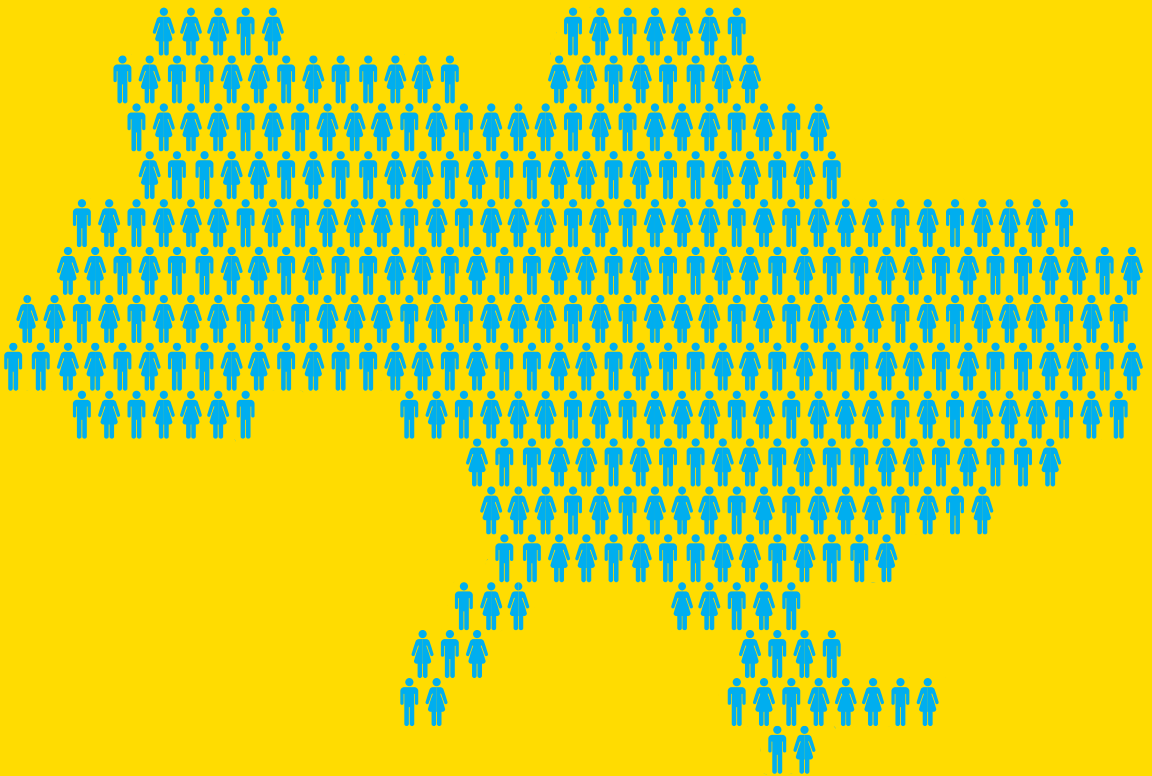


Ukrainian Women's Fund

*Women's Participation
in Politics and Decision-Making
in Ukraine:
Strategy Paper*



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Kiev, 2011



The Ukrainian Women's Fund (UWF) is an international charitable organization founded in 2000. The UWF provides civil society organizations from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus with financial, information sharing and consultation support. UWF is a member of the International Network of Women's Funds, Women's Funding Network and the Ukrainian Philanthropists' Forum.

UWF's mission is to assist civil society organizations specifically, but not limited to women's organisations, to play an active role in the processes of democratization and achievement of gender equality, justice and respect for human rights. UWF also supports civil society development with financial contributions.

Introduction

Gender equality in political participation is a fundamental aspect of modern democratic governance. Under international standards, both men and women should have equal rights and opportunities to participate fully in all aspects and at all levels of political processes. In practice, however, it is often more challenging for women to access and exercise these rights. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the current levels of women's political participation in Ukraine, to highlight the main challenges women face in accessing political structures, and to suggest strategies for overcoming these challenges.

This paper was drafted on the basis of sociological studies, statistical data, and findings of domestic and international research, for the purposes of identifying appropriate strategies to promote gender equality in the political life and decision-making in Ukraine.

The document is structured as follows: Introduction, 1) Current Situation Analysis, 2) Current Legislation, 3) Women's Participation in Politics: Views of Political Parties and the Public, 4) Gender Equality Activities in Ukraine, 5) Gender in the Media and Advertising, 6) Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Political Life and Decision-Making in Ukraine, and Conclusions.

This comprehensive overview analyses the particular problems and issues of women's participation in politics and decision-making in Ukraine and also sets out the main directions for improvement, based on international and European standards and good practices. The document is addressed to and can be useful for national legislators, policy makers and advocates, as well as international partners and donors.

1) Current Situation Analysis

The extent of women's participation in politics and women's access to decision-making can be seen as the key indicators of gender equality in a society. Gender equality in decision-making is to be viewed in the context of whether women are in the position to make or influence public decisions on the same footing as men. The 1995 Beijing Platform stresses that equality in decision-making is integral to the advancement of women's rights and that women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a question of simple justice or democracy, but also a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account.¹

Historically, the share of women in the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic reached 30%² (in 1985, 157 women were elected to the Ukrainian parliament),³ as a consequence of the introduction by the Communist Party of the USSR of a non-official quota for women in elected office.⁴ Following the first multi-party elections of 1990, the representation of women in the parliament decreased significantly. In the 20 years since Ukraine's independence, the representation of women in politics has improved only slowly. In 1990, women accounted for 3% of Members of Parliament, in 1994 — 5.7%, in 1998 — 8.1 %, in 2002 — 5.1 %, in 2006 — 8.5 %, and in 2007 — 7.5 %).⁵ The results of the latest 2007 election to the Ukrainian Parliament demonstrate a continued negative trend, as in recent years the number of women in each subsequent parliament and government

¹ Пекін +15 і Україна: Міжнародні зобов'язання і практики впровадження/упорядника О.Суслова – Київ: СПД Москаленко О.М., 2010

² Denys Kovryzhenko. Regulation of Political Parties in Ukraine: current state and directions of reforms. Published by Agency for Legislative Initiatives, and OSCE/ODIHR, Kyiv, 2010 (Vistka Ltd), p. 81

³ Омелян І. Гендер у політиці – історія боротьби за політичні права жінок; <http://gender.at.ua/news/2010-03-04-294>

⁴ Права людини в Україні – 2004. Доповідь правозахисних організацій. / За ред. Є.Захарова, І.Рапп, В.Яворського /Українська Гельсінська спілка з прав людини. – Харків: Фолю, 2005. – С. 255; <http://helsinki.org.ua/files/docs/1117296126.pdf>

⁵ Web site of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine <http://www.minjust.gov.ua>

of Ukraine has continuously decreased. In terms of the percentage of women Members of Parliament globally, Ukraine ranks 115th on the list of 137 countries in the world and has the second lowest performance in the OSCE region, just above Georgia).⁶

The political forces now in power demonstrate insufficient understanding and lack of acceptance of the gender equality concept and its advantages for society. Not a single head of regional council, regional capital city council, or regional administration is a woman; there are no women in the Cabinet of Ministers or among the chairpersons of the Ukrainian parliament. In the present Parliament of Ukraine, women make up only 7.5 % of its membership.

