

# ACHIEVING BALANCED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## Report on European Best Practices



Co-operation on the implementation of the  
Russian Federation National Action Strategy for Women (2017–2022)

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# **ACHIEVING BALANCED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

REPORT ON EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICES

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention of Human Rights
<b>ECtHR</b>	European Court of Human Rights
<b>EMB</b>	Election Management Body
<b>GGI</b>	Gender Gap index
<b>GII</b>	Gender Inequality Index
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IPU</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>ODHIR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>SCO</b>	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United National Development Programme
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Council of Europe (CoE), the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation are currently implementing the project “Co-operation on the implementation of the Russian Federation National Action Strategy for Women (2017–2022)”, with financial support provided by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The project focuses on developing knowledge and skills in two chapters of the Russian National Action Strategy (NASW): 1) prevention of social disadvantage of women and violence against women and 2) women’s participation in public and political life.

The primary aim of this research is to analyse the current situation in regard to balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making in the Russian Federation in comparison with other CoE countries and to share best practices.

This study is based on an extensive review of secondary sources on women’s participation in political and public decision-making in Russia, other Council of Europe member states, and at the global level. Qualitative methods – interviews with key stakeholders in Russia – were used to supplement this secondary data, as well as to provide insight into the perspectives of local stakeholders on issues relating to women’s political participation.

The following **challenges** relating to women’s representation in decision-making positions have been identified:

- ▶ Overall low levels of political representation of women in Russia as indicated by both GGI (123 ranking out of 149 states in political representation) and GII (0.257) measurements. This shows that women’s human development potential is underused;
- ▶ Although political representation of women has improved recently due to the mixed-election system which can facilitate selection of women candidates, women are still not represented fairly and proportionately both in legislative and executive branches of power;
- ▶ Russian legislation guarantees *de jure* gender equality and prohibits gender-based discrimination (see section on legislative framework below in this report); however, it doesn’t promote positive measures targeting women (such as quota of women’s representation in the political parties, preference of women over men in recruitment if they are underrepresented, etc.);
- ▶ Russia does not have any specific bodies or institutions promoting the human rights of women.

Solutions to address imbalance in women’s participation in political and public decision making are unique for each country, and related to trajectories of political, economic and cultural development. However, the following **solutions** that worked in similar contexts and which had the support of stakeholders consulted for this study could be applied.

## **Election processes and political parties:**

- ▶ Design and implement legislative or regulatory provision to encourage political parties to introduce quota systems for candidate selection (see examples from the Nordic countries below);
- ▶ Introduce changes in voting legislation and procedures to alternate women’s and men’s names on candidate lists (the ‘zip’ system, as used in Sweden as presented below);



- ▶ Introduce financial incentives for parties to promote female candidates such as fundraising only for women, reducing registration fees, and allowances to cover travel and childcare (see examples from Italy and Ireland below);
- ▶ Follow PACE 1898 (2012) Resolution recommendations on ‘Political parties and women’s political representation’ as well as the recommendations included in Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Resolution 404 (2016) on Women’s political participation and representation at local and regional levels;

### **Improving gender sensitivity of legislation and policies:**

- ▶ Use gender expertise methodology (*gendernaia ekspertiza*) to analyse legislation and remove gender bias from law (as shown in an example from Moldova below);
- ▶ Collect regularly gender-sensitive statistics on women’s representation in politics (such as gender statistics from Eurostat for the European Union);
- ▶ Introduce gender equality trainings for public officials. This could include “reverse mentoring”, whereby women active in local politics provide gender sensitivity training to national level officials;
- ▶ Establish a specific body or agency for combating discrimination against women and for promoting equal opportunities for women and men;

### **Better working conditions:**

- ▶ Include a gender equality-sensitive agenda in the personnel policy of public authorities and promote gender sensitive parliaments and other decision-making bodies, including introducing “zero tolerance” policies against sexual harassment and violence, and effective mechanisms to address harassment and abuse (as per recommendations of the IPU below);
- ▶ Create more flexible working conditions for women and men elected to office who have family obligations (see the examples from various countries below);

### **Training and mentoring:**

- ▶ Provide training to women (would-be) candidates in key areas, such as how the political and electoral systems function, new technologies, psychology, political communication, fundraising and community mobilisation. Continue to develop leadership training for women and girls to encourage their participation in public and political decision making (see the examples from Germany, Moldova and Portugal included in this report below);
- ▶ Support the establishment of cross-party women’s caucuses at national, regional and local parliamentary levels that can provide mentoring support to women in political and public decision-making bodies (see the example from North Macedonia below);

### **Working with the media:**

- ▶ Provide trainings to women politicians to help them have successful media campaigns and to provide them with tools to deal with the media in cases of sexist or misogynistic behaviour, including how to fight and protect oneself from online violence (see examples from Moldova and Portugal below);

- ▶ Train mass media specialists to promote unbiased image of women, and women in politics in particular;
- ▶ Encourage the establishment of national regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms aimed at ensuring fair and balanced media coverage of women and men candidates for elected offices;
- ▶ Encourage the Human Rights bodies or other relevant bodies to receive, analyse and review complaints in relation to sexism in the media and in advertising, and to publish annual reports on their activities regarding gender equality and against gender stereotypes in the media.

# INTRODUCTION

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The Council of Europe (CoE), the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation are currently implementing the project “Co-operation on the implementation of the Russian Federation National Action Strategy for Women (2017–2022)”, with financial support provided by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The project focuses on developing knowledge and skills in two chapters of the Russian National Action Strategy (NASW): 1) prevention of social disadvantage of women and violence against women and 2) women’s participation in public and political life.

The project facilitates knowledge creation and increases the capacity of relevant stakeholders in order to advance women’s empowerment, more effectively combat violence against women and contribute to the implementation of the NASW and other international commitments such as Council of Europe instruments, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On the basis of the 2016 Analytical Report on Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Decision Making after the third round of monitoring of CoE Recommendation Rec(2003)3, the project partners agreed to generate knowledge through targeted research on stock-taking of the participation of women in political and public decision making in the Russian Federation.

# BACKGROUND

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The necessity and desirability of ensuring women's balanced participation in political and public decision-making bodies is well established. As the 2016 analytical report by the CoE noted, the degree of women's political participation is a 'key indicator of gender equality and women's full enjoyment of their human rights and, at the same time, a condition for gender equality, social justice and true democracy' (Council of Europe 2017, 17). The participation of women from a wide variety of different backgrounds at all levels in decision-making bodies enables the formulation of laws and policies that better reflect the needs and experiences of the whole society, rather than just those of men (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 13; Ballington et al. 2015, vi). Reflecting this, a range of international and regional agreements commit states to upholding women's right to equal representation, including CEDAW and the European Convention on Human Rights. International experience indicates that the number of women elected or appointed to a decision-making body must reach a 'critical mass' of 40% – and 30% in senior, decision-making positions – in order to have a significant, positive effect on policy (Council of Europe 2007; European Institute for Gender Equality 2015).

Despite this consensus, women remain woefully underrepresented in decision-making bodies across the world. As of July 2019, women held just 22.5% of lower-house parliamentary seats worldwide;<sup>1</sup> 11 women were serving as Head of State and 11<sup>2</sup> as Head of Government (UN Women 2019).

In CoE member states, analysis of data from 2016 found that women made up 25.6% of elected representatives, and only two countries (Finland and Sweden) had reached the target of 40% representation<sup>3</sup> in their lower houses of parliament; none had achieved that percentage for upper houses (Council of Europe 2017, 7, 23).

In 2019, in the CoE member states, the picture is more promising: 50% of elected representatives of the lower house in Andorra are women, while a further five countries have reached the 40% 'critical mass' of women elected to lower houses of parliament.<sup>4</sup> Belgium alone has reached the 40% target of women elected to its upper house (43.3%). While this represents significant progress, out of a total of 47 member states, in 17 CoE countries women make up 20% – 29% of representatives elected to lower houses of parliament, and in a further nine countries, fewer than 20% of elected representatives are women. This includes the Russian Federation (15.8%) (Inter-parliamentary Union 2019).<sup>5</sup>

The data analysed in 2016 for the CoE member states found similarly low levels of women's representation in regional parliaments, where these exist (only three out of 17 had reached the minimum target of 40%) and in the executive (where the average proportion of women heads of state or government, heads of regional governments and mayors was below 17%) (Council of Europe 2017, 8, 37, 44). At regional and local government level, none of the countries reporting had reached the 40% threshold

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1 Author's calculation based on Inter-Parliamentary Union data (2019).

2 This is one less than the number given by UN Women, reflecting the fact that Theresa May ceased to be Prime Minister of Britain in July 2019.

3 Percentage committed to under CoE Committee of Ministers Recommendation REC (2003)3.

4 Spain (47.4%), Sweden (47.3%), Finland (47%), Belgium (42.7%), and Norway (40.8%). A further 11 countries outside the CoE region have reached the 40% threshold: Rwanda (61.25%), Cuba (53.2%), Bolivia (53.1%), Mexico (48.2%), Grenada (46.7%), Namibia (46.1%), South Africa (45.7%), Costa Rica (45.6%), Nicaragua (44.6%), Senegal (41.8%), and New Zealand (40.8%). All data: Inter-parliamentary Union 2019.

5 The other countries are Greece (18.7%), Cyprus (17.9%), Turkey (17.5%), Azerbaijan (16.8%), Georgia (14.8%), Liechtenstein (12%), Malta (11.9%), and Ukraine (11.6%).

among mayors, and only four out of 35 had reached the 40% threshold among municipality councilors (Council of Europe 2017, 52–55).

### **Slow progress in increasing the number of women elected to office reflects the significant barriers that women continue to face as candidates and elected representatives**

Additionally, political parties are still overwhelmingly led by men: in 60% of countries supplying data, there were no women leaders of political parties at all (Council of Europe 2017, 59).<sup>6</sup>

First and foremost, stereotypical views and assumptions about women's role in society and their (lack of) suitability for political office make it difficult for them to be accepted as candidates.

Lack of or reduced access to finance, networks, and time – given the expectation that women should prioritise care for family and households over their career – also put women potential candidates at a disadvantage in many national contexts. They do not have the money or resources to register as candidates or to run effective campaigns, particularly if they stand as independents (Ballington and Kahane 2014; Bunyan and Petruti 2017). When a woman does manage to be selected as a candidate by a political party, she may not receive the same allocation of support, funding, and resources from the party as a male candidate or have access to important intra-party networks, due to sexism within the party (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 307). Lack of interest from the media – again often fuelled by prejudice against women politicians – can result in women candidates having less visibility or opportunity to put their message across (Bunyan and Petruti 2017, 34–35).

### **At the global level, there is growing recognition of the need to make parliaments and other decision-making bodies more gender sensitive and family friendly, and many parliaments and other decision-making bodies are adopting policies and guidelines to this effect.**

Once elected, women continue to face barriers to their full and effective participation in parliaments and other decision-making bodies. These range from male-dominated working and communication cultures to the difficulties of balancing raising families with long and irregular hours. Women are less likely to be taken seriously or to be appointed to senior positions and are even at risk of violence and harassment, including from male colleagues within their own political parties (Ballington and Kahane 2014; Inter-parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2018). As a report on women's political participation in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine noted, for many women themselves, these stereotypes are internalised (Bunyan and Petruti 2017).

In the face of limited progress so far and the significant barriers that women continue to face to be elected to office or to fulfil their responsibilities as elected representatives, many countries among the CoE member states and beyond have adopted laws and policies to increase the number of women in parliaments and other decision-making bodies at national and local levels. Examples include quotas, financial incentives to encourage political parties to put forward women candidates and legislating for gender equality committees or women's caucuses within parliaments and other decision-making bodies. As the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (which monitors country-level implementation of CEDAW) has noted, national governments have a 'fundamental responsibility to encourage these initiatives', but also to challenge 'attitudes that discriminate against women or discourage women's involvement in political and public life' (Committee on the Elimination

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<sup>6</sup> Buvinic, Furst-Nichols, and Koolwal (2014, 33) note that there are gaps in data on women's political participation globally especially at subnational level and women's leadership across political parties.

of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 28). States are often guided by recommendations issued by international bodies, including the CoE Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2003)<sup>3</sup> (discussed in the section on International standards and instruments).

Political parties – the main channel through which modern politics is organised and structured (Palmeri 2011, 75) – share the responsibility of achieving balanced participation of women and men. As discussed in the section on 'International experience', across the world many political parties have adopted policies and practices that have had as much, if not more, impact on raising the numbers of women representatives than legislated initiatives. These include voluntary quotas, training and mentoring for women candidates and elected officials, and the adoption of formal gender equality policies.

Women's rights organisations and other civil society groups have also been active in pressing for change, as well as providing training and support to women would-be candidates.

## AIMS AND SCOPE

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The primary aim of this research is to show the situation in regard to balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making in the Russian Federation and showcase experiences of other Council of Europe member states. The research also strives to identify promising policies and practices currently being used in Russia to support women's participation in political and public decision-making. The research assesses the relevant legislative framework in Russia and takes stock of existing research, laws, statistics, and policies. Additionally, the report presents promising examples of legislation, policies and practices on achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making from other CoE countries as an inspiration for application in Russia.

