

Tie formation in a monitoring network

Drivers of information exchange and collaboration to monitor the implementation of EU gender directives in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT: Monitoring the implementation process in domestic settings of multi-level policies like the EU gender directives is dependent on interactions among a diverse set of policy stakeholders. However, there is no clear understanding what factors determine the structure of these monitoring networks and what benefits effective exchange. Drawing on insights from social network theory, literature on information politics in interest group and advocacy networks and the policy network approach, this study analyses what drives information exchange and collaborations of actors in the monitoring network of the Coordination of women's groups in the Netherlands. Using Exponential Random Graph Models, the analysis demonstrates that institutional influence is most important for information exchange, whereas financial resources matter more for collaboration. Moreover, information exchange is most likely among actors that have different policy preferences, whereas collaboration requires organisational similarity. The findings indicate that effective information exchange for monitoring purposes benefits from a diverse and inclusive network.

Introduction

The implementation of policies related to gender equality and anti-discrimination in the European Union is a multi-level game. Member States have to transpose these EU directives, prepared by the Commission and

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² Betweenness takes into account to what extent actors can potentially control information flow in the

agreed upon collectively, into national legislation and are responsible for their actual implementation in the domestic context. The implementation process is supervised by the Commission and to make sure Member States comply with EU requirements it relies heavily on a decentralised monitoring system (Tallberg, 2002). Due to the complexities related to this multi-level policy process and the limited resources available to them, the Commission gains access to novel information by fire-alarm oversight (Jensen, 2007). Local actors can monitor implementation informally by assessing whether targets are actually met and provide information on incorrect applications whenever there is a problem. Though the importance of monitoring by local actors to help enforce compliance is acknowledged in the compliance literature (Börzel, 2000; Jensen, 2007; Tallberg, 2002), little is known on how these actors organize their monitoring activities and what determines effective information exchange.

Following Keck & Sikkink's (1998) seminal work, ample research on advocacy networks has shown how civil society organisations, research institutions and political actors can use information politics to increase transparency of the implementation process and hold governments accountable. This study aims to establish what factors determine the structure of these networks and what drives collaboration and information exchange in a monitoring network. A social network approach is adopted to combine theories on the operation of social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 2000) with insights from the literature on monitoring activities by interest groups (Klüver, 2012), advocacy networks (Sissenich, 2007) and research on drivers of stakeholder interaction in policy networks (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Kenis & Schneider, 1991; Leifeld & Schneider, 2012; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Stokman & Berveling, 1998; Weible & Sabatier, 2005). Whereas most policy network studies that focus on actors aiming to push a certain policy forward have found that interactions are based on shared policy beliefs and organizational similarity, I expect that networks for the purpose of monitoring the implementation process will benefit from a more broad-based interaction. Instead of coalition building (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), actors will try to establish access relations (Stokman & Berveling, 1998) to exchange information. Although collaborations are likely to benefit from institutional similarity, information

exchange is expected to be most likely across types of organizations and among actors with divergent ideas on implementation measures. More generally, I expect that actors with more resources at their disposal and actors with a formal role in the implementation process will be most involved in a monitoring network.

The focus of analysis is the monitoring network of the national platform of women's groups in the Netherlands. The Dutch women's council is the national coordination of the European Women's Lobby and is considered the most relevant network for monitoring the implementation of the EU directives on gender equality and anti-discrimination on the basis of sex in the Netherlands. Not only is the environment to monitor implementation favourable in the Netherlands due to active monitoring by the Equality Body, Anti-Discrimination Bureaus and the social partners, it also represents a case of good practical implementation of the relevant legal requirements by the EU. To test what factors determine the monitoring network and increase the likelihood of information exchange and collaboration in it an Exponential Random Graph Model is fitted for each type of interaction.

The findings indicate that monitoring does indeed follow a distinct logic of interaction from advocacy. Whereas resources are instrumental for any type of interaction, the influence that comes with a formal role in the implementation process is an even greater asset than financial and human resources when it comes to information exchange. Moreover, information exchange is more likely among actors that differ in their preferences regarding implementation measures and in organizational background. The opposite is true for collaborations; while preferences do not have a significant effect, pooling resources and establishing long-term partnerships is most likely among actors that have a similar organisational background. This implies that especially effective information exchange benefits from a diverse and inclusive monitoring network with access to domestic implementers.

Set against the background of policy networks the paper will first elaborate on the theoretical argument on the drivers of information exchange and collaboration in a monitoring network. Following a description of the data collection and the method of analysis, the results are presented and discussed.

Policy networks

Policy networks can be defined as the linkages between governmental and other actors around shared interests in the policy-making and implementation process (Rhodes, 2006). Most studies conceptualize policy networks as a form of interest intermediation for policy-making, either informally or more institutionally. Network theories employed by social network approaches to policy-making are based on actor-centred institutionalism (Kenis & Schneider, 1991). Actors are linked to each other to exchange all kinds of resources, forming the policy structures specific for dealing with policy problems (Scharpf, 1997). To influence policy outcomes, rational actors interact with each other based on their capabilities, preferences and institutional norms. The principal determinant for interaction between actors most studies on policy networks have put emphasis on is policy preferences. The basic assumption is that actors are policy driven, and therefore policy positions should be included in the analysis (Dahl, 1961). Therefore, the concept of a policy network includes both communication structures and policy stands (Knoke et al, 1996; Kenis & Schneider, 1991).

Accordingly, the widely-used Advocacy Coalition Framework by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) states that stakeholders determine whom they interact with based on their belief system. Though the assumption is that actors are self-interested and instrumentally rational, it is expected that rational individuals have limitations that affect their choices (Ostrom, 1990). Based on social psychology theories, the assumption is that individuals filter perceptions according to their belief system and overemphasise the influence and negative traits of their opponents, which results in strong ingroup favouritism and outgroup derogation. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) theorise how shared beliefs on the cause and saliency of the problem and the preferred policy instruments to deal with it determines whether actors interact with each other. The idea is that sets of actors that have similar preferred policy instruments form coalitions and coordinate action so that they can increase the likelihood that their preferences will be translated into policy and have the most impact on implementation outcomes. Particularly collaborating actors need to trust each other and are more likely to choose

their partners on similar preferences when looking for each other's support in pursuit of common goals (Weible & Sabatier, 2005).

