

**Policy paper**

**Gender (in)equality – Local elections  
Kosovo 2017**

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## Abstract

This research investigated gender representation in the 2017 local elections held in the northern Kosovo. The aim of the research was to analyse gender representation in order to create a policy paper that will improve gender equality in the future elections in Kosovo. The previous research and monitoring of the electoral processes in Kosovo have shown that representation of women in the entire process was at the worrisome level<sup>1</sup>. In addition, even though Kosovo has admirable legislative, its implementation in the field remains questionable. Paper contains both secondary and primary data. The findings indicate that although there were some improvements regarding women's representation in the elections, there is still evident gender inequality.

This project is financed by the grant of United States Embassy in Prishtina. Opinions, attitudes, conclusions, or recommendations included in this publication belong to authors and do not necessarily express opinions of State Department.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://enemo.eu/uploads/file-manager/Missions/Kosovo-2013-Municipal-Local-Elections/ENEMO%20EOM%20KOSOVO%20LOCAL%20ELECTIONS%202013%20-%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>  
<http://www.kas.de/kosovo/en/publications/36704/>

## **Background**

Modern democracy is unimaginable if it does not include the equal participation of men and women in decision-making processes in public, as well as in the political life. Although women are more than half of the total population, centuries of fighting were needed in to ensure their right to vote. The struggle for their emancipation was hard, exhausting and extremely long. The desire and the ability of women to become more involved in political life depend on many factors, starting from the educational, professional and social status, development of democratic institutions, influence of women's organizations, and the assessment of the possibilities for support in the election campaign. Women's decision to run for political positions and the importance of environment to accept women's candidacy is influenced by traditional perceptions, prejudices towards women, which are affecting women's self-confidence and their desire to participate in political life. Ignoring women, society loses because it does not use the capacities, knowledge and other resources of half of the population.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2017 President Hasim Taci brought decision that elections for local self-governments will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2017. The Kosovo President ordered the Central Election Commission to take all necessary actions to organize and hold local elections, in accordance with the decisions and legislation in force.

This were 7<sup>th</sup> Local Elections to be held in Kosovo, all of the political entities had on disposal two months for submitting the request for confirmation of wish to participate in Local

Elections for the Presidents of the Municipalities and Municipal Assemblies. During this two-month period (22 June - 22 August), a total of 91 applicants were registered as it follows:

- 35 Political Parties
- 1 Coalition
- 30 Civic Initiatives
- 25 Independent Candidates

When it comes to the Northern Municipalities, North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok, Leposavic there where:

- 9 Political Parties
- 1 Coalition
- 6 Civic Initiatives

Total number of candidates in Northern Municipalities was 312.

## Legislative

Kosovo legislative is modelled on international recognized standards, therefore it could be heard by the many state officials and relative bodies that Kosovo has great legislative on the paper but in the field it is not even close to the modern democratic standards. While speaking about gender equality regarding the electoral processes it is enshrined in many Kosovo legal instruments, starting from the main pillar of legislative Constitution of Republic of Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, to The Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo (2008)<sup>3</sup>, and the last but not the least The Law on Gender Equality (2015)<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, gender equality is highly presented in almost every single article in the instruments mentioned above, but the most relevant articles are:

### Constitution of Republic of Kosovo:

Article 7.2 – “The Republic of Kosovo ensures gender equality as a fundamental value for the democratic development of the society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other areas of societal life.”

Article 101.1 – “The composition of the civil service shall reflect the diversity of the people of Kosovo and take into account internationally recognized principles of gender equality.”

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008\\_03-L073\\_en.pdf](http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L073_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/05-L-020%20a.pdf>

## The Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo:

Article 27.1 – “In each Political Entity’s candidate list, at least thirty (30%) percent shall be male and at least thirty (30%) percent shall be female, with one candidate from each gender included at least once in each group of three candidates, counting from the first candidate in the list”

## The Law on Gender Equality

Article 6.8 - "Equal gender representation in all legislative, executive and judiciary bodies and other public institutions is achieved when ensured a minimum representation of fifty percent (50%) for each gender, including their governing and decision-making bodies".