The concept of balanced participation in political and public decision-making encompasses a wide range of different activities and processes, from ensuring the equal right to vote, to the proportion of women in decision-making positions in the judiciary and diplomatic service.<sup>7</sup> This study, however, focuses on the election and appointment of women to national, regional, and local parliaments and decision-making bodies in Russia.

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<sup>7</sup> See for instance the 'General recommendation No.23: Political and public life' (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997)

# METHODOLOGY

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This study is based on an extensive review of secondary sources on women's participation in political and public decision-making in Russia, other Council of Europe member states, and at the global level. We have used qualitative methods – interviews with key stakeholders in Russia – to supplement this secondary data, as well as to provide insight into the perspectives of local stakeholders on the issues relating to women's political participation. The study's reliance on secondary sources and on a limited number of interviews means that the findings are not in any way representative. They will, however, provide a 'snapshot' of the current situation, as well as of promising practices and policies within Russia and beyond that could be adapted and / or scaled up.

## Desk review

In order to identify examples of good practice from CoE member states and beyond, the researchers initially searched the publicly available online resources of leading key international and regional actors working on analysing and boosting gender balance in political and public decision-making. In addition to studies and resources produced by the CoE itself, the websites of the following regional and international organisations were valuable sources of materials:

- ▶ European Institute for Gender Equality
- ▶ iKnow Politics
- ▶ Inter-Parliamentary Union
- ▶ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
- ▶ National Democratic Institute
- ▶ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (ODHIR)
- ▶ UN Women
- ▶ UNDP

## Identification of key stakeholders

A list of significant Russian stakeholders relevant for the protection of women's rights was identified in the process of preparation for the report. They include:

- ▶ High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation;
- ▶ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation;
- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;
- ▶ Civil Society.

## Interviews and workshop

Interviews were conducted during a field mission to Moscow on 17 to 20 September 2019, with key stakeholders including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, an elected representative,



representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, and representatives from civil society (see programme of meetings in the references section at the end of this report). Initial findings and recommendations were then shared at a 1 and a half day workshop for stakeholders held in Sochi, Russia, on 17–18 October 2019. The recommendations were revised following feedback during this workshop.

### **Other methods of data collection**

Descriptive statistics was used to produce data on women’s political representation in the Russian Federation. The data was manually collected using Russian State Statistics Agency (Rosstat) and governmental webpages (State Duma, Federation Council, regional legislative and executive bodies). There are no (at least accessible and updated) gender sensitive statistics in the Russian Federation such as the gender statistics collected by Eurostat for the European Union<sup>8</sup>.

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8 [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_statistics)

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND INSTRUMENTS

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The right of women to participate equally in political and public decision-making is rooted in the principle of equal enjoyment of all rights without discrimination, enshrined in various international and regional human rights conventions and declarations to which the Russian Federation is a signatory. Additionally, as a member of the Council of Europe, Russia and all member states are recommended by CoE Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on 'balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making', to ensure that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%.

## International legal standards

The right to equal enjoyment of political rights without discrimination is enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR, adopted in 1948) (article 2 – right to non-discrimination – and article 21), and again in the [International Convention on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR, adopted in 1966), at articles 2 and 25. Russia is also a signatory to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and its protocols, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex in relation to all the rights covered (Article 14). [The Convention on the Political Rights of Women](#) (adopted in 1952) includes specific commitment to women's equal right to participate in political and public decision-making (Articles 1–3).

### **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

Adopted in 1979, the [Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW) is the most important international agreement in regard to protecting women's equal right to participation in political and public decision making. Under article 7 of CEDAW, states parties are called to: 'take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country'.

Significantly, CEDAW obliges states to take positive measures to eliminate discrimination against women (Ballington et al. 2015, 7), including the adoption of 'temporary special measures'. In General Recommendation No.5, the CEDAW Committee specifies that temporary special measures could include positive action, preferential treatment or quota systems (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1988). CEDAW General Recommendation No.23 reminds states parties, however, that temporary special measures on their own will not be sufficient to 'overcome centuries of male domination of the public sphere' without 'the encouragement and support of all sectors of society to achieve full and effective participation, encouragement which must be led by States parties to the Convention, as well as by political parties and public officials' (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 15).

## Other international standards

Russia has also signed up to a number of other international legal standards that uphold women's equal right to participation in political and public decision making, including [The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) (Beijing PfA) (Beijing PfA) and [UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130](#) (adopted in 2011), which calls on states to recognise and address the obstacles that women face to equal participation in political and public decision-making. The [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) (SDGs) also commit states to ensuring 'women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life' (SDG target 5.5), and to ensuring 'responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'.

## Council of Europe instruments

The CoE has long prioritised women's equal participation in political and public decision making as a strategic goal, recognising that gender-balanced representation is a requirement of justice and a necessity for attaining genuine democracy.

### **Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

Passed in 2003, [Recommendation Rec\(2003\)3](#) of the Committee of Ministers recommends member states to commit themselves to promoting the balanced representation of women and men. Balanced participation is taken to mean that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%. The Recommendation proposes a range of 17 legislative and administrative measures (such as legislative reforms, action through the funding of political parties, and improving the working conditions of elected representatives), 24 supportive measures (for instance, networks for elected women representatives, mentoring and training programmes, and setting up databases of women willing to run for public office), and ten indicators against which progress can be measured.

### **Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 17 on Gender equality standards and mechanisms**

[Recommendation Rec \(2007\) 17](#) of the Committee of Ministers on gender equality standards and mechanisms reiterates the concept of 'parity democracy', i.e. that 'a minimum participation rate of 40% for each sex' in order to 'guarantee that women's and men's interests and needs are fully taken into account in policymaking and in the running of society'.

### **Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1898 (2012) on Political parties and women's political representation**

[Resolution 1898 \(2012\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on political parties and women's political representation recommends 14 practices and policies that political parties can adopt in order to increase women's political participation.

## **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Recommendation 390 (2016) and Resolution 404 (2016) on Women’s political participation and representation at local and regional levels**

Recommendation 390 (2016) and Resolution 404 (2016) both recommend Congress members to put Recommendation Rec(2003)3 into practice at local and regional level, particularly in regard to adopting the 40% quota to ensure balanced representation. Resolution 404 also recommends local and regional authorities to adopt several measures including family-friendly working practices to encourage women’s greater participation, and to sign and implement the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.

# BRINGING WOMEN TO DECISION MAKING IN RUSSIA

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In Russia the process of democratisation has seen a decreasing number of women in politics compared to Soviet times. Those women who have made it into politics vocally separate themselves from feminism, considering it a negative marker. This does not necessarily mean that they do not promote or support women's rights; they may do so under the label of neutrality and focussing on their own agency and achievements as an example of opportunities for women to make it up the ladder.

Russia's female population is highly visible at the labour market. According to Rosstat, Russian State Statistical Agency, 60.1% of all women are employed outside of home, which is only 10% lower than for men (71.5%). Only 5% of women stay at home. Women double men among the retired population due to longer life expectancy: 21.7% to 13.5%.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, women are still paid less than their male counterparts. In Russia the gender pay gap is high (0.648) but smaller at the level of professional and technical workers compared to those with low-income occupations.<sup>10</sup>

Women are represented in highest numbers in sectors such as health and social security (84%), education (74%), culture (70%), communication (68%), trade and service (76%) (Yarychev, 2016). The percentage of self-employed women is lower than men's: 40% to 60%, although it is not a big portion compared to those in employment (5.4% of women and 7.7% for men).<sup>11</sup> Women are highly concentrated in the tertiary sectors of the economy and the public sector (health and education, for example) where they have lower incomes and are highly dependent on public spending (Kosyakova, Kurakin and Blossfeld 2015). In addition, the absolute majority of people working part-time are women (71%). According to Rosstat, in 2016 women's income was 66% of the men's income (51843 to 78011), the major difference comes from salary payments.<sup>12</sup>

Despite high visibility of women in the labour market, gender stereotypes are very much present in Russian society. According to the recent poll data from Levada Centre, the percentage of people who approve women in leadership positions decreased since 2006 from 70% to 56%, however, among women the approval rate is 69%. The situation has become worse with the support of a female candidate to the position of the president of Russia: in 2006 – 65% supported this idea, today the amount of people who support it decreased to 49% among women and 19% among men.<sup>13</sup>

In Levada's poll on 'what characteristics you find most valuable in men and women', conducted in March 2018, three major characteristics for men are brains, ability to make money and decency, while for women are most valuable to be a good housekeeper, provide care and have good looks.<sup>14</sup>

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9 See Rosstat data (Russian State Statistics Agency) in Zhenshchiny i Muzhchiny Rossii 2018, p. 93: [https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18\\_50/Main.htm](https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18_50/Main.htm)

10 The Gender Gap Country Report: Russia [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf).

11 Rosstat data (Russian State Statistics Agency) in Zhenshchiny i Muzhchiny Rossii 2018, Table 4.7: [https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18\\_50/Main.htm](https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18_50/Main.htm)

12 Ibid. Table 5.2.

13 'Zhenshchina-president v proshlom i buduishchem', Levada Center: <https://www.levada.ru/2019/03/12/zhenshchina-prezident-v-proshlom-i-budushhem/>.

14 'Genderbye stereotipy'. Levada Center: <https://www.levada.ru/2018/03/29/gendernye-stereotipy/>

According to Russian Public Opinion Research Center<sup>15</sup>, compared to men, the disadvantages of women politicians are their soft character and emotional nature. Respondents also said that women are more likely to make irrational short-sighted decisions and to be lacking professionalism.

Women in politics face stereotypes as well while conducting campaigns. According to the interviews with women who participated in Moscow Duma elections, the electorate always ask women about their personal life and almost never question men.<sup>16</sup> Russian media essentially communicates a patriarchal culture, reinforcing the subordinate position of women (Shmeleva and Pochebut, 2015). During political and election campaigns women often become objects of sexist criticism. According to interviews with NGOs and female campaigners, negative portrayal of women in mass media feeds gender stereotypes and creates obstacles for women when they campaign for public positions. In addition, Russian advertising industry represents women stereotypically: either as a sexual object or as a wife and a housekeeper (Potkina, 2018).<sup>17</sup>

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15 Women in Politics: Russian version. Russian Public Opinion Research Center. <https://wciom.com/index.php?id=61&uid=1706>

16 Interview with Sofia Ruzova; Interview with Alena Popova.

17 See examples and analysis here: <https://www.wonderzine.com/wonderzine/life/life/214593-oh-no-they-didnt> .

# RUSSIA IN GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY RATINGS

## Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index (GGI)<sup>18</sup> measures the relative gender gap (the gap between men and women) in four key areas, or sub-indexes: Economic participation and opportunities, Level of education, Life and health, Expansion of political rights and opportunities. Political rights and opportunities are related to the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making (ministerial and parliamentary posts but also the executive branch (Prime Minister or President)).<sup>19</sup>

In the last report in 2018, 149 countries were analysed on the basis of their progress towards gender equality on a scale from 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality) in key areas listed above. Russia ranked 75th among all 149 countries with an index of 0.701. The GGI indicator for Russia has increased only slightly since 2006 (from 0.677 to 0.701).

According to the outcome for 2018, Russia has completely closed the gender gap in secondary education and closely in health. There have also been improvements in achieving equal pay, the share of women in the legislature and women in senior positions has increased (see the following sections). However, among the rankings of Russia, political participation remains the lowest of its gaps (ranking of 123 out of 149 countries with a total score of 0.085)<sup>20</sup>.

## Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme

The Gender Inequality Index (GII)<sup>21</sup> is an integral indicator that makes up the global Human Capital Index, which is published annually by the United Nations Development Programme. It covers 160 countries and measures inequalities between men and women in key areas such as reproductive health, empowerment and economic status. The purpose of measuring is to identify differences in the distribution of achievements between men and women: an indicator with a high value shows a large gender gap, meaning a significant loss for human development.

The area of empowerment is reflected in the share of seats in Parliament that are held by women and in the share of at least secondary education of women and men 25 years or older.

18 The GGI assesses countries on how well they are dividing their resources and opportunities among their male and female populations, regardless of the overall levels of these resources and opportunities

19 See Key concepts and analytical approaches here < <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/measuring-the-global-gender-gap/>

20 The Gender Gap Country Report: Russia [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf).

21 An index for measurement of gender disparity that was introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report 20th anniversary edition by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is a composite measure to quantify the loss of achievement within a country due to gender inequality. It uses three dimensions to measure opportunity cost: reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

Russia's GII ranking is 0.257 for 2017. The index highlights the low level of political representation of women in Parliament (slightly more than 15%). However, the share of women among the Russia's educated population (those who have at least the average level of education) exceeds the proportion of men, while significantly more men participate in paid work than women (71.8% versus 56.6%). Since 2005, Russia's indicator has steadily improved from year to year, having decreased by one-tenth from 2005 to 2017 (from 0.359 to 0.257).

