



Bratislava 2009

# Enhancing Women's Political Participation

*A Policy Note for Europe and CIS (ECIS)*

# Enhancing Women's Political Participation:

A Policy Note for Europe  
and the Commonwealth  
of Independent States

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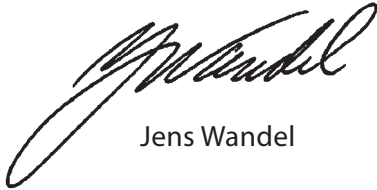
# Foreword

Transition and development processes in the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) region have proceeded without the full participation of women, weakening their position in political and socio-economic life. These trends need to be reversed in order to ensure that women and men equally contribute to, and benefit from, the transition process, especially where the transition is expected to lead to more inclusive democracy. The proportion of women members of parliament in most of the region is slowly rising. Nevertheless, with a regional average of just over 15 percent, the proportion of women in parliament is still below the critical mass of 30 percent considered necessary for women to contribute meaningfully to politics. But increasing women's political participation also needs to go beyond the numbers, making sure gender issues become an integral part of political agendas. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a human rights issue but also a prerequisite for a democratic society where the interests, needs and concerns of both women and men are taken into account in political decision-making. By improving gender balance in governance institutions, governance structures will be strengthened, making them less vulnerable in crisis situations, including times of economic downturn.

This Policy Note for Europe and CIS: Enhancing Women's Political Participation is intended to respond to the need for measures to counteract the low participation of women in political decision-making. Building upon an analysis of regional data and detailed outcomes from six national round tables (Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine) held in 2008 and a subsequent regional conference held in Istanbul in December 2008, this Policy Note is intended for parliamentarians, civil servants at decision-making levels and civil society organizations promoting democratic governance in the region with a focus on ways to promote and strengthen women's political participation, tailored to the regional context. This publication illustrates the practical value of parliaments/governments' engagement in promoting women's political participation. It seeks to advance parliament's own institutional capacity to promote women's political participation and to equip parliamentarians with examples from other countries in the region. Finally, the Policy Note is a resource for practitioners engaged in programming to enhance the political participation of women.

Women's political participation is an internationally agreed women's human right. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stipulates equality between women and men in terms of access to, and opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and stand for election. As the Convention celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, the Policy Note is expected to facilitate the design and adoption of measures to further the full implementation of the Convention. Women in power and decision-making was also identified as one of the 12 areas of concern in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

The tool draws on the expertise of members of parliament, government officials and civil society representatives from the six roundtable countries and beyond, as well as from UNDP practitioners. The production of this Policy Note has demanded the work and devotion of many people. We are tremendously grateful to all who have shared their experience, knowledge and insights to make this publication a rich compilation of knowledge and data.



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# List of Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECIS	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
EU	European Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GEL	Gender Equality Law
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSAGI	UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Executive Summary

Women have seen their status improve substantially over the past decade in the ECIS region. The legislative and electoral reforms introduced during the transition process have made societies more inclusive. A larger number of women are now participating in decision-making processes as parliamentarians, political party members, senior civil servants, and as representatives of civil society and the media. Legal and policy frameworks have been established to promote and protect the civil, political, economic and social rights of women.

However, no country in the ECIS region has achieved gender balance in high-level decision-making bodies. Furthermore, the integration of gender perspectives in policy formulation processes has been insufficient and ineffective. Meaningful participation of women in public life requires more than just an additional number of women in visible and responsible positions. It requires strengthened capacities of both male and female policy makers, e.g., parliamentarians and government officials, to implement policies that promote gender equality. It also requires enhanced capacities of civil society organizations and media to support an environment in which women are empowered to claim and exercise their right to participate in public life.

This *Policy Note* presents a set of pragmatic recommendations that will enable policy makers to enhance women's political participation in the region. These measures are the product of six national roundtable discussions organized in 2008 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine as well as a regional conference in Turkey in December 2008. As a comprehensive set of practical and relevant guidance for the region, these measures clearly demonstrate the ways forward in promoting women's political participation.

This *Policy Note* also presents the current status of, and opportunities for, women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes in the region. Based on the evidence and regional data collected and analysed through the six national roundtables and the subsequent culminating regional conference of 2008, this *Policy Note* is for parliamentarians, government officials, legislators, political party members, civil society organizations working on enhancing women's political participation and media with the recommended policy and action options in the following three areas:

- Legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation;
- Mechanisms and strategies to promote women's political participation; and
- Partnerships for women's political participation: civil society organizations and the media.

These recommendations aim to help to remove barriers to women's political participation. In order to create an enabling environment for women to fully and equally participate in public life at all levels, it is crucial to : 1.) increase women's participation and representation in formal politics; 2) assist women in becoming effective political actors; 3) ensure that governments are accountable to women; and 4) mainstream gender equality and social inclusion in all policies.

## Legal and Institutional Frameworks to Promote Women's Political Participation

The formulation of Gender Equality Laws to serve as an overarching binding framework to encompass all spheres of life and putting gender equality laws into practice at all levels are prerequisites

for an environment enabling women to participate meaningfully in politics. Political Party Laws and Elections Laws are further pillars that strongly affect women's political participation in the region. Regional databases capturing gender equality legislation, its implementation and best practices, can help to facilitate related policies and efforts.

Harmonizing national laws with Gender Equality Laws, international standards promoting and advancing gender equality, as well as implementing the recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is instrumental for strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for women's political participation.

Assigning adequate authority to national gender equality machineries can be a way to effectively overcome existing challenges in monitoring and implementing national gender equality commitments. Where they exist, Gender Equality Commissions in parliament have proven to be key mechanisms to monitor gender equality achievements including gender parity within the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

Furthermore, a strong and active public and civil society remains a precondition for holding governments accountable to national gender equality legislation. Temporary special measures are instrumental for promoting women's political participation, but throughout the region require supportive activities to strengthen the understanding of temporary special measures as an integral part of efforts to achieve gender equality and democratic governance. Quotas – legal, constitutional and voluntary – are beginning to be adopted to good effect in the region, though it is important to continuously monitor their implementation.

Policies aimed at promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes need to address the complex economic, financial and social obstacles women face in political life.

This is particularly true during times of financial and economic crisis, which have the potential to exacerbate gender inequalities. The promotion of equality between women and men in decision-making also requires stronger commitment and partnership at all political levels.

Physical or psychological violence can undermine women's ability to enter, or stay in, politics. Such violence can take on a variety of forms, including hindering women's efforts to carry out their official duties, or silencing women, character assassination and defamation, harassment by the media, insults and slander, sexual violence, assault, degrading treatment, as well as targeting of relatives and supporters.

### **Mechanisms and Strategies to Promote Women's Political Participation**

Voluntary quotas in candidate lists as well as a gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in parties' electoral platforms can significantly strengthen women's status in political parties. The latter can be enhanced by sharing successful experiences of those parties in the region that have introduced gender equality strategies or established women's party sections. Political parties can further work towards gender parity by promoting women to governing bodies within party structures.

Alliances across party lines have proven to be a key strategy to promote gender equality in political life, through more formal committees to more informal dialogue. Women's party sections have proved to be important mechanisms for exerting influence on party policies and for galvanizing women's political participation.

However, women in politics also require further support to develop their capacities to be effective in their roles and to overcome gender-based barriers and obstacles in taking up political lead-

ership. Women politicians need to be empowered to bring their voices to public forums and to develop their capacities to promote an agenda of gender equality. In this context, mobilizing and capitalizing on knowledge and capacity available within civil society organizations can be a driving force for nurturing a new generation of women leaders. They can also raise awareness of the importance of women's political participation as well as draw attention to the barriers and obstacles women face in public life.

Still, adequate and sustainable financial resources remain crucial. This argues for national programmes and action plans that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, for national machineries for gender equality and women's empowerment, civil society partners for building platforms for greater political participation of women, as well as for women's alliances across party lines to join forces to pursue a gender equality agenda, and for women candidates to ensure gender-balanced representation in elections.

Last but not least, measures and policies to promote a work/life balance are needed to create an enabling environment for women to engage in politics: This includes adequate policies and laws that promote an equal sharing of family responsibilities of men and women in all sectors (including financial incentives for men to take greater responsibility in family life), appropriate care facilities and services, tax-incentives, financial allowances, flexible work arrangements, and parental leave, tailored to the personal and professional needs of women to enable them to be more active in political life.

## Partnerships for Women's Political Participation: Civil Society Organizations and the Media

The promotion of equality between women and men in decision-making requires strong partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors at all levels. The benefits of such partnerships in this region were particularly evident in the accelerated progress made in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment around the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. A significant contribution has been made in upholding international commitments and agreements on women's political participation confirmed through UN processes.

The involvement of civil society organizations in decision-making processes is instrumental for incorporating women's concerns and needs in policy formulation and implementation, as well as to further knowledge sharing and joint planning at national and local levels among women in parliament, government, political and public offices and representatives of civil society organizations working for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Non-governmental organizations that are exclusively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment can also play a key role in strengthening the capacity of women leaders as well as raising public awareness of the importance of women's social and political participation in modern democracies. Providing them with secured and sustained financial resources despite the difficulties caused by the recent financial downturn will yield greater success in achieving gender-responsive, democratic governance.

Strengthening existing networks of women politicians, civil society organizations, media and academia across countries can enhance women's political participation through the exchange of

lessons learned and best practices. This also includes opportunities for experience sharing and networking among women leaders across the region as well as international and regional gender experts.

Media organizations are instrumental for portraying women in political and public offices focusing on their competencies and political achievements as policy makers instead of perpetuating traditional gender stereotypes. They also have an important role in ensuring equal representation of women and men political leaders in policy debates. Media campaigns have proven vital in challenging negative or stereotypical portrayals of women. The media have also played an important role in partnerships with civil society organizations to hold governments and political parties responsible for putting in place a gender equality agenda. The media can also promote women's electoral achievements and their political visions, which can be important measures to raise awareness about discrimination against women in politics and in the media.

# Introduction

This booklet is intended as a *Policy Note* for enhancing women's political participation in the ECIS region, intended for parliamentarians, government officials, legislators, political party members, civil society organizations and the media in order to support their efforts to promote greater participation of women in governance.

This short document presents the status, obstacles, challenges and opportunities for women's leadership and their participation in politics and decision-making in the region. It presents ways forward for governments, legislators, parliamentarians, political parties, civil society organizations, the private sector, trade unions and the media to redress the challenges of transition and improve processes that have been occurring in the region without the full participation of women, weakening women's position in political and socio-economic life.

This guide, which features practices on women's political participation in the region, is based on an in-depth survey of data and literature on women's political participation as well as six roundtables held in Ankara, Turkey; Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Tbilisi, Georgia; Warsaw, Poland; Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kyiv, Ukraine and at an International Conference on Women and Governance in Eastern Europe and the CIS, held in Istanbul, Turkey. The events took place from September to December 2008 (<http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/genderandgovernance>).

The region, where an average of 16.4 percent of women participate in parliament, falls below the global average of 18 percent, and far below the 30 percent target of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. This is also of particular importance given the upcoming review of this target in 2010. Be-

sides the 30 percent target, key benchmarks for achieving women's equal representation in public life include the enactment and implementation of gender equality legislation as well as gender parity in governmental bodies, public administrative entities and the judiciary. In the ECIS region, women's share of power in the executive branch of government is low and even lower in legislative bodies. In the majority of countries in the region, women have less than 15 percent of ministerial positions.

This *Policy Note* identifies reasons for women's low political participation and provides recommendations to support greater engagement of women in political processes in the region. It aims to provide the data and information that can support governments in implementing gender equality laws and mechanisms to support the election of women within parties and to parliament. It also outlines ways to mobilize public parity campaigns to support women's political participation and practical ways to enlist civil society organizations and the media to build the political will required to meet the challenges. Increasing women's participation in political life requires efforts both to address the constraints (economic, social, cultural and religious) of women's political involvement, and initiatives to empower women and develop their capacity to participate within a range of political spaces, both formal (national and local) and informal.

The *Policy Note* is divided into four sections. The first section provides a contextual overview of women's political participation in the region, presenting current trends in political, economic and social differences between men and women in the region, in particular from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine.

The second section introduces country-specific practices related to women's political participation: how women have tried to take on a greater role in political processes. It does this 1) by examining legal and institutional frameworks to promote greater women's political participation, looking at gender equality laws, election laws and other specific laws affecting women's political participation such as laws on gender-based violence and the European Community's gender *acquis*; 2) by providing examples of strategies to promote women's political participation such as quotas and proportional representation, women-only parties and alliances across party lines; and 3) by examining partnerships for women's political participation, looking at how civil society organizations and the media can support the promotion of women's political participation, presenting successful models and experiences as well as existing challenges.

The third section presents a set of recommendations for gender equality and women's political participation addressed to governments, legislators, parliamentarians, political parties, civil society organizations, the media, the private sector and trade unions to promote women's political participation in the areas of: 1) legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation; 2) strategies to promote women's political participation; and 3) partnerships for women's political participation, such as with civil society organizations and the media.

The fourth section provides a list of on-line resources with links to UNDP publications and other UN and institutional publications and websites working on expanding women's political participation, both regionally and globally.

# I. Regional Overview of Women's Political Participation in ECIS

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) mandates that there be equality between women and men in terms of access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and stand for election. The essential quality of enhancing women's political participation is also captured in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) call for representative democracy as the key to good governance. The importance of ensuring women are represented in democracy is critical to help achieve the MDGs and bring about change in governance structures.

This brief overview of women's political participation in the region presents some major trends in political, economic and social differences between men and women affecting women's political participation. The review draws in particular on six in-depth country studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine. In addition, the review also includes relevant examples and lessons from other countries in the region.

The overview addresses women's political participation and leadership positions in democratic transition, legislative frameworks and quota systems as well as economic and social challenges to women's political participation. It sketches out the economic and social changes during the transition period since 1989, reviewing their impact on women's political leadership and participation in the region.

The economic and political changes played out differently across the region. The New Member States of the European Union have aimed to comply with the highly sophisticated EU gender equality laws and measures. The EU's roadmap for equality between women and men sets out the priorities for the period 2006-2010. It provides for both gender-specific initiatives as well as for the integration of gender equality concerns into all EU policies and activities ('gender mainstreaming'). In contrast, Central Asia is dealing with poverty and political volatility and is working to eliminate discrimination against women and to put in place democratic processes. The South Caucasus has experienced economic and social upheavals with uneven results for democracy and women's political participation. Southeast Europe has undergone major violent conflict which has caused geopolitical, economic and social disruptions from which the countries are still emerging, with negative consequences for women's political participation. Russia and the Western CIS are experiencing significant changes on the geopolitical level, marked by natural resource challenges, growing social and economic gaps and uneven development for men and women. Turkey is an emerging economic leader as evidenced by a rapidly growing market, and characterized by a progressive women's movement, as well as traditional social and economic structures. Such structures continue to restrict women's active participation in politics and to hinder the growth of women in both local and national assemblies.



## Terminology and Concepts: Gender and Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>

**Gender:** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships (i.e. gender roles) are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. In everyday life, gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. In other words, gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context and as such, gender systems are institutionalized through education systems, political and economic systems, legislation, and culture and traditions. In utilizing a gender approach, the focus is not on individual women and men but on the system which determines gender roles / responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making potentials. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.

**Equality between Women and Men (Gender Equality):** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equality has quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. The quantitative aspect implies an equal distribution of women and men in all areas of society, such as education, work, recreation, and position of power. The qualitative aspect implies that the knowledge, experiences and values of both women and men are given equal weight and used to enrich and direct all social areas and endeavours.

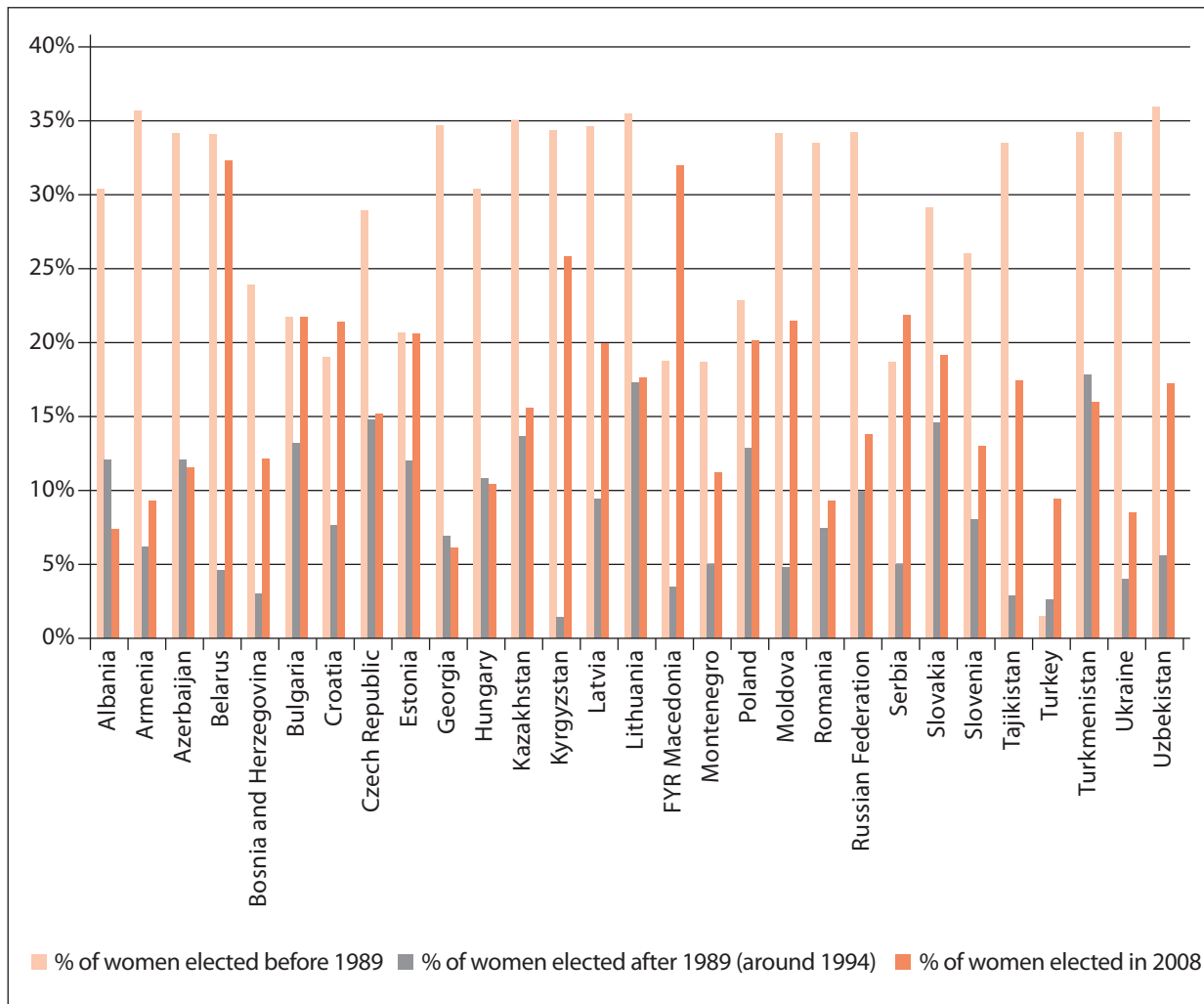
## Women's Political Participation and Democratic Transition

Despite economic and social challenges, progress in bringing women into political positions is being made. The proportion of women members of parliament in most countries of the region is slowly rising, though it is still below the critical mass of 30 percent considered neces-

sary for women to meaningfully influence political debates. Figure One shows the radical changes in the region during the transition period on women's opportunities to participate in political processes. The average number of women members of national parliaments in the ECIS region is just above 15 percent. This figure, however, masks considerable regional variation. Women in Georgia and Albania hold only

<sup>1</sup> For working definitions of gender equality see *UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)*, [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm). as well as <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf>.

