



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

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Base Line Study

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»More Women in European Politics – More Women in 2014«

Women in Politics in Slovenia

Baseline Study - Synopsis

Authors:

Tanja S. Pleš, M.A.
Klara Nahtigal, M.A.
Angela Murko Pleš



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Introduction

Slovenia is one of the newer European states. This year we marked the 22nd anniversary of the independence declaration. It joined the European Union in 2004.

Over twenty years of establishing and consolidating the new government institutions is at the same time a period of more or less intensive efforts to enhance the political power of women. With the first multi-party elections, the share of women, who in the previous system used to participate in the decision-making bodies, dropped dramatically. In the Socialist Republic of Slovenia's Delegates' Assembly before 1990, the share of women amounted to 24%, yet during the 1990 multi-party elections it dropped to 12% in the newly elected National Assembly.

During the transition processes when social, economic and value systems were changed in their core, women in Slovenia lost more economic and social gains of socialism compared to men. They were almost completely ousted from power politics institutions. Men conquered the newly established political parties; when the ninety member RS National Assembly was convened for the first time in 1992, only 12 female members or 13.3% held seats.

In the analysis of the current situation, we examined in more detail the state of women's representation in politics, namely at three levels:

- European level (European Parliament – Slovenian female and male members)
- National level
 - o President of Slovenia
 - o RS Government (prime ministers-male/female, vice prime ministers-male/female and ministers-male/female)
 - o RS National Council
 - o RS National Assembly (presidents-male/female, as well as female and male members)
- Local level
 - o Mayors and mayoresses
 - o Municipal female and male councillors

Besides women's representation, we were also interested in measures on gender parity that have already been implemented in the legislation, as well as other measures, and we were thinking about potential further steps.

So far all these mechanisms, as well as the measures whose encouragement, creation and implementation were accompanied by the civil and political engagement of women, have not more decisively contributed to the reduction of an explicit democratic deficit in accomplishing gender equality.

Gender equality index was presented for the first time in June 2013 by the European Institute for Gender Equality or its calculation for EU-27 "in 2010 amounted to 54; this means that the EU is halfway to gender equality." (Šter 2013)

"The biggest deficit concerning gender equality is in the component of power. The value of index for EU-27 is 38". (Šter 2013) According to the 2010 data, Slovenia is below the European average as regards the component of power, namely under 38, which is the consequence of a low women's representation in taking political decisions, or in other words, their representation in decision making political bodies.

Women's representation in politics at the European level- European Parliament

Slovenia joined the European Union in May 2004 and a month later, the first elections of the Slovenian female and male members to the European Parliament were held.

a) Statutory measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

The 2002 Election of Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Slovenia Act (ZVPEP) was amended in 2004 by the provision: "On the list of candidates, neither gender may be represented by less than 40 percent. Every list must be composed in such a way that at least one candidate of each of the genders is placed on the upper half of the list".

b) Other measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

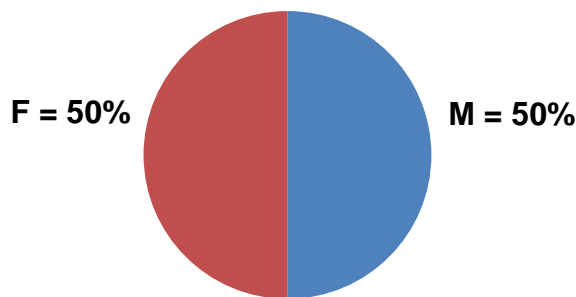
Prior to the European Parliament elections in 2009, a campaign run by the Women's Lobby of Slovenia titled "50-50" took place. It was aimed at both the political parties and at voters. The former were invited to put female and male candidates on the lists alternately and place as many women as possible on top of the list. Voters were encouraged to vote for female candidates regardless of the small impact of the relative preference vote.

a) Current situation

The proportion of female members immediately after the 2009 elections was 28.57. Due to the additional seat in the parliament under the Lisbon Treaty and the resignation of one of the members of parliament, this proportion increased to 50% in the next two years¹.

In the European Parliament today there are eight seats for Slovenian members equally distributed between the two genders: four women and four men.

