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RESEARCH/INVESTIGACIÓN



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**ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE INSTAGRAM  
ACCOUNT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
COOPERATION, FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

*Análisis de las publicaciones de la cuenta de Instagram del Ministerio  
de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación, desde una perspectiva de género*

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**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** This qualitative and quantitative study seeks to identify the actions carried out by the government of Spain to promote and promote gender equality in the country itself and around the world. **Methodology:** A content analysis of the publications found on the MAEC Instagram account is carried out, thus discovering the importance that Spanish institutions attach to this topic. To achieve this goal, the 861 Instagram posts published as of March 11, 2016, the date from which the first publication appears, have been analyzed until today November 30, 2019. The central hypothesis is that two important events occurred in Spain in 2018: the 8M feminist strike and the motion of censure by former President Rajoy have favored that the government pay more attention to gender equality and, therefore, increase the number of publications regarding this theme. **Discussion and results:** around four axes (interaction and engagement, the themes, the representation of women in the Instagram account @exterior.maec and audiovisual content, hashtags, and emojis). The level of interaction of the MAEC Instagram account is low (0.33%). The categories where a higher number of publications were found that include the gender issue include the use of inclusive language; The use of unique photographs is preferred, before carousels (24.66%) or videos (12%) and in the period and sample analyzed, it should be noted that in 74% of the audiovisual content related to gender equality found in the account From MAEC's Instagram it is possible to find a female presence. **Conclusions:** Although in the last couple of years a considerable increase in publications related to gender equality can be observed on the MAEC Instagram account, they are still few and mainly focus on celebrating or commemorating

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around key dates such as it is International Women's Day or International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender Equality - Digital Diplomacy - SDGs2030 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation - Feminism - 8-M - Spanish Government.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** El presente estudio de carácter cualitativo y cuantitativo busca identificar las acciones que lleva a cabo el gobierno de España para fomentar y promover la igualdad de género en el propio país y alrededor del mundo. **Metodología:** Se lleva a cabo un análisis de contenido de las publicaciones encontradas en la cuenta de Instagram del MAEC (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación) descubriendo así la importancia que le otorgan las instituciones españolas a este tema. Para lograr ese objetivo, se han analizado los 861 *posts* de Instagram publicadas a partir del 11 de marzo de 2016, fecha de la en la que aparece la primera publicación, hasta el 30 de noviembre de 2019. La hipótesis central es que dos sucesos importantes ocurridos en España en el 2018 -la huelga feminista del 8M y la moción de censura del expresidente Rajoy- han favorecido que el gobierno preste más atención a la igualdad de género y por tanto, aumente el número de publicaciones respecto a esta temática. **Discusión y resultados:** en torno a cuatro ejes (interacción y *engagement*, las temáticas, la representación de la mujer en la cuenta de instagram @exteriores.maec y contenido audiovisual, hashtags y emojis). El nivel de interacción que tiene la cuenta de Instagram del MAEC es bajo (0,33%). Las categorías donde se encontró un número más alto de publicaciones que incluyen la cuestión de género encontramos la utilización del lenguaje inclusivo. Se prima el uso fotografías únicas, antes que carruseles (24,66%) o vídeos (12%) y en el periodo y muestra analizada, cabe destacar que en un 74% del contenido audiovisual relacionado con la igualdad de género encontrado en la cuenta de Instagram del MAEC es posible encontrar presencia femenina. **Conclusiones:** Aunque en el último par de años se puede observar un aumento considerable en las publicaciones relacionadas con la igualdad de género en la cuenta de Instagram del MAEC, siguen siendo pocas y se centran principalmente en la celebración o conmemoración alrededor de fechas clave como es el Día Internacional de la Mujer o el Día Internacional de la Eliminación de la Violencia contra la Mujer.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Igualdad de género - Diplomacia digital; ODS2030 - Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación - Feminismo -8-M - Gobierno de España.

Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

## ANÁLISE DAS PUBLICAÇÕES DA CONTA DO INSTAGRAM DO MINISTÉRIO DE RELAÇÕES EXTERIORES E COOPERAÇÃO, DESDE UMA PERSPECTIVA DE GÊNERO

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** O presente estudo de caráter qualitativo e quantitativo procura identificar as ações que são feitas pelo governo da Espanha para fomentar e promover a igualdade de gênero no próprio país e ao redor do mundo. **Metodologia:** Foi feita uma análise de conteúdo das publicações encontradas na conta do Instagram do MAEC (Ministério de Relações Exteriores e Cooperação pelas siglas em espanhol) descobrindo assim a importância que lhes são dadas as instituições espanholas a este tema. Para atingir este objetivo, foram analisados os 861 *posts* do Instagram publicados a partir do 11 de março de 2016, data na que aparece a primeira publicação, até 30 de novembro de 2019. A hipótese central é que dois acontecimentos importantes acontecidos na Espanha no ano de 2018 –a greve feminista de 8M e a moção de censura do expresidente Rajoy– favoreceram que o governo desse mais atenção referente a igualdade de gênero e como resultado temos um aumento no número de publicações sobre esta temática. **Discussão e resultados:** ao redor de quatro eixos (interação e engagement, temáticas, representação da mulher na conta de instagram @exteriores.maec e conteúdo audiovisual, hashtags e emojis). O nível de interação que a conta do Instagram do MAEC tem é baixo (0,33%). As categorias onde existe um número maior de publicações que inclui a discussão de gênero encontramos a utilização da linguagem inclusiva. Se dá prioridade ao uso de fotografias únicas, e não a carrossel (24,66%) ou vídeos (12%) e no período e amostra analisada, é importante destacar que 74% do conteúdo audiovisual relacionado com a igualdade de gênero encontrado na conta do Instagram do MAEC pode-se observar um aumento considerável nas publicações relacionadas com a igualdade de gênero, continua sendo uma pequena quantidade e estão principalmente relacionadas às celebrações e comemorações de datas importantes como o Dia Internacional da Mulher ou o Dia Internacional do combate a Violência contra a Mulher.

