Gender Analysis of Ukraine's Electoral and Political Process

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Lead Author:
Gina Chirillo

Contributing Authors:
Zhozefina Daiier
Denys Kovryzhenko
Oleksandra Palagnyuk
Serhii Savelii

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Executive Summary

After a landmark 2014 presidential election – the first one since the Euromaidan revolution and the subsequent illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation as well as the occupation of areas in Donetsk and Luhansk – Ukraine has had three major national electoral milestones in 2019 alone. The two rounds of the presidential election took place in March and April 2019, respectively, leading to a landslide victory for the new president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. In July, Ukraine centered its focus on the 2019 parliamentary elections, which took place on July 21. Originally scheduled for October, newly inaugurated President Volodymyr Zelenskyy issued a decree on May 17 that dissolved Parliament early and called snap elections for July, a decision upheld by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine on June 20.[1] Given this significant electoral period and the local elections in 2020, it is more critical than ever to examine the opportunities and challenges for women's political participation in the upcoming elections and beyond. Though much focus will be on the successful implementation and conduct of elections, attention must be paid to ensuring that half the population – women – have the opportunity to equally and meaningfully participate in the electoral process.

Much progress has been made in the push for gender equality in Ukraine, and many remain optimistic in the direction the country is headed. Women played a pivotal role in the Euromaidan protests and continue to be active in civil society efforts and movements for peace. Under the Ukrainian Constitution, women are entitled to equal constitutional rights. However, while there are large numbers of highly qualified Ukrainian women, persistent and pervasive patriarchal structures have had an impact across socio-economic spheres. New threats to gender equality have emerged, including an anti-gender movement that has been extremely vocal and promoted traditional gender roles that endanger the advancement women have made in the fight for equal rights. Women from other groups that are traditionally excluded, such as women with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) women, the internally displaced, Roma women and rural women, face additional discrimination and challenges when attempting to realize their political rights.

Though Ukraine has ratified multiple international agreements supporting women's equal political participation – and has enshrined equal rights in its Constitution – there are major gaps in the implementation of these commitments. For example, flaws in its gender quota law that make it difficult to ensure women are

> *"In 1919, women in Ukraine received equal rights; in 2019, we are ready for equal opportunities."*
> **– Participant in assessment interview**

elected to public office in significant numbers despite extensive public support[2]. Sixty-two percent of Ukrainians support measures to increase the participation of women in politics, including through measures such as quotas. Despite this, prior to the 2019 parliamentary elections in July, Ukraine had the lowest proportion of women in Parliament in all of Europe – far below the global average of 24.3 percent. After the 2019 parliamentary elections, the percentage of women in Parliament is now higher at 20.3 percent; however, this still fails to meet international standards. The international election observation mission for the National Democratic Institute emphasized in its preliminary observation

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[1] "The Constitutional Court recognized the constitutional decree of Zelensky on the dissolution of the Council." UNIAN News Agency, June 20, 2019. https://www.unian.ua/elections/10581924-ksu-viznav-konstituciynim-ukaz-zelenskogo-pro-rozpusk-radi.html.

[2] "Ukraine Post-Presidential Election Survey: Key Findings." International Foundation for Electoral Systems, July 7, 2019. http://ifesukraine.org/ukraine-post-presidential-election-survey-key-findings/?lang=en.

statement that parties marginally increased the number of women on their party lists and among single-mandate candidates compared to the last parliamentary elections. Still, only 13 of the 22 parties competing in the nationwide constituency had at least 30 percent women on their party lists, who, in many cases, were not placed in winnable positions. Male candidates received significantly more media coverage on national television channels than women, and women candidates were often subject to sexism and harassment in traditional and online media during the campaign. Other observer reports came to similar conclusions and called for temporary special measures for women such as a gender quota. Women were generally well represented in election administration at all levels, including in executive positions.

Though different revisions to the quota law have been debated for years, the *Verkhovna Rada*, Ukraine's Parliament, has not passed measures that specifically address this disparity, leaving the same law in place for the 2019 parliamentary elections as existed for the last elections in 2014; at the time of the July 2019 elections, women made up only 12.3 percent of the Rada. Another major barrier for women is the lack of adequate funding to run for political office; much more could be done to address legislation that would further level the playing field for women and populations facing discrimination.

Ukrainian women are well represented in election administration, including in leadership positions. Over half of the sitting commissioners on the Central Election Commission (CEC) are women, with women making up a significant number of commissioners at both the district and precinct levels. However, the CEC has not historically addressed gender equality issues in its structures, institutions or training curriculum, and the new commission appointed in September 2018 has faced three national elections as well as local elections during its brief tenure – likely contributing to a lack of time and resources to adequately prioritize gender equality. There is a lack of gender-disaggregated data, which makes it difficult to see the full picture of women's participation as election officials, voters and candidates. While a number of political parties state publicly that they appreciate the importance of women's participation, they do not necessarily run or support enough women as candidates and leaders. There was a notable increase in the number of women candidates fielded by political parties for the 2019 election. with four of the five parties who met the threshold including 20 percent women on their party lists. However, parties that did not pass the threshold and the "Opposition Platform for Life" party generally ran far fewer. In addition, as party lists only make up half the seats in the Ukrainian Parliament, this does not necessarily guarantee a sufficient number of women elected and holding seats. A lack of intraparty democracy means that groups of men make party decisions behind closed doors, tapping their own networks, which are also made up of men. to participation in political activities.

The way women – particularly women in politics – are portrayed in the media can play a big part in shaping how everyday citizens understand gender roles and expect women to act and behave. Women's portrayal in the media can – subtly or explicitly – communicate which spaces women should and should not be in. Women in Ukrainian media are often portrayed as objects and victims: they are sexualized, and emphasis is often placed on their appearance, clothes and personal lives, rather than on their ideas, thoughts and expertise. This treatment contributes to the regressive belief that women do not belong in politics, but rather should focus on more "feminine" pursuits, a belief that greatly inhibits women's ability to successfully participate in political life.

This report aims to better understand how different parts of the electoral process affect people of all genders differently and propose recommendations on how to address inequalities that privilege one while hindering the participation of others in public life. It examines the legal framework, election administration, voter registration process, women's political participation, public information and voter education, and political parties to understand specifically how gender affects different aspects of political participation. A summary of opportunities to promote women's political participation and vulnerabilities that can inhibit progress can be found in Annex 1.

Methodology

The goal of this assessment was to analyze the political, electoral and civic environment in Ukraine to identify how gender impacts inclusion in and access to political life. Building off the International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) *Ukraine Gender Assessment 2014*, the assessment examined women's participation in a broad range of roles, including voting, running for office, working in election management, participating in civil society and in civic life and serving as an elected official or in other relevant roles. This analysis identified gaps in participation – vulnerabilities that could limit the participation of certain gender identities – and opportunities to promote political inclusion and mitigate obstacles to participation. Findings from this report will be shared with targeted stakeholders in order to further advocacy efforts and will be incorporated into current IFES programming to further strive for the equality of all genders in political and civic life.

This assessment was based on a combination of field and desk research, including in-depth analysis by both national and international experts. Field research for this gender assessment took place from May 20-30, 2019 in Kyiv, Ukraine and was supplemented by field research conducted throughout the last year by national interlocutors in a variety of regions in Ukraine. Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders including members of civil society, political parties, representatives from the CEC, parliamentarians, international implementers and media representatives. All interviews were semi-structured and occasionally took place with the assistance of a Ukrainian or Russian language translator. To allow interviewees to be candid and truthful and ensure they do not face retribution for their comments, a meeting list of interviewees is not included as part of this report. Interviewees were notified of privacy protections before interviews began.

This gender assessment specifically focused on the participation of women as a primary area of analysis, though also researched and considered gender-based discrimination against other groups, such as discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. However, not all women – or men – have the same experiences and, thus, the analysis was conducted with an intersectional lens. The analysis considered the different experiences of women with different identities, particularly those who experience compounding discrimination. This included, but was not limited to: women with disabilities, rural women, women of different ages, women from national minorities, internally displaced women (women IDPs) and representatives from the LGBTQ+ community.

This report was funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) as part of the "Ensuring Meaningful Engagement Through Reform for Gender Equality" (EMERGE) program. The ultimate goal of the EMERGE program is to increase the inclusivity of the political process, work toward establishing better gender equality by removing barriers to participation and build the capacity of women to excel and participate in Ukraine's civic and political processes.

The equal, active inclusion of all citizens in political life, including women, minorities and other groups facing discrimination, is fundamental to democracy. Representative government requires that all people are able to participate, and that the demographics of a country are reflected in democratically elected institutions. To achieve our mission of advancing good governance and democratic rights by empowering underrepresented to participate in the political process, IFES works to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of all genders in elections and in political life. IFES takes into account the barriers that inhibit equal participation, including conflict, transitional institutional

developments, socio-economics and cultural context. This approach assumes different genders are affected differently by these constraints and that the success of IFES' work around the world depends on understanding and addressing gender dynamics.

Assessment Findings

Legal Framework

Several elements of Ukraine's legal framework should be strengthened or reformed to close existing gaps around political gender equality and promote a more enabling environment for women in public life. The following section analyzes the electoral legal framework in place as of the time of this publication. As the Verkhovna Rada debates electoral system reform, it is critical to consider the lessons from past systems and how they did or did not support women's equal representation. Any electoral reform efforts should include a consideration of specific provisions to promote women's equal and meaningful participation at all levels of elected office.

Ukrainian women's equal right to meaningful participation in political and electoral processes is codified in its legal framework. Ukraine's Constitution guarantees all citizens equal constitutional freedoms, specifically prohibiting discrimination based on gender in Article 24:

> *"Equality of the rights of women and men shall be ensured by providing women with opportunities equal to those of men in public, political and cultural activities, in obtaining education and in professional training, in work and remuneration for it; by taking special measures for the protection of work and health of women; by establishing pension privileges; by creating conditions that make it possible for women to combine work and motherhood; by adopting legal protection, material and moral support of motherhood and childhood, including the provision of paid leave and other privileges to pregnant women and mothers."*

The Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men states that "[t]he equal electoral rights and opportunities of women and men shall be secured by the legislation of Ukraine. At the time of the nomination of the candidates for the People's deputies in the multi-mandate electoral constituencies, the political parties and electoral blocs shall provide for the representation of women and men in the relevant voting lists. The electoral commissions shall exercise control over the fulfilment of this requirement."[3]

While Ukraine has committed to multiple international and regional agreements that guarantee women's equal access to the political process, actual implementation of these agreements has not been consistent. Ukraine ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, a legally binding international agreement that specifically guarantees women and men the equal right to vote, to run for office, to participate in the formation of government, and to participate in civil society organizations in Article 7.[4] Article 4 of CEDAW specifically notes that temporary special measures – such as gender quotas – can accelerate de facto equality between women and men. Ukraine is also a state party to the International Covenant on Civil

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[3] Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, No. 2866-IV, Article 15 (2005). https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2866-15.

[4] United Nations General Assembly. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Resolution 34/180 § Article 7 (1979). https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article7.

and Political Rights, a legally binding treaty that commits states to ensure that *every* citizen has the right to participate in public life.

