

# *Proportional Electoral System: a guarantee for women's participation in decision-making in Albania*

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## **Abstract**

*Despite Albania being a member of NATO and making significant strides toward the EU, its challenge remains the construction of a functional democracy. There is a clear correlation between women's participation in politics and the level of democracy. Data show that in countries with functional democracies, women's representation in parliament varies from 35% to 49%.*

*The issue of increasing women's participation in politics is not merely a matter of numbers and percentages. The real issue lies in their actual influence in the decision-making process within political parties. Therefore, women's contribution to political parties should be seen not only as a right but also as a societal necessity. The objective of this work is to analyze the results of this change both in terms of quantitative and qualitative representation criteria.*

**Keywords:** *women representation, electoral code, proportional system, politics, power.*

## **Introduction**

Empowering women in society and encouraging their participation in decision-making is a constant priority in the global public debate. This issue is a perennial and ubiquitous topic on the agendas of world decision-making centers, from

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the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly to specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN), the European Union, and others. The inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the highest level of the UN's 2030 Agenda has spurred the adoption of best practices and legislative interventions worldwide to ensure women's inclusion in decision-making and non-discrimination. The frequency of addressing this issue, closely linked to the broader issue of gender equality, is almost inflationary. However, states have made progress in enacting laws that protect and ensure women's presence in decision-making processes across the globe.

The European Union, inspired by the authority of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), leads this effort. The European Union supports and encourages its member states, as well as aspirants, in creating strategies for developing legislation that promotes women's participation in political life and ensures gender balance in representation. The two main institutions responsible for drafting gender policies in the EU are the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (established in December 1981) and the European Institute for Gender Equality, established in December 2006.

From the perspective of Albanian society, gender equality remains a significant challenge, requiring the attention of social and political actors. Referring to statistics on gender disparities in Albanian society, numerous gaps are evident in employment, participation in political decision-making, property ownership, and more. Despite continuous positive steps to increase women's representation, Albania still lags behind in terms of women's representation in politics and governance. Despite legislative adjustments in line with EU directives and best practices, traditional masculinity, as an old social stereotype, remains a powerful obstacle.

The increase in women's participation in politics was extensively discussed by political parties during the Electoral Reform in 2008 and its subsequent update with OSCE/ODIHR recommendations in 2012. In the final amendments to the Electoral Code, a 30% quota for women's representation was guaranteed. Legal guarantees and obligations on this issue were reduced compared to previous requirements, ignoring the fact that in the last three local elections, women, with their votes, constituted more than half of the voters and, at best, were represented by 19% of the seats in Parliament (ISP, 2014).

In the post-election assessment report for the 2013 local government elections (November 2013 - January 9, 2015), prepared by the Coalition of Domestic Observers on January 14, 2015, issues related to women's representation are clearly highlighted. This report was supported by the Small Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, and it was strongly promoted by the Embassy, resulting in the addition of an extra point to Article 67, Point 6 of the Electoral Code, which



stipulated that “For each electoral zone, at least thirty percent of the multi-name list, and one in three of the top three names on the multi-name list, must belong to each gender;” thus making a valuable contribution to the political participation of Albanian women (Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania, 2008). Meanwhile, according to Article 164, if a deputy, from the underrepresented gender who won the mandate according to Point 6 quoted above, resigns, they are replaced by a candidate of the same gender, regardless of their position on the list. This provision automatically led to the inclusion of five more women in the parliament upon the resignation of deputies who took ministerial positions (*Ibidem*). It should be noted that during this process, in the case of the replacement of female candidates in the Lezha and Durrës districts, some of the women who received the mandate of deputy from the Central Election Commission (CEC) refused it as a personal choice. Additionally, they cited pressure or political decisions from the party forums to which they belonged. In the multi-name lists presented for the 2013 Parliamentary Elections and the most recent ones in 2017 by the three largest parties in the country (PS, PD, and LSI), they failed to meet the legal obligations stipulated in Article 67(22) in several districts, and measures taken by the CEC in these cases included fining the electoral subjects (Central Election Commission).

In a population where 50% consists of women, participation in decision-making positions of both sexes should be in equal quotas. However, global statistics generally speak of male-dominated societies, where women’s participation can mainly be imposed through international organizations. For this reason, the Beijing Platform recommended that states provide for at least a 30% representation of women in parliament, a platform that has also been implemented in Albania but is primarily used for propaganda by political parties in the run-up to elections. They always emphasize that women should have a significant voice in decision-making and in the Albanian parliament. This paper aims to provide a general overview of Albanian women’s participation in the active politics of the country.

