

# Advancing gender equality in political decision-making

## Good Practices



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# Contents

- Introduction..... 4**
- 1. Background: women in political decision-making ..... 6**
- 2. Methodology: mapping and assessing good practices ..... 10**
- 3. The advancement of women in politics: evidence from the selected examples of good practices ..... 14**
  - 3.1. Competence development ..... 15
  - 3.2. Awareness raising ..... 16
  - 3.3. Advocacy and political tools on gender balance ..... 17
- 4. Promoting gender balance in politics — the way forward..... 20**
- 5. Conclusions ..... 24**
- Annex I**
  - Assessment criteria ..... 26**
- Annex II**
  - Selected examples of good practices ..... 32**

# Introduction



# Introduction

Under the framework of EIGE's work on gender mainstreaming, a study on women in power and decision-making was carried out by a consortium composed of ÖSB Consulting GmbH and the Queen's University Belfast.

The objective of the project was to develop a comprehensive methodology and a set of criteria to assess and identify examples of good practices in the field of women in political decision-making.

EIGE's approach is based on the identification and assessment of good practices as a fundamental tool for gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality across the European Union.

The examples of good practices presented in this publication have been identified and assessed by experts and stakeholders. This process was carried out in line with EIGE's approach on good practices. Thirty examples of good practices with the potential to advance women's political participation were presented and discussed among participants.

There are large differences between countries when it comes to legal and other measures to advance women, reflecting different gender policy traditions. Thus, it is clear that there is no one 'best' way to improve gender balance and increase women's participation in political decision-making. The

purpose is therefore not simply to imitate the examples of good practices, but to use them as an inspiration for adaptation to different contexts. Sharing experience and highlighting effective initiatives facilitate creative thinking; the development of new ideas can motivate others to take further actions.

Chapter 1 of this report provides a short introduction to the current situation in the European Union when it comes to women in political decision-making. The following chapter describes the methodology used for mapping and selecting the examples of good practices, while chapter 3 presents the main outcomes of the study and highlights the findings stemming from these examples. Chapter 4 focuses on the ways to further promote gender balance in politics. The final chapter provides key conclusions linked to the consultation meeting debate.

Examples of good practices can support Member State governments in fulfilling their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action declaration:

*'We are convinced that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making processes and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace' (1).*

1 Fourth World Conference on Women — Beijing Declaration, 1995: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>.

# 1. Background: women in political decision-making



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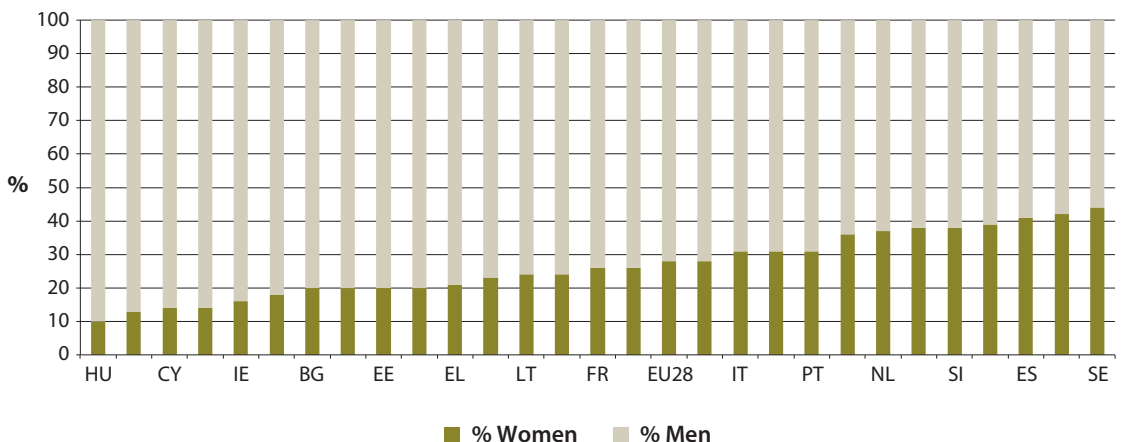
Women make up 51.2 % of the population of the European Union, yet do not share the distribution of political, economic and social resources of power equally with men. In political decision-making, women's under-representation remains stubbornly persistent. Over the past 10 years, the overall proportion of women in the EU Member States' national parliaments increased by only a moderate 6 %, reaching 28 % in 2014. In 2009, eight (29 %) Member States had 30 % women in the parliament; by 2014 this number had increased to only 11 Member States (39 %). However, six Member States had fewer than 20 % women parliamentarians in 2014 (IE, CY, LV, HU, MT, RO) (Figure 1).

The increase in women's participation in political decision-making recorded by Member States has been assisted by special measures of either a voluntary or legislative kind. Of the 11 Member States with a critical mass (30 %) or more of women parliamentarians, five have legislated for candidate gender quotas (BE, ES, IT, PT, SI, at regional level),

while the remaining have strong voluntary quota measures implemented by political parties. These countries are influenced by a political culture which is sensitive to gender equality issues (DK, DE, NL, AT, FI, SE).

When voluntary measures are ineffective in delivering an improved gender ratio in parliament, attention turns to securing the adoption of special measures such as legal gender quotas. Eight EU Member States had adopted quota legislation for national elections by 2014. The operation of quotas can have a significant impact on women's share of political decision-making, as the example of Slovenia shows (see Figure 2). More modest, though discernible, increases in women's share of parliamentary seats occurred in Portugal, France, Poland and Greece after implementation of the candidate gender quota law. The quota provisions enacted in Ireland in 2012 are still to be implemented.

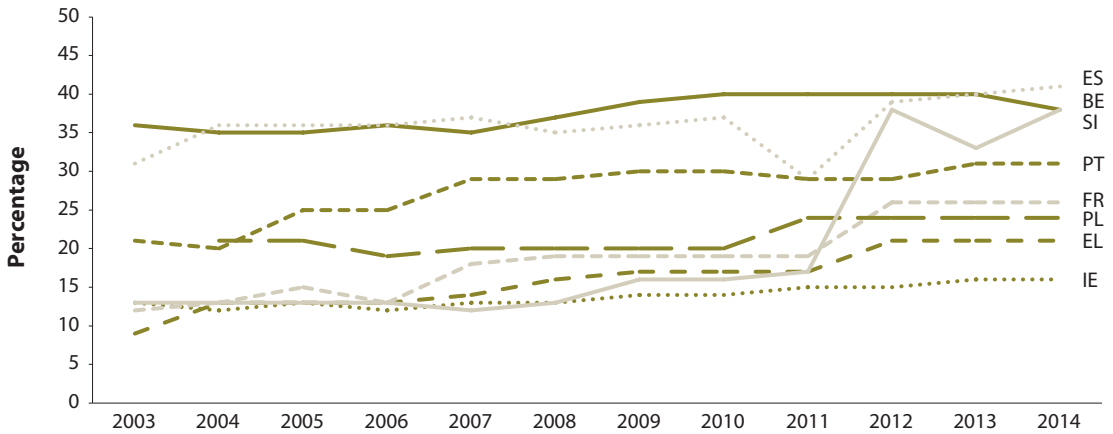
**Figure 1: Women and Men in Member State national parliaments, 2014**



Source: European Commission, DG JUST. Database on women and men in decision-making.



**Figure 2: Proportion of women in national/federal parliaments in countries with legislated quotas, 2003–2014**



Source: European Commission, DG JUST. Database on women and men in decision-making.

Electoral system rules can help or hinder women’s inclusion. Most Member States operate list electoral systems. Indeed, there is an on-going discussion as to whether ‘open list’ systems (where seats are allocated according to party share of the vote, but an individual ballot determines who gets to fill the seats) benefit women candidates, and on that point the evidence is still mixed. In other cases, the electoral system itself may make it difficult to have alternate female and male candidates on the ballot paper — for example, the single transferable vote used in Malta and Ireland, and the plurality system in the UK. More generally, though, it is the interaction of political culture, electoral system rules, and the presence or absence of measures (voluntary or legally required) to increase women’s presence among election candidates that shapes women’s political opportunities.

Women’s share of government positions also continues to remain unequal, at 27 %. The male-dominated nature of political life is further illustrated by the absence of women in party leadership positions across Europe: women comprise only 19 (13 %) of the 134 party leaders in the 28 Member States, and 15 Member States have even an all-male profile in terms of party leadership. While women fare somewhat better in holding deputy leadership positions (33 %), these roles are not necessarily the preparatory ground for assuming party leadership in the future.

The glass ceiling for women in political decision-making thus remains. While previously it was found in the realm of parliaments, it is now more at the level of top decision-making positions in parties and governments. Enabling women to secure these posts requires changes in perception among political elites (particularly parties) as well as society as a whole.

## 2. Methodology: mapping and assessing good practices



## 2. Methodology: mapping and assessing good practices

The starting point for the selection of good practices, in the context of this study, was to look at innovative policies in Member States which can be considered effective in increasing women's political participation and are perceived as having a high potential for transferability to other countries.

The thematic focus for the mapping exercise comprised:

### (1) Competence development

This includes capacity-building tools such as mentoring, training courses, seminars and the establishment of knowledge and expertise networks to support women's participation in political decision-making.

### (2) Awareness raising

This encompasses effective means of communication, helping to change attitudes, behaviours and beliefs and overcoming inequalities, e.g. campaigns to promote gender equality in elections or to disseminate information about women candidates.

### (3) Political tools on gender balance and advocacy

This thematic focus addresses voluntary and legislative quota measures, gender mainstreaming mechanisms within political assemblies and advocacy by civil society in favour of women's equal participation, and fighting discrimination.

It is important to remember that due to the scope and aim of the study, the expected examples of good practices are not intended to be 'the best examples in all EU Member States' but **effective and relevant solutions implemented** to promote gender equality in political decision-making and to increase women's participation in the whole political sphere.

In total, **62 examples of initiatives promoting women in political decision-making** were collected. A comprehensive screening and assessment process was carried out, consulting stakeholders and experts, in order to select 30 examples showing a high degree of innovation, effectiveness and transferability. Diversity was a further important principle for selection, aiming at presenting a wide variety of initiatives from different Member States with varying gender equality traditions.

In the next step, from these 30 examples with potential, 11 were identified as **EIGE's examples of good practices**. The selection was based on a set of criteria, taking into account EIGE's work on good practices, further developed and specified for the field of political decision-making. Three levels of criteria were applied (see Annex 1 for more detailed information):

- **general criteria** adopted by EIGE to assess tools, methods or practices with potential to improve gender equality;
- **common criteria** applicable to all good practices promoting women in political decision-making (cross-cutting through all three thematic focus areas);
- **specific criteria** applicable to a particular thematic focus area (competence development, awareness raising, political tools on gender balance, and advocacy).

Around 30 participants with extensive experience and broad knowledge in the field attended the consultation meeting and played an active role in validating the methodology, assessing the practices and selecting the final examples to be disseminated by EIGE and presented on its website. The participants included official representatives of ministries, parliaments, institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and other public bodies, experts from research centres and universities, representatives of political parties and women's networks, as well as members of NGOs and other relevant institutions in the field of gender equality.

### 3. The advancement of women in politics: evidence from the selected examples of good practices



# 3. The advancement of women in politics: evidence from the selected examples of good practices

As the examples of good practices selected at the consultation meeting show, promoting women in political decision-making positions requires a comprehensive — and often closely interlinked — set of tools, ranging from a more general awareness raising about the issue, to specific competence development for women candidates as well as advocacy and political tools, including legal measures.

## 3.1. Competence development

The cross-country analysis carried out in the framework of the study clearly demonstrates a variety of approaches to empower women and equip them with leadership skills. This includes the organisations that launch the programme, the political level which is in focus, the target groups and the tools applied.

**Organisations:** On the one hand, many big parties, as the gatekeepers for candidacy, often have training

and mentoring programmes for new politicians to prepare them for their work and to enhance their political skills including specific strategies to facilitate women's advancement. The example of the multifaceted approach taken by the Maltese Labour Party illustrates how different training and capacity development tools can be creatively combined. On the other hand, there is a considerable lack of initiative from political parties to address this issue and even where strategies are devised, formal and informal practices within the parties are still hindering progress. In this case NGOs and feminist associations step in, launching cross-party initiatives to fill the gap. The German, Czech and Portuguese mentoring programmes provide successful examples of this kind.

**Political level:** In many countries women remain particularly under-represented in local government and it is often the case that the stereotypes at the local community level are stronger. Action is needed to tackle this challenge and encourage more women to enter local politics. Mayoral and city

Selected examples of good practices	
International mentoring and training programmes (Fórum 50 %)	Czech Republic
Women Power Politics — Helene Weber Kolleg (European Academy for Women in Politics and Business)	Germany
Increasing women's political representation through capacity development (Maltese Labour Party)	Malta
From Woman to Woman (Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality)	Portugal

council positions equip women with the skills necessary for higher levels of public office and serve to launch careers in regional and national politics. In view of this, initiatives focusing on the local level, mobilising women to take political mandates in their own cities are particularly relevant, like programmes developed in Germany and Portugal.

**Target groups:** The progress towards effective gender parity in political decision-making depends on the success in engaging a new generation of young women and men. Thus initiatives targeting young people and particularly young women prove to be very promising. Among them are the projects launched by the Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality (REDE) and by the European Academy for Women in Politics and Business in Germany. Both aim at equipping young women with leadership skills, attracting them to politics, strengthening their networks and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge.

**Tools:** The tools applied by different competence-development programmes include mentoring, training courses and seminars, public campaigns, work with the media, as well as building women's platforms, networks and pools of potential candidates. The Czech Republic, Germany, Malta and Portugal demonstrate a comprehensive mix of measures in very different country settings, which may also inspire other countries. At the same time the emphasis is on political mentoring which is used increasingly as an effective strategy for competence development. It is confirmed by the analysis of the successful mentoring schemes (CZ, DE, PT) which are all building on international experience and high levels of expertise. Finally, irrespective of

which tools are chosen, for any training to be fruitful it should integrate gender equality considerations, challenge gender stereotypes and enable trainees to build capacity for promoting gender equality in their future political careers.

## 3.2. Awareness raising

Next to competence-development programmes, awareness-raising initiatives are also widely used to redress the existing gender imbalance in political decision-making. Most Member States have experience with awareness-raising campaigns either directed at the general public or targeted at smaller groups with specific messages. The wide range of accumulated experiences include: campaigns to promote gender equality in elections; campaigns to disseminate information about women candidates; campaigns to raise awareness among the general public, and men in particular, on gender equality in elections.

The good practice examples from Croatia, Ireland, Portugal and Sweden demonstrate that a well designed campaign by a committed organiser can move things forward, stimulate change and help to overcome inequality. The analysis suggests a number of features that make an initiative successful:

- The creative employment of **innovative awareness-raising tools** is essential for making the initiative visible and popular. The Croatian campaign gained a lot of public attention by using such innovative methods as street performances and a 'pillar of shame' to point

### Selected examples of good practice

Stup Strama (Centre for Education, Counselling and Research)	Croatia
Grass-roots campaigning for equal representation of women in politics (National Women's Council of Ireland)	Ireland
Women Can Do It! (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality)	Portugal
Combatting male dominance in politics (political parties and NGOs)	Sweden

at political parties not complying with gender equality principles. In Sweden actions to address and counter male domination involved the use of role play, films and exercises which stimulated wide-ranging debate on women's representation in politics and facilitated discussion in schools, workplaces, municipalities, etc.