In 1995, 189 government representatives, including from Ukraine, committed to the Beijing Platform for Action, largely regarded as one of the most comprehensive global policy frameworks on the human rights of women and girls. Though it is not legally binding, the platform supports affirmative action measures – like gender quotas – that lead to a more equitable distribution of decision-making power.[5] Specifically, the platform mentions benchmarks of 30 percent representation of women in decision-making positions.

There are also regional standards set by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers that aim to achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making. Recommendation Rec(2003)3 defines "balanced" representation as the proportion of women or men in any decision-making body not falling below 40 percent and urges the adoption of legislative reforms that include parity thresholds for elections. A case for higher thresholds or parity is also established in the Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, which notes: "If there is a specific constitutional basis, rules could be adopted guaranteeing some degree of balance between the two sexes in elected bodies, or even parity."[6] In Ukraine, this constitutional basis exists in Article 24, referenced above. The code also identifies good practices for quota design and implementation, such as a "zipper" system – a system that requires lists to alternate between women and men.[7]

Legal Framework: Parliamentary Gender Quotas

Since independence in 1991, Ukraine has used a variety of electoral systems for elections to the Verkhovna Rada. The current parallel electoral system for parliamentary elections – used in the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections – consists of two components: a first-past-the-post system for single-member constituencies (SMCs), under which 225 members of Parliament (MPs) are elected, and a closed list proportional representation system for the remaining 225 seats in the Parliament.[8]

Currently, the 2001 Law on Political Parties is the only law with gender quota provisions. In Article 8, it stipulates that:

> *"the statute of the political party must contain the following information […] the quotas establishing the minimum level of representation of sexes on the list of the candidates for the members of the Parliament put forward by political party in the nationwide election district, as well as on the list of the candidates to the local councils*

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[5] United Nations General Assembly. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Resolution 50/203 § Articles 182, 187, 190 (1995).
http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf.
[6] Council of Europe Venice Commission. Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: adopted guidelines and draft explanatory report, § Section 2.5 (2002).
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/CompilationDemocracyen.pdf.
[7] Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making, Rec(2003)3 § (2003). https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848.
[8] For the 2019 parliamentary elections, only 199 seats were elected through SMCs due to conflict.

> *in the multi-member constituencies that should ensure at least 30 percent representation of either sexes among the candidates on the list."* [9]

In effect, it requires parties to include a gender quota in their party statutes but does not require those statutes to be implemented. The Parliamentary Elections Law (2011) does not include gender quota provisions, and no constitutional gender quota exists for any elected or appointed positions. Thus, the gender quota language that exists in the Law on Political Parties does not legally obligate parties to adhere to any kind of gender quota, nor does it obligate the CEC to take remedial action, such as rejecting the party list or sending it back for correction, and therefore is not sufficient to promote women's participation.

While the gender quota regulations in the Law of Political Parties is a positive step, stipulating that the gender quota be in party statutes – rather than including a gender quota in electoral law that regulates the actual outcomes of the candidate lists – means that parties are under no legal obligation to fulfill the quota requirements. Parties face no legal recourse if they do not follow the gender quota language in their own party statues; no sanctions are outlined in any legislation.

Only nine of 29 political parties chose to nominate 30 percent women on party lists in the 2014 parliamentary elections. Only one party elected at least 30 percent women. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, an analysis of the 10 political parties with the most regional support revealed that six nominated at least 30 percent women on their party lists.[10] Despite this increase in candidates across more parties, it appears that only two parties will have elected at least 30 percent women in Parliament. This could be due to placing women in lower ranked positions on party lists, which are less likely to result in being elected.

This placement issue highlights further weaknesses in the quota. Even if the quota was legally enforceable as written, its design contains loopholes that would strongly decrease its effectiveness. Specifically, the law does not have any specific candidate placement rules for national party lists, meaning that parties could meet the 30 percent quota by placing all of their women candidates on the bottom of the list in unwinnable positions.

The current legal framework's rules of substitution also fall short of supporting increased women's participation. When a woman MP is appointed as a minister or to another government position, her position is filled with the next eligible candidate on the party list, who is often a man. In addition, political parties can change candidates on a party list after that list has been registered, or candidates can withdraw after they have registered. This can also have negative effects for women's representation, allowing parties to meet the 30 percent quota upon registration of the party list, but then substituting women candidates for male candidates after the list has been registered. Stricter laws on substitution – both of MPs and of candidates – could help mitigate these issues (see "Recommendations" for more details).

> *"Without promotion of this quota, we won't see anyone [in Parliament] who represents women's rights or human rights issues."*

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[9] Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. On Political Parties in Ukraine, № 2365-III, Article 8 (2001). https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2365-14.

[10] "Women in Elections: Hurdle Race," Ukrainian Women's Fund, July 2019, https://www.uwf.org.ua/en/news/11582.

Finally, given the electoral system, half of MPs are elected in single-member constituencies, not from the party lists, and therefore outside of the quota requirement in the Political Party Law. Even if parties run 30 percent women on their national party lists, unless they run women in winnable single-member constituencies, they will fall far short of having 30 percent women elected to office. This has played out repeatedly in practice. During the 2014 parliamentary elections, only two women were elected from 198 single-member constituencies. There was a significant increase after the 2019 elections, with women now making up approximately 13 percent of MPs elected from single-member constituencies; however, this is due to the popularity of a single party that ran more women in SMCs, rather than an effort across parties to run women in winnable districts.

Legal Framework: Local Gender Quotas

Local elections use a different electoral system under a different electoral law. The "St. Petersburg" electoral system includes three electoral systems:

1. A first-past-the-post system for election of village and settlement councils, as well as mayors of villages, settlements and of cities with less than 90,000 voters;
2. A two-round system for mayoral elections in cities with at least 90,000 voters; and
3. An "open list proportional system" for elections of councils for oblasts, rayons and cities of any size.[11]

The Local Election Law (2015) introduced a gender quota in Article 4, Section 3: "the proportion of representatives of the same gender in the electoral list of candidates for deputies of local councils in multi mandate constituencies should be not less than 30 per cent of the total number of candidates in the electoral list." But the CEC introduced a regulation that said that non-fulfillment of the 30 percent gender quota could not be used as a reason to reject the registration of a party list, a regulation that was later upheld by a High Court ruling in 2015. [12] Therefore, the CEC does not have the authority to reject a party list if it is not in compliance with the gender quota.

Political parties participating in local elections are also subject to the same gender quota provision as the national elections, specifically Article 8 of the 2001 Law on Political Parties, cited above. The shortcomings of this are even more pronounced than at the national level for several reasons. However, as noted above, there are no sanctions for non-compliance with this quota. The lack of an enforced gender quota at the local level will be especially impactful as decentralization efforts give more influence and higher budgets to locally elected bodies.

Legal Framework: Political and Campaign Finance

Ukraine's current strategy to promote women's participation in elected office relies on incentives for parties through the public funding mechanism rather than sanctions for non-compliance with the quota. Since 2016, political parties in Ukraine have received direct public funding for ongoing party activities. According to Article 17, Section 3 of the Law on Political Parties, public funding is available

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[11] "Elections in Ukraine: October 25 Local Elections." Frequently Asked Questions. International Foundation for Electoral Systems, October 21, 2015.
https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2015_ifes_ukraine_local_elections_faq_final.pdf.

[12] Dean, Laura A. and Pedro A. G. Dos Santos. "The Implications of Gender Quotas in Ukraine: A Case Study of Legislated Candidate Quotas in Eastern Europe's Most Precarious Democracy." *Teorija in Praksa* 54, No. 2, 2017. https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/tip/tip_02_2017_dean_santos.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

to all parties that received at least two percent "of the votes [sic] who voted for all party lists of candidates in the nationwide multi-member constituency." Public funding was provided to parties that participated in the 2014 early parliamentary elections, although a temporary threshold of 5 percent of the vote was used until the results of the 2019 parliamentary elections were finalized. This funding is allocated according to the share of votes that each party received, with an additional 10 percent allocated equally to political parties that "ensured that the number of representatives of one sex among the elected Members of Parliament who assumed their offices does not exceed two-thirds of the total number of the Members of Parliament who were elected from that party."

The 10 percent figure is distributed evenly among parties that reach the threshold. Though nine party national lists out of 29 respected the gender quota (31 percent of parties) for the 2014 parliamentary elections, only the Samopomich Party reached 30 percent women in the Rada after the 2014 elections. The preliminary 2019 election results suggest that two of the five parties that passed the 5 percent electoral threshold – the European Solidarity party and Holos – are eligible for 10 percent of the total amount of annual funding for political parties, as they elected at least 30 percent women from their parties.[13] The total annual amount of public funding for all eligible political parties – parties that received no less than two percent of the votes in the nationwide election constituency – is UAH 565 million or USD 22 million. Ten percent of this amount will be equally divided between Holos and European Solidarity; each party will receive UAH 28.25 million or USD 1.1 million annually, in addition to the annual share available to all parliamentary parties.

A current issue with the existing 10 percent funding allocation is that as more parties meet the 30 percent quota, more parties will get a share of the 10 percent reserved funds, meaning that it will be a smaller amount per party (though this was not the case during the 2019 parliamentary elections as only two parties met the threshold). This means that as more parties meet the quota, parties will have less of an incentive to do so, since there would be less money to go around. The proposal to give parties a 10 percent surplus of their regular allocation would mitigate this issue, since the amount of funding would not be reduced as more parties are eligible for the funding.

The existing legal framework around campaign and political finance can inhibit women's ability to compete fairly for representation in elected bodies, especially in single-member constituencies, which have been particularly challenging for women to win in past elections. Although the formal legal framework for campaign finance in SMCs is gender-neutral, the broader context of political funding in SMC races makes them significantly more challenging for women. Women typically report less access to political funding for campaigning and that they receive less support, less airtime and less funding for media advertising than their male counterparts. This type of support is critical in an SMC race where voters select an individual candidate rather than the party. Specifically, in SMC races the burden for fundraising falls on the individual candidate to a much greater extent than in multi-member constituency races, where the party is primarily responsible.

In general, political finance regulation is a global problem that takes a specific toll on Ukrainian women's participation. Given the insufficient oversight of political finance regulations, the weak sanctions for non-compliance and the absence of regulations around in-kind donations, parties and candidates can take advantage of these loose rules when raising and spending campaign funds. Lax

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[13] The percentage of women MPs elected from Holos could be as large as 45 percent, while the percentage of women elected could reach 36 percent from the European Solidarity party.

enforcement of political finance regulations tends to help those candidates – who tend to be men – with strong networks and ties to powerful and rich individuals. Thus, poor campaign finance regulations often disproportionately disadvantage women candidates.[14]

Recommendations

1. *Amend the electoral law to include a gender quota for the Rada that includes sanctions for non-compliance, and a 40 percent threshold and placement rules for party lists.*

As noted above, the current gender quota regulations are housed in the Law on Political Parties and do not have any placement rules for party lists or sanctions for non-compliance. The gender quota law should be part of the electoral law, rather than the Law on Political Parties, and the Law on Political Parties should be amended to take into account any amendments made to the electoral law on gender quotas. In addition, the 30 percent threshold in the current Law on Political Parties has been insufficient to increase the number of women elected. To move closer to compliance with Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Council of Europe Council of Ministers, Ukraine should seek to at least achieve a legally binding gender quota threshold of 40 percent for party lists. The quota should also include placement rules, in particular a regulation that specifies that two out of every five candidates on national party lists should be women. The quota law should also empower the CEC to reject the party lists if they do not comply with the gender quota.

