



Project “More Women in European Politics – More Women in 2014”

Local Action Strategy

Partner 1

BALKAN ASSIST ASSOCIATION

Bulgaria

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LOCAL STRATEGIES

under the international project „*More Women in European Politics, More Women in 2014*” implemented by the Balkan Assist Association in partnership with the LUDEN organization, Belgium, and other NGOs from 13 European countries

I. Project Goal: To achieve gender equality in the participation in political decision-making and leadership at all levels, and especially at the European level.

II. Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations of the baseline study in Bulgaria:

- The presence of women in Bulgarian politics has gradually increased over the past 23 years; women MPs make up 23% of all deputies; the number of female Cabinet ministers has also been on the increase; the number of women is going up at the top level of public administration (40%), with only the situation at the local level being different: only 11% of all Mayors are women, and women members of the Municipal Councils are about 28%. Women are best represented at the European level: more than 40% of Bulgarian European Parliament Members are women (2009-2014)
- There is no specific piece of legislation on equal opportunities for women and men in Bulgaria, although since 2007 an annual National Plan for Equality has been prepared, outlining the issues of women's participation in decision-making; in fact, however, no concrete measures have been taken to address the issue (there are no quotas, government-subsidized initiatives, etc.).
- **At the same time, women appear to be more active voters than men (8% more voters are women)**, their vote being equally divided between left- and right-wing parties. Women generally do not support nationalist parties - their vote for this part of the political spectrum is 20% less compared to male voters.
- **As regards women and political representation**, there are no significant differences with the EU. There has been no recent increase in the percentage of women participating in the governing bodies of political



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parties.

- The higher the level of representation, the more women are involved: the highest percentage is that of women in the EP (more than 40% of Bulgarian MEPs are women), next comes the national Parliament (around 23%), while at local level the representation of women is lowest - only 11% of Mayors are women.
- There are specific political functions which are generally considered "masculine": these include national security, finance, economics etc., and others that are considered "feminine" - the social and cultural sphere. Interestingly, in recent years infrastructure policies have been delegated to women, which differs from the situation in the EU.
- There is a clear territorial imbalance concerning the political representation of women in local government: there are more women mayors in smaller towns and villages with up to 25,000 inhabitants; and a huge shortage of women in Southern Bulgaria - a fact that needs to be specially investigated and explained.
- **Specific policies are needed in Bulgaria to ensure the inclusion of more women in the governing bodies of political parties and movements in both national and local politics.**

III. This determines the overall goal of activities in Bulgaria: To focus public attention and interest on the need for greater participation of women in politics and encourage political parties and responsible authorities to take concrete steps needed to ensure gender equality.

IV. Specific Objectives:

1. Conduct an extensive information, awareness-raising and advocacy campaign for greater participation of women in politics and more women candidates for European Parliament elections.
2. Draft and implement a Training and Support Programme for 15 young women having the interest and desire to be involved in political activities and run for MPs at European Parliament elections.

V. Activities to achieve the objectives:

1. Set up a National Group for Project Management with participation of representatives of organisations and institutions involved in the topic.

Deadline:

31.05.2013



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2. Carry out a national baseline study on the participation of women in politics and plan concrete steps and actions based on the study results; promote the results of the study.

Deadline to develop the baseline study 15.07.2013

Time period to promote results: September, 2013 –

March, 2014

3. Organise meetings with representatives of state institutions, political parties and NAMRB to discuss the need for greater participation of women in politics and to create an updated database on the representation of women in political parties and other bodies at local, regional, and national level.

Time-period: September, 2013 –

April, 2014

4. Research into, present and promote specific examples and best practices ("case-studies") of successful women in local government, decision-making positions in political parties, and women - activists (active women who are not currently holding political positions), and on this basis create profiles of the different types of women.

Time-period: August - October, 2013

5. Conduct a survey on the attitudes to elect women (in the forthcoming European Parliament vote or in connection with the early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, if scheduled) - by including questions in the planned survey of one of the sociological agencies (omnibus).

Time-period: January-April, 2014

6. Organise discussion meetings with women members of the European Parliament and involve some of them (depending on the level of interest demonstrated) in specific activities and initiatives under the project.

Time-period: November, 2013 – April,

2014

7. Develop and implement a **Training and Support Programme** for 15 young women including:

- general part - training with the Bulgarian School of Politics
- individual part (as needed) - counseling, coaching, support and more.

Deadline: to develop: 30.10.2013

Period of implementation: November 2013 - March 2014

8. **Draft and submit a Final Report** on the project implementation in Bulgaria, comprising:



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- a. a description of the context in which the project has been implemented
- b. description of the goals and objectives of the campaign
- c. a detailed description of the activities planned and implemented as part of the project and the campaign
- d. presentation of the campaign results
- e. findings, conclusions and recommendations for the future

Promote the most important highlights of the report.

Time-period: July – November,

2014

9. Develop and implement a Plan for an information and advocacy campaign, including:

- the use of social media and the Internet;
- publications, interviews and reports in electronic and print media;
- public events (press conferences, meetings, discussions, debates, etc.)

Deadline to develop the plan: 30.09.2013

Period of implementation: October, 2013 – May, 2014

10. Organize specific activities and events within the information and advocacy campaign:

- Create a Facebook account to promote the project (**April 2013**)
- Regular online publications (the websites of Balkan Assist, NAMBR, CPF) and also in electronic and print media (**2013 - 2014**)
- Participation in the International Conference in Estonia (**September 2013**)
- Information meeting announcing the launch of the project and the baseline study results in Bulgaria (**October 2013, EP building in Sofia**)
- Announce a competition to select participants in the Training and Support Programme (**October-December, 2013**)
- Public debate on "Women and Politics" held at the Red House Culture and Debate Centre (**January, 2014 Sofia**)
- Conference on "Women and European politics" with the participation of MEPs and Bulgarian politicians, media and NGO representatives (**January, 2014 Sofia**)
- Official launch of the Training and Support Programme and ceremony to award certificates (**February, 2014 Sofia**)
- Roundtable on "Women's Contribution to European politics" (**April, 2014 Europe House in Sofia**)
- Election campaign meetings to present women-candidates participating in the Support Programme (**May 2014, Sofia and Plovdiv**)
 - Participation in the international conference in Greece (**June**



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- Closing Meeting to present the project outcomes in Sofia (**September 2014**)
- International closing meeting in Brussels (**October, 2014**)



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