**Figure 1: Regional Comparison of Women's Political Participation in the Lower House of Parliament in the ECIS region (1989, 1994 and 2008)<sup>2</sup>**



around 6-7 percent of seats, in Turkey, Armenia and Romania, women currently hold approximately 9 percent of seats, while in Kyrgyzstan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>3</sup> and Belarus they hold just below 30 percent of seats.

## Women in Leadership Positions

Throughout the region, women hold too few senior-level political positions. The numbers

range from Bulgaria with over 30 percent of women in ministerial positions, Poland with 28 percent, to Romania and Turkey, where less than 10 percent of ministers are women (although in Turkey two Vice Presidents of parliament are women). In Kyrgyzstan, three women hold cabinet-level positions (Vice-Prime-Minister, Minister of Labour and Social Development, and the Chair of the State Agency on Migration and Employment). Women also hold the following posts in Kyrgyzstan: the Chair of the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court and the National Academy of Science. As of May 2009, women have

<sup>2</sup> Data extracted from IDEA, 2008: <http://www.idea.int>.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter Macedonia.

### Country Example: Women's Leadership in Ukraine

Ukraine is ranked at 110 out of 188 countries in terms of the number of women in parliament. The proportion of women rose from 4.0 percent in 1994 to 8.4 percent in 1998. However, after the 2002 elections, women's representation dropped back to 5.1 percent, only to slightly rise again after the snap parliamentary elections of 2007 to 8.5 percent of female Members of Parliament. In 2009, two women held posts in the Cabinet of Ministers (including the Prime Minister). The gender difference between women and men among people's representatives varies according to the responsibility and power of the positions, with women more represented at lower levels. For example, in 2006, 8.5 percent of representatives in the national parliament were women, while they made up 12 percent of regional councils, 21 percent of district councils, 24 percent of city councils and 40 percent of village councils.<sup>4</sup>

### Country Example: Women's Political Representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The war in the former Yugoslavia from 1992-1995 resulted in massive imprisonment and killing, rape and other forms of torture of civilians. According to some estimates, more than 200,000 people were killed. At one point, almost 50 percent of the population lost their homes. The armed conflict ended in November 1995 and the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, commonly known as the Dayton Peace Agreement, transformed the country into a complex and decentralized State composed of two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska and District Brcko. Although women were actively involved in the peace process, they have been sparsely represented in the new political structures. In 2008, women constituted 13.33 percent of deputies in the House of Peoples and only 11.90 percent of deputies in the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>5</sup>

presided over parliament in the following countries: Albania, Estonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>6</sup>

Women ministers tend to be assigned to manage portfolios related to socio-cultural functions (social affairs, health, women and children, sport, youth, age, education, science, culture, labour) rather than economy (finance, trade, industry,

agriculture), infrastructure (transport, communications, environment) or basic functions (foreign and internal affairs, defence, justice). This has also been underlined by a review of EU countries in the region<sup>7</sup> that shows that almost half of all women ministers were given responsibility for socio-cultural functions and less than 15 percent responsibility for economy or basic functions. The perception that defence, police and security are 'men's issues' is widespread. Women

<sup>4</sup> See *Kateryna Levchenko*, Women and Management: Participation in Political Processes and Women's Leadership in Ukraine. Presented at the UNDP Roundtable 'Women Leadership and Participation of Women in the Political Life of Ukraine,' 6th November 2008, Kiev, Ukraine <http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/gendermainstreaming/show/A40239DE-F203-1EE9-BE0F195553D2CDA9>.

<sup>5</sup> *Jasminka Džumhur*, A Survey of Political Participation of Women in BiH (Pregled političkog učešća žena u BiH). Sarajevo/Bosnia & Herzegovina, 11. November 2008. [www.ipu.org/wmn-el/speakers/htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-el/speakers/htm).

<sup>7</sup> *European Commission*, Women and Men in Decision-Making, Analysis of the Situation and Trends, 2007 [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/publications/2008/ke8108186\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2008/ke8108186_en.pdf).

generally fill administrative posts and are present on boards when the issues are considered suitable for women. Typically, neither the police nor military are regarded as occupations suitable for women. Also at parliamentary level, planning for police reform is often confined to the political party leaders, over which women have little power or influence.

Women are better represented in regional assemblies or parliaments or councils, though it is difficult to make broad comparison as there are different levels of regional and local structures in

different countries. There are no women leaders of regional assemblies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In countries where there is an executive body with members nominated from elected representatives, there are fewer women than men. In 2007, for example, women at executive levels in Slovakia and Hungary made up less than 15 percent, but over 30 percent were women at the executive level in Latvia.<sup>8</sup>

### Country Example: Women's Political Status in Turkey<sup>9</sup>

Turkey has both modern and traditional social, economic and political structures. With its foundation as a Republic in 1923, modernization led to major social transformations. One of the important instruments of the modernization movement was the creation of the modern woman as a role model, breaking traditional social norms. The Republic encouraged the presence of women in education, health care and civil service. While many of these policies were successful, women's participation in local and national politics and their presence in key state bodies remain weak.

Women's political representation and participation has been a challenge. Women in Turkey gained the right to vote in 1934 – which was much earlier than in many European countries. In 1935, the year of the first elections in which this right was used, women entered parliament at the rate of 4.6 percent. This rate was not achieved again until the general elections of 2007. The rate of women's representation, which stood at 4.36 percent before those elections, doubled to 50 women, reaching 9.1 percent of the total seats in parliament. Although this increase is far from the 17 percent target set by the government for MDG Goal 3 by 2015, it is a positive sign of progress towards equality between men and women, and also constitutes a clear step forward compared with some other countries of the region.

The situation of women's political participation is even more challenging in local governments. Contrary to the rest of the region, the rate of women's representation is much lower in local assemblies than in parliament: Following the 2009 local elections only 0.9 percent of mayors were women (26 out of 2877), 3.5 percent of women were members of the provincial council (115 out of 3166) and 4.5 percent were municipal council members (1471 out of 30921).

<sup>8</sup> *European Commission, Women and Men in Decision Making, Analysis of the Situation and Trends, 2007* [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/publications/2008/ke8108186\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2008/ke8108186_en.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> *KADER. Women's Political Participation and their Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States'* Ankara, October 2008.

### Country Example: Fall in the Political Participation of Women in Georgia<sup>10</sup>

During the transition period, the number of women in the Georgian parliament has decreased. Six parliamentary elections and three local elections have been held since 1992, with a very small number of women elected. Even the 'Rose Revolution' of 2003 did not ensure women's active involvement in the political life of the country. The number of women elected to parliament in 2004 reached 9.4 percent. During the struggles for power which have dominated the Georgian political scene, many individuals, especially women, have been discouraged from engaging in politics. In 2008, the overall percentage of women members of parliament declined to 5 percent. The number of women in local self-governance bodies has also decreased at each successive election. In local elections the percentage of women dropped from 14 percent in 1998 to 12 percent in 2002. In May 2006 no cities in Georgia had women mayors, none of the 66 local administration heads (*gamgebeli*) were women, and only 5.5 percent of the chairs of local councils (*sakrebulo*) were women. After the elections of 2006, held under the new election law, only 11.14 percent of those elected were women.

### Example: Challenges and Opportunities in the New and Old Member States of the EU

While the pre-accession period may have provided attractive reform opportunities, gender equality measures and institutions in the new Member States have not always enjoyed strong support from existing political groupings. Most new Member States boast few 'gender champions' within the administration who remain actively engaged post-accession. Indeed, the fact that gender equality legislation was often 'fast-tracked' through parliament with little time for debate exacerbated problems of inadequate support from domestic constituencies. Many gender-equality bodies in the new Member States have therefore seen their roles and budgets slashed, or their work criticized by the government.

Although the EU has committed itself to mainstreaming gender through all its activities, no consensus exists about how this should be done. The picture of gender equality in the new Member States is one of patchy implementation and progress. Accession is the beginning, rather than the end, of a debate about the role of the EU as a promoter of equality in Central and Eastern Europe. Further debate is also needed within the 'old' Member States about future gender equality policy – not least due to the increasing dependence of those states on migrants from new Member States to fill gaps in the employment market, often in low-paid occupations, with serious repercussions for family and domestic life. Recent moves to extend the scope of EU gender policy to cover areas such as domestic violence and health require the development of wider and more inclusive processes. However, progress on gender equality within Member States – especially the new Member States and candidate countries – will depend on the more gradual evolution of domestic attitudes, public institutions, and behaviour. Improved statistics, new laws and regulations, and new gender equality bodies will help, but common efforts from many actors are required for any real improvements to emerge.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Medea Badashvili. Country Report on Women and Governance: Political Participation of Women and Women's Leadership in Georgia. Tbilisi, December 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Fiona Beveridge, Gender and EU Enlargement – Potential and Progress., In: *Development and Transition* Newsletter, Issue Number: 08/2007: Gender In Transition, <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&DocumentID=662>.

## Legislation for Women's Political Participation

Gender Equality Laws provide an important basis for ensuring women's rights and political participation in the region. During the transi-

tion period, Gender Equality Laws have been put in place in many countries of the region. At this stage, emphasis needs to be put on harmonizing legislation and related procedures and institutions to ensure the implementation of gender equality laws.

**Table 1: Legislative and National Institutional Frameworks for Gender Equality and Women's Political Participation**<sup>12</sup>

Country Examples	Affirmative Actions	Gender Equality Laws	Laws on Gender based Violence	Institutional Framework for Gender Equality
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Election Law Quota Regulation/National parliament; Legislative Quota/ Sub-National Level	The Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003)	Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (Entity of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (Entity of Republika Srpska), 2005	The Agency for Gender Equality; Entity Gender Centres; Gender Commissions in Municipalities; Gender Commissions in the parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina (State level parliament and Entity levels)
<b>Georgia</b>	No	State Concept on Gender Equality (2006)	Georgian Law on Domestic Violence (2006)	Governmental Commission on Gender Equality and Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of parliament
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Presidential Decree On Measures to Improve Gender Policies targeting the Introduction of a 30% Quota for Women in Political Positions, 2006	Law on Basic State Guarantees for Ensuring Gender Equality (2003)	Law on Social and Legal Protection against Family Violence (2003)	National Council on Women, Family and Gender Affairs under the President and its working body
<b>Poland</b>	No constitutional quota/ National Parliament and no Election Law Quota Regulation/National Parliament. However, three political parties have voluntarily applied quotas.	Equality provisions in the Labour Code (harmonization with requirements set by the EU (2002))	Bill on Counteracting Violence in Close Relations (2005)	The Office of the Governmental Plenipotentiary on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Poland

<sup>12</sup> Sources: [www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org), <http://www.stopvaw.org>. Websites visited in Summer 2009.

Country Examples	Affirmative Actions	Gender Equality Laws	Laws on Gender based Violence	Institutional Framework for Gender Equality
<b>Turkey</b>	Law for the Establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission in the Parliament; Gender Equality Action Plan of the General Directorate on the Status of Women 2008-2013	Amendments to the Constitution on the Equality of Women and Men (2004)	Law on the Protection of the Family (1998)	Directorate General on the Status of Women
<b>Ukraine</b>	No	The Law of Ukraine 'On Ensuring the Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men' (adopted by the parliament in 2005). The State Programme on Ensuring Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society (2006-2010) - adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2006.	Law 'On the Prevention of Violence in the Family' (2001)	Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, Department of Family Affairs and Gender Equality

## Special Temporary Measures

The results of the latest elections in the region confirm that proportional representation together with some form of quota system and accompanying measures to reduce obstacles to women entering politics are key to women's election to parliament. Throughout the region with the exception of Belarus<sup>13</sup>, the countries which have the most women in political positions (Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan and

Moldova) combine proportional representation together with some form of quota system.

## Economic Challenges to Women's Political Participation

Prior to 1989, women had benefited from ample access to vocational training and had assumed a high share of employment in many countries of

<sup>13</sup> Belarus has no quota system in place but a simple majority/winner system. For more information on Belarus and gender equality please see UNDP projects on gender equality in Belarus <http://un.by/en/undp/focus-areas/women/>.

### Country Example: Kyrgyzstan Elects Highest Percentage of Women to Parliament in Central Asia

In Kyrgyzstan's 2005 election, no women were elected to parliament. Quotas, together with the long-term involvement of civil society organizations, helped to increase women's political participation. Thanks to the quota system and the new Elections Code adopted in 2007, women now make up 26.6 percent of representatives in parliament. This is the highest percentage of any Central Asian state and second place in the CIS region.<sup>14</sup>

the region, even if they had less access to power and resources than men. The Soviet period of intense industrialization, urbanization and scientific-technological revolution had been built on the principle of equality with men in the economic and social spheres. Women's issues were dealt with by women's committees and through laws legitimizing the equality of women and men in education and professional activities. Women participated in large numbers in the labour force. Throughout the region, women made up the majority of professions such as teachers, physicians and engineers. Maternity leave and child care made it possible for women to work.

The economic transition that started in 1989 caused a major decline in the participation of women on the labour market. Large differentials between the wages paid to women and men, and the declining

access women have to jobs, have coincided with a rising burden for women at home, due to shrinking social safety nets and child care provisions.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the vast majority of women have suffered economic setbacks, in the form of increasing poverty and unemployment, as well as growing economic insecurity and exploitation<sup>15</sup>. Some of the national MDG reports in the region call attention to the glass ceiling in business and the need to stimulate women's interest in seeking public office.<sup>16</sup>

Women's increased economic dependence along with a lack of access to economic resources has discouraged them from actively engaging in politics. For more data on women's economic status, see Table 2 on page 17.

### Country Example Kyrgyzstan: Employment for Women in Transition

In Kyrgyzstan, the economic transition has seen an increase in the economic marginalization of women. Women must bear heavy workloads, especially in rural areas. Women typically earn low wages and are forced to work in the informal sector in such areas as small-scale trade. The high level of poverty among women and their lack of access to economic resources have excluded women from privatization and the redistribution of resources.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See also *Anara Moldosheva*. Kyrgyzstan National Report on Women & Governance. Bishkek, November 2008.

<sup>15</sup> UNECE, Countries in Figures, <http://www.unece.org/stats/profiles2009/Welcome.html>, June 2009; and *European Commission*, <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/genpols/keyinds/genpols-2work.htm>, June 2009.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see the project 'Expand Public Space for Women in Belarus as part of the 2006-2010 National Plan of Action on Gender Equality in Belarus'. The project has worked to draw public attention to the problem of discrimination against women and to sensitize media on this issue through trainings for local journalists in Belarus <http://europeandcis.undp.org/poverty/mdghdpm/show/A4CC9CFB-F203-1EE9-BC7CA9898E0D574B>.

<sup>17</sup> UNDP Roundtable 'Women and governance: political participation and female leadership' 25 September 2008, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Discussion led by Ainura Kenjebaeva, Member of Parliament, Irina Karamushkina, Member of Parliament, Cholpon Baekova, Deputy Speaker of the Kyrgyz Parliament <http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/gendermainstreaming/show/66F1EDBD-F203-1EE9-B3F12FEA5C87F079>.



## Terminology and Concepts - Work/life Balance in the EU Context

Although women are still under-represented in economic and political decision-making positions in the New EU Member States, their share of power has increased over the last decade. Nevertheless, the division of family responsibilities still remains unequally distributed between women and men and the risk of poverty remains higher for women than for men. Equal participation of women and men in political decisions was a priority under the Slovenian Presidency in 2008, as part of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action. EU countries have focused on taking better advantage of women's and men's skills, including ensuring a better work/life balance. Improving work/life balance is at the core of Europe's strategy for growth and jobs and the European Parliament has consistently called for more action to improve work/life balance, as have national governments in the Council. European Commission Policy and legislative developments for women's political participation have focused on ways to support a better work/life balance including provisions for adequate maternity protection, family-related leave other than maternity leave, family policies and work/life reconciliation issues. The aim of these policies is to help balance professional, private and family life, improve the quality of life for both women and men and increase participation in the labour market, particularly for women. Policies to support work/life balance include maternity/paternity leave, equal treatment for the self-employed and spouses, adequate provision of childcare facilities, entitlement to leave, and flexible working arrangements.<sup>18</sup>

### Financial Barriers for Women to Engage in Politics and Run as Candidates

Women often lack access to adequate funds, which limits their ability to run for political office. This is also true of the ECIS region, where women lack the economic resources and corporate and business networks that men have to raise money. Women are also often kept outside the existing party establishments, their professional fundraisers and political networks. In addition, socialization sometimes makes women reluctant to ask for money, or to gain fundraising skills and experience.<sup>19</sup>

### The Financial and Economic Crisis and its Implication for Women's Political Participation

As pointed out by many experts and organizations,<sup>20</sup> the economic crisis will have serious consequences for women. The crisis will hamper progress made so far in terms of achieving gender equality. Even though the current global financial crisis is still unfolding, and it is too early to comprehend the full social implications,<sup>21</sup> the gender-specific impact of the crisis could affect women in such areas as employment and social safety networks, unpaid care work, health, education, migration, and also in terms of gender violence.<sup>22</sup> This also seriously affects the enabling environment, which is fundamental for women's participation in public life.

