

CODE OF CONDUCT

Gender equality as a guiding principle in the works of the Group of the Party
of European Socialists in the European Committee of the Regions

The Group of the Party of European Socialists (PES) in the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is committed to ensuring that gender equality is consistently and continuously reflected in the exercise of its activities and the elaboration of its policies. This is driven by the firm belief that gender equality is a non-negotiable prerequisite for all truly progressive political forces because it ultimately determines the legitimacy and integrity of their responses to the needs and aspirations of European citizens. The PES Group remains of course vigilant about other forms of discrimination (racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation), which it condemns vehemently.

Ensuring gender parity within the Group's internal democratic structures as well as external representation requires determined efforts by all members of the Group and a fundamental change in mind-sets; such parity can only **enhance** the Group's collective skills and competences, and therefore, its overall effectiveness and impact. Some steps have already been taken. The Group's Rules of Procedure stipulate that for the election of the Group's 1st Vice-Chair, candidatures are restricted to members of the sex opposite to that of the Chair. Moreover, overall gender balance is our guiding principle when it comes to proposing PES candidates for membership to **internal to the Group, at the level of the CoR or external configurations**. The same applies to suggestions for PES speakers to various events.

The PES Group will continue to strive to combat any form of discrimination in the recruitment policy of the staff of its secretariat. It applies an equal opportunities policy and considers applications without any discrimination.

However, more resolute action must be taken from now on.

I. The key challenge for gender equality: impacting upon CoR membership

Gender equality cannot be applied in strictly numerical terms by the PES Group alone if there is no critical mass of overall CoR female membership. The biggest challenge lies in the composition of national delegations within the CoR.

To address this thorny issue, envisaged action should be threefold:

- a) Individual members of the PES Group, in particular those being heads of their national delegation, should exert both internal and, where appropriate, public pressure in their national contexts in order to influence their respective countries' internal procedures for appointing a gender-balanced delegation of CoR members. It must, however, be born in mind that this would require a gender balanced approach in the way national politics is conducted (e.g. in Spain, the Presidents of the Autonomous Communities are in principle automatically designated as CoR members);
- b) A broader political discussion should be envisaged at political level within the CoR to advance gender equality. Building on the momentum offered by the PES-led CoR presidency, the PES Group should strive to initiate a meaningful dialogue between the CoR and national delegations in order to raise awareness about the importance of gender balanced representation within the Committee;

c) While leading by example, the PES Group should exert pressure upon the CoR administration to promote gender parity in the way the CoR work is organised and carried out. By the same token, the PES Group should engage in the promotion of competent women and highlight the need for such promotion also at CoR level.

II. Recommendations

The PES Group's margin of manoeuvre in the implementation of gender equality measures within its internal structures and beyond is determined by the overall representation of women and men as reflected in the CoR membership, and therefore, in the PES Group membership. Nomination of CoR members is the prerogative of individual Member States (often, however, based on proposals by national associations of local and regional authorities) and it is not necessarily linked to any gender equality criteria. At the same time, the PES Group firmly believes that gender equality can be made possible. What is more, there is no contradiction between gender parity and a competence-based approach when designating PES Group members.

Therefore, the PES Group should apply a gender equality policy in those of its **internal structures** on which it has full control of membership, such as:

- > The PES Group Executive;
- > The PES Group Coordinators in CoR commissions.

To this effect, awareness should be systematically raised in the calls for expression of interest, addressed to the members of the PES Group. Gender equality should be ensured through zippered lists, where possible. This could be the case for membership in those **internal configurations** where more than one positions need to be filled. Expressions of interest by men only or women only should automatically be deemed unacceptable and a second call for candidatures pointing to the need for gender balance should be made.

Likewise, the PES Group should lead by example in terms of gender balance when presenting candidates to positions in **CoR configurations**. This is the case for PES Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the CoR commissions and of the CoR commission on financial and administrative affairs. PES Group membership in Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs), Working Groups (WGs), platforms, networks or other CoR-driven configurations should also respect gender equality. The same should apply, as far as possible, to PES rapporteurships in CoR commissions.

Concerning its representation **beyond the CoR**, the PES Group should strive for overall gender balance representation within the instances, thematic configurations and sectoral organisations of the Party of European Socialists (PES). The PES already applies a strict gender balanced policy for its members' delegations with voting rights at the level of the Council and the Congress. The PES Group should strive to extend this policy also for its delegates without voting rights.

