

# Women participation in politics in the Pollog region, North Macedonia 

- Research on influencing factors


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# Women participation in politics inthe Pollog region, NorthMacedonia-Research oninfluencingfactors 

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North Macedonia

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## Introductory summary

In the Republic of North Macedonia, one of the main challenges for gender equality is the achievement of gender parity in the political and social processes in the community. It should be noted that the legal framework guarantees the same rights for men and women, but the influence of social norms, customs, traditions, economic conditions and institutional barriers are a serious obstacle to strengthening and advancing the position of women in this area.

## Summary of Methodology

This research was conducted in the Polog planning region on a territory of 2416.91 km , which has a total of 184 settlements with 319,916 inhabitants, of which $73.2 \%$ are Albanians, $18.4 \%$ are Macedonians, $5.7 \%$ are Turks, $1.9 \%$ Roma, o.01\%, Vlachs, o.32\% Serbs 0.08\% Bosniaks and $0.66 \%$ other ethnicities. According to the data of the Statistical Office, out of the total population, 161,005 are men and 158,911 are women. This study included women and men over the age of 18. The survey covered 498 ( $44 \%$ men and $56 \%$ women) respondents. The sample is representative because the respondents reflect the ethnic structure of the settlements (urban and rural dimension), age, educational level in the Polog region.

## Summary of the analysis of the survey data

Respondents answered the question of political activity. $35 \%$ of the respondents are voters of a political party, $11 \%$ are members of a political party, $9 \%$ are supporters of a certain political party, $5 \%$ are activists of a political party, while as much as $40 \%$ have no connection with political activity. If we analyze the answers by gender, it can be concluded that the $\%$ of men involved in politics is higher compared to women ( $11.9 \%$ vs. $9.7 \%$ ), only $2.5 \%$ are political party activists, and the \% of women who are voters only or have no interest is also higher compared to men. Respondents answered the question whether the elections in the Republic of Northern Macedonia are fair and democratic, $37.3 \%$ of respondents believe that to some extent the elections are democratic. As many as $29.7 \%$ disagree and $16.3 \%$ do not agree at all that the elections are fair and democratic. Citizens' perception of women's involvement in political life is important because it is the basis for designing interventions for increased participation of women in political life. As many as $33.7 \%$ of respondents believe that women are not involved in political life, interestingly, $7 \%$ of respondents did not answer this question, and only $14.1 \%$ believe that women are involved in political life. Every second person surveyed, regardless of gender, believes that women are not at all represented in leading positions at the central or national level. Every 10 women surveyed thinks that women are very much and largely involved in leading positions at the national level.
Consequently, the perception of the citizens in the Polog planning region is that women are excluded from the leading positions at the central level. Citizens believe that the determination to get involved in political life is influenced by several factors. The largest percentage of citizens (2/3) believe that prejudice and the perception that politics is dirty and corrupt, influence women not to get involved in the political life of RNM. About $50 \%$ of respondents believe that the lack of support from political parties and family, and support from husbands, greatly affect a woman's determination to get involved in politics. Interesting is the finding, compared to other factors, that education is relatively less correlated with women's involvement in politics (38\%). Respondents also answered questions about support mechanisms for achieving gender equality in politics. Consequently, $62.2 \%$ support the measures adopted by law to support women candidate lists, $52 \%$ believe that women candidates should have financial support, and $55 \%$

believe that it is necessary to work with political parties to introduce gender parity in party structures. Every 10th respondent is against affirmative action measures to promote gender parity in politics.

## Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The citizens in the Polog planning region believe that women are not sufficiently involved in the political life in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Citizens believe that women politicians, politicians from non-majority communities and young politicians have a secondary role in the political life of RNM. However, the largest percentage of citizens believe that prejudices and the perception that politics is dirty and corrupt have an impact on women not to get involved in the political life of RNM. In the Polog planning region there is no tradition of organization of women in civil society, in order to articulate the interests and needs of women. Deep-rooted cultural norms on the division of responsibilities of women and men in the overall life, that determine certain roles by which a woman identifies with the home and family, and a man with management and leadership lead to a state of (self) exclusion of women from politics. The limited number of women candidates in political parties is the reason for the lower representation of women. The limited turnout is related to the low percentage of women candidates, not to the lack of voter support. Depending on the electoral system, such differences may be due either to gender gaps in political ambitions or to the process of recruitment and selection within political parties.

To strengthen the capacities of the institutional machinery in LSGU in the Polog region because they are the main drivers of the implementation of gender equality policies at the local level as a nucleus of any social change. Insisting on the introduction of special measures at the level of the executive power at central and local level, by setting special quotas for the executive positions as well. To encourage public debate by civil society, in order to inform citizens, specifically women, about the need to include women in public and political life. The Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and women's civic associations to organize trainings for political parties in order to raise their awareness on gender equality and gender parity in party structures. Introduce a gender quota in political parties in order to improve women's access to decision-making structures, with the aim of creating a "role model" for women active in political parties in order to inspire women to be more actively involved in politics.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, one of the main challenges for gender equality is the achievement of gender parity in the political and social processes in the community. It should be noted that the legal framework guarantees the same rights for men and women, but the influence of social norms, customs, traditions, economic conditions and institutional barriers are a serious obstacle to strengthening and advancing the position of women in this area.

