



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

Agreement number: JUST/2012/FRAC/AG/2695

Base Line Study

Partner 3

PRO PATRIA WOMEN

Estonia

“This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission”



With financial support from the
“Fundamental Rights and Citizenship”
Programme of the European Union



Overview of the representation of women in politics and the activities that support the involvement of women in Estonian politics

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WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

*./.../Unfortunately there are considerably fewer women than men in the Parliament, and this has not been the choice of the Prime Minister but of the people. ./.../*¹

Andrus Ansip, the PM of The Republic of Estonia

Parliamentary election

There are 101 members in the Estonian parliament – Riigikogu. The elections use the proportional representation voting system and the election threshold of 5% is applied. Table 1 shows the overview of the gender breakdown of the candidates and the elected members that took part of the Parliamentary elections of the Republic of Estonia during the period of 1992-2011. The percentage of women among the candidates was the lowest during the first Parliamentary election after the Restoration of Independence – 14% of all the candidates were women. However, comparing the percentage of the women who were elected and the female candidates shows a rather similar outcome.

Table 1. Elections of Estonian Parliament - Riigikogu, 1992-2011

	1992	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Candidates' %						
Men	86	82	73	79	73	77
Women	14	18	27	21	27	23
Elected candidates' %						
Men	87	88	82	81	76	80
Women	13	12	18	19	24	20

Source: Elections in Estonia 1992-2011 Statistics and explanations.

The percentage of female candidates during the following two Parliamentary elections was higher but the percentage of the women elected was lower. Compared to the previous elections the most successful for women were the Parliamentary elections held in 2007, in which 27% of the candidates and 24% of the elected members were women. However, during the elections in 2011 the growing trend did not continue but rather decreased. Although the influence of different methods used to increase the political participation of women cannot be proven, it can still be noted that in the beginning of the 21 century various campaigns and projects were used to bring more attention to increasing the involvement of women.

¹ XII Riigikogu stenogramm. V istungjärg. 11.03.2013. Inquiry about Estonian politic regarding the gender equality in political decision making process.

There were altogether 12 constituencies during the elections held in 2011. The basis for being elected to the Parliament is either personal, district, or compensation mandate. Receiving a personal or district mandate does not depend so much on what the position in the list of constituencies is but that position is strategically important for the party to receive a compensation mandate. For the former two mandates the number of received votes is crucial, and of course we cannot deny that for some voters a candidate's position in the district list is very significant and, therefore, (s)he might give his/her vote to a candidate that is placed on top of the list, in other words, the total number of votes may be in a positive relation to being on top of the list. Taking a look at the percentage of women among the ones who received the compensation mandate, it can be seen that with the last 3 Parliamentary elections the proportion of women has decreased. In 2003 women received 30% of the compensation mandate, in 2007 it was 27%, and 11% in 2011.

Table 2. Method of acquiring mandates during the Parliament election in 2011

		Mandates in total	Personal Mandate	District Mandate	Compensation Mandate
Men	N	81	12	52	17
	%	80%	86%	76%	89%
Women	N	20	2	16	2
	%	20%	14%	24%	11%
TOTAL	N	101	14	68	19

At the Parliamentary elections in 2011, 23% of all participating candidates were women and the method of acquiring mandates was as follows: 14 people were elected to the Parliament with the personal mandate, out of whom 2 were women (14%), district mandates brought in 68 people, of whom 16 were women (24%), and the compensation mandate added another 19 members, of whom 2 were women (11%) (See Table 2). Therefore, it can be said that, on one hand, it is more difficult for women to gather a number of votes that would ensure a personal mandate, on the other hand, the positioning of women in the overall list is not very favourable to receive compensation mandates. In the district lists of constituencies, however, where the ranking is based on votes received, women are rather successful. Allik (2013) points out that the district lists of constituencies are usually led by a man, but the 2nd or 3rd place is more likely reserved for a woman. Therefore, the positioning of women is better in the district lists of constituencies than the overall ones, which can also explain women's rather modest representation among the ones elected to the Parliament by compensation mandate.

Analyses have shown that even when omitting candidates (mainly male), who have received over 10 000 votes, the differences between the number of votes gathered by men and women are not that big. If in 2007 the difference was 100 votes, then during the elections in 2011 men and women received approximately the same amount of votes (Allik 2013).

