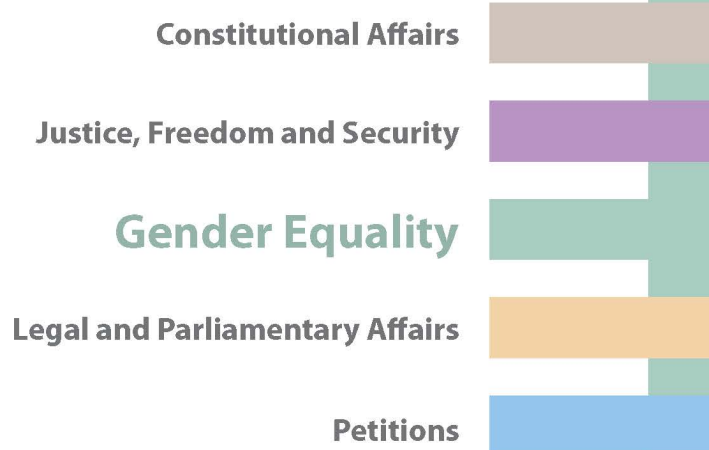


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **C**
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



**Electoral lists ahead of
the elections to the
European Parliament
from a gender perspective**

Study for the FEMM Committee





DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

GENDER EQUALITY

Electoral lists ahead of the elections to the European Parliament from a gender perspective

STUDY

Abstract

Upon request of the FEMM Committee, this study provides a detailed analysis of the existing electoral systems for the European 2014 elections from a gender perspective in the 28 EU Member States. It also presents and scrutinises the electoral lists of the Member States from a gender perspective and presents the synthesis of the main findings from the lists. Some main conclusions are made on the basis of the mapping. They concern the relation between the adoption of legislated gender quotas and the implementation of quota provisions by national parties.

**Document requested by the
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALDE Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

ECR European Conservatives and Reformists Group

EFA Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

EFD Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group

EPP Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

EU-28 European Union

FPTP First Past the Post

GUE/NGL Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left

MS Member State

PR Proportional electoral system

S&D Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

TRS Two-Round System

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The European Union is committed to promote gender equality in decision-making, to raise awareness of the gender gap in this area, and to take action to improve the situation. Considerable progress has been achieved over recent decades in terms of equality in decision-making. Yet, almost sixty years on since the Treaty of Rome, there remains a persistent under-representation of women in political assemblies across Europe.

The situation in the European Parliament is more positive in what concerns equal representation of women and men. However, there are differences across Member States concerning the share of women Members of the European Parliament.

In order to redress women's under-representation in political assemblies and achieve gender balance, some Member States have adopted gender quotas. In several Member States, individual political parties have adopted voluntary party quotas. Other political parties have adopted strategies such as mentoring, networking, and candidate schools to promote an equal representation of women and men in elected bodies.

Aims

This report presents:

- a synthesis of the main findings from the analysis of the lists for the May 2014 European Parliament elections in all EU-28 Member States for those parties that were represented in the European Parliament 2009-2014 legislature;
- a statement on the electoral systems for the European Parliament elections 2014 in the 28 EU MSs, specifying how quotas or other systems for equal representation of both sexes apply and what are the sanctions for non-compliance;
- a statement on whether voluntary gender quotas or other systems are applied at political party/independent candidate list level (and sanctions for non-compliance).

Separately, in Annexes, the report presents in detail:

- the legal situation in each EU-28 Member States as regards the forthcoming elections for the European Parliament regarding the electoral system and legal gender quotas;
- the lists of the names of all parties and independent candidates which will partake in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament, regardless of whether they have already participated in past elections;
- for those political parties and independent candidates represented between 2009 and 2014 in the EP whether voluntary gender quotas are applicable, or another system is in place to ensure a certain representation of each gender on the list (e.g. zipper system).
- copies of the electoral lists of those national political parties or independent candidates who, as at January 2014, are represented in the European Parliament and who are participating in the May 2014 Elections to the European Parliament.

Methodology

The study is based on a mapping conducted through accurate desk research at Member State level. The results have been also further cross-checked with official sources as well as with databases dealing with gender quotas and gender representation in political systems across the world¹. Furthermore the results from the analysis have been cautiously compared with former results in the existing specialised literature.

Key Findings

A. Main Conclusions

1. In the Member States which have adopted **legislative quotas**, often political parties have implemented further quota provisions; overall, findings point to the success of sanctions for non-compliance.
2. Parties that have adopted **party quotas** have implemented them successfully in most cases.
3. **Quota levels** and the **design** of the respective quota provisions vary across Member States
4. The adoption of party quotas, as well as the quota level, varies in accordance with the traditional **left-right dichotomy**. The S&D and G/EFA members are more prone to have adopted party quotas.

B. Recommendations

To promote women's participation in political decision-making, gender quotas have been identified as pivotal. The 50/50 campaign has had some effects on the composition of the lists for the European Parliament 2014 elections but it has not been as relevant as expected.