<sup>18</sup> European Commission, IP/08/1449 and MEMO/08/592, Brussels, 3 October 2008.

<sup>19</sup> See *iKNOW politics*, Summary from the E-Discussion Forum on Financing Women in Politics (October 22-29, 2008), <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/node/7944>.

<sup>20</sup> See for example the 53rd Session of the *UN Commission on the Status of Women*, March 2009; *World Bank*, *The Global Financial Crisis. Assessing Vulnerability for Women and Children*, 2009b; *Sylvia Walby*, *Gender and the Financial Crisis*. Paper for UNESCO Project on Gender and the Financial Crisis, April 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Written statement submitted by *Shamika Sirimanne* to the Interactive Expert Panel of the Commission on the Status of Women, 53rd session on the Emerging Issue: The Gender Perspectives of the Financial Crisis, 2-13 March 2009, p.2. [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/panels/financial\\_crisis/Sirimanne.formatted.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/panels/financial_crisis/Sirimanne.formatted.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> See also *Louise Sperl*, *The Crisis and its Consequences for Women*, in: *Development and Transition Newsletter*, 2/2009, <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&DocumentID=728>.

**Table 2: Economic Status of Women According to OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2009 (GID-DB) (from the greatest gender income gap to the smallest)<sup>23</sup>**

Country	Ratio of estimated female to male earned income	Estimated earned income (PPP US\$), female	Estimated earned income (PPP US\$), male	Female professional and technical workers (as % of total)
Turkey	28%	4,959	17,988	33%
Georgia	33%	2,044	6,185	62%
Macedonia	49%	5,184	10,643	51%
Armenia	55%	3,524	6,420	65%
Albania	55%	4,171	7,599	..
Serbia and Montenegro <sup>24</sup>	56%	6,752	12,133	56%
Kyrgyzstan	58%	1,333	2,306	62%
Ukraine	58%	4,648	8,045	64%
Tajikistan	58%	1,182	2,041	..
Slovak Republic	59%	13,311	22,583	58%
Czech Republic	60%	16,603	27,585	53%
Poland	60%	11,084	18,466	61%
Uzbekistan	60%	1,646	2,727	..
Slovenia	62%	19,246	31,010	56%
Estonia	63%	15,122	23,859	68%
Russian Federation	63%	10,360	16,474	64%
Moldova	63%	1,865	2,969	64%
Turkmenistan	64%	3,461	5,420	..
Belarus	64%	7,722	12,028	..
Azerbaijan	66%	4,915	7,495	51%
Bulgaria	66%	8,219	12,459	62%
Hungary	67%	14,658	21,951	61%
Latvia	67%	12,530	18,704	64%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	67%	5,282	7,866	..
Kazakhstan	68%	8,039	11,782	67%
Croatia	69%	11,753	17,025	51%
Romania	70%	8,648	12,286	57%
Lithuania	72%	13,265	18,533	71%

23 Source of data: Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2009 (GID-DB), <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=GID&lang=en#> (Navigation: Social and Development Statistics / Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2009 / Political and economic status of women). Data extracted on 2 September 2009.

24 No separate data are available yet under the OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2009 (GID-DB) for Montenegro and Serbia.

The economic and financial crises of the 1990s in Eastern Europe hit women particularly hard, as one of the most vulnerable social groups. Women in particular found themselves with a bigger burden of unpaid work. This is likely to be repeated again in the current crisis as the region's governments look to cut spending, as growth and budget revenues fall. In order to avoid a similar scenario, support for social protection is required, along with appropriate macroeconomic policies.

According to the issues paper prepared for the 53rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women 2009: 'Economic recessions put a disproportionate burden on women, who are concentrated in vulnerable employment, are more likely to be unemployed than men, tend to have lower unemployment and social security benefits, and have unequal access and control over economic and financial resources. Women also take on additional responsibilities to provide non-market substitutes for market goods that their families are no longer able to afford.'<sup>25</sup> During difficult times, families also often rely on women to care for the sick, elderly, and extended family. This means longer work hours and heavier workloads for women.<sup>26</sup> This 'social reproduction' work is likely to present women in many cases with difficult choices about reconciling intra- and extra-household labour,<sup>27</sup> which makes it more difficult for women to engage in politics. In its 'Global Employment Trends for Women' 2009<sup>28</sup> the International Labour Organization warned that the global jobs crisis is expected to worsen sharply in 2009. The global economic crisis will place new hurdles in the path towards sustainable and socially equitable growth, making decent work for women increasingly diffi-

cult.<sup>29</sup> The ILO Report also highlighted the gap in wages earned by women and those earned by men. In its analysis of labour markets in Europe and Central Asia it concluded that although the reduction of the gender pay gap is a major political objective for governments and social partners, progress remains slow and the situation will deteriorate with the crisis.

The overall challenge is to find efficient and sustainable responses to the financial crisis and inevitable economic slowdown and reduce the multiple short- and long-term impact on women's economic and social roles. Gender equality concerns need to be integrated into the responses given to these challenges.

An equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes is a democratic and economic necessity. In the current economic situation the skills of both women and men should be mobilized. The financial and economic crisis could be an important opportunity to invest in the region, righting the gender balance in government, business and management in order to improve governance institutions as well as corporate governance and profitability. This also implies making governance structures less vulnerable, which is particularly important during times of economic and financial downturn. Greater equality in sharing of power makes society more resilient because economic responsibility is borne more widely, and economic resources are distributed more broadly and comprehensively. Partnerships between governments and civil society organizations will be key in order to identify local responses to the crises, fostering and developing the capacities required in a given country context.

25 53rd session of the *Commission on the Status of Women*, Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/papers/Emerging%20issue-%20financial%20crisis%2023Feb09.pdf>.

26 *Sirimanne*, p5.

27 *Sakiko Fukuda-Parr*, *The Human Impact of the Financial Crisis on Poor and Disempowered People and Countries*, 2008, p5. [http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/gfc/sakiko\\_p.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/gfc/sakiko_p.pdf).

28 *International Labour Organization*, *Global Employment Trends for Women 2009*, Geneva, March 2009, [www.cinterfor.org.uy/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/gender/doc/trends09.htm](http://www.cinterfor.org.uy/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/gender/doc/trends09.htm).

29 *Kanaga Raja*, *Economic Crisis to Put more Women out of Work this Year*, *South-North Development Monitor* (SUNS, No. 6655, 9 March 2009).

## Social Challenges to Women's Political Participation

Throughout the region, policies aimed at promoting the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes and positions have to take into account how to challenge existing stereotypes and perceptions that have affected women's participation in political life. These stereotypes influence the unequal sharing between women and men of work time, income and family responsibilities. They also constitute barriers to women's career advancement and appointment to decision-making positions.

The transition to modern democracy has afforded the opportunity to challenge gender stereotypes through gender mainstreaming, helping to change visible and invisible discriminatory practices and structures.

Gender mainstreaming aims to change gender stereotypes and perceptions, which are at the root of traditional barriers to women entering political life. The stereotype that politics is not a women's place makes it difficult for women to take up political positions. Politics is assumed to be a hostile environment for women, where the world of politics has been arranged by men and

### Terminology and Concepts - Gender Mainstreaming

The Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming as the '(re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making'. The UN has defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as 'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.'<sup>30</sup>

### Country Example Albania: Gender Mainstreaming in the National MDG Report<sup>31</sup>

Through UNDP's support to the national Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report (2004), gender mainstreaming was identified as one of the four principles of the government's approach to achieve the MDGs. The MDG report highlighted gender inequality as one of the key obstacles to the country's development, and specific measures were suggested to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies, to empower women to participate in economic development and to reduce school dropout rates for girls, especially in rural areas. Civil society organizations took an active part in the formulation of local goals and development priorities.

Source: <http://intra.undp.org.al/ext/elib/download/?id=659&name=Albania%20National%20MDG%20Report%202004%20%28English%29.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Gender Mainstreaming. An Overview. New York, 2001 [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm).

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit (part I), 2007, p. 143.

adapted to their way of behaviour, the so-called old boys' network, the unofficial bonding of men, in which there is simply no place for women. Family demands are another reason why politics is not chosen by women who are mothers. Their families often don't welcome the demanding hours and travel. As a result, many women politicians wait until they are over 50, when their families are grown, to enter politics. The dominant model of political leadership is the traditional one – competitive and masculine – which limits the opportunities not only of women but also of younger men who are low in the hierarchy of patriarchal authority. Women remain traditionally concentrated at low decision-making levels as well as at low levels of state administration.

### Violence Against Women in Politics

Violence, or the threat of violence, has been identified as a significant impediment to women's political participation. While crimes of violence against women in politics are receiving increasing international attention, the attention is often limited to high-profile cases, while the overall scale of such violence – including violence occurring at the local level – remains underreported and under documented.<sup>32</sup>

The root causes of violence against women in politics include persisting cultural stereotypes, abuse of religious and traditional practices, patriarchal societal structures and the role women have historically played as the followers of male leaders. Women can become victims of violence in political life, just because they are women. Violence can take on a wide range of forms, both physical and psychological. This includes hindering women in their duties or silencing them,

character assassinations and defamation, harassment by the media, insults and slander, sexual violence, assault, economic control, domestic violence, degrading treatment, illegal alternating of positions and targeting of relatives and supporters. Women are de facto also often left out of key decision-making processes, for example those taking place during informal gatherings outside regular working hours. Women's lack of mobility due to family responsibilities often hinders their participation in such informal gatherings, which can be easily instrumentalized by others.

Some experts distinguish violence against women that is used as a tool for political power fights from violence that is unleashed on women because they attempt to put in place so-called transformative politics.<sup>33</sup> In the conflict that resulted in the break up of the former Yugoslavia, violence against women, including systematic mass rape, was used as a tool in political power fights between men. However, violence against women is also used to silence women who follow transformative political agendas. For example, when women activists spoke against the war in the former Yugoslavia, they were demonized as national traitors.<sup>34</sup>

The implementation of laws to prevent gender-based violence is a prerequisite for providing a positive environment for gender equality and for overcoming barriers to women's political participation, and for mobilizing women to become more involved in political life.

<sup>32</sup> *iKNOW Politics*, Consolidated response from the E-Discussion on Violence Against women in politics: [http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/Consolidated%20reply%20\\_violence%20against%20women%20in%20politics\\_.pdf](http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/Consolidated%20reply%20_violence%20against%20women%20in%20politics_.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> See for example *Sonja Lokar*, in [http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/Consolidated%20reply%20\\_violence%20against%20women%20in%20politics\\_.pdf](http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/Consolidated%20reply%20_violence%20against%20women%20in%20politics_.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

### Country Example: Violence against Women in Turkey

A recent study on violence against women in Turkey reports a groundbreaking shift in the legal approach to such violence. The primary driving force for these reforms has been the efforts of a strong women's movement. The reforms have not only promoted significant legislative advances, but also have led to a visible shift in terms of public discussion and attention to violence against women and challenging prevalent attitudes and constructs.

Examples include a case from April 2007 related to sexual harassment in the workplace, when the High Court penalized a perpetrator with an eight-month prison sentence and approximately US\$ 5,000 fine. This was a precedent case because the woman had no witness of the harassment. In April 2008, a marital rape case under the new penal code was approved by the High Court and the perpetrator was sentenced to 10 years. A parliamentary commission was formed in 2006 to investigate violence against women, in particular honour killings, and issued a report. As a result, the Prime Minister issued an official circular to all public institutions on combating violence against women, and the General Directorate has launched a training programme for police and health personnel (2008).<sup>35</sup>

### Summary

Though uneven and uncertain at times, the ECIS region has made progress in achieving gender equality over the last decade. At the same time, ensuring women's equal participation in political processes remains a challenge, especially as the informal criteria for political positions are set in ways that may exclude women. Women are not yet equally represented in decision-making positions across the board. Nevertheless, political and economic transition has introduced legislative and electoral reform to include women, in line with the democratic principles of pluralism and inclusiveness. Women are now increasingly participating in political processes as parliamentarians, political party members, and civil servants at decision-making levels. They are also becoming increasingly involved in civil society organizations and the media.

<sup>35</sup> Pinar Ilkkaracan and Liz Ercevik Amado, Good Practices in Legislation on Violence against Women in Turkey and Problems of Implementation, EGM/GPLVAW/2008/EP.13. Presented at an Expert Group Meeting organized by UNDAW/DESA and UNODC on good practices in legislation on violence against women, Vienna, Austria, 26 to 28 May 2008, [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw\\_legislation\\_2008/vaw\\_legislation\\_2008.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw_legislation_2008/vaw_legislation_2008.htm).

## II. Behind the Figures: Country-specific Practices Related to Women's Political Participation in the ECIS region

This section introduces country-specific practices related to women's political participation in the ECIS region. First, it examines the legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation through an analysis of the existing practices, successes and challenges of Gender Equality Laws, election laws and other specific laws impacting on women's political participation such as political party laws and laws addressing gender-based violence as well as the European gender *acquis*. Second, the section looks at mechanisms and strategies to promote women's political participation such as quotas and proportional representation, women-only parties and alliances across party lines. Finally, the section examines partnerships for women's political participation by looking at how civil society organizations and the media can support the promotion of women's political participation by presenting successful models and experiences as well as existing challenges.

### II.1. Legal and Institutional Frameworks to Promote Women's Political Participation

Legislative reform is key to fostering women's rights, particularly in a region that is still undergoing economic and political transition, and where some countries are recovering from violent

conflict. Gender Equality Laws provide an important basis for ensuring women's rights and political participation in the region, following the requirements of international obligations and agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG3 on gender equality) as the basis. Since the transition period started, the ECIS region has been putting Gender Equality Laws into place. Now a special emphasis is required to ensure that these laws are implemented.

#### Gender Equality Legislation

Gender Equality Laws guarantee equal treatment on the grounds of gender, prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, reproductive status (pregnancy), marital status, and family status. These laws also often include specific sections that relate to women's participation in public life. In the EU, gender equality laws are determined by the *equality acquis*, which is explicitly written into the legislation and into the structure of national equality institutions.

Gender Equality Laws have been put in place in different times in the region often through strong support of UN agencies and civil society organizations, and are at different stages of implementation.

## Terminology and Concepts – CEDAW<sup>36</sup>

Since the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1979, it has been ratified by 186 countries.

Article 7 of CEDAW stipulates that all states that ratify the Convention shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and, in particular, shall guarantee that women have the right to:

1. vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
2. participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
3. participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

**Poland** established itself as a popular democratic regime in 1989. On 16 April 2003, Poland signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Union and became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004.

The new Constitution of the Republic of Poland was adopted in 1997 and establishes equality before the law in several provisions.<sup>37</sup>

As a member of the EU, Poland is obligated to follow EU directives. Poland's Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men is the most important vehicle for ensuring that the country's laws follow EU directives with regard to gender. In 1992, the Plenipotentiary drafted a Government Action Programme for improving the situation of women, children and families. This led to a National Action Programme for Women based on the final recommendations of the 1995 Beijing Conference, adopted by the

Council of Ministers in April 1997. The Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men introduced gender equality into the government's legislative agenda and carried out several projects during the pre- and post-accession period, including training of judges, prosecutors, police officers and public administration officials on the principles of gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

As of 2008, the government's policy on gender equality has been handled by two offices – a Department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment. The Plenipotentiary operates as a member of the Prime Minister's chancellery. In addition to coordinating equality-oriented actions of the government, these two bodies monitor the situation on gender equality and analyse proposed legislation from the perspective of gender equality.

<sup>36</sup> For the full text of the convention see <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm>. Updates on the status of ratification are available at [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en).

<sup>37</sup> Article 32 states: 1. All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities. 2. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever. Article 33 states: 1. Men and women shall have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life in the Republic of Poland. 2. Men and women shall have equal rights, in particular, regarding education, employment and promotion, and shall have the right to equal compensation for work of similar value, to social security, to hold offices, and to receive public honours and decorations. In addition, Article 47 guarantees all persons the right to 'legal protection of one's private and family life, of one's honour and good reputation and to make decisions about one's personal life.'



The Gender Equality Law in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** was adopted in 2003 after years of policy advocacy by women's NGOs. The Law established the Agency for Gender Equality as the state gender equality mechanism. On the entity level, there are the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Gender Centre of the Republic of Srpska. One of their main roles is monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Law and tasks relating to state obligations under CEDAW. The law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender and guarantees equal opportunities in the private and public domain. The Law promotes affirmative action, and legal measures can be taken in case of discrimination based on gender. The law addresses a wide range of issues, such as education, employment, social welfare, participation in decision-making, and modalities and responsibilities concerning the implementation of the law.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Gender Equality Action Plan, adopted in September 2006, includes a separate chapter on gender budgeting with specific recommendations. A gender-responsive Budget Framework Paper (medium-term expenditure framework) was prepared for the first time for the period 2006-2008 and has intensified efforts to introduce gender budgeting in several ministries. The Law on Gender Equality includes provisions for the collection, recording and processing of sex-disaggregated data and requests that sex-disaggregated data collection be prioritized in accordance with the Gender Equality Law.

In **Georgia** the Gender Equality Advisory Council, made up of members of parliament, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, under the parliament of Georgia was established in 2004 with the support of the UNDP project 'Gender and Politics' in the South Caucasus. The Council's mandate was to ensure that gender legislation was passed based on international agreements and conventions related to gender equality and women's empowerment. In

February 2005 the Governmental Commission on Gender Equality and the Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of the parliament of Georgia, with the support of UN Agencies (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA) established a working group composed of members of the Commission, Advisory Council, government representatives, members of women's NGOs and the *Ombudsman's* office. The working group elaborated the Gender Equality Strategy of Georgia that became the State Concept of Gender Equality adopted by parliament in July 2006. The State Concept of Gender Equality introduces definitions of gender, gender equality, direct and indirect discrimination and gender mainstreaming, based on CEDAW and Council of Europe definitions. The parliamentary approval of the concept establishes gender equality as a policy framework for the executive branch of government.

The concept also helped to develop the capacity of the State Commission for the Elaboration of a State Policy for the Development of Women. It also led to the gender sensitization of the legislative and ministerial programmes, the creation of gender information centres; and a central gender resource and information centre for training, research, policy advisory services, and public advocacy.

