

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and Gender: Challenges for 2014- 2020

Ewa Ruminska - Zimny, PhD

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EU Strategies and Gender

- Marginalized in Europe 2020, European Recovery Plan, Cohesion Policy
- Outside policy priorities to build a new Europe through intelligent (innovation, R&D, education), sustainable (SMEs, green economy) and inclusive growth
- European Regional Development Fund: equal opportunities as a horizontal priority –but only 8% of gender related programmes had specific strategy, budget and quantified targets (2000-2006)
- European Social Fund --only 7% of financing went on equality measures incl. reconciliation (2000-2006); EQUAL --15%
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EU Strategy for BSR

- Framework for cooperation in BSR area
- First Strategy of the EU related to a macro-region (started 2009); Action Plan adopted 2013
- Three main objectives: „To Save the Sea”; „To Connect the Region”; „To Increase Prosperity”

Priorities within objectives

- „To Save the Sea” (clean Baltic Sea water; protect inhabitants of the Baltic Sea; safe shipping; cooperation)
- „To Connect the Region” (transport, energy, people, fighting crime)
- „To Increase Prosperity” (common market; support Europe 2020; increasing competitiveness of BSR, adapting to climate change)

Gender in EUSBSR

- Only a small reference in PA SME
- The (last minute) proposal of Sweden and Poland to include a stronger statement in Action Plan on equality- growth links
- Lack of specific actions/flagship projects/ success indicators in specific priorities/ areas
- That is why a Flagship on Gender and Economic Growth in BSR is so important

