

## Advanced Course on Gender Equality in Politics

*A specialised course for  
staff of governmental bodies for gender equality*

July-August 2025 (online learning)

Tuesday-Friday, 9-12 September 2025 (four-day, in-person training in Stockholm, Sweden)

October-December 2025 (online learning and consultations)

**Why this Course?** In 2025, states in Europe and Central Asia, together with the rest of the globe, are marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Beijing Platform for Action**, a central set of international norms on women's rights and gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action sets women's full and equal participation in politics and decision-making as one of twelve priority areas and calls upon UN member States to set up or strengthen their institutional mechanisms/governmental bodies for the advancement of women and of gender equality (IMGEs). Reflecting on the last 30 years, Europe and neighbouring regions have seen a far-reaching development. To name a few of the major achievements: states have tripled the average number of female parliamentarians (31.6%), they adopted revolutionary gender equality laws, and set up stronger ministries, government agencies and councils that lead on gender equality policy. 26 states also introduced legislative gender quotas and dozens of parliamentary political parties committed to voluntary representation targets and measures, all aiming at decreasing male over-representation and targeting gender balanced politics in the long run.

Nevertheless, **advancing gender equality in politics in many countries is still not a governmental national policy priority**. While the majority of states have adopted some form of multi-year national gender equality strategy, programme or action plan, aiming at addressing key policy issues, like violence against women, women's economic participation or gender-based discrimination, a lot of them have not committed to comprehensive approaches in order to advance women's political participation and gender equality in politics. In fact, governmental bodies in charge for gender equality policy often refrain from engaging with political parties, considering them as non-state actors and in that way beyond the scope of work of the executive. At the same time, Europe is facing partial stagnation in women's political representation. While the percent of female ministers is still gradually increasing, the number of women parliamentarians is standing on the same level for the last five years. The **2024 General Recommendation No 40 of the CEDAW Committee** is a reminder and call for action towards all actors, including governments, for a **renewed commitment towards gender parity (50/50)**.

Thematic and specialized learning opportunities on gender equality in politics are limited, especially for staff and leadership of IMGEs. In order to fill this gap, the *Advanced Course on Gender Equality in Politics*, provides to those who complete it with necessary knowledge,

qualifications and skills to contribute to fostering the advancement of gender equality in politics and of gender-responsive governance through policy, legislation and programming.

**Course objective:** The course aims to equip selected staff of IMGEs with knowledge, skills, and competences to understand, critically assess, and apply concepts, methods and tools of gender equality in politics. The aim is to contribute towards successful leadership, gender analysis, and IMGEs policy development and programming in this area.

Specifically, the course aims for following **learning outcomes**:

- Good understanding of concepts, tools, and methods of advancing women's political participation, gender equality in politics and gender-responsive governance;
- Ability to integrate gender equality in politics as a policy issue in IMGE policy development and programming;
- Demonstrate skills in presenting, communicating, and influencing on gender equality in politics.

**Course duration and format:** The course will be implemented in three phases, starting with online learning in July and August 2025. In the second phase, participants will attend a four-day in-person training, 9-12 September 2025 in Stockholm, Sweden. Finally, after the in-person training, in the third phase participants will have to complete another online learning exercise and apply the learning from October to December 2025. All sessions will be run in English language. After completing all phases, participants will receive a certificate.

**Course target audience:** The course is designed for IMGE leadership (senior and middle management) and staff that work on the broader policy issue of 'gender equality in politics' in Europe and Central Asia. Specifically, the course is open for IMGE staff that are a) heading departments/units/sections, b) conducting analysis/advising management and political leadership, and/or c) directly involved in conceptualising, overseeing, and/or implementing policies/programmes/projects on advancing women's political participation, gender-responsive governance and/or gender equality in politics in general.

**Course partners:** The Course is a collaborative initiative of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (UN Women ECARO), and the Government Offices of Sweden – who act as host and co-organizer for this training. The training is also kindly supported by the Riksdag – the Swedish Parliament.

**Course facilitators and trainers:** OSCE/ODIHR, UN Women and Government Offices of Sweden staff, and international experts

**In-person training venue in Stockholm:**

Brunkhuvudet Building/Bankhallen, Malmtorgsgatan 3, 111 51 Stockholm

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## Course outline

First phase, online: REFRESHER ON GENDER EQUALITY				
Date/time	Session	Learning outcome	Learning method	Facilitator
Any time in July or August 2025, ca. 2.5 hours	UN Women's <a href="#">Introduction to gender equality – I know Gender 1, 2, and 3</a>	Participants comprehend key concepts, methods and international standards on gender equality and women's rights to be able to apply them in their work.	Online course with presentations, videos, reading materials, and quizzes, etc.	Self-paced
Any time in July or August 2025, ca. 2.5 hours	CoE's <a href="#">Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming</a>	Participants comprehend key concepts, methods and international standards on gender equality and gender mainstreaming to be able to apply them in their work.	Online course with presentations, videos, reading materials, and quizzes, etc.	Self-paced
Any time in July or August 2025, ca. 1 hour	UN Women's <a href="#">I Know Gender 5: Women's Leadership and Decision Making</a>	Participants comprehend key concepts, methods and international standards on women's leadership and decision making to be able to apply them in their work.	Online course with presentations, videos, reading materials, and quizzes, etc.	Self-paced
Any time in July or August 2025, ca. 1 hour	UN Women's <a href="#">I Know Gender 11: Women, Peace and Security</a>	Participants comprehend key concepts, methods and international standards on women, peace and security to be able to apply them in their work.	Online course with presentations, videos, reading materials, and quizzes, etc.	Self-paced

### **Recommended reading before the in-person training in Stockholm:**

Drude Dahlerup (2017): *Has Democracy Failed Women?* Polity Press. (Available in the [LINK](#))

ODIHR (2024): [Advancing gender equality in politics — National assessments and action plans](#). Warsaw.