## **The empowerment of women and the electoral system: an inseparable pair**

There are numerous reasons why the emphasis is consistently placed on the participation of women in politics and, above all, in parliament. First and foremost, equal opportunity for participation is everyone’s right. In addition, studies show that states with fewer than 30% of female representatives in parliament are less democratic and more discriminatory. Secondly, women and men have different perceptions of a country’s policy priorities (Thomas 1991; Carroll 2001). Facts demonstrate that women are more involved in laws that benefit women, children,

and families. Consequently, gender equality in representation enables better protection of women and their issues. The third element, highly significant, is that evidence suggests improved governance and reduced corruption due to women's participation.

Women's representation in parliament is an indicator of complex dependencies, as it depends on many factors simultaneously. It is difficult to analyze the dependence of this indicator from each of the factors independently, as they interact in their functional reality. Nevertheless, in this section of the analysis, we will examine the dependence of this indicator on the type of electoral system and structural variables of the systems. The dependence on this factor is presented in a pleasant space for independent analysis, due to the concrete nature of the various types of systems and the constituent variables of the "electoral system" factor.

The electoral system is just one of several factors that influence the representation of women, and its effects largely depend on the specific political and social conditions of each country. Gender scholars unanimously conclude that "electoral systems have a significant impact on gender balance" (European Commission, 2013). Different electoral systems offer different terrains for women's representation in parliament.

Electoral systems can be classified into families based on the processes by which they translate votes into parliamentary seats. The history of pluralism has seen a considerable number of electoral systems, but the main categories are: the majoritarian system, the proportional system, and the mixed system. Each of these main groupings has various derivatives but retains the basic characteristics of the main grouping. The influencing factors of these families of electoral systems on the gender representation in parliament are the same as those of their versions. Proportional systems and their influence on gender balance Researchers Larsrud and Taphorn have concluded: "Countries that implement proportional representation systems have a higher percentage of women in their parliaments than those with majoritarian systems."

There is a significant quantitative difference regarding parliamentary representation of women in countries that have used the proportional electoral system compared to countries that have used the majoritarian system. Scholar Norris concludes: "Women's representation in world parliaments is about twice as high in countries with proportional electoral systems as in those using majoritarian electoral systems" (Norris, 2006:197-213). He analyzes data as well from 53 different countries worldwide in 1999 and concludes that "...women occupy an average of 20% of parliamentary seats in countries with proportional systems, 15% in countries with mixed systems, and only 11% in countries with majoritarian systems" (Norris, 2000). The analysis of elections worldwide in 2012 shows that countries based on proportional representation resulted in 25% of women elected

to their parliaments, compared to 14% for majoritarian systems and 17.5% for mixed systems.

France's case is a concrete realization of the above conclusions. Gender quotas set in the "Equality Law" in France for all levels of government are constant. The other factor, the type of electoral system, varies depending on the level of government where elections are held. In this case, the dependence of the gender representation result on the electoral system is directly observed, as the other factor, "gender quota," is constant. In France, within the European Union, the effectiveness of a legislative quota can be influenced by the type of electoral system used. The "Equality Law," adopted in 2000 and amended in 2003 and 2007, essentially requires parties to have an equal number of men and women among their candidates in all elections. However, it is applied differently depending on the type of electoral system in use.

Regarding European Parliament's elections, regional and local councils, a proportional list system is used; gender equality on lists and the use of the zipper rule in ranking is mandatory. For National Assembly elections, a majoritarian voting system is used. The results are impressive. The most recent elections based on proportional lists have produced 46% women among French representatives in the European Parliament and 49% in regional councils, compared to only 26% in the National Assembly (European Parliament, 2010).

As evident from the above data, in the case of elections using the proportional system, the result of women's representation was nearly twice as high as in cases where the majoritarian electoral system was used, a conclusion that aligns perfectly with Norris' findings above. This conclusion is further reinforced by a simple analysis of several other countries, not only in Europe, where the statistical indicator clearly shows the positive impact of proportional systems on gender representation compared to majoritarian systems in parliament (European Commission, 2013).