- The development of **publicity materials** (guides, toolkits, handbooks, etc.) strengthens the campaign and provides the targeted groups with helpful information and argumentation. The educational guides and toolkits produced and disseminated in the framework of the Portuguese project were widely used by teachers in schools and helped them to tackle gender stereotypes among the students. The well-known Swedish 'Power Handbook' published by the National Federation of Social Democratic Women (with advice for women on how to get access to power) was translated into various languages and spread to many countries around the world supporting numerous awareness-raising activities. A guide developed in the course of the Irish grass-roots campaign setting clear ways to build a woman-friendly parliament supported the efforts aimed at changing political structures.
- The impact of an awareness-raising initiative is increased when it becomes **visible and achieves good coverage in the media** (television, radio, social media, print media, etc.). The Portuguese nationwide campaign *Women make democracy better* was carried out in close collaboration with the media — it was widely featured on national and cable television, as well as on radio. In Sweden the use of social media (YouTube) allowed for wide dissemination of concepts to address domination techniques. The films used humour to illustrate situations in which such techniques are deployed and most

people watching them could relate to the situations portrayed. The Croatian campaign gained popularity by posting sexist and discriminatory statements made by politicians on their website and inviting readers to vote for the most sexist.

- **Linked to other measures** (for example electoral quotas or competence-development schemes) complementary campaigns can effectively support the implementation of these measures. Both the Croatian and Irish initiatives are linked to the introduction of quota regulations and involve active campaigning for gender quotas, while the Portuguese *Women Can Do It!* project beneficially combined awareness raising with training in fostering women's self-confidence, communication and leadership skills.

### 3.3. Advocacy and political tools on gender balance

In order to address gender imbalance in politics, countries have introduced a range of political tools, such as gender quotas and dedicated gender equality committees within political assemblies. Furthermore, change can also be initiated by committed advocacy from civil society.

**Gender quotas** (mandatory or voluntary) principally involve the introduction of targets for gender balance in candidate selection and in some cases ensure equal representation of the numbers of women and men elected. The Spanish law on mandatory women's quotas on electoral lists provides a comprehensive example of such a measure. Quota systems seem to be most successful when there are effective and rigorous sanctions in place for non-compliance. Likewise, they need to apply some sort of 'zipper system',

#### Selected examples of good practice

Delegations for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men	France
Changing discriminatory party practice (Dutch Women's Council and women's associations)	Netherlands
Mandatory Women's Quotas (all political parties)	Spain



to prevent the female candidates being placed only in unwinnable positions at the end of the list. Quota regulations can help to change deeply embedded gender stereotypes and male-dominated political cultures. So far, about one third of Member States have some form of quota law in place.

Also the establishment of **gender mainstreaming mechanisms within political assemblies** (e.g. parliament) appears to be a growing trend. These mechanisms can be formal, such as a commission or a committee, or informal, such as a caucus or working groups. The functions of these mechanisms are broad and generally aim at drafting, promoting and monitoring laws and policies. They are instrumental in ensuring that gender equality issues are taken into account in national policies and in strengthening efforts to achieve equality between women and men. The French Parliamentary Delegations for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men provide an example of a parliamentary committee which can help to put certain gender

equality issues on the agenda and to stop others from getting dropped from it, such as gender parity. In monitoring the implementation of policies they can highlight negative policy outcomes for women and raise public awareness.

Civil society's **continued advocacy** for women's equal participation is also important in promoting gender equality in political decision-making. Advocacy by women's organisations and NGOs can influence gender representation in politics and help change male-dominated attitudes and culture. Determined advocacy can have very concrete results in addressing women's exclusion from politics, as the Dutch example shows. Challenging the discriminatory practices of the an ultra-orthodox protestant political party (SGP) was vital in addressing non-discrimination and equal treatment, which are fundamental to women's representation in politics. This case highlights the need for continued commitment and advocacy to remove obstacles to women's political participation.

# 4. Promoting gender balance in politics — the way forward



# 4. Promoting gender balance in politics — the way forward

In spite of the observed positive trends in women's participation in political decision-making, further promotion of more gender-equal democratic politics remains on the agenda. Some of the examples of good practices identified are valuable in demonstrating how to make progress in this direction. They vividly illustrate the innovative approaches that work well and thus could support those countries, parties and organisations that are facing similar challenges.

## **The need for political parties to become more focused on and more inclusive of women.**

The prevailing culture within many parties as well as the insufficient support they give to gender equality issues present clear obstacles. In this context, good practices focusing on political parties and motivating them to support women more effectively provides very valuable examples. Among many, let us mention the following: the example of the Maltese Labour Party's initiatives seeking to enhance the party's policy agenda and to challenge stereotypical views of the roles of women and men in politics; the Croatian 'Pillar of shame' campaign attracting public attention to the lack of implementation of the 40 % gender quota by political parties and thus stimulating parties to change; the Spanish mandatory election quotas introduced in 2007 which had a positive impact on women's presence among elected politicians; the Dutch example of successful advocacy by women's associations aimed at challenging women's exclusion from politics and the abolition of the discriminatory practice of an ultra-orthodox protestant political party (SGP) preventing women from participating or running for political office.

## **The full-scale implementation of the existing legal frameworks presents a challenge in many countries.**

Insufficient national funds as well as lack of political will and civil society mobilisation often create barriers for putting adopted regulations into practice. Having this in mind, priority has been given to initiatives with **renewed focus on implementation**. Among them the Spanish mandatory quota legislation, implemented effectively due to its well thought-out design which includes strict sanctions for non-compliance, and the French Delegation for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in both houses of parliament which monitors and scrutinises all draft legislation for its gender impact and contributes to setting the political agenda.

## **The under-representation of women in politics cannot be tackled effectively without attracting youth and young women in particular.**

The lack of involvement by young women presents a serious challenge for the future. Initiatives specifically targeting young women, such as the two Portuguese projects, 'From Woman to Woman' aimed at educating and raising a new generation of women motivated to take a part in politics particularly at local level and 'Women Can Do It!' which is raising awareness and engaging young women through close cooperation with youth associations and schools, have been identified as valuable and relevant approaches. The same holds true for the German initiative Helene Weber Kolleg and the Irish

grass-roots campaign which mobilise women, in particular young women, to take on political mandates at a local level.

### **The prevalence of a male-dominated political culture and leadership creates barriers for women to run for political office.**

In response, women should get support to take leadership positions; they should be **equipped with leadership skills** relevant for the future. Realising that political mentoring is becoming increasingly important as a strategy for competence development, there has been an emphasis and an appreciation for practices involving innovative mentoring. The German nine-month mentoring scheme in the context of the Helene Weber Kolleg training initiatives was appreciated for its solid and effective approach to preparing women for local politics, while the Czech programme involving Scandinavian mentors was considered innovative in the national context. The Swedish ‘Power Handbook’ was praised as an internationally recognised and effective tool providing women with the knowledge and practical skills to counteract male power in politics and thus to prepare them for leadership.

### **Fighting gender stereotypes is closely linked to the male-dominated political culture.**

The media is known to be a powerful tool in helping to overcome stereotypical attitudes. Thus, the projects which are **effectively working with the media** and enhancing positive media coverage of women in politics were highlighted as particularly successful. Examples were the Maltese initiative which benefitted from regular TV and radio coverage and press releases, the German Helene Weber award and the Croatian initiative which attracted

significant publicity and media coverage, as well as the widely disseminated Swedish handbook which employed internet and media demonstrating clips, films, and role plays and which is used in many other countries to fight gender stereotypes.

### **Insufficient resources delay and restrict the launch of new initiatives.**

In view of this, **sharing of knowledge and learning from successful experiences** of others might prove very beneficial as it provides a shortcut, suggests quicker solutions and inspires and stimulates change. The fact that some projects build on international experience and tailor it to the local context was considered an advantage. Appreciation was given towards the creative application of Danish and Norwegian experiences within the Czech mentoring project and initiatives by Swiss and Norwegian projects brought inspiration to the Portuguese project.

### **The existing divide between an ‘elitist’ political establishment and civil society, resulting in low interest and participation in politics presents an unfavourable environment for enhancing women’s role in politics.**

In this context, the initiatives that bring people into the political arena and **make politics more representative of society by involving more women** were assessed as very promising. Among them the Irish grass-roots campaign focusing on the representation of women at both local and national levels, the German example equipping women for local politics and mobilising them to seek political office, as well as the Portuguese initiative promoting an inclusive environment for women under the slogan ‘women make democracy better’.

# 5. Conclusions



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## Focus on specific target groups

- ✓ **Involving the young generation** is particularly crucial for promoting women in politics. More strategies need to be developed to get them interested and engaged in politics and gender equality.
- ✓ **The involvement of men** is crucial to advancing gender equality in politics. The advantages of having more women in politics and of sharing power should be emphasised and recognised by men.
- ✓ By supporting **women's networks** and mentoring it is possible to mobilise and promote women to take leadership positions.
- ✓ **Training and capacity-building** measures to equip women with the necessary leadership skills need to be in line with the principles of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- ✓ The wider and greater involvement and participation of women should also focus on **mobilising rural areas** and local communities.

## Focus on the political and societal framework conditions

- ✓ To make politics more representative of society, it is crucial to bring people into the political arena so that they vote and participate. **Active citizenship** is a prerequisite for advancing women in politics.
- ✓ A change in the culture of political parties is necessary. **Parties need to become more gender sensitive and representative of society.** It is therefore

essential to increase the number of women in political parties at all levels of decision-making.

- ✓ **Stakeholder involvement and grass-roots initiatives** can promote social innovation and mobilisation when it comes to raising awareness of gender inequalities and imbalances in politics.
- ✓ The media is a powerful tool in fighting gender stereotypes. There is a need to increase women's visibility and **positive media coverage** in politics as well as to present success stories and relevant role models.
- ✓ To attract more women to politics, it is essential to put more emphasis on **changing the male-dominated political culture.**
- ✓ **More and better research**, surveys, data and statistics can provide the social and political evidence of the extent of persistent gender inequalities and their impact on advancing women in politics.

## Focus on the EU level

- ✓ Information on **EU financial support** for women's political empowerment (e.g. mentoring, training, awareness raising) should be more accessible.
- ✓ **Sharing experience**, knowledge, effective strategies and good practices across Member States can provide inspiration and stimulate change.
- ✓ There is a need to monitor and explicitly earmark **specific financial support** for gender issues in the European funding programmes (e.g. Structural Funds and the Horizon 2020 research programme).

# Annex I

## Assessment criteria



# Annex I

## Assessment criteria

In the process of selecting examples of good practices, participants were supported by a comprehensive list of assessment criteria developed within the study. Three levels of criteria were applied:

- **general criteria**, adopted by EIGE to assess tools, methods or practices with the potential to improve gender equality;
- **common criteria**, applicable to all good practices promoting women in political decision-making (cross-cutting through all thematic focus areas: competence development; awareness raising; advocacy; and political tools on gender balance);

- **specific criteria**, applicable to a particular thematic focus area.

### 1. General criteria

The general criteria are applicable to all examples. This set of criteria forms the basis for the assessment and the selection of the final examples of good practices to be disseminated to the wider audience. The following criteria have been adopted by EIGE to assess tools, methods or practices with potential to improve gender equality.

- 1.1. It has been working well (the practice is finished, or at least shows substantial achievement provided by the practice itself).

*This demonstrates that there is a good and solid design and methodology, that it has been implemented efficiently and shows some positive outcomes.*

- 1.2. The practice/initiative is transferable and can be replicated elsewhere.

*The issue(s) and actions carried out under the measure are relevant and applicable to other countries or to different regions or parties within the same country.*

- 1.3. It is good for learning how to think and act appropriately.

*This shows that the example has significant potential to be a learning tool that can be used to develop or improve similar initiatives.*

- 1.4. It is embedded within a wider gender mainstreaming strategy.

*This demonstrates the commitment to embed the practice into a wider gender mainstreaming strategy and is part of a structured approach rather than a one-off isolated initiative.*

- 1.5. It demonstrates effective achievement in terms of advancement of gender equality and/or reduction of gender inequalities.

*This highlights the importance of the practice being grounded in the broad objective of achieving gender equality, and which addresses some of the structural factors that lead to gender inequalities.*



## 2. Common criteria

These criteria represent the key elements of the next level for assessing the content, design, implementation and outcomes of the initiatives. They provide more detailed elements and allow for more

in-depth assessment of the practices on women in political decision-making. These criteria are common to all the three themes covered by this study (competence development, awareness raising, advocacy/political tools on gender balance).

The common criteria are as follows:

- 2.1. There is substantive information on the practice available and there is evidence of its success.
- 2.2. The practice is evidenced by context analysis, research and data analysis, setting out the problem to be addressed and the monitoring and evaluation of the practice/initiative.
- 2.3. Innovative elements in the design or in the implementation of the measure are present.
- 2.4. There is evidence that the practice is innovative it is testing new thinking and approaches to address the problem identified, and it is grounded in substantive planning that establishes clear goals, actions and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.5. The practice/initiative is grounded in a well thought-out communications strategy.
- 2.6. There is evidence of efforts to disseminate information and results about the initiative/practice.
- 2.7. The objectives and purpose of the practice/measure are clear and there is a link between these objectives and gender equality/gender mainstreaming.
- 2.8. There is evidence that the initiative on women's participation in political decision-making is deeply connected to gender equality and gender mainstreaming objectives, targets and outcomes.
- 2.9. The practice/measure is well-designed, based on a clear and coherent methodology, with concrete and clear actions for implementation.
- 2.10. There is clear evidence of a coherent and strategic approach to planning, methodological design and project management.
- 2.11. There is evidence of positive effects on women's political participation and gender equality.
- 2.12. There is evidence of monitoring and evaluation of outcomes in relation to women's political participation and that it has a direct impact on gender equality outcomes.

### 3. Specific criteria: competence development

- 3.1. The design of the training/competence development initiative is based on prior gender analysis, context information and experience.
- 3.2. The training/competence development programme is needs-driven, linked to core issues in the current context, and responsive.
- 3.3. The training/competence development initiative is appropriate to local circumstances and political contexts and is embedded in a wider gender mainstreaming strategy.
- 3.4. The training/competence development initiative is based on cooperation with relevant partners, parties, educational institutions and stakeholders as well as on community support.
- 3.5. The training/competence development initiative has clear target group(s), preferably also representatives of the young generation and appropriate participant selection.
- 3.6. The training/competence development initiative has concrete, measurable and time-bound objectives.
- 3.7. The training/competence development initiative has appropriate training topics and methodologies to develop specific political skills (networking, lobbying, mobilising community, fundraising, leadership and communication).
- 3.8. Sufficient human and technical resources are allocated to support the implementation.
- 3.9. The initiative uses a combination of training tools and methods that support and reinforce one another.
- 3.10. There is coordination with other existing training programmes to avoid duplication.
- 3.11. There is evidence that the initiative is empowering women and contributing to their increased political participation.

## 4. Specific criteria: awareness raising

- 4.1. The initiative/campaign has clear goals, is well focused and planned.
- 4.2. The campaign has clear messages which are conveyed to multiple audiences using effective and innovative techniques and approaches.
- 4.3. The campaign/initiative is built on good understanding of the prevailing political culture and views as well as gender equality principles.
- 4.4. The awareness-raising campaign/initiative has a clearly defined target group(s) and preferably aims to engage and include young men as well as women.
- 4.5. The awareness-raising campaign/initiative uses a combination of tools and methods that support and reinforce each other (educational, media, social media, information, case studies, etc.).
- 4.6. The scope and design of the campaign ensures that the progress is made and the campaign promotes debate on balanced participation of women in politics.
- 4.7. The campaign/initiative helps to overcome traditional stereotypes of gender roles and particularly stereotypes related to gender roles in the political sphere.
- 4.8. There is evidence that the campaign/initiative is positively influencing the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs of the target group and is stimulating further debate.
- 4.9. The campaign/initiative mobilises public concern on gender values and gender inequalities in the political sphere.
- 4.10. The campaign/initiative specifically targets and addresses politicians to push for more gender equality in the political agenda.
- 4.11. The campaign/initiative successfully involves media in raising awareness about the need for balanced gender representation in politics and in giving positive coverage to women politicians.