2. *Amend existing regulations to require that party lists, after registration, must maintain the proportion of women represented during submission of the list.*

Currently, if a woman candidate is removed from the party list after registration of the list, she can be replaced with a male candidate. This could allow parties to meet the gender quota when they draft a party list but allows them – after the list is accepted – to replace women candidates with men. To close this loophole, it is critical to amend existing regulations to specify that party lists – even after registration of the list – must maintain the proportion of women represented during submission of the list to be in full compliance with the gender quota law.

3. *Amend public funding stipulations to maintain and extend incentives for parties as multiple parties meet the existing quota and to require a certain amount of public funding be used to promote women's political participation.*

Currently, 10 percent of public political party funding is set aside for parties that elect 30 percent or more women in the Rada. The current law, though, doesn't specify that the party must *maintain* 30 percent women in the Rada in order to continue to receive this funding. In addition, as more parties reach the 30 percent threshold, the amount allocated to each party will decrease, lessening the incentive. The public funding stipulation should be amended to give parties who meet the 30 percent threshold an extra 10 percent of funding in addition to its usual public funding allocation. This means that as more parties fulfill the requirement, the incentive will not decrease. In addition, the law should specify that a meaningful percentage of public funds allocated to parties be used to promote women's

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[14] Cigane, Lolita, and Magnus Ohman. "Political Finance and Gender Equality." White Paper Series. International Foundation for Electoral Systems, August 2014. https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/political_finance_and_gender_equality.pdf.

political participation or for gender equality activities, such as training for women candidates, rallies for women voters or voter education materials for women party members.

> 4. *Strengthen political and campaign finance regulations to impose stricter rules for non-compliance, to support implementation of existing sanctions, and to clarify which institutions are responsible for enforcing regulations.*

Gaps in legislation, implementation and enforcement of political and campaign finance laws can disproportionately disadvantage women candidates. By strengthening existing political and campaign finance laws and regulations, decision-makers can better level the playing field for those vying for elected office. Reforms could include: clarifying the mandate of the CEC and the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) in enforcing regulations and safeguarding their independence from other branches of government, establishing clear criteria for investigating potential violations and penalizing or imposing sanctions for perpetrators, and regulating third-party funding of electoral campaigns. The electoral justice system should also better enforce regulations, ensure a level playing field and make sure that the process for filing a complaint is transparent and easy to understand for all applicants, including women.

Election Administration

After both the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, observers noted that there is generally strong gender balance within election administration. Ukraine has a three-tiered election management system comprised of the CEC, District Elections Commissions (DECs) and Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). The CEC is a 17-seat permanent body last renewed in fall 2018. Each commissioner serves a seven-year term. Headquartered in Kyiv, the CEC has the overall authority for planning, regulating and overseeing elections. The CEC supervises the formation of DECs and PECs, issues regulations on how to implement existing election laws, prints ballots, maintains the voter register, and handles electoral complaints against the DECs, national political parties or any candidates in the nationwide electoral district.

DECs and PECs are formed during the election period based on nominations by parties or candidates. The DECs are responsible for forming PECs, tabulating results and allocating polling stations. DECs serve as an intermediary between the CEC and the PECs, distributing ballots, handling electoral complaints and tallying the results for each of the PECs in their districts. DECs are also responsible for accrediting observers. There are at least 12 members of each DEC, nominated by the candidates standing for election. Formed no fewer than 18 days before Election Day, PECs are responsible for establishing and running polling stations on Election Day. This responsibility includes enabling the voting process, counting and tabulating results, sending results to be aggregated and tallied and handling electoral complaints that arise during the voting process. There are at least nine members on each PEC, appointed by candidates standing for election.

In the CEC, nine of 16 commissioners are women, including CEC Chairperson Tetiana Slipachuk. Most of the current commissioners were appointed in September 2018. Currently, the CEC does not collect gender-disaggregated data on its staff, making analysis of the CEC secretariat difficult. There is no quota for CEC, DEC or PEC staff that requires a certain percentage of staff to be women, though evidence suggests that women are well-represented in DECs and PECs. For the first round of the presidential election, 57 percent of DEC members were women, with 46 percent (91 of 199) of DECs

chaired by women, 56 percent (111 of 199) that had women deputy chairpersons, and 63 percent (126 of 199) that had women secretaries.[15] Seventy-two percent of PECs were chaired by women in polling stations observed by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observers.[16] In the second round, women represented a higher proportion of these bodies: 60 percent of DEC members were women, with 106 chairwomen (53 percent) and 143 women secretaries (72 percent). Women made up 78 percent of PEC chairpersons in polling stations observed by the OSCE.[17] In the July 2019 parliamentary elections, women accounted for 59 percent of all DEC members.[18]

There is a lack of gender-specific institutional structures that support women's political and electoral participation within these election management bodies. As of the time of this assessment, the CEC does yet not have an internal gender policy and has not done an internal gender audit or review. There is no separate gender focal point within the secretariat and no gender department or gender working group. Despite this lack of institutional structures, interviews indicate more support for gender equality issues in this CEC than previously. Commissioner Iryna Yefremova has gender equality – as well as inclusion of persons with disabilities – as part of her larger portfolio[19]. The CEC does not designate any part of its budget specifically for women's political participation programming.

In terms of staff training and professional development, there is a need to sensitize election commission staff on the importance of encouraging women's participation in elections and of using a gender lens to design and implement election programming. Some interlocutors noted the lack of understanding among poll workers on the rights of women with disabilities at the polling station – particularly relevant as global trends indicate that the majority of people with disabilities are women. For example, some interviewees noted that some poll workers used insensitive language and did not understand the accommodations that can be made to facilitate voting for people with disabilities.

The CEC does not collect gender-disaggregated data on staff, registered voters, candidate registration or voter turnout. Collecting this data could help the commission better understand the participation of women at all parts of the electoral process.

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[15] "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine - Presidential Election." International Election Observation Mission. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, European Parliament, March 31, 2019.
https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/415733?download=true.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine - Presidential Election, Second Round." International Election Observation Mission. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, European Parliament, April 21, 2019.
https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/417821?download=true.
[18] "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine - Early Parliamentary Elections." International Election Observation Mission. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, European Parliament, July 21, 2019.
https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/426257?download=true.
[19] Central Election Commission of Ukraine. Decree: On the distribution of responsibilities among the members of the Central Election Commission, Resolution 168 § (2018). https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/v0168359-18.

Recommendations

1. *Institutionalize gender equality in the structure of the election commission.*

Currently, the CEC does not have a dedicated gender focal point or gender unit. Institutionalizing gender equality in the CEC's structure would ensure that this topic be given appropriate attention and resources. It is critical that the gender focal point or department be given adequate funding to mainstream gender issues throughout the CEC's work as well as pursue stand-alone women's political participation programming. If the CEC establishes permanent presence in regions or decentralizes, the same focal point could be established at the regional level. These individuals could have other responsibilities as well – whereas the gender focal point at the national level should have a portfolio that only consists of gender equality initiatives – but are tasked with implementing and reporting on gender equality issues in each district.

2. *Integrate gender considerations into CEC strategic and operational planning processes.*

For gender equality to remain a priority in the CEC and its operations, it is critical that gender considerations are integrated into strategic and operational planning processes. This means including commitments to gender equality and women's inclusion as part of the overall goals of the commission, including in the mission and vision statements or in the guiding values or principles. The operational plan should also include gender considerations to ensure that people of all genders are able to participate equally in the electoral process. Specific initiatives could include: targeted voter information for women, training for women candidates or messaging for political parties on the importance of upholding the gender quota.

3. *Collect gender-disaggregated data of staff, registered voters, candidate registration and voter turnout, and make it publicly available and easily accessible.*

Gender-disaggregated data is critical in understanding the current landscape of women's participation. Currently, gender-disaggregated data is not regularly available to the public. Providing this data could better allow the CEC, women's civil society groups, political parties and international organizations to tailor their interventions to better address barriers and challenges to women's equal participation. Disaggregating the data further based on other measures – such as region, age, and disability status – could further help these organizations specify their approaches to support specific groups.

4. *Provide training on the importance of the inclusion of excluded groups or groups facing barriers to participation, including women, to staff at all levels.*

Election commission staff should understand the importance of taking special measures to ensure the inclusion of women and people from other populations who face barriers to participating in the electoral process. Training programs should include international examples – especially from European countries in order to provide best practice within the European community in light of Ukraine's European Union ambitions as well as countries with a smaller gross domestic product than Ukraine, to show that some of these special measures are not expensive – and standards on inclusion. They should also include examples of common barriers faced by different groups in the electoral process and equip staff with instructions on how to mitigate these barriers. For example, in poll worker

training, training programs could include a scenario where a woman with a visual disability comes to the polling station and provide instructions to poll workers on her rights and how to assist her.

> 5. *Designate a legally established portion of the election budget for women's political participation programming.*

Allocating a specific amount of the election budget for women's political participation programming will demonstrate that gender inclusion is a priority for the CEC and will give staff the resources to implement women's political participation programming. This programming could include: internal training for election staff on gender equality in elections, training for women candidates in parliamentary or local elections, or conducting an internal gender audit of the CEC. This budget could also be utilized in funding a CEC gender action plan and instituting a gender policy for the CEC, as well as research and study on gender equality in election management. The CEC could also examine its spending for the 2019 parliamentary elections to assess how much of its budget went to gender-related programming. It could also conduct an assessment of current operational budget and its budget for the 2020 local elections to analyze how much is budgeted for gender inclusion activities.

> 6. *Develop an internal gender policy to guide work on this area.*

An internal gender policy would help the CEC ensure its internal policies promote gender equality and remove barriers for women employees. An internal gender policy can ensure gender balance and equal opportunities in human resources systems and processes on selection, recruitment, employment and professional development. The gender policy should be written in consultation with CEC staff and should reflect values of diversity, inclusion and transparency. The gender policy can set goals or targets for women's inclusion in management positions, include affirmative action measures for recruitment or highlight the CEC's commitment to gender equality as an overall goal for the institution and its policies.

Voter Registration

In Ukraine, any citizen 18 or older by Election Day has the right to vote, including citizens who are living outside of the country. Citizens deemed mentally "incapable" by a court are not permitted to vote, which impedes the right to vote of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Ukraine ratified in 2009. The voter registration system in Ukraine is passive, meaning that citizens do not need to register to vote but instead are automatically added to the voter list from another source of data. More than 20,000 public authorities provide monthly updates to the centralized State Register of Voters (SRV), which is maintained by the CEC through local Register Maintenance Bodies.[20] A total of 35,560,427 voters were included in the voter list for the 2019 presidential election, including 530,123 voters registered abroad with Ukrainian embassies or consulates. Gender-disaggregated data is not available. For the 2019 parliamentary elections, approximately 35,550,428 voters were included. Because women often face challenges when registering to vote in other countries, a passive registration system decreases the burden on women to provide identification documents or travel to registration centers.