## PALAVRAS CHAVE

Igualdade de gênero - Diplomacia digital; ODS2030 - Ministério de Relações Exteriores e Cooperação - Feminismo -8-M - Governo de Espanha.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1915, World War I was in full swing when a group of different organizations and more than 15,000 women from twelve countries of the world carried out, despite the obstacles that mobilization at that time posed, the International Congress of Women in Hague. The main objective of this meeting was to propose initiatives for the establishment of a lasting peace; "A change of course in international politics with agreements between governments and international organizations that establish the principles necessary for the maintenance of peace" (Rabaneda and Martínez, 2015, p.195). As a result of what was proposed in the congress, a series of proposals were generated aimed mainly at establishing world peace, but which already included current concepts such as international cooperation, solidarity, arbitration and conciliation, education in the culture of peace, the inclusion of women in international decision-making, and general disarmament. And they even thought of creating an Association of Nations. Unfortunately, none of these proposals was heard at the time by the men who were in power, who branded the meeting of sisterhoods of pacifists and dreamers. However, the resolutions adopted by the women gathered in this initiative have been the basis of modern international relations (Tickner, 2018, p.223) and even inspired the American president, Woodrow Wilson, in the elaboration of the famous "Fourteen Points" that he presented to the United States Congress in January 1918 (Rabaneda and Martínez, 2015, p.197).

This article raises the use of social networks as a place and opportunity to represent the feminist movement of recent years, specifically from the point of view of diplomacy and foreign policy because that is where an important part of the life of modern societies is developed. As Finkel and Gordo point out, (2019, p.27) "digital technologies and environments can create an opportunity to redefine the functioning of society and advance in social and economic equality". These networks in general - and Instagram in particular, as regards this research - are, of course, the new spaces where the social identity of people and nations is built (Villaplana and León, 2019, p.290). For this reason, and how could it be otherwise, foreign ministries also make use of the advantages offered by these networks to carry out the tasks of diplomacy. This new practice is known as digital diplomacy.

In this sense, it is pertinent to research the content that is published on social networks regarding roles, speaking time, or simply the references or shots that are dedicated to the presence of women in international relations.

## **2. STATE OF THE ISSUE**

If the previous paragraphs help us to account for the -little recognized, let's admit- influence of women in major decisions on international politics at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, let us now briefly look at the academic perspective on feminist theories in the field of international relations from different perspectives: liberal feminism, radical feminism, and postmodern feminism. Lozano Vázquez (2012, p.147) places the -general- objective of feminism in international relations in the challenge of the "realistic and liberal paradigm that argues and justifies the operation of an international system that keeps men in a superior position and

advantage over women, in a *status quo* that is absolutely disadvantageous and oppressive”. Other authors, such as Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement (2019, p.7), define feminist foreign policy as:

The politics of a state that defines its interactions with other states and movements in a way that prioritizes gender equality and enshrines the human rights of women and other traditionally marginalized groups, sets aside significant resources to achieve this vision, and seeks to disrupt patriarchal structures throughout all its levels of influence (aid, trade, defense, and diplomacy), with its implementation informed by the voices of feminist activists, groups, and movements.

As noted, there are three different perspectives in the academic study of feminism and international relations. The first perspective, liberal feminism, dates back to the 60s and 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Marchand, 2016, p.64), and proposed that women were equal to men, for which they criticized the under-representation of women in international relations, “from the liberal-feminist point of view, equal rights are reduced to both sexes having the same amount of public offices” (Locher, 1998, p.6).

Second, radical feminism starts from the assumption of the difference between the sexes; In other words, it is based on dualistic principles (man-woman, good-bad, aggressive-peaceful, empathy-apathy, etc.) and includes the concept of patriarchal society as a system that “defines relations and mechanisms of domination and subordination in different contexts, such as politics, the market, and everyday life” (Marchand, 2016, p.64) and gave superiority to feminine qualities to carry out international relations (Locher, 1998, p.7).

And lastly, postmodern feminism substitutes the concept of man-woman for that of “gender” based on “the social construction of the differences between men and women” (Villarroel, 2007, p.72). In this way it would be possible to reconfigure the architectural pillars of societies and, according to Locher, (1998, p.11): “a gender-sensitive perspective goes much deeper, it seeks to place in its focal point those norms and ideas on which the relationship between the sexes is based, to link them with the actions of international actors”.

Since 2000, the United Nations (UN) has included the promotion of gender equality among its development goals; these goals have been ratified by 189 countries (2000) and 193 countries (2015). Unfortunately, according to the *Equal Measures 2030* report, no state will reach *goal 5* on the date set. And at the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the performance and worth of women in the practice of global foreign policy are taken seriously; since, historically, international relations have been carried out from a male perspective because they were mainly directed by men. And although the battle is not won, there are some sectors in a few countries such as Sweden (Stevens, 2018) or Canada (Robertson, 2017) where great advances can be seen in fields that have been traditionally considered patriarchal throughout history: feminist diplomacy or the practice of a feminist foreign policy, which promotes the representation of women in high diplomatic and governmental

positions, the allocation of economic resources to the protection of the rights of girls and women, and “human dignity”, which also includes concepts such as access to health, education, employment, property, or climate action (Thompson and Clement, pp. 2-3).

Eliminating the gender gap is an issue that worries and occupies the societies of the modern world. Specifically, Spain has become a worldwide benchmark for the feminist movement, where on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, for the first time, a national feminist strike was carried out in commemoration of International Women's Day. It was repeated on the same date in 2019. It should be remembered that among the multiple demands of this movement is the parity of labor rights between men and women, the elimination of the glass ceiling in all social areas, and the eradication of sexist violence, among others.

