

The Implementation of the G7 and G20 Gender Equality Goals in Germany

Summary and political
recommendations for action

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Imprint

Published by



W20 Germany is a cooperation project of the National Council of German Women's Organizations (Deutscher Frauenrat, DF) and the Association of German Women Entrepreneurs (Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen, VdU)



The Implementation of the G7 and G20 Gender Equality Goals in Germany - summary
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Layout
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Print
Print24.com

Publication date
February 2020

Translation
Summary: GlobalSprachTeam
Political recommendations for action: Monika Mersmann

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The **Association of German Women Entrepreneurs** (Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen, VdU) represents the interests of 1,800 women entrepreneurs since 1954. Together they generate an annual turnover of 85 billion euros and employ 500,000 people. www.vdu.de

Summary

Axel Berger, Sören Hilbrich, Gabriele Koehler

The G7 and G20 are what are known as "club governance" institutions, whose decisions are made at regular meetings of government representatives from an exclusive group of countries. Neither institution has a secretariat or an organisation that could independently implement policies. Nor are the decisions of the G7 and G20 legally binding. Nevertheless, they have a certain influence within the global governance architecture. This influence can be seen in the effect that discussions and agreements within both institutions have on the policies of the member states and various international organisations.

The annual work process of the G7 and G20 culminates in each case in a **summit meeting** with the member states' respective heads of state and government. These summits end with a leaders' declaration which, alongside a general description of the current situation in the world, contains joint objectives set out by the member states. The heads of state and government can also adopt additional political documents which are created by the topic-based working groups responsible for preparing the summit.

In their early years, both the G7 and G20 concentrated on narrowly defined economic and financial topics. **Both institutions have broadened their agenda** over the years, and now deal with topics ranging from politics and the economy to society and the environment. Gender-related issues increasingly feature in the G7 and G20 discussions.

The decisions contained in the G7 and G20 documents can be divided into **general goals, quantitative targets and commitments to policies and strategies**. General goals leave a lot of room for interpretation. They specify no measures to be undertaken to actually achieve the aims. Quantitative targets also lack specific measures or strategies, though they are more precise in describing the form and degree of change required. Commitments to policies and strategies relate to more

or less specifically described changes in law, initiatives, state programmes, and so on.

With regard to gender equality, in recent years the G7 and G20 countries have stated their commitment to general goals and, to a much lesser degree, quantitative targets. They also pledged to implement a series of relevant policies. Many of these objectives relate to the **economic inclusion of women**. However, gender equality goals also relate to **female representation in leadership and decision-making positions**, to **education** and to **violence against women**.

Germany is a member of both the G20 and the G7 and thus committed to the aims of both institutions. In the following sections, we will summarise the gender equality goals of the G7 and G20 over the last ten years for the four political areas mentioned above and describe the policies and initiatives that have been undertaken and that can contribute to realising these goals in Germany.

Economic inclusion: labour market conditions, women entrepreneurs, financial inclusion

The majority of the gender equality goals of the G7 and G20 relate to the economic situation of women and the conditions women encounter on the labour market as well as the challenges facing women entrepreneurs and their financial inclusion. Regarding the labour market, the quantitative target of reducing the employment gap between men and women by 25 percent between 2015 and 2025 is particularly worthy of note. This aim was first stated in the G20 process. The G7 member countries subsequently also stated their support for the aim in their documents. Both institutions also pledge to promote equal pay and a family-friendly labour market. In order to achieve the latter objective, the G7 countries want to improve, for example, regulations concerning parental leave.

Both the G7 and the G20 also support the goals of promoting women entrepreneurs and improving the financial inclusion of businesses run by women. The documents

of both institutions include commitments to various policies and strategies. The plan is to make successful women entrepreneurs more visible as role models and to improve networking, continuing education and training, and mentoring for women entrepreneurs. The G7 and G20 countries also pledge to give women entrepreneurs better access to capital.

Particularly in the economic sphere, **Germany** is far from achieving equality between women and men. This is especially the case on the labour market. The employment rate of women is still significantly lower than that of men. However, the employment gap has shrunk by around one percentage point since 2014, so a certain amount of progress can be seen concerning the G20's quantitative target in relation to employment. In 2016, the pay gap between men and women was 21 percent. In 2017, Germany passed a Pay Transparency Act (Entgelttransparenzgesetz) to promote equality in this area. The introduction of a legal minimum wage in 2014 may also help to reduce the pay gap, as far more women than men work in the low-wage sector.

With regard to the G7 and G20 objectives of reconciling work and family life, the new Good Daycare Facilities Act (Gute-KiTa-Gesetz) aims to improve the care available in nurseries and other daycare facilities. In addition, since 2012 parents have the right to parental allowance following the birth or adoption of a child, and the right to longer parental leave since 2015, which is primarily aimed at increasing men's participation in childcare. However, currently only a third of men in German take parental leave.