Graph 1: *Proportion of female and male members of the European Parliament, May 2013*



¹ By virtue of the Lisbon Treaty, Slovenia obtained one more seat in the European Parliament. According to the 2009 election results, this seat belonged to a female candidate. In the beginning of 2011, one of the Slovenian members of the European Parliament resigned because of suspected corruption, therefore a woman got his seat in the European Parliament instead of him.

Women's representation in politics at the national level

1.1. President / Female president of the Republic of Slovenia

In its twenty year history Slovenia has not yet had a female head of state. In December 2012, the fourth president of RS was sworn in for the fifth mandate. He was elected among three male candidates.

In all the five elections for the president of RS only 5 women stood as candidates, or almost 14% of all the female and male candidates. Women participated only in three elections: two in 1992, one in 2002 and two female candidates in 2007.

1.2. National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia

National Assembly of RS is the highest legislative institution where the people's female and male representatives are elected by universal and equal suffrage in free and direct elections by secret ballot. National Assembly of RS has 90 female and male members.

1.2.1. President / Female president of National Assembly of RS

During the six National Assembly terms, 10 individuals have so far performed the function of the president; among them there have been no women.

Table 1: *Number of previous National Assembly of RS presidents*

	Men	Women
President of National Assembly of RS	10	0

1.2.2. Female members in the National Assembly of RS

The Slovenian National Assembly election legislation determines a proportional representation or the proportional election system which also includes certain elements of the majority election systems.

In our case the proportional election system, more in favour of women, does not work. It does not work due to the inclusion of certain majority system elements that are less favourable for women and it is precisely these elements that are the key reason for a low participation of women in the National Assembly of RS.

As can be seen from the table below, the proportion of female members in the Slovenian parliament until the last early elections in 2011 did not exceed 13.3%.

Table 2: *Number and proportion of women in the National Assembly of RS directly after the 1992 -2011 elections*

	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2011
Number of female members	12	7	12	11	12	29
Proportion of female members	13.3%	7.8%	13.3%	12.2%	13.3%	32.2%

a) Statutory measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

The National Assembly Election Act was amended in July 2006 by the provision: "On the list of candidates none of the genders may be represented by less than 35% of the total actual number of female and male candidates on the list". The exception to this rule applies to the list of three female and male candidates on which at least one representative of every gender must be placed.

The legislator decided to apply quotas gradually. In the transitional provisions for the next elections after applying the Act he prescribed a 25% quota which was used in the 2008 elections.

On the lists of candidates there were consequently at least 25% of women and 12 female candidates were elected members of parliament or 13.3%. The measure to enhance gender equality obviously did not work. The reasons may be both of an institutional nature (inadequacy of election system) and the lack of political will.

The quota prescribed by the law namely does not affect the classification of female and male candidates on the list. "Female and male candidates from the list are namely classified in individual electoral districts within the constituencies and it is entirely understandable that it is impossible to prescribe by a law, how they will be distributed by gender. This is why the actual impact of the minimum quota on the

election of women depends on the political parties' treatment as well as on their readiness to apply the principle of equal female and male representation in practice". (Murko Pleš et al. 2011: 17)

b) Other measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

At the end of 2011, the Women's Lobby of Slovenia performed a detailed analysis titled "The impact of electoral districts on women's eligibility".

The results clearly showed that "the success of a female or male candidate depends on how eligible is the electoral district where he or she appears. A multiple appearance at the elections allows political parties quite a reliable assessment as to which electoral districts or female/male candidates in these districts will be allocated the terms in the constituency. (Murko Pleš in dr. 2011: 31)

The results of the analysis were presented to the public only a few weeks before the early elections that took place in December 2011. A strong external pressure and the awareness of female candidates that for their eventual election it is important in which electoral district they are classified had the following consequence: the political parties which are granted seats in this term in the National Assembly introduced 41.7% of women in the lists of candidates (the prescribed quota requested at least 35% of one gender).

