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MEN  
AND  
WOMEN  
JUST DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
EACH  
OTHER.

WHAT  
D'YOU  
MEAN?



Comune  
di Bari



Provincia  
di Milano



Municipality of  
Zalaegerszeg



Diputación  
de Granada

Red de municipios



## European Guidelines for gender-oriented communication

The underlying assumption of these guidelines is that **institutional communication could have an important role** in removing existing gender stereotypes by promoting new social, working and cultural models. In fact, institutional gender-oriented communication which takes into account equal opportunities could have a fundamental role in eradicating stereotypes and in promoting cultural and social change.

Institutional communication stems from the need of institutions to **inform citizens about ongoing activities and available opportunities**, while responding to their necessity for clarity and transparency. Above all, efficacious and appropriate communication could also contribute to the positive image of the institution. Institutional communication should be clear, straightforward and accessible.

It should **use simple and comprehensible language** and be able to reach whoever needs information. Institutional communication, due to the very purpose it serves, should focus primarily on respecting the non-discrimination principle.

In particular, it should be mindful of respecting the non-discrimination principle between sexes, bearing in mind that it refers to both women and men. It should also **avoid the use of gender stereotypes** (gender-oriented communication). Institutional communication, by virtue of its nature, should be more responsible than commercial communication.

Institutional communication should also **take into account the changes underway in contemporary society** and provide an appropriate portrayal of evolving gender roles thus also positively influencing other kinds of communication.

The guidelines proposed below could be instrumental to **integrating the gender perspective into institutional communication** and enhancing women's role in communication strategies. The aim is to improve the quality of institutional communication, while paying particular attention to the non-discrimination principle.

**Before devising any kind of communication, it is important to answer a couple of preliminary questions:**

- *What message must be conveyed? What does the campaign want to communicate?*
- *Who does the campaign want to reach?*

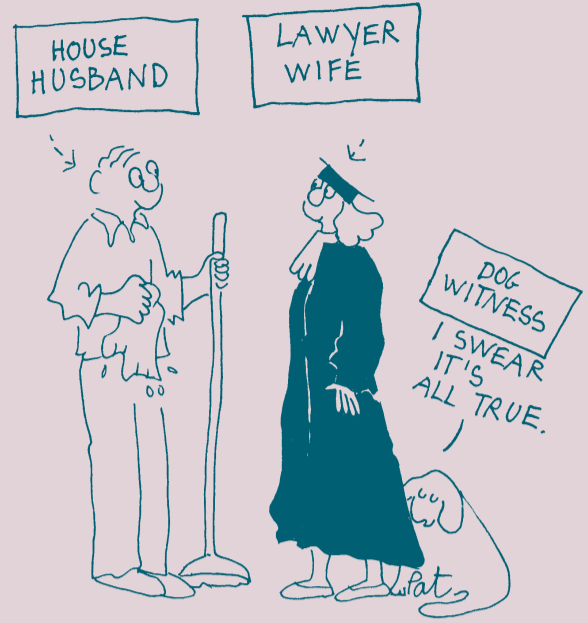
**In planning the campaign, it is important to ensure that the message (or communication) is not discriminatory for one of the two sexes by answering a few questions:**

- *Does the campaign use appropriate and non-discriminatory media to reach the target?*
- *Does the message ensure that both sexes have access to the same rights and opportunities?*
- *Does the portrayal ensure visibility for both sexes?*
- *Does the portrayal convey the images of women and men who are representative of the real targets and does it take into account the social changes that are underway?*
- *Does the portrayal fight or enhance gender stereotypes?*
- *Does the verbal language express gender differences?*
- *Are the images of the men and women coherent with the intended message?*

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**Integrate a gender perspective in the institution's mission**

and in all communication strategies in order to comply with the non-discrimination principle, thus recognising that equal participation of women and men in all aspects of social life is crucial for lasting growth and democracy. Differences between women and men should never be used as grounds for discrimination.



2

**Portray both sexes on equal terms** and provide equal

visibility, in line with the purpose and aim of the campaign in order to emphasise the contribution of both women and men in society. Attention should be focused not only in quantitative terms (i.e. the number of women and men portrayed), but also in qualitative terms. Both sexes should be targeted using appropriate messages.

3

In compiling the texts, **use a language form that includes both genders**; avoid using the generic masculine gender as a default and try to also use the feminine gender.

Both women and men should be named, unless you specifically wish to refer to only one gender. If the use of both genders makes the text less fluent, it is best to opt for universal definitions that include both men and women (i.e. "person" instead of "man" to indicate all human beings).

I WISH YOU THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AND SKILLS AS MEN.

CAN I CHANGE BACK AT MIDNIGHT?



AT LAST I'VE FOUND A WAY TO RECONCILIATE FAMILY AND WORK.

I'M SINGLE AND UNEMPLOYED.



**Avoid portraying the subjects of the communication in segregating activities and traditional roles** (such as women in their private lives and men in a public environment). Institutional communication should account for the changes occurring in contemporary society and provide an appropriate portrayal of evolving gender roles. Examples:

- portray women in non traditional job profiles and roles (e.g. engineer) rather than in conventional ones (e.g. nurse)
- portray men in activities, job profiles and roles in which they are underrepresented (e.g. care-giving roles)
- portray women in public roles (e.g. women in government)
- provide visibility to the need of sharing the responsibility of family care between partners
- portray men doing housework.

4

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**The models of women and men** portrayed in the communication (their image, needs and expectations) **should reflect reality**, without imposing aesthetic criteria and taking into account people's real needs and expectations.

NOT EVERYONE'S YOUNG AND SLIM.

SOME PEOPLE GET OLD AND EAT.



**Use appropriate and non-discriminatory media**

to reach the audience, according to the context and target of the communication. Choose media that are accessible for both sexes and remember that the target could also include people (e.g. foreign women) who may have limited access to certain communication media.

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