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WOMEN FOR ELECTION(S),  
WOMEN FOR DEMOCRACY

HOW TO REACH EQUALITY



HOW TO REACH EQUALITY

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# **HOW TO REACH EQUALITY**

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# Introductory remarks

This publication is a collection of the most significant findings of a one year project entitled: “*Women for Election(s), Women for Democracy*”, implemented by the weekly *Monitor* and *Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro* (CIN-CG), with support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy to Serbia and Montenegro. This publication contains articles, a public opinion poll, as well as extracts from two debates about the role of women in politics which were organized during the project implementation.

All the findings of this one year research indicate that in Montenegrin politics, as well as in society, women do not have an equal position compared to men. In most political parties, they are marginalized, rarely occupying the key decision-making positions. They are almost completely left out from leading positions in the most important institutions of our country. In the new Government where Dusko Markovic is the Prime Minister, there are only four women, while in the Montenegrin Parliament there are only 23.5 percent of them, which is among the lowest share of women in European parliaments.

Respondents, the majority of interlocutors and participants in the debates all agree that Montenegrin society would be more democratic and economically developed, as well as just, if women occupied senior positions in the country. There can be no change, freedom, justice or Europe without equality. Findings in this publication show that the path to achieving this goal is long, but that the journey has started.

Weekly Monitor and CIN-CG would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy, whose support made possible the implementation of this project and raised the debate on the role of women in Montenegro’s politics to the highest level.

**Milka Tadić-Mijović**



# Progress by force of law

The representation of women in the Montenegrin Parliament has increased from 17 to 23.45 percent. It won't be long before half of the population of Montenegro is represented by a quarter of female representatives in the Parliament

**After elections** held on 16 October last year, the number of women in the Montenegrin parliament and the Government has slightly increased: "slightly" meaning still insufficient.

After the parliamentary mandates were assigned and various elected deputies resigned their seats to assume an executive office, 62 men and 19 women took seats in parliament. The representation of women in the Montenegrin parliament now stands at 23.45 percent. It won't be long before half the population of Montenegro will be represented by a quarter of female representatives in the parliament.

Among 36 MPs in the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), ten are women. The Democratic Front (DF) has 18 seats, of which four belong to women. Two parliamentary seats were taken by women from the Grand Coalition Key (Kljuc) electoral list which has nine MPs in total. Democrats of Montenegro have eight MPs, including two women, while one of the four seats of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is taken by woman. The minority parties and the Social Democrats (SD) have no women among the representatives of the people.

The Speaker of the Parliament is a man, as well as two Deputy Speakers. The Prime Minister is a man too. So are the deputy prime ministers. Of the 19 ministries, four are headed by women. The previous government had 17 ministries and three female ministers during most of its term of office.

At the dissolution of the last Parliament, 15 or 18.5% of the MPs were women out of the total of 81. During the last four-year term of office, the representation of women was generally 17 percent. Progress in the number of women has been achieved by force of law.

The obligation for political parties to have 30 percent of women on electoral lists was introduced in 2011. At the time, there were only 13.6 percent of women in the Montenegrin Parliament. Every increase of this figure required more precise legal obligations. The law was first violated by placing women at the bottom of the electoral lists. It was clear that there was no way they could be elected while in those positions. When it was specified that women had to take every fourth place on the electoral list, it was necessary to prevent another mechanism of manipulation, i.e. women resigning to their positions to be replaced by men.

The Law on the Election of Councillors and MPs now prescribes the obligation of the parties to have at least 30 percent of candidates of less represented gender on the electoral list, with the view of achieving the principles of gender equality. However, it has also been specified that "at least one candidate who is member of the less represented sex has to be included in the electoral list among every four candidates in line with the list order". A submitter of the electoral list who fails to comply with this rule will be called upon to correct the mistake, and if it fails to do so, according to the

Branka Bosnjak:  
"A slight progress in women's participation in the Parliament is exclusively the result the prescribed quotas, rather than the political will"

Draginja Vuksanovic: "It is unacceptable that, neither in this nor in the previous convocation, no woman has occupied a senior position in the Parliament, at least a vice-president position. The same goes for the Government"

Law, the electoral commission will reject the proclamation of the electoral list. It is also specified that the vacant seat of the MPs with less represented sex is filled by "the first next candidate on the electoral list of the less represented sex".

Of course, the question remains - why the same Law that stipulates a share of 30 percent of women's representation prescribes that they will take every fourth place on the list when it clearly leads to a share of one-quarter female representation, which was finally almost reached. It's simple: in parliament, women were not strong enough to achieve every third place on the list. Such a proposal was supported by the majority in the Gender Equality Committee, but not in the plenary.

Although the amendments to the Law clearly led to an increase in the representation of women, Montenegro lags behind countries in the region. There are 18.5% of women in the Croatian Parliament, and 33.6% in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Slovenia has 36.7<sup>1</sup>

The number of women in the Montenegrin Parliament remains too small, *Monitor's* interlocutors argue. "A slight progress in the participation of women

in parliament can be noticed, but this is exclusively the result of the prescribed quota, rather than a political will. It was more than obvious that all parties, obliged by the Law, only aim at reaching the prescribed quota. Only a few parties put the first woman in a position which was higher than fourth place on the electoral list as proposed by the Law", says **Branka Bosnjak**, MP from the DF, for *Monitor*. She underlines that women occupied almost half of the list of Movement for Change (PZP), within the Front, and that a woman occupied the third position within the framework of the PZP quota.

Bosnjak notes that at the moment there are only three female MPs, representing fifteen percent of the total MPS, serving as chairmen of parliamentary committees. She finds that this is further evidence of a lack of political will for the equal treatment of men and women. "We also do not have a woman in the vice-presidency of the Parliament, or, God forbid, a president of the parliament, which again shows the lack of political will. We will see whether the new leadership will continue to treat the Gender Equality Committee as 'an orphan' and whether it will appoint an office at least for its presidents. This illustrates the position of women in parliament. It all comes down to the fulfilment of the norm, we are essentially far from equality", notes Branka Bosnjak. She explains that the standard in the Council of Europe has risen from 30 to 40 percent, while we still maintain a figure of fewer than 25 percent of women in the Parliament.

**Zdenka Popovic**, MP from the Democrats of Montenegro, recalls that since the amendments to the Election Law in 2011 and the introduction of a 30 percent quota for women on the candidate lists for local and parliamentary elections, the number of women in the Parliament increased from 13.6 to 23.45 percent. Therefore, equal representation of men and women is still not a reality, although this is one of the preconditions of democracy which we all swear by. The current group of long-term politicians would hardly decide to leave their office to a woman, justifying themselves with the stereotypes that we are still a traditional society and that women must primarily be the pillar of the family, and that politics is dirty and exclusively intended for men", said Zdenka Popovic.

According to her, there will be more women in decision-making positions only after a change of generation at the political scene of Montenegro; as she states, the new generation of politicians is well aware of the role and importance of women in Montenegrin society. "Women must be equal in all areas of life, as well as in politics, especially because of the growing interest of women in actively engaging in the political life of Montenegro. It is very important for women to reach solidarity and help each other. The easiest and best way to position themselves properly is first in their party, and then on the candidate

Zdenka Popovic:  
"Nothing is still happening in the field of equal representation of men and women, although this is one of the conditions of democracy that we all swear by"

\* Interparliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments situation as of 1 July 2017

list as councillors and MPs”, says Zdenka Popovic.

**Draginja Vuksanovic** from the SDP says she does not approve when women’s participation in political life is discussed in numbers and percentages - for example, that there must be 30 percent of them on the electoral lists. “There are more women in the current Parliament than in previous Parliaments, which is a good sign that we are slowly leaving the ‘percentage’ framework. I do not think that women are sufficiently represented, especially in decision-making positions. It is unacceptable that there has been no woman in a leadership position, at least as vice-president, neither in this, nor in the previous convocation of the Parliament. The same goes for the Government. I do not remember that we had a women candidate for the country president in the history of Montenegro”, says Draginja Vuksanovic.

Vuksanović claims that a woman with a moral and professional quality has the ability to deal with all challenges. “A woman is not a number; a woman is not a percentage. This is about a woman in Montenegro. And a woman in Montenegro is knowledgeable, capable and braver than any other man, when it’s necessary to take burden of responsibility for important decisions. Regardless of whether it’s a housewife, a politician, or a woman engaged in any other business”.

An unavoidable fact in the topic of women in politics is that the opposition does not take part in the work of the Parliament.

**Zdenka Popovic** says that the boycott of the Parliament, in which nine women from the opposition parties participate, throws a new light on the depth of the political crisis in Montenegro. “In this way, they showed maturity, responsibility, solidarity and a full understanding of the political collapse which we as a society find ourselves in due to the stubbornness of the ruling coalition to vainly lead our country without looking for compromise and good solutions.”

“We must keep in mind that almost half of the elected male and female MPs are boycotting the Parliament. A justified boycott over irregularities in elections and a *coup d’état* hides the real image of the parliament, and therefore we can’t speak about the right representation of citizens in general, including women”, says Branka Bosnjak. She thinks it is difficult in “this complex and unhealthy political situation” to draw attention to the problem of representation of women and gender equality and talk about it when the basic human rights for free choice and fair elections were suspended. “Women are active participants in these events, regardless of whether they belong to one side or the other”, says Bosnjak.

The Parliament of Montenegro is currently operating mainly as a set of hand-raisers. What the Government suggests, the Parliament accepts unconditionally. In the shadow of such images, for now, remains the number of women’s hands who vote and women’s heads that are not there.

**Milos BAKIC**

# Women and Parliamentary Elections 2016

Panel discussion Women and parliamentary elections 2016 was held on 6th December. It was organized by the Monitor and Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CIN-CG), under the auspices of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy to Serbia and Montenegro. At the event held at the Centre Ville hotel, the introductory session included the following speakers: Barbara Rotovnik, on behalf of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, Nada Drobnjak, former MP of Montenegro (DPS), Branka Bosnjak, MP of Montenegro (DF), Natasa Vukovic, former MP of Montenegro (Kljuc), Karen Gainer, lawyer, Canadian human rights activist with considerable experience in the region, and Paula Petricevic, gender theorist and lecturer of Women's Studies, from NGO Anima. Luuk Nijman, representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy, Milka Tadic-Mijovic, CIN-CG's Director and Milena Perovic-Korac, editor in Monitor, spoke at the event on behalf of supporters and organizers.

We are here presenting short extracts from the discussions and debate that followed, along with the conclusions and recommendations formulated at the end of the debate.

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MILKA TADIC-MIJOVIC, DIRECTOR OF THE  
CENTRE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM OF MONTENEGRO

## Equal only on paper

**In 2007**, the same year when Montenegro signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement and embarked on a historic process of association and harmonization of its system with the EU, it adopted the Law on Gender Equality, as part of the set of anti-discrimination legislation.

Today, almost ten years after the adoption of the Law, we are still at the beginning. Montenegro is far from a society with equal opportunities for all its citizens. Not only in terms of women, but also in terms of people with disabilities, those living in the poor north, people from the edges of cities, representatives of minority groups - ethnic, religious, sexual, those who represent minority opinions, ordinary people who fight their personal battles for justice.

The Law adopted in the far 2007 specified that "gender equality implies equal participation of women and men in all areas of the public and private sectors" and imposes an obligation on both state and local administrations as well as political parties to work towards achieving gender equality. However, instead of increasing, the participation of women in state institutions has either decreased or stagnated.

There are only four women in the new Government of Montenegro - the same as in its previous composition. After the 2016 elections, the number of women in the Parliament has slightly increased. However, with 23 percent of women in the Parliament, we are at the bottom in Europe, although the current Parliament has more woman than in the previous Parliament, which had less than 15 percent women members of parliament.

In these elections, no list for the parliament of the republic was headed by a woman, which is further proof that our society is predominantly authoritarian, with men in leading roles. Unfortunately, there is little difference on this issue between the ruling parties and the opposition.

Montenegro has never had a woman president or prime minister. The time has come for things to change and for us to start fighting more intensely and more loudly for the change in our role in the society. Because that is how we are going to change Montenegro.

Our goal is to encourage debate on this topic among various social actors, including representatives of state institutions, political parties, civil sector and academic community.

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LUUK NIJMAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS EMBASSY TO SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

## Women's rights are our priority

**The promotion** of the participation of women in political and economic life is a priority for the Netherlands, which is why we supported this important project of *Monitor* and the *Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro*. I will try to sketch how the Netherlands promotes gender equality domestically, in our foreign policy and through the EU.