Government of the Republic

Women were elected as ministers for the first time during the government-in-exile. Renate Kaasik was a member of Heinrich Marga's government-in-exile in Sweden in 1971 – 1990 and the attorney-general during Enno Penno's government-in-exile in 1990 – 1992 was Aino Lepik von Wirén. The transitional government period in 1990-1992 saw Siiri Oviir as Edgar Savisaar's government's

Minister of Social Care and Klara Hallik as the Minister of International Relations during Tiit Vähi's transitional government.

At the moment the government of the Republic is formed by 14 ministers. Never before have there been that few female ministers in the government as there is at present. The only woman in the Cabinet is the Reformist Minister of the Environment, Keit Pentus. During the previous elections in 2007, women still held the fifth, that is 21% of all the ministerial positions, when 3 female ministers were sworn into the Cabinet: the minister of Culture and Social Affairs from the Reform Party and minister of Population from Social Democratic Party (the latter position was abolished in 2009). Take a look at Table 3. Female ministers through the years by Party and governing area.

Table 3. Female ministers 1992-2011 by governing area and party.

	1992 *	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Primeminister						
Minister of the Justice						
Minister of the Economics and Communication		Liina Tõnisson Kesk	Liina Tõnisson Kesk 2002-2003			
Minister of the Education and Science			Mailis Reps(Rand) Kesk 2002-2003	Mailis Reps(Rand) Kesk 2005-2007		
Minister of the Defence						
Minister of the Environment						Keit Pentus Reform
Minister of the Culture			Signe Kivi Reform 1999-2002 2002		Laine Randjärv Reform	
Minister of the Finance						
Minister of the Social Affairs	Marju Lauristin Mõõdukad/ social.dem 1992-1994	Siiri Oviir Kesk ... 1996 Tiiu Aro Koond. 1996-1997 1997-1999	Siiri Oviir Kesk 2002-2003		Maret Maripuu Reform. ... 2009	
Minister of the Interior	Lagle Parek Isamaaliit/IRL 1992-1993					
Minister of the International Relations			Kristiina Ojuland Reform 2002-2003	Kristiina Ojuland Reform 2004-2005		
Minister of the Agriculture				Ester Tuiksoo		

Rahvaliid
2004-2005
2005-2007

Minister of the Population	Klara Hallik 1992 Rahvussuhete minister	Andra Veidemann Kesk 1996-1999 1997-1999	Katrin Saks Sots.dem. ...2002	Urve Palo Sots.dem. Kuni 2009	-----
Minster for Regional Affairs					
Minister for Reform	Liia Hänni Möödukad/ sots.dem. 1992-1994 1994-1995	-----			

During the years 1992 – 2011 there have been three women on average who have been part of the executive power. The greatest number of women has been in Reformist Siim Kallas’ government in 2002 – 2003 that had five women working as ministers, forming 36% of the government members.

Election of the municipal council

Women’s participation in the local government elections’ electoral lists and the number of the elected women has through the years been higher than it has been during the Parliamentary elections. Allik (2010) brings out that while in 1993 there were little over 28% of women among the candidates and the percentage of elected women turned out to be up to 24%, then in 2005 and 2009 the corresponding percentages were 39 and 30 (See Figure 1). As can be seen from the graph, the last two elections have been the most successful for women, and during that time also the Parliamentary elections of 2007 took place which have been the most successful for women so far.