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[20] "Elections in Ukraine: 2019 Presidential Election." Frequently Asked Questions. International Foundation for Electoral Systems, March 22, 2019. https://www.ifes.org/faqs/elections-ukraine-2019-presidential-election.

Changes to the voter registry are allowed up until Election Day for the presidential election and can be changed even on Election Day for parliamentary elections if based on a court decision. In theory, voters should not need to register name changes, as these should be done automatically after a person updates their registration and gets a passport that reflects his or her new name. However, these changes are reflected in the voter list only if the migration service or Ministry of Justice delivers data in time to the SRV. If not, there are inconsistencies between various registers. The inclusion of old names – for example, names changed after marriage – is not uncommon. Because name changes should theoretically automatically be updated in the voter list, there is less of a burden on women, who often change their name when they are married, and transgender people, who might change their birth name to reflect their gender identity. However, as an important caveat, the trans+ population in Ukraine faces enormous barriers to recognition of their rights and widespread stigma, hindering their ability to change their name in the first place. Despite this, during the 2019 presidential election, there were several issues with last names on the voter list not reflecting married names.

Women make up 58 percent of the IDP population in Ukraine.[21] Though IDPs are eligible to vote, they are currently not able to vote for single-member constituencies in parliamentary elections or in local elections without changing their place of residence in the official registry. Though this would allow them to vote in their current district, it could also mean losing claim on property in occupied territories, or it could cause issues when traveling to occupied territories through checkpoints. Because women make up more than half of the IDP population, measures that restrict IDP voting disproportionately disenfranchise women. There is widespread support in Ukraine of allowing IDPs to exercise their rights locally and participate equally in politics, with 70 percent of support in a recent IFES survey conducted in June 2019.[22] Currently, Draft Law 6240 – registered in Parliament on March 27, 2018 – aims to allow IDPs to vote in the places where they live, not in their officially registered places of residence.[23] This law will allow "any voter … to change their voter address to current/actual place of residence by submitting a written application to the Voter Register Maintenance Body (RMB) whose jurisdiction expands to the territory of the voter's current/actual place of residence."[24] On January 17, 2019, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Legal Policy and Judiciary recommended that this draft law be adopted at first hearing, but the Rada has yet to adopt the law. This law could enfranchise millions of Ukrainians – the majority of them women – who have been displaced due to conflict.

Women also likely make up a majority of the population of people with disabilities in Ukraine.[25] People with disabilities face challenges with voter registration. In particular, when people register as having a permanent disability, they are automatically added to the list for at-home voting without being first

[21] "National Monitoring System Report on the Situation of Internally Displaced Persons: Ukraine." International Organization for Migration, March 2019. http://ukraine.iom.int/sites/default/files/nms_round_13_eng.pdf.
[22] ""Ukraine Post-Presidential Election Survey: Key Findings." International Foundation for Electoral Systems, July 7, 2019. http://ifesukraine.org/ukraine-post-presidential-election-survey-key-findings/?lang=en.
[23] "Parliament's Committee on Legal Policy and Judiciary Recommends Adopting at First Hearing Draft Law 6240 Aimed to Enfranchise IDPs in Elections." International Foundation for Electoral Systems (blog), January 17, 2019. http://ifesukraine.org/parliament-s-committee-on-legal-policy-and-judiciary-recommends-adopting-at-first-hearing-draft-law-6240-aimed-to-enfranchise-idps-in-elections/?lang=en.
[24] Ibid.
[25] "Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities." United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Disability, n.d. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html.

given the option of continuing to vote at their polling place. Because of the automatic registration to the at-home voting database, individuals who prefer to vote at their polling station must make a special request in order to opt out of at-home voting and vote at their designated polling station. Contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, to which Ukraine is a signatory, most polling stations are inaccessible, with disability rights groups placing this figure as high as 90 percent in some locations and international observer reports indicating between 50 to 60 percent of polling stations countrywide are not accessible. This means that it is only possible in many cases for voters with disabilities to vote from home, infringing on their right to participate in elections on an equal basis with other voters.

There is no publicly available gender-disaggregated data on the number of registered voters, as noted previously (see text and recommendation in the "Election Administration" section).

Recommendations

1.   *Introduce changes to the electoral legal framework to fully enfranchise IDPs.*

Though IDPs could vote in presidential elections and for party lists in the 2019 parliamentary election, they have not been able to vote for single-member constituencies in parliamentary elections or in local elections. Women are disproportionately disenfranchised, as they make up 58 percent of the IDP population. The Verkhovna Rada must pass legislation to fully enfranchise IDPs, such as Draft Law 6240.

2.   *Audit the SRV to ensure that individuals' names accurately represent the names on their identification documents.*

If a woman is married and changes her name and this change is not reflected in the voter register, her name in the register will not match her identification documents on Election Day and she will not be permitted to vote. If the SRV has not been updated to account for name changes like this, married women who have changed their last names might not be able to vote. An audit could help to ensure that the SRV is accurately updating name changes based on changes in identification documents.

3.   *Amend regulations to allow people with permanent disabilities to choose whether they vote at home or at their polling station.*

Currently, people who register with a permanent disability are automatically added to a list for at-home voting and must make an additional request to be allowed to vote at their polling station. To allow people with disabilities to vote how they prefer, regulations should be amended to allow them to select their polling preference. Because women likely make up a majority of the population of Ukrainians with disabilities, this existing regulation disproportionately affects women.

Women's Political Participation

Ukrainian women have a right to participate in political life as election officials, candidates, elected representatives, activists, journalists and voters. To understand women's challenges in participating in politics, it is important to look at how Ukrainian society and culture view women's roles in leadership and public life. Though women tend to be well represented in certain areas – as election officials and

voters, for example – there are still many barriers that women face due to societal and cultural expectations of how they should act and behave and their place in society.

In an IFES post-presidential election survey conducted in June 2019, 13 percent of participants thought women were the group the most frequently discriminated against in Ukraine. More participants identified pensioners (42 percent), IDPs from Donbas (22 percent), youth (18 percent), and citizen from rural areas (16 percent) as the groups most recently discriminated against. The only group that a lower amount of survey participants identified as the most frequently discriminated against was sexual minorities (11 percent).

According to a survey of the National Democratic Institute from July 2018, 66 percent of participants think that politics is male-dominated, while only 36 percent of participants think that's how it should be.[26] Sixty-one percent of participants want a more equal gender balance of involvement in political life. Participants also identified *why* there are fewer women in top government positions, with the fact that men are more likely to be appointed and the time pressure of family and domestic responsibilities finishing on top (see Image 1 below). In an IFES survey from June 2019, 62 percent of respondents supported temporary special measures to increase the percentage of women in Parliament; 64 percent said that gender was not a factor in their voting choice, meaning that they would not discriminate against women, per se.

Image 1: Survey on women's political participation in Ukraine

There are different reasons given for the fact that there are fewer women than men in top government positions in Ukraine. Do you agree or disagree with the following…? (q25)
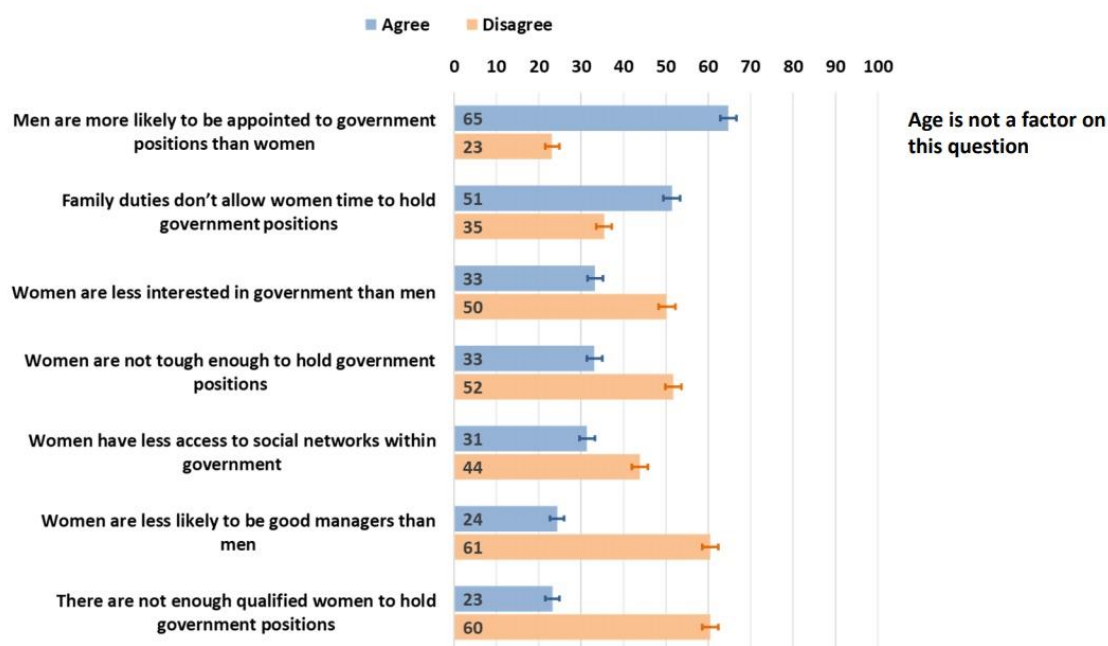
Source: National Democratic Institute

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[26] "Ukraine National Survey on Equality Between Men and Women." National Democratic Institute, July 2018. https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/media/17-presentation-2018/29.22.2018Klimpush/Ukraine%20National%20Survey%20on%20Equality%20between%20Men%20and%20Women%20July%202018.pdf.

Compared with data from 2016, this new survey information demonstrates significant progress on certain measures. In 2016, 49 percent of respondents said that women are less interested in politics than men, while in 2018, only 33 percent said that women are less interested in government than men.[27]

Though this survey data disaggregates participants by gender, it is clear that attitudes toward women's participation vary according to other factors as well. For example, in some more conservative areas of Ukraine, women still need to ask their husband's or father's permission to participate in leadership trainings or public events. But regardless of where women live, it is clear that the majority of domestic and family responsibilities still fall on women, limiting the amount of time they have to participate in politics and elections.

Women's Political Participation: Elected Offices and Government Appointments

Out of the 39 presidential candidates, only four, or 10 percent, were women, and only one of those women, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, was considered a serious candidate who actually had a chance to win. During the runoff presidential election, which featured two male candidates, the candidates' wives were subject to public scrutiny, facing online abuse and harassment during their husbands' campaigns.