The Dutch Constitution in its very first Article states the following: “All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted”. This Article forms the basis of the efforts of our Government to promote equality, as well as the representation of women in public life.

The Netherlands tries to put this into practice every day through various measures including:

- On our streets, police patrolling teams are always comprised of a man and a woman. Studies have shown that presence of women in police forces decreased violence.
- The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics reports that the number of working women has risen more rapidly over the past decade than the number of working men.
- More women receive higher education degrees than men.

The Dutch Government stimulates companies to have more flexible working hours for women, especially when they are pregnant. This year, we have raised the benefit allowance for parents with children, aiming at simulating women to combine motherhood with a professional career.

We also promote gender equality through our foreign policy. Protection of women’s rights is among the top three priorities of the Netherlands and many efforts are put in opposing discrimination against women. The Netherlands was one of the first countries in the world to appoint a Human Rights Ambassador, a diplomatic envoy promoting our policies on human rights abroad – amongst other those on the representation of women in political and economic life.

The Netherlands also actively promotes UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which underlines women’s role in conflict prevention and resolution. This is especially relevant during this time of year, which marks the Orange Day campaign of 16 days of activism to fight gender-based violence.

Also, we see that the equal treatment of men and women has been a core value of the European Union since its founding as well:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union foresees equality between women and men in all areas, including employment, work and pay.
- Numerous other documents, some dating back to 1957 like the Treaty of Rome (which committed Member States to the right of equal pay for equal work for men and women), support the EU commitment to the principle of gender equality.

EU Directives are legally binding for the Member States and must be incorporated into their national legislation. Therefore any state aspiring to become a member must adopt such legislation, but also implement it properly and continue to work on improvement of human rights of all its citizens.

The recent Country Report offers some insight into gender equality in Montenegro from an accession perspective. It presents four findings that I would like to highlight:

-In political life, the implementation of the 2013-2017 Action Plan on gender equality has continued. The electoral lists are complied with the new criteria. At the local level, all municipalities have concluded memoranda of cooperation with the central Gender Equality Office. Activities at local level to promote gender equality should continue.

-Concerns remain regarding the effective functioning of the gender equality referral mechanism established by the new Law on Gender Equality, and to the overall economic empowerment of women. The Ombudsman’s Office needs to increase its capacity in this field, partly by hiring staff experienced in gender issues.

-On the labour market the gender imbalance worsened as a result of regulatory changes in the social care system. Women continue to be underrepresented in the labour market. More measures are also needed to overcome undeclared work, inactivity and unemployment among women.

-Gender-based violence continues to be a concern. Montenegro has taken initial steps to implement the convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. A new 2016-2020 Strategy on combating family violence was adopted in December.

The EU country report and the research presented today show those Montenegro still faces challenges in the field of representation of women in public life. Events like this one today help raise awareness about women’s rights. It contributes to development of a democracy where everyone has the right to equal treatment. It brings the country closer to the EU.

# Political representation of women in Montenegro has not improved

It is a pleasure to participate in today's panel discussion. Indeed, it is good to encourage discussion on this issue of the representation of women in political and economic life between all the important actors in Montenegro including international organisations, media and civil society. That is why I am pleased that the Embassy of our Member State – The Netherlands – is supporting this project because it is important for journalists to contribute to a better position of women through their analysis and reporting.

Equality between women and men is one of the founding values of the European Union. The question of gender equality in political and economic life of a country requires continuous education and raising awareness of all members of the society, and there is always room for improvement not only in Montenegro and other candidate and potential candidate countries, but also inside the EU.

Recently published European Commission's 2016 Report on Montenegro highlights that concerns remain regarding the effective functioning of the gender equality referral mechanism established by the new law on gender equality, and to the overall economic empowerment of women.

The implementation of the 2013-2017 Action Plan on gender equality has continued, focusing mainly on closing the gender gap in political life, and on awareness-raising. However, the 2016 elections did not show that this gender gap has indeed been closed in practice. Namely, the newly formed government includes four female ministers, which represents the same number as before, whereby the percentage of women in the Government decreases due to the increase of ministerial positions. Furthermore, none of the three are deputy Prime Ministers. Women's political representation has not improved in the Parliament either – the parliamentary committees should be more gender balanced!

In 2014, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights published its concluding observations on the report of Montenegro concerning implementation of the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee is concerned at the lack of adequate financial and human resources to effectively implement gender equality policies, the underrepresentation of women in senior and decision-making positions, and the persistence of stereotypes concerning gender.

The EU advocates integration of gender perspective into all policies and promotes specific measures to increase the number of women in the labour market as well as in politics, and to ensure that women have equal chances in securing better education and training. The EU is also strongly committed to ending gender-based violence.

The EU has embarked on a path of mainstreaming gender into all of its projects, while the Gender Action Plan (GAP II) obliges the EU Delegations and the EU Member States to report on their activities and projects implemented in the field of gender equality on a regular basis (thus, the project we are talking about today was the subject of one such report prepared by the Embassy of the Netherlands).

In that regard, I also wish to highlight some of the results of our IPA 2010 Gender Programme, implemented together with the UNDP, with the objective to improve the status of women reflected in personal integrity, economic advancement and political representation. I am happy to inform you that "The project has succeeded in all the areas to strengthen capacity, improve mechanisms, advance policies and improve conditions for implementation of the National Action Plan". Among other successes, the project has established a high-level cooperation between the ministries, parliamentarians and women's organisations on the issues of promotion of gender equality. Most importantly for our topic today, gender

sensitivity in political parties and administrative authorities has strengthened as a result of the project.

In order to continue with this good practice and to keep overcoming the before mentioned issues of underrepresentation of women in politics and in the labour market, the media, together with civil society organisations active in this field, play a crucial role. This is why today's discussion is extremely important as well as the project behind it.

Finally, I wish to assure you that the European Union will continue to support Montenegro's efforts in allowing women to exercise their full potential, because the promotion of real gender equality and women's participation in all spheres of political, economic and social life is to the benefit of the society as a whole.

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MILENA PEROVIC-KORAC, EDITOR, WEEKLY MONITOR

## Unfair distribution of power

**According to** the survey conducted in September 2016, Montenegrins are ready for change and are waiting for it to take place. In a telephone survey carried out on a sample of 880 families in 16 municipalities by CEMI for *Monitor* and CIN-CG, more than half of the respondents, i.e. 54 percent, believe that the current distribution of power on the political scene is not just and that more women should get involved in politics.

75.5 percent of respondents believe that progress has been achieved in the participation of women in politics in the past five years. 68.5 percent found that progress has been made but that, in general, there are not enough women engaged in politics.

With regard to the distribution of economic power, the majority, i.e. 54.8 percent, believe that men are in a better economic position than women, recognizing it as an unequal position.

Citizens believe that some areas of society would significantly develop if more women were involved in politics. They found that the quality of childcare would improve if women were in the country's top leadership positions. This is an opinion of 87.4 percent of respondents. 79.5% of the citizens believe that this would bring about more respect for human rights, while 74% of the respondents believe that social justice would be easier to reach, and that there would be less corruption. 65.7 percent of respondents believe that economic position would generally be better. Respondents believe that reforms would be much better implemented if women were more involved in politics.

Unfortunately, some stereotypes are present. Thus, respondents do not believe that, for example, the quality of security sector would improve if women were more involved in politics.

Interestingly, 75 percent of respondents believe that there should be a higher number of women on electoral lists and quotas are justified. Furthermore, 89.3 percent of respondents believe that it would be useful to Montenegrin society if one of the political lists were headed by a woman.

Opinion was divided on whether active female politicians are fighting enough to include women in the political life of Montenegro. Also, the majority of respondents found that women in politics are not properly presented in the media.

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NADA DROBNJAK, DPS

## The law is ready for implementation

**I have** recently heard that if you want to be listened to, you should speak loudly and concisely: loudly to be heard, and concisely to be liked. I know that in politics we don't always like each other, but if we talk concisely and send the message, I believe that it would be easier to reach an agreement on the issues which are important for all

of us. It is simply not a surprise that representatives of all political parties are present today, because we all understand the importance of achieving gender equality in the society.

Tom Kelly said that the non-inclusion of women in politics is the same as playing basketball with one hand. It makes me sad that after so many years since the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality and the establishment of the Gender Equality Committee, we still have to repeat what we said at that time. This survey encourages Montenegrins to recognize the importance of this issue, but when final decisions are to be made, citizens change their standpoint.

We had the latest election where it was recognized for the first time that political parties sent messages to women. Every one of them from its own worldview - which I may or may not like - but it is important that messages have finally been sent to female voters.

The Law on Gender Equality was adopted in 2007, and amended in 2015. It applies not only to women and men, but also to persons of different gender identities. Adopting articles that regulate a penal policy, a message has been sent that more attention will be paid on the application of the law itself. If it was previously considered that the law was only declarative, but with penalty provisions its proper application can be expected.

What I found interesting in these elections was the idea that was mentioned, which is to introduce open lists so that people should know who they are voting for. I am not denying that this is more democratic, but seen from the point of view of increasing a number of women decision-makers in parliament, I know that this would be a step back, unless women and men would have to have equal material means, access to the media and other resources in order to be sufficiently recognizable and could expect equal participation in parliament. I think that we have not reached this level yet, therefore we must use closed lists and quotas, to achieve an increased number of women in parliament.

I believe that the number of women in parliament who are gender-conscious should be increased. But, the whole story should also involve men who understand the importance of achieving gender equality in our society.

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BRANKA BOSNJAK, DF

## Politics is not exclusively male profession

**If we want** to ensure that something is carried out, we have to keep on talking about it, even though it is not easy to break the taboos in Montenegrin society. I was part of a working group that worked on electoral legislation and drafting laws concerning women's quotas. I will give you impressions from this working group to see how this was just a declarative effort, rather than a genuine one.

When quotas were brought up, I was not happy with the feeling that I was part of a percentage or some figure, but I realized that this was the only way we could succeed in this environment, to have women in some decision-making positions.

With the electoral legislation we have reached a certain percentage of 23.5 percent, there are 19 women in this parliament. What we managed to achieve with the election law was the possibility to increase this number, because we have introduced the norm which prescribes that, if a woman leaves the parliament, she is to be replaced by the first woman on the electoral list, rather than the next candidate; and if the parliament is left by a man and the next at the list is a woman, then she will enter the parliament. So there may be room for this figure to increase.

In PZP, we have had a number of women in leadership positions from the very beginning. But it is very difficult with national parties, because when we worked on the electoral legislation, we had colleagues from the Bosniak Party who openly told us that they would only have their wives, sisters, and relatives on the lists, because of the lack of interest.

I think that this is because politics here is perceived as a male and a dirty profession, which makes women run away from it. In fact, politics should be a noble skill where you put public interests ahead of yours. Unfortunately, this is not the case with all politicians. Especially in these small environments, it is very difficult to suddenly convince women to engage in politics. That is why I like the idea to start with these quotas, although the Council of Europe standard is no longer 30% but 40%.

When we were creating election law, it was a hard work to agree on 30 percent, which in the end was some kind of compromise. Socialist People's Party (SNP) supported it, and so did we in PZP within DF, and so did Pozitivna, but other parties resisted it. It was international community which played important role in reaching a compromise. When the lists were made, this was seen as a necessary evil. Along these lines, first, second and third position, and the fourth has to be a woman. It was done as a necessary evil and with dissatisfaction.

We still need to mature in this. I hope that our male fellow politicians will help us, and I think that this electoral legislation, as well as this article on the participation of women on the lists will be revised. A progress will be made. Us, women, also have to be more proactive and more solid in order to achieve all this. There is a room for that.

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NATASA VUKOVIC, SNP

## Half of the earth, half of the sky, half of the power

**Gender equality** is something that still holds me in politics.

The society is ahead of the political elite in readiness, as shown in this and other research. This is something that gives us hope, because majority of politicians - when speaking about gender equality - explain that we are a very traditional society and relies on that fact as an excuse. We know that this cannot be an excuse. There are societies much more traditional than ours, which have a higher number of women in high positions.

Talking about gender equality should not be a temporary or an ad hoc pre-election aim, which is obviously most often the case. Equal representation has to become a need, rather than a legal imperative. Parties, the media, and society in general do not continuously address this topic. I have to express my dissatisfaction with the media because women feature only 11 percent of important news items, while worldwide, this percentage is around 24 percent.

