many different ways.

PROBLEMS REGARDING THE ZIPPER PRINCIPLE

Let me report on problems observed in Sweden.

- The first one occurs in small parties that have only one or a few seats in each constituency.

If most top positions go to male candidates, the female one step down may never get in and the entire team of that party may become very skewed, gender-wise. One good advice I got once is refuse to be number two and always head for the top.

- The second problem occurs when male-dominated nomination meetings are called upon to select female candidates.

Under a zipper system, some places on the list are reserved for women and other for men. So you don't get a battle between the sexes but a series of battles inside the sexes: Men against men, women against women.

Would it be different with arbiters of both sexes, depending on the composition of the party membership or the representatives entitled to vote at nomination meetings?

So if a roomful of men gets to choose among several women, young charm often beats mature experience. The zipper system is sometimes harsh on elderly experienced female politicians.

Now, getting onto the ballot and getting elected is of course only part of the story.

For real parity in local politics, there are also a lot of other obstacles.

OTHER CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN (LOCAL) POLITICS?

JOURNALISTS AND FELLOW POLITICIANS

The way women are treated by journalists and fellow politicians can be another obstacle for women in politics. A lot of attention is paid to clothes and the outer trimmings. We can see the numbers of articles about Theresa Mays shoes. Which paper wrote anything about Donald Trumps?

Condescendence camouflaged as politesse. Back-handed compliments by colleagues pretending to be gentlemen.

MALE HABITS, THAT REDUCE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN AND IDEAS TO TACKLE THEM

There are many male habits in politics that tend to reduce the influence of women.

Berit Ås, the Norwegian social psychologist and former party leader, has come up with an interesting list of five methods employed to reinforce male supremacy.

- Render your opponent invisible.
- Ridicule her.
- Avoid sharing relevant information.
- Give her two options and then criticize her for whatever choice she makes, and
- Don't forget to invoke her sense of guilt and shame.

How many of you in this room have ever met one of these? Please raise your hands. But when seeing them and talking about them it is much easier to handle. So do talk about how you treat and are treated by political colleagues. A good thing to do is also like many men do, enforce the person that spoke before.

Other preconditions for parity in local politics are more practical.

PARITY IN POLITICS AND PARITY AT HOME

You need a home base, and that base may be very demanding. There may be kids to take of, or parents, or other relatives. Parity in politics requires parity at home. That's easier said than done, of course. But unless we say so and say so quite often, it will never get done.

WOMEN IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL

When Tony Blair was prime minister of Britain his wife Cherie said her husband certainly knew where to find the washing machine but he was perhaps not so familiar with the nicer details of how it worked. The gender balance in local politics depends ultimately on the gender balance in our daily lives. Many families may consider the domestic division of labour as settled once and for all, through deeply ingrained habits.

But the idea of life-long learning implies that even such habits may be modified. So keep trying. Gently, but firmly.

A divided parental leave is very important, not only to keep women in the labour market but also to make fathers assume their role in the family.

Other things that make it easier for women to get into politics are, of course, a good community planning with public transports and good affordable child and elder care. We need to organize the political life so that meetings and other events are adjusted in order to combine family life and political activity.

CONCLUSION

Let me now conclude on a personal note.

The Swedish Association for Local and Regional Government which is my employer since 14 years is strongly committed to gender parity. It is actively promoting the agenda of the Charter and has contributed € 300.000 to the Observatory.

I am currently on leave from my job there to serve half-time as opposition leader in a Stockholm suburb, an island with some 46.000 inhabitants. Another half-time I spend as a member of the Stockholm county council, mainly on health-care matters. And a third half-time then goes to my family, with three kids between three and ten.

Did I miscalculate in combining half-times? Perhaps, but that's life.

Squeezing all these tasks into the 24 hours of the day and the 7 days of the week remains a work in progress, with many time conflicts, improvisations, and continuous domestic negotiations. Plus a little help from my mother.

My husband's job is quite demanding as a vice-president of a big company, as many jobs are, but we do try very much to divide up the tasks on the home front. Unlike the situation in 10 Downing Street, the washing machine is a shared domain.

I think that gender equality starts with the choice of a good spouse. And it is also important to be aware of while raising our sons and daughters. I personally don't think there is gene that makes me or my daughters a better cook, however some training is of course necessary and the kitchen might be quite messy afterwards....

The other choices will have to be made by and by. That is what family life is all about, and that's what local government is all about. So what can we do to get more women into politics? No party,

no municipality or country has all the answers. No simple, single strategy can be applied everywhere. But we can pick up a few ideas and a few tricks here and there, and that is why meetings such as this one are so useful.

When I was asked in this speech to give some good advices and when preparing this speech I asked some wise women around me.

The former Swedish Ministry of Gender balance said:

- Be brave, you can do it.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Be a good networker.
- Try to understand where the power is.
- And finally don't ever take it personally.

Finally, I should like to emphasize the following:

- Gender equality is not a women's issue – it is in all senses an issue affecting both men and women!
- We political leaders have the power to change!
- Work strategically to attain your goal!
- You can do it, good luck!

So, again, thanks to the organizers and thanks all of you for your attention! ■

ROZETA ALEKSOV, SKGO (Standing Conferences of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia)

STANDING CONFERENCE OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES (SCTM) EXPERIENCE – AN ON-GOING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN SERBIA

Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National association of local authorities in Serbia has a mission to advocate the interests, provide high quality services and support development and improvement of local self-government in Serbia through joint work of its members, according to European standards. Good local government provides high quality services to the citizens and gives them the possibility to enjoy their rights which are mostly being achieved on local level. SCTM's vision is a local government based on the principles of good governance, professionalism, efficacy and efficiency. SCTM believes that integrating gender perspective in local governments activities can contribute to both human rights and to the increase of quality of services through more efficient resource allocation.

SCTM actively cooperates with CEMR and promotes the Charter for Equality of women and men in local life since 2009, first by translating and sharing the document at conferences and round tables, and with a more focused support in last five years. In 2009 Serbia adopted Law on equality between sexes, and this document assigned some duties to local level, for which they were unprepared. SCTM recognized that an intensive support will be needed. That is how the idea of a new project and

international cooperation was born. In 2011 SCTM started implementation of a Program "Support to Local Governments in Serbia in the EU Integration Process" financed by Sweden and technically supported by SALAR (Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities). One of the five components of the program was "Gender Equality at Local Level" which was inspired by the national policies in area of gender equality (law, National Strategy and Action Plan for advancement of women and gender equality) and international framework defined by the Council of Europe, United Nations and EU. A strong focus was put on gender mainstreaming. The cooperation of SCTM and SALAR was recognised by the Observatory of the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life as a good practice example in applying the Charter in area of international cooperation and twinning. During implementation of the programme, SCTM had a Working Group on gender equality and formed a Network of professionals and elected representatives on local level in charge for gender equality issues. The Presidency and the Assembly of SCTM adopted several important documents to promote gender equality, such as: Declaration on respecting principle of gender equality at local level, SCTMs Policy document in the area of gender equality and Strategic plan that underlines

gender equality as one of the main principles of the association's work. Even the Statute of SCTM was changed in order to secure a seat in the Presidency for at least one woman mayor, as proposed by one member municipality.

Besides these important decisions, SCTM was actively working in raising capacities of local officials for gender equality work. Many training courses, round tables and conferences were organised in order to provide space for sharing knowledge and networking. The gap in participation of women and men in decision-making bodies of SCTM and at local level is still significant. To increase participation of women in decision-making bodies is a challenge that will remain unresolved in the years to follow, nevertheless SCTM had an approach that gender perspective should become integral part of all processes regardless of who is in the boards. Stronger focus was put on raising capacities of practitioners and agenda setters on local level and within SCTM structures. SCTM used the potential of modern technologies to create an interactive database for collection of data from local level. Also, an online benchmarking tool was created to assess the performance of municipalities in their gender equality work. Networking of practitioners and decision makers' interest in working and advocating for gender equality was also supported by development of e-platform for professional exchange and horizontal communication. Not forgetting their basic purpose, SCTM was actively cooperating with national institutions in charge of gender equality, independent bodies, ministries, governmental bodies and representatives.


After five years of actively working on gender equality, the organisation became recognised as a relevant stakeholder in the issues of gender equality and no process on national level took place without the participation of SCTM. After completing the Program, SCTM started a new round of cooperation with SALAR financed by the Swedish government, so the support for gender mainstreaming at local level will continue until 2020. The new programme "Support to Serbian LSGs on the road to EU accession: enabling high quality services, stakeholder dialogue and efficient local administration" will have a strong focus on gender mainstreaming at local level, and a special attention will be paid to other thematic areas such as: environmental protection, improving business climate and risk reduction, and emergency management.

Very important aspect of SCTMs work in gender equality is for the organisation's own gender equality attitude to change, so that all the outcomes change as well. The process of organisational change is rather slow and difficult to register, but it should be sustainable and irreversible.