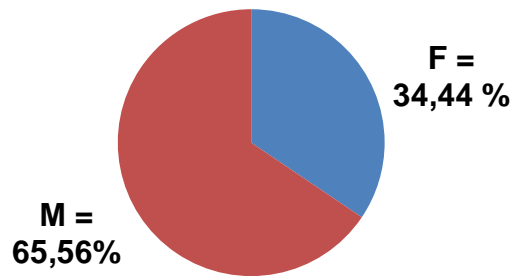
The key reason why the statutory measure on equal women's representation in the National Assembly is not efficient however remains. As long as the constituencies are divided into electoral districts and the elements of the majority election system exist, there is an institutional obstacle for applying the parity between the genders, because "from a formal legal aspect it is impossible to prescribe the classification of female and male candidates in electoral districts pursuant to their eligibility level" (ibid.).

c) Current situation

It was precisely the analysis performed by the Women's Lobby of Slovenia and the activities, as well as the knowledge based on it which *inter alia* contributed to the fact that during the early December 2011 elections, that is the second elections after the introduction of quotas in the National Assembly Election Act, there were 32.2% or 29 female members elected.

After the formation firstly of one government and then the other one (20 March 2013) and other changes (resignation of a male, female member), the number of female National Assembly members changed so that in May 2013 the proportion of female members was the highest so far, namely 31 female members or 34.4%.

Graph 2: Number of female and male members in the National Assembly of RS, May 2013



1.3. National Council

The National Council of RS is a representative body defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia as an agency of social, economic, professional and local interests. Female and male councillors, 40 in total, perform their function non-professionally. National Council elections are indirect through relevant interest organisations or local communities.

The table below shows that the National Council is even a tougher stronghold of men than the National Assembly; the highest proportion of women in all the previous five terms amounted to 12.5%.

Table 3: Number and proportion of women in the National Council of RS immediately after its formation

	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012
Number of female councillors	1	5	3	1	3
Proportion of female councillors	2.5	12.5	7.5	2.5	7.5

Discussions have already been under way for some time in the country about a potential abolishment of the National Council or at least its reorganisation. Both nevertheless requires a change in the Constitution and when this becomes actual it will be necessary to ensure that the election act in the reorganised National Council will provide equal opportunities for women and men.

1.4. Government of the Republic of Slovenia

In the period since the creation of an independent state to this day, there have been eleven governments in Slovenia. The current RS Government was appointed on 20 March 2013. For the first time it is led by a woman. Besides her there are also 11 ministers in the government and 2 female ministers of whom one is without portfolio.

Statistics indicate and extremely poor women's representation in the previous RS Governments:

- Of eleven governments only one is led by a woman,
- In four of the eleven governments also the vice-prime ministers, 11 in total, were all men,
- Of all the 233 ministers there were only 30 women or 12, 87%,
- The percentage of women in the government has never exceeded 28%,
- In less than one half of the governments (five), the percentage of women was lower than 10.

Women's representation in politics at the local level

In contrast with other EU Member States, a single-level local self-government system has evolved in Slovenia; broader local communities have not (yet) been established, although they are envisaged in the Constitution.

Locally governed communities in Slovenia are municipalities. Elections take place every four years. In independent Slovenia so far there have been 5 elections, the first ones in 1994 and the last in 2010. The current number of municipalities stands at 212.

The below analysis of women's representation in local politics is performed on two levels, namely between mayoresses and female municipal councillors.

1.1. Mayoresses

During all the mayoral election so far there have been altogether 3,739 women and men who stood as candidates, of whom 346 female candidates or 9.25%.

The representation of women, elected mayoresses, was after all the elections even lower than the representation among the female candidates for the mayor's position. The number of mayoresses in the entire Slovenia has never exceeded 11 or 6%. The lowest number of mayoresses was after the first elections in 1994, namely just 2.

Table 4: Number of mayoresses by individual elections, 1994 – 2010

	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	Total
All	147	192	193	210	211 ²	953
Women (no.)	2	8	11	7	10	38
Women (%)	1.36	4.17	5.70	3.33	4.74	3.99

There are currently 10 mayoresses, which is less than 5% of all the persons performing the mayoral function. None of the women is the mayor of an urban municipality (during the last elections there were 20% female candidates for the mayor's position).³

1.2. Female municipal councillors

Municipal council elections are performed under two different election systems pursuant to the number of female/male municipal councillors – the majority system applies to municipal councils with up to 11 male/female members, and the proportional system applies to the rest.