I have read that the Millennium Development Goal for Montenegro is that by 2020 the number of women in decision-making position is 40 percent. With this pace and with this legal solution which is a step ahead but a bad one, we cannot reach that goal. I say that this law is bad because it prescribes 30 percent of women, or every fourth person on the list. With a minimal knowledge of Maths it is clear that in practice that cannot be 30 percent. It also happens that women fill the places in the bottom of voting lists, which was less visible during these elections.

My suggestion on how to reach 40 percent women elected to Parliament by 2020 is the following: I have read that the DPS and minority parties have agreed on amendments to the electoral legislation related to the rights of minorities. Since we have the support of all European institutions, why not use these planned amendments to request amendments to the law in terms of gender equality as well.

We need to further promote dialogue about women's rights with women in high positions. Not every woman in a high position contributes to this dialogue. Some of them are trying to prove that they don't hold those positions thanks to quotas, but thanks to their merits.

Development of a more favourable environment in which female politicians would operate at full capacity, depends on many factors, such as: democratization of political parties, better visibility of candidates, greater trust of both parties and

voters, and breaking stereotypes. Significant changes in society will only be possible after quotas are no longer needed.

I don't accept the target of 30 percent of women in decision-making positions, I want 50 percent instead. I always like to mention the motto of women of the Croatian SDP, which is at the same time my motto: *Half of the earth, half of the sky, half of the power.* That belongs to us, nobody is giving it to us, but we have to say it loud and clear and to achieve it.

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KAREN GAINER, A CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

## Women for democracy

**Women in politics** - This topic I have been discussing and working on for decades-first as a party activist, candidate, lawyer and board member in Canada then later working with political parties in the region and then working with the governments of Viet Nam and Sri Lanka on how to mainstream gender within their courts and ministries.

I must admit that as a young political activist in Canada-too many years ago - I thought that talented women could effectively participate in political decision making without any special measures being put in place-over time-I have been proven wrong time and again.

The inclusion of women in political decision making has not been straightforward process or evolution-rather it continues to be a rather bumpy, tenuous and cyclical journey that while has yielded some gains-we still remain more on the outside than on the inside when the decisions are made.

We saw this with the selection of the Secretary General of the UN-the conventional wisdom was that it would be a woman from this region. The boys were more comfortable with one of their own - yet again.

Genuine gender parity in political decision making with the exception of the Scandinavian countries remains elusive-in my country of Canada as well as here in Montenegro. It remains a first world problem.

In Canada, our electoral system is not conducive to an institutional response - such as imposing quotas for women candidates-which explains why Canada is ranked in 63rd place out of 193 countries although the most recent election in 2015 saw the highest number of women members of parliament elected-still only 27%- only slightly ahead of Montenegro which in 74th position.

But as we all know-electoral law is only one tool to increase the number of women in decision making positions; another one is political leadership.

Again if we look at the 2015 elections in Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named a cabinet with 50% women. When asked why he had appointed 50% women - he simply shrugged his shoulders and said - it is 2015! This was the right and only answer-finally there is no need to explain or justify why a cabinet should have gender parity.

But why does it matter?? Why is it important to have women decision makers?

Research shows that public confidence grows as the percentage of women in the cabinet increases. This is fundamental as we enter this new unsettled new era of the erosion of public confidence in its democratic institutions across Europe and the Americas. Public confidence increases as the number of women in the cabinet grows. Research also shows that with more women in cabinet there is an increase in public health spending and an increase in family friendly policies.

But let's be clear about something:

Once women are elected - it is another matter whether they become influential. Having women who are influential decision makers is a separate step.

Women who are powerful - does not necessarily flow that they will use their influence to increase women's rights and gender equality. Again a separate step and again does not necessarily flow.

So as one works it is important to be clear that genuine change will take time and serious commitments from all political players.

# The secret of reproductive work

**The results** of the presented public opinion poll show attitudes of Montenegrin women and men with regard to the participation of women in politics, which are according to some optimistic, though mostly traditional, as expected. As one could assume, it is considered that the greatest contribution of women in leading positions would be in areas traditionally related to women such as the quality of childcare, the protection of human rights and the achievement of social justice, and the reduction of corruption. Also, according to the majority, women in ruling positions would not contribute to traditionally “male” jobs such as the army and the police.

This, as well as other research demonstrate to what extent are rigid gender roles deeply rooted in our society, and to what extent are capabilities of women and men perceived differently, and that different expectations from different genders still persist. According to more than 90% of respondents, it is acceptable that women are engaged in politics, but only a thin majority of them, i.e. 54%, find the present state problematic. How could we interpret this difference?

Every one of us has heard the argument: “Women have equal rights as men, why don’t they use them then?” or: “If women wanted, they could be politically, economically and in many other ways more represented and powerful”.

Then why aren’t they and why without provisional measures of affirmative action, they are in positions of social power and decision making only sporadically? This is because the public and the private spheres are like fussed vessels and for that reason it is impossible to transform one sphere without transforming the other.

The elephant which sits comfortably here in the room is very old, and its name is - reproductive work, good, old, invisible, unrecognized, socially invalorized and unappreciated work which is predominantly carried out by women, and which, in the words of Katja Kobolt, “takes place quietly and non-heroically”, while infinitely renewing in return, but without any excess value that would legitimize it, and without the goods that could be exchanged on the market. Although invisible, it is the prerequisite of paid labour, I quote: “Capitalism is built on the shoulders of unpaid work of workers from all around the world. Most unpaid workers are women, and most of unpaid work takes place at home. Housework consists of two things: reproduction of human beings, and therefore the workforce, and daily preparation of workers for work”.

The relation between patriarchy and capitalism is not random, but capitalism depends directly on the patriarchate and its division into the public and private sphere. These areas are separated and clearly gender-oriented - the sphere of public, productive, paid and recognized work belongs to a man, while the sphere of private - reproductive, unpaid and unrecognized work belongs to a woman. It is assumed, even implied, that women carry out these socially invalorized jobs “willingly” and “out of love”.

Market logic colonizes all the spheres of our everyday life, also changing the concept of motherhood. Neoliberalism introduces re-traditionalization and re-patriarchalization of motherhood, and under the guise of policies which are promoted as good for women (such as flexible and/or part-time work, work from home, working “on call”, etc.), in fact it reduces their economical power and independence, and takes them back (in round-about way) into a private domain.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS:

During the discussion, **Mirel Radic-Ljubisavljevic**, President of the Women's Social Democratic Party's Forum, said that her extensive experience shows that, although a progress in the attitude of citizens can be noticed, as demonstrated in the survey conducted by *Monitor* and CIN-CG, changes would not take place in practice without the introduction of quotas and affirmative action principles.

**Rajka Glusica**, professor of General linguistics at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niksic and a member of the Coordination Committee of United Reform Action (URA), said that the party has been organizing conferences on the subject for a while, in order to point out the causes of the unequal position of women in Montenegro. She believes that misogyny is deeply rooted in the foundations of society.

"Once a minority, always a minority", said **Dritan Abazovic** from the URA, pointing to a small number of politicians and male colleagues at the event. He believes that the distribution of power is not just, and that this is not just a problem of women, but rather of the whole society.

1. Montenegro has made progress in terms of the representation of women in politics, but it is still far from European standards and there are many challenges to gender equality implementation before it.

2. The legal anti-discrimination framework has been improved, but its implementation is still slow and insufficient.

3. Neither the ruling party nor the opposition are devoted enough to the issue of gender equality.

4. Generally speaking, our society is more ready for change and looks for greater participation of women in politics, but elites do not comply with the needs of society.

5. Montenegrin population believe that the reforms would be faster, and the society more just, if the highest political positions were occupied by women.

6. Decisions made by governments with more women are better for society. There are no women in the highest political positions in our country.

7. Quotas on the electoral lists resulted in a greater representation of women in the Parliament of Montenegro after the 2016 elections, but the Parliament has not yet achieved the balance and the prescribed minimum of women MPs (30 percent, or every fourth MP position). After these elections, the number of women in the government has not increased.

8. Women were not sufficiently visible during the campaign for the 2016 parliamentary elections. No electoral parliamentary list was headed by a woman. There was a clear imbalance between women and men in the media and on the public scene.

9. During the 2016 campaign, parties targeted women voters, but messages about gender equality were rarely sent.

10. Media should play a more important role in the promotion of gender equality and greater participation of women in politics.

11. It would be desirable to create an informal network of female politicians, journalists and civil society activists in order to strengthen efforts in the fight for gender equality and greater representation of women in politics.



# Quota of lies

In principle, everyone agrees that there should be more women in a political life and welcomes the initiative to increase quotas for women in electoral lists from 30 to 40 percent. However, the difficulties faced while adopting the present quota, and especially the complications that followed its application, does not give much reason for optimism

**Our Government** is ambitious, and its plans are zealous. The Ministry for Human and Minority Rights stated in the Plan of activities for achieving gender equality 2017-2021, among other things, that during this year “affirmative measures for gender equality in the Law on the election of councillors and MPs” will be promoted and the prescribed quotas agreed with 40% outlined in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. We only lack a parliament to vote on that change. After the October 2016 elections, the Parliament of Montenegro works with a little more than half of the deputies, and a two-thirds majority is needed to amend the Law on the election of councillors and MPs. And even if there was the opposition in the Parliament, based on everything we have seen so far, the political will to actually increase the number of women in political life is unstable.

Out of 81 MPs in the current parliament, 19 are women. This makes up 23.46 percent. This is the best result in the history of Montenegrin Parliamentary elections. In the previous parliament, there were 15 women, accounting for 18.5 percent.

Of the 11 parliamentary committees, women are the head the Legislative Committee; the Gender Equality Committee and the Anticorruption Committee. Only in the Gender Equality Committee and the Committee on European Integration does membership of women MPS exceed 30 percent. The average representation of women in the working bodies of the parliament is 15.51%.

The DPS has 35 MPs - 10 women (28.57%); the SDP has four MPs with one woman who makes up 25 percent, Democrats have eight MPs - two women, also 25 percent. Two women among nine MPs in the Kljuc, Demos, SNP, URA account for 22.22 percent, as well as four women among the 18 MPs from the DF.

At the local level, the percentage of women in local assemblies has increased from 15% before 2014 to the current 26.3%.

Although we still have four female ministers, the percentage of women in the government was reduced as the total number of members of the Government has increased.

In its Report on Montenegro for 2016, the European Commission stressed that the electoral lists for the 2016 parliamentary elections “complied exclusively with the minimum requirements in terms of gender equality”.

“A novelty in relation to the previous reports of the European Commission is the fact that these observations are presented in the key part of the report ‘Political criteria’, which clearly indicates the importance of this issue as one of the priorities in the EU accession process”, highlighted Maja Raicevic, Director of the Women’s Rights Centre during the debate *Women for Election(s), Women for Democracy*, organized by *Monitor* and the *Centre for Investigative Journalism*.

In principle, everyone agrees that there should be more women in political life and they welcome the initiative to increase the quota for women on the electoral lists from 30 to 40 percent. However, all the difficulties faced when

Maja Raicevic: “The ‘argument’ that the quotas do not guarantee the quality of the elected women, has to be answered by a counter argument - the existing legal solution does not guarantee the quality of male members of the parliament either”

Branka Bosnjak: “The existing solution would not have been voted in without the pressure from the international factor on the ruling party, so neither will this one”

adopting the present quota, and especially all the complications which followed its application, does not give much reason for optimism.

“The introduction of quotas for greater political participation of women did not provide adequate results, because instead of the amendments suggested by the Women’s Right Centre, Ombudsman and SNP, which would provide a critical mass of 30 percent of women in parliament, a solution proposed by the DPS was adopted, i.e. that one in four places on the list is taken by a less represented gender. Our amendment envisaged that in a group of three candidates on the electoral list, one place belongs to a less represented gender”, explains Maja Raicevic for *Monitor*.

She points out that the 2011 recommendation of the UN Committee for the Prohibition of Discrimination against Women was not respected. “Amendments to electoral legislation only resulted in a slight increase in the number of women in

the Parliament of Montenegro - 23.6 percent and the local government - 26 percent. Therefore, I believe that the electoral law should be amended again, and that the new legal solution should require a minimum of 40 percent of women”, says Raicevic and recalls that the Government has committed to such a solution in the Plan of activities for achieving gender equality 2017-2021, as well as the Strategy for Sustainable Development.

“Essentially, a political will to significantly increase the percentage of women on the electoral lists, or in parliament has never existed. Declaratively, no one has anything against it, but it is essentially hard to ‘digest’ it. The standard that we are now trying to achieve is 40 percent. We missed 30 percent, and now the Council of Europe has raised the scale by 10 percent”, says **Branka Bosnjak**, MP from DF and Vice-President of the PZP.