In contrast, new intuitionist theory on access relations (Stokman & Zeggelink, 1996; Stokman & Berveling, 1998) and information transmission (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992) in policy networks assume it is actually more likely for actors with divergent preferences to interact. Actors do not necessarily exchange information with those that share their preferences on the implementation of policies; instead they can use information to convince actors with alternative views (Leifeld & Schneider, 2012). In fact, as it requires time and effort to gather and process information, actors must be selective with whom they interact. Access relations are key in influencing the policy positions of others and getting policy outcomes closer to their own preferences. So, if actors would be merely interested in exchanging information with those that already agree with them, there would be no direct effect of these costly actions. In other words, they would be preaching to the choir, only strengthening their own ideas about the preferred policy implementation among actors that are in agreement already (Stokman & Berveling, 1998). It is more valuable to invest in relations to actors that have different preferences and to influence them for an optimal policy outcome.

In sum, the share of network analyses on policy networks have focussed on actor interactions based on certain issues in order to push their preferred policy forward. Actors try to overcome conflicts over unequal access and resources by either forming advocacy coalitions or by the strategic use of access relations. However, little is known about what drives interactions between actors when they are monitoring the implementation of policies.

Drivers of tie formation in monitoring networks

Monitoring entails the activities related to assessment of whether targets are actually met (Brambilla, 2001). Monitoring increases transparency during the implementation process and creates chances for collaboration with partner organisations and ultimately leads to greater accountability. In a monitoring network actors need to collect information broad-based to be able to detect and assess implementation problems. Effective networks should include interactions among state actors, civil society actors and independent experts,

as they can complement each other. First, ministries or other governmental actors have the capacity to collect background information, regularly review and reflect on activities and establish lists of priorities that feed into action planning processes. Whereas international organisations (such as international or European NGOs like the European Women's Lobby, the International Council of Women or entities of the Council of Europe) can advocate for a comprehensive political will for policy implementation. Additionally, they can provide input for the data collection process, report on implementation efforts and distribute information. Furthermore, they can help build capacity and assist in establishing contacts among governmental institutions and local CSOs. Instead, local CSOs are able to provide input for the data collection process such as specific knowledge and feedback on the concrete impact of outlined activities and share information with other organisations. Finally, independent experts or research institutions can build capacity by data collection and external evaluations (Beetham & Popovic, 2009).

However, not every actor is equally able to be involved in a monitoring network. Monitoring the implementation process is costly. It requires extensive efforts to gather information, process and order the information and transmit it to the relevant actors (Kaya & Schrama, 2017). Not only does it make actors more attractive to interact with if they have the resources to engage in these activities, resources make it easier to be more involved in a monitoring network as well. Klüver (2012) demonstrated that interest groups with more money and staff were better able to effectively monitor the EU policy process. For actors with more resources to spend it is easier to develop the valuable information through their monitoring activities needed to improve policy implementation. In their study on monitoring by citizens' organizations in collaboration with researchers and other professionals as a tool to improve environmental policy, Nerbonne & Nelson (2008) found that better staffed organizations produced higher quality information and that the more money at their disposal, the more this information was used in official reports or as motivation for an investigation.

The idea that resources are instrumental to empower actors in their strategies toward goal attainment is rooted in resource mobilization theory (McCarthy &

Zald, 1977). In accordance, resources need to be mobilized to promote awareness on the implementation practice, to provide direct services to women that face discrimination and to influence the implementation process (McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). This makes it more likely that actors with more resources available to them are more linked up to other actors. Hence, the expectation is that:

H1: Actors with more resources tend to be more involved in monitoring networks

Since resources are important in determining whom to interact with, it is likely that actors will choose their contacts wisely. Establishing any kind of exchange relation costs time and effort; consequently, it is crucial to link up to actors that are considered influential (Leifeld & Schneider, 2012). New institutionalists' accounts of policy-making stress the significance of formal procedural settings and assume that actors will try to get access to those actors that are in the formal position to influence the policy process (König & Bräuniger, 1998; Stokman & Berveling, 1998). Hence, the most influential actors in a network based on monitoring the implementation of EU gender policies are those actors responsible for implementing them, both in law and in practice. This leads to the expectation that:

H2: Actors responsible for the implementation tend to be more involved in monitoring networks

Besides the expected effects of certain actor attributes on their likelihood to be involved in a monitoring network, it is important to know what factors drive the formation of ties for monitoring purposes. These factors are expected to differ according to the type of interaction between actors. Studies on policy networks identify various types of interactions among policy stakeholders (Weible & Sabatier, 2005). The primary reason for a variety of organized governmental and non-governmental actors to link up in policy networks is to exchange technical information related to policy issues (Leifeld & Schneider, 2012; Knoke et al, 1996; Schneider et al. 2003) One actor cannot possibly be

knowledgeable in all policy facets and is therefore in need of information by other actors dealing with the same policy issues, possibly with a different expertise and an alternative point of view. This is particularly important when actors have to handle policy issues that are complex and in areas with high uncertainty (Hecl, 1978). Especially the application phase of a multi-level policy process is complex and uncertain. It is difficult for the Commission to keep oversight on how EU directives are actually implemented in each specific domestic context, making them heavily dependent on local actors to provide for this information (Börzel, 2000; Pleines, 2010). Another important motivation to for interaction is for policy actors to join forces and coordinate their actions. More so than information exchange does collaboration require actors to build stable and long-term relations and to have a shared goal (Weible & Sabatier, 2005). Collaboration is defined as actors acting constructively with other stakeholders on a voluntary basis and a common interest by pooling resources in a joint structure (Wood & Gray, 1991). The idea is that actors collaborate to gain access to resources (money, staff, but also legitimacy can be seen as a resource) and to use resources efficiently. By engaging in a more or less fixed partnership, actors can divide some of the work needed for their strategies to goal attainment (McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). Information exchange and collaboration represent a different rationale for interaction and are likely to be driven by different factors. As shown by Baldassari and Diani (2007) in their study on civic networks, collaboration bound CSOs in dense clusters, whereas more instrumental ties of information exchange integrate them into a broader and heterogeneous network with other types of organizations.

