

THE EFFECT OF GENDER QUOTA ON THE ELECTIONS OF 2017

ANALYTICAL BRIEF



Government Offices of Sweden



This analytical brief was compiled based on the outcomes of monitoring women’s participation in elections. The monitoring was conducted within the framework of “Promoting women’s political participation in Armenia” project.

The Project is implemented by OxYGen Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights with partnership with the info-analytical portal WomenNet.am and Family Academy NGO with the financial support of Government Offices of Sweden.

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Contents:

1. The formulation of gender quota provision in the RA Electoral Code
2. Women candidates constituted 30% in the electoral lists of political parties
3. Women candidates were granted only the 9% of TV broadcast
4. Women in electoral committees
5. Women candidates presented according to their age and occupation
6. The representation of women in the RA National Assembly is 18%
7. Women constitute 23.4% on average in parliaments around the world
8. The “Women’s agenda” is topical and enforced
9. The district lists reduced the effectiveness of quotas
10. What were the main findings of the gender analysis of electoral programs of parties?
11. The gender quota had the best impact on the Council of Elders election in Yerevan
12. The fair governance principles of the city reflected in the electoral programs
13. Conclusion

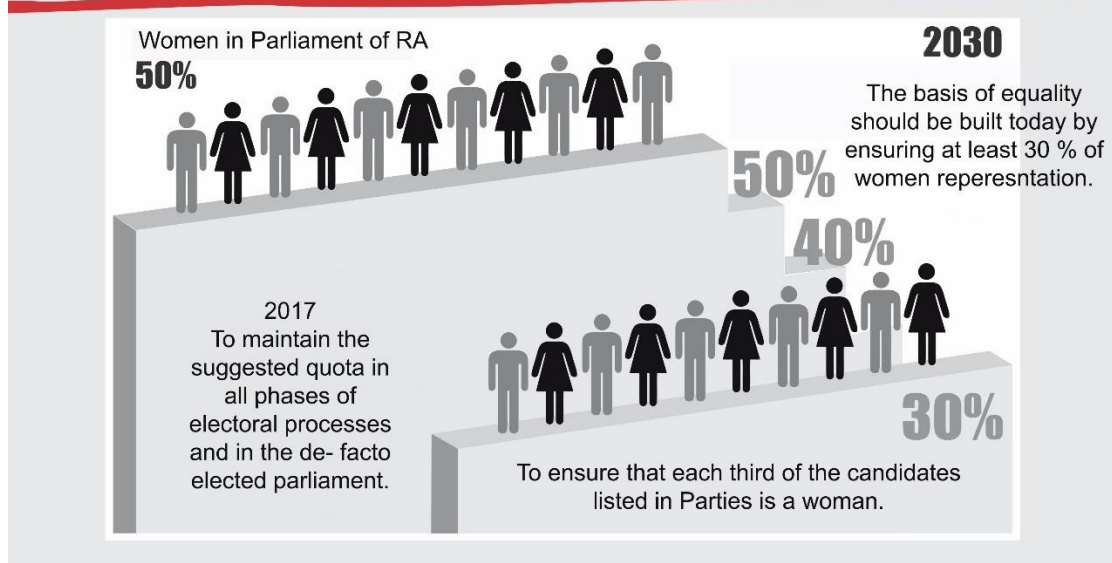
1. The formulation of gender quota provision in the RA Electoral Code

The RA Electoral Code (EC) provisions related to women's political participation anticipate the following:

- Provisions 83.4 and 83.10 anticipate the increase in the proportions of gender in the party lists up to 30/70 (this proportion is valid also for the district lists);
- Article 130.2 defines that the 30/70 proportion set for political party lists is also applicable to local self-government (LSG) elections held through proportional electoral system, i.e. Elders Council elections of Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor cities.
- Article 100.3 sets the following legal guarantee: “if rejecting a seat results in the decrease of number of representatives of either gender for a given party, particularly the decrease bringing the percentage below 25, then the seat is granted to the next candidate of the least represented gender”.
- Provisions 141.6 and 141.8 guarantee that factions that are established as a result of Elders Council elections in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor (conducted through proportional electoral system), should include representatives of both genders constituting not less than 25% each.

In the meantime, the afore-mentioned positive amendments reflected in the 14th, 15th and 16th provisions of Article 144, included in the transitional and concluding provisions, will enter into force in the elections of 2022. Until then, only the provision defining the 25/75 proportion will be enforced.