In summary, on one hand the work of SCTM was aiming at internal organisational change in improving capacities for mainstreaming gender perspective in all thematic areas that SCTM is covering, and on the other hand on advocating interests of local level on the national scene and providing services to municipalities such as: trainings, networking, experience exchange, tools and methods for better performance. ■

NICOLE JEMMING, REGA (Réseau national des chargé-e-s à l'Égalité de chances entre femmes et hommes)

RÉSEAU NATIONAL DES CHARGÉ.E.S À L'ÉGALITÉ ENTRE FEMMES ET HOMMES



RÉSEAU NATIONAL DES CHARGÉ.E.S À L'ÉGALITÉ ENTRE FEMMES ET HOMMES

Luxembourg

Nicole JEMMING (membre) - Ville d'Esch-sur-Alzette
Anastasia LABERGE-SAFFRAN (membre) - Ville de Dudelange

CRÉATION

- **Création : 2003**
- **Groupe professionnel**
- **Critère de participation: bénéficiaire d'un contrat de travail dans une structure communale de promotion d'une politique communale d'égalité entre femmes et hommes**
>> actuellement: 11 structures (10 services communaux/chargées de mission et 1 service régional), représentant 21 communes
- **Objectif de création : favoriser l'échange sur l'identité et la pratique professionnelle des membres**

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

FONCTIONNEMENT

- **Echanges professionnels inter-collégiaux réguliers**
 - Participation dans le cadre des heures de travail
 - 3 réunions par année
 - Porte-parole volontaire, à tour de rôle, pour 1 année
- **1 formation (0,5 – 2,0 journées) par année**
- **Collaboration, soutien logistique et financier: Conseil National des Femmes du Luxembourg (soutien financier pour formations et pour publications communes CNFL-Réseau ; convocation des réunions; coordination des projets communs CNFL-Réseau)**
 - Monique Stein, responsable du service "Politique communale d'égalité entre femmes et hommes"

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

ACTIVITÉS INTERNES

- **Echanges professionnels inter-collégiaux réguliers**
 - Niveau « technique »: concertation et discussion sur des projets communs
 - Niveau « échange d'informations »: informations mutuelles sur projets et activités organisées par les services communaux
 - Niveau « échange d'expériences »: mise en place d'activités; freins et résistances
- **Réunions supplémentaires: développement et mise en place de projets communs**

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

ACTIVITÉS INTERNES

- **Mise en réseau en vue de collaborations intercommunales: exemples**
 - Formation gender4kids (initiée par 5 services communaux et financement du développement par les 5 communes: Bettembourg, Differdange, Dudelange, Esch-sur-Alzette, Hesperange)
 - Cycle de forums « Les enjeux actuels de l'égalité » (collaboration des services de Bettembourg et de Dudelange); objectif: approfondir la réflexion sur des thématiques actuelles et leur lien avec l'égalité/le genre; 2 sujets: la sexualité, l'environnement
 - Exposition sur le droit de vote des femmes « Mit Macht zur Wahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht in Europa. » du Frauenmuseum de Bonn (collaboration des services de Bettembourg, de Dudelange d'Esch-sur-Alzette et de Luxembourg); coordination en vue des dates d'exposition et de la tournée dans les 4 communes; traduction des textes en français; création de 2 panneaux sur le droit de vote des femmes en Italie et au Portugal

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

ACTIVITÉS INTERNES

- **Formation spécifique annuelle: exemples**
 - Gestion de projets « Projekte- und Changemanagement für Chancengleichheitsbeauftragte » (2009); 2 jours
 - Travailler avec les résistances « Herausforderungen und Belastungen wirkungsvoll begegnen » (2010); 1 jour
 - Gestion des ressources personnelles et gestion de qualité « Professionalisierung von Gleichstellung » (2010); 1 jour
 - Travailler avec les résistances « Hemmnisse und Widerstände in der Gleichberechtigungsarbeit: Analyse, Instrumente, Strategien »; en collaboration avec le Réseau de la Grande Région (2012; Saarbrücken); soutien: Staatskanzlei Rheinland-Pfalz; 1 jour
 - Femmes et leadership; en collaboration avec le Réseau de la Grande Région (2013; Bettembourg); soutien: Ministère de l'égalité des chances et CNFL; 1 jour
 - Gender Budgeting « La budgétisation sensible au genre au niveau communal » (2015); soutien: CNFL; 2 jours

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

ACTIVITÉS EXTERNES

- **Participation au Réseau des chargé.e.s à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes et à la promotion féminine de la Grande Région: plateforme d'échange d'informations; organisation de formations transfrontalières (2010-2015)**
- **Promotion de la politique communale pour l'égalité entre femmes et hommes: brochure sur les structures de la politique communale de l'égalité; présentation de bonnes pratiques Just Do It!; participation à l'Info-Villages (JIF); promotion des projets gender4kids et diversity4kids**

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

ACTIVITÉS EXTERNES

- **Promotion de la politique communale pour l'égalité entre femmes et hommes**
 - Brochure « Pour l'égalité entre femmes et hommes. Services communaux à l'égalité des chances » sur les structures de la politique communale de l'égalité; en collaboration avec le CNFL (2008)
 - Objectifs: Informer sur les missions des organes soutenant la politique communale à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes (commission consultative; délégué-e politique à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes; services communaux); Formuler des recommandations concernant la création et le développement d'un service; Donner des exemples concrets de mesures réalisées au sein des communes
 - Présentation de bonnes pratiques Just Do It!; en collaboration avec le CNFL et sous le patronage du Ministère de l'Égalité des chances (2013)
 - Objectifs: Encourager les communes à mettre en œuvre une politique locale; Présenter et donner visibilité aux services à l'égalité communaux et régionaux; Présenter exemples concrets et pratiques de mesures réalisées dans les communes

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ACTIVITÉS EXTERNES

- **Promotion de la politique communale pour l'égalité entre femmes et hommes**
 - Participation à l'Info-Villages (événement socio-culturel au Centre culturel Neumünster à l'occasion de la Journée Internationale des Femmes); en collaboration avec la plateforme d'action JIF (composée d'une quinzaine d'organisations œuvrant en faveur de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes)
 - Objectifs: Présenter et donner visibilité aux structures communales (services, chargées de mission) dont la mission est de mettre en place une politique communale à l'égalité; Présenter pratiques et projets
 - Promotion des projets gender4kids et diversity4kids; en collaboration avec le CNFL (projet nouveau)
 - Objectifs: Inciter les communes et les responsables des Maisons Relais communales à mettre en place une pédagogie sensible au genre et à la diversité; Présenter des exemples de mise en œuvre de projets concrets dans les structures d'accueil/dans les classes de l'enseignement fondamental

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

EGALITE RESSOURCES

- **Communes qui ont un service / une chargée de mission à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes**
 - 105 communes au Luxembourg
 - 10 communes et 1 structure régionale ont mis en place un service à l'égalité des chances (un service à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes ou engagé une chargée de mission (représentant 21 communes)
 - >> (service régional « Genderhaus »)
 - 20% des communes ont une structure professionnelle administrative dont la mission est (entre autre) la promotion de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes
- **Charte européenne pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la vie locale**
 - 24 communes sur 105 ont signé la charte (23% des communes luxembourgeoises)
 - 8 communes (un tiers des communes signataires): développement, approbation par le conseil communal et publication de leur plan d'action; dont: 7 communes qui ont une structure professionnelle (service, chargée de mission à l'égalité) pouvant aider à mettre en œuvre les mesures prévues dans le plan d'action

► Réseau national des chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes

EGALITE RESSOURCES

- **Qualifications du personnel (chargée à l'égalité):**
 - Carrière supérieure (études universitaires en sciences humaines et sociales: sociologue, psychologue, ...)
 - Carrière moyenne (assistante sociale, éducatrice diplômée, ...); transposition de l'accord Gouvernement-Syndicats concernant les fonctionnaires travaillant auprès de l'état: carrière supérieure, niveau Bachelor
- **Ressources en personnel:**
 - Situations diverses:
 - 4 communes: un poste d'une demi-tâche
 - 4 communes: un poste d'une tâche à plein temps
 - 2 communes: deux postes à plein temps
 - 1 service régional: un poste de 33 heures par semaine
 - Assistance administrative

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EGALITE RESSOURCES

- **Les ressources en personnel des services communaux ou régionaux ne sont pas toutes mises à disposition pour la promotion de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes**
- **Services plus anciens: le champs d'action des services a été élargi par les responsables politiques, sans toujours augmenter les ressources en personnel**
 - Bettembourg Esch-sur-Alzette: égalité entre femmes et hommes; intégration des résidents étrangers/résidentes étrangères; coordination de l'accueil des réfugié-e-s
 - Dudelange: égalité entre femmes et hommes; gestion de la diversité; coordination de l'accueil et accompagnement des réfugié-e-s et primo-arrivants
 - Luxembourg: égalité entre femmes et hommes; gestion de la diversité; santé au travail

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EGALITE RESSOURCES

- **Services plus récents: dès leur mise en place, plusieurs missions ont été confiées aux services communaux/aux chargées à l'égalité des chances/aux chargées à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes par les responsables politiques**
 - Junglinster: Service de l'intégration et de l'égalité des chances
 - Schiffange: Service à l'égalité des chances et de la jeunesse
 - Sraassen: Service de l'intégration et de l'égalité des chances
- **Risque: diminution de la place de la promotion de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes et de la prise en compte de l'aspect de genre dans les politiques communales**

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MERCI.



RÉSEAU NATIONAL DES CHARGÉ.E.S À L'ÉGALITÉ ENTRE FEMMES ET HOMMES

Luxembourg

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN MAYORS OF EUROPEAN CITIES – A SUMMARY

MICHAELA HÖFLSAUER, Mayor of Lend (Austria)

SIMONE MASSARD STITZ, Mayor of Sandweiler (Luxembourg)

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN, Mayor of Alberschwende (Austria)

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH, Mayor of Mondercange (Luxembourg)

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC, Mayor of Svrlijig (Serbia)

FACILITATION BY CLAUDE WOLF (journalist and member of CNFL)

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF ALL PANELISTS AND FACILITATOR:

Michaela Höflsauer, Mayor of Lend (Austria), was born in Gmunden in 1966 and grew up in Embach (Salzburg). After graduating from high school (general qualification for university entrance) she emigrated to Greece. During a holiday in Austria she met her husband and migrated back to Austria to Lend-Embach (Salzburg). She has always shown commitment to socio-political concerns. For 18 years she has already been active in the municipal representation and municipal council, also as vice mayor. Since 2015 she is mayor of Lend. In her main job she is the manager of a retirement home. Further she is one of the editors of the "Gemeindezeitung" (municipal newspaper).