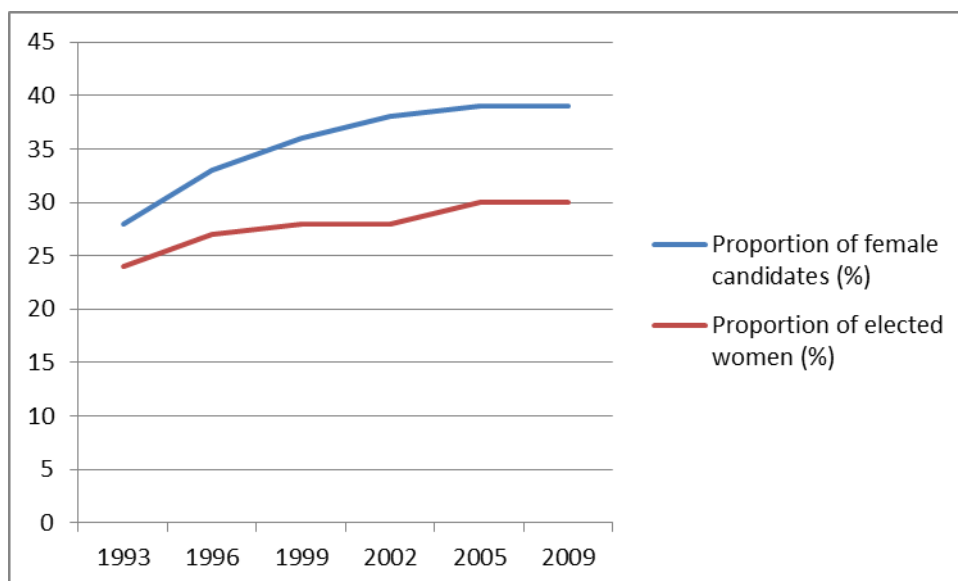


Figure 1. Proportion of female candidates and of elected women, elections of municipal councils (local level), 1993-2009.

However, to compare Figure 1, illustrating the ratio between female candidates and elected women at the level of local elections, to Figure 2, which illustrates same values at the level of Parliamentary elections, it can be seen that women’s standing at the local level is not that much better from the national level. The difference between the proportion of female candidates and elected women during the last three Parliamentary elections was 2-3%; at the local level the percentage of the candidates was 9-10% higher than the percentage of the elected women.

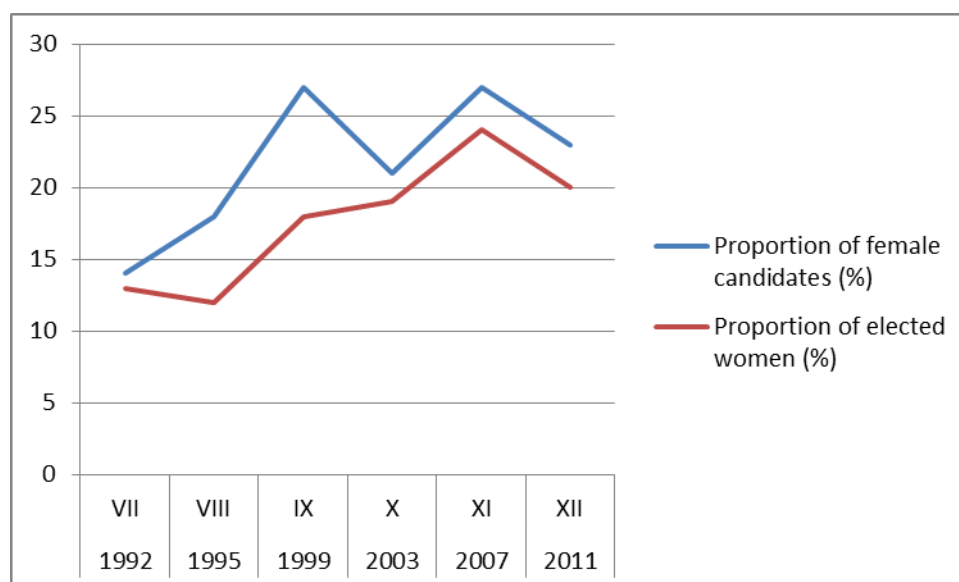


Figure 2. Proportion of female candidates and of elected women, Estonian Parliament Elections 1992-2011.

The probability of becoming elected is much higher among men than it is among women (Table 4). Namely, during the latest election, 23-24% of all men who ran for Parliament got elected, for women that number was 15%. Therefore, it can be said that nearly every fourth male candidate became elected; as a comparison, every seventh female candidate became elected to the municipal council during the last election. It should still be emphasized that the likelihood of becoming elected depends on how many candidates there are altogether. In the beginning of 1990s much fewer people ran for the municipal council than for the most recent elections – the number of candidates has increased by 6351 people, whereas the number of seats in the council has diminished by 407.

Table 4. The proportion of elected women and men among candidates of municipal councils.