For these reasons, we urge **national Governments and national Parliaments** to:

1. Address women's under-representation in political decision-making at all political levels more effectively through appropriate strategies and action plans with measurable targets and regular review.
2. include **targeted initiatives** in the action plans to improve the gender balance in political decision-making (such as awareness raising campaigns, mentoring programs and candidate schools) at all political levels to empower women and to fight stereotypes.
3. Adopt **structural measures**, like gender quotas, as they have proven more effective to achieve gender balance in political decision-making in the short and medium term.
4. **Monitor progress** towards the aim of gender balance in political decision-making to allow for regular adaptation of measures to ensure ownership, success and transparency.

¹ See the website: <http://www.quotaproject.org>

5. Support efforts to **promote greater participation** of women as candidates in elections, including adopting transparent criteria for candidate selection for decision-making and ensuring that selection bodies are gender balanced;
6. Promote equal representation of women and men in internal positions in committees and boards within the **political parties**

Recommendations to the European Institutions: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council

The **European Parliament** should:

7. Raise the problem of women's under-representation in political decision making and encourage the adoption of **strategies and action plans** for parity representation of men and women at all levels more actively.
8. Promote the adoption of **gender quotas** by political parties and through legislation of the Member States.
9. Initiate **discussions** on strategies and actions plans with national parliaments and in inter-parliamentary delegations.
10. Call upon the Commission to **monitor and promote** the **adoption of gender quotas** more effectively and also to provide guidelines on how they could best advance real equal representation of men and women in parliaments.
11. Cooperate with the Council and the Commission to develop instruments that assist Member States in the development of more **assertive and binding tools** to achieve equal representation of men and women in political institutions.

The **European Commission** should:

12. Cooperate with the Gender Equality Institute (EIGE) regarding continuous **monitoring** of the situation of gender equality in decision-making in the political sphere in EU-28 Member States at all governance levels.
13. Provide EIGE with the appropriate resources to develop additional indicators to measure equality in the "**Power**" dimension of the Gender Equality Index.
14. Encourage the adoption of **measures** like awareness-raising campaigns, mentoring programs and candidate schools on equal participation of men and women in decision-making in the political sphere at Member States level through participation in the appropriate EU programmes.
15. Promote the adoption of **gender quotas** in the political sphere in Member States at **all governance levels** and explore how they could best be implemented to achieve real equal representation of men and women in political institutions.

The **Council** should:

16. Invite Member States to adopt **measures**, in particular gender quotas, to encourage the achievement of equal representation in decision-making at all government levels.
17. Develop stronger **cooperation** with the Commission, EIGE, and the Member States with a view to promote the adoption of measures, in particular gender quotas, to issue guidelines on how these measures could best be implemented to improve equal representation of men and women in decision-making at all governance levels, and to ensure continuous monitoring.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Equality between women and men is one of the founding principles of the European Union, enshrined in its policy since the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

Ever since the 1970s, the European Commission² and the European Parliament³ have been actively promoting special measures to promote gender equality in various fields.

In the European Commission's Road Map for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2009), equal participation of women and men in politics is listed as one of its priorities.

In March 2010, the European Commission strengthened its commitment to equality between women and men with the Women's Charter. As pointed out in the Women's Charter, 'gender balance in decision-making, in political and economic life and in the public and private sectors, will help Europe shape more effective policies, develop a gender-aware knowledge-based society, and create a stronger and more prosperous democracy'.

To achieve the objectives of the Women's Charter, an action plan was developed and adopted by the European Commission on 21 September 2010: the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men for the years 2010-2015. The Strategy covers the European Commission's program in this area, setting out priorities in various fields, including equality in decision-making. In line with the European Pact for Gender Equality, the Strategy reaffirms the dual approach of specific actions and gender mainstreaming in the five priority areas, including equality in decision-making. Thus, as stated in various documents, the European Union is committed to promoting gender equality in decision-making, to raising awareness of the gender gap in this area, and to taking action to improve the situation.

Considerable progress has been achieved over recent decades in terms of equality in decision-making. Yet, almost sixty years on since the Treaty of Rome, there remains a persistent under-representation of women in political assemblies across Europe. Gaps remain and women continue to be a minority in the political sphere. As of February 2014 the share of women members of the single/lower houses of national parliaments in the EU-28 is 27 per cent and the average share of women in upper houses of parliament is 25 per cent (<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/>). While the figure is slightly above the world average of 21.7 per cent (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>), the proportion of women is far from the stipulated goal of gender balance, often formulated as 40-60 per cent of either sex. Also, there are great differences within the region, ranging from 45 per cent in Sweden to 9 per cent in Hungary in national parliaments.

² See the dedicated website on gender and decision-making of the European Commission at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm. The website includes a database on Member States that is continuously updated at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm. Decision-making is also taken in due consideration by EIGE in the calculation of the Gender Equality Index results are available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/activities/gender-equality-index>.