Article 5.1 – “In order to prevent and eliminate gender Manual for Gender Equality in the Electoral Process discrimination and achieve gender equality, Republic of Kosovo Institutions which include bodies at all levels of legislative, executive, judicial and other public institutions shall be responsible to implement legislative and other measures including:

1.1. Analyzing the status of women and men in the respective organization and field;

1.2. Adoption of strategies and action plans for the promotion and establishment of gender equality in accordance with the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality;

1.3. Gender mainstreaming of all policies, documents and legislation;

1.4. Ensuring that the selection, recruitment and appointment processes, including for leading positions, are in line with the requirement for equal representation of women and men;

1.5. Inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in collecting, distribution and allocation of resources;

1.6. Ensuring equal representation of women and men in all conferences, meetings, seminars and trainings inside and outside the country;

1.7. Allocating adequate human and financial resources to programs, projects and initiatives for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.8. Gender division of all data and collected statistical information shall be recorded, registered, processed and shall be obliged to submit these data to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics.”

## **Methodology**

This is a qualitative study in which both secondary data and observation were used for analysis. Collection of secondary data consisted of researching previously conducted analysis of the elections in Kosovo. For the collection of the primary data, ACDC hired monitoring expert who monitored all the activities organized by the political subjects during the election campaign in the north of Kosovo, as well as the media reporting from the previous elections.

Monitoring team has monitored all of the campaign activities in four northern municipalities including:

- Street actions
- Press conferences
- Public discussions
- Door to door campaign

When it comes to media campaign and presence of female candidates in it, ACDC team was monitoring most popular media that are broadcasting their channels throughout North of Kosovo.

Media covered were:

RTV Mir – Leposavic

TV Most – Zvecan

Radio Kontakt Plus – North Mitrovica

Kossev Portal

Dankos TV

RTV KISS

Overall conclusion is that Political Subjects were not very active in media during campaign, given the low number of organized campaign activities, especially on media. Even though Political Subjects were not very present in media, representation of woman was even worst. Media appearance was mainly by the candidates for mayors. It can be concluded that female candidates had no adequate space in media. All of the media attention was focused on candidates for mayors, candidates for Municipal Assemblies were almost invisible.

From the all of the monitored Media, only RTV Mir had kind of woman presentation and that was supported by the project “Encouraging the active participation of women in local elections”.

The primary responsibility for increasing political participation of women is on political parties. They deal with issues of gender equality declaratively and very conservative, most often limiting and pointing out only to their reproductive role. Politicians in the media often talk about women using stereotyped models, such as those that are more often burdened by the state and less as individuals who contribute to the development of society (women entrepreneurs, experts, scientists). Therefore, it is necessary to take systematic steps in order to achieve long-term changes.

## Results:

### Candidates by gender Local Elections 2017



If we compare gender balance with Local Elections in 2013 it could be seen slight increase of woman presents on the lists of political subjects. Even though number of woman on the lists did not grow, percent did, given that there were 245 male and 122 female candidates in 2013, and there were 199 male candidates and 113 female candidates in 2017.

## Candidates by gender - Local Elections 2013



When it comes to gender equality by the respective municipalities, statistics are worrisome, given that almost all of the parties had woman present in proportion that could barely meet the quotas enshrined in the Kosovo legislation. Mentioned fact leads to feeling that voice and representation of woman are artificial rather than nature and of free will.