Before the July 2019 elections, women made up 12.3 percent of Ukraine's Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, ranking 155th globally out of 192 countries for which there are data and last in Europe.[28] After the 2019 parliamentary elections, Ukraine improved its international standing in terms of the representation of women; however, it is still lower than the global average of 24.3 percent of women in Parliament and the European average of 28.6 percent.[29] Even though this proportion is low, it still represents the largest percentage of women in Parliament since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 (see Table 1 below). It is worth noting that only two women parliamentarians won their seats in single-member constituencies in 2014, a number that vastly improved during the 2019 election; still, the majority of women elected win their seats through party lists.[30]

Despite being underrepresented in Parliament, former First Deputy Chairperson Iryna Herashchenko and former Deputy Chairperson Oksana Syroyid are both women. Nina Yuzhanina was the chair of the largest committee, the Tax and Customs Policy Committee, but the other three largest committees – Committee on Agrarian Policy and Land Relations, Committee on Legal Policy and Justice, and Budget Committee – were all chaired by men. At the time of this assessment, the new chairs of committees are still undetermined.

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[27] In 2016, the survey question was: "Different reasons are given for the fact that there are fewer women than men *in elected office* in Ukraine. Which, if any of the following statements, do you agree with?" (emphasis added). It is slightly different than the question in 2018, which asks about women in *top government positions*, not elected office.

[28] "Women in National Parliaments: World Classification." Inter-Parliamentary Union, February 1, 2019. http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "Brief Overview of Elections in Ukraine (Version 26)." International Foundation for Electoral Systems, n.d.

Table 1: Representation of women in Parliament, 1991-2019[31]

Legislature	Men	Women	Percentage of women
First Legislature (1991-94)	464	11	2.3 percent
Second Legislature (1994-98)	418	18	4.1 percent
Third Legislature (1998-2002)	416	16	3.7 percent
Fourth Legislature (2002-06)	481	28	5.5 percent
Fifth Legislature (2006-07)	499	42	7.8 percent
Sixth Legislature (2007-12)	499	42	7.8 percent
Seventh Legislature (2012-14)	401	44	9.9 percent
Eighth Legislature (2014-19)	374	49	11.6 percent
Ninth Legislature (2019-present)	338	86	20.3 percent

Women representatives in the Verkhovna Rada face a number of challenges in how they are perceived by their colleagues and the media. There are higher expectations for women MPs, who feel immense pressure to be overprepared, perfectly articulate and know everything about whatever topic they are championing. There tends to be a large focus on women MPs' looks, clothes and personal lives, rather than their policies and ideas. For example, women MPs have reported public comments by colleagues and peers on their looks in professional settings, even in their introduction. The media also treats women MPs different than male MPs, with numerous MPs noting a significant difference. For example, in October 2018, a male MP told a woman MP during a committee hearing that "feminism will not pass;" instead of the media criticizing him for regressive ideas, media outlets criticized the woman MP for being too sensitive, saying she was not able to take a joke.[32]

> *"I feel like I have to be five times more prepared than my male colleagues."*
> **- participant in assessment interview**

Women MPs are also subject to harassment and abuse online. In light of her stances regarding Ukraine's relationship to Russia, one woman MP was subjected to a fake photo of her face on a naked woman's body being shared broadly on social media accounts. Women MPs also receive many private messages of a sexualized nature on their social media pages. Users often insinuate that women MPs traded sexual favors to win their seats, rather than winning their seats based on merit. IFES' analysis of online violence against women demonstrates widespread and pervasive online harassment and

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[31] Ibid; CVU Press Service. "CVU: In the New Parliament, the Most Women in History Is Analytics." Committee of Voters of Ukraine, November 11, 2014. http://www.cvu.org.ua/nodes/view/; current data via "Women in National Parliaments: World Classification." Inter-Parliamentary Union, February 1, 2019. http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.

[32] "Екс-Регіонал Мисик На Комітеті Заявив Нардепу Пташник, Що 'Фемінізм Не Пройде.'" Espreso.TV, October 18, 2018. https://espreso.tv/news/2018/10/18/eks_regional_mysyk_na_komiteti_zayavyv_nardepu_ptashnyk_scho_qu otfeminizm_ne_proydequot.

hate speech that undermines women's political participation and preserves male dominance of political leadership.[33]

> *"It's not just jokes; it's not just words; it's a violation."*
> **- participant in assessment**

In terms of other elected positions, only one of 24 oblast governors is a woman.[34] In local city councils, women represent just 18 percent of elected representatives and 15 percent of seats in oblast councils.[35] Multiple interlocuters noted that as decentralization progressed and as local councils gained more power and resources, women's participation decreased. In addition, the larger the town, the fewer women were elected as local representatives.[36]

Women are also underrepresented in appointed positions. Out of 25 cabinet positions, there were only six women ministers (24 percent) between 2014 and 2019.[37] In the current government, six of 16 ministers are women with only four women out of 23 serving as heads of parliamentary committees. In May 2019, newly inaugurated President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was criticized for a photo taken walking with his advisers, who were all men (see Image 2).[38] Though two women are part of Zelenskyy's presidential team, they did not appear in the photo.

Image 2: Newly inaugurated President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and some of his advisers

Source: Twitter Volodymyr Zelenskyy

While all women are underrepresented in elected and appointed government positions, women with disabilities are even less present in political leadership, leaving women and girls with disabilities with

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[33] Bardall, Gabrielle, Otito Greg-Obi, Iryna Lylyk, Gennadiy Korzhov, and Olena Buchunska. "Online Violence Against Women in Elections in Ukraine: An IFES Assessment." International Foundation Electoral Systems. Unpublished.

[34] "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine - Presidential Election." International Election Observation Mission. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, European Parliament, March 31, 2019. https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/415733?download=true.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Participation of Women in Ukrainian Politics." Kyiv, Ukraine: International Centre for Policy Studies, 2017. http://icps.com.ua/assets/uploads/images/images/eu/t_women_s_participation_in_the_ukrainian_politics_eng.pdf.

[37] "Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine - Government of Ukraine," n.d. https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/team.

[38] Хоменко, Святослав. "Зеленский провел первые назначения. Кто эти люди?" BBC News Русская служба, May 22, 2019, sec. Подробности. https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-48366727.

no role models in high-level positions. Evidence from Fight for Right, a Ukrainian organization that supports the rights of people with disabilities, found that 60 percent of girls with disabilities are not interested in political life, 85 percent of girls with disabilities do not plan to take part in political life, and 48 percent of girls with disabilities do not plan to vote this year in elections. Part of the reason might stem from how girls with disabilities are socialized in the schools for children with disabilities, where teachers are less progressive and suggest that girls with disabilities pursue traditionally "feminine" professions, limiting their career choice and possibilities. Negative cultural stereotypes that already exist about women in Ukraine – that women are weak and unfit to lead – are magnified for women and girls with disabilities, which erodes their self-confidence and ambition.

Women's Political Participation: Women's Organizations and the Women's Movement

There are many women's civil society organizations in Ukraine that are professional, active and well-respected. Unfortunately, these groups are not always consulted when it comes to political or electoral issues. If these groups want to have input, they often have to advocate for themselves

> *"Women and girls with disabilities are invisible."*
> **– Participant in assessment interview**

to plug into larger processes rather than being invited initially. For example, women's organizations had to strongly advocate to provide feedback on briefs developed as part of the Reanimation Package of Reforms forum in preparation for the Third Reform Ukraine Conference that took place in Toronto.[39] Women's organizations were not asked to be part of the original conversation and reportedly feel that they are often not taken seriously or considered to have expertise to discuss wider social problems. There is also a dearth of data and information on women's experiences that could be used to power the women's movement and provide evidence to support women's interests.

One challenge that has plagued the women's movement is the *anti-gender movement*. Though the anti-gender movement has been present for years in Ukraine, only recently has it become apparent to women's and LGBTQ+ activists and leaders how pervasive supports of this movement are in powerful positions. The anti-gender movement is mostly made up of nationalist groups who are working to undermine efforts to secure LGBTQ+ and women's rights and return the country to traditional "family values." This conservative shift came into stark focus in 2018, when several bills and petitions were introduced for the "protection of societal, moral and family laws" with strong anti-women and anti-LGBTQ+ components.[40] In September 2018, many local councils began passing "family values" bills.[41] There is also a draft resolution in Parliament that is based on the same "family values" rhetoric that is used to suppress women's rights and relegate women to the home.

Many interlocuters pointed out that the anti-gender movement is wellfunded and resourced and has

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[39] "RPR Forum. Commitment, Trust, Inclusivity: Vision of Reforms for Tomorrow. Civil Society Proposals," n.d. https://rpr.org.ua/en/announcements/rpr-forum-how-do-we-ensure-the-irreversibility-of-reforms-in-the-face-of-change-of-power-civil-society-proposals/.

[40] Alexander, Vilkul. Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Protection of Public Morality and Traditional Family Values, Pub. L. No. 9183 of 10/09/2018 (2018). http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=64775 and Alexander, Vilkul. Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Protection of Public Morality and Traditional Family Values, Pub. L. No. 8442 from 06/07/2018 (2018). http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=64163.

[41] "МІСЦЕВІ РАДИ – НА ЗАХИСТІ СІМ'Ї І СВОБОДИ | Всі разом!," n.d. https://vsirazom.ua/council.

strong strategic communication skills. The movement often targets young people and takes advantage of those who may be less exposed to more progressive ideas to focus its rhetoric, including through free newspapers in schools and public buildings in villages. As part of the anti-gender movement, supporters use a variety of tactics to undermine those working toward equality, including   public protests, counter-protests, statements and propaganda that uses violent language in attempt to marginalize feminists and those who fight for women's rights. Anti-gender movement supporters from

the Sisterhood of Saint Olha launched a "Kill a Feminist… Inside You" campaign, urging Ukrainians to rid themselves of their feminist ideals and principles (see Image 3). A literal translation of the poster has "KILL" on the top line in navy letters, with "FEMINIST" separately in pink on three lines, and "inside you" in smaller white text. The message – though not explicitly calling for the murder of women's rights activists – uses violent language to grab the attention of readers and is dangerous in its willingness to use this type of language to rally individuals against feminism and the women's movement.

Image 3: Anti-gender movement

Though the anti-gender movement has presented a challenge to the women's movement, women's organizations have tended to have reactive – rather than proactive – responses. There is not a uniform strategy regarding how to handle the anti-gender movement, with some activists split on how to engage religious groups. For example, there is a debate on whether to engage progressive, religious women leaders, who support women's inclusion, but do not support abortion rights or the LGBTQ+ population. However, notably, interlocutors point out that the number of those supportive of the anti-gender movement, while vocal, do not represent the views of the majority of Ukrainians.

Women's Political Participation: Women Voters

Generally, women tend to vote in elections in equal numbers to men, but not all women have equal access to electoral and political processes. As noted in the "Voter Registration" section, IDPs are not able to vote in all relevant elections, and women make up more than half (58 percent) of the IDP population. Women with disabilities also face challenges at the ballot box. Some women with disabilities might require assistance traveling to the polling station to vote but might not feel comfortable with a man, who might be required to assist them. In addition, home voting, which is usually the only accessible option for those with limited mobility, requires a number of people enter a voter's home, including poll workers, candidate representatives, and observers; some women with disabilities have stated that they are uncomfortable with unknown men entering their homes. As with much gender-disaggregated data, there is a lack of information and data on women with disabilities' participation in electoral processes. Mothers and women with small children might also face challenges voting, while women from conservative, rural areas might need to seek permission from male relatives to vote or participate in politics.