³ See the report prepared by MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen on 'Women in political decision-making – quality and equality' for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted on 13 March 2012 (P7_TA(2012)0070) available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2012-0070&language=EN&ring=A7-2012-0029>

The situation in the European Parliament is more positive pertaining to equal representation of women and men. As of February 2014, the European Parliament is comprised of 36 per cent women and 64 per cent men. However, there are differences between the Member States (MSs) concerning the share of women members of the European Parliament, ranging from 62 per cent in Finland, 54 per cent in Denmark, and 50 per cent in Croatia, Estonia, Malta, and Slovenia to 17 per cent in Luxembourg, 20 per cent in Poland, and 23 per cent in the Czech Republic and Italy.

In order to redress women's under-representation in political assemblies and achieve gender balance, many Member States have adopted gender quotas. In several Member States, individual political parties have adopted voluntary party quotas. Other political parties have adopted strategies such as mentoring, networking, and candidate schools to promote an equal representation of women and men in elected bodies.

This reports makes available:

- a detailed description of the situation in each of the 28 EU Member States (in Annex) as regards the forthcoming elections for the European Parliament (Number of seats in the EP, Electoral System type for the EP election 2014, whether national gender quotas apply or not, in the latter case what type of system applies, whether there are sanctions for non-compliance);
- the lists of the names of all parties and independent candidates which will partake in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament, regardless of whether they have already participated in past elections (see Annex);
- copies of the electoral lists of all national political parties or independent candidates which, as at January 2014, are represented in the European Parliament and which are participating in the May 2014 Elections to the European Parliament (see Annex), sorted by Member States; the lists include the names of the candidates⁴ on places:
 - a. 1-8 for those Member State which have 8 or less seats in the EP
 - b. for those Member States which have 11 or more seats, the copies will at least indicate the first half of the names of candidates on the lists⁵.
 - c. the lists clearly indicate the sex of each candidate.
- for each political party and independent candidate entry, whether voluntary gender quotas are applicable or another system is in place to alternate candidates by gender on the list (e.g. zipper system). In the latter case it is mentioned which system is adhered to and whether monitoring and/or sanctions in case of non-compliance are applied and whether the respective lists are in accordance with legal or voluntary gender quotas in force (see Annex).

⁴ In the Annex the total number of MEPs to be elected for each Member State is indicated together with the number of the candidates included in the list as required by the study. Only for BE, DE (only for CDU/CSU), FR, IE, It, PL, UK the lists include all official candidates. This is because all these countries present no national lists but constituency level lists. In case of CDU/CSU see the respective section in the Annex for further explanations.

⁵ As indicated in the Resolution of the European Parliament of 13 March 2013 on the composition of the European Parliament for the period 2014-2019, the EP will have 751 Members, allocated as follows: Germany — 96; France — 74; Italy and the United Kingdom — 73; Spain — 54; Poland — 51; Romania — 32; The Netherlands — 26; Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Portugal and the Czech Republic — 21; Sweden — 20; Austria — 18; Bulgaria — 17; Finland, Denmark and Slovakia — 13; Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania — 11; Latvia, Slovenia — 8; Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg, and Malta — 6;

In addition the study provides:

- a synthesis of the main findings from the analysis of the lists;
- a statement on the electoral systems for the European Parliament elections 2014 of the 28 EU MSs specifying how quotas or other systems for equal representation of both sexes apply and what are the sanctions for non-compliance;
- a statement on whether voluntary gender quotas or other systems are applied at political party/independent candidate list level (and sanctions for non-compliance).

1.2. Methodology of the study

The study has been conducted according to the following methodological steps.

- Firstly, a desk research was carried out to construct a database of contacts of all national political parties and independent candidates which are currently represented in the European Parliament and which are planning to take part in the 2014 elections, sorted by Member State.
- Secondly, a mapping of the legally imposed gender quotas or other systems for equal representation for both sexes which are applicable to the European Parliament 2014 elections has been carried out considering also whether the national law foresees monitoring of its applications and or sanctions in case of non-compliance.
- Thirdly, the application of voluntary gender quotas or alternative systems (such as zipper system) at party level to alternate candidates by gender and their respective sanctions, if applicable, has been verified.
- Fourthly, a cross-check with the former reports of the European Parliament has been performed for points b) and c), relying on the publications of the European Parliament on "The European elections: EU legislation, national provisions and civic participation" (PE 410.672) as well as "Electoral gender quota systems and their implementation in Europe" (PE 408.309) and its update of 2013 (PE 493.011) to certify that no additional changes have taken place since the 2013 update.
- Fifthly, the Study Team has contacted national parties and independent candidates upon closure of the electoral lists and asked them to provide the lists of candidates.

To collect the information at Member State level, the Study Team availed itself of the wide network of national specialists in the field they have built in years of activities.

2. SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN RESULTS

KEY FINDINGS

- In the Member States which have adopted national quotas, political parties have succeeded in implementing the quota provisions; apparently sanctions for non-compliance seem to work.
- Parties that have adopted party quotas have implemented them successfully in most cases.
- Quota levels and the design of the respective quota provisions vary.
- The S&D and G/EFA members are more prone to have adopted gender party quotas than members of other party groups.

2.1. Introduction

The report maps the representation of women and men on party lists for elections to the European parliament on 25 May 2014.

In this section the major findings will be described and commented upon.

2.2. Electoral systems applied in EU-28 for European Parliament Elections

2.2.1. Definition of electoral systems

One of the most important factors in explaining the impact of women's political representation is the electoral system. Pertaining to the effects on representation, the electoral system can be defined as "the ways in which votes are translated into seats" (Larserud & Taphorn 2007, 5). Electoral systems can be divided into three major families: plurality/majority, proportional, and mixed systems (PR). **Plurality/majority systems** consist of two major systems: First past the post (FPTP) and Two-Round System (TRS). In FPTP and TRS, single-member electoral districts are used. In FPTP, voters vote for candidates rather than political parties, and the candidate that gains most votes wins the seat available even if he/she does not receive an absolute majority. In TRS, a second election is held if no candidate achieves 50 % of the votes (or another specified level of votes). In **proportional electoral systems** (PR), multi-member electoral districts are used. In list-PR systems, each party presents a list of candidates, the voters vote for a political party, and the parties gain seats in parliament in proportion to their share of the votes. In **mixed systems**, a list-PR system is usually combined with a plurality/majority system.

2.2.2. Previous research on electoral systems and women's political representation

Proportional representational systems tend to be more beneficial for women's political representation than the other two types of electoral systems (Norris 2004).⁶ In fact, a study made in 2007 showed that women gained more seats in parliamentary chambers elected using a proportional electoral system – 18.3 percent on average compared to 13.8 percent for those electing using a majority or plurality electoral system (Interparliamentary Union 2008). The reason for this is that proportional systems tend to allow parties to nominate a list of candidates rather than an individual candidate, as is the case in majority/plurality systems. According to political scientist Diane Sainsbury (2005), the PR system does not automatically result in a higher representation of women but it is more amenable to change and therefore tends to lead to a significantly higher representation than majority electoral systems.

Despite the fact that large electoral districts, or more specifically large party magnitudes in each party district (PR systems), are **favorable to the election of women** and more amenable to the implementation of gender quotas, scholars disagree on the importance of closed-lists versus open-list election for women's chances to be elected (Matland 2005). Under **open-list systems**, the voters may by personal voting (preferential voting) change the order of the candidates. Under **closed-list systems**, the rank-ordering of candidates made by the nominating political party is decisive for which candidates to be elected. The system of preferential voting, however, seems to vary over time regarding the election of women, between countries, and even between political parties, making it difficult to come up with a general conclusion (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2009).

2.2.3. Mapping of electoral systems applied in EU-28 for European Parliament Elections

Our findings show that the proportional electoral system is applied in all EU-28 for the European Parliament Elections. The application of the proportional electoral system is in line with a 2002 EU Council decision. However, the electoral systems vary in terms of whether it is an open, semi-open or closed list system, as well as regarding the method for allocating the seats. The number of constituencies ranges from one, for instance in Bulgaria, Denmark, Romania and Spain, to 13 in Poland and 15 in Germany. The countries are free to subdivide the electoral area as long as it does not affect the proportional nature of the voting system. Another component of the electoral system that may vary is the threshold percentage. The threshold percentage varies from none in, for instance, Germany and the UK, to 5 per cent in, among others, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The threshold may not exceed 5 per cent.

⁶ For further reading on electoral systems and women's political representation, see for example Kenworthy & Malami (1999), Matland & Studlar (1996), Paxton & Kunovich (2003), McAllister & Studlar (2002), Paxton & Hughes (2010), Reynolds (1999), Rule (1987). For an overview on electoral systems and gender quotas, see Larsrud & Taphorn (2007) Designing for Equality. Best-fit, medium-fit and non-favourable combinations of electoral systems and gender quotas.

2.3. National quotas systems applied in EU-28 for European parliament elections

2.3.1. Definition of quotas

During the last decade, electoral gender quotas have been introduced in an increasing number of countries in order to achieve gender balance in elected decision-making bodies, for example in parliaments (national, regional and European), governments, and local councils (Dahlerup 2006, Squires 2007, Phillips 1995, Krook 2009). Quotas in politics may be defined as an **affirmative measure** that establishes a fixed percentage or number for the nomination or representation of a specific group, most often in the form of a minimum percentage, which may be 20, 30 or 40 (Dahlerup 2006,19). Electoral gender quotas, hence, refer to the adoption of a fixed percentage or number for the nomination or representation of women in elected bodies.

