



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

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Base Line Study

Partner 8

CENTER FOR EQUALITY ADVANCEMENT (CEA)

Lithuania

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More Women in Politics

Base Line Study Lithuania



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Overview of women's participation in politics on the EU, national and local levels

Theoretical literature analyses various factors influencing women's political participation. It covers different impact of electoral systems, as well as the "supply" and "demand" factors. The supply shows that women have the capacity, experience and willingness to be included on the lists of potential candidates. Whereas the demand illustrates traits and institutions stimulating or hindering the shift from the lists of candidates to the political positions (Paxton and Hughes, 2007). Typically, it is noted that women have much lower ambitions (supply) to participate in political elections which influences their poorer representation in various decision-making bodies. However, the situation in Lithuania shows that the supply of women candidates does not meet the level of demand. Thus it is important to assess the institutional aspects of the political system (Hughes, 2009; Paxton and Kunovich, 2003; Stevens, 2007).

Election legislation

Law on Elections to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Elections to Municipal Councils of the Republic of Lithuania provide universal and equal rights to elections by secret ballot. Mixed electoral system (voting in single-member and multi-member constituencies) is applied at the elections to the Parliament. Whereas the elections to municipal councils is based on proportional electoral system where individual multi-member constituencies are organised in every municipality. There is no legislation foreseeing requirements of equal gender representation.

Elections to the European Parliament

After joining the European Union, the residents of Lithuanian has already had two opportunities to participate in the European Parliament (EP) elections (in 2004 and 2009). In 2004 Lithuanian delegation consisted of 13 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), in 2009 – 12. The comparison of both election cycles shows that the “supply” of both male and female candidates increased (Fig. 1). In 2004 there were 126 candidates registered, whereas in 2009 there were 3 times more candidates (377).



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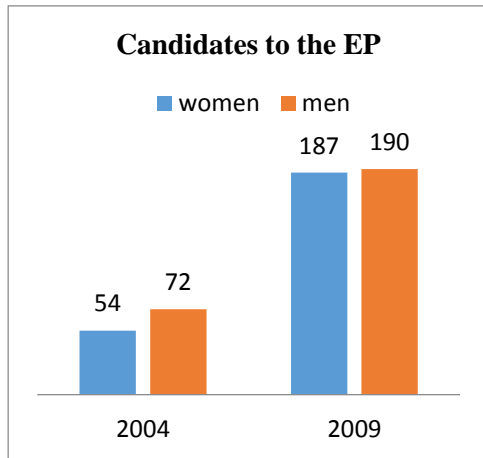


Fig. 1.

Candidates to the EP.

The number of women candidates grew much faster than the one of men. In 2009 the number of women candidates increased by 346.3 percent (or 133 candidates) and became almost the same as the number of men candidates which increased by 263.9 percent (or 118 candidates). However, in 2009 the number of women elected to the European Parliament declined. In 2004 women accounted for 46.2 percent of the Lithuanian delegation, whereas in 2009 – only 25 percent (Fig. 2 and 3). Thus the gender-equal supply of candidates to the European Parliament did not have a positive effect on the outcome of the elections.



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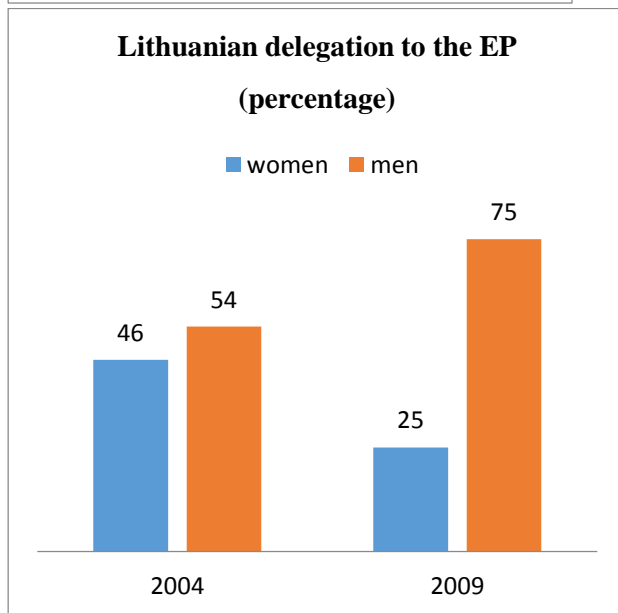
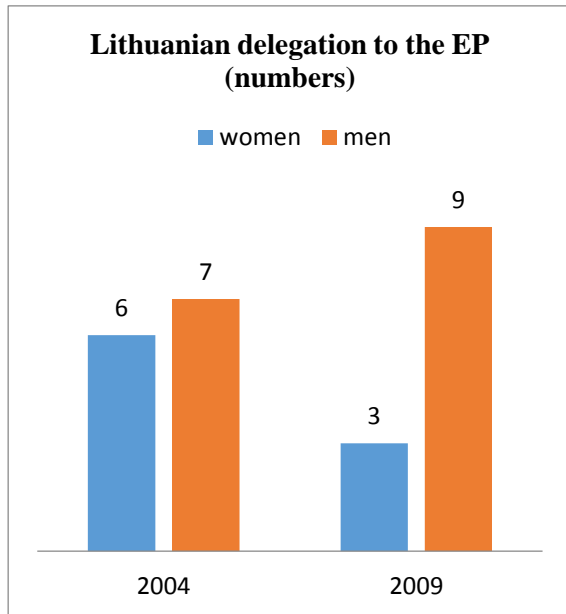


