

# **A new vision of Ukrainian politics or another political trick: reflections on the role of the electoral quota for women in Ukraine and its results**

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## **Abstract**

*The goal of this paper is to analyse the state of women representation in the political environment in Ukraine before and after the adoption of the obligatory 30% quota, as well as to consider the attitude of the society regarding the introduction of such electoral quotas for women in general. The issue of electoral quotas for women is not new for the international community and especially for Europe. However, in Ukraine it has never had due attention: it was ignored both by the legislator and civil society. The year 2015 brought about significant changes in the country and this question was included on the agenda of the Parliament. As a result, the law Ukraine "On Local Elections" of 14.07.2015 has established an obligatory 30% quota for the representatives of one gender to be in stock in the party list. Nevertheless, one can still question whether the legislator has done everything to provide the real gender equality or this has been nothing more than another PR action. Based on the course of the local elections in 2015 and its results, I argue that this time such electoral quota is only political fiction and it is not aimed at achieving fundamental changes in the structure of the political system of the country.*

**Keywords:** elections, electoral quotas, women in politics, gender equality, Ukraine, reformation

## **1. Introduction**

New government, new political course, new reforms, and ambitions for a new life – all these took place in 2015 – a year of great changes for Ukraine. The mind-set of the society is changing; the legal institutions are being transformed according to the European standards. The idea of democracy becomes greater and stronger. A growing number of new political voices argue in favour of urgently correcting the entire system of the country, advancing the rule of law

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and strengthening society's trust in the power of their country and politicians. One of the biggest changes that must be made pertains to the electoral system of Ukraine, as it is impossible to talk about democratic institutions if they are composed in such a way that representatives of only one gender are included.

The new electoral legislation is on the agenda of the Parliament. A new law dealing with the issue of local elections was adopted and, for the first time in the history of Ukraine, the issue of the electoral quota was set as an obligatory rule to be followed by all political parties willing to participate in the elections. On the one hand, this shows the desire of the new state government to meet European standards; on the other hand, such rapid introduction of the newly established norms raises concerns regarding the genuineness of these aspirations and their sincerity.

In this article, I analyse the status of the representation of women in the state administration before the introduction of the 30% quota in order to understand the agenda of the current Ukrainian government and their commitment to the ideas of democracy and inclusiveness. This analysis is based on my research on the shifts in gender representation in Ukrainian politics and it is carried out by relying on the comparison between the number of women in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament of Ukraine) and the results of analytic researches performed by the main think tanks and public agencies and organisations in Ukraine, such as the Ukrainian Women's Fund, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine etc. Data provided by the official representatives of the Parliament of Ukraine, social media, interviews of civil society representatives, reports of international and national human rights protection organisations are the main sources of this paper.

Based on the results, I argue that the introduction of the provision concerning the 30 % electoral quota in the new law "On Local Elections" has no visible result in reality and has not brought any changes in the structure of the political system of the country, as was the case in 2013 when a similar norm was inserted in the law "On Political Parties". This happens because of the parties' lack of responsibility, of their inability to adapt to the newly introduced legal requirements as well as of the old politicians' unwillingness to change the established system. Moreover, the rules for setting the position of women-candidates on the electoral lists have not been adopted yet. Therefore, the legislator can hardly be expected to change in the upcoming law "On the elections of the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine".

## **2. Contextualising gender equality**

The global historical experience shows that countries with a high level of gender equality and ensuring balanced representation of both sexes in government achieve high levels of development. It is obvious that current gender

asymmetry of power hampers the integration of Ukraine in the European Union. The implementation of gender equality is a fundamental principle of European and international law, and therefore *not only* the conditions and criteria of democracy and civil society, but also Ukraine's commitments to the international community should be respected. The issue of gender equality is not a philosophical concept; this is an everyday life problem. The improvement of women's representation in government is key to social and political development, and enhances the decision-making processes at all levels, improves the consideration of social, economic, political and cultural issues from a different angle, and finally it helps overcome the patriarchal form of governance.

A good representation of women in politics, as Androniuk (2012) states, has a number of positive effects:

1. It leads to the introduction on the agenda of new themes, as differences in life experience affect the priorities of elected women and men;
2. It ensures a vibrant competition of ideas – the need for serious study and more purposeful compromises arises;
3. It promotes the improvement of the quality of management – according to the UN, Scandinavian countries, with Norway on the top position, have the best performance in human development (including life expectancy, access to information, health care, social security system) These countries have a traditionally high level of representation of women in Parliament (the average in the Nordic countries is 39.7%).

This can be achieved by the introduction of electoral quotas for women. However, all legislative quotas are inefficient if they are set without sanctions in case of non-fulfillment and do not provide clear rules for the location of female candidates on party lists.

It should be noted that in order to ensure equal rights of men and women in the electoral process, international standards of legal regulation of electoral gender quotas allow the establishment of gender quotas for parliamentary representation. In particular, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979) defines the state's responsibility for parity representation of women in elected bodies. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1996), obliges States parties to ensure equal opportunities for the enjoyment of all civil and political rights for both women and men.

As mentioned in the Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas (2013) 37 countries have reached the critical mass of 30% women in their lower houses of parliament, as mandated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1990 (the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution in 1990 recommended the target of 30% women in leadership positions to be reached by 1995, and 50% by 2000), though a large majority of countries lag behind: 72

countries have less than 15% women in their lower houses. Countries with the highest number of women in elected offices, led by Rwanda with 64% women in its lower house, are spread all over the world and cut across all levels of economic development or democratic freedoms and liberties. The Nordic countries have the highest regional average of female parliamentarians: in October 2013 it reached 42% women in their single or lower houses. The Americas, Europe (excluding Scandinavia) and Sub-Saharan Africa come next, with 24.8%, 22.8% and 21.1%, respectively. Asia (19.1%), the Arab states (17.8%) and the Pacific (13.1%) are at the bottom (Dahlerup, Hilal, Kandawasvika-Nhundu and Kalandadze, 2013).

In Europe, however, as the Report on “The Implementation of Quotas: European Experiences” states, quotas are rather unpopular, except in the Balkans. In Western Europe, quotas mainly take the form of voluntary party quotas, Belgium and France being the exceptions. In Central and Eastern Europe, very few parties have approved quota regulations and no legal gender quota regulations for parliament are in place. Moreover, the implementation and scope of quotas differs greatly across the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro utilise quotas in the electoral legislation. Slovenia is considering a constitutional amendment to introduce positive gender equality measures and has established a quota for the European Parliament elections. In the remaining countries, voluntary political party quotas have been mostly used by left-wing and Green parties. Not all of the party quotas are statutory. Some of them target the parties’ electoral lists, others apply to elections to internal party bodies and still others focus on both candidate lists and party positions (Ballington and Binda, 2005).