Although equal before the law, as a result of the mental and traditional code, women in the Republic of Northern Macedonia are not yet involved in political processes. The basic principle of democracy is the involvement of all community segments in the public policy process.

The importance of citizens' participation in the process of policy making is emphasized in various international documents, while at the national level there are a series of legal documents that envisage participation of young people and young women in this process. Some of the most important are the Electoral Code, Law on Members of Parliament, Law on LocalSelf-Government, the Law on Equal Opportunitiesfor Women and Men, the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, as well as many strategic documents that call for involvement of citizens and their active participation in the development and implementation of the policies of the respective strategic goals. The laws provide a legal basis for various mechanisms through the right to be elected or appointed (indirect democracy), but also through the right of citizen participation, civil initiatives, public assembly, referendum, to decide on public policies (direct democracy).

The mechanisms of citizen participation, especially women, as an opportunity to influence policies have not yet been fully used, are not functional and efficient. It is evident that the implementation of these mechanisms is sporadically and is mainly initiated by initiatives from the international community. This is due to the lack of commitment, resources and leadership of the authorities to promote and strengthen women's participation on the one hand, but it is also a consequence of the lack of civil society organizations and lack of awareness of civic activism, especially among women to put pressure on decision-makers for more substantial participation of women in political processes. Although each of the aspects elaborated above can be found in the mechanisms for participation in institutions at central and local level, it is evident that there is no evidence that there is a balanced approach to the participation of men and women in the political process.

Comparative experiences indicate that stereotypes about women's capacities have a negative effect on women's participation in political and public life. These stereotypes are the basis for marginalization and segregation not only in the leading decision-making positions at the local and central level but also (self) exclusion from the participatory political and social processes in the local community. We also face this situation in the Polog region where women do not challenge the dominant cultural norms enough, primarily because they do not have the support of the community (family, CSOs, political parties, institutions at local and central level), lack of

"positive role model" as a driver of change and consequently women are still excluded from political and social processes. The fact that there is a significant gender gap in the decisionmaking processes at central and local level is evident. Although on the one hand there is a significant increase in the representation of women in the national parliament (by 34\%), women, especially those belonging to the non-majority are less represented in ministerial positions, in senior positions in the diplomatic service.

## METHODOLOGY

The research is focused on two dimensions;

Analysis of the legal framework that regulates participation in the political life in the Republic of North Macedonia and

Field Research, by surveying women and men from the Polog region regarding access and participation in political life through the mechanisms of indirect and direct democracy.

The research is based on a primary resource (survey). The Institute for Leadership and Public Policy designed the research methodology by hiring an expert in order to assess the attitude of women and men in the Polog region, regarding the issue of political activism.

The details related to the research instruments, the approach and the sample are presented below in this document.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

It should be noted that the legal framework in the Republic of North Macedonia has set the basic principles for equality, relating to the economic and social rights. In this context, Article 9 of the Constitution reads: "Citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia are equal in freedoms and rights, regardless of their gender, race, skin color, national and social affiliation, political and religious beliefs, property and social status. ${ }^{11}$ Citizens are equal before the Constitution and the laws.

The attention to gender equality is also seen in the fact that the political actors in the Republic of North Macedonia have adopted a special Law on Equal Opportunities. This law regulates the issue of gender equality, promoting equal opportunities between women and men in the political, economic, social and educational spheres. The law sanctions the new terminology of

equal opportunities and equal treatment as the most important for achieving equal opportunities. It determines the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in the political, economic, social, educational, cultural, health, civic and any other sphere of social life. The law determines two types of measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men:

General measures that involve changing social and cultural customs in relation to the behavior of women and men to remove prejudice, as well as any other practice based on the inferiority or superiority of one or the other sex or the traditional social role of men or women. 2

Special (temporary) measures taken to overcome the existing unfavorable social status of women and men, resulting from systematic discrimination or structural gender inequality arising from historical and socio-cultural circumstances in order to remove barriers or provide a special contribution to achieving an equal starting point, equal treatment and balanced participation. Special measures, in context of the law, include the following measures that are relevant to the mapping study:
a) Positive measures, where under equal conditions priority is given to persons of the underrepresented sex, until equal representation is achieved or the goal for which the measures are taken is achieved.
б) Encouraging measures to provide special incentives or to introduce special benefits in order to eliminate the circumstances that cause unequal participation of women and men, or unequal status of one sex versus the other, or unequal distribution of social goods and resources. 3

Similarly, the law determines that the basic measures for equal opportunities between women and men are measures for systematic inclusion of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in the process of designing, implementing and monitoring policies and budgets. 4