Fig. 2. Lithuanian delegation to the EP in numbers.

Fig. 3. Lithuanian delegation to the EP in percents.

In 2004 11.11 percent of women candidates and 9.72 percent men candidates were elected to the EP. Whereas in 2009 – only 1.6 percent of women and 4.73 percent of men candidates (Fig. 4). However, these figures do not fully reflect the attitudes of the voters. Even though there were less women than men elected to the EP, women candidates received more support from the voters. Women’s positions in the party voting lists rose by the average of 0.67 point in 2004 and 1.21 point in 2009 elections to the EP. Meanwhile, the men's positions fell by the average of 0.07 point in 2004 and 0.43 point in 2009 (Fig. 5). This suggests that the lack of women's representation in



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the EP might be caused not as much by the attitudes of the Lithuanian voters as by the way the lists of candidates are arranged.

attitudes of

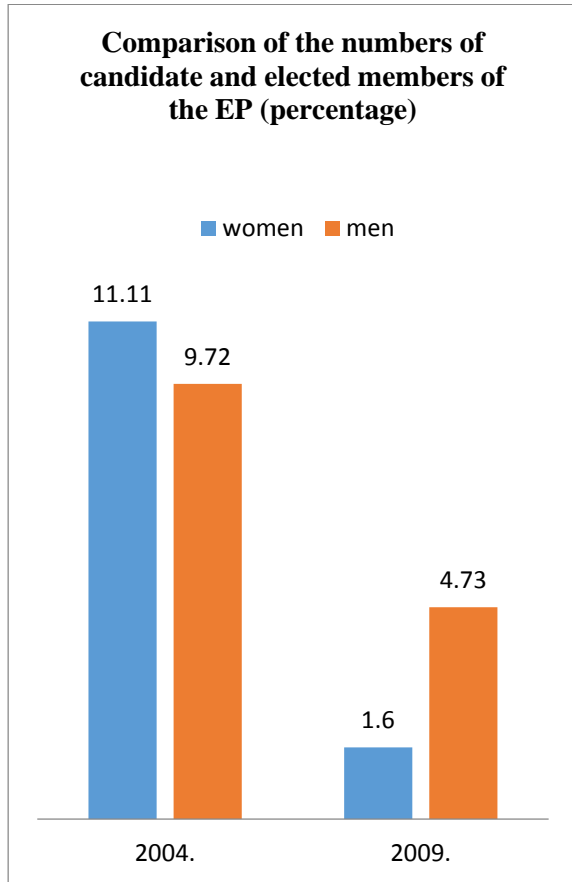


Fig. 4. Candidate and elected members of the EP lists

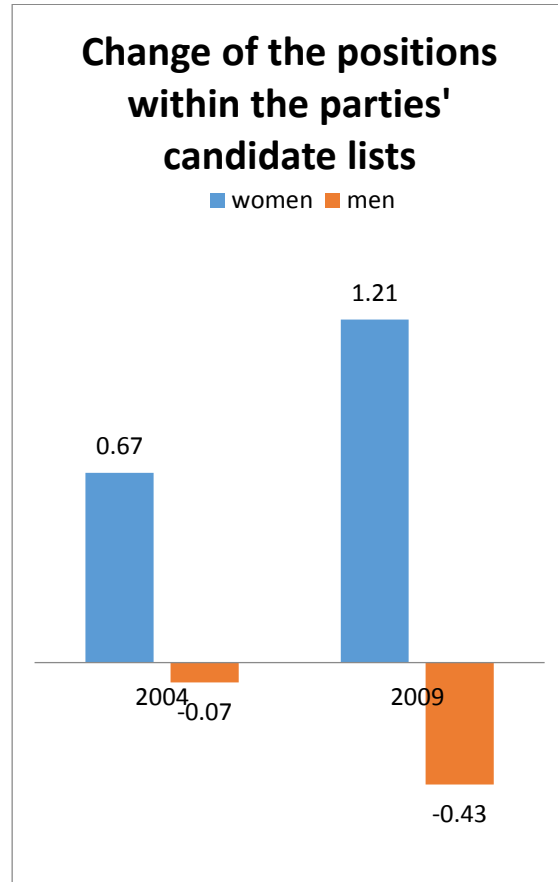


Fig.5. Change of the positions within the parties' candidate lists

Elections to the Seimas (Parliament)

Overview of the national parliamentary elections shows that the political activity of women and men has been consistently growing. In 2004 there were 320 women (and 931 men) candidates, in 2008 – 459 women (and 1144 men) candidates, and in 2012 – 611 women (and 1316 men) candidates (Fig. 7).



