

# Gender-sensitive Parliaments

## Area 1: Women and men have equal opportunities to ENTER the parliament

### Electoral system and gender quotas

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#### From neutral to gendered citizenship – France: Constitutional law on equality between women and men

The constitutional law of 8 July 1999 on equality between women and men authorises legislators to take affirmative action, but remains within the bounds of constitutionality. It complements Article 3 of the constitution (on the indivisibility of sovereignty) with the following item: ‘The law favours equal access of women and men to electoral mandates and elective positions.’ It then stipulates (in Article 4) that political parties ‘contribute to the implementation [of this principle] under the conditions set by the law’. This minimalist reform merely asserts that formal equality must be implemented in practice, but it is fundamental because by redefining the sovereign people it marks a break from the symbolic order from which it arises. In place of the old order, based on ‘neutral citizenship’ and the ‘oneness’ of a society made up of individuals, parity brings in a bi-gendered, dual order.

Source: International Institute for Democracy Electoral Assistance – IDEA (2005), Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers: A Revised Edition, International IDEA Handbook Series, Stockholm.

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#### Electoral gender quotas – Spain: Quotas that work

In 2007, Spain adopted a law that obliges political parties to ensure that women make up at least 40 % of every list for each election. Two features are crucial to the effectiveness of this law: effective sanctions – non-compliant lists are disallowed – and the fact that the 40 % quota applies not only to the list as a whole, but also to each group of five candidates (this prevents women being systematically allocated unwinnable places at the bottom of the list). The law has led to a steady increase in the number of women elected.

Source: [EIGE's collection of good practices on gender mainstreaming \(political decision-making\)](#)

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### **Electoral gender quotas – Belgium: Flemish Parliament after 2014 elections**

Following the elections of May 2014, the administration of the Flemish Parliament processed data following the methodology developed by academic experts in previous elections. The report aims to show the positive impact of electoral gender quotas.

Source: [www.agora-parl.org](http://www.agora-parl.org)

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### **Gender auditing of political parties – Armenia, Georgia and Tajikistan: ODHIR pilot project on strengthening women's participation in political parties**

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (ODHIR/OSCE) piloted a self-assessment methodology to determine the level of gender equality in key internal party processes, procedures, structures and policies. In 2013–2014, 14 individual party gender audits were produced, half of which were followed by a party Gender Action Plan.

Source: [OSCE/ODIHR \(2014\). Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties](#)

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### **Labour Party – Malta (Nisa Laburisti): A strategy to increase women's political representation**

The Maltese Labour Party has been implementing a set of integrated actions focusing on women's representation since 1995, such as electoral and executive committee quotas, bringing men into the women's section, raising awareness on gender issues, and capacity development for women.

Source: [EIGE's collection of good practices on gender mainstreaming \(political decision-making\)](#)

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## Conservative Party – UK: Nominating women candidates in winnable seats

In 2005 the Conservative Party launched the Women2Win programme by campaigning for more women to win nominations for winnable and Conservative-held seats. The programme played an active role in recruiting new women members and providing them with the training, mentoring and support they needed to succeed within the party. Furthermore, new candidate selection procedures were announced, designed to increase the number of women and ethnic minority Conservative legislators. They included the introduction of a Priority List of the ‘brightest and best’ candidates, at least half of whom should be women and 10 % ethnic minorities.

Source: [UNDP \(2012\), Empowering women for stronger political parties: A guidebook to promote women’s political participation](#)

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## Further reading on electoral gender quotas and equal participation

[The Quota Project website](#)

[International Institute for Democracy Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\) – Electoral system design database](#)

IDEA, 2007. *Designing for equality: Best-fit, medium-fit and non-favourable combinations of electoral systems and gender quotas*, International IDEA Publications, Stockholm.

[OSCE 2014. Handbook on promoting women’s participation in political parties](#)

[UNDP 2012. Empowering women for stronger political parties: A guidebook to promote women’s political participation.](#)

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## Active support for equal political participation of women and men

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### Helen Weber Kolleg – Germany: Women Power Politics

Born from a local initiative in Berlin, the Helen Weber Kolleg mobilises women across the country to stand for elections in their cities and is supported by the Federal Government (Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth). It includes an award for female politicians, a mentoring program and local activities by award winners.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming](#) (political decision-making)

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### **Women can do it! – Portugal: a toolkit, training and awareness campaign**

In 2008, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality launched a toolkit and training events across the country to support active involvement of women in politics. Education material for young girls and boys was also provided, together with an awareness raising campaign.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming](#) (political decision-making)

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### **National Women's Council of Ireland – Grassroots campaign for the equal representation of women in politics**

The National Women's Council of Ireland has been conducting an awareness raising campaign aiming to change policy – including 30% gender quotas – and empowering women to play an active role in politics.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming \(political decision making\)](#)

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### **Network of Young People for Gender Equality – Portugal: From women to women, 2nd edition**

Mentoring and competence development program for young women - including women from ethnic minorities - to participate in politics. The program also included social transformation projects, working with youth from political parties and from minority groups on women's underrepresentation and tackling gender stereotypes.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming \(political decision-making\)](#)

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### **Fórum 50% - Czech Republic: Female politicians learn from international experience**

The NGO Fórum 50% implemented a mentoring program for Czech female politicians - by associating them with successful Danish and Norwegian women politicians – and short courses for EU parliaments women candidates.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming](#) (political decision-making)

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### **CESI campaign – Croatia: Political parties in the pillory**

The feminist organisation CESI ran a campaign naming and shaming political parties persisting in ignoring equality legislation that forces parties to include at least 40% female candidates in their lists.

Source: [EIGE's collection on good practices on gender mainstreaming](#) (political decision-making)

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