Information exchange is likely to be driven by diversity in the monitoring network. Different kind of actors will process and value information according to their distinct perspectives, which leads to more broad-based monitoring (Beetham & Popovic, 2009). Information exchange for the purpose of monitoring entails sharing detailed information and specific knowledge about the concrete impact and implementation of policies. This type of information is often shared by research actors and CSOs and put to use through access relations with state actors (Stokman & Zeggelink, 1996). Monitoring by fire alarm (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984) assumes interaction between societal

actors and governmental actors to get full information on implementation practices at those in the position to do something about it. Information is likely to be dispersed among actors with divergent preferences on implementation strategies. In addition, CSOs rely on the information resources produced by research actors. When actors are believed to be functionally interdependent or dependent on resources of other actors, as is the case in a monitoring network, actors are more likely to link up to actors with divergent preferences as well (Weible, 2005).

Based on the functional and resource dependency of actors in a monitoring network and the value of access relations to actors with divergent positions, the expectation is that it is more likely that dissimilar policy preferences on how policies should be implemented will drive information exchange in a monitoring network. Monitoring requires a network that is inclusive in order to have full information and policy agreement is even less likely when you take into account that actors might monitor implementation more intensively when actors do not agree on the same implementation of external rules. Therefore, it is expected that:

H3a: Actors tend to exchange information with actors that disagree with them on the necessary implementation measures.

Moreover, similarity in organisational type is also expected to affect information exchange between actors differently than their collaboration.

Various types of organisations have distinct expertise and resources and are expected to process and interpret information differently. In line with Burt's structural hole argument (2000), new information is most likely to seep in when networks are prone to diversity. Structural holes represent a break in social structure, which can be bridged by actors positioned in those holes, giving them access to new and diversified information. Actors from dissimilar backgrounds, representing different organisational units, can be assumed to span many structural holes (Sandström & Carlsson, 2008). Information that comes from different parts of the network is assumed to be more valuable, as it differs from what is already circulating among closer related actors. For this

reason, there is a tendency to exchange information with other types of actors in monitoring networks, leading to the expectation that:

H3b: Actors tend to exchange information with actors with a different organizational background.

Instead, building collaborative relations requires trust and stability and here agreement is assumed to be vital (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Henry, Lubbell & McCoy, 2011). Collaboration enables actors to divide the work, pool resources and work together to: increase awareness on the topic of gender equality and women's rights, help women facing discrimination find justice and improve the implementation of the EU gender directives in practice (McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). In pursuit of a common goal, actors are more likely to choose their partners based on their view of the causation of gender inequality and discrimination and according to similar preferred policy instruments to tackle the problem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Weible & Sabatier, 2005). Accordingly, the expectation is that:

H4a: Actors tend to collaborate with actors that agree with them on the necessary implementation measures.

Likewise, it is easier to interact with actors that are similar when building stable and long-term relations with high levels of trust as required for collaborations. The general tendency to homophily has been identified in a wide range of network studies (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). This homophily effect is also likely to influence collaborations between actors in a monitoring network. CSOs are more likely to collaborate with other CSOs, governmental actors will collaborate with other governmental actors and research actors tend to mostly initiate collaborations among each other. Their organisational similarity will make it much easier to share a common goal, work according to the same principles and in an equivalent role, this results in the expectation that:

H4b: Actors tend to collaborate with actors with a similar organizational background.

In addition to these hypothesised effects on the likelihood of information exchange or collaboration between actors in the network there are other effects that are expected to matter and that have to be accounted for. First, different types of interaction in the monitoring network are likely to have an effect on each other. Collaboration is expected to increase the likelihood of information exchange by providing for more opportunity to exchange information and reducing the transaction costs associated with establishing contact (Leifeld & Schneider, 2012). In line with general models of network formation (Bala & Goyal, 2000), it is assumed that actors weight costs and benefits when they consider to link up to another actor. By using opportunity structures such as provided for in collaborations, actors can exchange information at low cost. At the same time, processing and interpretation in the creating of a joint report for monitoring purposes requires collaboration on top of information exchange. Actors need to agree on the way they represent and prioritise information according to shared beliefs, coordinate their actions and share resources to produce the reports. The amount of coordination this necessitates, makes it all the more likely that joint reporting is most cost effective if actors engage in collaboration more generally.

Furthermore, in the context of EU politics information politics is described as a crucial tactic employed in transnational advocacy networks to transmit information efficiently and credibly to where it will have the most impact (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). In the case of monitoring the implementation of EU directives by national governments and administrative actors the most effective information transmission will be on a national level. Domestic groups are expected to use their channels to their governments if possible. However, when there is limited access, or governments are unresponsive to information, civil society actors will link up with actors across borders and pressure their government to respond. Valuable information on the implementation of gender policies requires local knowledge and action by national governmental actors. Most information exchange is therefore expected to circulate within cliques among national actors. Liaison actors that connect actors across

different polity levels for multi-level information exchange can be used to keep pressure on national governmental actors. More generally, networks on gender equality and women's rights are expected to be transnational in nature, as these issues are regulated in international, EU and national law. Especially non-state actors are expected to collaborate with other non-state actors across borders, according to the ideal type global civil society (Sissenich, 2007). Still, as proximity is important for collaborations, whether actors are active on a national, European or international level is expected to matter. For this reason, both the network model for information exchange and for collaboration should take into account the tendency to interact with actors within the same polity level.

Finally, the extent of both exchange of information and collaboration is determined by the amount of social capital within a policy network. Based on the seminal work of Granovetter (1973) on bridging ties, the added value in a network originates from actors that are able to access new resources and information by brokering between different parts of the network. However, according to Coleman's social closure argument (1990) coordinative action is most effective when this added value can be put to use by densely clustered actors in close contact to build trust. Burt (2000) has theorized and demonstrated that the fundamental factors that facilitate social capital are precisely the combination of densely clustered network structures (transitivity) on the one hand and the spanning of structural holes by actors with high betweenness² on the other hand. Taking into account network structures that facilitate social capital, these endogenous network processes of tie formation are tested and controlled for in the model as well.