## Gender equality by Municipalities:

More less representation of female candidates among the Political Subjects on the North was the same, proportion of gender by the municipalities was as it follows:

### North Mitrovica :

#### Candidates by gender - Municipality of Mitrovica North



As it could be seen from the graphicone above, in Muncapality of Mitrovica North there were 39% of female candidates which is more than quota of 30%, when it comes to male candidates there was 61% of male candidates

**Zvecan:**

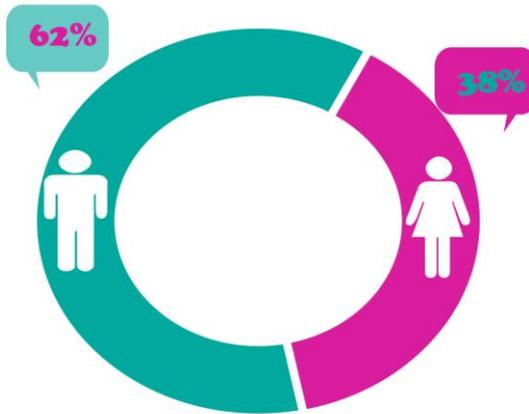
**Candidates by gender - Municipality of Zvecan**



In the municipality of Zvecan, the situation is quite different, percent of female candidates was 30% , while percent of male candidates was 70%.

**Leposavic:**

**Candidates by gender - Municipality of Leposavic**



In municipality of Leposavic, there were 38% of female candidates and 62% of male candidates.

## Zubin Potok:

### Candidates by gender - Municipality of Zubin Potok



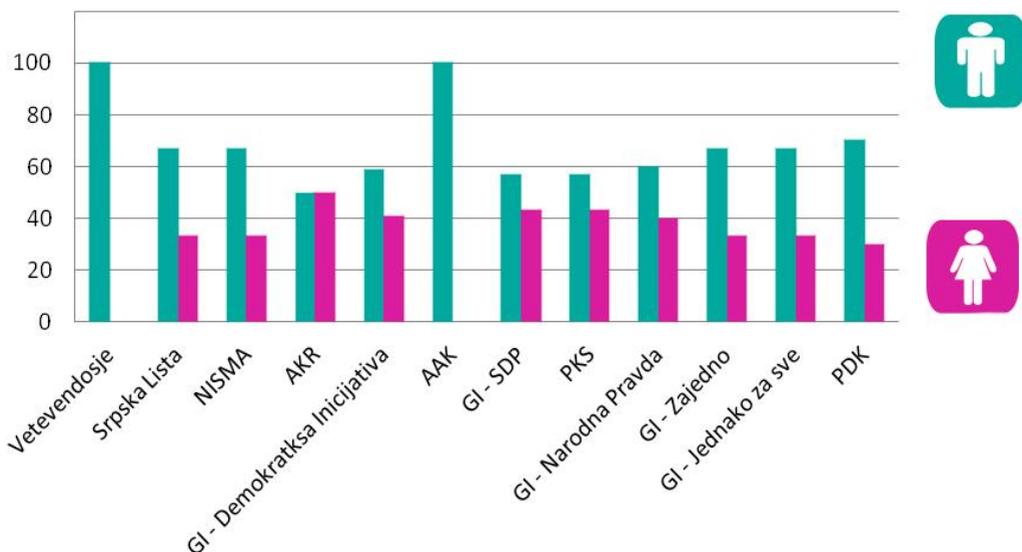
When it comes to Municipality of Zubin Potok it numbered 34% of women candidates and 66% of male candidates.

Above proved charts are showing that the municipality of Mitrovica had the highest number of registered candidates (39%), while the municipality of Leposavić was second (38%), third was the municipality of Zubin Potok (34%) and the least with a lowest number of registered female candidates was the municipality was Zvecan (30%).

