

[*FemCities*]

Sexism: a Challenge to Gender Equality

Conference Documentation

[*FemCities*] Conference 2022/2023

Ljubljana, Slovenia



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1. Photographic Impressions from the Conference



Photo 1: Group photo of conference participants in Ljubljana City Hall

Lively Debates



Compelling discussions



Manifold contributions



*Photo 2: from left first row: Rada Borić, Claudia Throm, Sanja Stankovic, Tanja Hodnik, behind her: Jana Radić
from left second row: Christiane Ugbor, in corner Erzsébet Fanni Tóth, Bianca Dreyer, Lana Bobić*



Photo 3: Group photo of conference participants in front of Ljubljana City Hall

2. Program

The **City of Ljubljana** and the **FemCities** network coordinator, the **City of Vienna** Department for Women's Affairs, welcomed network partners, associated partners and interested parties to the FemCities Conference 2022/2023 on the topic of '**Sexism: a Challenge to Gender Equality**' on the 2nd and 3rd of March 2023 hosted by the City of Ljubljana.

VENUE: Ljubljana City Hall
Mestni trg 1, 1000 Ljubljana

DATE: Thursday the 2nd and Friday the 3rd of March 2023

TIME: 09:00 – 17:30/17:00 (local time)

The conference language is English.

#femcities #genderequalcities #equaleurope

1. CONFERENCE DAY: THURSDAY 2ND OF MARCH 2023

09:00: **Arrival, Registration and Coffee**

09:30: **Official Welcome and opening of the conference – ZORAN JANKOVIĆ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LJUBLJANA**

Welcome words and introduction by host – Tanja Hodnik, Head of Department for Health and Social Care of the City of Ljubljana

Welcome words by FemCities coordinator – Stephanie Kiessling, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs

10:00: **Keynote Speech 'Immunity and normalisation of sexism in politics' – Milica Antić Gaber, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts**

10:45: **Keynote Speech 'Sexism from a European Perspective' – Christiane Ugbor, Executive Committee Member, European Women's Lobby**

11:30: **Coffee Break**

12:00: **Round Table on 'Activities of the City of Ljubljana'**

Speakers: **Simona Topolinjak**, coordinator for equal opportunities, Head of Social Care Section, Department of Health and Social Care
Melita Oven, Head of Schooling Section, Department for Education
Irena Strelec, senior advisor, City Council Administration Office and Advisor of Commission for naming the districts and streets City of Ljubljana
Mateja Veble, senior advisor, Department for Culture

Moderation: **Špela Veselič**, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care

13:30: **Lunch Break**

14:30: **Round Table on 'FemCities network partners'**

Speakers: **Nina Gabryś**, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of **Krakow** for Equality Policy
Spencer Kirpach, Attaché Equality in Municipalities, **Luxembourgish** Ministry of Equality between Women and Men
Sarah Caquineau, Head of the 'Non sexist city' unit within the Equality department of the City of **Nantes**
Sophie Rendl, City of **Vienna**, Department for Women's Affairs

Jana Radić, City of **Zagreb**, Head of Department for Promoting Human Rights and Civil Society (City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society)

Moderation: **Karima Aziz**, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs

16:00: Parallel Workshops hosted by FemCities network partners:

- **Workshop 1:** 'Why Are There So Few Statues of Women in Our Cities?' – **Nina Gabryś**, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy
- **Workshop 2:** 'Stop Sexism! See it. Name it. Stop it. – Campaign against Sexism' – **Spencer Kirpach and Patrick Kleinbauer**, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men
- **Workshop 3:** 'Power, Abuse, Men: #MeToo as an Example of Social Media Activism and Its Limits' – **Claudia Throm**, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs Vienna

17:30: End of 1st Conference Day

19:15: Conference Dinner

2. CONFERENCE DAY: FRIDAY 3rd OF MARCH 2023

09:00: Arrival, Registration and Coffee

09:30: Official Welcome – **Antonija Poplas Susič**, Director of Community Health Centre Ljubljana

09:45: Keynote Speech 'It's the end of the world as we know it: Anti-gender backlash in Europe' – **Roman Kuhar**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

10:30: Round Table on 'Sexism as Hate Speech'

Speakers: **Nina Gabryś**, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy
Erzsébet Fanni Tóth, Coordinator of an International Ph.D. programme at Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Founder and CEO of Femspace
Katarina Kresal, Attorney, Founder and President of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, and Managing Partner of the Law Firm Senica & Partners
Manca G. Renko, Historian, currently working at the ERC Eirene project at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Moderation: **Špela Veselič**, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care

12:00: Coffee Break

12:30: Round Table on 'Sexism in Journalism'

Speakers: **Rada Borić**, Member of Zagreb City Assembly, President of Gender Equality Commission of the City of Zagreb, Feminist Linguist
Nika Kunaver, Investigative Journalist POP TV
Grega Repovž, Journalist, Editor-in-Chief at Mladina weekly

Moderation: **Nataša Briški**, Co-Founder Meta's list, Media Strategist, Journalist and Podcaster

14:00: Closing Remarks

14:00: Lunch Break

15:00: Field Excursions:

- City of Women: Feminist Tour around Ljubljana
- Kresija Exhibition with Guides

17:00: End of Conference

Moderation: **Danči Maraž**, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care & **Karima Aziz**, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs

3. Introduction and Welcome Words

Discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, be they gender, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, age, sexual orientation, is against the law. However, the practice of stereotyping groups of society in gendered ways and discriminating against them is still prevalent. Ten years after the FemCities Conference 2012 on „Ending Gender Stereotyping and Sexist Portrayals in Advertising“ the topic of SEXISM is still pressing and a challenge to gender equality. The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers adopted in 2019 the Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1). The questions of sexism and women’s participation in politics, the ongoing glass ceiling, hate speech against women, the stereotypical portrayal of women in media and sexism in general were therefore on the agenda of the FemCities Conference in Ljubljana

3.1. Official Welcome and Opening of the Conference

Zoran Janković, Mayor of the City of Ljubljana

In his welcome words the Mayor of Ljubljana Zoran Janković pointed out, that the representation of women in the City administration is comparable to the overall population shares. There are many women acting as female leaders of different departments and other services. Furthermore, Ljubljana City Hall is the only City Hall to offer its premises to a LGBTIQ-friendly bar, which is situated right next to the City Hall entrance.

The City of Ljubljana is pursuing continuous efforts to respect the diversity of different groups and sees itself as an open City.



Photo 4: Zoran Janković, Mayor of the City of Ljubljana in the back from left: Karima Aziz, City of Vienna, Department for Women’s Affairs, and Danči Maraž, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care

3.2. Welcome Words and Introduction by Host

Tanja Hodnik, Head of Department for Health and Social Care of the City of Ljubljana

The host, represented by Tanja Hodnik, has welcomed warmly the participants of the conference. She highlighted the history of good practices in gender equality in Ljubljana. Through action plans efforts for an inclusive society for all genders and all vulnerable groups were implemented. Ljubljana is pursuing a long-term commitment to develop equal opportunities in education, employment, access to services and infrastructure. Direct social and political participation is being increased as well as actions implemented to reconcile work and family, challenge stereotypes, further social inclusion and prevent violence.

The FemCities Conference is one more event in these efforts. Furthermore, two exhibitions compliment the conference. Six diverse artists contributed their work to an exhibition in the Kresija gallery exploring gender stereotypes and gender roles. Students from the 3rd year of the Ljubljana Highschool for Design and Photography exhibit their work on sexism as experienced by young people in the atrium of the City Hall.



Tanja Hodnik has pointed out, that sexism and sexist hate speech are daily experiences for girls and women in all areas of life. This can take many forms such as victim blaming, slut shaming, body shaming, sharing of sexual images, sexualized threats, comments on appearance, sexuality, sexual orientation and supposed jokes. Women and girls can become targets of online and offline sexist hate speech. The Council of Europe has framed sexist hate speech as a form of violence. On the occasion of the International Women's Day the United Nations spotlights the rights of women and girls in digital spaces. The FemCities Conference is more than consistent with this message promoted by the United Nations.

She also congratulated all to the upcoming International Women's Day and explained her effort to use her role as head of department as an opportunity to be a role model and to show that women can be successful leaders and that we all can and must fight sexism and sexist hate speech.

Photo 5: Tanja Hodnik, Head of Department for Health and Social Care of the City of Ljubljana

3.3. Welcome Words by FemCities Coordinator

Stephanie Kiessling, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs

Thank you very much to the Mayor of the City of Ljubljana, Zoran Janković, for hosting this years' FemCities Conference in your beautiful city. The FemCities network appreciates your generous hospitality and we are looking forward to a compelling two-day conference in Ljubljana. I would also like to thank Tanja Hodnik, Head of the Department for Health and Social Care of the City of Ljubljana, and her whole team, especially Simona Topolinjak, Špela Veselič and Danči Maraž, for graciously agreeing to co-organise this years' conference. Thank you very much for the fruitful and intensive cooperation in the past months.

The FemCities network was established under the name Milena in 1997. This network brings together Cities as partners and other organisations as associate partners in networking for gender equality. Around 30 City administrations are FemCities network partners – some of our newest members we can welcome today to their first FemCities experience such as representatives from Krakow, our first network partner from Poland, and representatives from Nantes, our first network partner from France. Recently Vilnius has also joined the network as the newest

member. We are also glad, after two years of no in-person FemCities event taking place, to welcome our long-time partners such as representatives from Zagreb, Helsinki, Luxembourg and Serbia. We would also like to warmly welcome the Vice Mayor of Athens for Equality Aikaterini Katrivanou.

Together with the host, the City of Ljubljana, the topic for this years' conference, Sexism: a Challenge to Gender Equality, was chosen. Discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, be they gender, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, age, sexual orientation, is against the law. However, the practice of stereotyping groups of society in gendered ways and discriminating against them is still prevalent. The questions of sexism and women's participation are therefore on the agenda of this FemCities Conference in Ljubljana.

The objectives of FemCities include the exchange of best practices, expert networking on the local level, mutual support and cooperation. This conference serves all these objectives in the best way with its manifold program and diverse participants.

We are looking forward to Keynote Speeches on sexism in politics by Milica Antić Gaber, on the European perspective by Christiane Ugbor, Executive Committee Member of the European Women's Lobby, and on the Anti-gender backlash in Europe by Roman Kuhar. We also have a variety of Round Tables planned on the activities of Ljubljana, on the FemCities network partners, on sexism as hate speech as well as on sexism in journalism. Furthermore, there are three workshops as contributions from FemCities partners to choose from.

As FemCities coordinator we would like to thank all our speakers and contributors to the conference for their willingness to share their insights and engage in debates. Thank you to all participants, who have taken the time to come and attend the conference, join in networking and discussions. We wish you all a compelling conference, fruitful discussions and a nice stay in Ljubljana.

3.4. Official Welcome to the 2nd Conference Day

Antonija Poplas Susič, Director of Community Health Centre Ljubljana

In her welcome words Antonija Poplas Susič shared her story of working towards a professional career in health. She knows the health care system from different perspectives as a family physician, in leadership functions, in professional associations and as being involved in structural and political processes. In 2011, she took over the position as professional medical director of the Community Health Centre, the largest health centre in Slovenia. She received a prestigious award as the first and only woman. Two years ago, she became the general manager of the Health Centre and with this a challenging time began. The minister of health started to attack her and the Health Centre publicly in a reaction to the media outrage over the lack of family physicians. The attacks consisted of accusations of her being arrogant, having a bad attitude, humiliating colleagues and bad conditions in the Health Centre. Many hundred media reports against her and the Health Centre have been published. The Mayor supports her and also got attacked for this. The public perception was that something was wrong and she and the Mayor have to be blamed. She and her family have been gravely affected by this public attacks and the public has lost trust in the health services. She is grateful to be able to share her story with the FemCities Conference participants.



Photo 6: Antonija Poplas Susič, Director of Community Health Centre Ljubljana

4. Keynote Speech: Immunity and normalisation of sexism in politics

Milica Antić Gaber, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

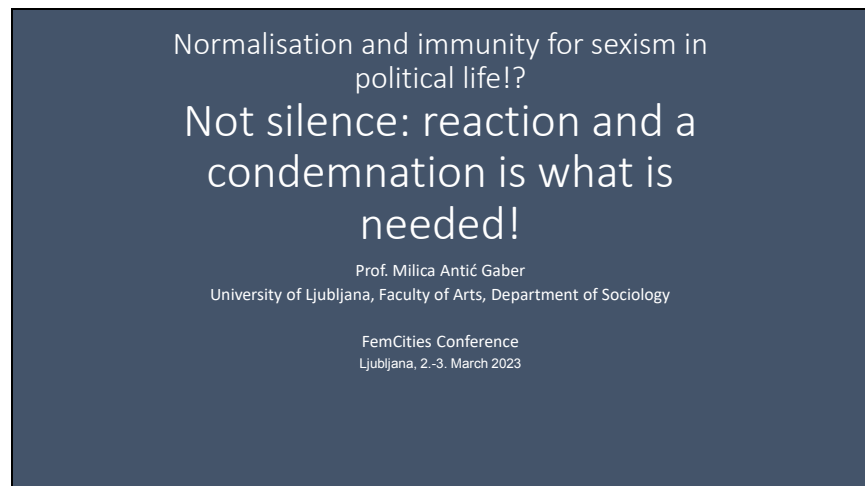


Photo 7: Milica Antić Gaber, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

Synopsis:

The first Keynote speaker at the FemCities Conference, Milica Antić Gaber from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, talked on the topic of "Immunity and Normalisation of Sexism in Politics." The speech highlighted the prevalence of sexism in politics and the need for reaction and condemnation instead of silence.

She started her presentation with a quote of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: *'A sad truth: our world is full of men and women who do not like powerful women. We have been so conditioned to think of power as male that a 'powerful woman' is an aberration and so she is policed.'*

She furthermore presented some statistics that showed that only 26.5% of women serve in parliaments worldwide, and as of 2023, only 15 women hold the position of Prime Minister globally. Moreover, only 11 women serve as state presidents. Sexism is not a new phenomenon and is characterized as unequal treatment of individuals based on their sex. It can take different forms, such as acts, words, images, and gestures, and can be consciously or unconsciously hostile. Sexism creates inequalities and poverty, targeting women in political institutions, parties, media, and the general public.

Milica Antić Gaber presented some cases of high profile female politicians like Julia Gillard and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez that have experienced sexism even while running for prominent roles. In Finland, female politicians are constantly being questioned about their age rather than substantive issues like the war in Ukraine or COVID. In Slovenia, Alenka Bratusek faced sexist remarks about her appearance, while the first female speaker of the Parliament. Sexism in the Slovenian parliamentary election 2022 led to women being labeled as incompetent, objectified, dehumanized, sexualized, and silenced with verbal violence. To combat this, it is crucial to fight gender stereotyping and sexism, raising public awareness, changing political culture, and promoting a culture of inclusion, so the conclusion. She closed with a study from IPU from the year 2016, which showed that 81.8% of women in politics experienced psychological violence, 65.5% received humiliating sexist remarks, and 44.4% received threats of death,

rape, beatings, or abduction. The study also identified risk factors such as being young, opposition, and a minority. Sexism in politics presents a natural status and power difference between men and women and manifests itself as prejudice and discrimination towards women seeking to work in prestigious fields such as politics.

But how to react to all this? When faced with sexism, it is essential to be aware of its existence, recognize it as abnormal behavior, and take action to stop it. Being insensitive and silent towards sexism is not the right thing to do. Sexism is more dangerous than it seems at first glance, and it is crucial to fight against gender stereotyping and sexism in everyday life. This fight requires the sensitization of the wider public and a change in political culture. Women need support not only from women's organizations and civil society but also from prominent male figures. The goal is to develop a culture of inclusion, not exclusion. One effective way to combat sexism is to ridicule and mock it and those who perpetuate it. It is time to take a stand against sexism and promote equality for all.