**Both GGI and GII measurements indicate low levels of political representation of women in Russia which shows that women's human development potential is underused**



# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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Russian legislation contains all the necessary provisions for gender equality. Equal rights between women and men are formally guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which declares that 'men and women shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and have equal opportunities to exercise them' (The Constitution of the Russian Federation, 1993, art. 19.3). The Constitution goes further as to ensure that international legal standards take priority over national legislation if there is a contradiction or a gap in the field of regulation (art. 15.4), which means that international treaties on women's rights and gender equality, which were ratified by Russia, are an integral part of the country's legal system, International law works directly in the country's legal sphere and the courts may apply international treaties without additional approval from the parliament (Maggs, Schwartz, and Burnham, 2015).

Other important international documents on the human rights of women, ratified by Russia, include the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by the USSR in 1981; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993); UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993); the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action to ensure women's equal access to decision-making processes with men;<sup>22</sup> the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals for the period 2015–2030, that includes goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.<sup>23</sup>

The principle of equal rights for women and men is present in all major codes of law as well as in all the federal laws and relevant policy documents. There are two ways Russian legislation uses to ensure equality between women and men: 'positively' through declaring equal rights, as in the Constitution and other Federal Laws, and 'negatively', through prohibiting discrimination. The majority of federal laws stipulate equal rights via declaring equal access to the rights they provide for notwithstanding sex (Russian *pol*) and other characteristics (such as race, nationality, social origin, religion and so on)<sup>24</sup>. In the realms of politics and public life, the Federal Law 'On Political Parties' explicitly states parties' obligation to create equal opportunities for the representation of men and women, thus stipulating gender equality in political representation (art. 8.4).<sup>25</sup>

In 2011, the Russian Federation Code of Administrative Offences added a new article – article 5.62. 'Discrimination' – which stipulates that discrimination, that is, violation of human and civil rights, liberties, or legal interests on the basis of sex (*pol*); race; colour of skin; ethnicity; language; origin; property, family, social or employment status; age; place of residence; religion; beliefs; or affiliation or non-affiliation with public associations or any social group results in administrative fine...<sup>26</sup>

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22 United Nations. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. 1995. Available at : [https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf)

23 United Nations. General Assembly. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1. Available at: [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

24 These laws include the Federal Constitutional Law 'On the Referendum of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law 'On Civil Service of the Russian Federation

25 The Federal Law N 95-FZ "On Political Parties", dated 11.07.2001 (rev. 26.07.2019). Available at < [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_32459/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_32459/) .

26 The Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation, with latest amendments and revisions dated 02.08.2019. Available here [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_34661/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_34661/) . Accessed 26 August 2019.

However, this definition differs from the model definition included in CEDAW<sup>27</sup> and does not define what discrimination is other than a violation. In 2003, the State Duma passed a draft law on gender equality titled 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights, Freedoms and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Russian Federation' in its first reading.<sup>28</sup> Women's non-governmental organisations attempted to cooperate with the State Duma Committee on Family Affairs, Women, and Children to promote the law. The draft law contained a definition of gender inequality, a definition of discrimination based on CEDAW, and the concept of equal opportunities. The same document raised the topic of quotas for men and women in public administration. However, in 2003 it advanced only to the stage of the first reading. In 2012 and 2013, the State Duma and the Government of the Russian Federation received numerous communications 'against' the passage of the draft law from individuals and public organisations perceiving it as a threat to traditional family values. The public expressed strong objection to the draft law's use of the term 'gender', which, in the public's opinion, has no analogue in the Russian language (Sherstneva, 2013).<sup>29</sup> Currently, the draft law on equality between men and women in the labour market is under consideration<sup>30</sup>.

In Russia, issues of the status of women were under the jurisdiction of the following institutions:

- ▶ State Duma's Committee on the Family Affairs, Women and Children (2004-present; previously on the Family, Women and Youth, 1992–2004);
- ▶ Commission on Women, Family and Demography under the President of the Russian Federation (1993–2000);<sup>31</sup>
- ▶ Commission for the Advancement of Women's Status, established under the Government of the Russian Federation (1996–2004);<sup>32</sup>
- ▶ Department of Demographic Policy and Social Security on the basis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation (includes sub-departments for demography and gender equality, family support);<sup>33</sup>
- ▶ The Department of Child Medical Services and Obstetrics at the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (includes the sub-department for reproductive health).<sup>34</sup>

Today, there are no independent institutional structures representing the interests and protecting the rights of women. Other wider-mandated institutions include the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation (Tatiana Moskalkova is currently in office), the State Duma's Committee on Family Affairs, Women, and Children and the Department for Demographic Policy and Social Protection of Population under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation.

27 Articles 1 of CEDAW defined discrimination against women as 'any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field'.

28 Draft Federal Law N-284965-3 "On State Guarantees Equal Rights, Freedoms and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Russian Federation", first reading dated 16.04.2003. Available at : <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=PRJ&n=16508#06835252910175711>. Accessed 26 August 2019.

29 See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention Eighth periodic report of States parties due in 2014. Russian Federation. CEDAW/C/RUS/8. Available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fRUS%2f8&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fRUS%2f8&Lang=en). Accessed 26 August 2019.

30 See deputy Oksana Pushkina's comment to TASS on 15 December 2017 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/4815574>

31 The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation N-1908 "On the Commission of Women, Family and Demography under the President of the Russian Federation" dated 15.11.1993, extinct 01.09.2000. Available at <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/4833>.

32 The Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation N 599 "On the Commission for the Advancement of Women's Status" dated 17.05.1996 (amended by N 91 28.01.1997, extinct by N 380 26.07.2004). Available at <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&prevDoc=102041338&backlink=1&nd=102045446>.

33 See webpage here < <https://rosmintrud.ru/ministry/about/structure/dep/protection> >.

34 See webpage here < <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/61/5> >.

Regional structures mirror this institutional framework, which means that every subject of the RF has its own commissioner for human rights, committees on family affairs, women and children at legislative level and departments of social security at the local executive body. The activities of these institutions however focus primarily on family and children<sup>35</sup> rather than specifically on the advancement of women.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation has continued to commit to ensuring equality between women and men. It created the Coordination Council for Gender Problems in 2012 and then Coordination Council for Execution of the National Strategy in the Interests of Women, 2017–2022, in 2017.<sup>36</sup> The Ministry also produced the main document in support of women's development that is the National Strategy for Women, 2017–2022.<sup>37</sup>

The only measures to specifically support women in place in Russia are in the event of maternity. Women are provided with sick leave to prepare for childbirth, maternity leave (18 months paid, 40% of average salary calculated for the past two years; and further 18 months of unpaid leave) with a guarantee of her workplace; sick leaves to take care for sick children; provision for women with small children to work night shifts and go to business trips only with their consent. The employers are prohibited not to hire or to fire a pregnant woman on the grounds of her pregnancy (art. 64 and 261).<sup>38</sup> Whereas recommendations and/or ethical codes are promoted by several organisations (i.e. trade unions), however, there are no specific measures to promote women in the workplace, such as giving a preference to a female candidate during a hiring process or forbidding sexual harassment in the workplace. No measures exist to actively promote and support women in public and political decision making nor in leadership positions.

**Russian legislation guarantees *de jure* gender equality and prohibits gender-based discrimination (see section on legislative framework above in this report); however, it doesn't promote positive measures targeting women (such as quota of women's representation in the political parties, preference of women over men in recruitment if they are underrepresented, etc.)**

**Russia does not have any specific bodies or institutions devoted to the promotion of the human rights of women**

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35 See the latest report of the Duma's committee for 2018 here [http://www.komitet26.km.duma.gov.ru/upload/site8/informacionnyy\\_byuleten\\_Komiteta\\_31.12.2018..pdf](http://www.komitet26.km.duma.gov.ru/upload/site8/informacionnyy_byuleten_Komiteta_31.12.2018..pdf). Accessed 26 August 2019.

36 See the Ministry's webpage for Gender Policy: <https://rosmintrud.ru/ministry/programms/8>.

37 The text of the Strategy available here <https://rosmintrud.ru/uploads/magic/ru-RU/6fbee78a-1500964810.pdf>.

38 The Labour Code of the Russian Federation, dated 30.12.2001 (rev. 02.08.2019). Available at: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_34683/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_34683/).

# GENDER BALANCE IN PUBLIC DECISION MAKING IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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The Federal Law 'On Political Parties' explicitly states parties' obligation to create equal opportunities for the representation of men and women thus stipulating gender equality in political representation (art. 8.4).<sup>39</sup> The Russian political system is party based. Since 2016, Russia has a mixed electoral system at all levels. It is based on mixed-member proportional representation. Thus, for the State Duma 225 deputies are elected by a plurality or majority vote in single-member constituencies and another 225 by proportional representation. The same principle goes to all other legislative bodies at the regional and municipal level. The results of the proportional vote are adjusted to balance the seats won in the constituency vote in order to ensure that parties have a number of seats proportional to their vote share.<sup>40</sup> According to the election legislation, candidates to electoral bodies can be included in party lists even if they do not belong to this party. Main Russian parties have different ways of selecting candidates with the final lists of candidates are to be approved at the party convention by secret ballot of all delegates.<sup>41</sup> United Russia conducts its selections at primaries and encourages other parties to do so. Presently, anyone can register as a candidate via using an online resource as well as vote for the candidates online at primaries.<sup>42</sup>

Currently, none of the parliamentary parties has a clear women's promotion agenda. Only one party – Yabloko, which did not enter the State Duma at the last elections – has a gender-sensitive policy. The Yabloko party included 'achievement of constitutional provision of equal rights and opportunities for men and women' into its party manifesto in 2002.<sup>43</sup> In 2006, the party organised its own Women's (Gender) Fraction (*Gendernaia fraktsiia*).<sup>44</sup> In their ballots, Yabloko put women's names first, so they would have better chances to be a party representative.

Russia has two women's parties, that are officially registered as a political party: People's Party 'For Women of Russia'<sup>45</sup> and party 'Women's Dialogue'.<sup>46</sup> Both parties, though, encourage women to perform their role as mothers and wives. Their manifestos for advancing women in decision-making positions do not contain specifics.

In 2018 the NGO 'Women's Union of Russia' (WUOR) was granted a status of a state-sponsored NGO. The Union was founded in 1990 and contributed significantly to the development of women's movement in Russia. In its manifesto, the Union lists 'active involvement of women in governance and public administration and advancement of women into decision-making positions' as its 9<sup>th</sup> goal.<sup>47</sup> One of its current projects include the School of Civic Activism, that aims at women's leadership training.<sup>48</sup>

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39 The Federal Law N 95-FZ "On Political Parties", dated 11.07.2001 (rev. 26.07.2019). Available at: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_32459/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_32459/).

40 Art. 3 of The Federal Law N 20-FZ "On the election of the deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", dated 22.02.2014 (rev. 29.05.2019). Available at: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_159349/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_159349/).

41 Art. 39 of The Federal Law N 20-FZ "On the election of the deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", dated 22.02.2014 (rev. 29.05.2019). Available at: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_159349/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_159349/).

42 See website Predvaritel'noe golosovanie, available at: <https://pg.er.ru/pub/index>.

43 Programma Rossiiskoi Demokraticheskoi Patrii "Yabloko": <https://www.yabloko.ru/Union/Program/ch2.html>.

44 Yabloko. Gendernaia fraktsiia: <https://www.yabloko.ru/Faction/Womens/index.html>.

45 Webpage: <http://npzhr.ru/>.

46 Webpage: <http://partiyawd.ru/>

47 Soiuz Zhenshchin Rossii: [https://wuor.ru/posts/2332-soyuz\\_zhenshin\\_rossii\\_tseli\\_zadachi\\_plani](https://wuor.ru/posts/2332-soyuz_zhenshin_rossii_tseli_zadachi_plani).

48 Schkola Grazhdanskoi Aktivnosti: [https://wuor.ru/Page/152-171shkola\\_grazhdanskoi\\_aktivnosti187](https://wuor.ru/Page/152-171shkola_grazhdanskoi_aktivnosti187).

# FEDERAL LEVEL

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## State Duma

The 7th State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has achieved the highest number of women-deputies in the country's post-Soviet history: 15.8% of deputies, which shows an attempt to reach gender balance at quantitative level. The increase in the number of women was also due to the return to the mixed electoral system<sup>49</sup>, as almost 50% of women who ended up in Duma won in single member constituencies. Single member constituencies allow women to use their personal network and capital to maximize their chances of election rather than appearing in party lists, in which they are often at the end. Three out of six deputy chairpersons of the Duma are women, which constitutes 50%. However, all leading posts belong to men. There are no women among party leaders represented in the Duma.<sup>50</sup>

At the qualitative level, the distribution of women deputies among committees reproduces the horizontal gender segregation of the labour market in the Russian Federation (see section above). Recruitment to parliamentary committees and commissions is based on a deputy's professional qualifications and main legal initiatives, which reinforces that gender segregation. Women lead five out of 26 (19%) Duma's committees: on culture, on ecology and environmental protection, on housing policy and housing and communal services, on rules and organisation of State Duma, and on family, women and children.