	Elected male candidates		Elected female candidates	
	Number of elected/number of candidates	%	Number of elected/number of candidates	%
2009	2166/9385	23%	910/5937	15%
2005	2191/8893	25%	920/5763	16%
2002	2345/9464	25%	928/5739	16%
1999	2404/8239	30%	951/4562	21%
1996	2533/7454	34%	920/3674	25%
1993	2649/6434	41%	834/2535	33%

Source: Own calculations based on the data from Estonian National Electoral Committee

To take a look at the increasing numbers of men and women among the candidates separately, we can see that in 1993-2009 the number of male candidates has increased 1,46 times and female ones 2,34 times. Therefore, it can be said that at the level of local elections women's participation has increased more rapidly than men's.

In consequence, two important aspects appear: 1) even though the proportion of women among the candidates has increased considerably, there are still much fewer female candidates than there are male ones. Hence, the first obstacle for women's participation is their lesser involvement among candidates. 2) Female candidates' chances to become elected are smaller than male ones'; consequently, the second obstacle could probably be cultural-historical, which shows men as more preferable candidates. Of course it cannot be denied that the candidates' education, occupation, earlier political experiences, and the positioning in the electoral list should also be taken into consideration (See Allik 2013 about the Parliamentary elections).

European Parliament election

Estonia became the full member of the European Union on the 1st of May, 2004, immediately after which the first European Parliament election took place for Estonia. The composition of Parliament consists of six Estonian members and during both periods half of them have been women and half men. It is important to point out that, in reality, during both years there were four men and two women elected. However, on both occasions a woman was accepted as a substitute member, which created the gender balance. Looking at the gender breakdown on the background, it could be said that women were more successful than men. While women formed a fourth of the candidates in 2004 and 30% in 2009, third of them got elected at both times. Of the members of the European Parliament that started working, already half were women.

Table 5. Elections of the European Parliament , 2004 and 2009

	2004		2009	
	Number	%	Number	%
Candidates				
Men	72	76%	71	70%
Women	23	24%	30	30%
Elected members				
Men	4	67%	4	67%
Women	2	33%	2	33%

Source: Valimised Eestis 1992-2011, Statistikat ja selgitusi.

The proportion of women politicians in Riigikogu by political party

While until now we have viewed women's representation in politics irrespective of the party, then at this point we are taking a look at the representation of women in the parliament by political party. To do this, we have examined the last four year's compositions of parliament after registration of the members that immediately followed the voting results, leaving out the substitute members. As the main political forces were not yet established during the first elections of the republic (many

candidates were running in electoral alliances, electoral lists of the unions, and as an individual candidates) we have left out the results from the elections held in 1992 and 1995.

From the Table 6 it can be seen that within the last four compositions of parliament, the Central Party faction has the greatest number of women – as the summary of the last four elections, every fourth member is a woman which means one woman for every three men. On the second place, considering the amount of women, is the Social Democrats Party, where for every woman there is three and a half men. The Reformist Party has 5,3 men for each woman, and there are even fewer women in Isamaa and Res Publica Union (includes the number of women before the merging of the two parties) – 5,5 men for each woman.

Table 6. Ratio of elected women (number of men divided by number of women = ratio) by political party, Elections of Estonian Parliament, 1999-2011.

	1999	2003	2007	2011
	IX	X	XI	XII
Central Party				
Men	23	21	19	19
Women	5	7	10	7
Ratio	4,6	3	1,9	2,7
Reformist Party				
Men	15	16	26	28
Women	3	3	5	5
Ratio	5	5,3	5,2	5,6
Social Democrats Party				
Men	14	4	7	16
Women	3	2	3	3
Ratio	4,6	2	2,3	5,3
Isamaa Union				
Men	14	7	---	---
Women	4	0	---	---
Ratio	3,5	7	---	---
Res Publica				
Men	---	23	---	---
Women	---	5	---	---
Ratio	---	4,6	---	---
Isamaa and Res Publica Union (IRL)				
Men	---	---	19	19
Women	---	---	17	4
Ratio	---	---	8,5	4,75
Rahvaliid*				
Men	12	13	3	0
Women	4	1	3	0
Ratio	3	13	1	0
Estonian Green Party				
Men	---	---	5	0
Women	---	---	1	0
Ratio	---	---	5	0

* Data of IX Riigikogu, the members of Estonian Maarahva Party and Estonian Koonderakond are added together.