According to the World Economic Forum report “*The Global Gender Gap 2018*”, Spain ranks 29<sup>th</sup> out of 149 countries analyzed regarding gender parity. For its part, the “*Equal Measures 2030*” report placed it in 23<sup>rd</sup> place in the 2018 and 2019 editions. Finally, the “*European Gender Equality Ranking*” places it in 8<sup>th</sup> place out of 36 countries that make up the EU.

Regarding female representation in the Spanish government, both in the parliament and in the Senate, there are approximately 40% of women occupying seats (Tena, 2018), besides, the current government of Pedro Sánchez has incorporated eleven female ministers, reaching 48% of female presence.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

This article aims to identify the construction of the feminist discourse by the MAEC on its Instagram account (@exteriores.maec). The main objective of the research is to discover how the MAEC represents gender equality on its Instagram account, recognizing the actions of the foreign policy practice shown by the Spanish government to achieve gender equality and end gender-based violence.

Besides, it seeks to observe the role of women in political decision-making, as well as their participation in international relations through governmental bodies or international organizations. And it is also essential to distinguish the main representations made of women on the MAEC's Instagram account based on different categories proposed by the authors and related to the level of gender inclusion (See graph 1).

The **central hypothesis** from which this article is based is that two important events that occurred in Spain in 2018, the celebration of March 8<sup>th</sup> and the coming to power of the socialist government, have led to greater government attention to gender equality which has, among many other consequences, the increase in the number of publications with a female presence.

These two events mentioned in the previous paragraph deserve to be briefly explained to contextualize the current research. On the one hand, a purple tide flooded the Spanish streets on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, on the occasion of the fight for the equality of men and women and the eradication of violence against women, coinciding with the celebration of International Women's Day. And on the other, the motion of censure against Mariano Rajoy that took place in mid-2018, allowed the socialist Pedro Sánchez to access the presidential chair. As a direct consequence, the Spanish government acquired a feminist label, granting top-ranking positions in the ministries to a majority of women. Among the novelties, the Ministry of Equality was also reinstated.

We intend to answer the following research questions:

- What has been the MAEC's discourse, regarding feminism, since the creation of its Instagram account?
- When is there information related to gender equality?
- What are the topics that lead to the appearance of content related to gender on the MAEC's Instagram account?
- How are women represented on the MAEC's Instagram account?
- What is the content on Instagram, referring to gender equality, that achieves greater *engagement*?

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This quantitative and qualitative study is based on a content analysis of the publications of the Instagram account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC by its acronym in Spanish) of Spain in which women assume a role. That is, the publications must deal with, represent, or show the participation of women in some aspect of Spanish foreign policy, either as an object or subject.

Out of a total population of 873 publications available on the MAEC's Instagram account -from March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the date of the first publication of the account, until November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019- date of the last publication available at the ending of Data collection, publications in which the topic of the post was related to feminism, women, and gender equality were selected.

For the elaboration of the content analysis, an analysis sheet has been carried out with fourteen categories that correspond to the main topics that the MAEC's Instagram profile deals with related to gender parity:

1. **2030 Agenda:** In 2012, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals were created, signed by 193 countries, including Spain. In them, it is agreed to take the necessary measures to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
2. **Art, Science, Culture, and Sports:** those publications that show outstanding women in any of these fields.

3. **International Cooperation:** those publications related to the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.
4. **Human Rights:** conferences, projects, commissions in favor of Human Rights.
5. **International Women's Day:** those publications related to the commemoration of March 8<sup>th</sup>.
6. **Exhibitions/Meetings:** publications related to inaugurations, performances, events.
7. **Gender Equality:** forums, celebrations that advocate for it.
8. **Inclusive Language:** especially, regarding the copy of the post. For this, the Fundéu recommendations have been followed, available at: <https://www.fundeu.es/lenguaje-inclusivo/>
9. **Women in government:** posts in which women in government are represented.
10. **UN:** meetings and bilateral encounters with this organization.
11. **Recognition:** awards given to women.
12. **Work of the MAEC:** visibility of the work in favor of gender equality carried out by the MAEC.
13. **Gender-Based Violence:** those publications that make visible the International Day Against Gender Violence.
14. **State Visits:** Spanish government female ministers on State trips or their counterparts from other countries visiting Spain, but also first ladies from other countries and international female leaders.

In total, 151 publications were obtained with the necessary characteristics to proceed with their analysis. Based on this content analysis, a qualitative study was carried out in which the roles that women play in these publications were observed and they are:

1. Vulnerable women or girls.
2. Working women.
3. Women entrepreneurs or women receiving higher education or training.
4. Vase woman.
5. Female artists or scientists.
6. Women empowering themselves.
7. Women in decision making.

The study is completed with an analysis of the type of format present in MAEC's publications, that is, whether it is photographs, videos, or carousels; and on the other hand, if in that content women are represented and the relationship of the appearance of women versus men and how women are represented. The work has been complemented with an analysis of the hashtags and emojis that are used in these publications, to discover what relationship they have with our object of study.

