

Gender-sensitive Parliaments

Domain 2 - Political party/group procedures

This domain refers to gender mainstreaming measures within political parties that have seats in the parliament. The internal organisation and procedures of a gender-sensitive party allow the implementation of rules to assure a gender-balanced representation in the party. Data from the EU Member States show that women are under-represented as *leaders and deputy leaders of major political parties*. Visit EIGE's database on '[Women and Men in Decision-Making](#)' (WMID) to learn more about women and men in leadership positions in political institutions at European, national, regional and local level.

Some possible measures include explicitly addressing gender equality in party rules, establishing gender quotas for decision-making roles, and the existence of well-functioning forums for lobbying, advocacy and discussion, such as women's wings and/or committees. The party may also ensure substantive parity in activities between women and men, e.g. numbers of women and men speakers at conventions and other events, equal chairing of public and/or televised meetings, as well as parity among appointed members of key party committees and working groups (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics: 2009).

Read more about specific measures in the pre-electoral and post-electoral periods

Gender-sensitive political parties implement specific measures not only in the electoral phase, but also in the post-electoral period to assure gender-responsive governance within the party and the government (e.g. they support gender equality oversight of implemented legislation). In the pre-electoral period, a gender-sensitive political party addresses two critical issues:

- Recruitment and nomination of women candidates: recruiting women candidates can mean implementing specific measures to ensure the presence of women, such as candidate quotas, placement in winnable positions, and allocating funds for targeted training;
- Funding: gender-sensitive political parties may establish internal party funds for

women candidates and provide targeted subsidies.

Gender-sensitive political parties also implement specific measures in the post-electoral phase, in order to promote gender-responsive governance. Some examples of post-electoral procedures include undertaking a gender equality assessment, providing training to newly elected members in parliament, ensuring that gender mainstreaming is part of party policy, ensuring women's access to vacancies and retention initiatives, supporting cross-party networks of women's caucuses, sensitising party members on gender equality issues and working with men politicians on equality issues (UNDP and NDI: 2012).

Political parties that actively include women at every level and take their participation seriously can benefit from a wide range of positive political effects, such as stronger electoral positions, access to new groups of voters, and enhanced opportunities for cooperation with international party networks and foundations (OSCE: 2014). A number of case studies worldwide have shown that gender-sensitive reforms in political parties' internal organisation and procedures have increased their support base (McCann: 2013; EIGE's Good Practices for Spain: 2007-2015; Husted and Kenny:1997; Lizzeri and Persico: 2004).

The Gender-sensitive Parliaments Tool focuses on the parliament as an institution and thus includes only rather general measures of gender-sensitive procedures implemented at political party level. Individual parties differ substantially and single party assessments are recommended, both to gain a more detailed picture and to support gender-oriented institutional transformation. Specific research and tools are available to parties interested in assessing their level of gender-sensitivity, such as the OSCE-ODHIR methodology for [Gender Audit of political parties](#) and [Electoral Knowledge Network](#).