Not surprisingly, women's parliamentary representation in New Zealand increased significantly from 21.2% in 1993 to 29.2% in 1996 after the country switched from a majoritarian electoral system to a mixed proportional system. In the 2008 elections, the highest percentage of women representatives to date (34%) was achieved there. The latest data for women's representation in Germany (32%) is like that in New Zealand (Krennerich, 2008). Another noteworthy case is Lithuania, with a parallel system, where the percentage of elected women in majoritarian areas over the years (1992: 7%, 1996: 16.2%, 2000: 8.4%, 2004: 18.3) is lower than that of women elected in proportional areas with party lists (1992: 7.1%, 1996: 20%, 2000: 12.8%, 2004: 22.9%). Among the best examples are the 2006 elections in the Palestinian territories, which resulted in the election of 17 women out of 132 representatives. All 17 women were elected through the proportional list, and none from the single-member constituencies.

In Europe, most states apply the proportional system for national parliamentary elections, a fact that can be considered quite favorable for women's representation. Among the member states of the Council of Europe, only the United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, and France (with its two-round system) use the majoritarian system for national parliamentary elections. In United Kingdom and France, the figures for national parliaments are much lower than those for female representatives in the European Parliament, where a proportional electoral scheme is applied.

The significant impact of electoral systems on the representation of women in parliament is clear when we analyze countries that do not apply gender quotas but have a proportional voting system compared to those that apply political gender quotas and have a majoritarian voting system. In circumstances where the influence of the electoral system is non-existent, logically, systems that apply gender quotas, i.e., majoritarian systems, should result in higher female representation in parliament (Report to the Venice Commission). From the data analysis, we can see that many European countries that did not apply gender quotas during the recent elections analyzed in the report but have a proportional electoral system in place had higher female representation results in parliament. For example, Finland with female representation in parliament at 42.5%, Denmark with 39.1%, Poland with 23.7%, and Latvia with 23% (Krennerich, 2008).

## Gender quotas

Apart from the electoral system, the effective implementation of gender quotas is an institutional factor of great importance for achieving gender balance and equality of outcomes, as well as balancing interests and contributions. They aim to balance the representation of women in decision-making bodies with their existential presence in society based on analyses of contribution, experience, needs, and interests. In fact, empirical analyses show that gender quotas provide one of the most proven means of women's parliamentary representation. This is why the Committee of Ministers recommends that member states of the Council of Europe adopt legislative reforms to establish equal thresholds for candidates in elections at all levels, ensuring the participation of each gender in parliament, aiming for balanced gender representation (CoE, 2010, Recommendation 1899).

While the European concept of "true gender equality" presupposes moving beyond this level of "critical mass" of women's representation. However, this minimum threshold is relatively higher than Dahlerup's "critical mass," which is the first researcher to introduce this concept into political and academic discourse (after developing Elizabeth Moss Kanter's theory of tokenism in 1977) by claiming that "30% is the 'critical mass' point for women's legal representation, and whenever women make up less than 30% of the general legislature, they face many difficulties



in being recognized as legitimate participants in a specific political environment” (Dahlerup, 1988: 275-298). Gender quotas aim to improve gender balance in politics and executive decision-making bodies, public administration, as well as in the private sector. The quota system places the responsibility for recruitment not on individual women but on those who manage and control the recruitment and selection process. Today, quota systems aim to ensure that women are elected to at least 30%, 40%, (Dahlerup, 2006: 19), or achieve true gender equality of 50-50%.

In some countries, quotas have been applied as a temporary measure until barriers to women’s entry into politics are removed. However, the analysis of all European countries and worldwide indicates that in most of them, quotas have not been limited in time. This shows that the challenge of achieving equal gender representation, especially in decision-making bodies, remains as relevant as ever. This mechanism emerged as a response to the difficulties women faced in increasing their representation in parliamentary, executive, or administrative decision-making bodies due to numerous hidden social-economic barriers, despite the removal of formal legal barriers. Norris concludes in one of her studies that three significant factors determine the adoption of quota laws in most democracies:

1. The political system as defined by electoral and party systems, and legislative competition;
2. The party context determined by party ideology and organization;
3. Demand and supply factors in the recruitment process based on social background, resources, and motivation (Norris, 1996: 184-215).

Her conclusion raises the need for an analytical consideration of the impact of all three factors in the process of establishing and implementing quotas. However, experiences and statistics from all countries that have implemented quotas confirm that quotas are precisely what enable change in the politics of public equality, shifting from “equal opportunities” to “equality of results.”