	<b>Second phase, in-person: FOUR-DAY INTENSIVE TRAINING in Stockholm</b>			
<i>Date/time</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Learning outcome</i>	<i>Learning method</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>
<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Theory and evidence of gender equality in politics I: Access</b>			
9.00-10.30	Welcome by course team & Getting to know each other	Course participants have clarity on course flow, learning & working methods	Presentation Exercise	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher & Saša Gavrić
10.30-11.00	Group picture & coffee break			
11.00-12.30	<b>Workshop I:</b> River of Gender Equality in Politics: International standards & history overview	Participants understand major international standards (UN, CoE, OSCE & GR 40) and how women's political participation has developed	Exercise Input presentation	Yulia Netesova & Rachel Weston Eschenbacher
12.30-13.30	Lunch break			
13.30-15.00	<b>Workshop II:</b> Barriers for women and men in accessing politics & empowerment measures	Participants are able to identify the different barriers, map existing solutions to overcome them & understand the need for comprehensive national assessments	Group discussion & work Input presentation	International consultant
15.00-15.30	Coffee break & networking			
15.30-17.00	<b>Learning about Sweden I:</b> Making gender equality in politics a reality – A history overview	Participants are informed about key developments in the Swedish success story and the remaining challenges	Presentation Discussion	Swedish Ministry of Labour/Gender Equality Division

Day 2	Theory and evidence of gender equality in politics II: Voice			
9.00-9.30	Reflections from yesterday	Course participants are able to summarize and reflect on key learnings from day 1	Group discussion	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher & Saša Gavrić
9.30-11.00	<b>Keynote input I:</b> Abolishing men's overrepresentation: Solutions from electoral systems, gender quotas & other TSMs	Participants understand the influence different electoral systems have and what legal solutions can be applied to promote gender balance	Presentation and discussion	Saša Gavrić
11.00-11.30	Coffee break & networking			
11.30-13.00	<b>Workshop III:</b> Strengthening women's voice, including of minority women, in political institutions	Participants are able to identify diverse solutions to challenges which hinder impactful women's voice in institutions on different levels of governance	Group discussion & work Input presentation	International consultant
13.00-14.00	Lunch break			
14.00-15.30	<b>Workshop IV:</b> Engaging male politicians as transformative actors for gender equality in politics	Participants understand barriers and have identified approaches on how to strategically engage male politicians	Group discussion & work Input presentation	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher
15.30-16.00	Coffee break & networking			
16.00-17.00	<b>World Café:</b> What we have done great, and what we can do better	Participants will be able to learn about selected cases of IMGE gender equality in politics policy & programming	World café	International consultant

Day 3	Theory and evidence of gender equality in politics III: Transformation			
9.00-9.30	Reflections from yesterday	Course participants are able to summarize and reflect on key learnings from day 2	Group discussion	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher & Saša Gavrić
9.30-11.00	<b>Workshop V:</b> Transforming political institutions – political parties and parliaments	Participants understand the application of gender mainstreaming tools and are able to apply them	Presentation Group exercise	Yulia Netesova & Saša Gavrić
11.00-11.30	Coffee break & networking			
11.30-13.00	<b>Workshop VI:</b> Transforming political culture and addressing sexism & violence against women in politics (VAWP)	Participants understand the definition, types and impact of sexism & violence against women in politics and are able to advice on ways of addressing it	Presentation Group exercise	International consultant & Rachel Weston Eschenbacher
13.00-15.00	Lunch break			
15.00-17.00	<b>Learning about Sweden II:</b> Swedish Riksdag – A global leader on the 'gender sensitive parliaments' agenda	Participants are informed about key developments related to making the Swedish Parliament a gender-sensitive institution	Presentation Discussion	Swedish Riksdag

Day 4	Policy and programming for gender equality in politics: Advocacy & innovation			
9.00-9.30	Reflections from yesterday	Course participants are able to summarize and reflect on key learnings from day 3	Group discussion	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher & Saša Gavrić
9.30-11.00	<b>Workshop VII:</b> Advocacy for gender equality: Making 'gender equality in politics' a national policy priority	Participants will review enabling factors, challenges and practical steps to strategically engage on 'gender equality in politics' as a policy priority	Presentation Exercise Group discussion	International consultant
11.00-11.30	Coffee break & networking			
11.30-13.00	<b>Workshop VII (continues):</b> Advocacy for gender equality: Making 'gender equality in politics' a national policy priority	Participants will review enabling factors, challenges and practical steps to strategically engage on 'gender equality in politics' as a policy priority	Presentation Exercise Group discussion	International consultant
13.00-14.00	Lunch break			
14.00-15.00	Group evaluation, what's next and closing remarks			Rachel Weston Eschenbacher & Saša Gavrić

October-December 2025	Third phase, online: APPLIED LEARNING			
Date/time	Session	Learning outcome	Learning method	Facilitator
Any time in October or November, ca. 5 hour	<b>Voluntary learning</b> UN Women's <a href="#">An introduction to CEDAW</a>	Participants comprehend core principles and concepts from CEDAW and are able to consider those in day-to-day work	Online course with presentations, videos, reading materials, and quizzes, etc.	Self-paced
October/November/December, to be agreed	<b>Voluntary</b> 30-45 min. one-on-one or group consultations with ODIHR/UN Women experts	Participants discuss concrete ideas and challenges for 2026 and are, based on the consultations provided, able to identify practical solutions and to integrate those into their planning	Individual or group consultation sessions	ODIHR/UN women staff