Simone Massard Stitz, Mayor of Sandweiler (Luxembourg), was born in 1963. She is married and mother of two children. She is a registered nurse. Since 1999 she works as municipal councillor and was deputy mayor till 2015. Since 2015 Ms. Sandweiler is mayor of Sandweiler. Sandweiler has 3550 inhabitants.

Angelika Schwarzmann, Mayor of Alberschwende (Austria) was born in 1959, she has four children in the age between 27 and 34. When moving to Alberschwende in 1983 (her husband applied

for a position as veterinarian there) she started to work politically in the municipality. She was the first women in the municipal representation of Alberschwende.

Christine Schweich, Mayor of Mondercange (Luxembourg) was born in 1983 in Luxembourg. She studied law and is lawyer at the court. At the time of the conference she is mother of a daughter of 11 months. From 2011 to 2013 she was city councillor and since 2013 she is mayor of Mondercange.

Jelena Trifunovic, Mayor of Svrlijig (Serbia), was born in Svrlijig in 1980, where she completed her primary education. Later on, she completed high-school and The Faculty of Law in Nish. As a representative of the United Peasant's Party in 2004 she became a member of the local parliament in the municipality of Svrlijig. In 2008 she was elected a president of the local parliament. In 2014 she was elected mayor and is one of the very few women mayors in Serbia. In 2016 she was reelected on the position. Ms. Trifunovic is a member of the Presidency of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities where she advocates for gender equality goals. She is also a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.



Claude Wolf is journalist by profession and also a member of the national council of women (CNFL). The year before she was president of the national council of women.

IN THE SUMMARY OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISCUSSION WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED AND QUOTED.

CLAUDE WOLF:
LET ME POSE MY FIRST QUESTION TO CHRISTINE SCHWEICH: **HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO ASSUME SUCH A LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN YOU ARE SO YOUNG IN YEARS?**

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH:
Yes in 2011 I became a town councillor in my local authority Mondercange. It has about 6000 inhabitants. From the size it is small. I was one of the councillors in the town council. I became mayor a short time later.

With regard to your question, how difficult is it to assume such a responsibility so young I say that I certainly wasn't expecting of becoming a member of the council in the beginning. And when I was member of the council, I would say that **you have to show a lot of work and responsibility, many tasks have to be performed. But I think women can**

undertake such tasks just the same as men. And I think they can manage all kind of situations and find solutions.

When I'm asked or someone says we have a problem, sometimes it takes energy and time, but I think you have to remain calm, trust your feelings and look for an answer. **It is not easy, in particular as a woman, and particular being so young to show such responsibility. But sixty employees at our local authorities is like a small undertaking and I hope and I try to manage it as a small undertaking.** But you also have to satisfy your voters and all inhabitants of your municipality.

And that is quite a challenge, because you have to understand what your citizens in the local authority area want and to communicate your decisions. You can't make everybody happy, you can't. That is impossible, but you have to provide explanations to people. What is really important is that you explain people why things not always work out as they wish. Explain the situation how the council works, why they have to pay a certain tax, what you can do, what you can't. If you talk to people and try to explain the situation to them, then it is usually easier. This is part of my job, but it is also part of my character. And also if you enjoy what you are doing, it makes things much easier.

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CLAUDE WOLF:

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC, YOU ARE THE MAYOR OF A LOCAL AUTHORITY WITH ABOUT AN EQUAL SIZE (AS MONDERCANGE) IN SERBIA. TELL US ABOUT YOUR VILLAGE OR TOWN. WHAT ARE THE BIG WORRIES AND THE BIG CHALLENGES YOU FACE? WHAT ABOUT THE GENDER BALANCE IN SERBIAN TOWNS AND IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY?

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to attend this impressive event. I am honored to get a chance to speak in front of you today. In two years of being a mayor, this is the first time I speak in an international setting and share my personal challenges as a mayor. I am coming from a small municipality of Svrlijig in South-East Serbia, mostly a rural area. The political party I belong to, United Peasant's Party is a rather minor party on national level. We mostly act on local level, and represent the interests of those working on farms and producing food. Food production and agriculture is one of the most important branch of economy in Serbia, and many women work in that sector. Unfortunately, their contribution to the economy is not formally recognized nor paid, so there is a lot to be done in that area.

Serbia has close to 30% of women in the National and local parliaments thanks to the quota system we have established a couple of years ago. Unfortunately, we do not have a quota set



for the national and local executive bodies. So in the Government, where the representation is noticeable, there are about 20% of women, but on local level, it is even less - about 15%, and there are municipalities where no single woman participates in the work of executive bodies. On the micro local level, neighborhoods and villages, or as we call it - the local community self-governing, there is no quota for women, and therefore women's participation is dramatically low, about 8%.

In such a political environment for women's leadership, there is only 10 women mayors out of 168 municipalities, which makes about 5%. The proportion of women mayors has been stable during the last 5 years, since the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities started keeping track of them. Among those 10 there are only 3 women serving as mayors of big cities at the moment, which is actually an increase, since previously there used to be only one.

CLAUDE WOLF:

MICHAELA HÖFLSAUER, YOU ARE MAYOR OF THE SMALLEST VILLAGE OF THIS PANEL. IT IS LEND, NEAR THE CITY OF SALZBURG IN AUSTRIA. PERHAPS YOU COULD INTRODUCE YOUR LOCALITY AND TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?

MICHAELA HÖFLSAUER:

I'm from Lend-Embach, which is just outside the city Salzburg. Perhaps my local authority is rather special because two authorities have joined which have considerable differences: You have got on the one side tourism, agriculture and a couple of miles down the road, on the other side, you are in the industrial area of the municipality. And the two areas are so different, that is is sometimes quite a challenge to bring them together.

I'm politically active as long I can remember. One way or another, I never wanted to miss any of

the political events when I grew up. So I became member of the local authorities 21 years ago and then I also became the vice president (vice mayor) of the executive authorities .

During my time when I was politically active, men often tried to explain me, what women have to do according their point of view: Women were responsible for organizing the carnaval parties and events, but were not responsible for speaking or taking decisions. This was obviously not quite my perspective. I didn't always want to be second best and to always stay in the backrow.

CLAUDE WOLF:

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN, YOU HAVE A LOT TO TELL US TOO. YOU HAVE RECEIVED A PRIZE FOR YOUR CIVIL COURAGE, BECAUSE YOU HAVE OPPOSED A POLICY OF DEPORTATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES BACK TO HUNGARY. AND THIS IS A PROBLEM FACING MANY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN EUROPE.

MY QUESTION: DO YOU DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM IN A DIFFERENT FORM BECAUSE YOU ARE A WOMEN OR DO WOMEN APPROACH THIS PROBLEM IN A DIFFERENT WAY?

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

I think so. I think that women approach such issues differently. If I look back into the past I would say the situation (regarding refugees) in Vorarlberg and indeed throughout Austria was a situation characterized by immense pressure being brought vis a vis local governments. There was a federal directive said that each and every local authority has to accept refugees.

But already before this directive, I said: we can't sit and wait, we have to take action. So even before the government and the national council said anything, we said: we had many empty houses in the local area. We have 3.000 inhabitants and within the „Bregenzer forrest“ we know that we have at least 1.000 houses or facilities which were unused or



barely used. There were two houses that were not particularly well furnished, but they could be used.

I went to „Caritas“, saying: we have houses, can you use them? And they said „yes, we do need such houses to accomodate refugees“.

In 2015 we received the first refugees. They were all men. That gave us in the beginning some thoughts and a lot of talk in the village. Of course, these houses were good for families and then there were suddenly young men. The neighbours were concerned: „We have young daughters, they are teenagers, we can't let them go out into the street anymore.“ We had sought discussions with people, talking about their concerns, reflecting together: „What were we going to say – to tell them (the refugees)? That they have to go back to their place of origin again?“ We had to let these people to come here and stay.

When I tell you what happened, then, I think, you will be surprised: These young men came and they have been accepted. And the neighbour was the first one to call me and to warn when there was the first attempt to deport one of the young men back to Hungary – the neighbour said „the police is here to deport these young people.“

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We had this question of deportation – and therefore we won the Ute Bock prize: We as a local authority had done, what we were asked to do – we took refugees. And three days later I was told: Some of these people have a white card. Some of them have a green card, so this is a Dublin convention card, namely they have to be sent back to the EU-country of first arrival.

I don't have to tell a lot, but I told myself, this cannot be right. **We cannot treat people like merchandise. Send them on one day in that direction and on the next day to the next direction.** Unless we have some sort of regulation. We didn't just stand there and said we will let this happen. Rather we looked at these regulations and legislations. We went to interviews. We looked at notices that were sent to these people. We needed networks for this. I needed all my networks in the political arena, at the local level, at the regional level, at the national level. My family, my local authority, my association. And we all came together and we all agreed, we cannot let this (the deportations) happen. Together we wrote a manifesto (remark of editor: The manifesto of Alberschwende is inserted to the FemCities documentation after the summary of the panel discussion).

One of the highest officials of the Federal Agency for Freigeners and Immigration came and said if you are successful in maintaining the asylum seeker in the country where he now is resident and now has made his application, the country in question can say it will handle this application.