She says there is no illusion that the initiative for 40 percent of women on electoral lists will receive sincere support, but that it does not mean that we should not fight and insist on this topic. “The existing solution would not have been voted in without the pressure from the international factor on the ruling party. Therefore, I think it will be the case this time as well”, says Branka Bosnjak, adding that any initiative to amend the election law is unrealistic with the necessary two-third majority, while the opposition is out of parliament.

**Zdenka Popovic**, the Vice President of Democratic Montenegro in a statement for the *Monitor*, estimates that the initiative of the Women’s Right Centre to raise women’s quota to 40% is a good idea, but almost impossible in this political moment. “The Parliament is being boycotted by 39 MPs, and the ruling majority is not so gender-conscious to enable greater participation of women in the political life of Montenegro”, said Zdenka Popovic.

In her opinion, the greater participation of women in political life must be a need, rather than an imposed obligation. “However, the fact is that without an imposed obligation, there would be no women in politics or they would be poorly visible.”

When it comes to the participation of women in political life, it is often possible to hear speculations that current increase in the number of women has not in any way brought about improvement. “To all those who criticise these measures, from whom we often hear the ‘argument’ that quotas do not guarantee the quality of elected women, I have to reply with counter-argument - the existing legal solution does not even guarantee the quality of male members of parliament, which is, in my view, more than obvious, says Maja Raicevic.

According to her, party leaders have so far not respected the right of women to participate in the decision-making process and that only when this approach is secured, women can, in time, be able to strengthen and start to autonomously represent their attitudes. Then, Raicevic believes, women will be less used as a channel for party arguments. According to her, in the previous parliament, women were among the most active MPs with an enormous number of proposed initiatives and legislative amendments.

Zdenka Popovic claims that the ruling coalition continues to defy stereotypical

Zdenka Popovic:  
“The initiative to raise the quota for women representation to 40 percent is a good idea, but it is almost impossible in this political moment”

opinion that politics is a male occupation, because, as she says, even the binding quota of 30 percent of women has not been respected either in executive or legislative power, especially not in decision-making positions.

Branka Bosnjak raises the question of how much some women in politics are sincerely advocating for the so-called women's issues and how proactive are they in that field. "Although the percentage has increased, I have not really noticed that the visibility of this increase is at an enviable level. Women are still not visible enough, and they are largely to blame for that. What is visible is that women's solidarity is missing. Party interests are still stronger than the desire to step up and be unique on some issues, no matter which party we belong to", says Bosnjak. Nevertheless, as she claims, she does not lose hope that Montenegro could soon have a woman as a president or prime minister. She believes that this change would be a breath of fresh air in every respect.

No one in Montenegro knows when and how this country will get an integral parliament. It cannot be expected that the Government will fulfil the task which it has imposed on itself, i.e. to increase the quota for women. This will give women advantage over men: when the number of frauds is distributed per capita in Montenegro, women will receive at least slightly higher share due to this unfulfilled promise. They will, therefore, end up with a higher quota of lies.

**Milos BAKIC**



# Women for election(s), women for democracy

A debate Women for Election(s), Women for Democracy was held on Monday 29th May, in Hotel Centre Ville in Podgorica. The debate is a part of a one-year project implemented by weekly Monitor and Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CIN-CG), with the support of the Royal Netherlands Government. Its goal is to encourage a debate in a society on the position of women in the politics and to strengthen reforms which lead to an equal position of both sexes.

The following conclusions and recommendations have been made at the debate:

- \* participation of women in the politics is not a feminine question, but a question of the progress of the overall society;
- \* the progress has been made in Montenegro, particularly in terms of the legislative framework, but requires a better application of the law in practice together with legislative amendments to reach the desired goal: 50 percent of women in the politics ;
- \* it is important to initiate amendments to election law in order to reach 40 percent of women in the lists instead of 30 percent;
- \* the question of gender equality must be systematically resolved, supported by a clearly expressed political will;
- \* a dialogue between women and men in politics is necessary in order to achieve gender equality;
- \* it is necessary to work on the democratization of the entire society and the political system;
- \* working and economic status of women must be a priority political issue;
- \* more solidarity of women and society in general is necessary;
- \* an informal group should be formed in which all women MPs would participate, which would monitor the preparation and implementation of legal norms for achieving gender equality;
- \* it is necessary to ensure gender-sensitive approach and impact assessment when drafting new laws and government policies;
- \* it is necessary to provide incentives for parties to promote women in senior positions within party structures and increase visibility of female candidates during election campaigns;
- \* encourage public and professional discussions on women's political participation;
- \* gender-sensitive media reporting should be developed in order to eliminate stereotypes;
- \* gender-sensitive education system should be developed in order to eliminate gender stereotypes;
- \* gender equality must be continuously promoted; a case study of the persecution of women on the public and political scene of Montenegro should be created.

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MILKA TADIC-MIJOVIC, CIN-CG

**At first glance,** in the sea of other key and difficult issues, such as the rule of law, corruption, economic reform, public debt, foreign policy issues and challenges, women's participation in the political life of Montenegro may not seem as an important topic. However, transition to democracy, free society; modern Montenegro in Europe is not possible without the equal participation of women in political life.

Montenegro is a conservative, almost petrified society, where fear of change rules. It is therefore no wonder that a country dominated by authoritarian political culture and consciousness, is at the bottom in Europe in terms of the number of women in parliament and that at this moment there is no woman in any of the senior political positions.

Instead of enhancing participation of women in politics, the multiparty political system seems to further degrade a position of women in the society. It was only for a brief period that we had a woman heading the Montenegrin Parliament. A woman has never been a candidate for presidential elections, or a prime minister. None of the parliamentary parties in Montenegro are headed by woman.

Although Montenegro has adopted a system of quotas for electoral lists, after pressures from the EU and initiatives of our civil sector, progress has been limited to the reaching minimal quotas as prescribed by law. Political parties, both governing and opposition alike only comply with legal regulations, but they do not promote the principle of equality within their parties, parliament or government.

Clearly, progress is not possible without representation of women in all social spheres, not only in politics. This is also the main conclusion of our survey, which was carried during this project. Citizens of Montenegro believe that women in the highest political positions would significantly contribute to changes in society, reforms, social justice and the rule of law.

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HANK VAN DEN DOOL, AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS  
TO SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

**I would like** to thank Monitor and Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro for bringing us together today. Enhancing women's participation in political and economic life is a very relevant and important topic and I am pleased that the Dutch Embassy has been able to support you.

Let me share some personal thoughts with you. Although I am a non-resident Ambassador – I live and work in Serbia - I try to come to Montenegro at least once a month. This time we came by car, crossing the border close to Durmitor. Every time I travel in Montenegro I am amazed by the beauty of this country. All the citizens of Montenegro, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age or religion, are truly blessed with living in this country. And since this beautiful country belongs to them all, all the citizens of Montenegro should be represented in political life. Easy calculation: around 50% of the Montenegrin population is female, therefore women should make up about half of the people active in politics.

Reality, however, is different – at the moment there are 19 women in your Parliament, which makes 23.5 percent. The desired figure has not yet been reached. Let me immediately add that the situation in the Netherlands is not much better. We may have been ruled by Queens for 133 years in succession (from the death of King William III in 1890 till the inauguration of King Willem-Alexander in 2013), but their political influence was limited. In our current Parliament, installed after general elections in March, only 54 out of 150 parliamentarians are women, which makes a meagre 34 percent. We have never had a female prime minister and I can tell you immediately that we will not have one in the near future. From the 13 political parties represented in parliament, only one is led by a woman. So you see, we also have not yet achieved the goal of equal participation of women in politics. We are, therefore, on a common journey!

Without taking too much of your time and without going too much in detail, I would like to make three points about the topic of women in politics.

Firstly, there's no reason to approach enhanced participation of women in politics as a political issue. It's not about politics at all! If anything, it's about humanity. Inclusion of and dialogue between all the various stakeholders is very important for real reform. That's precisely what you are doing today; I am very glad that this topic has united government officials, political parties from all over the spectrum and civil society. In addition, it has gathered independent international experts. Therefore, let me repeat that this is not a political issue and we should not make it a political issue. The point is to initiate discussion with a view to bringing about reform.

A second point I would like to make is that greater participation of women in politics is not "a woman thing". It does not matter which sex you are. Everyone benefits from enhanced participation of women in politics. The quality of argumentation and thus the quality of political debate improves drastically when men and women contribute equally. Perhaps you've noticed a speech by famous actress Helen Mirren which circulates on social media these days, in which she compellingly states that everyone should be a feminist, regardless of being a man or a woman. I very much agree with that. Luckily, I see both men and women around this table. I hope both will participate in the discussions later today.

The third and last thing I would like to share with you is that this issue is not necessarily about "human rights" or "non-discrimination". Yes, the point is simple: excluding women from political life is just plain wrong. It violates basic human rights as well as many international agreements to which our countries are partner. But there's something else – it's not only wrong, it's also stupid. In politics, you need all the intellectual capacity you can get. By excluding women, 50 percent of the scarce resources are being wasted! And don't forget that 50 percent of voters are women. If there's an insufficient number of women in politics, 50 percent of voters will have reason to think they're not adequately represented in Parliament.

Let me finish here and leave you with these three, or rather four, considerations: enhancing the political participation of women is not about politics. It is not simply a woman's matter. It's not only about non-discrimination. And our journey is a joint one!

I wish you a diverse and lively debate. Thank you!

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## SUZANA PRIBILOVIC, MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**It's been seventy years** since women in this region have gained the right to vote, and reaching gender equality is a topic that remains a challenge. This shows that it takes time to achieve this, as well as all other changes in consciousness.

Bridging the gap between gender equality and eliminating the structural reasons of gender imbalance in power in various spheres of society, but also establishing what is considered to be a modern and mature democratic society today is one of Montenegro's major tasks and challenges on its path to the EU.

The principle of gender equality is incorporated in the Montenegrin Constitution and the legislative framework. Amendments to the electoral law increased the quotas for representation of women at the parties' candidate lists.

Out of 81 MPs in the current parliamentary convening, 19 or 23.46% are women, which is the highest share of women's representation in the history of the Montenegrin parliament. There are four female ministers in the Government, out of a total of 19 ministers, i.e. 21.05%. Women also make over 44% in the positions of assistant ministers, which is significantly higher than in the previous period. Many institutions are headed by women: from the State University and the Media Public Service, to the Supreme Court and municipal governments.

However, we are aware that statistics are often not a realistic reflection of social movements and that there is room for more adequate representation of women in political parties, as well as in executive, legislative and judicial power in Montenegro. Positive experiences have shown that greater participation of women in decision-making positions plays a key role in fighting corruption, increasing general social stability and responsibility and affects the increase in the credibility of political processes.

What I want to point out at the very end: women must fight on their own for their equal place on the social, political and public scene! No one else will bring it to us! This primarily involves commitment to personal education, to the highest level, in accordance with the increasingly demanding standards that a modern Montenegrin society is seeking.

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## AIVO ORAV, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO MONTENEGRO

**Balanced representation** of both genders in leadership is the topic that must involve not only the decision-makers and international organisations, but even more importantly citizens, civil society, and media. I am grateful to the Embassy of Netherlands for supporting this project, recognising the important role journalists can play in advocating for a better position of women in politics.

Equality between women and men is one of the founding values of the European Union. This equality is still not achieved in practice, which is why the EU devotes particular efforts to addressing it within our own borders, worldwide, and also with our future members. It is essential that the principle of equality of men and women is observed in all spheres of life. Much more efforts are needed in Montenegro to close the gender gap in political life. The 2016 parliamentary elections did not achieve this, despite the quotas introduced to this purpose. The political parties respected the bare minimum quota requirement and less than one quarter of MPs elected are women, and none is among the deputy speakers. The number of female ministers remained the same, and no female deputy Prime Ministers were appointed.

Minister Pribilovic, however, is at the helm of one of the most important Ministries for Montenegro's EU accession process and we hope that the public administration reform she heads will foster an enabling environment for a greater number of women in decision-making roles. It is important to note that the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Report, which the EU uses as benchmark in assessing elections, made the following priority recommendation: to achieve a better balance between women and men holding publicly elected positions, political parties could consider internal measures to promote women to senior positions within party structure and to increase visibility of female candidates during the election campaigns.

