

# EWL Report 2017



I would like to start with a few personal words. This has been a long time since my previous report. Many things have changed in my life and I am now settled – at least for the upcoming year or so – in Bulgaria. I have managed to continue my work with the EWL, dealing with the influx of emails, transferring useful information to the ECC, giving input as requested by EWL secretariat general, participating in the General Assembly and Boards of administration.

However the first term of 2017 was mostly taken with moving, adapting to a new work environment and getting in the swing of speaking Bulgarian once more. So I have had some difficulties keeping track of the staff changes at the Secretariat General of EWL and I am still waiting for further developments on women economics which have not happened as soon as we would have liked following the board of administration meeting at the end of 2016 during which there was a workshop to discuss possible action plans.

I have included in this report not only information about the past year changes, but also elements about evolutions that took several years. Do not hesitate after reading this report to send me questions on additional topics or ask for any necessary clarifications : [amelie.leclercq@bpw-europe.org](mailto:amelie.leclercq@bpw-europe.org)

## 1 EWL strategy and organisation

The last two years have seen positive evolutions in the management and structure of EWL:

- a) **new statutes** were adopted in 2015 - they make decisions easier to reach – more issues are dealt with in the Board of administration, not during yearly general assemblies. Please note that it could pose some problems regarding **involvement of European-wide members** organisations as not all of them can be part of the Board of administration. Indeed out of 32 European-wide members organisations only 10 can be represented in the Board of administration. However, some of them are not that active in EWL and sometimes are not even represented during the General assembly. During the elections for the Board of administration in 2016, there were only 11 candidates from European-wide organisations for the 10 positions. At the same time, all national coordinations are members of board of administration so it is still not a streamlined organisation. The possibility of having a Board of administration with fewer members was voted out by a majority of national coordinations which all want to remain in the Board of administration. Flexibility in decision-taking is provided by the fact that many discussions and decisions are taken online as there are only two board meetings per year, one of which takes place just before the General Assembly.
- b) For 2016 and 2017 work in the board of administration was all about finalising a **general strategy** and specific objectives to implement it.

This new strategy was needed to take on board current realities (new technologies, place of young feminists at European level), engage better with members and find new solutions to the permanent issue of lack of financial resources.

You can find the four year plan online on the EWL website:

[https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/european\\_women\\_s\\_lobby\\_strategic\\_framework\\_2016-2020.pdf](https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/european_women_s_lobby_strategic_framework_2016-2020.pdf)

EWL's key principles:

- Women's rights are Human rights (non-negotiable and indivisible)
- Autonomy
- Solidarity
- Inclusion
- Participation

*EWL mission :*

We are a **credible source of expertise and experience** on women's rights and equality between women and men, representing the diversity of the women's movement across the European Union.

We represent an **inclusive, confident, loud, independent feminist voice** and bring real women's voices into the EU political arena.

We **build consensus and mobilise our members'** collective experience to work on major issues affecting women, to realise women's rights, equality between women and men and social justice.

We **act as a catalyst** connecting different actors and organisations to bring change at EU level.

c) In 2017 two **national coordinations** were accepted by the General Assembly to replace those which had disappeared in the previous years.

There is now a new national coordination for [Poland](#), which took life as a consequence of the street demonstrations and debates against the change of the national law on abortion. It is led by NEWW-Poland. The new national coordination for Spain is a new non-profit structure set up in 2016 [LEM España](#).

Please note that in 2016 the EWL statutes underwent a slight modification to allow a Swiss national coordination to be accepted as member. However up to now no such national coordination has been organised.

### **Consequences of these evolutions for BPW Europe, BPW affiliates and members:**

- We are encouraged to present the expertise of our members when a EWL project is being put in place. The challenge being that most of the time, deadlines for answering are quite short. I try to tweet in real time information which appear on EWL website @AmelieBPW
- BPW focus on gender equality in the workplace and financial independence is now mainstreaming in EWL objectives and activities which helps interactions.
- The leading role of BPW Europe and affiliates regarding Equal Pay campaigns is now acknowledged.
- The issue of gender equality in boards of administration is now accepted as an EWL objective, which show a group change of mentality from looking at supporting women as victims to also looking at the strength of women and promoting further social integration. Input from European members focusing on migrant women, handicapped women could be useful be integrated in BPW campaigns regarding women on boards. The BPW campaign material was shared on the online platform accessible to board members (nicknamed "the living room").
- If national BPW affiliates are not happy with their national EWL coordination, please feel free to let ECC and me know what the issues are. If you wish to have more visibility for your projects or topics within a national coordination of which you are already member, please also to not hesitate to tell me. In general I have

good contacts with the EWL representatives of the national coordinations and as you know repetition is the mother of pedagogy.

I also enjoy very much my interactions with BPW Italy representative to the Italian national coordination and can only encourage other BPW affiliates to have their national representative to the national coordination be also in contact with me (for federations and clubs which are members of their national coordination!).