This is then what happened. The five young men remained with us. This was a huge, huge effort. I admit that, really. But I do not regret it. And this is why we received the Ute Bock award. And I have to say like my friend Michaela, who spoke of **persistance. How important it is.** And I want to read something that was said in the laudatio, when I received the Ute Bock prize.

From the laudatio, that Christine Nöstlinger, a famous Austrian writer of childrens books, said in her Laudatio. That we can take as a guide.

„I will recall Hannah Arendts decision to an independent citizen: „Nobody has the right to obey“. And this sentence is hanging on the front of my refrigerator and I have never seen more surprised looks wether these are plumbers, electricians, neighbours or even university professors. People raise eyebrows, when they look at this sentence. Because Hannah Arendt is expecting us nothing less that we oppose laws and regulations - when we once have looked at them and examined them carefully, and when we have decided that they are not reconciled with our morality and our reason - and that is what we did.“

**CLAUDE WOLF:
SIMON MASSARD, YOU ARE ALSO COMING FROM A SMALL PLACE OF 3.400 INHABITANTS. CAN YOU DESCRIBE SANDWEILER? AND THEN CAN YOU TELL US, BECAUSE YOU GOT A PURELY FEMALE LOCAL AUTHORITY – HOW DOES THIS DIFFER THEN FROM THE OPPOSITE?**

SIMONE MASSARD-STITZ:

Good afternoon. I'm from Sandweiler. One of the smallest local authorities in the country (Luxembourg), we have 3.500 inhabitants. And we are very mixed, we have a mixture of foreign and Luxemburgish nationalities. It is very nice, to be so small and so diversivied. We have a high standard of living. If you live in Sandweiler, you don't even need a car (in most areas), because you can get to everything, doctors, chemists, banks, shopping without needing a car. We are very close to Luxembourg, which is a very big local authority. We have very good transport links and connctctions and we have a very high level of quality of live. And of course Findel (airport) is part of Sandweiler which is the transport hub.

In 2013 after having been member of the executive



board of the council I became mayor, and now I have two women co-councillors. I already have worked with two men, and now we are all women. It is a little bit difficult, especially when we are dealing with technical matters. But now when we became three women I think the discussions tend to be a bit more open. So for the last 18 months we have been three women. I don't believe there is that much difference between women and men. I think things go as good as with men.

But I have often heard the question: **Three of you on the board of the executive town council, how does this work? They expected us to be in each other's hair. But no one questions if the council operates well with three men in charge? Anyway,we don't have a problem.**

**CLAUDE WOLF:
THANK YOU. THAT IS OBVIOUSLY THE KEY POINT. HOW DO THINGS WORK DIFFERENTLY IF ITS WOMEN RATHER THAN MEN? EVEN THE WORKING TIMES, HOW LONG THE MEETINGS LAST. DO THEY LAST LONGER? DO THEY LAST LESS TIME?**

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

I think it is the same. Might be that women are better organizers, better executives. So we don't talk a lot like men said. We talk very short and in a few words. But I never see the difference between meetings if there are men or women.

**CLAUDE WOLF:
MS SCHWARZMANN, DO WOMEN WORK DIFFERENTLY?**

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

Yes, I think they do work differently. One example from my authority. I have about sixty people all together on the team, including also the dustbin people. So you have men dominating in some sectors.

I for example learnt a lot of technical things. As a mayor you have got a very wide range of responsibilities. You can't know everything. If you don't know, you should ask, so you can find out what the facts are rather than trying to guess.

**CLAUDE WOLF:
YOU HAVE THREE FEMALE MEMBERS: DO YOU FINISH AT 11.00 IN THE MORNING OR DO YOU HAVE AT 5 PM A LONG EVENING AHEAD OF YOU?**

SIMONE MASSARD-STITZ:

No. I work very precicsely. That is my own professional experience. I think you don't go to a meeting without beeing properly prepared. That makes a big difference in time. I don't know if it is different among women or with men.

I have the experience when we have entrepreneurs, when they come in and they see three women, of course the discussion is a bit different. They think they walk in and walk all over us. This is not the way that it is. I would say to, that women listen better. I think people speak in a different tone to women or to men.

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CLAUDE WOLF:
CHRISTINE SCHWEICH – YOU ARE A YOUNG MAYOR. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH TIME MANAGEMENT?

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH:

For the last weeks I had a baby daughter. I had a week barely out of the clinic and I was back in my office with my baby. I had to make an effort. When I was pregnant it was evident: you don't have any parental leave, or maternity leave, if you have a political position. **Men don't even have to worry about this.**

But we then have a very different need for organization. I think, people said this already – women need to be really well organized. I think this is good for an organization as well. We are all good at organization. When I look what we have all to do each day – we have to get it all done.

What I don't like is, when you are dealing with men, **women tend to get directed towards the so called „soft issues“**, like looking after the elderly, looking after the children and education. **We also have to draw a budget. We have also to get construction permits passed, and these are areas where women absolutely can do what is necessary. We don't need only to deal with the „soft issues“.**

We discuss everything together with the women members. It is really important to understand that we can do this just as good as men. We make decisions. They might be right, they might be wrong. While men do not pose so many questions as we might do. Perhaps we both see problems slightly differently, but what is important is: Get decision made, to get them through, be organized, and perhaps if this is possible, change legislation, change legislation for election because to encourage more young women to enter into local politics. And when I'm asked if I will be a candidate during the next elections, I will say, well, why not. I can do this. I will try to have meetings not too long



into the evening, so I don't think this should be a disincentive for young women joining into the political sphere.

CLAUDE WOLF:
AND FINALLY MICHAELA, WHAT ABOUT THE WAY YOU ORGANIZE YOUR DAY? HOW STRUCTURED OR UNSTRUCTURED DO YOU WORK?

MICHAELA HÖFELSAUER:

I have to be very carefully structured to get everything into the day. I still work full time. I run an old peoples home. I've got 30 people in my team there. And then there are around 50 people in my team at the local authority. Obviously they are both proper jobs. But I have also this work (being a mayor), a „normal“ job and a family. I have to be really carefully organized. And I need to have people to back me up as well. Perhaps our local authorities proceedings are a bit different from others in other countries.

We have had a mayor for 22 years, he was the „old guard“. There is a big difference with all these management types. The incoming mayors vs. the „old guards type“. **For me it is crucial to have coworkers who are part of the structure and that they are able to work independently within a certain defined framework. Within that people have the freedom to work independently.** And this seems to work. It is tremendously important to give people a hearing. To listen to other people and work things out together. And in management terms you've got to see what your environment is – to be very forcefully and very carefully structured.

CLAUDE WOLF:
THEN I PUT THE NEXT QUESTION – HOW MUCH COMPETENCE IN HOW MANY AREAS DO YOU NEED. DO YOU HAVE EXACTLY TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING ON EVERY CONSTRUCTION SITE? HOW MUCH DO YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PREPARATION OF A LEGISLATION?

MICHAELA HÖFELSAUER:

In politics I think you need a certain basic level of knowledge, I think this is an advantage. **You need a knowledge of political structure, but in general, even if you are not so familiar with some issues it is important to ask questions and not to pretend you know everything.** We had a meeting with 30 men, most of them have been in the job for 20-30 years and they were all using jargon. And I said, stop I'm not sure what we are talking about here. And after that meeting they said, that nobody had ever confessed, that they didn't understand what was going on. And I said why would I support a wrong decision just because I didn't understand something?

We were talking about water rights and water law. Indeed experts did disagree on that. This is why we do have experts, but dealing with this at first I thought it was easier to learn Chinese at this point of time than some of the stuff I had to deal with. So after that meeting I have looked at what we had discussed. I looked at the files, and then formed an opinion.

Nobody was born as a master of any science. Nor are mayors of towns. **Each and every woman can do this, I want to stress this.** But you need to be keen on doing this. I don't like the term to be „broad shouldered“. But I think you need a little bit of firmness. And you learn to be firm, because you have to get back to yourself. This is a useful thing as a mayor that comes with time: you have „to find“ yourself. And 90% of women would be quite capable of carrying out this work.

CLAUDE WOLF:
AND A QUESTION TO OUR LUXEMBURGISH MAYORS: A YEAR FROM NOW WE WILL BE ELECTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES AGAIN. WHAT ARE YOU SAYING TO YOUNG WOMEN IF THEY ARE ASKED WHETHER THEY WANT TO BE PLACED ON AN ELECTORAL LIST, IF THEY SAY „I CAN'T DO THIS“. HOW MUCH KNOWLEDGE DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE? HOW MUCH MUST YOU KNOW IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO MANAGE THIS WORK?

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH:

I think that question as it is posed is the same as young men ask themselves. How much knowledge do I need? How much confidence do I need? Usually men say, yes I can do it. Women are always questioning themselves. Can I do it? Should I do it? What do I need to know? How do I obtain that knowledge? These are all things that we all can learn as my colleague just said.

You can learn everything. If you get yourself on a list. You don't have to know all legislation. You don't have to know every fact of the life of the local town community. Because each and every day you find yourself in situation which you could not be prepared for.

I had only been mayor for three months and one of the biggest waste disposal sites suffered kind of a landslide and we had a huge area of damage done. **Nobody could have been prepared for this.** We had to go to the site and decide on the measures that needed to be adopted immediately. So you face things where you have to do a decision. And no matter what responsibility, you have to assume, you have people around you, they have been around in the job for years, you can get their opinion and then you have to do the decision.

Everybody who is a little bit interested in participating in social questions who is ready to make a commitment, can do this. I'm a very critical person. I do criticize. But if I criticize I have to

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do something, make some effort to provide for a different outcome. Now that I'm in the position of an authority I can do something. It doesn't always work. I have to find ways. And you have to take a commitment. Whether you are a man or a woman you can do it. And it is a pity that we have to have this discussion as of what must a woman be able to do or a man must be able to do in order to assume a political office.