Women's Political Participation: Women in the Media

The media plays an important role in shaping discourse and perceptions of gender roles in society. This perception can affect whether women are viewed as leaders and decision-makers and can impact

their ability to successfully run for political office or lead a political movement. In Ukraine, many media outlets objectify women, sexualize women or only portray women as victims. Similarly, coverage of the LGBTQ+ population is also significantly biased. All these portrayals serve to dehumanize people other than men and take away their agency. Though many interlocuters note that there has been positive progress, there is still a long way to go to make media a gender inclusive space.

> *"The higher the quality of the media, the lower proportion of women who are represented; the lower the quality of the media, the more women are represented."*
>
> - participant in assessment interview

Women in politics are often treated differently than their male counterparts. Oligarchs own mainstream media channels and only feature candidates who those oligarchs support and are mainly men. When media outlets do discuss women in politics, they focus on their clothes, personal lives and their looks, instead of their policies or views. For example, the deputy minister of foreign affairs gave an interview to a magazine, which the magazine then entitled "Diplomat in High Heels;" the editor then posted the interview to Facebook with the comment "beautiful woman, and what is important - smart."[42] Women are rarely invited onto evening talk shows as experts, and when they are, it is to discuss issues like education, health, family and fashion. Women journalists also face a wide variety of challenges, including online harassment and threats, and there are no laws regarding behavior or ethics. IFES' analysis of violence against women in elections online also supports the finding that violence, particularly sexualized violence, targets women with public and political profiles.

Recommendations

1. *Conduct training for journalists on how to cover women in politics.*

Sexism in the media can shape how citizens view women, particularly women participating in political life. Training for journalists can support media outlets to cover women and women's issues in a more gender-sensitive way. This could also include training for media professionals who work on television programs on the importance of inviting women experts on as guests, and training for print journalists to seek out women sources – particularly on articles that are not traditionally viewed as "women's issues."

2. *Build partnerships between women's organizations and across civil society groups.*

Women's civil society groups must work together to combat the narratives disseminated by the anti-gender movement. Creating a forum for women's groups – and other civil society organizations that are likewise fighting for inclusion, like disabled people's organizations and LGBTQ+ advocacy groups – to come together to develop a common strategy and platform is critical to organizing against such a strategic, harmful, regressive movement. Having a common platform for action can work to amplify the voices and concerns of women from diverse groups and can serve to combat more harmful narratives that might persist via less progressive individuals and groups.

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[42] "Vitalii Sych - На Обложке Очередного Приложения HB Style -…" Facebook, September 19, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1544846332238314&set=a.193001344089493&type=3&theate.

3. *Provide targeted support to women from diverse backgrounds running for political office at different levels of government.*

Women candidates face a multitude of barriers when running for office at the individual, institutional and cultural levels. This support should include training to build women's confidence, help them fundraise for their campaigns and teach them how to communicate effectively with voters and the media. Special emphasis should be placed on working with women candidates for local elected bodies, as well as working with women who belong to groups facing compounding discrimination, such as women with disabilities or LGBTQ+ women. This training should also include information on how to handle online harassment and violence, as women candidates are likely to experience this during their campaigns. Mentorship programs linking women elected officials with women who are running or interested in running for office can also be helpful.

4. *Support the institutionalization of gender equality in the president's office and other government institutions and continue to support the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy.*

In order for gender equality to remain a priority, it is critical that it remain institutionalized at the government level. The formation of a gender adviser position in the office of the president would demonstrate that Zelenskyy is serious about this issue, and continuing to support the existing Government Commissioner for Gender Policy would also ensure that women's issues and experiences remained central to government policy.

5. *Support measures that increase awareness of gender equality and build allies.*

The reason for a lack of women in leadership position and a lack of understanding of gender equality more broadly is not solely due to women's lack of support or capacity, as many are already leaders in their own right. It is critical that men and allies who currently benefit from patriarchal structures of power understand how gender equality benefits everyone and support the restructuring of political leadership to be more inclusive and diverse.

Public Information and Civic and Voter Education

The CEC has certain legal obligations to fulfill for its voter education efforts, including posting candidate and voting process information on its website and informational posters about candidates and parties in polling stations. They also make election results public and issue important information regarding the voting and electoral process. The CEC tends to focus on the voter education responsibilities outlined in the law and relies on traditional methods of voter education, such as posters, flyers and some public service announcements (PSAs) (see Image 4). While these methods can be effective for certain

Image 4: Example of voter education billboard

segments of the population, it can be difficult for women with certain types of disabilities or women from rural communities.
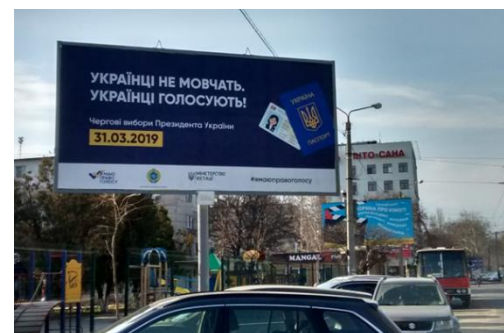
In general, the CEC does not target its voter education to specific groups of voters, but international organizations and civil society groups have filled the gap to ensure targeted voter education ahead of electoral events. For example, ahead of the 2015 local elections, the CEC worked with IFES to develop a PSA that highlighted the new party list gender quota that was part of the Law on Local Elections. Some PSAs developed by civil society organizations, however, contain images with gender stereotypes that serve to further reinforce existing gender biases (see Image 5). Credible public information on women candidates and on gender-related electoral issues can be difficult to find, as media outlets often focus on women's appearance, clothes and personal lives rather than on policy issues.

Image 5: PSAs developed by civil society organizations

There is a widespread lack of civic education, including civic education on critical issues like gender equality. According to the results of USAID/ENGAGE National Civic Engagement poll conducted at the end of 2018, only 7 percent of respondents confirmed that they had received steady proactive civic education while 22 percent claimed they have rarely attended any relevant meetings or participated in political activities.

Recommendations

1. *Increase CEC capacity to develop and disseminate voter education efforts, especially those targeted at traditionally excluded groups.*

Currently, the CEC relies heavily on international groups and civil society organizations to develop targeted voter information for groups who are traditionally excluded from electoral processes. The CEC should increase its own internal capacity to both develop and disseminate these messages so that they reach a broad range of citizens.

2. *Integrate messages on gender equality and equal political participation into civic education curriculum in schools and universities.*

Often, ideas about gender roles and how women and men should behave in society are shaped when children and young people are in school. By integrating messages on gender equality into civic education curriculum in both schools and universities, students have an opportunity to engage on these issues when they are younger and in a safe space for inquisitive thinking. Prioritizing gender equality as part of civic education curriculum teaches young girls and boys that women should be equal and active participants in political issues.[43]

3. *Target men in voter education messages about gender equality.*

Finding and fostering male allies is critical in efforts to bring about a more gender-equal society. By targeting men in voter education messages about the equal participation of women, these messages

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[43] IFES is currently mainstreaming gender equality in its university-level civic education course in Ukraine, which takes place at 20 universities.

can influence individuals who are often in decision-making roles where they can impact policies and attitudes.

4. *Ensure that some voter education includes simple messages about women's political participation and is distributed in more rural areas.*

Traditional voter education tends to reach those who have the easiest access to mainstream media, which does not always include rural or other historically excluded populations. Since voter education messages are often developed in urban centers by highly educated individuals, messages do not always resonate with all segments of the population. To ensure that all citizens understand the importance of women's equal and meaningful participation, it is important to craft some voter information messages in simple, easy-to-understand language and ensure it reaches all parts of the country.

5. *Provide capacity building to civil society organizations and others engaging on civic and voter education to ensure that materials and products align with gender equality principles and best practices.*

Groups engaged in civic and voter education need training and guidance so that they do not reinforce stereotypes unintentionally in their messaging and are able to actively counter stereotypes that demonstrate some genders or communities as leaders at the expense of others.

Political Parties

Political parties can provide a variety of opportunities for women to participate in political life but can also represent barriers to their equal participation. Currently, there are 355 registered political parties in Ukraine, though only a small portion of those remain active. As noted in the "Legal Framework" section, there is a 30 percent gender quota that requires parties to have, as part of their statute, a commitment that 30 percent of their party nominees will be women, but because there are no sanctions for non-compliance, parties do not feel obligated to meet the quota. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, only nine of 29 parties that had national lists nominated 30 percent women, and only one of those parties, the Samopovich Party, elected 30 percent women to the Rada. In the 2019 elections, women made up 22.5 percent of candidates (1,315 women candidates out of 5,830 total candidates; see Image 6 on the following page),[44] with two parties (European Solidarity and Holos) electing more than 30 percent of women to the Rada from their MPs.

Oleh Lyashko's Radical Party nominated the largest proportion of women candidates to its party list at 41 percent, and President Zelenskyy's party, Servant of the People, nominated 33 percent women candidates on its list.[45] Women candidates, however, were more likely to be concentrated at the bottom of party lists, with men making up 77 percent of candidates in the top half of lists and women making up just 23 percent of candidates in the top half (men also dominated the bottom half of party

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[44] Data represent information from 10 parties: Batkivshchyna, Civic Position, Holos, European Solidarity, Opposition Platform – For Life, Opposition Bloc, Radical Party of Oleh Liashko, Samopomich, Strength and Honor, and Servant of the People. Source: "Women in Elections: Hurdle Race," Ukrainian Women's Fund, July 2019, https://www.uwf.org.ua/en/news/11582.