## 2 EWL financial situation and prospects

Under the leadership of Joanna Maycock, EWL secretary-general since 2014, and in answer to the repeated requests from the General Assembly EWL secretariat-general is working on new financial reporting documents showing precisely the costs and income pertaining to each different project managed by EWL. Additional internal organisation of tasks of the secretariat general has been done in order to :

1) have more capacities for fund-raising

2) eliminate the deficit which the EWL had been carrying for over 20 years

This is quite a success story since the yearly deficit has been eliminated at the end of 2015. It was then possible then to look at reducing and eliminating the deficit accrued in the past (over 20 years !). This has been achieved by end 2017. The 2017 accounts even show a slight benefit !

This is very important for interactions with the European Commission (the main funding source for EWL) as bank costs and interests are not eligible under EU rules for co-funding and could not be covered by EU funds. Which means that any costs related to the existing deficit impacted directly on monies obtained through other sources (which in the past were more or less limited to membership fees). Achieving a positive outcome was due to a sustained effort in finding new sources of funding (sponsors, foundations, etc.).

*(Clarification for readers : as a general principle, non profit organisations are ALLOWED to make benefits on projects as long as the benefits go back into either the functioning of the organisation or development of new projects – the “non profit” terminology is about the monies not benefiting personally the staff, the members of the board of administration or the members of the executive committee, any trustees or shareholders. However this does not apply to projects funded through EU funding which is calculated as a percentage of real costs for the final paiement.)*

So what do we do with a newly stable financial situation ? This was a welcome topic for discussion in the 2017 Boards of administration and it makes for shorter meetings than when discussing deficits. **Financial Roadmap:**

First : Focus on building a financial reserve and

Second: look at creating a foundation to fund feminist European projects.

This does not mean that we can automatically expect to achieve a stable financial situation each year in the future. In general terms, public subsidies are under threat at European and national levels. We know that Brexit will impact the EU budget 2020-2027. Since women issues are not often a priority, EWL fears to see a decrease in its funding from EU programmes during that period. Additionally, due to the rising of populists parties in many Member States, it could be that the Progress Programme under which EWL is co-funded by the European Commission will be decreased due to different political orientations.

Further efforts are needed regarding fund-raising. The objective is to rely less heavily on EU funding. However there is also a need to streamline projects funded by private sponsors. In the last two years EWL has been applying for nearly all and every relevant source of funding, but the sums raised for each project were small. On the basis of the experience and contacts obtained, EWL

needs to manage to obtain private funding for a smaller number of projects but for larger amounts in order to be able to cover the 28 Member States in all its projects. The administrative burden of a small project is nearly similar to that of a larger one. An additional challenge for EWL fundraising is the necessity to ensure that the vision and behaviours of potential sponsors or foundations are coherent with the vision and objectives of EWL. It is especially important for BPW topics, as how coherent would it be to have EWL linked to a company which is doing nothing to promote equality in the workplace!

For two years, two staff members of the EWL secretariat general had been dedicating 50% of their time to fund-raising – from finding potential sponsors, to developing relevant projects to answer these sponsors specificities, to monitoring the projects and writing reports. They have been successful in raising EWL visibility and credibility amongst potential sponsors. Note that in the same period a fund-raising scheme called “friends of EWL” was abandoned as it was considered to be too much work for too small a return, since it was basically asking individuals to pay small yearly sums. Successful fundraising is about having a professional approach to financial issues with expected outcomes from sponsors being research findings which can be used by a company in its yearly reports to show how supportive it is to gender equality and visibility at European level through yearly reports to the European Commission or mentions of successful projects during European level events (at the European Parliament for instance).

2018 will be a new stage for EWL fundraising since these two persons have now been recruited by two larger NGOs (which can be seen as a recognition of the tremendous work they have done). While we can only wish them the best for their new challenges, it means a loss of know-how within EWL for the coming months.

### **Consequences for BPW Europe, BPW affiliates and members:**

- Member States are THIS year having discussions and negotiations regarding the 2020-2027 multiannual framework for the European budget, so any input and possibility of influence at national level to keep European social financial programmes at the current level would be welcomed.
- BPW Europe and Affiliates should also use their contacts in national administrations involved in such negotiation to ensure that European financial programmes such as cohesion funds, structural funds, social funds, etc which are part of the regional funds and thus eventually managed at national level, include for their countries objectives allowing to obtain funding for BPW projects.
- Very often within EWL, an “entrepreneurial eye” is missing when discussing finances, projects and objectives. My interventions during board meetings are mostly to remind all members that we should not solely depend on public subsidies and that it is ok to have projects with a view of making profit. It is a balancing act : we need to keep coherence with EWL objectives while presenting them in such a way that they can be included in overall visions of firms, foundations, which are mostly not specialised in women issues.
- BPW Affiliates can help as our topics of social integration and financial independence of women through work is often easier to present to potential sponsors than “intersectoral integration discriminated women” for example!  
BPW does not primarily focus on domestic violence but if they are ciate input from affiliates and members if you have any example of non-profit shelters for victims of domestic violence which are able to raise money through social entrepreneurship activities (that is to say any entrepreneurial activities from which profits are reinvested in shelters)
- Should BPW Europe or BPW affiliates so wish, I could ask experienced staff of EWL to organise training about fundraising for BPW members active in boards. However this means paying for time, transportation and accommodation, except if organised in Brussels. It could

even be seen as a common project we could organise with our usual partners women networks such as Soroptimists or European Migrant Women.