In September 2007 the government adopted a three-year action plan for implementing gender equality measures, along with recommendations to establish permanent mechanisms to monitor and coordinate gender equality issues. With the support of the UNDP 'Gender and Politics' project, the Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of the parliament of Georgia initiated the elaboration of a Gender Equality Law. The working group charged with preparing the draft equality law was established by MPs from the Advisory Council, women NGOs, legal and gender experts/academia and UN Agencies (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNHCR). When adopted by the Georgian parliament, the Gender Equality law will be a strong mechanism for achieving gender equality.

**Kyrgyzstan's** gender law and policy were endorsed following Kyrgyzstan's signature to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 as well as the 2000 Millennium Declaration, where Kyrgyzstan is a pilot country in the Millennium Challenge programme.<sup>38</sup> The Law 'On the Basics of the State Guarantees of Gender Equality' was adopted by parliament and signed by the President in spring 2003. This Law provides for equal rights and opportunities for persons of both sexes in social, political, economic, cultural, and other aspects of human life. It is designed to protect women and men against discrimination on the basis of sex; to promote progressive democratic relations between men and women on the basis of national traditions; and to provide state guarantees of equality and equity to persons of both sexes.

Kyrgyzstan also developed national programmes for gender equality. A State Commission for Women and Family Affairs was initiated by the government, and the National Programme (*Ay-almazat*) for the advancement of women was approved for 1996-2000. In 2003, the Law on social and legal protection from domestic violence was approved, and in 2006 the Presidential Decree was signed on measures to improve gender policy, which recommended a 30 percent quota of women to fill decision-making positions in executive agencies.

Further improvements on gender equality have been made through Kyrgyzstan's Development Strategy for 2007-2010, which includes provisions for gender equality aiming at gender parity in the civil service. As of August 2008, 41.9 percent of civil servants were women. Within the government there are 5 women out of 23 members, (Vice Prime Minister of Social Affairs, Min-

ister of Finance, Minister of Education, Minister of Social Development, Chairperson of the State Committee for Migration, Labour and Employment) representing 21.7 percent of the government in total. In August 2008 the President signed an amendment to the law 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic', which introduced new measures to increase women's representation in executive agencies.

In **Ukraine**, equal rights among women and men are guaranteed under the Constitution. Article 24 guarantees equality of rights and freedoms for all citizens with no gender discrimination, stating that equal rights for women and men are ensured by equal opportunities for women and men in public, political, and cultural activity, in education and professional training, in work, and compensation. The Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women (2005) defines concepts such as 'equal rights of women and men', 'equal opportunities of women and men', 'discrimination based on sex', 'gender equality' and others. It also outlines the main directions of state policy concerning equal rights and opportunities of women and men, assigns roles and responsibilities to ensure equal rights and opportunities of women and men to specific public authorities, institutions and organizations. Article 15 specifically guarantees equal rights and opportunities for female and male candidates during elections.

In **Turkey** important changes to legislation including laws related to political parties and elections have been made in the last decade led by civil society organizations. On 22 November 2001, the Turkish Parliament ratified a new Civil Code (No. 4721), replacing the 1926 Civil Code (No. 743). The former Civil Code subordinated women to the family and fuelled a movement to change

<sup>38</sup> The Millennium Challenge Programme is a US Government cooperate strategy to provide aid to developing countries to promote good governance and fight corruption. The Programme provided US\$ 16 million to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2008. For more details see [www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov) including the 2009 scorecard.

discriminatory provisions. The 2001 Civil Code introduced many changes regarding the status of women in the family.<sup>39</sup> In May 2004, Turkey passed amendments to the Constitution which provide for equality of women and men (Act No. 5170).<sup>40</sup> Guarantees against discrimination are also codified in other laws. Provisions on gender equality related to family law, maternal health, child care, discrimination, labour laws, minimum wages, honour killings and gender-based violence were passed including:

- the establishment of family courts to deal with cases and affairs arising from family law; the Optional Protocol granting the Right of Individual Complaints to the CEDAW Committee upon breach of CEDAW State obligations;
- a new Labour Law was adopted and important gains were achieved in the area of women's rights and equal opportunities in working life including non-discriminatory treatment, direct or indirect, on account of gender or pregnancy;
- a Law on Turkish Citizenship which improved conditions for women citizens was adopted, as well as a law prohibiting gender discrimination in personnel recruitment;
- new Municipalities Law introducing the obligation for municipalities with a population over 50,000 to establish shelter homes for women and children, as well as paid maternity leave and rules governing working conditions and protection of the family.

Additionally, the Action Plan for National Equality for 2008-2013 approved by the Prime Minister's Office within the General Directorate for the

Status of Women includes concrete action for the promotion of women in decision-making bodies. In April 2009, a Law for the Establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission was approved by the parliament.<sup>41</sup> Despite these guarantees, further legal reform is still needed. A shadow NGO Report from 2004 on Turkey's report to CEDAW emphasized the need for affirmative action measures to ensure gender equality. The shadow report urged temporary special measures to increase the political participation of women, such as a gender quota system.<sup>42</sup> In its Concluding Comments on Turkey's State report, the CEDAW Committee recommended introducing temporary special measures to increase the number of women in parliament, in municipal bodies and at higher levels in the foreign service.<sup>43</sup>

## Election Laws

Gender equality legislation in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and MDG3 includes election codes and laws which are crucial for ensuring women's equal political participation. The election laws throughout the region are at different stages of implementation. A major challenge in their implementation is to ensure that the Election Law is harmonized with Gender Equality Laws and international agreements, in particular meeting MDG 3. This requires that Laws ensure that more women are elected to parliament and take more decision-making positions in public administration, the judiciary, and state companies by using mechanisms and strategies such as temporary special

39 The old legal approach, which assigned women a legislatively subordinate position in the family with rights and duties defined in respect to the husband, has been abandoned in favour of one that defines the family as a union based on equal partnership. The husband is no longer the head of the family; spouses are equal partners, jointly running the matrimonial union with equal decision-making powers. The concept of 'illegitimate children', which was used for children born out of wedlock, has been abolished.

40 The persistence of the women's movement as advocates for affirmative action contributed to the approval of constitutional amendments that were made in May 2004.

41 Turkey does not have a Gender Equality Law, although recently Turkey established a Parliamentary Commission on Women-Men Equal Opportunities which may pave the way for the enactment of a Gender Equality Law. Source: UNDP Turkey.

42 For more information on shadow reports see [www.wwhr.org/images/shadowreport.pdf](http://www.wwhr.org/images/shadowreport.pdf) and <http://www.stopvaw.org/Turkey.html>. For a complete list of Shadow Reports see <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/iwraw/resources.html>.

43 UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Concluding Comments: Turkey (2005), CEDAW/C/TUR/CC/4-5, <http://www.undp.org.tr/GenderinDevelopmentDocuments/CEDAW-CC-TUR-0523813E.PDF>.

measures including quotas. The CEDAW recommendations also require that member states sensitize private enterprises, trade unions and political parties to promote women in the decision-making process. CEDAW Article 7<sup>44</sup> obliges states parties to 'take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that they enjoy equality with men in political and public life'. The obligation specified in article 7 extends to all areas of public and political life. The political and public life of a country is a broad concept. It refers to the exercise of political power, in particular the exercise of legislative, judicial, executive and administrative powers. The term covers all aspects of public administration and the formulation and implementation of policy at the international, national, regional and local levels. The concept also includes many aspects of civil society, including public boards and local councils and the activities of organizations such as political parties, trade unions, professional or industry associations, civil society organizations, community-based organizations and other organizations concerned with public and political life.<sup>45</sup>

In October 2007, largely as a result of two and a half years of lobbying by civil-society organizations in **Kyrgyzstan**, a new article 13 in the Constitution was passed giving men and women equal rights and freedom and equal opportunities. This article was applied in the new edition of the Election Code of Kyrgyzstan that introduced a gender quota in the electoral lists of political parties that participated in parliamentary elections. As a result in the national elections in December 2007, 23 women-deputies (26.6 percent)

were elected to the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan. With the ratification of over 30 international conventions, including CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, and a vast array of domestic legislation, the foundation for gender equality was firmly established in the first decade of Kyrgyzstan's independence.<sup>46</sup>

In **Ukraine** equal suffrage is guaranteed by the Constitution, prohibiting privileges or restrictions of nominees based on race, skin colour, political, religious, or other preferences, sex, ethnic or social origin, property possession, place of residence, language or other characteristics. The laws such as 'On Elections of Members of Parliament of Ukraine' (Article 3) and 'On Elections of Members of Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Local Councils, Village, Town, and City Heads' (Article 4) declare equal suffrage. The 2005 Law On Guarantee of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women provides legal guarantees for equal rights and opportunities to women and men, prohibits gender discrimination, and enables the implementation of special temporary measures to achieve gender equality. The State Programme on Ensuring Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society until 2010 includes an item on the preparation and introduction of amendments to the Electoral Law to introduce quotas. However – so far, Ukraine's legislative framework does not provide for any special measures to ensure gender equality for political representation since attempts to introduce a quota system have not been supported by the parliament.

Election laws do not always support women's political participation. In 1998 the electoral sys-

44 Article 7 (political and public life) states that 'Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure that women, on equal terms with men, have the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) To participate in the formulation of government policies and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm>

45 *UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination of Women*, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 23 (16th session, 1997), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom23>.

46 *UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination of Women*, Concluding Comments: Kyrgyzstan, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw30/KyrgyzstanCC.PDF>.

tem in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** was based on quotas. The situation in 1998 was an improvement compared with the elections of 1990 and 1996 when there were no quotas. The problem occurred when the lists became open in the Elections of 2002, when there was not enough support given to women candidates. They did not have space in media and were not promoted adequately by their own political parties. The issue was not only a matter of quotas or lists but lack of space given to women within their parties, in media and little trust in women politicians in the transition and post-conflict period.<sup>47</sup>

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, elections since 2002 have seen a decline in the percentage of women elected to government bodies, but the quota system has helped to contribute to a more favourable climate for gender equality. Women's advocacy groups are working with various government bodies such as the Committee on Human Rights calling for the harmonization of the quota system with the Gender Equality Law and the implementation of special measures in conjunction with the statutory quotas in order to achieve higher representation of women in all legislative and executive bodies.

A major challenge for women's participation in the elections of **Georgia** in 2008 was that the Constitution and the United Election Code changed the election administration, campaign regulations and complaints and appeal procedures. The new Election Code impeded women's chances of being elected to parliament: it decreased the total number of parliamentary members, which gave women less chance to be included at the top of party lists. Also in single-mandated constituencies, women had fewer opportunities to participate in elections. In the Georgian parliamentary election in 2008 all abovementioned aspects, along with the resurgent political factors (oppo-

sition parties boycotted the new parliament), caused a decrease in the number of women MPs from 10 percent to 6 percent.

This decline occurred despite major campaigns on gender and governance supported by World Vision Georgia and financed by the European Union and the Council of Europe. These campaigns aimed to encourage women to vote in the national elections in 2008. According to experts, the reasons for women's under-representation in the 2008 elections were manifold and mainly linked to the lack of an enabling legal framework as well as to the lack of implementation of gender mainstreaming policies within political parties.

## Legislation on Gender-Based Violence

As outlined in Chapter I, the implementation of laws to prevent gender-based violence are crucial for providing a positive environment for gender equality and for overcoming certain barriers to women's political participation, such as physical and psychological violence that can be faced by women in politics. Gender-based violence is either addressed through gender-equality laws or through laws targeting gender-based violence.<sup>48</sup> The region has devoted considerable attention to providing legal and social protection to the victims of gender-based violence. Responses by governments have been crucial for supporting women's rights and protecting women from violence.

On 15 November 2001, the **Ukrainian** Parliament adopted the Law 'On the Prevention of Violence in the Family.' On 26 April 2003, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a decree providing for a procedure to consider and review statements about

47 Discussed at the UNDP Roundtable 'Women and Governance in Eastern Europe and CIS,' 11. November 2008, Sarajevo/Bosnia & Herzegovina.

48 An example for the first scenario is the Kyrgyz case; an example for the latter the Ukraine. For further details see later parts of this section.

## Terminology and Concepts - European *Acquis* Related to Gender Equality

Gender Equality between women and men is enshrined in the European Community Treaty and in European law. EU members are obliged to follow democratic principles and defend human rights, particularly those concerning the rights and opportunities of men and women. EU member states follow EU directives within the *acquis communautaire* (the term used in European Union Law to refer to the total body of EU law) including those related to the attainment of equality between men and women.

The laws of the *acquis communautaire* can be divided into the primary law, which establishes the European Community (Treaty), and the secondary law, which derives from the treaties (directives and regulations). There is also a very important soft law, adopted by the EU, that guides the national policies of the current Member States in employment, social affairs and gender equality.

The Gender *Acquis* refers to the large body of European legislative texts dedicated to equality between women and men. This is made up of various Treaty provisions and Directives concerning access to employment, equal pay, maternity protection, parental leave, social security and occupational social security, the burden of proof in discrimination cases and self-employment. The EU policies and legislation on equality between women and men are part of the package which EU accession countries adopt before joining the EU.

Articles 2, 3, 13 and 141 integrated in the Treaty of Amsterdam, adopted in 1997, created a strong legal basis for action and an obligation to promote equality. In accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the EC Treaty (gender equality and gender mainstreaming) as well as Article 141 (equality between women and men in matters of employment) and Article 13 (sex discrimination and other types of discrimination within and outside the workplace), the objective is to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between women and men throughout the European Community.

In terms of political representation, there is still no provision in European Treaties for parity democracy (50/50 representation of men and women) or the equal representation of women and men in decision-making. However, the Gender *Acquis* provides an important example of legal and institutional practice for the whole region, particularly in the areas of employment and occupation and for those countries that are currently in the EU accession process.

acts or threats of domestic violence (Decree No. 616).<sup>49</sup> The law defines domestic violence as any intentional actions committed by a family member towards another family member, which violate the constitutional rights and freedoms of a

family member as a citizen and cause harm to his or her physical, mental or moral health or to the development of a child. The definition of sexual harassment was provided for the first time in the legislation of Ukraine in the Law 'On Ensuring

<sup>49</sup> In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sports, issued a decree in 2004 establishing a procedure of cooperation between governmental institutions to prevent violence in the family.

the Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men' that entered into force on 1 January 2006.<sup>50</sup> However, public awareness on the legal framework for gender equality remains low. According to a poll among Ukrainians in 2007, 61 percent never heard of the Law 'On Ensuring the Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men' and only 5 percent were familiar with the content of the law.<sup>51</sup>

Article 4 of the Gender Equality Law in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** defines the legal meaning of terms such as: gender, gender-based violence, harassment and sexual harassment. In its article 17, the Law forbids 'gender-based violence in all its forms, in the private and public spheres.' The legal framework for combating domestic violence was improved by laws on domestic violence adopted in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska in 2005. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Gender Agency, jointly with the Entity Gender Centres and CSOs, has drafted a State Strategy to Combat Domestic Violence. This draft has been sent to the Council of Ministries for approval. Sexual harassment is prohibited by law, but it remains a serious problem that is poorly understood by the population. The Criminal Code criminalizes sexual intercourse with helpless persons, juveniles and sexual intercourse by abuse of position. The mechanisms to prevent gender-based violence are yet to be fully developed.<sup>52</sup>

The **Polish** government developed a programme for counteracting violence in the family, called 'Against Violence – Ensure Equal Chances', which was carried out with the assistance of UNDP in the late 1990s. It aimed to establish a compre-

hensive system of aid to victims of domestic violence. The Government Plenipotentiary also drafted an Act on counteracting violence in the family, as a self-standing regulation designed to increase the protection of victims of violence. This Act was adopted by parliament on 29 July 2005. A National Programme of Counteracting Domestic Violence was instituted on 25 September 2006.<sup>53</sup> The National Programme is meant to coordinate efforts and ensure an interdisciplinary approach to counteracting domestic violence. The National Programme will benefit from an evaluation, where the implementing entities have an opportunity to introduce modifications and new solutions.

The first **Georgian** law on domestic violence came into effect on 9 June 2006. In this law, the definition of domestic violence goes beyond physical violence to include psychological, economic, and sexual violence. The law, however, does not explicitly criminalize domestic violence. Instead, perpetrators of domestic violence are prosecuted under existing criminal provisions, such as prohibitions on battery or rape. The Law allows both for a protective order and a restrictive order to be issued by courts as well as for police to provide immediate protection for victims of violence.

In **Turkey**, the Family Research Institute in the Prime Minister's Office has stated that domestic abuse is one of the most common forms of violence against women in Turkey. Traditional attitudes and concepts of family exacerbate the problem of domestic abuse. Honour killings are another violation of women's human rights. Sexual assault is a serious problem. Traditional atti-

50 According to this law, sexual harassment includes actions of a sexual nature, expressed verbally (threats, intimidation, improper remarks) or physically (stroking, pats), that humiliate or offend people. The Law obligates an employer to take measures to end cases of sexual harassment. However, it does not determine which exact measures must be taken, and the institutions responsible to deal with violations are not clearly specified.

51 See *Kateryna Levchenko*, Women and Management: Participation in Political Processes and Women's Leadership in Ukraine. Presented at the UNDP Roundtable 'Women Leadership and Participation of Women in the Political Life of Ukraine,' 6th November 2008, Kiev, Ukraine <http://european.dcis.undp.org/gender/gendermainstreaming/show/A40239DE-F203-1EE9-BE0F19553D2CDA9>.

52 See *European Parliament*, Note on the Situation of Women in the Balkans, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=A6-0435/2008>.

53 Resolution No.162/2006 of the Council of Ministers pursuant to Article 10 of the Law from July 29, 2005 on Counteracting Domestic Violence.

tudes and a failure to adequately investigate cases make it difficult for women who have been raped. The new Turkish Criminal Code has incorporated modern provisions for gender equality and violence against women. As a result, a parliamentary commission in 2005 was formed to investigate the causes of honour killings and of violence against women and children, and to identify what responses were required. In July 2006 the Prime Minister's Communication 2006/17 on Measures to be Taken to Prevent Violence Against Children and Women and Honour Killings was published.