The 2008-2009 UN’s report estimated that with the rate of increase of the number of female representatives in parliament, true parity would be achieved in 2024 in developed countries and in 2047 in developing countries (United Nations Development Fund for Women, Progress of the World’s Women 2008-2009). Under such circumstances, the necessity to establish quotas for women is obvious, especially when we are talking about life in a democratic society with the rule of law principle. The question was mentioned by the authors of Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas – why are women under-represented? In the global survey of parliamentarians conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2008, women parliamentarians identified the following factors as the most significant obstacles in pursuing successful political careers:

1. domestic responsibilities;
2. prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society;
3. lack of support from the family;
4. lack of confidence; lack of finances; and
5. lack of support from political parties.

The male parliamentarians surveyed identified the lack of support from the electorate as the single most important deterrent, followed by a lack of financial resources and saw the prevailing cultural attitudes as one of the least important factors influencing their participation in politics. The results of past research and analysis of political processes and institutions point to a paramount challenge – access to political decision making is influenced by the dominant gender norms, attitudes and stereotypes in a given society. This key realisation has driven a global shift from women’s alleged lack of adequate qualifications as the main reason for their under-representation to a new focus on reviewing and reforming unfair and discriminatory laws and practices into more inclusive, transparent and equitable ones (Dahlerup et al., 2013).

Ukraine is a post-soviet country; that is why more stereotypes and obstacles regarding the issue of women representation and strong barriers arise in terms of the quotas for women. In Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in Russia, strong resistance against quota provisions is also based on the understanding that quota regulations are a phenomenon of the Soviet past, an example of that period’s “forced emancipation”. It is often heard that under communism a quota system of 30% for women was installed. Nevertheless, is this true, or does it present resistance against quota systems today or partly rest on a myth of the past? The fact is that political institutions during the Soviet period were dominated by men, both in the East and in the West. Moreover, the systems of nomination and election varied considerably between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the level of women’s representation was not stable, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Under communism, the level of representation of women in the powerful central committees of the communist parties was negligible, but somewhat higher in most symbolic parliaments. A few figures may help to dispel the myth about a stable 30% quota provision for women. In the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, women’s representation (as full members) was 8% in 1981, increasing to 13% in 1986, a historic high. Women held 31 % of the seats in the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and as many as 48% of seats in the local Soviets in 1975. Women’s representation in the parliaments of many Eastern European countries increased during the 1970s and 1980s, but the system of selection or appointment differed from country to country. Research conducted in the 1980s does not indicate a stable and widespread 30% quota for women (Ballington and Binda, 2005).

The Global Gender Gap Index, which was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress, issued the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Index in 2014, allowing for a time-series analysis on the changing patterns of gender equality around the world and comparisons between and within countries. 142 countries were analysed and the rank was composed. Ukraine is the 56<sup>th</sup> in this

general list with a score of 0.7056. The worst score is presented by Yemen - 0.5145; the best – by Iceland 0.8594. The highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality). Nevertheless, when the issue is about the political activity of women, the rates are different. Ukraine occupies the 105<sup>th</sup> position among 142 states in this field with a score of 0.101.

The data of the “Women in national Parliaments” report, compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union based on the information provided by National Parliaments by 1 June 2015, classify 190 countries by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House. Among 190 countries, Ukraine is on position 104 (Women in Parliaments Rank), which shows the inefficiency of the existing electoral system.

In an interview, the advisor of faction “Samopomich” in the Parliament of Ukraine, the lawyer Mariana Tomina mentioned the following:

For communication with citizens of Kyiv city, we have realised that for women, it is much more difficult to use even the meager support of the authorities and donors to develop their own business. Existing programs do not address their needs for more knowledge, information and advice, access to information and communication resources, and business contacts. Moreover, violence against women’ rights occur both citywide and nationally (Tomina, 2015).

That is why quotas are necessary to accustom Ukrainian society: politics is as natural and regular workplace for women as for men. This opinion was expressed by the Head of Volyn gender centre Oksana Yarosh. The biggest fear after the adoption of such quota resides in the fact that it might lead to setting the parties with insufficiently qualified people just for them to comply with the 30% barrier. Instead, the expert advises to consider the party as a slice of society; therefore, it is not difficult to find educated and intelligent people of both sexes. Finally, this is the issue of rating and authority of a party (Polyanska, 2015).

To explain the state of women representation in the political system of Ukraine, I will mention the legal provisions which define the electoral system in Ukraine in present times. In accordance to the Article 1 of the Constitution of Ukraine, our state is “sovereign, independent, democratic, social and legal”. Because of this fact, the people as “the only source of power in Ukraine” elect the highest authorities in the county. The whole Section of the Constitution is dedicated to the issue of elections in the county - Section III “Election. Referendum”. Nevertheless, this section contains only six articles of general character. The detailed legal norms concerning the elections can be found in the sections of the Constitution, dedicated to a particular institution or special laws, for instance: law “On the Elections of the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine” of 17.11.2011, law “On the Elections of the President of Ukraine” of

05.03.1999, or law “On the Local Elections” of 14.07.2015 etc. New laws and regulations come to replace the previous ones and this is the case of the latter one, which was adopted in the framework of the law Ukraine “On the Election of the Members of the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, members of the local councils and village, town and city mayors” of 10.07.2010.

Proclaiming itself as a democratic state, in the Basic document of the Country – its Constitution – Ukraine affirms the importance of building a society of equal opportunities for both genders. On the constitutional level, the significance of the equality of men and women is emphasised by stating that one of the ways of ensuring it is by “providing women with equal opportunities in social, political and cultural activities” (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). Moreover, in 2005, the law Ukraine “On Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” was adopted to help women exercise their rights. The aim of the law is “to achieve equality of women and men in all spheres of society through legal guarantee of equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the elimination of gender discrimination and the use of temporary special measures, aimed at addressing the imbalances between women and men to exercise equal rights granted to them by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine”. One of the important things that should be mentioned is Article 5 of this law as it brings forward the question of legal gender expertise and obliges all the legal instruments to take into the account the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Moreover, conclusions of gender-related assessment are an integral package of documents accompanying the draft of any legal act for consideration.