[45] Ibid.

lists at 60 percent, with women candidates making up 40 percent). The first half of the Servant of the People party list contained only 11 percent women candidates.[46]

Image 6: Breakdown of the proportion of women candidates on party lists by party
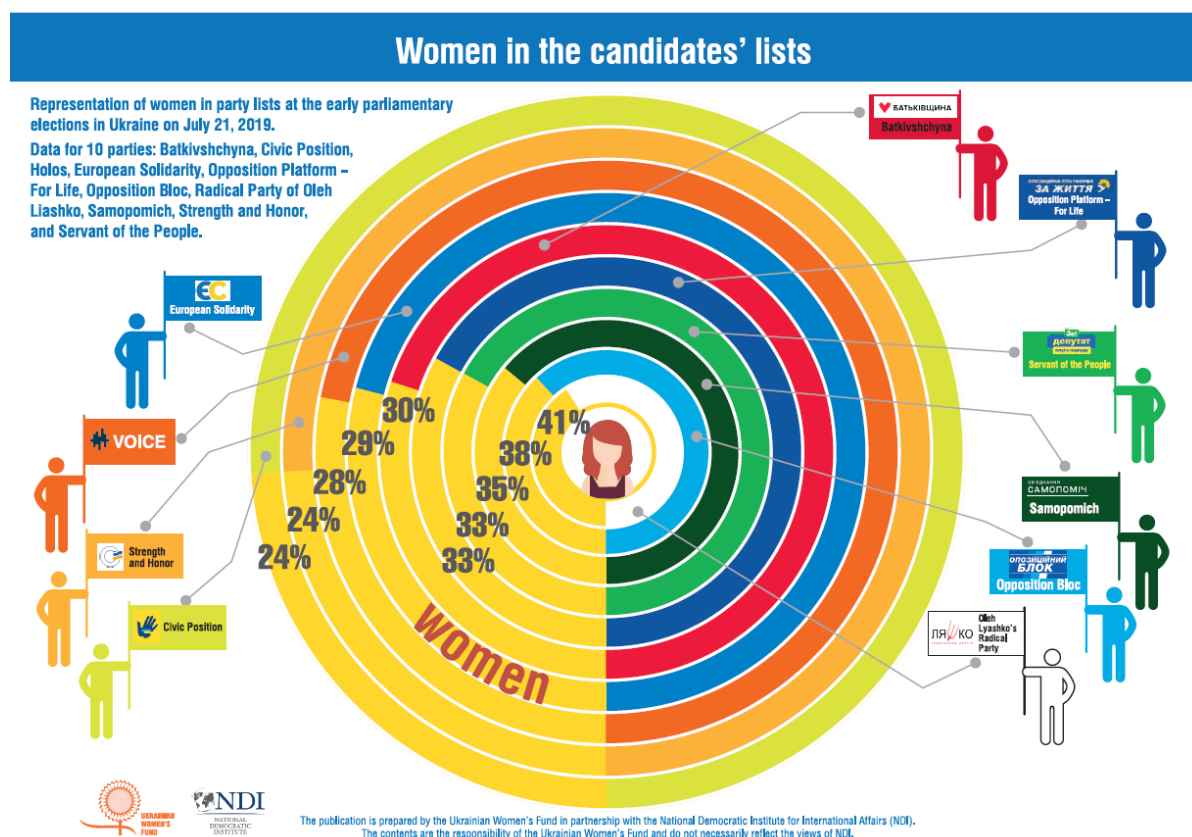
Source: Ukrainian Women's Fund

As noted in a previous section, only two women in the Verkhovna Rada were elected in SMCs in 2014, while the rest were elected from party lists. In 2019, 27 women were elected through SMCs, while 59 women were elected through party lists, a marked increase in the number of women who won in SMCs (see Image 7 on the following page).[47]

Though women were more successful in SMCs in this election versus in the 2014 parliamentary elections, parties nominated a lower proportion of women to SMC elections than on party lists and women represented a larger proportion of candidates elected through party lists (21 percent women) compared with candidates elected through SMCs (13 percent women).[48] Geographically, women nominated to run in SMCs is relatively even across larger regions but varies greatly between oblasts

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] "IFES Comment on women's representation in the new parliament and further steps to maintain and facilitate better women's representation in politics," International Foundation for Electoral Systems, July 26, 2019, http://ifesukraine.org/ifes-comment-on-womens-representation-in-the-new-parliament-and-further-steps-to-maintain-and-facilitate-better-womens-representation-in-politics/?lang=en.

within regions (Kyiv city had the highest proportion of women candidates in SMCs at 26 percent, while Volyn oblast had no women candidates in SMCs; see Annex 2).[49]

Image 7: Breakdown of the proportion of women candidates in SMCs by party
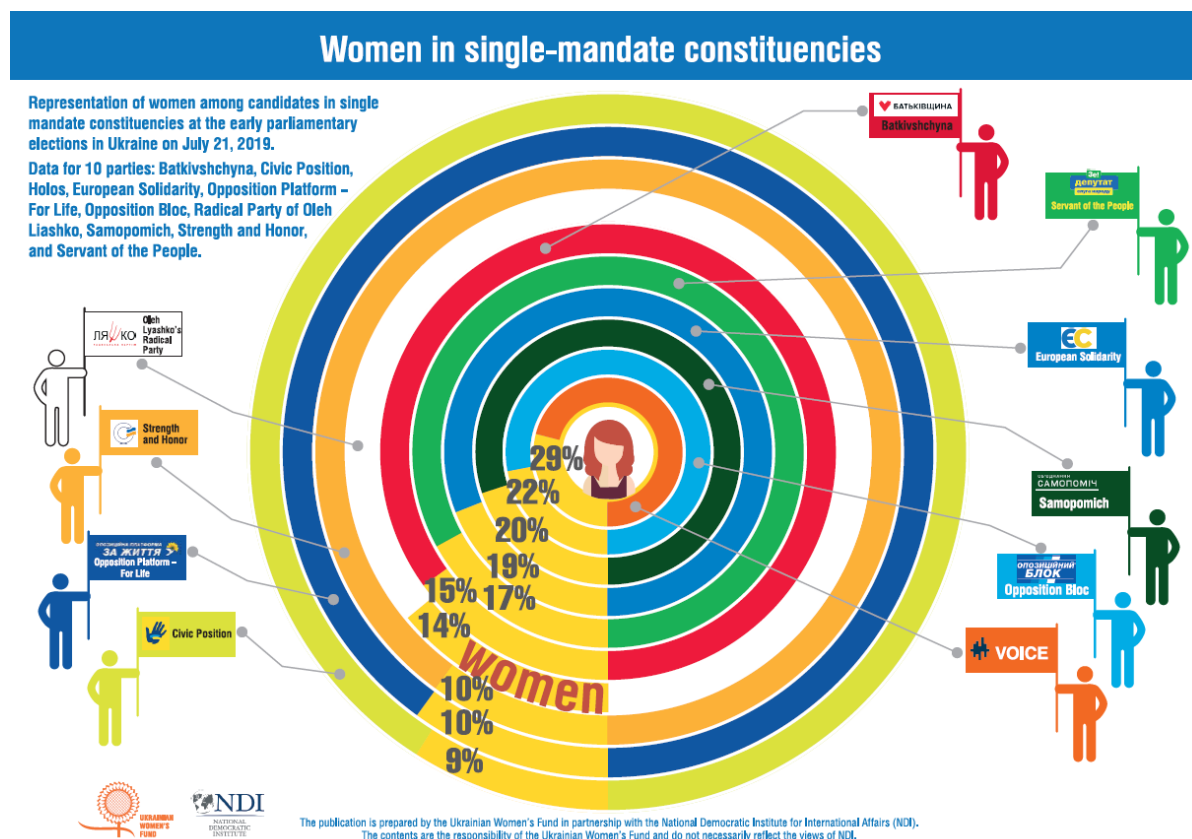
Source: Ukrainian Women's Fund

Though women were more successful in SMCs in this election versus in the 2014 parliamentary elections, parties nominated a lower proportion of women to SMC elections than on party lists and women represented a larger proportion of candidates elected through party lists (21 percent women) compared with candidates elected through SMCs (13 percent women).[50] Geographically, women nominated to run in SMCs is relatively even across larger regions but varies greatly between oblasts within regions (Kyiv city had the highest proportion of women candidates in SMCs at 26 percent, while Volyn oblast had no women candidates in SMCs; see Annex 2).[51]

While women represented 22.6 percent of all candidates, women won 20.3 percent of all seats in Parliament, a significant increase from the 12.3 percent in the 2014 elections, but still below the global and regional averages. A chart with a gender breakdown of the number of women candidates for the parties that won seats after the 2019 parliamentary election is below:

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[49] "Women in Elections: Hurdle Race," Ukrainian Women's Fund.

[50] "IFES Comment on women's representation in the new parliament and further steps to maintain and facilitate better women's representation in politics," International Foundation for Electoral Systems, July 26, 2019, http://ifesukraine.org/ifes-comment-on-womens-representation-in-the-new-parliament-and-further-steps-to-maintain-and-facilitate-better-womens-representation-in-politics/?lang=en.

[51] "Women in Elections: Hurdle Race," Ukrainian Women's Fund.

Political Party	Number of MPs				Women MPs Disaggregated by PR and SMC	
	Women	Men	Percentage of Women	Total	Party List	SMC
Servant of the People	54	200	21.2%	254	33	21
Opposition Platform For Life	5	38	11.6%	43	5	0
Batkivshchyna	5	21	19.2%	26	5	0
European Solidarity	9	16	36%	25	9	0
Holos	9	11	45%	20	7	2
Parties that did not meet threshold	2	8	20%	10	-	2
Self-nominated Candidates	2	44	4.3%	46	-	2
Total	*86*	*338*	*20.3%*	*424*	*59*	*27*

Out of the 27 women candidates who won seats in SMCs – a significant increase from the two who won during the 2014 parliamentary elections – 21 (or 77.8 percent) came from Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party. Women candidates' success in SMCs could be interpreted as a sign of the extreme popularity of the Servant of the People party rather than as a result of any type of systematic and purposeful reform to increase women's participation. The Servant of the People party nominated a significant number of women in many SMCs, while other political parties either did not nominate a high number of women or win many seats. Had Servant of the People decided to nominate fewer women in winnable SMCs or only nominate candidates in a small number of districts (for instance, like the Vakarchuk-led Holos party), the overall representation of women would have been much lower.

Despite an increase in the number of women candidates who won seats in SMCs, women consistently have won more seats through party lists. One reason for this is the large economic cost to run for office. The cost to register to run for office is high, and women candidates are less likely to have access to networks that can support fundraising efforts. One interlocutor noted that women are less willing

"If I was scared [to run], and I was already in the public eye, how scared must women from other fields be?"
– Participant in assessment interview

to use their family budgets for campaign expenses than men are. Other barriers include lack of internal party democracy and transparency (further discussed below), lack of confidence, lack of family support, and general sexism and misogyny that are pervasive in cultural attitudes around women in leadership. Safety and security are concerns for LGBTQ+ women. LGBTQ+ activists might be well known in civil society, but once they run for office, they become more well known by the larger public, which could pose a security risk.

Most parties do not have internal structures to improve women's participation, and women's leadership in parties – at the national and local level – is lacking. None of the major parties included any language on gender equality in their platforms or as part of their ideology. It is not clear what the gender balance is in leadership of the relatively new Servant of the People party.

One reason that there is a lack of women's representation in parties is that parties lack internal democracy, relying on closed circles and networks to set policies and make decisions. Decision-making within political parties is often opaque, made behind closed doors by a select number of political elites, who are usually men. Internal democracy is oftentimes absent from political parties' statues, regulations and mandates. Candidate selection, for example, is usually not a consultative and transparent process; rather, candidates are informed if they have been selected after the fact by a political party's executive committee.

Based on research and interviews, most party leaders' inner circles are made up of only men. One interlocutor noted that many party decisions are made when the men go to the sauna, for example, a place where women and men are separated. This lack of internal party democracy and the prevalence of backroom dealings perpetuates women's unequal access to leadership roles and elected positions. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report found that local politics is often determined by business interests, and because women often do not have leading roles in businesses, they are also underrepresented in local politics.[52] Sexism and ageism among party leaders persists and keeps women from fully realizing their potential as political leaders.