Presentation:

Slow progress

2023 statistics


- 26,5% of women in the parliaments worldwide
- 2023 - 15 women PM (10%) worldwide
- From 1960 on, only 77 women held the position of PM
- Only 11 women serve as state presidents



Why this is so?

“A sad truth: our world is full of men and women who do not like powerful women. We have been so conditioned to think of power as male that a ‘powerful woman’ is an aberration and so she is policed.”

— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nigerian feminist author



Everyday sexism

- Sexism is not a new phenomenon.
- Sexism = unequal treatment of individuals based on their sex.
- Sexism = linked to stereotyped beliefs concerning W and M and ranking one above to the other.
- Sexism can be consciously or uncsciously hostile.
- Sexism can take over different forms: act, word, image, gesture ...
- In effect sexism presents status and power difference between W and M as natural.
- One manifestation of sexism: prejudice and discrimination of M and W who seek to work in the prestigious sfields (politics).

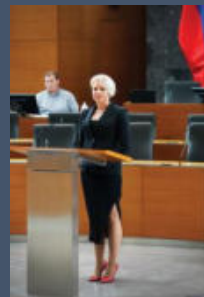
Examples of prominent female politicians facing sexism and reacting against it were presented and discussed such as the impressive speech of Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard against misogyny, the US-Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez condemning sexism in Congress and the Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern confronting sexist remarks from a journalist during a press conference.

Slovenia

"The duration of Alenka Bratušek as a PM will be directly proportional to the length of her skirt." (SDS, 2014)



The first woman as Speaker (2022) of the Parliament and her "inappropriate red shoes" and her behavior...



IPU study 2016

Prevalence:

- **81.8 %** experienced psychological violence (the most widely spread form),
- **65.5 %** received (several times, or often) **humiliating sexist remarks**,
- **44.4 %** received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction.
- **Risk factors:** young, opposition, minority.

Table III Prevalence of various manifestations of psychological violence

Humiliating sexual or sexist remarks	65.5%
Images of yourself or highly disrespectful comments with sexual connotations about you in the traditional media	27.3%
Extremely humiliating or sexually charged images of yourself spread through social media	41.8%
Threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction	44.4%
Harassment (exposure to insistent and uninvited behaviour, including unwanted attention or unwelcome verbal contact or interaction that may have frightened you)	32.7%

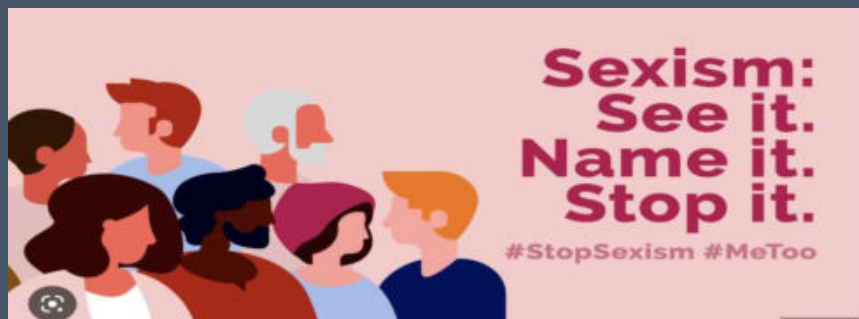
Sexism, mysogyny in Slovene parliamentary election 2022

- **Women as incompetent for politics**
- **Animalistic dehumanization of women**
- **Women as invaders in politics**
- **Women as sexual objects**
- **The objectification of women**
- **Silencing women with verbal violence**

So how to react to all this?

- Being insensitive and silent would not be the right thing to do
- Sexism is more dangerous than it seems to be at the first sight
- Fight against gender stereotyping and sexism in everyday life
- Sensibilisation of wider public
- Changing political culture
- Women's support from CS and W's organisation but also from prominent male figures
- Developing a culture of inclusion, not exclusion
- Ridiculing and mocking sexism and sexists

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpavaM62Fgo>



Thanks for your attention!

Prof. Milica Antić Gaber, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Sociology department; milica.antic@ff.uni-lj.si

5. Keynote Speech: Sexism from a European Perspective

Christiane Ugbor, Executive Committee Member, European Women's Lobby



Photo 8: Christiane Ugbor, Executive Committee Member, European Women's Lobby

Synopsis:

In her keynote speech, Christiane Ugbor highlighted the work of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), which is the largest European umbrella network of women's associations. The EWL represents over 2000 organizations in 26 EU Member States, three candidate countries, one former EU Member State, and one European Free Trade Association country, as well as 17 European-wide organizations. The EWL focuses on several areas of work, including Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Women in Decision making and Gender Mainstreaming, and Women's Economic Independence.

Christiane Ugbor emphasized that sexism is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which leads to discrimination and prevents the full advancement of women in society. The definition of sexism includes any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex. It violates the inherent dignity or rights of a person or a group of persons, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological, or socio-economic harm.

The prevalence of sexism is high, and European women are suffering from sexist or sexual violence during their careers. Women are also the target of sexist attacks on social networks, and a large percentage of women have been confronted with "mansplaining" and "maninterrupting" at work. The harmful impact of sexism can be worse to women due to their ethnicity, age, disability, social origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other factors.

Christiane Ugbor stressed the need to put an end to sexism as it continues to suppress and oppress women and girls. Sexism hampers equal opportunities and empowerment of women and girls on many domains. The internet has provided a new dimension for the expression and transmission of sexism, especially sexist hate speech. Harmful stereotypes of the roles and representation of boys and men in our society lead to emotional suppression, and women are too often on the receiving end of the violent or aggressive results of these stereotypes.

The solutions to combat sexism include tackling gender-blind or discriminatory language, acknowledging sex as a category of structural inequality and discrimination, and putting in place complaint mechanisms, disciplinary measures, and support services in the workplace. There is a need to apply a feminist lens over and gender mainstreaming over education policies and review textbooks, ensure the representation of women in non-stereotypical roles, teach women's history, and ensure the availability of complaint mechanisms. Every girl and boy in Europe should be empowered and protected by comprehensive feminist sexuality education, and sexism online must be addressed as part of the continuum of violence. The speaker also stressed the role of the media, including digital media and platforms, in combating sexism, male violence, and gender stereotypes. It is necessary to challenge the hypersexualized and gendered norms that are assumed in society, and this must be tackled in all legal frameworks fighting violence against women and girls.

Lastly, Christiane Ugbor was talking about the EWL participating in a collaborative project called "Mobilise Against Sexism" in 2020, together with nine national coordination members. The goal of the project was to raise awareness on sexism and influence Member States to pass legislation or adopt measures in line with the CoE's Committee of Ministers' adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 – Preventing and Combating Sexism. The recommendations included in the speaking points are in line with what was done during this project, which aimed to combat all forms of sexism in key sectors of society.

Presentation:

The presentation slide features a dark blue speech bubble on the left containing the text "European Women's Lobby" and "[EWL]". To the right, a light blue rectangular box contains a bulleted list of facts and main areas of work.

European Women's Lobby
[EWL]

- Founded in 1990
- Largest European umbrella network of women's associations, representing more than 2000 organisations in 26 EU Member States, 3 candidate countries, one former EU Member State and one European Free Trade Association country, as well as 17 European-wide organisations

Main areas of work:

- Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) incl. sexual exploitation
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)
- Women in Decision making + gender mainstreaming
- Women's economic independence

Quotes

„Women must earn less than men because they are weaker, they are smaller, they are less intelligent“.

Polish Member of the European Parliament Janusz Korwin-Mikke, during an European Parliament debate on the gender pay-gap, 3 March 2017



„You are more beautiful than intelligent“

Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, on live television to Rosi Bindi, the President of the Democratic Party – 2009



„But who will watch the kids?“

Laurent Fabius, former French Prime Minister and Member of the French Socialist Party, on Stéphanie Royale, former Minister and Member of the French Parliament, while she was running for the 2007 French Presidential Elections

Sexism

Sexism is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which leads to discrimination and prevents the full advancement of women in society (Council of Europe Recommendation on prevention and combating Sexism CM/Rec (2019))

Sexism: Any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline, with the purpose or effect of

Sexism

- Violating the inherent dignity or rights of a person or a group of persons;
- Resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or socio-economic harm suffering to a person or group of persons;
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;
- Constituting a barrier to the autonomy and full realisation of human rights by a person or a group of persons;
- Maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes

Definition from the Council of Europe Recommendation on preventing and combating Sexism CM/Rec (2019)

What is still the reality of sexism in Europe

EUROPE: 80% of women have been confronted „mansplaining“ + „maninterrupting“ at work

(Council of Europe data)

58% of Female members of the Parliament across the EU have been the target of sexist attacks on social networks

60% European Women suffered sexist or sexual violence during their careers (suggestive looks, rude gestures or comments, obscene proposals or messages with sexual connotation, received texts, photos, videos of sexual nature)

2019 survey on the extent of sexist or sexual violence suffered by European Women at their workplace
by Jean Jaures Foundation & FEP/IFOP



What is still the reality of sexism in Europe?

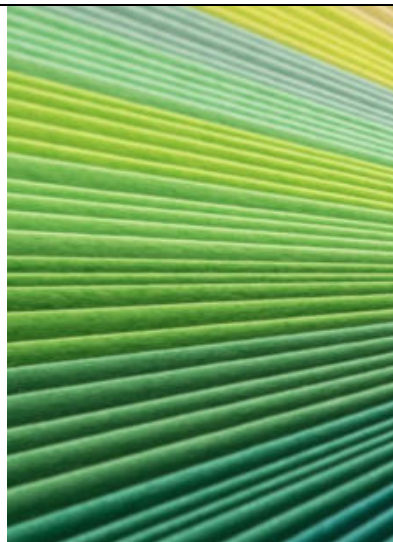
The harmful impact of sexism can be worse to women due to their ethnicity, age, disability, social origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or other factors. Intersectional dimension to sexism was stressed by the study

Youngest women reported the most sexist or sexual abuse;

Bis and lesbians were overly targeted in terms of sexist and sexual violence at work;

Women from religious minorities were disproportionately targeted: 40% of Muslim Women experienced at least one form of sexist or sexual violence in their workplace versus 26% of Protestant women and 20% of Catholics;

2019 survey on the extent of sexist or sexual violence suffered by European Women at their workplace



Why is it crucial to put an end to sexism

- The prevalence of sexism continues to suppress and oppress women and girls;
- Sexism hampers equal opportunities and empowerment of women and girls on many domains;
- The internet has provided a new dimension for the expression and transmission of sexism, especially sexist hate speech;
- We need to deconstruct the harmful and stereotyped roles assigned to girls and boys from an early age; similarly, harmful stereotypes of the roles and representation of boys and men in our society lead to emotional suppression, women are too often on the receiving end of the violent or aggressive results of these stereotyps;

What are the solutions to tackle sexism?

Part I

- Sexism is still widely accepted and present within our societies
- Sexism is structural, systematic, problematic and an infraction of women's fundamental rights

As per the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism,

We must:

- Tackle Gender-blind or discriminatory language which reinforces sexist attitudes and behaviour
- Acknowledging sex as a category of structural inequality and discrimination. All EU political instruments must adopt a gender mainstreaming / prevent and combating sexism approach alongside with concrete measures targeting specifically women and girls

What are the solutions to tackle Sexism?

Part II

- In the Workplace: To put in place complaint mechanisms, disciplinary measures and support services
- Apply feminist lens over and gender mainstreaming over education policies:
- Review textbooks, women and men in non-stereotypical roles#
- ensure the representation of women as scientists, artists, athletes, leaders, politicians in textbooks and programs
- Teach women's history
- Ensure the availability of complaint mechanisms

What are the solutions to tackle sexism?

Part III

- Every girl and boy in Europe to be empowered and protected by comprehensive feminist sexuality education, all should have equally access to this.
- Sexism online must be addressed: online VAWG is part of the continuum of violence
- Sexism should also be fully included within the proposed Directive on Hate Speech
- The media, including digital media and platforms have a crucial role in combating sexism, male violence and gender stereotypes.
- We must challenge the hypersexualised and gendered norms that are assumed in society, this must be tackled in all legal frameworks fighting VAWG

What are the Solutions to tackle sexism?

Part IV

EWL's collaborative Project "Mobilise Against Sexism" in 2020

In 2020 the EWL participated in a collaborative project "Mobilise Against Sexism" together with nine national coordination members from

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, and Spain

- to raise awareness on sexism and
- on how to combat all forms of sexism in key sectors of society.

The Mobilise Against Sexism project was supported by the Council of Europe, being our goal to raise awareness on sexism and influence Member States to pass legislation or adopt measures in line with the CoE's Committee of Ministers' adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 – Preventing and Combating Sexism.

The recommendations included in the speaking points are in line with what was done during this project.

EUROPEANS WOMEN LOBBY BRUSSELS

"Mobilise against Sexism" (2020)

collaborative project with 9 Nations
(Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands,
Portugal, Romania and Spain)
Supported by the Council of Europe

Conclusion

The EWL is a strong advocate against sexism in the EU. To realise EWL's vision of a Feminist Europe in which all women and girls enjoy equal rights and participation in power and decision making structures across all levels of society and are liberated from all forms of oppression and exploitation, we must put an end to sexism.

That is why our work at EU level combats gender stereotypes and strives to change EU legislation towards the application of gender-mainstreaming throughout the whole policy cycle.

Thank you for giving us space at this important conference to introduce our work.

6. Round Table on: Activities of the City of Ljubljana

Speakers:

- Simona Topolinjak, coordinator for equal opportunities, Head of Social Care Section, Department of Health and Social Care
- Melita Oven, Head of Schooling Section, Department for Education
- Irena Strelec, senior advisor, City Council Administration Office and Advisor of Commission for naming the districts and streets City of Ljubljana
- Mateja Veble, senior advisor, Department for Culture

Moderation:

- Špela Veselič, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care






Photo 9: Round Table on: Activities of the City of Ljubljana; from left: Špela Veselič, Simona Topolinjak and Melita Oven



Photo 10: Simona Topolinjak, coordinator for equal opportunities, Head of Social Care Section, Department of Health and Social Care

 <p>National legislative and policy framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia • Equal Opportunities for Woman and Men Act (2002) • Protection against Discrimination Act (2016) • National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2015-2020 	 <p>Role of municipality</p> <p><i>Self-governing local authorities promote and create equal opportunities according to their jurisdiction and to take a gender perspective into account when planning and implementing their actions and activities. (Article 30, paragraph 1 of the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act)</i></p> <p>Local administrations can establish a local Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men</p>
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 <p>The City of Ljubljana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator and assistant coordinator for the equal opportunities • Gender equality Action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopted by City Council - Priorities, objectives and measures in 8 areas 	 <p>Gender mainstreaming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group for implementing gender equality in the City Administration • Gender sensitive language • Booklet For gender equality in Ljubljana 
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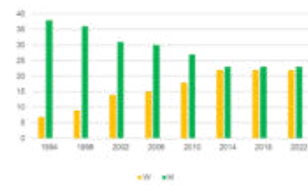


Gender mainstreaming

Urban 2021: Gender equality and accessibility



Decision-making process – City Council

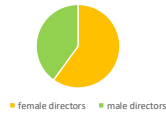


Decision-making process – City Administration & City's public institutes and companies

City Administration Employees and management (28.2.2023)

	W	M	total
Employees	396	153	549
	72 %	28 %	
Management	45	15	60
	75 %	25 %	

Female and male directors of public institutes and public companies



Decision-making process

Urban 2022: Women leaders in big city family



Economic independence

- Round tables in the City hall
- News on website



Work – life balance

- City administration and public institutes – family friendly company
- Public childcare and support services
- Public and support services for the elderly





Traditional social roles and stereotypes

- Competition on Gender Equality for Primary schoolchildren (written and artworks contribution)
- Day with female director/ deputy mayor



European Women Handball Championship

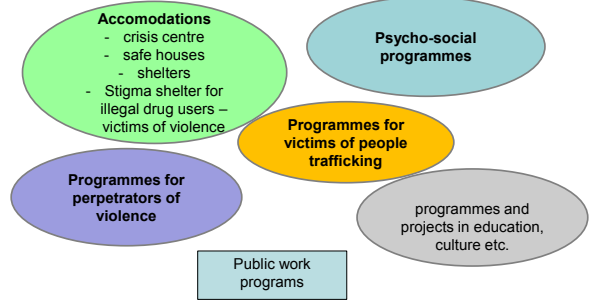


Social inclusion of vulnerable groups

- Financial assistance for citizens with no income or low-income
- Strategy for the development of Social Care in the City of Ljubljana for the period from 2021 to 2027
- Action plans
- Co-financing social programs for various vulnerable groups
- Public work co-financing
- The possibility of renting MOL premises for NGOs



Prevention on violence against women: The financial support



Prevention on violence against women: The spatial support

The use of the premises of the Municipality of Ljubljana for implementation of activities



Prevention on violence against women: Public Housing Fund

Women, victims of violence, receive additional points in public tender





**Prevention on violence against women:
Awareness-raising activities**

International days for the elimination of violence against women (25. 10. – 10. 12.)







