

Statistical note on gender balance in politics - EU candidate countries and potential candidates

December 2019

Executive Summary

The persistent under-representation of women in politics remains a cause for concern. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) monitors the latest situation and trends at all territorial levels in the EU Member States and also in the EU candidate countries and potential candidates that benefit from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – the so-called IPA beneficiaries. Data for key political decision-making bodies at national level are updated quarterly, while other data are mostly updated annually (local level only biennially). The latest quarterly update and the annual update of regional data were completed in December 2019. Key findings in relation to IPA beneficiaries are:

➤ National level

- Women account for 26.6% of the members of national parliaments (single/lower house) across the 7 IPA beneficiaries compared to 32.2% in the EU Member States. In the IPA beneficiaries, therefore, men still outnumber women by 3 to 1.
- The parliament in North Macedonia is gender balanced (i.e. at least 40% of each gender) but women account for less than 20% of members in Turkey. Indeed, the Turkish parliament is large (600 members) and weighs heavily on the overall results for IPA beneficiaries. If Turkey is excluded the proportion of women in parliaments in IPA beneficiaries rises to 34.2% and therefore ahead of the EU Member States.
- All the IPA beneficiaries except Turkey have legislative quotas requiring a minimum proportion of women on candidate lists. Nevertheless, at the current rate of change, it will still take another 13 years to achieve gender balance in the combined parliaments of all seven IPA beneficiaries. This is, however, only one year behind the projected gender balance in EU Member States where the rate of change is slightly slower.
- Less than one in ten major political parties in IPA beneficiaries (6.5%) has a woman leader, although there are slightly more women deputy leaders (13.9%). These results are much lower than in the EU where women account for 17.1% of party leaders and 34.5% of deputy leaders.
- In national governments, women account for a fifth (21.8%) of senior ministers (members of the cabinet or equivalent) in the IPA beneficiaries compared to 30.4% in the EU. Albania has a gender balanced cabinet (53.3% women), but in all other IPA beneficiaries, men hold more than three-quarters of ministerial positions.

➤ Regional level:

- Latest data show that women hold only 11.2% of seats in regional assemblies in IPA beneficiaries and are even less well represented in regional executives (8.5%), again well behind the EU, where women hold at least a third of these positions.

➤ Local level:

- In 2019, women held a third of seats in local/municipal assemblies in the EU (32.6%), but less than a fifth in IPA beneficiaries (18.3%). None of the IPA beneficiaries have gender balanced local assemblies.
- Very few women lead local/municipal councils in IPA beneficiaries (3.8%). The figure in the EU is also low (15.4%), but four times that in the IPA beneficiaries.

Introduction

The composition of political assemblies and executives at all territorial levels too often fails to reflect the gender diversity of the population they represent, with women significantly under-represented in many cases. Moreover, progress towards a better gender balance in political decision-making has proved to be extremely slow.

Monitoring progress towards gender equality in politics, as well as in other life domains, is key to support better informed policy-making and ensure its effectiveness and accountability. In January 2017, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), took over the database on women and men in decision-making (WMID), previously managed by the European Commission. The data are made available through the **Women and men in decision-making** entry point of EIGE's [Gender Statistics Database](#) (GSD) and include information on the numbers of women and men in key decision-making positions across a number of different life domains¹. The database represents an invaluable source of reliable and regularly updated statistics that can be used to monitor the current situation and trends through time.

In relation to politics, EIGE monitors the situation in political institutions at the European, national, regional, and local levels in the EU, the EU candidate countries and potential candidates (i.e. those benefitting from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, or "IPA beneficiaries"). Data are updated quarterly for the European Parliament, European Commission, European Committees² and the national parliaments and governments. Data on major political parties (last updated in June 2019) and regional³ level politics are updated annually whilst local data are updated every other year (last updated in May 2019). Whilst data for the EU Member States have been collected regularly since 2003, the IPA beneficiaries have been progressively added to the routine data collection: Turkey since 2005; North Macedonia and Serbia since 2007; Montenegro since 2015; and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo since 2018.

This note summarises the latest available data on the representation of women in politics at the national, regional and local levels for the IPA beneficiaries compared with the EU-28 Member States, following the update completed in December 2019.

