

Contemporary Picture of Changes in Women's Media Activity. Selected European Aspects

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The article presents selected aspects of the contemporary picture of changes in women's media activity. The presence of women in the media is increasingly seen not only in the dimension of their passive participation, but also in journalistic activity and in non-stereotypical representations of the female sex in media broadcasts. The text presents the socio-political conditions of changes in women's media participation, with particular emphasis on the processes of receiving messages and the sphere of journalistic activity. The text recognizes that the contemporary picture of women's participation in media systems, despite numerous activities aimed at implementing equal opportunities policy, is characterized by asymmetry and still insufficient women's presence, especially in the area of decision-making processes and various topics in media, in general. Although the progressive feminization of public space is noticeable, women still face barriers and restrictions in professional development on journalistic ground. Therefore, breaking stereotypes and equalizing gender representation in the media ought to be considered as an evolutionary process rather than revolutionary changes in this matter.

Key words: *women's; activity; media; change; gender equality policy; Europe*

Nowadays, not only the means of communication are changing, but also the models of participation of women and men in the media, including the creation, distribution and reception of media broadcasting. The presence of women in the media is increasingly perceived not only in the dimension of their passive participation, but primarily in professional journalistic activity and in diverse and non-stereotypical representations of the female gender in the media broadcasting. As a result of the development of new communication techniques, not only the journalistic profession is changing, but also the position of women in this profession, their role in the media and the ways of using and influencing the media. The multidimensional and complex position of women in the media systems of individual European countries is the result of numerous historical, social, political, cultural and economic factors. The systematic boost in the presence of women in the public sphere in Europe, based on the transition from

anti-discrimination policy to actions in the name of real equality, does not translate into an increase in women's decision-making processes in the media or their key positions in this field. What's more, certain restrictions that women face in the media and in the journalistic profession are similar in both the European and global dimensions and currently cause the position of women in the media to oscillate between subjectivity and objectification.

Today, the issue of the growing activity of women in the media sphere is closely related to the increased involvement of women in the public sphere, especially the political one. The presence of women in public life, which has been increasing over the years, and especially in the last half-century, has brought changes in the ways in which female participation takes place, from passive participation to multidimensional and diverse activity in all media spheres. The media itself has also become an important tool for socio-political transformation, which can significantly contribute to improve the range of women's activity in the public and private sphere. Despite many positive actions aimed at empowering women, their position and status in the media are still too often based on unequal power relations. Women, like men, want to have power, learn the sense of benefits associated with it, but also often sacrifices. Their motives or methods of exercising power do not differ from men in this respect. The necessity of joining many roles by women - family-oriented and professional - means, however, that their chances of achieving career or political aspirations are not always possible. Therefore, strengthening the strong position of women in the media is somewhat a political act, because it is associated with the concepts of "power" and "decision making".

Key terms used in this text - media activity¹ - refers to determining the level of women's involvement and participation in the media systems - from the insignificant interest of individuals in the processes of communication as recipients of the broadcast, to the growing forms of women's participation in the media, such as: readership of the press (including specialized), presence and discussions on social forums, making important editorial decisions, managing media organizations (presence on the boards and boards of media companies) and taking positions on regulatory boards for media. Therefore, women's media activity is understood as a special manifestation of public activity. The condition of activity is the recognition of the media space as an important sphere for the individual, in which one can define the motives of activities and pursue specific goals.²

¹ Balczyńska-Kosman A. (2017). *Wielowymiarowość partycypacji kobiet w systemach medialnych a polityka równości* [Multidimensionality of women's participation in media systems yet equality policy]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM, p. 27.

² Skarżyńska K. (2002). Aktywność i bierność polityczna. In K. Skarżyńska, (Ed.) *Podstawy psychologii politycznej* [The basics of political psychology]. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, p. 33.

The second of the title's term – the concept of “change” usually defines the transition from the current state to another. As Zuzanna Ewa Wojciechowska notes, the change is a common phenomenon that it seems imperceptible and even obvious, and at the same time requires precise definition of what it refers to.³ As the aforementioned author further claims, each change is multidimensional and occurs on numerous levels, and taking into account the area of its impact, it may concern, inter alia, professional, political, cultural or economic transformations. Change can be a response to the circumstances (accommodation, adaptation, struggle) or the result of autonomous decisions and human actions.⁴ The concept of “media system”, understood as a whole of diverse media and relationships between them, functioning on the basis of such criteria as the level of development of media markets, political parallelism, professionalization of the journalistic profession and the nature of state intervention in the media system is also important for further considerations.⁵ In one of the most widespread classifications of media systems, covering mainly the countries of Western Europe, three differentiated media models are distinguished today – the Mediterranean (polarized pluralism), the North Central European (democratic corporatism) and the North Atlantic (liberal). The indicators such as press readership, the degree of links between the media system and the political system, the autonomy of the journalistic profession, and finally the scale of state intervention in the media world have become the criteria for distinguishing individual media functioning patterns in several countries.

