

Facts and Figures

Women's representation in National Parliaments is 23,4%



Based on the data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the proportion of women in single house parliaments is 23,4%. The average proportion in OSCE member countries is 26,6%. Women's parliamentary representation in Arab States is 18,9%. Women make 18% of the parliament in Armenia, 16% in Georgia and 16,8% in Azerbaijan.

Only 9% of the airtime was allocated to female candidates.



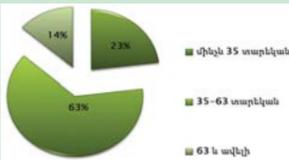
According to the OSCE/ODIHR Parliamentary Election Observation Mission media monitoring results, only 9% of female politicians were granted campaign coverage during the most popular news programmes. The preliminary conclusion of the mission states that women were active as candidates; however, party platforms did not directly address issues related to gender equality.

Women in electoral commissions



Three of the seven members of the Central Electoral Commission are women, including the Deputy Chairman. Women make up 35 percent of the TEC members where only 16% have senior management positions. According to the assessments of international observers, 57% of the PEC committees were women with 39 percent holding the chairman's post. Note that by law at least two of the TEC members should be of opposite sex, and there are no gender requirements for PECs.

Woman candidates by age and occupation



23% of women candidates for the parliamentary elections were young women under 35 years of age, 63% - of average age of 35-63 years, and 14% were above 63 years of age.

At least one-third of the man and woman candidates in the party lists were unemployed. 45% of working women were from the education system.

Woman & politics

"Women's Agenda" presented ahead of the parliamentary elections of the RA is still in force.



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Women's Representation in the National Assembly is 18%

Photo by: Lilian Galstyan

19 of 105 or 18% of the MPs of the sixth convocation in RA National Assembly are women, including one woman from the electoral list of national minorities, and two were elected by the regional lists.

Note that in the previous convocation of the National Assembly women were 10%; this result may be considered as one step forward in the elections if not the expectations from the quota of at least 25 percent representation of each sex stipulated in the Electoral Code that was not met again. In this regard, this quota provision worked more effectively in Gyumri and Vanadzor elections with 24% of women in councils.

The Republican Party of Armenia received 58 seats where 8 or 14% are women. Arpineh Hovhannisyan, the Minister of Justice, Margarit Yesayan, NA member, Hermineh Naghdalyan, the Deputy Chairman of the NA, Shoushan Petrosyan, singer and NA member, Shoushan Sardaryan, the former assistant to the Prime Minister of the RA, Jemma Baghdasaryan, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Rouzanna Mouradyan and Karine Atshemyan, NA members will be engaged in the legislative branch of the country.

"Tsaroukyan" Alliance received 31 seats where 8 or 25,8% are for women. Naira Zohrabyan, NA member, Iveta Tonoyan, the Speaker of Gagik Tsaroukyan, Director of "Epicentre" news service of "Kentron" TV, Luiza Sargsyan, the Assistant in the Chair of the Russian language in the Armenian National Agrarian University, Karine Poghosyan, NA Member, Marine Margaryan, the Professor of Yerevan State Medical University and Shaqe Isayan, the Assistant to the Director of "Gagik Tsaroukyan" charity foundation were elected by the nation-wide election list. Nora Arustamyan, Assistant of the Leader of the Prosperous Armenia Gagik Tsaroukyan, was elected to the NA by the territorial election list. Tatyana Mikaelyan, who is Russian by origin, was elected to the NA by the list of national minorities:

The Party Alliance "Yelk" (Exit) is represented by 9 deputies, 2 of which or the 22% are women. They are the deputies that were elected to the National

Assembly by the territorial lists: Maneh Tandilyan from "Lusavor Hayastan" (Bright Armenia) and Lena Nazaryan from the Party "Civil Contract".

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation will have 7 deputies in this convocation of the NA, with only one female deputy (14%), Armenouhi Kyureghyan, Professor of the Vanadzor State University with PhD in physical and mathematical sciences.

Thus, only one of the political forces that has passed to the National Assembly has managed to provide 25% of one gender parity as stipulated by the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia. Although, in the lists of parties that participated in the parliament elections 30% were women.