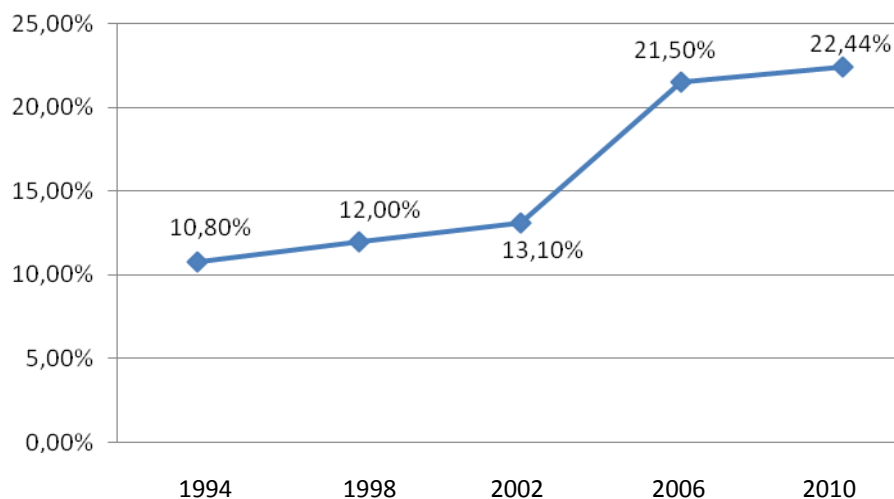
² In the newly established 212th Slovenian Ankaran Municipality, the first elections will take place in 2014 by virtue of the RS Constitutional Court's decision.

³ In Slovenia there are 11 urban municipalities. The Local Self Government Act provides in Article 16 that a "town may acquire the status of an urban municipality if it has at least 10.000 inhabitants and if it is the geographic, economic and cultural centre of its gravitation area. Exceptionally it can acquire the status of an urban municipality for historical reasons."

Under the majority system, people vote for an individual female/male candidate and under the proportional system, for the lists of candidates.

Of the five previous local elections the first three took place without the measures for an equal gender representation provided by the law. These were adopted before the fourth local elections. The proportion of female councillors otherwise slightly increased after every election, therefore also after the second and third elections. We can nevertheless see that the legislative changes had effect immediately after they had been applied, therefore during the 2006 elections when the proportion of women in municipal councils doubled compared to 1994 (SURS 2007).

Graph 3: Proportions of female municipal councillors by individual local elections, 1994 - 2010



a) Statutory measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

In 2005 the Local Elections Act was amended by the provision: "A political party or voters who designate more than one candidate in a constituency as a member of the municipal council must determine the candidates or lists of candidates in such a way that that each of the two genders is granted at least 40% of candidatures or places on the list of candidates. The candidates or the candidates on the first half of the list must be classified alternatively by gender".

The exception to this provision applies for the lists containing three candidates on which at least one representative of each gender must be established.

The legislator chose a gradual achievement of this quota, so that the basic provision will apply only during the local elections in 2014.

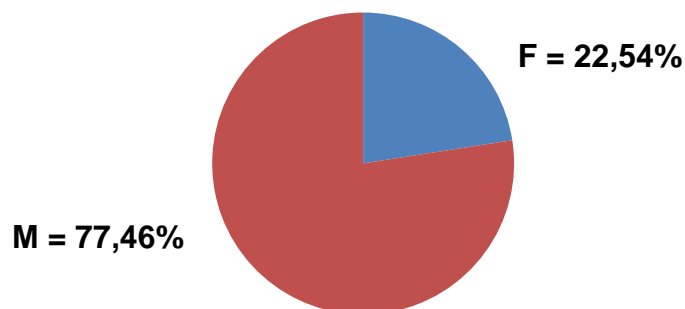
As regards the elected female municipal councillors, the legislative changes had a positive impact. Their proportion after the first election when the quotas were already enacted, therefore in 2006, increased from 13, 10% to 21, 5%. The proportion during the next or the second elections in 2010 when quotas already applied it rose to 22, 54%. "Since the introduction of positive measures the trend of raising the level of women's representation in city and municipal councils amounts to 4, 5% per term.

b) Other measures for applying and providing a balanced representation of women and men