Surely, all the same, you have to go through the same struggle. You have to be ready to stand up for your opinions and face others. You will achieve success and find your way.

CLAUDE WOLF:
MS. MASSARD, HOW DO YOU HANDLE THINGS?

SIMONE MASSARD-STITZ:

Well, in 1999 I came to Sandweiler. At that time people were not satisfied. And I said, well I would actually go into politics if I had a chance to get elected. And it was difficult actually to put my name down, because I wasn't sure about, what I could do. I had no ideas about laws, I was never before at a meeting of the town council, I didn't know how that functioned. But my husband encouraged me. When he wouldn't have said – look Simone you are a critical person, you can manage this, I probably would not have my name had put onto the list. I think we can learn everything.

I learnt a lot. But you need a good secretary. You need good advisors. You have to make then decisions about building permits, compensation claims and so on. You try to make the right decisions. What we are doing is working not for ourselves, but working for our citizens. We are asked to get the best outcome for them.

CLAUDE WOLF:
ANGELIKA,... HOW MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE IS NECESSARY FOR A MAYOR AND HOW MUCH CAN YOU GET FROM YOUR STAFF.

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

I don't think you can just draw a line, that you need to have this „fixed“ amount of knowledge. You have to „fix things“, you have to be able to sort things out. After 15 years on the council I thought I know most what might pop up. But then as a mayor it is completely different and I would agree with Christine, you will manage to see your way through the technical problems.

So it is important to also rely on people who have been learning this for a long time. A lot of women would be capable of doing this, but you have to decide: Is this what you want. Because it is not easy splitting your available time. But if you say: yes, I want this. It is a great job.

CLAUDE WOLF:
I WILL ALSO PUT THIS QUESTION TO JELENA.
HOW TECHNICALLY CAPABLE YOU HAVE TO BE TO DO THIS JOB?

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

First, I have to say that local government in Serbia seems to have quite a different organization than those of my colleagues. I'm a mayor. There is a chief of various (administrative) departments. And every department has departments with their own chiefs. And I'm the chief of the chiefs.

The mayor must have a vision and a knowledge of the wish of the citizens. And the departments and the co-workers of these departments must find their ways to solve the problems. I have to identify the problems. I want to fix the problems, but my departments must find their ways.

In most of the cases you must know about budget, economy, social questions, medical questions, because in my government medical is a local government authority. So it is a problem, because I'm not a doctor, but I must know something about it. **And in my country and in my local government it is important to have good co-workers and that the co-workers are professionals, not politicians. A mayor is a politician.** But the co-workers must be professionals.

CLAUDE WOLF:
ANOTHER KEYWORD WOULD BE PREJUDICES – I THINK NOT ONLY POLITICIANS, BUT ANY PROFESSIONAL WOMAN IS CONFRONTED OF ABANDONING HER CHILDREN. SO I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU DEAL WITH THIS KIND OF REMARK AND HOW DO YOU CONVINC THAT YOU ENCOUNTER THIS. WHEN YOU HAVE FOUR CHILDREN, THE QUESTION IS: **WHAT ARE YOUR CHILDREN DOING WHILE YOU ARE HERE BUSY LOOKING AT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

Let me say that my children now are grown up. I've only been a mayor for the last four years and my oldest son is 27. I'm happy that they are so grown up that they don't need me in the same way anymore as when they were little. And I admire any women who are doing this while they are having young children. And I encourage all to do it nevertheless.

Let me put it this way – my husband is a veterinarian, he was usually working evenings and I was helping him. I was responsible for the children, but I also worked in the local authorities. So I was responsible for organizing everything for the children and combining it: Who is responsible for putting them to bed while I'm at my meeting at the town council? And people were used to it in my town. I don't think that I encountered this problem so much since I'm a mayor.

But in very many other local councils that is the case, especially for younger women.

I wasn't born in this area where I'm now the mayor. But I came 30 years ago to my local community and I was one of the first women in the local council. As soon as I arrived I was the very first to address primarily child care. That was a good thing. Now I'm mayor and among many other issues I am still dealing with questions of childcare that is still not sufficient and I want to bring this issue forward.

CLAUDE WOLF:
CHRISTINE, YOU JUST CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THESE PROBLEMS, YOUR BABY IS JUST A FEW WEEKS OLD. **ARE YOU CONFRONTED WITH PREJUDICES?**

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH:

Well, isn't that prejudices you are saying? That what people would say? **This is really new to me. Obviously I have my daughter with me, my husband is helping me.** You have to be organized. Who will be looking after the baby, what times the meetings are held? It is all a question of organization which is taking place in the background.

With regard to the reactions of my citizens I haven't received too many complaints. They did ask, how do you manage that, how do you organize that. But if you are in that situation you do get organized. And I don't think that the fact that you have children does mean you can't be committed in public life. Each and every one of us can go and do all these things. Angelika said, her children are already grown up. I think certain age groups have different advantages. You also can have problems when you have very young children. But it is really important to have proper childcare available.

We are living in a society that has changed rapidly. Women don't stay at home as much as previously.

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Most of us are having access to childcare from the very beginning. That makes a difference. We should not stop to be involved in public life, just because there are difficulties in coordinating this.

CLAUDE WOLF:
SIMONE, YOU ARE A BAD MOTHER?

SIMONE MASSARD-STITZ:

I don't think so. But of course my children are older now. When I began the children were six and eight. Yes, it was sometimes a little bit difficult, especially during the daytime, but also in the evening. My mother was a very great help to me. And my husband was also very helpful and available.

CLAUDE WOLF:
AND MICHAELA, ARE YOU A BAD MOTHER?

MICHAELA HÖFELSAUER:

My kids are amazing, they are 16 and 19 years old. And I used to take the girls with me. Not in the middle of the night, but if it was acceptable. And as a result just recently my older daughter said: you showed us, that everything is possible. Even when other people saying other things to us, obviously I was approached as a „unnatural and not caring mum“ („Rabenmutter“). Well, I was at home when I was needed. So I skipped some meetings and tried to fix their time. The children did have a certain priority.

But all this negative stuff that people say implies that they are home with their own children 24/7. Are they?

Whatever you do, someone is going to be critical of your actions anyway. So I think you should teach yourself on what you really want to do and what you can do well, because other people will criticize you anyway.

CLAUDE WOLF:
JELENA, ARE THERE PREJUDICE YOU ARE CONFRONTED WITH?

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

It is not easy to be a woman in politics in general, and especially not on a noticeable position. **Media are very harsh on women politicians.** They are analyzing their looks, which is never good enough: either too stylish or without any style, too feminine or too masculine, too cheap or too expensive, too conservative or too provocative.

While you are young, you are considered too young and inexperienced. At some point, a woman becomes too old, while men never need to deal with that as a problem. This is also true when certain women's issues are put on the table: it is either too early for them or too late – the chance is missed. The way you address some issues as a woman is always questionable as well: usually it is either too “aggressive” and an inappropriate style for a woman, or too mild because you are a woman.

Even the feminists are harsh towards women politicians: they expect us to be advocates of women's issues, and as such, they have expectations that they never have from men. Those expectations are not easy to meet, so we, women in politics, are trapped between the women's movement and their standards and finding our way in the political labyrinth, facing obstacles designed in a patriarchal culture.

Therefore, it is demanded from women in politics to perform better than any man. The most important question posed to a woman is of course: “How will she handle it and balance between the family and the duty.”

If you are a woman and you do not have a family, for example, you are unmarried or

divorced, this is treated as a disadvantage. In a small town in south-eastern Serbia the patriarchal norms are even more expressed, and the community thinks it knows better what is good for everyone and how he or she needs to live their lives.

There is no right on privacy and rumors appear distribute quickly, even without media. During electoral campaigns, “everything is allowed”. The goal to win, regardless if something is ethical or not: I personally experienced a lot of accusations and shaming because I am over thirty and still not married. It would have been easier to give up, but I never did and I will not, because I believe that I have a responsibility to be a role model for future generations. Fighting for equality and women's rights was never an easy job, and I know that. If a young girl sees me as a mayor, and feels encouraged to wish the same for herself as well, I believe that a part of my mission is completed.

CLAUDE WOLF:
I HAVE A DIFFERENT QUESTION: FREETIME AND LEISURE TIME – JELENA, IF YOU ARE NOT AT WORK, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? DO YOU HAVE ANY FREETIME FOR YOURSELF?

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

Well, in Serbia being a mayor means having a full time job. I don't have a lot of freetime. Usually I spend it with my friend. And I love to run and go hiking on mountains. But I recognize: earlier I went to run every two days or every day. And now it is about one day in two weeks.

Especially in small local municipalities the citizens expect from the mayor to be with them 24hours. For instance when someone comes to your home at 23.00 in the night, just to ask you something about some document and some license. This is a challenge in small local municipalities. In some bigger towns and cities most people even don't

know where the mayor lives. But in a small city everyone knows your place and your family.

CLAUDE WOLF:
MICHAELA – BEING MAYOR IN SUCH A SMALL MUNICIPIALITY, DOES THIS MEAN TO HAVE LESS TIME?

MICHAELA HÖFELSAUER:

From the very beginning I had the feeling I should always attend every single meeting and be available all the time. It is a management job. But then you are supposed to have free time and at the same time you are also supposed to be available and you just have to be there.

At one point, when I had to had a small operation, as soon as I came out of the anaesthetic someone was standing there, waving a document at me for a signature. And I was just thinking, well, how much time am I supposed to dedicate to this job. Usually I'm there all times during the day and late at nights, but my home is my castle. It is true, that sometimes, at 7 am in the morning someone is wanting something. But it worked to tell people, that I am not permanently available. You really have to work on the issue of free-time, especially in a small municipality.