At the same time, women have dominant representation at the lowest political tiers – in the village councils their share is 51%, in township councils – 46%, and in city councils – 28%.⁷ Work in local environments is very strenuous, requiring direct contact with electors and willingness to solve specific daily issues, usually with minimal availability of resources. Regrettably, active participation of women at the lower levels of public administration and local self-government has not led to their advancement to higher authorities and has not facilitated their access to decision-making posts at the national level.

A politician's task is to ensure public representation and protection of the interests of his/her voters and of certain regional, ethnic, religious, or socio-demographic groups. The limited participation of women in political and decision-making processes poses a serious challenge to democracy, since over 50% of the citizenry is *de facto* excluded from public affairs. Thus, the interests of this excluded group, namely of women, cannot be adequately represented in decision-making processes. Some argue that many outstanding problems of Ukraine mainly affecting women – poverty, unaddressed social, health, and education issues – are not resolved properly, as these belong to the lowest level of the male politicians' pyramid of interests.

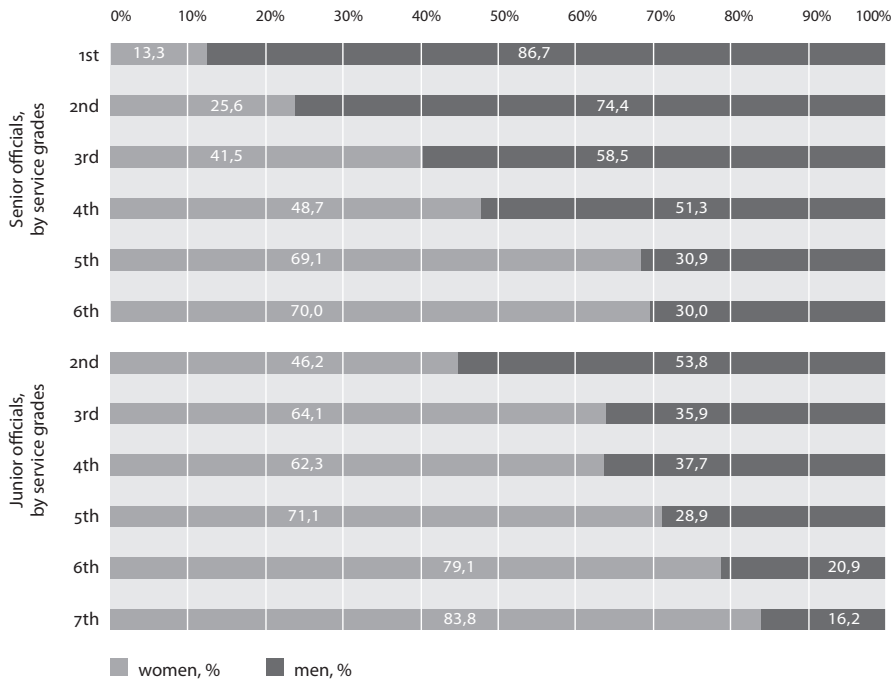
The practical alienation of Ukrainian women from decision-making at top political levels contrasts with the rather high representation of women in the Ukrainian public service. At the beginning of 2010, women prevailed both in the senior and junior ranks of public service, with shares of 64.8 %

⁶ Women in national parliaments. Situation as of 31 August 2011; <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁷ Гендерна арифметика влади: інформація станом на 25 березня 2010 року/ Український жіночий фонд, Київ

and 79.5 % respectively.⁸ Women make up the majority of civil servants at lower-level positions, requiring lower qualifications and not carrying significant responsibility (Table 1). However, any higher service grade shows a decrease in the representation of women. In turn, women constitute only 13.3 % of officials with the first and the highest grade of public service, namely those who participate in decision-making at the national level.⁹

State Officials in Ukraine, shown by Sex and Grade in Public Service, according to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine (as of early 2010)



⁸ Матеріали слухань Комітету Верховної ради України з питань прав людини, національних меншин і міжнародних відносин «Практика застосування Закону України» про забезпечення рівних прав та можливостей жінок і чоловіків», Київ, 10 листопада 2010 р.

⁹ Letter of the Main Department of the Civil Service of Ukraine #8419/52-10 from 15.10.2010

According to the data of the Main Department of Civil Service in Ukraine, an analysis of the cadre reserves for central executive authorities indicates serious inconsistencies with the requirement of balanced and proportional representation of candidates of both genders in civil service. For example, in 2010 the lists of candidates for public office increased by 76.7% for men and 23.3% for women. In the nominations for senior postings in local executive bodies, men candidates constituted about 86% of the nominations, leaving only 14% to women. New appointment line-ups for a number of state agencies in 2010 did not include a single woman.

The 2010 Global Gender Gap Index ranked Ukraine 63rd out of 134 countries.¹⁰ In recent years, Ukraine's ranking on this list has been continuously declining: from 48th place in 2006 to 57th in 2007, 62nd in 2008 and 61st in 2009. Some indicators of the Index reveal the unjustifiably low representation of women in politics. In terms of women's education levels, Ukraine is assessed 23rd globally, while it ranked 105th in terms of women's political rights. Although education levels of both genders in Ukraine are equivalent, women on average make only 75% of men's earnings and their pensions are only 67% of those of men. Women account for a very low percentage of owners of medium-size businesses and very few women own major companies.

The last Ukrainian census showed that 23,715,450 educated women constituted 54.3% of the population, and 19,922,150 men – 45.7%.¹¹ The 2010 report on Ukraine's implementation of CEDAW commitments considers the absence of substantial gender disparities in education levels to be an important socio-cultural feature of Ukraine, which – according to UNESCO data – is amongst the most developed nations in terms of population literacy.¹²

The Ukrainian political elite can be seen operating on the level of political declarations, while actual implementation of the existing gender-related legislation and policies is lacking. In spite of lengthy consultations with the Council of Europe and the declared course towards European integration, in the context of real gender equality indicators, Ukraine still lags behind the recognized European standards. However, equal access of women and men to the decision-making process is not only a crucial foundation for Ukraine's

¹⁰ The Global Gender Gap Report 2010 <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2010?ol=1>

¹¹ Державний комітет статистики України. Статистичні таблиці щодо становища жінок і чоловіків в Україні; available at: www.ukrstat.gov.ua

¹² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Forty-fifth session 18 January-5 February 2010, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ukraine (CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/7)

progress as a law-governed state, but also a pre-requisite for economic and social development of the nation. This has been proven by numerous evidence-based studies of the UN, arguing that the countries leading in women's representation in politics also have the best quality of life and economic development rates.¹⁵ Ukraine, with its high level of education, technical potential and resources, is definitely worthy of better results for both women and men.