**Prevention on violence against women:
Awareness-raising activities**





TikTok results (no advertising):

- 15.000+ views
- 30+ new followers
- 50+ saved videos

Very good, regarding the non sensationalistic theme.*

*we started TikTok profile in September 2022.

Contact: dr. Simona Topolinjak
City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social care
T: 01 306 4102
E-mail: simona.topolinjak@ljubljana.si



Gender Equality & Education in Ljubljana

Melita Oven, Department for Education, City of Ljubljana

Ljubljana, 2 March 2023

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www.ljubljana.si/en








Photo 11: Melita Oven, Head of Schooling Section, Department for Education

Department for Education

Tasks in the field of:

- Kindergartens
- Primary schools
- Music schools
- Adult education
- Family centre
- Prevention and leisure activities for children
- Training of professionals



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www.ljubljana.si



Kindergartens

- Strong network of public kindergartens
- Include 95.9 % of all children in Ljubljana
- For children of 11 months – 6 years
- 3-4 meals per day, inclusion 9h per day



Kindergartens

- Flexible working hours
- Subsidized fees depend on family's income
- Professional staff
- Care & education
- Rich extracurricular activities



Primary schools

- Above-standard programmes funded by the city:
 - Morning care (2nd and 3rd grade)
 - Afternoon care (1st to 5th grade)
 - Pre-school teacher's assistance (1st grade)
 - Foreign language teachers for early foreign language learning
 - Special needs' teachers
 - Sports teachers in sports classes
 - Technical teachers
 - School counsellors
- 3 meals per day, flexible working hours



Extracurricular activities in schools

Our goal is to provide high-quality free activities for children.

- Culture
- Sports
- Environmental projects
- Research projects
- Experimental activities
- Craft activities



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www.ljubljana.si

Cooperation with NGOs

Yearly public tenders to co-found numerous projects and programs for children:

- Leisure time programs
- Projects and camps for promotion of science
- **Holiday care programs** during school holidays
- Preventive programs in the field of chemical and non-chemical addictions, programs for prevention of violence, school for parents



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www.ljubljana.si



Family centre Mala ulica

- Aimed at providing quality free time and implementing support programmes and activities for children and their families
- Activities for children: creative workshops, classes, holiday care programmes
- For parents: parenthood training, workshops hosted by qualified experts



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www.ljubljana.si
www.2020.si

Contact

Melita Oven, MSc
Head of Schooling Section
Pre-School Education and Schooling Department
City of Ljubljana
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www.ljubljana.si
www.2020.si



Irena Strelec from the City Council Administration has highlighted in her contribution, that street names are still dominated by the names of men. This creates a specific cultural environment and reproduces common history and identity.

Street names represent geographical attractions, landmarks, enterprises, fictional and real persons, heroes and identities. This can show gender bias.

Photo 12: Irena Strelec, senior advisor, City Council Administration Office and Advisor of Commission for naming the districts and streets City of Ljubljana

In order to quantify culture one can therefore examine street names. Thereby the role of women in society can be tackled. By analysing street names it can be shown to which extent a society is gender biased. The process of naming the streets by local authorities can be complex and is influenced by the current political situation. Until 1848 all street names were in German language. Later on the streets should represent Ljubljana as capital city of Slovenia with names of ideological and political leaders as well as poets and writers. Street naming always reflects historical changes. After

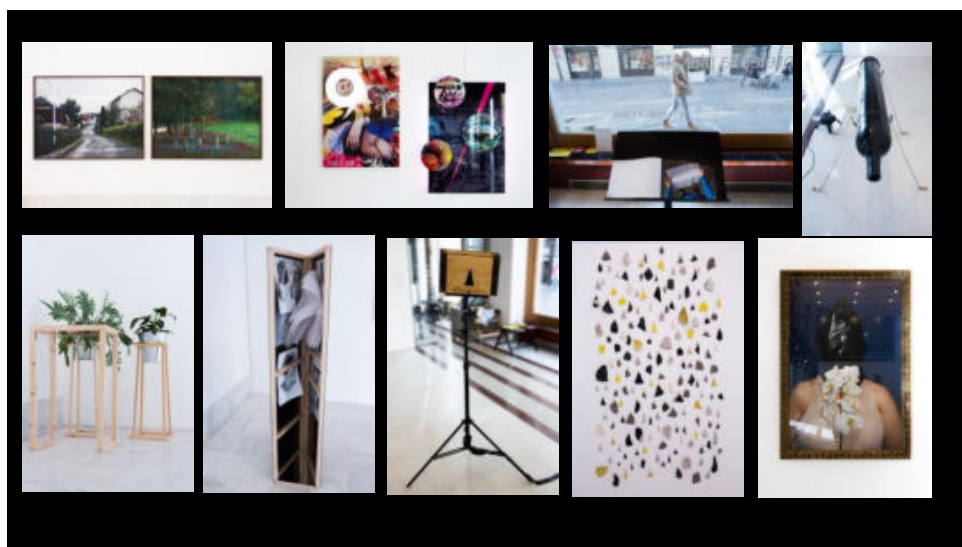
World War 2 50 streets were named after heroes from the war and after the independence of Slovenia in 1991 new names were given. In 1876, one hundred years after the first streets were named, the first street was given the name of an influential woman: the monarch Maria Theresia. Until the end of the 20th century Ljubljana only had 28 streets named after women. In 2017 the City of Ljubljana had 48 streets, around 3% of all streets, named after women. From 2018 onwards 29,41% of new street names were given women's names. It took 100 years to name as many streets after women as it took now in only four years. This shows that the times are changing in favour of women's street names, reflecting the recognition of women as crucial contributors to society.

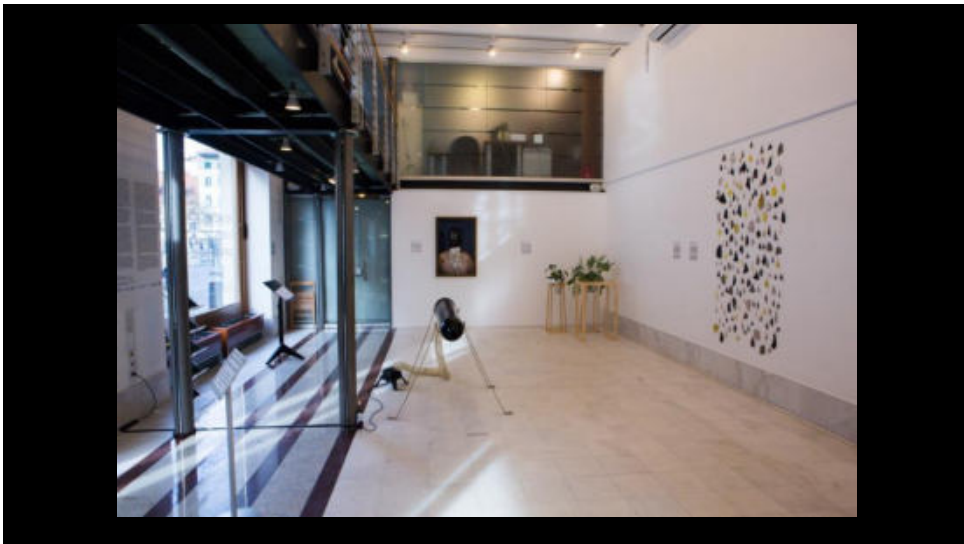
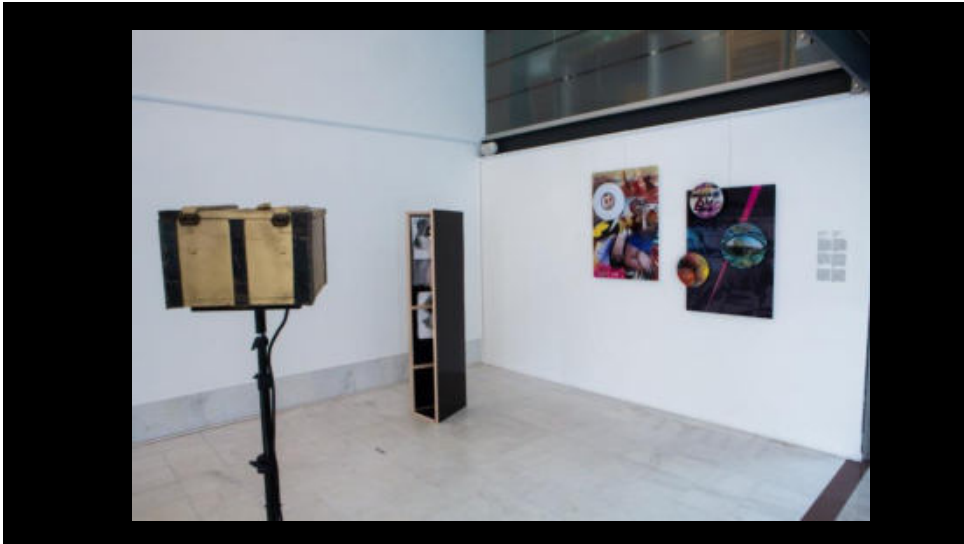


“By allowing art to take one by surprise, one can see the visionary potential of the artworks that gradually change one’s perception of certain social issues.”

Božidar Zrinski, curator of the exhibition
“When he hit the door the second time, I covered the hole with a poster”, Kresjja Gallery, November 2018

Photo 13: Mateja Veble, senior advisor, Department for Culture





Anja, 68.
In collaboration with artist
Tadej Vaukman, 34.
Without title, photograph, 100cm x 70cm, 2018

EXCERPT FROM THE STORY:

My husband was physically and psychologically violent with me for years. He abused me, threatened me, insulted me, humiliated me. I had nowhere to go, and so I stuck it out. It was unbearable. He threatened over and over again that he would kill me. The threats got even worse when he started leaving a knife on the kitchen table or on one of the cabinets. I was afraid he would stab me in my sleep. I could no longer live like that. I fell ill. I sought medical help and decided to get back to safety. I literally ran away.

PROJECT:

Tadej Vaukman uses the photograph of a woman with a black plastic bag over her head to send an unequivocal message about the victim's helplessness and fear in a desperate situation, and about the inconceivable amount of courage she had to muster to escape this terrible ordeal.



<https://zgodbe.drustvo-sos.si/>



Invitation to Field Excursion
3rd March at 3 pm



Galerija Kresija

NE TIČ
NE PTIČKA
NEITHER CHICK
NOR COCK
23. 2.-2. 4. 2023

*Don't miss the exhibition in the Right
Atrium in the City Hall*



thank you for your attention

mateja.veble@ljubljana.si

7. Round Table on: FemCities Network Partners

Speakers:

- Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy
- Spencer Kirpach, Attaché Equality in Municipalities, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men
- Sarah Caquineau, Head of the 'Non sexist city' unit within the Equality department of the City of Nantes
- Sophie Rendl, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs
- Jana Radić, City of Zagreb, Head of Department for Promoting Human Rights and Civil Society (City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society)

Moderation:

- Karima Aziz, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs



Photo 14: Round Table on: FemCities Network Partners; from left: Spencer Kirpach, Sophie Rendl, Sarah Caquineau, Karima Aziz, Jana Radić and Nina Gabryś

Please note: The following discussion has been paraphrased on the basis of the round table discussion. The following are therefore not verbatim quotes of the discussants.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Welcome to the round table on the FemCities Network Partners. We will get to know the FemCities partners on this stage, talk about 'sexism as a challenge to gender equality' in the different local settings,

how the network partners work towards gender equality and what is needed to combat sexism. First, I would like to shortly introduce our discussants – I will do this in alphabetical order of the Cities/Localities they represent:

- From the City of Krakow, one of our newest members and the first City in Poland to join the network, I would like to welcome Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy.
- From the Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men, I would like to introduce Spencer Kirpach, Attaché for Equality in Municipalities.
- From our very newest partner and the first City in France to join FemCities, I would like to introduce Sarah Caquineau, the Head of the 'Non sexist city' unit within the Equality department of the City of Nantes.
- From the Department for Women's Affairs of the City of Vienna welcome to my colleague Sophie Rendl.
- City of Zagreb I welcome Jana Radić, Head of Department for Promoting Human Rights and Civil Society in the City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society

As the conference topic indicates sexism still poses a challenge to gender equality and what we all as FemCities partners have in common is that our administrations are working towards gender equality.

I would like to start from the back now with Jana Radić from the City of Zagreb – a long-time FemCities partner, who have also hosted a FemCities Conference before. You are the Head of Department for Promoting Human Rights and Civil Society and work in the field of gender equality, integration of migrants and civil society. You have co-created the strategic document on gender equality of the City of Zagreb, are in charge of EU project in the field of gender equality and a member of the Gender Equality Commission of Zagreb. The president of the gender equality commission, Rada Borić, member of the Zagreb City Assembly, will also join the round table tomorrow on 'Sexism in Journalism'. Jana Radić, how does Zagreb work towards gender equality and how does sexism pose a challenge to gender equality in your local context?

Jana Radić: There are institutions in the City of Zagreb, which deal with gender equality – the department, which is tasked with integrating the gender equality action plan, this is the second plan in existence. Because there is no action plan on the national level, Zagreb therefore is implementing its own. Furthermore, the European charter on equality in local life was signed by Zagreb, this plan serves as the basis of what is in force now. Zagreb organizes campaigns on different areas of the action plan.



With signing the European Charter came the need for an action plan. This covers the fields of gender sensitive language, research on the gender pay gap, multiple forms of discrimination and the fight against gender based violence. The city assembly adopted an action plan on the protection of domestic violence. Sexism can be found everywhere. It is widespread in Croatia and not an easy issue to point out, awareness is not sufficiently there and often sexism is perceived as normal and harmless. The City of Zagreb does its best to follow the strategy of raising awareness through campaigns in order to decrease it.