From the results mentioned above it can be concluded that representation of female candidates was insufficient, especially for Kosovo, given that Kosovo puts enormous

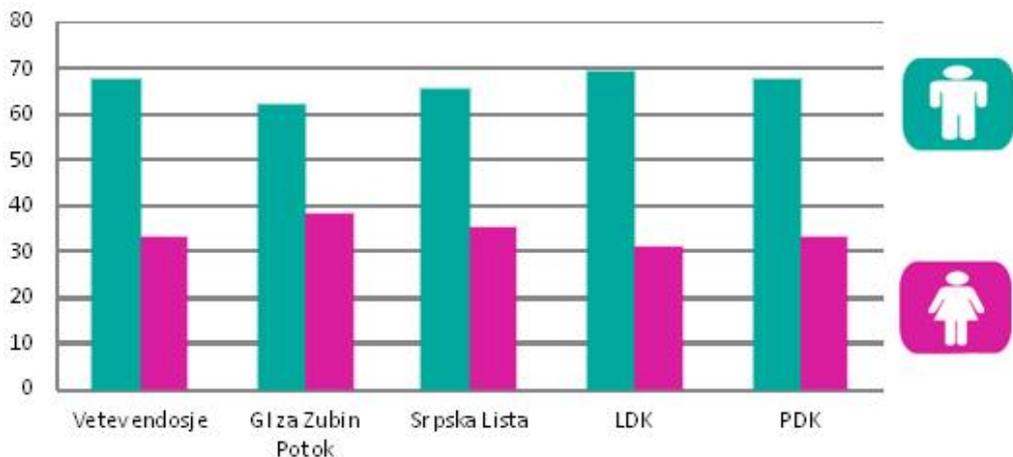
effort in order to become democratic country, respecting and promoting all of the democratic values. Even though expression "Gender equality" was mentioned a lot of times during both parliamentary and local election campaign, in the field that is not the case. Once again we are witnessing the dominant discourse in Kosovo society which reflects in the patriarchal upbringing and traditional gender roles. The fact is that society in Kosovo see political activity as men's work. More numerous candidacy of female is first step in order to ensure their more extensive participation in public sphere. All of the mentioned above should be preceded by the change in current perceptions of the majority of citizens that politics is "male" activity, which certainly has a negative impact on the final selection of women in positions of responsibility. Even though quotas for gender equality were met by almost every Political Subject in North of Kosovo, gender equality was far away from satisfying. Below are presented percent of male and female by each and every Political Subject from the North of Kosovo.

## Gender equality by the Political Subjects - Municipality of Leposavic



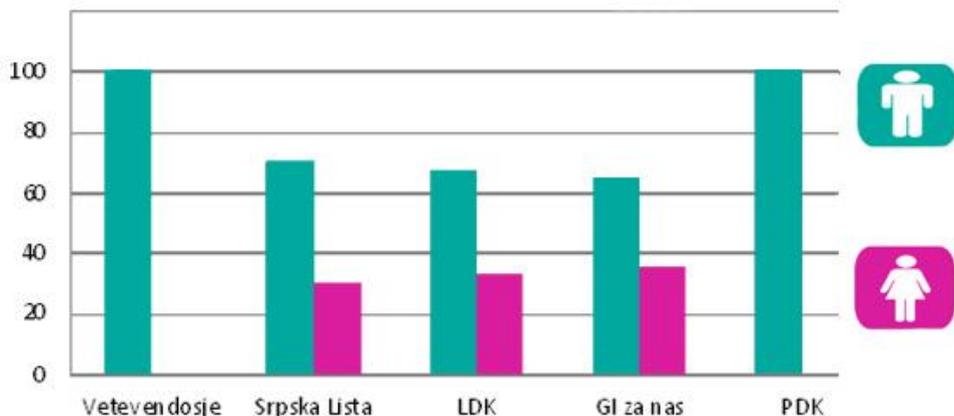
When it comes to gender quota per Political Subjects in the Leposavic municipality, the highest percentage of female candidates, in fact, equal representation of male and female candidates, had AKR. 43% of female candidates were present in GI - SDP and PKS. 41% of women's representation had GI – Demokratska inicijativa, 40% had GI Narodna Pravda, while 33% of female candidates had the largest number of political subjects including: Srpska Lista, NISMA, GI - Zajedno and GI – Jednako za sve. The lowest representation of female candidates was noticed in PDK. The parties that did not have the female candidates were Vetvendosje and AAK.