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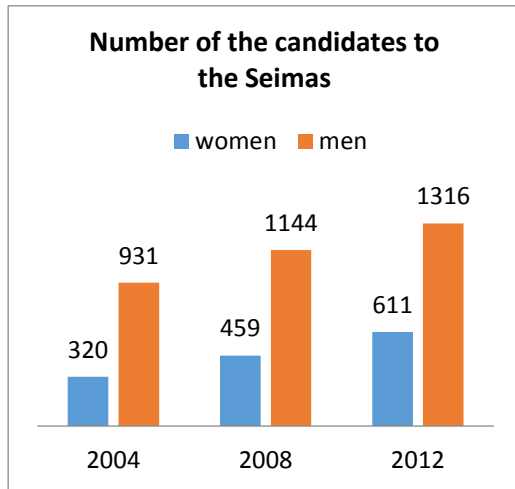


Fig. 7. Number

of the candidates in the parliamentary elections.

The number of women candidates for the parliamentary elections has grown by 43.44 percent from 2004 to 2008 and by 33.12 percent from 2008 to 2012. Both times the growth was much higher compared to the increase in men candidates (which was 22.88 percent from 2004 to 2008 and 15.03 percent from 2008 to 2012). The overall increase in women's political activity was 90.94 percent and increase in men's political activity was 41.35 percent from 2004 to 2012. Even though the percentage of women candidates is still much lower than the one of men, it is constantly. In 2004 women accounted for 25.58 percent, in 2008 – 28.63 percent, and in 2012 – 31.7 percent of all candidates (Fig. 8.).

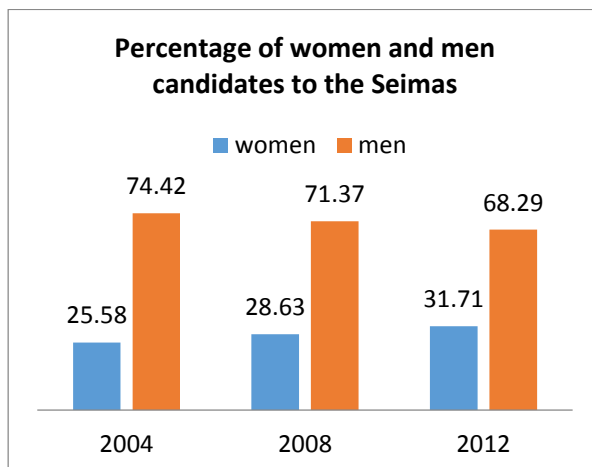


Fig. 8. Percentage of women and men candidates to the Seimas.

Women are not equally represented in both single-member and multi-member constituencies. The overall change in the number of candidates could be observed in the Table 1, and the comparison



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of percentage of women candidates to the Seimas member and multi-member constituencies could be seen in the Figure 9.

in the single-

Table 1. The number of candidates in single-member and multi-member Parliament constituencies

Parliamentary elections	Women	Men
2004		
Single-member constituencies	130	472
Multi-member constituencies	302	881
2008		
Single-member constituencies	188	602
Multi-member constituencies	454	1123
2012 m.		
Single-member constituencies	279	677
Multi-member constituencies	599	1273

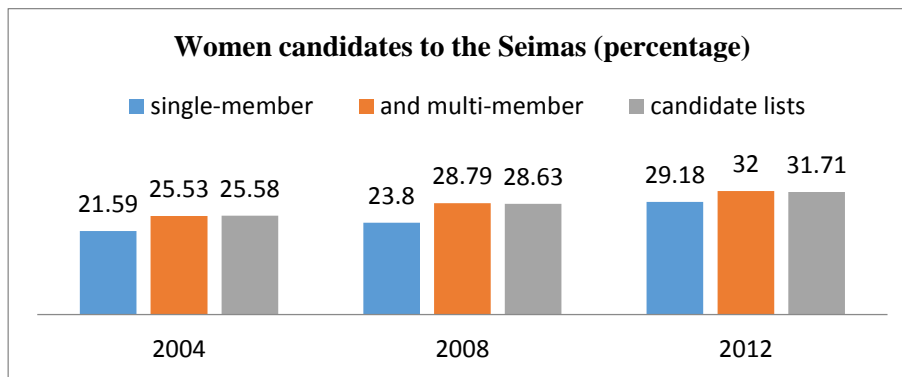


Fig. 9. Percentage of women candidates in single-member and multi-member constituencies and on candidate lists.