Unlike the previous elections, when the number of women decreased because of self-withdrawals of the candidacies, this time, however, the main reason was the territorial or the so called "rating" lists, where women were simply knocked off balance from the race by big pocket male candidates. As for the self-withdrawals, this time it "harmd" mainly the male candidates. In particular, only 2 of the 35 self-withdrawals that were registered in the CEC were women.

Pre-election Lists

30% of candidates were women

In comparative lists of the 9 political forces, 5 parties and 4 alliances that had nominated candidates in the elections, 29,5% of total candidates were women. The number of women candidates by territorial lists was 30,8%. It turns out that the delay in the ratio of 30 to 70 was an unnecessary caution, as long as the parties were ready to involve even bigger number of women in their lists than is required by the transitional clause of the Electoral Code. At the same time the political forces were not ready yet to let women have more seats in the first five and ten sets of seats, showing an overzealous dedication in watching literally the rule of law in that issue. Instead, as the analysis of the lists showed later, they had filled the last sets of ten seats with women candidates thus in some cases even raising the participation of women up to 100%. None of the lists of the leading political forces was led by women. There were no women as well in the second horizontal lines. Three of the political forces had involved women in the third lines, the rest were involved at lower than the 4th line in the first set of 10 seats, almost everybody was represented by 2 women each, and only one party had involved 3 women in the first set of 10 seats.



Exit Poll

Which political force was preferred by women voters?

In the course of the Parliament elections that took place on April 2 the Armenian Sociological Association and the Baltic Surveys /The Gallup Organization (Lithuania), with the support of the Television Company "Yerkir Media" made three Exit Polls for the study of the public opinion. The polls were made in 13 precincts of Armenia's provinces, at randomly selected 125 polling stations. Around 30 thousand people have participated in the survey, i.e. every 7th voter coming out of the polling station.

Voters that have already used their polling ballots and were coming out of the polling stations were asked to fill in an Exit Poll, with the indication of the party and the precinct candidate that they have voted for and then to place the completed forms in specially prepared for the Exit Poll boxes that allowed to insure the privacy of people participating in the Exit Poll. Gevorg Poghosyan, the Chairman of the Armenian Sociological



Association has reported that although there have been no significant discrepancies in the gender parity of those who participated in the Exit Poll, nevertheless, there were some differences in the results.

The approaches of male and female voters in favour of the Armenia's Republican Party have been similar: 46% of both men and women have voted for the Republican Party.

25% of those who have voted for the "Tsaroukyan" Alliance were women and only 23% were men. Women were majority among those who voted for the Alliance "Yelk" (Exit): 10% of women and only 9% of men.

The Armenian Revolutionary Alliance was voted for by 5% of men and 4% of women.

The "Armenian Renaissance" was voted for by 4% of both men and women.

Preferences for "Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan" alliance were also equal among genders, 3% of each have voted for the alliance.

The alliance "Congress-ADP" was more preferred by men than women with the ratio of 3% men and 2% women.

More men than women have voted for the Armenian Communist Party: 3% men and only 2% women.

The "Free Democrats" were voted for by the same 2% of both men and women.

Thus, the general picture shows that women have voted more for the "Tsaroukyan" and "Yelk" party alliances, and men have given preference to the Armenian Republican alliance, "Congress-ADP" and ACP.

Decision Making

The number of women in leading positions of the National Assembly has decreased



The leading positions of the National Assembly were assigned in the first session of the 6th convocation that started on May 18. The MPs elected the chairman of the parliament, three deputy speakers, the heads and secretaries of the party factions and standing committees. Although the number of women MPs has increased as compared with the previous convocation from 14 to 19, nevertheless, only 2 women were elected in the National Assembly leading positions. For the sake of comparison, only 5 women were elected in leading positions in the 5th convocation.