Within the European Union, there are currently 17 countries applying political quotas, while 8 others apply legislative quotas. Finland, Denmark, and Latvia do not have any quotas in place, as the gender balance in these countries is already consolidated, and their respective governments have considered gender quotas unnecessary. Globally, there are now 100 countries applying various types of gender quotas, political, legislative, and reserved seats. The decision to introduce or not introduce a quota is increasingly influenced by international organizations’ recommendations and developments in various national contexts.

The European Union itself clarified the legitimacy of positive actions in support of women by adopting the “Revised Directive on Equal Treatment of Men and Women in the Labor Market,” which left no room for interpretation on this aspect. Positive actions in support of women and gender quotas have also been put before

the judiciary in many other European countries, such as Switzerland or Italy. In Italy, the Constitutional Court invalidated the relevant Gender Equality Law in 1995, a stance entirely contrary to that of the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2008, which declared the Gender Equality Law constitutional (Rodríguez-Ruiz, 2009). In this fierce battle of recent decades, quota experts and advocates have developed comprehensive legal, political, and technical strategies to counter their opponents' arguments. The main argument has been the very high level of gender imbalance in political and executive decision-making bodies, compared to the population, the percentage of women in it, as well as their level of education and training.

According to quota advocates, these do not discriminate against men but rather compensate for discrimination against women. They prevent the undemocratic imposition of their gender preference lists by party leaders, typically men, on voters in elections. Quotas give voters the “opportunity for true equality” to choose between the two constitutive genders of society, men, and women, thus serving social equality and democracy, ensuring the best and most efficient use of human resources, presenting and advocating for the needs and interests of women, as half of society, and improving policymaking (Phillips, 1995). Quotas are directly related to the discussion of why women's representation is important. Researchers Dahlerup and Phillips provide three fundamental arguments and a fourth motivating one related to the necessity of gender balance in decision-making, for which the quota mechanism is necessary. According to them:

1. Women make up half of the population and have the right to occupy half of the seats in decision-making (the justice argument).
2. Women have different interests and experiences (biological or social), and they must be represented equally to present and defend them (the experience argument).
3. Women and men have partly conflicting interests, so men cannot represent women (the group interest argument).

A fourth argument concerns the importance of women politicians as role models who can pave the way for other women (Dahlerup, 1978: 139-172)

In a logical analysis of the basic principles of equality and democracy, women's representation in decision-making is crucial since the opposite situation would seriously undermine these principles:

- The foundation of democracy lies in the principle that the legitimacy of power to make decisions for people, their lives, society, and the country must come from the choice of those affected by these decisions. Women make up half of the world's population, and in this context, decisions affecting them should be their choice.





- People, in terms of equality, are also politically equal. In this context, women have the right to be politically equal participants in executive and other political decision-making.
- Women's participation in politics is both a responsibility and a guarantee to create a more equal and democratic world. The various stages of development in different countries with varying levels of women's representation serve as a clear indicator of the truth of this thesis (Xheka, 2015).

## Women in the Albanian Parliament

The origin of Albanian parliamentarism dates to 1920 with the Congress of Lushnja, which elected a High Council of 4 members to carry out the functions of the Government and a National Council of 37 members to perform the functions of the Parliament (Lamani, 2003).

In this first parliament of the Albanian state, as mentioned in the historical excursus in Chapter One, no women were elected. Similarly, in the three subsequent legislatures of 1921, 1925, and 1928, the Albanian parliament consisted of 100% male deputies. Albania at the time had dominant patriarchal characteristics. To give an example, in Albania in 1937, the Parliament passed a law prohibiting veils for Muslim women. The reaction caused by this law was significant nationwide. King Zog sent his three sisters, dressed in Western attire, to Shkodër to promote the law.

The elections following liberation were those for the Constituent Assembly on December 2, 1945. For the first time in this process, women participated in voting, and they were granted the right to vote and be voted for. Due to the demagogic ideology of the system, for the first time in this parliament, 6 women were among the 82 total seats. Their number formally increased from one legislature to another, reaching a record of 35% in the legislature of 1974-1978. While their number increased from one legislature to another, as seen in the table below, their role and voice were nonexistent. The People's Assembly of the dictatorship era was a formal body that convened only twice a year. The role of the women who were formally deputies of the assembly was entirely formal, in the service of the dictatorial power.