Finally, in the quantitative part, the *engagement* of the publications with the audience is compared by counting the *likes* and *comments*, as well as the interaction of



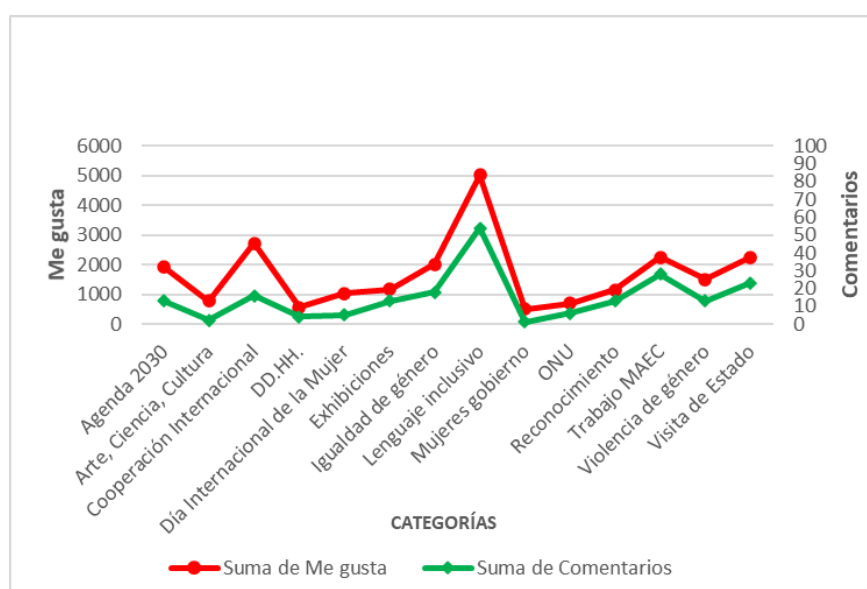
the publications. This part of the research has been done with the help of the *FanPage* platform.

## 5. RESULTS

To illustrate the results of the content analysis, the graphs produced from the data extracted from the contents of the publications of the MAEC's Instagram account are presented below, which will be discussed taking into account the most interesting aspects.

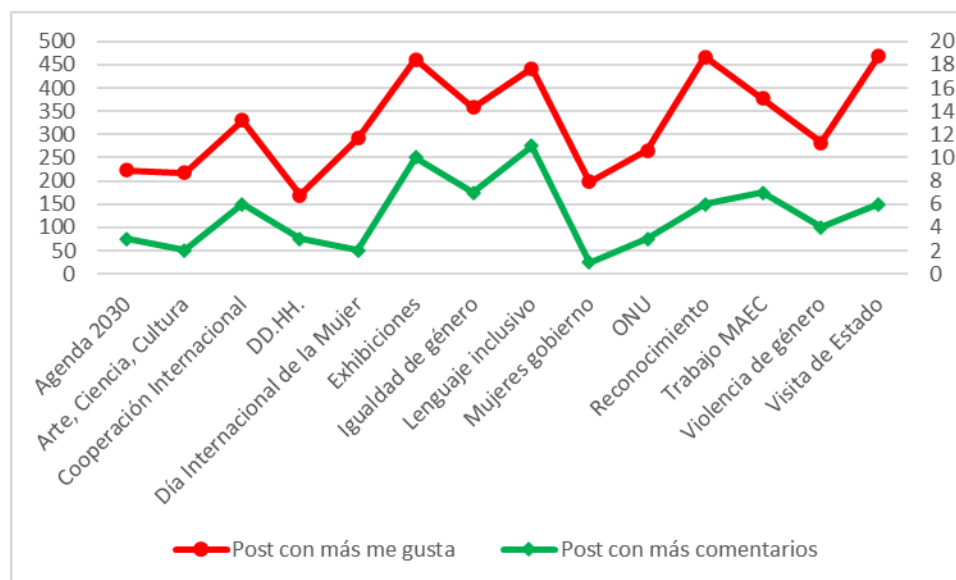
### 5.1. Interaction and engagement

The following graph shows the sum of *likes* and *comments* based on the fourteen categories of content analysis mentioned in the methodology section:



**Graph 1.** *Sum of interaction with users by topic.*

**Source:** Self-made



**Graph 2.** Posts with more interaction by topic.

**Source:** Self-made

To carry out the calculation of interaction with users, the classic formula has been used:

$$\frac{\text{núm. likes} + \text{núm. comentarios}}{\text{núm. de seguidores}}$$

According to the calculation made, the level of interaction, or percentage of the audience that likes or comments on their publications, that the MAEC's Instagram account has is low. It only reaches 0.33% of *engagement*, while the average interaction for accounts with less than 1 million followers is 2.97%<sup>1</sup>. The MAEC has 23.8K followers as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

However, this study tries to find out which content related to gender equality is of most interest to users who follow the MAEC's account, either because they are mostly commented on or because they have a greater number of *likes* (n). In this sense, we find that the posts with the highest number of *likes* correspond to the Inclusive Language category (n=5,030, a=209.58); secondly, there is the category of International Cooperation (n=2,724, a=118.43); and the third position is occupied by publications related to the Work carried out in the MAEC (n=2,254, a=187.83). The categories with the best average (a) of likes are Recognitions (n=1,157, a=289.25); Inclusive language (n=5,030, a=209.58); and finally, State Visits (n=2,248, a=204.36). It is possible, given these data, that the category that has the most engagement or the best reception among followers of the MAEC's account are those analyzed publications related to the Inclusive Language category.

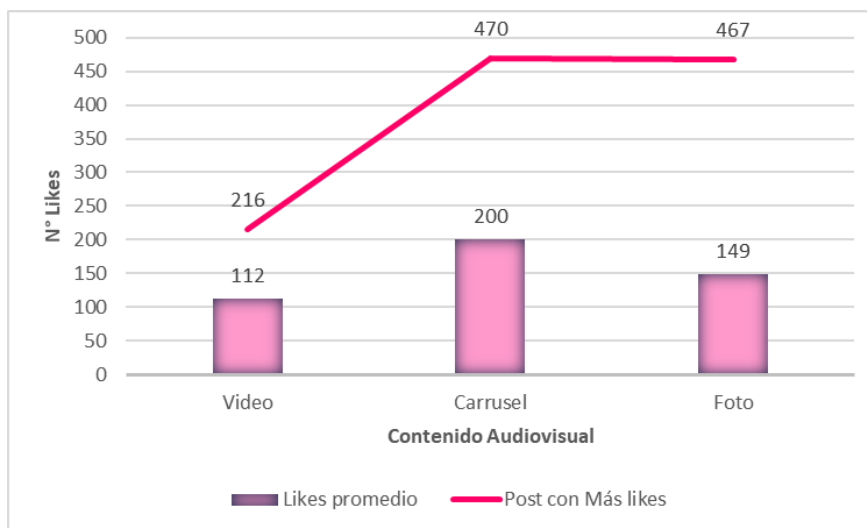
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scrunch.com/blog/what-is-a-good-engagement-rate-on-instagram>