Despite the sharply increased numerical representation and the fact that almost half of women – members of the State Duma (36 of 73) won elections in single-member constituencies, they lack both a clearly articulated agenda and political experience. As a consequence, they follow their party's agenda (United Russia's agenda as most women belong to that party). The fact that women constitute a minority in other parliamentary parties means that there are little opportunities to achieve cross-fraction collaboration or gender-sensitive agenda (Figure 1).

## Council of Federation

The Federation Council (Upper Chamber) includes 30 women senators which constitute about 18% of the upper house of parliament.<sup>51</sup> Valentina Matvienko, Chairwoman of the Council of Federation since 2011, has voiced her concerns about underrepresentation of women in politics and decision-making positions in the Russian Federation.

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49 Since 2016, Russia has a mixed electoral system at all levels, to which it returned before the 2016 elections. It is based on mixed-member proportional representation, meaning that 225 deputies are elected by a plurality or majority vote in single-member constituencies and another 225 by proportional representation. Then the results of the proportional vote are adjusted to balance the seats won in the constituency vote in order to ensure that parties have a number of seats proportional to their vote share.

50 All the data comes from the State Duma of the Russian Federation webpage: <http://duma.gov.ru/>.

51 The number of women varies as representatives from executive bodies could be dismissed and from legislative bodies due to regional elections. For current composition see: <http://council.gov.ru/structure/members/>.

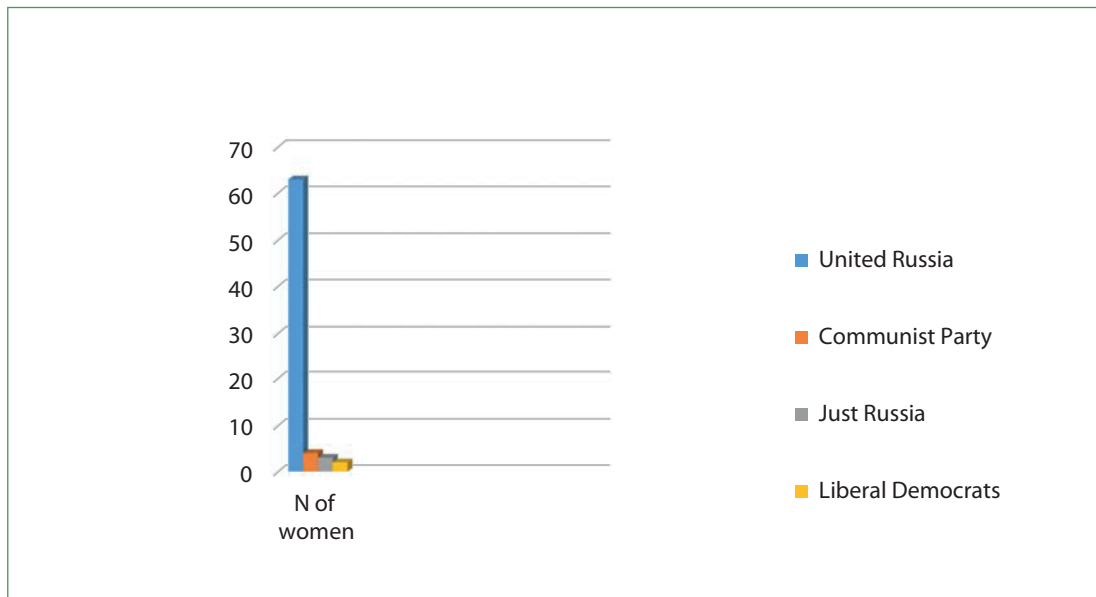


Figure 1. Number of women in Political Parties of the State Duma

**“We, in Russia, are not satisfied with the level of women’s representation in decision-making positions. We have very few women in Parliament, much fewer than we would have liked”<sup>52</sup>.**

Valentina Matvienko’s opening speech at the 1st international women’s congress of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)

Only 28% subjects of Federation have female representatives in the upper house of parliament. In a number of subjects both senators are women: Nenets Autonomous District, Primorsky Krai and Republic of Tyva. The majority of subjects of federation with female representation are either republics or areas with predominantly minority ethnical population and big industrial cities. Both Moscow and St. Petersburg, the two biggest cities in Russia with federal status, have gender parity in representation: one male and one female representative.

52 <https://lenta.ru/news/2017/07/03/female/>

# REGIONAL LEVEL

## Regional Representatives

Russia is a Federation. Each subject of Federation (republics, territories (kraya), regions (oblasti), cities with federal status, autonomous regions, and autonomous districts (okrugi)) have their own representative and executive bodies. On average, the proportion of women elected representatives in the regions is slightly higher than in the Duma (18.5%). The proportion is the highest in the regions and the autonomous regions and autonomous districts (on average 25%). Among republics, the Northern ones show higher levels of women's representation<sup>53</sup>.

Women constitute only 12% of the Chairpersons of the representative bodies in the subjects of Federation (Figure 2).

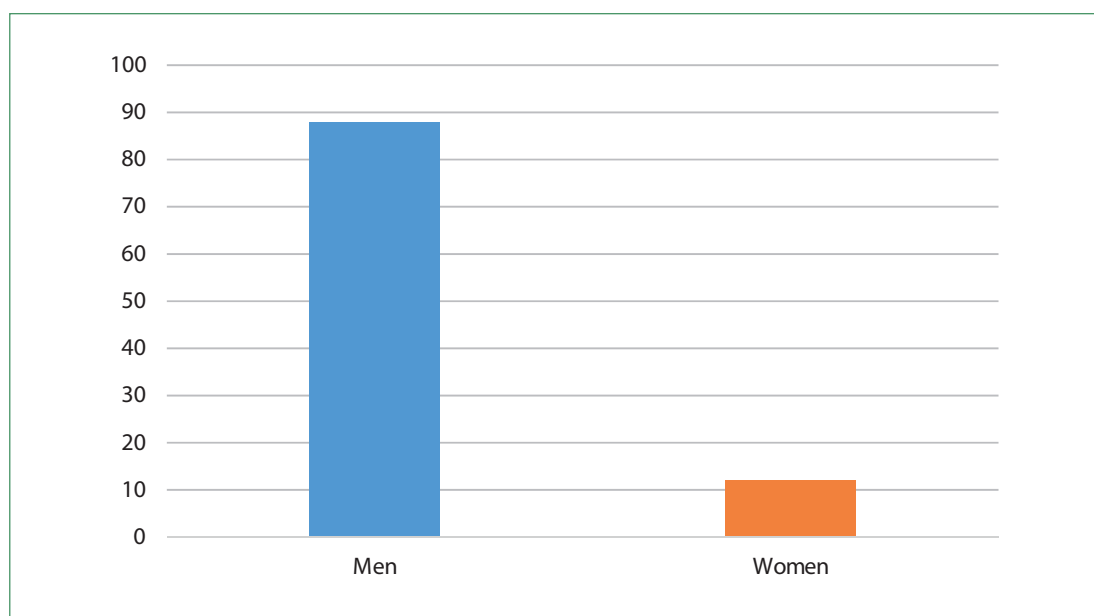


Figure 2. Gender composition of the Chairpersons of representative bodies in the subjects of the Russian Federation, 2019 (%)

## Regional Government

In recent years, only four women have occupied the posts of heads of subjects of the Russian Federation: i.e. 5% of all heads of regions. Currently, only one subject is headed by a woman: Natalia Komarova who was appointed a governor of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug in March 2010. Statistics suggests that women occupy the majority of low and middle level positions in federal and regional

<sup>53</sup> Data compiled manually by Valeriya Utkina from webpages of the regional representative bodies.

public administration and service (proportion 2.5 to 1 in absolute numbers<sup>54</sup>). They predominate in categories such as ‘assistants’, ‘specialists’ and ‘managers.’<sup>55</sup> Women in leadership positions are concentrated mainly in the social sphere, healthcare and education.

In regional governments women occupy senior positions is lower proportion than men. At the level of deputy head of regional governments women represent on average 22% with up to 75% of all deputy heads in the republics of Kalmykia and Buryatia, in Omsk and Ulyanovsk regions to no women as deputy heads at all, for example, in Chelyabinsk, Sakhalin, Penza, Lipetsk, Kaluga and other regions. In Moscow government the percentage of women in senior positions remains low – 22% (41 men and 12 women). The salient feature in the capital, is that the head of the financial of department (Minister of Finance) is a woman<sup>56</sup>.

### Local level

Women are better represented at the municipal (local) level in Russia – about 31% of local representatives (municipal deputies) across the country. The situation in executive bodies is even better: women hold 54% of all managerial positions.<sup>57</sup> However, the heads of cities are rarely women. In 2019, women constituted in average only about 8 % of mayors of Russian cities (of more than 150 000 inhabitants). The highest percentage (20%) of female mayors is in the biggest industrial cities (see Figure 3).

All women in charge of Russian cities except one come from the cities in which mayors are elected by the local representative body. Yakutsk mayor, Sardana Avksentieva was elected directly by the population in mayor elections in 2018. All women-mayors come from the same locality and previously served either in the local government or local representative body.

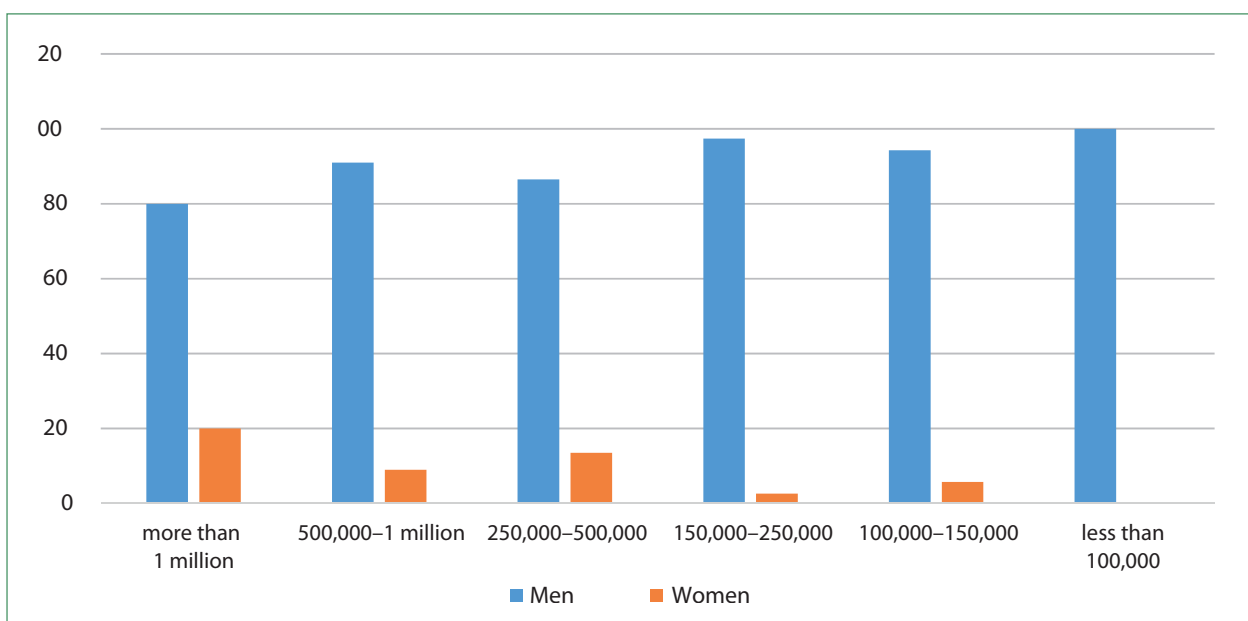


Figure 3<sup>58</sup>. Gender composition of mayors in the Russian cities classified by the number of inhabitants, 2019 (%)

54 See Rosstat data (Russian State Statistics Agency) in Zhenshchiny i Muzhchiny Rossii 2018: [https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18\\_50/Main.htm](https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18_50/Main.htm).

55 See Rosstat data (Russian State Statistics Agency) in Zhenshchiny i Muzhchiny Rossii 2018: [https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18\\_50/Main.htm](https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18_50/Main.htm).

56 Information was taken and analysed from the official websites of the regions and Moscow government.

57 Rosstat data (Russian State Statistics Agency) in Zhenshchiny i Muzhchiny Rossii 2018, Table 6.9: [https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18\\_50/Main.htm](https://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b18_50/Main.htm).

58 Information compiled manually.



**Russia has generally low political representation of women in higher-level decision-making positions. Although it has improved recently due to the mixed-election system, it still does not present women fairly and proportionately**

# INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FROM COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES

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International experience to date indicates that sustainable progress towards women's equal participation in political and public decision making relies on the adoption of a variety of different interventions, accompanied by effective enforcement mechanisms. Changes to enable more women to participate in decision making need to happen at the level of political parties and other political bodies, inside parliaments and other legislative bodies, and in the wider society to combat discrimination towards and stereotyping of women candidates and elected officials (Combaz 2018, 3–4). Lack of enforcement mechanisms significantly weaken the impact of measures that are put in place (Bunyan and Petrucci 2017, 7).

As the analysis of current legislation and policies in the Russian Federation has indicated, at the moment there no substantive mechanisms to promote balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making have been identified. This is reflected in imbalance between women and men in decision-making positions at all levels. The practices described below have been used to address similar situations in other countries and have proven successful to remedy gender disparity in parliamentary politics and other decision-making bodies.