## Gender equality by the Political Subjects Municipality of Zubin Potok



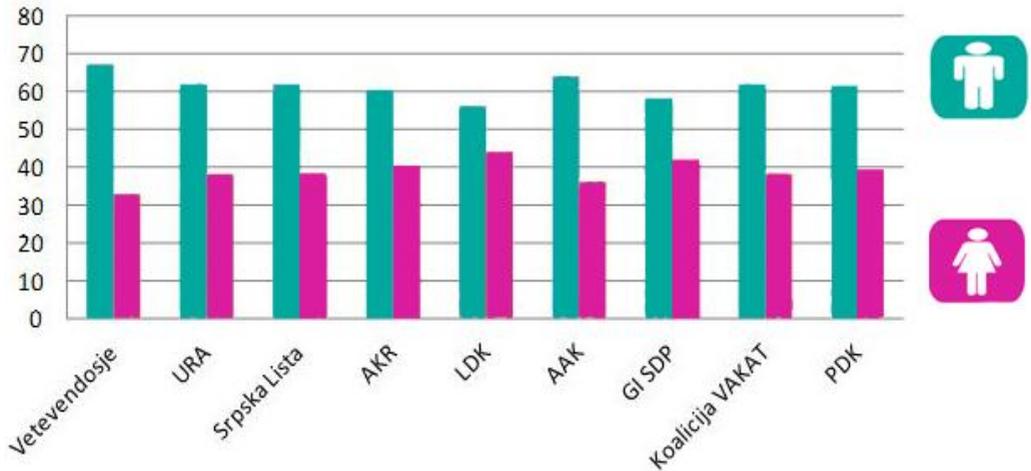
In the municipality of Zubin Potok, the representation of female candidates within the parties was distributed as it follows: Political Subject with the highest representation of female candidates of 38% was GI za Zubin Potok, then the Srpska Lista with 35% of female candidates, Vetevendosje and PDK had 33% female candidates, while LDK had the lowest representation of female candidates with 31%.

## Gender equality by the Political Subjects - Municipality of Zvečan



In Municipality of Zvečan, GI za naš Zvečan had the highest representation of female candidates with 35%, LDK had 33%, while Srpska Lista had 30%, and Political Subjects Vetevendosja and PDK did not have female candidates.

## Gender equality by the Political Subjects - Municipality of North Mitrovica



In the municipality of North Mitrovica compared to other municipalities it can be concluded that the representation of female candidates was significantly higher than in other municipalities. The largest proportion of women's candidates was represent in LDK with 44%, 42% had GI SDP, 40% AKR, 39% PDK, and 38%, which was also the dominant percentage was present in Srpska Lista i Koalcija VAKAT. Political Subject that included 36% of female candidates was AAK, while the Vetvendosje had the lowest percentage of female candidates. Also worth of mentioning is even thought representation of female candidates increased their voice was not given that only one female was the Leader of the List throughout entire north of Kosovo

## **Gender structure after Local Elections in 2017**

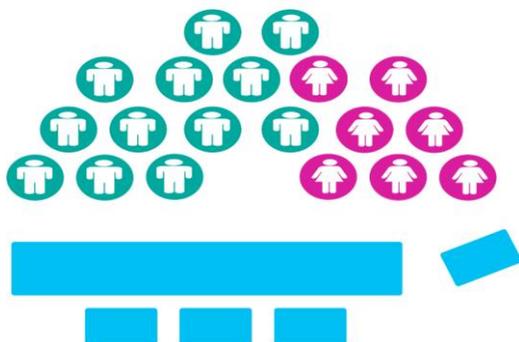
After local elections, the assemblies were assembled in all four municipalities in northern Kosovo. Out of the 19 councilors in North Mitrovica, 12 are men and 7 women, which in percentage amounts to 36.8%.