I actually write books. I write novels, detective stories. I could maybe have done that instead, as a profession, rather than being a mayor. It is still a hobby. But of course, I don't have much time for writing these days. And then a bit of sports now and then and my family. But otherwise I don't have time to fit anything else in.

CLAUDE WOLF:
SIMONE, HOW DO YOU BALANCE THINGS OUT?

SIMONE MASSARD-STITZ:

Well, leisure time is fairly reduced. And it is always about politics. If you have got two events in

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the week-end – then this is the end of the week-end. And often I have to work anyway.

I think the best way of balance for me is provided by being able to go home and read a book in a comfortable chair. I think this is really important, if you are in contact with people I don't really need to go out in the evening and meet again people. The best way for me to enjoy some leisure is to read a good book at home.

And we (my husband and I) invite friends at home and for dinner. I think that is also a good balance to political activities. It is also enjoyable to sit around the table with friends. For me it is important to have some sort of balance and some space apart from politics.

CLAUDE WOLF:

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN, WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOUR AWARD, WHICH WAS AWARDED TO YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR ACTIONS FOR REFUGEES. TELL ME WHAT WAS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR YOU AS A MAYOR. AND HOW DO YOU MANAGE CHALLENGES IN GENERAL?

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

I think that (actions for refugees) was the biggest challenge so far. I think you have to show who you are, to be honest about it. Not depending when elections are or what others suggest. You just can't change with every direction of the wind. But that requires a great deal of courage and persistence. And often I sat alone and thought about it: is that

what I'm doing right? But again and again I found, that what I was doing was right. And I'm really happy that we did what we did, as well as how and when we did.

CLAUDE WOLF:

PERHAPS TO EVERYONE A FINAL QUESTION: YOU HEARD PROBABLY IN THE MORNING, THAT OUR MINISTER IS WORKING ON A CERTAIN DIRECTIVE, WHICH WOULD MEANT, THAT THE VOTING LISTS, THE LISTS FOR THE LOCAL ELECTIONS WOULD BE BETTER BALANCED AND THERE WOULD BE QUOTAS. WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN YOUR HOME COUNTRIES REGARDING QUOTAS? WHAT IS REGULATED AND TO WHAT EXTEND THERE IS NO REGULATION? WHAT IS THE MAIN WORK STILL TO BE DONE ON THIS? ANGELIKA ... HOW IS THE SITUATION IN AUSTRIA?

ANGELIKA SCHWARZMANN:

Quotas are in discussion in Austria for some time. But today we actually don't have any regulations imposing quotas. As far as federal and county level is concerned women's representation is about 30% on the average level. And for local authorities it drops down to 25%. And for mayors 7%.

The situation is not unlike Serbia. Of 2.100 mayors we have got 146 women mayors. As far as quotas are concerned I see them as relatively positive. But I'm not entirely convinced that just having quotas will resolve the problems. And that is something that I wanted to cover here at this conference. Because it is also to a certain

extent down to us, because we are politically active in this very area. We need to work the hardest to motivate. I always try to motivate and encourage women, but you can't rely on other people. You have to go out and do it yourself. To encourage people by saying: We can do this. We should be doing this.

CLAUDE WOLF:

CHRISTINE – IN LUXEMBOURG, WHAT CAN GET ACHIEVED BY LEGISLATION? AND TO WHAT EXTENT YOU ARE NEED TO PUSH HARDER?

CHRISTINE SCHWEICH:

Well, here in Luxembourg quotas are not yet obligatory. We don't have a quota system. But we are supposed to have a 40% of quota at national elections the next time. For me I can say, that next year we got local elections and I hope there will be more women standing for elections in municipalities.

And the fact is – we as women have to be role models for other women, to give them an incentive to end up in politics.

CLAUDE WOLF:

MICHAELA – HOW DIFFICULT IS IT, TO CONVINCE WOMEN TO END UP IN POLITICS?

MICHAELA HÖFELSAUER:

I see it as Christine. A quota can be a useful instrument. But if you are not being to convince people, you will not be able to swing numbers and it is not going to work just on that basis. We, as I have already said, require a certain amount of pioneering work. We are not up to one third in Austria.

When we talk to women they tend to pull back and say they are not interested in going into politics. They are saying: my husband certainly will do that better than I would. This is just the way it is. I can't explain it, it is clear that you have to be really persistent, really and then it can work.

CLAUDE WOLF:

JELENA – ARE THERE QUOTAS IN SERBIA? WHAT IS REGULATED AND TO WHAT EXTEND THERE IS NO REGULATION? WHAT IS THE MAIN WORK STILL TO BE DONE ON THIS? WHAT A MAYOR CAN DO FOR SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY?

JELENA TRIFUNOVIC:

If we were to speak about supportive measures, I could say that there are not many. There is no direct support for becoming mayor. Thanks to years of a great and dedicated work of women from the political parties, academia, experts and NGOs, in the Serbian law on elections now we have a quota of 30% for less represented sex when councilors are elected nationally or locally. At the same time, in Serbia, the mayors are not directly elected by citizens, but by and among the council members. Of course, in that situation, having 30% of women in the council, gives 30% of chances to a woman to be elected. The experience however, teaches us that when it comes to electing "only one" it is usually a man. Nevertheless, in rare cases - 5% - women win, as in my case. I am aware that a set of circumstances made me a mayor but I am giving my best not to disappoint those who believed in me and I feel responsible to open opportunities for others, in the same way I was given this chance.

As a mayor, I really do my best. I am working very hard to make good results. I choose my coworkers in a way which will contribute the most. And you know what? Most of the coworkers that I chose are women that I can rely on. Sometimes they even accuse me of being too supportive towards women. But I have two clear goals: first - make the job done in a good way and on time, and second - create fair chances for women. In a country where women are traditionally better educated and earn less than men, have more knowledge and less chances to use it, I believe it is fair to give them an opportunity. ■

[MANIFESTO OF ALBERSCHWENDE



Municipality of Alberschwende, 23 March 2015

MANIFESTO

Preliminary remark

The following text has been written by citizens who used to have great confidence in Austrian institutions. Every refugee faces the threat of deportation, if the law requires so. But...

How it all started

The Federal Government of Austria requested all municipalities to create housing for asylum seekers. Many communities and individuals prepared accommodations and so did the village of Alberschwende, located in the Bregenzerwald region. As a village, we wanted to set a positive example.

The first asylum seekers arrived in our village. Contrary to expectation, they were welcomed with a warm heart. The image of "asylum seekers" portrayed by the media quickly transformed into real people of flesh and blood who came to us to ask for protection and support. Far away from the big asylum accommodations, we experienced first-hand what is happening here. We recognized these people's needs and learned about the distress they had suffered. We became aware of the violence and arbitrariness they had experienced during their escape as well as the omnipotence of bureaucracy.

Our new fellow citizens are well-educated, open-minded young men who are eager to help in the community and offer their services wherever they can. A wave of solidarity went through our village. People cared and showed commitment, resulting in many activities being set up (from the parish to the local football club). People of our community felt it was necessary to support these people and give them back their dignity. We thought that the Federal Government would ensure protection and a secure place to stay. However, this is not the case.

The case of Ibrahim as an example

Ibrahim, a trained physicist and a mechanical engineer, experienced the civil war in Altal-City near Damascus. Every day, he recovered mutilated corpses and the dead bodies of women and children. Then he was drafted into the army, meaning he would have to shoot at his own fellow citizens. Those who refuse to do so, are summarily executed. He brought his wife to a safe place and fled towards Europe. He earned a good salary in Syria, but the facilitator cost him a fortune.

Ibrahim's refugee group consisted of four persons traveling together, hoping to get to Germany. Personal data and fingerprints were taken from all four of them in Greece and Serbia. In Hungary they were detained. It was here that the journey turned into agony and humiliation.

Forced to sign

The authorities in Hungary demanded the refugees to sign the Hungarian documents. At first, they refused, because they wanted to ask for asylum in a safe country. The four were then locked up with other people (a total of 20) in a 3x3 m cage without any food or drink. The only thing they received, was an empty bottle to urinate in. After 18 hours, some of them were forced – partly by beating – to sign the documents. The others then signed "voluntarily". Shocked by the cruel treatment, the group fled to Austria, where they applied for asylum.

Asylum "lottery"

Two of the four refugees were granted asylum status in Austria, meaning they received a white card. Ibrahim and the fourth person received a green card (Dublin cases), meaning a deportation order to Hungary. Yet all four of them arrived in Greece first and were subsequently registered in Serbia, Hungary and finally in Austria. Therefore, the same country should be responsible for all four. No explanation has yet been given.

No transcript – but far-reaching consequences

One reason for the deportation order was that Ibrahim was accused of making different statements at the first and second hearing with respect to his asylum application, and therefore his testimony was dismissed as implausible. As a matter of fact, the transcription of the first interrogation was neither explained nor handed over to him. This is required according to the law. Thus, he never had the opportunity to point out any mistakes and omissions. This small formal error had far-reaching consequences: Ibrahim is considered non-credible and therefore received a negative decision!