**Table 1.** Categories with a greater number of likes in the MAEC's Instagram account in the analyzed period.

Topic	Number of posts	Number (n) of likes
1. Inclusive language	24	4,727
2. International cooperation	23	2,724
3. MAEC's work	12	2,254
4. Gender equality	15	2,012
5. 2030 Agenda	15	1,787

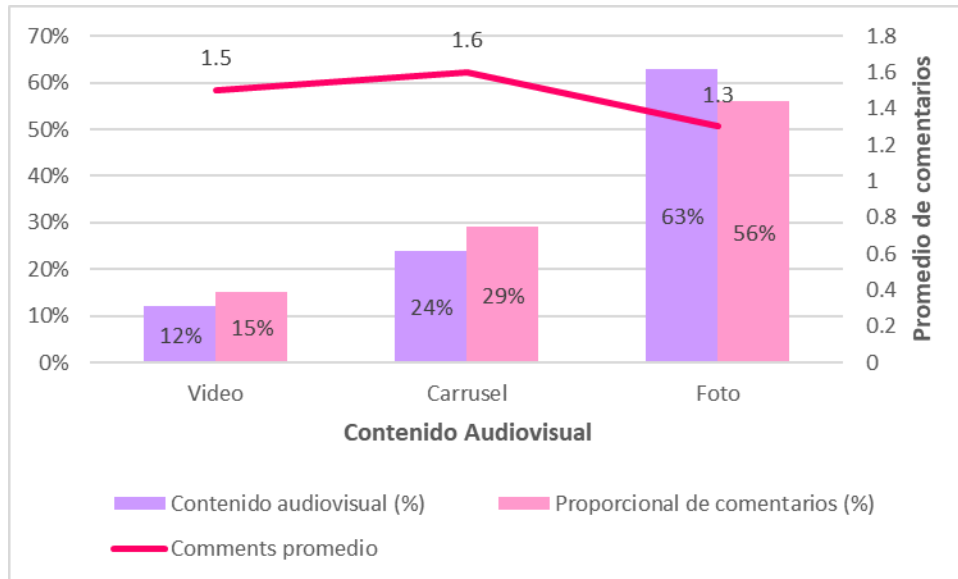
Source: Self-made

The relationship between the audiovisual material used for the publications and the interaction with the public indicates that the *posts* that include photographs or *carousels* have a greater interaction in terms of *likes* (graph 3). While the publications with *carousels* are the ones that receive the highest proportional and average percentage of comments (graph 4).



**Graph 3.** Relationship of likes with audiovisual content.

Source: Self-made



**Graph 4.** Relationship of comments with audiovisual content.

**Source:** self-made.

In fact, and to illustrate the aforementioned, the publication that obtained the most likes (470) and a relatively high number of comments (6), dates from March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and corresponds to the state visit of the former president and the former first lady of Argentina to Spain, it uses a *carousel* and the representation it makes of women is of a “*vase women*” since it shows the Queen of Spain and the wife of Mauricio Macri as mere companions (image 1).



**Image 1.** MAEC's publication with the highest number of likes, in the analyzed period.

**Source:** @exteriores.maec

On the other hand, the publication that caused the most conversation among the audience was the celebration of the Valencia Community Day (October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019) with 11 comments and 263 likes. This publication is a photograph of *La Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències* wrapped in a sunset (image 2). In general, the community of followers alluded to the celebration and commented on the aesthetics of the image. This content shows an inclusive language in the text that accompanies the image by

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congratulating all the Valencian men and women in their day in both Spanish and Valencian. Therefore, it is included within the Inclusive Language analysis category.



**Image 2.** MAEC's publication that has caused the most conversation in the analyzed period.

**Source:** [@exteriores.maec](https://www.instagram.com/exteriores.maec)

In the case of posts in video format, the publication with the most likes (216) and comments (5) in the analyzed period is the one that took place on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. This publication deals with the evolution of women in the diplomatic career and therefore belongs to the analysis category "MAEC's work".



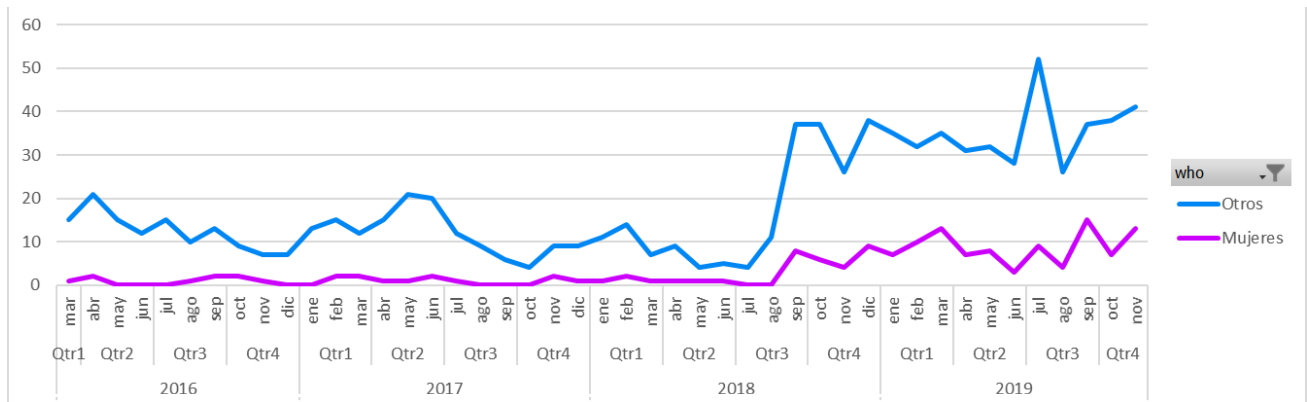
**Image 3.** MAEC's publication in video format with the most likes and comments in the analyzed period.