Gender equality indicators are known to develop under multiple influences and should be regarded and assessed both in view of the factors that contributed to the present situation as well as the already existing preconditions that may influence the situation in the near future.

¹⁵ UNDP Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights in Ukraine Programme, available at: <http://gender.undp.org.ua>

2) Current Legislation

The principle of equal rights of women and men is stipulated in the Constitution of Ukraine. Specifically, Article 24 guarantees equal rights and opportunities to all citizens and prohibits restrictions on grounds of gender. Article 24 reads: “Equality of the rights of women and men is ensured by providing women with opportunities equal to those of men, in public and political, and cultural activity, in obtaining education and in professional training, in work and its remuneration.”

The legislation of Ukraine includes a large number of subordinate laws and regulations. Such agency-specific provisions occasionally carry clauses restricting women’s rights to maintain certain positions, for example in the military sphere. There are also instances in Ukrainian legislation of the so-called positive discrimination of women, which, however, may pose restrictions on certain women’s rights. For example, Article 176 of the Labour Code of Ukraine states that “pregnant women and women having children under three years old may not be engaged in night work, overtime work, work on days-off, and business trips.”¹⁴

Equal electoral rights are granted by Article 3.5.1 of the Law on Elections of People’s Deputies of Ukraine, prohibiting “privileges or restrictions of candidates on grounds of race, colour, political, religious or other views, gender, ethnic and social origin, property status, and place of residence, language or other features.”¹⁵

Adoption of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men in 2005 was a major step towards implementation of the

¹⁴ Labor Code of Ukraine, Article 176 as amended under the Decree of the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada No. 4841-11 of 30 October 1987; Law No. 871-12 of 20 March 1991), available at: http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=188245

¹⁵ Law on Elections of People’s Deputies of Ukraine, available at: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/15271>

principle of equal rights. Article 4 of this Law requires a gender analysis of all effective legislation and drafts of new regulations.¹⁶

In addition, according to Article 15¹⁷ of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, political parties and electoral blocs shall provide for the representation of women and men on the corresponding electoral lists during the nomination of candidates for people's deputies of Ukraine in the national multi-mandate constituency.¹⁸ However, the Law on Parliamentary Elections does not contain any provisions aiming to ensure implementation and enforcement of Article 15 of the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men.¹⁹ In turn, the charters of all political parties represented in the Ukrainian Parliament do not envisage adequate procedures for the nomination of election candidates, which could increase the chances of women to be elected.

The most recent attempt to improve the levels of women's participation in politics and decision-making in Ukraine was made in 2010. A draft law with amendments to the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, the Law on Elections of People's Deputies of Ukraine, and the Law on Elections of Deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and on Elections of Local Radas, and of Village, Settlement, City Chairmen, proposed a procedure ensuring representation of both men and women in each group of five candidates on the voting list. Specifically, it proposed a legal quota of at least 20% women in elected state bodies. Unfortunately, the draft law was rejected by the Verkhovna Rada; the initiative was supported by 189 deputies, but 226 were required for adoption.²⁰

The current legislation and party rules pertaining to promotion of women's representation among candidates for public office do not provide for effective means of enforcement. Although equal rights and opportunities are stated

¹⁶ Постанова Кабінету Міністрів України № 504 від 12.04.2006 р. «Про проведення гендерно-правової експертизи».

¹⁷ Гендерні перетворення в Україні. Укладач М. Скорик.– Київ. Надруковано в ТОВ «АДЕФ-Україна», 2007. – С. 14

¹⁸ Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, available at: <http://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/52/topic/7>

¹⁹ In 2007, the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission recommended bringing the Law on Political Parties and Law on Parliamentary Elections into compliance with the Equal Opportunity Law. See: Pre-Term Parliamentary Elections 30 September 2007. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report. – Warsaw, 20 December 2007. – Recommendations 34, 35; http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2007/12/29054_en.pdf

²⁰ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Official web-site; http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=31114

in the laws, the procedures and the means for the exercise of such rights are very limited. The judicial system and the regulatory environment lack the power to protect individuals from discrimination and to hold violators liable under the law.

3) Women's Participation in Politics: Views of Political Parties and the Public

Although women have *de jure* equal status with men, *de facto* they are still discriminated against, often due to gender stereotypes that are deeply rooted in society and amongst the Ukrainian power holders.

A survey conducted by the Ukrainian Women's Fund among political parties represented in the Ukrainian Parliament has shown another controversy. On the one hand, political parties declare equal rights and opportunities for women and men as well as no internal discrimination of women; however, on the other hand, they account for the absence of women in their structures with the argument that preference is given to the most professional and competitive candidates, who, they say, are men. In addition, the majority of surveyed political parties indicated nearly no interest in targeted training, increased participation or empowerment of women in their structures or activities.²¹

The results of focus group discussions among representatives of leading political parties – conducted by the Agency of Legislative Initiatives – also show that women's representation in elected office is currently not considered a high priority for reforms in the field of political parties and elections. Enhancing internal party democracy and restricting the influence of the party leaderships and donors on the nomination of candidates for elections are considered priority issues for reform. In the opinion of the focus group participants, women's participation in political life should be promoted primarily indirectly, rather than through introduction of mandatory quotas.²²

²¹ Increasing Women's Representation in Decision Making through Political Parties. Report based on the results of the survey carried out among the political parties represented in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Ukrainian Women Fund, 2010, Kyiv

²² Denys Kovryzhenko. Regulation of Political Parties in Ukraine: current state and directions of reforms. Published by Agency for Legislative Initiatives, and OSCE/ODIHR, Kyiv, 2010 (Vistka Ltd)

A recent public opinion poll conducted across Ukraine by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation²³ indicated that Ukrainian voters show greater support for gender parity in politics than representatives of political parties. The poll showed a nearly two-fold prevalence of voters who support greater representation of women in local authorities (47%) over those who oppose this idea (25%). Male respondents divided evenly regarding support for or rejection of greater involvement of women in politics – 34% support the idea, 34% consider it not necessary, and 32% answered that it was “difficult to say.” On the other hand, 58% of women respondents support women’s active participation in local self-government, versus 17% who oppose it. Among both men and women respondents, 53% support the idea of legislated equal representation of both women and men on the party candidate lists, while 20% oppose it. The majority of supporters for the implementation of such procedures were women: 61% of female respondents and 40% of male respondents were in favour. Among the factors which prevent women from being more active in politics, only 10% of respondents considered “women’s inability to engage in politics” as one; the most frequent answer being “lack of time because of household duties” (31%).

