

# Government's Experiences in the Implementation of CEDAW in Finland

Gender equality creates a  
sustainable society

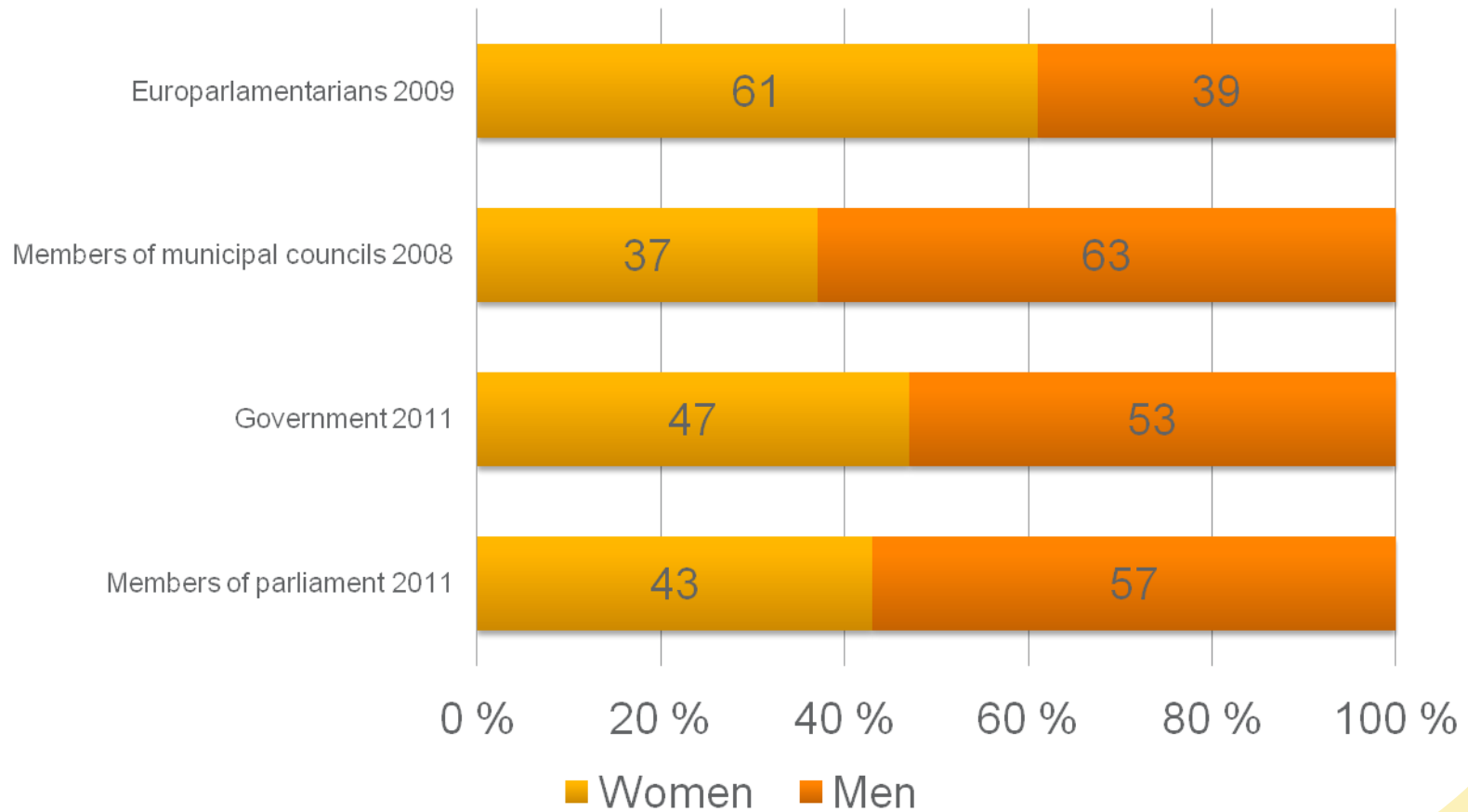


1. Some characteristics of gender (in)equality in Finnish society
2. National gender equality bodies and legislation
3. The development of gender equality policies and strategies in Finland
4. Violence against women

## Some characteristics of Finnish society

- Highly educated labour force (women and men)
- High labour force participation of women (almost equal)
- Comparatively high participation of women in political decision making (43 % of MPs)
- Highly gender segregated labour market
- Comparatively high levels of violence against women

