

# Increasing women's representation in politics through the electoral system

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## Parliamentary Assembly

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Author(s): Parliamentary Assembly

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1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its [Resolution 1706 \(2010\)](#) on increasing women's representation in politics through the electoral system, welcomes the Committee of Ministers' commitment to making equal participation of women and men in political life and in decision making in all spheres a reality, as evidenced by its Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making, and its Declaration: Making gender equality a reality, of 12 May 2009.
2. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to continue its work in this field, and to encourage the member states of the Council of Europe to take the necessary measures in order to increase women's representation in politics by:
  - 2.1. reforming their electoral system to one more favourable to women's representation:
    - 2.1.1. in countries with a proportional representation list system, consider introducing a mandatory quota which provides not only for a high proportion of female candidates (ideally at least 40%), but also for strict rank-order rule (for example, a "zipper" system of alternating male/female candidates), and effective sanctions (preferably not financial, but rather the non-acceptance of candidatures/candidate lists) for non-compliance, ideally in combination with closed lists in a large constituency and/or a nationwide district;
    - 2.1.2. in countries with majority or plurality systems, consider introducing the principle of each party choosing a candidate amongst at least one female and one male nominee in each party district, or find other ways of ensuring increased representation of women in politics, such as applying innovative mandatory gender quotas within political parties, or "all-women shortlists" or "twinning" constituencies, again accompanied by effective sanctions for non-compliance;
  - 2.2. associating the gender equality and anti-discrimination provisions in their constitutions and their electoral laws with the necessary exception allowing positive discrimination measures for the under-represented sex, if they have not already done so;

2.3. accompanying these changes with measures such as gender-sensitive civic education and the elimination of gender stereotypes and “built-in” bias against women candidates, in particular within political parties, but also the media.

3. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers instruct the competent committee to consider drafting an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) in order to enshrine the right to equality for women and men therein, as well as the necessary exception allowing positive discrimination measures for the under-represented sex.