As it can be seen in the Figure 9, the percentage of women candidates in single-member constituencies has grown alongside with the total number of women candidates. However, it still remains relatively low compared to the latter one. Even though it could be noted that the situation was slowly changing, ensuring greater parity, the parties were still inclined to devote the top positions of the candidate lists to men.

The consistent increase in women's political activity by greater participation in the elections did not have a direct impact on women's representation in the Parliament. In 2004 women accounted for 20.57 percent, in 2008 – 18.44 percent, and in 2012 – 23.74 percent of all the members of the



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Parliament (Fig. 10). These figures are lower than the percentage of women candidates in the parliamentary elections (Fig. 11). The proportion of women elected to the Parliament was lower than the one of the listed candidates by the average of 8 percent, whereas the situation was different for men (Fig. 12). This suggests that in order to understand the low representation of women in the Parliament it is important to assess not only aspects of the "supply" (such as possible women's passivity, lack of preparation, etc.), attitudes of the voters and aspects of the "demand" but also how parties and electoral system rejects or enables women.

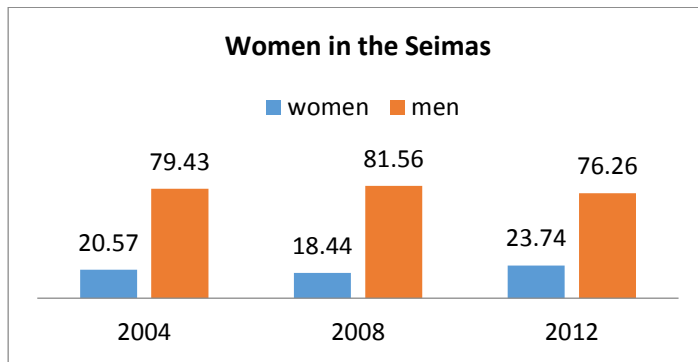


Fig. 10. Percentage of women and men in the Seimas.



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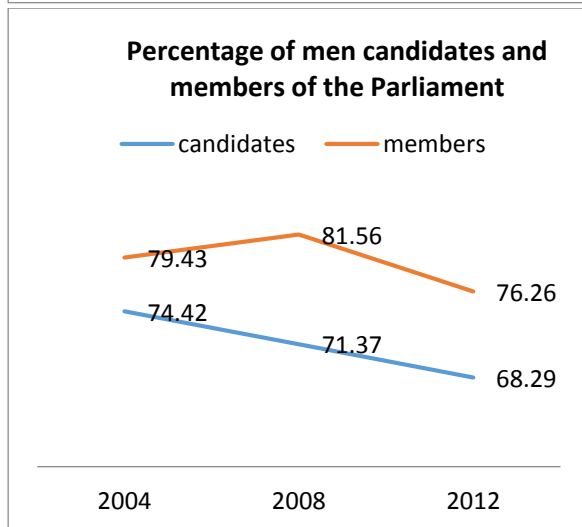
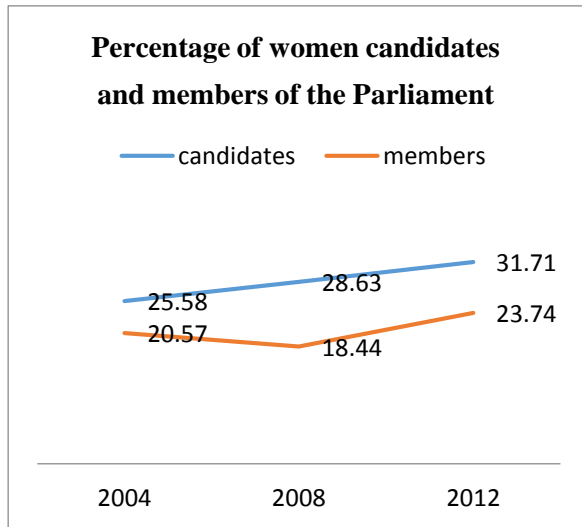


Fig. 11. Women candidates and members of the Parliament

Fig. 12. Men candidates and members of the Parliament

In 2008 the voting procedure of the parliamentary elections has been changed – the closed candidate lists were replaced by the open lists. It is difficult to make generalizations about the impact of these changes for women's political representation. However, building on the insights of Jennifer Rosen (they will be discussed more in the next section) and the results of the recent elections to the Seimas, it is doubtless if these changes of the voting system can have a positive effect for the women's situation. In 2012 women's position on the electoral lists fell by 1.37 positions, whereas in 2008 it increased by 1.16 positions (Fig. 13). On the other hand, even with these changes there were 6 percent more women elected to the Seimas in 2012 than in 2008.