[^0]The law obligates state administration bodies and local self-government units toincorporate the principle of equal opportunities in strategic plans and budgets and to monitor the effects and impact of their programs on women and men. 5

However, for the regulation of women's rights and gender equality in politics, the most important are the amendments to the Electoral Code from 2006 which determined the inclusion of at least $30 \%$ of women candidates on party lists, and thus every third place on the list should be for less the representedsex. 6

The amendments to the Electoral Code from 2015 provided even greater inclusion of women, with at least $40 \%$ women, and in every three places, at least one place belongs to the underrepresented gender (women) and additionally at least one more place every ten places. The same applies to the candidate lists for members of the council of the municipality and the city of Skopje. 7

In the context of the legal framework, the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination of 2020 should be mentioned, because it addresses all forms of discrimination, including that based on gender and gender identity. Pursuant to the Anti-Discrimination Law, a Commission for Protection against Discrimination has been established as an autonomous and independent complaints body, and it translates detailed complaint procedures for any person who believes he or she has been a victim of discrimination in various sectors of public or private life.

## FIELD RESEARCH

## a) Polog region, general data

The Polog region in the period from May 2008 has been established as a planning region according to the Law on Equal Regional Development and is one of the eight regions of the Republic of North Macedonia. This region includes the municipalities: Tetovo, Gostivar, Mavrovo and Rostuse, Zelino, Tearce, Bogovinje, Vrapciste, Jegunovce and Brvenica.

On a territory of 2416.91 km , there are a total of 184 settlements inhabited by 319,916 inhabitants of which $73.2 \%$ are Albanians, $18.4 \%$ are Macedonians, $5.7 \%$ are Turks, $1.9 \%$ Roma, $0.01 \%$, Vlachs, $0.32 \%$ Serbs $0.08 \%$ Bosniaks and 0.66 \% other ethnicities. According to the data of the Statistical Office, out of the total population, 161005 are men and 158911 are women

[^1]
## b) Samples of research

This study included women and men over the age of 18 . The survey covered $498(44 \%$ men and $56 \%$ women) respondents. The sample is representative because the respondents reflect the ethnic structure of the settlements (urban and rural dimension), age, educational level in the Polog region.

## c) Approach

The field research was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire composed by experts hired by the Institute for Leadership and Public Policy Tetovo, which is divided into several parts. The questionnaire is composed of general questions with demographic data for the respondents, questions related to the political activity, questions related to the participation of women in the political life in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The field research was conducted through a survey of 498 respondents from the Polog region. The research was done according to the random sample (method). First, the approximate group in each municipality and settlement was identified, then the number of respondents were determined, after which training was organized for the persons who conducted the survey. The random sample was chosen for this research, because in the Polog region there were no studies on the attitude of women. The questionnaire used in this survey is a structural questionnaire, consisting of 19 questions, divided into various thematic sections. It is composed in order to obtain qualitative and quantitative data that will provide information on the participation of women in political life in the Republic of North Macedonia.

## Variables

Ethnicity-Macedonian,Albanian,Turkish,Roma,Serbian,Vlach,Bosniakandothermodalities.
Settlement - urban and rural modality
Age - modalities 18-25 years, 26-33 years, 34-41 years, 42-49 years and 50+ years.
Education - modalities: Incomplete primary education, completed primary education, completed secondary education, completed higher education (faculty), completed postgraduate studies.

Employment - modalities: employed in the public sector, employed in the private sector, employed in the civil society (non-governmental sector), farmer, housewife, pensioner, pupil / student, unemployed, etc.

Net monthly average income in the family- Modalities: up to 9000 denars, from 9001 to 15,000 denars, from 15,001 denars to 21,000 denars, from 21,001-27,000 denars from 27,001-35,000 denars, from 35,001-41,000 denars, more than 41,001 denars.

The main results of the research in these areas are presented below, followed by the general recommendations.

## g) Overview of variables

## Ethnicity

Wanting to have adequate representation of all communities in the survey, the survey samples pay special attention to the variable - ethnicity. Thus, in this survey, out of a total of 498 respondents, $76 \%$ are of Albanian ethnicity, $21 \%$ are of Macedonian ethnicity, $1.8 \%$ are of Turkish ethnicity, $0.8 \%$ are of Roma ethnicity and $0.2 \%$ identified as other (see Chart 1).

Chart 1 Ethnicity


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North
Macedonia"
This structure of the respondents is almost appropriate for the structure of the population according to ethnicity. Regarding the inclusion of women in politics according to ethnicity, it is
crucial because it presents possible differences between communities in terms of practices and access of women from different ethnic groups to politics. The differential findings according to this variable are highlighted if there is a need for special interventions based on ethnicity in raising the awareness of women and communities for involvement in politics.

## Gender

Gender is perhaps the most important variable, according to which different perceptions of women and men about participation in politics will be determined. According to the survey data, $56 \%$ of the respondents are women and $44 \%$ of the respondents are men (see Chart 2).