Concerning the guarantee of political activity of women, the same law points to an interesting thesis: “equal voting rights and opportunities for women and men are provided by the legislation of Ukraine. Political parties, election blocs during the nomination of candidates for the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine in the multi-mandate constituency provide representation of women and men in the respective electoral lists”. From this, it is difficult to understand if the legislator definitely had the aim to oblige the parties to include women-candidates in the electoral lists or not. If yes, other problems occur: what should be the number of women appointed by the party on such lists, what is the responsibility for not including them, and how should the process be managed and controlled?

According to the international standards and commitments, Ukraine “should do everything to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life of the country”<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, political players are encouraged to

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<sup>1</sup> Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180 on 34th session of the UN on 18.12.1979 and ratified by Ukraine on 12.03.1981.

“promote the idea of equal participation of women and men in political parties in order to reach a better level and gender balanced representation of women in elected positions at all levels, in which decisions are taken”<sup>2</sup>.

The Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine consists of 450 members, who are elected by universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for five years. The general conditions which must be met in order for a person to be elected as a Member of the Parliament are established by the Constitution:

The Member of the Parliament of Ukraine must be a citizen of Ukraine, who has reached twenty-one years old on the Election Day, has the right to vote and has been living in Ukraine for the past five years. A citizen who has a criminal record or has committed an intentional crime, if the record is not cancelled and erased by the procedure established by the law, cannot be elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine).

Elections are carried out by a mixed system: 225 members are elected by proportional representation in multi-member constituency - national district on electoral lists of candidates from political parties; 225 members are elected by plurality in single-member constituencies. Therefore, we may conclude, that there are no restrictions as to the gender to be elected to the Parliament. At the same time, there is no support for candidates who can be in less favourable conditions (women, for instance).

The law “On the Elections of the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine” adopted on 17.11.2011, as the act which was adopted later and was more progressive for the time could have dealt with the issue of equal gender representation. However, the issue did not meet due attention. It is important to indicate that even in such circumstances, there are provisions concerning the guarantee of the equality of rights and opportunities of candidates and parties - subjects of the electoral process. For example, Article 3 of the Law provides the following measures:

1. prohibition or restriction of privileges for candidates based on race, colour, political, religious and other beliefs, sex, ethnic or social origin, property, residence, language or other characteristics;
2. prohibition of interference of state authorities, authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and local authorities in the electoral process;

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<sup>2</sup> Article 3 of the Decision 07/09 of the OSCE Ministerial Council on the participation of women in political and public life, adopted in Athens on 2.12.2009.



3. equal and unbiased attitude of state authorities, authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and local governments, their officers and officials to candidates, parties - subjects of the electoral process;
4. prohibition of the use of candidates, parties - subjects of the electoral process during the election campaign funding other funds besides the election ones;
5. equal and impartial treatment of the media towards candidates, parties - subjects of the electoral process.

In this context, we assume that the legislator sticks to the concept of general neutral treatment to all of the candidates: no one can be restricted in his attempt to take part in the election, but no one can have any privileges. However, the question arises: does such system assure the equal representation of both genders in the circumstances of a hardly developing country?

Some steps towards the “improvement” of the situation for women were taken in 2013, when changes were introduced in the legislation – Article 8 of the law “On Political Parties” was changed and sub-paragraph 10 with the following content was added: “Article 8. The charter of a political party. Political parties must have a charter. The Charter of a political party shall contain the following information) the amount of quota that determines the minimum level of representation of women and men on the electoral list of candidates for Members of the Parliament of Ukraine from the party in the national constituency and has at least 30% of candidates on the electoral list.” However, no other provisions ensuring this rule were adopted.

To understand the state on the issue of the representation of women and men in the highest public authorities in Ukraine from the first Calling of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the current days, I present here the Tables with the results of the research based on the data provided by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

It is obvious that women have always been underrepresented in the Parliament of Ukraine. To some extent, it is a problem of mentality (i.e., the “patriarchal” perception of the world), yet there are other reasons: historical issues and low political education of women, unwillingness of men to allow women to “take the reins in their hands”. Nevertheless, among all these reasons, legislation plays an important role.

To understand to what extent society believes in the power and political wisdom of women, and to demonstrate this, I suggest you have a look at the following tables which present the quantity of women elected in accordance to the party lists or by the plurality in the single-member constituencies (for the type of the electoral system in general, please, have a look on the Table 1).

**Table 1. Men and women in the Parliament of Ukraine from the first Calling of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (1990- 2015)**

The term of office of the Parliament / Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine	Electoral system	Elected parliamentarians	Men	Women	Women (%)
I Calling (1990-1994)	Majority	475	462	13	2.73 %
II Calling (1994-1998)	Majority	436	418	18	4.12 %
III Calling (1998-2002)	Mixed	477	439	38	7.96 %
IV Calling (2002-2006)	Mixed	509	480	29	5.69 %
V Calling (2006-2007)	proportional representation	483	442	41	8.48 %
VI Calling (2007-2012)	proportional representation	541	499	42	7.76 %
VII Calling (2012-2014)	Mixed	478	432	46	9.62 %
the VIII Calling (from 2014)	Mixed	422	371	51	12.08 %

Source: own representation

**Table 2. The number of women in the Parliament in accordance to the type of election**

System	1990-1994	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2006	2006-2007	2007-2012	2012-2014	from 2014
Party list	-	-	24	21	-	-	31	49
Single-member constituencies	13	18	14	8	41	42	15	2

Source: own representation

The dynamics of representation of women in political parties in Ukraine after the proclamation of independence of the state is worth mentioning. This can be seen from the following data (source: own representation):

**Table 3. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 1994**

Political party	Communist Party of Ukraine	Socialist Party of Ukraine	The Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists
Number of women	4	1	1

Source: own representation

**Table 4. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 1998**

Political party	Communist Party	Progressive Socialist Party	People's Movement	Agrarian Party	Socialist Party	Ukrainian Union "Hromada"	The Green Party	Christian - Democratic the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists	"Reforms and Order"
Number of women	13	5	3	3	3	3	2	1	1

Source: own representation

**Table 5. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2002**

Political party	Block "Our Ukraine"	Communist Party	Party of Regions	Block "For United Ukraine!"	Block of Yulia Tymoshenko	Socialist Party	Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs	People's Block of Lytvyn	Social Democratic Party	People's Party
Number of women	7	6	4	4	2	2	1	1	1	1

Source: own representation

In 2004 Ukraine has experienced a revolution which changed a lot politics and society in general. From that period, the correlation between political forces changed and the role of women in politics was also revised.