EUSBSR Action Plan

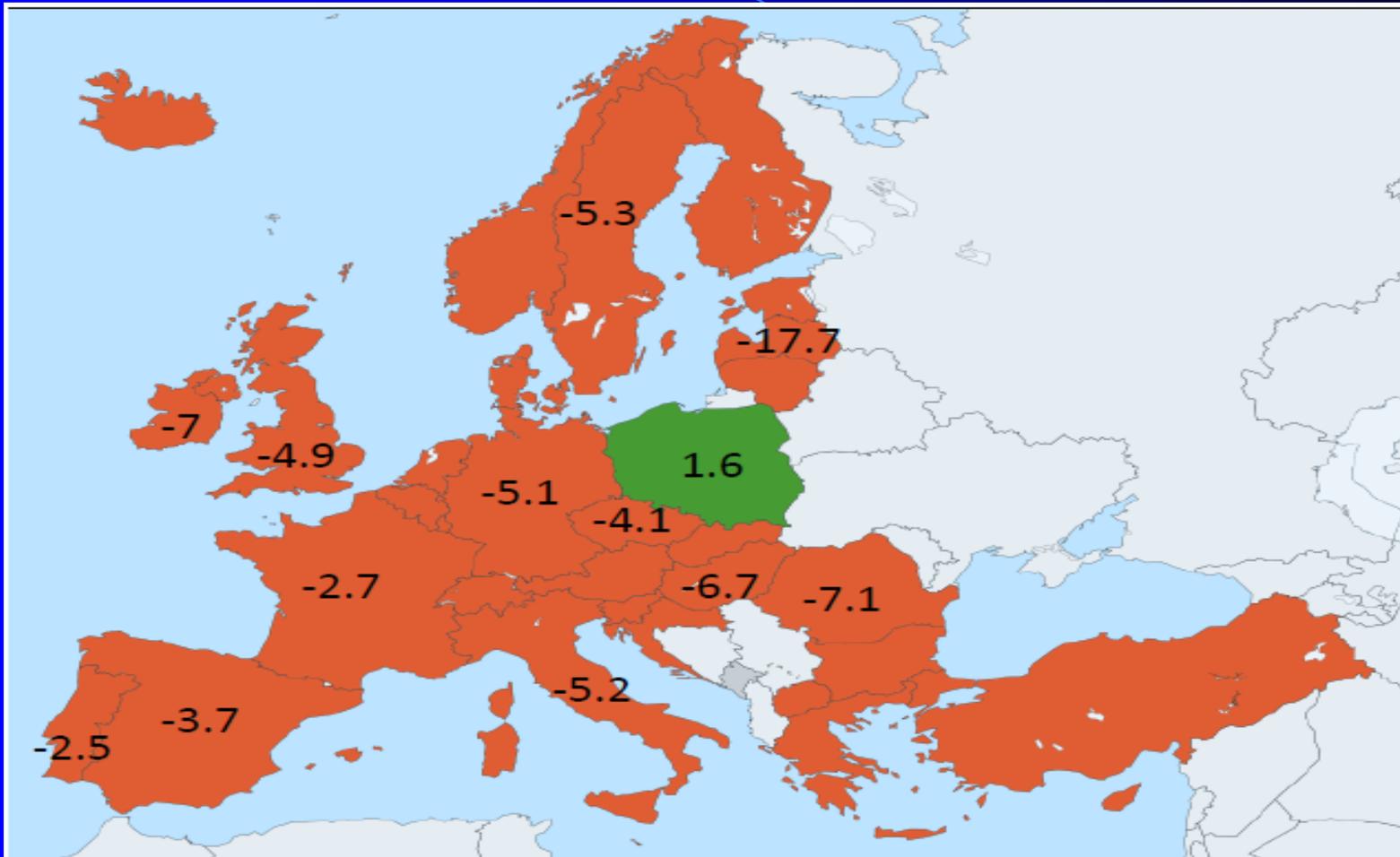
„gender”para

„Successful implementation of the Strategy requires also the adoption of a gender perspective in the governance system and the Action Plan. Equality between men and women is a core value of the European Union. At the same time, economic and business benefits can be gained from enhancing gender equality. In order to achieve the objectives of the EUSBSR the contribution and talents of both women and men should be fully used.”

Missing a gender perspective is an issue of economic growth

- It is an issue of fairness but also a common sense in ageing societies
- Women are the main source of new labour in Poland and in Europe (except migration)
- Gender diversity in innovation, production and management styles pays off