One woman was elected in the Presidium of the National Assembly

Ara Babloyan, the candidate from the Republican Party of Armenia, was elected as the Chairman of the NA, and Eduard Sharmazanov and Arpineh Hovhannisyanyan from the Republican faction and Michael Melkumyan from the "Tsaroukyan" alliance faction were elected as Deputies to the Chairman. For the sake of comparison, the Parliament of the previous convocation had only two Chairman Deputies, one of whom was a woman, Hermineh Naghdalyan.

By the way, Arpineh Hovhannisyanyan in her speech applying to those who have voted for and against her, said, "I thank those who have expressed a political position and those who have expressed a personal position. At least they were honest" ...

There are no women among the leaders of the factions

The new NA has no woman leader in any of the party factions, unlike the previous convocation, when three of the groups were led by women, Heghineh Bisharyan (Rule of Law), Naira Zohrabyan (Prosperous Armenia), and Zaruhi Postanyan (Heritage).

Only one of the Heads of the Standing Committees' was a woman

We could say that there is a regress also in the number of women involved as leaders of the Standing Committees of the National Assembly. First, the Parliament voted for cutting down the number of Standing Committees from 12 to 9. Several Standing Committees were merged with others: like the Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights, the Committees on Agriculture and Environment Protection, and the Standing Committee on Healthcare, Motherhood and Child Protection.

For example, the Standing Committee on Healthcare, Motherhood and Child Protection that was previously Chaired by the current Chairman of the Parliament Ara Babloyan, will now operate within the Committee on Social Affairs, which is as arguable as the elimination of the Committee on the Protection of Human Rights, as the sphere is pregnant with a whole range of issues that need legislative regulation.

And by the way, the human rights protectors and Elinar Vardanyan, lawyer by profession and the previous Head of the Standing Committee on Human Rights have given a severely negative assessment to the fact of elimina-

tion of a separate standing committee on the protection of human rights in the newly elected Parliament. "It is a pity that the Committee on the Protection of Human Rights and the Committee on Public Affairs were merged with the Committee on State and Legal Affairs, and I think that taking into account the fact that the protection of human rights is a matter of high concern in the Republic of Armenia, as of this momentum such decision was not to be made", - she said in an interview given to "Liberty", noting that the new law has entitled the Committees with wider regulatory functions and now especially the Committee on the Protection of Human Rights could have played a more substantial role in Armenia.

The suggestion of the oppositional "Yelk" (Exit) alliance on preserving the Committee on Human Rights and maintaining 10 Standing Committees was rejected by the common vote. Hrayr Tovmasyan that had made the suggestion for cutting down the number of the Standing Committees brought the justification that the number of the MPs as compared with the previous convocation has decreased from 131 to 105. Moreover, the experience has shown that the work load in the committees is unequally distrib-

uted. And finally, cutting down the number of the committees would also mean budgetary savings. In the course of 5 years of any given parliament convocation, the maintenance of one Standing Committee costs from 70 to 80 million drams of additional expenses to the state budget. In a word, savings as always were made on the account of the "human rights".

As a matter of fact, the suggestion of the Republican Party faction was accepted that the National Assembly of the 6th convocation will have only 9 Standing Committees and only one of them will be headed by a woman. For six of the Standing Committees the Republican Party faction has published the nominations for the positions of the Heads of the Committees and there is no woman in the list.

Hakob Hakobyan was elected as the Head of the Committee on Healthcare and Social Affairs, Armen Ashotyan will head the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations, Koryun Nahapetyan will head the Standing Committee on Defense and Security, Hrayr Tovmasyan will head the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs and Protection of Human Rights, Khosrov Harutyunyan will head the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, Gagik Minasyan will head the Standing Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs. "Tsaroukyan" alliance had nominated candidates for the positions of the Heads of three Standing Committees. And one of their nominees is a woman, Naira Zohrabyan, who will be the Head of the Standing Committee on European Integration. Vardan Bostanyan from the "Tsaroukyan" alliance will head the Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and Vardan Grigoryan will head the Standing Committee on Territorial Administration, Local Self-Government, Agriculture and Environment.

For the sake of comparison, we have to note that two of the Heads of the Standing Committees of the previous convocation were women, Naira Zohrabyan and Elinar Vardanyan.