Photo 15: from left: Jana Radić, City of Zagreb, Head of Department for Promoting Human Rights and Civil Society (City Office for Culture, International Relations and Civil Society) and Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy

Moderation – Karima Aziz: I would like to move on to our first FemCities member from France - Sarah Caquineau from the City of Nantes. There you are responsible for the development of the non-sexist and LGBTQIA+ city public policy,

whose political ambition is to make Nantes the first non-sexist city in France by 2030. This includes strategies such as inclusive schoolyards, gender budgeting, fight against menstrual poverty/taboo of periods and the animation and empowerment of a local network of the non-sexist city partners. Can we understand the goal of non-sexist to represent gender equality, how does Nantes pursue this goal and how does sexism pose a challenge to gender equality in your local context?

Sarah Caquineau: In order to achieve equality of men and women we need to make sure, that child care is provided, so that women have access to the labour market, especially single mothers. Nantes has set its goal to become the first non-sexist City by 2030. In order to achieve this we are not working on corrective matters, but working on collective



practices. There needs to be a change of perspective and a big commitment. There are laws in existence in France, which cover sexism, however there are few complaints and convictions on this basis. There are still shocking inequalities: most women experience sexist acts, the gender pay gap, harassment in public transport to only name a few. In low-income neighbourhoods, there are many single parent households. In Nantes there is the positive aspect of a strong civil society fighting for their rights. Three types of action are implemented to get rid of inequality: maintaining remedial measures, acting before sexism occurs and the non-sexist-city as collective issue. We try to fight the poverty of women and to ensure, that victims of violence do not have to recount their stories again and again. These victims need secure shelters. However, most centers are handled by NGOs, while in Nantes they are run by the City. Preventing sexism is a structural approach and making the issue a collective matter highlights the need to include many stakeholders.

On the activities of Nantes please also find the presentation below.

Photo 16: Sarah Caquineau, Head of the 'Non sexist city' unit within the Equality department of the City of Nantes

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Now I am switching back to a longer member of FemCities, the Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men. Spencer Kirpach is Attaché for Equality in Municipalities since 2019. Having initially developed a national strategy and support instruments for the municipalities, the team nowadays often visits municipalities, advising policy makers and implementing activities and measures for gender equality in local life, together with the municipal staff. One of your efforts will also be the topic of your workshop after this, so there will be more time to go into detail on the campaign against sexism. How does your ministry work towards gender equality and how does sexism pose a challenge to gender equality in your local context?

Spencer Kirpach: The Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men was created in 1995 following the World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Ministry works exclusively for gender equality. While it is a small department, it is unique. We have meetings with politically responsible persons on the municipal level. We convince them that equality is an important matter and show them good practice examples of how easy it is to boost equality between women and men.



Photo 17: Spencer Kirpach, Attaché Equality in Municipalities, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men

The European Charter, mentioned by Jana, can be intimidating for small municipalities with its 30 measures. Therefore, we adopt a tailor made agreement for small municipalities. We implement equality in teachers' training as well as many interesting programmes and workshops. In my perspective, this brings different local settings to the table, since all municipalities are different in size and population, so it is important to translate measures into different local contexts.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Again to one of our newest members and the first city in Poland to join FemCities. Nina Gabryś – you are the Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy and the chairwoman of the Equal Treatment Council, which was established in Krakow in 2019. You are also Harassment and Discrimination Advisor and co-created the 'One Hundred Years of Women's Voice' Association. Nina Gabryś will also host a workshop after this round table and will join the round table tomorrow on 'Sexism as hate speech', so anything we might not have enough time now for can be covered in the workshop and the round table tomorrow. How does Krakow work towards gender equality and how does sexism pose a challenge to gender equality in your local context?

Nina Gabryś: I am new to the FemCities network and happy to join. In 2018 Krakow set up the equality council and in 2020 my role was established. I started working in 2021 and since then I have managed to develop some crucial programmes: Krakow for equality, implementing the human rights framework with a timetable for its implementation and referring to the units responsible. We are working on different groups, who are being discriminated against. The gender equality plan has different objectives such as the internal strategy of the City Hall. This is an important beginning. One main project is an umbrella project, which enables us to address a lot of issues. We frame Krakow as the City of Queens, a woman with a crown, since before it was always the City of Kings. We celebrate women's rights throughout the whole year, not only on one day. Currently we are running the campaign Krakowianki on women, who are the strength of the city. We strive to empower and support women in business and communicate historic 'herstory' heroines besides many other projects going on.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: From the Department for Women's Affairs of the City of Vienna my colleague Sophie Rendl is here. She is an expert on anti-discrimination and violence against women and girls and has co-founded the association *Frauendomäne*, a Database for female experts (www.frauendomaene.at). She also sits as the Austrian expert on violence protection in the European Women's Lobby and has developed an ombuds agency against violence in the arts and cultural sector in Austria. Today we focus on the activities of the City of Vienna, where you are my colleague in the Department for Women's Affairs. How does the City of Vienna work towards gender equality and how does sexism pose a challenge to gender equality in your local context?

Sophie Rendl: Laws for equality are great, but in Vienna we also have the political commitment and it has a long history. The City administration is qualified to work towards gender equality and there are gender experts in all kind of departments such as gender planning, gender budgeting, women's health amongst others. We work in the division for basic research of the women's affairs department. The department also offers counselling through the women's centre



and the 24-hours-emergency hotline for women as well as funding for women's organizations. Our division focuses on conducting studies and developing evidence based projects, trainings and workshops. We also work on new and developing topics such as climate and gender. One of the biggest challenges however is that Vienna is still sexist, there is still hate speech against female politicians, which can pose a threat to democracy. The question, that needs to be tackled, is how the public deals with sexism. Our effort is to work on sexism in an intersectional way and take an intersectional point of view.

Photo 18: Sophie Rendl, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Thank you for all your interesting contributions. We now have gained some insight into what your City's or Ministry do in their efforts to work towards gender equality and combat sexism. I would like to ask you now for an outlook – what is needed from your perspective and what are your plans or maybe also wishes for the future working towards gender equality and against sexism?

I would like to pose this question again in the program's order and start with Nina Gabryś from Krakow.

Nina Gabryś: One of the biggest challenges is that the election is coming up and that there could be changes. Without the political protection and commitment, it is not possible to work towards equality.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Let's continue with Spencer Kirpach from the Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men. What is needed and what are your plans working towards gender equality and against sexism?

Spencer Kirpach: There are 3 examples of places, which could do better: 1) the topic of language and communication – we have a culture of dealing with many languages on a daily basis in Luxembourg, which can make it complicated; 2) daily situations in work places – there is a programme called positive activities, which works with leaders of companies in the private sector in order to promote equality in daily life in order to promote a good work life balance; 3) the topic of education – we hold many workshops in municipalities and schools, who are interested to implement this in the national curriculum of education, but this needs political commitment.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: The City of Nantes has already set out the goal of becoming a 'Non-sexist city' (see presentation below. Sarah Caquineau, what else is needed in your eyes and what are your plans working towards gender equality and against sexism?

Sarah Caquineau: We need to work on standards inside and outside of the City administration. We are working on how to train colleagues and give clues on what is gender mainstreaming. In external matters, gender budgeting is new in France and very important. We are looking forward in Nantes to integrate it.

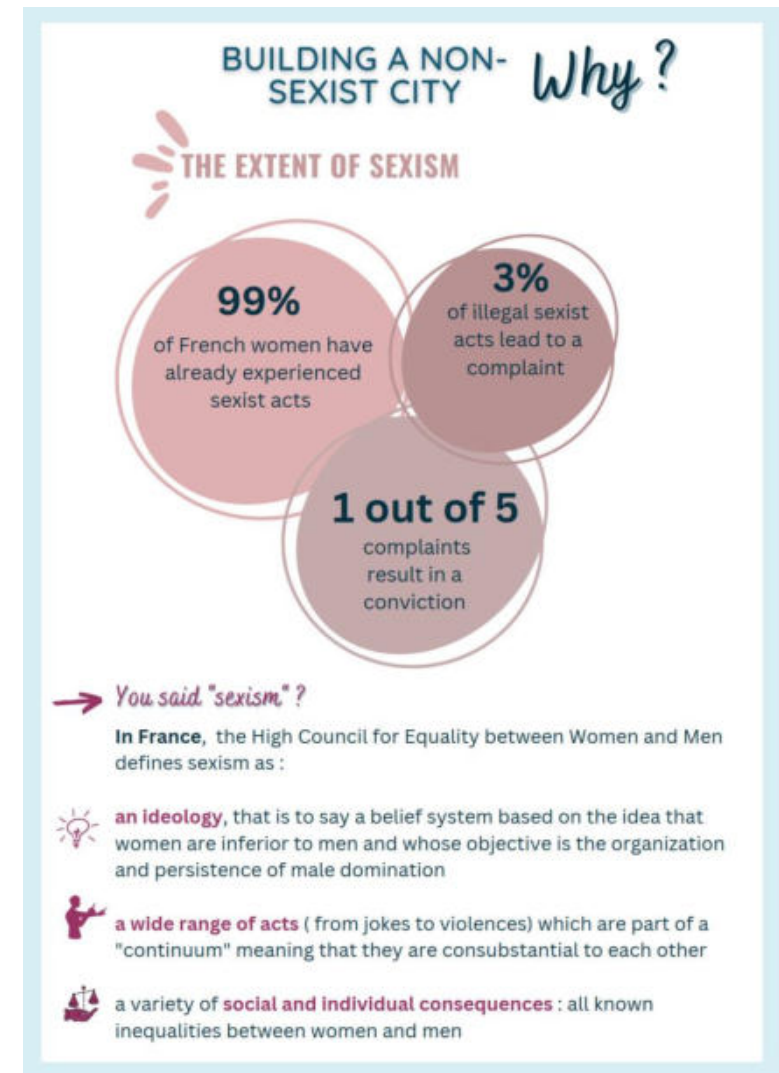
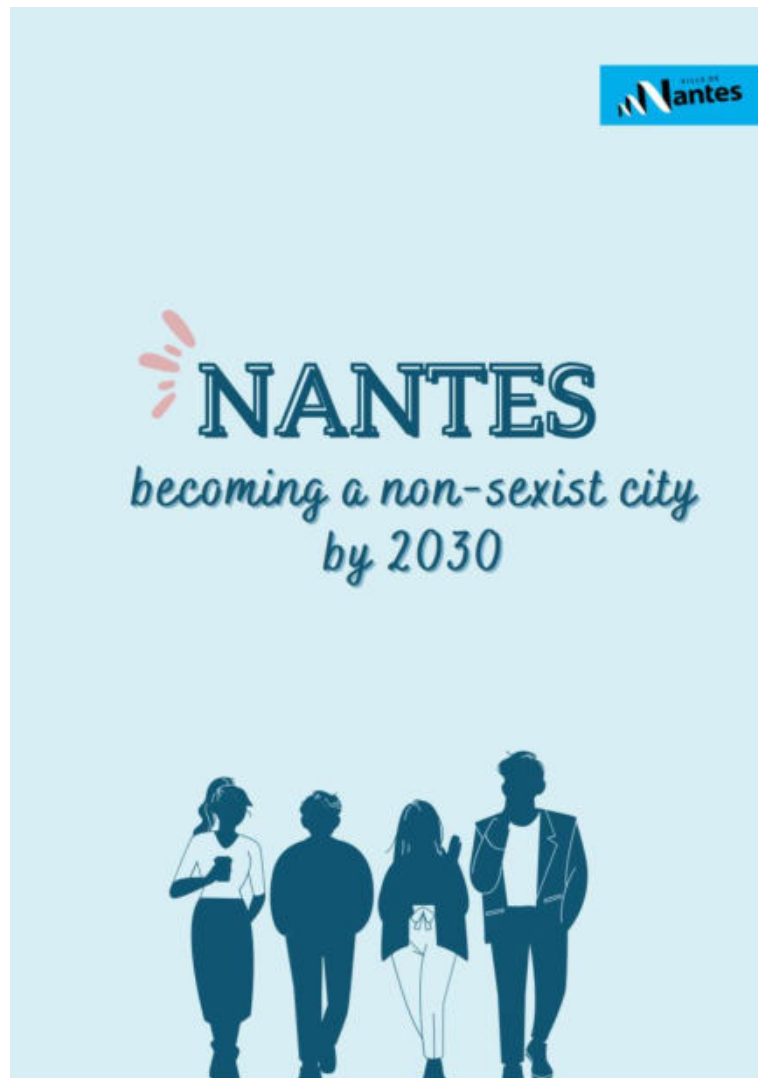
Moderation – Karima Aziz: Sophie Rendl, what would you say is still need to tackle sexism and how will the City of Vienna continue its efforts towards gender equality?

Sophie Rendl: Gender stereotypes are an issue, we need to include men and other genders in the discussion and persuade men to change their narratives, because everyone benefits from overcoming stereotypes. We need to actively fight everyday sexism, which is in all of us, and reflect on own biases, not only about sexism.

Moderation – Karima Aziz: Last but not least - Jana Radić from the City of Zagreb, what is needed and what are your plans working towards gender equality and against sexism?

Jana Radić: We have an ongoing project confronting stereotypes from an early age. We train teachers and staff in kindergartens, raise awareness about their own stereotypes and try to promote more girls in STEM professions.

7.1. Nantes becoming a non-sexist city by 2030



BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *Why?*

THE COST OF SEXISM

→ **Sexism** has important consequences whether :

symbolic : breaking the french republican motto "liberty/equality/fraternity"

concrete : inequalities, discriminations and violences resulting in a deterioration of mental and physical health for victims and families of victims

financial : the actual impact on public budget

€118 billion / year on the French economy



The total cost of inequality is €118 billion of which :

- €3.6 billion to domestic violence
- €89.3 billion to virile/manly behavior
- €22.15 billion to economic inequality
- €3.6 billion to health



Individually, rape "costs" the victim between 60,000 and 810,00€
The pay gap "costs" women 5,420 euros per year and in couple they spend 25 169 euros more than their husband

BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *How?*

3 TYPES OF ACTIONS

1

Maintaining remedial measures

For over 20 years, we have been committed to fighting gender inequalities. Where there is an inequality, we are reaching to compensate for it.

- ↪ *women only "wage negotiation training"*
- ↪ *shelters for women victims of violence*

2

Acting before sexism occurs

From now on, it is a matter of looking at each public policy, to avoid participating, even involuntarily, in sexism

- ↪ *gender budgeting*
- ↪ *inclusive schoolyards*

3

The non-sexist city, a collective issue

The non-sexist city is seen as a geographical and social space, not limited to the administration: everyone must act at their own level

- ↪ *the non-sexist network*

BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *How?*

5 MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS

Equality in life choices and trajectories

Equality in visibility and representation

Equality in access to law and services

Equality in the uses of the city

Equality in the power to say and to act

RESOURCES



One Deputy Mayor for the non-sexist city



A dedicated department with a team of three for the non-sexist city, part of the Equality Department



A growing budget 250 000€ a year to support associations in addition to the projects budget

BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *Examples*

MENSTRUAL TABOO & ACCESS TO PERIOD PRODUCTS

93%

of French women have hidden their period products at least once out of shame

€8000

is the average lifetime expenditure of a woman on period products

1 out of 10

women is subject to period poverty and cannot afford to buy menstrual products

How a non-sexist city can act ?

- ➔ By providing free and easily accessible dispensers of menstrual products in the city (already 30 and more to come)
- ➔ By Fighting the taboo of menstruation through public awareness



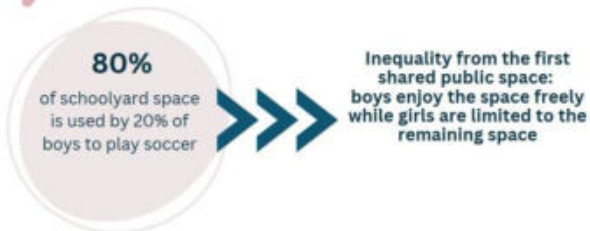
The menstrual protections chosen are safe and without controversial substances. The placement of these dispensers, in public space, helps to fight against the taboo of menstruation.

