



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



## European Charter for Equality

A Charter setting out Europe's local and regional governments' commitment to using their powers and partnerships to achieve greater equality for their populations

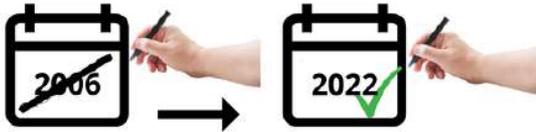


Co-funded by  
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Adopted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions' Policy Committee in 2006.



Changes to the document were made by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions' Policy Committee in 2022



The Charter invites the people in charge of local and regional areas in Europe to sign it and make a public promise to people.



This promise is that all of their policies and systems will treat men and women equally.



They will also be promising to make sure that all of their public services and groups will treat men and women equally too.



After a review of the Charter in 2021 some new pieces were added and you can find information about those on page 27.



## Background



Men and women both have the right to equality.



To make equality happen in all parts of our lives we need to make sure that it is included in our laws.



Even though this has been done in many areas, men and women are still treated differently.



Examples of this are that men may get paid more and that there are less women in politics.

To change this it may help if people change how they think about men and women.



People should not expect all women to do the same things in the same way.

# Gender Equality and European Union Governance



Equality between men and women is very important to the European Economic Area and was first written into a promise made by its leaders to the people.



This was called the Treaty of Rome 1957.



Local and regional governments know about what happens in their area. They also know a lot of the people so they can make changes in their community.



They have made a written promise to do all that they can in their community to make equality happen for all people in their community and tell people how important this is.





## Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Local/Regional Gender Equality

The CEMR and its Standing Committee for Equality have been working on gender equality and making sure everyone knows how important it is since the 1980s.



The Town for Equality work let people know about people in Europe who were making equality happen and how they did it. This charter builds on that work.



There have been studies in the last 20 years that have shown that the number of women who have important roles in local government is growing.



These studies also show that there is still more that needs to be done.

## Part 1 Principles



The people who sign this Charter for equality of women and men in local life agree that the following principles guide them in all that they do:



1: Equality of women and men is a basic human right.



2: To make sure the equality of women and men happens we must look at how discrimination and disadvantage affects people in lots of different ways.



3: In a fair society, women and men should have an equal chance to have roles in local government and the community that mean their voices can be heard and/or they can be leaders.



4: We must not expect all the people of one gender act or look exactly the same. Everyone is their own person with their own wants and needs.



5: We must make sure that we think about gender equality in all things that we do. It must be included in all local laws and policies.



6: Local and Regional governments must draw up Equality Action Plans and programmes . They need to have the money and people needed to make this happen and carry out the plan.



## Part 2 Implementation of the Charter and it's Commitments

This part of the Charter is about the steps that need to be taken. The people who sign the Charter promise to:



PLAN

(1) Make an Equality Action Plan within 2 (two) years and then carry it out.



PLAN

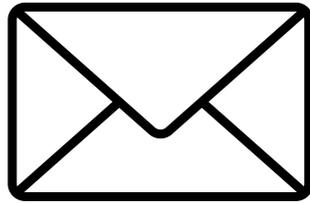
(2) Say in the plan what they are going to do and what things, people and money they need. They will also say how long it will take. If they already have an Equality Action Plan it will be checked to see that it includes all the points in this Charter.



PLAN

(3) Talk to all the people that gender equality affects and send the plan to everyone.





Send out reports to say how the plan is working and what has been done over time.



(4) Change the plan if needed but in a way that includes the points in this Charter.



(5) Look at the plan over time to make sure that it is being carried out in the right way. There is a special tool that they must use to do this.



Keep talking to other local and regional governments to share what they have learned and tell them about how they are creating gender equality in their areas.



(6) Let the CEMR know that they have signed the Charter and keep in contact about it.