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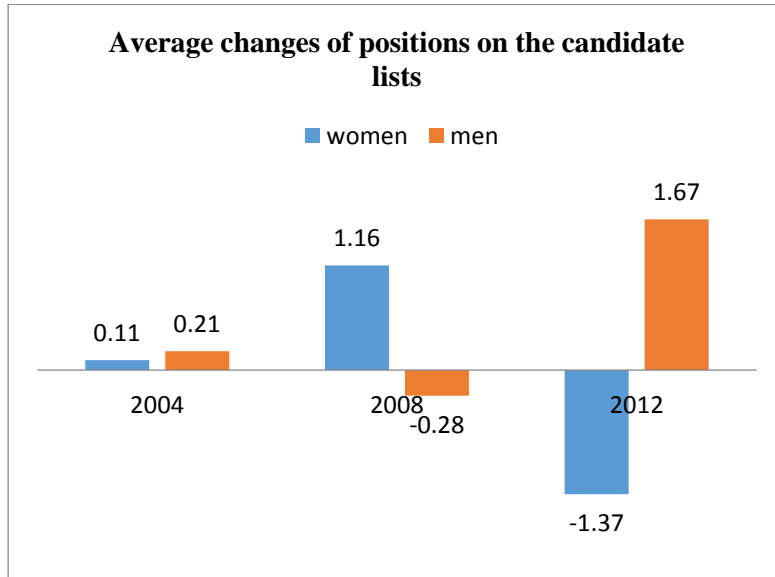


Fig. 13. Average changes in positions on the candidate lists after the ranking.

Women are misrepresented in the governing bodies of the Parliament, especially in the Board of the Seimas (Table 2).

Table 2. Womens’ representation in the governing bodies of the Seimas

	2004-2008 (%)	2008-2012 (%)	2012-2016 (%)
Board of the Seimas	0	29	11
Conference of Chairs	24	14	21
Chairs of the Political Groups	57	0	50
Chairs of the Committees	20	7	20
Chairs of the Commissions	25	22	23

Table 3 reveals the distribution of women in the leading positions of the Seimas’ committees. According to the overview of the last three terms the percentage of women among the chairs and deputy chairs of the committees is much lower than their percentage in the Parliament.



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Table 3. Distribution of members of the Seimas in the committees according to their gender¹

Committees	2004-2008			2008-2012			2012-2016		
	Chair	Deputy chair	Members (%)	Chair	Deputy chair	Members (%)	Chair	Deputy chair	Members (%)
Environment Protection			13			11			20
Audit			13	1		43	1		38
Budget and Finance			10			11			23
Economics			7			10			8
European Affairs			24			8			20
Development of Information Society	1		30			14			29
Rural Affairs			0			0			0
National Security and Defence			17			17			9
Social Affairs and Labour		1	70			55	1		33
Health Affairs	1		43			20			56
Education, Science and Culture			36			23	1		43
Legal Affairs			27			0			25
Foreign Affairs			0			8			0

¹ informacija apie 2004-2008 ir 2008-2012 m. Seimo komitetų vadovų pasiskirstymą iš MATONYTĖ, Irmina (2010) „Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo narės: Kas ir kaip vyksta keičiantis politinio atstovavimo tradicijoms ir organizacinėms struktūroms“. *Lyčių studijos ir tyrimai*. Nr. 8. P.6-19. Šiaulių universitetas. Prieiga internete: <http://www.su.lt/mokslas/mokslo-leidiniai/ml-lyciu-studijos-ir-tyrimai/2010-nr-8>



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State Administration and Local Authorities			22		1	20		1	40
Human Rights	1		13			43			25
Totally:	3	1	--	1	1	--	3	1	--

Municipal Elections

The results of three most recent local election show that the political activity of both women and men has increased. In 2002 there were 3468 women (and 6671 men) candidates, in 2007 – 5393 women (and 8029 men) candidates, and in 2011 – 7037 women (and 9367 men) candidates (Fig. 14). From 2002 to 2007 the number of women candidates increased by 55.5 percent and from 2007 to 2011 – by 30.48 percent (whereas for men candidates the increase was only 20.36 and 16.66 percent respectively).