Art exhibitions in public spaces



BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *Examples*

INEQUALITIES IN THE SCHOOLYARD



How a non-sexist city can act ?

➔ **Action must be taken on both the equipment and the practices of the kids**

Equipment : Building schoolyard differently: move away sports fields, increase natural areas

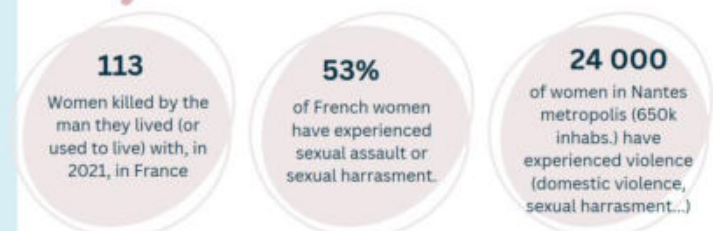
Practices : train educators, teach children to share space, provide more mixed games, collective and less stereotyped activities.



New schoolyard designed with the children

BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *Examples*

GENDER BASED VIOLENCES



How a non-sexist city can act ?

➔ **A support center for women victims of violence.**

Is opened 24/7

Welcomes all women and their children

Provides psychological and legal support with a multidisciplinary team and partner structures

Is of course free of charge

Do not require any appointment

Since november 2019, near 3000 women came. Between 2 and 3 women come each day.



<https://www.nantescitadelles.fr/>



BUILDING A NON-SEXIST CITY *Examples*



GENDER BUDGETING



How a non-sexist city can act ?



First, question whether the collection (taxes, service payment, etc.) **and distribution of financial resources** (grants to associations, investment in equipment, operation of services, etc.) **strengthen or reduce inequalities between women and men.**

Then, depending on the results, initiating changes in the budget to better enforce quality.

In the long term, train all the staff so they have the "GB reflex" and adopt a gender perspective prior to the formulation of public policies.

Nantes started an experiment in 2023 with 2 budget items such as the music conservatory (in France, there is only one percent of female composers and 4% of female conductors) . Finally, regarding social life, aid schemes for projects and citizen initiatives will be scrutinized (studies have shown that women submit fewer projects, ask for less money and that their proposals are less often chosen by the inhabitants).



CITY OF NANTES
Equality Department

8. Parallel Workshops hosted by FemCities Network Partners

8.1. Workshop 1: Why are there so few statues of women in our cities?

Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy



Photo 19: Workshop by Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy

The presentation for this workshop is forthcoming.

8.2. Workshop 2: Stop Sexism! See it. Name it. Stop it. – Campaign against Sexism

Spencer Kirpach and Patrick Kleinbauer, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men



Photo 20: Workshop by Spencer Kirpach and Patrick Kleinbauer, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality between Women and Men



KEY POINTS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Launch date 23th November 2022

In collaboration with the Council of Europe

Based on the 2019 Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism of the Council of Europe



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Objectives:

- provide a definition of sexism
- show-case its various aspects
- prompt behavioural changes

Key elements:

- 7 spots, shown on TV, in cinemas, in social media channels, public, commercial and news websites
- 1 radio spot
- 1 action page (thematic website)
- 1 brochure

WHAT IS SEXISM?

Sexism is any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behavior, based upon the **idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex**, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline, with the purpose or effect of:

- violating the inherent **dignity** or **rights**
- resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or socio-economic **harm or suffering**
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive **environment**
- constituting a **barrier to the autonomy** and full realization of human rights
- maintaining and **reinforcing gender stereotypes**



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WHO IS AFFECTED?

Sexism affects mostly women. It can also affect men and boys when they don't conform to stereotyped gender roles.

Sexism is neither restricted to an ethical background, a gender or similar. But the **harmful impact of sexism** can be worse for some women and men due to their ethnicity, age disability, social origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or other factors.



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WHERE DO WE ENCOUNTER SEXISM?

IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE



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LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language and communication matter because they make people visible or invisible and recognize or demean their contribution to society. Our language shapes our thought, and the way we think influences our actions. Gender-blind or discriminatory language reinforces sexist attitudes and behavior.

Therefore, language and communication are never neutral. They can either be social and cultural carriers that can fuel sexism, or they can also play a key role in the fight against sexism.



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MEDIA, INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The gender stereotypes conveyed in the media **condition our view of the concepts of "masculinity" and "femininity"** and guide the decisions **affecting individual choices** for professional and private life. After all, it is important to avoid that the images conveyed reinforce gender discrimination or incite violence against girls and women.

Children and others are **bombarded with sexist media messages** and influenced by them. Such messages limit their own choices in life. They **give the impression that men are the keepers of knowledge and power** and that **women are objects** and it's ok to comment freely on their appearance. Online sexism pushes women out of online spaces. Online sexism can cause very real harm. Abusing or mocking someone online creates a permanent digital record that can be further disseminated and is difficult to erase.



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WORKPLACE

Workplace sexism **undermines** the **efficiency** of victims and their **sense of belonging**. Silencing through sexism means that **ideas or talents are ignored** or under-used. Belittling comments **create an intimidating/oppressive atmosphere** for those confronted with them and can degenerate in violence/harassment. **Victims** may develop **higher anxiety levels**, be more prone to outbursts and **depression**. More generally, sexism leads to lower salaries and fewer opportunities for those confronted with it.



PUBLIC SECTOR

Public institutions

The **public sector** has a **duty to lead by example**. Sexism in parliaments is very common but it **limits the opportunities** and freedom of women in parliaments, be they elected or staff.

Public services, public spaces

Sexism **undermines equal access to public services**. Sexism in public spaces **limits women's freedom of movement**. Sexism can lead to violence and creates an oppressive environment preventing mostly women from fully participating in public life.

Sexism is also common in public spaces, such as on the streets, in public transport, on sports fields or swimming pools. It not only causes psychological damage to victims, but also hinders their freedom of movement, as it **can lead people to avoid public places**.



JUSTICE

There are **many examples** in the justice system where **sexist behavior or opinions can harm people**: A judge implying to a victim of sexual violence that she was 'asking for it'; a law professional commenting on the appearance of a woman who is a colleague; a police officer not taking an allegation of violence against women seriously or trivializing it.

Such behavior **can lead to victims dropping cases**. They create **distrust in the justice system**. They can lead to misinformed judgments. They demean women and can push them out of legal professions.



EDUCATION

The **textbooks and teaching materials** used in the classroom implicitly communicate culture and values. They **have a great impact on the image that children and young people have of the world around them**. One important aspect is the **representation of girls and boys**, women and men and **their place in society**, which can have an impact on the development of identity and on students' career choices. Indeed, gender **stereotypes** influence, often unconsciously, the behavior of boys and girls. Acting as a psychological barrier, they **can limit children and youth in their choice of leisure activities, studies or professions**.



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CULTURE AND SPORTS

Both **culture and sport are shapers of attitudes**. If women and men are depicted in stereotyped ways, this will feed into gender stereotyping. When **mostly men are visible in these areas**, this influences the way women are seen as potential artists or athletes and **narrows the range of role models for children** and young people. Gender stereotypes limit the choice of women/men, girls/boys to practice sports that are not considered "feminine" or "masculine"; this **leads to self-censorship**.



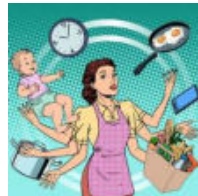
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PRIVATE SPHERE

According to the WHO, a person's **mental health** is defined "as a state of well-being that enables him/her to **achieve their potential, cope with** the normal **challenges of life, work successfully** and productively, and be able to **contribute to the community**."

This definition indeed contains the **primacy of "having to function" in our society**. And it is primarily boys and men who have been raised to be tough, stoic, and manly, rather than being encouraged to talk about their emotions and show their vulnerability.



Unpaid work weighs on women's participation in the labour market, on their **economic independence** as well as on their **participation in sport and leisure activities**. Toys (e.g. a tiny kitchen or a construction game) influence gender roles, but also future study or career choices.



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THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING!



8.3. Workshop 3: Power, abuse, men: #metoo as an example of social media activism and its limits

Claudia Throm, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs Vienna




Photo 21: Workshop by Claudia Throm, City of Vienna, Department for Women's Affairs Vienna

Power, abuse, men: #metoo as an example of social media activism and its limits

A workshop by Claudia Throm
FemCities conference March 2023

Stadt
Wien | Frauenservice Wien



Input

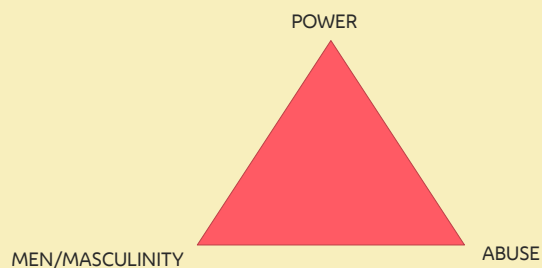
- The triangle: power, abuse, men/masculinity
- The case of Harvey Weinstein
- Strategies of perpetrators
- Social media – positive effects for victims
- Social media – negative effects on victims

Discussion



'Power, abuse, men' - a workshop by Claudia Throm

2



'Power, abuse, men' - a workshop by Claudia Throm

3

Strategies of perpetrators

The example of Harvey Weinstein

- Choose victims less powerful than you
- No witnesses
- Guilt trip your victim
- Escalate the situation quickly
- Retaliation / threat of retaliation
- Smear campaign against the victim
- Physical overpowering
- Use legal strategies – nondisclosure agreements
- payoffs



'Power, abuse, men' - a workshop by Claudia Throm

4

Sexual harassment or assault

Women who said they had been sexually harassed or assaulted by Weinstein include

1. Adrian Andrews, actress	56. Katherine Healy, actress
2. Lyndee Anthony, actress	57. Heather Hill, actress
3. Ann Aronson, actress and director	58. Julia Garner, actress
4. Rosalind Wiseman, author	59. Melissa Joan Martin, singer and model
5. Jessica Barr, actress	60. Roseanne Barr, actress
6. Kate Beckinsale, actress	61. Lizzy Caplan, actress
7. Julianna Burchick, screenwriter	62. Gigi Chasson, model and actress
8. Dana Brunetti, actress	63. Andrea Dworkin, actress
9. Melissa Etheridge, singer	64. Emma Garner, author and daughter of Lily Tomlin
10. Zoe Lister-Jones, model	65. Anna Louise, author and daughter of Lily Tomlin
11. Cynthia Rice, actress	66. Laura Miskin, television producer
12. Lisa Compitelli, writer and editor	67. Melissa McCarthy, actress
13. Roseanne Colton, producer	68. Jessica Mann, former "Project Runway" judge
14. Roseanne Colton, television producer	69. Juliana Margulies, actress
15. Marina Clougher, actress and writer	70. Tedd Mandel, actress
16. Megan Conroy, actress	71. Sarah Jane Morris, actress, comedian, and writer
17. Lisa Compitelli, writer and editor	72. Ashley Matthews, actress
18. Cynthia Rice, actress	73. Rose McGowan, actress
19. Paz de la Huerta, actress	74. Rachel McAdams, actress
20. Julianna Burchick, screenwriter	75. Stephen Morris, administrative assistant
21. Dana Brunetti, actress	76. Alycia Osherson, TV producer and host of "Fashion for Body Positivity"
22. Sophie Okonedo, actress	77. Emily Nelsie, television producer
23. Jane Doe, model and aspiring actress	78. Jennifer Sackett, documentary filmmaker and actress
24. Lucy Dorn, actress and filmmaker	79. Emma Stone, actress
25. Helen Edmunds, actress	80. Rachel Watson, actress
26. Carter Cruise, actress	81. Lydia Hearst, actress
27. Dawn Cunniff, actress	82. Lauren O'Connell, television producer
28. Lisa Edds, actress and director	83. Cheryl Patrick, actress
29. Alex Faria, actress	84. Samantha Rodriguez, former model
30. Lucia Evans, former "Lara Croft" actress	85. Zaida Perdomo, television producer
31. Angel Chen, model and actress	86. Jojo Whilden, actress and businesswoman
32. Cheri Fink, actress	87. Sarah Fyrie, actress, writer, and director
33. Monica Garcia, actress	

List of 107 victims of assault and 20 victims of rape, who spoke out
Source: [Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse cases - Wiki](#)

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If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet. pic.twitter.com/k2oeCiuFgn

— Alyssa Milano (@Alyssa_Milano) October 15, 2017

Positive effects of social media for victims of sexual harassment/violence

- Engage in a public discussion
- Break taboos
- Bring attention to single cases
- Providing a space for victims to raise their voice under their own conditions

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Negative effects of social media for victims of sexual harassment/violence



- Architecture of social media is often in favor of the perpetrators
- Forums on women-hate
- Threats against women
- Silencing women in public discussion

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Time of discussion – Any Questions?

- Your thoughts / opinion / take on the triangle
- Examples from your country of the role of social media in cases of sexual assault
- What are other positive/negative aspects of social media in your opinion, when it comes to speaking out on violence against women
- Counter-strategies to deal with powerful abusive men



Stadt
Wien

'Power, abuse, men' - a workshop by Claudia Throm

8

**Thank you for your
participation and
listening!**

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9. Keynote Speech: It's the end of the world as we know it: Anti-Gender Backlash in Europe

Roman Kuhar, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts



Synopsis:

Roman Kuhar was talking about the anti-gender movement in Europe. The anti-gender movement has gained momentum in recent years, with various incidents and statements from political figures highlighting its growing influence. The movement began in Europe with mass protests against marriage equality in France in 2013 and has since spread to other regions. The movement is characterized by new forms of mobilization and discourse that seek to appeal to a broader audience beyond traditional conservative circles. In 2011, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro vowed to fight against gender ideology in schools. Poland's ruling party, Law and Justice, has declared LGBT movements and gender as threats, while Hungary and Romania have introduced legislation that opposes gender identity and related studies. Croatia, Slovakia, and Poland have seen numerous protests against the Istanbul Convention, LGBT rights, and restrictive abortion laws.

Photo 22: Roman Kuhar, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

The common denominator in these attacks is the concept of "gender ideology" or "gender theory," which has been picked up as a fact by politicians and media. This movement seeks to address wider audiences and mobilize new forms of resistance, often driven by religious or conservative backgrounds. Research on anti-gender campaigns reveals the movement's portrayal of gender ideology as a conspiracy theory, an empty signifier that can be filled with various issues such as same-sex marriage, reproductive rights, sex education, adoption, abortion, and political correctness. This struggle is seen as a battle between men and women, rather than between capital and the working class.

He stated that high-profile figures like Pope Francis have condemned gender ideology as "ideological colonization," while others claim it is worse than communism and Nazism combined. The movement's origins can be traced back to the 1990s, with the Vatican expressing reservations about the term "gender" and its implications on the equal dignity and rights of men and women.

The anti-gender movement is not solely a religious project, as it includes a wide range of actors, such as academics, politicians, businesspeople, and media. These groups unite under the narrative of defending nature, nation, and normalcy, with international cooperations like "Mum Dad and Kids" and "Agenda Europe" supporting their cause.

Roman Kuhar presented a variety of pictures, which show their strategy, presenting themselves as modern and secular, hiding religious connections, and using self-victimization to gain sympathy. Actions include demonstrations, petitions, lobbying, referendum campaigns, and social media.