An analysis of gender stereotypes among voters demonstrates a certain “gender indifference” of most citizens with regard to senior positions within political parties and unions. The majority of voters believe that a leader of a party should possess the right virtues, skills and abilities rather than be a man or a woman specifically. The same research shows that women voters support greater representation of women in senior positions, are inclined to uphold the idea of quotas for women in party structures, and more closely scrutinize party lists for presence of women in their upper, “winning” sections.²⁴

²³ National public opinion survey was conducted for the Ukrainian Women’s Fund and implemented by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation named after Ilko Kucheriv in cooperation with «Ukrainian Sociology Service» company in October 2010 (2011 respondents representing the adult population of Ukraine. Sampling error does not exceed 2.1%)

²⁴ Гендерні стереотипи та ставлення громадськості до гендерних проблем в українському суспільстві / Ю. Саєнко. – К.: Програма розвитку ООН, Центр соціальних експертиз Інституту соціології НАН України, 2007. – С. 35–47

4) Gender Equality Activities in Ukraine

A number of activities aimed at promoting equal rights and opportunities of women and men in Ukraine, including promoting increased political participation of women, have been implemented in Ukraine in the last 10 years. Over this period, women's organizations, international actors and the government have led joint efforts resulting in considerable progress in gender equality, ranging from individual initiatives to the development of official gender policies and the establishment of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality.

The following gender equality activities have been implemented at the national level:

- Adoption of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, in 2005;
- Continuous gender-related work in Parliamentary Committees, including appointment of Secretariat staff to implement the principles of equal rights and opportunities of women and men, and establishment of the Gender Policy Sub-Committee (2006). The task of these specialists is to contribute to the work of Parliamentary Committees substantively, for example, to promote awareness of people's deputies on gender issues, to include gender aspects in the plan of the Committee, to monitor the gender component of bills and proposals, to take into account gender and legal expertise²⁵ and gender statistics, and to ensure cooperation with gender experts and NGOs;²⁶

²⁵ Левченко К. Б. Методологічні підходи щодо здійснення гендерно-правової експертизи національного законодавства України / К. Б. Левченко. — К.: Телесик, 2008. — С.5 — (Програма розвитку ООН в Україні. Програма рівних можливостей ПРООН).

²⁶ Практичні аспекти впровадження принципу рівних прав та можливостей жінок і чоловіків в діяльності Верховної Ради України. / Програма сприяння Парламенту II: Програма розвитку законодавчої політики. За редакцією О.Суслової. – К.Москаленко О.М. ФОП, 2010

- Parliament and Committee hearings, gender analysis of the leadership of central authorities and gender mainstreaming of existing and draft legislation, to draw attention to gender equality and gender aspects at the highest levels of government. These initiatives lead to an introduction of a gender perspective into many other issues discussed, such as poverty, family policy, equality of wages, men's health, etc;
- Adoption of the National Program of Gender Equality Enhancement in Ukrainian Society, until 2010. This strategic document outlined the main priority areas; not all objectives were achieved due to lack of financial and human resources;²⁷
- Some inclusion of gender components into secondary, university and graduate education was initiated, including gender sensitising of school curriculums, manuals and textbooks.²⁸ Gender equality courses were added to university curriculums and gender equality topics were included into some secondary school compulsory subjects²⁹
- Active consultation of civil society and gender experts with public authorities in the development of national policies and amendments to existing laws has taken place;
- Activities to improve the national sex-disaggregated statistics have been initiated, aiming at facilitating analysis of gender equality advancements. Progress in the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated statistics is a collaborative effort of the State Statistics Committee, the Institute of Demography and Social Research, Institute of Economy and Forecasting of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, as well as the EU-UNDP Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights Program in Ukraine.³⁰

These activities have so far not lead to substantive qualitative changes in raising women's participation in political life and decision-making to a higher level. Most politicians persist in their belief that international commitments are just declarations of political will. The accomplishments of the earlier years are at risk after the adoption of the Presidential Edict from December 2010 on administrative reform, ultimately dismantling the

²⁷ Матеріали слухань Комітету Верховної ради України з прав людини, національних меншин і міжнародних відносин на тему «Практика застосування Закону України «Про забезпечення рівних прав та можливостей жінок і чоловіків», Київ, 10 листопада 2010 р.

²⁸ Гендерні перетворення в Україні. Укладач М. Скорик.– Київ. Надруковано в ТОВ «АДЕФ-Україна», 2007. – С. 188

²⁹ Відповіді України на запитання щодо виконання Конвенції з ліквідації всіх форм дискримінації щодо жінок на засіданні Комітету 21 січня 2010. (CEDAW/C/UKR/Q/7/Add.1.)

³⁰ Гендерна статистика України: сучасний стан, проблеми, напрями вдосконалення. Запоріжжя: Друкарський світ, 2011. – С. 49

Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport. Among central executive authorities, there is now no institution in charge of family and gender policy. After restructuring, these functions were not re-assigned to any government agency. Therefore, the topic of gender equality is presently not addressed at the level of state institutions.

In accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action, the basic goals of the national machinery for the realization of gender equality are “to develop, promote, implement, monitor, assess and publicize the policies and mobilize support for them. The fundamental purpose of the national machinery is to secure the enactment of legislation on gender equality and monitor its application, as well as to ensure the effective functioning of the institutions responsible for carrying out the State’s gender policies.”³¹ The absence of a national institution guarding gender equality efforts is a serious threat to previous and future gender equality achievements in Ukraine.

³¹ Організаційні та правові елементи інституційного механізму забезпечення гендерної рівності в Україні. Запоріжжя: Друкарський світ, 2011.-С. 10-12

5) Gender in the Media and Advertising

Media and advertising campaigns in Ukraine, as elsewhere, play a significant role in generating individual gender perceptions. Many people accept stereotypes uncritically, informing their behaviour and attitudes.³² A monitoring study of the Women's Information and Counselling Centre has showed that, over the last year, the number of advertisements with brutal and sexist content in the capital of Ukraine has increased.³³ The research revealed widespread manipulation of gender perceptions, especially in commercials, where women are traditionally presented as housekeepers or objects of sexual desire, while men appear as successful businessmen, winners, and confident decision-makers.³⁴ Such media messages have a negative impact on efforts to promote gender equality, creating a particular image of women, ultimately also creating additional barriers for women's active participation in the Ukrainian society. Such media contributes to the idea that women and men still have traditional and different roles to play in society, justifying the pay gap and strengthening the stereotype of women's incompetence to actively contribute to public and political life.³⁵

The way the media portray women and addresses issues of special concern to women can have a major impact on women's participation in politics. Even more important than the amount of media coverage devoted to women is the quality of such coverage.³⁶ The media often perpetuates stereotypes of

³² Говорун Т.В. Гендерна стереотипізація та егалітарність: виклики часу. – Інститут психології ім. Г.С. Костюка НАПН України; www.ispp.org.ua/files/1285955758.doc