## Voting systems

The type of voting system in place in a country appears to be an important factor in increasing the number of women elected to office.

***In general, proportional representation systems are more favourable to the balanced participation of women in elected office than majoritarian ('first past the post') systems.***

Analysis by the CoE in 2016 found that 'the highest proportion of women members of the single/lower houses was found in [member states of the CoE] using proportional list systems, while the lowest proportion of women members was found in single majority systems' (Council of Europe 2017, 9).<sup>59</sup> In elections held across the world in 2018, parliaments elected via proportional representation or mixed electoral systems elected more women (26.5%) than those elected via majoritarian systems (Inter-parliamentary Union 2019, 10). One reason for this connection is that proportional representation systems are more accessible for women candidates, because there is less burden on individual candidates to campaign (and to raise money to campaign) (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 305). The positive impact of proportional representation systems is strengthened when there are rules in place requiring political parties to put women in 'winnable positions' on party lists (Bunyan and Petrucci 2017, 59).

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<sup>59</sup> Under proportional list systems, the distribution of seats corresponds closely with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. Under majoritarian electoral systems, a seat in parliament or another representative body is allocated to the candidate who wins the most votes in a constituency. ('Proportional Representation – Glossary Page' n.d.; 'How Does a Majoritarian System like FPTP Work?' n.d.)

Nevertheless, with majoritarian systems, targeted temporary special measures such as all-women candidate shortlists (see UK example below) or placing women candidates for election to ‘winnable’ seats can also have positive impact.

### **Increasing women candidates in a majoritarian voting system**

In 1997 in the United Kingdom, the British Labour Party adopted a temporary special measure of ‘All Women Shortlists’ for selecting candidates for parliamentary and local council elections. Under this policy, when a woman MP or local councillor retires or if a man retires in a seat that is likely to be won by the Labour Party, then the local party members must choose a candidate from a list of women. Following the adoption of this policy, the proportion of women MPs elected to the House of Commons in 1997 rose from 10% to 18%, and has continued to increase since then; it currently stands at 32%. Following the elections in 2017, 45% of Labour MPs are women.

*Sources: Bunyan, Diane, and Doru Petruti. 2017. Regional Study on Women’s Political Representation in the Eastern Partnership Countries. 2nd ed. Strasbourg: Council of Europe; Browning, Steve. ‘Women in Parliament and Government’. London: House of Commons Library, 2019.*

## **Legislative measures**

Legislation to encourage and support women candidates can help to address the low representation of women in politics, while gender neutral legislation to make candidate selection processes more transparent and fairer can benefit *all* candidates, and women in particular (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 309).

### **Quotas**

Setting quotas for the minimum number of the underrepresented sex to be elected or appointed to office has become one of the most widely used measures to address unbalanced participation of women and men in parliaments and other decision-making bodies.

***Elections in more than 130 countries today are governed by some type of quota policy, either legislated or introduced at party level,<sup>60</sup> and 75% of CoE member states have some form of legislated or voluntary quota system***

(Inter-parliamentary Union 2019, 10; Council of Europe 2017, 28)

While quotas are legislated as temporary special measures, parity laws are permanent, and aim at reaching 50/50 representation of women and men at all levels of office (Council of Europe 2017, 27).

### **Quota legislation**

Legislated quotas set specific targets to increase the proportion of women candidates for election, or reserve seats in the legislature for women members (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 302–3).

<sup>60</sup> Party quotas are discussed in the section on Political parties: successful practices and programmes

In order to be effective, quota laws need to be well designed and include meaningful sanctions (Council of Europe 2017, 9; European Institute for Gender Equality 2015b). One review of quota laws found that they were most effective when the following conditions were met:

- ▶ The law requires a relatively high proportion of women candidates to be nominated by political parties (for instance, 40%, in line with COE Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on ‘balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making’);
- ▶ The law includes a placement mandate (also known as ‘double quotas’), which specifies the alternative rank order of women and men candidates on party lists (for instance, every second candidate should be a woman);
- ▶ The law includes penalties for non-compliance, such as financial sanctions or the rejection of nomination lists which do not comply with the law, or, alternatively, which create positive incentives for parties to nominate more women; and
- ▶ Compliance is monitored by independent bodies, including Electoral Commissions (Norris and Krook 2011, 33–34).

If these conditions for effectiveness are not met, there is a danger that the quota law will have little effect and will discredit the policy (Council of Europe 2017, 31). Additionally, quotas alone will not ‘solve’ inequality between women and men in political and public decision making, and nor will they (necessarily) enable a diverse range of women to pursue political careers (McCracken et al. 2019, 8)

### **Effective quota legislation**

A law adopted in 2007 (organic law 3/2007 of 22 March 2007) in Spain obliges political parties to ensure that there are no fewer than 40% and no more than 60% of candidates of each sex on their electoral lists (within a proportional representation voting system). The law has two strong features that ensure its effectiveness:

- ▶ Strong sanctions: electoral authorities withdraw electoral lists that do not fulfil the requirement of the quota
- ▶ The 40/60 proportion must be respected not only on electoral lists as a whole, but also for every five positions on each list, meaning that political parties cannot relegate women candidates to unwinnable positions at the bottom of electoral lists

The adoption of the quota law has been an important contributing factor in increasing the proportion of women elected to the Congreso de los Diputados (the lower chamber of the parliament); as of 2019, 47.4% of elected members were women.

Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality. 2015. ‘Electoral Quotas That Work (Spain)’. European Institute for Gender Equality (blog). 2015. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/spain/electoral-quotas-work>; Inter-parliamentary Union. ‘Spain’. New Parline: the IPU’s Open Data Platform (beta), 5 July 2018. <https://data.ipu.org/content/spain>.

## **Legal parity systems**

While quota laws are legislated temporary special measures, parity systems are permanent rules that aim to ensure the equal (50/50) representation of women and men in decision-making bodies (Council of Europe 2017, 27). To date, only a small number of countries have introduced parity laws

### **Legislating parity in France**

France is one of the few countries in the world that has introduced permanent rules for the equal representation of women and men at all levels of national and local government. Following laws passed in 2000, for elections to the Assemblée Nationale (the lower parliament), the difference between the number of candidates of each sex on a party list cannot be greater than 2%, and candidates must alternate women and men. In local elections, since 2013 voters in each canton of a department elect two members of the opposite sex, on a tandem ballot.

Sources: Lepinard, Eleonore, and Marylene Lieber. 'The Policy on Gender Equality in France'. Brussels: European Parliament, 2015; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 'Gender Quotas Database: France'. Accessed 16 August 2019. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/86/35>.

## **Reviewing legislation to remove inadvertent discrimination against women bias**

Electoral laws may not necessarily openly discriminate against women candidates. However, a thorough review of legislation can reveal instances where there is inadvertent discrimination, particularly in the area of campaign financing, given that women candidates are less likely to have access to significant financial support. For instance, if the candidacy deposit is set too high, women candidates may be discouraged from standing (Ballington et al. 2015, 65). In reviewing electoral law in Moldova, Bunyan and Petrutu (2017, 51) found that provisions in the rules governing campaign finance that allowed unlimited financial contributions indirectly disadvantaged women candidates, as they generally had lower access to funds and could therefore not campaign as effectively as other (male) candidates.

## **Targeted measures to encourage participation of women**

Targeted reforms to encourage political parties to field more women candidates mainly involve the allocation of public funding as an incentive or penalty for compliance or non-compliance with legislated quota laws (Ballington et al. 2015, 69). Public funding (which covers campaign expenditures, training, party activities and intra-party institution building) is also made available in some countries for political parties if they fulfil other gender equality requirements, such as supporting a women's wing or women's caucus in parliament or to ensure that women candidates have increased media access (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 309–16).

It is important to note, however, that larger political parties that have good access to funding from donors and supporters and are not reliant on public funding often ignore these incentives or penalties. In France, for instance, larger political parties chose to pay the penalties introduced in 2000 for failing to field an equal number of male and female candidates, rather than increase the number of women on their candidate lists (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 317–19).<sup>61</sup> Similar patterns have been observed in Georgia and Moldova (Bunyan and Petrutu 2017, 41).

<sup>61</sup> The penalty for non-compliance was a reduction in the public funding provided to parties based on the number of votes they received in the first round of elections; if the gender difference among candidates was larger than 2%, the public funding was reduced by three-quarters of this difference (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 317–19). The regulations have since been changed, see: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 'Gender Quotas Database: France'.

### **Using public funding to encourage more women candidates**

A 2012 amendment to the Electoral Act in Ireland states that political parties will lose 50% of their public funding if “either gender is represented by less than 30% of party candidates”.

In Croatia, since 2011 “for each elected deputy who belongs to an under-represented gender, political parties shall be entitled to a bonus of 10% of the amount allocated to each deputy or member of the representative body”.

*Source: Ballington, Julie, and Muriel Kahane. ‘Chapter 9: Women in Politics: Financing for Gender Equality’. In *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*, 300–343. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2014. <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/funding-of-political-parties-and-election-campaigns.pdf>.*

## **Other legislative measures**

Other, gender neutral legislative measures can help to address inequalities between women and men candidates and make candidate selection processes fairer for *all* candidates, such as:

- ▶ regulations on how much a party or individual candidate can spend, meaning that candidates with fewer resources are not disadvantaged;
- ▶ limits on the amount that can be contributed to a party or candidate by a single donor, which addresses women’s lack of access to client networks;
- ▶ requirements to disclose the identity of donors and bans on some sources of donations;
- ▶ legislated media access, meaning that all candidates get the same amount of media coverage (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 309–14).

## **Training, mentoring, and capacity building for women candidates and elected officials**

Women’s (assumed) lack of political experience is often cited by political parties and voters as a reason not to support female candidates (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 323). Training, mentoring, and capacity building programmes for women candidates or women who would like to stand for office in the future – including women from marginalised groups such as younger women or women living with disabilities or belonging to minority groups – and for elected officials can play an important role in addressing this lack of experience, as well as boosting confidence and enabling women to build networks and contacts.

### **Training and capacity building activities: some examples**

- ▶ Leadership training
- ▶ Public speaking
- ▶ How to prepare for meetings
- ▶ Working with and using the media
- ▶ Opportunities to gain direct experience of political processes and activities

- ▶ Training in the use of information and communication technologies, including using social media to engage voters
- ▶ Mentoring from senior women politicians
- ▶ Support to build networks
- ▶ Negotiation tactics
- ▶ How to budget

*Sources: McCracken, Kate, Ana Fitzsimons, Sergio Marquez, and Małgorzata Druciarek. 'Women in Political Decision-Making in View of the next European Elections.' Brussels: European Parliament, 2019; Council of Europe. 'Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making: Analytical Report - 2016 Data.' Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017; European Institute for Gender Equality. 'Study on Good Practices : Women in Power and Decision-Making : Empowering Women in Politics.' Vilnius: European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015.*

Programmes providing training and capacity building to women are now a firmly established method of addressing imbalances between women and men in political and public decision making. That said, as the Council of Europe has noted, capacity building programmes may only have limited impact, and they 'do not force political parties to fundamentally change their recruitment and selection procedures, nor do they encourage parties to critically reflect upon the existence of gender biases or male privilege in candidate recruitment and selection processes' (2017, 65).

Capacity-building programmes can be delivered by civil society organisations, political parties, international organisations, and through national level, state-funded schemes (European Institute for Gender Equality 2015a; 2015c; McCracken et al. 2019).

***The most effective programmes combine different activities and go beyond 'classroom' training to include mentoring and networking opportunities***

(McCracken et al. 2019, 9).

Once elected, further training on the rules and procedures of the parliament or other decision-making body can also support elected women representatives. It is important that this training continues regularly rather than petering out and leaving new parliamentarians feeling lost (Palmieri 2011, 73).

***Boosting equal representation in local government: the Helene Weber Kolleg***

Women remain significantly under-represented in local level decision-making bodies in Germany, making up around 25% of representatives. Begun in 2011, the Helene Weber Kolleg programme encourages women to stand for local government, combining a range of interlinked tools. These included:

- ▶ The Helene Weber award of €10,000, given to 15 local women politicians in each round
- ▶ A nine-month mentoring scheme
- ▶ Local activities to promote gender equality in politics, organised by award winners with their prize money

The programme also has an informative website and organises international exchanges and a travelling exhibition. The programme is run by the NGO EAF and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and has cross-party support.

*Source: European Institute for Gender Equality. 'Women Power Politics – Helene Weber Kolleg (Germany): European Institute for Gender Equality (blog), 2015. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/germany/women-power-politics-helene-weber-kolleg>.*

In some countries, rules have been introduced requiring political parties to use a proportion of the public funding that they receive for training, mentoring or other programmes to support women's increased participation in political and public decision-making. Public funding can also be earmarked for subsidies for childcare available to all elected representatives (but which de facto are more likely to benefit women), or to support women's wings of political parties as is the case in Finland, where since 1975, all political parties have been required to allocate 12% of their public subsidy to the women's wing of the party (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 322–25). Such measures are included as promising practices in the list of concrete actions suggested in Council of Europe Recommendation 'Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making' (Council of Europe 2017, 63).