It is worth mentioning that a significant lack of the given classification is to omit the characteristics of media systems in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In this part of the Old Continent, after the processes of political transformation, various patterns of media functioning and regulation were adopted based on their own historical, institutional and legal traditions. In the processes of reorganizing the media systems of Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th century, in most cases the politicization of mass communication, especially the public sector, was not avoided. Nevertheless, the continuity of employment, the foundations of organizational structures and the way of thinking in mass media were preserved.⁶ Thus, media models in this region of Europe took

³ Wojciechowska Z. E. (2018). *Kobiece i męskie wzory (re)konstrukcji biografii w perspektywie zmiany zawodowej* [Female and male patterns of (re) biography construction in the perspective of professional change]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26–28.

⁵ Hallin D. C. – Mancini P. (2007). *Systemy medialne. Trzy modele mediów i polityki w ujęciu porównawczym* [Media systems. Three models of media and policy in comparative approach]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, p. 67.

⁶ Williams, K. (2008). *Media w Europie* [Media in Europe]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne Spółka z o.o., pp. 145–149.

the form of a hybrid liberal model, a system of politicized media, a media model in transit and an authoritarian pattern.

The concept of "equality participation" is of the paramount importance for the issues raised in this article. According to the author of the text all the forms of women's involvement and presence in media systems mean the possibility of making decisions in the media, taking into account equal opportunities for men and women. The socio-political determinants of changes in women's media activity include a number of factors. The first group of conditions include primarily issues related to: journalistic profession, career paths, career advancement, remuneration for work, reconciliation of family and professional roles, gender equality indicators and gender stereotypes in media organizations. The category of social conditions for women's media participation is also complemented by the phenomena: the transformation of "women's press and media", the interchangeability of the roles of the sender and recipient, and the evolution of women's images in media relations. In contrast, among the main determinants of changes in the media activity of women of a political nature the following should be noted: taking decision-making processes in the media, the presence of women as experts in information and journalistic programs, women's participation in communications devoted to electoral issues and the use of institutional mechanisms to increase women's activity. The selected most significant contemporary socio-political conditions for changes in women's media activity in Europe have been discussed below.

Bearing in mind the long history of inequalities between women and men dating back to the Athenian democracy in which women were effectively excluded from civil society, it should be pointed out that granting rights to women was a gradual and difficult process.⁷ The demand for equal political rights for men and women has become the fundamental message of the first wave of feminism. Subsequent waves supplemented the catalog of postulates proclaiming, inter alia, the right of women to work, reform of marriage law and deciding about their body.

Analyzing the contemporary picture of changes in women's media activity, it should be emphasized that the key issue for women's equality was the deliberations of the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, which resulted in the signing of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action by 189 countries.⁸ The

⁷ White, S. (2008). *Równość* [Equality]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic! s. c., pp. 163–171. The author points out that throughout history from ancient times, many thinkers postulated the natural equality of men, having not extended this idea to women. He cites the example of the Lewellers, who proclaimed political rights exclusively for men and the theorists of social contract, including J. J. Rousseau, who excluded women from the right to political participation in the republic.

⁸ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, United Nations, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995, New York 1996, www.un.org/esa/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf, 12 December 2019.

document indicated twelve main areas of activity, among which there was the sphere of “Women and the media”. The main goals were pointed out in it, namely increasing women’s participation and access to expressing opinions, deciding “in” and “through” the media and through new communication techniques. It was also recommended to promote the image of women in roles free of gender stereotypes and assured about securing means and conditions for the development of broadly understood media activity of women (creating stereotype-free programs, promoting equality education in the media). Nowadays, the issues of gender equality and protection of human rights, the prohibition of discrimination occupy an important place in the European politics, and within half a century they have already gained the recognition of the general principles of the EU law. The issue of gender equality, covering the “dual” principle of non-discrimination and the demand for equality (in the media) is taken equally in the activities of one of the oldest European organizations – the Council of Europe, as well as in the regulations of the European Union. As for the Council of Europe documents devoted to equality between women and men in the media, among the most significant in this matter, one should mention Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers No. 17 of 1984 on equality between women and men in the media⁹ and Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers No. 7 of 2011 on the new concept of media.¹⁰