Chart 2 Gender


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## Dwelling

Creating attitudes depending on the typology of the settlement, and different sociological and gender analysis plays an important role in representing a phenomenon but also in designing and targeting specific interventions for urban and rural settlements. Such an approach is necessary in this study where the issue of women's participation in politics is treated, ie identification of the views of respondents by settlements because the trend of changes in value systems at micro levels (small communities) plays an important role in women's active
participation in politics. In many cases in the context of analyzing issues related to women, the primary indicators of the analysis are city-based referents, because due to the influence of social factors, the expectation of changing some traditional practices in cities is much higher compared to rural municipalities. $43.5 \%$ of respondents live in urban municipalities while $56.5 \%$ in rural municipalities (see Table1).

Table 1 Respondents by municipalities

|  |  | \% |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Municipality of Tetovo | 34.5 |  |
| Municipality of Gostivar | 9.0 |  |
| Municipality of Zelino | 8.4 |  |
| Municipality of Vrapciste | 11.2 |  |
| Municipality of Tearce | 11.6 |  |
| Municipality of Jegunovce | 4.2 |  |
| Municipality of Brvenica | 6.4 |  |
| Municipality of Bogovinje | 11.4 |  |
| Municipality of Mavrovo i Rostuse | 3.0 |  |
| Total | 100.0 |  |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## Education

Research shows that an important tool for strengthening a woman's position is education. The research addresses the relationship between the educational level of the respondents and the exercise of the right to participate in politics. It is an obvious fact that there is a correlation between the level of education and politics, i.e. a correlation between the prestige of the profession, the level of education and the possibility of involvement in politics. If the
educational structure is analyzed, it is obvious that $2.6 \%$ of the respondents have not completed primary education, $13 \%$ have completed primary education, $27.7 \%$ have secondary education, $43.4 \%$ have higher education and only $13.1 \%$ have completed postgraduate studies (see Chart 3) .

Chart 3 Education


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## Age

In this part, the majority of respondents belong to the age group 34-41 years ( $26.5 \%$ ), followed by the age group 26-34 years (22.5\%), 42-49 with (18.1\%), group aged 18-25 years (17.7\%) and aged $50+(15 \cdot 3 \%)$.

Generational differences are issues that are the subject of scientific research in the context of trends, values and tastes. This research tries to address the issues of policy approach by analyzing the differences between different age groups regarding the realization and definition of the prominent problem.

## Employment variable

Comparative experience shows that the access to the labor market, employment sector is directly correlated with the opportunities for women to participate in politics, because unpaid labor combined with long or inflexible work engagements can be a barrier to more active involvement of women in politics. Consequently, this research also analyzed the relationship between employment status and involvement in politics. Regarding the employment status, $33.7 \%$ of the respondents - are employed in the public sector, $25.1 \%$ are employed in the private sector, $13.5 \%$ are unemployed, $10 \%$ are students, and $9.8 \%$ are housewives (see Chart 4).

Chart 4 Employment status


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## Economic Status

One of the questions in the questionnaire was related to the economic status, i.e. the income in the family. $22.1 \%$ of the respondents reported incomes of 27000-35000 denars, $20.9 \%$ of 210001-27000 denars, $13.9 \%$ of 9001-15000 denars, $13.7 \%$ of 15001-21000 denars and $6 \%$ with less than 9000 denars (see Chart 5) .


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## A) Political Activity

Respondents answered the question of political activity. $35 \%$ of the respondents are voters of a political party, $11 \%$ are members of a political party, $9 \%$ are supporters of a certain political party, $5 \%$ are activists of a political party, while as many as $40 \%$ have no connection with political activity. If we analyze the answers by gender, it can be concluded that\% of men involved in politics is higher compared to women ( $11.9 \%$ vs.9.7\%), only $2.5 \%$ are political party activists, and\% of women who are only voters or not interested is also higher compared to men (see Chart 6).

Chart 6 Political Activity


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents answered the question whether the elections in the Republic of Northern Macedonia are fair and democratic, $37.3 \%$ of respondents believe that to some extent the elections are democratic. As many as $29.7 \%$ disagree and $16.3 \%$ do not agree at all that the elections are fair and democratic (see Table 2).

Table 2 Elections are fair and democratic

## Do you think that the elections in the Republic of Northern \% Macedonia are fair and democratic?

| I completely agree | 4.2 |
| :--- | :--- |
| I agree | 14.3 |
| To some extent I agree | 37.3 |
| I do not agree | 27.9 |
| I do not agree at all | 16.3 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Active suffrage is the basis of direct democracy, which unfortunately in recent years is less and less used by citizens due to the feeling of apathy and distrust of political elites. However, according to the survey results, as many as $87 \%$ of respondents voted in the last election, every 10th respondent did not vote in the last election (See Chart 7).

Chart 7 Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections?

## Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections?



