



## Women's Involvement in Political Processes in Georgia

On December 21, 2017, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) held a presentation of the interim results of the study titled **Gender Analysis of the Local Self-Government Elections of 2017: Main Findings and Challenges**. The study is being conducted in the framework of the project **Promoting More Competitive, Fair and Inclusive Electoral Environment for the 2016-2018 Electoral Cycle in Georgia**, which is implemented with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project aims to promote inclusive, competitive, and transparent electoral processes in Georgia.

To achieve this goal, the GYLA will study and analyze the **Georgian legislation** (including policy documents) and overview the **international standards and Georgia's international obligations with regard to women's involvement in political and electoral processes**.

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The organization will also **study the practice with regard to the realization of women's political and electoral rights**. The study will be carried out in stages, in the context of the electoral years of 2016-2018.

The main findings and challenges revealed during the study of the local self-government elections of 2017:

- The local elections of 2017 have once again confirmed that women's political participation in Georgia cannot increase in a natural way;
- As a result of the 2017 elections, the number of women candidates has increased by about 1.5% compared with the previous local self-government elections and reached 13.46%;
- Only 1 (1.56%) out of 64 elected mayors is a woman;
- The 2017 local self-government elections have once again confirmed that majoritarian elections do not help increase women's participation, because the number of women elected through the majoritarian system (8%) is considerably lower than the number of those elected through the proportional system (19.59%);
- In 22 out of 64 municipal councils, the number of women elected through the majoritarian system is 0;
- The local elections have demonstrated that the problem lies in the failure of parties to nominate women candidates in majoritarian elections rather than in the failure of voters to support them. Whenever a party nominates a woman candidate, voters vote for her. For example, in Ninotsminda, a self-governing unit populated by ethnic minorities, voters elected a woman as the mayor;
- Political parties often fail to use the gender supplement they receive for empowering women within the parties. Fifteen out of 18 political parties funded from the state budget receive the gender supplement, though the number of women in local self-government bodies is still low;
- The shortcoming of the norm on financial stimulation specifically, the lack of positioning of women in the top ten candidates of the party list prevents increasing

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the number of women in proportion with the increase in funding. We often see women in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> positions, which does not give them an opportunity to be elected, especially in local self-government elections where only 15 people are elected in municipal councils and winning parties cannot get more than five people elected;

- Representatives of political parties in the regions think that the number of women in politics  both across the country and in their region  is average (53.5%) or low (31.4%), although they don't  see this problem in their parties and believe that the number of women in their parties is average or high;
- 73% of regional representatives of parties support the introduction of mandatory gender quotas with the aim of increasing women's political participation;
- 87% of regional representatives of political parties would like to see more women in the municipal council of their municipality.

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