Electoral gender quotas take mainly two forms: legislated (or legal) quotas and party quotas (Dahlerup 2006). **Legislated quotas** are included in the constitution and/or electoral laws of a country, and they target the gender composition of the electoral lists of all political parties, for instance, requiring a certain minimum of women candidates. **Party quotas** are adopted voluntarily by political parties and take the form of internal party requirements to nominate at least a minimum number or percentage of women for elected office.

Legislated gender quotas have now been introduced in more than 60 countries in the world for national elections. In 40-50 additional countries some political parties represented in parliament have written party quotas into their statutes (<http://www.quotaproject.org>). This development has mainly taken place in the last 15 years after the UN Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Electoral gender quotas, therefore, represent **one of the most innovative changes** in national electoral legislation in recent times.

2.3.2. Implementation of gender quotas

Several factors are important to the successful implementation of gender quotas. The three crucial dimensions are the design of the quota system and its compatibility with the electoral system in place, the specification of the quota provisions, including the question of a rank order for the candidates, and the sanctions for non-compliance (Dahlerup 2006, Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013).

Depending on the electoral system in use, quotas have different **designs** and are used in different steps of the selection process (Larserud and Taphorn 2007). In countries with PR systems, as all EU-28 pertaining to the EU Parliament election, candidate quotas are most often used for the party lists (the candidate stage), either compulsory by legal requirement or voluntarily by the political parties. Generally, it is easier to construct a quota system that is compatible with a PR electoral system since it is possible to introduce a greater number of candidates on party lists and since parties consciously try to balance their lists in order win seats (Matland 2005).

A requirement of 40 per cent women on candidate lists may result in no women being elected, if the female candidates are put at the bottom of the list with no chances of being elected. Even a 50-50 regulation, where women and men are alternated on the list, may result in the election of only men. If, for example a small party nominates a man as the

first candidate on the list and a woman as the second candidate in a closed-list electoral system, and the party wins no or only one seat in all constituencies, then a 50-50 quota provision is of no help.

In order to redress this problem, some countries have introduced **placement rules or rank-ordering rules**. For example in Spain, there is a 40 per cent quota regulation for national elections. Quotas are both applied to the whole list and to every five posts. If the number of eligible posts is less than five, then the list must be as close as possible to the 40-60 equilibrium. In Belgium, as another example, there is parity (50-50%) of men and women for the total list for national elections, and the two top candidates on the lists cannot be of the same sex. These **double quotas** are often used to prevent women from being placed at the bottom of the list with small chances for election.

Many quota laws for national elections also include **sanctions** for non-compliance. They come in two forms: legal sanctions (rejection of the list before the election) and financial sanctions (financial penalties). The experience so far is that the first option, rejection of the list, is by far the most effective, provided that the electoral authority, e.g. the Electoral Commission in the country, is given the legal competence to reject the lists that break with the quota regulations and also makes use of this power. Many quota laws for national elections in Europe include sanctions in the form of rejection of the list, for instance in Belgium, Poland, and Slovenia. In Spain, a party that does not comply with the quota rules will be given a 2 days' warning, followed by rejection if not remedied.

A number of countries instead **penalize non-compliance financially**. In Portugal, an incorrect list for national elections will be made public and the party will be punished with a fine. The fine is calculated according to the level of non-compliance.

To understand how different quota rules operate, the **nomination process** must be studied, the process in which parties select and rank their candidates among all prospective nominees (Dahlerup & Leyenaar 2013, Freidenvall 2011, Geissel 2013, Kenny 2013, Krook 2011, Meier 2011, Sineau 2011). Since it is the parties who select who should represent them, parties act as **gatekeepers**. Often this process takes place behind closed doors, i.e. "the secret garden of politics".

2.3.3. Mapping of quota systems applied in EU-28 for European Parliament Elections

Table 1 illustrates the adoption of legislated quotas in EU-28 for European Parliament elections. It also describes the adoption of placement rules as well as sanctions for non-compliance, as well as the extent to which the adopted legislated quota provision has been implemented on party lists for the 2014 European Parliament election.

Table 1: Adoption of legislated quotas in EU-28 for European Parliament Elections EU parliament level - Election to the European Parliament, 2014*Sources:* Country fiches 2014 collected for the present study.

QUOTA LEVEL, %	PLACEMENT RULES	SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE	IMPLEMENTATION OF QUOTA ON PARTY LIST (YES OR NO)	IMPLEMENTATION OF QUOTA ON PARTY LIST (YES OR NO)
Belgium	50%	Yes. The first two candidates (both main candidates and substitutes) cannot be of the same sex	Legal sanctions	Yes
France	50%	Yes. Strict alternation of women and men is mandatory from the beginning to the end of the list	Financial sanctions	Yes
Greece ⁷	1/3	None	Legal Sanctions	Yes ⁸
Poland	35%	None	Legal sanctions	Yes
Portugal	33%	Yes	Financial sanctions	Yes
Slovenia	35%	None	Legal sanctions	Yes
Spain	40%	Yes. 40-60 % women in every group of five candidates on party list	Legal sanctions	Yes

⁷ In Greece the Supreme Court's monitoring was released today, 11 May 2014, at 22.00. All 43 parties and alliances passed the eligibility check and they are all participating in the European elections.

