



Resolution 2615 (2025)¹

Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary life: gender equality, accessibility and inclusive policies

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Parliaments in Europe remain male-dominated, including in leadership and decision-making positions, and such under-representation of women in parliamentary life undermines democratic institutions and processes. Equal participation of women and men, in all their diversity, in every area of society and employment, is a human rights issue: their equal representation in parliamentary life is essential for well-functioning democracies and good governance.
2. Parliaments are also workplaces where many elected representatives and members of staff are parents. However, requirements such as physical presence, the absence of adapted infrastructures (including childcare facilities and areas equipped for breastfeeding) and accessible premises create additional barriers to participation in parliamentary life, especially for women, further exacerbating their under-representation.
3. Members of parliament, like all persons in employment, need a healthy and sustainable work–life balance. Yet family and care responsibilities continue to affect mostly women’s participation in parliamentary life. Male parliamentarians need to be key actors in bringing about transformative change to parliamentary life and working together with women to achieve gender equality in parliaments.
4. At the same time, inclusion is not limited to levelling up women’s participation in parliamentary life and accommodating the needs of young parents. The specific needs of other groups, such as persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, either as members of parliament or parliamentary staff, must also be considered.
5. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the need to meet relevant targets under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, including Target 5.5 (under SDG 5) “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”; Target 10.2 (under SDG 10) “Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”; and Target 16.7 (under SDG 16) “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”.
6. The Assembly welcomes the Pact for the Future, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024, and its Action 8 about the need to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making.
7. The Assembly further welcomes General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, adopted in October 2024 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
8. The Assembly refers to the Kigali Declaration, adopted at the 145th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in October 2022, entitled “Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world”.

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 June 2025 (26th sitting) (see [Doc. 16183](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Maryna Bardina). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 June 2025 (26th sitting).



9. The Assembly further refers to its [Resolution 2386 \(2021\)](#) “Enhancing participation of women from under-represented groups in political and public decision making”; its [Resolution 2274 \(2019\)](#) “Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment”; its [Resolution 2222 \(2018\)](#) “Promoting diversity and equality in politics”; its [Resolution 2155 \(2017\)](#) “The political rights of persons with disabilities: a democratic issue”; and its [Resolution 2111 \(2016\)](#) “Assessing the impact of measures to improve women’s political representation”.

10. The Assembly calls on the member and observer States of the Council of Europe, and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

10.1. with regard to gender equality, to:

10.1.1. ensure the balanced participation of women and men in all areas of parliamentary life, especially in decision-making roles;

10.1.2. set up a gender parity goal for political representation in national parliaments, conduct an assessment of the situation at the national level and develop a strategic plan to reach this goal through specific measures;

10.1.3. analyse the composition of national parliaments with an intersectional perspective, collect disaggregated data and support research on the participation of women, including those from under-represented groups, in political decision making;

10.1.4. consider using the available tools drawn up by the IPU, the European Institute for Gender Equality and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to assess the representation of women and men in national parliaments, so that appropriate measures can be put in place;

10.1.5. raise awareness of the impact of sexism and gender-based violence on political life, including on the level of participation of women parliamentarians;

10.1.6. promote and support networks of women parliamentarians, including women’s caucuses in national parliaments;

10.1.7. develop specific programmes to engage male politicians as transformative actors, working together with female leaders to achieve gender equality in politics;

10.1.8. review national legislation and repeal, where applicable, legal measures restricting the right of women parliamentarians with children to participate in business trips and carry out paid overtime work to which they have agreed;

10.2. with regard to the accessibility of parliaments, to:

10.2.1. make both the parliamentary buildings and the work of parliaments fully accessible to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, including members of parliament, parliamentary staff and visitors;

10.2.2. establish clear rules and procedures so that members of parliament and parliamentary staff can enter the premises with children and infants;

10.2.3. formally allow for breastfeeding in parliamentary premises and consider providing nurseries, baby feeding and changing rooms;

10.2.4. encourage co-operation between parliaments and relevant non-governmental organisations to carry out audits on the accessibility of parliamentary premises and work;

10.3. with regard to inclusive policies in parliaments, to:

10.3.1. develop internal policies aimed to facilitate a better work–life balance for members of parliament and parliamentary staff, including the regulation of working hours aimed at preventing late sessions and meetings, and setting the sittings schedule based on the school calendar;

10.3.2. adopt the necessary measures so that parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can benefit from parental leave;

10.3.3. consider establishing procedures for substitution/proxy voting or distance voting in certain cases;

10.3.4. review the implementation of Assembly [Resolution 2155 \(2017\)](#) as regards the accessibility of electoral processes, information and procedures; and take the necessary measures to address any existing gaps;

10.3.5. promote support networks for minority groups in national parliaments;

10.3.6. adopt, review and/or update, as appropriate, codes of conduct for parliamentarians and staff members to address violence, sexual and psychological harassment, sexism and discriminatory behaviour, and introduce reporting procedures and sanctions in case of breach, in line with [Resolution 2274 \(2019\)](#);

10.3.7. organise training on inclusiveness, intersectionality and gender equality, covering relevant policies and reporting mechanisms, for all members of parliament and parliamentary staff.

11. The Assembly also encourages political parties in Council of Europe member States to:

11.1. adopt measures to promote the participation of women and persons from under-represented groups in their internal structures, including at leadership levels;

11.2. assess and develop a long-term strategy to address the needs of persons from under-represented groups, such as persons with disabilities and those facing multiple and intersectional discrimination, with a view to facilitating their participation in political life; and organise capacity-building trainings, in accessible formats, to enable such participation;

11.3. establish rules for the selection of candidates for elections with a view to ensuring the active promotion of gender equality and diversity;

11.4. review their internal composition, policies and working practices, for example through the use of ODIHR's assessment tools, with a view to determining measures to increase participation and representation of women and men from diverse backgrounds;

11.5. put in place internal codes of conduct, including sanctions, complaints procedures and trained contact persons, prohibiting violence, harassment, sexism and all other forms of discrimination, and collect data on incidents and the outcomes of reported cases;

11.6. implement targeted actions to engage male political party leaders as allies, who work with female leaders to abolish the harmful practices and stereotypes that persist in the organisational culture of political parties.

12. As regards its own functioning, the Assembly invites its political groups to consider implementing the measures listed in paragraph 11 above, as appropriate.

13. The Assembly asks its Secretary General to:

13.1. consider carrying out a new joint study with the IPU to assess the progress made in combating sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe, following an intersectional approach;

13.2. consider carrying out a gender-sensitive audit (using the tools referred to in paragraph 10.1.4 above) and an inclusivity audit of the Assembly;

13.3. provide training to staff to raise awareness of the needs of members, experts and visitors with disabilities and reduced mobility who participate in Assembly meetings and events;

13.4. consider possible measures to make the Assembly's work accessible to persons with visual impairments.

14. The Assembly invites the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities and the Bureau of the Assembly to consider taking the necessary steps to enable the online participation in committee meetings of members who are unable to attend in person due to care responsibilities, including caring for children under the age of 3.