UN SDG GOALS AIMS TO ENSURE 50/50 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN ALL SPHERES BY 2030



The Gender Theme Group uniting more than 60 local and international organizations sent a letter to all National Assembly (NA) factions and to Standing Committees (dealing with legal and state affairs, human rights protection and European integration affairs) with the proposal of including in the NA agenda the issue of cancelling the 14th, 15th and 16th provisions of Article 144. That would create an opportunity of enforcement for the provisions of Articles [83.4](#), 100.3, 130.2, 141.6 and 141.8 right in the NA elections of 2017. The proposal was rejected.

The provision 14 of Article 144 in the “Transitional provisions” section of the current RA Electoral Code stipulates: “Before 1 January 2021 during elections of the National Assembly, the Councils of Elders of Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, in the first part of the national electoral list of a political party, alliance of political parties and each of the political parties included in the alliance, the number of representatives of each sex, starting from the 1st place on the list, must not exceed 75 per cent in each integer group of 4 (1-4, 1-8, 1-12 and subsequently up to the end of the list), and the number of representatives of each sex in the district electoral list of a political party (alliance of political parties) running in elections must not exceed 75 per cent”.

The Joint Opinions of OSCE/OIDHR and the Venice Commission published in 2016 highlight that in case of using district lists The RA Electoral Code does not actually guarantee the maintaining of gender equality in party lists in the de facto elected National Assembly. In addition, the Venice Commission in its Analytical Report of “Women’s representation in the electoral systems policy” (2009) had highlighted that the analysis of introducing “open” or free lists in various countries might result in the election of less women.

2. Women candidates constituted 30% in the electoral lists of political parties

Overall, 29,5% women candidates were represented in the national lists of 5 political parties and 4 political coalitions that ran for the election of April 2, 2017. In district lists women constituted 30,8 %. This means that postponing the application of 30/70 proportion was not justified since political parties were actually ready to include more women in their lists than required by the 25/75 proportion, as stipulated by the transitional provisions of the EC.

The political forces are not still prepared to concede more seats in the integer of the first five and ten candidates, by strictly adhering to the legal requirements. As analysis shows, they instead, replenish the integers of the last ten seats with women candidates by sometimes ensuring 100% representation of women in the lists.

Hence, we get the following overview:

- None of the political party lists running for the election was headed by women.
- Women were absent in the second seats in the lists as well.

- Three political parties included women in the third seats of their lists; the others had women starting from the fourth seats.
- Almost all political parties included two women in the integer of the first ten seats of the lists. Only one political party had three women in the integer of the first ten seats.