**TABLE 1:** Representation of Albanian Women in Parliament

Legislature	Total Number of Deputies	Men	Women	Percentage of Women
1945 – 1950 Legislature I	82	76	6	7%
1950 – 1954 Legislature II	121	104	17	14%
1954 – 1958 Legislature III	134	118	16	12%

1958 – 1962 Legislature IV	186	170	17	9%
1962 – 1966 Legislature V	214	189	25	11.6%
1966 – 1970 Legislature VI	240	201	39	16.2%
1970 – 1974 Legislature VII	264	193	71	27%
1974 – 1978 Legislature VIII	250	162	88	35%
1978 – 1982 Legislature IX	250	169	81	32.4%
1982 – 1986 Legislature X	250	172	78	31%
1987 – 1991 Legislature XI	250	179	71	28%
1991 – 1992 Legislature XII	250	240	10	4%
1992 – 1996 Legislature XIII	140	132	8	5.7%
1996 – 1997 Legislature XIV	140	119	21	15%
1997 – 2001 Legislature XV	155	144	11	7%
2001- 2005 Legislature XVI	140	132	8	5.7%
2005 – 2009 Legislature XVII	140	130	10	7%
2009 – 2013 Legislature XVIII	140	117	23	16%
2013 – 2017 Legislature XIX	140	113	27	19.3%
2017 – present Legislature XX	140	101	39	28%

From the historic year of the first pluralistic elections in 1991, after the fall of the dictatorship and up to the completion of this work, Albania has held 9 rounds of general parliamentary elections. Albania held its first pluralistic elections after the collapse of the 50-year dictatorship in 1991. (Krasniqi, 2009.) The elections of 1992 and 1997 are considered premature, and the mandate of the preceding parliament for these two elections lasted no more than a year. The electoral systems applied in these electoral processes varied from one process to another. Thus, in the first pluralistic elections on March 31, 1991, the electoral system applied was the majoritarian one with two rounds. In the 1992 elections, there were two significant changes: first, the transition from a parliament with 250 deputies to one with 140 deputies, and second, the change of the electoral system from majoritarian to a mixed proportional electoral system.

The electoral system applied in the parliamentary elections of 1996 was again a mixed system, but unlike that of 1992, it was no longer dependent but independent. The government's mandate in 1996 was very short, only one year, leading to the 1997 elections. In the 1997 elections, a mixed, semi-independent electoral system was applied again. The electoral system used in the 2001 elections for the Albanian Parliament was a mixed dependent system, with minor modifications in 2005.

It was in 2009 when, following approval by the Albanian Parliament in 2008, the "Gender Equality in Society" Law and the introduction of gender quotas both in this law and in the Electoral Code brought about the first changes in the

electoral system. For the first time, a legal gender quota obligation of 30% for underrepresented gender was established.

Monitoring the first elections after the introduction of the electoral quota reveals various tactics used by political parties to avoid the 30% female representation in Parliament. The two largest parties in the country, PD and PS, in Kukës added a fifth female candidate to their respective candidate lists, exceeding the number of (4) possible mandates. This phenomenon was repeated by PS in Lezhë, where an eighth female candidate was added, surpassing the possible number of 7 seats. For this purpose, gender quotas were respected only because the last name added at the end of the list was a female candidate. (Albania. ACER & ASET. (2009) Parliamentary Elections in Albania 2009)

In the 2009 elections, it became evident that the major parties did not meet the 30% quota requirement for female candidates. Neither of the two main parties, PD or PS, achieved the 30 percent target. PD's lists contained 29.3% women, while PS's lists contained 28%. These percentages were reached only after corrections were requested by the Central Election Commission (CEC). Overall, out of the nine parties portrayed in this study, only five achieved the 30 percent goal. An examination of the smaller parties reveals that the newest party, Party G99, had the highest number of women on its candidate lists. It had 54 women, or 38.6% of the total, followed by LSI with 30.7%, PDK with 30.7%. PR had a list with 29.3% women; this number was achieved after a list correction requested by the CEC. A total of one hundred eighteen female candidates, or 24.7% of the total of 477 candidates, were presented on PSD's lists. In general, smaller parties had higher percentages of female candidates compared to the two larger parties, PD and PS.