The European Union will continue to support efforts that lead to a balanced society where women can exercise their full potential in all spheres of political, economic and social life. This is to the benefit of the society as a whole.

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## IVAN BRAJOVIC, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO

**I must** also mention the anti-fascist heritage of Montenegro in the context of women's political rights. I am convinced that one significant achievement of the anti-fascist movement is the right to vote, granted to women in Montenegro in 1946. This great civilization step is one of the prerequisites for the modernization of our country. We should be proud of this fact, but it should also remind us that we have to do more to justify this heritage.

The representation of women in legislative power varied from the time when women in Montenegro first gained the right to vote and amounted to about three percent on average in the first decade. If we look back at the time when multiparty system was introduced in Montenegro, this percentage remained the same in several convocations as in the first decade after obtaining the right to vote, i.e. a few percent, while in the last few Parliaments, it was between 10 and 17 percent. It is precisely on the basis of these data that the importance of amending the Election Law can be seen, starting with a minimum of 30 percent norm of the less represented gender on the electoral lists, as well as the order on the list, and finally, major amendments that envisage that if a female MP or councillor resigns, her place belongs exclusively to the next female candidate from the list.

In essence, the fight for full equality of women must be systemic and must cover all areas. I am convinced that no society can expect a real progress without an equal distribution of power between men and women.

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BRANKO CAVOR, DPS

**It is often considered** that the private sphere is dominated by women, while a public one is dominated by men. The needs of family and household largely rely on a woman, which results in a lack of ambition of a large number of women to actively participate in political life.

The reason which is not highlighted enough even though it has significant impact on women's intention to take up politics is her family upbringing. Such a patriarchal upbringing of female children often results in them not being open towards public jobs.

What is interesting, and what could be considered a kind of phenomenon, is that there are more women in Montenegro in the judicial power. In the mid-20th century, the percentage of women judges in Montenegro was negligible; 50 years later, in 2001, there were more than 50 percent of women in basic courts. This is the situation today in the High Court and in higher-instance courts, where women are not only judges but also presidents of these courts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the situation is more favourable and that such a tendency will continue.

In order to achieve greater employment of women in decision-making positions, it is necessary to develop their self-esteem, eliminate indecisiveness, get rid of patriarchal patterns and prejudices, foster women's motivation for political engagement, develop gender solidarity, and in particular solidarity between women.

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NEBOJSA MEDOJEVIC, PZP

**In this context,** there are two important processes that Montenegro has gone through in these 27 years. Wrong, negative social process. The first is the process of totalitarianism, and the second is neoliberalism, or global neoliberal fascism.

In totalitarian conditions, it is difficult to talk about the political rights of women and their participation in politics.

Neoliberal ideology has brought all citizens who are not members of the narrow class of new capitalists in a position to fight for day-to-day survival. The greatest victims of these ideologies are women. The labour rights of female employees, especially in the trade, are at the level of slavery. If you consider some of the other features that are used to evaluate the so-called value of the social capital: the number of divorces, the number of single mothers, domestic violence, the increased drug addiction in minors, the increase in violence in minors etc, and if you look at how much it affects the quality of life of women, you will see that they have a key existential problem – how to feed and save the family.

The primary task of both women and men in Montenegro, as well as each of its citizens, is to make Montenegro a democratic country. To change the totalitarian regime. By then all of us will be endangered, and women even more than they are now.

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DANILO SARANOVIC, DEMOCRATIC MONTENEGRO

**This issue** is a not only a challenge for Montenegro, but for many democratic societies. In legislatures of countries such as Great Britain, the USA, Canada, the level of women's participation ranges between 20 and 30 percent.

In 1945, the Yugoslav Constitution put women in an equal position with men, while in Switzerland, for example,

women gained the right to vote only in 1971 and in Liechtenstein in 1984. It is not difficult to conclude that the key to solving this issue lies precisely in political parties. It is not enough to define this issue in party documents and electoral legislation. It would be necessary to find a way to create such a political environment that would be attractive to women themselves for their greater participation in political life.

The banalization of political opportunities, and political extremism, which is often present on the Montenegrin political stage, result in a significant number of women who lack motivation, with reason. The binding quotas stipulated by the Montenegrin legislation have had a positive effect, but not at the desired level. It is therefore necessary to move from the level of the declarative to the level of the essential and put the maximum effort to be completely normal for women to find themselves not only in a leadership positions within their party, but also within the legislative and executive powers.

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## RANKO KRIVOKAPIC, PRESIDENT OF SDP

**In this area,** as in all others, Montenegro has resolved status-related matters. Legislation was passed, and minimum quotas for representing women in political life were raised. And the form was fulfilled. But it is like you made a bottle in which you did not pour enough wine, and the wine in the bottle has gone bad.

These are the limits that Montenegro is facing. Mutual dependence is clear: more democracy, more social development, more rule of law, and there will be more women in politics, and stimulation and more success. I agree that one of the causes of this situation is that there were no more women in politics. The best example is DPS. Their best time was when DPS was headed by a woman.

Mr. Medojevic pointed to the key area, i.e. the working legal position of women. The position of women in Montenegro is worsening in a wild transition and a wild capitalism that are dominant in Montenegro. One could speak about the lack of rights. There is no efficient inspection supervision; court procedures are very rarely successful. This is stimulated by high unemployment rate. Thus, our social structure, and therefore the position of women, is much closer to the African than to the European one. These topics should become dominant in political life.

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## DRITAN ABAZOVIC, PRESIDENT OF URA

**Equality of the sexes** should be the natural state of a society. We can not avoid its political dimension, and the most important thing is that there are no basic conditions for democratic law enforcement. The parliament does not exist in this moment. We are talking about the number of women in it, while it's blocked. And then we should say that the number of MPs has increased. This is important, but not crucial because our elementary parliamentary life is not functioning.

And we care so much about women that we have recently cancelled compensations for mothers. Do we think that such attacks on their lives encourage women to engage more, to be involved in politics? No, we are devaluing the overall social environment. It is our duty, first of all, to restore faith to the democratic system. I would emphasize the quality of this research, which clearly showed that people believe that political changes would be possible if more women were involved in politics. Men did not pass the exam; they were unable to initiate political changes in all these political turbulences, which is why women should do it. They should be a factor that will have a decisive influence to make a significant step towards political change and to be able to finally create the conditions to be a democratic and prosperous country.

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NADA DROBNJAK, DPS

**I would like** to quote Margaret Thatcher: "If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done - ask a woman". That is proving to be the case in Montenegro. When it comes to democracy, we would not put an important area of work on hold, we would deal with it instead. The question of gender equality cannot wait while we are putting some other processes in place/other things are being done/other processes are put in place. There is no need to debate that the position of women in a society is a political question.

It is also necessary to promote the networking of women from different parties. Furthermore, it is important that the women groups within the parties are strengthened. They must have a clearly defined program and clear financial resources within their respective parties. The connection of women's groups and young people within parties is necessary.

In order to achieve gender equality in Montenegro, for starters it is sufficient to respect the laws. A major contribution of political parties is necessary in order to make a number of women in decision-making positions sustainable and in order for women to take on a share of responsibility, authority and power which is due to them. For that reason, I am glad that we have heard from the party leaders today that this is an important issue for them, and that they will advocate for more women in decision-making positions.

Today we have heard again that women should dedicate themselves to family. Yes, but men also have to equally participate in raising family. As responsible male and female politicians, we have to put on the agenda a role distribution in a private sphere, so that we can reach equality in the public sphere.

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BRANKA BOSNJAK, PZP

**A lot has been said** on this topic, but little has been done. Our efforts to achieve gender equality are more declarative than fundamental. However, the progress can be seen. We are saying that the solidarity of women should be greater, which I fully agree with. However I am afraid that this is not possible, because everything is under a huge influence of politics and parties.

Gender statistics are better because we have introduced quotas, but all those who took part in the amendments to the law know that there was a great discussion about this issue and that quotas would not have been introduced without the pressure of international community. What hurt me badly, regardless of what I think about the law on mothers, what we call it, was the attitude towards these women. I was mostly hurt by the lack of solidarity with these women by those entering/joining the parliament. This attitude of superiority is illustration of the moral degradation of Montenegro. Even then I did not see solidarity between women themselves. I think all depends on us. Our position will reflect our desire to be active. I am aware that many women do not have time to engage more actively in politics. But the quota system is stimulating and 40 percent quota should be our target.

I call on all my fellow women parliamentarians to become louder and show more solidarity: to step out of the party shackles.

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LJILJANA DJURASKOVIC, NEW SERBIAN DEMOCRACY (NOVA)

**There is** a lot of prejudice about women in Montenegro, which need to be broken. The first one is that politics is purely a male profession and that women are not interested in politics. Or they take decision-making positions using their female attributes, rather than their qualities, that they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to be engaged in politics. However, women are disciplined, persistent, non-bribeable, good and patient

negotiators, brave and responsible.

The goal of gender equality is not the dominance of women in politics, but the division of responsibilities between the sexes. The introduced quotas are not discrimination, but the compensation of existing barriers that prevent women from taking a share in politics, fair and square. The media shape the perception of the public and can help by raising awareness of citizens about the acceptance of women in politics.

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## ZDENKA POPOVIC, DEMOCRATIC MONTENEGRO

**I have** to make a comment that the President of the Parliament left this event when he was supposed to have listened to the voice of the women. That is highly inappropriate, even though it is possible that he has other pressing engagements. Still, he should have been here to hear the voice of the women.

The question of gender equality seems to be lacking in priority in a situation where we have enormous economic, social and political problems. Still, this question can not be postponed anymore. There is no rational reason for women the under-representation of women in politics, because it is a stereotype that women don't want to be engaged in politics, that men are better at it and that a woman has to devote herself to home and family.

The only limiting factor is the lack of time. I agree that an informal group should be formed including all female MPs regardless of political affiliation. This group would monitor the preparation and implementation of legal solutions, especially in the fields of education, health, and violence against women. However, I am afraid that there is no solidarity, and that the party captivity is stronger.

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## ANKA VUKICEVIC, DEMOS

**The attitude** towards women in politics in Montenegro is the same as the attitude in society, and family. But we live in a time of change and I hope that the change in this field will occur much faster than before. The topic of equality and participation of women in politics is most often current within a project such as this one or on the eve of the election, when counting whether the quotas were met. The media can play a major role in affirming a greater number of women in politics. This topic has to remain on the agenda continuously. This is the only way to make the results visible. I can't help but draw your attention to the labour rights of women. I was fired once only because I was pregnant. Fifteen years later, women's labour rights are much worse than they were at the time. It is the duty of male and female politicians to not only deal with processes and phenomena, but also with individual cases, because every woman must have our protection.

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## MIREL RADIC-LJUBISAVLJEVIC, SDP

I thank the organizers for persisting with addressing this topic. Last time you managed to bring around one table all women representatives of different political parties. This time you made a step forward; in addition to women representative we now have with us party leaders too. I am sure that the next step will be to identify those who are not with us. I encourage you to continue in this direction. Women in today society have much more courage to show that something does not work and that they are not afraid. I am sure that women will be the ones to lead changes that are visible in society. We must reach solidarity in this area. Events like this and informal networking are necessary.

How can we demand from women to get involved in politics when they are legally disadvantaged and marginalized

to such an extent? When they experience financial hardships, when they work Saturday and Sundays, when the welfare of the whole family is on their shoulders? We have not created conditions for women to get involved in politics.

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## VALERIJA SAVELJIC, URA

I have never considered that gender equality is something that should be given to women, but something that belongs to them and that they should fight it out on their own starting from the family, through workplace, to the political scene.

Despite making up 50 percent of electorate in Montenegro, women are not proportionally represented in a public or political life. In URA, we are committed to reaching this percentage in order for Montenegro to become a better place for everyone.

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## MARIJA BLAGOJEVIC, SD

Perhaps I am overly optimistic, but the whole story about the lack of consent is invalid, because it is denied by everything that my predecessors spoke about. We have a minimum consent regarding these issues.

We have a problem with representation, the image sent to the media, and labour rights. Quotas are highly needed in the upcoming period until we reach the necessary representation of women in parliament, which is 50 percent of the number of women in the society.

The process of achieving full equality must go in several directions. One is legal, and we have achieved it in some way. Another one is the level of education and upbringing. We will be facing gender stereotypes until we discourage them into the education system, and raise girls and boys to be equal.

Economic independence of women is a major problem in Montenegro and a prerequisite to get engaged in politics. All parties can proudly talk about active women, but I think that we need to build internal capacities and to encourage women not only to get involved in politics, but also to conduct policies from a woman's perspective. Finally, I would like to note that the role of the media is particularly important in achieving gender equality.