Research design

Gender equality and women's rights in the Netherlands

To test what drives information exchange and collaboration in a monitoring network, this study focuses on the network of societal, research, political and governmental actors concerning the implementation of the EU gender

² Betweenness takes into account to what extent actors can potentially control information flow in the network and is defined by Freeman (1977) in terms of the degree to which an actor is on the shortest path between other actors.

directives⁴ in the Netherlands. Within the area of Employment and Social Policy, EU requirements on gender equality and anti-discrimination are relatively well developed. Since the 1990s, the Commission has promoted coordination among women's groups across member states and advocated women's rights on a European level. In response to the expansion of EU policies affecting women's daily lives the European Women's Lobby (EWL) was founded by national representations of women's groups in all EU Member States⁵. Today the EWL is considered the most influential transnational women's network in the EU (Lang, 2009). The activities of the EWL are aimed to provide EU institutions with information on Member States' legislation and to communicate local needs in the preparation of policies and legislation.

The Dutch women's council, coordinating the Dutch women's groups and representing them in the EWL, is considered the most relevant network for monitoring the implementation of the EU requirements on gender equality and women's rights in the Netherlands. There are a number of reasons why the Dutch monitoring network provides for an interesting case.

First, the EU Commission has positively assessed the practical implementation of the relevant legal requirements in the Netherlands in commissioned evaluation reports. These reports were prepared by external experts contracted by the Commission to evaluate the national implementation of EU directives in each member state, both in law and practice (Zhelyazkova et al, 2016). According to these evaluations the Dutch equality body (Institute of Human Rights) is adequately resourced and has means to enforce implementation such as the authority to request information and documents in case of discrimination and it can additionally bring cases to attention of relevant ministers, take legal action to obtain a judgment or forward opinions to relevant organizations (Ammer et al, 2011). Length and costs of court proceedings are also closely monitored by the Dutch judiciary and Supreme Court and do not pose major issues (Burri & Van Eijken, 2011). As the protection against indirect discrimination is often problematic in practice because it is difficult to prove (Farkas & O'Farrell, 2015), the

⁴ The employment equality framework directive (2000/78), the gender directive (2004/113), the recast directive (2006/54), the parental leave directive (2010/18) and the self-employed workers directive (2010/41).

⁵ At the time Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Netherlands allows (but does not require) statistical evidence that would indicate indirect discrimination to implement this legal provision. Additionally, collective arrangements provide for more beneficial implementation of rules regarding the right to childcare facilities and parental leave than transposed in legislation.

Second, the Netherlands is one of the few member states where monitoring activity is explicitly included as a task of the national equality body by law. Monitoring activities are aimed at assessing trends and developments in discrimination and equal treatment and evaluating the effectiveness of relevant legislation (Ammer et al, 2011). All municipalities in the Netherlands are required to establish and fund Anti-Discrimination Bureaus that monitor situations of discrimination and assist victims. Social partners are reportedly playing a part in the realisation of gender equality by stimulating the exchange of ideas regarding issues as equal pay and positive action. Moreover, to raise awareness and increase transparency on wage inequality employers in the Netherlands are required to establish a sound job evaluation system and a state subsidised initiative of a collaboration of NGOs and social partners enables online comparisons of wages and substantive information provision about equal pay (Tummer & Senden, 2016).

In short, not only the environment for monitoring implementation is favourable in the Netherlands, it also represents a case where good compliance in terms of the practical implementation at member state level is achieved and maintained. Monitoring activity in the Netherlands is relatively high, both in terms of the number of actors involved in information exchange and the frequency of information exchange among actors. By analysing what factors shape the network of the Dutch women's council used for monitoring the implementation of EU gender directives in practice, this case study represents data-rich environment to analyse what drives an effective monitoring network for EU policies.

Data collection and methodology

The network of the Dutch women's council was mapped out by a computer-assisted telephone survey data using the egocentric network data collection program EgoNet (McCarty, 2003). The two-stage survey entailed a name

generator to list all the relevant actors in the monitoring network and an online meeting for the survey interview. Additionally, data was collected by analysing online documents of the actors they named as part of their monitoring network. As the data represents the monitoring network of the Dutch women's council and all actors they exchange information with, they themselves need to be excluded from the analysis. As ego, they are connected to the other actors by definition, hence, if not excluded it would influence the parameters strongly (Lubbers et al, 2010; Robins & Lusher, 2013). The resulting matrix of the network (excluding ego), the attributes of the named actors and the type of interactions between the named actors are analysed by the use of the software package statnet (Handcock, 2003). Note that the data is symmetric, therefore the network consists of undirected ties only. Both the exchange of information and collaboration is coded as a mutual interaction.

The definition of a tie in the *information exchange* network is whether there was a regular exchange of information about affairs related to the implementation of the EU gender directives. The interviewed expert was prompted to first name all relevant actors with whom they had such a relation and second to indicate whether it was *not likely*, *somewhat likely* or *very likely* that the named actors exchanged information with the other named actors. Only when it was *very likely* that actors engaged in information exchange, the tie was represented in the network. As for the measurement of a collaborative tie in the *collaboration* network, actors were coded as collaborators in a matrix when they have common interests and act together by sharing resources to work towards a shared goal (Wood & Gray, 1991). For example, the partnership of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the Dutch Equality Body (College voor de Rechten van de Mens) is set up to exchange best practices regarding human rights on a local level and they organize meetings and workshops together with other local actors for a better understanding on how to best tackle discrimination on the basis of sex. Furthermore, the research institute Atria regularly works together with the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) on projects to collect comparable data and indicators on women's rights to raise awareness of gender inequality. Another example is the joint organizing of recurring events, such as a festival with workshops and network meetings by the civil society

actor Women Inc and the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV) aimed to help women in their career.

Moreover, some of the independent variables are operationalized as network relations (so-called edge attributes). *Policy agreement* is measured as a tie when both actors agree (coded as 1 as opposed to 0) on the policy instruments needed to implement gender equality and anti-discrimination measures on the basis of sex, based on the survey interview with the expert from the Dutch women's council. In addition, *joint reporting* is operationalized as a network relation (weighted based on the number of joint reports) when actors contributed to a joint monitoring report⁶ on the implementation of gender equality and women's rights together.