## 5. Specific criteria: advocacy and political tools on gender balance

- 5.1. The work of the committee/forum/group is instrumental in contributing to the work of parliament/the party to promote and support gender equality.
- 5.2. The committee/forum/group has a balanced gender composition and gender sensitive organisational structure with involvement of both women and men.
- 5.3. The activities of the committee/forum/group contribute to translating the norms promoting gender equality into binding provisions.
- 5.4. There is evidence that the activities of the committee/forum/group stimulate and facilitate positive change and improvements in policy and practice with respect to gender-balanced political participation.
- 5.5. The committee/forum/group effectively oversees the implementation of policies/ programmes/ party procedures to ensure that they meet the set gender standards and goals.
- 5.6. The activities of the committee/forum/group help raise gender equality concerns in public debates.
- 5.7. The committee/forum/group has a sound oversight role (e.g. monitoring and inquiries function, etc.) and it holds the government/party to account.
- 5.8. The committee/forum/group works in close coordination and cooperation with other stakeholders, groups and networks to promote common goals of women's political participation.
- 5.9. The committee/forum/group has successful outreach strategies (via media, etc.) to inform the public of parliamentary/party action and it raises awareness of gender issues.
- 5.10. Sufficient technical and human resources are allocated to ensure continuity, effectiveness and sustainability of the committee/forum/group.
- 5.11. The focus of the committee/forum/group is not only on the representation of women in politics but also on promoting the gender equality agenda.
- 5.12. All criteria incorporate raising the awareness, understanding and, consequently, the involvement of men.

# Annex II

## Selected examples of good practices



# Selected examples of good practices

## Competence development

International Mentoring Programme and Training	Czech Republic
Women Power Politics (Helene Weber Kolleg)	Germany
Increasing Women's Political Participation through Capacity Development by a Political Party	Malta
From Woman to Woman	Portugal

## International Mentoring Programme and Training — Czech female politicians learn from international experience exchange

### Czech Republic — 2014–2015

#### Summary

The share of women in the Czech parliament has languished at around one in five, while their share of the Czech seats in the European Parliament is less than one in four. The NGO Fórum 50 % decided to do something about this by launching projects aimed at raising the level of women's political representation.

One of them is a mentoring scheme, which partners Czech female politicians with Danish and Norwegian women who have successful political careers and valuable experience to share. The mentoring involved face-to-face meetings and regular contact by email and Skype.

Fórum 50 % also organised two short courses for 15 female candidates in the 2014 European Parliament elections. These comprised media training, individual coaching, a weekend seminar and a debate with a sitting MEP.

This recent initiative presents a good example of political mentoring, based on 10 mentoring pairs, and shows innovation in the Czech context when political mentoring is becoming increasingly important as a strategy to build women's competence to participate in politics. The programme was inspired by the practices within political parties in Denmark and Norway and is implemented by the NGO Fórum 50 %. The programme strengthens women's political participation and addresses the lack of support programmes for women. It aims to increase women's representation in Czech politics

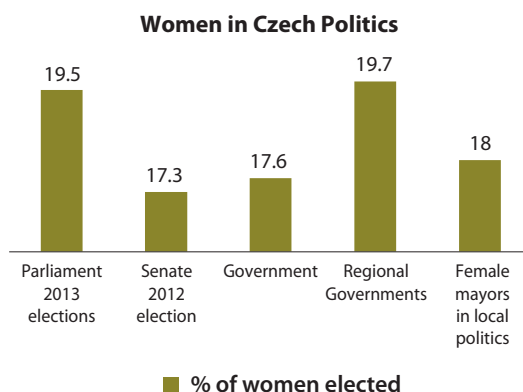
by sharing experiences from countries with high levels of participation by women. Pairs are formed between Danish and Norwegian female politicians (mentors) and Czech mentees. The programme also included a training component targeting female candidates in the 2014 European Parliament elections to support them with workshops and courses. The initiative as a whole has a cross-party dimension. There was a slight increase in the proportion of elected women to the European Parliament in 2014 — 23.8 %, compared to 18.2 % in 2009.

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It includes innovative ways of applying the mentoring tool.
- ✓ It benefits from sharing of international experience and knowledge.
- ✓ There is a good match and close collaboration between the mentor and mentee.
- ✓ It provides practically oriented, tailored training to equip women for political office.
- ✓ It stimulates new approaches and fresh ideas.
- ✓ It contributes to the expansion of political networks.
- ✓ As a small-scale initiative, it can easily be transferred to other countries.

## Helping women to win

Czech women are still under-represented in political decision-making, and make up a little less than 20 % of the national legislature. Similar or even lower figures reflect women's involvement at regional and local levels. This is considerably lower than in the majority of EU Member States. The gender imbalance in political decision-making, which is a long-term issue in the Czech Republic, results from political parties placing women in unwinnable positions on candidate lists. Moreover, the parties do not provide tools to support or promote women politicians, and there are no mentoring programmes or courses to help women develop their skills.



*Based on: Women in politics – joint project of the Nordic Chamber and Fórum 50% on political mentoring.*

The NGO Fórum 50 % decided to fill this gap by launching, in collaboration with the Nordic Chamber, an international mentoring and training programme for female candidates in the Czech Republic. Fórum 50 % is a non-profit organisation founded in 2004 which supports the equal participation of women and men in politics and decision-making. It strives for a more balanced decision-making process which takes both sexes' views and life experiences into account. It encourages women to become politically active, supports female politicians and leaders, and works with political parties and other bodies on concrete measures. Its guiding principle is to be non-partisan. Its main activities are:

- assessing political parties' ballots and agendas from the gender point of view, running a 'Women-Friendly Party' competition, workshops, trainings and consultancy;
- conducting opinion polls on the representation of women in Czech politics;
- training women politicians and women interested in politics, networking and mentoring;
- media campaigns to support women politicians in the elections (public discussions, press conferences, workshops, website, conferences);
- studies on women's representation, in cooperation with a number of research institutes;
- cooperation with other NGOs in the Czech Women's Lobby.

It is funded by the European Commission and EEA grants.

Seeing mentoring as a successful tool, the Czech NGO drew inspiration from Denmark and Norway, where political parties run mentoring programmes and training courses for women in politics. It thus relied on the methodology of the Danish Centre for Gender, Equality and Ethnicity (KVINFO) which has been at the forefront of developing mentoring initiatives for women politicians in Denmark for more than a decade and has established a broad Mentoring Network. The successful Nordic mentoring initiatives had already inspired the European Women's Lobby when they launched in 2013 the first European Political Mentoring Network within the framework of their 50/50 Campaign in order to address

the lack of gender parity and ethnic diversity in political decision-making at the European level.

## Mentoring on the Nordic model



Fórum 50 %s international mentoring programme aims to increase women's representation in Czech politics by sharing experiences from countries where it is already at a high level. The mentors are female politicians from Denmark and Norway who have long-term experience and have influenced the political scene in their home countries. They are not chosen for their political party views, but for their personal engagement, interest and skills.

There are now 10 mentoring pairs who meet face-to-face and stay in touch at least twice a month through email and Skype. Both mentors and mentees come from a range of different political parties and different levels of politics. The Nordic mentors were chosen on the basis of their knowledge and experience, while for the Czech mentees there were two qualifications: they had to already be involved in politics at local, regional or national level and they had to be committed to gender equality. Mentors and mentees were matched on the basis of shared political interests and whether the mentors' skills fitted the mentees' needs. Once the mentees had defined the specific goals they wanted to work towards in the mentoring process, the mentors gave them feedback and shared their experience.

They have focused on different topics, including promoting gender equality, negotiating within political parties, campaigning, challenges in becoming an MP, balancing political and private life, and responding to sexist statements.

The programme lasts 18 months for each mentee and consists of three six-month blocks with



a specific political topic chosen for each block (e.g. efficiency and transparency of public administration, social and educational policies for children and the elderly, immigration issues, employment policy, etc.). These topics are discussed not only in private meetings between mentor and mentee but also at the seminars open to other Czech politicians. The mentoring programme also foresees visits by the mentees to their mentors' country and the establishment of a communication platform to exchange and share views.

The mentoring programme is part of a broader project called *Equilibrium between Women and Men* <sup>(2)</sup>, which started in July 2014 and will run until April 2016. It is financed by the Norway Grants fund, and its partners are the Danish Embassy in Prague and the Nordic Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic.

### Training for prospective MEPs

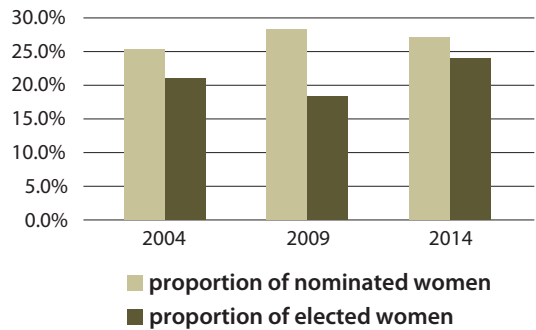
In February and March 2014, Fórum 50 % also ran training courses for 15 female candidates in the 2014 European Parliament elections. The aim was to support candidates from different political parties through training activities, such as a workshop on how the European Parliament works, courses on negotiation and media skills, and individual coaching. The selection of trainees was based on two criteria: a clear vision of future work in the parliament and support for gender equality.

The courses comprised three hours of media training, three hours of individual coaching and a weekend seminar, and were delivered by internal and external lecturers and coaches from the International Coach Federation. Trainees also took part in a discussion with Czech female MEP Zuzana Brzobohatá. This training was part of a larger international project supported by the European Commission called *More Women in European Politics, More Women in 2014* <sup>(3)</sup>.

2 <http://www.soc.cas.cz/en/project/zeny-muzi-v-rovnovaze>

3 <http://www.ludenet.org/projects/wiep>

### The development of women's representation in European Parliament for the Czech Republic



Source: Czech Statistical Office

### Women's representation improves

The mentoring is successful because the nature of the mentoring relationship is carefully thought through before the start. What the mentee and mentor are to focus on during the mentoring process is set out in a mentoring agreement and a clear activity plan. Further success factors are the enthusiasm and dedication of all the participants who work hard to reach the set goals in spite of their busy agendas as politicians. Mentors and mentees see the programme as a mutually rewarding process which enables them to expand their political networks, share experiences and perspectives, gain fresh ideas and get to know different political systems. The programme benefits from the sharing of international experience and knowledge coming from countries where women's political representation is high.

The European Parliamentary candidates found the training especially valuable, as it taught them new skills and enabled them to network with other Czech female politicians. It is difficult to say whether the programmes had any direct impact on the outcomes of the elections. However, it is true that recent years have seen some improvement in women's participation, particularly in the European Parliament elections. Compared to 2009, the 2014 elections demonstrated an increase in the proportion of elected female MEPs: from 18.2 % to 23.8 %.

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Mentoring: <http://padesatprocent.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/prihlasujte-se-do-unikatniho-mentoringoveho-programu>;

Training: <http://padesatprocent.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/vzdelavaci-program-pro-kandidatky-do-evropskeho-parlamentu>;

Women in politics — joint project of the Nordic Chamber and Fórum 50 % on political mentoring: <https://birgerblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/women-in-politics-intro-to-mentoring-project-08-2014.pdf>;

Links to the video clips used by Fórum 50 % during 2014 European Parliament election campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hXPxLlb310>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdnVjssiPU4>;

Image from Fórum 50 % website: <http://padesatprocent.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/vzdelavaci-program-pro-kandidatky-do-evropskeho-parlamentu>.

# Women Power Politics (Helene Weber Kolleg) — Supporting women in local politics

## Germany — 2011–2015

### Summary

In Germany, it is in the local authorities (the over 11 000 municipalities and 295 districts) that women are most noticeable by their absence from political decision-making. Their share of local councils is stuck at around 25 %.

The aim of the Helene Weber Kolleg initiative, created in 2011, is to break this stalemate by getting more women into (local) politics, improving their political career opportunities and creating a network of support and cooperation. The Kolleg arose from the campaign *Frauen Macht Kommune* ('Women Power Municipalities'), launched in 2008 by the NGO EAF Berlin in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). The most important activities include:

- The Helene Weber award, worth EUR10 000, which is given to 15 female politicians (among them one main winner) every term. So far 45 laureates have been awarded and are forming a national network of female local politicians.
- A nine-month mentoring scheme for women who want to break into local politics. This has so far supported 65 mentoring pairs, comprising 107 women, who have benefited from activities including shadowing, seminars and networking.
- Local activities planned and executed by the award winners with their prize money to promote gender equality in politics.

The initiative supports the political representation of women at the local level and responds to the lack of initiative from political parties to address this issue. It aims to mobilise women to seek political office and to promote women who are already engaged in politics at a municipal level. It combines in a creative way a range of interlinked activities: (i) Helene Weber

award (a visibility strategy); (ii) a nine-month mentoring programme which enhances the knowledge, capacity and motivation of women in local politics; (iii) local initiatives developed by the winners of the award; (iv) international exchanges; and (v) an informative website. The project is supported by the Federal Government and is well documented.

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It has an innovative combination of a number of mutually reinforcing tools.
- ✓ It builds on a solid mentoring programme: continuing work between mentor and mentee encompassing networking, training and qualification.
- ✓ It has a cross-party dimension.
- ✓ It achieves good visibility and wide publicity through the award component.
- ✓ The model for a multi-faceted approach is relevant for other countries and is transferable.

## The problem is at the local level



In Germany, the biggest gap in women's representation in political decision-making is at municipality (*Kommune*) level, where the number of women has stagnated at about 25 % of the total. However, there are significant differences between large urban and small rural councils: the rate is between 30 % and 40 % in the larger towns, but decreases the smaller the municipalities are. Alarmingly, there even are some municipalities that have no women councillors at all. The situation in the administrative districts (*Kreise*) of Germany is even worse: more than 91 % of the 295 administrative districts are governed by men and only 10 % of mayors are women (4). A couple of studies have examined the causes and developed recommendations in order to increase the number of women in municipal decision-making (5). They show that equal opportunities at regional level, the promotion of women in education and employment, and adequate care facilities are key factors for encouraging women to engage in politics. But the efficient organisation of political activities at a municipal level, the specific

advancement of women and quota regulations are also considered to be helpful.

## The Helene Weber Kolleg

The Helene Weber Kolleg arose from the *Frauen Macht Kommune* (Women Power Municipality) campaign which EAF Berlin started in 2008 in co-operation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). The EAF is an independent non-profit organisation, promoting gender equality. It combines designated scientific expertise with advisory services and professional development (6).

Set up in 2011, the role of the Helene Weber Kolleg is to mobilise women to stand for election in their cities and promote the activities of women who are already engaged in politics. Its activities fall under six headings:

1. the Helene Weber award;
2. mentoring;
3. local activities;
4. a travelling exhibition on the 'Mothers of German Basic Law';
5. international exchanges;
6. a website with online offers (<http://frauen-macht-politik.de/>).

So far, 45 women have been granted the **Helene Weber award** for being outstanding female local politicians, holding voluntary, non-paid political positions. In turn, they act as role models for more women, motivating them to take a chance in politics. The award was bestowed in 2009 and 2011 and will be awarded again in 2015. The candidates — between 70 and 110 — are put forward by members of the German Bundestag. An independent jury, chaired by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, selects the winners. The main winner receives EUR 10 000; all further winners are given tailored coaching focusing on issues which the winner and her coach select together, for example, political advancement,

4 EAF Berlin (2014) (Helga Lukoschat, Jana Belschner) *Frauen führen Kommunen. Eine Untersuchung zu Bürgermeisterinnen und Bürgermeistern in Ost und West*. [http://frauen-macht-politik.de/fileadmin/eaf/Dokumente/Schwerpunktthema/Studie\\_Frauen\\_fuehren\\_Kommunen.pdf](http://frauen-macht-politik.de/fileadmin/eaf/Dokumente/Schwerpunktthema/Studie_Frauen_fuehren_Kommunen.pdf).