# DISCUSSION

**Marina Jovic**, MP from Nova, highlighted that there is a fear of engaging in politics, and that the party visited and identified more than 200 women who were ready to engage in politics during the past year.

**Jelena Colakovic** from NGO *Juventas* said that stereotypes are still present, and that they could have also been heard during the debate - that women should not deal with corruption because it is dangerous, that women should be a model of modesty, and similar attitudes, and that she would like to see a change in that discourse.

**Aida Petrovic** from the Montenegrin Women's Lobby believes that the message is sent subtly that politics is a difficult job, and that women should be involved in some other business.

**Ljiljana Raicevic**, director of the Safe Women's House, warned that in the last few years there was a considerable misogyny in Montenegro, and that that was not the case even in the 1990s. She said that solidarity was needed more than ever.



## MAJA RAICEVIC, Director of Women's Rights Centre

Despite making 50.6% of the population, women in Montenegro take only 19 out of 81 seats in the Parliament. The most senior positions in the Parliament are covered by men. Women are heading only three of the 14 parliamentary committees. There are only four female ministers in the Government, and the Prime Minister and all three deputy prime ministers are men. There are 26.3% of women in local assemblies. Of the 23 municipalities, only three are headed by women.

After the quota system has introduced a guaranteed share of 30 percent of women on the voting lists, the expected results have not been achieved - women won only 17% of the seats in the national Parliament in the 2012 parliamentary election, since the parties placed most of the candidates at the bottom of the voting lists. Therefore, a legal obligation for parties was introduced in 2014, to have at least one woman among the four candidates on the electoral list. This also included additional safeguards that, if needed, a woman will be replaced by the next woman, in line with the electoral list order.

It was difficult to reach a compromise for the current legal solution. These amendments, after the parliamentary elections in 2016 resulted in the increased number of women in the Parliament to the current 23.5% and at the local level from 15% to 26.3%. The percentage of women in the Government has actually been reduced due to the increase in the total number of members of the Government

compared to the previous convocation. It is obvious that measures aimed at strengthening the participation of women in the political and public life of the country have a very limited result. The lack of progress in this area is the result of the obvious lack of political will.

Political parties have one of the key roles for improving the participation of women in public and political life. Obstacles such as direct or indirect discrimination against women, unequal distribution of party resources, the lack of affirmative measures in the party's statutes, are some of the complex challenges faced by women within the parties. The great responsibility lies with the leaders of parties who should encourage the integration of gender aspects into the decision-making process within the parties, and the ability of women to promote their political careers and to make them visible. For this to happen, it is not enough to educate women from parties, but to regulate the internal functioning of parties in order to act in a more democratic manner. It is particularly important for female politicians to work together, and to cooperate with civil society. Therefore, I would like to conclude today's discussion with a call for solidarity and cooperation, which is, as demonstrated by the practice of states that have made great progress in the area of gender equality, the only way to achieve progress and to have women take the place that belongs to them in the political and public life of Montenegro.

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# Citizens' perception on the role of women in politics, electoral process, their representation in the political life of Montenegro

Project  
"Women for Election(s),  
Women for Democracy"

Public opinion poll on  
the role of women in  
politics in Montenegro  
Conducted September  
2016

# Methodology

<b>Realization:</b>	<b>Survey conducted: 20 September to 3 October 2016</b>
Sample frame:	Montenegrin population aged 18+; assessment of population based on the 2011 census and statistics on birth and death from 2011 to 2014
Sample size:	808 respondents
Sample type:	Three-stage random representative stratified sample
	Stratification: Type of settlement (village/town), sex and age
	First stage unit: Territory (municipality divided based on the type of settlement) the size proportional to the number of inhabitants.
	Second stage unit: Households (randomly selected telephone numbers)
	Third stage unit: Respondent within households (first birthday, combined with quotas on sex and age groups)
Type of survey:	One-time, CATI (phone survey); questionnaire averaging 7 minutes in length
Place of survey:	16 municipalities in Montenegro, allocation by municipalities proportionate to the number of inhabitants.
Poststratification:	Gender, age, type of settlement
Error:	$\pm 3.45\%$ for occurrences with an incidence of 50%, confidence level 95% ( <i>margin of error</i> )

## Sampling error

Incidence	Error
1%	0.69%
3%	1.18%
5%	1.50%
10%	2.07%
15%	2.46%
20%	2.76%
25%	2.99%
30%	3.16%
35%	3.29%
40%	3.38%
45%	3.43%
50%	3.45%

# Key Findings

Although there has been an increase in the representation of women in politics in Montenegro, the majority of the population believe that the current distribution of political power between men and women is not acceptable.

\* 90.3% of respondents find it acceptable that women engage in politics.

\* 85.3% believe that men are more represented in the political life of Montenegro.

\* 54% of respondents see the present distribution in politics between men and women is not acceptable, while 41.8% find that it is.

\* 75.5% of respondents think that there has been progress in the participation of women in politics over the last 5 years. 68.5% of those who believe that there has been progress think there are not enough women involved in politics in Montenegro.

\* 54.8% believe that men are in better economic position than women, while only 8.8% find that women have an advantage over men in this field.

If the top leadership positions in the country were held by women,

\* 87.4% of the citizens, agree to fully agree that : the quality of child protection would improve

\* 79.5% of citizens, agree to fully agree that : human rights would be more respected

\* 74% of citizens, agree to fully agree that: the state would invest more in achieving social justice

\* 70.5% of citizens, agree to fully agree that : there would be less corruption 65.7% of citizens, agree to fully agree that : the economic position of the population would improve

\* 65.6% of citizens, agree to fully agree that: the institutions of the system would develop faster towards meeting the needs of citizens

If the top leadership positions in the country were held by women:.

\* 60,5% of respondents believe that reforms would be carried out faster

\* 36% of respondents agreed that it would strengthen the role of the army and the police, while 46,4% disagreed.

\* 64.8% of respondents believe it would bring change to Montenegro.

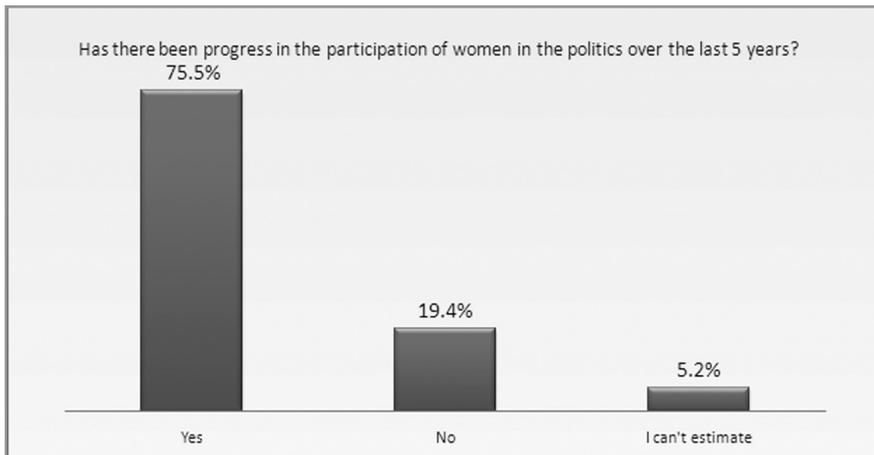
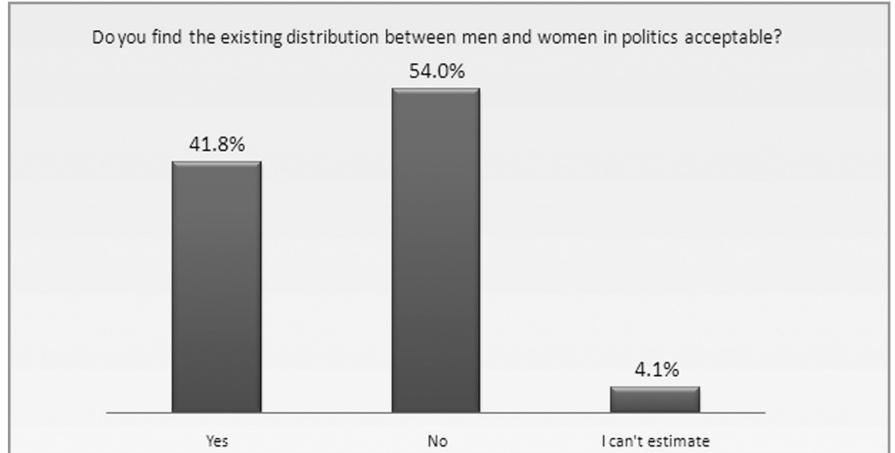
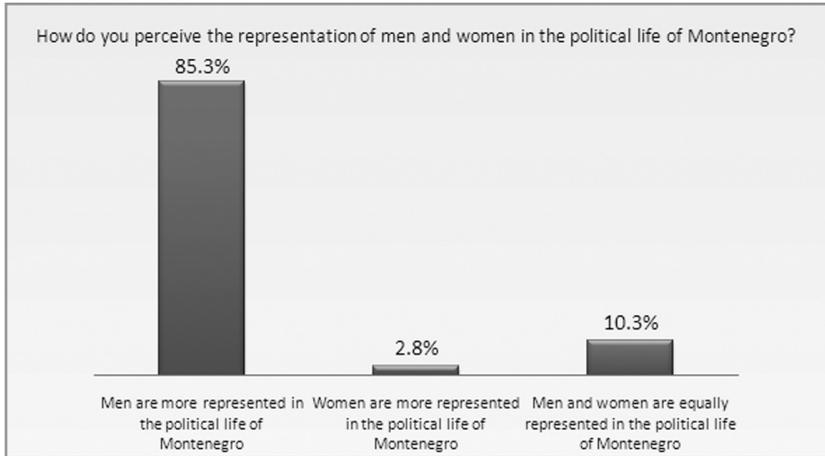
\* 75% of respondents thought that the introduction of female quotas, i.e. the minimum percentage of female candidates on the electoral lists, is necessary for improving the position of women in politics.

\* 63.4% of respondents agreed that there should be more women on the lists (while 1.8% think that there are enough women on the lists of political parties)

\* 82.3% of the respondents agreed it would be beneficial for a Montenegrin society if one of the political lists is headed by a woman. 12.6% of respondents disagreed

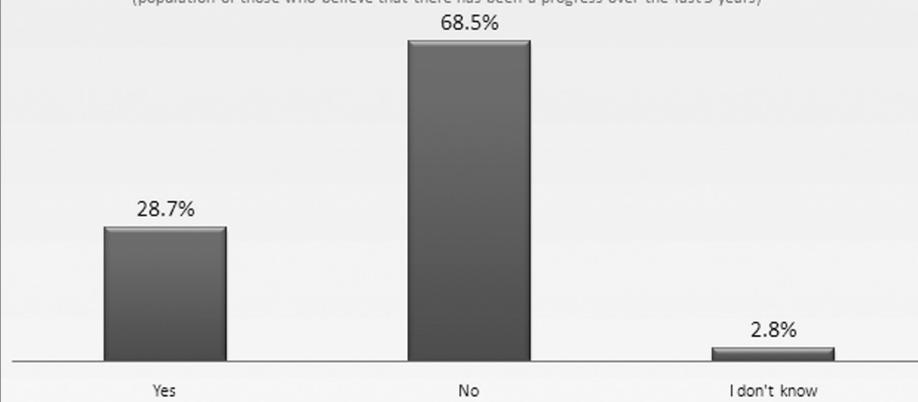
\* 49% of respondents thought that active politicians are not fighting enough to include women in the political life of Montenegro, while 42.7% think they are. More than half of respondents, 50.6% thought that women who are engaged in politics are not sufficiently represented in the media in Montenegro, while 41.7% think they are.