At this point let us say that during the last election, the Central Party used the zipper system, placing women and men at the top of the electoral list alternately, and also 6 of the 12 candidates set up for European Parliament elections were women. This has also been a subject in Social Democrats Party, but the zipper system has so far not been put into practice.

The representation of women by political party can be seen as anticipated. On one hand, it is logical that in the left-wing parties that stand for participatory democracy, social policy, and state intervention, representing so called soft values that are associated with women rather than men, women get more voted for. So far it has been a global trend. On the other hand, the left-wing parties can be taken as „women friendly“ (Lovenduski and Norris 1993) because more attention is paid on promoting gender equality and involving marginalised groups into politics on a wider scale (Matland & Studlar 1996). Thus it is logical that supporting women takes place even inside the left-wing parties, which results in more female candidates.

The position of women in political parties

There is no exact data concerning members of a party, but the earlier overviews have brought to attention that 48% of Estonian parties' ordinary members are women (Naiste diskrimineerimise kõigi vormide2004). The balance between men and women is not reflected in the inner hierarchy of a party. The size of a party executive varies from 7 to 24 members. Women's proportion in the party executive is nonetheless rather modest, from 1 to 5 members (Table 7). Proportionally, the Reformist Party has the largest number of women in the party executive – 28,6%, followed by Estonian Central Party with 25%, and Social Democrats with 23,8%.

Table 7. Female members in party executives (08.09.2013).

	Number of members in executive	Female members	Proportion of female members (%)
Isamaa and Res Publica Union	24	4	16,7
Estonian Central Party	16	4	25
Estonian Reformist Party	14	4	28,6
Estonian Conservative People Party	14	2	14,3
Social Democrats	21	5	23,8
Estonian Green Party	7	1	14,3

Women's participation in elections

The general election turnout varies depending on whether it is Parliamentary, Municipal Council, or European Parliament elections. Taking a look at the general election turnout during the period of 1992 – 2011 in Estonia shows that the Parliamentary elections are much more popular than the local or European Parliament elections. 63,5% of all eligible voters participated in the last Parliamentary election. There is no exact sociodemographic statistics about the turnout, but it is still possible to view voting activity separately for men and women thanks to electronic voting system and also based on data from different surveys and researches. Since the local elections held in 2005 it is possible to

vote electronically in Estonia. This in turn allows to establish the gender composition of the e-voters. Year by year the number of e-voters increases (from 9317 to 140764) and also the percentage of women among the e-voters. While in 2005 women made up 46% of all e-voters then the latest Parliamentary elections increased their proportion up to 54%.

Based on the data from European Social Survey in 2010 it can be pointed out that, taking voting activity into consideration, there is not much difference between younger men and women, 58% of 18-35-year old men and 57% of women gave their vote in the last Parliamentary election. The activity is greater among 36-65-year olds, but the differences between the genders are also larger. Namely, at the given age category women are more active than men (65% of men and 80% of women participated in the election). There are not many differences between 66-years and older men and women, on both cases the participation was 78%. The unemployed and people with lower level of education made up proportionally the largest part of the people who decided not to vote. Women under 35 with low level of education form one of the groups that is least interested in political involvement.

PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

Increasing women's involvement in politics and other assemblies that require leadership and decision making is not a national priority. Legally binding acts as well as funding to promote gender equality have been provided primarily thanks to international human rights agreements, European Union's directives concerning gender equality, and funding from Europe.

Increasing the involvement of women in politics has been a priority for Estonian-based women's associations since before the Restoration of Independence. Major social changes took place in Estonia already in the end of 1980s.

Support for women from 1990s until present day has come from the bottom up, from the grassroots level, where the main, if not the only role has been played by women's associations. Back in the day, women's organisations acted in four main fields, one of which was to increase women's involvement in decision-making organs. Other fields were self improvement and education, supporting small businesses and charity (Laja 2006).