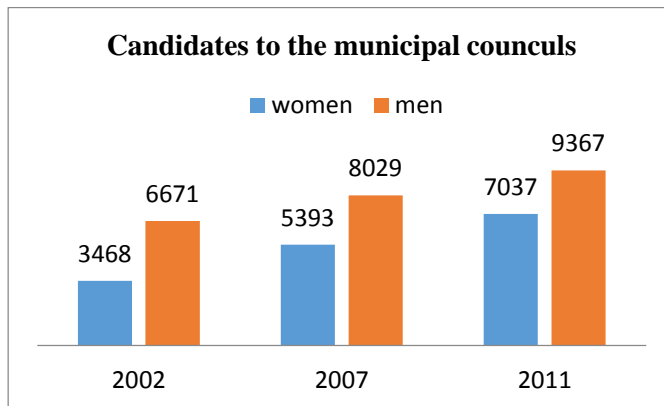


Fig. 14. Number of candidates to the municipal councils

However, the increase in activity did not have a direct affect on women's representation in local councils (Fig. 15). From 2002 to 2011 the number of women in the municipal councils even declined slightly. In 2002 women accounted for 25.28 percent, in 2007 – 22.19 percent, and in 2011 – 22.41 percent of the members of the municipal councils (Fig. 16).

Currently there are 60 mayors in Lithuania – 54 men and only 6 women.



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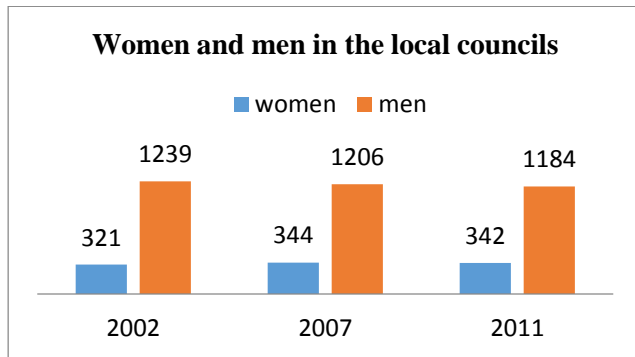


Fig. 15. Women and men in the local councils

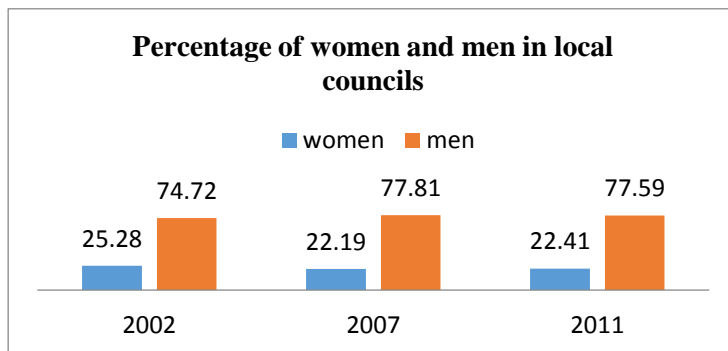


Fig. 15. Percentage of women and men in local councils

Women’s Involvement in Political Parties and Women’s Votes

Women in Political Parties

The results of the long-term survey “Women in the Lithuanian Society” (1994, 2000 and 2009) reveal that the public opinion regarding women's participation in the politics became more favourable, although the change of the opinion of men and women varies considerably (the results of the years 1994 through 2009 can be observed in the Table 4).

Table 4. The opinion of women and men regarding women's participation in the politics²

² Ibid, p.8.



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	1994		2000		2009	
	Men,%	Women,%	Men,%	Women,%	Men,%	Women,%
Women should not participate in the politics	31	23	22	15	12	5
Women should participate in the politics the same as now	43	41	61	55	55	42
Women should participate in the politics more than now	18	28	16	30	15	36

The number of women who think that women should be more involved in the politics, has increased gradually over 15 years (from 1994 to 2009) growing by 8 percent (from 28 to 36 percent). Whereas the number of men who think that women should be more involved in the politics decreased by 3 percent (from 18 to 15 percent). The number of respondents who believe that women should not participate in the politics has declined steadily among both women and men – by 18 per cent (from 23 to 5 percent) and 19 percent (from 31 to 12 percent) respectively. However, the number of men who think that women should not participate in politics is still 2.4 times higher than the respective number of women. The experts conclude that for the majority of the Lithuanian population it is not important whether women are involved in the politics or not (in 2009 there were 55 percent of men and 42 percent of women who were satisfied with the status quo). Therefore, the change of the public attitudes did not affect the voters’ behaviour.

The study also showed that the politics is considered to be the least important field of life for both women and men. The interest in it has declined sharply since 1990, and in 2000-2009 the number of residents for whom politics is important has stabilized. They account for 5 percent of men and 3-4 percent of women. In 2009 37 percent of women and 50 percent of men said that they were interested in the politics (Fig. 16)



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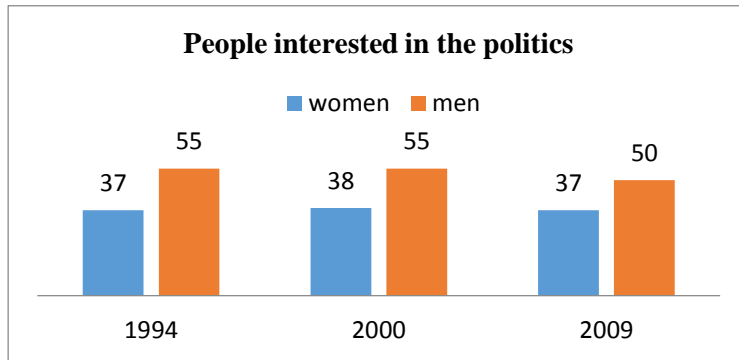


Fig. 16. Lithuanian residents’ interest in the politics.