**Table 6. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2006**

Political party	Party of Regions	Block of Yulia Tymoshenko	Block "Our Ukraine"	Communist Party of Ukraine	Socialist Party of Ukraine
Number of women	17	12	8	3	1

Source: own representation

**Table 7. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2007**

Political party	Party of Regions	Block of Yulia Tymoshenko	Block "Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defence"	Communist Party	Lytvyn Block
Number of women	15	12	7	5	2

Source: own representation

**Table 8. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2012**

Political party	Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna"	Party of Regions	UDAR Party	Communist Party	The Svoboda Party	Block of Petro Poroshenko
Number of women	14	10	6	6	3	1

*Source:* own representation

**Table 9. The number of women in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2014**

Political party	Block of Petro Poroshenko	"Samopomich" Union	People's Front	Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna"	Opposition Block	Radical Party Oleg Liashko
Number of women	16	12	12	5	3	3

*Source:* own representation

The issue within the parties in accordance to the proportional representation system can be demonstrated in percentage in the following way:

**Table 10. The structure of Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2006**

Name of the party	Total number of parliamentarians	Men	Women	Women (%)
Party of Regions	203	196	17	8.37 %
Block of Yulia Tymoshenko	130	118	12	9.23 %
Block "Our Ukraine"	86	78	8	9.30 %
Communist Party of Ukraine	38	35	3	7.89 %
Socialist Party of Ukraine	21	20	1	4.76 %

*Source:* own representation

The 2006 elections were the first ones held after the 2004 revolution. The system used was proportional representation. In accordance to the results of the election, the Block "Our Ukraine" and the Block of Yulia Tymoshenko, as the parties which proclaimed their loyalty to the ideas of democracy and the rule of law, had the highest share of women in Parliament. The Socialist Party of Ukraine and the Communist Party of Ukraine were the ones whose results can be estimated as a sample of inequality in terms of gender.

The 2007 elections were held on the basis of a proportional representation system. Under the circumstances, parties appointed to the parliament only the candidates, which they chose themselves. Therefore, the results were the following: the Communist Party of Ukraine was represented by the largest number of women while the Party of Regions by the lowest.

**Table 11. The structure of the Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2007**

Name of the party	Total number of parliamentarians	Men	Women	Women (%)
Party of Regions	224	209	15	6.69 %
Block of Yulia Tymoshenko	177	165	12	6.77 %
Block "Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defence"	83	76	7	8.43 %
Communist Party of Ukraine	30	25	5	16.66 %
Lytvyn Block	24	22	2	8.33 %

Source: own representation

**Table 12. The structure of the Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2012**

Name of the party	Total number of parliamentarians	Men	Women	Women (%)
Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna"	78	64	14	19.71 %
Party of Regions	78	68	10	12.82 %
UDAR Party	38	32	6	15.78 %
Communist Party of Ukraine	34	28	6	17.64 %
The Svoboda Party	30	27	3	10 %

Source: own representation

Taking into the account the information from the table, it is clear that the only party which was at least close to the required norm of 30 % of women, was the Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna". The Party of Regions and the Svoboda Party showed the lowest scores.

**Table 13. The structure of Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2014**

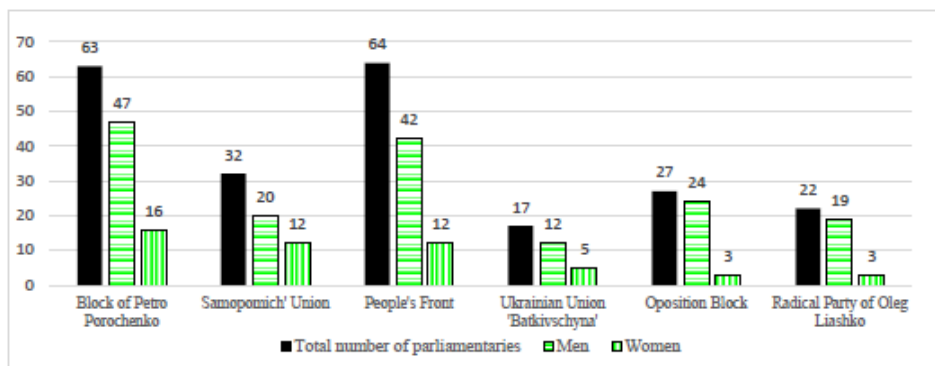
Name of the party	Total number of parliamentarians	Men	Women	Women (%)
Block of Petro Poroshenko	63	47	16	25.39 %
"Samopomich" Union	32	20	12	37.50 %
People's Front	64	42	12	18.75 %
Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna"	17	12	5	29.41 %
Opposition Block	27	24	3	11.11 %
Radical Party Oleg Liashko	22	19	3	13.36 %

Source: own representation

It is commonly believed that nowadays the Ukrainian Parliament is composed of democratic oriented parties, which manifest the idea of the rule of law, equality, and justice based on Europeanisation. One of the real indicators of the actual situation is the proportion of women appointed by parties to the Parliament. From the data above, we can conclude that currently, only "Samopomich" Union follows the requirement of the minimum 30% women, Ukrainian Union "Batkivschyna" and Block of Petro Poroshenko being close to

comply with this requirement. The worst result, with the lowest representation of women is found with the Opposition Block.

**Figure 1. The structure of women representation in Ukrainian Parliament by parties in 2014**



Source: own representation

The 2013 norm concerning the obligation to insert in the Statute of the party the 30% quota for women was not obligatory. There was no punishment for non-compliance with this requirement and the position of women on the list was not defined. That is why almost all parties put women-candidates somewhere at the end of the electoral list of the party which gave them almost no chance to be elected to the Parliament.