# Results

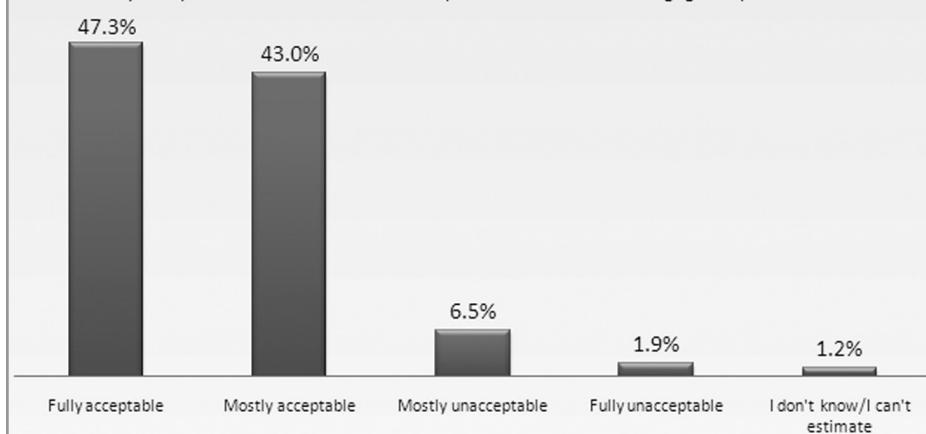


Generally speaking, do you find that there is a sufficient number of women engaged in politics in Montenegro?

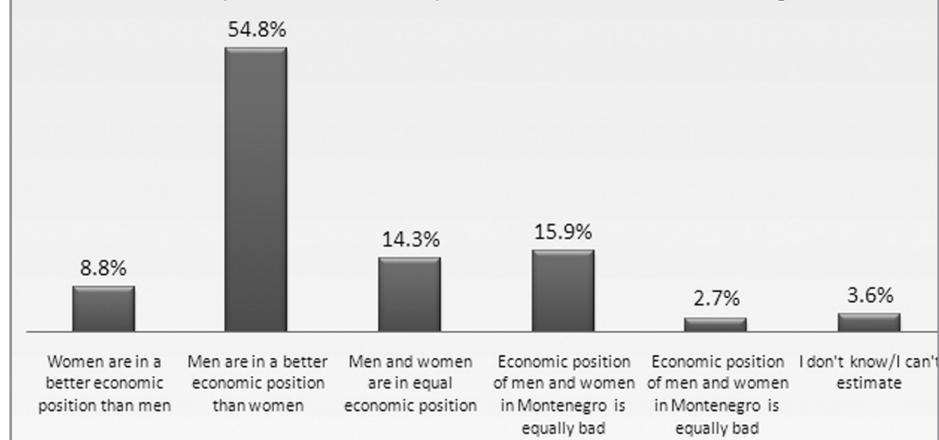
(population of those who believe that there has been a progress over the last 5 years)

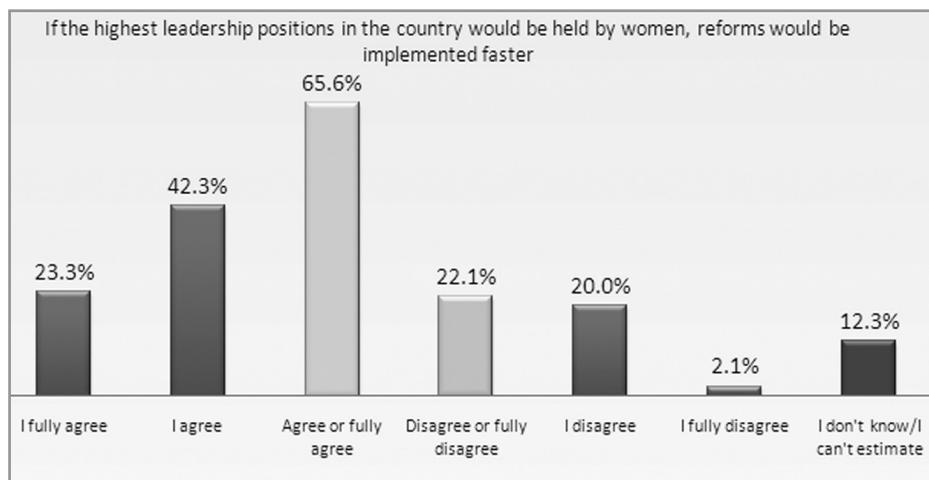
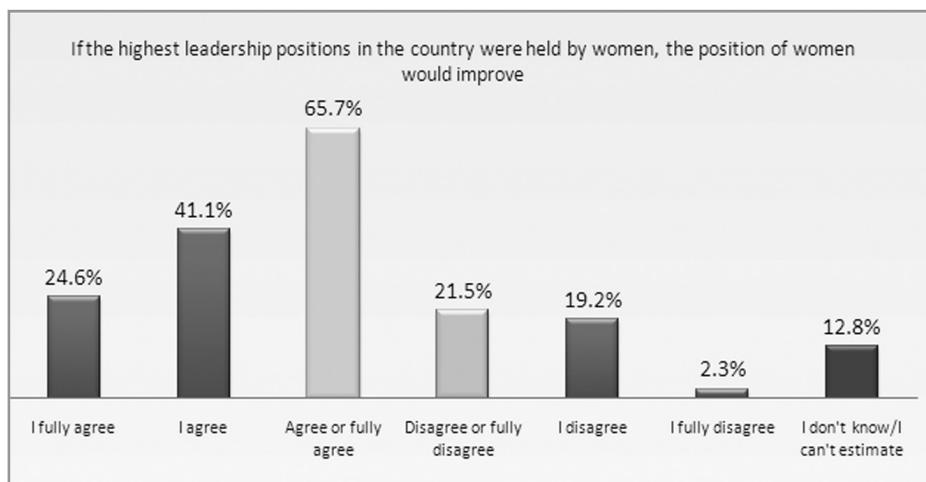
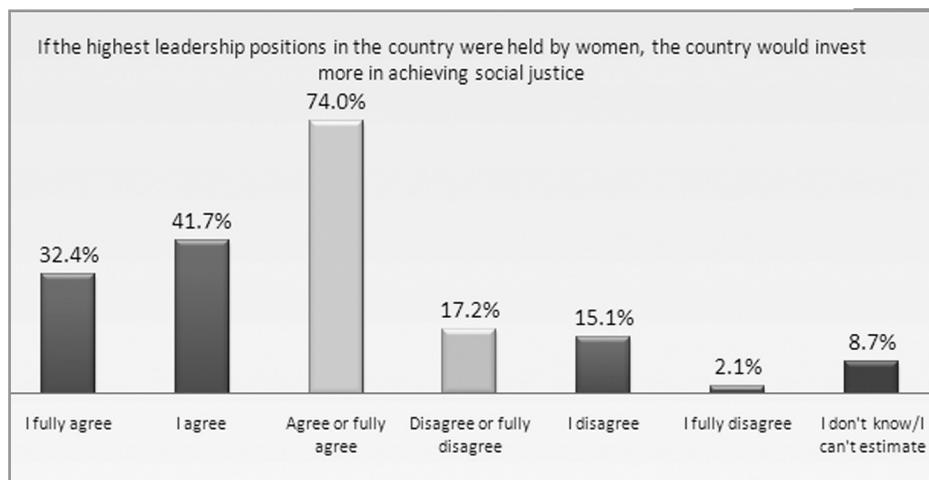


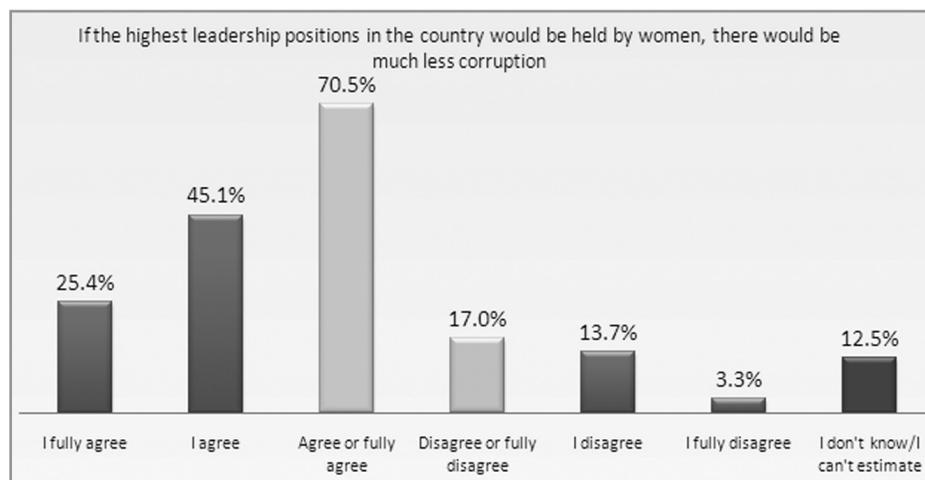
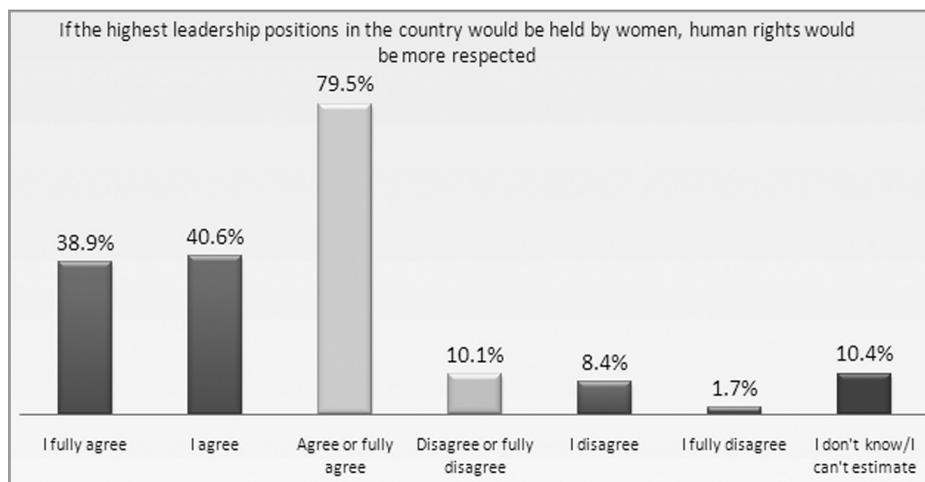
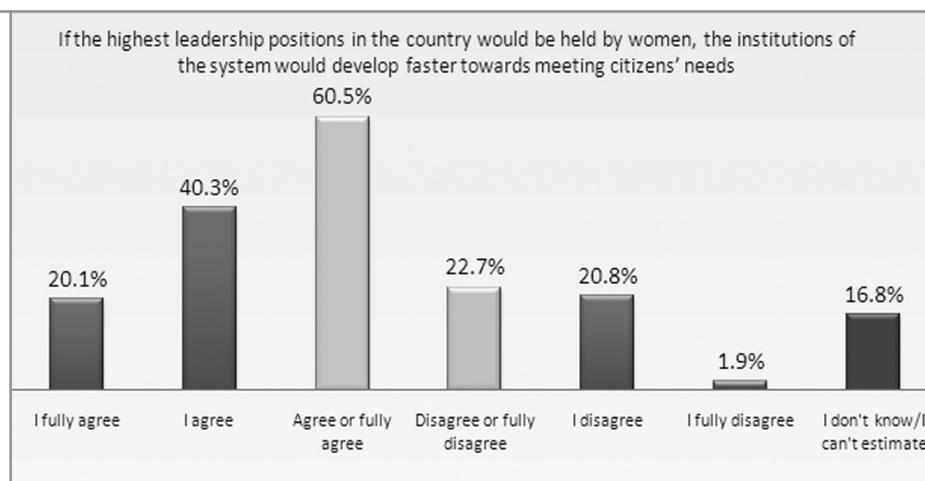
In your opinion, to what extent is it acceptable that women are engaged in politics?