Parties also particularly ignore women from groups facing compounding discrimination, only acknowledging them when it can bring positive attention to the party. An exploitative example of this was detailed by one interlocutor: one party asked a woman with a visual disability to be part of its party but later told her the party was no longer interested as it instead preferred to have a woman in a wheelchair, since her disability was more visible. Parties have not reached out to members of the LGBTQ+ population, who insist that they can lend their votes and support to parties who fight for their rights.

Recommendations

1. *Develop a comprehensive messaging strategy on the importance of nominating women for party leadership positions and elected offices.*

Because the gender quota law is not compulsory and the anticipated future open-list system also

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[52] "Integrity and Inclusiveness of the Democratic Process in Ukraine - Analysis of Interim Research Findings in the Regions." United Nations Development Programme Ukraine, February 2019. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/ukraine/docs/DG/Integrity%20and%20Inclusiveness%20report%20FINAL_12%2003%202019.pdf.

makes adherence to gender quotas difficult, it is important for parties to understand why running women as candidates and appointing women to leadership positions is advantageous for them. Effective messaging may vary by party. For parties who support Eurocentric policies, it could be effective to message to these parties that if they truly wanted to uphold European values, they will work to promote women's equal and meaningful representation. Pressure from both the international community and Ukrainian citizens is essential to compel parties to prioritize gender equality and women's inclusion.

2. *Enhance internal party democracy, especially around candidate nomination.*

Lack of transparency in intraparty dealings decreases women's ability to be meaningfully involved in political decision-making in parties. Parties should introduce visible, inclusive mechanisms to select candidates for party lists and to run in single-member district elections.

3. *Increase party financial support to women candidates.*

One of the largest barriers to women's participation as candidates is lack of sufficient financial support or personal funding for their campaigns. Parties should increase their financial support to women candidates to mitigate this issue, setting aside a portion of party funds to increase women's participation. Parties should also use their funds to conduct campaign clinics for women who are interested in running for office, including holding sessions on fundraising and campaign finance management.

4. *Implement quotas within parties for party leadership.*

Currently, parties lack equal representation in their executive boards and local party structures. Parties should institute 30 percent gender quotas for their internal party structures, including their leadership boards and their local party organizations.

Recommendations

The following list provides a summary of recommendations for each subcategory, based on the assessment findings. This list is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, it focuses on the most pressing concerns in the electoral process based on the gender analysis conducted by the assessment team.

Recommendations	Responsible Actor(s)	Priority Level
Legal Framework		
• Pass a gender quota law that includes placement rules, sanctions for noncompliance, and a 40 percent threshold for party lists if the current parallel system is used.	Rada	High
• Strengthen political and campaign finance regulations to impose stricter rules for noncompliance, to support implementation of existing sanctions, and to clarify which institutions are responsible for enforcing regulations. Improve access to electoral justice.	Rada, CEC, NAPC, Courts, DEC/PEC	High
• Amend public funding stipulations to maintain or increase incentives for parties if multiple parties meet the quota and the total is therefore decreased; require a certain amount of public funding be used to promote women's political participation.	Rada	Moderate
• Amend existing regulations to require that party lists, after registration, must maintain the proportion of women represented during submission of the list.	Rada	Low
Election Administration		
• Institutionalize gender equality in the structure of the election commission.	CEC	High
• Integrate gender considerations into CEC strategic, communication and operational planning processes, including through the development of a gender policy and action plan.	CEC	High
• Collect gender-disaggregated data of staff, registered voters, candidate registration and voter turnout, and make it publicly available and easily accessible.	CEC, DECs, PECs	High
• Provide training on the importance of the inclusion of excluded groups or groups facing barriers to participation, including women, to staff at all levels.	CEC, DECs, PECs	Moderate
• Designate an adequate amount of the election budget for women's political participation programming.	CEC	Moderate
• Develop an internal gender policy to guide work in this area.	CEC	Moderate
Voter Registration		
• Amend the electoral code to fully enfranchise IDPs.	Rada	High
• Audit the SRV to ensure that individuals' names accurately represent the names on their identification documents.	CEC	Low
Women's Political Participation		
• Conduct training for journalists on how to cover women and ensure gender sensitivity.	International organization, CSOs	High
• Build partnerships between women's organizations and across civil society groups.	International organization, CSOs	Moderate
• Support women to run for political office.	International organization, CSOs, Political parties	Moderate

• Create a gender equality adviser in the president's office, who is qualified and has experience working in gender equality, and continue to support the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy.	President's office	Moderate
Public Information and Civic and Voter Education		
• Increase CEC capacity to develop and disseminate voter education efforts, especially those targeted at traditionally excluded groups.	CEC	High
• Integrate messages on gender equality and equal political participation into civic education curriculum in schools and universities.	Ministry of Education	High
• Target men in education messages about gender equality.	CEC, International organizations, CSOs	High
• Ensure that some voter education includes simple messages about women's political participation and is distributed in rural areas.	CEC, International organizations, CSOs	Low
Political Parties		
• Develop a comprehensive messaging strategy on the importance of nominating women for party leadership positions and for elected offices.	International organizations, CSOs	High
• Enhance internal party democracy, including around candidate nomination and for party structure and leadership positions.	Parties	High
• Increase party financial support to women candidates.	Parties	High
• Encourage parties to ensure that women receive equitable campaign resources, air time and media coverage.	Parties	High
• Encourage parties to develop gender policies and procedures for addressing sexual harassment.	Parties	High
• Implement quotas within parties for party leadership.	Parties	Moderate

# Annex 1: Opportunities and Vulnerabilities

Significant vulnerabilities need to be addressed to encourage women's equal and meaningful participation in political and electoral processes and opportunities upon which to build to continue positive strides toward gender inclusion.

Gender Analysis Summary of Findings		
Category	Vulnerabilities	Opportunities
Legal Framework	• Gender quota law does not have sanctions for noncompliance, does not include placement rules, and is not voluntary followed by political parties. • Substitution rules leave an opportunity for parties to skirt the quota after submitting party lists. • Campaign and political finance laws make it difficult for women candidates to run, especially in SMCs.	• Ukraine has ratified international agreements and signed onto some regional frameworks that support women's equal participation. • Ukraine's Constitution and other legislation guarantee women's rights to equally participate in public life. • There is a 30 percent gender quota as part of the Political Parties Law.
Election Administration	• There are no staff members responsible for gender inclusion issues (no gender focal point or gender unit). • There is no specific budget allocated to gender inclusion. • The CEC does not collect gender-disaggregated statistics and release them to the public. • Training does not sufficiently address gender equality issues.	• There is support among commissioners for gender equality issues. • Women are well represented at all levels of election administration.
Voter Registration	• Some information in the voter list did not update, meaning that names on the voter list did not match voter identification documents. • IDPs cannot participate in all elections.	• Voter registration is passive.
Women's Political Participation	• Media outlets portray women as objects, sexual beings and victims. • Women MPs and candidates are often the targets of online harassment and abuse. • The anti-gender movement has taken hold in decision-making bodies and threatens the gender equality movement with regressive ideals and policies. • Women are largely underrepresented as government officials, elected representatives and candidates.	• Ukrainian citizens are generally supportive of increased women's participation in public life. • There are many professional, organized, active women's organizations.
Public Information and Civic and Voter Education	• Public information about issues important to women can be lacking due to poor media coverage. • The CEC does not produce much of its own voter education or distribute voter education widely to citizens.	• International organizations provide voter education and public information targeted at enhancing the political participation of specific groups, including women. • Voter education shows both women and men in active roles.
Political Parties	• There is a lack of internal party democracy, especially in candidate nomination processes.	• Some political parties voluntarily followed gender quota in previous elections. • There are some women in party leadership positions.

	• There are few women in party leadership positions on executive committees and in local party organizations. • Parties do not provide strong financial support for women candidates. • Sexism and ageism of party leaders leads to lack of women's representation on party lists and in party leadership. • There are no sanctions for noncompliance with the gender quota, so parties do not always comply.

Annex 2: Women Candidates in Single-Member Constituencies

The chart below shows the proportion of women candidates in SMCs by region and oblast.
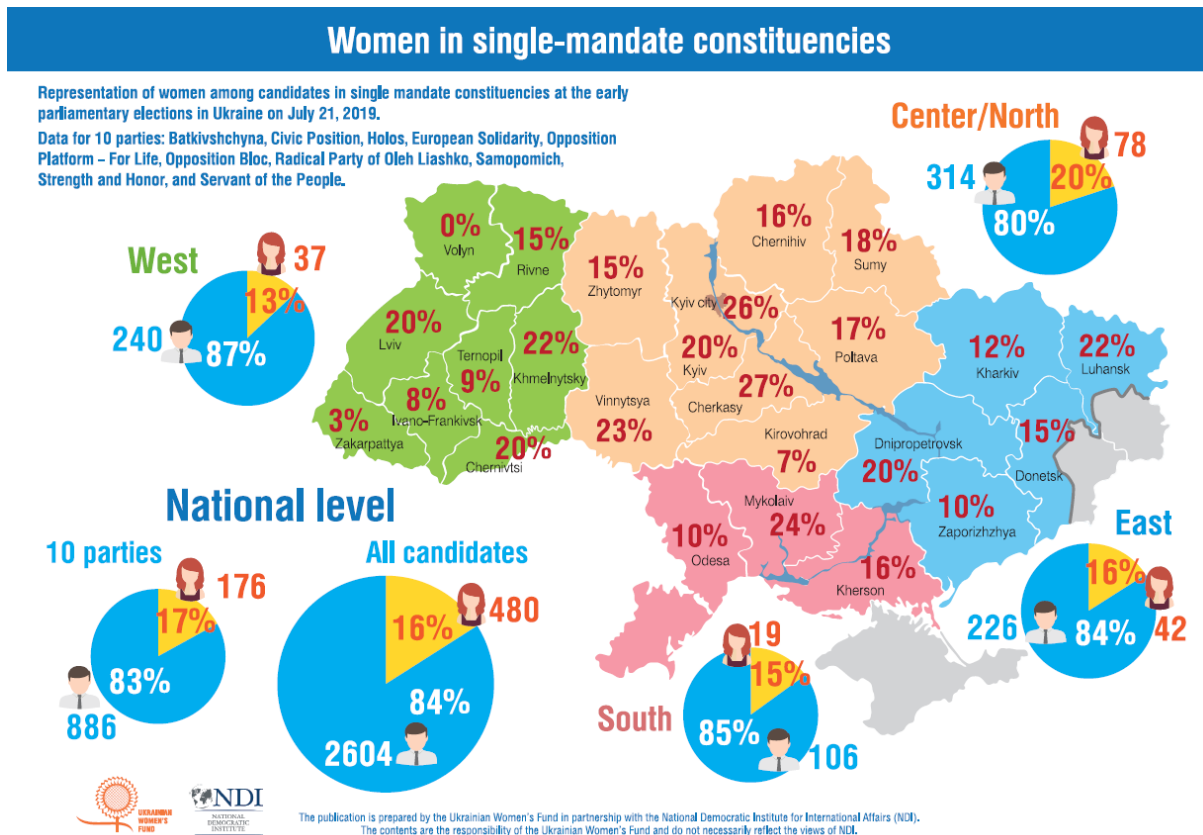
Source: Ukrainian Women's Fund

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