The municipalities of Zvecan, Leposavic and Zubin Potok number 13 men and 6 women out of 19 councilors, which is speaking in percentage 31.6%.

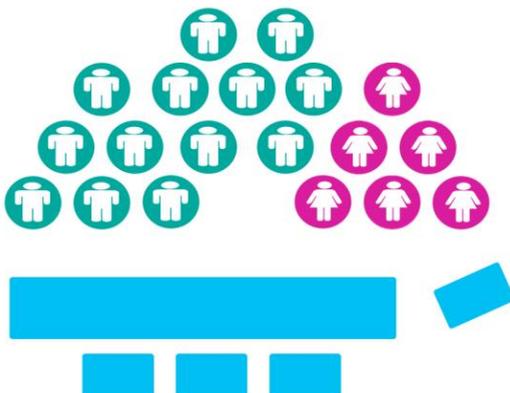
These results indicate that the municipality of North Mitrovica has distinguished from other municipalities in northern Kosovo when it comes to the increased representation of women in the assembly, and made a positive shift, compared to the previous Municipal Assembly. In addition, Municipality of Zvecan is the only one with a woman who chairs the Municipal Assembly.

## Gender structure by the Municipalities:

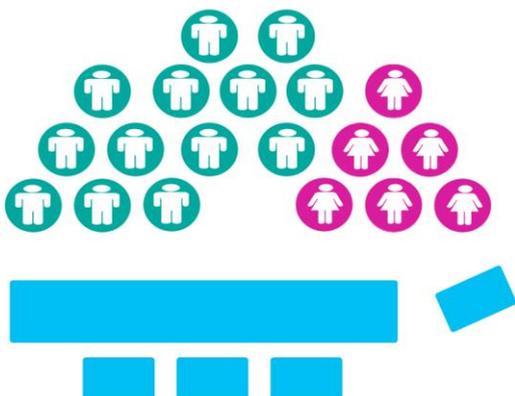
### Municipal Assembly Mitrovica North



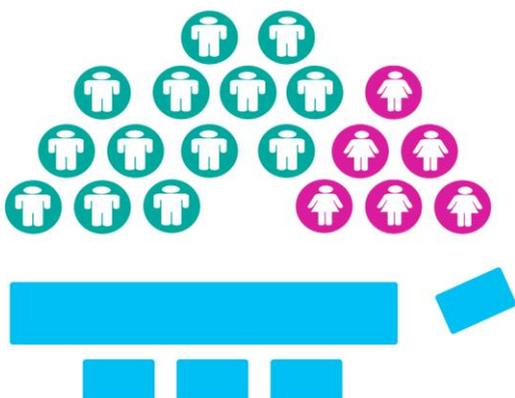
### Municipal Assembly Zvečan



## Municipal Assembly Leposavic



## Municipal Assembly Zubin Potok



## **Recommendations:**

- Political parties should launch a survey on women's voting patterns in order to understand women's preferences, priority issues, attitudes and trends. The research should also focus on women as candidates - why are they running and what obstacles they face - the role of civil society in supporting women and perceiving the public about women in politics. This research will enable the Political Subjects to develop more effective electoral strategies;
- The parties should conduct the process of finding a candidate by placing enough time ahead on this task, before future elections. The selection of candidates should be formal, clearly formulated and transparent. For example, candidates should be found more than a month before the election, and Political Subjects should develop criteria for their process of finding;
- Political Subjects should make greater efforts to keep women running in the future, especially during non-electoral cycles by involving women in activities such as training programs, round tables for policy discussion and party-level events at branch level;
- The leadership of political parties should distribute equal resources to all candidates, which would include human and financial support and exposure in the media;
- Civil society, including the media, should take measures to actively participate in the education of voters on gender sensitivity and the benefits of women's participation in politics;
- Political parties should provide gender-balanced leadership on myths, meetings and media presentations.

**Disclaimer:**

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