The success of the anti-gender movement can be attributed to its strategic reinforcement of uncertainties about fundamental ontological questions and offering simple solutions. It capitalizes on crises of knowledge, liberal democracy, equality, and masculinity, as well as societal homophobia and transphobia.

He closed his keynote speech with a with an estimation on the movement's impact which from his point of you poses a danger to progressive values. However, this challenge also provides an opportunity for feminists and LGBT activists to create new spaces of freedom and solidarity. The rise of the anti-gender movement should be seen as a call to action for defenders of equality and human rights.

Presentation:

Introduction

This is Brazilian president Bolsonaro in May 2020 in conversation with a group of children chanting »Mr. President, we, children, don't like gender ideology«. This scene is a reaction to the Brazilian Supreme Court, which ruled against a ban on discussing gender in schools. In January 2019 then newly elected president Bolsonaro promised in his inauguration speech that »his administration will fight against gender ideology«. Similarly, in april 2019 Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of the Polish party Law and Justice claimed that the LGBT movement and gender are a danger to our identity, our nation and our state. In October 2018 the Hungarian government removed gender studies from a list of approved MA programs. They claimed that there is no need for these graduates in the labor market and that these studies do not fit into Christianity and their Christian values. Similarly in June 2019 the Romanian parliament adopted a law that bans any reference to gender identity in schools and universities, but it was later rejected by the Romanian president. In december 2013 a constitutional referendum was held in Croatia in order to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. It was coordinated by organization U ime obitelji (In the name of the family), who was also behind numerous protests against the Croatian government's intention in 2018 to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Protesters claimed that the Convention is introducing 'gender ideology' into the Croatian legal and educational system. Similarly in Slovakia gender was one of the buzzwords during their referendum campaign in 2015 about the definition of a family and the rights of same-sex couples. In October 2016, thousands of demonstrators filled streets across Poland to protest the ruling party Law and Justice, which wanted to enact a complete abortion ban. Since then, women's rights and LGBT activists and organizations in Poland remain under attack with some polish cities introducing LGBT-free zones. The Polish president Duda went as far as to claim that LGBT people are not people, but rather an ideology.

All these examples are just a few among numerous attacks on women's rights, LGBT rights and similar policies in the recent years. All these mobilizations had one common denominator: that of »gender ideology« or – as it is sometime called – »gender theory«.

The turning point for the anti-gender movement in Europe were mass protests against marriage equality in France in 2013 – organized by the Manif pour tous. According to some estimation nearly one million people protested against the French government, which opened up the institution of marriage for same-sex couples. It was during these protests and some other similar mobilizations in Europe in the following years that the term »gender theory« became a matter of fact: it was picked up by the mainstream media, politicians started to refer to "gender ideology" in their speeches and eventually it also became a term used among general population. Today, this phenomenon is known as the anti-gender movement. After its initial successes in Europe, the movement soon spread to Latin America, Africa and elsewhere.

The anti-gender movement should not be understood as a continuation of earlier forms of conservative resistance to gender equality and sexual politics. Rather, it is new resistance based on new forms of mobilization, new types of actions, and new discourses that portray anti-gender actors as rational, active citizens whose actions are based on

common sense. In this way, the anti-gender movement seeks to appeal to a broader audience, not just the traditional circles of conservative groups.¹

The roots of the anti-gender movement

The anti-gender movement alternately uses three terms – “gender ideology”, “gender theory,” or “genderism” – to indicate the danger posed by issues related to intimate/sexual citizenship. Gender equality policies, they argue, no longer aim to guarantee equal rights but to deny biological facts about men and women, promote gender fluidity, and abolish traditional gender roles, including the role of mother and father. “Gender ideology” is thus understood as a kind of conspiracy theory, a form of social engineering that interferes with the “natural order”. It can be understood as an empty signifier that can be filled with very different and sometimes contradictory meanings.² As an empty signifier, “gender ideology” is a marker for same-sex marriage, reproductive rights, sex education in schools, adoption, abortion, political correctness, as well as for questioning democracy, social sciences, the functioning of international organizations (UN, WHO or EU) and the adoption of international treaties (such as the Istanbul Convention), all of which are perceived as an attack on the “silent majority”. In Eastern Europe in particular, the anti-gender movement represents “gender ideology” in terms of a neo-colonial logic, according to which the decadent West seeks to impose its “sexual delusion” on the rest of the world.³ Related to this is the idea that “gender ideology” is a sign of former communist elites trying to establish a new cultural revolution after the failed political project of socialism. The assumption is that the struggle is no longer in the relationship between the capital and the working class, but in the relationship between men and women. Indeed, “gender ideology” is often classified as new Marxism or Marxism 2.0.⁴

The movement has Catholic roots and is based on the conflict between two concepts: equal rights (gender equality) and equal dignity of men and women. The emergence of the term “gender ideology” can be traced back to developments following the 1994 UN Conference on Population in Cairo and the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. During these two conferences, the term “gender” began to appear in official United Nations documents, replacing the more essentialist term “sex”. At that time, the Vatican and several other countries expressed explicit reservations about the term “gender”. For them, the idea that the roles of men and women are socially constructed is at odds with their notions of a “natural family” in which both men and women have their own roles defined by their biological differences. For these reasons, the Vatican has sought to promote the idea of the “equal dignity” of men and women, rather than equality regardless of gender.⁵

Actors and strategies of the anti-gender movement

Today, the anti-gender movement goes beyond specific religious affiliations. As Eszter Kováts and Maari Põim⁶ point out, the vague notion of “gender ideology” acts as a symbolic glue that enables cooperation between different actors

¹ Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte, eds., *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality* (London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

² Stefanie Mayer and Birgit Sauer, “‘Gender Ideology’ in Austria: Coalitions around an Empty Signifier,” in *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*, ed. Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte (London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 23–40.

³ Agnieszka Graff and Elżbieta Korolczuk, *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003133520>.

⁴ Tadej Strehovec, “Zakonska Zveza v Perspektivi Drugega Vatikanskega Koncila,” *Bogoslovni Vestnik*, no. 2 (2013): 233–49.

⁵ Mary Anne Case, “The Role of the Popes in the Invention of Complementarity and the Vatican’s Anathematization of Gender,” *Religion & Gender* 6, no. 2 (2016): 155–72.

⁶ Eszter Kováts and Maari Põim, *Gender as Symbolic Glue* (FEPS, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/11382.pdf>.

despite their many differences. The network of the anti-gender movement therefore includes family associations, pro-life groups, radical nationalist parties, right-wing populists, and allies from the media, academia, or the business world. In some countries, such as Poland or Hungary, anti-gender ideology has become the official ideology of political elites in power.

The anti-gender actors also form international coalitions, as in the case of the European Citizens' Initiative for the Protection of Marriage and Family "Mum, Dad and Kids"⁷ or the "One of Us"⁸ initiative. There are advocacy networks and organizations such as the European Center for Law and Justice, Alliance Defending Freedom International, and Agenda Europe. The latter links 150 organizations and individuals in 30 different countries. Their goals are to ban same-sex marriage, ban divorce, ban same-sex adoption, ban artificial insemination, legalize home-schooling, and abolish equality legislation at the EU level.⁹

One of the first transnational tools to promote the alleged danger of "gender ideology" was the creation of the CitizenGO platform in 2013, whose goal is to "defend life, family and freedom around the world". According to its website, it consists of over 17 million active citizens who "prevent radical lobbies from imposing their agenda on society".¹⁰ It operates in 12 different languages primarily on the basis of collecting signature for anti-gender petitions.

In most cases, the movement tries to hide its religious connections and creates a secularized self-image. It presents itself as a rational, reasonable actor raising its voice because things have simply gone too far. Often this movement also employs a strategy of self-victimization, portraying itself as the true defenders of oppressed people, a majority that is silent or even silenced by powerful lobbies and elites. They also present themselves as the saviours of national authenticity in the face of international powers. An important part of their activity is the so-called walk through the institutions, in which they try to have their representatives occupy important positions in consultative or decision-making bodies of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the like. They also use the tool of amicus briefs and other forms of strategic litigation to intervene in legal cases involving issues of intimate or sexual citizenship in an attempt to influence the decisions of the courts.¹¹

If we look at the logos of anti-gender campaigns, we can notice many similarities. Most often they are depicted with a silhouette of what they consider a natural family. All of them have two children – a boy and a girl – except Russia and recently Mexico, where they have three children. In some other cases, the logo consists of a hand protecting the children from gender-based threats. What seems to unite them is the image of the "innocent child" – and thus of the family and the nation – which are at the heart of anti-gender discourse (Picture 1).

⁷ "European Citizens' Initiative: Mum, Dad & Kids," 2015, https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2015/000006_en.

⁸ "European Citizens' Initiative: One of Us," 2012, https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000005_en.

⁹ Neil Datta, *Restoring the Natural Order* (Brussels: EPF, 2018), https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/rtno__EN_epf_online_2021.pdf.

¹⁰ "CitizenGo: Defending Life, Family, and Freedom across the World," 2013, <https://www.citizengo.org/>.

¹¹ Kuhar and Paternotte, *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*; Graff and Korolczuk, *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*; Kováts and Pöim, *Gender as Symbolic Glue*.



Picture 1 – Logos of anti-gender organizations

The discourse of anti-gender actors is based on what Ruth Wodak¹² calls the politics of fear. The alleged danger posed by gender is translated into short messages that incite fear, moral panic, and a sense of threat, but also allude to essentialist notions of what is normal and natural. The notion of “gender ideology” plays on people’s deep-rooted anxieties about sexuality, especially homosexuality, and gender roles. In this way, it creates the desired populist effect: aversion, but also anger and moral panic.¹³

The success of the anti-gender movement

From this brief description of the contemporary anti-gender movement, it can be concluded that gender and sexuality are now at the center of struggles for cultural and political hegemony. But what makes the anti-gender project such a successful platform for populist politics in the 21st century?

The most general answer to this question is that the anti-gender movement strategically reinforces the uncertainties associated with the fundamental ontological questions of humanity, including gender as one of the most basic and important indicators of our identity. At the same time, it offers a very simple but reassuring and strategically formulated response to these uncertainties and, more generally, to the current political, economic, social, and cultural changes that are being presented as a crisis. In fact, the anti-gender project, both in terms of political movement and discourse, can be understood as a response to four interrelated crises: the crisis of liberal democracy and the problems caused by neoliberalism, the crisis of masculinity, the crisis of equality, and the crisis of knowledge (epistemic crisis).

Most current research links the anti-gender movement and anti-gender ideology to the negative economic and social consequences of neoliberalism. The assumption is that the collapse of the welfare state and the culture of commercialization of our everyday lives, as well as the rise of individualism, have caused anti-gender discourse to fall on fertile ground, especially among the victims of neoliberalism, those who were left behind. Graff and Korolczuk claim that anti-genderism is “structured and legitimized as a conservative response to the excesses of neoliberalism.”¹⁴ Their main argument is that the people are the victims of corrupt elites and gain a sense of agency by adopting anti-gender rhetoric. They become proactive citizens and defenders of traditional values.

Some scholars who see the anti-gender project as a response to the crisis of neoliberalism specifically link it to the failures of liberal democracy and democratic representation. In the context of the European Union, the anti-gender project is interpreted as a reaction to the image that the EU conveys, namely that the EU is based on human rights,

¹² Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (London: Sage, 2015).

¹³ Kuhar and Paternotte, *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*.

¹⁴ Graff and Korolczuk, *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*, 11.

which is understood primarily as the protection of minorities, while at the same time social provisions are being dismantled. According to Grzebalska, Kováts, and Pető (2007), anti-genderism is a rejection of the current socio-economic order, which prioritizes “identity politics over material issues and the weakening of people's social, cultural, and political security (...)”.¹⁵

Specifically in the context of Eastern Europe, Elena Zacharenko points out that the anti-gender movement feeds on disenchantment with the creation of equal economic standards with the rest of Europe – a project that has obviously failed. “What was imported instead,” she claims, “often with a patronising attitude, were lessons on ‘correct’ attitudes and values.”¹⁶ This is precisely why LGBT activists and feminists are considered elite; it is the success of equality and identity politics that sets them apart as such.

However, this is only part of the story; the success of the anti-gender movement and the viewing of feminists and LGBT people as elites is also related to societal homo-/transphobia and non-acceptance of lifestyle diversity, which is only reinforced by economic and social dissolutions. Legal protection of sexual minorities is seen as “ideological colonization” – a term often used by Pope Francis when referring to “gender ideology”. The antipode of ideological colonization is tradition, including the traditional family and traditional relationships between men and women. This is where the anti-gender movement and the radical right meet: in the family. For the anti-gender actors, the traditional family is an opposition to “abnormal” LGBT+ lifestyles or radical feminism, and for the radical right, the traditional family is the core of their nationalism and nativism.

The second stream of studies interprets the success of the anti-gender movement as a response to the crisis of masculinity. Some men are seen as the losers of equality policies and the successes of feminism and gender mainstreaming. The crisis arises from the new and not entirely clear position of men in contemporary society and in the family. This manifests itself in many ways – from the claim that boys are disadvantaged in school because of female teachers and gender equality policies, to the threat to heterosexual men from the normalization and legal protection of homosexuality, to the interpretation that migrant workers are taking “our jobs”, etc. The anti-gender movement is therefore seen as an attempt to restore the supposedly natural role of men as patriarch of the family. It is an attempt to restore the authority of men who believe that they have been replaced by women, LGBT+ people and migrants. Birgit Sauer¹⁷ calls this “masculinist identity politics,” which is largely based on creating a crisis situation, a situation of fears and anxieties, and on the other hand, facilitating the generation of anger and rage at “the others,” at those who are held responsible for this situation, including the advocates of so-called “gender ideology”.

This is related to yet another line of explanation of the successes of the anti-gender movement, which can be called “equality fatigue”. Equality fatigue is a position of being fed up with equality politics, “woke culture”, political correctness ... and seeing them as excessive. Equality fatigue is the belief that equality has already been achieved and that feminists and other minorities seek special protection and additional – not equal – rights and benefits. This claim can be understood as tapping into broader forms of “fatigue”, particularly in terms of disillusionment with discourses of human rights as spearheaded by transnational organisations and state-sponsored programmes, and broader disillusionment with the promises of democratic transformation in post-socialist societies.¹⁸

The fourth crisis from which the anti-gender movement capitalises is the epistemic crisis, a growing distrust into science, especially the social sciences. It is a struggle over the legitimacy of academic work, especially gender and

¹⁵ Weronika Grzebalska, Eszter Kováts, and Andrea Pető, “Gender as Symbolic Glue: How ‘Gender’ Became an Umbrella Term for the Rejection of the (Neo)Liberal Order,” *Political Critique: Long Reads, Network 4 Debate* (blog), 2017, <https://politicalcritique.org/long-read/2017/gender-as-symbolic-glue-how-gender-became-an-umbrella-term-for-the-rejection-of-the-neoliberal-order/>.

¹⁶ Elena Zacharenko, “The Neoliberal Fuel to the Anti-Gender Movement,” *Green European Journal*, 2019, 1–5.

¹⁷ Birgit Sauer, “Authoritarian Right-Wing Populism as Masculinist Identity Politics. The Role of Affects,” in *Right-Wing Populism and Gender*, ed. Gabriele Dietze and Julia Roth (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2020), 23–40.