**In Kyrgyzstan**, bride kidnapping (*ala kachuu* in Kyrgyz), which involves the taking of an unwilling young woman by a young man for the purpose of non-consensual marriage, is still prevalent. Kidnappings can occur in rural and urban areas. It has been estimated that up to a third of all ethnic Kyrgyz women in Kyrgyzstan may have been wedded in non-consensual bride kidnappings. The Gender Equality Law of **Kyrgyzstan** applies to family members and to relatives who reside with a family member (Article 5) from whom they experience physical, psychological or other forms of harm.<sup>54</sup> In 2004, the CEDAW Committee was concerned about widespread domestic violence and requested a detailed report on sexual violence against women in the Kyrgyzstan's next report. The Committee expressed strong concerns that patriarchal traditions and discriminatory practices are re-emerging in Kyrgyzstan, especially those of polygamy and kidnapping of women. The Committee felt strongly that eradication of such discriminatory practices and the combating of stereotypes are fundamental to eliminating discrimination against women in society.<sup>55</sup> In its recommendations from 2007, the CEDAW Committee stated that the retention of the patriarchal structures and the survival of cul-

tural stereotypes still hinder the advancement of women.<sup>56</sup> It recommended an extensive public awareness-raising campaign against violence in the family, particularly bride kidnapping, and requested that the state immediately begin enforcing the law, which penalizes such practices.

## Challenges and Key Issues

Though legal instruments and institutional mechanisms to promote women's political participation have been established, more work needs to be done to fine-tune them and put laws into practice. In many cases, poor implementation of gender equality laws, including the absence of provision for work/life balance, account for the low participation of women in political processes. Greater participation of women in parliament and other decision-making bodies, together with their strong representation in civil society organizations, are needed to ensure government accountability to gender equality legislation.

Policies aimed at promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes need to address the complex economic, financial and social obstacles that women face. They also need to account for gender stereotypes that hamper women's access to positions of responsibility and leadership, in addition to discriminatory practices. This is particularly true during times of financial and economic crisis, which can exacerbate gender inequalities. Temporary special measures, such as legislative quotas, can help to achieve gender equality.

Electoral systems affect women's involvement and representation. Political parties and national

<sup>54</sup> Article 1 provides definitions of domestic violence, physical domestic violence, psychological family abuse and sexual domestic violence. Articles 23 and 24 address temporary restraining orders, and Articles 25 to 27 address protective court orders. Monitoring of the law is the responsibility of the police and court system.

<sup>55</sup> See [http://www.wilpf.int.ch/publications/CEDAW\\_Report\\_Jan\\_2004.html](http://www.wilpf.int.ch/publications/CEDAW_Report_Jan_2004.html).

<sup>56</sup> <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/264/90/PDF/N0726490.pdf?OpenElement>.



- Gender Equality Laws are in place, but they require more funding, better implementation and more appropriate policies for national needs as well as careful reviewing and monitoring in parliament. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is needed at all levels. Not only governments but political parties and civil society organizations, media and educational institutions need to work together to implement gender equality laws.
- Election Laws: Election laws are in place but need to be harmonized with gender equality laws in accordance with CEDAW and in order to meet MDG3 – to promote gender equality and empower women.
- Political Party Laws: More effective legislation on women's participation in parties is needed – including temporary special measures – in order for women to overcome the barriers to women's leadership.
- Laws on gender-based violence are crucial for gender equality and for overcoming certain barriers to women's political participation.
- The EC gender *acquis* has helped establish a stronger culture of gender awareness through its work/life legislation as well as mainstreaming economic parity into its primary and secondary law. It has greatly influenced work on gender equality in the ECIS region.

parliaments in the region should be encouraged to involve more women and improve the representation of women and men on voting lists and among nominations for elected office.

Violence against women in the political arena is a challenge, undermining women's capabilities to enter politics. It can take on a wide range of forms, both physical and psychological. The scale of such violence is far from fully documented. Institutions are required to overcome gender-based violence, both in political life and beyond.

## II.2. Mechanisms and Strategies to Promote Women's Political Participation

A number of countries in the region have developed successful strategies to increase women's political participation. These strategies demand more support from governments and funding institutions. Quotas, proportional representation, measures to strengthen the position of women in political parties, the formation of women's political parties, the creation of women's party sec-

tions, and the fostering of alliances across parties have all proved important strategies to promote women's political participation.

### Quotas and Proportional Representation

Quotas to enhance women's representation are being implemented with increasing frequency. Gender quotas ensure that women constitute a specific number or percentage of the members of a body, be it a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee or the government. There are different types of quotas, with the main distinction being between legislative and constitutional quotas on the one hand, and voluntary political party quotas on the other. Legislative and constitutional quotas are based on legal provisions, officially mandating that all political entities participating in elections apply them equally. Voluntary political party quotas are set by the political parties themselves, in order to guarantee the nomination of a certain number or proportion of women.

Quotas can be applied in the nomination process or be results-based, such as quotas that depend on how many seats a party is given. In order to

gain a better understanding of the types of quotas that work most effectively, their use should be examined in the context of the electoral system.<sup>57</sup> The most dramatic improvements in the region have taken place when governments have passed laws that support women in elections or on party lists and have given equal visibility on ballot papers and by quota systems.

Quotas can be critical to increasing women's political participation. However, they can also be contentious. Some people have challenged their ability to increase the numbers of qualified women candidates. In the ECIS region, quotas have proven crucial for improving women's political participation, in particular when accompanied by supportive activities that enhance the public's understanding of temporary special measures such as quotas as an integral part of efforts to achieve gender equality and democratic governance.

In **Poland** quotas have proven effective in increasing the numbers of women in parliament. The Polish Elections in 2001 were preceded by a major campaign to increase women's participation with the resulting increase from 13 to 20 percent. The success was due largely to three factors: 1) Three parties guaranteed a minimum of 30 percent of women on their candidate lists; 2) The election saw more left-leaning parties gain a majority rather than right-wing parties, with the latter tending to promote more traditional gender roles; 3) The women's lobby gained strength as civil society organizations worked with women politicians to increase their visibility among the voting public. The election marked a change in the public attitude towards women in politics as public opinion shifted towards accepting women in leadership positions.

The most effective strategy for increasing the number of women in parliament was the introduction of quotas on ballots. These were applied

by the political parties, not by parliament. The first group to apply the quota system in general elections in Poland was the Union of Labour (UP), which already in 1993 had decided that 30 percent of ballot places in parliamentary elections would be reserved for women. In 2001, the Union of Labour and the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) signed an Agreement to reserve at least 30 percent of places on their ballots for women. In 2000, the Alliance modified its own document to guarantee a minimum 30 percent to each gender, among both the potential candidates, and on the lists of candidates. A similar principle was enshrined by the Democratic Left Alliance in its constitutional document - the Party Statute (Article 16, sections 1 and 2). As a result, the ballots of the SLD – UP coalition for the 2001 elections included more than 36 percent of women in total, though in some election districts the share was less than 30 percent. It should be noted, however, that in the first five places on coalition ballots there were only 17 percent of women. In those elections coalition seats were won by 161 male deputies and 55 women deputies (50 from the Democratic Left Alliance and 5 from the Union of Labour), a total of 25 percent.

As of 2008, Poland's ruling party had not introduced a quota system. However, before the 2007 election, a resolution was adopted that one of the first three positions on each candidate list must be held by a woman. In practice, 34 out of 41 electoral districts observed the rule, and three others included a woman in the fourth position. The strategy proved successful and women took 21 percent of places on the candidate lists, and make up 23 percent of the party caucus in parliament. Only the Green Party in 2004 adopted a parity system for elections to party bodies and in the composition of electoral ballots: In 2004, the names on Green party election ballots and in general elections alternated between women's and men's names, with women assigned odd-num-

<sup>57</sup> See <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/taxonomy/term/5>.

bered places on the ballot, so that there is always a woman in the first position on the election ballot. However, in 2004 the Green Party did not win the minimum proportion of votes needed to enter parliament.

Some challenged the quota system, asserting that women with links to civil society organizations found it very hard to find space on ballots after the introduction of quotas. Parties would often choose women without links to civil society organizations.<sup>58</sup>

**Kyrgyzstan** saw an increase in the number of women deputies in parliament in 2000 due to the introduction of elections on the basis of party lists. Though the total number of women deputies was not significant – six women out of the total in the bicameral parliament won seats, with three entering on the basis of party lists. These results led civil society organizations to push for a proportional system as the most conducive to women's participation. However, this system was removed in the country under the constitutional reform of 2003.

In 2005, under the new Constitution, political parties again had the opportunity to nominate candidates to parliament. Political parties nominated only nine women to parliament (out of 38 women deputies), which comprised about 20 percent of the total number of candidates. Out of 38 women candidates, none won a parliamentary seat in 2005. From this it became clear that special support measures were needed to overcome the *de facto* exclusion of women from parliament.

Civil society organizations lobbied for the establishment of temporary special measures to ensure women's political participation.<sup>59</sup> As a result, the following measures were implemented: a repre-

sentative of the President on Gender Issues was appointed in the parliament (2005); a Presidential Decree that there be at least 30 percent women in public administration was passed (2006); the principle of gender equality in governance was to be included in the national development strategies; and quotas were introduced (for the groups which were under-represented – women, youth and ethnic minorities) to parliamentary elections based on party lists (every fourth on the list). The result was highly successful: some 27 out of 90 women were voted to parliament in December 2007, the highest number among Central Asian countries.

Prior to 1989, the Former Socialist Federal Republic of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** had a system of reserved seats for women officials. Women constituted 27 percent (during the 1980s) of Communist Party membership. They were also well represented in other political organizations, such as the Socialist League (50 percent) and the unions (35 percent). Due to a system of reserved seats adopted by the Communist Party to support women's representation in 1986, women made up 24.1 percent of the Peoples Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 17.3 percent of local or municipal assemblies.

In the first free multiparty elections in the early 1990s, the loss of reserved seats in these elections resulted in the disappearance of women from elected political bodies and state institutions. Of the 240 elected representatives in the Peoples Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only seven were women (2.9 percent). In the municipal assemblies, women secured 315 of 6,299 seats (5 percent).<sup>60</sup>

This continued until a quota system was established in 1998. This improved the situation, but the establishment of an open list system in 2000

58 *Malgorzata Fuszara*, *Kobiety w polityce* [Women in Politics], Warszawa 2007.

59 *Women Watch*, *Women's Participation in Kyrgyzstan: Analysis of Parliamentary Elections 2005 from a Gender Perspective and Specifics of Women NGOs*, 2005.

60 *Besima Borić*, *Application of Quotas: Legal Reforms and Implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, A paper presented at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)/CEE Network for Gender Issues Conference, Budapest, October 2004, [http://www.quotaproject.org/CS/CS\\_BiH-boric.pdf](http://www.quotaproject.org/CS/CS_BiH-boric.pdf).

led to a drastic reduction in women's representation in comparison with 1998. Only three women (17 percent) were elected to the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives, in contrast with 39 men. A similar level of representation of women was reached at the Entity level as well as within the municipal assemblies (from 17 to 18 percent).

The Bosnian case shows that closed lists are problematic for the empowerment of women and their participation in politics. Likewise, open lists can lead to a drastic reduction in women's representation when the country lacks an enabling environment for women candidates. The major lesson learned from the Bosnian experience is that if a quota system is introduced, it must be accompanied by other measures such as support to women in election campaigns, education of women on how to lead their campaigns, support to media to pay more attention to women candidates, and voter education.

Civil society organizations in **Georgia** lobbied for the establishment of temporary special measures to ensure that women receive equal political participation. The Women's NGOs Coalition of Georgia forwarded to parliament 32,000 signatures in support of amendments to the country's elections legislation in favour of a 50 percent quota. The Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of the Parliament of Georgia has supported the initiatives, as well as the introduction of a gender equality law. The process is ongoing.

In **Ukraine**, quotas are also not yet in place. The Law 'On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men' guarantees equal rights and opportunities for both women and men in political life, but does not indicate how to implement this provision. It was never translated into the appropriate legislative instruments, such

as electoral legislation. No special mechanism for promoting women and gender equity through a quota system was agreed upon.<sup>61</sup> Attempts to implement changes by introducing gender quotas were made, but without success: In 2006 and 2007 a bill was introduced that would have changed the electoral law of Ukraine, for example mandating the nomination of at least one member of the opposite sex in every group of five candidates. The bill failed to receive the support of parliamentarians.

## Party Political Leadership

Throughout the region, political parties don't often promote women to leadership positions. Political parties are critical for ensuring women's political participation. Parties are governed both internally and externally, sometimes with rules and regulations that significantly influence the role of women. External rules affecting women can include gender quotas and other candidate selection mechanisms established through constitutional or party laws.

In many cases, parties recruit women, engaging them in organizational work, especially in election campaigns. However, women are often portrayed as having little political knowledge, political experience or skills.

This creates an unfavourable environment for women's political participation and gender equality. As a consequence, there are many women party members, but few are able to move into positions of power.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** has very few women political leaders at both the state and local party levels. It is a widespread practice that key deci-

61 A survey was made on quotas which indicated some support among the Ukrainian public. See National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Research of Political Participation of Women. Gender Quotas. Thoughts and Opinions of Ukrainian people. 2005 – 2008. Information provided by *Svetlana Oksamytna* in: *Kateryna Levchenko*, Women and Management: Participation in Political Processes and Women's Leadership in Ukraine prepared for the UNDP Roundtable 'Women Leadership and Participation of Women in the Political Life of Ukraine,' 6 November 2008, Kyiv, Ukraine <http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/gendermainstreaming/show/A40239DE-F203-1EE9-BE0F195553D2CDA9>.

sions are being made within political parties rather than in the legislative and executive bodies, along with the imposition of strong party discipline that in practice often leads to the marginalization of women.

Women in politics in **Kyrgyzstan** include those few who have maintained their position in national parties from the former Soviet times, regional women leaders who stepped in to fill posts vacated by men politicians as they moved to the national level (considered to be more prestigious), and then in 2005, newcomers who were voted in sometimes with limited experience in the political system. In the last election, 90 percent of women included in the electoral lists of political parties were not party members and were at times hastily recruited before the elections in order to fulfil the mandatory 30 percent quota for women.

Remaining challenges for Kyrgyzstan are clan influences and traditional masculine leadership that can perpetuate authoritarian forms of governance and contribute to re-emerging stereotypes.<sup>62</sup> Another challenge is the low institutional and organizational capacity of local women's groups. They are marked by weak networking between women's groups at the local level and by a lack of women's leadership capacity development programmes and policies.

In **Ukraine**, a challenge in party politics is that traditional parties have a varied approach to nominating candidates to parliament. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the number of women candidates ranged from 39 percent (the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine) to 9 percent (the Peasants' Bloc Agrarian Ukraine). During the last elections, five parties surpassed the 3 percent threshold and gained representation in

parliament. The Party of Regions won a majority of seats with only 11 percent female MPs. The Communist Party obtained the smallest number of seats (17 percent female MPs).

Women party leaders in Ukraine are not considered to be part of the women's movement. Examples are the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (headed by Natalya Vitrenko), Batkivshchyna Party (headed by Yulia Tymoshenko who is at the same time leader of the bloc of parties bearing her name), and the Agrarian Party of Ukraine (headed by Kateryna Vashchuk). In 2007, the Peasants' Bloc Agrarian Ukraine (under the leadership of Lidiya Porechkina) and Party Viche (Inna Bogoslovska) were established. But even in the parties headed by women, very few women entered the list of candidates. One reason for the absence of women parliamentarians is the high level of bias in the selection of candidates – a process where women are unable to compete with men on equal terms, due to stereotypes, less access to money, and less effective social networks, which are traditionally dominated by men.

A survey conducted in **Turkey** among members of political parties and parliaments within the context of a project on 'enhancing women's participation in local politics and decision making' as well as a public-perception survey conducted with citizens before the 2007 general elections underlined the difficulty of promoting women to positions of responsibility. Instead, the roles given to women politicians replicated those they held at home and in their communities.<sup>63</sup>

The public-perception survey polled the general public's views on women's involvement in politics in Turkey. The survey showed that understanding public perceptions of women's partici-

<sup>62</sup> Anara Moldosheva. Kyrgyzstan National Report on Women & Governance. Bishkek, November 2008.

<sup>63</sup> KADER. Women's Political Participation and their Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Ankara, October 2008.

pation in politics could have been decisive in the 2007 general elections, especially for those parties that did not receive the required minimum percentage of votes.

The main findings of the survey include:

- 77 percent of respondents said the most important reason why women are represented at a low level in politics is that 'women are not given a chance';
- 82 percent of respondents would like the number of women politicians to rise;
- 25 percent of voters would choose to vote for the party that has the higher number of female candidates compared to other political parties;
- 16 percent of citizens who voted in the general election in 2002 were not satisfied with the position of the parties they had supported on equality issues and the rights of women.<sup>64</sup>

Through the survey, challenges to women's political participation were raised openly and with broad coverage for the first time in a pre-election process.

## Women's Party Sections

Women's party sections aim to unite women members within parties. They can be important bodies for women to exert greater influence over party platforms and policies and to galvanize women's political participation. The establishment of women's party sections requires the creation of an appropriate legal framework and structure, the identification of funding options, and a well-planned strategy for how to recruit new members and retain current ones.<sup>65</sup>

In **Kyrgyzstan** women account for 10 percent of high-ranking party leaders. A move is now afoot

### Country Example: Social Democratic Party of Croatia

The Social Democratic Party of Croatia was created in 1994 after a merger of several left-wing parties. At the beginning, women faced resistance from party members to establish a women's wing or organize themselves within the party. However, by January 1995, women activists founded the SDP Women's Forum. The Forum has become an internal structure within the party and complied with the party's statute that allowed women who are interested in the values and work of the Forum to become a member without being a party member. The Forum held a series of seminars entitled 'Women Can Do It', following the example of women in Norwegian political parties.

Initially, the strategy was to form branch offices in any place where there was a party branch. Within two to four years almost 100 branches were established across the country.

The strategy of capacity building and increasing the representation of women within the party was essential for the forum in order to influence the national agenda and implement gender-related policies once the party formed a government in 2000. As the leading party in the coalition government, the party was largely responsible for achieving 34 percent women's representation in parliament in 2000.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> For more information on activities to enhance women's political participation in Turkey, see <http://www.undp.org.tr/Gozlem2.aspx?WebSayfaNo=86>.

<sup>65</sup> See iKNOW Politics, Consolidated Response on Women's Party Sections: [http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/consolidatedresponsewomenspartysection\\_iknow-politics.pdf](http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/consolidatedresponsewomenspartysection_iknow-politics.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> Extracted from *Karolina Leakovic*, Political Party Quotas in the Croatian Social Democratic Party by International IDEA, <http://iknowpolitics.org/en/node/3302>.

among political parties to create women's sections, as a response to the introduction of gender quotas in the election system based on party lists.