### **Public funding for capacity building**

In Italy, political parties must allocate 5% of the public funding that they receive to activities promoting the active participation of women and in politics.

Since 2009, public funds received by political parties in Ireland must fulfil certain purposes including the promotion of participation of women and young people in political activities.

*Source: Ballington, Julie, and Muriel Kahane. 'Chapter 9: Women in Politics: Financing for Gender Equality'. In *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*, 300–343. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2014. <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/funding-of-political-parties-and-election-campaigns.pdf>.*

## **Support to women from marginalised groups**

Younger women, women living with disabilities, and women from marginalised ethnic, religious, or other groups face additional barriers to their participation in political and public decision-making, often the result of discrimination. Once elected, young women have more difficulty than young men in commanding the respect of their peers and in being accepted as legitimate political players, while younger women and women belonging to minority groups are more likely to experience abuse, harassment and violence within parliaments and decision-making bodies (as discussed in greater detail below) (Palmieri 2011; Inter-parliamentary Union 2016b). Targeted training, mentoring, and capacity-building activities can help to address these issues.

### **Schemes to support minority and younger women's political participation**

Local elections in Moldova in 2015 saw two Roma women elected as councillors, for the first time since the country became independent in 1991. Both had participated in the 'Women in Politics' programme, run by the Romani Women and Girls' Network in partnership with UN Women, and had benefitted from training in campaigning and networking skills. Once elected, the two councillors continued to receive training and mentoring support under the programme. The elected councillors reported that they had been able to address key issues relevant to Roma communities, including increasing school registration, and securing street lighting and waste collection in Roma neighbourhoods.

The 'From Women to Women' programme in Portugal aimed to increase young women's participation in politics. Older women active in politics provided twelve months of mentoring to 30 young women aged 16-30, who also took part in training activities on gender equality, democracy, political systems,



and other topics, and visits to political institutions. Young women belonging to minority ethnic and cultural groups were particularly encouraged to apply.

Sources: UN Women. 'UN Programme "Women in Politics" in Moldova'. UN Women, 2016. <http://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/moldova/leadership-and-political-participation/women-in-politics>; UN Women. 'Women's Political Participation Gains Momentum in Moldova'. UN Women, 26 September 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/news/stories/2016/9/womens-political-participation-gain-momentum-in-moldova>.

European Institute for Gender Equality. 'Bringing Young Women into Politics: The Project "From Woman to Woman" (Portugal)'. European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/portugal/bringing-young-women-politics-project-woman-woman>.

## Political parties: successful practices and programmes

There is wide consensus that political parties have a crucial role to play in improving women's participation in political and public decision making, and even that the impact of these actions can be more significant than legislated changes or policies. Because they control the recruitment and nomination of candidates, political parties are in effect the 'gatekeepers' for women who want to stand for office, and they 'can act as barriers to prevent, or enablers to secure, an increase in women's political participation' (Bunyan and Petruti 2017, 12; McCracken et al. 2015; Ballington and Kahane 2014). Political parties also continue to have an important role to play in supporting women once they are elected, in order to enable women representatives to fulfil their responsibilities and to be able to work safely and effectively (Combaz 2018, 3).

***International evidence indicates that political parties can have the greatest, positive impact on increasing women's participation when 'they undertake ambitious, multi-faceted, coordinated programmes of action that seek to change the status quo of internal party practices and cultures as well as building women's capacity'***

(McCracken et al. 2019, 8)

Reflecting this, as mentioned earlier, PACE Resolution 1898 (2012) on 'Political parties and women's political representation' includes a comprehensive list of recommendations to political parties in CoE member states, ranging from introducing formal gender equality policies to quotas for women candidates to training and mentoring (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2012, para. 6).

## Adopting formal commitments to gender equality

Adopting a formal gender equality policy and / or addressing gender equality in the party's legal framework can serve as a strong, positive, public signal to would-be women candidates (and voters) about the party's commitment to supporting women's equal participation in political and public decision making. An equality policy can encompass special measures to increase women's participation (such as quotas, or women-only capacity building and mentoring schemes), as well as issues such as work-life balance and mechanisms for addressing discrimination and abuse. An equality policy can also include a commitment to ensuring that equality and women's empowerment are incorporated into the party's policies, 'including by supporting gender-specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues, and by promoting

gender equality in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security and inheritance' (Ballington et al. 2012, 6).

### ***What should a gender equality policy for a political party look like?***

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance suggests that political parties' equality policies should 'embrace and institutionalise' these principles:

- ▶ Substantive rather than formal equality, i.e. measures that take into account women's and men's different positions and situations
- ▶ Special measures, e.g. quotas, training and mentoring for women candidates
- ▶ Specific measures to support the inclusion of women from minority groups
- ▶ Measures to enable all candidates and representatives to balance work and family, e.g. making 'gender-sensitive choices' about timing and location of meetings, promoting family-friendly working cultures
- ▶ Collecting and using sex-disaggregated data to inform further development of the equality policy

*Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 'A Framework for Developing Gender Policies for Political Parties'. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2016*

## **Political party quotas**

While the adoption of a formal gender equality policies by political parties has important significant value, in the CoE member states, the adoption of voluntary quotas for candidate lists has had much more impact in increasing the equal representation of women.

### ***Voluntary party quotas seem to have more impact than legislated quotas (discussed above).<sup>62</sup>***

One explanation may be that political parties that are committed to equal representation set their targets relatively high, and also effectively implement these voluntary quotas (Council of Europe 2017, 29, 65). Both the CEDAW Committee and the CoE have made recommendations that political parties should adopt measures such as voluntary quotas to 'ensure that women are included in party lists and nominated for election in areas where they have a likelihood of electoral success' (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 28; Council of Europe 2017).

Political parties can also apply quotas for other areas of activity, such as nominations and appointments to party executives or governing boards, or for participation in party conventions (Ballington et al. 2012, 4). Political parties with higher numbers of women on party executives and in leadership positions within the party also appear to be able to attract more female members, and more women wishing to stand as candidates (Council of Europe 2017, 64).

Voluntary party quotas seem to have the greatest impact on the numbers of women elected when:

<sup>62</sup> Analysis by the COE in 2016 found that the average percentage of women in lower / single houses was 28.8% in CoE member states with political party quotas only, compared to 26.3% in countries with political party quotas and quota legislation, and 25.3% in countries with quota legislation only (Council of Europe 2017, 28).

- ▶ *many parties*, especially several *larger parties*, adopt these policies;
- ▶ the quotas adopted call for a relatively *high proportion* of women to be nominated as party candidates and contain provisions related to the *placement* of female candidates on party lists; and
- ▶ parties have formal nomination procedures and *rules are enforced* by internal party bodies. (Norris and Krook 2011, 35–36)

### ***Voluntary party quotas in the Nordic countries: a recipe for success?***

Collectively, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have some of the highest rates of women's political participation in the world. None of the Nordic countries have legislated quotas; however, many political parties across the region have had voluntary quotas in place since the 1970s or 1980s. For instance, the Social Democratic Party in Sweden has had internal quotas since 1978 and now uses a 'zip system', alternating male and female candidates on party lists. In Norway, the Norwegian Labour Party has had a voluntary quota in place since 1983, and the party's constitution includes a 50% quota and states that 'both sexes shall be represented in the first two positions on the list'. In Iceland, the Progressive Party has a 40% quota for selection of electoral candidates and for nominees for internal party structures. Many factors have contributed to the high rate of women's political representation in the Nordic countries, and voluntary party quotas are among them.

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Inter-parliamentary Union, and Stockholm University. 'Gender Quotas Database'. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Accessed 24 July 2019. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas>.

## **Financial support to women candidates**

***Lack of money can be a major barrier to women's political participation, for women candidates standing for the first time, or standing for re-election***

(Bunyan and Petruti 2017, 46)

### ***Targeted fundraising for women candidates***

The women's wing of the Labour Party in Ireland identified five factors disadvantaging women candidates: care, culture, cash, confidence and candidate selection. The programme that the party has developed to address these factors includes fundraising on behalf of women candidates, as well as training courses for women members and outreach activities.

Source: Ballington, Julie, and Muriel Kahane. 'Chapter 9: Women in Politics: Financing for Gender Equality'. In *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*, 300–343. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2014. <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/funding-of-political-parties-and-election-campaigns.pdf>.

Lack of finances is a significant barrier to women would-be candidates in many countries, even when they are standing for election as candidates of political parties. For instance, research on women who had stood for election in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine found that

funding that they had received from their political parties was not enough to pay for a campaign. As most would-be candidates worked in education, health or as journalists or for NGOs, they did not have access to other funding for their campaigning (Bunyan and Petrucci 2017, 46). Responding to this, some political parties across Europe have adopted different mechanisms to reduce this financial burden. These include: mechanisms to raise funds internally for women candidates; subsidies or in-kind donations to women candidates (e.g. to cover childcare or travel costs); waiving or reducing candidate registration fees; and fundraising networks that specifically benefit women candidates (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 327–28).

## Women's wings of political parties

Supporting a formal 'women's wing' is a longstanding and very common mechanism for political parties to encourage women's participation (Palmieri 2011, 76). Women's wings can play an important role in shaping the party's policy on gender equality, as well as providing support and mentoring to women candidates (Ballington and Kahane 2014, 324). This is particularly true in contexts where the first affirmative actions towards equality are being taken. To be effective, however, women's wings need to be formally integrated into the party structure, with defined roles and responsibilities, and appropriate funding (Ballington et al. 2012, 4).

### ***A women's wing drives gender equality***

Established by women party activists in 1995, the Democratic Women's Forum of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in Croatia has since worked hard to increase women's participation in the party. This has included forming strategic relations with civil society actors, successfully pushing for the party to adopt a 40% quota for the 'underrepresented gender', offering skills-development opportunities to women party members, and developing local level platforms on policy priorities for women. These activities have resulted in more women being elected as SDP MPs and women being more involved at senior levels in decision making within the party.

*Source: Ballington, Julie, et. al. Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation. New York / Washington, DC: United Nations Development Programme / National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2012.*

## Other activities by political parties

### ***Enlisting male allies***

In Spain, the Socialist Workers' Party adopted a range of different mechanisms to improve equal participation, including an internal quota and mainstreaming gender equality into all their party policies. What had significant impact, however, was the support of senior male leaders, including party leader and eventual prime minister José Zapatero, who publicly committed to supporting equality between women and men and women's empowerment.

*Source: Ballington, Julie, et. al. Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation. New York / Washington, DC: United Nations Development Programme / National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2012.*

Political parties across the CoE member states have adopted a range of other measures to improve the balance between women and men, including 'gender audits' to assess the level of equality within the party, supporting gender-sensitive reforms to political institutions (e.g. supporting adoption of family-friendly policies), and supporting cross-party initiatives (e.g. women's caucuses).

Conducting a 'gender audit' – an assessment of the level of equality within the party, with the aim of identifying and eventually eliminating practices and rules that directly or indirectly disadvantage women – can be an important first step towards a more integrated equality policy, and can help a political party to decide which measures could help it to improve women's participation (Ballington et al. 2012, 6). Gender audits are discussed in more detail below, in relation to gender-sensitive parliaments.

Other activities can include devising mechanisms to ensure women's participation in the party's policy-making processes and ensuring that the responsibility for ensuring gender equality is shared throughout the party (not just the women's wing) and that adequate staff and resources are made available (Palmieri 2011, 76, 81). Further, political parties can realise their support for equal participation through promoting gender-sensitive reforms to political institutions (discussed in detail in the section below), supporting cross-party networks of women representatives and women's parliamentary caucuses, and appointing women to leadership roles within the party's parliamentary group and committees (Ballington et al. 2012, 6).

## Gender-sensitive and family-friendly parliaments

In many countries there is growing recognition of the need to make parliaments and other decision-making bodies more gender-sensitive and family-friendly. Such measures can encourage more women to stand as parliamentary candidates, as well as addressing the barriers that women face to effectively fulfilling their responsibilities as representatives, once they have been elected or appointed. They can also make parliaments more pleasant places for *all* elected representatives and their staff to work.

The culture inside many national and local parliaments can be very off-putting for women. Women parliamentarians report that parliamentary culture is often very masculine, with unwritten codes and rules, where they are made to feel uncomfortable and as if they do not belong (Palmieri 2011, 84). Women representatives may be ignored, talked over, and excluded from parliamentary debates, committees and meetings (Bunyan and Petruti 2017, 32). There may be rules in place that make it more difficult for women to participate, such as bans on children entering the building, or no facilities for breastfeeding (Bunyan and Petruti 2017, 60). Women parliamentarians across the world also report experiencing high levels of abuse and harassment, including from fellow representatives (Inter-parliamentary Union 2016b; Inter-parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2018).

