

Gender-sensitive Parliaments

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

Electoral system and gender quotas

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.

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 disqualified – and the fact that the

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](#)

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.](#)

Active support for equal political participation of women and men

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)

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)

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 \(political decision making\)](#)

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 \(political decision-making\)](#)

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)

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)