Similar proportion of men and women for whom the politics is important is reflected in the composition of the parties. In general, there are more women party members than men. In Labour Party they represent about 55 percent, Lithuanian Social Democratic Party – 52 percent, Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action – 61 percent, Liberal Movement of the Republic of Lithuanian – 45 percent of all their members. However, there is no party led by a woman in Lithuania. Women's representation in the councils, boards or presidiums of the parties is less than their percentage on the party lists (Table 3).

Table 4. Percentage of women in the governing bodies of the major parties.

	Council	Board	Presidium	Members
Labour Party	--	27,77	30,61	55
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral	--	30	--	61
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party	23,5	34	36,58	52
Liberal Movement	7,69	--	--	45



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Voting Activity

In Lithuania data on voters’ participation in elections is being collected only since 2011, when the voters were started to be registered at the polling stations. Therefore there is no possibility to compare the dynamics of the voters’ behaviour. The voting results from 2012 indicate that women voted more in all age groups except the youngest voters under 24 (Fig. 17). This reflects the demographic situation of Lithuania in regards to gender. The older voters are, the greater gender imbalance is. Amongst 25-34 year-old voters there were 5 percent more women than men, whereas amongst the voters over 75 – 47.72 percent more women than men. In general there were 25.41 percent more women than men voters. Therefore, it can be noted that women's political choices have a significant impact on the election results.

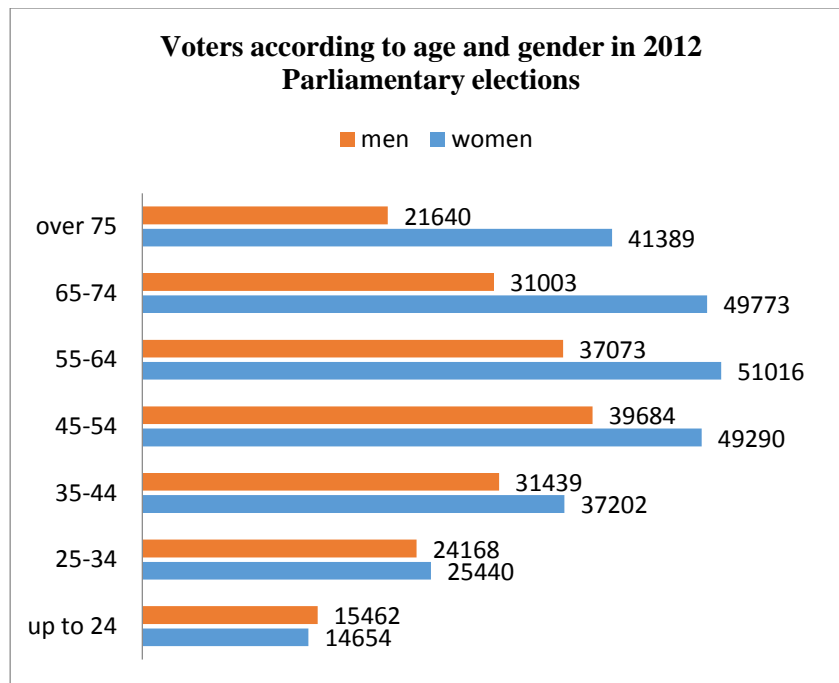


Fig. 17. Voters according to age and gender in 2012 Parliamentary elections

Almost in all age groups women voters’ political activity is higher than the one of men (Fig. 18 and 19). The exception is the 65-74 years old and older voters.



