



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

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Base Line Study

Partner 5

REGIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER

Hungary

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Base Line Study English Summary

Hungary

The aim of the present research has been to outline the lack of equality of men and women in public life in Hungary throughout the last nearly 25 years, after the political transition. We have been focusing on the question as to what extent women are involved in local and national politics and in the European Parliament. We were led to the conclusion that the level of participation of women in public life in Hungary is very low. We have examined the unsuccessful attempts to introduce a gender quota in Hungary. The analysis of the various party programs put together before the

2010 elections has also contributed to get a clearer picture of reasons why there are not enough women in public life in Hungary.

Finally, we discuss other areas of inequality between men and women, the disadvantageous situation of women in the job market, the paradox nature of the division of household chores as well as the problem of violence against women.

The following are the most important results of our analysis.

- In international comparison the participation of women in the Hungarian parliament is very low. According to the list of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Hungary is in the 100th place out of 131 countries. So Hungary belongs to the third of the countries of the world where the representation of women is the lowest. Following the Hungarian elections, out of the EU-27 countries it was only in Malta where there were less female representatives than in Hungary. Since

2002 Hungary has steadily had the least women representatives in the Parliament. Furthermore, it is remarkable that the proportion of women MP's is the most constant in Hungary.

- Since the political transition the proportion of female representatives only exceeded 10% twice; between 1990 and 2010 the number of women was between 28 and 43 persons out of the 386 MP's. Women's participation was lowest in the first Parliament after the transition, only 7,3 %, while it reached 11,1 % - the highest number so far - as a result of the 1994 elections. After the 1998 elections, however, only 8,3

% of the MP's was women, then 9,1% in 2002. In 2006 women's



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participation reached 10,6%. Finally, the 2010 elections brought decline again since only 9% of the representatives are women. As far as parliamentary parties are concerned, in Hungary – just like in other countries – left wing parties offer better opportunities for women than their right wing counterparts. Out of the two parties permanently present in the Parliament it was MSZP that gave better chances for women; until 2006 more than 10% of the MP's was women at each election while the proportion of women has never reached 10% in Fidesz. At the 2010 elections, however, both parties had practically the same number of women representatives.

- We have looked into the numbers of gender representation in parliamentary committees and the highest parliamentary positions. After the transition the number of women in the highest positions has been very low, in each and every parliamentary session. Right now the situation is the most unfavorable: there is only one female notary in the Parliament. All the other positions are staffed by men. Women are disadvantaged in standing committees as well: out of the 155 chairpersons there were only 9 women between 1990 and 2013.

- The landscape is more favorable in case of the local governments but

women's participation does not comply here either with the standard of parity democracy where the whole population's gender equilibrium should be considered. In 2002 the proportion of women in the districts of the capital city and county seats was 15,8 %, slightly increasing since then; in 2010 it was nearly one fifth. Opportunities for women in the Budapest districts are significantly more favorable than in the countryside. Regarding MP's, it is true for Hungary as well that left wing parties support women's participation more than right wing parties. This, however, is not necessarily true for representatives in the capital city and county seats.

- There are relatively very few women mayors in the various districts of

Budapest and in the county seats: 8,9 % in 2002 and 4,3 % in 2010.

- The proportion of women in the standing committees of the Budapest city council and county seats is relatively better in 2013. Every 4th member of the standing committees is a woman and every 5th committee is chaired by a woman. In the various districts of Budapest there are significantly more female committee members and chairpersons than in the county seats.

- After the transition there have been much less women in the

Hungarian governments than men. In the Antall administration there was only one female minister; there were two in the Horn government and one in the first Orbán government. Between 2006 and 2009 the left wing administrations offered government positions for more women: there were 5 female ministers in Péter Medgyessy's government – 20% -, 3 in Ferenc Gyurcsány's first government (13%) and 5 in his second government (16%). In the Bajnai administration, however, there were no female ministers at all. Similarly, the second Orbán government has only one woman minister.

- Likewise, women's participation in the leadership of democratic institutions is very low.



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- Internationally – and in Hungary – women participate in the work of the European Parliament in bigger numbers than in the national parliaments. In 2004 one third of the Hungarian representatives at the European Parliament were women. At present 36% of the EU MP’s are women. This way Hungary belongs to the average of the EU-27 countries. The Hungarian political left sends more female delegates to the European Parliament than the right wing parties.