⁸ Only for one party : Statute of the Party generally provides for at least 30% of candidates to be female in its instruments.

Table 1 shows that legislated quotas have been adopted in seven Member States for the 2014 European Parliament Election, namely Belgium, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain. These countries have also adopted legislated quotas for elections to the national parliament (www.quotaproject.org). Table 1 also shows that the level of the adopted legislated quotas varies from 33 per cent in Greece and Portugal to 50 per cent in Belgium and France. Moreover, table 1 shows that in these seven Member States, sanctions for non-compliance are applied. Five countries have adopted legal sanctions (Belgium, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Spain) and two countries have adopted financial sanctions (France and Portugal).

In **Spain**, for example, political parties are given 2 days (48 hours) to adjust lists that do not meet legal requirements. If they fail to do so, the lists will not be approved by the Electoral Commission.

In **Portugal**, as another example, financial sanctions are in use. If lists are not modified within a certain timeframe, non-compliance is to be made public and reduction of public funding will ensue provided for the conduct of the electoral campaign, in relation to the level of inequality on lists (Article 7). If either sex accounts for less than 20 per cent of each list, the party will see public funding halved. For lists where either sex accounts for 20 to 33 per cent, the reduction in public funding will be 25 per cent. The financial sanction does not apply to lists with less than 3 names.

Furthermore, table 1 shows that in seven countries, the adopted quota provision has also been implemented. Thus, the adoption of legal quotas seems to have been successfully implemented in the party lists for the 2014 election to the European Parliament.

It should be noted, however, that a stipulated quota level does not necessarily translate into an increase in the proportion of elected women. For instance, although **Poland** has adopted a 35 per cent national gender quota, only 20 per cent of the top candidates in the party lists are women. If women candidates are not among the top candidates, they have few chances of being elected. This illustrates the importance of placement or rank ordering rules.

Table 2 illustrates the adoption of party quotas in EU-28 for European Parliament elections. Political parties in countries with legislated quotas are not included, unless they have adopted a party quota that is higher than the one stipulated in law.

Table 2: Adoption of party quotas in EU-28 for European Parliament elections, election to the European parliament, 2014

COUNTRY/PARTY	QUOTA LEVEL, %	PLACEMENT RULES	SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE	IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTY QUOTAS (YES OR NO) ⁹
Austria				
ÖVP (EPP)	33.3%		No	Yes
SPÖ (S&D)	40%		No	Yes
Greens (G/EFA)	50%		No	Yes
Croatia				
SDP (S&D)	40%	-	No	Yes (see specific party fiche)
Cyprus				
Democratic Rally (DISY) (EPP)	30%	-	No	Yes
Movement for Social Democracy EDEK (S&D)	30%	-	No	No (the list is not in compliance with the formal party quota for national elections)
Czech Republic				
Czech Social Democratic Party (S&D)	25%	-	Yes. If a local party organization has failed to nominate 25% women among its top candidates, then the Social Democratic Women's Organization has the right to nominate extra women.	Yes
Germany				

⁹ All information is based on the number of candidates accounted for in the fiches, see Appendix

CDU (EPP)	33% Every third candidate must be a woman (art. 15 C Statutes)		No.	Yes
SPD (S&D)	40%	Zipper system. Every 5 th place can be allocated to a candidate of either sex		Yes
Alliance 90 –The Greens (G/EFA)	50%			Yes
The Left (GUE/NGL)	50%	Zipper system		Yes
Hungary				
Hungarian Socialist Party (S&D)	20 %			Yes
Italy				
Democratic Party (S&D)	50%			No
Lithuania				
The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (S&D)	33%			Yes
Luxembourg				
Christian Social People's Party (EPP)	33%			Yes
LSAP (S&D)	50%			Yes
The Greens (G/EFA)	parity			Yes
The Netherlands				
Labour Party (S&D)	50%	Zipper system		Yes

Green Left (G/EFA)	participation of women in all party activities (including list)			Yes
Romania				
Democratic Liberal Party (EPP)	30%			No
Social Democratic Party (S&D)	30%			Yes (Joint list with Conservative party and National Union for the Progress of Romania)
Slovenia				
Social Democrats (S&D)	40%			Yes
Sweden				
Social Democratic Party (S&D)	50%	Zipper system		Yes
Green Party (G/EFA)	50%			Yes
Left Party (GUE/NGL)	50%			Yes
The UK				
The Labour Party (S&D)	50%			Yes

Sources: Country fiches 2014 collected for the present study.

Table 2 shows that in thirteen of the EU-28 (except for the MS with legislated quotas), political parties have adopted party quotas. Member States with party quotas include Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the UK.