5 Schlote, Sarah (2013) *Ursachen für die Unterrepräsentanz von Frauen in der Kommunalpolitik*, Studie im Auftrag der SPD-Landtagsfraktion Baden-Württemberg, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), Berlin. (Causes of the under-representation of women in municipal politics, study commissioned by the SPD group of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg, WZB Berlin):

BMFSFJ (2011) (prepared by Hagen Lindstädt, Kerstin Fehre, Michael Wolff) *Frauen in Führungspositionen. Auswirkungen auf den Unternehmenserfolg (Women in executive positions. Effects for the success of companies)*: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/Redaktion-BMFSFJ/Broschuerenstelle/Pdf-Anlagen/Frauen-in-Fuehrungspositionen-langfassung.property=pdf,bereich=bmfsfj,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>.

6 EAF <http://www.eaf-berlin.de/index.php?id=eaf>.

professional career planning, self-management, work-life balance or assertiveness.

By sharing the experiences of politically successful women, the **mentoring** scheme aims to lead more women towards participating in local politics. Locally elected representatives of all political parties, most of them past winners of the Helene Weber award, accompany women who plan to stand. For nine months, mentor and mentee work together in tandem. So far, 107 women have formed 65 such pairs and have participated in the mentoring programme, which offers activities including shadowing, seminars on professional appearance and presentation, motivation, feedback, networking, and gender and politics.

EAF Berlin supports and advises award winners at **local** level who want to organise actions to promote gender equality, such as seminars on public speaking and appearance, and lectures and discussions on municipal politics.

The travelling **exhibition** acknowledges the four women who enshrined the equality of women and men in the German Basic Law. This exhibition constitutes a very good basis for debate on the political participation of women.

Under the umbrella of the Helene Weber Kolleg, the Tunisian-German 'Democracy Needs Women' project has supported the political participation of women in Tunisia since the Revolution in 2011. All its activities are advertised on the website <http://frauen-macht-politik.de/>. Furthermore, there are international exchanges of local female politicians from Germany and the South Caucasus region (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia).

## Consistent support from government

The Helene Weber Kolleg relies on the commitment of the Helene Weber award winners and of numerous female politicians who provide networking, exchange and support to women in local politics. One of the most important success factors is the non-partisan and nationwide nature of the activities. Helene Weber Kolleg has developed a broad network which works as an efficient platform for women in local politics. Experts from the European Academy for Women in Politics and Business provide their expertise in mentoring and campaigning.

The Helene Weber Kolleg creatively combines different tools and thus represents a multifaceted approach, which is very relevant and transferable to other countries as well. The Federal Government continues to support the Helene Weber Kolleg financially and has mentioned this initiative explicitly in the coalition agreement of 2013.

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<http://frauen-macht-politik.de/>

**Further material:**

<http://frauen-macht-politik.de/infothek/kurzfilm-frauen-macht-politik.html>;

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<http://frauen-macht-politik.de/helene-weber-kolleg/studien/engagiert-vor-ort.html>;

Heinrich Böll Stiftung / Fernuniversität in Hagen (2010) (prepared by Holtkamp, L., Wiechmann, E., Pfetzing, J.) *Zweites Gender Ranking deutscher Großstädte (Second gender ranking of large German cities)*: [http://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download\\_de/demokratie/Zweites\\_Genderranking\\_deutscher\\_Grossstaedte.pdf](http://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/demokratie/Zweites_Genderranking_deutscher_Grossstaedte.pdf);

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2008) *Beruf Bürgermeister/in. Eine Bestandsaufnahme für Deutschland*.  
[http://mifkjf.rlp.de/fileadmin/mehr-frauen-in-die-politik/dokumente/Beruf\\_BuergermeisterIn.pdf](http://mifkjf.rlp.de/fileadmin/mehr-frauen-in-die-politik/dokumente/Beruf_BuergermeisterIn.pdf);

Image from website:  
<http://frauen-macht-politik.de/>.

# Increasing women's political participation through capacity development — Partit Laburista (Labour Party) in Malta

## Malta — 1990s–2015

### Summary

Malta has one of the lowest levels of political representation of women in the EU. Of the political parties, it has been Labour that has traditionally been the first to adopt measures for the advancement of women — since women's suffrage in 1947. Nevertheless, formal and informal practices are blocking further progress.

Accordingly, the party has adopted a fourfold approach to promoting gender equality within its own ranks: quotas, party structures, capacity development and awareness raising. It has introduced a voluntary 20 % women's quota for electoral lists and a one third quota within its national executive, opened up its women's section to men, run a training programme in Brussels, drafted press releases and articles, and organised courtesy visits and seminars. There are signs that the strategy is bearing fruit, with two thirds of Malta's MEPs now being women.

This example draws on a strong commitment by the Labour Party to address the long-standing under-representation of women in politics. The 2014 relaunch and modernisation of 'Nisa Laburisti', the party's women section dating back to the 1950s, is one of several recent initiatives to tackle the issue. Other initiatives include building a pool of potential female candidates and strengthening their networks, providing training courses and seminars, launching media campaigns, awareness-raising activities, working with NGO's, and raising the profile of female candidates. The competence development project LEAP launched in 2013 by the Labour Party think tank (Foundation EDEAT) focuses on theoretical and practical training and capacity development for women.

Despite being a relatively new initiative, it has already had a very positive impact on the European Parliament elections; a similar campaign is planned to be held at the next local elections. Overall, the Labour Party, through Nisa Laburisti, has enhanced its policy agenda and challenged the stereotypical views of the roles of women and men.

### Slow progress towards women's representation

In Malta, political parties and their leaders are generally supportive of gender equality and agree that women should be better represented in political and economic decision-making. Nevertheless, the number of women in elected offices in Malta is one of the lowest in the EU, as a result of various structural, social and cultural factors (?). The main gatekeepers of women's representation in national

7 Cutajar J. (2014) *Women and political participation in Malta*: <https://socialdialogue.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Documents/Updates%20and%20Upcoming%20events/Women%27s%20political%20participation/Paper%20on%20Women%20and%20Political%20Participation%20in%20Malta%20FINAL%2020141219.pdf>;

Spiteri L. (2012) *Promoting women in decision-making in the economy through quotas: a Maltese perspective*. Exchange of Good Practices on gender equality. Women in economic decision-making, Norway 10-11 May 2012. Comments paper — Malta: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange\\_of\\_good\\_practice\\_no/mt\\_comments\\_paper\\_no\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_no/mt_comments_paper_no_2012_en.pdf).

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It is built on a long-standing and strong commitment of the party.
- ✓ It has a creative combination of training and capacity development tools.
- ✓ It benefits from the support of the party members.
- ✓ It is successful in challenging traditional stereotypes.
- ✓ It has high visibility through good coverage in the press and media.
- ✓ It has achieved fruitful cooperation with NGOs.
- ✓ It is interesting for other countries and transferable.

legislatures<sup>(8)</sup> are the political parties, and although they have gone beyond lip-service and have devised strategies to facilitate women's advancement, formal and informal practices within the parties are still hindering progress.

The Labour Party (PL — Partit Laburista), one of Malta's two main parties, has historically been the one that has supported gender equality in decision-making. It supported women's suffrage by giving Maltese women the right to vote in 1947, and was the first of the main parties in Malta to adopt quotas for women on its national executive level.

Despite this commitment, progress towards effective gender parity in political decision-making has been slow. The party has therefore adopted a multifaceted approach to promoting gender equality within the party, by acting on electoral quotas, party structures, capacity development and awareness raising.

### Electoral and executive committee quotas

Since the 1990s, the Labour Party has put a set of quotas in place which make it easier for women

to get involved in its decision-making. It operates a voluntary 20 % quota for women on party lists, and its rules require that at least four of the 12 ordinary members of the party's national executive are women. The party has also set a quota of one third of women within its local government section.

Women currently occupy four of the 12 elected places on the national executive, plus another two seats set aside for the women's section, Nisa Laburisti. Other sections (the parliamentary group, young people, pensioners, local government, etc.) are also free to appoint female representatives to the national executive. At present, the total number of women on the national executive is 13 out of 47 members (28 %). Meanwhile there are 189 women out of 673 general conference delegates (also 28 %).

It does not stop here: Nisa Laburisti executive members were active in the 2014 EU election campaign and in 2015 will be conducting a campaign for more female representation in local councils.

### Bringing men into the 'women's section' and raising awareness

The Labour Party has also undergone structural change. Its women's section (Sezzjoni Nisa Laburisti) was set up in the 1950s. It eventually became Għaqda Nisa Laburisti ('Labour Women's Unity'), and all female party members are automatically members.

8 Cutajar J. (2014) *Women and political participation in Malta*: <https://socialdialogue.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Documents/Updates%20and%20Upcoming%20events/Women%27s%20political%20participation/Paper%20on%20Women%20and%20Political%20Participation%20in%20Malta%20FINAL%2020141219.pdf>;

Schiavone H. (2011) *More Women needed in Parliament*: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110308/opinion/more-women-needed-in-parliament.353664>.





When the Labour Party was returned to power in the March 2013 elections, the new Prime Minister, Joseph Muscat, announced that he intended to make it the most feminist government

ever<sup>(9)</sup>. As part of the accompanying culture change, he announced a reform of Għaqda Nisa Laburisti. At its annual general meeting in January 2014, he said: ‘after wide consultation Għaqda Nisa Laburisti will enter a new phase, as it will go through changes which are also innovative.’ He revealed that Għaqda Nisa Laburisti would no longer be exclusively for women, since the issues it discussed affect not only women but also men. He emphasised how important it was for women — including career women, young people and mothers — to be represented in all sectors. He said that the role of women was changing all the time and that the glass ceiling was still to be broken. Stating that exciting times were in store for the organisation, he urged it to assume an active role and to spur the work of the government and the party<sup>(10)</sup>. On 8 March 2014, Nisa Laburisti — NL (‘Labour Women’) was relaunched.

Since then Nisa Laburisti has issued 25 press releases dealing with a wide range of issues related to women’s role in private and public life. It has also undertaken a programme of courtesy visits to important figures including the president and the speaker of the House of Representatives as well as a number of ministers and ambassadors. It was active in seminars on ‘Women in Political Decision-Making’, ‘Female Business Café to Promote Female Entrepreneurship’, ‘Women’s Political Participation in Malta’ and ‘Women within the Party of European Socialist Women’. Nisa Laburisti became more visible and well featured in the media. This helped to challenge the stereotypical image that a politician was a male<sup>(11)</sup>.

9 Dalli, M (2013): <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/elections2013/23864/muscat-aspires-to-lead-most-feminist-government-20130111#VH3XD8JdWRs>.

10 Partit Laburista press release 23 January 2014.

11 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMMP) (2010), *Who Makes the News?*: [http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports\\_2010/highlights/highlights\\_en.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2010/highlights/highlights_en.pdf).

## Capacity development

In 2013 Fondazzjoni IDEAT — which is the party’s think tank — launched the LEAP project together with MEP Claudette Abela Baldacchino, supported by the S&D group of the European Parliament. This initiative aimed at encouraging and supporting more women to enter politics by running a training programme in Brussels. This included a seminar entitled ‘Women in Politics and Public Life’, as well as theoretical and practical training in politics and mentoring by established politicians. Some of the members who participated are now active members of NL.

Nisa Laburisti supports equal opportunities and promotes women’s interests, and one of these is to increase their participation in decision-making. It is building the capacity of the pool of potential female candidates through a diverse range of activities such as strengthening their networks, media campaigns, awareness raising, working with NGOs (especially women’s NGOs) and raising women’s profiles. For example, Nisa Laburisti has held seminars on topics such as ‘Two Women — Two Presidents’, ‘Women in ICT’, and ‘Local Committees for Women’. The seminar entitled ‘Women — Leaders in an Evolving Society’ included a visit from the woman president of the Party of European Socialists, Zita Gurmai.

## A successful strategy

The result of the 2014 European Parliament elections — women now make up two thirds of the Maltese delegation — provides evidence that this strategy within the party is bearing fruit. The situation is also very encouraging at local level, with many women playing an active role in running their local councils. However, obstacles remain: parliament and local councils operate on a part-time basis, and consequently tend to meet after office hours, with sittings running late into the night. This conflicts with family obligations and therefore constitutes a particular problem for women. The situation at national level is still a challenge but the critical mass of female representation within the Labour Party signifies change in the future.

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<http://www.nisalaburisti.org/index.html>;

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nisa-Laburisti-NL/1376828599258576>;

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140308/local/pl-sets-up-new-womens-branch.509779>;

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Nisa Laburista logo from website  
<http://www.nisalaburisti.org>.

# Bringing young women into politics: the project 'From Woman to Woman'

## Portugal — 2008–2010

### Summary

Faced with the very slow trend towards balanced political representation for Portuguese women, the Network of Young People for Gender Equality in Portugal (REDE) carried out an innovative project called 'From Woman to Woman' to help young women, including those from ethnic minorities, to participate in politics. Run from 2008 to 2010, it was developed from a similar project which operated in 2005–2006, and was supported by the European Social Fund.

It had four components:

- the mentoring of 30 young women from the Lisbon and Porto areas by women active in politics;
- competence development through a course of six weekend sessions using non-formal techniques and covering human rights, intercultural dialogue, media and press, politics, and gender equality concepts and priorities;
- a batch of nine social transformation projects for gender equality (with a focus also on young men);
- the publication of useful handbooks.

This initiative focuses on educating and raising a new generation of young women motivated to participate in politics. The initiative responds to a significant under-representation of women in politics, particularly at local level, and addresses traditional stereotypes, for instance related to the role of mayors. It was launched by the Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality (REDE) and benefitted from the support of the European Social Fund. The initiative aimed at empowering young women and improving their confidence and skills. It encompassed several components: (i) a mentoring scheme inspired by the Swiss experience; (ii) a competence-development programme which also included women of ethnic minorities as target groups; and (iii) social transformation projects targeting not only young women but also young men, developed and implemented by groups of mentees. A toolkit for empowering young women in civic and political decision-making was developed and disseminated. The project was given good visibility in the media and on social networks.

### Gender balance far from reality

Despite a rising trend, gender balance in politics is far from reality in Portugal, where only 7.5 % of mayors, 26.5 % of members of parliament and 17 % of the government are women <sup>(12)</sup>. Women's representation in the European Parliament is better, at 38.1 % since 2014 <sup>(13)</sup>. So it is at municipal level where the subconscious idea that leaders have to be male surfaces most blatantly.

To try to redress this balance, the Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality in Portugal (REDE) developed an affirmative action project,

12 CIG — Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, Report — Beijing + 20 — PORTUGAL, 2014, [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National\\_reviews/Portugal\\_review\\_Beijing20.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National_reviews/Portugal_review_Beijing20.pdf).

13 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-parliament/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-parliament/index_en.htm)

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It has a clear focus on youth and young women in particular.
- ✓ The solid network of REDE acts as a good basis for the initiative.
- ✓ It is innovative in applying international experience to Portugal.
- ✓ It promotes intergenerational cooperation and transfer of knowledge.
- ✓ It benefits from the joint efforts of politicians and major stakeholders.
- ✓ It has a cross-party dimension.
- ✓ It was visible in the media and the project material was widely disseminated.
- ✓ The model is relevant for other countries and is transferable.

based on a previous programme which ran in 2005 and 2006. The second project, which ran from 2008 to 2010, introduced some innovative approaches, such as an additional focus on ethnic minorities and the involvement of young men.