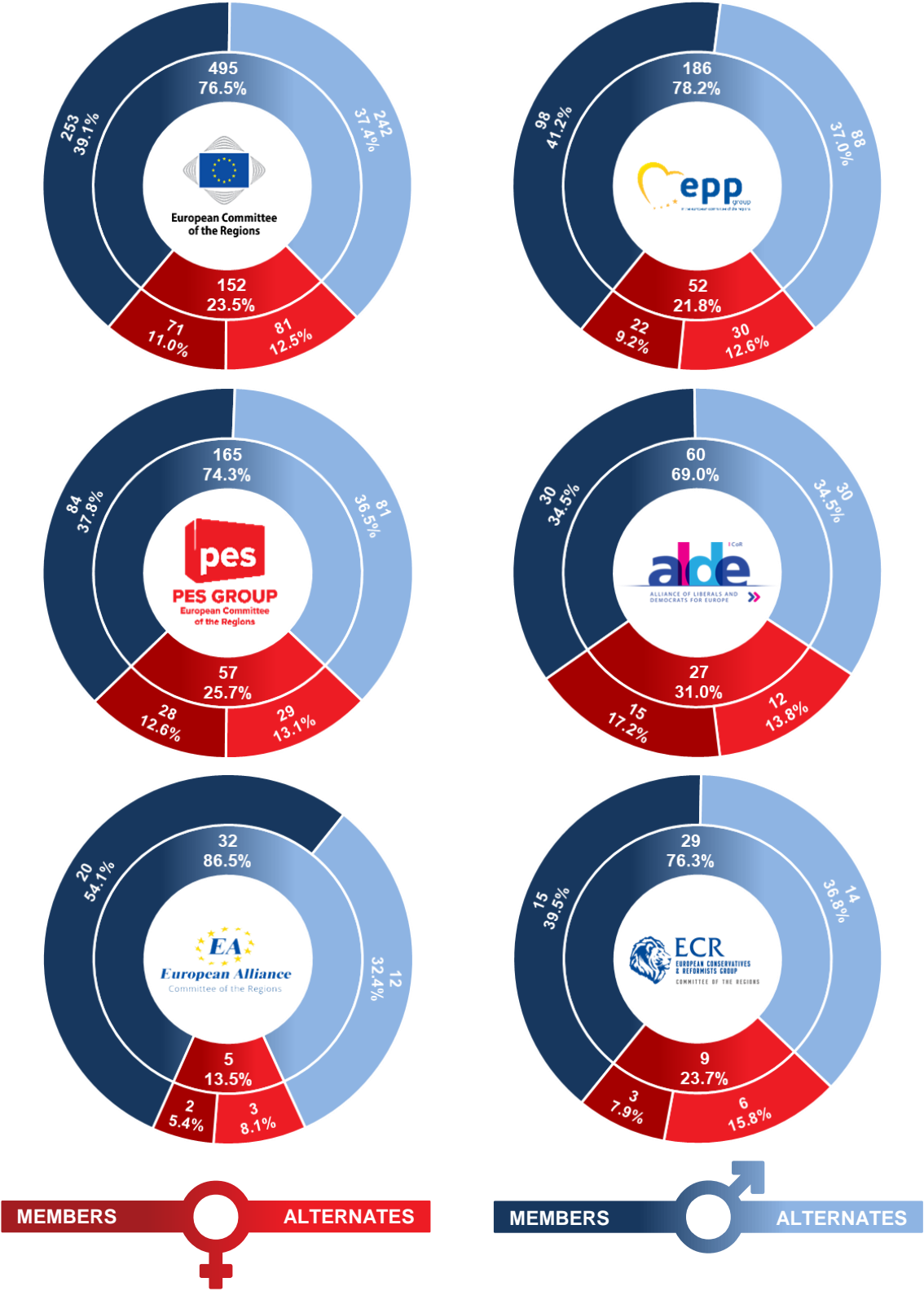
Last but not least, the PES Group should lead by example in terms of gender parity in **discussion panels or debates** within the framework of organised events. Likewise, it should be an ardent supporter of this principle when PES members participate in events organised by others. Refusal to participate in all male or all female panel discussions should be considered an option. Moreover, to set a good example, the PES Group should ensure zippered speaking slots during its internal debates.

In a nutshell, **our shared goal should be to attain 50%-50% parity in terms of gender representation** for PES members in all bodies/positions. In view of the above, the Secretariat of the PES Group should provide **an annual assessment of the implementation of the gender equality principle**.

In Annex, you will find a statistical analysis of the overall gender breakdown within the CoR, its political groups and national delegations. You will also find a more in-depth analysis on the appointment of members to key positions within the PES Group, as well as a comparison of rapporteurships by political group.