During the 2013 elections in Albania, parties chose to use a demagogic maneuver, placing some women at the top of the list but putting most of them at the bottom. None of them chose to place a woman in every three candidates throughout the list. However, the authority of the CEC to reject a party candidate list that did not comply with the quotas is an effective coercive procedure, if put into action. The European Commission Progress Report for Albania in 2013 highlighted that "Women continue to be underrepresented in public positions. In the 2013 general elections, the three main parties were fined for not respecting the gender quota on the list of parliamentary candidates."

## Concluding remarks

There is a clear correlation between women's participation in politics and the level of democracy. Data show that in countries with functional democracies, women's representation in parliament varies from 35% to 49%. Increasing women's

participation in politics is not merely a matter of numbers and percentages. The real issue lies in their actual influence in the decision-making process within political parties.

Proportional electoral systems are a much friendlier environment for implementing gender quota systems, both legally and politically. Researchers Larsen, Tamphorn, and Norris have concluded in their studies that proportional systems offer many more opportunities to increase the representation of women in parliament.

In general, it's easier to establish a quota system within a proportional electoral system because it allows for a larger number of candidates on party lists, and parties consciously try to balance their lists to gain as many votes as possible, as explained earlier when analyzing gender quotas. In their efforts to attract votes from all social categories, political parties themselves are interested in having candidates from both genders on their lists. The obligation to adhere to the gender quota in countries where it exists, ensures for certain the placement of women on candidate lists. The sanctioned percentage for gender quotas varies from continent to continent and among different countries. Globally, this percentage ranges from 10% to 50%.

European Union countries have the highest gender quota percentage globally. Experiences from different countries that have implemented and enforced gender quota systems show that, despite the widely accepted conclusion of their significant role as an effective mechanism in gender balance, the effects of this system are not immediate. It takes a certain amount of time for an established quota system to produce its effects, and this time depends on a variety of specific conditions and situations.

In this context, the Albanian case confirms this thesis, considering that the application of the new regional proportional system did not immediately achieve the desired number of women in parliament. However, there has been a noticeable increase from the 2009 elections to the recently concluded ones in 2017. The analysis of the Albanian case confirms once again that the lack of clear rules for candidate ordering on lists and sanctions for non-compliance with quotas are essential elements that dictate the failure of the quota system.

Based on the failure to achieve gender quotas in Albania, which is tolerated by the law and obliged by Recommendation 1899 of 2010, there is a need for a rapid revision of the Electoral Code to make the gender quota obligation a real one and not just demagogic. The reason for such a situation is argued to be the fact that the established legal quota was not accompanied by strong rules for candidate ordering to ensure 30% of women in parliament. The only defined rule was placing a woman among the top three names on the list and/or having 30% of the entire list composed of women. The sanctions for non-compliance with the quota were also weak, limited only to a fine of 1,000,000 Albanian lekë (after the amendment



of the code) by parties that did not comply (Article 175 of the Electoral Code). A superficial assessment of these two elements and especially the use of the phrase “and/or” leads to the conclusion that the code itself was the legal instrument that created conditions for political parties to avoid achieving this 30% goal, leaving it simply as a demagogic aim and not a real one. The Albanian Electoral Code allowed another loophole in this regard. By not specifying the maximum number of candidates on party lists, it allowed them to place 30% of women at the end of the list, even exceeding the possible parliamentary seats for certain constituencies.

Despite the above analysis, it must be said that it did produce a significant increase in women’s participation in the legislature. The elections with the new regional proportional system in 2009, 2013, and 2017 brought interesting developments in the representation of women in parliament, significantly increasing their numbers to 23 in 2009, 27 in 2013, and 39 in the recent 2017 elections, which, truth be told, is a satisfying figure. If we carefully analyze the table above regarding the composition of parliament from one legislature to another, we will notice that since 2009 when the electoral system changed from a mixed one with a majority dominance to a proportional system with closed lists, the number of women in parliament has increased significantly. Thus, from 6% in 2001 and 7% in 2005, it reached 16% in 2009, 19.3% in 2013, and approximately 28% in the last elections of 2017. It remains to be seen whether with the installation of the new legislature, the mechanism of women elected resigning from their positions, as in the cases of Lezhë, Durrës, Berat, and Vlorë in the 2013 elections, will not occur. To avoid these situations, Albanian legislation should integrate other punitive and restrictive mechanisms for political parties and even for the holders of the mandates.

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