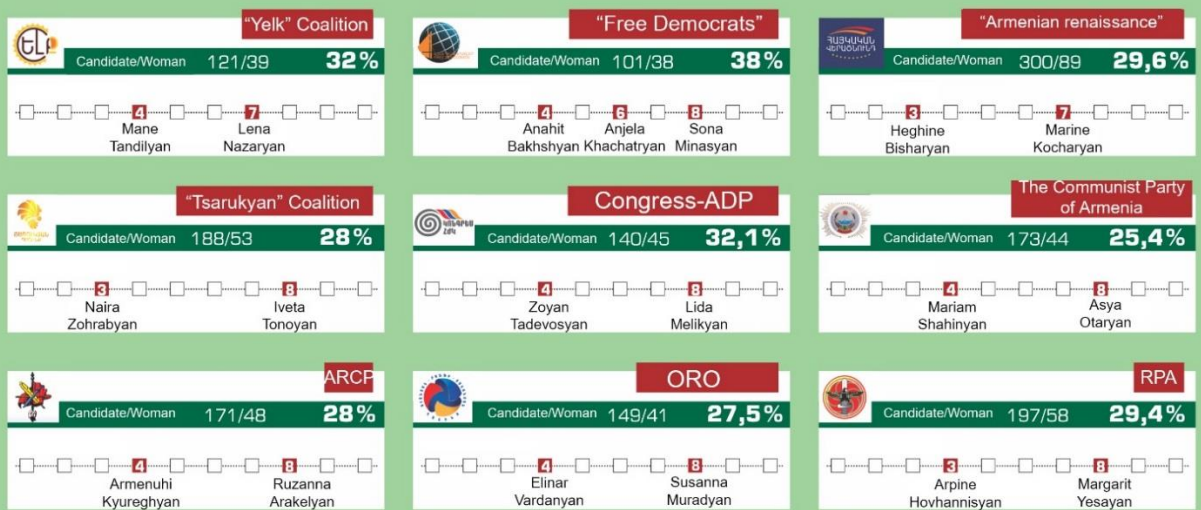


PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

2017

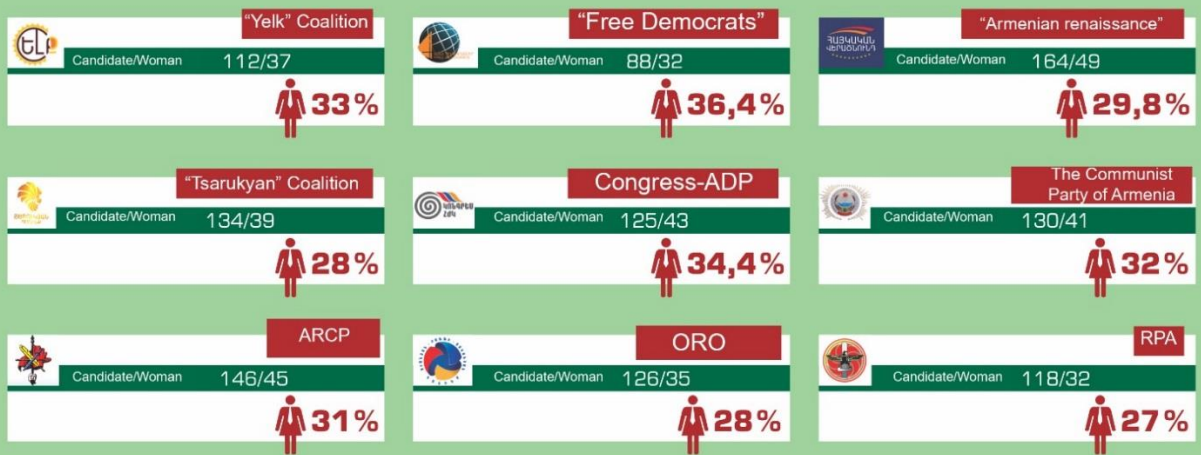
Number of women candidates in the national lists

29,5%



Number of women candidates in the regional lists

30,8%



EQUAL

3. Women candidates were granted only the 9% of TV broadcast

As the media monitoring conducted by the OSCE/ODIHR Observer Mission showed, the most watched TV programs covered only 9% of women political leaders and their election campaigns. The summary report of the Observer Mission highlights that generally, during the election campaign women candidates received support from their political parties and led active campaigns. As the report mentions, “However, women did not get senior positions in the pre-election campaign offices of parties and thus, they rarely acted as keynote speakers during campaigns. The election programs of political parties did not directly target the issue of women’s participation in public and political life. Besides, women candidates themselves omitted gender equality issues in their campaigns and prioritized more the discussion of widespread social issues in the country”.

4. Women in electoral committees

Three of seven members of the Central Electoral Committee (CEC) are women, one of them acting as the Deputy President of CEC. Women constitute the 35% of CEC members, however only 16% of them hold senior positions. International observers have assessed that 57% of Territorial Electoral Committee (TEC) members are women. 39% of TEC presidents are women. It is important to note that the law requires that at least two CEC members are of opposite gender, whereas this requirement does not exist for TECs.

5. Women candidates presented according to their age and occupation

The 23% of women candidates were aged up to 35; 63% were of middle age – aged 35-63, and 14% of them were aged 63 and higher.

At least one third of all men and women candidates included in the political party lists are unemployed. The 45% of employed women are engaged in the education sector.

6. The representation of women in the RA National Assembly is 18%

19 out of 105 MPs in the 6th convocation of the RA National Assembly are women (constituting 18%). One of them, Tatyana Miakyelyan, won the election through the list of the national

minorities. Two women – Mane Tandilyan from the “Yelk” Coalition and Nora Arustamyan from the “Tsarukyan” Coalition, were elected through the national lists.

Women’s representation in the previous convocation of the National Assembly constituted 10%, hence the results of 2017 elections marked one step forward in terms of women’s political participation. This was largely due to the 25% gender quota defined in the acting Electoral Code, however not very much justified. In this regard, the gender quota was more effective in the elections of Gyumri and Vanadzor ensuring 24% women’s representation in community councils

The Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) received 58 mandates, eight of which (14%) are held by women.