In addition, variables are included to take into account relevant attributes of actors (node attributes). First, *resources* were measured as the number of employed staff for each actor. To use the number of employees as an indicator for resources is common practice, because it is hard to find reliable information on the size of the budget for each organization (Klüver, 2012). A categorical variable was created for organizations with less than 10 employees (coded as 1), less than 50 employees (coded as 2), less than 100 employees (coded as 3), less than 500 employees (coded as 4) and more than 500 employees (coded as 5).

Second, a dummy variable assigns actors to being an *implementing actor* (coded as 1) when they have some kind of institutional responsibility in the implementation process. For example, actors responsible for the implementation of the EU gender directives in the Netherlands were the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as they are required to transpose the directives in national law and enforce their implementation. Furthermore, both the social partners and the equality body are required by the directives to be part of the implementation process as well. Moreover, the national government designated the municipalities to implement anti-discrimination action plans and to establish Anti-Discrimination Bureaus.

⁶ CEDAW Shadow Report, Women's Platform reporting (Vrouwenpodium), Gendersensitive Policy Report (gendersensitief beleid), Equal=Different Report (gelijk=anders)

Lastly, node attributes such as their *organisational type* (civic, political, governmental or research) or their *polity level* (national, EU or international) were included as separate variables. For a list of all actors in the network and their attributes see Table 3 in supplementary appendix.

To measure the homophily effect of actors with the same organisational background, a nodal attribute matching statistic⁷ was used to represent ties where the connected actors are both civic, both governmental or both research actors.⁸ The same statistic takes into account the matching of both national and both EU level actors.⁹

Finally, two types of variables were created to control for the network structure in both the information exchange network and the collaboration network. *Transitivity* is operationalized as the extent to which an actor interacts with an actor with whom they both share ties. This effect is measured by using the geometrically weighted edge-wise shared partner statistic (GWESP) that also helps overcome model degeneracy (Snijders et al, 2006). To measure the effect of actors brokering structural holes within the network, the *betweenness* score¹⁰ of every actor was calculated and used as a node attribute, testing the effect of an actors' level of betweenness in the network on the likelihood of a tie.

To test the hypotheses on the likelihood of information exchange and collaboration a model for each was fitted using Exponential Random Graph Models (ergm, see Handcock, 2016). This is because networks consist of complex dependencies between ties and standard logistic regressions would result in matrix autocorrelation (Robins et al, 2007). The theoretical assumptions of ERGMs are that networks self-organize and are influenced by actor attributes and exogenous factors as well. Patterns within networks can be understood as evidence for continuing processes. Since multiple processes can operate simultaneously it is necessary to model the effects of interest and find a distribution of graphs with the observed network central to that (Robins & Lusher, 2013). By estimating the relevant parameters, the model can be

⁷ A statistic for each category of types of actors is included that counts the number of ties between similar actors.

⁸ The nodal attribute matching statistic for connected political actors was excluded, because there were too few observations for this type of actor.

⁹ The nodal attribute matching statistic for connected international level actors was excluded as well, because there were too few observations for this type of actor.

¹⁰ The degree that an actor is positioned on the shortest path between other actors (see Freeman, 1977).

fitted accordingly using the `ergm` package (Handcock et al, 2016). Sampling is done by use of the Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) procedure that produces a sequence of simulated networks. These are updated through small changes so that they best represent the sample space. The centring of the distribution of network graphs is done according to the method of maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) so to find the parameter values that maximize the likelihood for a given model and observed data (Koskinen & Snijders, 2013). Finally, to assess how well the model captures the observed network a Goodness of Fit (GOF) procedure is performed. After the convergence of the models, their fit is assessed by looking at features of the data that were not explicitly modelled in a distribution of simulated network graphs compared to the observed networks.

Results

Before testing the hypothesis, the network structure of both information exchange and collaboration are described by some summary statistics (see Table 1). On average actors exchange information with a higher number of actors (9.62) than they collaborate with (2.57). Both network types are not particularly dense. If compared to random networks of the same size, the network structure of information exchange (0.48) is not particularly different, while collaboration within the network (0.13) is significantly sparse.¹¹ Betweenness centralization is relatively high (0.17) in both networks, compared to what you would expect from a network of that size and density. Furthermore, transitivity is significantly prominent when it comes to information exchange (0.73), whereas for collaborative relations transitivity levels are rather average (0.26).

----- Table 1 here -----

To test the hypotheses the monitoring network is simulated according to both information exchange (model 1a and 1b) and collaboration (model 2a and 2b), which are presented in Table 2. At first sight, the results indicate that the

¹¹ Using conditional uniform graph tests basic graph indicators are compared to a distribution of random networks with similar size (and density levels for indicators other than density).

more resources to their disposal, the more involved an actor is in any kind of interaction in the monitoring network. Actors with more resources are more likely to exchange information (see model 1a) and they also enable actors to collaborate with more actors (see model 2a). However, once you take into account that information exchange is more likely to involve an actor that is responsible for the implementation process, resources do no longer have a significant effect (see model 1b). It is actually the role of an actor as an implementer that is driving information exchange ($p < 0.5$), and not necessarily their resources. Implementers are indeed more influential in the monitoring network and other actors are more likely to exchange information with them than with others. Although it is the case that implementing actors also tend to have more money and staff, the more endowed actors without responsibility in the implementation process are not more likely to engage in information exchange than their less equipped counterparts. The picture is somewhat different when it comes to collaborative ties. Whether you are an implementer or not does not have any effect on how many collaborations you engage in (see model 2b). Instead, resources do matter here; actors are more inclined to secure a collaborative partnership when at least one of the actors has more money and staff at their disposal ($p < 0.5$). These findings partly support hypotheses 1, however it only confirms that actors with more resources are more involved in the monitoring network when it comes to collaboration. Information exchange, in line with hypothesis 2, predominately entails actors using access relations to influential actors in charge of the implementation process.