Germany also needs to do more to implement the G7 and G20 objectives of supporting women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs frequently obtain less funding than their male counterparts. One strategy for supporting women entrepreneurs which has been implemented in Germany in recent years is the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy's (BMWi) "FRAUEN unternehmen" initiative, which provides, for example, advisory services and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Beyond such individual initiatives, there are no comprehensive strategies specifically aimed at promoting women entrepreneurs in Germany.

Leadership and decision-making positions

Both the G7 and G20 have repeatedly stated their wish to improve women's access to leadership and decision-making positions. However, only the G7 documents contain commitments to specific policies and strategies. For example, according to the G7 decisions, the aim is to improve the representation of women in leadership positions in the private sector by means of management training and the use of equality certificates.

In Germany there is a major discrepancy in the representation of women and men in leadership positions. For example, in 2015 women held just 5.1 percent of board seats in the private sector. One policy aimed at changing this imbalance in accordance with the G7 and G20 objectives is the "Act on Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the Private and Public Sector" ("Gesetz zur gleichberechtigten Teilhabe von Frauen und Männern an Führungspositionen in der Privatwirtschaft und im öffentlichen Dienst"), which was passed in 2015 and contains binding quotas for some areas. Initial findings show that where the obligatory quota applies it did lead to an increase in women's participation in management. Where such a quota is lacking, women rarely reach leadership positions.

Basic, initial and continuing education and training

For several years now, the G7 and G20 have also recognised the importance of gender equality policies in the area of basic, initial and continuing education and training. The G7 has made commitments to strategies such as the expansion of grant programmes in areas in which women are under-represented, the improvement of learning environments and the training of teachers in gender-sensitive teaching methods. Both institutions emphasise educational opportunities for women and girls in science, medicine, technology and engineering. In 2015, with regard to developing countries, the G7 pledged to implement measures to increasing by one third the number of women who participate in vocational

education and training by 2030. Furthermore, at the 2018 G7 summit, there was a commitment to make 2.9 billion US dollars available for an education programme for girls in crisis-stricken countries.

Germany, for example, has the initiatives "Klischeefrei" ("No Clichés") as well as "Girls' Day" and "Boys' Day". These initiatives aim to counteract gender stereotyping and thus improve the educational chances of girls and women in areas in which they are traditionally under-represented. There are also attempts to tackle the lack of women in research and teaching (particularly in higher education). With respect to the G7 objective of increasing the number of women in vocational education and training in developing countries, a limited number of measures are being implemented in development programmes in which Germany is involved.

Violence against women

Both the G7 and G20 are committed to the general goal of reducing violence against women. However, only the G7 countries have set out specific policies for advancing this objective. These policies include setting up national strategies for preventing violence against girls and women, providing safe spaces for those affected by violence, and providing sufficient funding for women's organisations that are involved in tackling violence. There are also plans for awareness campaigns regarding sexual and gender-based harassment in the digital sphere.

In 2017, **Germany** ratified the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on contraception and combating violence against women and domestic violence; it came into force in 2018. Germany also launched its "Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women" ("Aktionsprogramm gegen Gewalt an Frauen"). This plan aims, among other things, to support federal states and local authorities in developing needs-based systems to help women who are victims of violence. It remains to be seen whether the programme has sufficient funding.

It is thus clear that Germany has taken some steps to implement the G7 and G20

objectives, particularly with regard to economic inclusion and violence against women. However, the aims are still far from being achieved and the measures that have been undertaken so far are not enough to ensure full success in the future.



W20 Germany's political recommendations for action

General requirements

The gender policy goals of the G7 and G20 must be fully implemented in Germany through concrete measures and legislative changes. Fundamental structural changes are important. W20 Germany therefore demands:

- The development of an **interdepartmental gender equality strategy** and a **National Action Plan** for its implementation with targets, indicators and measures
- The collection, analysis and monitoring of relevant data in order to evaluate the implementation or effectiveness of **the laws relevant to the requirements**
- The **anchoring of effective sanctions** in legal regulations
- The **gender-equitable allocation of public subsidies and contracts** and the implementation of a **gender-equitable budget** at federal and state level and in international cooperation
- The establishment of an independent **Federal Institute for Gender Equality** to provide continuous support for gender equality policy
- An end to the **policy of disincentives** that lead to a reduction in gainful employment (e.g. splitting of spouses or taxation of single parents), **inequality in the independent livelihood** of women and men over the course of their lives, and an end to the constant reproduction and perpetuation of **stereotypes**
- Protection against **gender discriminatory and racist advertising**

1. Economic inclusion: labour market conditions, women entrepreneurs, financial inclusion

a. Labour market conditions

Reconciling paid work and care work is essential to close the gender gaps in the labour market and to increase the employment rate and especially the participation rate of women in Germany. W20 Germany demands:

- Transparent, comprehensive **test procedures** for gender-differentiated pay analysis
- and **fair pay in social professions**
- Nationwide expansion of **childcare infrastructure** to a high standard, including during marginal periods
- The implementation of a legal entitlement to **full-day care for primary school children** until 2025 as agreed in the coalition agreement
- The full deductibility of **childcare costs** from income tax
- Flexible **working time models**, oriented towards different phases of life
- The promotion of greater **participation by men in care work**, including through information campaigns on the much greater time that women spend on unpaid care work (gender care gap)
- Family policy services designed to **reconcile gainful employment and care work** must cover both childcare and care needs and address both men and women
- Improvements to the use of **parental and care time by men** by 2025, including by extending the number of partner months in the reform of parental benefits

b. Women entrepreneurs and financial inclusion

There are still far fewer women entrepreneurs, especially among start-ups in Germany. Female entrepreneurship is also characterised by comparatively small businesses that grow less and at a slower pace. W20 Germany demands:

- Publicly funded campaigns to make **women entrepreneurs visible as role models**
- Promotion of the growth of women-owned businesses, in particular by facilitating **access to capital**
- Concrete targets for the **award of contracts to women-led enterprises** and consideration of gender criteria in public procurement and the private sector in accordance with the Women's Empowerment Principles formulated by UN Women and the UN Global Compact
- Promotion of access to **international trade** for women-led enterprises.
- Promotion of **business incubators** for the creation of innovative women-led enterprises
- **Networking offers and digital platforms** for educational and financial institutions, investors, mentoring and support programmes and funding

2. Management and decision-making positions

The introduction of the FÜPoG 2015 (German Act on Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the Private and the Public Sector) is an important step and proof of the effectiveness of quotas for supervisory boards in Germany. Studies show that the law is effective where the fixed quota applies, but not where voluntary commitments are used.

For the private sector, W20 Germany demands:

- For the **supervisory boards** of companies that are either listed on the stock exchange or subject to co-determination, a fixed gender quota of at least 30 percent for new appointments and the extension of this quota to all corporate legal forms (SE, Ltd & Co KG), including foreign ones (British Public Limited Company)
- A target figure of at least 30 per cent women for each of the **operational management levels** (Board of Management and at least the two levels below it)
- The **introduction of effective sanctions:**
 - > in the event that the gender quota for supervisory boards is not achieved e.g. empty chair, nullity of resolutions
 - > in the event that the transparent publication of target figures or reasons for their possible non-achievement is not made public, e.g. financial sanctions, restriction of the audit opinion
 - > in the event of failure to achieve the minimum 30 percent target figures, e.g. the obligation to disclose the reasons in detail in a comprehensible manner and to have them reviewed by a suitable body which comments publicly on them

For politics and parliaments, W20 Germany calls for electoral legislative reforms to introduce **parity laws for elections in German parliament** in order to create effective measures to increase the proportion of women in parliament.

3. Education and training

Girls and women in Germany must be promoted as equal participants in social, digital and technical developments and strengthened in STEM professions.

W20 Germany demands:

- The structural anchoring of **gender-sensitive media education**, which makes girls and women more visible in the formation and expression of political opinion on the net
- The introduction of **economics and economics of life as a compulsory subject** as well as **computer science/technology as a compulsory subject**
- Lifelong learning and vocational training opportunities in information and communication technology and **digital literacy**
- The development of age-appropriate extracurricular activities and mentoring programmes with a focus on STEM and the establishment of prestigious programmes that ensure high visibility for girls and women

4. Violence against women

To protect girls and women from violence, W20 Germany demands for Germany:

- Nationwide, comprehensive and barrier-free **access to protection** for all women affected by violence and their children, the strengthening of victim protection
- The **qualification** of persons in the judiciary and other authorities and institutions, which guarantees a trained, competent contact with those affected and fundamentally protects victims and punishes offenders
- The **establishment of a national coordinating body** for the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which monitors the implementation of and compliance with the Convention, and an independent monitoring centre for

data collection and research on violence against women. Both bodies are to cooperate actively with civil society, for example in the form of a practice advisory board, and involve civil society

- The introduction of a new **criminal offence in order to effectively combat digital violence**. To this end, the burden of proof must be relaxed in favour of women and girls who have been victims of digital violence
- The creation of more **counselling and contact points** for women and girls and training for police, the judiciary, teachers and educational staff in this area
- The inclusion of the category "gender" in the thematic field "hate crime" for politically motivated crimes in police crime statistics

Conclusion

The implementation of the G7 and G20 goals can only succeed if everyone pulls together. The German Women20 Representation calls on the German Federal Government to declare equality between women and men to be a top priority. Germany, as the fourth largest economy in the world, can and must take a forward-looking and global approach to gender equality.



www.w20-germany.org