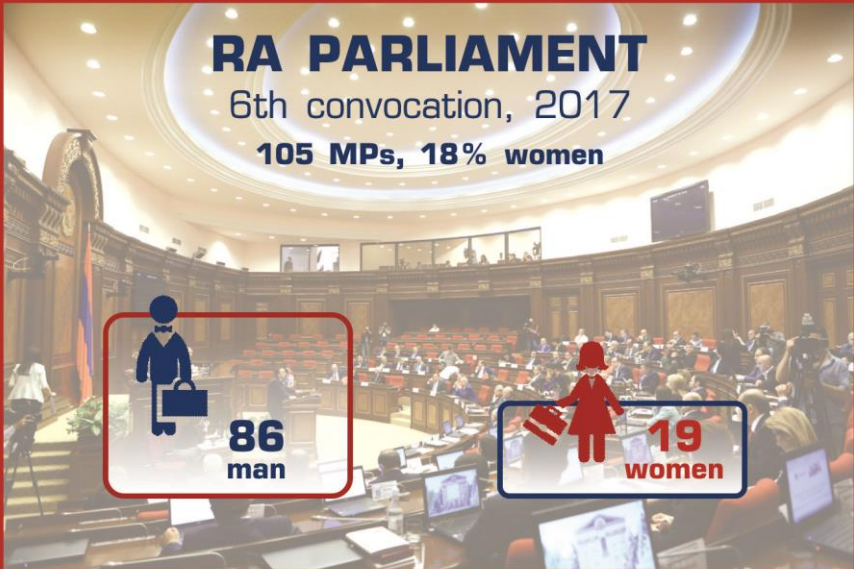
The Coalition of “Tsarukyan” parties received 31 mandates, eight of which (25,8%) are held by women. Only one woman was elected through district lists. Through the 2nd part of the national list that includes representatives of national minorities, one woman from the Russian community was elected.

The Coalition of “Yelk” parties is represented in the National Assembly by 9 MPs, two of whom (22%) are women. One of them got elected through district lists.

The Armenian Revolutionary Coalition Party (ARCP) has 7 MPs in the NA with only 1 woman (14%) in it.

Although the political party lists included 30% women contestants, only 1 of the contestant political parties / coalitions was able to ensure the 25% representation of at least 1 gender in the National Assembly, as stipulated by the RA Electoral Code.

Unlike the previous parliamentary elections where the number of women decreased due to self-withdrawals, the main reason for less women was the district, or the so-called rating lists. They were simply supplanted from the process due to political battle taking place between wealthy men contestants. This time, self-withdrawals affected men contestants. Only two of the 35 applications of self-withdrawals submitted to CEC (9 applications from RPA, 3 from ARCP and 23 from Tsarukyan Coalition) were submitted by women.



How Quota worked in the RA Parliamentary Elections

2012

5th convocation of the Parliament



2017



6th convocation of the Parliament, 2017



Women in the leadership positions of the RA Parliament

Only **2** out of **17** members of RA Parliamentary Council are women



No woman was ever nominated as the President of the Parliament
 One of the Vice-Presidents is a women-Arpine Hovhannnisyan
 Women are not represented in the position of the Chairs of the faction
 Only one of the heads of permanent commissions is woman-Naira Zohrabyan

7. Women constitute 23.4% on average in parliaments around the world

The representation of women in the RA National Assembly increased to 18% thus improving the position of Armenia in the rating schedule defined by the Interparliamentary Union: currently Armenia holds the 11th position in the list of 193 countries as opposed to previous 160th position for the indicator of women's political participation. Women's representation in the Parliament of Georgia is 16% as a result of the parliamentary elections last year. In Azerbaijan this figure is 16.8% registered as a result of the 2015 parliamentary elections. As the Interparliamentary Union reports, women's representation in the world's unicameral parliaments has constituted 23.4% on average. This figure is 26.6% for OSCE countries. Women's representation in the parliaments of Arabic countries constitutes 18.9%.

8. The “Women's agenda” is topical and enforced

OxYGen Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights, the WomenNet.am website and the “Family Academy” NGO, as the initiator organizations for the “EQUAL” Campaign, presented the ‘Women's Agenda’ to all political parties contesting for the parliamentary elections on the eve of the elections. These organizations expected that the contestant political parties would raise the key issues of the ‘Women's Agenda’ once they are elected to the National Assembly, as well as come up with solutions to those issues.

The ‘Women's Agenda’ includes a number of enquiries related to ensuring the equal rights and opportunities of women and men, evidence on existing gender issues in different sectors, as well as it suggests potential solutions to those issues. This makes the “Women's Agenda’ a detailed and comprehensive source of information about the current gender situation in Armenia for every single MP that is concerned with gender equality issues. The main enquiries in this document are based on the RA Constitution, laws and programs adopted in Armenia within its gender policies, international commitments undertaken by RA, RA official statistical data and recent studies and sociological surveys conducted in the country.

The ‘Women's Agenda’ continues to be topical and enforced after the parliamentary elections in the context of sustained collaboration with the four political coalitions elected into the NA. The main goal of the ‘Women's Agenda’ is to focus the attention of newly-elected MPs to key issues of equal rights and opportunities of women and men. The main expectations from MPs is that they will not only talk about these issues publicly in the NA, but will also propose solutions onto the discussion space.