Inspired by its Swiss predecessor (*De Femme à Femme*), the *From Woman to Woman* (*De Mulher para Mulher*) project aimed to:

- promote intra and intergenerational communication and cooperation between women;
- contribute to the integration of young women's concerns and needs in decision-making processes in different types of organisations;
- increase young women's participation in decision-making;
- develop young women's skills;
- contribute to the creation and strengthening of networks for young women;
- identify additional obstacles faced by women with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in accessing the political and civic spheres;
- raise the awareness of boys and men of the importance of promoting gender equality<sup>(14)</sup>.

The project targeted young women (16-30 years old), particularly from ethnic or cultural minorities. The beneficiaries — 15 young women from the Lisbon region and 15 from the Porto region — were mentored by women who were already active in politics or in civil society organisations. These included Members of the European Parliament, a Secretary of State, the president of a women's rights NGO and a Member of the Portuguese Parliament.

Besides the mentoring programme, the project also ran a competence development programme and had a part dedicated to the development of social transformation projects for gender equality, with a special focus also on young men. Mentees were invited to participate in several parallel activities organised by the project team, such as institutional visits and meetings (e.g. to the national and European parliaments), events focused on gender equality and other political and civic experiences.

The project was co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Operational Programme for the Promotion of Human Potential (POPH).

### Focus on young women and minorities

For the selection procedure, REDE published a call for participants, requesting the following profile: young women between 16 and 30 years old, with or without experience in activism, NGOs or politics,

14 Arnaut, Catarina (2014), 'Woman to Woman: intergenerational mentorship programme'. Paper presented at the 4th ATGENDER Spring Conference 2014 — Setting a New Agenda for the Equality Policies, 25-27 June, Barcelona.

interested in political and civic participation and available to participate in all the project activities. The open call specifically stated that the project was intended to favour applicants from ethnic and cultural minorities.

This open call was disseminated among youth associations, the youth wings of political parties, universities, high schools and immigrant organisations. The applicants who matched the profile were invited for interviews. For the final decision, the results of the interview and the diversity factors were taken into account: young women with experience in activism, young women with no experience in the field, and young women from ethnic minorities.

The project activities took account of the diversity of the target group and addressed such topics as intercultural dialogue, cooperation and development, and multiple discrimination. The main objective was to raise awareness about the multiple faces of feminism and women's concerns. Mentors were also selected based on their experience in working in international and intercultural environments.

## Mentoring and competence development

The **Mentoring Programme** had four different phases. At the start, the project team paired up the mentees and mentors, by matching the mentees' ambitions with the mentors' expertise. Then a kick-off meeting was organised, at which the mentoring pairs could each define a strategy for conducting their relationship, including the number of meetings and other forms of contact that they would have during the 12 months of the mentoring programme. The activities were regularly monitored by the project team.

The **Competence Development Programme** was based on non-formal education activities and covered a wide range of areas — human rights, intercultural dialogue, media and press, politics, and gender equality concepts and priorities, such

as engaging men in gender equality issues. The programme was composed of six weekend training sessions spread over a year, plus other complementary activities, such as visiting city halls, the national and European parliaments, taking part in conferences and debates, and assisting the political campaigns of female candidates in local elections.

The weekend training sessions strengthened the social bonds among the young women and covered six themes, the first five of which were:

- introduction to gender equality (concepts and historical movements);
- citizenship and intercultural dimensions (intersectionality and multiple forms of discrimination against women);
- activism and intervention projects;
- democracy, parity and politics;
- communication and media.

The sixth topic was prepared by the mentees themselves, addressing themes such as women in the arts, women and literature, and women and science. The group of mentees had the help and support of the project officers in organising the activities and the overall preparation of the weekend.

## Social transformation projects

Groups of mentees carried out nine **social transformation projects** on gender equality according to their interests. The project team supported the whole process with the ultimate goal of providing experience in developing and implementing a gender mainstreaming or an affirmative action project in gender issues. The projects were required to be sustainable and to multiply their results, as well as taking into account a gender perspective throughout the project cycle with a focus also on young men. Issues addressed by the projects included, for instance, work-life balance, fighting gender stereotypes and strengthening intercultural dialogue.

Some examples of social transformation projects developed under the 'From Woman to Woman' umbrella were:

### Parity for Young People

This group worked on parity, gender and political decision-making in the youth wings of political parties. They developed a flyer on the subject and worked with young men and women in these political parties, addressing the under-representation of women in political decision-making and how young men could contribute to a more gender-friendly political system.

### Deconstructing inequalities

This group worked with students from Cape Verde studying in Portuguese universities. They developed some debates with the students, addressing gender stereotypes from an intercultural dialogue perspective, leading the discussion towards cultural influences regarding gender stereotypes and the role of men at home and in family life.

Taking into account that Cape Verde had one of the most egalitarian governments in the world — its government achieved gender parity in 2006 and since autumn 2014 has a majority of women — these young women also interviewed female leaders from Cape Verde, in order to eliminate the stereotype that women do not belong in politics.

### Key achievements of the project

The under-representation of women in politics cannot be tackled effectively without attracting youth and young women in particular. The project 'From Woman to Woman' developed strategies to engage young women and men and to get them interested and involved in politics and gender equality.

Furthermore, the project was able to raise its visibility in the media and social networks. A set of handbooks, guides and other materials were published

in the context of the project that attracted much attention and are still widely used by teachers, schools, and gender equality and youth NGOs. An example is the toolkit for empowering young women in civic and political decision-making.

An internal evaluation was made using an online survey which was answered by mentees and mentors. Both considered that the objectives established for the mentoring relationship were achieved. The project succeeded in empowering young women and improving their confidence and skills. REDE's very solid network was crucial to the project's success as it enabled the mentors to be identified and the social intervention projects to be put into practice.

The project is relevant and transferable and the focus on youth represents a particularly important aspect to inspire other countries.

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### Further material:

Programme website:  
<http://demulherparamulher.redejovensigualdade.org.pt>;

Project 'From Woman to Woman' — International Women's Day 2010 — Lisbon:  
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## Awareness raising

Stup Srama	Croatia
Grass-roots campaigning for more women in politics	Ireland
Women Can Do It!	Portugal
Combatting male dominance in politics	Sweden

## Stup Srama (Pillory)

### Croatia — 2007–2015 Political parties in the pillory

#### Summary

Despite electoral reforms dating back to 2000, the number of women elected to Croatia's parliament and local authorities remains at around a quarter or fewer. Since 2008, political parties have been legally obliged to include at least 40 % of each gender in their electoral lists — but this quota is widely ignored.

Since 2007, the *Stup srama* campaign, run by the feminist organisation CESI, has been naming and shaming those political parties that persist in ignoring this equality legislation, by setting up 'pillars of shame' in the streets during each election campaign.

CESI also operates a website that publishes the worst examples of sexist or discriminatory language by politicians and other public figures, and every month gives the public the chance to vote for the most outrageous among them.

The campaign is thought to be one factor that has contributed to a small improvement in gender equality in recent elections, as well as a higher public awareness of the issue.

Stup Srama is an example of a small and innovative campaign running since 2007, focusing on raising awareness of the under-representation of women in politics. The campaign was launched by CESI (a feminist organisation that campaigns for gender equality and the advancement of women in society) in Zagreb and has been extended to other cities. It has gained a lot of public and media attention by

using innovative tools including street performances to present the 'pillar of shame', identifying the political parties who fail to fulfil the 40 % gender quota for electoral lists. In addition, sexist statements from politicians and public figures were posted on a web portal. The campaign enhanced awareness about gender representation in political decision-making and the lack of the implementation of the



### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It uses innovative and creative tools to raise awareness (including street performances and the 'Pillar of Shame').
- ✓ Its use of different media to raise awareness is very transferable.
- ✓ It has a cross-party dimension.
- ✓ It has visibility and wide publicity.
- ✓ It enjoys enthusiastic commitment from the organisers.

set gender quotas. It contributed to greater visibility of issues affecting women's representation prior to elections. It is difficult to assess the impact of the campaign but women's political representation has improved in local as well as national elections.

### Electoral reform takes women's representation halfway



A CESI 'pillar of shame'

Changes in Croatia's electoral system in 2000 increased women's representation in politics, with the share of women in parliament rising from 4-7 % to 22 %. However, during the 2000s the position stagnated, with 18-21 % of women in the parliament, 10-29 % in the government and 7-21 % in municipal

councils. Currently, women make up 26 % of the parliament, 19 % of the government, 16 % of municipal councils, 23 % of city councils and 21 % of county assemblies. Only 7 % of municipal mayors and 8 % of city mayors are women.

In 2001, a further measure to enhance women's participation in politics was introduced, which allows parties to claim a 10 % higher state subsidy for each woman elected. Finally, in 2008, 40 % gender quotas were introduced: political parties are obliged to include at least 40 % of each gender in their candidate lists, subject to a transitional period of three election cycles.

However, these laws have not brought about significant improvements in practice. While the share of female candidates is rising, they are generally put forward by smaller political parties which have no realistic chance of winning. Women are also usually given lower positions on the electoral lists. The political will to truly implement gender quotas is also lacking, as was clearly seen at the last local elections, when the introduction of fines for political parties which do not respect the gender quotas was postponed until the local elections in 2017 and the parliamentary elections in 2019.

### Putting the parties in the pillory

Given this situation, visibility campaigns in pre-election periods are called for, to warn the public of this problem and advocate change. 'Electoral law needs to be changed so that electoral commissions at all

levels reject lists that do not respect the legislation on balanced representation of women and men,' says the feminist organisation CESI (Centar za edukaciju, savjetovanje i istraživanje — Centre for Education, Counselling and Research).

In 2007, CESI designed and initiated the *Stup srama* ('Pillory') awareness-raising campaign, which has since become a regular activity. The campaign has been organised four times so far — in the run-up to the 2007 and 2011 parliamentary elections, and the 2009 and 2013 local elections.



Stup srama's *Libela* webpage

The campaign's main activity is a street performance in which CESI presents to the public a pillory — literally a 'pillar of shame' — which lists all the political parties that have failed to respect the 40 % gender quota of women in their electoral lists. This piece of theatre has become a pre-election tradition in Zagreb, but has also been organised in smaller towns of Split, Vukovar and Poreč by CESI's partner organisations. The action, which relies on CESI's analysis of all the parties' electoral lists, appeals to the public and usually gains a lot of public and media attention.

A second campaigning activity is publicising the most sexist and discriminatory statements made by politicians and other public figures. CESI has created a *Stup srama* webpage on the [www.libela.org](http://www.libela.org) portal, where it uploads such utterances. Every month, readers' votes are used to compile a 'best of' list.

The campaign is funded by the Croatian Office for Gender Equality, the French and American embassies in Croatia, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the City of Zagreb.

*Stup srama* has several strong features: it is small in scale but attractive to the public, and has been covered extensively by the media. It is held regularly before each election, and is accompanied by a website containing sexist and discriminatory statements of politicians and persons from public life, which is updated daily. Though it started in Zagreb, it has been spread to other towns by CESI's partner organisations.

## Women's representation improves

The *Stup srama* campaign has certainly raised the public visibility of problems related to gender quotas. Without it, the importance of gender-balanced participation in politics would probably be absent from the public agenda during election campaigns.

It is hard to say whether the campaign has any impact on political parties and whether they are selecting more women candidates in order to improve their appeal to female electors. However, it is true that recent years have seen some improvement in women's participation in local elections. Between 2005 and 2013 the share of women in municipal councils nearly doubled from 8.4 % to 16.1 %; in city councils it rose by 44 % to 22.6 % and in county assemblies by 42 % to 20.7 %. There is also a small increase in the number of female mayors: in municipalities the share rose from 4.9 % in 2009 to 6.8 % in 2013 and in cities from 4.7 % in 2009 to 7.9 % in 2013, although they are elected in direct elections.

At the parliamentary level, the share of women elected in the 2011 elections was 19.8 %. One year later the share of women in parliament rose to 25 % and it is currently at a high point of 26 %. There has been no improvement in the number of female ministers.

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*Libela* list of sexist and discriminatory utterances:  
<http://www.libela.org/stup-srama;>

CESI annual report 2011: [http://www.cesi.hr/attach/\\_c/cesi\\_godisnji\\_izvjestaj\\_2011\\_~2.pdf;](http://www.cesi.hr/attach/_c/cesi_godisnji_izvjestaj_2011_~2.pdf)

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# Grass-Roots Campaigning for the Equal Representation of Women in Politics

## Ireland — 2013–2015

### Grass-roots campaign empowers women

#### Summary

In response to the historically low level of women's political representation in Ireland, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), the umbrella body for women's organisations, led a campaign to change policy, raise awareness and empower women to play an active role in politics.

Elements of the campaign were the introduction of electoral quotas, constitutional reform and a women-friendly parliament. These were supported by consciousness-raising and networking activities, especially at local level, where involvement in politics starts. A model that is being rolled out across the country is that of the Women's Manifesto Group in Longford. It held a national workshop for women candidates, helped first-time candidates to network (all of them were subsequently elected), and organised a post-election debrief on what worked in helping women to get elected, and the barriers they came up against.

The first of NWCI's goals was achieved in 2012 with the introduction of a 30 % quota of women candidates for parliamentary elections; this will rise to 40 % seven years after it is first applied. There is a sanction of a 50 % cut in government funding for parties that do not comply. However, the voting system and the male-dominated political culture mean that a lot remains to be done before equal political representation for women is achieved.

NWCI's local empowerment strategy is transferable to other countries, particularly to those with few women politicians.

This is a good example of grass-roots women's organisations campaigning and networking for improved political representation of women. The initiative responds to the fact that men significantly outnumber women in all political decision-making structures in Ireland. The campaign was launched by the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), a national umbrella body representing women's groups and organisations across the country. Innovative activities to improve women's representation included a guide which sets out six ways to build a woman-friendly parliament and campaigning for gender quotas which currently require a minimum of 30 % of women electoral candidates.

By focusing on women's talents, campaigning to change political structures so that they become

women friendly, networking, and consultations, women have been empowered to become more actively involved in politics. The emphasis on local-level initiatives linked to national campaigns and lobbying is particularly important as engagement in national politics depends on prior local participation. This model of women's organising and campaigning for gender-sensitive politics is very transferable and is particularly relevant for countries where there is a low representation of women in politics.

#### A history of low women's representation

The NWCI is an umbrella body representing women's organisations across the country. It has a long-standing commitment to improving the

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It is a high-profile public campaign, setting off a wide-ranging debate about women's representation in politics and challenging the existing male-dominated political culture.
- ✓ It combines in an innovative way a number of awareness-raising initiatives: campaigning for quotas; development of publicity materials aiming to change the male culture in politics; local projects to make politics more inclusive and increase community-based women's engagement.
- ✓ The issue of women's political representation was brought onto the agenda of the Constitutional Convention, including an explicit new provision on gender equality.
- ✓ There is a strong and long-standing commitment from NWCI and from member organisations.
- ✓ It enjoys a high level of engagement amongst community-based women's organisations.
- ✓ The model is relevant for other countries which lack women's political participation.



gender-sensitive policy-making, which could make a major contribution to gender equality.

Through its member organisations, including the 50-50 Group and Women for Election, NWCI has mobilised women to advocate policy changes, including changes in the Irish constitution, to improve women's political representation and to empower women to engage in politics.

This issue is very important in Ireland as men greatly outnumber women in all political decision-making structures:

- Women make up only 15.7 % of representatives in the lower house of the Irish Parliament (Dáil); this is up from 13.9 % in 2009, but it is the

representation of women in politics and has been at the forefront of campaigning and raising awareness of this issue. It supports gender quotas, and believes that if there are more women in politics this will result in more

fifth-lowest proportion in the EU and well below the EU average of 27.8 %;

- Only 13.3 % of government ministers and just over one quarter of ministers of state were women in 2013;
- There is a slightly better gender representation in the upper house (Seanad), where nearly one third of representatives were female in 2013. The Seanad is partly elected and partly appointed;
- Less than one in five elected members of local authorities were female in 2013;
- Under the EIGE Gender Equality Index, Ireland scored 38.7 on the domain of political power, below the EU-28 average of 49.8.