- Investments in women's education should be better used

Poland as a „Green Island”, GDP change 2009



Term 'green island' was invented and popularized by Polish government officials at media conference in 2009

Growth factors and context

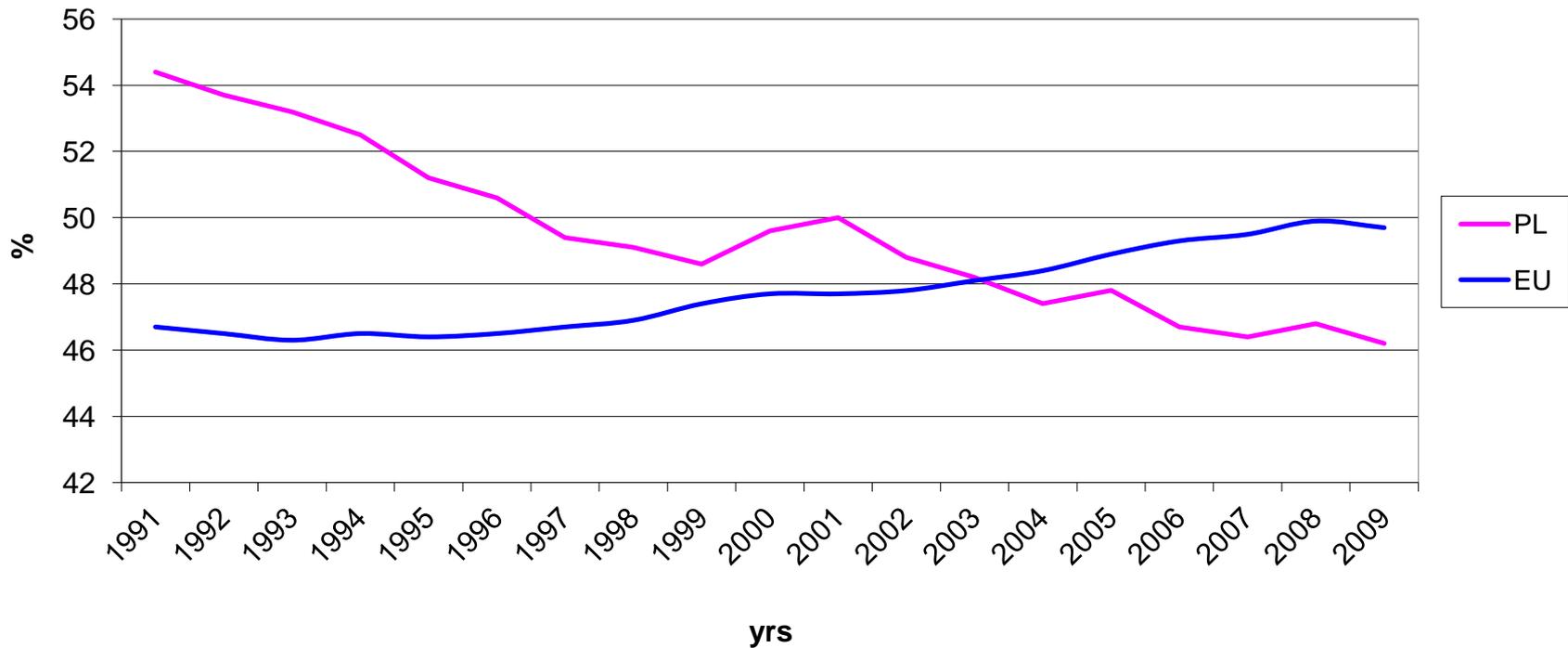
- GDP growth continued in 2010 (3.9%), 2011 (4.3%) and 2012 (even if at a slower pace of 2%)
- Driven by private consumption, exports and investments: good situation banking/housing s.
- And supported by the EU regional policy funds (PL the largest beneficiary due to its size, development gap and share of agriculture - 68 bln euro plus 18 bln euro agriculture 2007-2013)
- Big infrastructure projects (football EURO 2012) and flexible exchange rate PLN