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## B. Women's participation in political life

The perception of citizens about the inclusion of women in political life is important because it is the basis for designing interventions for increased participation of women in political life. As many as $33.7 \%$ of respondents believe that women are not involved in political life, interestingly that $7 \%$ of respondents did not answer this question, and only $14.1 \%$ believe that women are involved in political life (see Table 3).

Table 3: Women are sufficiently represented in the political life in RNM

## Do you think that women are sufficiently \% represented in the political life in RNM ?

| Yes | 14.1 |
| :--- | :--- |
| To some extent | 45.2 |
| No | 33.7 |
| No answer | 7.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

[^2]Every second respondent, regardless of gender, believes that women are not represented at all in leading positions at the central or national level. Every 10 women respondent thinks that women are very much and largely involved in leading positions at the national level. Consequently, the perception of citizens in the Polog region is that women are excluded from leading positions at the central level (see Table 4).

Table 4: Representation of women at the national level

|  | Women sufficiently represented / In a leading position at the national level |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Not at all | Not much | To some <br> extent | Too much | To a large <br> extent | No answer |
| Male | $8.7 \%$ | $37.9 \%$ | $37.0 \%$ | $11.9 \%$ | $4.1 \%$ | $.5 \%$ |
| Female | $\mathbf{1 1 . 8 \%}$ | $40.5 \%$ | $36.2 \%$ | $7.9 \%$ | $3.6 \%$ | $0.0 \%$ |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Local self-government is the nucleus of direct democracy and a platform for the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. It is interesting to note that the $\%$ of men who think that women are not represented at all is higher than the $\%$ of women ( $48.4 \%$ vs. $48.2 \%$ ). While $11.9 \%$ of men in the Polog region believe that women are highly represented, $8.2 \%$ of women agree with this statement (see Table5).

Table 5 Representation of women in local self-government

| Women represented / In local self-government |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Not at all | Not <br> much | To some <br> extent | Too much | To a large <br> extent | No answer |
| Male | $13.7 \%$ | $34.7 \%$ | $33.8 \%$ | $11.9 \%$ | $4.1 \%$ | $1.8 \%$ |
| Female | $8.2 \%$ | $40.5 \%$ | $39.4 \%$ | $8.2 \%$ | $3.6 \%$ | $0.0 \%$ |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

More than $50 \%$ of the citizens in the planning region in the Polog region, regardless of gender, believe that women have little or no involvement in leading positions at the local level. Only $4.1 \%$ of men and $3.6 \%$ of women think that women are largely involved in leading positions at the local level. While $16.4 \%$ of men think that women are completely excluded, the percentage of women who share this opinion is lower (10.8\%). Interestingly, only $0.5 \%$ of men and women did not answer this question (see Table 6).

|  | Women sufficiently represented / In aleading position at thelocallevel |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | Not at all | Not much | To some <br> extent | Too much | To a large <br> extent | No <br> answer |
| Male | $16.4 \%$ | $33.3 \%$ | $31.1 \%$ | $14.6 \%$ | $4.1 \%$ | $.5 \%$ |
| Female | $10.8 \%$ | $40.1 \%$ | $36.2 \%$ | $9.0 \%$ | $3.6 \%$ | $.4 \%$ |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

The basic thread of political activism in our society are the political parties, and the involvement in these structures is a precondition for leadership positions in the local selfgovernment and the institutions of the central government. This indicator indicates that only $1 / 4$ of the surveyed men and $1 / 5$ of the surveyed women believe that many or to a large extent women are included in the structures of political parties. $51.6 \%$ of women think that they are involved to some extent, while the $\%$ of men who think that women are fully involved in political parties is almost twice as high as women's (see Table 7).

Table 7 Representation of women in political parties

## Women sufficiently represented / through political parties

|  | Not at all | Not much | To some <br> extent | Too much | To a large <br> extent | No <br> answer |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Male | $8.2 \%$ | $26.5 \%$ | $38.8 \%$ | $22.8 \%$ | $3.2 \%$ | $.5 \%$ |
| Female | $4.7 \%$ | $22.9 \%$ | $51.6 \%$ | $17.2 \%$ | $3.6 \%$ | $0.0 \%$ |

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Direct democracy, which is manifested through civic activism but also through established mechanisms implemented by the institutions to involve the citizens in the process of setting priorities, is based on a participatory and inclusive approach to governance. Only $6.8 \%$ of women in the Polog region believe that they are to a large extent involved in the policy-making process. $30 \%$ of men and women surveyed believe that women are not involved at all in the policy-making process (see Table 8)

Table 8 Women involved in various organizations that have influenced policy making

> Women insufficiently represented / through various organizations that have an impact on policy making

|  | Not at all | Not much | To some <br> extent | Too much | To a large <br> extent | No <br> answer |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Male | $6.4 \%$ | $23.7 \%$ | $39.7 \%$ | $20.1 \%$ | $10.0 \%$ | $0.0 \%$ |
| Female | $5.0 \%$ | $24.4 \%$ | $41.9 \%$ | $21.5 \%$ | $6.8 \%$ | $.4 \%$ |

## Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

The perceptions of the citizens on the influence of various segments of the political elites are important in order to determine the dynamics of the relations and the influence in the political life in RNM. Citizens assessed the influence of male politicians, female politicians, those from non-majority communities as well as young politicians. According to the findings, $69.3 \%$ of respondents believe that men politicians have an influence in political life, while $37 \%$ of respondents believe that women have some influence, it is interesting to find that as much as $1 / 3$ of respondents believe that women have little or no influence on political life in RNM. Given the fact that in the Polog region the majority population belongs to the non-majority communities is interesting the finding that as many as $41 \%$ of respondents believe that leaders and politicians from non-majority communities have little or no influence on political life in RNM. Citizens' belief in the influence of young politicians and leaders in political life is even lower, only $17 \%$ of respondents believe that young politicians and leaders have an impact on political life in RNM (see Chart 8).

Chart 8: Impact on political life


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North
Macedonia"

Of particular interest for the analysis is the perception of citizens about the factors that influence the determination to get involved in political life. Respondents with the Likert scale
model assessed the extent to which social and cultural attitudes about the role of women in society, prejudice, religion, lack of finances, lack of support from political parties, perception of politics as dirty or corrupt, lack of family support and men, lack of support from the electorate, lack of education, lack of experience can affect the determination of women to get involved in political life in RNM. Citizens believe that the determination to get involved in political life is influenced by several factors. The largest percentage of citizens (2/3) believe that prejudices and the perception that politics is dirty and corrupt influence women not to get involved in the political life of RNM. About $50 \%$ of respondents believe that the lack of support from political parties and the family, and support from the husband too much or to a large extent affect a woman's determination to get involved in politics. Interesting is the finding, compared to other factors, that education is relatively less correlated with women's involvement in politics (38\%). The perception of religion is similar, with only $35 \%$ of respondents believing that it too much or to a large extent influences a woman's determination to get involved in politics. 34\% of respondents believe that the lack of finances to some extent affects the determination of women to be actively involved in politics. The findings indicate that the problem of inclusion is a consequence of most of the above factors and consequently public policies in this area should be a combination of interventions in the family, community, political parties and intervention to strengthen the socio-economic position of women in the community (see Chart 9). It is an interesting finding that there are no significant differences in perception by gender, but the exception is prejudice, while only $21.5 \%$ of men think that prejudice has a great impact, while the $\%$ of women who think that prejudice has a great effect is twice as high. 40.1\%.

# How much do the following factors influence women's determination to get involved in politics? 



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"




 ■ ■

■

Respondents believe that special measures and programs should be introduced in order to increase women's participation in politics. While the vast majority of $74 \%$ are in favor of such measures, interesting is the high \% of citizens (15\%) who do not have an opinion, while $7 \%$ are against such measures (see Chart 10).

Chart 10: Should there be special measures
Should there be special measures / programs in order to increase the participation of women in the


## Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents also answered questions about support mechanisms for achieving gender equality in politics. Consequently, $62.2 \%$ support the measures adopted by law to support women candidate lists, $52 \%$ believe that women candidates should have financial support, and $55 \%$ believe that it is necessary to work with political parties to introduce gender parity in party structures. Every 10th respondent is against affirmative action measures to promote gender parity in politics. An interesting finding is that as much as $16 \%$ of the total number of respondents did not answer thesequestions.

Chart 11 Measures for gender equality in politics


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North
Macedonia"

Respondents also answered questions about the existing policy of quotas for women's participation in politics. Consequently, $8 \%$ of the citizens are against quotas in the legislative power / parliament of RSM, while more than 90\% agree to some extent or completely with this policy. Only $29 \%$ of respondents do not agree with the statement that quotas should be applied only temporarily, $2 / 3$ of respondents believe that parties should set higher affirmative quotas than what is legally established quota. Interestingly, $85 \%$ of respondents believe that quotas should be accompanied by other awareness-raising measures, about $30 \%$ of respondents believe that quotas are discriminatory mechanisms (see Chart 12). The findings indicate the need to raise awareness of the mechanisms implemented to improve the position of segments of the population that / which for cultural and structural reasons are excluded from these processes and the need for specific interventions to improve access to resources, needs, impact etc.

Chart 12: Perception about quotas


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents answered the question about the need to raise citizens' awareness of gender parity, $81 \%$ of citizens support measures to raise awareness, $7 \%$ are against while $11 \%$ do not know if there is a need for such mechanisms (see Chart 13).

## Chart 13: Need for awareness raising

Do you think that the awareness of the citizens should be raised
in order to ask the political parties to make the gender representation as good as possible, i.e. to have more women in politics and decision- making?