Before the 2010 local elections, in a similar way as before the European Parliament elections the year before, the Women's Lobby of Slovenia again organised a parallel election campaign "50–50". "The project was conceived as an organised pressure on the leaderships of political parties at the time when they establish their lists of candidates, so that as many women as possible would be placed on eligible posts. Female and male voters were informed before the elections on how to identify the parties that are truly committed to gender equality and called upon them to vote for these parties or their list of candidates. They were also invited to cast their preference vote for a woman on the list of candidates that they will choose". (Murko Pleš in dr. 2011: 14)

c) Current situation

Graph 4: Proportion of female and male municipal councillors in municipal councils, 2012



Political parties

Speaking about Slovenia we can say that in the recent twenty years political parties have occupied the entire political arena. All the key decisions, not only for the state in a narrow sense, but also for individual society systems and the society in general are established in the political parties.

If we called the National Assembly and a less important National Council for its formal and actual influence strongholds of men, this especially applies to political parties. Since all the social political life takes place in political parties, it is crucial for the women's political participation how much space they acquire in the political parties. All the newly established and remodelled political parties from the early 90's were run by men and with two or three exceptions in an individual term they have maintained this leadership to this day. In the collective bodies of political parties women (were) are also rather an exception than the rule. In their response to such a situation individual women politicians and politically aware women started to establish special women's groups within political parties. During the past twenty years, with the exception of two of all the parliamentary parties, the so called women's factions operated or still operate. And precisely these women's political groups in cooperation with civil society movements reached numerous normative foundations for applying a balanced representation of women and men in making political decisions.

The Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men provides that political parties that are included in the register of political parties shall adopt, every four years, a plan in which they shall adopt the position on the issue of balanced representation of women and men and, in accordance with this position, determine methods and measures for the promotion of a more balanced representation of women and men within the bodies of the party, on candidate lists for elections to the National Assembly and to bodies of local communities as well as for elections of the female or male President of the Republic.

The Political Parties Act provides that parties should determine the procedure and the authority, determining female or male candidates in elections for the National Assembly and for the female or male President of the Republic of Slovenia and female or male candidates in elections for the local community bodies, as well as the manner of ensuring equal opportunities for both genders when determining female and male candidates in the above elections.

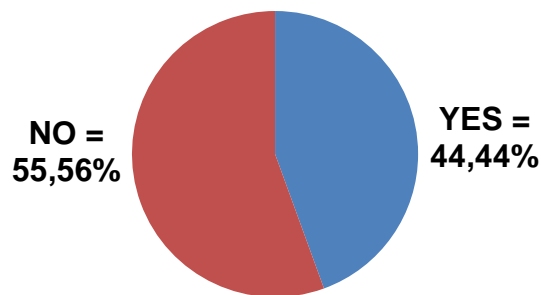
In order to learn more about how political parties implement the above two provisions we addressed them directly with a questionnaire that we prepared for the purposes of this situation analysis. The questionnaire contained six questions which are all of a closed type, except one. We asked the respondents whether they have special women's organisations/groups; if they have a transparent funding of women's organisations/groups; if they adopted an action plan for enhancing and creating equal opportunities for both genders; and if their articles of association include the prescribed minimum proportions for the individual gender in the bodies of the party. We also asked about the representation of individual functions in the bodies of the party by gender and number.

We addressed the questionnaire to the political parties that are or were represented in the parliament during the last two terms. These are: Social Democrats, Slovenian Democratic Party, Slovenian People's party, Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia, Positive Slovenia, Citizen's List, New Slovenia, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, ZARES – Social Liberals and the Slovenian National Party.

Only 5 of the 10 requested political parties replied to the questionnaire. For the remaining parties we could only use the information available on their websites. This is unfortunately why the picture is not perfect because we could mainly obtain the information on the structure of the last, i.e. the operational leadership: female or male president, female or male vice-presidents, party's council and executive committee. Since we were unable to obtain information on the Slovenian National Party needed for the purposes of this analysis even from the internet, we did not consider this party in data processing. Hereinafter we therefore speak about nine parties.

The analysis showed that out of 9 only 4 parties have an organised special women's organisation or group and only 1 of them a clearly defined funding of this group.

