

# Women in Politics

## Where do we stand?

A look at the status of women's political participation across 18 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia\*



### Gender & Power

While women's representation in politics has increased in recent years across the 18 ECA countries and territories, the number of women at the highest levels of decision-making remains low.



<sup>oo</sup> Speakers of Lower Houses and Unicameral Houses of Parliament

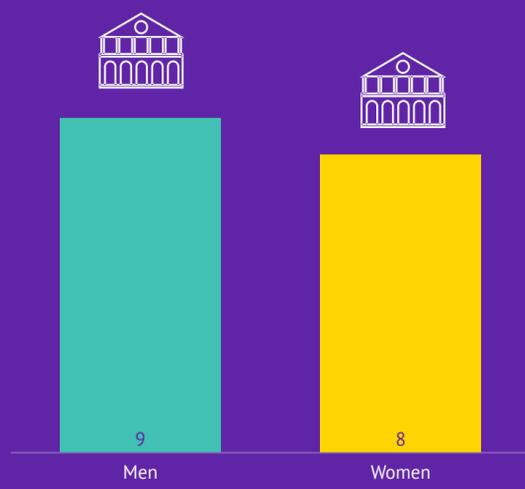


**2**  
out of 18

countries and territories across the UNDP ECA region have women Prime Ministers: Serbia and Moldova.

### Gender & Age

The youngest members of parliament show a closer split when it comes to gender, representing a shift towards more women entering politics. As of October 2022, there are eight UNDP ECA parliaments whose youngest MP is a woman.



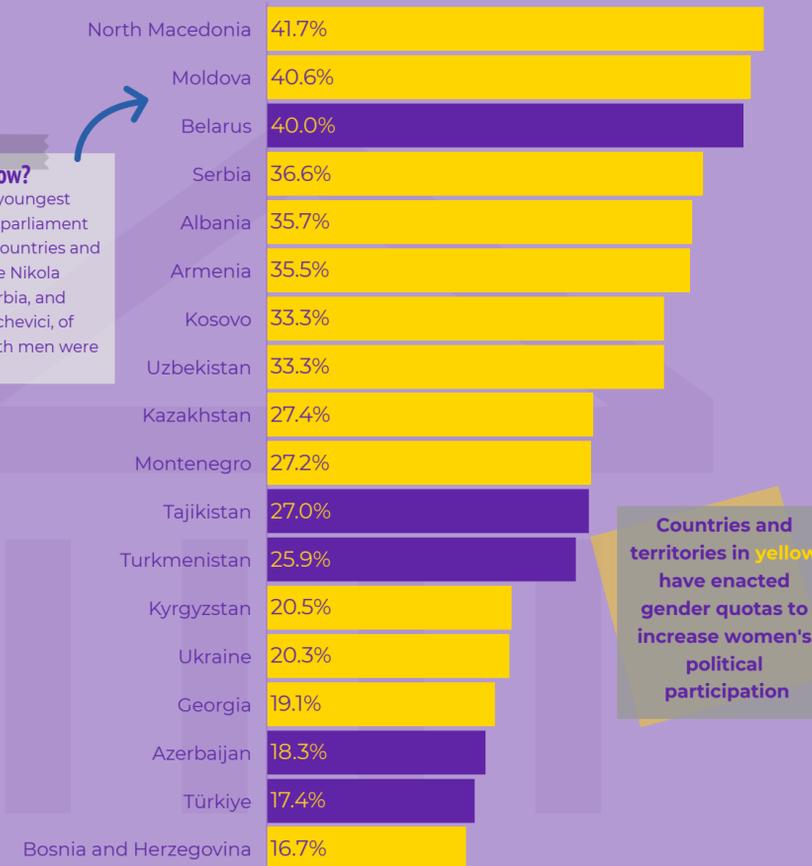
The youngest members of ECA parliaments<sup>ooo</sup>

<sup>ooo</sup>Data unavailable for Kosovo<sup>1</sup>

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Türkiye

### Members of Parliament

Many ECA countries and territories have enacted quota systems to boost gender equality and women's representation in parliament. This has helped make progress, but there is still a long way to go before we reach true gender equality. As of October 2022, North Macedonia has the highest percentage of women MPs, with 50 out of 120 women, or 41.7%.



**Did You Know?**  
The current youngest members of parliament across ECA countries and territories are Nikola Bokan, of Serbia, and Eugeniu Sinchevici, of Moldova. Both men were born in 1999!

Countries and territories in yellow have enacted gender quotas to increase women's political participation

Percentage of Women Members of Parliament

### Parliamentary Gender Quotas

Among ECA countries and territories, many governments have enacted gender quotas to ensure space for women in politics. There are many approaches to using quotas as a tool to boost gender equality and ensure that women have the opportunity to participate in political life.



UNDP ECA countries and territories: gender quotas

### Challenges

In many places, women are still not seen or accepted as trustworthy, capable leaders due to gender and cultural norms.



When women only fill administrative or back up positions, this does not translate into an equal distribution of power between genders.



Backlash against women in politics can take different forms, including violence, intimidation, online stalking, harassment, and bullying.



When governments combine the categories of Gender Equality and Family Issues, issues of women's empowerment risk being left behind or deprioritized.



The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the gender gap, with women taking on disproportionate levels of unpaid care work.



Women in politics often face double standards and endure much heavier critique and scrutiny than men in the same positions.



The most commonly held portfolio of responsibilities under women ministers is: family, children, youth, elderly, and disabled.

### Opportunities

While there is still work to be done, there are many ways to work towards increasing women's political participation and equitable representation!



Including women in designing post COVID-19 economic recovery plans is key to realizing sustainable, equitable objectives.



Continuing to implement gender quotas will boost women's political participation. Quotas that do not overlap with other identity traits will likely have the biggest impact.



Entering politics at local levels can present paths for women beginning their political careers and building trust and respect as leaders.



**EQUAL FUTURE**  
by UNDP Europe and Central Asia

\*UNDP works in 18 countries and territories in the Europe and Central Asia region: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

1. References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Data sources: [Equal Future](#), [IPU Parline: Global Data on National Parliaments](#), [IDEA: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#)