These low figures have led to criticisms from the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which stated in 2005 that it 'is concerned at the significant under-representation of women in elected political structures'.

### Thirty per cent quota

The under-representation of women in politics led to a lively debate in Ireland and the launch of a national campaign by NWCI and its member organisations, which resulted in the introduction of legislation on electoral gender quotas in the Dáil under the Electoral (Amendment) (Political

Funding) Act 2012. This requires that a minimum of 30 % electoral candidates be women. This will rise to 40 % seven years after the quota's first implementation. A party failing to achieve this will lose half its government funding. While it affects the number of women candidates, the law does not regulate the number of women actually elected.

The current Dáil electoral system, based on multi-member regional constituencies with TDs (members of parliament) elected under the single transferable vote (STV) system, represents a barrier to women's entry into politics because it demands a lot of constituency work, which is difficult for women who bear most childcare and family responsibilities. This is in addition to a male-dominated culture and low membership and representation of women in political parties.

Obstacles to women's participation in Irish politics identified by the parliament's Joint Committee on Justice, Equality Defence and Women's Rights (2009) include access to cash and resources, responsibility for childcare, confidence in putting themselves forward for selection, a gendered political culture and candidate selection processes. NWCI says that care responsibilities and male-dominated structures of power and decision-making are major barriers (NWCI 2013).

## A national campaign

NWCI's aims are to:

- implement change in policy and legislation to improve the representation of women in local, national and European politics;
- raise awareness of the need for women-friendly political systems and gender-sensitive political structures;
- empower women to stand for election and participate in politics;
- engage women in seeking political change by challenging politicians and electoral candidates to address women's issues in their election campaigns.

Having identified better political representation for women as a strategic priority, NWCI launched a national programme of campaigning, awareness raising and empowerment. Its main activities were:

### Campaign for electoral quotas

NWCI and its member organisations have been very active in successfully campaigning for electoral gender quotas (see above). This has had an impact nationally and locally in making people aware of the extent to which women are under-represented in politics, challenging male-dominated decision-making, and pressing for concerted action. The campaign for gender quotas involved a wide network of NWCI member organisations across the country, including the national women's campaigning groups, the 50-50 Group and Women for Election.

### Women's political representation in the Constitutional Convention

NWCI was instrumental in getting women's political representation onto the agenda of the Constitutional Convention which voted in favour of measures to improve the representation of women in politics, including an explicit new provision on gender equality and a gender-neutral amendment to the 'women in the home clause'.

### A Parliament of all Talents: building a women-friendly parliament

NWCI believes that quotas are only one part of the solution to the under-representation of women in politics, and argues that the way the parliamentary system works needs to be improved: its male culture needs to change so that, once elected, women will go on to seek re-election. Core objectives are to change how women see and experience politics, and to value the contribution women make to politics. NWCI's 2013 report *A Parliament of all Talents: Building a Women-Friendly Oireachtas* sets out six ways forward: family-friendly policies; promoting women to senior cabinet and parliamentary committees; carrying out a gender audit; introducing

rules to promote a culture of respect; investing in politicians and gender-sensitivity; and promoting solidarity among women politicians.

### Women Rising

In 2013, NWCI commenced an innovative project called 'Women in Politics and Decision-Making', funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which implemented a wide range of initiatives to improve the representation of women in politics and decision-making. As well as lobbying and campaigning for gender quotas and other measures, NWCI carried out a consultation process known as 'Women Rising' which addressed women's issues and the representation of women in politics in the lead-up to the 2014 local and European elections. Large meetings were held with candidates and women voters in three places in Ireland at a series of café events, with the aim of providing a space for women to have their say on the issues important to them, as they relate to the election campaign, and encouraging women from the grass-roots to play an active role in local politics. The *Women Rising Manifesto* (NWCI 2014) drawn up in consultation with NWCI member organisations, was used as the basis for these large meetings.

### Women's Manifesto Group

One example of a local initiative is the Women's Manifesto Group, established in 2009 by Longford Women's Link, which has worked closely with NWCI. The group aims to make communities and politics more inclusive of women's perspectives by increasing the number of women in local decision-making, and in local and national politics. It was created as a response to women's dissatisfaction with their under-representation. Examples of its work include a national workshop for women standing for election, national networking for first-time candidates (all of whom were subsequently elected), and a post-election debrief on what worked in helping women to get elected, and the barriers they came up against. It is a good example of how networking and sharing experiences can contribute to a culture of change. The model is currently being rolled out across Ireland.

## Empowering the grass-roots is a transferable approach

This example of grass-roots campaigning and organising shows the importance of empowering women to become involved in political decision-making. This has been needed in Ireland as many women feel alienated from the male culture of decision-making and are put off standing for political office. By focusing on women's talents, campaigning to make political structures women friendly, networking and consulting, women have been empowered to involve themselves more actively in politics, either by pressing political representatives to take women's issues seriously or by opening up spaces for women to stand for election. The focus on local initiatives linked to national campaigns and lobbying is important because many Irish politicians only find a role in national politics after they have first held office locally.

NWCI's approach is transferable to any country as it focuses on engaging women in local and national politics and empowers them to make change from the grass-roots. It is especially relevant for countries where there is a low representation of women in politics. The 'Women Rising' and 'Women's Manifesto Group' initiatives have been effective in empowering women to influence politics at a local level, and through this to open up spaces for women to network and enter politics. The 'A Parliament of all Talents: Building a Women-Friendly Oireachtas' initiative is transferable as it sets out six ways to build a woman-friendly parliament that could be used and adapted by any country. One of the successes of the NWCI's work is that it has stimulated a wide-ranging debate in Ireland about women's representation in politics, and this has challenged the existing male-dominated political culture.

Along with strong commitment from member organisations, a key factor of NWCI's success was that it appointed a policy officer specifically to deal with this area of work. She has been instrumental in agreeing national policy changes and in mobilising women at the grass-roots.

Even though there have been significant achievements, many politicians still oppose quotas and

resist changes to existing power structures. For this reason it is vital that the grass-roots work continue. However, projects like 'Women Rising' demand resources. NWCI's funding has been cut since the economic crisis; restoration of funding is critical to achieving its organisational goals in the long term.

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*The Women's Manifesto model. Longford Women's Manifesto Project*, Longford Women's Link: [http://www.longfordwomenslink.org/photos/Womenss\\_Manifesto\\_9\\_steps\\_Supports\\_Model.pdf](http://www.longfordwomenslink.org/photos/Womenss_Manifesto_9_steps_Supports_Model.pdf);

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Link to a video made by NWCI in relation to young women and their interest in politics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o4646QRsSU>;

Photo from NWCI website: [http://www.nwci.ie/?/learn/photo\\_gallery/women\\_rising](http://www.nwci.ie/?/learn/photo_gallery/women_rising).



# Women Can Do It! (Na política, as mulheres são capazes!)

## Portugal — 2007–2010

### A toolkit, training and an awareness campaign

#### Summary

In Portugal, the share of elected political posts held by women is respectable at the European level (38 %), rather low nationally (26 %) and abysmal locally (only 7.5 % of mayors).

To counter this, in 2008 the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) republished a tried and tested training toolkit, *Na Política, As Mulheres são Capazes!* (*In Politics Women Can Do It!*), organised a series of 11 training sessions around the country which reached 242 women, and drew up agreements with the regional governments of the Azores and Madeira to enable actions on those islands.

In 2009, CIG followed up with the nationwide *Women make democracy better* campaign, which used television, radio, posters and cards to encourage women to be politically active. In 2010, CIG undertook an innovative action in education, by publishing a handbook for teachers, the *Education Guide: Gender and Citizenship — third cycle*, which suggests practical activities to tackle gender stereotypes.

Women Can Do It! is an example of a nationwide project launched by CIG (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality) aiming to raise awareness of women's participation in political decision-making with a specific focus on young women. It uses the slogan 'Women make democracy better' to promote an inclusive environment for young women. Specific tools have been developed including a toolkit built on the Norwegian experience to support awareness raising and training to foster women's self-confidence, communication and leadership skills. Furthermore, education guides for teachers were produced to tackle gender stereotypes. To better reach out to young women and men the project established close cooperation with the National Youth Council, youth associations and the Portuguese Youth Institute.

#### Waiting for parity



Although the number of Portuguese women holding political posts is increasing, progress towards equality is slow and uneven. There is a particular difficulty at local level, where since the most recent elections in 2013, only 7.5 % of the mayors elected have been women. The situation is somewhat better at national level, with the 2011 elections returning 26.5 % of women to parliament and 17 % to government posts<sup>(15)</sup>. At European level the gender balance is even better, and since 2014, 38.1 % of Portuguese MEPs have been female<sup>(16)</sup>.

15 CIG — Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, *Report — Beijing + 20 — Portugal, 2014*, [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National\\_reviews/Portugal\\_review\\_Beijing20.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National_reviews/Portugal_review_Beijing20.pdf).

16 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-parliament/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/eu-parliament/index_en.htm)

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It is an innovative and multi-pronged campaign with good prospects for transferability.
- ✓ It has clear goals and focus, and it has achieved a significant reach to young women.
- ✓ There was a fruitful cooperation with youth organisations and stakeholders.
- ✓ It provided teachers with pedagogical support for raising the awareness of students, teaching and developing projects.
- ✓ It proved useful in initiating and stimulating debate.
- ✓ It took international experience into account.
- ✓ It improved cooperation between the Commission on Gender Equality and municipal and regional governments.

Deeply ingrained stereotypes regarding gender and leadership are particularly noticeable when it comes to electing mayors, who are called on to be father figures to their communities and are much more visible politically than their colleagues on local councils. Elections centred on one person are less open to women's participation — as in the case of presidential elections, at which there have been no female candidates since the 1980s — than collegial or plural decision-making bodies such as the national or European parliaments, which operate a list system. This unbalanced situation persists despite the adoption of the Parity Law in 2006. This law lays down that any list of three or more candidates (for parliament, the European Parliament or local authorities) must contain at least 33 % of each gender, and that for the Portuguese and European parliaments the lists should not include more than two persons of the same gender successively. If lists do not comply with these requirements, public financing for election campaigns is reduced.

### A nationwide awareness-raising campaign

In order to promote the participation of women in politics, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) launched a nationwide awareness-raising campaign. In 2008, the Commission decided to reprint the *Na Política, As Mulheres são*

*Capazes! (In Politics Women Can Do It!)* toolkit<sup>(17)</sup>, originally published in 2001 and to disseminate it widely. The toolkit, which was translated from a publication of the same name produced by the Norwegian Labour Party's Women Network, supports awareness raising and training sessions by describing practical activities that trainers can implement. These improve women's communication and leadership skills and give them the self-confidence to raise their voices, put over their points of view and take the lead in public interventions.

Eleven awareness-raising sessions took place across the country between 2007 and 2010, each lasting six hours. Taken together, they reached 242 participants. Generally, their main aim was to support women to actively participate in public life, by addressing topics such as how to communicate effectively with a large audience, how to be assertive and self-confident in communication<sup>(18)</sup>.

In addition to these activities on the mainland, CIG signed agreements with the governments of the Azores and Madeira, which led to several training sessions taking place on the islands to raise

17 CIG — Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, *Na Política, As Mulheres são Capazes (In Politics Women Can Do It)*, 2008 (2nd ed.): ISBN: 972-597217-1.

18 See reports of training sessions: <http://www.umaracores.org/images/anexos/82-2.pdf>, <http://www.ps-baixaolentejo.com/images/mps.pdf>.

awareness of the importance of women's participation in organisations and in political life.

CIG also established close cooperation with the National Youth Council to gain the support of youth associations and of the Portuguese Youth Institute in encouraging young women to take part in public life and particularly political life.

## Women make democracy better

Following these awareness-raising events, a nationwide campaign called *Women make democracy better* was launched in 2009 <sup>(19)</sup>. It was broadcast on national television and cable TV 111 times and on radio 180 times. It was advertised at 600 sites outdoors, in 380 trains and on 2 439 ATMs as well as through cards distributed in restaurants, cinemas, theatres, cultural centres, etc.

Moreover, for the first time educational guides were produced to promote citizenship and gender equality. The *Guide for the third cycle* <sup>(20)</sup>, launched in 2010, covers the issue of decision-making and suggests practical activities to tackle gender stereotypes and induce equal attitudes towards leadership among female and male students. Its main purpose is to provide teachers with pedagogical support for teaching and developing projects and other activities. The primary target group of the Guide are students of 13 years and upwards, but it is also possible to carry out almost all of the activities with some adjustments in other age groups.

The Guide presents a useful resource for school teachers as it supports them in two ways: by providing a clear theoretical framework; and by offering practical advice for classroom activities.

Practical suggestions for 'Gender and Leadership', for instance, focus on exploring and discussing inequalities between women and men in power-related and decision-making positions. Through group work and structured class discussions students are asked to reflect on the variety of reasons for the asymmetry between women and men in positions of power and decision-making. A particular focus is placed on the constraints derived from the reconciliation of work and family life and the role of gender as a determining factor influencing the amount of time dedicated to different life spheres, particularly domestic life. The Guide also seeks to demystify the idea of a 'born leader' while demonstrating that behaviours associated with 'leadership' can be developed through active training. A further emphasis of the Guide is 'Gender and Vocational Choices'. It addresses the issue of gender asymmetries in the choice of professions by students and gives practical suggestions as to how teachers and psychologists could make students aware of gender stereotypes associated with professions and support them in vocational decision-making. Gender stereotypes are also often transmitted via different media products, computer games, etc. The Guide focuses on these aspects and gives concrete examples of exercises, group sessions and tests that could make students more aware and empower them.

The Guide was commissioned by CIG and the General Directorate for Innovation and Curriculum Development.

A spin-off effect was that the action strengthened the relationship between CIG, municipalities and regional governments.

19 See <http://www.cig.gov.pt/campanhas/as-mulheres-fazem-a-democracia-melhor-a-diferenca-faz-a-igualdade/>.

20 CIG — Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, *Education Guide: Gender and Citizenship — 3rd cycle* (coordinated by Teresa Pinto; other authors: Conceição Nogueira, Cristina Vieira, Isabel Silva, Luísa Saavedra, Maria João Duarte Silva, Paula Silva, Teresa-Cláudia Tavares and Vasco Prazeres), 2009, [http://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education\\_Guide\\_3rd\\_Cycle.pdf](http://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education_Guide_3rd_Cycle.pdf).

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# Domination Techniques and How to Combat Them

## Sweden — 1970s–2015

### Tools to combat domination techniques

#### Summary

Domination techniques are defined as strategies of social manipulation and domination by which a dominant group maintains its power and privilege. They are often used by men to assert themselves over women for instance by treating women as invisible, ridiculing them, withholding information, putting them in a double bind and shaming them.

In Sweden, the idea of domination techniques — as well as the strategies to combat them — has been disseminated to large parts of political parties and other organisations across the country. Various role plays, films and exercises to combat these techniques have been developed, and these are used in schools, in political parties and at workplaces.

One prominent example in the field of political decision-making is the Power Handbook produced by Sweden's National Federation of Social Democratic Women (S-kvinnor) which promotes ways to resist men's use of 'dominance techniques' and was published in eight languages. The Power Handbook articulates ways for women to obtain, keep and utilise power. The book not only explores how power can be achieved and is accessible at the level of institutions, but also through everyday interactions and personal relationships.