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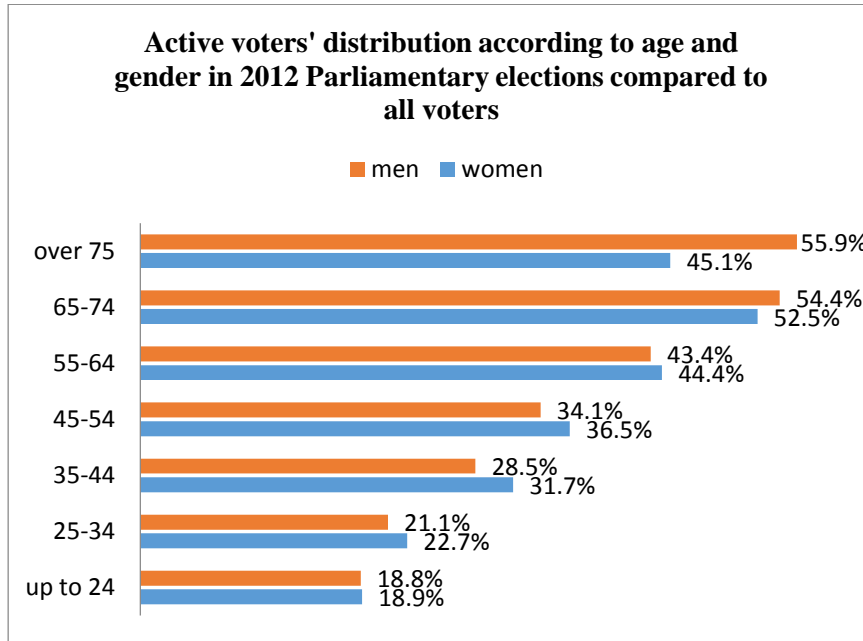


Fig. 18. Active voters' distribution according to age and gender in 2012 Parliamentary elections compared to all voters

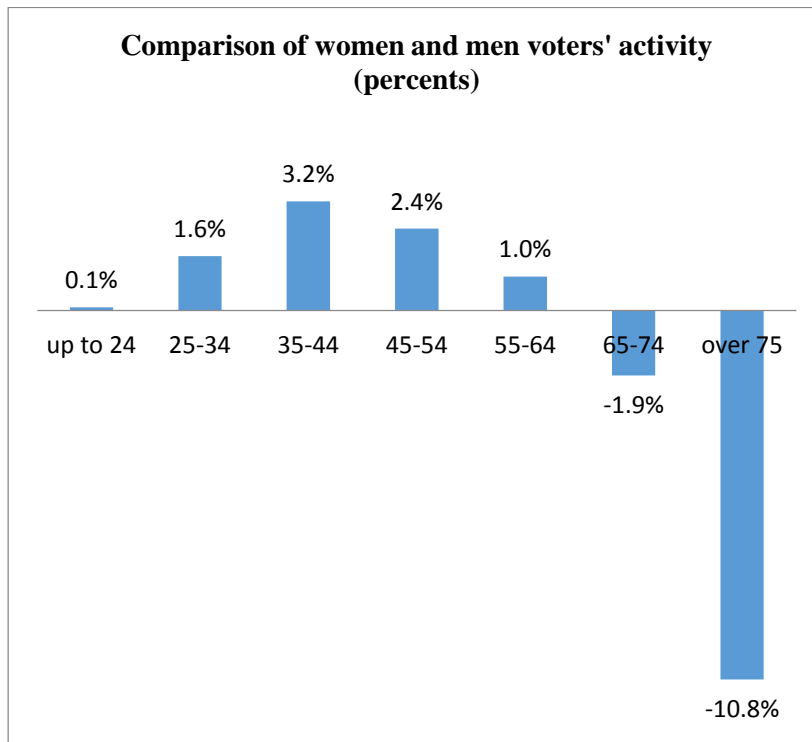


Fig. 19. Comparison of women and men voters' activity (in percents). Positive numbers show higher women's activity, negative – men's.



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Initiatives to Attract More Women into Politics

General Initiatives

Kaunas Women’s Employment Information Centre (WEINC) has implemented several projects on women political empowerment:

- Building on research about career skills needed for leadership and effective participation in contemporary political life there were trainings organised for women leaders. The participants became more self-confident and gained knowledge on how to stand for local elections.
- Club of women politicians “MILDA” was created in order to facilitate networking among different parties and women NGOs in Lithuania. At the moment, the club members represent six different political parties. The club started in Kaunas and since then has been expanding to other regions of Lithuania. “MILDA” organizes meetings and training for club members, helps to keep contacts and networking among women in politics, designs media campaigns in support of women in politics.
- Open discussion forums are arranged, where representatives of different parties and NGOs gather for networking, sharing good practices and debating. The activities contribute to developing political culture which is more open for women’s political participation.

Initiatives of Political Parties

Among six most influential political parties only the Lithuanian Social Democrat Party implements special measures to encourage women’s political participation and networking. It is the only party which has included gender equality and non-discrimination principles in its statutes. It also applies gender quotas. The Lithuanian Social Democrat Party has established the Union of Women Social Democrats. The union has its women clubs in every larger city or town of Lithuania. Activities of the union:

- Networking within the party and with women social democrats from other countries;
- Informational and educational activities for the union members;
- Political statements and public initiatives on the issues related to women’s rights and gender equality;
- Monitoring of implementation of the principles of gender equality within the party.