# Decision-making



# The National Gender Equality Agencies

## Council for Gender Equality (1972–)

- Permanent advisory body
- Brings up new topics on the political agenda
- Promotes cooperation between decision-makers, authorities and the civil society

## Office of the Ombudsman for Equality (1986–)

- Supervises compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men
- Provides advice and guidance on the law

## Gender Equality Unit (2001–)

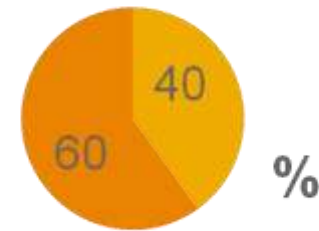
# Gender Equality Unit

- Established in 2001
- Prepares Government's gender equality policy in collaboration with other ministries
- preparation of national legislation
- tasks related to gender mainstreaming
- international activities: EU's gender equality legislation and policy, United Nations, Nordic cooperation, Council of Europe



# The Act on Equality between Women and Men (1987)

- The objectives of the Act
  - to prevent discrimination based on gender
  - to promote equality between women and men and
  - to improve the status of women, particularly in working life
  
- The Act includes provisions on
  - gender equality planning
  - gender quotas in Government committees, advisory boards and working groups and in local and inter-municipal bodies (with the exception of the municipal council)



# The Development of Gender Equality Policies in Finland

- International agreements and cooperation have had a strong impact on Finnish equality policies (e.g. CEDAW, Beijing 1995)
- Cooperation between the gender equality bodies, women politicians and the NGOs as well as feminist researchers
- "The welfare state is the woman's best friend"



# Gender Equality Policies in Finland

- Traditionally a strong focus on the labour market questions
- Two-earner family model
  - reconciliation of work and family, support for working mothers (day care etc.)
- Since the 1990s the focus has broadened:
  - Decision making
  - Violence against women
  - Gender mainstreaming
  - Men and gender equality



# Gender in all policies, gender mainstreaming

## *Duty of all authorities to promote gender equality*

- Authorities must promote equality between women and men purposefully and systematically in all their activities
- Circumstances which prevent the attainment of gender equality must be changed
- CEDAW committee had drawn special attention to the accountability of gender mainstreaming

# Violence against Women

- CEDAW committee has pressed Finnish Government to take action in order to come up with a national action programme against VAW.
- Emphasized the state's obligation to take action against all kinds of violence against women by enacting laws and protecting the victims.
- It is also the state's responsibility to provide supporting services for victims and offenders alike.

# Violence against Women

- Work was based on separate projects
- not sufficient continuity
- resources have been too small
- work has been done by the NGOs

# Legislation Amendments

- Sexual harassment has been defined as a form of discrimination
- Extension of the Restraining Order as the Act on the inside-the-family Restraining Order
- Both 2005

# Multi-sectoral Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Women

- Finland has not had an action plan focusing on this theme since the project to prevent violence against women and prostitution in 1998–2002.
- The action plan has been prepared in cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the drafting was coordinated by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, as commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
- The Ministerial Working Group on Internal Security adopted the action plan in June 2010.

# The aim of the action plan is to

- tackle violence proactively by influencing attitudes and models of behaviour,
- prevent revictimisation violence,
- improve the position of victims of sexual violence and the crisis assistance and support provided for them,
- develop methods to identify and intervene in violence experienced by vulnerable persons,
- and to increase the knowledge and competence of the authorities needed in the prevention of violence against women and in helping the victims of violence.

# Comprehensive perspective, by means of three principles.

- The action plan covers comprehensive measures to prevent violence, to protect the victims and provide support for them, as well as to bring the perpetrators to justice for their acts.
- The proposed measures total 66, and some of them can be carried out without separate funding.
- The starting point for the action plan is evaluation of the present state of violence against women and an analysis of the fringe areas of the previous action plans.



# Government Report on Gender Equality 2010

- decision-making
- education and research
- working life
- reconciliation of work and family life
- men and gender equality
- violence against women and interpersonal violence



## Proposals for the future

- extending gender equality planning to basic education
- reinforcing the gender equality perspective in university and science policy
- prolonging work careers
- extending solutions to reconcile work and family life to different phases of life.
- encouraging fathers to take more family leaves by earmarking parental leave periods

# Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2011 - 2015

- *Work in progress*
- Fifth action plan
- Formulated jointly by the ministries
- Implements the objectives specified in the Government Programme
- Compiles and co-ordinates the Government measures for promoting gender equality

***Thank you!***

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