## Part 3

### Democratic Accountability



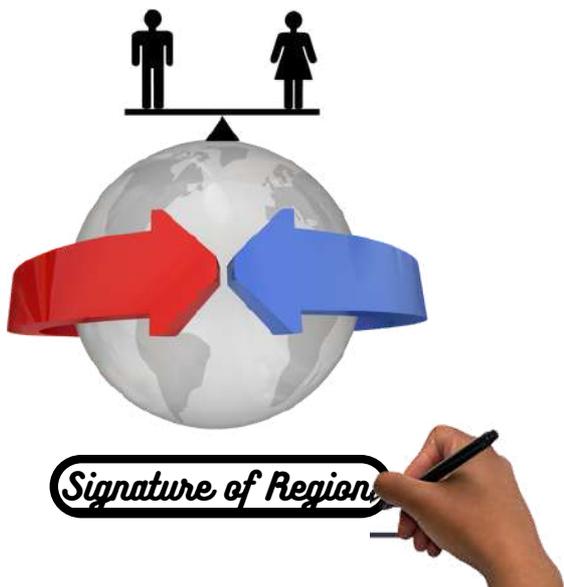
This part talks about gender equality in a democratic society. This means that everyone has an equal say in how things are done.



#### Article 1 - Political Commitment:

The people who sign this Charter agree that equality for women and men is needed for a democratic society.

They must make sure that the people that live in their area have good lives.



To do this they will always make equality part of everything that they do as leaders and shapers of their community.



## Article 2 - Political Representation

The people who sign this Charter agree that it is the right of women and men to be equally involved at all levels of political life and activities.



They will protect this right by saying and doing as much as they can to make sure women have their vote and their voices heard.



They will tell every group involved in politics to do the same and support them in this.



They will work on ways to protect women in politics and to stop bullying or unfair actions towards them.

## Article 3 Participation in Political and Civic Life



The people who sign this Charter agree that in a democratic society women and men have an equal right to lead and/or help guide their communities.

They will support equal ways of doing things and help to make new and even better ways.



They will women and men who are often left out to take part in political life.

## Article 4: Public Commitment to Equality.

As leaders of their communities, the people who sign this Charter, will make a public promise to protect equal rights for men and women.





They will use their policies and laws to support all of the groups and bodies in their communities to protect gender equality in everything they do.



Article 5: Working with Partners to Promote Equality.

The people who sign this Charter will work with all of their partners and their communities to carry out the promises in this Charter.

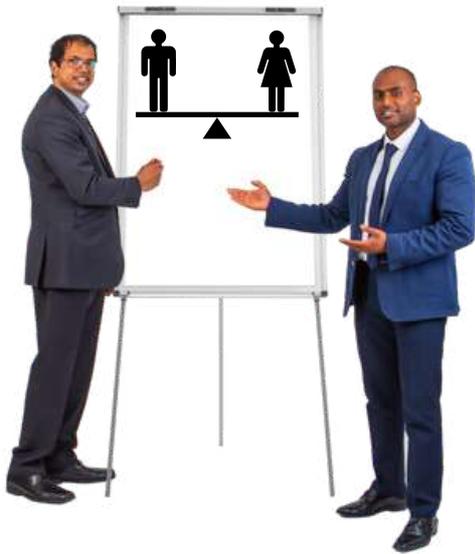


Together they will look at their Equality Action Plans and make them better.

Article 6: Countering Stereotypes.

The people who sign this Charter will work to stop people being treated differently or unfairly because of their gender.





They will also carry out this work in all of the things they do using ways such as training and programmes to raise awareness of gender equality.

Article 7: Good Administration and Consultation.



The people who sign this Charter agree that women and men have the right to be involved in all things that affect them.



They should be able to have their say and have access to all the information on decisions made about them.



The people that sign this charter are making a promise to put ways in place to make sure women and men always have equal access to these rights.



The people that sign this Charter agree that the things they do and the way that they do them will always be better if women and men are involved equally at all stages.



They promise to make this happen in an accessible and inclusive way so that all voices are heard.