National parliaments

In November 2019, only one of the seven single or lower houses of national parliaments across IPA beneficiaries was led by a woman (14.3%), and their combined members comprised 73.4% men and 26.6% women. Men therefore outnumber women by 3 to 1. This compares to 67.8% men and 32.2% women members across the single or lower houses of national parliaments of the EU Member States.

There is, however, considerable variation between the IPA beneficiaries. The parliament in North Macedonia is gender balanced with 40.0% women, and Serbia is close behind (37.6% women), whilst in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Turkey women account for only a fifth or less of members (21.4% and 17.3% women respectively, Figure 1). Indeed, the situation in the IPA beneficiaries is significantly influenced by the large parliament (600 members) in Turkey. If Turkey is excluded the share of women rises to 34.2%, slightly ahead of that in the EU Member States (32.2%).

¹ Including politics, public administration, judiciary, business and finance, social partners and NGOs, environment and climate change, media, education, science and research, and sports.

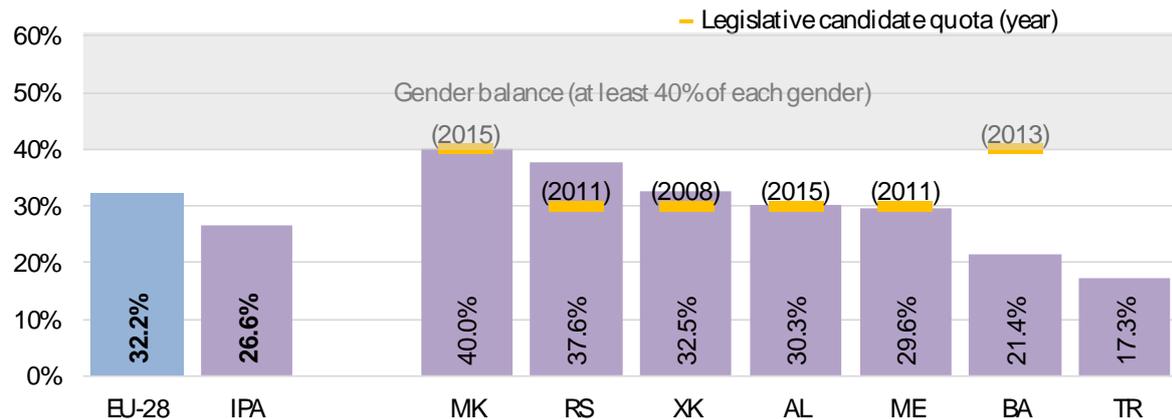
² The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) represents civil society, employers and employees. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents regional and local authorities.

³ In case of regional elections, data for the affected regions are updated in the next quarterly collection.

In recent years, all IPA beneficiaries except Turkey have taken legislative action to increase the presence of women in their parliaments by passing laws that require the candidate lists presented by parties to have a minimum share of each gender, with sanctions in case of non-compliance. The quota is set at 30% in all cases except North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (both 40%).

The November 2019 data show that the composition of parliaments in five of the six IPA beneficiaries with a legislative candidate quota has already met or exceeded the quota threshold, the exception being Bosnia and Herzegovina (40% quota target, currently 21.4% elected members), (Figure 1).