Post factum

The rating election approach has the face of big pocket males

As we know the fair half of the parliament mandates are shared by the territorial or the so called "rating" lists that include the candidates who have got the biggest number of votes, and as a matter of fact all of them are exclusively male. Only two women have passed to the parliament by the rating lists: Maneh Tandilyan from "Yelk" alliance, who being nominated in Precinct 1 managed to collect 5110 votes for her alliance, and Nora Arustamyan from "Tsaroukyan" alliance, who collected 4789 votes in Precinct 7 of Aragatsotn Province and passed, as the men who had collected more votes than her had self-withdrawn their candidacies.

Another woman nominated in the territorial lists, Lusineh Mejlumyan who was involved in the rating lists of the Republican Party, collected 4722 votes in Precinct 9 of Lori Province, however, in her case it turned out to be not enough to pass to the Parliament: we have to note, nevertheless, that regardless of the number of votes collected by women for their parties in different precincts, almost all candidates that have passed to the Parliament by rating lists had from 5 to 10 thousand votes and more. Only 14 of 353 women nominated by territorial lists have collected from 1000 to 2000 votes. The rest of the women have collected less than 1000 votes.

In general, one can say that the rating lists turned out to be much less favourable for women than was the previous majoritarian approach. As political scientist Armen Baghdasaryan says, "The transition to 100 percent proportional election approach, that was however advocated as a progress, has shown the exactly adverse result and in practice has brought to

an actually full 100 percent majoritarian election approach, where everything is determined by the votes of the candidates with high rates and the parties have almost no significant role. A lot of citizens have already qualified the new Parliament as the result of contracts and trade between money and more money. In this trade the political forces and candidates were the buyers and the voters were the vendors of their votes. Women nominated in the territorial lists did not become buyers, as they did not offer money for the votes and as a matter of fact they lost. They were offering programmes that would give a new quality to the political processes and they were expressing a desire and readiness to stand next to the citizens that are overburdened with problems and concerns. However, these values were not demanded... A vivid example is Precinct 3 of Yerevan (Yerevan Malatia-Sebastia and Shengavit administrative districts), the defeat of Anahit Bakhshyan, member of the Yerevan Council who did not collect even 1000 votes, who, however, has been

next to any Yerevan inhabitant that would have shown the courage to raise alarm on the issues of their concern and has shown consistency and determination in solving their problems. On the other hand in the same district businessman Samvel Aleksanyan from the Republican Party collected 42 thousand votes, whereas this very person, as qualified by the Parliament monitoring, used to be one of the "silent" candidates for 5 years. By the qualification given by politologist Alexander Iskandaryan, the director of the Institute "Caucasus", the motivation of the society has been: "let's vote not with voice but with stomach". That is to say people would vote not for the preferred ideology but for the momentum or personal gain.

"A momentum gain is, for example, the reconstruction of the entrance door or window frames of an apartment building, paving a small portion of a village road with new asphalt, etc. Almost all political forces have worked in this direction", - says Alexander Iskandaryan.



The role of money in these elections was evidently big. The main competition in precincts would sometimes be among the deep pocket representatives of the same party and women who, as a matter of fact, are not involved in big business and would have simply be knocked off the race. And not only women, the same could be said about the male candidates who didn't happen to be a director of a medical institution, an owner of a factory or a supermarket, who didn't happen to have any sibling or big brother governor or businessman, a big pocket entrepreneur father-in-law or a big foot bureaucrat father.

A Message to the newly elected deputies

“Women’s Agenda” is still in force



The initiators of the “Equal” campaign congratulated the newly elected MPs wishing them success in legislative activity and reminding them that the “Women’s Agenda” submitted ahead of the parliamentary elections of the RA is still in force. Especially women MPs are expected to be active to advance the “Women’s Agenda”.

Note that “Women’s Agenda” was developed within “Equal” campaign which is implemented by the “OxYGen” Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights in cooperation with Women-Net.am webpage and “Family Academy” NGO.