This example represents a long-standing initiative of awareness-raising activities and materials (including training, handbooks etc.) to address and counter male domination techniques and the theory of male power. Its objective is to stimulate debate about power and how it can be used in a democratic way. In a political context this has led to the use of role play, films and exercises to combat domination techniques. A YouTube clip has been widely disseminated in Sweden as an illustration of male dominance in politics; the National Federation of Social Democratic Women (S-women) has published the 'Power Handbook' (with advice for women on how to get access to power) which was translated into many languages and spread to numerous countries around the world.

The strategies to combat male domination techniques were disseminated to political parties and organisations and Swedish society in general, they were adapted to specific workplaces (for example,

Swedish police, municipalities) and the concept is widely discussed in schools. Social media also played an important role in dissemination.

#### Five techniques for domination

The proportions of women and men in elected decision-making bodies in Sweden are relatively well-balanced. However, the numerical gender balance in politics does not necessarily mean that the sexes share power and influence equally. Gendered norms about who is a proper political leader and who should be making political decisions persist, and those in power may consciously or unconsciously use various strategies to maintain their power and privileges. One such strategy is the use of domination techniques, also called master suppression techniques. These are defined as strategies of social manipulation and domination by which a dominant group maintains its power and

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It addresses masculine domination techniques and the theory of male power in an innovative way.
- ✓ The strategies to combat male domination techniques and to promote balanced decision-making have been elaborated and used over many years proving to be effective.
- ✓ The strategies have been transferred from politics to many different areas (e.g. workplace, education).
- ✓ It creatively employs a variety of awareness-raising and training tools (e.g. films, plays, exercises, social media, etc.).
- ✓ It is rooted in a gender mainstreaming framework.
- ✓ The materials and tools produced have been used extensively across Europe and around the world.
- ✓ The model is very transferable and adaptable to different contexts.

privilege. The idea was popularised in the 1970s by the Norwegian professor of social psychology, Berit Ås, who described five techniques for domination that men use to assert themselves (mostly) over women. They are:

1. **Making invisible:** silencing and marginalising people by ignoring them. This includes, for instance, reformulating a colleague's idea as one's own, taking the floor when it is another one's turn to speak or not paying attention (e.g. by talking, browsing through papers or checking emails) while someone else is speaking.
2. **Ridicule:** portraying someone else's arguments in a ridiculing way, or commenting on someone's appearance.
3. **Withholding information:** sharing information among an inner circle, without telling everyone concerned. For instance making decisions not at the board meeting where everyone is present, but in a small group at the bar afterwards.
4. **Double bind:** putting people in a situation in which they will be belittled and penalised whichever alternative they choose or regardless of how they act. For example, when a person does thorough work there are complaints that they are too slow; when the work is done efficiently, there is criticism that they are sloppy.

5. **Blaming and shaming:** embarrassing someone, or insinuating that they are themselves to blame for their position.

### Tools to fight back



Various counter-strategies have been developed to combat these domination techniques, which have since been used in politics, schools and civil society organisations throughout Sweden. They include techniques such as 'respect' and 'demand information'.

Examples of these exercises can be found in printed form and on the internet, and various sectors in society have adapted the counter-strategies to fit into their own contexts.

One example of this is the *Power Handbook* published by the National Federation of Social Democratic Women (S-kvinnor). The book gives women practical advice on how to get access to political

power and influence, particularly in political parties. It provides step-by-step guidance to achieve the goal (e.g. learn the rules, analyse power structures, put forward women candidates, increase women's representation in decision-making, in selection committees, in working groups, in campaign groups and chair meetings). It also presents the five domination techniques by Berit Ås, and gives advice on how to counter them. The book outlines the steps that women can take as individuals and in groups to get more women into decision-making bodies, and raises awareness about gender dynamics so that women will be more effective once they get there. The booklet observes that *'there are innumerable traps on the road towards fair power for women. This handbook identifies the traps and provides a guide on how we can avoid or eliminate them'*. It emphasises that politics is not only about being a candidate. There needs to be gender balance behind the scenes if a party is to be credible to women voters. It gives concrete tips on how to change things. The wider benefit of this initiative is that the ideas easily cross party lines, and can be used by a wide variety of women's political organisations. Across Europe, political parties try to train their politicians, and sharing of good training material on working together to make gender balance a reality is a way to empower ever-broader groups of people.

Further examples of initiatives that have been developed in Sweden to raise awareness of domination techniques include role plays and films such as, for instance, a video made in 1992 by the municipality of Växjö illustrating various domination techniques and strategies to combat them. This video was widely disseminated across Sweden when it was published. Today, YouTube films are used.

## Broad dissemination

Awareness of domination techniques and the strategies to combat them has been widely disseminated in Swedish society. The concepts are discussed in schools, and pupils are taught how to combat domination techniques by taking part in role plays, watching YouTube clips etc. Domination techniques

are also discussed in workplaces, politics and civil society, as part of combatting discrimination and promoting a good working climate.

One reason for their broad spread is that the ideas are relevant to many different arenas and groups of people, and strategies to combat domination techniques can fairly easily be adapted to different contexts. Most people who watch the films can relate to the situations that are portrayed. The films also use humour to illustrate the situations in which domination techniques are deployed.

The *Power Handbook*, which serves as a guide to women for gaining power in political parties, was translated into several other languages including English, Spanish, French and Serbian. It inspired others and became a useful resource for the development of similar guides on achieving gender balance in different fields. The Council of Europe's *Guide for Balancing Decision-making* (2001) refers to the Swedish good practice, as well as the recent *OSCE Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties* (2014).

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*Göran Persson utövar härskarteknik*: Göran Persson, prime minister of Sweden 1996-2006, practices domination techniques against Maud Olofsson, leader of the Centre Party. This YouTube clip has been disseminated widely in Sweden as an illustration of male dominance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JipBk3V0EI0>.

Materials on combating domination techniques (in Swedish):

- at the workplace: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_hJzQksRlpw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hJzQksRlpw;);
- in the police: <http://www.svenskpolis.se/Artikellarkiv/Artiklar-2013/November-2013/5-knep-mot-harskartekniker/>;
- in civil society organisations such as trade unions and political parties: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_LG1e7TBUY8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LG1e7TBUY8;);
- in women's shelters: <http://www.tjejjouren.se/tjejjuiden/feminism/harskarteknikerna-8544>;
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## Political tools and advocacy

Delegation for Women's Rights	France
Changing discriminatory party practice	The Netherlands
Delegation for Women's Rights	France

### Delegation for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

#### France — 1999–2015

#### Parliamentary delegations keep gender on the agenda

##### Summary

Both houses of the French parliament — the National Assembly and the Senate — have had a 'Delegation for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men' since 1999, with the objective that they complement each other. Their function is to mainstream gender throughout the legislative process. They are cross-party bodies, each has 36 members, among them both women and men. The delegations can scrutinise proposed legislation and monitor implementation. They also conduct consultation and research to produce proactive reports aiming to influence future legislation.

The delegation in the Assembly has drafted at least six reports on different aspects of the French electoral system and has been instrumental in introducing certain new measures — for example, the use of 'twinning' in the recent regional elections.

Both delegations have played a crucial role in safeguarding and extending gender parity in politics.

In 1999, the Delegations for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (in the General Assembly and the Senate) were established with the aim of creating a parliamentary body to implement gender mainstreaming across the legislative process. The delegations can scrutinise proposed legislation and monitor implementation. Their purpose is to revise legislation where the gender repercussions had been overlooked,

through sponsoring amendments, as well as to prepare and support legislation that has a directly gender-related remit. They also conduct consultation and research to produce proactive reports aimed at influencing future legislation (e.g. by getting issues onto the government agenda or have them taken up as a Private Members' Bill). Both delegations have played a crucial role in safeguarding and extending gender parity in politics.

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It is innovative in combining gender-equality policy developments with monitoring of gender parity legislation.
- ✓ It helps to put certain issues on the agenda and to stop others from falling off (such as gender parity).
- ✓ It monitors the implementation of policies and highlights negative outcomes for women (e.g. in reports).
- ✓ It provides a formal arena within parliament devoted to promoting women's rights.
- ✓ It established a network linked to powerful actors and empowers members in their parliamentary work.

## Two delegations on women's rights

The women's delegations in the two houses of the French parliament (the General Assembly and the Senate) were established in 1999 as part of the introduction of gender parity legislation. Their function is to mainstream gender equality throughout the legislative process, to ensure the successful implementation of the gender parity legislation, to ensure good outcomes for women in all aspects of decision-making, and to raise awareness of policy areas particularly concerning women in France and abroad and to get them onto the political agenda. Members also sit on standing committees and those members often use their committee roles to enhance the work of the delegations. They can also use Private Members' Bills to initiate legislation proposed by the delegations.

Both delegations were intended to introduce an element of gender mainstreaming into the French parliament. They are composed of members of the respective chambers of parliament from across the parties and include both sexes, even though the great majority are women (26/36 members in the Senate and 30/36 members in the National Assembly).

## Making a difference

The delegations can scrutinise proposed legislation and monitor its implementation. Delegations can take control of bills in order to issue recommendations before they are adopted. Their purpose is to revise legislation where gender-related repercussions have been overlooked, through sponsoring amendments, as well as to prepare and support legislation that has a directly gender-related remit. They also conduct consultation and research on their own initiative, and produce reports to influence future legislation by getting issues onto the government agenda or having them taken up as a Private Members' Bill. In recent years, the balance between new legislative input and the monitoring of existing measures has shifted towards the latter, largely because the delegations have now built up a range of measures that require monitoring. The delegations have extensive powers to call expert witnesses, obtain documents and question ministers. Since their establishment the delegations have focused, among other things, on:

- parity in politics;
- gender pay and professional equality;
- women and pensions;
- violence against women.

The working methods have included: preparation of reports commenting on legislative proposals or draft legislation (e.g. on immigrant women, women in precarious situations, part-time employment and professional equality); elaboration of information and evaluation reports; and initiating or active participation in hearings, public debates, international events, etc.

Since they were set up, the delegations have developed and intensified their activities. For example, if in the period 2002–2007 the Delegation of the National Assembly prepared two or three reports a year, in the period 2012–2014 it published, on average, six a year. This demonstrates that since their establishment the role of the delegations has become more prominent. Numerous proposals made by the delegations have been taken into account by the government. For example, recently in the context of the draft law for equality between women and men, an amendment allowing the introduction of specific measures to enable the Public Investment Bank (BPI) to support women entrepreneurs, initiated by the members of the delegation and presented by its president, was taken on board. The same applies to the draft law on the adaptation of society to an ageing population. In this case, the recommendations of the delegation on raising awareness of violence against older persons, in particular older women, and on developing gendered data collection to improve the information available to parliament were adopted <sup>(21)</sup>.

The two delegations aim to complement each other to maximise their effectiveness, and often publish reports on the same subjects — which is inevitable as bills are passed back and forth between the two houses during debate. Regarding monitoring and proactive research on issues that are not (yet) on the legislative agenda, they are also complementary, often examining different aspects of a given issue. The delegations have helped to get certain issues onto the agenda, to stop others (such as gender parity) from falling off before they are resolved, to monitor the implementation of policies and highlight where outcomes have been negative for women, and to

provide a formal arena within parliament devoted to promoting women’s rights. Both delegations have played a crucial role in safeguarding and extending gender parity in politics, and the reports they have published — together with the speaking time in the chamber that delegation members are entitled to when they present them — are key. The delegation in the Assembly has drafted at least six reports on different aspects of the French electoral system and has been instrumental in introducing certain new measures — for example, the use of ‘twinning’ in the recent regional elections — and has been very vocal in its opposition to previous measures that would have undermined gender parity.

## Influence through networking

The delegations reinforce the influence of a gender equality perspective in the state administration. They also work closely with other gender parity mechanisms — particularly when they issue evaluations and recommendations of public policies and pending legislation. The presidents of the women’s delegations in the National Assembly, the Senate and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council all have automatic membership of the *Haut Conseil à l’Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes* (HCEfh), which was set up to stimulate public debate on gender equality. The HCEfh has a more neutral research function and the delegations have a more political function focused on revising and introducing legislation.

The cooperation between the Haut Conseil and the delegation in the Assembly is particularly close and was a vital component in the early days. The fact that many people transfer between these two bodies is indicative of this link. Since the HCEfh is attached to the executive, and the delegation is rooted in the legislature, they have on several occasions worked hand in hand. This comes about as a result of effective networking.

One of the strengths of the delegations, therefore, lies in their ability to network with powerful actors and to empower their members in their parliamentary work.

21 <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/rap-info/i2694.asp>

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delf-index.asp](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/commissions/delf-index.asp);

<http://www.senat.fr/commission/femmes/>;

Rapport d'information sur l'activité de la  
délégation de l'Assemblée nationale en 2014:  
[http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/rap-info/  
i2694.asp](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/rap-info/i2694.asp).

# Reformed Political Party (SGP)

## Netherlands — 2001–2014

### Advocacy for the right to stand for election

#### Summary

Until 2013, the SGP (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij or Reformed Political Party) was unique among Dutch political parties in that, based on its interpretation of the Bible, it prohibited women from standing for political office. The party regards women bearing government or legislative responsibility to be at odds with the biblical vocation of women. Despite condemnation from women's organisations, the Dutch state was reluctant to intervene, stating a clash of fundamental rights: non-discrimination versus religious freedom. This prompted a number of women's organisations to take action and to contest this in court. After a seven-year legal battle involving four court cases, in 2012 the European Court of Human Rights agreed with the ruling of the Dutch Supreme Court that the SGP's position was discriminatory and unacceptable regardless of the religious conviction on which it was based. The SGP changed its rules in 2013 and in March 2014 its first woman councillor was elected in Vlissingen.

The Dutch SGP is an ultra-conservative, faith-based political party that did not allow women to be elected to political functions. The Dutch government was indecisive in taking action as it was qualifying the situation as a clash of fundamental rights: non-discrimination versus religious freedom and freedom of association. Thus, several women's associations took legal action against the Dutch state. The multistep court procedure, involving several appeals including one to the European Court of Human Rights, led in 2012 to the final decision, that the SGP cannot exclude women. Following the legal procedure, the SGP executive council changed its general regulations such that in the nomination of candidates for elections (at all levels) the sex of candidates cannot abrogate the candidate's right to run. In March 2014, in the municipality of Vlissingen, the first female candidate was included on the list of candidates from the SGP and was elected as a councillor.

This example demonstrates the importance of civil society in challenging women's exclusion from politics. The initiative was vital in addressing non-discrimination and equal treatment, which are fundamental to women's representation in politics. The

case highlights the need to remove obstacles to women's political participation and could also be replicated for the application of positive measures.

#### Condemnation at the United Nations

Until recently, one Dutch political party stood out from the rest. The SGP (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij or Reformed Political Party) was unique in that, based on its interpretation of the Bible, it prohibited women from standing for political office. The party held obstinately to this principle despite high-level criticism: at its 2001 session, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) made it clear that the policy conflicted with Article 7 of the CEDAW convention, which the Netherlands signed in 1980. CEDAW recommended that the Netherlands take action to correct this situation.

*The Committee notes with concern that in the Netherlands there is a political party represented in the parliament which excludes women from membership which is a violation of article 7c of the Convention.*

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ It proves that action against discriminatory rules and practices can lead to change.
- ✓ It demonstrates that the determination and commitment of Women's Associations is essential for change.
- ✓ It highlights the need to remove obstacles that still exist within political parties to exclude women from political participation.

*The Committee recommends that the State party take urgent measure to address this situation, including through the adoption of legislation that brings the membership of political parties into conformity with the obligations under article 7' (2)*

### Dutch state reluctant to act

Nevertheless, the Dutch state declined to take any action against the SGP, and continued to subsidise it as it had done since 1999. The state's reasoning was that Dutch law was in accordance with the convention, so did not need changing. Equally the cabinet did not want to move against the SGP since it believed that what was at stake was a clash of different fundamental rights: non-discrimination versus religious freedom and freedom of association. The government refused to ban or penalise the party and held that the law was already strong enough to deal with any discrimination by the SGP. This reaction received a lot of criticism. The rejection of the CEDAW's recommendation was seen as undermining the international legal order. It is not the Netherlands but CEDAW that supervises the interpretation of and compliance with the convention.