The 2011 document recommends, above all, the acceptance of the broad significance of the new media, which includes all participants in the production and dissemination of content for potentially large audiences. It also includes instruments that facilitate interactive communication while maintaining editorial control and supervision. The Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation also sets out six criteria for identifying media, such as: intention to act as media, purpose and practical purposes of the media, editorial control, professional standards, coverage and dissemination, and public expectations. The aforementioned document points out that the media should make every effort to prevent stereotypes and avoid using hate

⁹ Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Rec (84)17 *on equality between women and men in the media*, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=090000168043c678, 6 December 2019.

¹⁰ Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Rec (2011)7 to member states *on the new concept of media* adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011, www.krrit.gov.pl/regulacje-prawne/rada-europy/, 2 December 2019.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2 December 2019.

¹² Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Rec (2013) 1 *on equality between women and men in the media* adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013 during 1176 meeting of the deputy ministers, www.krrit.gov.pl/Data?Files?_public/Portals?.../0572-recomendation-cm_eng.docx, 11 December 2019.

speech and content that discriminates for any reason. The Recommendation also points out that media content creators, editors and distributors should adhere to professional standards and promote gender equality. Particular care should be assured while giving an account of topics about women and ensure that they participate in the processes of creating, editing and distributing information.¹¹

It is worth mentioning here that, in hand Recommendation, unfortunately, the issue of making key decisions in the media by women and increasing their presence in managerial positions in media editorial offices, is not touched on. The provisions of the Conference of Ministers of the Council of Europe responsible for equality between women and men also play an important role in the issue of gender equality in mass media (Baku, 2010).¹² Among the non-binding documents of the Council of Europe, special attention should be given to the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality and the media from 2013.¹³ The Recommendation lists the most important areas of inequality that women face in the media. It is noted here that the media can hinder or accelerate structural changes towards gender equality and inequalities in society are reflected in the media. The manifestation of these processes is the low participation of women in media ownership, creation of information and in managerial positions in editorial offices and management boards of media companies. This phenomenon is also revealed in the insufficient visibility of women as media experts and the relative absence in showing women's opinions in the media. The media asymmetry of men and women is also noticeable in the ways of reporting political events and election campaigns, in the persistence of sexist stereotypes and the lack of actions to prevent them, and in the professional promotion of the female journalists and the level of their remuneration in the media. Out of the latest documents issued by the Council of Europe, the new Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2023 deserves special attention.¹⁴ This document sets out the main objective and six strategic goals, including, among others, preventing and combating gender stereotypes and achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making actions. The Introduction to the Strategy states that “even if progress is visible and the legal status of women in Europe has undoubtedly improved in recent decades, effective equality between women and men is far from being achieved”.¹⁵ In this

¹³ Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Rec (2013) 1 *on equality between women and men in the media* adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013 during 1176 meeting of the deputy ministers, www.krrit.gov.pl/Data?Files?_public/Portals?.../0572-recomendation-cm_eng.docx, 11 December 2019.

¹⁴ Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2023, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (March 2018), rm.coe.int/gender-equality-strategy-2018-2023-pl/168097fa52, January 2, 2020.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *Introduction: Council of Europe and Gender Equality*, p. 5.

Strategy it is pointed out that the traditional and social media are used to share information, but especially new media may be subject to abuse and can become forums for transmitting hate speech or sexist content aimed mainly at women. Social perception and media image might become a breeding ground for gender stereotypes.

When it comes to the legal regulations and institutional mechanisms of the European Union in the gender equality policy, they are bound by a heterogeneous force, which means that they take the form of the soft and the hard law.¹⁶ The Council of the EU together with the European Parliament have the key legislative powers, and the European Commission to a lesser extent. The Amsterdam Treaty was a landmark act in the EU gender equality policy, and the Lisbon Treaty was the crowning action for the women's rights activities. In contrast, the current European Commission priorities in the field of gender equality are contained in the Strategy "The Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality for 2016–2019".¹⁷ The issue of gender equality in the EU has also been reflected in recent years in the European Parliament's resolutions and the European Commission's annual reports. The European Parliament in the plenary session of April 17th 2018 adopted the resolution on gender equality in the media "Gender equality in the media sector in the EU"¹⁸, in which an up-to-date assessment of the situation of women in the media was made and proposals to strengthen female sex in this area were presented. The document emphasized the role played by the media – the fourth power - and their significant impact on shaping public opinion and social patterns. It was also noticed that the gender image in the media still shows the unequal representation of women in diverse contexts, including social, cultural, political, economic or scientific. Women are portrayed mainly in passive and stereotypical roles, very often in the objectified dimension. Especially advertising messages resort to sexist and discriminatory practices against women. The Resolution also points out that the new technologies change traditional media business models, and the audiovisual sector in the EU brings significant economic value and creates employment conditions for over a million people. It is clearly emphasized that the potential and skills that women themselves have in transferring information and