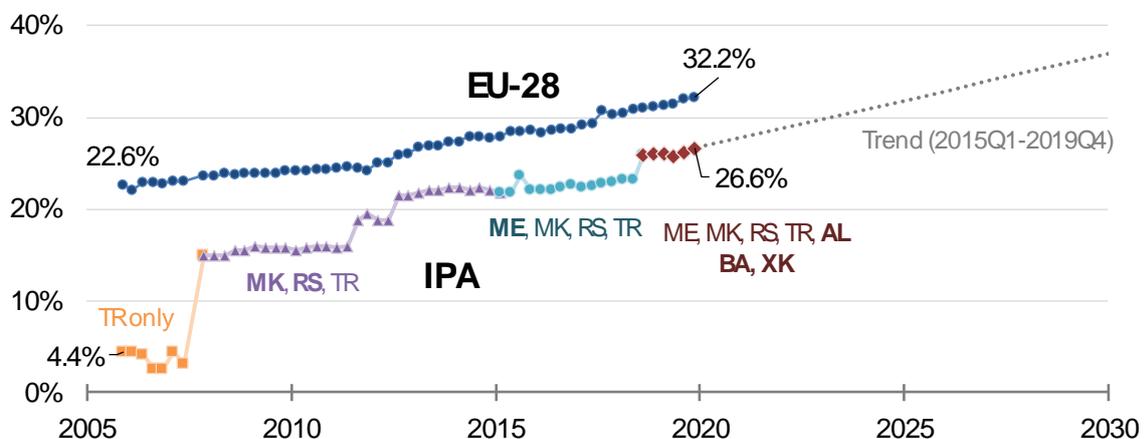
Figure 1 Share of women in the single/lower houses of national parliaments, EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, November 2019



Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [national parliaments](#).

IPA beneficiaries have been added to the WMID data collection progressively so that it is not possible to create a consistent time-series covering all 7 beneficiaries. However an IPA aggregate that takes into account all beneficiaries covered at each observation point, starting from the first quarter of 2015, when four of the seven IPA beneficiaries were covered (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey), and including the others progressively, shows that the share of women in parliaments in IPA beneficiaries has increased by 4.8 percentage points (pp) at an average rate of 1.0 pp/year. At this pace, it would take 13 more years (until 2033) to reach gender balance, just one year more than for EU Member States, where, although the share of women members in single or lower houses of parliaments is currently higher (32.2%), there is a slightly slower pace of change (0.7 pp/year).

Figure 2 Share of women in the single/lower houses of national parliaments, EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, 2005-2030



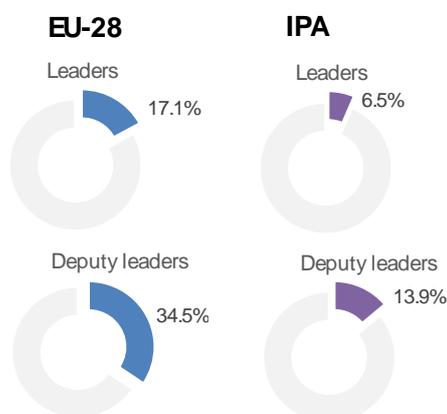
Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [national parliaments](#).

Major political parties

Political parties are the gatekeepers of gender equality as they set party policy and select the candidates for election. In 2019, women accounted for less than one in fifteen (6.5%) leaders of major political parties (i.e. those with at least 5% of seats in parliament) across the IPA beneficiaries and for less than one in seven deputy leaders (13.9%) (Figure 3). This compares to 17.1% and 34.5% women leaders/deputy leaders of major political parties in the EU Member States.

It is striking that several of the IPA beneficiaries have not had a single woman leading a major political party since data were first collected. This applies to Serbia and North Macedonia since 2011, Montenegro since 2015 and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo since 2018 (see Table 2 in the Annex).

Figure 3 Share of women leaders and deputy leaders of major political parties, EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, 2019

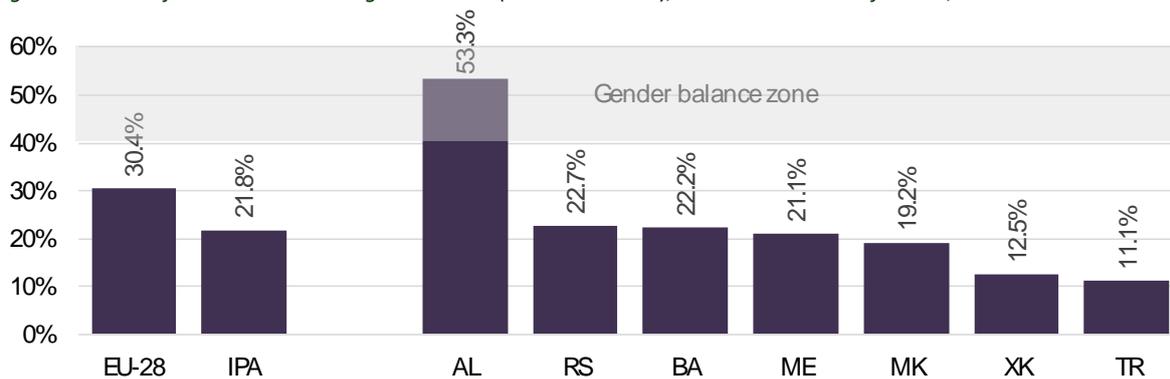


Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [major political parties](#).