³³ Інформаційно-консультативний жіночий центр; <http://empedu.org.ua>

³⁴ Гендерні ресурси українських мас_медіа: ціна і якість: Практичний посібник для журналістів та працівників ЗМІ./Н.М.Сидоренко, М.М.Скорик, та ін.; ред_упоряд. Н.М.Сидоренко. — К.: "К.І.С.", 2004. — С. 6

³⁵ Оксана Кісь. Гендерні аспекти реклами: сексизм як негативний чинник формування гендерних відносин в Україні// Законотворчість: практичні аспекти впровадження принципу рівних можливостей жінок і чоловіків в діяльності Верховної Ради України/ Програма сприяння Парламенту II: Програма розвитку законотворчої політики. – К.Москаленко О.М. ФОП, 2010 – С. 57–65

³⁶ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter3.htm>

women in their traditional roles rather than conveying a positive image of women as political leaders.³⁷ The quality of media coverage can have a major impact on the advancement of women as candidates and as voters. Despite the small number of women in Ukrainian politics, most of them are actively communicating with the media and participating in public political debates. It is also important to note that politicians' access to media resources in Ukraine may be more dependent on a person's party affiliation (pro-government or opposition) rather than gender. This poses serious challenges for women's advancement in the Ukrainian public life and society overall.

³⁷ Гендерні перетворення в Україні. Укладач М. Скорик.– Київ. Надруковано в ТОВ «АДЕФ-Україна», 2007. – С. 180

6) Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Political Life and Decision-Making in Ukraine

Promoting gender equality both in the areas of politics and legislation as well as in society as a whole is a long and complex process. Gender stereotypes and gender inequalities have been developing over decades; any initiatives to remedy those inequalities must be strategic and long-term oriented. It is also crucial to avoid a limited interpretation of gender equality, as only referring to anti-discrimination measures. Absence of discrimination is not sufficient to promote gender equality, but should rather be accompanied by concrete activities and positive measures contributing to substantive equality, equal opportunities, equal access to opportunities, and equivalent results.³⁸

This section outlines strategies and recommendations proposed as next steps for Ukraine to achieve a more balanced political participation of women and men and for Ukraine to effectively comply with its international gender-equality commitments. To achieve progress, concerted action is required by all key players: the Parliament, the President and the Government, political parties, civil society, the media and the public. The various sub-sections below are addressed, but not limited to each group of mentioned stakeholders, and describe the main strategies and activities prioritized and formulated in accordance with the Ukrainian context and previous achievements:

³⁸ Практичні аспекти впровадження принципу рівних прав та можливостей жінок і чоловіків в діяльності Верховної Ради України. / Програма сприяння Парламенту II: Програма розвитку законодавчої політики. За редакцією О.Суслової. – К.Москаленко О.М. ФОП, 2010. – С. 15-16

- Compliance with Ukraine's international commitments,
- Legislative provisions on representation of both women and men on the political parties' candidate lists.
- Legislative reforms aimed at safeguarding equal rights and opportunities of women and men,
- Affirmative action to overcome gender disparities in politics and decision-making, particularly in the political parties.

Since political parties are seen as the gatekeepers of democracy, governments and international organizations seeking to advance the participation of women in politics should focus on the role of political parties, as follows:

- Voluntary quotas to increase women's participation in party structures,
- Political parties' outreach to women voters,
- Strengthening of public and inter-party dialogue.

Political participation also extends beyond parties. Women can participate in certain aspects of the electoral process independently, for example, by joining civil society organizations. Women's networks, non-governmental organizations, and the media can all provide avenues for increased political participation of women, as follows:

- Public campaigns and support for women's political involvement,
- Gender monitoring of political forces: quality of men's and women's political activity,
- Encouraging a new generation of women politicians,
- Working with men as partners to promote women's active participation in politics,
- Reducing gender-discriminatory media information.

Several practical directions, which require special attention and improvement for efficient implementation of gender-balanced state policies, are as follows:

- Improving collection of sex-disaggregated statistics,
- Balancing the professional and private roles of women and men,
- Gender budgeting and analysis of state-level decisions.

Compliance with Ukraine's international commitments

Ukraine has made a number of commitments under key international documents in the field of elimination of discrimination against women, and particularly relating to women in political life. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³⁹ and the UN Millennium Development Goals. In accordance with Article 7 of the CEDAW, states should “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country.”⁴⁰ Under the UN Millennium Development Goals, a minimum 30% of either gender should be represented in legislative and executive bodies by 2015.⁴¹ In 2010, the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report also observed that “women are underrepresented in the legislature.”⁴²

Following the proclamation of Ukraine's independence, a number of international documents and specific programmes to ensure gender equality were approved at the highest legislative and executive levels, including the following:

- United Nations – Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Optional Protocol (CEDAW) of 1979;
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993;
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the other final documents adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women of 1995;
- Fifty-three of the 183 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions;
- The Millennium Declaration, adopted by General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000.

³⁹ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was ratified through the Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, № 3565-X, December 19, 1980; http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=995_207&p=1270074647320297)

⁴⁰ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, available at: <http://legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/7707>

⁴¹ Gender and the Millennium Development Goals, United Nations Development Programme, available at: http://www.undp.org/women/mdgs/gender_MDGs.pdf

⁴² Ukraine. Presidential Election. 17 January and 7 February 2010. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. – Warsaw, 28 April 2010. – p. 20; available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/67844>

In addition to these legally binding commitments, as a participating State of the OSCE, Ukraine has also recognized the following:

- OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, Sofia, 2004;⁴⁵
- OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, Ljubljana, 2005;⁴⁴
- OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women, Ljubljana, 2005;⁴⁵
- OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/09 on Women's Participation in Politics and Public Life, Athens, 2009.⁴⁶

A firm position of the authorities, which naturally rests on political will and readiness to abide by the nation's international commitments, is the key pre-requisite for achieving gender equality in the political, economic, and social realms in Ukraine. At present, such political will is extremely weak, as is any understanding among the high-level officials that gender parity is a recognised standard for democratic European societies.

In 2010, Ukraine presented to the UN CEDAW Committee its combined sixth and seventh reports on implementation of the Convention. The Committee gave specific recommendations to enhance the efforts in the following directions:⁴⁷

- To strengthen education and training programmes, in particular for judges, lawyers and law enforcement personnel on the scope of the Convention in order to encourage them to utilize the Convention in legal proceedings.
- To strengthen the complaints and sanctions mechanisms, as well as to expand the definition of discrimination against women, to encompass both direct and indirect discrimination.