**Source:** [@exteriores.maec](https://www.instagram.com/exteriores.maec)

## 6. DISCUSSION

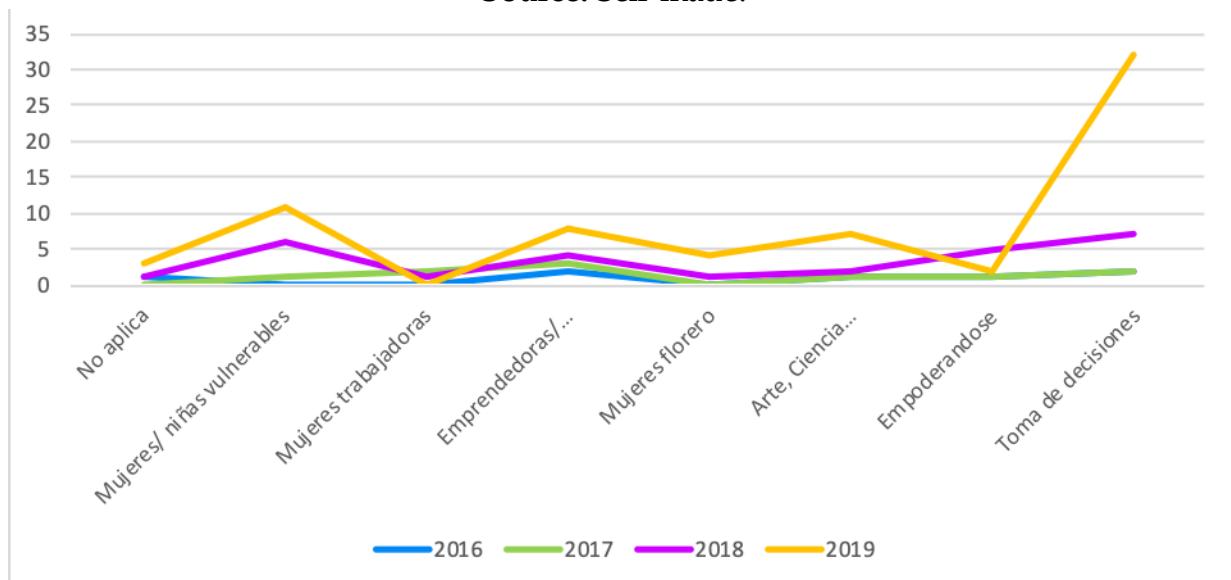
### 6.1. The representation of women in @exteriores.maec

Graph 5 shows us a gradual increase in publications referring to the representation of women on the MAEC's Instagram account:



**Graph 5.** Representation of genders in the MAEC's Instagram account.

Source: Self-made.