The “Women’s Agenda” was presented to the public prior to the parliamentary elections; it was discussed with political forces and the representatives of women’s NGOs. However, it is still in force. The main goal of the agenda is to draw the attention of the newly elected National Assembly deputies to the problems of ensuring equality of women and men in the hope that they will raise these issues not only in Parliament but also offer solutions. Within a parliamentary

government, the political forces of the NA of the RA become responsible for the policy implemented by the executive branch.

The text of the “Women’s Agenda” raise several issues related to ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, provide facts and figures on current issues in various sectors and offers possible solutions. Thus, the agenda is a rich source of information on existing gender situation in Armenia for each member of the Parliament. The questions of the “Women’s Agenda” are based on the RA Constitution, laws and programmes based on the concept of Gender Policy of the RA, international obligations of the RA, statistical data of the RA and recent studies and social surveys in Armenia.

The main questions

1. Do you support the UN resolution within Sustainable Development Goals on 50/50 participation ensuring equal participation of women and men in politics, economy, social life and equal representation in decision-making?
2. What steps are you ready to take to execute the RA law “On Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men”?
3. Are you ready to adopt the RA Law “On Preventing Domestic Violence” and follow up on its execution?
4. What steps are you going to take up to promote actual equality for women and men stipulated by Article 86 of the RA Constitution?
5. Do you plan to implement the principles of the concept of gender policy of the RA and integrate the interests and needs of women and men in social and economic development plans?
6. Do you agree that it is necessary to strengthen the capacities of the Council on Affairs of Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between Men and Women adjunct to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia for effective implementation of gender equality national mechanisms including coordination and monitoring of the relevant policy?
7. Your attitude to the following issues and their solutions:

- Insufficient representation of women in all branches and levels of power
- Ineffective use of women’s potential and discrimination against women in the labour market
- Greater vulnerability of women and children and households headed by women in terms of poverty
- Vulnerability of rural women to the accessibility of resources and services
- Exclusion of discrimination against women with disabilities and ensuring complete social inclusion
- The necessity for expanding economic opportunities for women in times of demographic crisis, declining birth rate and migration
- Reproduction of gender stereotypes through education and mass media
- Ensuring availability of and accessibility to healthcare services and reducing maternal and child mortality rates.

The Agenda is open for joining

Views



- I don’t think we should constantly increase quotas; we must change the environment and create incentives to ensure natural progress. By constantly increasing the quota we make women more passive who will sit back and wait to be included in the pre-election lists as objects of “positive discrimination”. It is difficult to discuss equality in cases when one wants to regularly make use of the “special supportive means” granted by men as it means to wait for a favour from men. At some stage, quota will work; however, that period must continue and not slacken. I believe that women’s role must be raised by women. Men may artificially assign a role to women if required, for instance, for ensuring a quota. But women will have the opportunity to compete equally when they work on themselves to be on equal starting point with men. Moreover, women must be ahead of men as in patriarchal societies the starting points for men and women are never equal. My starting point wasn’t equal either, and it is also driven by the attitude of the society. Women are always treated sceptically; men consider things from the perspective of their sex first and then listen to what women have got to say....

Arpineh Hovhannisyan
Deputy Chairman of the NA of the RA
Republican Party of Armenia

« Territorial or open election lists may be favourable for popular men candidates, which creates the risk of including less number of women. However, experience shows that open lists may not impede women. It depends on how much women in a given society are prepared to get self-organised and actively support women candidates.

» Extract from Venice Commission Report “On the Impact of Electoral Systems on Women’s Representation in Politics” (2009)

Expert opinion

Gender Analysis of Electoral Programmes

“The electoral programmes of political parties participating in the parliamentary elections were not gender sensitive, in general. The planned actions and their results were not targeted by gender. A goal for equal rights and equal opportunities is not set; this concept is completely overlooked in the programmes”, mentioned gender expert Lilit Zaqaryan.

According to her, with the initiation of gender analysis of electoral programmes it was expected to find solutions to the issues raised in “Women’s Agenda” or an approach to the equality of men and women. However, expectations were not met.