⁴⁵ Full text of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/23295>

⁴⁴ Full text of the Ministerial Council Decision on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/17450>

⁴⁵ Full text of Ministerial Council Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/17451>

⁴⁶ Full text of the Ministerial Council Decision on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/40710>

⁴⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Forty-fifth session 18 January-5 February 2010, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ukraine (CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/7)

- To strengthen the national machinery by raising its authority and visibility, by establishing it at a higher level of government and by providing it with adequate human and financial resources.
- To formulate and adopt, in cooperation with women's organizations, a new national Plan of Action, which should provide a comprehensive approach to gender equality, with clear targets and benchmarks as well as sufficient financial resources for the implementation of the Plan.
- To adopt and implement temporary special measures, including quotas, aimed at the achievement of substantive gender equality in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, particularly at high levels of decision-making, the electoral process, and in the composition of the Parliament.
- To eliminate persistent gender stereotypes that are discriminatory against women, including through awareness-raising campaigns emphasizing the equal status and responsibilities of women and men in the private and public spheres.
- To encourage the media to eliminate sexist and gender-stereotyped advertisements, and to project positive images of women.

Unfortunately, up to the present, most of these recommendations have not received significant attention from the Ukrainian authorities. Ukraine, as regards gender equality in the context of political representation, retains one of the lowest places worldwide. However, gradual action to eliminate gender disparities in the Ukrainian society and, consequently, in politics, is nonetheless possible. Special emphasis by public and international organisations on Ukraine's need to honour its commitments may prove conducive to their actual implementation.

Legislative provisions on representation of both women and men on the political parties' candidate lists

Internationally recognised standards of electoral process regulation allow for the introduction of gender quotas for parliamentary representation. CEDAW specifically establishes the responsibility of the state to ensure representation of women in elected bodies on par with men and to take relevant special action for this purpose. The issue of adequate participation of women in public office has been addressed in a number of documents of the Council of Europe, the Venice Commission, and the OSCE. Among these documents, we should particularly highlight the following:

- Council of Europe Resolution 1706 on Increasing Women's Representation in Politics of 2010;
- Council of Europe Recommendation 3 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political and Public Decision Making of 2003;
- PACE Recommendation 1676 on Women's Participation in Elections of 2004;
- PACE Recommendation 1899 on Increasing Women's Representation in Politics through the Electoral System of 2010;
- OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality of 2004;
- OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life of 2009;
- OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation of 2010;
- Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of 2002;
- Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in the Field of Political Parties of 2010;
- Venice Commission Report on the Impact of Electoral Systems on Women's Representation in Politics of 2009.

Ukrainian and international gender experts have repeatedly recommended the introduction of legal provisions to increase women's representation in the national legislature, outlining its positive effects on guaranteeing more balanced representation of the whole population as well as facilitating adequate representation of diverse social interests in politics. Implementation of a legal quota could serve as a proven fast-track and temporary method to achieve a gender balance in politics. Once the playing field has been levelled, the quotas can be lifted. At the same time the political parties in the present Parliament of Ukraine do not support the idea of providing quotas for women on party candidates lists. As stated above, the attempt to pass relevant amendments to the laws has failed due to the insufficient number of supporting votes in the Parliament.

Legislative reforms aimed at safeguarding equal rights and opportunities of women and men

To synchronize all national efforts and initiatives on gender equality, it is crucial to establish a central executive authority in charge of ensuring equal rights of women and men, to set up a coordinating body within the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and to adopt a new National Program of Gender Equality for 2011 – 2015.

In order to enable protection from any form of gender discrimination, Ukrainian gender experts recommend including a specific definition of indirect discrimination in the Equal Rights and Opportunities Act (in conformity with Article 1 of CEDAW); launching a complaint processing and response mechanism, and drafting and incorporating directly applicable tools and liabilities in the current legislation of Ukraine. The availability of such mechanisms will entail judicial proceedings of precedent value and court rulings on liability for gender discrimination, thus proving their instrumentality for protection of citizens' rights.

Affirmative action to overcome gender disparities in politics and decision-making, particularly in the political parties

The elimination of gender disparities in political and administrative public bodies requires operational mechanisms of affirmative action and regular gender analysis of public institutions and organizations. It is crucial to implement the principle of parity representation in appointments to official public positions and in the making of cadre reserve lists for the public institutions and state-owned enterprises. It is also important to launch training programs on gender equality standards and gender policy requirements for civil servants, and to take their relevant knowledge into account during selection and appointment procedures.

Voluntary quotas to increase women's participation in party structures

Political observers express concern over the credibility of political parties in Ukraine, which appears to be continuously decreasing. At the same time, the Ukrainian society has rather high expectations for the establishment of new, modern, and democratic political forces. Experts believe that substantial competitive advantages await those political parties, which are ready to display voluntary commitment to democratic principles, which will responsibly form the candidate election lists on a parity basis, and which will take action to identify and involve competent women in their structures and make a recognizable trend of such practices. Proper media coverage and greater public awareness of such voluntary measures of political parties could increase voter support for those parties, especially among women voters, which constitute the majority of the Ukrainian electorate.

Political parties can adopt voluntary targets or quotas for women candidates. These measures are most effective when linked to a specific time frame

and accompanied by training and resources for women party members and candidates. Parties may also adopt a code of conduct that includes requirements regarding participation of women and principles of gender equality within the party. Skill-sharing and mentoring by more experienced women politicians, advanced training programs on the fundamentals of public administration, leadership and public speaking should be pursued by political parties to support women candidates' professional development, and thereby also to create levers for their political party in the electoral campaign competition.

Political party laws can offer incentives to political parties to introduce such measures for increased women's representation, such as additional public funding or additional public broadcast time in case a certain threshold of women's representation on party candidates list has been passed. A so-called "zipper" list, which provides that every other electoral candidate is a woman, may provide the best prospects for women seeking election. In Ukraine, this approach may seem too radical; however this rule applies in municipal elections as well as in elections to the Senate in France and in the European Parliament.⁴⁸

A number of incentives for political parties to increase the number of women in their structures and to promote the participation of women in elections were highlighted in the United Nations *Women and Elections: Guide to Promoting the Participation of Women in Elections*, as follows:

- 1) financial incentives, either through women politicians attracting additional campaign funding opportunities for the party or through public funding;
- 2) increasing party outreach to voters (also to women voters);
- 3) increasing mobilization and communication factors, as women politicians can reach out to women NGOs, asking them to mobilize voters and funding for the party, and using women NGOs as a communication tool;
- 4) increasing campaigning resources: women are known as excellent campaigners and committed volunteers. Most political parties with mass structures rely on women as leaders of their local party branches;
- 5) expanding the party's pool of resources and talents: attracting women politicians who are experts in their professional fields will increase

⁴⁸ Denys Kovryzhenko. Regulation of Political Parties in Ukraine: current state and directions of reforms. Published by Agency for Legislative Initiatives, and OSCE/ODIHR, Kyiv, 2010 (Vistka Ltd) p.84

the level of political debate, and it will attract more professionals and experts to the party platform.⁴⁹

Political party outreach to women voters

Since women numerically prevail in the electorate, each single political party has a greater number of women electors. Political parties should recognize the potential of women's electoral support, as women make up the majority of the Ukrainian voters. Although this argument may be disputed, political parties need to consider the possibility that a greater number of women in the party's leadership may possibly lead to greater support of female voters. An analysis of the top five candidates on the political parties' and blocs' lists in Ukraine shows that during election campaigns, most parties go by the "one woman in the top five" rule, while women rarely make one fifth of the candidates who get into the legislature.⁵⁰ This can easily result in disconnect between political elites and the voters. Political parties need to consider having a larger number of women politicians, who can relate to and connect with women voters by actually serving as elected representatives.