¹⁸ Kristen Ghodsee, “A Tale of ‘Two Totalitarianisms’: The Crisis of Capitalism and the Historical Memory of Communism,” *History of the Present* 4, no. 2 (2014): 115–42.

related studies. Anti-gender actors are important contributors to this crisis because they are concerned not only with political power but also with epistemic power.¹⁹ Alternative knowledge production is one of their main political strategies. In some countries, gender departments and gender studies at universities have been attacked and denounced as nests of “gender ideology” and unscientific work. Often dismissed as a waste of public money, gender studies are constructed as ideological, unscientific, and in contradiction to the supposedly indisputable findings of the natural sciences, especially biology. For this reason, the anti-gender movement seeks to develop into an alternative field of knowledge production that aims to dismantle post-structural research in the social sciences and humanities.²⁰

More recently, anti-gender actors have also begun to establish their own universities. One example is the Polish ultraconservative think tank *Ordo Iuris*, which produces so-called alternative facts for the Polish government, or what Erzebeta Korolucz²¹ calls “ultraconservative gendered knowledge” framed by legal and medical discourses and supported by conservative experts with law or medical degrees. Among other things, *Ordo Iuris* prepared anti-abortion legislation in Poland and recently established the “*Collegium Intermarium*,” which began its work in the fall of 2022. According to its website, “*Collegium Intermarium* was founded as a response to the deepening crisis of academic life. It refers to the classic perception of the university as a space of free debate and courageous search for truth.”²² However, it is also true that the alternative knowledge produced to trigger anti-gender actions has its weak points, the most important being the discrepancy between this knowledge and the actual experiences of women and other groups.²³ Mieke Verloo rightly claims that in the face of the production of alternative knowledge, it is not “the truth that disappears, but rather the facts and arguments producing it.”²⁴

Conclusion

The anti-gender movement is successful because, like populist parties and groups across Europe, it appeals to people's fears about the future – first and foremost, the future of the family, and especially the future of children. With its focus on corrupt elites, the anti-gender movement gives people the promise of a better future. The future, however, lies in the past: our societies, it is claimed, should return back to the natural order of things.²⁵ Bauman²⁶ called these demands for a return to the past “retrotopia”: utopian longings today are directed toward an ideal past rather than a better future. The anti-gender movement is a typical retrotopian project. However, the success of the anti-gender movement should not tempt us to create a grand narrative of a global backlash against everything that has been achieved in the last decades in terms of gender equality and sexual politics.²⁷ Indeed, many anti-gender campaigns and messages of hatred toward gender and sexual minorities have led to countermeasures or perhaps even increased public support for equality.

¹⁹ Elżbieta Korolczuk, “Counteracting Challenges to Gender Equality in the Era of Anti-Gender Campaigns: Competing Gender Knowledges and Affective Solidarity,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 27, no. 4 (March 16, 2021): 694–717, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxaa021>.

²⁰ David Paternotte and Mieke Verloo, “De-Democratization and the Politics of Knowledge: Unpacking the Cultural Marxism Narrative,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 28, no. 3 (November 12, 2021): 556–78, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxab025>.

²¹ Korolczuk, “Counteracting Challenges to Gender Equality in the Era of Anti-Gender Campaigns.”

²² “*Collegium Intermarium*: A New University Connecting Academics from Central Europe,” 2021, <https://collegiumintermarium.org/en/collegium-intermarium-a-new-university-connecting-academics-from-central-europe/>.

²³ Korolczuk, “Counteracting Challenges to Gender Equality in the Era of Anti-Gender Campaigns.”

²⁴ Mieke Verloo, “Gender Knowledge, and Opposition to the Feminist Project: Extreme-Right Populist Parties in the Netherlands,” *Politics and Governance* 6, no. 3 (2018): 23.

²⁵ Kuhar and Paternotte, *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*.

²⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017).

²⁷ David Paternotte and Roman Kuhar, “Disentangling and Locating the ‘Global Right’: Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe,” *Politics and Governance* 6, no. 3 (September 14, 2018): 6–19, <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v6i3.1557>.

In the summer of 2022 Slovenia became the first post-socialist country to introduce marriage equality, including the possibility of adopting children. The claim that the anti-gender movement in Slovenia has contributed to equal rights may seem a little far-fetched, but the fact is that all of this was possible in part because the adoption of the marriage equality law was a reaction to the radical activities of the anti-gender movement.²⁸ We cannot naively say that the danger of the anti-gender project is not real - it is. But the success of the anti-gender movement should not be discouraging. Rather, it should be seen as an opportunity to critically engage with the current problems of feminism and the LGBT+ movement, and to move away from the complicity of gender equality and sexual politics with neoliberal ideology. Instead, the role of feminism and the LGBT+ movement in the 21st century should be to create new spaces of freedom based on strong social politics and solidarity.

This text is based on the author's keynote at the conference Femcities, Ljubljana, March 2, 2023.

Slides of the Presentation:

²⁸ Roman Kuhar, "How the Anti-Gender Movement Contributed to Marriage Equality in Slovenia," *Cultural War Papers* (Illiberalism Studies Program), no. 36 (2022): 1-10.



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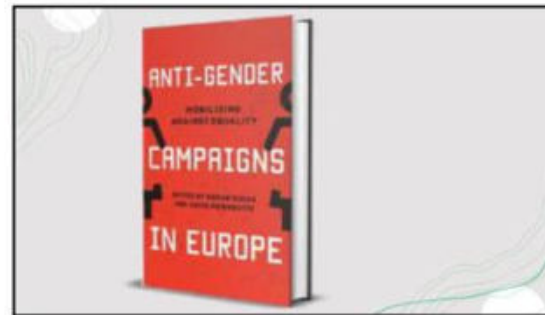
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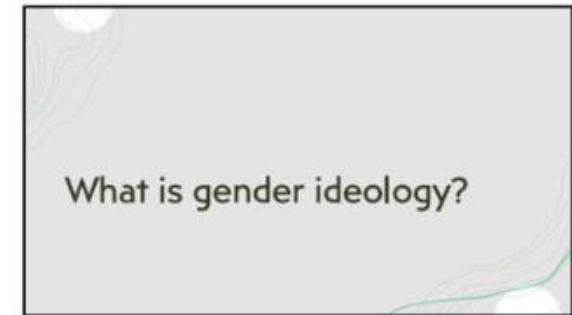
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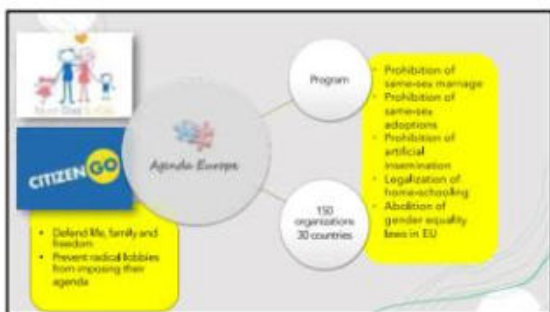
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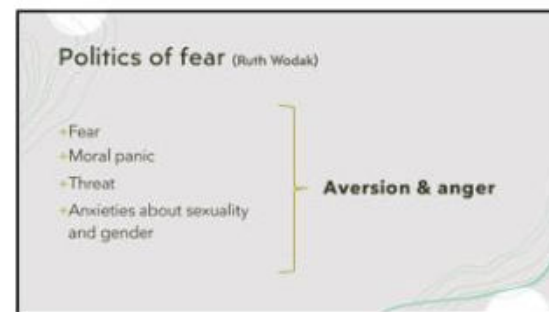
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18

The "anti-gender" strategy

- Partial facts + fictitious constructions
- Commonsensual claims
- Social media (and other channels)
- Mobilizing truth



19

The network

- +117 anti-gender organizations
- + \$700 million between 2009 and 2018
 - + 10 % US (Christian Right, Conservative think tanks)
 - + 30 % Russia (oligarchs)
 - + 60 % Europe




20

The reasons for the success of the anti-gender movement

21

Reinforcement of the uncertainties about fundamental ontological questions of humanity + simple solutions

- Four inter-related crisis



22

The crisis caused by neoliberalism

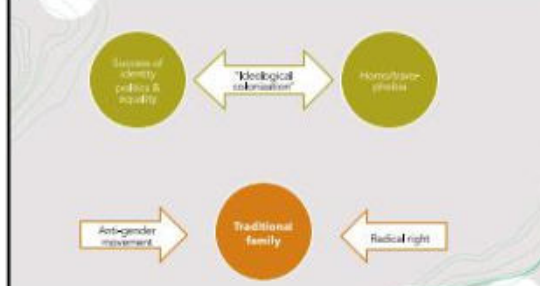
- Collapse of welfare state,
- Rise of individualism

– Anti-genderism is “structured and legitimized as a conservative response to the excesses of neoliberalism” (Graf & Kovitz, 2022)

– Anti-genderism is a rejection of the current socio-economic order, which prioritizes identity politics over material issues and the weakening of people’s social, cultural, and political security (Gozabika, Kovits, and Peß, 2017)



23



24

Crisis of masculinity

- Unclear position of men in contemporary society and in the family
- Restore the natural role of men
- “Masculine identity politics,” which is largely based on creating a crisis situation ... and on initiation of anger and rage towards “the others” (Jörg Sauer, 2021)




25

Equality fatigue

- Crisis of equality (equality politics, woke culture, political correctness)
- Equality has already been reached
- “Gender wars”



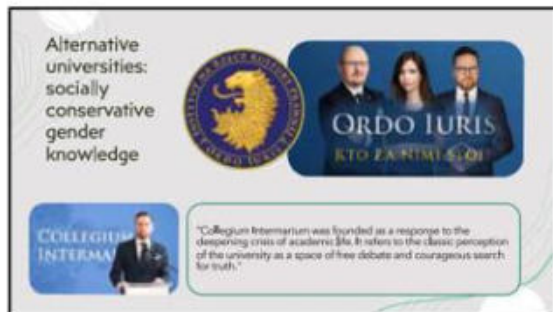
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Epistemic crisis

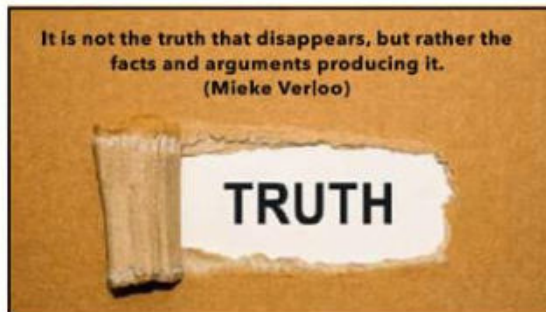
- Distrust into science
- Legitimacy of academic work
- “Alternative knowledge”



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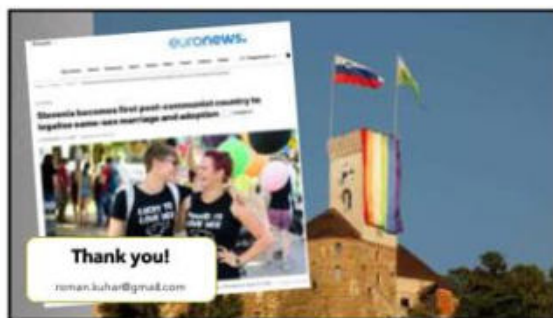
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10. Round Table on: Sexism as Hate Speech

Speakers:

- Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy
- Erzsébet Fanni Tóth, Coordinator of an International Ph.D. programme at Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Founder and CEO of Femspace
- Katarina Kresal, Attorney, Founder and President of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, and Managing Partner of the Law Firm Senica & Partners
- Manca G. Renko, Historian, currently working at the ERC Eirene project at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Moderation:

- Špela Veselič, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care



Photo 23: Round Table on Sexism as Hate Speech; from left: Katarina Kresal, Špela Veselič and Nina Gabryś

Please note: The following discussion has been paraphrased on the basis of the round table discussion. The following are therefore not verbatim quotes of the discussants.

The round table on Sexism as Hate Speech dealt with the question, how sexism and hate speech influence the work of the discussants and their way of doing.

Manca G. Renko highlighted, that history is the most masculine field of humanities, a place where women do not exist and a culture of no women representatives. Women are underrepresented in politics and history, they only started to be represented in the past seventy years. When a woman enters a male dominated sphere, she faces hate speech and sexism as for example the first female war reporter in World War I, when it was still male dominated. When we look at the way she was perceived, we see that the Christian party banned her from the field and she encountered



sexualisation from all parties. She was unmarried, had no children and was going to war fields. Manca G. Renko was announced into the council, but because her former partner was a politician, people said, that her only qualification was this former relationship. However, she has been a historian for over ten years. She received hate mails saying she used sex for her way to the top, or that her partner is gay. Sometimes these were hurtful; sometimes she got through it. For centuries, this way of perception was normal and women were not taken seriously. The hardest part is that people do not want to know what you have to say.

Photo 24: Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy, and Manca G. Renko, Historian, currently working at the ERC Eirene project at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Nina Gabryś was 27 years old when she got into politics. It was a change for many and there were not many young people in politics either. There was no other young women in the city council. She was already known as a feminist and some people were afraid. She faced a lot of sexism during the campaign, for example on how she looks. There were a lot of discussions between women and a lot of comments made also from women, that said, if you do not want to be



perceived as sexy, why do you dress up? She faced everyday sexism, which is hard to address and it can be difficult to do your job, when you have to explain sexism every day. She hated being the youngest, but there is never a good time to be a politician as a woman. She was perceived as having a problem with everything, she got into controversial issues and raised questions about migration, language options etc. When running the commission of families, people said she was not qualified to run it without having a family of her own, but in the end she became the deputy.

Photo 25: Špela Veselič, City of Ljubljana, Department for Health and Social Care, and Nina Gabryś, Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy

Katarina Kresal entered politics as an already accomplished attorney. Being a lawyer she was used to working in a male dominated profession, especially in her field of business law. However, she never felt sexism in this area or wrong attitude of colleagues. She had a successful career, when she decided to go into politics at 34 years old. She started as the president of parliament. For some it seemed as if she came out of nowhere and was a shock for everybody. She was perceived as too young, too female, too well-off, but she wanted to work on human rights and equality. However, she only got that possibility, when the men had failed. In politics she first encountered sexism and hate speech. The media were full of hate and only focused on her being a woman, good looking, well dressed, her car and her established partner. It was about her look, her age, whom she is with etc. She struggled for a year to finally be able to talk about content and real issues with the media. She was head of parliament and later became the minister of interior.



She learned that in politics people do not keep their word. The ministry was respectful with her and the media changed the view on her. She became the most popular politician in Slovenia, but then there was a second trigger to hate speech, which was very brutal. The media said she was not a real woman, because she had no children, no husband, was not cooking etc. Now it is starting to change, since there are outstanding and more women in politics. There is an institutional need for some kind of reaction, the laws exist, but nothing is happening. There needs to be penalisation of this behaviour. People do not see beyond the image and the quality of media is declining. There are no analysts anymore, everything is just for click bait. There is no political analysis, the people believe what the media says is the truth and it is hard to get those ideas out. Even her own colleagues put her down, just because of competition. The end of her political career was an assassination of her character.

Photo 26: Katarina Kresal, Attorney, Founder and President of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, and Managing Partner of the Law Firm Senica & Partners



Erzsébet Fanni Tóth promotes female entrepreneurship in her project Femspace. At the University however, she is the only woman on her level of profession, despite the vast majority of students being female. In the project on female entrepreneurship, the question was posed, if they face sexism. When their businesses fail, women often think it is their fault, however, there is systematic trauma that comes with facing everyday sexism and it was experienced by all generations. We know what sexism is, but we have to start taking it seriously. We are loosing human capacity because of it. It causes personal pain, suicide; stories are complex and need to be understood in an intersectional way.