## General Framework for Equality



Article 8: General Commitment.

The people that sign this charter promise to respect and protect gender equality.



They will work hard to make sure that they keep all of the promises in this Charter in any way that they are legally able.



## Article 9: Gender Assessment.

The people that sign this Charter will carry out gender assessments in all of the areas that they work in.

An assessment is like a test where they check that something includes the gender equality promises that are in the Charter.

They will include these gender assessments in their Equality Action Plan.



## Article 10: Multiple and Intersecting Forms of Discrimination or Disadvantage.

The people that sign this Charter agree that nobody should be treated differently or unfairly because of who they are.





Sometimes people are treated differently or unfairly for things such as not having enough money to live a good life, the colour of their skin, or a disability..



The people that sign this Charter promise to work hard to make sure that everyone is treated equally whenever and however they can.

## **Role as an Employer**

Article 11:



The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone should have an equal right to be treated fairly in their jobs including their own staff.



They promise to support them in all the ways they can including pay, time off, types of work, safety, talking with unions, work/life balance, and other things.



They will work hard to stop any bullying, violence or sexual harassment and make it clear to everyone that they do not allow it.



They will have people from all communities and backgrounds working for them.

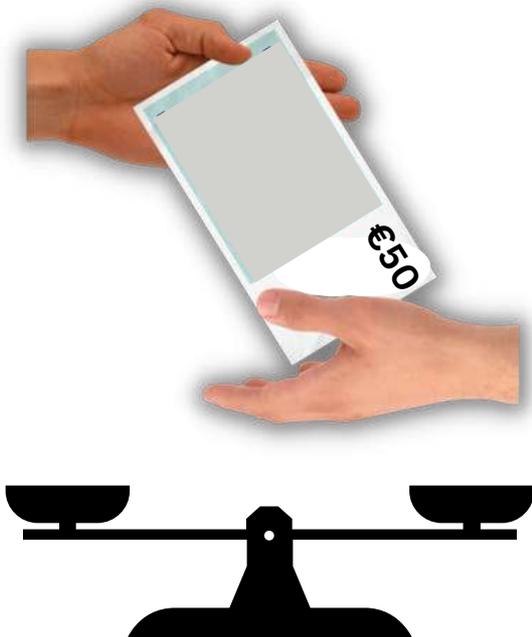


They will support their workers so that their home-life and family are not affected by work in a bad way.

## **Public Procurement and Contracts**

Article 12: Public Procurement and Contracts

The people who sign is charter agree that the right to gender equality is important when you are paying someone to do something for you or you are buying goods from them.





They promise to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally no matter who they are when they do this.



This is very important when they are getting something done that is needed by law.



They promise that the organisations and companies that they use will also include the right to gender equality for anyone who works for them.

This will be included in any contracts that they sign.

## **Services Delivery Role**



Article 13: Education and Lifelong Learning

The people who sign this Charter agree that everyone has an equal right to education in any community and at any age.



They agree that education provides skills for life and employment, and they promise to support gender equality in this whenever and however they can.



They understand that people of the same gender can want to do or be different things so they will support gender equality in all kinds of education and training.



They will look at all the things used for teaching people and all the ways they are taught to make sure that they include the points in this Charter.



They will support centres of education such as schools to have a balanced amount of women and men as teachers and board members.

## Article 14: Health



The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone has an equal right to good mental and physical health and all of the things that support us to be healthy.



They agree that women and men have different health needs.

Sometimes these health needs are caused by people being treated differently or unfairly because of their gender.



The people that sign this Charter will do whatever it can to make sure women and men have equal access to the things they need to live a healthy life.



This can include training health workers and creating accessible information about keeping healthy.

## Article 15: Social Care and Services



The people that sign this charter agree that everyone has the right to access important social services and supports if they need them.



They agree that women and men may have certain needs that can happen because of lots of reasons such as not having enough money to live a good and healthy life or being treated unfairly.