Political parties need to engage in gender awareness campaigning. By addressing gender equality and other issues of special concern to women in their platforms, political parties can increase their relevance and attractiveness to women voters and provide a greater incentive for women to become involved in the political process.

Strengthening of public and inter-party dialogue

The operational provisions of the Law on Political Parties in Ukraine are extremely important for establishing the adequate framework for increased women's political participation.⁵¹ For example, if political parties were required to properly practice internal democracy and employ transparent

⁴⁹ UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women: Women and Elections Guide to promoting the participation of women in elections, p.36–38. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/WomenAndElections.pdf>

⁵⁰ Increasing Women's Representation in Decision Making through Political Parties. Report based on the results of the survey carried out among the political parties represented in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Ukrainian Women Fund, 2010, Kiev, Ukraine

⁵¹ Law of Ukraine on Political Parties in Ukraine, 2001, available at: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/7110>

nomination procedures through primary elections, all-party caucuses, locally-based candidate selection or similar measures, women would generally have a better chance of emerging as election candidates. In contrast, highly-centralized parties that are tightly controlled by a few leaders or organized around well-known personalities—usually men—may be much less receptive to selecting substantial numbers of women as candidates.

It is similarly important to strengthen NGOs' and gender experts' dialogue with representatives of political parties for exchange of information, data analysis, and to discuss ways of achieving gender parity, for the benefit of the whole society. Mere rhetoric on the advancement of women in politics should be avoided; attention should be paid to positive measures to achieve gender parity as well as the benefits of gender parity. Such consultations can be supported by factual data and socio-economic estimates from Ukraine. The ideas and principles of gender equality should be a topic of inter-party discussions as well.

Some political forces in Ukraine have the so-called "women's wings." This mechanism can provide an avenue for women to become active, learn political skills, and develop networks within their political party. The women's groups/wings can contribute to women's advancement and empowerment within political parties. Women's wings can often influence party platforms, especially on issues of special concern to women. Women's wings within political parties are known to be most effective when linked directly to party leadership and decision-making bodies. Otherwise, women's wings may lead to the compartmentalization or marginalization of women in party structures.

Activists of party-affiliated and often co-founded NGOs often seek opportunities for co-operation and dialogue with other civic institutions. Enhancement of partnership between political parties and such organizations may help to introduce gender equality ideas to political leaders in Ukraine. The political forces should realize the need for a broad inter-party dialogue on gender equality and gender parity in Ukrainian politics. Multi-partisan gender caucuses with participation of leading women politicians may eventually become platforms for lobbying and advancement of gender equality principles into Ukrainian political culture.

Public campaigns and support for women's political involvement

Involvement of the broad public in the discussion on women's political involvement will facilitate a deeper understanding of the factors obstructing gender equality and of the political actions required for their elimination. Thus, gender policies will be efficient and effective not only when the word "gender" appears in all laws, but when both public administrators and the citizens realize that gender parity leads to another, better quality of life.

Increasing the awareness among children and youth through educational institutions as well as the awareness of the adult public through media and public events constitute an important aspect in overcoming the existing challenges to women's political participation. The traditional roles for women should be adjusted to also present women politicians as a viable option for political leadership. Cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Ukraine should be strengthened in order to extend education initiatives on gender issues.

Support networks need to be created to encourage women's political involvement. Participation in political endeavours and elections requires considerable administrative, financial and time resources. Women have less access to such resources than men. Efficient support for women running for elected tenure may come from a civic initiative that will provide candidates with training, preparation, and promotion to make maximal use of the limited resources and to win the election race. Such programs at the local level may prove more realistic and in greater demand. Efficient support for women candidates could come in the form of activities modelled after an initiative of the NGO EMILY List (USA), which offers women candidates support, training, and promotion, so they can make the most of limited resources and increase their chances of winning races.⁵²

Gender monitoring of political forces: quality of men's and women's political activity

Political party support for candidate nominations should not be dependent on the philosophies of individual party members, but rather on objective indicators of the candidates' efficiency. This assessment of efficiency should also be reflected in the ratio of men and women in the top layers of the parties' candidates lists and in the party leadership positions. In order to

⁵² More information on this initiative is available at: www.emilyslist.org

assess the efficiency of women and men's political activity, a comparative analysis may assess the activity level of men and women politicians – for example, numbers of submitted regulatory drafts, speeches, and official information requests – , instances of transfer to a different political camp as well as the education level of elected officials and office-runners of both genders. The outcomes of such analysis could be presented to the parties themselves as well as to the general public.

Encouraging a new generation of women politicians

Ukrainian youth displays high political activity and patriotism, pointing to the important role of youth in Ukrainian politics. Support for and increased involvement of young active women, promising political leaders, could help form a new generation of women politicians, keen to pursue community interests and serving as key players towards the development of a democratic and gender-equal society. Young women politicians are crucial in facilitating the establishment of new standards and principles in Ukrainian politics; they could promote different views on the role of women in the political life and could greatly influence the “young” political culture of Ukraine.

Representatives of new political parties and projects may prove less burdened by patriarchal stereotypes and more likely to abide by gender equality principles in their ranks. The specific share of younger political leaders, who, irrespective of party affiliation, already promote more democratic values and more liberal and cosmopolitan outlooks, will gradually grow. The efforts to promote women's political participation by focusing on young political leaders may provide better results, however, the current leading parties and representatives of the older generation should, of course, not be ignored.

Working with men as partners to promote women's active participation in politics

Gender-based discrimination may be rooted out only with a shift in the system of gender roles and stereotypes that support them. However, no stereotypes, especially gender-based ones, are changeable overnight. A review of gender roles and relations is possible only under the condition that both, men and women, participate in such a process, without which common social problems and discrimination cannot be eliminated

To achieve greater support of the gender parity idea among men, it is essential to stress that gender inequality affects both men and women.

For example, Ukrainian society is rather conservative regarding parental duties: in 95% of divorce cases, the decision on child custody is taken in favour of the woman, regardless of the conditions each parent can offer. The traditionally dominant role of men in society remains unchanged despite recent changes in gender relations. Presence of such stereotypes may lead to stress, excessive risk-taking, and family tensions.⁵³

Reducing gender-discriminatory information

Any manifestations of sexism, however complex it may be to define this term, in all spheres of public life – especially in the media, advertising, and public speech – are unacceptable. Instances of sexism should not be just criticized, but rather publicly condemned. In this context, an important task is to develop and launch efficient mechanisms for the elimination of gender-discriminatory content in the media, by incorporating directly applicable rules into the Law on Advertising.