### First protests against SGP discrimination

The individual complaints about SGP practice started in the 80s and 90s and played an important role in challenging the party's position, although these 'horizontal' allegations of discrimination had legally failed and did not lead to real changes. In the 80s one woman with a reformed background Mrs Grabijn-Van

Putten had threatened to take the party to court if she did not receive voting rights for a party assembly, declaring the party's position to be unconstitutional. After many years of disputes in 2001 she brought her case to the Equal Treatment Commission, which declared this case to be outside its jurisdiction.

In 1993, several women from Deventer reported discrimination by the SGP to the police but no further action was taken. The same holds true for an appeal of a woman in 1995 concerning the party's refusal to register her as a member on the grounds that she did not endorse the party's foundations. This appeal was lost, the District Court of The Hague ruled that while the SGP did discriminate it did not do so in a criminal manner.

More organised and concerted action was needed to challenge women's exclusion and bring about change. Dutch human rights NGOs and women's rights associations took the next step, triggered by the government's refusal to implement the recommendations of CEDAW Committee.

### Women's rights associations: seven years of court cases

Faced with this stalemate, a number of women's associations started legal action against the Dutch state. They comprised 10 of the country's most notable human and women's rights organisations and were led by the Clara Wichmann Test Case Foundation (Stichting Proefprocessenfonds Clara Wichmann), which exists specifically to support legal action to improve the legal position of Dutch women. Among others were the Netherlands Association for Women's Interests, Women's Labour and Equal Citizenship, the Women's Network Association and

22 [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25/TheNetherlands\\_Final.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25/TheNetherlands_Final.htm)



the Netherlands section of the International Commission of Jurists. In their appeal the associations stated that the SGP violated the fundamental right to equal treatment of men and women and the fundamental right of women to political participation and thus violated society's general interest in the elimination of discrimination. The NGOs presented the practices of the SGP as a violation of the right to non-discrimination of all Dutch women.

A decision of the Regional Court in September 2005 established that excluding women from party membership was in violation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and concluded that the state had acted unlawfully by subsidising the SGP and the public funding to the SGP should be suspended. That would have cost the party about EUR 800 000 a year as in the Netherlands political parties receive funds from the state which are distributed based on three criteria: a fixed amount is distributed to all parties represented in parliament; additional funds are distributed depending on the number of seats obtained; and a further amount is distributed in proportion to the number of contributing party members. The state appealed this decision.

Under this pressure in 2006 the SGP amended its principles to enable women to become members of the party and from 2007 the party admitted women members, though still without allowing them to stand for election to public office. But the plaintiffs had also demanded that the SGP should change its statutes so that women could be elected to office. They were not initially successful on this point but appealed this decision.

The appeal court ruled on 20 December 2007 that the Dutch state should take action against the SGP, as women should be eligible to stand for election

within this political party. The state again appealed these decisions on the same legal grounds as it had stated in its reaction to CEDAW's recommendations. On 9 April 2010 the Supreme Court ruled against the state's appeal, saying that the state cannot tolerate discrimination against women and should take action against the SGP.

In reaction, the SGP filed a complaint at the European Court of Human Rights, claiming that it should have the freedom to act according to its principles. But on 10 July 2012 the European Court of Human Rights took the decision that, even given its principles, the SGP could not exclude women. The Court judged the complaint to be inadmissible because of it being manifestly ill-founded.

### The party changes its rules

At last, in 2013, the SGP acted on the Dutch Supreme Court and European Court of Human Rights rulings. The SGP executive council amended the party's general regulations so that, in the nomination of candidates for elections to a city council, the States-Provincial, the House of Representatives, the Senate or the European Parliament, candidates cannot be debarred from standing because of their sex. This change took effect on 1 April 2013 and, in concrete terms, meant that henceforth women from the SGP could stand as candidates for their party. With this decision, which was followed by an exchange of letters with the cabinet and discussions with the executive council of the SGP, the candidate nomination procedure of the SGP was brought into line with the law as stipulated by the Supreme Court. This removed the need for the state to take any further measures.

In March 2014 in the municipality of Vlissingen, the first female candidate (Lilian Janse) was included on the list of candidates from the SGP in the position of party leader, and was duly elected as a councillor.

### Advocacy for change

This example demonstrates the importance of civil society in challenging women's exclusion from

politics. For a long time the discriminatory actions of SGP went relatively uncontested. But during the past decade several women's rights and human rights groups took legal steps to challenge both: the SGP party rule of excluding women and the state subsidy to the SGP on the grounds that they discriminated against women in violation of international law. The women's rights organisations aimed to force the state to put an end to discriminatory practice. The lengthy legal battle got a lot of public attention, intensified discussions on the issue, opened up the party membership to women, and finally resulted in the change of party rules allowing women to be election candidates.

The overturning of the SGP's discriminatory selection procedure was entirely due to the persistence and commitment of a group of women's associations which had pursued the case doggedly through the courts since 2005. This legal success shows that determined advocacy of women's rights can have very concrete results, even when faced with official intransigence.

The initiative was vital in addressing non-discrimination and equal treatment, which are fundamental to women's representation in politics. The case highlights the need to remove obstacles to women's political participation.

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### Further information:

YouTube videos: <http://www.clara-wichmann.nl/proefprocessen/2002/sgp-zaak/>;

SGP — Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (Reformed Political Party): <https://www.sgp.nl/>;

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# Mandatory Women's Quota of 40 %

## Spain — 2007–2015 Electoral quotas that work

### Summary

In 2007, Spain adopted a law that obliges political parties to allocate at least 40% of the places on their list of candidates to women at every election. Two features are crucial to its effectiveness: firstly, the measure incorporates effective sanctions — non-compliant lists are disallowed. Secondly, it is structured to prevent women from being systematically allocated unwinnable places at the bottom of the list, since the 40 % quota applies not only to the list as a whole but also to each group of five candidates.

The law has led to a steady increase in the number of women elected and, interestingly, not only in the case of the socialist PSOE but also the conservative People's Party (PP), which had previously opposed quotas.

This is a comprehensive example of mandatory election quotas introduced in Spain in 2007. The quotas aim to promote balanced participation by women and men (40 % minimum and 60 % maximum for each gender) in all areas of economic, social and political decision-making. It represents good practice in the design of quota legislation, including the introduction of a 'zipper system' and having effective sanctions in place on the basis that

electoral lists will not be approved unless they fulfil the quota requirements. It also reflects an overall steady increase of women elected. The introduction of the quota legislation was facilitated by the fact that it did not require constitutional reform. Also there is a strong support from civil society and public opinion. It is a transferable model and shows the importance of effective implementation mechanisms.

### Why does this represent a good practice and how does it advance women in politics?

- ✓ The measure is innovative and the design well thought-out.
- ✓ It has an effective implementation mechanism which includes sanctions for non-compliance: rejection of lists that do not comply with the quota.
- ✓ It ensures that women will enter electoral bodies: 40/60 provision has to be respected not only in electoral lists as a whole but also every five positions within each list. Thus female candidates cannot be placed only in unwinnable positions at the end of the list.
- ✓ The mandatory quota was in line with public opinion and supported by civil society.
- ✓ The quota system resulted in a steady increase in women's presence among elected politicians.
- ✓ The model is relevant for other countries and transferable.

## A good previous record

In Spain, even before the adoption in 2007 of a mandatory quota of 40 % women in electoral lists in all elections, the number of women political decision-makers was comparatively high. The graph below illustrates this point: after the 2004 general elections, women accounted for 36 % of members of the Congress of Deputies, which is the lower chamber of parliament. Members of the Congress of Deputies are elected by proportional representation under the d'Hondt system with closed and blocked lists. Thus, voters can (effectively) only vote for a political party as a whole and have no influence on the order in which party candidates are elected.

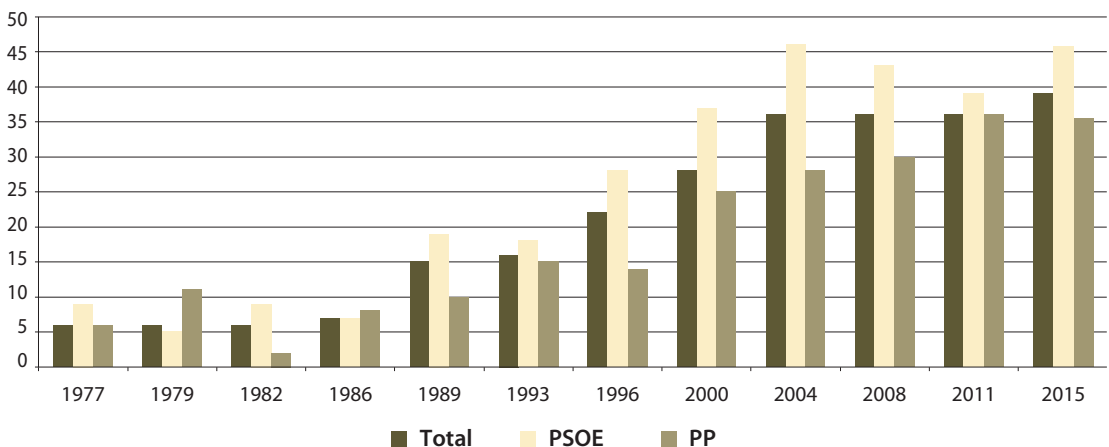
The Congress of Deputies is made up of 350 seats, divided among 52 constituencies — the 50 provinces plus the two North African territories of Ceuta and Melilla — with the number of seats per constituency ranging from one in Ceuta and Melilla to 31 in Barcelona and 34 in Madrid. A threshold of 3 % applies in each of the 52 constituencies, rather than across the whole country. These characteristics mean that the electoral system tends to favour big parties and parties with geographically concentrated support.

The two main political parties have somewhat different gender profiles: after the 2004 general election 43 % of MPs representing the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) were women, while the share for the conservative People's Party (Partido Popular, PP) was only 30 %.

The steady increase in the number of women elected between the late 1980s and the introduction of the mandatory women's quota in 2007 was due to the left-wing parties adopting women's quotas voluntarily. For instance, the centre-left PSOE adopted a 25 % women's quota in 1988 and raised it to 40 % in 1997. In 2001, the party submitted a bill to reform the 1985 General Electoral Act. Their first proposal was debated and rejected but it paved the way for subsequent reforms and pushed other parties and regions to take steps to increase women's participation. In June 2002, the regional parliaments of Balearic Islands and Castile-La Mancha, made zipping mandatory in lists for regional elections. At that time, left-wing parties had the majority of seats in both chambers of parliament.

The successful lobbying for quota reforms by the PSOE Women's Committee as well as feminist social mobilisation played a crucial role in the whole process of statutory quota adoption. Women's

### Percentage of women in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, in total and by party (PSOE, PP) 1977-2015





Committees, usually established at the highest party level, often send representatives to party organs that prepare electoral lists. Academic literature explicitly refers to cases where these representatives are key to making sure that party lists fulfil quota requirements and that a significant proportion of women is placed in winnable positions <sup>(23)</sup>.

Political parties are gatekeepers in political decision-making. In electoral systems which are proportional and have closed and blocked lists such as the Spanish system (with the exception of elections for the upper house or Senate), parties prepare lists that voters choose in elections. Within parties, it is thus important that those supporting female inclusion are present at the highest organisational levels to advance the cause of increasing women's presence in political decision-making.

Quotas adopted by left-wing parties also produced a contagion effect in the conservative PP, which vehemently opposed quotas of any type. Particularly after the adoption of the Electoral Law the distance between the PSOE and the PP regarding women candidates narrowed considerably.

## Five good practice features

Among other provisions, the Spanish gender equality law (organic law 3/2007 of 22 March 2007)

23 See for instance: Jenson, J. and Valiente, C. 2003: Comparing Two Movements for Gender Parity. In L. Banaszak, K. Beckwith and D. Rucht (eds), *Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 69-93.

mandates parties to incorporate in all electoral lists no fewer than 40 % and no more than 60 % of candidates of each gender. This proportion has to be respected within each successive five positions on each list. This mandate is in effect a 40 % women's quota. The law, passed under the rule of the centre-left PSOE, has several strong points:

First, the law establishes effective sanctions since electoral authorities withdraw electoral lists that do not fulfil the requirement of the quota.

Second, the measure is designed to prevent abuse by political parties as the 40/60 proportion must be respected not only in electoral lists as a whole but also in every five positions within each list. This requirement prevents parties from indulging in bad practices such as relegating the 40 % of female candidates to the bottom of the list, thereby placing many of them in unwinnable positions. This is particularly important in proportional election systems, as it is the case in Spain, with closed and blocked party lists.

Third, the adoption of the law did not require a change to be made to the constitution, which would have been a complicated process.

Fourth, the quota was in line with public opinion. Before its adoption, 58 % of adult men and 75 % of adult women in Spain supported mandatory women's quotas for all political parties <sup>(24)</sup>.

Finally, the quota contributed to an increase in women's presence among PP representatives, even though the party had vehemently opposed quotas. As the graph above shows, in 2004 — before the adoption of the measure — women accounted for 28 % of PP members of the Congress of Deputies. This percentage increased after the adoption of the quota to 30 % in 2008 and 36 % in 2011. Moreover, the quota has prevented any subsequent decline in women's access to political decision-making <sup>(25)</sup>.

24 Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 2006. Study number 2,636 (March). [www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es) (accessed 22 October 2014), March 2006 data.

25 PSOE (as well as the other left-wing parties United Left and Podemos) used zipping in the 2015 elections, whereby women and men alternate throughout the list.

## An effective measure

There is strong evidence that the design of quotas is important for allowing women to get into political office. Elements such as effective sanctions and a ‘zipper’ system built into the Spanish quota model clearly contributed to its success. Over recent decades Spain has become (and remains) one of those Member States with the highest proportion of female politicians. Only Sweden and Finland currently have a slightly higher percentage of women among MPs — 43.6 % and 41.5 % respectively. Also at regional and municipal levels the political representation of women increased considerably which can be attributed partially to the electoral quotas as the Law applies to all elections including regional and local.

The quota measure aimed to increase the share of women among elected political decision-makers (in all elections) to at least 40 %, and scholars have given its implementation a generally positive evaluation<sup>(26)</sup>. Its application is monitored by the electoral authorities who verify before every election that all lists comply with the 40 % quota.

As shown above, two key factors enabled the measure to achieve its target: credible sanctions for non-compliance (rejection of lists that did not comply with the quota) and careful design of the measure (the 40/60 proportion has to be respected within every five positions in each list). Factors that facilitated its approval were that constitutional reform was not necessary and that there was a strong feminist movement led by the parties’ women’s sections which were successfully advocating parity, thus influencing public opinion which became favourable to mandatory electoral women’s quotas.

26 Kenny, Meryl, and Tània Verge, Decentralization, political parties, and women’s representation: Evidence from Spain and Britain. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 43 (1), 2013, pp. 109-128; Valiente, Celia, Women in parliament: The effectiveness of quotas, *Women and legislative representation: Electoral systems, political parties, and sex quotas*, 2012, pp. 129-139; Verge, Tània, Institutionalizing gender equality in Spain: From party quotas to electoral gender quotas. *West European Politics* 35 (2) March 2012, pp. 395-414; Verge, Tània, Regulating gender equality in political office in Southern Europe: The cases of Greece, Portugal and Spain. *Representation* 49 (4), 2013, pp. 439-452; Verge, Tània, and María de la Fuente, Playing with different cards: Party politics, gender quotas and women’s empowerment. *International Political Science Review* 35 (1), 2014, pp. 67-79.

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