“Problems of women were directly reflected only in two or three provisions of the electoral programmes. For example, in the programme of “Armenian Renaissance” party it was stated: “Consider the work of women with land ownership as work experience with annual indexation and increasing of pension”. There was a provision in the programme of “Free Democrats” that suggested increasing the duration of paid maternity leave by 30-50%, and create similar opportunity for fathers. Another provision suggested creating opportunities for paid military service for girls and women and establishing special military units”. The electoral programme of the Armenian Communist Party envisaged adop-

tion of a law “On Maternal Capital”. There were no gender-sensitive provisions in the programmes of the rest of the political parties; it could only be assumed that implementation of some provisions would promote expansion of economic opportunities for women or have indirect impact on their development”, said the expert.

For example, almost all the programmes had provisions that could create a favourable environment for small and medium business development, and consequently, for women’s entrepreneurship. Many programmes envisaged increased salary for teachers and healthcare sector in particular or introduction of 18 hours weekly workload for pedagogues that may be considered a favourable statement for women’s problems as the absolute majority of the mentioned sectors are women. The following statement in the programme of “Yelk” alliance may be highlighted: “The psychologist’s institute will be introduced in maternity homes to prevent leaving newly born babies

with health problems in special institutions”.

All the provisions on human rights were stated under the section on “The Man and the State” in the electoral programme of ARF that stipulates the principles of justice, honest competition and opportunities for all. “We may assume that these provisions relate also to women; however, international and historical experience shows that gender neutral statements lead to gender-blind policy, as a rule,” said Lilit Zaqaryan. According to her, electoral programmes of parties have never been quite gender-sensitive and women’s agenda has always been limited to provisions on family and maternity. “Nevertheless, the political parties have not touched upon the minimum in 2017 that was presented in the previous elections. The traditional reflection upon protection of maternity is absent, and this is neither because mothers are sufficiently protected nor because political parties have progressed and began to worry about the issues of political or eco-



conomic representation of women and enhancement of opportunities to combining family and career. Unfortunately, we must confess that political powers do not take the issues of gender equality and various other problems relating to women’s participation in the country’s development processes seriously. And this is why the above mentioned issues are not reflected in the electoral programmes”, summarised the expert.

A question to a deputy

Are you ready to protect women's interests in the Parliament?

19 of the 105 deputies are women and 11 of them are elected to the NA for the first time. We talked to several newly elected women deputies and asked only one question – Are you ready to protect women's rights and interests in the Parliament regardless of you political views?

Shoushan Sardaryan
RPA Faction



- Definitely, I am ready to protect women's interests. I cannot identify the ways of my activity but I think that I will be able to specify the priorities after a detailed analysis. And yes, I am ready to vote not only as a deputy but as a woman deputy.

Iveta Tonoyan
"Tsaroukyan" Alliance" Faction



- Of course, women's issues will be a priority for me, as being a woman I understand in what kind of society we live in and what kind of problems women face. I have mentioned several times that women have more potential than it is now reflected in one or another sector and in the legislative power, and I have always supported the view that politically literate, intelligent women with wide vision must be involved in

various areas. I am sure that increased involvement of women will have a positive impact on every sector, including politics.

Lena Nazaryan
"Yelk" Alliance" Faction



- I consider women's rights in the context of general human rights, but I also understand that some cultural attitudes in our society lead to discrimination against women, so we must discuss women's rights separately. I believe that there may be cases when I will vote as a woman in the first place and will state my agreement to the law as a women deputy because I want to specify women's rights and protect their opportunities.

Maneh Tandilyan
"Yelk" Alliance" Faction



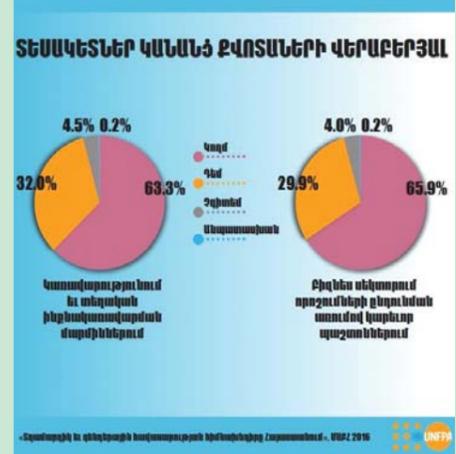
- Before being a deputy, I have protected actively the rights of both women and men as I see equal opportunities in the same context. Naturally, I will continue my activity as a deputy to the NA as I highlight the importance of women's participation, involvement and equal opportunities in every branch – legislative and executive. And I believe that we do not have enough resources to isolate women from some sectors. Women's potential is obvious and their contribution can finally make our country developed with completely different image making it a bold, decisive, consistent and visionary state.