It is crucial to promote greater gender-related awareness and competence of journalists and other media professionals. Mass media employees should possess clear knowledge of gender equality standards, and should maintain a balanced discourse on gender equality. Positive changes will depend upon the level of attention paid to these matters at the institutions of learning, and not only during one-off training programs for practicing journalists.

Improving collection of sex-disaggregated statistics

The quality of administrative decisions in the area of gender policy depends on underlying information, namely on reliable statistical data. Sex-disaggregated statistics help to develop policies proceeding from facts and not presumptions, stereotypes, or ideological positions. Such statistics provide quantitative data that enable analysis of divergences in the situation of men and women and allow observation of the relevant changes or their absence. Such data will allow for serious consideration of priorities and needs of both women and men in Ukraine, and is a must for monitoring and assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs and policies.

⁵³ Елла Лібанова. Круглий стіл на тему: «Становище чоловіків в Україні» 19 лютого 2009 року – К.: «К.І.С.», 2009. – С. 21

Improving the available expertise in gender statistics requires the following:⁵⁴

- Development of data collection methods to account for stereotypes and socio-cultural factors that may generate gender biases;
- Harmonization of Ukrainian statistical indicators with recommended international standards;
- Inclusion of additional observations or indicators, facilitating a more comprehensive analysis of the status of women and men in Ukraine.⁵⁵

The topics that are crucial, but lacking sufficient statistical data for proper gender analysis, include the following:

- Women and men in senior positions (in the economic, educational, and public affairs spheres);
- The pay gap in the salaries of women and men;
- Access to, and participation in, the labour market (including informal occupations);
- Cases of violence against women and men;
- Trafficking in human beings;
- Access to information and communication technologies;
- Time balance for professional and private/family duties of women and men;
- Gender budgeting.

Collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics deserve special attention. Such data should be presented in an understandable and analysis-friendly form that can be easily used by decision – and policy-makers. Sex-disaggregated statistics on the participation of women in decision-making structures should be available for researchers, politicians, and civil society, enabling them to initiate discussions, draw more public attention to the issues, and convince the population about the benefits of promoting gender equality. This data should also be taken into account by senior government and state officials when making policy decisions.

⁵⁴ Галустян Ю., Герасименко Г., Макарова О., Гендерна статистика України: сучасний стан, проблеми, напрями удосконалення. – Проект «Програма рівних можливостей та прав жінок в Україні»: Київ, 2009. – С. 44

⁵⁵ Катерина Левченко. Круглий стіл на тему: «Становище чоловіків в Україні» 19 лютого 2009 року – К.: «К.І.С.», 2009. – С. 32

Balancing the professional and private roles of women and men

The manner in which people make use of their time impacts their social and economic welfare. Different models of time allocation by women and men reflect the differences in their roles, conditions, and opportunities. Time allocation of women and men influences family life, public life, and their ability to pursue and realise their private and professional goals and aspirations. So far, Ukraine has not actively pursued sociological or statistical surveys on the time use of women and men.

The lack of time due to household duties largely impedes women's active participation in the labour market and in public and political life specifically. Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men requires balancing of professional and private duties, the promotion of regular childcare leave for women and men, establishment of friendly working environments for people with family obligations, and easy access to pre-school establishments. All these factors influence the ability of women and men to actively participate in politics and decision-making.

Gender budgeting and analysis of state-level decisions

Gender budgeting assesses gender policy impacts in the financial domain. Gender budgeting makes the issue of gender equality a primary consideration in funding decisions at highest levels. This instrument allows disaggregation of budgets on a gender basis and can identify discrepancies in state funding, from a gender perspective. The aim of this approach is to achieve a properly gender-transparent process of financial decision-making at the government level.⁵⁶

This instrument is also applicable to local government budgets and local city councils' budgeting process. OSCE-ODIHR, UNDP, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung have already implemented training activities in Ukraine on integrating a gender perspective in local policies.⁵⁷ In several pilot cities, this led to the introduction of gender-sensitive budgeting or allocating funds for the promotion of gender equality. Gender budgeting should be introduced at both national and local levels, because it is necessary to

⁵⁶ Бадлендер Д. Гендерные бюджеты. Пособие для тренеров. – Братислава: Програмаразвития ООН, 2005. – С. 23

⁵⁷ Малиняк Б., Іваніна Т., Герашенко С. Гендерне бюджетування в Україні. Фонд ім. Фрідріха Еберта, Київ, 2010; www.fes.kiev.ua

achieve real equality at all levels of society. Gender budgeting is particularly important in facilitating recovery from the current financial crisis, in which women suffered tremendously and disproportionately to men.

Conclusions

Despite the evident progress made by Ukraine in ensuring gender parity, the current situation shows unacceptably low levels of participation of Ukrainian women in political and decision making processes at national level. According to all international commitments and indicators, Ukraine is moving in the wrong direction in terms of promoting women's participation in politics and decision-making.

Despite the generally high level of education and qualification of Ukraine's women, and the fact that women constitute the majority of Ukrainian voters, political parties still do not recognize women's potential on the political stage and often ignore the fact that women's interests are underrepresented. This automatically affects the gender imbalance in many key areas such as employment, welfare, health, education, and economic development. To remedy this situation and move closer to European standards of democracy and gender equality, Ukraine must take a holistic long-term approach and implement the following strategies:

- Compliance with Ukraine's international commitments, ensuring that CEDAW takes precedence over conflicting domestic laws;
- Capacity building and coordination of different levels of government to address gender equality issues;
- Introduction of legislative provisions and amendments to the electoral law, to increase the representation of women in high-level positions of government and state elective bodies;
- Enhancement of public education activities to eliminate the existing gender-based stereotypes;
- Elimination of discrimination against women in employment, through provision of adequate positions and equal pay for equal-value work;
- Providing training programs on gender equality in local and central government, judiciaries, schools, social services, police, and law enforcement;
- Introduction of mechanisms to combat gender-discriminatory information in the media and public life.

To achieve progress, solidarity and cooperation is needed in the efforts of international organizations, women politicians across party lines, and civil society, with a focus on targeting reform-minded politicians and men as allies. Promoting gender equality and balanced participation of women in politics should not be seen as a feminist fight, but as a precondition that any country must fulfil to be a modern 21st century democracy that is representative and accountable.

International organizations should demonstrate persistence and solidarity in supporting initiatives that encourage Ukraine to fulfil its international commitments. Taking into account the preparation for Ukraine's Chairmanship of the OSCE in year 2013, Ukraine might want to assess its record on gender equality and women's political participation if it wishes to have proper international credibility for this role.

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