Chain deportation – "Hungarian roulette"

The member states through which asylum seekers first enter the EU are not allowed to send them back, because in such a chain of deportations, refugees are at risk of eventually ending up back in the country they fled from – in Ibrahim's case in Syria, meaning certain death. Even in Ibrahim's deportation order, the following is explicitly stated: "If, in individual cases, fundamental rights might be threatened, e.g. by chain deportation, the procedure shall be performed in Austria". Hungarian authorities illegally perform chain deportations. These are facts that are internationally documented. **In its order, the Asylum Office determines that an asylum seeker should not be deported if such is the case, but at the same time decides to do so anyway.**

Prison instead of refugee support

A further issue: There is documentation that Hungary is detaining asylum seekers. According to international law, European Union law as well as constitutional fundamental rights, it is prohibited to detain asylum seekers in prison, just for having applied for asylum. Asylum seekers are no criminals. In Hungary, Ibrahim will be imprisoned for no reason – and without a trial – for at least six months, including humiliation and forced labor. Here, entire families, even with young children, are simply locked up in prisons. Common practice in Hungary...

Unacceptable situation within the "Dublin area"

Unfortunately, incidents such as the ones experienced by Ibrahim, are not isolated cases. This is confirmed by numerous reports of the UNHCR, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, the German Foreign Ministry, renowned refugee organizations and NGOs.

Numerous courts in various European countries – including an Austrian one – have prohibited deportation of asylum seekers to countries such as Hungary, Italy, Romania or Bulgaria, because of the inhumane conditions that prevail here.

The Dublin Regulation

The Dublin Regulation sets down criteria for the transfer of asylum seekers in most European countries. The Member States have the *right* to deport migrants back to the country in Europe in which they first arrived. However, there is no *obligation* to do so.

A precondition for the Regulation is that there are suitable accommodation facilities in all signatory states. Only then, people can be sent back. Currently, however, people are being deported although these uncertain countries are not prepared at all. Also Austria sends back persons in need of protection to degrading conditions, although it is aware of the systemic deficiencies. Our authorities feel they are acting in accordance with the law while asylum officers merely carry out the rules, without considering the individual situations. "That's the way things go with Dublin cases..."

A community fights back

From the numerous reports of UNHCR, the Council of Europe and the judgments of various courts in Austria and abroad, we draw the following conclusions:

- Deportation to the countries mentioned poses a high risk of unauthorized detention, inhumane treatment and chain deportation.
- Whoever currently deports people to an insecure state such as Hungary knowingly accepts human rights violations and thus breaks the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (esp. Art. 4 and 6)
- Whoever protects asylum seekers from being deported, does not break any law. On the contrary: they prevent an action that may lead to a violation of fundamental rights.

Since protection and safety are not guaranteed by the inhumane deportation procedure, we are forced to protect our asylum seekers even from our own federal authorities in case of "transfers" to Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Italy.

The community of Alberschwende will not let fundamental rights be violated. It is not only our right, but our duty to prevent injustice.

Collateral damage in our civilized society

In addition to the recurrent traumatization of asylum seekers, the unjustified deportations to unstable countries cause serious collateral damage in our own ranks: frustration and personnel fluctuation in the institutions in charge (e.g. Caritas) is very high. For socially committed people, it is hard to deal with the high level of hypocrisy and inhumanity in the asylum issue.

In our village, this senseless approach of dislocating vulnerable people from their social environment once more is perceived as wrong, as an attack on humanity and devastating to our efforts. That explains the huge response in many communities, not only in Alberschwende!

The confidence in our authorities is deeply shaken. In this way, we will lose our international reputation as a humanitarian society, acquired for example during the Hungarian crisis in 1956, the Czechoslovakia conflict in 1968 and in the Poland crisis in 1981/82. Now, in the worst crisis since the Second World War, we are failing, fueled by xenophobic manifestations in society.

As a municipality and a community, the people of Alberschwende are doing what they were asked to do:

- we provide accommodation to those entrusted to us and integrate them into our community
- we support them socially by organizing community events, but also by protecting them if circumstances require us to do so
- we offer them security and will not let them be uprooted and humiliated once again

Alberschwende, as a small community, can do no more in this European dilemma than to take care of the people that found their way to us. Those very few, at least, should have the prospect of a fair asylum procedure in a safe country. Hermann Gmeiner, the founder of SOS Children's Villages, was born in this village; Therefore, we carry a social responsibility that can and shall not be broken by immoral bureaucracy.

If the Federal Asylum status no longer protects people from inhumanity, we will do so as a municipality – consistently and sustainably. Our community as well as the parish will come up with creative solutions within the context of civil obedience. To this end, a quote from Article 1 of our Federal Constitution: "Austria is a democratic republic. Its law emanates from the people."

What is it that we are demanding?

We make no claims of our own. Requirements arise from the legal obligations and international conventions to which our country has committed itself. We only demand they are adhered to!

Alberschwende needs you.
You, or at least your opinion and your support!

In the name of the municipality: Mayor Angelika Schwarzmann
In the name of the Parish: Rev. Peter Mathei
In the name of the Kulturmeile Alberschwende (on behalf of various associations and committed fellow citizens): Dr. Erich Schwarzmann



FEMCITIES CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS 2016 – WOMEN IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING POSITIONS

The FemCities conference 2016 focused on women in decision making positions. Women mayors of European Cities, politicians, gender experts of city administrations, NGOs and universities discussed together strategies to promote women in decision making positions as well as the advancement of women in cities. The conclusions of the FemCities conference are results of the discussion at the World Cafes.

Following topics have been discussed:

- Networking
- Promotion of sustainable structures – also in gender equality
- Quotas – are they a solution for promoting women?
- Dealing with media “trolls” (hate speech)

CONCLUSIONS

1. NETWORKING – beyond lines of political parties is important – to promote actions for women in politics, bringing up internal and external challenges that women face in all parties (e.g. prejudices, sexism by media or sometimes even colleagues,

mansplaining, no possibility for a maternity leave,.... – and developing strategies together. This was one of the main results and insights.

An example was given by Amelie Taschyrs Ingre to identify male habits, that reduce influence of women, which are:

- Render your opponent invisible.
- Ridicule her.
- Avoid sharing relevant information.
- Give her two options and then criticize her for whatever choice she makes, and
- Don't forget to invoke her sense of guilt and shame.

Examples given to tackle those male strategies were again discussed in the world cafe as mentioned in the speech by Amelie Taschyrs Ingre the day before:

- Do talk about how you treat and are treated by political colleagues.
- Name those strategies, to make them visible.
- A good thing to do is also like many men do, enforce the person that spoke before.
- Be brave, you can do it.



- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Be a good networker.
- Try to understand where the power is.
- And finally don't ever take it personally.

Also in the discussion of mayors it became evident, that struggles are the same and are likely to depend on gender but (not necessarily) on the political party.

Networking and the zipper system:

Under a zipper system, some places on the list are reserved for women and other for men. Strategies and challenges regarding the “zipper principle” have been discussed:

- refuse to be number two and always head for the top.
- So you don't get a battle between the sexes but a series of battles inside the sexes: Men against men, women against women.





2. PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES – also in gender equality: Women mayors have to meet many expectations. Of course this is not possible. But there are means sustainable structures – that will last longer than the term being elected. This could be either in establishing a certain meeting- and communication culture to establishing structures for gender equality in the city and for citizens

Recommendations for establishing gender equality structures may include among others:

- Nomination of gender experts in cities and ensuring that they are not only appointed but are trained or get adequate (quality) training on the issue.
- Gender Action Plan, or signing the European Charter on Gender Equality. Important fact is: You don't have to implement every chapter of the European Charter on Gender Equality at the same time, but set priorities, work step by step.
- Having a strategy for employees when affected by sexual violence and/or harassment and /or inequality (e.g. regarding promotion).

- Take a public position on women's rights, rights of women in your city and municipality.
- Having statistics looking for effects / benefits of women and men in your municipality.
- Use of gender sensitive language in forms.
- Funding of feminist activities
- Using gender budgeting and gender statistics on all expenses in all areas (make visible who are the main target groups, who benefit,...).

Questions discussed have been:

- Does the women representative have to be a woman? There were divergent opinions on this issue. In some countries or cities, NGO's are responsible of the implementation of gender politics. A strategy of the city and municipality would be beneficial as well.
- In Germany, a new anti-discrimination law opens the action field of gender politics to diversity management politics. Many gender experts now have also to focus on age, handicap, religion, etc. These new missions could nevertheless have dangerous consequences such as the gender aspects could lose their