■ Yes

- No

I I don't
know No
answer

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents answered the question about the adequacy of the tools that decision makers should implement to raise public awareness of gender parity, $20.9 \%$ of citizens believe that panels should be organized with citizens, $20 \%$ believe that public should be organized meetings, $19.3 \%$ think that they should use social networks, about $9 \%$ think that citizens should visit their homes and about $5 \%$ think that internet e-mail and mail should be used to inform citizens about this problem. (see Chart 14).


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The citizens in the Polog planning region believe that women are not sufficiently involved in the political life in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Every second respondent in the Polog planning region believes that the elections in RNM are not fair and democratic.

The citizens in the Polog planning region believe that men politicians have a monopoly and receive influence on the political life in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Citizens believe that women politicians, politicians from non-majority communities and young politicians have a secondary role in the political life in RNM.

The problem of inclusion is a consequence of several factors and consequently public policies in this area should be a combination of interventions in the family, community, political parties and intervention to strengthen the socio-economic position of women in the community.

However, the largest percentage of citizens believe that prejudices and the perception that politics is dirty and corrupt have an impact on women not to get involved in the political life of SRM.

The citizens of the Polog planning region believe that the central and local government should intervene with measures to increase the participation of women in political life.

In the Polog planning region there is no tradition of organizing women in civil society, in order to articulate the interests and needs of women.

Deep-rooted cultural norms for the division of responsibilities of women and men in the overall life, which determine certain roles by which a woman identifies with the home and family, and a man with management and leadership leads to a state of (self) exclusion of women from politics.

The economic situation also has an impact on participation in politics, women's professions are professions that bring less income, the number of women-owned companies and the percentage of women who own real estate compared to other planning regions is lower. Consequently, given the fact that there is a practice in our political culture for candidates to invest in their campaigns, it becomes clear that the economic situation is insurmountable for women in the Polog region.

The limited number of women candidates in political parties is the reason for the lower representation of women. The limited turnout is related to the low percentage of women candidates, not to the lack of voter support. Depending on the electoral system, such
differences may be due either to gender gaps in political ambitions or to the process of recruitment and selection within political parties.

Research shows that men in the Polog region recognize the need to close gender gaps and support policy changes to achieve gender parity. This means that there are men who would support the process of increasing women's participation in politics and who can be very useful allies in the process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen the capacities of the institutional machinery in the Units of Local SelfGovernment in the Polog region because they are the main drivers of the implementation of gender equality policies at the local level as a nucleus of any social change.

Investing in child care facilities and introducing measures that would contribute to balancing family responsibilities, in most rural municipalities by 2020 there were no kindergartens and care institutions for the elderly.

Insisting on the introduction of special measures at the level of the executive power at central and local level, by setting special quotas for the executive positions as well.

Municipalities that gravitate to the Polog planning region, commissions for equal opportunities between women and men at the municipal level and other appropriate mechanisms for achieving gender equality and respect for human rights, should monitor the involvement of women in politics.

To encourage public debate by civil society, in order to inform citizens, specifically women, about the need to include women in public and political life.

A more precise analysis of the legal framework is needed to consider possible changes and overcome "bottlenecks" in order to reduce the space for excluding women from political and public life.

CSOs in cooperation with the institutional mechanisms for achieving gender equality to initiate awareness raising campaigns and information on the need for inclusion of women in political life. Campaigns should design a specific approach to rural and urban areas, different ethnic communities and different information mechanisms that will be acceptable to the appropriate age groups.

The Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and women's civic associations to organize trainings for political parties in order to raise their awareness on gender equality and gender parity in party structures.

The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and human rights to prepare and implement programs and long-term strategies that will influence the change of prejudices, patterns and models of behavior of men and women in society.

Institutional mechanisms for achieving gender equality and civil society organizations to monitor the implementation of laws and strategies for the protection of human rights and freedoms of women and girls.

It should be introduced a gender quota in political parties in order to improve women's access to decision-making structures, with the aim of creating a "role model" for women active in political parties in order to inspire women to be more actively involved in politics.

Support for women's interest groups in order to increase the visibility and legitimacy of these structures and to sensitize the community about the need for more substantial involvement of women in public life in the community.

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## ANNEX

## Structured questionnaire

Nr. $\qquad$

This questionnaire is an integral part of the project "Increasing women's participation in politics in Northern Macedonia". The purpose of this research is to better understand the drivers and blockers of women's participation in politics in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. These data will help design adequate approaches to raise citizens' awareness of the gender dimension of political participation and create a welcoming and supportive environment for women's participation in political life in the Republic of Northern Macedonia.