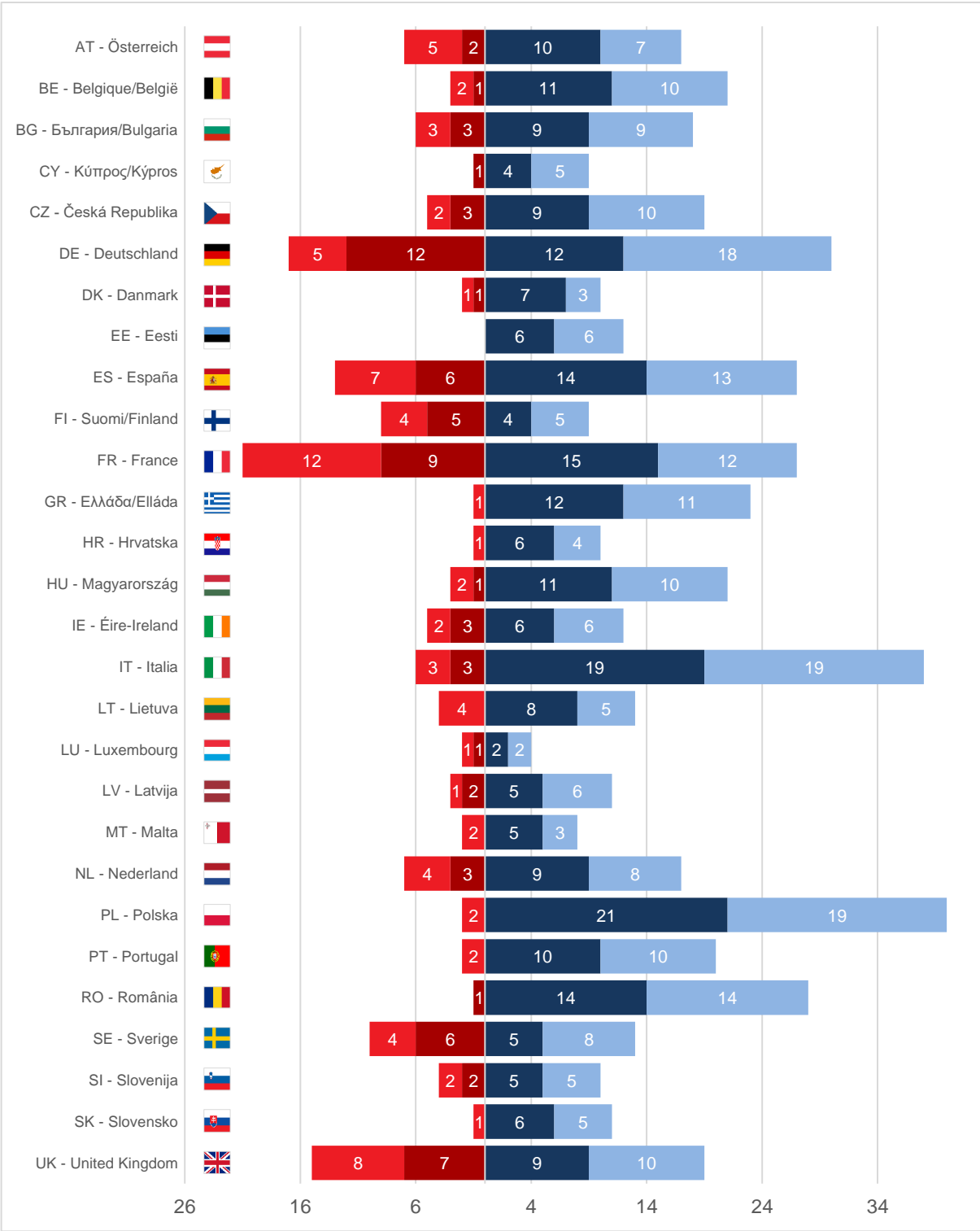
ANNEX: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Gender balance in the CoR and the Political Groups