9. The district lists reduced the effectiveness of quotas

Although the political parties ensured 30,8% women's participation on average in the district lists, as per the requirement of the EC, the highest number of votes were gained exclusively by men through the district or rating lists. It could be stated that it was just due to the district lists that the quota effectiveness decreased for the parliamentary elections.

Mane Tandilyan from the "Yelk" Coalition was elected into the NA through rating lists. She contested in the 1st electoral district and received 5110 votes. Nora Arustamyan received 4789 votes in the 7th electoral district in Aragatostn marz. This was not sufficient to enter NA, however she managed to get an MP mandate as a result of self-withdrawals of one man candidate.

Lusine Mejlumyan included in the RPA rating list in the 9th district of Lori Marz received almost the same number of votes – 4722, that did not still suffice for getting elected into the NA. Irrespective of how many votes women had received in favour of their parties, all the candidates winning through rating lists had scored around 5-10 thousand and even more votes. Overall, only 14 out of 353 women nominated through district lists receive 1000-2000 votes. The other women received less than thousand votes. It can therefore be stated that generally the rating lists were more non-beneficial for women, than the previous majority system. Armen Baghdasaryan, a political analyst states that a full transition to the entirely proportional electoral system, presented as a progressive process, brought to an opposite effect. It actually created a 100 per cent majority system where everything is decided through the votes of rating list candidates and political parties have no role whatsoever in the election results.

A number of political analysts rated the previous parliamentary elections as "a deal and sales between money and a lot of money". The customers in the sales were the political parties and candidates, and the voters were the vote-sellers. Women included in the district lists did not become customers and did not offer money for votes, and therefore lost. Instead, they proposed new programs that would improve the quality of political processes, as well as their willingness to support overburdened citizens. However, these types of values are not acknowledged and modern. As political analyst Alexander Iskandaryan, the director of the "Caucasus" Institute states, the society was guided by the principle of "voting based on your stomach, and not the feelings. This means that people voted for individual, personal and sporadic interests, and not for ideological beliefs. By saying sporadic interests, I mean the needs raised by people to replace the door of the building, the windows of apartments, to renovate village roads and so on. Almost all political parties engaged in that", Alexander Iskandaryan said.

Money played an obviously huge role in this elections. The main competition in districts was often between wealthy representative of the same part, and women, who are not part of big businesses, were simply left out of the elections process. By the way, not only women, but men with no significant financial and administrative resources, were also left out of the election process.

10. What were the main findings of the gender analysis of electoral programs of parties?

The election campaign programs of political parties contesting for the parliamentary elections were, on the whole, gender blind. Their actions and outcomes were not targeted in accordance with gender. They did not outline goals and objectives that aimed to ensure equal rights and opportunities. In fact, conceptually they lacked gender equality principles, although women's organizations had worked considerably with them in that direction.

The overall logic and content of political parties contesting in this elections differed from the campaign programs set forth in the previous elections in that they outlined the critical situation in the country. Almost all of the programs this time accented key issues of defense and economic development for Armenia and social packages. Direct references to women's issues were made only in two or three provisions. In particular, in one of its election campaign programs the "Armenian renaissance" party mentoned the following: "Defining the work of women owning agricultural land plots, as legal work experience that will be counted and considered in the indexation and increase of pensions". The "Free Democrats" political party included a provision in its program, which stated: "increase the duration of paid maternity leave by 30-50%, and provide paternity leave to fathers with the same terms". Another important provision of theirs was "Women will be granted the opportunity to serve in the army by paying for it. To that end, special divisions will be set up." The Communist Party of Armenia anticipated the adoption of the law on Maternity Capital Assets in its campaign program. Other political entities did not anticipate any gender-sensitive provisions in their programs; it could only be assumed that the implementation of certain provisions could contribute to enhancement of women's economic opportunities or indirectly improve the gender situation.

Almost all programs have provisions that can lead to the creation of a conducive environment for the small and medium enterprise development and consequently for women entrepreneurship. Many of the programs anticipated salary increase of particularly teachers and health workers or introduction of 18-hour working rate per week for teachers.

These can be considered as gender-sensitive provisions if we take into account that the absolute majority of the employees in the education sector are women. The following provision in “Yelk” coalition program is noteworthy: “Positions of psychologists will be opened up in maternity hospitals to prevent the transfer of children born with disabilities to special institutions. A sustainable and permanent family support service will be established. The foster care and the child adoption mechanisms will be further developed”.