¹⁶ Półtorak M. (2015). *Kobiety-Kwoty-Polityka. Gwarancje równości płci w Unii Europejskiej [Women-Figures-Politics. Guarantees of gender equality in the European Union]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, pp. 34–35. The term the "hard" law refers to binding legal acts and includes, for example, regulations, directives and decisions, while the "soft" law defines non-binding regulations, i.e. recommendations and opinions.

¹⁷ *The Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019*. The European Commission, the European Union – Luxembourg 2016, www.europedirect-bielsko.biala.pl, 3 December 2019.

¹⁸ *European Parliament Resolution of April 17, 2018 on gender equality in the media sector in the EU*, 2017/2210(INI), Legislative Observatory EP, [oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/fichprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2017/2210\(INI\)](http://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/fichprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2017/2210(INI)), 5 December 2019.

knowledge about the challenges they face should not be lost. The document points to specific statistics, which show that in 2015 women constituted 68 % of graduates in journalism and related professions, while the percentage of women employed in this sector was only about 40 %. Participation of women at the decision-making positions in the EU media in the same year was below the gender balance range and was only 32 % (percentage of women in the positions of Chief-Executive-Officers of the media company boards – 22 %), and the level of women's remuneration was 17 % lower than men's in this industry.¹⁹

Women face limitations in the journalistic profession, associated primarily with the possibility of promotion at higher levels of the career, which is due to the mechanisms adopted in organizational culture, but also the lack of balance between personal and professional life, often long working hours and rigid deadlines limit their activities. The Parliament's resolution points out that women are not sufficiently visible in news programs in the fields of sport, politics, finance and economics. They constitute only 24 % of the people we hear or read about in the news. 37 % of women are information providers (female reporters and female presenters) in traditional and new media. Less often than men they receive more prestigious and difficult topics. They are too rarely shown as media-savvies or experts - only one in five experts in the EU media are women. Women are more exposed to threats, violence and hate speech than men. The lack of sufficient representation of women – as the Resolution points out – is particularly evident in the public media sector in the EU, both at high level strategic and operational positions in editorial offices, as well as on the boards of media companies. In its Resolution, the European Parliament recommends that both the use of legal regulations and so-called “soft” measures implement and support the policy of gender equality in the media (i.a. conducting training for managers, including gender equality issues in the programs of journalism and communication studies both at bachelor's and master's degree). The resolution also supports the use of good practices in the media such as: anti-discrimination media campaigns (the Belgian *Expertalia* tool, the Czech award “*Sexistické prasátko*” (Sexist piggy), the Swedish project #*TackaNej* (No, thank you), the prizes for content without gender stereotypes, the creation of expert databases, trainings, the codes of practice in media organizations, the establishment of minimum gender representations at the levels of managing media regulatory bodies.²⁰

In the aforementioned Parliament's Resolution the changes have been noticed in the new media sector. The differences between traditional and digital media are blurring, which on the one hand create new opportunities but on the other generate threats. Digital media give new voices a chance, mobilize and raise public awareness. In the economic dimension, the media based on new technologies create jobs and

¹⁹ European Parliament Resolution..., *ibid.*

²⁰ European Parliament Resolution..., *op. cit.*

may contribute to equalizing the level of earnings between men and women. On the other hand, in the context of threats, the digital sector may aggravate existing inequalities through the phenomenon of misogyny, cyber violence, content that does not reflect the needs of women, and the lack of involvement of women themselves in the preparation of online transmissions.²¹ Changes in the forms of women's media activity in recent years can be seen in both the passive and the active dimensions of women's participation in the European media systems. In the first of these areas one should consider the impact of media, which is not monolith, on women's attitudes and behaviors. Although media images are not always real, they usually have a real impact on how society perceives gender issues.²²

People often think of media products as entertainment or artistic expression, forgetting that the media also plays an ideological role and shape consciousness. The means of mass communication significantly affect the thinking directions of recipients of messages, which in turn translates into the creation of socio-political reality by the media. This also affects shaping the information strategy of broadcasters. The process of change in women's media activity is primarily about transforming passive female users and female "consumers" of media content into engaged participants of communication processes that are aware of their needs and capabilities. Although, as mentioned earlier, the development of new media has not eliminated the problem of gender stereotyping, it has nevertheless created greater opportunities for women (and men) to interactively participate and create communication processes. Particular importance in this regard should be attributed to the phenomena of personalization of information that allow addressing messages to specific individuals or social groups. In addition to the images of women (wives, mothers, home carers) perpetuated in the media, women are increasingly appearing in new, non-traditional professional roles competing with men.

