Special Edition Guest Editor's Note

Women's Research in Law and Digital Technologies

Dear readers,

I am pleased to greet you on the pages of our journal!

This time, the editorial board dedicates a special issue to women and men discussing women's issues from a legal perspective. This is to support women's research, to provide a platform for colleagues to speak out, and to show what can be achieved in science and law. My colleagues from different countries are presenting their research in different areas of law on the most challenging issues.

I confess that until now I had not thought about how many women can advance the legal profession. Sure, I see lawyers on a daily basis, but it didn't become the focus of my attention. Now I have done some research, and I can say that I have a sense of parity between women and men in the legal profession, thanks to my employer.

The study of the issues of the correlation between the quantitative representation of women and men in the legal profession, as well as the peculiarities of their cultural competences, is not only of keen interest to representatives of the legal profession but also stems from general questions about the gender situation in various fields of human activity.

Vivian López Núñez, one of the authors of this special issue, shows that in Paraguay, the judicial system is dominated by men. In Russia, the situation is somewhat different. According to judicial statistics, the proportion of women in the Russian judiciary is 66%.[1] Moreover, today the Supreme Court is headed by a woman, Irina Podnosova. Women predominate among notaries in Russia. More than 80 per cent of Russian notaries are women.[2] Women also dominate legal education. According to 2021 data, more women than men are involved in the scientific and educational spheres in the Russian Federation. Overall, in higher education institutions, more than 80% of women are involved in education and pedagogical sciences. While in the humanities, the share of women is more than 65%[3].

The unequal representation of men and women in the legal profession is due to various factors, primarily historical, economic and socio-cultural reasons. Although legal work has long been the prerogative of men, the granting of full rights to women has enabled them to become involved in legal work.

For example, Soviet Russia was one of the first countries to legalize gender equality in the early 20th century. After the October Revolution of 1917, women had access to vocational education, jobs, legal

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[1] Researchers have studied the gender composition of the Russian judiciary - 66% of seats are occupied by women, https://pravo.ru/news/view/125831/?ysclid=m6v3czd9o5378745282

[2] Information of the notary of Russia, https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/pages/svedeniya-o-notariate-v-rossijskoj-federacii-za-2021-god/

[3] The Ministry of Education and Science told about the ratio of women and men in education, https://ria.ru/20211014/obrazovanie-1754596757.html

abortion and easy divorce. In the 1990s, Russia also paid a lot of attention to this issue.[4] Of course, there is always room for improvement. Summarizing foreign and Russian experience, N. Shvedova notes, "social practice has revealed the limited, illusory nature of equality and has come into conflict with life itself. The idea of gender equality has not become an organic part of either the culture of society, human rights, or real state policy."[5]

Magdalena Łągiewska's remark that "currently, there is a global stereotype on arbitrators such as 'male, pale and stale'" was very interesting. As far as I can tell, there has been no specific research on how women and men make judgments as judges. This suggests that the design of e-judge algorithms should not take into account how much softer or harsher a judgment should be, as it might seem at first glance. Freeing the AI in court from gender-specific features offers a chance to get a completely impartial judgement in strict accordance with the law.

This discussion is actively initiated by William Manga Mokofe, who, in an article in this special issue, shows the importance of addressing gender disparities and promoting inclusivity in the design and implementation of legal and technological systems.

My personal experience at the Faculty of Law of Lomonosov Moscow State University, as well as academic research, shows that the number of trained female legal professionals is growing faster than that of male lawyers. The growing supply of lawyers, and consequently, the face of the legal profession, is gradually changing.

This allows us to lead projects related to digital jurisprudence (Gergana Varbanova, Elizaveta Zainutdinova), global investment projects (Anna Belitskaya, Yulia Kharitonova), and criminal law assessment in the area of illegal trafficking and use of weapons (Elona Abasalieva).

I thank our authors for supporting the editorial call and sharing their relevant research, and I wish our readers a productive and inspiring reading experience and new ideas!

Best Wishes,

Yulia Kharitonova, LL.D.

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[4] For example, Presidential Decree No. 337 of 4 March 1993 on the priority tasks of State policy with regard to women was adopted.

[5] Shvedova, N. A. (2020). Celebrating the anniversary: gender equality issues in UN priorities. Woman in Russian Society, (3), 16-29.

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