----- Table 2 here -----

Moreover, agreement on the type of policies to implement gender equality is negatively associated with information exchange. Information exchange is more likely among actors that disagree ($p < 0.5$), in line with hypothesis 3a. The monitoring network benefits from information exchange across actors with different ideas about the best measures to implement gender equality. One reason for this could be that valuable information on the implementation process is needed no matter the disagreement on preferred policy

instruments. Exchanging information with actors with diverging preferences on the necessary policy instruments to tackle gender inequality could be considered more valuable for monitoring purposes, in order to keep them in check. Instead, shared implementation preferences are positively associated with collaboration between actors. However, even though the effect is positive, it is not significant and preferences about implementation measures do not appear to drive collaboration (unlike hypothesis 4a).

The differentiated effect of diversity and homophily on either information exchange or collaboration is also apparent when it comes to the type of actors. Whereas there is no homophily effect for CSOs, government actors or research institutions in terms of sharing information, it is clear that collaborations do mostly occur among actors with the same organisational background, indicating that collaborations in monitoring networks are rather institutional in nature. CSOs tend to collaborate with other CSOs rather than with other types of actors ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, governmental actors are more likely to collaborate with each other ($p < 0.1$). Furthermore, collaboration among research actors is also more likely than with other types or organizations ($p < 0.5$). Although hypothesis 3b cannot be confirmed since the negative effect of information exchange among similar organisational types of actors is not significant, the findings do support hypothesis 4b on the homophily effect for collaboration.

Furthermore, one type of interaction increases the likelihood of another type of interaction. First, collaboration helps actors to exchange information with each other. Collaboration creates opportunities for actors to exchange information at low cost, making it more likely for collaborators to share information as well ($p < 0.001$). Second, it appears that when actors engage in joint reports, they are more likely to be collaborative partners ($p < 0.01$). The lack of effect of joint reporting on the likelihood of information exchange indicates that the preparation of a joint reports requires more stable relations among actors than merely exchanging information.

Any actor that is able to connect otherwise unrelated actors with each other is significantly more involved in the monitoring network ($p < 0.01$). This is indicative of the importance of brokerage in monitoring activities. Transitivity seems to be largely accounted for by the increased likelihood of sharing

information with actors within the same polity level. Actors active on a national level tend to exchange information with other nationally active actors ($p < 0.001$), while EU level actors tend to share information among each other ($p < 0.01$). These border effects are less apparent in the collaboration network. Although EU actors collaborate mostly with actors on the EU level ($p < 0.01$), there is no such homophily effect for national actors. It appears that national actors collaborate with actors both inside and outside of the national polity level. When actors are able to access the relevant institutions on a domestic level to exchange information on the affairs related to the implementation of the policies they are interested in, they are less inclined to use information as leverage transnationally. But this is not to say that CSOs still collaborate with other CSOs across the border.

To assess the goodness of fit of the full models of the information exchange and collaboration, the networks can be simulated based on the coefficients (see figure 1). Both simulated networks appear to have the same structural features as the observed networks and seem to replicate reality quite well.

---- Figure 1 here ----

To support this interpretation figure 2 and 3 show the distribution of the samples of simulated networks (boxplots) according to the models plotted against the real network (line). Well-established structural network parameters for assessing goodness of fit (such as degree, edge-wise shared partners, minimum geodesic distance and triad census) reasonably fit the data. Although the sample of simulated information exchange networks misses the mark a little for the edge-wise shared partners of 10 as well as the degree of 13, both minimum geodesic distance and triad census appear to be modelled realistically. As the smaller AIC/BIC already indicated, the fit of the collaboration network seems to be a bit better, as all statistics fall within the range.

---- Figure 2 and 3 here ----

Conclusion

The application of policies related to gender equality and anti-discrimination in accordance with EU requirements in the domestic context is dependent on local actors monitoring the implementation process. Scholars on compliance have recognized the importance of this decentralized monitoring system by fire-alarm (Jensen, 2007; Tallberg, 2002) and studies on advocacy networks as defined by Keck & Sikkink (1998) have demonstrated how non-state actors can use information to increase transparency and hold governments to account. However, it is yet to be established what determines the structure of networks for monitoring purposes and what factors drive information exchange and collaboration.

Combining insights from literature on interest groups, transnational networks and studies on policy networks with a social network analysis approach, this study tries to establish predictors of information exchange and collaboration among actors in a monitoring network. The analysis is based on the case of the monitoring network of the Dutch women's council, the national platform for women's groups that is part of the EWL and represents women's interest in a national, EU and international context. Exponential Random Graph Models are employed to test whether widely found determinants of interactions in policy networks such as shared policy beliefs and organisational similarity drive information exchange and collaboration in their monitoring network as well. More specifically, monitoring interactions are likely to depend on the resources actors have at their disposal and will most of all involve actors in charge of implementation.

The findings indicate that resource-rich actors are indeed the most active in a monitoring network. This corroborates research that emphasizes the instrumental role of resources to mobilize coordinated action (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996) and to cover the costs of establishing and maintaining relations to gather, process and disseminate information across relevant policy stakeholders (Klüver, 2012). However, when it comes to information exchange, influence as a consequence of an actor's formal role in the implementation process is of even greater importance than their financial and human resources. This confirms the importance of establishing access relations to actors with institutionalized power to influence the policy process

(König & Bräuniger, 1998; Stokman & Berveling, 1998). Moreover, the finding that information exchange is generally driven by actors with diverging ideas about the necessary implementation measures is also in line with new institutionalist approaches to access relations in policy networks (Stokman & Zeggelink, 1996; Stokman & Berveling, 1998; Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992). Evidently effective monitoring demands to keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. The use of access relations with those actors that are most beneficial for the dispersion of valuable information is reflected in the lacking tendency of actors to only exchange information with actors of the same type of organization. Information exchange occurs equally across all types of organizations, indicating brokerage.

Instead, collaborations are based on a distinct rationale. Building partnerships of trust and long-term commitment is more likely to occur between actors with a similar type of organizational background. It is easier to pool resources for joint strategies in goal attainment when actors have an equivalent institutional role and a similar organizational structure. However, taking these similarities into account, the lack of significance of agreement on the necessary implementation measures demonstrates that building coalitions according to policy beliefs is not a driving factor of tie formation in monitoring networks. This is where monitoring networks are different from advocacy networks. Monitoring does not necessitate overcoming conflict by coalition building to push a certain policy forward, such as demonstrated in many studies on policy networks (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Weible & Sabatier, 2005, Ingold & Fischer, 2014). Instead, it requires more broad-based interaction and information exchange to increase transparency in the implementation process. Monitoring networks benefit from diversity and actors that are able to broker valuable information that is different from what is already circulating among like-minded actors.