Grassroot level

The first organisation to unite women, Estonian Women Union (Eesti Naisliit) that was active during the first Republic, was recreated in 1989. The following years saw the increase in women's organisations. Other key organisations next to Women Union were Women's Training Centre (Naiskoolituse keskus) and Estonian Business and Professional Women Association (Eesti Ettevõtlike Naiste Assotsiatsioon, presently BPW Estonia). Most of those organisations were founded with the support of development programs and foundations (for example, the EL PHARE program, Open

Estonia Foundation, foreign embassies in Estonia, UN Development program, Nordic Council of Ministers, etc).

Organisations, whose sphere women's involvement in decision making processes belongs to, have been presented in the chronological sequence according to the year of foundation. In addition to the short descriptions, projects concerning women and politics directly or indirectly have been brought out.

Table 8. Organisations that deal with supporting and promoting women's involvement.

Name, year of foundation	Implemented projects/programs	Project's/program's purpose
Estonian Women Union (1989)	Campaign „Woman support woman!“ (2003)	Women should vote for women in Parliamentary elections
Women's Training Centre (1991)		Creating networks for women entrepreneurs, international contact seminars, women's democracy training, training for gender equality, etc.
BPW Estonia (former EENA e. Ettevõtlike Naiste Assotsiatsioon - Estonian Business and Professional Women Association) (1992)	Women onto key positions (2012)	Women were called up to take leadership positions in society. Training for women leaders trainers took place (How to help women to key positions) and learning the best practices on the example of the Nordic Countries.
	Memorandum: Parties to use zipper system when creating electoral lists.	
Tartu University gender research group (1995)	Equality Gender and Governance (EGG) (2002-2005)	Analysis of the EU candidate countries' institutions' and organisations' contribution to increase the involvement of women in political decision processes.
Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre ENUT (former Naisuuringute Keskus) (1995)	Together on the way to gender-balanced society(2011)	Elaborating policies promoting gender equality
	Sustainable civil society is gender-balanced society (2009-2010)	To improve the skills of the members of civil organizations to be able to follow the principles of gender equality in one's activity and to create equal opportunities for men and women to take part
Estonian Rural Women's Association (1996)		The greatest network that strives to create a social, cultural, educational, and developmental network for Estonian rural women. To increase the proportion of women in the local decision-making bodies.
Centre of Civic	Women into Parliament (1998-1999)	Increasing women's readiness to run for

Education (former Women's Civil Training Centre) (1998)		elections
	Support for women (2001-2002)	Increasing the competitiveness of female candidates for local and parliamentary elections.
	Women decide (2001-2002)	Seminars with the network partners and study trips to Nordic countries to learn from the experience of Finnish, Swedish, and Danish women in the local government councils.
	Awareness campaign (2005)	Increasing the awareness of women's role on the level of decision making.
	Changing attitudes (2006)	To influence young people's attitudes in a positive direction towards gender equality and women elected and running for political positions; develop cross-party cooperation policies between women trying to get into politics.
Estonian Women's Associations Round Table Foundation (EWAR) (2003)		In 2007 EWAR presented CEDAW committee with a shadow report, in which among other spheres attention was brought to lack of support in increasing women's involvement in decision making processes.
Enterprising Women in Estonia (ETNA) (2003)	Women entrepreneur in local politics (2005)	Training for women who run for local elections and wish to act as politicians.

National level

Activities supporting women's involvement on a national level are handled on two levels. The level of national politics, which includes international conventions, the passing of national laws, and establishing gender equality promoting organs; and the level of cooperation between women in political parties, which has largely taken the form of the third sector.

Policies supporting the involvement of women in politics

International level

In 1991 accession to Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDAW

In 1995 accession to IV World Conference on Women Beijing Platform

Government / Ministry level

Preparations for joining the European Union gave impetus to developing policies promoting gender equality. Although the idea of adopting the Equality Act did not receive a warm welcome in the parliament, adjusting Estonian legislation to European Union's directives regulating gender equality was the prerequisite for the accession to the European Union. The Equality Act underwent repeated readings due to not finding approval among the members of the Parliament.

The Gender Equality Bureau was established at Ministry of Social Affairs already in 1996 which became Gender Equality Department under the ministry after Estonia joined the European Union in 2004. Although there were only a couple people working in the department at the beginning, the number of workers has now increased to approximately ten. In 2005 a Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner started work there whose task was to monitor the enforcement of the equal treatment laws. The commissioner is also helping people with discrimination disputes and provides expert advice about incidences of discrimination.