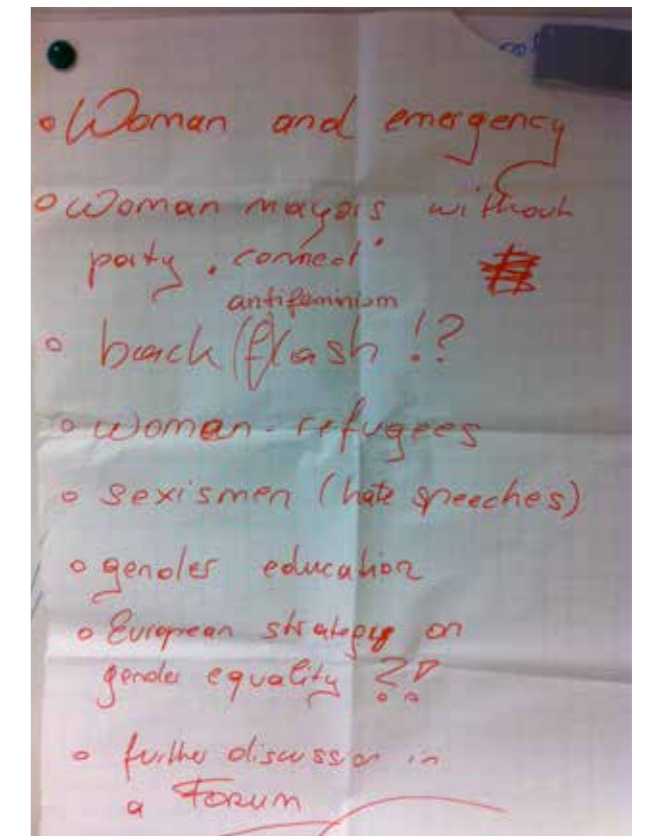
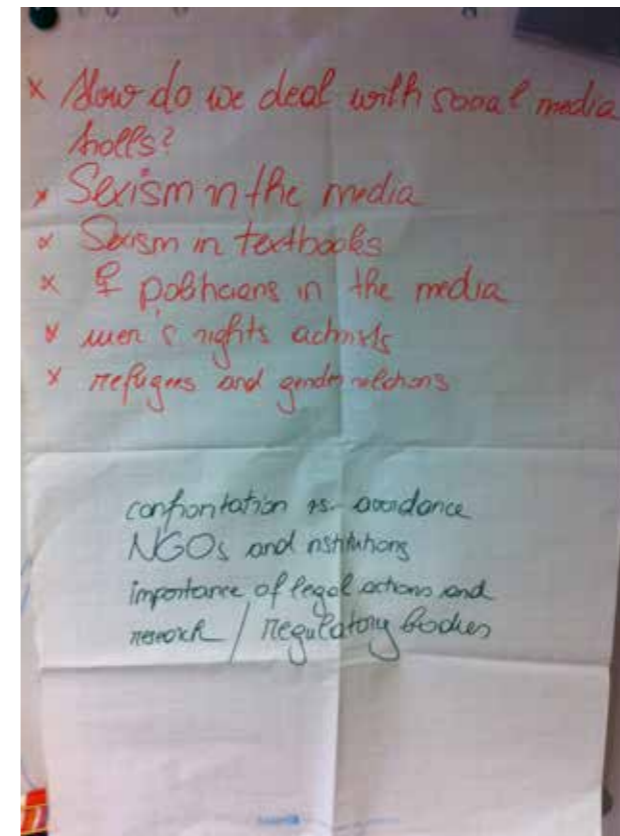
importance and be neglected. At the same time it is crucial to work on the various intersections.

- Who is the gender expert in a municipality? Often gender experts are nominated, but don't have adequate training. An idea of an online tool was discussed, in case there are no other trainings available.
- Women mayors could build sustainable structures to implement and promote gender politics that last beyond the own election period.
- Further discussed have been a quote by Jelena Trifunovic at the panel discussion addressing various expectations people have:
 - “Even feminists are harsh towards women politicians: they expect us to be advocates of women's issues, and as such, they have expectations that they never have from men.
 - Those expectations are not easy to meet, so we, women in politics, are trapped between the women's movement and their standards and finding our way in the political labyrinth, facing obstacles designed in a patriarchal culture.

3. QUOTAS – ARE THEY A SOLUTION FOR PROMOTING WOMEN?

In the discussion there was no final decision on quotas.

- But it was discussed that parties could lose part of their payment when there are not at least 1/3 women on the list.
- Self obligation of the party was mentioned.
- Working across party lines.
- Women mayors should promote women in leadership positions when they have the same competences as men.



[WORLD CAFE]

4. DEALING WITH MEDIA “TROLLS” (hate speech)

Dealing with stereotypes in media and in society (focus on clothes, hairstyle and makeup instead of content) was mentioned by every political active women who discussed.

A special focus in the discussion was on strategies dealing with “trolls” / with hate speech in social media:

- ignore them.
- blame them, name them, publish them, get support.
- take legal steps.
- take steps that gaps in legislation regarding cyber harassment are closed.

There was no consensus in the group, but various partly opposing strategies, that might work at various stages:

You cannot change media with a magic wand from one day to the other. Therefore: “You have to play the game” – to a certain extent.

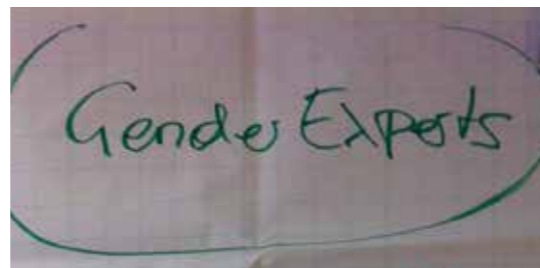
BUT:

Do we have to play the game – the long run? The discussion circled between confrontation vs. avoidance. NGOs and institutions play a role in deconstructing the pictures of women in decision making positions in the media. Find allies. Legal actions and regulatory bodies are important.



CURRENT TOPICS IN FEMCITIES PARTNER CITIES

- Women and emergencies
- Women mayors and women in political decision making positions beyond “party lines”
- Backlash and antifeminism
- Women refugees
- Sexism, especially hate speech against women
- Gender education
- Lacking strategy for gender equality in Europe, e.g. European strategy on gender equality – missing.
- Further discussion in FemCities Forum ■



BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

Rozeta Aleksov works at the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities since 2006. In the beginning she was in charge of different topics, and in 2011 she started working on gender equality issues. She is now in charge of implementing gender equality principles in SCTM's work, but also of providing support to municipalities in implementing Gender Equality Law and CEMR Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. In 2015 NALAS awarded SCTM for their contribution to promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming at local level in South-East Europe. Rozeta Aleksov is holding a master's degree in public administration, local government and public policies. Since 2000 she actively cooperated with various local and regional NGOs in promotion of gender equality, human rights, peace building and youth empowering through non-formal education.

Nicole Jemming has a Master degree in Sociology. Since October 2002, Nicole Jemming has been head of the department for gender equality of the municipality of Esch-sur-Alzette.

Jaimie Just joined the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in February 2016 as Policy Officer for Gender Equality and Diversity. Previously she worked at the European Women's Lobby in Brussels on women in decision-making.

Michaela Höflsauer was born in Gmunden in 1966 and grew up in Embach (Salzburg). After graduating from high school (general qualification for university entrance) she emigrated to Greece. During a holiday in Austria she met her husband and migrated back to Austria to Lend-Embach (Salzburg). She has been married for 21 years and has two daughters who are 16 and 19 years old. She has always shown commitment to socio-political concerns. For 18 years she has already been active in the municipal representation and municipal council, also as vice mayor. Since 2015 she is mayor of Lend. In her main job she is the manager of a retirement home. Further she is one of the editors of the "Gemeindezeitung" (municipal newspaper).

Monique Leyenaar (m.leyenaar@fm.ru.nl) is professor of comparative politics at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands, specialising in gender politics, political participation (citizens' juries) and direct democratic reform. She just published a monograph based on interviews with all women government ministers in the Netherlands (title in English 'Her Excellency'). Furthermore she co-edited with Drude Dahlerup the edited volume 'Breaking Male Dominance in Politics', published in 2013. Older publications concerning gender politics are 'Taking Stock: 1955 – 2005. 50 Years of Women's Political Representation in Europe' in: J. Bayes (ed.). 'Gender and Politics. The State of the Field.' IPSA series, Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2012; 'From Pioneers to Players: Women in the Netherlands' in: Joyce Gelb and Marian LiefPalley (eds.); 'Women and Politics around the World', ABC CLIO, 2009; 'Challenges to Women's Political Representation in Europe', in Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society 2008, vol.34, no.11:1-7. Leyenaar further advises

the Dutch parliament and government on a variety of issues. Since 2005 she has been a member of the Dutch Electoral Council and since 2009, a member of the Council for Public Administration.

Simone Massard-Stitz was born in 1963. She is married and mother of two children. She is a registered nurse. Since 1999 she works as municipal councillor and was deputy mayor till 2015. Since 2015 Ms. Sandweiler is mayor of Sandweiler. Sandweiler has 3550 inhabitants.

Angelika Schwarzmann, was born in 1959, she has four children in the age between 27 and 34. When moving to Alberschwende in 1983 (her husband applied for a position as veterinarian there) she started to work politically in the municipality. She was the first women in the municipal representation of Alberschwende. To have contact with people, to contribute a new the community, the situation of women as well as improvement of childcare were the main focus of her political work. Those issues are still accompanying her today, even though many improvements have taken place. In 2013 she was asked if she wants to run for elections as mayor and she agreed to say "yes".

Christine Schweich was born in 1983 in Luxembourg. She studied law and is lawyer at the court. She is mother of a daughter of 11 months. From 2011 to 2013 she was city councillor and since 2013 she is mayor of Mondern.

Amelie Tarschys Ingre is Deputy Mayor of the city of Lidingö since 2015 and councillor in the city council of Lidingö since 2010. Since 2014 Ms. Ingre is also councillor of Stockholm county council

and member of Healthcare Services Committee as well as vice president of the Committee for Future Health and Medical Care in the Stockholm county council. Since 2016 she is alternate member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and 2nd vice president of the Governance Committee, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe. In the years 2001 – 2014 she worked as senior advisor at the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, SALAR. Further Ms. Ingre was alternate member of Swedish Parliament from 2006 – 2010 and alternate member of European Parliament 2004 – 2009. Between 2003-2008 she was president of Liberal Women Stockholm county. Ms. Ingre has a Master in Political Sciences and followed studies in social sciences, french and European studies.

Jelena Trifunovic was born in Svrlijig in 1980, where she completed her primary education. Later on, she completed high-school and The Faculty of Law in Nish. As a representative of the United Peasant's Party in 2004 she became a member of the local parliament in the municipality of Svrlijig. In 2008 she was elected a president of the local parliament. In 2014 she was elected mayor and is one of the very few women mayors in Serbia. In 2016 she was reelected on the position. Ms. Trifunovic is a member of the Presidency of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities where she advocates for gender equality goals. She is also a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Ms. Trifunovic stands for gender equality and is recognized as a mayor who strongly supports participation of women in politics in Serbia. ■



[**Fem** *Cities*]