The emergence as a result of technological and social changes in the segment of so-called generic media, which are used by sexually diverse recipients, may contribute to the increase in the representation and activity of women in the media sector, although on the other hand it leads to the consolidation of divisions into the press media the female or the male one. The concept of "genre media" includes diverse media genres, program formulas, and journalistic materials, which are by definition produced and distributed with a view to a specific recipient or recipient profile. However, as M. Lisowska-Magdziarz points out, generic profiling is

²¹ Shreeves R. (2018). *Równouprawienie płci w mediach i w sektorze cyfrowym* [Gender equality in the media and in the digital sector]. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), [europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/620204/EPRS_ATA2018\)620204_PL.pdf](http://europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/620204/EPRS_ATA2018)620204_PL.pdf), 3 December 2019.

²² Palczewski C. H. – DeFrancisco V. P. – McGeough D. D. (2019). *Gender in Communication. A Critical Introduction*, Los Angeles – London – New Delhi – Singapore – Washington DC – Melbourne: SAGE Publications. Third Edition, p. 222.

expressed in the fact that the media select and shape the content of coverage according to the presumed female (or male) preferences and needs, determined on the basis of market research.²³

The profile of message recipients is changing among both men and women. The diversity of recipients' expectations translates into the content of program formats and content addressed to women. Women like to follow thematic channels dedicated to men, while men, in exchange, are increasingly looking for information useful in everyday life and broadcasts containing practical advice. Women systematically follow in the media especially those broadcasts from which they can learn something more about themselves, while the content in which they find promises of change and personal development are more inspiring. It is worth mentioning here that, especially when it comes to television, interest in this medium is declining in Western Europe, especially among young people regardless the gender.

However, according to Nielsen Audience Measurement data in Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, television is still eagerly watched, where one averagely spends 4 hours and 16 minutes in front of the TV screen.²⁴ In 2017, 72 % of women and 59 % of men were watching TV.²⁵ Women in the roles of recipients of media broadcasts, especially television, are very diverse as a target group. The creators of television programs recognize women's interest in social issues and human stories, transferring this feminine curiosity into specific productions. The phenomenon of "multi-screening", i.e. the use of at least two screens or several electronic devices at the same time, is more and more often observed in the receptive attitudes of women.²⁶ The process of changes in women's receptive attitudes is particularly visible in the female-friendly advertising sector. Statistics from the previous years, in which only 17 % of respondents thought that advertisements portray women in a degrading way and discriminatory treatment of women or men is not perceived as an important problem, belong to the past.²⁷ The expression of these changes is advertising in the style of *femvertising*. The main purpose of *femvertising* advertising broadcast is to show reality through the eyes of women, addressing a person, not gender. The strength of women-friendly

²³ Lisowska-Magdziarz, M. (2008). *Media powszechne. Środki komunikowania masowego i szerokie paradygmaty medialne w życiu codziennym Polaków u progu XXI wieku [Universal media. Means of mass communication and broad media paradigms in the everyday life of Poles on the threshold of the 21st century]*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, pp. 285–286.

²⁴ Report of the Wirtualnedia.pl portal, Wirtualnedia.pl/artykul/ogladalnosc-telewizji-2019-rok-atv-top-kanaly-programy-reklama, January 30, 2020.

²⁵ *Jak i co Polacy najchętniej oglądają w telewizji? [How and what do Poles willingly watch on TV?]*, miod-malinapl/jak-i-co-polacy-najchetniej-ogladaja-w-telewizji.html, January 31, 2020.

²⁶ Goczał B. (2013). Kobieta zmienną jest [Woman is fickle]. W *Press*, No 10, p. 11.