**Graph 6.** Role of women in MAEC's publications.

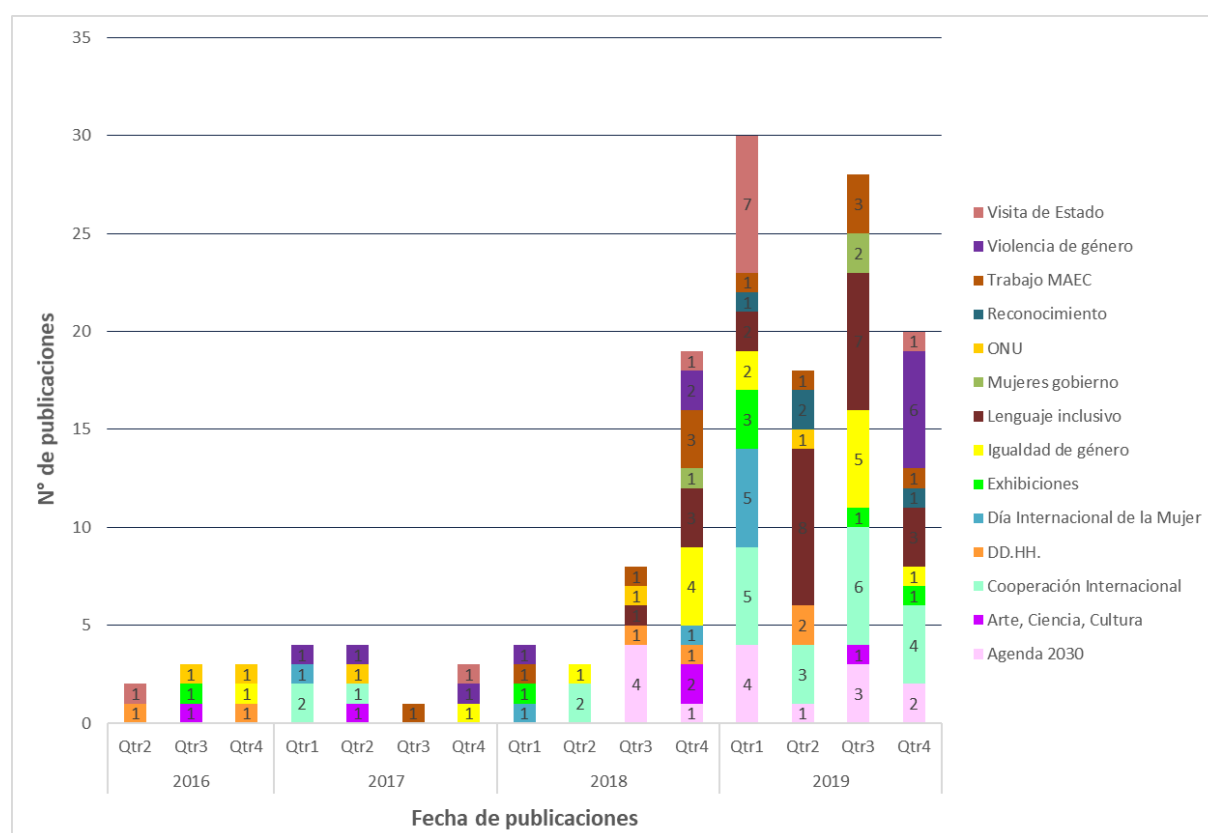
Source: Self-made

Graph 6 shows us the role of women in the MAEC's Instagram account in relation to the year of publication, since, remember that this study extends from 2016 to 2019. It is noteworthy that the content of the MAEC's Instagram account mostly represents an empowered woman, generally in positions of power and with active participation in the practice of Spanish foreign policy. The image of the woman who makes decisions is observed, especially from 2018, with a considerable increase in 2019, as can be seen in the previous graph. As speculated in the formulation of the hypothesis, this is due to the governmental change that took place in Spain, which established gender parity in high government positions.

Furthermore, it is possible to perceive how women are increasingly occupying high positions in governments and international organizations.

Secondly, paradoxically there is also an increase in publications that show women and girls as vulnerable in 2019, going from zero publications in 2016 to eleven in 2019. Finally, the least represented roles in the MAEC's account are those identified as "vase woman" - only five publications in the selected period- and working woman, with a total of three publications - two of them in 2017 and only one in 2018.

## 6.2. Topics



**Graph 7.** Topics covered by the MAEC's profile about gender equality.

**Source:** Self-made

Leading the categories where a higher number of publications that include the gender issue was found, we find the use of an "Inclusive language"; this is generally latent in regional festivities (eg, Madrid, Saint Jordi, or Castilla y León Community Day). In these publications, audiovisual content is not generally shown representing the population or high officials, so the inclusion is latent only in the *copy* of the post.

Secondly, there is the content referring to "International Cooperation", this category can be included within one of the basic pillars of traditional diplomacy: "Country promotion", since in these publications the government of Spain, through



the MAEC, promotes the international aid programs in which it participates, either with funds, with qualified personnel or with initiatives to improve the lives of women and girls around the world, specifically in countries with scarce resources or in conflict.

It is observed that the Instagram account of the MAEC emphasizes its joint participation with international organizations such as the UN or UNWomen through the programs of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.

The publications of the MAEC during the last two years, accentuate the commitment made by Spain in 2015 to meet the 2030 Development Goals, among which is to achieve gender equality. According to the UN 2030 Agenda, for the year 2030 the following is sought:

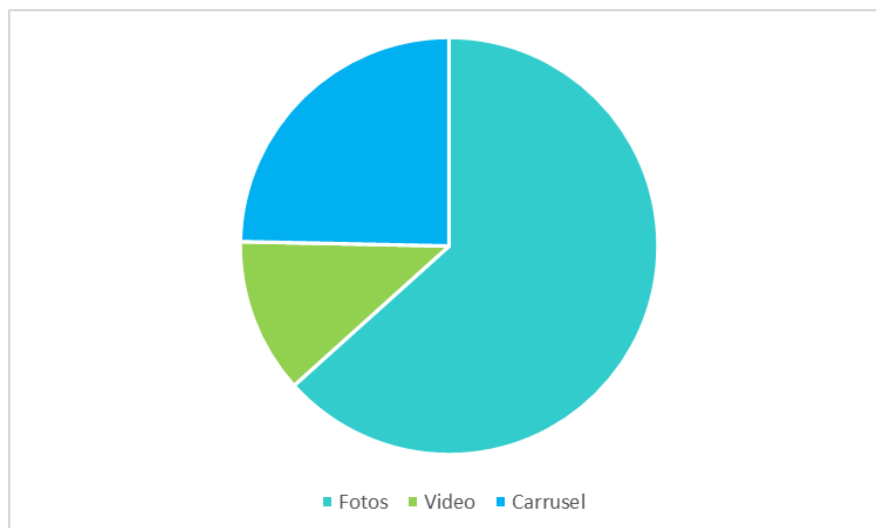
Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, but it is also crucial for sustainable development. It has been shown time and again that empowering women and girls has a multiplier effect and helps promote economic growth and development globally (SDG2030, 2015).

In the first quarter of the last year (2019), the contents related to "International Women's Day" increased considerably. It was already predicted that the 2018 National Strike was going to be repeated that day and was going to have a great media and social impact. The same happened with the category "Gender violence", publications aimed at eliminating gender violence or helping victims of it anywhere in the world through the network of consulates of the MAEC shot up around November 25<sup>th</sup> of that year on the occasion of the World Day Against Gender Violence.

### **6.3. Audiovisual content, hashtags, and emojis**

Regarding the audiovisual content that the MAEC uses for the representation of gender, it is clear that the use of unique photographs (63.33%) prevails, before carousels (24.66%) or videos (12%) as can be seen in graph 8:





**Graph 8.** *Audiovisual content in the MAEC's account.*  
**Source:** Self-made

In the period and the sample analyzed, it should be noted that in 74% (111 publications) of the audiovisual content related to gender equality found in the MAEC's Instagram account, it is possible to find a female presence. On the other hand, in 47% of the cases, within the pieces, there are more women than men compared to 21% where there are more men than women. There are 32% of publications in which we can affirm that the presence of men and women is equitable. However, people appear in only 13%, in the rest the use of landscape photographs or infographics has been identified. On the other hand, it is not possible to understand communication on social networks without the use of *hashtags*. These sets of words linked by the pound sign (#) allow the creation of communities around a current topic (Highfield et Leaver, 2015: 9), and at the same time, increase the visibility of the content that includes them. The MAEC is aware of this, so it uses them in most of its posts. Only in two of the publications analyzed no hashtags were found (January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018). The 10 hashtags most used by the MAEC on its Instagram in the selected period are: #España (42); #Mujer (25); #Agenda2030 (23); #ODS (23); #SomosCooperación (14); #Cooperación (11); Igualdad (10); IgualdadDeGénero (10); #CooperaciónEspañola (9); #AECID (9).