The Gender Equality Department has been related to the field of women's involvement in politics only indirectly, it has coordinated the funding of project competitions that promote gender equality and the subject has always figured in the ministry's publications (See The monitoring of gender equality 2005, 2009; On the road to balanced society I, II).

The collaboration between women in political parties

The cooperation among women belonging to parties has over time worked through and with the help of non-political women's unions. Very often the initiator has been the women's assemblage of Social Democratic Party.

Parliamentary level

The round table of female members in Riigikogu.

The collaboration between women at a parliamentary level started in February 1998 when Riigikogu Women's Association (RKNÜ) was founded among the female members of the parliament. Into this union all twelve female members of parliament aggregated with the purpose of increasing the representation of women in politics, acknowledging social problems that mattered to women and finding solutions to those problems, but also improving the political culture. (Laja 2006; 2013). The goal was to put forward three female candidates into electoral lists of ten. The Association also helped to spread the local round tables around Estonia.

Estonian Women's Chain Cooperation (2004)

The Chain Cooperation was founded in addition to the round table of the parliament's women which in the beginning joined together only women belonging to parties. At the moment there are other female organisations that have joined but not many.

Local level

Local round tables(1998)

In August 1998 the Socio-Democratic women's assemblage Kadri in cooperation with (women's) Civil Training Centre (See also project „Women into Parliament“) organized a seminar “Women can!”, the result of which were round tables that were formed locally to promote joint activity. That helped women's cross-party cooperation to grow locally as well. In 1998 the Round table movement took a clear direction to influence the Parliamentary elections of 1999. The round table for the association of women in parties, with which by that time women's training centres were joined, worked out tactics on how to better women's position in electoral lists. The steps for that were the following:

- Suggestions for parties to include at least one woman among every three candidates in the electoral list. The formula was introduced to the party leaders by well-known but politically inactive women.
- Short electoral video clip “Woman vote for woman” was produced which pointed out the need to vote for women.

There are reasons to believe that as a result of the cooperation between women, the Parliamentary elections of 1999 were successful – compared to year 1995 the representation of women rose from 12% to 18%. Its prerequisite, of course, was wider representation already in the electoral lists. No following election period has managed to do such a significant leap. In 2013 twenty women were elected to the Parliament which is only 2 more than in 1999.

CONCLUSION

Starting from the Restoration of Independence, the proportion of women in different level decision-making bodies has increased, but remains significantly lower than men's nonetheless. The percentage of female candidates is higher at a local level but the likelihood of being elected is lower than at a national level. The European Parliament elections have proved to be most successful for women. During both elections a fourth of the candidates were women but a third of them were elected. While the overall number of women among party members is approximately equal to the number of men, their proportion in the party secretary remains under 30%. Therefore, women's lower representation is clearly evident in decision-making bodies. However, voting activity among women is equal to men's or occasionally even higher; but, be that as it may, there is a rather alarming amount of young women with lower levels of education among the people who have chosen not to vote.

Analysing what has been done in Estonia so far to support women's involvement in politics, it can be said that it is mostly women organisations that have stood for it. Also joining European Union in 2004 and the accompanying directives have forced society to pay wider attention to the subject of equal rights. Still, increasing the proportion of women in the political field has not been a direct subject of equal rights programs and project competitions announced by different foundations. Nonetheless, there has been a chance to implement respective projects on a wider scale of gender equality theme and corresponding projects have been carried out by non-profit organisations that deal with women questions. As those projects have been in various forms and have happened in different years, it cannot be said how successful in its sphere a project has been.

At the level of political parties it could be argued that the most prominent in this sphere have been leftist parties. While Socio-Democratic women have done it to great extent in collaboration with other women organisations, their goal being supportive of women on a wider scale, the attention of

women in the Central Party is directed to increasing the number of female members inside the party and making women more successful in elections.

Every party's women assemblages signed a memorandum in 2012 with which they showed support to the idea of parties making it a principle to use the zipper system when creating the electoral lists – male and female candidates are placed alternately in the list. However, this system has not been used in the upcoming elections (October 2013) as to the knowledge of the author of this work.

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