### 3 What is EWL doing concretely ?

After talking about strategies, missions, finances, lets see what is being achieved for Women's rights in Europe.

EWL focuses on four main areas of work :

- Violence against women
- Women in decision-making and leadership
- Women's economic independence
- migrant & refugees women

In all its work it also seeks to bring forward, train and make visible young women. It also develops actions on an international level – presence at CSW, Council of Europe, Beijing 20-20.

There is a special focus on insuring that young women are integrated in all projects to ensure that generational transmission is achieved and that modern tools are used.

### Young Women and EWL

Two specific aspects need to be discussed within BPW:

#### Summer School – Agora

For the past two years, EWL has been organising a “feminist summer school” for young activists (18 to 30 years old) called [AGORA](#). It takes place in Brussels during a week and there is no public subsidies for it which means that sponsors have to be found for each participant.

Agora aims to support young women in :

- strengthening their knowledge and skills to advocate for women's rights and gender equality?
- Discovering what young feminists are doing against inequality across Europe - and how you can work together?
- engaging in highly participatory learning processes and willing to learn more about yourself, your talents and your work in this world?
- being part of shaping future feminist strategies and campaigns in Europe?

#### Internships

Most year, the EWL yearly financial programme includes one or two possibilities for six-months internships. These positions are paid. The EWL post on [its website](#) the positions offer when the budget is in place. The time given to answer the call for candidatures is usually quite short. I have asked to have longer time periods to send candidatures but I was told that there are so many candidatures received that the secretariat-general cannot cope with more and that is why little time is given to send in candidatures.

Should BPW Federations and clubs have in mind **young members who would be interested in being an intern at EWL headquarters in 2019**, they should already inform them about the

possibility, tell them to follow on twitter the EWL account @europeanwomen in order to receive updates. They can contact me should they wish more information about EWL.

## Publications and toolkits

### *Violence against women*

In recent years work on violence against women has evolve to include aspects of relevance to BPW thematics:

- the factsheet “[Disrupting the continuum of violence against women and girls](#)” looks at all aspects so including information and arguments regarding trafficking in women, violence at work, sexism in media an advertising, etc. **It is now also available in Bulgarian, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Romanian, Polish and Italian.**
- Online violence against girls and women – this is a new issue for all and EWL has developed and interesting campaign : [#HerNetHerRights](#)  
This was a six months project underwritten by a sponsor – Please read and use the [Report](#) which includes policy recommendations and an activist toolkit for internet security!
- [Women Voices](#) is a report about violence against refugees women and girls on the move. It includes recommendations to lobby for gender-sensitive asylum policies and procedures at national level in the context of BPW work on migrant women

### *Women in the economy*

#### **Female social entrepreneurship**

Factsheets concerning Luxembourg, Wallonia and Brussels have been added to the [WeStart](#) reports on Women social entrepreneurship.

#### **Women in EU 2020 strategy and European Semester**

The European Institutions have developed the EU 2020 growth strategy. Member States economic prospects are assessed every six months on the basis of this strategy. EWL monitors that semestrial reports include a gender perspective and lobby to that end.

The European Semester is really important for political and economic changes at national level and it is important that we get more familiar with the process and impacts in order to lobby for a feminist perspective at national level.

EWL is member of the European Semester Alliance and is the only NGO in it with a comprehensive gender perspective. The Alliance has developed a [toolkit in 7 languages](#) which can be share and used freely. It is available in English, Bulgarian, Italian, Hungarian, French, Finnish, Spanish and German.

## Thematic groups

Two thematic groups have been established at the end of 2017 regarding women in the economy and women in politics. Women in politics is looking at the actions needed to promote gender equality with a few to the European Parliament elections beginning of 2019 but also at the way women are represented at national level politics

I am member of the thematic group on women in the economy and Miette Dechelle has registered as member of the group on women in politics. Work should be starting this year.

In particular I will pushing for work to be done on gender budgeting as it was decided in a Board of administration end of 2016.

## Events

EWL organises ad'hoc events when publishing a report, a position paper or at the end of a study to present results.

In 2017 an event called [\*Where are the executive women?\*](#) was organised.

It pointed out that while improvements have been seen in the number of women in company boards, these positions are mostly non-executive and gender equality in senior positions remains an untouched problem.

## Perspectives

EWL will prepare again to promote **gender equality in politics** in view of the upcoming European Parliament elections 2019.

It is not only about parliamentarians. In the same period of time, we should organise to lobby at national level in order to see women in a higher number of senior positions at European Level.

In the current situation, we should consider that only Federica Mogherini as High representative of the EU for foreign affairs and security policy has a senior position in the EU institutions.

In the European Commission, the President and Vice-President are all men. The current college of commissioners will finish its term next year and Member States are already thinking about their national candidate for the next college (end 2019 to 2025). It is important that more Member States propose women candidates.

In the same way the President of the European Council is Donald Tusk and will finish his term in 2019. Informal talks amongst Member States regarding the position have already started.