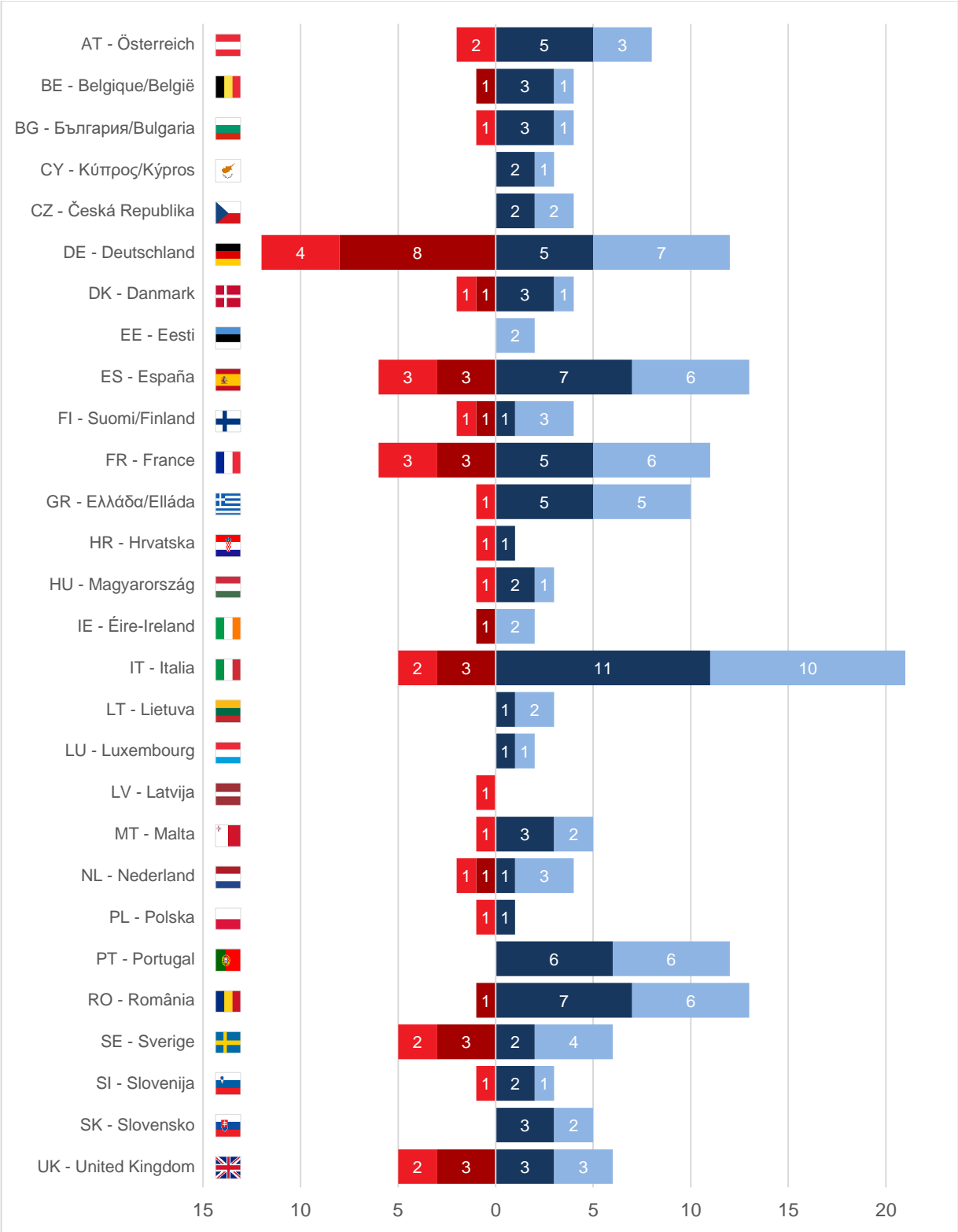
Source: European Committee of the Regions, April 2018

Gender balance in the CoR national delegations



Source: European Committee of the Regions, April 2018

Gender balance in the PES Group national delegations



Source: European Committee of the Regions, April 2018

Key positions in the PES Group

CoR presidency



PES Group presidency



CoR commissions coordinators



CoR commissions Presidencies



CoR commissions Vice-Presidencies



JCCs and Working Groups presidencies

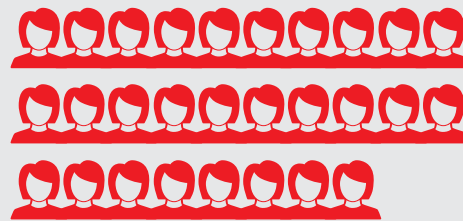


Source: European Committee of the Regions, April 2018

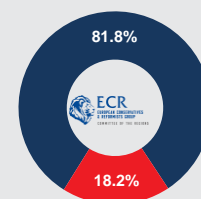
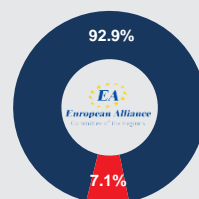
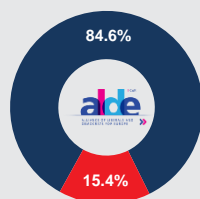
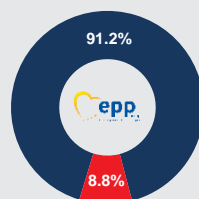
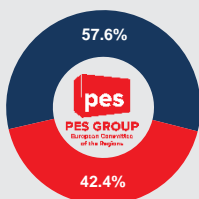
PES Group Rapporteurs (CoR 6th Term of Office)

PES Group

38 MEN 28 WOMEN



All Political Groups



Source: European Committee of the Regions, April 2018