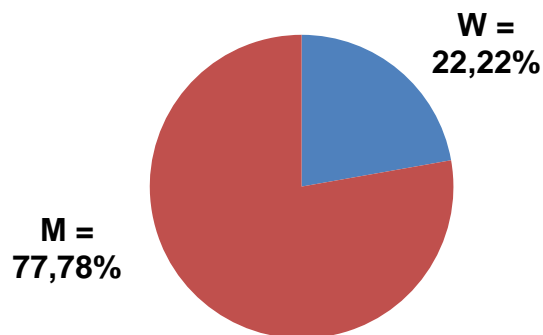
Graph 5: *Relation between the political parties that have women's groups and those that do not have them*



2 parties have an action plan for enhancing and creating equal opportunities and gender equality. There are 4 parties that have minimum proportions for individual genders in the party's organs prescribed in their articles of association.

Out of nine parties considered in this analysis there are currently 2 headed by women. These are parliamentary parties. One of them is in the government. She is the leader of the party and at the same time Prime Minister. In the past there was also another parliamentary party that had a female president.

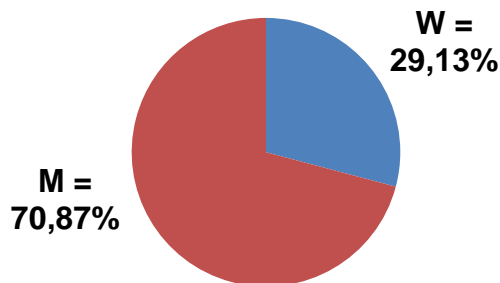
Graph 6: *Relation between women and men, presidents of political parties*



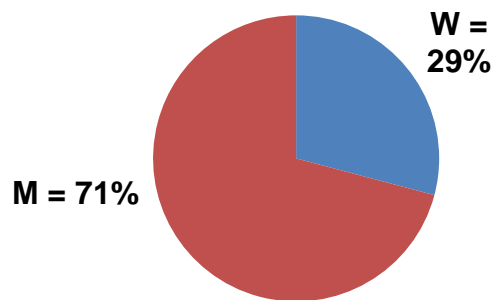
On average, political parties have 2 to 3 female vice-presidents or male presidents. The relation between them is in favour of women since as much as 7 out of 9 parties have a perfectly balanced composition in case when they have 2 vice-president positions or 2 vice-president positions are occupied by women in case when they have 3.

Less convincing is the representation of women in the collective bodies of political parties. On the average (7 parties considered) there is 29,13% of women in parties' councils. In this case the highest percentage is 47% and the lowest 11,76%. On the parties' executive committees there is on the average also almost 29% of women or maximum 54% and minimum 20% (8 parties considered).

Graph 7: *Relation between women and men in political parties' councils*



Graph 8: *Relation between women and men in political parties' executive committees*



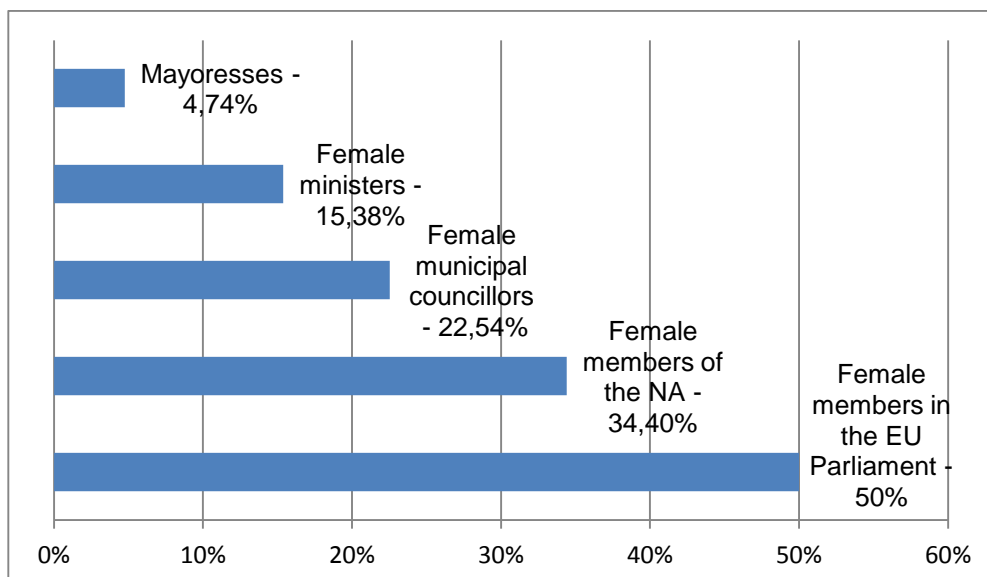
There are no essential discrepancies between left and right-wing parties. Information indicates that the proportions of women in political parties' bodies are slightly higher in left-wing parties. It is nevertheless interesting that both new political parties, established shortly before the 2011 elections, have a relatively high percentage of women in their collective bodies.