Photo 27: Erzsébet Fanni Tóth, Coordinator of an International Ph.D. programme at Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Founder and CEO of Femspace

11. Round Table on: Sexism in Journalism

Speakers:

- Rada Borić, Member of Zagreb City Assembly, President of Gender Equality Commission of the City of Zagreb, Feminist Linguist
- Nika Kunaver, Investigative Journalist POP TV
- Grega Repovž, Journalist, Editor-In-Chief at Mladina weekly

Moderation:

- Nataša Briški, Co-Founder Meta's list, Media Strategist, Journalist and Podcaster



Photo 28: Round Table on Sexism in Journalism; from left: Nataša Briški, Co-Founder Meta's list, Media Strategist, Journalist and Podcaster, and Rada Borić, Member of Zagreb City Assembly, President of Gender Equality Commission of the City of Zagreb, Feminist Linguist

Please note: The following discussion has been paraphrased on the basis of the round table discussion. The following are therefore not verbatim quotes of the discussants.

The round table on Sexism in Journalism dealt with the question, if sexism is present in journalism, how it is used against female journalists and how language and media reporting can influence the public perception.

The Moderator **Nataša Briški** has 30 years of experience working for local, national and international media. She pointed out, that sexism in journalism is a topic rarely discussed and invites the discussants to share their experiences and views.



Nika Kunaver, investigative journalist, highlighted the intense work field for journalists, women and men alike. However, sexism targets female journalists differently focusing on their appearance. Especially female journalists in television are targeted, since there are more exposed. Some slurs she and her colleagues have been targeted with include prostitute, whore, ugly, old, bitch, chicken, etc., from mostly anonymous online personas. She tries to keep her private life privately, because being to open can about your personal life can be used to attack you.

Photo 29: Round Table on Sexism in Journalism; from left: Nika Kunaver, Investigative Journalist POP TV, and Grega Repovž, Journalist, Editor-In-Chief at Mladina weekly

The Slovenian journalist **Grega Repovž** pointed out, that nowadays people much more focus on the way the discourse is framed and are more aware of discriminatory language. The fact that the non-discriminatory use of language is even being discussed shows this progress. Journalists now reflect on how to use language consciously without discriminating. Racism, sexism, homophobia and populism are finding new forms, especially through digitalisation. For example, the popularisation of figures such as Andrew Tate is a new form of sexism online, which many men connect to. The question is how to deal with these new forms of sexism and populism and being prepared for these new dynamics.

Rada Borić is a Member of the Zagreb City Assembly, the President of Gender Equality Commission of the City of Zagreb and a feminist linguist. She explained that by law the masculine grammatical gender includes men and women, but this is sexist. There is a difference between direct and hidden sexism as we can see from women's absence and trivialisation in news, which she called the symbolic annihilation of women. Language can be a loaded weapon against women, stereotypes are being perpetuated by language. This even shows in the definition of men and women in the dictionary, where men are the norm and women only deprived from them. Furthermore, there are around 5000 pejorative words for women. We have to fight back against this. She and other women sued collectively against a journalist for the sexism they experienced and they won.

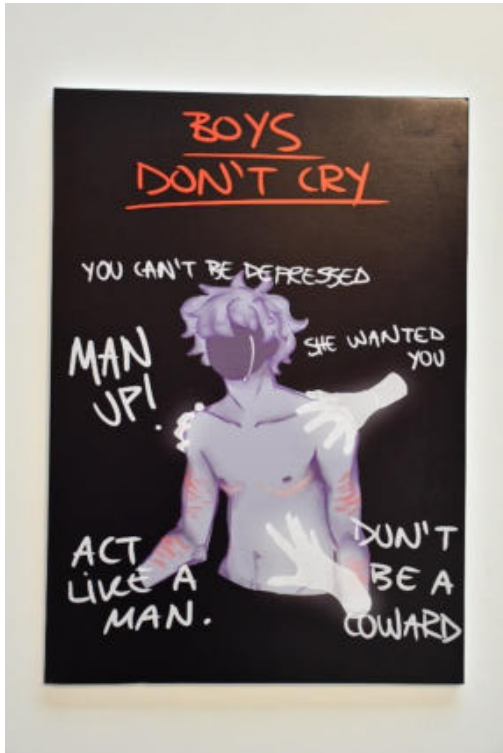
12. Field Excursions

12.1. City of Women: Feminist Tour around Ljubljana



12.2. Exhibition on Sexism in Kresija Gallery by artists and in Ljubljana City Hall by students





13. Short Biographies

Milica Antić Gaber Full Professor at the Department of Sociology at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where she teaches Sociology of Gender at graduate and post-graduate level and coordinates Doctoral program on Gender Studies. She was a visiting scholar and lecturer at Central European University in Budapest, Centre for Women's Studies in Belgrade, Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Birkbeck College in London, Centre for Women's Studies in Novi Sad and University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She participated in or coordinated several national and international projects on gender equality, the most recent one was the Gearing Roles project financed by European Commission working on issues of the GEP implementation in the academic field and National research project on Sexual Harassment in academia. She was a member of the Expert Council for Gender Equality at the Slovene Ministry of Labor, and was a member of the Expert Forum of European Institute for Gender Equality. She was a two terms a Head of Slovene Sociological Association and two terms a member of Executive Board of European Sociological Association.

Karima Aziz works in the division for basic research of the Department for Women's Affairs of the City of Vienna. Her focus areas include labour market, digitalisation, education, diversity and living conditions.

Rada Borić President of the Gender Equality Committee of Zagreb City Assembly. A feminist scholar and activist, 30 years active on the women's scene in Croatia and internationally. Co-founder and the executive director of the Center for Women's Studies Zagreb and Post-graduate course Feminism(s) in a Transnational Perspective (IUC, Dubrovnik). Mrs. Borić is also a member of various women's and peace networks: Women Network Croatia, Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, Nobel Women Initiative, V-Day - One Billion Rising against violence against women and girls (regional coordinator).

Nataša Briški Journalist by profession, with strong media credentials and 30 years of experience working for local, national and international media. Co-Founded digital media network Meta's list where she acts as an Editor-In-Chief of and co-hosts highest ranking podcasts on the media, European Union affairs and national politics in Slovenia. Previously, she was a Foreign Affairs Correspondent for POP TV, based in Washington D.C., a correspondent for BBC World Report, POP TV sports anchorwoman, columnist for Studio City and radio host at Radio Univox.

Sarah Caquineau Head of the 'Non sexist city' unit within the Equality department - City of Nantes. Within the Equality Department of the City of Nantes, Sarah Caquineau has been responsible for the support and development of the non-sexist and LGBTQIA+ city public policy for two years. She is responsible for the technical management of this public policy, whose political ambition is to make Nantes the first non-sexist city in France by 2030. To do so, she leads a team of 3 people whose major projects of the mandate are: inclusive schoolyards, gender budgeting, fight against menstrual poverty/taboo of periods and the animation and empowerment of a local network of the non-sexist city partners.

Nina Gabryś is Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Krakow for Equality Policy and chairman of the Equal Treatment Council, which was established in Krakow in 2019. She is also Harassment and Discrimination Advisor at Akademia Sztuk Teatralnych im. Stanisława Wyspiańskiego w Krakowie. Co-creator and Vice president of 'One Hundred Years of

Women's Voice' Association. She holds a scholarship of the international program Humanity in Action and Advanced Leadership Program for Top Talents organised by the Center for Leadership. She is a fellow of Programme d'invitation des personnalités d'avenir (PIPA) organised by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Tanja Hodnik is the Head of Department for Health and Social Care of the City of Ljubljana-

Stephanie Kiessling is a sociologist and has been working since 2004 at the Department for Women's Affairs of the City of Vienna. There she is in charge of publications, exhibitions and research projects amongst others on the topics of equality, women's history, women with disabilities and she develops new projects on the topic of accessibility.

Spencer Kirpach After his studies in political science, sociology and law, he worked as a fundraising manager for thirteen years in an international humanitarian organization. In 2019, he joined the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men, where he is part of the 'Equality in Municipalities' team. Having initially developed a national strategy and support instruments for the municipalities, the team nowadays often visits municipalities, advising policy makers and implementing activities and measures for gender equality in local life, together with the municipal staff.

Patrick Kleinbauer Coming from a background in graphic design and communication techniques, he worked in various communication and publicity agencies all throughout the 90ies and the early 2000s. In 2002, he integrated the public service by joining the staff of the worker's pension office where he treated all sorts of pension files. It is also there that he first got in touch with inequalities between men and women in the field, which prompted him to aim for the position of a representative of gender equality inside this institution. In 2010 he switched to the ministry of equal opportunities to work for the communication department inside that ministry until 2018, before joining the newly-formed 'Equality in Municipalities' department during the course of 2019.

Katarina Kresal Attorney, Founder and President of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, and Managing Partner of the Law Firm Senica & Partners. Katarina Kresal is president and founder of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, Managing Partner at Law Firm Senica & Partners, Ltd., and in charge of the CEE Subregion of international advisory firm Andersen Global. Apart from her extensive legal career, Ms. Kresal was a prominent political figure, having served as Minister of the Interior and President of the Parliamentary party. She is an internationally renowned expert in dispute resolution, serving as arbiter at the Court of Arbitration for Sport and member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, dealing with the promotion of women in the context of conflict mediation and effective participation in peace processes.

Roman Kuhar is Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the former dean of the Faculty of Arts (2017 – 2021). His work has been published in numerous academic journals and he is the author of several books including (with A. Švab) *The Unbearable Comfort of Privacy* (Peace Institute, 2005), (with J. Takács) *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday life of LGBT people in Eastern Europe* (Peace Institute, 2007) and (with D. Paternotte) *Anti-gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). He is also associate editor at *Social Politics* (Oxford University Press) and the president of the Slovenian Sociological Association.

Nika Kunaver Member of an investigative journalist team of the news section 24UR Fokus, 24UR Inšpektor, Dejstva and Preverjeno. Before that she worked for most viewed central news program in Slovenija 24UR for almost ten years. She is specialized in reporting on corruption and crime and connection between politics and the economy. She was awarded with Čuvaj/Watchdog for the achievement of young journalist in 2016.

Danči Marož works as a senior advisor in the Department for Health and Social Care. In the past he organized numerous conferences and events, such as a study course 'Empowering young disabled to Become Future Leaders of Independent Living Movement', conference with the title 'Accessibility of built environment, information and services for people with disabilities'. He executed the application for the VI. phase of the European Healthy Cities Network, which operates under the World Health Organization. Currently he is covering the areas of mental health, illegal drugs and other addictions for the city administration and is a deputy coordinator for equal opportunities in the COL.

Melita Oven is a Head of Schooling Section at the Department for Education of the City of Ljubljana. In private and professional life, she is an enthusiastic advocate of gender equality. In her opinion as a mother, Ljubljana offers a variety of services and programmes to make work-life balance easier and she is grateful to be able to participate in development of these services and programmes for children and their parents, which aim to improve the quality of life in Ljubljana.

Antonija Poplas Susič She is the head of the Community health centre of Ljubljana. Besides that she is also a lecturer at the medical faculty of the university of Ljubljana. And she was named European medical doctor of the year in 2014 as the first woman.

Grega Repovž is a journalist and Editor-In-Chief at Mladina weekly.

Jana Radić After studies of political science and master of sociology and anthropology, she joined the department for promoting human rights and works in the field of gender equality, integration of migrants and civil society in the City of Zagreb. She is the co-creator of the strategic document on gender equality of the City of Zagreb, in charge of EU project in the field of gender equality and a member of the Gender Equality Commission of the City of Zagreb.

Sophie Rendl studied law in Vienna and is an expert on anti-discrimination and VAWG. She currently works for the Women's Department of the City of Vienna. She is co-founder of the association Frauendomäne - Database for Experts (www.frauendomaene.at) and sits as the Austrian expert on violence protection in the European Women's Lobby. Last year she led the conception and development of an ombuds agency against violence in the arts and cultural sector in Austria.

Manca G. Renko is a historian (PhD), currently working at the ERC Eirene project at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research focus are women in afterwar transitions, especially after WWI and WWII. She is interested in intellectual and emotional history as well as in theory of history with a special emphasis on pop culture. She is also editor-in-chief of CUKR, bi-annual magazine on arts and culture, published by MGML (The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana).

Irena Strelec PhD in social pedagogy, master degree in Communicology, senior advisor in City Council Administration Office and advisor of Commission for naming the districts and streets City of Ljubljana.

Claudia Throm has been working in the field of women's rights and advancement for over 15 years, 10 years for the City of Vienna's women's department. She holds a Master degree in political science, where she focused on peace and conflict studies from the University of Vienna and a masters degree in journalism and new media from University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication. Inside the department she focuses on the subjects of advancement of girls, violence against women and girls and public outreach.

Simona Topolinjak PhD is Head of Social Care Section in the Department for Health and Social Care and is coordinator for equal opportunities in the City of Ljubljana. She has worked as a researcher at the University of Ljubljana at the Faculty of social sciences and has PhD in political sciences. In the City of Ljubljana she was responsible for the preparation of new Strategy for the development of social care and she coordinates activities within Action plan for gender equality. In 2018 The City of Ljubljana published the booklet For gender equality in Ljubljana, in which she contributed most of the text.

Erzsébet Fanni Tóth Coordinator of an International Ph.D. programme at Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Founder and CEO of Femspace: I have a degree from socio-cultural anthropology and a doctorate from psychotherapy science. My scientific interest lies in the understanding of narratives of the past, including traumatic and for a long-time silenced past. My passion is building bridges between the ivory tower of academia and the general public, and the support of women, who redefine themselves after a turning point in their life.

Christane Ugbor is an Executive Board Member of the European Women's Lobby which is the biggest umbrella organisation for women organisations and networks in Europe. She is also a member of the Austrian Women Ring the biggest umbrella organisation of women organisations and networks in Austria and is the Vice President of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women - CSW Vienna. She is engaged since 23 years in the African Women's Organisation in Austria that works for the prevention and elimination of FGM and other harmful traditional practices on women and girls.

Mateja Veble is a senior advisor in the Department for Culture.

Špela Veselič works as a senior advisor in the Department for Health and Social Care.

Karmen Žirovnik is Head of Marketing Section of the City of Ljubljana, She is responsible for the promotional activities of the city administration, public institutions and companies owned by the City of Ljubljana. In addition to the online presence of the City of Ljubljana on the official website ljubljana.si, Marketing Section also manage the City of Ljubljana's social networks (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram). She pays great attention to the unified overall graphic image of the city, branding, and the content, video and design support of numerous activities and events. At the same time, her Section also take care of media leasing of advertising and digital space to support awareness-raising campaigns.

14. Herstory of FemCities

In 1997, Milena was established upon the initiative of the City of Vienna as a forerunner network to what is now FemCities. The network at the time extended across cities in Central and Eastern Europe, enabling the Department for Women's Affairs in Vienna to cooperate with institutions and organisations in neighbouring regions and cities in Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

The purpose was to promote communication between city administrations, experts from universities and NGOs, as well as businesses on women's and gender issues and good practice models. Meanwhile, in 2005 all of the above mentioned countries became EU members themselves. At that time the network's objectives and structures were revised and what was formerly Milena now became the city network FemCities.

The Department for Women's Affairs at the Vienna City Administration is still responsible for its coordination, but its range of operation and cooperation has been expanded to include the entire EU and associated countries in Europe. The network continues the exchange of best practice models in the field of local and regional women's policies while strengthening lobbying activities for women's concerns in Europe.

FemCities provides a forum for communicating good practice models, as well as strategies for the implementation of laws and the installation of administrative structures to promote women and gender equality. Relevant administrations (on gender equality/ equal opportunities/ women) in European cities and municipalities are invited to join the network. Organisations, other than administrative units of cities and municipalities such as NGOs and administrative units of provinces, federal states or cantons are welcome to join the network as associate partners.

More Information: www.femcities.at