In Slovenia, the Social Democratic Party has adopted a 40 per cent party quota, thus exceeding the 35 per cent national quota provision.

Table 2 also shows that the quota level differs **from 20 per cent to 50 per cent**. The latter can be found for some lists of the Social Democratic, Green and Left Parties for the 2014 European Parliament election.

More generally speaking, most of the parties that use formal gender quotas are members of the S&D or G/EFA group but also parties to the middle and the right in the classic left-right dichotomy apply quotas. For example, the Christian Democrats in Germany have adopted a 33 per cent quota.

Considering that the G/EFA member parties form a smaller group than S&D and EPP in the EP, they are over-represented in the statistics on voluntary party quotas.

Some members of the EPP have formal gender quotas generally set at a lower number than 50 per cent. The EPP member parties that have adopted gender quotas are generally well established, large parties. It is possible that they, due to their powerful positions, experience social pressure to act responsibly in the process of increasing the number of female representatives.

Pertaining to placement mandates, most parties with a 50 per cent quota also apply the **zipper system**, particularly Social Democratic parties, in which women and men candidates are placed in alternate seats on the party list. In the German Social Democratic Party, the zipper system has been adjusted so that every fifth place may be allocated to a candidate of either sex. While placement mandates are not necessarily stipulated in the party statutes, they are implemented in practice in some cases, for example by the Greens in Austria, Alliance 90, the Greens in Germany, and LSAP in Luxembourg.

The table also shows that party quotas differ from legislated quotas regarding **sanctions** for non-compliance. In systems with legislated quotas, sanctions for non-compliance can be categorized into two types – legal sanctions and financial sanctions. In systems with party quotas, sanctions for non-compliance can often be characterized as internal sanctions. For example, if a local party organization has failed to nominate 25 per cent women among its top candidates in the Czech Social Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Women's Organization has the right to nominate extra women. In addition, when quotas are listed in party statutes, the negative social pressure that takes place in cases of non-compliance may be regarded as one kind of internal sanction that makes the local party organization refrain from breaking with the party rules.

Finally, the table shows that most parties that have adopted party quotas also implemented them on party lists for the 2014 European Parliament election. However, with some exceptions, a trend in parties with quotas lower than 50 per cent is that the share of men/women on party lists generally does not (or just slightly) exceed the stipulated quota level. While the quota level for CDU, for example, stipulates that at least one woman is nominated every three candidates, the share of women in the 2014 list is no more than 35 per cent. Also the Hungarian Social Democratic Party has a relatively low quota level at 20 per cent, which is only exceeded with five percentage units to 25 per cent.

2.3.4. Parties without party quotas

In eight EU Member States neither legislated quotas nor party quotas have been adopted. In Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Malta and Slovakia, no quotas have been adopted by the parties accounted for. However, the non-existence of quotas does not necessarily mean that the proportion of female candidates on electoral lists is low. For instance, in Bulgaria, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (ALDE) has a **55 per cent share** of women in the electoral list and the **top candidate** is a woman. In Finland, all parties running for re-election to the European Parliament have a share of women over **35 per cent**, and the Green League has **60 per cent** women candidates. In Slovakia, the Democratic Slovakia Party has a 28.6 per cent share of women, while Direction Social Democracy (S&D) has a **57.1 per cent** share of women. In Ireland, **two out of three candidates** in the Labour Party list are women.

What is more, in some countries, the political parties without quotas nominate approximately the same proportion of women candidates on party lists as parties with quotas. For instance, in Sweden, all parties that are currently represented in the European Parliament have **at least 40 per cent** women in their lists, also parties without quotas. Similarly, in Croatia, all party lists reach a share of women over 35 per cent. In Austria, likewise, parties with party quotas field 50 per cent women on party lists, while parties without quotas - the Freedom Party and the Freedom Party Alliance for the Future of Austria - have a 30 and a 40 per cent share respectively.

In line with Richard Matland's and Donald Studlar's (1996) **conceptualization of contagion**, a process by which parties adopt policies initiated by other political parties, political parties feel pressured to nominate more women candidates. Once a party has started the process, hence, the other parties follow suit in order not to be reprimanded by the electorate.

In general, **well-established political parties**, such as the Social Democrats in Denmark (42.9 per cent) or the Conservative Party in the UK (32 per cent) have a relatively high share of women in their lists. As powerful political players in the domestic arena, they are expected to garner support in large groups of the electorate, which might result in high levels of women's representation. Quite the contrary, **right wing parties**, such as UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party, 18 per cent), Jobbik (Hungary, 15 per cent) and Party for Freedom (NI) (The Netherlands, 10 per cent), generally have a low share of women in their lists. However, this is more significant for right-wing parties participating in the election but not currently represented in the EU. This is a general trend in all regions, with the exception of countries with national quotas: in these countries all parties have to respect the quota rules.