## Women-only Parties

There have been several experiments with women-only parties when male-dominated parties fail to promote women or take on a gender equality agenda. Women's parties serve to promote women's needs, but have often proven temporary and not effective in the long run.

In the 1990s, several women's parties were created in **Ukraine**: Women of Ukraine, Women for the Future, Party of Solidarity of Women of Ukraine, and the Christian-Democratic Women's Party. One of them was headed by Valentyna Dovzhenko, then Minister for Family, Youth and Sport. The party participated in elections twice, but did not obtain the required number of votes. The Party of Solidarity of Women of Ukraine was headed by Valentyna Goshovska, who had occupied high positions in government (MP, Deputy Minister for Defence, Deputy Head of the National Security and Defence Council). However, the Ukrainian experience shows that women-only parties were not able to gain enough support from the electorate.

The first decision by the newly formed **Georgia** Women's Party was to call for quotas on the eve of parliamentary elections in May 2008, when the Women's Coalition of Georgia forwarded to the parliament 32,000 signatures in support of amendments to the country's elections legislation. The party founded in March 2008 by Guguli Magradz, former MP and member of the Gender Equality Advisory Council, has 80 percent women and consists of 2,700 members. The Women's party formed a part of the 'Electoral Bloc Traditionalists – Our Georgia and Women's Party', an alliance of several political parties. This bloc nominated one woman in every five candidates.

The Georgian Women's Party advocates for improving women's educational and social opportunities, raising the political awareness of local communities among rural and urban voters, and for creating the space for women to take up positions of responsibility and power within the party.

**Kyrgyzstan** can also provide a number of examples of women's parties including the Women's Democratic Party (1994, renamed in 2005 the Democratic Party of Women and Youth, New Power) and the Party of Women El-Ene (2000), which literally means mother of the people. In addition, women leaders founded: El Muras (People's Heritage 2002), Agreement (2002) and the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (2000). In the parliamentary elections of 2000, the Women's Democratic Party won two seats in the Legislative Assembly. One of the two MPs – Ms. Toktokan Borombaeva – became a strong advocate of two important laws on gender equality – the 'Law on State Guarantees on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Men and Women', and the 'Law on Social and Legal Protection against Family Violence', which were approved by parliament in 2003.

## Alliances of Women Across Party Lines

Another strategy in some countries of the region to increase women's political participation has been to form alliances across party lines – often with support and input from civil society organizations.

**Georgia's** action plan to promote the social, economic and political empowerment of women included the establishment of a women's parliamentary group across party lines. The Parliamentary Women's Club in the Georgian Parliament was established in June, 1997. Special attention was dedicated to the role of women in the peace processes in the Caucasus and to the

problem of homeless children. The backbone of the Parliamentary Women's Club was the Consultation Council, represented by women working in the executive government, members of the previous parliaments, deputies of the councils of the autonomous republics and local government bodies, as well as leaders of civil society organizations. This proved an excellent example of cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government and the non-governmental sector.

In **Poland**, the Parliamentary Group of Women was formed in 1991 to unite women across party lines. The group was an important force for change, particularly in the beginning. According to some experts it later lost, to some extent, its reputation as being 'above the political fray'. The grouping has become less visible, gradually distancing itself from civil society organizations. It will be a challenge for the group to become more active in the future, particularly connecting again with civil society organizations.

In **Turkey**, the women's movement has worked to establish a network of women across party lines. This has led to the creation of the Equal Opportunities Commission in parliament in 2009.

An important network supporting women in politics in Central and Eastern Europe is '**The Central and Eastern European Network for Gender Issues (CEE Network)**' that aims to address the uneven progress towards gender equality in the transition period. It targets civil society organizations, women MPs, and party leaders from political parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The network aims to mainstream gender into party politics, supports special temporary measures such as quotas, and provides women the opportunity to increase their capacity to make political decisions within parties. Last but not least, the network is promoting the inclusion of gender

concerns in the EU enlargement process through advocacy, policy formulation, strategy setting and partnerships.

One major success for the CEE Network has been its programme 'Women in Politics' in eight accession countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland – to ensure that women take up their place in the European Parliament. The average of women MEPs from these eight countries rose from 14 percent in the former European Parliament to 29.5 percent of elected women MEPs in the current parliament, with five countries contributing more than 30 percent (30.3 percent): Slovenia (42 percent), Lithuania (38 percent), Slovakia (33 percent), Hungary and Estonia (33 percent, respectively). Out of ten EU commissioners (2004-2009) who are women, four came from Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. In 2007, the CEE network began a broad lobbying effort for a pan-European Parity in the Law Campaign together with the European Women's Lobby and European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity.

The CEE Network works closely with the European Commission Expert Group on women in political decision making, established in June 2008. This high-level network provides a platform at the EU level to exchange good practices and successful strategies to improve gender balance in decision-making positions.<sup>67</sup>

## Key Issues and Challenges

Women in political parties face a number of challenges. For example, they are often not promoted to higher party positions, they do not have access to funding, they don't attract the attention of the media, or have the social support to promote themselves for office. Some reasons for their exclusion include: the patriarchal tradi-

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.europeanforum.net/gender\\_network/cee\\_network\\_for\\_gender\\_issues](http://www.europeanforum.net/gender_network/cee_network_for_gender_issues).



tion, caring and domestic duties that are considered to be women's duties, as well as the psychological and physical demands of switching focus from motherhood. Policies aimed at promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes and positions need to tackle the main causes of the problem. Gender mainstreaming would promote women's greater participation in decision-making through appropriate policies and measures, equality plans, mentoring and targeted training.

Another challenge is to convince parties that ensuring women's rights and leadership opportunities are crucial for democratic development, so that parties better integrate measures for gender equality in their structures or platforms or both. Engaging men as advocates and allies can also be crucial to effectively promote women's political participation.

The challenge is to build a political culture, particularly during election campaigns, to promote women alongside men candidates. The key is to

ensure that party lists respect quota systems when they are in place, and go beyond the minimum possible representation of women required by law.

A candidate's chances at election, whether the candidate be a man or a woman, depend to a large extent on political parties and coalitions. Parties and coalitions decide who will be listed on the ballot and in what place. Such outcomes are determined by how people are recruited for election ballots. It is therefore important to encourage parties to place women candidates high on party lists and in responsible and accountable positions.

- Quotas and proportional representation: When appropriate for the electoral system and when monitored carefully, quotas are important mechanisms for increasing women's representation. Reforms need to continue to improve quota systems through better enforcement and, when necessary, legal amendments together with funds to support women candidates. In addition, awareness of the importance of gender issues for democratic governance within parliaments and governments needs to be promoted.
- Women's better representation in parties: The male-dominated political culture needs to change by introducing appropriate measures and policies such as political party quotas, funding and capacity building for women candidates and women political party members.
- Women-only parties: These types of parties are needed where there is a strong prejudice against women in politics, but should be seen as temporary and not the most effective mechanism for gender equality in the long run.
- Women's party sections can be important mechanisms for exerting greater influence on party platforms and policies and to galvanize women's political participation in general.
- Alliances across party lines: This strategy is a very important one in and outside parliament in order to build a culture of gender equality in political life, through committees, hearings and dialogue.
- Work/life balance: Within parliament and government, a better work/life balance needs to be established to encourage women to run for leadership positions and to ensure their participation.

### II.3. Partnerships for Women's Political Participation: Civil Society Organizations and the Media

#### Civil Society Organizations Mobilizing for Women's Political Participation

Throughout the region, civil society organizations have promoted women's political agendas and supported women's campaigns. Civil society organizations raise awareness of women candidates by promoting them in politics and public life. Their campaigns challenge stereotypes by showing that women can assume leadership roles.

Civil society organizations also produce strong women candidates. Once these women are in political positions, civil society organizations can keep them accountable. In this sense, civil society organizations act as watchdogs, monitoring how gender equality legislation and other policies affecting women are put into practice.

Civil society organizations provide networking, support and financial assistance. They also develop the capacity of women to support gender-sensitive policies. They help women candidates to confront the glass ceiling by providing informal networks, which male politicians often rely on. Such networks are crucial for helping women balance the long hours of political work with the demands of the family. They also help to sensitize male political party leaders.

In **Poland** the number of civil society organizations has expanded rapidly during the transition, with over 300 civil society organizations registered in 2008. Most of these organizations work on gender equality issues, though they might focus on specific issues such as reproductive rights, trafficking in women, violence, and legal assistance. Civil society organizations worked well with the government during the prepara-

tions for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). Working arrangements with the government were institutionalized with the Cooperation Forum of the Government Plenipotentiary for Family and Women's Issues and women's non-governmental organizations. The Forum successfully cooperated with the government in the drafting of a National Action Programme for Women that was undertaken after Beijing. The Forum then moved to work with the Parliamentary Group of Women. In 2001, when the new government was formed by a coalition of parties headed by SLD (Democratic Left Alliance), but also including UP (Union of Labour), cooperation flourished. Civil society organizations worked closely with women leaders to set up the Office of Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men.

Within the Forum, leadership rotated in order to prevent one organization from monopolizing the Forum. One challenge is that the Forum lacks a permanent ruling body to ensure sustainability. Unfortunately after the 2005 elections, cooperation between the government and civil society organizations weakened considerably.

In 1995, at the end of the war in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, civil society organizations working on gender equality, social development, democracy, human rights and peace became a vibrant part of civil society. As in Poland, the relationship between civil society organizations and women in political parties and in government has changed. The initial phase following the end of the war saw activism of women outside and inside government, with a focus on building institutions to ensure the political participation of women. During 1998-2003, the partnership was marked by close cooperation between civil society organizations and government, which resulted in the passing of the Gender Equality Law, the introduction of gender mechanisms, and the passage of the Strategy for the prevention of trafficking in human beings, and in a relatively high representa-

### Country Example: CEDAW Shadow Reports in Poland

Shadow reports drafted by civil society organizations are often an important counterweight to the official reports submitted by the government. The major advantage of drawing up shadow reports is that they provide important alternative sources of information for international forums. They are able to disclose information not available in government reports and provide valuable insights into the communities that are often the subject of the government reports. After the Beijing Conference, civil society organizations continued to use the shadow report mechanism to hold governments accountable for CEDAW commitments.

In Poland, for example, writing the Shadow Report was a highly visible and empowering exercise. During the preparations for the 1995 Beijing Conference, two shadow reports were drafted: one drafted by civil society organizations and women activists, and one by organizations associated with the anti-abortion movement. The latter report focused on the traditional role of women as mothers and wives, and argued that women should draw satisfaction and social prestige from fulfilling these roles. The two draft reports highlighted the strong polarity between progressive women's rights organizations and conservative organizations that are frequently linked to the Roman Catholic Church and which accentuate traditional gender roles.<sup>68</sup> A decade later, when the Polish Government submitted a report on the implementation of the CEDAW in 2006, several civil society organizations (the Federation for Women and Family Planning, Pro Femina Association, The PSF Women's Centre Foundation, Centre for Women's Rights, La Strada Foundation) submitted a joint shadow report. The report highlighted several areas where the government had failed to comply with its obligations as outlined in CEDAW. The critical remarks of the Committee recommendations to the Polish government coincided with the recommendations formulated by civil society organizations.

tion of women in governance. The present phase, by contrast, is marked by a less intense and strategically oriented relationship between government and civil society organizations.

Civil society organizations played an important role in supporting and promoting women on political lists. In terms of voter education, they have played a critical role in door-to-door contact with voters. Civil society organizations were strongest when they were receiving considerable support from the international community. The withdrawal of international organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the failure of civil society organizations to secure sustainable financing, have compelled organizations to focus on their

own survival, rather than being free to work towards gender equality. International organizations have supported civil society organizations during and after the war, but a sustainable funding mechanism from government sources was not created. The future of civil society organizations remains unclear. Furthermore, civil society organizations find it difficult to participate in public discussions about key issues, such as a draft law or policy that could empower women, partly because they lack the time, and partly because they don't have the capacity to analyse the social and economic impact of a given law or policy.

In **Kyrgyzstan** civil society organizations working on gender equality and women's empowerment

<sup>68</sup> Information provided by *Małgorzata Fuszara* at the UNDP Roundtable on Women and Governance: Political Participation of Women and Women's Leadership in Poland, 13 November 2008.

make up 20 percent of the 9,000 officially registered non-governmental organizations. Women head over 60 percent of all NGOs. As in Poland, Kyrgyzstan's civil society organizations focused on writing shadow reports<sup>69</sup> to CEDAW ratified by Kyrgyzstan in 1997.

Civil society organizations promoted the passage of gender equality legislation, including the Law on Ensuring State Guarantees for the Achievement of Gender Equality (2003) and the Law on Social and Legal Protection from Family Violence (2003), which was adopted after civil society organizations had collected 30,000 signatures. They also rallied together in 2005 when parliamentary elections resulted in no representation by women (in part because the three women who had been elected were stripped of their victory by a court). Together they adopted a Joint Platform of Action, which succeeded in establishing the Special Representative of the President in the *Jogorku Kenesh* on gender development. Since then, special measures to support gender equality have been implemented, following high-level consultations involving the government, civil society organizations and multilaterals.

Civil society organizations have also responded to direct violations of human rights and the rights of women. In particular, they acted when efforts to legalize polygamy threatened to challenge the constitutional separation of state and religion. With international support, local women's groups managed to stop this initiative.

Women in Kyrgyzstan have created *Women can do it!*, a nation-wide network for the advancement of women in politics. In 2008, the Alliance of Women's Legislative Initiatives, coordinated by the Agency of Social Technologies, was cre-

ated to strengthen the coalitions that had been formed during a campaign to promote women in politics during 2005-2008. The Alliance brings together women parliamentarians, state organizations and women's non-governmental organizations.

These networks and alliances were formed in a tradition new to Kyrgyzstan. As a result, they are still dependent on outside expertise and funding. They operate mostly at the national level, while regional and local women's networks remain weak, both politically and financially. More can be done to build on regional and local initiatives to improve women's political participation at these levels, and to strengthen informational and educational campaigns to mobilize women politically at the local level.

In Kyrgyzstan as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, civil society organizations have come to rely on a 'sandwich strategy' to influence gender equality laws, whereby they lobby governments to make changes via pressure from below (civil society organizations) and from above (international conventions and agreements).

The diverse profile of civil society organizations in **Turkey** reflects the country's complex make-up, which includes both women's groups dealing with sexuality to conservative groups, promoting traditional gender roles. Civil society organizations were instrumental during the last general elections in 2007, when they helped to increase women's political representation at the national level. The solidarity among women working for NGOs and women's movement organizations in reaching out to women in political parties proved very important. The Women's Coalition - a network of women activists established to promote women in politics - was key

<sup>69</sup> See the *Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan for a Shadow Report on Violence against Women and Political Participation*, 2008, [http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/42\\_shadow\\_reports/Kyrgyzstan\\_SR\\_%20Forum.pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/42_shadow_reports/Kyrgyzstan_SR_%20Forum.pdf). Regarding political participation, the Report states: 'The major problem in the area of women's political participation [is that] women continue to have limited exercise of legislative, executive and administrative powers. They are under-represented in decision-making bodies, there is a lack of women's issues in the country's policies, lack of political leadership capacity development opportunities for women, a lack of training possibilities for women to strengthen their leadership capacity, and a lack of financing' (p 12).

to these efforts. The network consists of independent civil society organizations and women's rights experts.

In 2007, political parties and civil society organizations worked together to double women's parliamentary presence to 9.1 percent. The election campaign led by KADER, a civil society organization drawing on other civil society groups and the international community and media, was able to raise crucial support for women candidates. Civil society organizations operating in different areas before the elections made women's political representation a common focus. They formed the Women's Coalition, which monitored political parties' behaviour towards women candidates and produced a report entitled *Card of Political Parties*.

Women's groups also campaigned at the local level with other civil society groups. For example, the Local Agenda 21 Women's Assemblies conducted a quota campaign. All these activities put pressure on political parties to include more women in their lists of candidates and eventually more women in politics.

In **Ukraine**, civil society organizations have helped to strengthen institutions that promote gender equality, as well as women and the family. They are actively engaged in the most important issues facing women. For example, in 1996 civil society organizations lobbied for the establishment of the Department of Family and Youth; helped to organize the first parliamentary hearings on gender equality issues in 1995; supported the successful passage of the law 'On the Guarantee of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women'; and the national campaign and Forum 'Say No to Violence'. Ukrainian civil society organizations at national and local levels have worked on programmes to advance and enhance women's leadership in politics.<sup>70</sup>

Civil society organizations have been key to organizing parliamentary hearings which have been held since the mid 1990s on gender issues. These hearings between parliament and civil society, with the support of the UNDP Equal Opportunities Programme, have led to the adoption of recommendations for gender equality by parliament. More recently, parliament conducted hearings on the 'Status of Women in Ukraine: Present and Future' (2004 and 2006), on changes to the law 'On Family Violence Prevention' and parts of the Criminal Code of Ukraine on punishment for human trafficking, and adoption of the law 'On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women' (2006). As a result of the hearings, a number of recommendations have been adopted, though with restrictions. In the summer of 2008, hearings of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities, and International Relations took place, also involving NGOs.

In **Georgia**, as in other countries, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action have proved to be important rallying points for civil society organizations. The Parliamentary Women's Club of the Georgian Parliament, which was established in June 1997, focused special attention on the problem of homeless children and on the role of women in the peace processes in the Caucasus. A Consultation Council was established, made up of representatives of women working in the executive branch of government, members of the previous parliaments, deputies of the councils of the autonomous republics and local governmental bodies, as well as leaders of civil society organizations. This was an excellent example of cooperation between the non-governmental sector and the legislative and executive branches of government. The Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of the Parliament of Georgia also brings together different actors from government

<sup>70</sup> Examples of successful models are Diya, Kyiv City Women's Centre, Women's Union of Ukraine, League of Women Voters 50/50, along with some oblast state administrations.

and civil society, including members of the Georgian parliament, representatives of the executive government, the Georgian Public Defender's Office, a number of Women's NGOs, and academia. This type of framework gives the forum to various stakeholders to bring their concerns and issues to one representative and unites the efforts to establish an effective policy dialogue.

A 'Coalition of Women's NGOs' (with 200 registered members) was established in Georgia with the support of the local Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR/OSCE). The Coalition provided space for civil society organizations to work together to promote women's political involvement.