Finally, this study found that whereas collaboration did occur transnationally, information exchange was heavily influenced by border-effects. This sheds some light on the link between access relations (Stokman & Berveling, 1998) and information politics in transnational networks (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). When actors are able to access policy-makers and implementing actors within the domestic setting, there is less need to make use of transnational networks

to exchange information for monitoring purposes. It does scrutinize the importance of actors that can broker these otherwise separate clusters of actors.

Although the importance of diversity finds empirical support in the case of the Dutch monitoring network on the implementation of EU gender and anti-discrimination policies in the domestic setting, there are some limitations to be considered. First, the empirical data is limited to the network as described by the Dutch Women's Council and contains undirected and binary relations only. Whereas this type of data collection allowed for a more in depth understanding of the monitoring network of the coordination of women's groups in the Netherlands, it does pose questions on the external validity of the study. For example, how specific are the drivers for information exchange and collaboration for monitoring the implementation process in the Netherlands? Does monitoring in other policy areas occur according to the same principles of heterogeneity, or is this especially important for EU policy on gender equality and anti-discrimination? Moreover, monitoring increases the transparency in the implementation process, but does not improve implementation performance directly. Though seemingly effective, it should be investigated whether the same network structure and formation of ties have similar benefits in different cultural and institutional settings. Future research should investigate the role of resources and access relations in other domestic setting and test whether heterogeneity benefits the efficacy of monitoring networks in general and under which conditions it results in better implementation.

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Tables and figures

Table 1: Descriptive statistics information and collaboration network

<i>Network property</i>	<i>Information exchange</i>	<i>Collaboration</i>
Directionality	Undirected	Undirected
Edge values	Binary	Binary
Node count	21	21
Edge count	101	27
Mean degree	9.62	2.57
Degree standard deviation	3.56	1.66
Density	0.48	0.13
Centralization (betweenness)	0.17	0.17
Transitivity	0.73	0.26

Estimation was conducted using the Igraph package in R (Csardi & Nepusz, 2006)

Table 2: Results ERGM

	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 2a	Model 2b
	<i>Information exchange</i>		<i>Collaboration</i>	
<i>Network structure</i>				
Density	-4.29 *** (1.27)	-4.02 * (1.31)	-7.57 *** (1.98)	-7.65 *** (1.98)
Transitivity	0.50 (0.45)	0.50 (0.45)	-0.07 (0.25)	-0.07 (0.25)
Betweenness	0.05 ** (0.02)	0.05 * (0.02)	0.03 *** (0.01)	0.03 *** (0.01)
<i>Edge attributes</i>				
Policy agreement	-1.21 * (0.53)	-1.42 * (0.55)	0.69 (1.22)	0.84 (1.23)
Joint reporting	-0.03 (0.32)	-0.17 (0.33)	1.21 ** (0.44)	1.28 ** (0.45)
Collaboration	2.63 *** (0.73)	2.97 *** (0.76)	-	-
<i>Node attributes</i>				
Resources	0.30 * (0.14)	0.16 (0.16)	0.60 * (0.29)	0.66 * (0.31)
Implementing actor	-	0.92 * (0.43)	-	-0.44 (0.66)
<i>Homophily type</i>				
Both CSO	0.19 (0.60)	0.32 (0.61)	2.60 ** (0.94)	2.51 ** (0.94)
Both governmental	-0.99 (1.32)	-1.42 (1.37)	2.49 † (1.44)	2.57 † (1.46)
Both research	-0.97 (1.16)	-1.03 (1.16)	2.96 * (1.24)	3.04 * (1.25)
<i>Homophily level</i>				
Both national	3.11 *** (0.48)	3.20 *** (0.49)	-0.08 (0.86)	-0.02 (0.86)
Both EU	1.76 ** (0.67)	1.85 ** (0.76)	3.23 ** (1.05)	3.20 ** (1.06)
AIC	207.80	205.00	120.40	121.90
BIC	248.00	248.50	157.20	161.10
Log Likelihood	-91.91	-89.51	-49.17	-48.96

MCMC MLE. *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, † p < 0.1

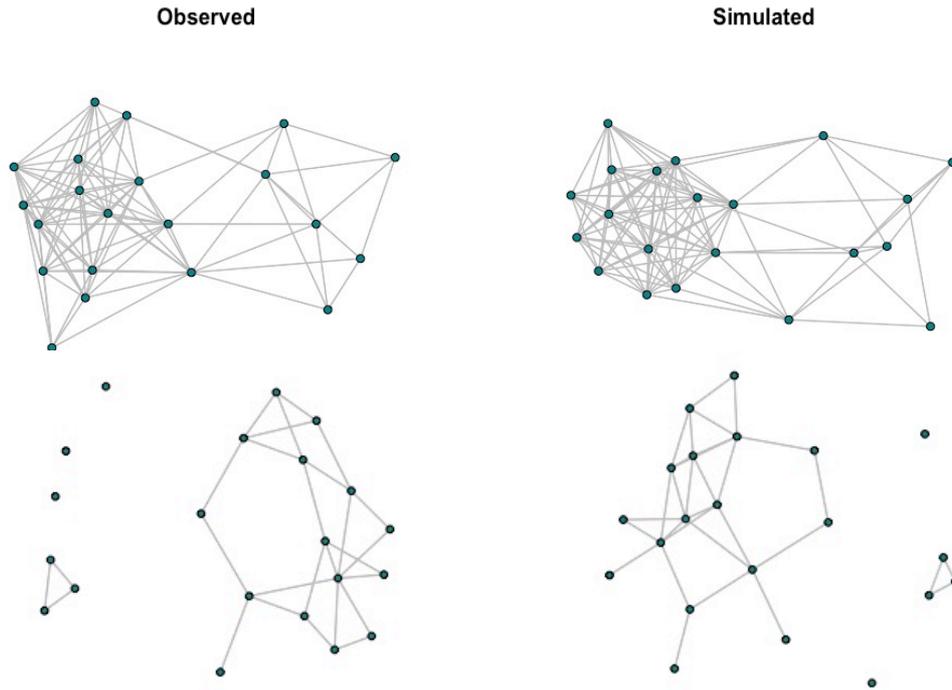


Figure 1: Observed and simulated network (above: information; below: collaboration)