They promise to do everything that they can so women and men have equal access to social care services and supports in their communities.



## Article 16- Children

The people that sign this Charter agree that good childcare is important for women and men.



They agree that good and affordable childcare is needed so that people can work so it is very important to the whole community and an equal society.



They will do everything they can so that good affordable childcare is available equally in their communities to everyone that needs it.



They will work hard to make sure people understand that childcare is equally important for both men and women.

## Article 17: Care of Other Dependents



The people that sign this Charter understand that women and men may not only be responsible for the care of their children and that they may also be caring for others.



They understand that often women are expected to do this caring more than men and that this is not equal or fair.

They promise that making this more equal is very important to them and that they will work hard on offering more support to carers.



This will include things such as offering care services and telling everyone in the community how important it is that women are not seen as the only carers.

## Article 18: Social Inclusion

The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone has the right to feel a part of their community and to have enough money to live a good and healthy life.





They understand that these issues often affect women more than men.



They promise to make a plan support all women and men to have equal access to all the things they need to live a good life such as a job, a home, education, health services, community support and and information.



This plan should include making sure that migrant men and women are supported to become a part of the community.

## Article 19: Housing



The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone has the right to have a home and that this is very important to everyone's health and well-being.



It is common for women to get less money and other things needed to live than men so they need housing that is affordable.



They are also the ones often in charge of keeping the home running so need support with that.



There are often more men who do not have a home than women.



The people that sign this charter promise to do what they can to make sure everyone has equal access to a safe home that is right for them and their needs.

This will include finding out who needs extra support and making sure women are supported to have the money they need to rent or buy a home.



## Article 20: Culture Sport and Recreation

The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone has the right to take part in cultural life and enjoy the arts.

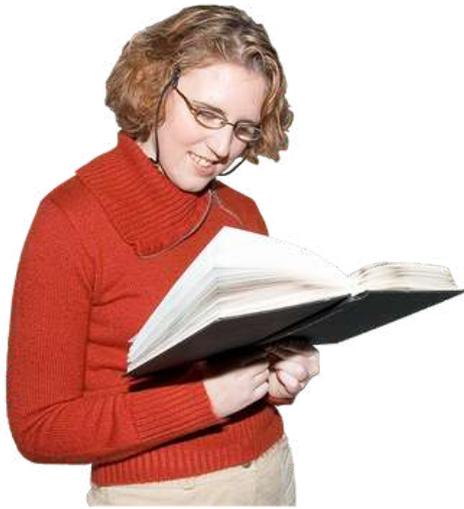


They also recognise how important sport and physical activity is to life and overall health in the community like Article 14 said earlier.

All of the different groups of women and men should have equal access to the things they need to take part all sorts of different activities.



The people that sign this Charter understand that sometimes people do not have equal access to these things because of their gender and that this is unfair.



They promise to do whatever they can to make things better and more equal.

They will support groups that run activities for things like sport, fun, reading and art to focus on making activities for the needs and wants of men and women equally.



Article 21: Safety and Security.

The people that sign this Charter agree that everyone has the right to be and feel safe no matter who or where they are.



They understand that different groups of people face different safety issues.



They will look at how things work in their community and do whatever they can so women and men are always safe.

## Article 22: Gender-Based Violence.



The people that sign this Charter agree that women and girls are more likely to experience violence or abuse and that they have the right to be and feel safe.



They understand that society has often made women feel like they are less important and that this is wrong.



They promise to look at gender-based violence in their community and work hard to support victims and provide accessible information about this.



They will make sure that all supporting groups like the police and health service have training and teach the community about how to stop gender-based violence.

## Article 23: Trafficking in Human Beings.



The people that sign this Charter understand that women and girls are more likely to be taken against their will and sold like property.



This is illegal, against their human rights and is very dangerous.



The people that sign this Charter promise to take steps to stop any human trafficking in their communities.



They will work hard to make sure everyone knows about the issues and that anyone working in support gets good training on this.