With the support of UNIFEM, civil society organizations also formed a peace network, called 'Unity of Women for Peace' which brought together over 100 organizations and individuals throughout Georgia. The objective was to achieve a positive and sustainable peace with women's participation and gender equality. The network called for better implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

With the support of UNDP, women's decision-making capacities were developed so as to facilitate their participation in political processes as well as to hold a dialogue on gender issues within political structures. Gender groups/women clubs have been supported through technical assistance and capacity building programmes. Networking and coordination of women councillors was supported. A Local Women Councillors' Forum was established and capacity strengthened to support local gender-sensitive policy-making.

Similar to Kyrgyzstan, networking and alliance building between women's groups and state institutions is relatively new to Georgia. Though at an early stage, these innovations have already led to improved exchange of information and consultation between women's groups and those government agencies that work for peace and gender equality.

## The Role of the Media

The media is critical for increasing women's political participation. Throughout the region the media continue to offer both opportunities and challenges. A key challenge before elections is that the media do not devote the same attention to women as they do to men. Furthermore, when they do pay attention to women candidates, they focus on their appearance and personal lives, which detracts from the seriousness of a woman candidate's political agenda. Consequently, women politicians need more training in how to work with the media – whether newsprint, internet, television or radio – by countering subtle but often highly damaging gender discrimination portrayed in print and over the airwaves.

The 'moustache campaign' led by KADER, a **Turkish** civil society organization, very successfully used the media to ask the public: 'Does one need to be a man to be elected to parliament?' For the first time, due to the media's focus on the moustache campaign, all levels of society debated the question of women's political participation.

In **Poland**, studies of election campaigns indicate that political parties distribute air time between women and men unevenly. Detailed analyses of election programmes on television show that the parties designing the TV spots promote mainly men.<sup>71</sup> Parties assign 80-90 percent of air

71 Renata Siemieńska (ed.): „Płeć, wybory, władza” [Gender, elections, power], „Scholar” Warszawa 2005 and Sylwia Spurek „Kobiety, partie, wybory” [Women, parties, elections], Centre of Women's Rights, Łódź 2002.

time to electoral statements by men. This means that women candidates are less able to promote their candidacies before the public. If women are to improve their success in campaigns, it is important to change this bias and provide women and men candidates equal air time.

According to the Helsinki Parliament of Citizens, not a single woman appeared in debates between parties on Radio Television in Republika Srpska/**Bosnia and Herzegovina** during an observed weekly period before the 2004 municipal elections, although the Election Law guarantees equal representation in the media to all political parties and independent candidates. The maximum representation of women versus men candidates was 12 percent in the daily newspaper *Oslobođenje*.

This bias towards women politicians is reflected in the general gender bias of the media. According to surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina, monitoring of TV newscasts found that women appear in reports on health and culture (35.7 percent), education (28.5 percent), environment (27 percent) and social issues (23.6 percent). Women appeared only in 6.3 percent of reports on the judiciary, police and military issues and in 9.1 percent of reports on state and entity institutions, commissions and agencies. In discussions about the economy, women appear as analysts and experts rather than as political figures with a decision-making role. Nevertheless, men appear as experts or commentators 10 times more often than women do.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, according to data from Global Gender Monitoring from 2006, women make up 12.5 percent of those interviewed in print media. Within the framework of the UNDP/SIDA project 'Promotion of Women in Civil Service and Politics', monitoring of 12 media outlets as well as the National Channel was conducted in 2007. The baseline data was very pessimistic: women made up just 3 percent of all speakers on the National Channel news programme. After a series of

trainings of journalists, editors and camera operators over 18 months, the number of women in pilot media outlets increased to 34 percent in TV news and 27 percent in the print media.

Usually, in news, women are presented as a crowd, a background or an object of discussion. Some 54 percent of women are shown as a passerby, a neighbour, or an inhabitant; some 28 percent as a manager or leader; 15 percent as a civil servant and only 15 percent as a politician. According to the results of the monitoring, women's activities are related to health, education and social protection.

## Key Issues and Challenges

Throughout the region, it is a challenge to encourage civil society organizations to get involved in politics beyond their area, such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, education, and equality in the workplace. Not many women's groups work on women's political participation with a strong gender equality agenda. Due to the financial crisis, the (already poor) funding for civil society organizations is likely to become even tighter. It is therefore crucial to raise awareness of how gender equality is important for economic and social development, and to encourage civil society organizations not only to provide services to assist in the crisis, but also to become engaged politically to find ways out of it.

Shifts in traditional sources of funding have also posed challenges for civil society organizations. Some countries are no longer eligible to receive official development assistance, often having become donor countries themselves. Instead of channelling funds to their own civil society organizations, they are supporting women in developing countries. Developing home-grown agendas alongside international agendas in the region is a challenge. Many civil society organizations must increasingly compete with one an-

other for decreasing funds, which can lead to difficult and sometimes even antagonistic relationships. Similarly, finding funds to educate the public on gender equality and the importance of women's political participation is difficult and can compete with funding for other gender issues, which may seem more pressing (such as gender-based violence, poverty and education). The challenge is both to link the issues in a holistic and strategic way, as well as to build coalitions to support all facets of gender equality.

Another major challenge is to encourage the media to tackle gender stereotypes. The media, including the advertising industry, transmits stereotyped information, in particular of women in decision-making positions. This needs to be confronted and changed. Overall, the media should have a greater awareness of the importance of gender equality across ECIS.

- **Partnerships and dialogue:** Civil society organizations are most successful when they foster platforms that enable constructive interaction among government, civil society and international organizations at national and regional levels on ways to increase the political participation of women.
- **Civil society organizations' expert technical know how:** civil society organizations have researched local and national conditions and have expertise, as well as connections to international women's networks.
- **Advocacy for gender equality and greater political participation of women:** Civil society organizations have often been key drivers for influencing decision makers at the national as well as regional level to uphold agreements on women's political participation (such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action) as well as work against negative, stereotypical images of women and women politicians in the media.
- **Mobilizing public opinion around gender-based violence:** Civil society organizations have played a major role in raising awareness of the negative effects of gender-based violence for economic, social and political progress in the region through multimedia campaigns.
- **Leading education and capacity development for women's political participation:** Civil society organizations play a key role in developing the capacity of women leaders and raising public awareness of the importance of women's social and political participation in modern democracies.
- **Missing Resources for civil society organizations:** Due to the financial downturn, civil society organizations must play a diminished role; that is, unless governments and political parties renew their commitment to women's rights and gender equality and recognize the vital importance of civil society organizations for democratic governance.



- The media influence public opinion: Better coverage of women in politics is critical to improving women's election chances.
- The media give women in politics important opportunities to promote their electoral programmes and present their candidacies. Currently, media time is given disproportionately to men. This needs to be changed to give women candidates greater exposure to the public.
- The media are able to challenge and change gender stereotypes: Media campaigns have proven vital in reversing traditional stereotypes of women and men, as well as reducing sexist images of women.
- The media can hold leaders accountable to women's economic, political and social rights. The media have played a vital role, especially when working in partnership with civil society organizations to hold governments and political parties accountable to put in place a gender-equality agenda.

# III. Recommended Measures for Enhanced Gender Equality and Women's Political Participation:

This section presents a set of measures to promote gender equality and women's political participation with a detailed list of recommendations for governments, legislators, parliamentarians, political parties, civil society organizations, media, the private sector and trade unions in the following areas:

- legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation;
- mechanisms and strategies to promote women's political participation;
- partnerships for women's political participation: civil society organizations and the media.

The recommendations aim to address the barriers that prevent women from participating in politics and to create an enabling environment for women to take part in political life at all levels, specifically to: 1) increase women's participation and representation in politics; 2) help women to become effective political actors; 3) maximize governmental accountability to women; and 4) mainstream governance, gender and social inclusion into all governmental policies.

In the tables below 'Civil Society Organizations' implies all non-governmental organizations including those exclusively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

## III.1. Recommendations for Legal and Institutional Frameworks to Promote Women's Political Participation

Though laws and institutions promoting gender equality have been established, more work needs to be done to put them into practice. In order to overcome gender stereotypes and to counter overt and subtle forms of discrimination, gender equality laws and their implementation require greater support. To increase women's political participation, an enabling environment must be created. Government must be accountable to national gender equality legislation, which requires oversight by civil society organizations. Women's political participation has to be founded on strong laws and institutions, where gender equality laws are in harmony with election laws, and resources are available and results monitored so that policies that promote women in politics are implemented effectively.

Temporary special measures (such as quotas) and certain types of electoral systems (such as proportional representation) can rectify imbalances in political representation. Electoral reforms can make it easier for women to participate in political processes. In addition, political parties need to promote equal representation and participation of women in their governing bodies in order to enable women to contribute meaningfully to political processes.

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
<b>1. Research and Analysis of Successful Practices for Replication</b>	
Build (or contribute to existing) databases in the region capturing gender equality laws, best practices on implementation and relevant knowledge products (e.g. www.iknowpolitics.org).	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
Analyse examples of innovative legislation on gender equality in the region to promote gender equality and democratic participation of women.	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
Identify obstacles that have been encountered in adopting and implementing gender equality legislation.	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
<b>2. Formulation of Gender Equality Legislation</b>	
Make the drafting process participatory and inclusive by involving experts from academia, civil society, the private sector and trade unions.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Trade Unions</i>
Make the drafting process adhere to international and European standards and adapt different successful models of legislation to the specific local context.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Trade Unions</i>
Formulate GEL to serve as an overarching binding framework to encompass all spheres of life.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Trade Unions</i>
Modify all relevant laws to include specific gender equality provisions (gender mainstreaming) in areas such as employment, education, family, information and communication technologies, media, election and political parties, finance, environment, industry etc.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Trade Unions, Media</i>
Put gender equality laws into practice at all levels.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Trade Unions</i>
Consider the inclusion of affirmative action provisions in GEL (see below), Election Laws and Political Party Laws.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Within GEL, provide protection from violence against women in public life.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>3. Harmonization with International Standards</b>	
Harmonize national laws in accordance with international standards promoting and advancing gender equality, and implement the recommendations from International Human Rights Treaty Bodies including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Make explicit reference to gender equality requirements in the process of EU accession, and institute monitoring and accountability mechanisms for their implementation.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>4. Accountability of Governments to Promote Gender Equality</b>	
Assign adequate authority to national gender equality machineries to effectively monitor and implement national gender equality commitments.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Institutionalize procedures for monitoring, reporting and disseminating reports on progress in implementing the recommendations of the International Human Rights Treaty Bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
Establish gender equality commissions in parliament to monitor gender equality achievements including gender parity within the executive, legislative and judicial branches.	<i>Parliamentarians, Governments, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>5. Temporary Special Measures to Promote Women's Political Participation</b>	
Adopt and implement temporary special measures to promote women's political participation. <sup>72</sup>	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Implement supportive activities to strengthen the understanding of temporary special measures such as quotas as an integral part of efforts to achieve gender equality and democratic governance.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Media</i>
Implement corrective measures in cases where temporary special measures are not enforced.	<i>Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>6. Engendering Political Parties</b>	
Promote equal representation and participation of women in the governing bodies of political parties.	<i>Political Parties, Governments, Legislators, Parliamentarians</i>

Ending violence against women needs to continue to be a major goal for the region, not only as a basic human right but also as a prerequisite for improving women's chances to enter politics. It is an important rallying and mobilizing agenda for women to enter into public forums, as it empowers them to advocate that the government put in place the institutions and frameworks that can overcome violence against women in political life and beyond. It is important for all parties to work systematically to fight against discrimination in all forms.

### III.2. Recommendations for Mechanisms and Strategies to Promote Women's Political Participation

The region needs to build a political culture that responds better to gender issues, particularly during election campaigns, to promote women alongside men candidates. Quotas and other tempo-

rary special measures can increase the number of women in politics. Key to this is to ensure that party lists respect the quota systems, place women high on party lists and in responsible positions along with an active recruitment system for women. Equality plans, mentoring and targeted training have also proven to be effective strategies for enhancing women's political participation. In order for quotas and other special measures to be effective, thorough monitoring is needed.

Women's party sections can influence party platforms and policies, and can galvanize women's political participation. Alliances across party lines have proven to be an important strategy to build a culture of gender equality in political life. Engaging men as advocates and allies can strengthen efforts to promote women's political participation.

To raise the status of women in political parties, women candidates need greater access to funding, media and support to promote their candidacies. In order for women candidates to raise money, they

<sup>72</sup> See also *UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, General Recommendation No 25 on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on Temporary Special Measures. [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20(English).pdf).

need to overcome barriers such as closed political cultures and the socialization of women not to ask for money. To overcome this situation measures are needed such as:

- support training for women on how to access public funds;
- establish party trusts for women candidates;
- change election laws so that candidates can claim tax exemptions for campaign expenses;
- introduce tax deductions for campaign contributions;
- guarantee equitable access to public broadcasters;
- ensure equitable allocation of public funding within political parties;

- enact spending limits for election campaigns;
- eliminate registration fees for political candidates;
- introduce incentives for political parties to nominate more women.

In addition, measures and policies to promote a work/life balance are needed to create an enabling environment for women to engage in politics: This includes adequate policies and laws that promote equal sharing of family responsibilities, affordable policies including child-care facilities, tax-incentives, financial allowances, flexible work arrangements, and parental leave, tailored to the personal and professional needs of women to enable them to be more active in political life.

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
<b>1. Promotion &amp; Strengthening of Temporary Special Measures within Political Parties &amp; Parliament</b>	
Advocate for the enactment of quotas in political parties & parliament, building on the good practices from different electoral systems.	<i>Civil Society Organizations</i>
Encourage political parties to introduce voluntary quotas in their candidate lists to increase the number of women in parliament.	<i>Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Advocate for the inclusion of a gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in party platforms and structures (e.g. by sharing experiences when parties have introduced gender equality strategies or established women's party sections).	<i>Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>
Encourage political parties to promote women to governing bodies within party structures.	<i>Political Parties, Governments</i>
<b>2. Promotion of Gender Equality in Governmental Bodies &amp; Public Institutions</b>	
Ensure gender balance at all levels in the management of state and public institutions, including politically appointed posts.	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>
Introduce gender equality strategies or action plans in state and public institutions to ensure a gender equality agenda is integrated in the work of state and public institutions.	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>
Include a gender module in trainings for civil servants as well as integrate a gender perspective into general training programmes.	<i>Governments, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>3. Capacity Development for Women's Political Participation</b>	
Develop the capacities of women to be effective in their political roles and to overcome gender-based barriers and obstacles in taking up political leadership.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>
Empower women to bring their voices and concerns to political decision-making processes.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions</i>

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
Ensure that women in political roles mentor newly elected and appointed women.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties</i>
Build the leadership skills of a new generation of women aspiring to enter politics and public offices and provide them with networking opportunities.	<i>Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Youth Organizations</i>
Reach out to marginalized women by including rural women, minorities and refugees in leadership skills development initiatives.	<i>Political Parties Civil Society Organizations, Youth Organizations</i>
Develop skills of women in politics to promote a gender-responsive agenda	<i>Civil Society Organizations, Political Parties</i>
Develop the capacities of governments, parliaments, both at the central and local level, to promote the importance of involving more women in policy decisions.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Develop the capacities of state and public institutions both at the central and local levels to design and implement gender-responsive policies and service deliveries.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>4. Build on Capacities &amp; Knowledge Available Within the Women's Movement</b>	
Mobilize and capitalize on knowledge and capacity available within civil society organizations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and to nurture a new generation of women leaders.	<i>Civil Society Organizations, Governments, Political Parties</i>
Encourage political parties to cooperate with women's organizations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the political arena.	<i>Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
<b>5. Advocacy &amp; Awareness Raising</b>	
Raise awareness of the importance of women's political participation as well as of the barriers and obstacles women face in public life.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Media</i>
Disseminate international and national commitments and agreements on gender equality, including national gender equality laws, CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action & the MDGs.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Make available the latest information on how a given country complies with its international obligations, such as with CEDAW and from the Council of Europe and the European Union.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Parliaments</i>
Increase the understanding of the public on the obstacles and barriers that women face in the political arena, including violent and discriminatory practices against women in politics.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Promote civic education for women and men as well as for boys and girls, to increase their understanding of the importance of women's political participation, ensuring the involvement of marginalized women, including rural women, minorities and refugees.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
Organize parliamentary hearings on gender issues to increase the understanding of strategies and mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
<b>6. Provision of Adequate Financial Resources</b>	
Provide adequate and sustainable financial resources to national programmes and action plans promoting gender equality and women's empowerment with earmarked and secured funds for implementation.	<i>Governments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
Provide adequate and sustainable financial resources to the national machineries for gender equality and women's empowerment with a view to supporting policy measures to promote gender equality and women's political participation.	<i>Governments</i>
Allocate financial resources to civil society partners for building platforms for greater political participation of women.	<i>Governments</i>
Implement gender-responsive budgets to track and identify the effectiveness of national financial planning to contribute to women's political participation.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Provide financial resources to support women's alliances across party lines to join forces to implement a gender equality agenda.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties</i>
Establish mechanisms for public funding of electoral campaigns, including incentives for parties to put forward and fund women candidates.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties</i>
Allocate adequate resources to finance women candidates to ensure gender-balanced representation in elections.	<i>Political Parties</i>
Ensure fair and equal financial support to elected women and men in order to ensure their meaningful contribution to political decision-making.	<i>Political Parties</i>
Provide funding to support the capacity development of women and men in parliament, government and state and public institutions to implement a gender equality agenda.	<i>Governments, Parliaments</i>
<b>7. Support Work/Life Balance of Men and Women in Political &amp; Public Offices</b>	
Review existing laws, policy measures and practices to identify their impact on the division of responsibilities in family life.	<i>Governments, Parliaments</i>
Implement laws and policies that promote equal sharing of family responsibilities of men and women in all sectors (including financial incentives for men to take greater responsibility in family life).	<i>Governments, Parliaments</i>
Design and provide appropriate care facilities and services to support men and women in political and public offices to fulfil their family responsibilities.	<i>Governments, Parliaments</i>
Promote working hours that are conducive to a work/life balance which allows women and men to contribute equally to decision-making processes.	<i>Governments, Parliaments</i>
<b>8. Research to Support Promotion / Implementation of Mechanisms &amp; Strategies</b>	
Collect, compile and disseminate sex-disaggregated statistics and gender information related to women's political participation in national and local governments, parliaments and political parties.	<i>Academia, Governments, Parliaments, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Identify and make public the factors hindering greater participation of women in politics.	<i>Academia, Civil Society Organizations, Governments, Parliaments</i>
Build an evidence base showing the benefits of women's greater political participation in all sectors including economic planning, health, education and security.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Academia, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Develop and use appropriate indicators to measure progress on achieving gender equity goals in the area of women's political participation.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Academia, Civil Society Organizations</i>

### III.3. Recommendations for Partnerships for Women's Political Participation: Civil Society Organizations and the Media

As outlined in the previous sections, legal and institutional frameworks as well as mechanisms and strategies to enhance women's political participation have been introduced across the region. However, effective implementation remains a major challenge. In order to overcome this persistent gap between commitments and *de facto* equality, partnerships play an important role, being driving forces for mobilizing for further change. In the ECIS region, the promotion of equality between women and men in decision-making processes still requires stronger partnerships. Such partnerships can enhance knowledge sharing and effective joint planning among women in parliament, government, political and public offices and representatives of civil society organizations working for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Alliances and networking for women's political participation can provide solidarity and knowl-

edge and at the same time allow for accountability and a 'reality check' to promote gender-responsive change. Strengthening existing networks of women's politicians, civil society organizations, media and academia through exchange and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned is critical.