Governments (senior and junior ministers)

In November 2019, all IPA beneficiaries except Serbia had a man as prime minister. Men also accounted for the large majority (78.2%) of senior ministers (i.e. those with a seat in the cabinet), with women holding only 21.8% of positions, compared to 30.4% in national governments of the 28 EU Member States. In Albania, 8 of the 15-member cabinet are women (53.3%), but in Kosovo and Turkey women hold only one in eight and one in nine cabinet positions respectively (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Share of women in national governments (senior ministers), EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, November 2019



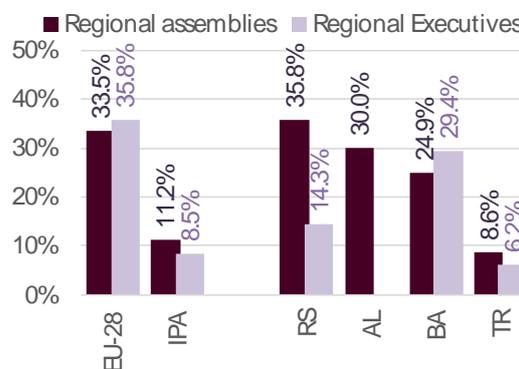
Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [national governments](#)

Regional assemblies and executives

The latest data from November 2019 show that women accounted for 11.2% of members of regional assemblies and for 8.5% of regional executives across the 4 IPA beneficiaries that have regions endowed with powers of self-government (Figure 5). These figures are well behind the EU Member States where women hold at least a third of positions in both regional assemblies and regional executives.

None of the IPA beneficiaries have balanced regional assemblies or executives. Regional assemblies in Serbia and Albania, have at least 3 women for every 7 men (35.8% and 30.0% respectively), whilst in Bosnia and Herzegovina women account for a quarter of members (24.9%). In Turkey, however, women are outnumbered by more than 10 to 1 (8.6%).

Figure 5 - Share of women in regional executives and assemblies, EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, 2019



Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [regional executives and assemblies](#)

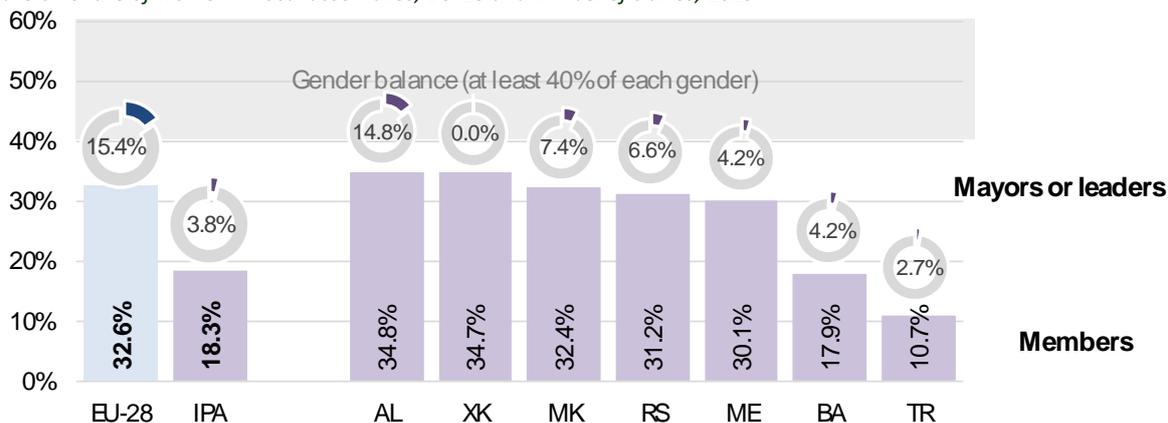
Note: No separate executive body in AL. No regions endowed with powers of self-government in MK, ME, XK.