- We looked at women’s participation in the leadership of the political

parties. At present there are most women among the leaders of the two left wing parties – LMP and MSZP -; more than one fifth each. 16% of

the leaders of KDNP and 14% of FIDESZ are women. There is only one woman among the 7 top leaders. In the leadership of Jobbik there are exclusively men. LMP has two chairpersons, a man and a woman, all the other parties are lead by men. Since the transition only two parties

– MDF and MSZP – have had women as chairpersons. Out of the

parties registered before the 2010 parliamentary elections only one (the Civilian Movement) had a chairwoman, and before the municipal elections there were three parties – Civilian Movement, SZEMA Liberal Party and the Alliance for the Future – with women leaders.

- One way of increasing women’s participation in politics could be the

introduction of gender quotas. In Hungary so far there are only two parliamentary parties that volunteered to introduce such a quota: MSZP and LMP. There have been three attempts to introduce the quota into the constitution since the transition, first by the SZDSZ in

2007, then by the Nők a Pályán Egyesület (Association of Professional

Women) in 2009 and by LMP in 2011, but none of these attempts proved to be successful.

- We have analyzed the 2010 programs of the parties and found that equal opportunities for women are not a central issue in any of them.

The issue of women is missing from the programs altogether. Gender equality is only mentioned by LMP but not in their election program but in a separate special program. The marginal position of women’s issues in political programs proves that in 2010 Hungarian parliamentary parties did not consider gender equality a major issue – not even at the level of promises. Similar analyses of the parties’ election programs had arrived at the same conclusions earlier.

- We were wondering if there is an interference gender wise between the willingness to vote and party preference. We found that there is no

significant difference between political activity of men and women. There is, however, considerable difference between party-preferences: Jobbik’s voters are almost exclusively men, MSZP has much more women voters, while in case of the other parliamentary parties the number of men and women voters is basically the same.



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- Finally, in the last part of our analysis, we looked at other inequalities in Hungary (inequalities in the job market, household chores, violence against women).

- Since 2006 World Economic Forum has published their Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) which gives a survey of gender equality in four areas (economy, politics, education, health.) In their latest, 2012 report they scrutinized 132 countries and Hungary was the 81st on their list, whereas Latvia is 15th, Lithuania is 34th, Slovenia is 38th, Poland is

53rd, Estonia is the 60th, Slovakia is the 70th and the Czech Republic is the 73rd. So Hungary with its 81st place gave the worst performance out of the EU-8 countries. In the field of health Hungary has a relatively good position (34th place), in the fields of economy and education we belong to the average (68th place), but in politics Hungary is at the 117th place. This is the result of the fact that very few women take part in politics.

- We have also been dealing with the consequences of inequalities in the job market. The difference between the rate of employment of men and women – although there is some progress – has always reached 10% during the last 15 years. The number of women being present at the job market is in close correlation with the spread of atypical forms of employment. Hungary lags behind in this sense, too: the number of people working in part time jobs does not even reach the 5-10% Eastern-European average. There is more discrimination against women in the job market than against men. In case of men the alleged reason for discrimination was “family circumstances” – like a baby in the family – in only 5,3 % of the cases, while the same was 27,4 in case of women. Regarding inequalities in wages, various researches have proven that women do not make less in most cases. There are two examples, however, where women are disadvantaged: when a woman gets a job in the private sector where men have high incomes and/or where there is a high percentage of female employees. In Hungary, too, senior positions in the economy take the shape of a pyramid: the higher the rank, the fewer women participate. If we look at managerial positions in the economy in general, the picture we get is more advantageous for women compared to examining top managers only. In the first case the rate of women managers exceeds the average of the EU-27 countries while considering top managers of big companies Hungary is only the third to the last in the EU-27 countries.

- Despite of the fact that women are in a disadvantaged position in the job market, research shows that women are not impacted by poverty more than men. According to the Eurostat data poverty struck 14% of people of both genders in 2011. It is important to emphasize, however, that the higher we draw poverty line, the higher women’s percentage among poor people.

- As far as household responsibilities are concerned there is significant inequality between men and women in Hungary, as well as in other

countries. 65% of the time spent with household chores and 70% of the time spent for taking care of the children falls on women. Compared to other European countries, men in Hungary take part



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in household duties at an average level while they play a more significant role in taking care of their children than in other countries.