A key strategy to raise awareness, end stereotypes, and change cultural attitudes against women in political life is to partner with the media. The media can shape public perceptions of gender equality and women's political participation. The media can raise the profile of gender issues, clearly explain gender-related problems in relation to social reforms, highlight positive examples of women's leadership, and promote the benefits of equality legislation and more balanced and representative governance. The media can also provide a platform for women to promote their election campaigns in front of the public.

Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
<b>1. Promote National Multi-stakeholder Dialogue &amp; Participatory Decision-Making</b>	
Establish and strengthen women's alliances across party lines to join forces to lead a gender equality agenda.	<i>Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Promote inclusive governance and involve civil society organizations in decision-making processes to incorporate women's concerns and needs in policy formulation and implementation.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Support knowledge sharing and joint planning at national and local levels among women in parliament, government, political and public offices and representatives of civil society organizations working for gender equality and women's empowerment.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Provide a platform at the local level to hold a regular dialogue on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment between elected representatives and the general public.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Identify women and men gender champions and support their engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to implement a gender-equality agenda.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>



Recommendations	Key Actors & Partners
<b>2. Promote Regional Networking to Build on the Region's Best Practices</b>	
Strengthen existing networks of women's politicians, civil society organizations, media and academia to enhance women's political participation through the exchange of lessons learned and best practices.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Media, Academia</i>
Provide opportunities for experience sharing and networking among women leaders across the region as well as among international and regional gender experts.	<i>Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, Media, Academia</i>
Support capacity development of civil society organizations working for gender equality to communicate and present gender issues more effectively through innovative and creative communication strategies, including the use of new technologies.	<i>Civil Society Organizations, Media</i>
<b>3. Strengthen Partnerships with the Media</b>	
Increase the time the media cover women politicians, highlighting their political achievements.	<i>Civil Society Organizations, Media</i>
Ensure equal representation of women and men political leaders in the policy debates that are featured in the media.	<i>Media, Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Promote higher visibility of women involved in political processes as voters, commissioners and candidates at local and national levels.	<i>Media, Civil Society Organizations, Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties</i>
Portray women in political and public offices focusing on their qualifications and political achievements as policy makers instead of perpetuating gender stereotypes.	<i>Media, Political Parties, Governments, Parliaments, Civil Society Organizations</i>
Challenge negative or stereotypical images of women as policy makers in the media.	<i>Media, Political Parties, Governments, Parliaments, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
Organize media campaigns to raise awareness about discrimination against women in politics.	<i>Media, Political Parties, Governments, Parliaments, Civil Society Organizations, Academia</i>
Promote the use of multimedia campaigns to enhance transparency, inclusiveness and accountability when pursuing the equal participation of women in politics.	<i>Civil Society Organizations, Media, Political Parties, Governments, Parliaments, Academia</i>

# IV. Resources

This section provides a list of resources and links to online UNDP and other UN publications, together with an annotated guide to websites of government and civil society organization working on women's political participation in the region and globally.

## 1. BACKGROUND PAPERS

**Six Country Reports** based on UNDP Roundtables on Women and Governance in the ECIS held from September to December 2008<sup>73</sup> (unpublished).

1. Jasminka Dzumhur. *Regional Report on Women and Governance: Political Participation of Women and Women's Leadership in the ECIS region: Report country - Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo, November 2008.
2. Medea Badashvili. *Country Report on Women and Governance: Political Participation of Women and Women's Leadership in Georgia*. Tbilisi, December 2008.
3. Anara Moldosheva. *Kyrgyzstan National Report on Women & Governance*. Bishkek, November 2008.
4. Małgorzata Fuszara. *Regional Report on Women and Governance: Political Participation of Women and Women's Leadership in Poland*. Warsaw, November 2008.
5. KADER. *Women's Political Participation and their Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.* Ankara, October 2008.
6. Kateryna Levchenko. *Women and Management: Participation in Political Processes and Women's Leadership (Ukraine)*. Kiev, December 2008.

## 2. GLOBAL RESOURCES

### 2a) UN Promoting Women's Political Participation:

United Nations Development Programme. *Empowered and Equal: Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011*. New York: UNDP, 2008.

Link: <http://www.undp.org/women/docs/Gender-Equality-Strategy-2008-2011.pdf>

United Nations Development Programme. *Measuring Democratic Governance: A Framework for Selecting Pro-poor and Gender Sensitive Indicators*. New York: UNDP, 2006.

Link: <http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs06/Framework%20paper%20-%20entire%20paper.pdf>

United Nations Development Fund for Women. *Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009, Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability 2008*. New York: UNIFEM, 2008.

Link: [http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/media/POWW08\\_Report\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/media/POWW08_Report_Full_Text.pdf)

United Nations Development Programme. *Primers in Gender & Democratic Governance*. New York, UNDP: 2007

# 1 *Quick Entry Points to Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Democratic Governance Clusters*

# 2 *Gender Equality and Justice Programming: Equitable Access to Justice for Women*

# 3 *Electoral Financing to Advance Women's Political Participation: A Guide for UNDP Support*.

<sup>73</sup> Roundtables link: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/regionalprogramming/show/DCA3E0CF-F203-1EE9-BF59DF40A4F1F4DC>.

# 4 *Gender Responsive E-governance: Exploring the Transformative Potential*

Link: <http://www.undp.org/women/publications.shtml>

## 2b) Databases

**Legislationline.org** developed by OSCE, provides direct access to international norms and standards relating to specific human dimension issues as well as to domestic legislation and other documents of relevance to these issues in the Europe and CIS region. One of the selected topics focuses on gender equality covering issues such as public affairs, education and development, employment, family, reproductive rights and access to healthcare system as well as violence against women. Data and information are intended to help lawmakers across the Europe and CIS region.

Links: [www.legislationline.org](http://www.legislationline.org), gender topic: [www.legislationline.org/topics/topic/7](http://www.legislationline.org/topics/topic/7)

**Global Database of Quotas for Women:** This database is intended as a working research tool. It provides information on the various types of quotas in existence today, detailing the percentages and targets in countries where they are applicable. The database represents a joint project of International IDEA and Stockholm University.

Link: [www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)

**United Nations Data Portal:** This is an internet-based data service that brings together UN statistical databases within easy reach of users through a single entry point from which users can search and download a variety of statistical resources of the UN System. It includes specific statistics on women & men, as well as data on Millennium Development Goals indicators. It is conducted by the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

Link: <http://data.un.org/>

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Gender Statistics Database (UNECE):**

The UNECE GSD comprises mostly of data supplied by National Statistical Offices through the network of Gender Statistics Focal Points. The Gender Statistics Website of UNECE offers also information on policies and training materials, use surveys, violence against women surveys etc.

Link: <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/database.htm>

**OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID-DB):** GID-DB offers researchers and policy makers a tool to determine and analyse obstacles to women's economic development. It covers a total of 160 countries and comprises an array of 60 indicators on gender discrimination. The database is compiled from various sources and combines in a systematic and coherent fashion the current empirical evidence that exists on the socio-economic status of women.

Link: [http://www.oecd.org/document/16/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33731\\_39323280\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/16/0,3343,en_2649_33731_39323280_1_1_1_1,00.html)

**Millennium Development Goals Indicators:** UN portal presenting the official data, definitions, methodologies and sources for more than 60 indicators to measure progress towards the MDGs. The data and analyses are the product of the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG Indicators, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division. It also provides the official progress reports and documents produced by IAEG.

Link: <http://millenniumindicators.un.org>

**Millennium Development Goals Monitor:** UN portal designed as a one-stop-shop for information on progress towards the MDGs, globally and at the country level. It is intended as a tool for policymakers, development practitioners and others interested in MDGs and tracking progress towards them. It enables one to track progress through interactive maps and country-specific profiles, as well as to learn about countries' challenges and achievements.

Link: <http://www.mdgmonitor.org>

**Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership:** Overviews of female Heads of State listed by country, a chronological list of Women in Power from B.C. 3000, female Prime Ministers, Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Defence and Ministers by country, female Chairpersons of Parliament, female Governors, Premiers and local Leaders by country, female Party Leaders for each country, a chronological list of female Presidential Candidates, Ambassadors to the United Nations and first female ambassadors for each country, lists of women's ordination to priesthood and female bishops etc.  
Link: [www.guide2womenleaders.com](http://www.guide2womenleaders.com)

**World Bank Atlas of the Millennium Development Goals:** The Online Atlas of the MDGs offers innovative visualization of the Millennium Development Goals that complements the World Bank's MDG website. It enables one to explore maps of key indicators for each of the eight MDGs, resize countries to reflect comparative values, zoom in on countries and pull up quick tables of supporting indicators.  
Link: <http://devdata.worldbank.org/atlas-mdg/>

**European Commission. Women and men in decision-making Database:** The EC database of numbers and percentage of women and men in decision-making positions in each of the three domains (political, public & juridical, and social & economical domain) at the EU level, national level and regional level. The third domain covers the largest publicly quoted companies, central banks, European financial institutions, European social partner organizations and European non-governmental organizations.  
Link: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/women\\_men\\_stats/measures\\_in4\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/measures_in4_en.htm)

### 3. REGIONAL RESOURCES

United Nations Development Programme. *Gender in Transition*, Development and Transition Newsletter, Issue Number 08/2007. Bratislava, UNDP & the London School of Economics, 2007.  
Link: [www.developmentandtransition.net](http://www.developmentandtransition.net)

#### 3a) Gender Equality Legislation

United Nations Development Programme. *Drafting Gender - Aware Legislation: How to Promote and Protect Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Bratislava: UNDP RC CEE & CIS, 2006  
Link: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/show/62D2D358-F203-1EE9-B0BB182FBC07C8CA>

#### 3b) UNDP National Human Development Reports from the Region

United Nations Development Programme. *Regional Cooperation*. UNDP Serbia, 2008.  
Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/serbia/name,13959,en.html>

United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Attitudes in Azerbaijan. Trends and Challenges*. UNDP Azerbaijan, 2007.  
Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/azerbaijan/name,3325,en.html>

United Nations Development Programme. *Pro-Poor and Pro-Women Policies Operationalizing the MDGs in Albania*. UNDP Albania, 2005.  
Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/albania/name,3220,en.html>

United Nations Development Programme. *Women and Men in Romania: 2000*. UNDP Romania, 2000.  
Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/romania/name,2904,en.html>

United Nations Development Programme. *Poverty, Social Exclusion and Marginalization*. UNDP Slovak Republic, 2000.

Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/slovakia/name,2918,en.html>

### 3c) Reports and Studies on Women's Political Participation from the Region

European Commission. *Women in European Politics – Time for Action*. European Commission, 2009.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2052&langId=en>

European Commission. *Report on Equality between Women and Men 2009*. European Commission, 2009.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2323&langId=en>

European Commission. *Report on Equality between Women and Men 2008*. European Commission, 2008.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2033&langId=en>

Stina Larserud & Rita Taphorn. *Designing for Equality: Best-fit, Medium-fit and Non-favourable Combinations of Electoral Systems and Gender Quotas*. IDEA, 2007.

Link: [http://www.idea.int/publications/designing\\_for\\_equality/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/designing_for_equality/index.cfm)

European Commission. *Women and Men in Decision-making, Analysis of the Situation and Trends*, 2007. European Commission, 2008.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2034&langId=en>

Julie Ballington and Francesca Binda (eds). *The Implementation of Quotas: European Experiences*. IDEA, 2005.

Link: [http://www.idea.int/publications/quotas\\_europe/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/quotas_europe/index.cfm)

### 3d) Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in the Region

European Commission. *A Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men 2006-2010*. European Commission, 2006.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1987&langId=en>

### 3e) Good Practices

European Commission. *Decision-making: Exchange of Good Practices*. European Commission, 2007.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2389&langId=en>

European Commission. *Reconciliation of Professional and Private Life: Exchange of Good Practices*. European Commission, 2007.

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2011&langId=en>

## 4. NETWORK AND PORTALS

**The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics)** A joint project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). Its goal is to increase the participation and effectiveness of women in political life by utilizing a technology-enabled forum that offers users an opportunity to access resources as well as the expertise of other users, experts and practitioners; to create knowledge through mediated discussion forums, information exchange and consolidated expert responses to member queries; and to

share experiences by using various tools designed to facilitate the exchange of lessons learned and best practices.

Link: <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/>

**Interparliamentary Union (IPU):** The International Organization of Parliaments of Sovereign States. It was established in 1889. The Union is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy.

Link: <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

**The International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)** established in 1985, aims to promote recognition of women's human rights under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). IWRAP operates as an international resource and communications centre that serves activists, scholars, and organizations throughout the world, with a special focus on publicizing and monitoring implementation of the CEDAW Convention, including support provided to organizations compiling Shadow Reports to governments' CEDAW Reports.

Link: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/iwraw/>

**The European Women's Women Lobby (EWL):** The EWL is the largest umbrella organizations of women's associations in the European Union. EWL works mainly with the institutions of the European Union: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EU Council of Ministers. EWL focuses on promoting women's rights and equality between women and men in the EU, covering areas such as women's economic and social position, women in decision-making, violence against women, women's diversity, etc.

Link: <http://www.womenlobby.org/site/hp.asp?langue=EN>

**Central and Eastern Network for Gender Issues (CEE Network)** was established under the auspices of the European Forum for Democracy and

Solidarity (Regional NGO initiated by the Party of European Socialists – PES) in 1994. Formalized into an international network in 1998, it aims to assist social democratic, socialist, labour and other parties, civil society organizations and progressive women's NGOs in policy design, capacity building and promoting of national awareness on gender equality and women's political participation.

Link: [http://www.europeanforum.net/gender\\_network/cee\\_network\\_for\\_gender\\_issues](http://www.europeanforum.net/gender_network/cee_network_for_gender_issues)

**Gender informational Network of South Caucasus:** This portal offers information about organizations working on gender issues and women's rights in the South Caucasus.

Link: <http://www.ginsc.net>

**The Network of East-West Women (NEWW):** NEWW is an international communication and resource network supporting dialogue, informational exchange, and activism among those concerned about the status of women in Central and Eastern Europe, the Newly Independent States, and the Russian Federation. NEWW coordinates research and advocacy that supports women's equality and full participation in all aspects of public and private life. NEWW is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. With members in more than 30 countries NEWW is among the largest networks in CEE/NIS, and is a trusted source of expertise, resources and information about gender in democratizing societies.

Link: <http://www.neww.org>

**Gender Task Force (GTF)** is a South East European regional initiative born out of an Appeal sent to the participants of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe Summit in Sarajevo, July 1999. The Appeal called for an equal and active role for women in the development and implementation of the South-east European Region's stabilization and democratization processes. GTF is supported by 150 prominent Southeast European women, NGOs,

government actors and political activists from Southeast Europe as well as numerous supporters from outside the region. GTF's mission is to advance gender-balanced participation in developing stable, prosperous and democratic societies in Southeast Europe. It brings the important experiences of women cooperating across party lines, and across ethnic and state borders, the experience of cooperation between NGOs, parliaments and governments, the experience of women monitoring elections from a gender perspective and the experience of grassroots and mass media campaigning, consensus-building, advocacy and social dialogue.

Link: [www.gtf.hr](http://www.gtf.hr)

**Stop Violence Against Women (STOPVAW):** A website forum developed by the Advocates for Human Rights as a tool for the promotion of women's human rights in the countries of ECIS. This forum for information, advocacy and change was developed with support from UNIFEM and OSI's Network Women's Programme. It addresses violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights abuses worldwide and provides women's rights advocates with information and advocacy tools focused on ending the most endemic forms of violence against women in the region, including domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and trafficking in women.

Link: [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org)

## 5. UN AGENCIES

**UN Women Watch:** The central gateway to information and resources on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the United Nations system, including the United Nations Secretariat, regional commissions, funds, programmes, specialized agencies and academic and research institutions.

Link: [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

**Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW):** DAW advocates for the improvement of the status of women of the world, and the achievement of their equality with men – as equal actors, partners, and beneficiaries of sustainable development, human rights, peace and security. Together with governments, other entities of the United Nations system, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, DAW actively works to advance the global agenda on women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to ensure that women's voices are heard in international policy arenas.

Link: [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw)

**The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body established in 1946 that gathers representatives of Member States every year at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

Link: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** The body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Link: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/>

**UN Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)** is headed by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and comprises a Principal Social Affairs Office in charge of Gender Mainstreaming and the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat. This Office was created in 1997. Its mission is to promote and strengthen the effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Beijing

Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and the Outcome Document of the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5.

Link: [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi)

***The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*** provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. UNIFEM has been also producing valuable reports and policy guides focusing among others on issues of violence against women and gender responsive budgeting.

Links: [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

[www.unifem.sk](http://www.unifem.sk) (Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe)

[www.unifemcis.org](http://www.unifemcis.org) (Regional Office for Commonwealth of Independent States)



*This Policy Note presents a set of pragmatic recommendations that will enable policy makers to enhance women's political participation in the region. These measures are the product of six national roundtable discussions organized in 2008 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine) as well as a regional conference in Turkey in December 2008. This Policy Note also presents the current status of, and opportunities for, women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes in the region. Based on the evidence and regional data collected and analysed, this Policy Note is for parliamentarians, government officials, legislators, political party members, civil society organizations working on enhancing women's political participation and media with the recommended policy and action options in the following three areas:*

- *Legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation;*
- *Mechanisms and strategies to promote women's political participation; and*
- *Partnerships for women's political participation: civil society organizations and the media.*



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