Local assemblies

Data for the local level are updated every other year. The latest data from 2019 show that women accounted for a third (32.6%) of members of local assemblies across the EU, but for less than a fifth in IPA beneficiaries (18.3%, Figure 6). In practice, however, women accounted for at least 30% of members in all cases except Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey. Indeed, the combined figure for IPA beneficiaries is heavily influenced by Turkey (where women account for just 10.7% of the 20,538 councillors), which contributes for nearly 60% of the councillors recorded. If Turkey is excluded, women account for 28.9% of women councillors across the remaining IPA beneficiaries, not so far behind the EU figure (32.6%).

Across IPA beneficiaries, very few women lead local/municipal councils (3.8% of mayors or equivalent council leaders). The figure is low also in the EU (15.4%), but four times higher than in the IPA beneficiaries. Albania has the highest proportion of women mayors/leaders (14.8%), whilst in Kosovo all 38 local assemblies are led by a man. Again, the proportion of women mayors or leaders in the IPA beneficiaries increases if Turkey is excluded (2.7% of mayors/leaders), but only up to 6.6%.

Figure 6 - Share of women in local assemblies, EU-28 and IPA beneficiaries, 2019



Source: EIGE Gender Statistics Database: [local/municipal councils](#)

Annex

Table 1 IPA beneficiaries with legislated candidate quotas applied to the single/lower house of parliament

IPA	Year	Provisions	Required % of under-represented sex	Sanctions
ME	2011	Candidate lists must include at least 30% of the under-represented gender.	30%	Yes - in case of non-compliance, the Central Electoral Committee asks parties to remove the shortcomings of the list and also shall refuse to publish the candidate list in case these shortcomings are not removed.
MK	2015	All candidate lists submitted for parliamentary elections must include at least 40% of the under-represented gender. These candidates must be equally distributed throughout the list - on every three positions on the list, one must belong to the less represented gender, plus at least one additional position reserved for the less represented gender on every ten positions on candidates' list.	40%	Yes - list rejected in case non-compliance.
AL	2015	For each electoral zone, at least 30% of the multi-member list and/or one of the first three names on the multi-member list must be from each gender.	30%	Yes - Central Electoral Commission (CEC) poses a fine in case of non-compliance. Furthermore, the CEC replaces each candidate with the next candidate in the list belonging to the least represented gender, until the gender quota is reached.
RS	2011	Candidate lists must include at least 30% of each sex. For every three candidates on the electoral list there shall be at least one candidate of the under-represented sex on the list (first group of three places, second group of three places and so on until the end of the list).	30%	Yes - Central Electoral Commission (CEC) requests parties to revise the list in case of non-compliance. If list is not revised, CEC rejects the list.
TR	None	-	-	-
BA	2013	Each list of candidates shall include both male and female candidates, who are equally represented. Equal gender representation exists when one of the sexes is represented by at least 40% of the total number of candidates in the list. The candidates of the underrepresented gender	40%	Yes - Central Electoral Commission approves the list up to the point where the requirements are met and requires parties to revise the list within 5 days and resubmit.

IPA	Year	Provisions	Required % of under-represented sex	Sanctions
		shall be distributed on the candidates list in the following manner: At least 1 candidate of the underrepresented gender amongst the first 2 candidates, 2 candidates of the underrepresented gender amongst the first 5 candidates, and 3 candidates of the underrepresented gender amongst the first 8 candidates etc		
XK	2008	Candidate lists must include at least 30% of each sex, with 1 candidate from each gender included at least once in each group of 3 candidates, counting from the first candidate in the list.	30%	Yes - list reordered by replacing the last elected candidate of the overrepresented gender with the next candidate of the opposite gender until the total number of seats allocated to the underrepresented gender reached at least 30%.

Table 2 Number of women leaders of major political parties, IPA beneficiaries, 2011-2018

Party Leader	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Grand Total
Turkey	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	8
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Macedonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Albania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Kosovo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0

“-“ Country not covered in the data collection.