***An important first step towards making a parliament or other decision-making body more gender-sensitive and family-friendly is to conduct a 'gender sensitive assessment' or 'gender audit' to assess how gender sensitive the parliament is already; and to adopt a formal gender equality policy.***

### **What does a gender-sensitive parliament look like?**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union describes a gender-sensitive parliament as one that:

- ▶ Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures.
- ▶ Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context.
- ▶ Mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work.
- ▶ Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality and responds to the needs and realities of MPs – men and women –to balance work and family responsibilities.
- ▶ Acknowledges and builds on the contribution made by its men members who pursue and advocate for gender equality.
- ▶ Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality.
- ▶ Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration.

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union. 'Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments'. Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2017.

Assessing how gender sensitive a parliament is can be done through an internal process (self-assessment) or externally through a **gender audit**. These external assessments might entail gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop an objective understanding of current practices and processes. External assessments usually conclude with a report. During such assessments, an independent person or group of individuals (such as auditors, researchers or parliamentary development specialists) is responsible for collecting evidence, evaluating it, and formulating a judgement or set of recommendations that are communicated through a report to parliament. The report would then be used to improve subsequent learning (Inter-parliamentary Union 2016, 10). Such audit could measure:

- ▶ the presence of women in the parliament, i.e. numbers and positions
- ▶ the state of the current policy framework for gender equality
- ▶ existing mechanisms for mainstreaming equality issues throughout the work of the parliament
- ▶ existing infrastructure and policies to support a gender-sensitive, family friendly culture

### **Increasing women's representation at senior levels**

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***A 'critical mass' of women representatives alone will not result in changes at policy and legislative level, unless women are appointed to positions of seniority and influence within governments and on parliamentary committees***

(Palmieri 2011, 17)

However, it is still the rule that even with the growing numbers of women elected to parliaments and other decision-making bodies, few reach positions of power and influence. For instance, analysis of

data from CoE member states found that only 21.7% of single / lower houses had a female president or speaker (although 50% had a female deputy speaker) (Council of Europe 2017, 32); one of these Parliamentary Speakers is, of course, Valentina Matviyenko, Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation. The CEDAW Committee has noted that ‘States parties have a responsibility, where it is within their control ... to appoint women to senior decision-making roles’ (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 26). Measures to address this can include temporary special measures such as quotas for ministerial appointments, giving preference to women nominees when a male and a female nominee are equally qualified, or ensuring equal representation of women on parliamentary committees, including as committee chairs (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, 29; Palmieri 2011, 17).

### ***What happens after a gender audit of parliament?***

There were three positive developments following a gender audit of the national parliament in Turkey:

- ▶ Equality between women and men became part of the parliament’s strategic plan, and an equality checklist was devised to guide parliamentarians in the development of new legislation
- ▶ A woman was appointed to the parliament’s Finance Committee for the first time
- ▶ New staff were allocated to the parliament’s gender equality committee

*Source: Inter-parliamentary Union. ‘Evaluating the Gender Sensitivity of Parliaments: A Self-Assessment Toolkit’. Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2016.*

It is also important to avoid the concentration of women in ministerial positions and parliamentary committees that deal with what are perceived as ‘softer’ issues – health, education, culture, and social affairs. To address this, ‘more transparent methods of matching leadership positions with members’ abilities, diverse working experience, and preferences’ are needed (Palmieri 2011, 1).

### ***Scrutiny and oversight from a gender equality committee***

The House Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Cypriot parliament examines draft legislation and budgets for gender sensitivity, as well as initiating discussion of relevant issues as it sees fit. The Committee also oversees Cyprus’ compliance with national and international standards on gender equality and makes relevant recommendations to the government.

*Source: Palmieri, Sonia. ‘Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice’. Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2011.*

## **Gender equality committees and women’s caucuses**

Many national and regional parliaments and other decision-making bodies now have dedicated gender equality committees and / or cross-party women’s caucuses.

Gender equality committees in many parliaments are part of ‘dedicated gender mainstreaming infrastructure’ (Palmieri 2011, 2–3). They can push for measures to increase women’s participation in political

and public decision making, monitor laws and policies on gender equality, and support gender mainstreaming in parliaments (European Institute for Gender Equality 2015a).

Cross-party women's caucuses can provide support and mentoring to women parliamentarians, raise and defend women's legislative priorities and increase their influence in parliament and also promote gender mainstreaming. Some women's caucuses are formal structures with permanent membership and clear objectives, while others are more informal mentoring networks which can function as important sources of support and knowledge exchange, but which have meetings only as needed and do not have a clear agenda (Palmieri 2011, 48, 74). Indeed, women representatives who are organized into a caucus can serve the same purpose as a 'critical mass' of women, even where women do not make up a significant portion of the legislature. (National Democratic Institute n.d., 1).

Because women's caucuses operate across party lines, they function to unite women parliamentarians around issues relating to women's rights and gender equality that they can all support.

***Women's caucuses can defend legislative priorities that are more relevant to women, making it more likely that these issues will be discussed in parliament and eventually articulated in legislation.***

For instance, in many national contexts, laws on domestic violence and on gender equality have been instigated by the women's caucus in parliament. These contributions are in addition to their role in helping to build the capacity of women parliamentarians (particularly those who are newly elected) through organising and providing support and training, as well as professional exchanges with women parliamentarians from other countries (Inter-parliamentary Union 2013, 12–15; Palmieri 2011, 49; UN Women 2018, 45).

#### ***Real impact from a women's caucus!***

The Women's Parliamentary Club Assembly in North Macedonia supported the passage of a law establishing a 30 per cent quota for women in parliament. The law has made it easier for the parliament to pass other women's legislation, dealing with equality and women's access to healthcare. The Club has also supported a new chapter in the Law on Families, to protect victims of domestic violence, and helped to draft and pass the Law on Equal Opportunities

*Source: Inter-parliamentary Union. 'Guidelines for Women's Caucuses'. Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2013; National Democratic Institute. 'Women's Caucus Fact Sheet'. Washington, D.C.: National Democratic Institute.*

Both gender equality committees and women's caucuses can also undertake other activities that can help to make parliaments more gender equality sensitive. These include: hearings with and facilitating written submissions from women's civil society groups; liaison with national women's machinery; arranging for equality advisors and / or gender equality focal points to work in the parliament; and demanding the collection of sex-disaggregated data for legislative work (Palmieri 2011, 57)

## **Addressing violence and harassment**

Violence and harassment – including from fellow parliamentarians – severely impacts the wellbeing of women representatives and their capacity to fulfil their responsibilities and may put off would-be women candidates.



Recent years have seen an encouraging increase in the number of women representatives in parliaments and decision-making bodies across the world, but this has ‘tended to disrupt the established order, provoking some resistance’, which in some cases takes the form of sexist remarks, intimidation or harassment, and even violence towards women representatives (Inter-parliamentary Union 2016b, 1). A global study conducted in 2016 found that 81.8% of women parliamentarians who responded to the survey had experienced psychological violence, 44.4% had received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction during their parliamentary term, and 65.5% had been subjected several times, or often, to humiliating sexist remarks, usually from male parliamentarians (Inter-parliamentary Union 2016b, 3). A survey with women parliamentarians from CoE members had similar findings: 85.2% of women representatives had experienced psychological violence, 46.9% had received threats of death, rape, or beating, and 67.9% had been the target of comments relating to their physical appearance or based on gender stereotypes (Inter-parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2018, 1).

Women representatives who are active in fighting against gender inequality and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, seem to be particularly vulnerable to attack. Age is another aggravating factor, with women representatives under 40 more likely to be subjected to sexist remarks, intimidation, threats and degrading treatment on social media than older women representatives. Being a member of an ethnic, religious, cultural or other minority group also exposes women parliamentarians to more sexist remarks and violence, often compounded by racism (Inter-parliamentary Union 2016b; Inter-parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2018).

More and more parliaments are adopting zero-tolerance approaches and complaint mechanisms. That said, many of the women parliamentarians who responded to the survey on violence, harassment, and abuse in parliaments stated that either there was no service or mechanism available to them to report abuse, or that they doubted the effectiveness or fairness of the existing mechanisms. Women parliamentarians were also reluctant to report violence and harassment for fear of appearing ‘weak’ or being blamed for what had happened, or because they did not want to damage the reputation of their party.

### ***Tackling violence and harassment***

In **Finland**, the ‘Guidelines of the Bureau of Parliament for the prevention of inappropriate conduct and harassment’ lays out a policy of zero tolerance for harassment in the parliament and explains the procedure for making a confidential oral or written complaint and for internal investigation of complaints. The Guidelines apply to all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, who receive information about them when they start work.

Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in **Austria** can report incidents of harassment to an independent expert, who will provide personalised advice on a confidential basis.

Recommendations from the Inter-parliamentary Union and PACE for robust mechanisms to combat violence, harassment, and abuse in parliaments include the following:

- ▶ Having strict, properly enforced laws to prevent and combat violence against women
- ▶ Reinforcing internal parliamentary policies aimed at eliminating sexism, harassment and gender-based violence, including:
  - Clearly pointing out the unacceptable nature of sexist conduct, bullying and sexual harassment, and gender-based violence and the remedies available to people who believe that they are victims and wish to report incidents, such as through specific policies or inclusion of provisions in parliamentary regulations, codes of conduct or codes of ethics

- o Ensuring that people who believe they are victims of harassment or assault can access confidential assistance and counselling services
- o Setting up a complaints and investigation mechanism that is confidential, ready to listen to victims and fair
- o Establishing and enforcing disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrators
- o Providing training on respect in the workplace and combating sexism and harassment for everyone working in parliament
- o Communication and awareness-raising initiatives to help prevent gender-based violence, encourage reporting and protect victims
- o Promoting a gender- and equality-sensitive culture in parliament
- ▶ Transforming political culture and mentalities, through:
  - o Adopting internal procedures for political parties against sexism and violence against women and applying them
  - o Actively involving men and encouraging them to actively take part in the debate and to make the elimination of sexism and discrimination in politics an issue and a commitment of prime concern to them
  - o Encouraging equal representation for women and men in parliaments and solidarity between female parliamentarians

*Source: Inter-parliamentary Union, and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. 'Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women in Parliaments in Europe.' Geneva / Strasbourg: Inter-parliamentary Union / Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2018.*

## Gender equality policies

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In addition to introducing policies to deal with violence, harassment, and abuse, a small number of parliaments have also introduced overarching gender equality policies, in this context 'a road map for outlining a parliament's commitment to gender equality, with a clear and detailed set of objectives and processes for achieving it' (Palmieri 2011, 67). These can cover policies on harassment and conduct, as well as protocols on equal access to resources (such as financial benefits, allowances, office space, computers) and on grievance procedures for challenging discrimination (Palmieri 2011, 68).

## Family-friendly policies

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Policies such as providing childcare facilities and family rooms, parental leave, and proxy voting systems (so that women who are on maternity leave or who are breastfeeding and cannot attend parliamentary sessions are able to participate in votes) all make it easier for women (and men) who have children to combine raising a family with a political career. They are also instrumental in changing the working cultures of parliaments to be more inclusive and gender sensitive (Palmieri 2011; Inter-parliamentary Union 2017).

### **Examples of family-friendly policies in national parliaments**

Denmark – no votes held after 19:00	Spain – fixed sitting times for plenary meetings
Portugal – maternity or paternity leave is an accepted ground for ‘temporary substitution’ of a member of parliament	Ireland – parliamentary creche is open to all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff

Source: Palmieri, Sonia. ‘Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice’. Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2011.

However, in the CoE member states and beyond, only a small number of parliaments provide for these policies benefitting representatives with children. For instance, most parliaments still do not have specific maternity or parental leave policies or facilities for breastfeeding in place, and parliamentary sessions often go on late into the evening. Where available, childcare facilities are often for the children of parliamentary staff, and representatives do not have the right to use them (Palmieri 2011)

### **At local / administrative level**

All of the policies mentioned above can and should also be applied in local level assemblies and decision-making bodies, where rates of women’s participation are also generally low (iKnow politics 2018).

#### **Global links, local action**

Launched in **Malta** in 2017, the Commonwealth Women in Local Government network aims to support more women to get involved in local government, and to increase the influence of women in decisions made about local issues.

Source: iKnow politics. ‘Consolidated Reply of the E-Discussion On Women’s Political Participation in Local Government’. Stockholm / Geneva / New York: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance / Inter-parliamentary Union / UNDP / UN Women, 2018.

The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Resolution 404 (2016) stresses the importance of adopting and implementing the ‘European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life’ (launched in 2006) as a sound step towards gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men in local political and public life. The Charter suggests that local decision-making bodies can support women’s participation in the following ways:

- ▶ Adopting temporary special measures to increase the number of women representatives, e.g. quotas
- ▶ Promoting women to decision-making roles within their internal structures
- ▶ Promoting women’s equality in their policies and in society as a whole
- ▶ Recognising which issues are of particular relevance to women and reflecting these in their party programmes
- ▶ Using positive images of women’s political representatives in their campaigns and in the media
- ▶ Ensuring that the behaviour of their own members is in line with the values of equality and respect for women (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2006)

## Gender mainstreaming in Election Management Bodies

Election Management Bodies (EMBs) have an important role to play in encouraging women's participation in political processes, as electoral candidates and as voters. For instance, during the pre-election period when candidates are being registered, they have a duty to enforce nomination rules regarding the number of women candidates, where these exist. On election day, there are measures that EMBs can take to enable women to access their right to vote, such as having in place female as well as male election staff who have received training on gender sensitivity, making sure that polling stations are safe spaces for women, providing women-only queues (if culturally appropriate) and / or priority queues for pregnant women and women with young children, and collecting sex-disaggregated data about voter turnout (Ballington et al. 2015; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2016).