Olha Vesnyanka, an expert of the campaign “Respect” which acts against sexism in the Ukrainian media and politics, and a member of the “Coalition to combat discrimination”, in her interview for the “Hromadske” radio, stated:

Why does the innovation of 2013 only have a declaratory character in Ukraine, and why do so few people in the country, even among the political parties, know that there is a quota principle? Because it is badly written in the law Ukraine “On Political Parties in Ukraine.” The law states that the quota should be recorded in the statute. And it turns out that such bodies as the Central Election Commission (CEC) does not have any sanctions that may apply to a political party that did not provide a list on which at least 30% are women. Even though many parties still applied so that they could have at least 30% women on their lists, but where do they add those women candidates? So the CEC cannot respond, and, moreover, members of the CEC do not even know about these changes, they just ignore them. (Freckles, 2015)

With the new revolution, new attempts to change the electoral system were made. This time, they were carried out by the European-oriented government, which proclaims its loyalty to the ideas of equality, rule of law, democracy in all spheres of life. On 14 July 2015, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted a new law on local elections and on 24 July 2015, it was sent to the President to be signed. Nowadays it is enforced. The local elections of 2015 were held in accordance to the newly established system. The next step which is expected to be made by the Parliament is the adoption of a new law Ukraine “On the Elections of the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine”.

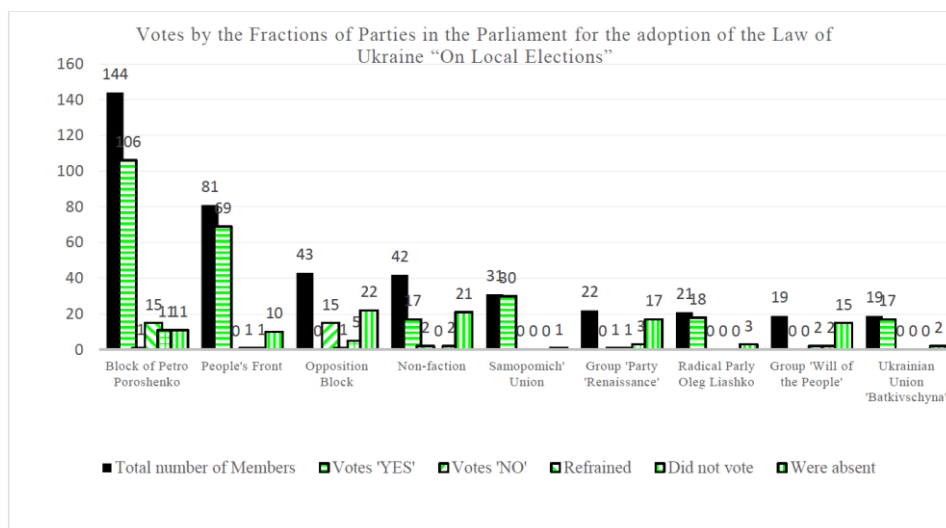
The most important innovation of the law Ukraine “On Local Elections” is the introduction of a proportional system with open lists for the election of regional, city and district councils. The winner is the candidate for whom the electorate casts most votes. The elections of mayors in cities, where the number of voters is equal to or greater than 90,000 are held by the majority system of absolute majority. In addition, the law provides for gender quotas among the participants of the election - at least 30% of “the same sex” candidates. “If among those who participate in the local elections 30% are men - this is also normal,” - jokingly commented this issue the Member of the Parliament, head of the association “Equal Opportunities”, Irina Gerashchenko. Literally, the law states the following:

All candidates for the Members of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, regional, district, city, borough, village councils, candidates for the country, village, municipal mayor registered in the order established by this Law (hereinafter - applicants) have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the electoral process relevant to the local elections. Representation of persons of the same sex in the electoral lists of candidates for members of local councils in multi-member districts must be at least 30% of the total number of candidates in the electoral list. All local party organisations - electoral subjects have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the relevant electoral process in the manner and within the limits established by this Law (Article 4. Equal Suffrage).

It is important to remark that in the first version of the Law, there were no provisions concerning the quotas. This amendment was proposed and stipulated by the chairman of the faction “Bloc of Petro Poroshenko” - Yuriy Lutsenko - and was one of the 1548 amendments proposed by the Members of the Parliament and one of the only two that were adopted. At the same time, it is important to point out that only 257 Members of the Parliament (from the total number of 422 and the number of 320 Members of Parliament who were present during the poll) gave their votes in favour of the adoption of the law. It means

that 60.90% of the Parliament supports such democratic changes. In this context, it is useful to understand the priorities of the parties presented in the parliament based on the already existing proportion of representation of women in the Parliament in parties' prospective.

**Figure 2. Votes by the Fractions of Parties in the Parliament for the adoption of the law Ukraine “On Local Elections”**



Source: own representation, on basis of the data taken from official web-site of the Parliament of Ukraine - [http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/radan\\_gs09/ns\\_golos?g\\_id=3198](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/radan_gs09/ns_golos?g_id=3198)

**Table 14. Votes “YES” by the Fractions of Parties in the Parliament for the adoption of the law Ukraine “On Local Elections” (%)**

Name of the Fraction of the Party	Total number of Members of the Parliament	Number of votes “YES”	% of votes “YES”
Block of Petro Poroshenko	144	106	73.61 %
People's Front	81	69	85.18 %
Opposition Block	43	0	0.00 %
Non-faction	42	17	40.47 %
“Samopomich” Union	31	30	96.77 %
Group “Party “Renaissance”	22	0	0.00 %
Radical Party Oleg Liashko	21	18	85.71 %
Group “Will of People”	19	0	0.00 %
Ukrainian Union “Batkivschyna”	19	17	89.47 %

Source: own representation

In the context of the current confrontation between the governing party (Bloc of Petro Poroshenko and its supporters, i.e. supporters of the



Europeanisation of the country) and the old-politicians, who are now in opposition (Opposition Block, which was previously the Party of Regions, i.e. pro-Russian), it is obvious that the decision was made based on the political contradictions between the parties and preferences of the political leaders. Moreover, some populism was also involved. We can explain this by the following fact: after the revolution of 2014-2015 and the formation of the new Parliament and Government, their political predecessors started the campaign for blocking the adoption of new decisions and formulating the new policy of the state. By this, they show total opposition against the democratic instruments of negotiations and neglect to the requirements of the international society. On the other hand, the new leaders of the country want to get more support from the society, to show their commitments enshrined in the election campaigns. However, not all their actions are aimed at achieving the real result. For instance, as in the previous attempt (amendments to the law “On Political Parties in Ukraine”), there is still no clear mechanism and responsibility for not matching the party’s actions with the request for the 30% quota of the same gender. Some critical ideas can be drawn in line with the issue of what will happen if there is only one gender represented in the party – male or female?