Problems: less green with a strong gender bias

- Jobless growth and rising unemployment -from 6-7% to over 14 % (2008-2013); female unemployment higher than men's despite better education
- Sharp increase of fixed-term contracts to 27% of all work contracts („junk/trash contracts”); including female caring jobs in public sector (hospitals, nurses)
- No progress in further reduction of poverty
- Lack of investments in social infrastructure; including child/elderly institutional care

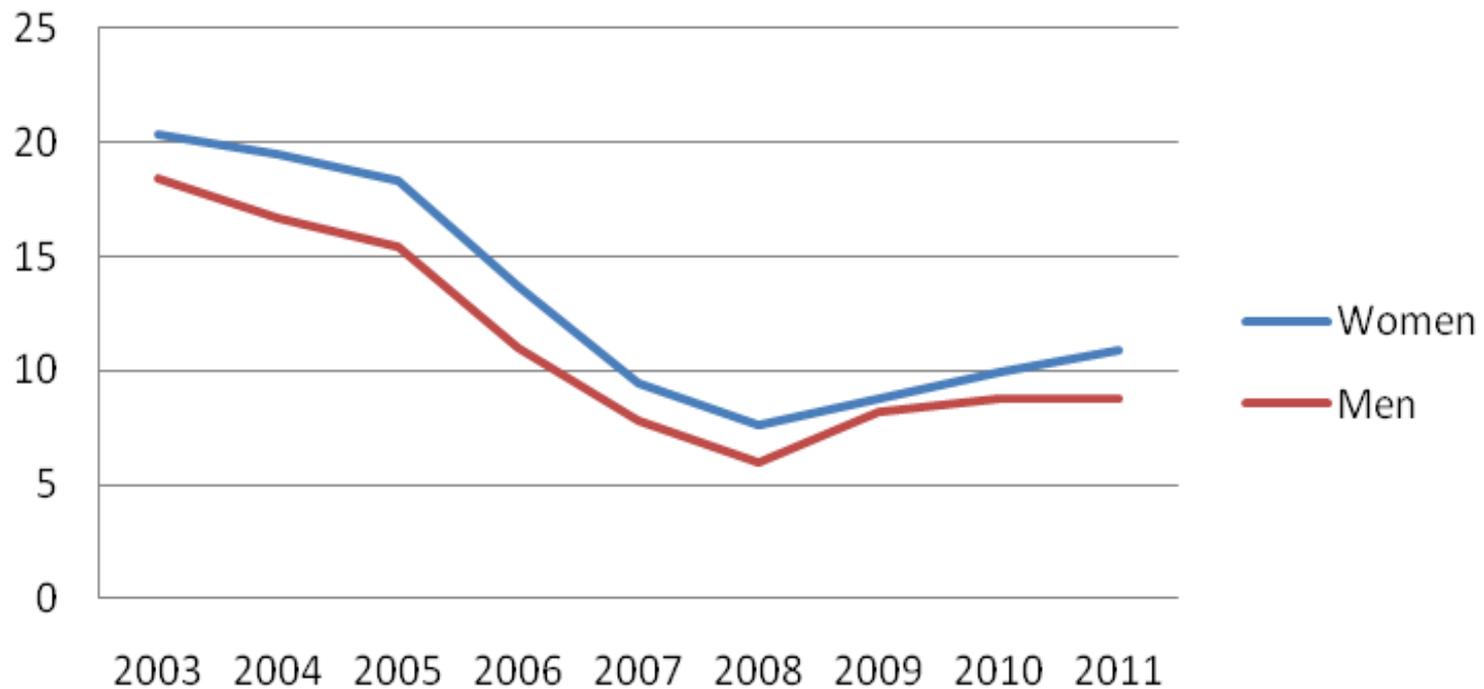
Less Polish women on the labour market

Female participation rate: Poland vs. average EU



More difficult to find a job

Poland: unemployment rates, 2003-2011,
in % (source: BAEL/LFS)