### **EMBs: a key role in enforcing quotas**

During the 2013 elections in Albania, under election rules, "each party's candidate list had to include at least one male and one female candidate in the top three positions, and in total, at least 30% of candidates of each gender". Many parties included women candidates at the bottom of their lists in unwinnable positions. In response, the EMB issued fines to the three largest parliamentary parties for failing to meet the quota.

*Source: Ballington, Julie, Gabrielle Bardall, Sonia Palmieri, and Kate Sullivan. 'Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation'. New York: UNDP / UN Women, 2015.*

## The role of civil society

National and international civil society organisations are active in many countries in supporting women's increased participation in political and public decision making through different measures such as: providing training and capacity building to would-be candidates and opportunities for networking, raising awareness of imbalances between women and men in parliaments and other decision-making bodies, and in certain contexts, providing direct funding to women would-be candidates to fund their campaigns. Civil society organisations can in this way act as catalysts for change at legislative level and by promoting understanding and acceptance of the importance of women's equality they can change the perception of citizens (Ballington and Kahane 2014; Bunyan and Petrucci 2017).

### **Awareness-raising campaigns**

Across the world feminist and women's rights organisations have adopted highly creative and effective campaigns to promote gender equality in elections, provide information about women candidates and convince political parties and / or voters to pay attention to balanced participation of women and men in politics and decision making (European Institute for Gender Equality 2015b).

### **Creative and imaginative awareness raising campaigns from across the CoE member states**

**Croatia** – a ‘name and shame’ campaign drew attention to which political parties were ignoring the 40% quota for electoral lists and posted sexist or discriminatory statements made by politicians. The campaign is credited with bringing about a slight increase in the number of women elected

**Turkey** - the Association to Support Women Candidates, KA.DER, uses humorous posters and social media campaigns to highlight the lack of women in decision-making bodies, for instance posters of well-known women wearing ties and moustaches with the slogan ‘Is it necessary to be a man to enter parliament?’

**Sweden** – the Federation of Social Democratic Women (S-Kvinnor) uses films and role-play exercises and distributes The Power Handbook with advice for women on how to access power and combat male dominance in politics

Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality. ‘Political Parties in the Pillory (Croatia)’. European Institute for Gender Equality (blog), 2015. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/croatia/political-parties-pillory/>; Bunyan, Diane, and Doru Petrutu. *Regional Study on Women’s Political Representation in the Eastern Partnership Countries*. 2nd ed. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017; European Institute for Gender Equality. ‘Tools to Combat Domination Techniques (Sweden)’. European Institute for Gender Equality (blog), 2015 <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/sweden/tools-combat-domination-techniques/>; S-KVINNOR. ‘The Power Handbook’. S-Kvinnor (blog). Accessed 25 July 2019. <https://s-kvinnor.se/var-politik/political-program/the-power-handbook/>.

## **Advocacy by women’s organisations**

Feminist and women’s rights organisations have an important role to play in advocating policy to improve women’s equal representation in political and public decision making (such as temporary special measures) and holding governments to account to ensure that policies are effectively implemented (European Institute for Gender Equality 2015a).

### **Successful advocacy to increase women’s representation**

In **Moldova**, the ‘Platform for Gender Equality’ (a coalition of NGOs) successfully advocated the introduction of a 40% quota for each sex on party candidate lists. The new law was passed in 2016.

Source: Bunyan, Diane, and Doru Petrutu. *Regional Study on Women’s Political Representation in the Eastern Partnership Countries*. 2nd ed. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017.

## **The role of the media**

Sadly, in most countries the media continue to play a *negative* role in regard to women’s equal political and public participation, sustaining negative stereotypes about women and politics, for instance by challenging whether women should be standing for office, giving women candidates low visibility (which means women candidates continue to be seen as the exception, not the rule), and asking questions about their personal lives which they would not ask of a male candidate (Bunyan and Petrutu 2017, 34–35).

### **Training to work effectively with the media**

Many of the capacity building programmes mentioned earlier in this report include media training as a component of the support offered to women candidates and elected representatives. For instance, the programmes from Moldova and Portugal mentioned on p.35 also included training on how to engage with the media, and how to recognise and challenge negative stereotypes. Women's caucuses in many parliaments have also developed effective media engagement strategies, which have helped improve the standard of media representation.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. 'A Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region'. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2013. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/105940?download=true>.

**Media can play an important role in supporting women's balanced participation in political and public decision making, including through giving women candidates equal visibility, and by highlighting the positive contributions of women in politics and avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes.**

These actions could contribute towards challenging negative public attitudes towards women's political participation, or lack of confidence in and support for female candidates among voters (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1997, para. 20; DiLanzo 2017).

## **Challenges and good practices**

Russia has a lot of potential to address equal representation of women and men as shown by the analysis of its legislation and increasing attention to the status and interests of women. Based on the analysis of the sources, the **challenges** are:

- ▶ Overall low levels of political representation of women in Russia as indicated by both GGI (123 ranking out of 149 states in political representation) and GII (0.257) measurements. This shows that women's human development potential is underused.
- ▶ Although political representation of women has improved recently due to the mixed-election system which can facilitate selection of women candidates, women are still not represented fairly and proportionately both in legislative and executive branches of power;
- ▶ Russian legislation guarantees *de jure* gender equality and prohibits gender-based discrimination (see section on legislative framework above in this report); however, it doesn't promote positive measures targeting women (such as quota of women's representation in the political parties, preference of women over men in recruitment if they are underrepresented, etc.);
- ▶ Russia does not have any bodies or institutions specifically mandated to promote the human rights of women;

Solutions to address imbalance in women's participation in political and public decision making are unique for each country, and related to trajectories of political, economic and cultural development. However, the following **solutions** that worked in similar contexts and which had the support of stakeholders consulted for this study could be applied:

### **Election processes and political parties:**

- ▶ Design and implement legislative or regulatory provision to encourage political parties to introduce quota systems for candidate selection (see examples from the Nordic countries);
- ▶ Introduce changes in voting legislation and procedures to alternate women's and men's names on candidate lists (the 'zip' system, as used in Sweden as presented);

- ▶ Introduce financial incentives for parties to promote female candidates such as fundraising only for women, reducing registration fees, and allowances to cover travel and childcare (see examples from Italy and Ireland);
- ▶ Follow PACE 1898 (2012) Resolution recommendations on ‘Political parties and women’s political representation’ as well as the recommendations included in Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Resolution 404 (2016) on Women’s political participation and representation at local and regional levels;

### **Improving gender sensitivity of legislation and policies:**

- ▶ Use gender expertise methodology (*gendernaia ekspertiza*) to analyse legislation and remove gender bias from law (as shown in an example from Moldova);
- ▶ Collect regularly gender-sensitive statistics on women’s representation in politics (such as gender statistics from Eurostat for the European Union);
- ▶ Introduce gender equality trainings for public officials. This could include “reverse mentoring”, whereby women active in local politics provide gender sensitivity training to national level officials;
- ▶ Establish a specific body or agency for combating discrimination against women and for promoting equal opportunities for women and men;

### **Better working conditions:**

- ▶ Include a gender equality-sensitive agenda in the personnel policy of public authorities and promote gender sensitive parliaments and other decision-making bodies, including introducing “zero tolerance” policies against sexual harassment and violence, and effective mechanisms to address harassment and abuse (as per recommendations of the IPU);
- ▶ Create more flexible working conditions for women and men elected to office who have family obligations (see the examples from various countries);

### **Training and mentoring:**

- ▶ Provide training to women (would-be) candidates in particular key areas, such as how the political and electoral systems function, new technologies, psychology, political communication, fundraising and community mobilisation. Continue to develop leadership training for women and girls to encourage their participation in public and political decision making (see the examples from Germany, Moldova and Portugal included in this report);
- ▶ Support the establishment of cross-party women’s caucuses at national, regional and local parliamentary levels that can provide mentoring support to women in political and public decision-making bodies (see the example from North Macedonia);

### **Working with the media:**

- ▶ Provide media training to women politicians to help women to have successful media campaigns and to provide them with tools to deal with the media in cases of sexist or misogynistic behaviour, including how to fight and protect oneself from online violence (see examples from Moldova and Portugal);
- ▶ Train mass media specialists to promote unbiased image of women, and women in politics in particular;

- ▶ Encourage the establishment of national regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms aimed at ensuring fair and balanced media coverage of women and men candidates for elected offices;
- ▶ Encourage the Human Rights bodies or other relevant bodies to receive, analyse and review complaints in relation to sexism in the media and in advertising, and to publish annual reports on their activities regarding gender equality and against gender stereotypes in the media.

***PACE Resolution 1898 (2012) on ‘Political parties and women’s political representation’: recommendations***

- ▶ introducing a formal commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their statute;
- ▶ organising campaigns and activities to attract women’s membership;
- ▶ setting up women-only structures and allocating them with adequate funding, and giving them control over how to spend it;
- ▶ ensuring that party structures which select candidates to stand for election are fully representative of society, and therefore include a proportional presence of women;
- ▶ ensuring maximum transparency in the procedure for the selection of candidates to stand for election;
- ▶ introducing a minimum quota of 40% of the under-represented sex in their executive decision-making bodies at all levels;
- ▶ in the case of proportional electoral systems, introducing a minimum quota of 40% of the under-represented sex in the electoral lists, accompanied by special gender safeguards as regards the ranking order and the positions at the top of the list, preferably through a zipper-system;
- ▶ in the case of majoritarian electoral systems, encouraging the shortlisting of candidates of the under-represented gender, if appropriate through “all-women shortlists” or priority lists with an equal number of people of either sex;
- ▶ setting up mentoring and training programmes to enhance the capacity of talented women to take up positions of political responsibility;
- ▶ setting up training programmes to strengthen women’s media skills and ensure that women members are given a fair chance to speak on behalf of the party on a broad range of issues;
- ▶ ensuring that, during electoral campaigns, the broadcasting time allocated to the party is proportionally shared by women and men candidates;
- ▶ setting up measures to enable members to reconcile political engagement and family commitments, for instance by providing free childcare during important party events or during electoral campaigns, and avoiding in so far as possible that party meetings take place at unsociable hours;
- ▶ setting up systems to regularly assess and discuss gender distribution in political party structures and party mandates, for instance by foreseeing that the party leader reports on this matter on an annual basis;
- ▶ trying to reach cross-party agreement on the need and ways to enhance women’s participation and representation in politics.

*Source: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. PACE - Resolution 1898 (2012) - Political parties and women’s political representation, Resolution 1898 (2012) Final version § (2012).*



# REFERENCES

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## Programme of meetings of experts of the Council of Europe (Moscow, 17–20 September 2019)

### 17 September

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation Moscow,  
Myasnitskaya street, 47**

**16:00–17:00** – meeting with the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation  
Ms Tatiana Moskalkova

### 18 September

**Russian Women’s Union HQ in Moscow  
Moscow, Glinishchevskiy Pereulok, 6**

**11:00–12:00** – meeting with **Ms Ekaterina Lakhova**, Member of the Council of Federation, Chairperson of Russian Women’s Union

**12:00–13:00** – meeting with **Ms Regina Azizova**, Deputy Head of the Department of Legal and International Affairs, and **Tatiana Melnikova**, Deputy Head of the Division for Demographic Policy and Gender Equality Issues of the Department for Demographic Policy and Social Protection of the Population of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Russian Federation (Executive Secretary), Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation

**Programme Office of the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation  
Moscow, Leontyevskii Pereulok, 9/3**

**13:30–15:00** – meeting with the representatives of the “Eurasian Women’s Association”

**Ms Marina Volynkina** – Head of the information agency “Eurasian Women’s Association”

**Ms Tatiana Vorozhtsova** – Deputy Head of the information agency “Eurasian Women’s Association”

**Mr Pavel Ivanov** – Head of the Media Group of the information agency “Eurasian Women’s Association”

**16:00–17:30** – meeting with the representatives of “Consortium of Women’s Non-governmental organisations”

**Ms Tatiana Belova** – lawyer, “Consortium of Women’s Non-governmental organisations”

**Ms Sofia Rusova** – public relations specialist, “Consortium of Women’s Non-governmental organisations”

## 19 September

### Programme Office of the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation Moscow, Leontyevskii Pereulok, 9/3

**11:00–12:00** – Skype conference with the representatives of “Women’s Alliance”

**Ms Elena Kalinina** – President of “Women’s Alliance”

**16:00–17:30** – meeting with **Ms Alena Popova**, W-Project

## 20 September

### Programme Office of the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation Moscow, Leontyevskii Pereulok, 9/3

**12:15–13:15** – Skype meeting with **Ms Yulia Barlova**, Deputy Head of Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Yaroslavl region

**13:15–13:30** – Stock-taking meeting with the Project team

## Documents

### International and EU

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