Goodness-of-fit diagnostics

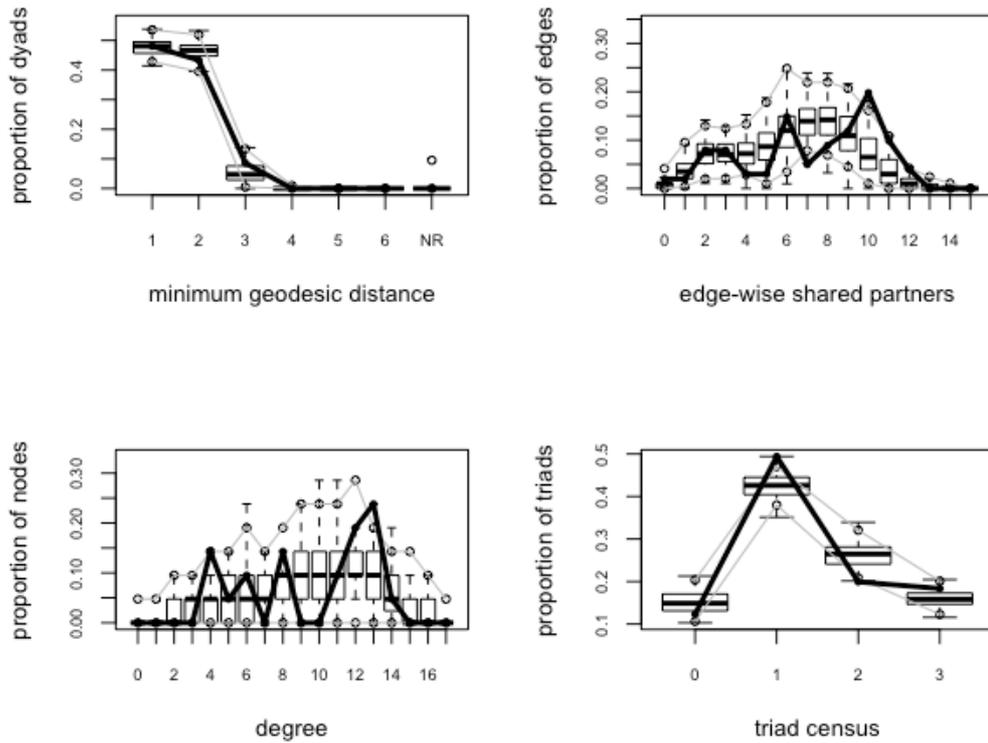


Figure 2: Goodness of fit of the information exchange model

Goodness-of-fit diagnostics

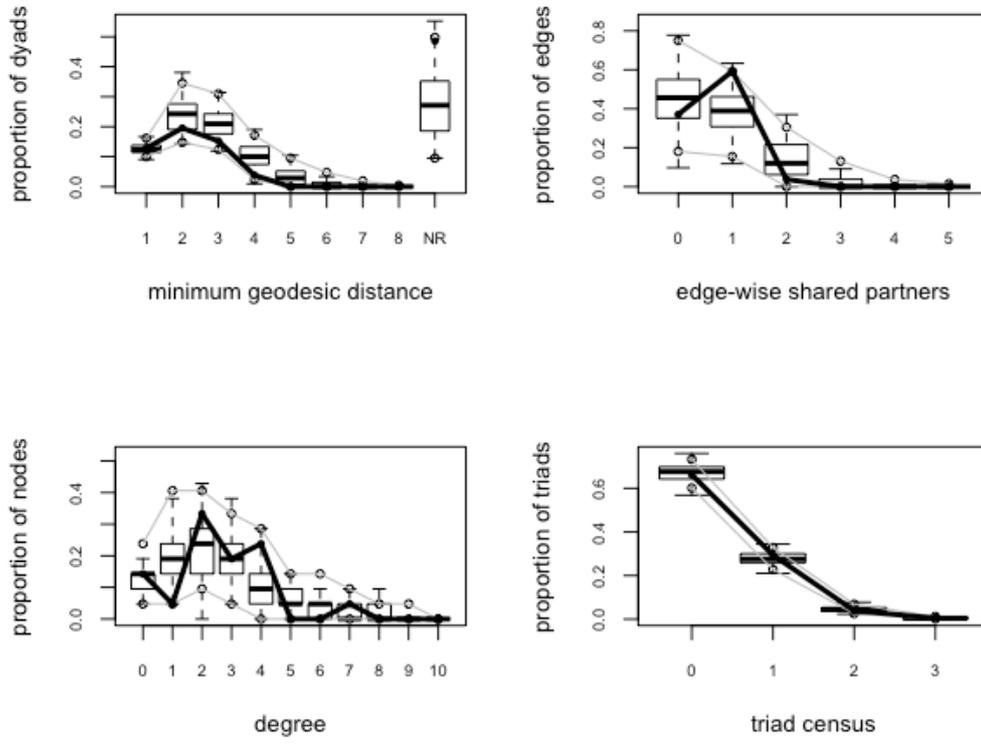


Figure 3: Goodness of fit of the collaboration model

Supplementary appendix

Table 3: List of network actors

<i>Name</i>	<i>Polity level</i>	<i>Organization type</i>
European Women's Lobby	European Union	Civic
Atria	National	Research
Wo=Men	National	Civic
Women Inc	National	Civic
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	National	Governmental
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	National	Governmental
Ministry of Justice	National	Governmental
Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV)	National	Civic
Netherlands Universities Sustainability NGOs	National	Research
European Centre of International Council of Women	European Union	Civic
Gender expert INGO Conference Council of Europe	European Union	Civic
Provincial women's councils	National	Civic
Women's League for Peace and Freedom - Netherlands	National	Civic
Equality Body	National	Research
Members of Parliament	National	Political
Members of European Parliament	European Union	Political
Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	National	Governmental
International Council of Women	International	Civic
Soroptimists Europe	European Union	Civic
European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE)	European Union	Research