Therefore, obligatory gender quota is introduced in Ukraine. Most citizens welcome this novelty and thus begin to have “faith in a better future”. However, this does not apply to all of them. And there are some quite comprehensible and objective reasons for this. M. Pyetsukh, a journalist of the News Agency Vholos, commented on the situation in the following way:

A massive set of women in politics is announced. There must at least 30% women on each election list for the elections to local authorities. This is made for us to be in line with the rest of democratic countries, compared to which we are left behind in terms of gender equality index. The attempt to be in line with world democracies is very praiseworthy, particularly in the case of making room for women. This does not apply to transportation but also to the seats in the assembly halls of the district or village council. However, the question is whether there will be candidates willing to occupy those seats. Where can we take those women from right now? The only solution is at the hands of enterprising people, who will open the market “selling women for the party lists” (in the literal sense of the word). The same situation happened in the past, when the names of already registered parties were sold or when, because of his/her poverty or foolishness, somebody used to sell some of his/her personal data for registration of fictitious land or firms (Pyetsukh, 2015).

A highly critical study concerning the issue of electoral quota was carried out by the Public youth organisation “The woman” in 2015. Alex Voronenko -

analyst, project manager of the fund “Ukrainian politics” - does not understand why quotas were introduced:

I think that we just need to treat this issue responsibly, and not force women because this is what is required by quotas. I think that women should be encouraged to participate in political activities, and that it should not be insisted on this through quotas. I have talked with many active women and I noticed that quite few want to go into politics; nevertheless, the process needs to be encouraged (Public youth organisation “The Woman”, 2015).

Tatiana Montyan - lawyer and leader of the party “Joint Action” - treats quotas negatively as they degrade women:

In our party, this issue is just fine - we have both men and women. We are not an oligarchic party, and therefore gender balance is the same as the average for the population. Formal gender equality - this is nonsense. Professionals regardless of gender should work in councils, and such situations where women are included on the lists only to fulfil the infamous rule of law should not exist. Moreover, we do not have many women in politics because women are now ruling men in life – this is more convenient. However, the real influence of women in politics is not lower than that of men. While politics in Ukraine is a dirty and cheesy thing, women will formally be away from it (Public youth organisation “The Woman”, 2015).

Moreover, M. Krekoten, Member of the Regional Council in Ternopil and member of Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” stated:

To squeeze 30% gender quota – for this you should be the European-moron. Now, instead of concentrating on the implementation of the best methods to find the most qualified, the amount of quota will be the question. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is in the yard and people are still willing to talk about sex instead of quantitative indicators of professionalism and quality indicators. Incidentally, the gender quota is the so-called “positive discrimination”, and I recall that the Constitution of Ukraine bans any discrimination against sex.

At the same time, as early as 2010, many scientists in Ukraine stated that women constitute 18% among the civil servants of the 1-2 categories members of regional councils - 12%; regional councils - 23%; city councils - 28%, town councils - 46%, but there are no women among the advisers of the President of

Ukraine, Ministers of Ukraine, heads of regional state administrations and Crimea, Parliamentary Speaker of Ukraine. Thus, women are much better represented at the local level of government in positions that do not require high skills and do not involve significant liability. This, however, does not indicate a smaller burden on women, as work at the local level and with the public requires considerable physical and psychological efforts. The representation of women in higher structures decreases with the increase in state certifying problem of blocking women's access to power and power resources. In modern Ukraine, the exclusion of Ukrainian women from decision making processes at the highest political level takes place, and this constitutes the phenomenon of vertical gender segregation (Bureychak, Hutkiy and Marcenyuk, 2012). So, there is no problem in "finding" women willing to participate in the elections and to express their opinion, to influence the decision-making process. Moreover, Irina Gerashchenko - politician, Member of the Parliament of Ukraine, when asked whether the quota introduction humiliates women, answered:

No. Because it is not about women. It concerns representatives of one sex. If it is men - OK. But what is really humiliating - the fact that only 12% of women are now in the parliament, the fact that there is no woman-mayor of the region, while Ukrainian women are very willing to have an active political life. The one who says that there is no 30% of women in Ukraine ready to successfully combine politics and family, – that one suffers from idiotism (Public youth organisation "The Woman", 2015).

Moreover, in the report carried out by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in 2011, "Women's participation in politics and decision-making in Ukraine. Strategies influence", it is mentioned that no woman holds the post of chairman of the regional council, chairman of the city council of the regional centre, the regional state administration, there are no women in the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, as chairman and deputy chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. However, many women are represented at the lowest levels of political management: in village councils there are 51% of women, in town councils - 46%, among the members of municipal councils - 28%. The work in such conditions is the most difficult because it requires direct contact with voters, solving specific problems, usually with minimal financial resources available. Unfortunately, the active participation of women in lower levels of public administration and local government is not a prerequisite for them to participate in higher administration and to have access to decision-making processes at the state level. The current political situation is not about this (Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2011).

The survey "The study of the public opinion of the citizens of Ukraine concerning the representation of women in political life", which was conducted

by the Ukrainian Women's Fund together with "Taylor Nelson Sofres Ukraine" in May 2012, showed the following results: the amount of supporters of the idea in favour of increasing the representation of women in the central legislative and executive power is almost twice and a half higher (61%) than the percent of opponents (27%). Almost half (48%) of the male respondents approve the idea. As for the women interviewed, they clearly expressed their desire to actively participate in political life (72%).

According to the information provided by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in 2015, women represent 53.72% in the total amount of citizens of Ukraine. That is why they definitely should be represented in the highest public bodies if not at the same level with men, then at least at the level requested from a democratic country.

By now, no one in Ukraine wants to have the relapse of the situation in 2010, when the Ukrainian government, headed by Mykola Azarov, established two records in Europe: Azarov gave the largest number of seats in the Cabinet of Ministers on the continent - 29. None of them went to a woman (Taze, 2013).