Additional parties with low proportions of women candidates include the party Nuovo Centro Destra (Italy, 14 per cent), the Christian and Democratic Union (the Czech Republic, 18.1 per cent, EPP), and Reform Conservatives (Austria, 20 per cent, NI). The Party of the Hungarian Coalition in Slovakia has no women among the seven top candidates accounted for.

In sum, despite the fact that many political parties in EU-28 make efforts to promote gender equality in decision-making, **gender gaps persist** and women continue to be a minority in the political sphere. Nonetheless, progress has been achieved over recent decades. Most of the political parties that have committed themselves to achieve gender balance have managed to accomplish their goals. However, even if party lists are comprised of a high proportion of women candidates, it is crucial that women candidates are placed in winnable positions, including the very top. **In fact, of all 391 lists, women are placed at the very top in 118 lists (30.2 per cent)**¹⁰. Although further steps are needed in order to achieve the 40-60 objective, it is a positive indication that quite a few of the parties currently represented in the European Parliament are committed to promote women leaders.

2.4. Conclusions

From the mapping of the lists registered for the 2014 European Parliament election, three main conclusions can be made.

¹⁰ Except for Greece.

Firstly, in most of the countries which have adopted legislated gender quotas, the national political parties have succeeded in implementing the quota provisions; apparently the sanctions for non-compliance seem to work, regardless of being legal or financial.

Secondly, political parties that have adopted party quotas have implemented them successfully in most cases. However, it is important to keep in mind that quota levels vary, from 20 per cent to 50 per cent, along with the existence or non-existence of rank ordering rules. This means that some parties which have adopted party quotas may still be quite far from having an equal representation of women and men in party lists.

Thirdly, the adoption of party quotas, as well as the quota level, varies in accordance with the traditional left-right dichotomy. As shown in the Annex, the S&D and G/EFA members are more prone to have adopted party quotas.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Conclusions

1. In the Member States which have adopted legislative quotas, often political parties have implemented further quota provisions; overall, findings point to the success of sanctions for non-compliance.
2. Parties that have adopted party quotas have implemented them successfully in most cases.
3. Quota levels and the design of the respective quota provisions vary across Member States.
4. The adoption of party quotas, as well as the quota level, varies in accordance with the traditional left-right dichotomy. The S&D and G/EFA members are more prone to have adopted party quotas.

3.2. Recommendations

To promote women's participation in political decision-making, gender quotas have been identified as pivotal. The 50/50 campaign has had some effects on the composition of the lists for the European Parliament 2014 elections but it has not been as relevant as expected.

For these reasons, we urge **national Governments and national Parliaments** to:

1. Address women's under-representation in political decision-making at all political levels more effectively through appropriate strategies and action plans with measurable targets and regular review.
2. include **targeted initiatives** in the action plans to improve the gender balance in political decision-making (such as awareness raising campaigns, mentoring programs and candidate schools) at all political levels to empower women and to fight stereotypes.
3. Adopt **structural measures**, like gender quotas, as they have proven more effective to achieve gender balance in political decision-making in the short and medium term.
4. **Monitor progress** towards the aim of gender balance in political decision-making to allow for regular adaptation of measures to ensure ownership, success and transparency.
5. Support efforts to **promote greater participation** of women as candidates in elections, including adopting transparent criteria for candidate selection for decision-making and ensuring that selection bodies are gender balanced;
6. Promote equal representation of women and men in internal positions in committees and boards within the **political parties**

Recommendations to the European Institutions: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council

The **European Parliament** should:

7. Raise the problem of women's under-representation in political decision making and encourage the adoption of **strategies and action plans** for parity representation of men and women at all levels more actively.
8. Promote the adoption of **gender quotas** by political parties and through legislation of the Member States.
9. Initiate **discussions** on strategies and actions plans with national parliaments and in inter-parliamentary delegations.
10. Call upon the Commission to **monitor and promote the adoption of gender quotas** more effectively and also to provide guidelines on how they could best advance real equal representation of men and women in parliaments.
11. Cooperate with the Council and the Commission to develop instruments that assist Member States in the development of more **assertive and binding tools** to achieve equal representation of men and women in political institutions.

The **European Commission** should:

12. Cooperate with the Gender Equality Institute (EIGE) regarding continuous **monitoring** of the situation of gender equality in decision-making in the political sphere in EU-28 Member States at all governance levels.
13. Provide EIGE with the appropriate resources to develop additional indicators to measure equality in the "**Power**" dimension of the Gender Equality Index.
14. Encourage the adoption of **measures** like awareness-raising campaigns, mentoring programs and candidate schools on equal participation of men and women in decision-making in the political sphere at Member States level through participation in the appropriate EU programmes.
15. Promote the adoption of **gender quotas** in the political sphere in Member States at **all governance levels** and explore how they could best be implemented to achieve real equal representation of men and women in political institutions.

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- Global Quota Website – www.quotaproject.org – operated by Stockholm University, IPU and IDEA International.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union – www.ipu.org – contains a database of Women's representation in National Parliaments.

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