



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

Local Action Strategy

Partner 9

INTERCULTURAL INSTITUTE TIMISOARA

Romania

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LOCAL STRATEGIES

In order to understand Romanian women's place in politics today one needs to take a close look at the way women and women's role was considered in the Romanian society in the past.

Before the communist period, within the predominantly peasant culture, men and women had a clear roles division and specific values were associated with different patterns of behaviour.

During the communist regime more and more women occupied political and leadership positions. Although this was nothing else than a justification and illustration of the equality preached by the regime, women in such positions had to follow order sex actly, otherwise they were replaced with less recalcitrant women. Women in leading positions had to comply with the communist party ideal of the exemplary woman. Such positions implied being an exemplary wife, mother and the most important, being an example to follow at your workplace. It is clear that such positions were unreachable for single women, divorced women, not to mention single mothers, regardless of their training and professional capacity. Women were usually dismissed from leading positions if they got divorced.

Things changed in 1989 when the Revolution marked the end of the communist regime. Ideas like the emancipation of women and that of social and political equality turned out to be perceived as a false problem as well as an additional concern and responsibility. Many women did not want to be part of the political life anymore, their main focus being again the family life or their professional career. During the first free electoral campaign in over more than fifty years, issues concerning women's needs were totally missing from the agenda of most major parties. Although



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the Romanian Constitution guarantees equal participation of women (about 51% of the population) after 1990 women almost disappeared from the political and public life. This could be explained by the combination of a pre-communist tradition with a reaction to the previously imposed and manipulated involvement. These things combined convinced Romanian women that their main concern for the near future should be their family.

In order to get a clear image of the women's status on the political scene of the period that followed the 1989 Revolution one has to take a closer look at the level of representation of women in the Romanian Parliament since 1990 till the present moment.

Between 1992 and 1996 less than 0.5% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies were women. A slight rise can be noticed since 2000, women representing approximately 1% of the total number of members. The situation is even more worrying when considering the women's level of representation in the Romanian Senate: since 1990 until 2000 there were only two or three women out of 94, 137 and 139 men. As in the case of the Chamber of Deputies, after 2000 a slight improvement can be noticed. However the situation is still not at all encouraging, because the average percentage of women representatives in the two chambers of the Parliament is of around 10% for the past three legislatures. In local and regional authorities women represent currently around 14% of elected officials. Women are thus dramatically underrepresented at both local and national levels of decision-making.

European Parliament

In the current legislature, 2009-2014, the percentage of Romanian women in the European Parliament is 37%: 3 from EPP, 5 from S&D and 4 from



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ALDE. While the representation of women in the National Parliament is very low, the representation of women in the European Parliament is higher than the European average.

Considering the provided data, we can say that nowadays the issue of gender equality is still perceived as being imposed by the European Union. In politics, as in other domains, society expects more of women and the general attitude is less sympathetic towards women than men when it comes to occupying leading positions.

Target of the advocacy campaign

From 1990 until the last parliamentary elections (in 2012) the electoral system was a proportional one on party lists. In 2012 elections were organised on uninominal system but this change did not affect significantly the percentage of women members of the Parliament. The elections for the European Parliament are still organised based on party lists, although there have been some proposals to change this system.

Therefore, at the current stage, the only way to have a balanced gender representation in the Romanian MEPs is by ensuring that the lists presented by political parties include in a balanced way men and women at all positions of the lists, particularly among the positions in the electoral lists that are considered “eligible” based on opinion polls.

The decision on the composition of the lists is taken by the governing bodies of political parties. Therefore, they are to be seen as the final target of the campaign.

Actions to be undertaken in the project “Women in politics” – Local Campaign

Taking in consideration the local and regional context present above, our Local Campaign will



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focus on working with a variety of stakeholders in order to build effective influence of the leaders of the political parties for ensuring parity on the electoral lists for the European Parliament. Young women and various organisations where young are involved, will be among the most important stakeholders envisaged. Through the campaign, they will be empowered to become active citizens and to have an active role in society, also encouraging them to become active in the political level. A key period of the campaign will be the period when in each political party there will be debates or discussions related to preparing proposals for the lists of candidates for the European Parliament.

The following actions were implemented:

Actions	Period	Led by
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<p>National and regional partnerships. In order to assure a national representation of the project, collaboration was set with other national initiatives regarding empowerment of women. Contacts were made with the coordination team of the following projects: “Women in politics” – a national project, “Reconstruction of the status of women: from discrimination and equal opportunities for professional development”.</p>	<p>February – October 2013</p>	<p>Intercultural Institute Timisoara</p>
<p>A national training course was organising on public participation and encouraging young people (with the focus on young women) to become active in the field of public policies. This training course focused on three methods in order to promote public participation: photo voice, world café and living library</p>	<p>26 – 30 September 2013, in Timisoara</p>	<p>Intercultural Institute Timisoara</p>
<p>Organising local events in at least five places in Romania, where the young women leaded public actions in order to promote active participation – they used the methods learned in the training course in Timisoara</p>	<p>October 2013 – October 2014</p>	<p>Intercultural Institute Timisoara and partners</p>
<p>Organised meetings with the Local Action Group</p>	<p>July 2013 – July 2014</p>	<p>Intercultural Institute Timisoara</p>



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Establishing an online activist group / that will undertake online actions in order to empower women	October 2013 – June 2014	Intercultural Institute Timisoara
Establishing an action group in Bucharest	October 2013 – June 2014	Intercultural Institute Timisoara
Organising national meetings in Bucharest	November 2013 – July 2013	Intercultural Institute Timisoara and partners
Implement three workshops with the women from the political parties	February – May 2014	Local Action Group
Set up an online campaign for a “clean” national presidential campaign in Romania. The online campaign was leaded by young women.	August – November 2014	Intercultural Institute Timisoara

Actions to be undertake in the project “Women in politics” – Training and support programme

I.I.T. will organise a national residential training course for 3 days, aiming to gather active young people – with the focus on young women to discuss about tools to use in order to advocate for a balanced representation of women on the electoral lists for the European Parliament.

I.I.T. would also coordinate an action group in Bucharest, because after evaluating the situation it concluded that meetings in Bucharest are necessary, where



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the main political parties have the headquarters.

The action group from Bucharest would propose a new action plan. The first meeting in Bucharest would take place on 06 November 2013.



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