Programs included provisions that could indirectly promote women’s political participation, for instance, the “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” Coalition proposed the “100 percent proportional electoral system without rating list voting and a bonus system”. The same proposal is fixed in the program of Congress-ADP Coalition program. Looking at the ARP program provisions, women could benefit from the introduction of proportional lists for the Council of Elders. It would particularly grant an opportunity to apply gender quota and enhance women’s participation in the LSG system. In its program the ARCP listed all human rights provisions in the “People and the state” section where all the principles of justice, fair competition and equal opportunities for all. It can be assumed that those principles also refer to women, however the international and historical experience show that neutral statements lead to gender-blind policies.

Let us bring some examples from the past for the sake of comparison. The ARCP program of 2007 included a separate section entitled “the equal rights of men and women”. This section outlined the need for achieving equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women and setting up legal guarantees for eliminating discrimination. This section did not exist in the ARCP program for 2012 and the program made mention of women’s employment issues. The 2017 program had no gender provisions at all. Most probably they thought that the increase of the gender quota resolved all gender issues.

The review of previous election campaigns programs proves that those programs are not evidently gender-sensitive. Reference to women’s agenda has always been limited to provisions on family and maternity. However, unlike the past elections, in 2017 the political parties did not even keep the minimum gender content. They did not even highlight issues of maternal protection, as they would do traditionally. They did not even outline concerns on women’s issues of family-career balance. This fact indirectly points out at the lack of priority that political entities place on gender equality and a big number of important issues linked to women’s participation.

11. The gender quota had the best impact on the Council of Elders election in Yerevan

18 (or %) out of 65 newly-elected members of Yerevan Council of Elders are women. This shows that women's representation in this Council of Elders has grown; the previous Council of Elders had 10 (or 15%) women members. Obviously, the 25/75 gender quota was the most effective for the election of Yerevan Council of Elders, although the political party lists included 38% of women on average.

Election of Yerevan Council of Elders- 2017



Candidates for the Post of Yerevan Mayor



Nikol Pashinyan
"Yelk" Coalition

Zaruhi Postanjyan
"Yerkir Tsirani" Faction

Taron Margaryan
Republican Party of Armenia

Women's representation in proportional lists

"Yelk" Coalition

Candidate/ Woman 63/ 21

33%

"Yerkir Tsirani" Faction

Candidate/ Woman 51/29

57%

Republican Party of Armenia

Candidate/ Woman 195/48

25%

Women candidates presented in the first tenth of the party list

4- Anahit Bakhshyan
7- Ani Khachatryan
8- Ani Samsonyan

1- Zaruhi Postanjyan
3- Sonna Aghekyan
5- Marina Khachatryan
8- Lilia Dilanyan
10- Gajane Davtyan

4- Astghik Gevorgyan
8- Anna Asatryan

EQUAL

10 women represent the ARP (46 mandates in total), 5 women represent the “Yelk” Coalition (14 mandates in total) and 3 women are members of “Yerkir Tsirani” faction (5 mandates in total).

Overall, 21.7% women are represented in ARP, although ARP met the legal requirement of 25/75 proportion of gender quota in its pre-election lists. Before self-withdrawals, 12 women were included in the first 46 seats of ARP lists. Eight of candidates having withdrawn are women. Hence, the current ARP members in the Council of Elders are: Astghik Gevorgyan, Anna Asatryan, Naira Nahapetyan, Roza Sirunyan, Natalya Lapauri, Lilit Beglaryan, Anna Mkrtchyan, Alina Koushkyan, Anush Hayryan and Hasmik Sargsyan.

Other political factions did not submit self-withdrawals, except for Nikol Pashinyan from “Yelk” Coalition who is an MP. “Yelk” Coalition has the following women members in the Yerevan Council of Elders: Anahit Bakhshyan, Ani Khachatryan, Ani Samsonyan, Tehmina Vardanyan and Zaruhi Batoyan. Women in “Yelk” Coalition constitute 36% which is more than the percentage fixed in the pre-election list – 33%.

The “Yerkir Tsirani” faction had initially five members, two of whom left after the elections. The remaining three women are: Zaruhi Postanjyan, Sona Aghekyan and Marina Khachatryan. In the pre-election list of this faction, women constituted 57%.