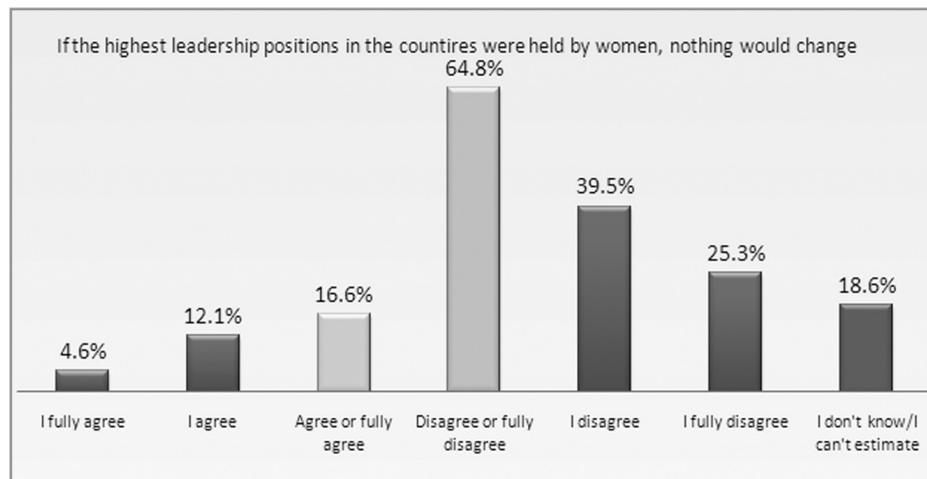
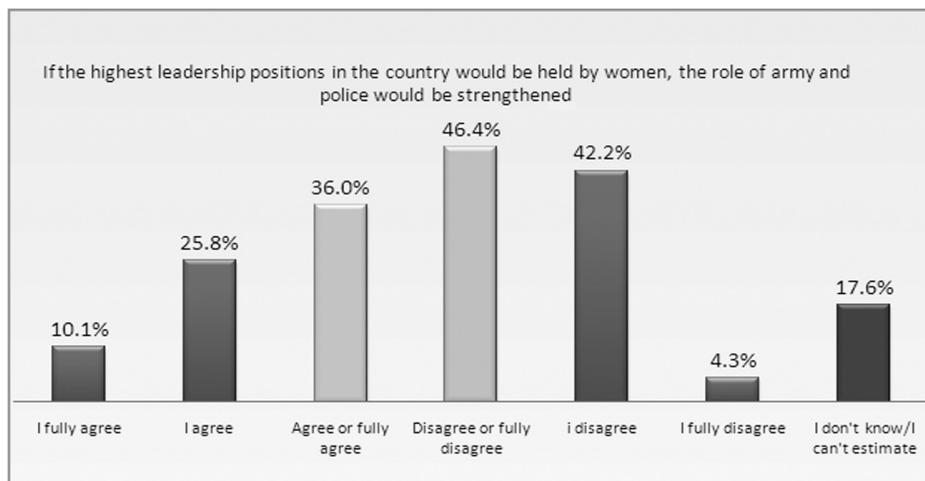
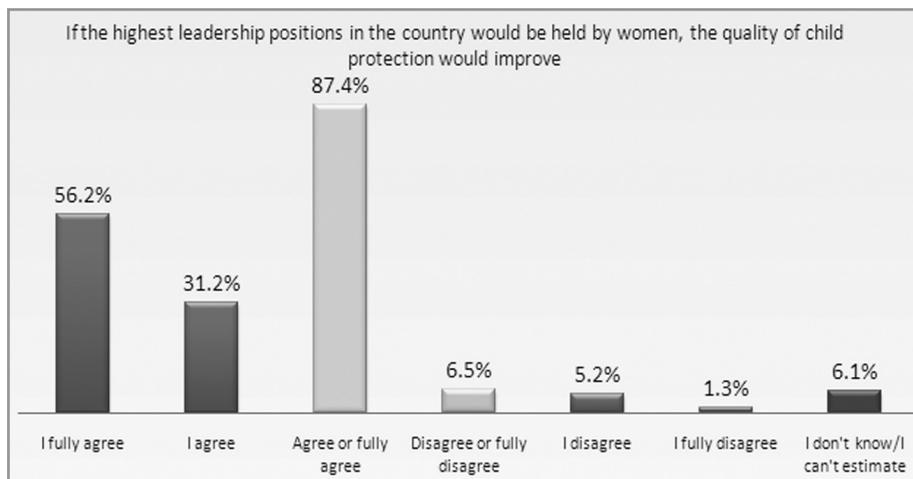


How would you assess the economic position of men and women in Montenegro?

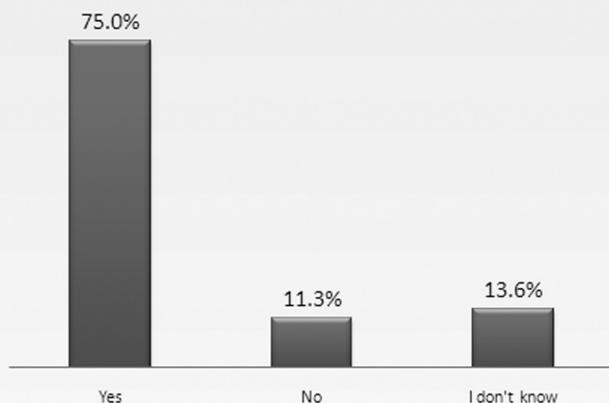




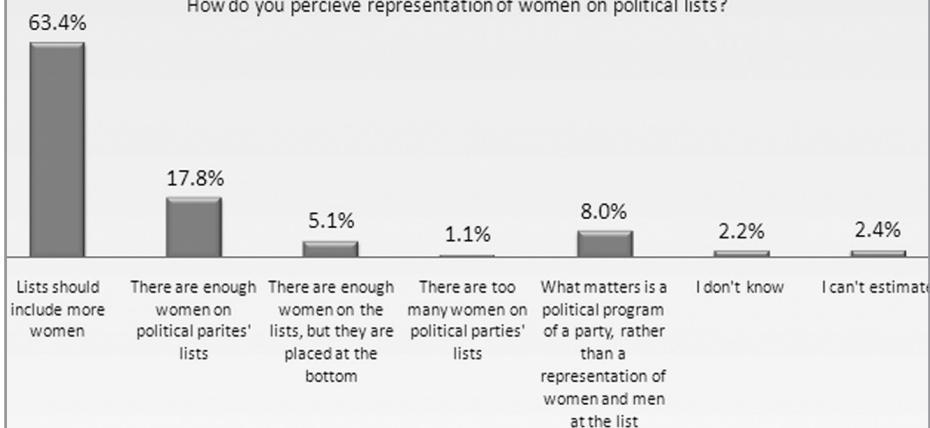




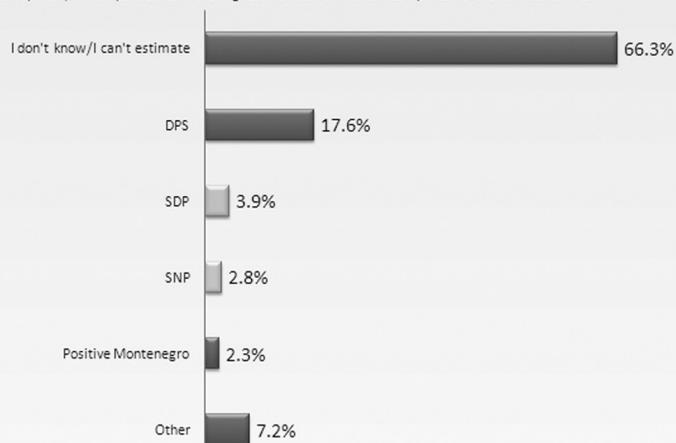
Do you find that the introduction of women quotas, i.e. a minimum percentage of female candidates on electoral lists necessary for improving the position of women in politics?

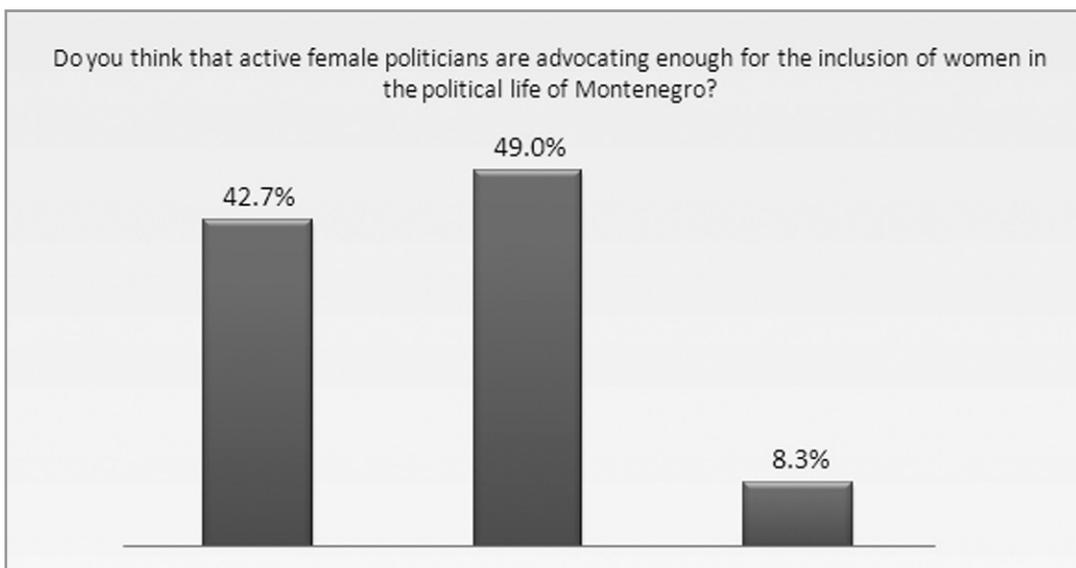
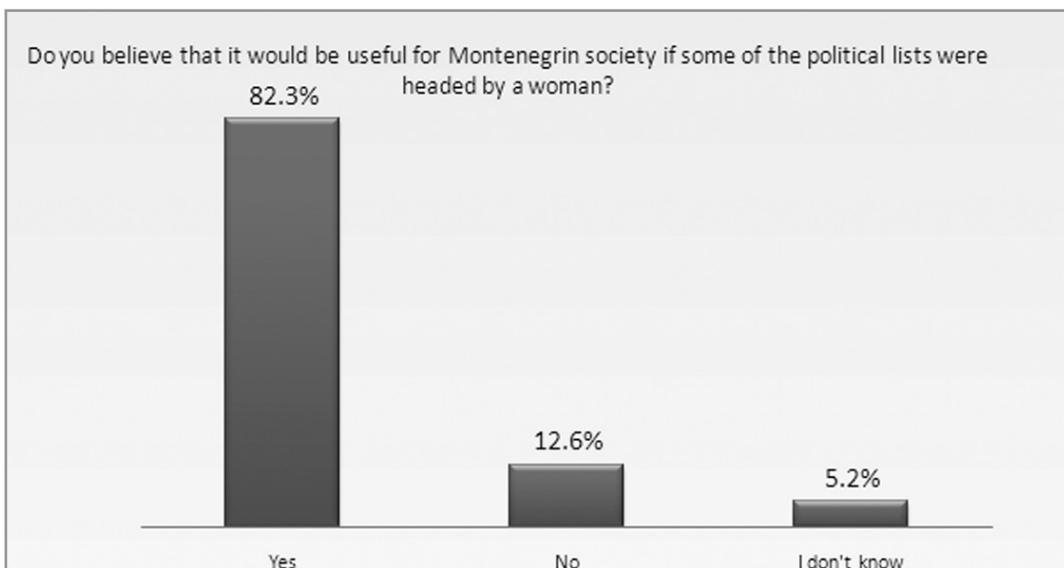


How do you perceive representation of women on political lists?

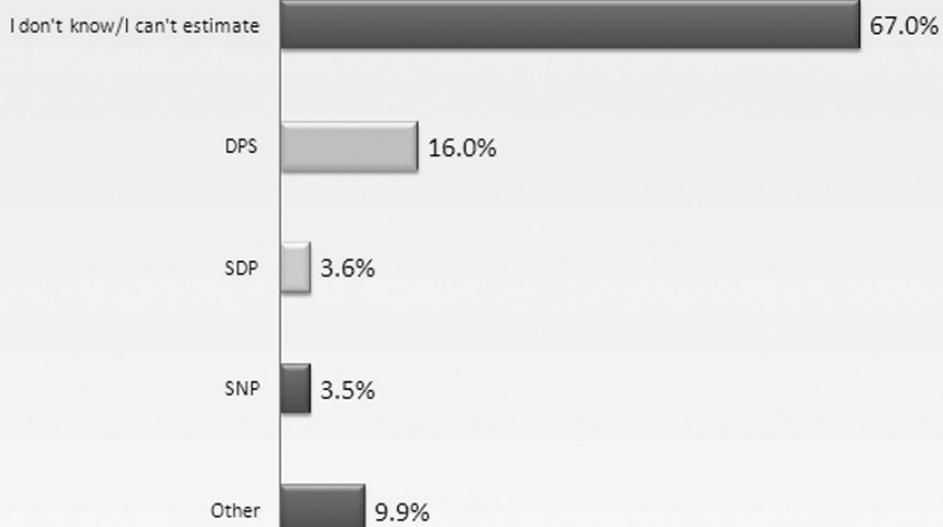


In your opinion, which parties have the highest number of women compared to the number of men?





In your opinion, which political party best recognizes the needs of women and advocates their rights and interests



Do you find that women engaged in politics are sufficiently represented in the Montenegrin media?