They will support victims including access to medical help, safe housing and language support.

## Article 24: Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development means working on things that will make the community better for a long time.

The people that sign this Charter understand that sustainable development is important and that gender equality is a key part of this.

They promise to include gender equality in all of their plans including ones about money, the environment, culture and the social welfare of their community.

## Article 25: Urban and Local Planning.

The people that sign this charter understand that gender equality is important in all of their plans including land use, transport and others.





They promise that when they are making these plans in the future they will include gender equality and the points in this Charter so they happen in all activities and areas of their community.



They will look at the all groups of people in their community and make good design choices to suit all of their different needs.

Article 26: Mobility and Transport.



The people that sign this Charter agree that access to transport and being able to move from place to place freely and safely is important so that people can live a good life.



They agree that women and men have different mobility needs and may move about their homes and communities differently.



They understand women take more trips on public transport than men and often move from one type of transport to another with lots of stops.



They promise to look at the needs of women and men in their community and how they use transport so that they can think of this when they are making plans for their towns, cities and the countryside.



Article 27: Economic Development.

The people that sign this Charter understand that making sure everyone in the community has enough money to live a good life is important.



It is important to each person and also to the community as a whole.



Women are at more risk of poverty than men and it is important that they have any support they need to get enough money to live a good and healthy life.



The people that sign this Charter promise to do what they can to make this happen including supporting training and women starting businesses.



They will make sure that groups that provide support to get jobs know how important gender equality is.



Article 28: Environment.

The people that sign this Charter agree that they must be aware that the way women and men use and enjoy the environment may be different.



They promise that they will take this into account when they are writing any laws or plans for their community.

## **Role as Regulator**

Article 29: Local Government as Regulator.



The people that sign this Charter agree that as part of their role in the community they must make sure the well-being and safety of everyone is taken care of properly.



They promise to always make sure they take account of the points in this Charter as part of that role.

Article 30: Gender Equality in Decentralised Cooperation.

The people that sign this Charter understand the importance of working with other towns and regions.





They promise that when carrying these activities out, such as town twinning, that they will involve women and men from all of the different groups within their community.

They will also use these activities to learn about how other areas include gender equality in their activities.

# Introduction of New Articles

## Forward

The first time this Charter was brought out to the public was 15 (fifteen) years ago.



In communities and across the world many things have changed in that time.

We have learned new things and become more aware of challenges like caring for our environment and our health.



The way we work, move, run our communities and connect with each other has changed a lot.

All of these things are affected by gender issues so the Charter has grown to include them.



This section will tell you about the new Articles.

The new articles focus on themes that either did not exist 15 years ago or have changed a lot including:



Sustainable Development.

It is very important to support equality, care for our environment and the amount of money available to communities in a lasting way.

Online Activities.



The internet offers us good things like making friends and learning but we must be aware of things like cyber bullying and online safety.

Women Elected  
Representatives.



Women in politics or public life have been bullied or treated unfairly so we must be aware of this and work on ways to stop it.

## Intersectionality.



This means people who are part of more than one type of community.

They are met with more challenges such as being treated unfairly because of both gender and disability.

## Flexible Working.



Modern technology like the internet has made it possible for more people to work in different ways.

We must be aware of the good and bad ways this can affect gender equality.



## Digital Inclusion.

We must work on new tools and new ways to include women and girls in technology development.



## Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.

These rights are very important to women and girls for living a good and healthy life.

## Climate Change.

This is an issue that can make other problems in our lives and communities bigger.



We must all be aware of these problems and include them in our plans for our community.

## Civil Preparedness and Emergency Response.

At times of crisis we must be ready to act but do so without forgetting gender equality issues.



Women and girls must be involved in these actions.



The people that sign this Charter from 2023 onwards will be making a promise to stick to both the first Charter and the new articles included in 2022.



# European Charter for Equality



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**Inclusion Ireland**  
The National Association for People  
with an Intellectual Disability.