**#IgualdadDeGénero- #Agenda2030- #SomosCooperación-  
#TúPuedesSerDiplomática**



**Image 4.** Cloud of hashtags used by the MAEC on its Instagram account and related to gender equality.

**Source:** Self-made

Emoticons or *emojis* are digital graphics that have become icons of expressions that help demonstrate emotions, feelings, situations, and even mark points. *Emojis* are a graphic element widely used in social networks. The MAEC uses them in 70% of its publications on its Instagram account, according to the results of this research. The top 10 of those found in the analysis of publications related to gender equality can be seen in image 5:



**Image 5.** Top 10 of the most used emojis in publications related to gender equality in the present study.

**Source:** Self-made.

To finish the results section, it is considered important to show an example of an examined publication, so that the reader understands how the different elements of the *copy* are used: *hashtags*, *tags*, *emoticons*, and audiovisual content. Image 6 shows a very complete example. In the image, you can see the representation of women: gender equality is shown, a woman with high political participation is projected making decisions that affect the international relations of the moment. This is corroborated in the *copy*, where it is mentioned, with the help of *hashtags*, that this woman is the Director-General of Unesco.

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**Image 6.** Publication of the MAEC that shows the Director-General of Unesco together with the Minister of Culture, José Guirao.

**Source:** @exteriores.maec

The goal of using *emojis* is to make the textual content more visual and attract the attention of users; For example, when the publication refers to aspects that affect the world, the planet is used, to talk about Spain, they use the flag, when it comes to culture, they institutionalize it with an emoji of a Greek building, and to give credit to the published photograph, the camera with the flash is used.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this article, a main objective was proposed that could only be achieved by carrying out a detailed study of the MAEC's publications on its Instagram account. This objective was none other than to discover how the MAEC represents gender equality on its Instagram account.

We can conclude that the representation of women in said Instagram account is based on the categories that have also been included in this work and which are:

1. Vulnerable women or girls.
2. Working women.
3. Women entrepreneurs or women receiving higher education or training.
4. Vase woman.
5. Female artists or scientists.
6. Women empowering themselves.
7. Women in decision making.

In this sense, it is positive to mention that the trend of the posts as of 2019 is, without a doubt, to show **women empowering themselves** and in **decision-making** situations. Regarding this last category, it must be said that the publications during the previous years are scarce, even nil in 2016. However, in 2019 the number of posts that fit into the category of "**vase woman**" is also significantly high. In fact, it has

already been seen that the post with the highest number of likes (470) and comments (6) is precisely the one that shows Mauricio Macri's visit to Spain, where his wife and Queen Letizia appear as mere companions (see image 1). This type of publication, which, as we see, has a great acceptance among the community of followers of @exteriores.maec, should be rethought since it contributes to perpetuating the stereotype of the president's wife as a mere ornament.

It is now time to collect the hypothesis raised in section two of this work to confirm or refute it. Let us remember that this hypothesis was: two important events that occurred in Spain in 2018, the celebration of March 8<sup>th</sup> and the coming to power of the socialist government, have led to greater government attention to gender equality which has, among many other consequences, the increase in the number of publications with a female presence. This hypothesis is confirmed if we look at the following table:

**Table 2.** *The number of publications with a female presence on MAEC's Instagram in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.*

Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019
9	12	34	96

**Source:** Self-made.

Precisely, in 2018 publications increased by 183.33% compared to the previous year. And this increase is maintained from 2018 to 2019, with an increase in publications with a female presence of 182.35%.

It is clear that since the arrival of the socialist government, publications with a female presence have increased. However, the hypothesis also mentions that the celebration of 8-M in 2018, International Women's Day, has in some way contributed to the increase in publications with a female presence in the Instagram account that is the subject of study. Well, in 2016 there was no reference to this day because the account did not exist; Let's see what happened in the years 2017, 2018, and 2019. First, in 2017 this day is commemorated with a single publication, which alludes to the 2030 Agenda and the commitment of the International Community to the achievement of gender equality.

In 2018, a publication is also made celebrating the very important date. In this case, it was also chosen to highlight the objectives of equality, empowerment, and elimination of discrimination against women. Let us remember that on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the motion of censure that ended with the coming to power of the socialist government had not taken place.

Finally, in 2019 it is possible to verify that the publications that celebrate International Women's Day increase significantly, in fact, the commemoration of this day begins a week before with a publication that inaugurates the #tiempodemujeres hashtag and is dedicated to women related to diplomacy. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, we found three publications related to 8-M. The first of the publications on this day announced the program of commemorative activities; the second shows the presentation of the said program of activities by Minister Josep Borrell together with prominent women of culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself. And the third and last post on March 4<sup>th</sup> is a video teaser of testimonies of diplomatic women. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, the publication that celebrates this day tries to remember that gender equality is SDG5 and the support that the MAEC makes of the United Nations Agenda for Women, Peace, and Security.

Indeed, as we can see, since the celebration of 8-M in 2018, the MAEC's publications on Instagram about gender equality have increased.

It is also important to mention that the publications related to gender equality in the MAEC's account revolve around three main axes: cooperation programs in which the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation collaborates in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America; measures adopted by the government to comply with the SDG2030; and, finally, the incorporation of women in government and diplomatic positions in Spain.

It is concluded that, although in the last year a considerable increase in publications related to gender equality can be observed in the MAEC's Instagram account, they are still few and focus on the celebration or commemoration of key dates such as International Women's Day or the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

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