²⁷ Por. *Opinie o reklamie*. Komunikat z badań [Opinions about the advertisement. The study report]. Oprac. M. Wenzel, CBOS, Warszawa, czerwiec 2005 pp. 8–9, January 30, 2019.

advertising is to understand the needs of the female recipients and strongly brace the message up. It should be emphasized, however, that there are also more cases in the media of advertising campaigns, which aim at profitable product sales under the formula of *femvertising* messages and equality slogans. The fight against gender stereotyping in press releases is one thing, and advertising profits for media owners are unfortunately still two separate issues. It is important, therefore, that changes in portraying women in advertising broadcasts would trigger the evolution of roles performed by women, from a housewife to a mature and independent woman who does not forget about her expectations.

In contrast, in the active dimension of the presence of women in the media, the biggest changes can be seen in the sphere of journalistic profession and in the ways of managing diversity in media organizations. Despite many positive actions to increase the role of women in the media, their contemporary position in media editorials still fluctuates between empowerment and objectification. Clear gender differences are particularly evident in the sphere of decision-making in editorial offices, especially on key issues, and in the presence of women on the boards of media organization companies and media councils. Inequalities are particularly evident when comparing the commercial and public media sectors, to the disadvantage of the former. For example, in 2012, women were accounted for 22 % of presidents and 29% of board members and management boards of media companies in the public media sector in Europe, while those in commercial media were 12 % and 21% respectively.²⁸

What is more, the latest research conducted in 2017 by the European Institute for Gender Equality shows that more than a third of decisions in the public media sector are made by women holding the position of presidents of media companies (36 %) as well as female chief-executive-officers and members of management boards and supervisory boards (38 %).²⁹ Considering the above, equality participation in media editorials depend on promoting the balanced participation of women and men in management positions, especially on the boards and companies' program boards of media companies and in the sphere of media ownership. The under-representation of women is less structurally and more qualitatively related, as has already been mentioned in the news media. Reporting and commenting on socio-political events by women is also underrated. In many media systems in Europe, female journalists also experience precarious employment conditions, wage disparities and the "glass ceiling" phenomenon in

²⁸ *Gender Equality in the Media Sector. Study for the FEMM Committee*, Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department C. Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, January 2018, p. 24, europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/596839/IPOL_STU%29596839_EN.pdf, 29 January 2020.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

developing careers. Equal participation in media systems contribute to the increase of the activity of women in the field of media. It is also taking into account in editorial offices indicators that measurably determine the level of equality between women and men in mass media.

The most important criteria (Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media, GSIM) referring to the active dimension of women's presence in media editorials include: gender equality in key decision-making processes, equal employment conditions for women and men, gender equality in journalistic organizations and councils to media regulation issues, promotion of the codes of ethics, the balanced presence of men and women lecturers in the field of journalism majors and in the authorities of political science and journalism faculties.³⁰ New information and communication technologies are a sector that can become a significant tool for achieving gender equality, ensuring well-paid jobs, but currently women are clearly underrepresented in this area. Out of 8 million 200 thousand persons employed in the EU in 2016 as female specialists in new ICT information technology and communication technologies, women constituted only 16.7 %.³¹

Summing up the aforementioned considerations, it should be noted pointed out that the contemporary picture of women's activity in media systems, despite numerous activities aimed at implementing equal opportunities policy, is characterized by asymmetry, and in many cases the scale of women's participation in the media is still too low. The multidimensional, complex position of women in this field is conditioned by numerous socio-political factors that affect the nature and pace of changes in women's media activity. Although the progressive feminization of public space is noticeable, this process is not associated with a significant increase and dynamics of women's equality in media systems, and women face barriers to career and professional development. Especially the sphere of making strategic decisions in the media of the EU countries is still a male domain. The exceptions are the Scandinavian countries and the region of Central and Eastern Europe, in which equality policy is successfully implemented. Nevertheless, the systematic implementation of positive measures to increase the position of women in the media, breaking stereotypes and equalizing gender representation is seen in Europe, although these transformations should be seen as an evolutionary process rather than revolutionary changes.

³⁰ *Gender-Sensitive Indicator for Media. Framework of Indicators to Gauge Gender Sensitivity in Media Operations and Content.* Raport UNESCO 2012, pp. 22–37, unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000217831, 16 January 2020.

³¹ *Międzynarodowy Dzień Kobiet: Wzmocnić pozycję kobiet w świecie nowych technologii.* [International Women's Day: Strengthening the position of women in the world of new technologies]. European Parliament News, 8 March 2018, europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/headlines/priorities/międzynarodowy-dzien-kobiet-2018/20180301STO98927/dzien-kobiet-wzmocnic-pozycje-kobiet-w-swiecie-nowych-technologii, 2 January 2020.