This questionnaire is anonymous

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESPONDENT

## 1.Dwelling

1. Municipality of Tetova
2. Municipality of Gostivar
3. Municipality of Zelino
4. Municipality of Vrapciste
5. Municipality of Tearce
6. Municipality of Jegunovce
7. Municipality of Brvenica
8. Municipality of Bogovinje
9. Municipality of Mavrovo and Rostusha

## 2. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

## 3. Ethnicity

1. Macedonian
2. Albanian
3. Turk
4. Roma
5. Other $\qquad$
6. Age
7. 18-25
8. 26-33
9. $34-41$
10. $42-49$
11. $50+$

## 5. Employment status

1. Employed in the public sector
2. Employed in the private sector
3. Farmer
4. Housewife
5. Pensioner
6. Student
7. Unemployed
8. Other $\qquad$

## 6. Education

1. Incomplete primary education
2. Completed primary education
3. Completed secondary education
4. Higher education
5. Completed post-graduate studies (Master's or PhD)
6. Economic status (net monthly income of your family in the last two years)
7. Less than 9000 денари
8. From 9001-15000 денари
9. From 15001-21000 денари
10. From 21001-27000 денари
11. From 27001-35000 денари
12. From 35001-41000 денари
13. More than 41001 денари

Approximately, how much you and your family spend per month $\qquad$ (denars) ..

## ISSUES RELATED TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY

8. What political activity do you personally have?
9. I am a member of a political party
10. I am an activist of a political party
11. I am a supporter of a political party
12. I am just a voter of a political party
13. I am none of the above
14. Do you think that the elections in the Republic of Northern Macedonia are fair and democratic?

I totally agree
I agree
To some extent I agree
I do not agree
I do not agree at all
10. Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections?
1.YES 2. NO

If 'NO', then please explain why?

## III. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

11. Do you think that women are sufficiently represented in the political life in RNM?
12. YES 2. To some extent 3.NO
13. Do you think women are insufficiently represented in politics?

| In your opinion, how represented are women in the political life in RNM | To a large extent | Too much | To some extent | Not much | Not at all |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. In the Parliament of the | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 2. In a leading position at the Republican level | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 3. In the local self-government | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 4. In a leading position at the local level | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 5. Through political parties | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 6. Through various organizations that have an impact on policy | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |

13. In your opinion, what influence do the following groups have on the political life in RNM?

|  | To a large extent | Too much | To some <br> extent | Not much | Not at all |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1. Male politicians and leaders | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Women politicians and leaders | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Politicians and leaders of non- <br> majority ethnic groups | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Young politicians and leaders | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Others | $\mathbf{5}$ | $\mathbf{4}$ | $\mathbf{3}$ | 2 | 1 |

14. In your opinion, how much do the following factors influence women's determination to enter politics?

|  | To a large extent | Too much | To some extent | Not much | Not at all |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. Social and cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 2. Prejudices | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 3. Religion | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 4. Lack of finances | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 5. Lack of support from political | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 6. Politics is considered "dirty" | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 7. Lack of family support | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 8. Lack of support from men | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 9. Lack of support from the | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 10. Lack of education | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 11. Lack of experience with "representative" functions: public address, relations with the | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 12. Others | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |

15. In your opinion, should there be special measures / programs in order to increase the participation of women in the political life in RNM?

Yes
No
I don't know
16. If your answer to the previous question is YES, then please comment on the following tools

|  | Yes | No | I don't <br> know |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1. Measures adopted voluntarily to support women candidates in <br> national or local elections |  |  |  |
| 2. Measures adopted by law to support women's candidacies in <br> national or local elections |  |  |  |


| 3. Provided places (quotas) for women in the electoral lists, such |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 4. Provide more financial support for women candidacies |  |  |  |
| 5. Measures or programs to sensitize party members on gender <br> equality issues? |  |  |  |
| 6. Others |  |  |  |

17. What is your opinion on the following quota-related statements (every third place in the electoral roll is guaranteed for women)?

|  | I totally agree | I agree | To some extent | $\begin{aligned} & \text { I do not } \\ & \text { agree } \end{aligned}$ | I do not agree at all |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1. Quotas are a necessary measure to address the underrepresentation of women and | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 2. Quotas should be applied only on a temporary basis |  | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 3. Voluntary quotas approved by political parties are more desirable than the quotas | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 4. Quotas are useful but not sufficient and should be accompanied by other measures, |  | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 5. Quotes are not required. <br> Women must be chosen based on |  | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |
| 6. Quotas are discriminatory |  | 4 | 3 | 2 |  |

18. Do you think that the awareness of the citizens should be raised in order to ask the political parties to make the gender representation as good as possible, i.e. to have more women in politics and decision-making?
Yes
No
I don't know
19. If YES, then which of the following tools do you think would be most appropriate for raising citizens' awareness? (you can circle more alternatives).
20. Brochure received by mail
21. Organization of various panels with citizens
22. Social media like Facebook etc.
23. TV
24. Home visits
25. Newspaper publications
26. Internet - e-mail
27. Public meetings
28. Other (specify) $\qquad$

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Article 9, Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia
    ${ }^{2}$ Article 3, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
    ${ }^{3}$ Article 7, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
    ${ }^{4}$ Article 5, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

[^1]:    ${ }^{5}$ Articles 11 and 14, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
    ${ }^{6}$ Article 21, paragraph 3, Electoral Code
    ${ }^{7}$ Law on Amendments to the Electoral Code

[^2]:    Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