Conclusion

The representation of women in politics on this day can be recapitulated and summarised in the following points:

- So far there have been no women performing the highest state functions, like the head of state and the president of the Slovenian parliament. We got the first female Prime Minister as late as March 2013.
- As indicated in the graph below, out of five representative functions only one acquired the democratic 50 percent proportion of women's representation. These are the female members to the European Parliament.
- In the meantime, the proportion of mayoresses is lower than 5%.
- The proportion of female members in the Slovenian parliament and the proportion of female municipal councillors are between 20% and 34, 4%.

Graph 9: *Proportion of women in Slovenian politics on 1.5.2013*



As we can see, the proportions of women are higher in those positions in respect of which the statutory measures for enhancing the gender parity were adopted in the past, therefore among the female municipal councillors, female members in the Slovenian, as well as the European Parliament.

The fact that despite the changes adopted in the Slovenian legislation, the proportions of women, except the proportion of female European Parliament members, the proportions do not exceed 34% remains at the same time of crucial importance.

Summary of proposals and shaping of joint conclusions

European Parliament

The existing balanced representation of the Slovenian female and male members in the European Parliament (50:50) is rather a coincidence than the result of the current provision on a uniform women's representation on the lists of candidates and political will.

Therefore we find it is necessary:

1. To amend the existing law so as to upgrade the provisions concerning the classification on the lists of candidates in such a way that an alternative classification in the first place be applied.

Until the request for this amendment enters into force, it is however urgent:

2. To enhance the pressure on political parties to classify women candidates in the 1st place on all the lists.

National Assembly of RS

The proportional election system, otherwise more in favour of women, does not work in Slovenia due to the input of certain majority election system elements. The existing election system is despite the provisions on quotas the main reason for a low women's representation in the Slovenian parliament.

Consequently, it is necessary:

1. To persist in amending the law in such a way as to abolish the division of constituencies into electoral districts

and at the same time:

2. To raise awareness among female and male voters about the biased election system which covertly and efficiently prevents women from being elected;
3. To introduce single lists of candidates with an alternative classification of women and men on these lists and an alternative classification of gender in the first place on the lists of candidates;
4. To enhance national and international pressure on all the parliamentary parties to agree to urgent systemic changes. (Murko Pleš in dr. 2011: 32)

Mayoresses

The proportion of women who performed in Slovenia the mayor's function is disgracefully low. It currently amounts to 4.74%, but has never exceeded even 6%.

The introduction of quotas when we cast our vote for individual functions in an individual environment is not adequate. It would be therefore:

1. Necessary to seek levers and enhance the pressure on political parties to become more willing to implement a balanced representation of the two genders in all the municipalities at the entire state level.

Municipalities

As we have already established in the chapter titled *Representation of women in politics at the local level*, a part of the problem of unbalanced representation of the two genders is a huge fragmentation of municipalities and very big differences in the number of inhabitants among individual municipalities and consequently among their representative bodies. The Municipalities Act therefore prescribes proportional elections in a part of municipalities and majority elections in the other one.

This is why it is necessary:

1. To demand a change in the law where it prescribes proportional elections so as to introduce an alternative classification of women and men in the first places on the lists of candidates;
2. To exercise pressure on the political parties in the municipalities with the majority election system to provide, by the selection of their female and male candidates, a balanced representation of both genders in all the municipalities at the entire state level.