For the first time in the history of Ukraine, at the local elections held in October 25, 2015, the provision of electoral quota was one of the main rules that political parties were to follow. And in this context the first thing worth mentioning is the following: when it came to real actions, the political forces in Ukraine tried to neglect the newly established rule and did that with the help of the official authority of the country. The Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC) issued on September 23, 2015 resolution no. 362 "On clarification of the application of certain provisions of the law "On Local Elections" on the registration of candidates for deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, candidates for the deputies of regional, district, city, borough, village councils, candidates for village, city mayor and the headman of a village, nominated by local organisations of political parties in regular, extraordinary and first local elections", the Clarification of which contained the following provision: "In accordance with Article 4 of the law "On the Local Elections" representation of persons of the same sex on the electoral lists of candidates for deputies of local councils in multi-member constituencies must be at least 30% of candidates on the electoral list. However, among the prescribed in the first paragraph of the Article 46 of the law "On the Local Elections", there are no grounds for refusal to register a candidate in deputy of a local council, village or city mayor, headman of a village. Considering this refusal to register candidates in multi-member constituencies for elections of deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, regional, district, city and borough councils on grounds of non-compliance with provisions of the law on representation of persons of the same sex on the electoral lists of candidates for deputies of local councils in multi-member constituencies under paragraph 1 of Article 46 of the Act is not allowed".

Such resolution of one of the most prominent state authorities concerning the rule which was so widely discussed could not exist without resistance from the civil society. That is why lawyers of the political parties “Power of People” and “Samopomich” Union sued and provided the national publicity to this case. As a result, on September 30, 2015, under the pressure of public opinion, Kyiv Appeal Administrative Court upheld the claim of “Samopomich” Union, and found unlawful the decision of the CEC which eliminates gender quotas prescribed by the law “On local elections”. As stated by the Civil Network “OPORA” (a non-governmental, non-political and financially independent nationwide network of public activists), the decision of the Court voiding CEC’s explanation is based on a standpoint that gender quota requirements are compulsory for all and must be applied to all legal relations in the election process including registration of candidates or their rejection. However, this very Court has ruled in another decision that gender quota requirements are declarative because there are no sanctions established for local party cells not adhering to them. After the Court has passed two opposite decisions on the same issue, the ambiguity of some provisions in the law on Local Elections (adopted by the Parliament in less than two months and signed by the President less than a month before elections started) became an even more serious problem. Besides that, a problem with the unequal interpretation of gender quota regulations by territorial election commissions, which has emerged yet before the corresponding court decisions were taken, has also worsened. OPORA is convinced that such a high number of controversial electoral procedures exists in the law on Local Elections only because the Ukrainian Parliament traditionally fails to adhere to rules of procedure and other law-making standards. Thus, as long as the principle of legal stability has not been observed, the new Law contains ambiguous regulations and procedures that could hardly be realised. For example, the list of grounds for refusal to register candidates does not include non-observance of gender quota regulations. The law, however, does not establish a separate procedure for specific situations when gender quota regulations cannot be observed (the election list has only one candidate, for example). Thus, all the problems concerning the implementation of the law on Local Elections emerge from non-systematic law-making activities of the Parliament. Taking into consideration the deadlines for filing appeals against court decisions, the Explanation of the CEC (saying that non-observance of gender quota regulations cannot be a reason for refusal to register candidates) remains obligatory for territorial election commissions until the deadline for candidate registration (1<sup>st</sup> of October). However, as long as there are different court decisions, controversial law regulations, ambiguous explanations of the CEC, we can expect that gender quota requirements will be applied unequally by different territorial election commissions. As a result, a high number of appeals can be filed against decisions of commissions concerning registration of

candidates or refusal of registration for local elections. According to OPORA, one decision passed by Kiev Administrative Court of Appeals has conclusions which are not going to increase public trust regarding the application of the law and elections as a whole. In particular, gender quota regulations established by the law on Local Elections are declarative, according to this decision, as long as a law-maker, so to say, has not established any sanctions for their violation. On the one hand, such court decision questions the efficiency of the law containing declarative regulations. On the other hand, politicians have widely informed the public that gender quota on election lists is one of the most progressive regulations in the law on Local Elections. Thus, when the CEC or the court says these regulations are declarative, or not obligatory, they whittle away expectations of the voters. OPORA was surprised by the fact that both the CEC and the court based the corresponding decisions on an explanation letter from the Head of the VRU Committee on Judicial Policy and Justice. However, according to the law Ukraine on Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the very Committee but not the Head or an MP is eligible to provide explanations concerning the application of certain regulations within their authority. Thus, such explanations cannot be considered as official interpretation (OPORA, 2015).

After such controversial deceptions of the Kyiv Appeal Administrative Court with its proclamation of the rule concerning the gender quota, it is difficult to give some assessment of the real effect of the newly established norm and the true intentions of the ruling elite in this context. Can we consider that, consciously disregarding the principle of equality of elections, Ukraine fulfills the international obligations arising from its UN and Council of Europe membership? Can we call the current elections legitimate? How does this “petty fraud” correspond to the legal and ethical norms of the Central Electoral Commission and the parliamentary parties as to their obligations to society?

Maryna Stavniychuk, member of The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) in 2009-2013, commented on the situation which developed in the following way:

The years of experience give me a reason to see that “administrative resources ears” are sticking out clearly in these cases. But even the most notorious lawyers of all previous governments did not encroach so cynically on the sacred - the “fundamental” principles of electoral law and democracy in general! Legal cynicism has no limits in this case. Nothing has changed. And the quota representation case proves this (Stavniychuk, 2015).

The local elections of 2015 took place despite all the problematic issues which disturbed society and human rights protection organisations. For the Kiev mayor, of 29 candidates, only 4 were women: A. Bilous - the party “Revival of

Ukraine”, L. Bogachenko – “Women of Ukraine”, N. Novak – “Civic Position”, and T. Montyan – “Joint Action”. Overall, among the candidates for mayor women at oblast centres amounted to 16%, at the level of cities of regional importance, it reached 13%, and in towns of regional importance - 12%. According to the CEC, as to October 20, 2015, in the process of forming the party lists, the leading parties adhered to the requirement of 30% gender quota: the average percentage of women on their lists kept in the range of 39.3% (the party “Revival”) to 32% (“Solidarity”) (Trojan, 2015).