WOMEN IN THE YEREVAN MUNICIPALITY

**18 women/28% out of
65 Municipality members
are women**



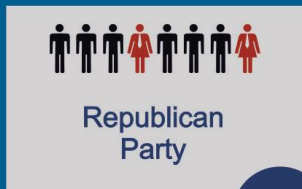
How Quota worked in the Yerevan Municipality Elections

2013

2nd convocation of the Yerevan Municipality



Women candidates in the party lists formed in average 38%

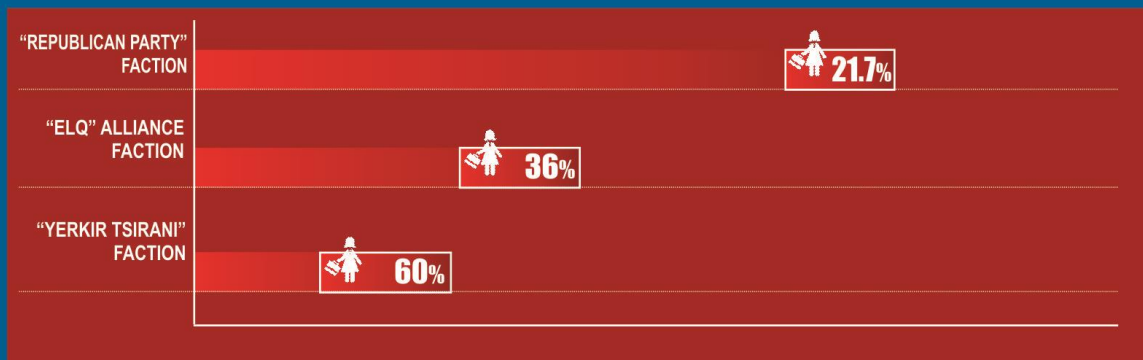


2017

3rd convocation of the Yerevan Municipality



Women in the of Yerevan Municipality Factions



8 out of 46 members of "Republican Party" faction are women
 5 out of 14 members of "Elq" Alliance faction are women
 3 out of 5 members of "Erkir Tsirani" faction are women

EQUAL

Hence, the effectiveness of 25/75 gender quota was the highest for the election of Yerevan Council of Elders in comparison with all the proportional elections, including the parliamentary elections (19%) and elections of Councils of Elders in Gyumri and Vanadzor (24%). If it were not for ARP self-withdrawals, women's representation could reach 30% thus ensuring 'women's critical mass' in the Council of Elders of Yerevan.

12. The fair governance principles of the city reflected in the electoral programs

Although all programs of political parties lacked gender mainstreaming, they still included sections the implementation of which could contribute to creating equal opportunities of men and women, resolving many issues related to routine and fair governance of the city. On the one hand, international approaches outline that the model of fair city governance requires establishment of partnership relations between the state and the civil society organizations and engaging citizens in governance. On the other hand, fair governance anticipates highlighting of various city issues by different social groups of the society, with clear consideration of women's issues, as one of the largest public groups. It is important to note that European feminists were the first to highlight the imperative of fair governance of cities. As a matter of fact, the consideration of age and gender peculiarities of needs outlined by urban population means that city expediency should be observed from the privacy perspective where women's role is particularly huge. For example, women's daily movement needs are more diverse and the consideration of their needs will help to increase urban infrastructure expediency.

Women also have a more active participation in the solution of several issues. For instance, a number of issues relating to garbage removal norms, garbage sorting and maintaining city cleanness are difficult to resolve without women's civic involvement. On the whole, it should be outlined that programs emphasizing fair urban governance cannot be gender-blind.

From the perspective of fair urban governance reflected in election campaign programs, it should be noted that the program of "Yerkir Tsirani" faction was one of the successful one, particularly its section entitled "Cooperation with the civil society". It anticipated public discussions and consultations with sectorial non-governmental organizations and professional unions. Such approach can pave a way for fair urban governance and grant opportunities to women's organizations to utilize their rich experience in identifying needs of various social groups and suggesting solutions to them.

This faction outlined issues like the removal of green public spaces, the low level of safety for districts, deterioration of sanitary conditions of residential buildings due to increased density of population in small districts of the city. The section on "Renovation of streets and yards" defines "Renovation and reconstruction of yards, recovery of retaining walls, construction of

bicycle routes, construction and renovation of upstairs and downstairs passes”. The “External lighting” section includes the following: “Illumination of lightless streets, yards and playgrounds, ... implementation of green urban lighting”.

Provisions on infrastructure expediency benefiting population are also included in the RPA election campaign program. We sorted out some of those provisions that directly relate to privacy and may enhance urban expediency and women’s daily routine burden. They are: “design and implement insulation and energy efficiency complex program of mutli-apartment buildings, conduct construction works of water supply and water insulation internal networks of multi-apartment buildings, build sewage systems in districts that lacked them”. The program also envisages renovation of yards, construction of new playgrounds and soccer fields and organization of yard leisure activities. The enhancement of external illumination network for all streets and yards aims at enhanced urban security.