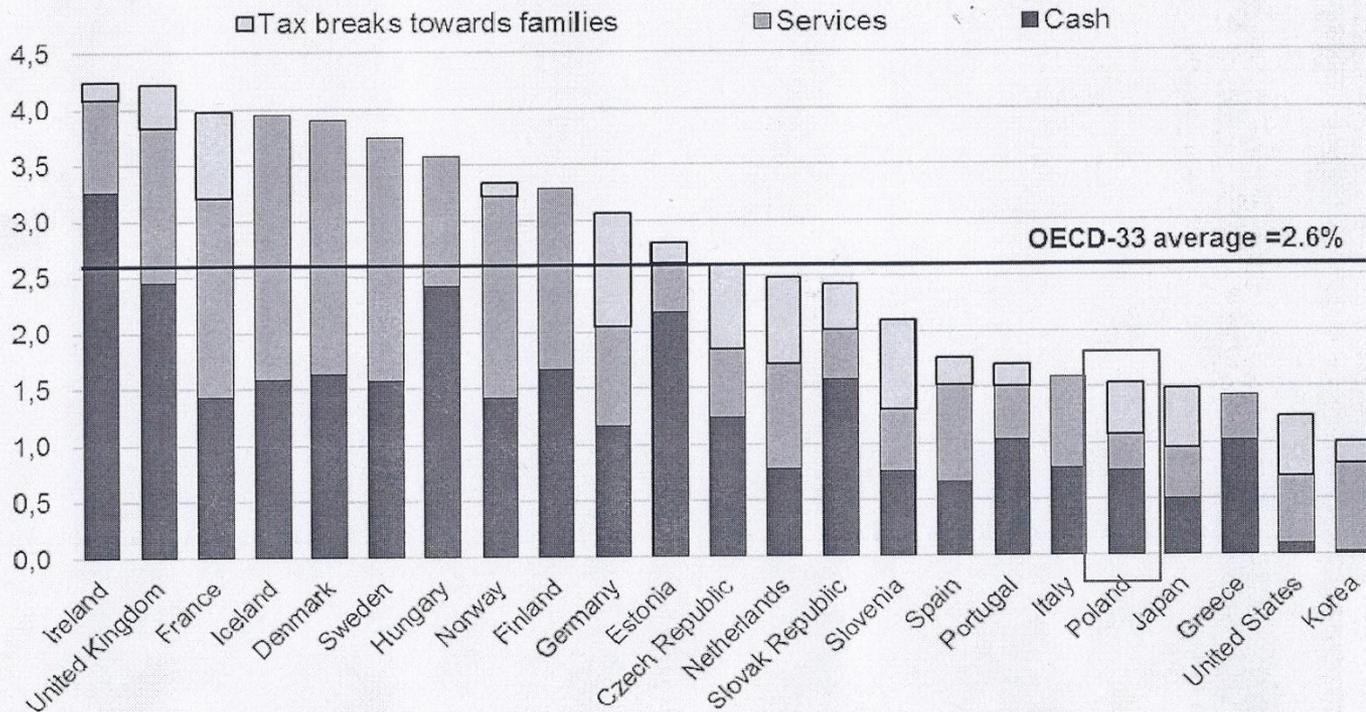


Female factor as barrier to further growth

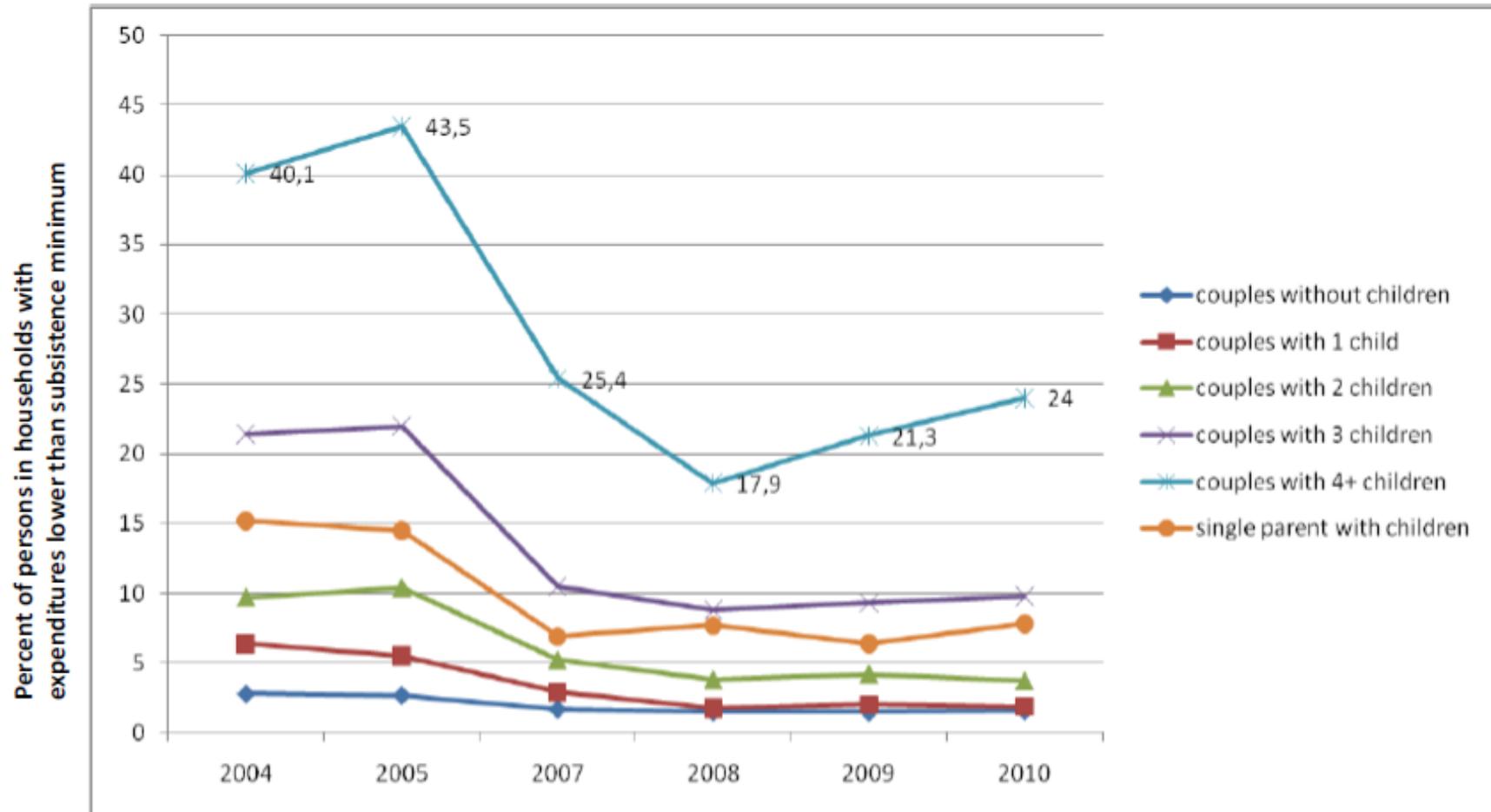
- Since mid 1980s fertility rates have dropped from the highest (above 2 children/women) to the lowest in Europe (1.2- 1.4)
- Employment as a prerequisite to have babies – the reversal of trends between participation rates and fertility (Matysiak 2009 ; d’Addio et al. 2005)
- Implications : shortages of labour, pressure on public finance, pension system, health care expenditure
- Fertility high on political agenda – but no effective policies

Family benefits: slightly higher than in Greece (OECD data: O.Thevenon*)

Gov. expenditures on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures in % of GDP, 2009



The losers: single parents and large families (GUS/HHS data: R.Szarfenberg**)



Challenges for 2014-2020

- Defining a gender sensitive concept of innovative economy based on BSR experience
- Identifying gender disaggregated indicators of success for EUSBRS
- Preparing country specific policy recommendations
- Building a regional platform and new partnerships at all levels

Thank you

- ewa.a.ruminska@gmail.com