The International Centre for Policy Studies (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness and implementation of gender quotas in the local elections 2015 immediately afterwards and assumed that in general, the requirement was ensured by the political parties in terms of electoral lists formation. The Committee of voters also analysed election results to oblast councils. According to the data of 20 oblast councils for which official results have already been published, the average representation of women in oblast councils reached 15.1%. The situation of gender balance is slightly better compared with previous elections when women gained 12% of the seats in oblast councils. However, this result does not correspond to the representation of women among candidates for oblast councils – 29.8%. As well as in city councils elections, women candidates had twice as low chances to be elected as men candidates did. The highest level of women’s representation was reached in Sumy oblast council – 21.9%. 14 of 64 newly elected deputies of the council are women. The lowest representation of women is registered in the Odessa oblast council (9.5%). Among 84 deputies only 8 are women. 13 out of 222 women deputies elected according to the election results were leaders of party lists. The level of representation of women in oblast councils is lower compared to city councils of Kiev city and cities-oblast centres – 15.1% compared to 18%. Such situation is consistent with the general trend in Ukraine – the higher the level of the representative body, the fewer women there are. According to the data of 19 city councils for which official results have already been published, 190 women deputies and 842 men deputies were elected. Thus, the average representation of women in city councils is 18.4%. This result does not correspond to the 32.1% representation of women among candidates for city councils. Women candidates had lower chances to be elected than men candidates. 11 (or 5.8%) out of 190 women deputies elected according to the election results were leaders of party lists (Committee of voters of Ukraine, 2015).

The Committee of Voters of Ukraine stressed that the formal implementation of quotas in the registration of lists of candidates is not enough to ensure equal opportunities for women to participate in political life. To ensure women candidates’ equal opportunities to be elected proportionally, financial and organisational support from the political parties is necessary. Due to limited financial resources, women candidates have to resort to various creative

approaches. Monitoring various researches, could be observed that the Women's Consortium of Ukraine reported that women more often than men use social networks, publish their own articles in the media, and appear on the radio.

Could it be otherwise? Could the intent to have 30% of women in the governmental and local authorities' bodies be fulfilled? Yes. It could, if the legislator formulated the norm concerning the 30% quota more strictly, with the mechanism of its fulfilment and responsibility of its non-fulfilment. The Ukrainian public organisation "Committee of Voters of Ukraine" drew a concept of the new law during the development stage of the Law "On Local Elections", in which it proposed to provide that, in case of nomination of candidates in multimember districts, among every three candidates nominated by one party, the representation of both women and men should be ensured. It was also proposed to establish that the general list of election candidates be held under the proportional electoral system with open voting for party lists, and that among every three candidates on the list the representation of both sexes should be ensured. From the Committee's point of view, the inclusion of such provisions of law could balance the representation of sexes in elected bodies - to increase the representation of men in local councils of the lowest level and to increase the level of representation of women in local councils of higher level. However, their proposals were not included in the law. And what do we have now?

Liliia Grinevich proposes to accustom the Parliament to gender equality with the help of legislative requirements. Together with her colleagues she introduced in the Verkhovna Rada a bill that should facilitate the involvement of women in politics:

We suggest that among the first five candidates on the list, there be no more than 60% of the same sex people. And then, in the further each ten, no more than 70%. This means: in the first five - three men and two women, in every ten - at least 3 women". If the parties do not fulfil these conditions, according to the proposed bill, the CEC has to refuse to register them (Polyanska, 2015).

It is quite difficult to judge the real intent of the current government, but some slight "glimpses of the sun" can be seen due to the fact that Members of the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the law Ukraine "On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine concerning prevention and counteraction to political corruption" no. 2123a on 8.10.2015, which has the following provision:

10% of annual state funding of statutory activities of political parties under Article 17.2 of this law shall be distributed equally among the parties that were awarded this funding under this Law, and during the last regular or special elections of Members of Parliament of Ukraine and the



last regular elections of members of local councils ensure the inclusion of representatives of each sex in every three candidates for each kind of election list of the party, local party to the relevant election.

It means that the rule regarding the 30% quota can provoke deep changes in the whole political system of the country.

However, the situation with the resolution of the CEC and two absolutely different court's decisions related to the issue of electoral quota cause concerns in reality regarding the intentions of the current government to change the system. The introduction of the 30 % electoral quota provision in the new law Ukraine "On Local Elections" has no visible result in reality and has brought no changes in the structure of the political system of the country, as in 2013 when a similar norm was inserted in the law Ukraine "On Political Parties".

### **3. Final remarks**

The next and really efficient step in the context of improving the electoral legislation of Ukraine is the amendment of the law "On the Elections of Members of the Parliament of Ukraine" of 17.11.2011 by providing it with the clear mechanism of ensuring women's participation in the political life of the country. For instance, one of the best ways to achieve sufficient representation of women in the Parliament is to introduce for example the following: "Every party, selected to the Parliament of Ukraine, should allocate the seats it received so as to ensure that 30% of the seats obtained were given to the women-representatives of the party". The same changes should be introduced to the newly-made law "On Local Elections" (14.07.2015). To make this possible and to prevent discussions on how to force the parties do this, the following amendments should be made:

1. to supplement the law Ukraine "On Political Parties in Ukraine" 05.04.2001 with provisions with the following content: "The party which does not comply with the demand of the Subparagraph 10 of Article 8, will not be allowed to participate in the election process";
2. to supplement Article 17 of the law Ukraine "On Central Election Commission" 30.06.2014 with provisions with the following content: "9-1) monitors the compliance of political parties with the requirements on electoral quotas and apply sanctions in case of their violations".

In this context, a good example can be found in the case of Nepal. After a revolution and the People's Movement of 2006, a provision for a 33 % quota for women in all organs of the state was introduced in the constitution. As a result, the representation of women in the first Constituent Assembly (CA) surged dramatically from 5.5% to 33% in 2008 CA elections. However, although women's representation increased dramatically in legislature, this number did not ensure women's meaningful involvement within the party and the

government or women's capacity building for effective political leadership. The gender outcome of the second CA elections (2013) was disappointing, especially considering the expectations raised by the first CA election outcome, and despite operating under the same legal framework. The total representation of women in the legislature of the second CA was 29 % and not likely to attain 33%. The 2013 election result has dented women's hard won political confidence and led to fear and loss of faith in democracy among women in politics and women aspiring to a career in politics. What were the reasons for this? First of all: the low support from their party in all activities, for campaign, unequal treatment as compared to men; no support from the media and civil society, and as a result – no external financial support; and the most terrible aspect is the fact that women-candidates got almost no support from their families (Dhakal, 2015).

Thereby, in order to improve the situation of women's representation in all governmental bodies, it is not enough to adopt the appropriate legislation - a wide campaign should be conducted in the community in order to ensure public acceptance and support for women-candidates. Of course, all this should be based on the respective and reasonable legislative regulation.

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