Armenouhi Kyureghyan
ARF faction



- I will definitely protect women's interests in the National Assembly. I have indeed made the first step when in my question to Hrayr Tovmasyan, the newly elected chairman of the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs and Protection of Human Rights I raised the necessity to make amendments to the RA Law "On Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men" aimed at introducing more practicable mechanisms and guarantees. Therefore, I am ready to both raise and protect women's interests in the Parliament and try to gather everyone to advance this issue...

The Voice of the Many



According to the results of the sociological survey on "Men and Gender Equality in Armenia" conducted by the UN Population Fund in 2016, 63,3% of the interviewees absolutely support quotas and find them proper both on the government and local self-government levels. 32% spoke against quotas and the rest either did not know or had a difficulty to answer. 67% of the quota supporters are women and 59% are men.

By the way, 67% of the survey participants support introduction of quotas not only in politics but also in businesses where 70% of the interviewees are women and 61,5% are men.

"In essence, the society understands the issue, and the majority tends to recognise the issue of women's participation in decision-making, they realise that women's potential is underused", added expert Vladimir Osipov.

All contestants complied with the requirement that each gender must appear in each integer group of four candidates, and out of a total of 1558 candidates 30% were women. In a positive development and in line with previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, the gender quota applies also to the distribution of obtained and vacant seats, as stated in the preliminary findings and conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission.

April 2, 2017

How did quota work?

Jemma Hasratyan, the President of Association of Women with University Education and Vladimir Osipov, a sociologist and PhD talk about the effectiveness of quota.

Jemma Hasratyan.
"It must be clear that quotas are temporary tools"

- I think that it was right for the NGO sector to make recommendations on quota, and we registered a positive change as women's representation increased to 18%. I would like to mention that when we were advancing the recommendation on raising the quota, it was yet unknown that the Electoral Code would introduce the concept of territorial or open electoral lists which is unfavourable for non-popular women and women with scarce financial resources. Nevertheless, we note a positive progress in terms of women's representation in the National Assembly. But I am more concerned about the quality and not the number of women in the NA. Their quality will be observed in their future work.

The main requirement has always been to have women in the Parliament who are knowledgeable and intelligent, who control the situation and are able to raise problems not only about women but also for the general society. Besides, it must be clear that quotas are temporary tools until civil society institutes, including NGOs and parties prepare resources for the Parliament. A time will come when there will be no quotas but there will be a large number of active women who will be able to participate in political processes independently. Finally, until when must the social sector be a guardian for women to be represented in the legislative power? This is important to think about. At this stage, the women who have passed to the Parliament through the quotas must realise their commitment to the society.

Vladimir Osipov
"There is a positive dynamics; however the pace and scope are not yet sufficient"

- I think quotas definitely worked. The dynamics is obvious in comparison to the former National Assembly. However, it would be good to think how much it is comparable to the European and worldwide tendencies. I believe that this question may only have a negative answer as in European countries the average representation of women in parliaments is 26-27%. Besides, the Electoral Code of the RA has stated 25% quota for women but women's representation in the NA has significantly decreased due to the territorial lists. It is obvious that women lose in similar "competitions". This is not a competition with equal conditions, and in general, I think that



territorial electoral lists are remainders of the past. Nevertheless, they were used driven by specific political interests and current requirements. In a word, the gap has reduced as compared to the former NA but not to a stage to able to consider women's representation as sufficient not only for Armenia but also for any democratic country or a state on the way to democratic reforms. Moreover, the world is progressing, and in 2015 a new benchmark 50/50 was defined within the SDGs adopted by the UN for equal representation of women and men in development processes.