All programs envisaged improvement of urban transportation services. “Yerkir Tsirani” emphasized the construction of bicycle routes and re-operation of tramways. The following provisions are noteworthy: “The city needs significant re-design of streets so that pedestrian movement is unconstrained. Bicycles can become alternatives to public transportation and personal cars; however, it is not possible without adequate infrastructure. Population with less movement abilities requires due infrastructure

“Yelk” Coalition presented a number of proposals on reforms in urban transportation. They reflect the need for ensuring the accessible transportation up until midnight, set up a bicycle corridor, adapt the 100 percent of all trolley buses and the 40 percent of all buses for people with disabilities by 2022. “Yelk” Coalition also promised to increase the proportion of passenger transfer by buses, trolley-buses, metro stations up to 80 percent instead of current 46 percent.

ARP program also has a big component of urban transportation improvement. They placed a special focus on issues of citizens facing physical movement limitations. It is anticipated “to continue projects on enhancing physical movement opportunities and general expediency for people with disabilities, build ramps in public buildings, continue installing relevant equipment in public transportation, and ensure physical movement opportunities in public places, set up special equipment and elevators in upstairs and downstairs passes”.

The garbage removal issue is of high priority in all programs. However, women’s engagement is important to resolve it. Women can play a big role in household garbage removal and garbage sorting both as main household care takers (in our society currently equal distribution of household roles is not a cultural value, so women carry the main household burden), and as upbringers of children (and not only at home; most of teachers are women too).

Election campaign programs place a big focus on environmental issues. All political parties highlight the need for urban green spaces. The ARP program focuses a lot on establishing new zones for leisure, renovation of gardens and parks and the existence of public toilets, “Yelk” Coalition also mentioned the need for public toilets and the establishment of family leisure zones.

“Yerkir Tsirani” faction program has a “Tourism” section, where you can read the following: “Tourism industry fully involves small and medium entrepreneurs and those employed in the sector are representatives of socially vulnerable groups of population, such as youth and women”. This section also outlines the ways in which the reasonable and effective planning for tourism development can contribute to sustainable urban development.

A positive trend to talk about is that all programs highlight the need to increase pre-school institutions, set up of institutions for children with various health issues and to inclusive education.

Nikol Pashinyan, heading the “Yelk” Coalition list talked about the above issues during the Yerevan Council of Elders election campaign. “Nowadays about 8000 children are waiting in the queue to enter kindergartens. Whereas, many kindergarten buildings are leased to other people”, Pashinyan said.

Zaruhi Batoyan, another member of “Yelk” also talked about the kindergartens’ issues during the campaign: “

“When I get elected into the Council of Elders, I will advocate for increasing the total working hours of kindergartens so that they close at 18.30 pm. Otherwise, it does not make sense for kindergartens to be open until 17.00 pm, when parents finish work at 18.00 pm. These rules were probably invented by people whose children are taken home by storks, and not parents.”

“Yerkkir Tsirani”, the other opposition faction contesting in the elections, also points out own solutions to kindergarten issue in its program: “Renovate all pre-school institutions (kindergartens) of Yerevan by using city budgetary resources and build new ones, establish new employment opportunities for kindergarten nannies and teachers which help to eliminate the corruption risks related to preliminary registrations in kindergartens. Kindergartens should be equipped with relevant specialists that can work with children with various disabilities. These children should enjoy full integration so that they later study at school without encountering any obstacles or discrimination.

ARP anticipates mandatory health insurance of all kindergarten employees, ensure comprehensive pre-school education through absolute elimination of queues for kindergartens and guarantee the continuity of free-of-charge pre-school education.

Around 8000 children of pre-school age residing in Yerevan are awaiting in the registration queue to get the opportunity to attend a kindergarten. 1800 of them are of age 3 plus. According to official statistics, 160 pre-school institutions operate by the financial support and supervision of Yerevan Municipality. The number of children attending kindergartens is 30,067. Since 2011, each around 30,000 children have received free-of-charge pre-school education.

It should be mentioned that Yerevan Municipality is not planning to increase the number of operational kindergartens next year. It is not planned neither in the draft budget, nor in the Yerevan Municipality Development Plan. It only anticipates reconstruction or capital renovation of kindergarten buildings and elimination of registration queues. For the latter, no particular mechanisms are foreseen or described.

Conclusion

To summarize the 2017 parliamentary and Yerevan Council of Elders elections conducted through the proportional electoral system, it should be acknowledged that the gender quota obviously promoted the increase of number of women in these institutions. In the meantime, the introduction of district lists in the parliamentary elections created serious obstacles for women contestants and actually reduced the effectiveness of the quota. The Yerevan Council of Elders elections saw more effect of the quota as it lacked district lists resulting in more elected women, than the quota proportion itself.