WHEN RESOURCES MATTER

Income analysis of candidates in 2025 parliamentary elections

Chisinau 2025

This product was produced by the Center Partnership for Development with the support of the project "Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova", implemented by UNDP Moldova, in partnership with UN Women Moldova and funded by Norway, Canada, Sweden and Denmark. The contents of this material are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UN, including UNDP, UN Member States or donors.

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INTRODUCTION

Republic of Moldova, where economic gender inequality persists. According to CPD calculations, based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics, women earned on average 15.6% less than men in 2023, which means that they received only 84.4% of the average wage earned by men. This disparity is also reflected in the income structure: the 2023 data show that women aged 18 and over are more dependent on social security payments, with every third woman having a pension as her main source of income compared to every fourth man[1] . At the same time, for about 61 percent of men in this age group the main source of income was self-employment and earnings compared to about 49 percent for women. Women's economic inactivity is mainly driven by family responsibilities: in the 25-54 age group, 55.7% of inactive women cite childcare or care of dependants as the reason for inactivity, while only 2.5% of men cite this reason. All these indicators suggest that women have, on average, more limited financial resources and time than men, which may reduce their ability to run for office or actively engage in campaigns.

Political participation is influenced not only by social perceptions, but also by the ability to mobilize resources to run for office. Organizing an election campaign involves significant expenditure on advertising, logistics and field activities, and candidates with high incomes or strong financial networks start with a competitive advantage. In this context, analyzing the income, property and bank accounts of candidates becomes an important tool for understanding resource asymmetries between women and men. The Law on the Declaration of Personal Assets and Interests and the Regulation of the Central Electoral Commission oblige each candidate to file a declaration of personal assets and interests for the year preceding the elections or to submit an annual declaration filed with the National Integrity Authority. These documents are verified by the Central Electoral Commission and made publicly available to ensure transparency.

In recent years, the Republic of Moldova has introduced a number of legislative mechanisms aimed at correcting these structural imbalances and reducing the financial barriers affecting the political participation of women and young people. The current legal framework provides for a "double gender quota" system for electoral lists: in both parliamentary and local elections, candidate lists must contain at least 40% of each sex, and the order of the lists must respect the alternation rule - at least four candidates of each sex for every ten positions. If this is not complied with, the Central Electoral Commission refuses to register the list, and the parties must maintain this proportion in any withdrawals or changes to the lists. For independent women candidates, the registration requirements have been eased: they are required to have 1 000-2 500 signatures (compared to 2 000-2 500 for men.

In addition to gender quotas, the legislation provides financial incentives for parties that ensure the effective representation of women and young people. Out of the annual subsidies to political parties from the state budget, 7.5% is distributed in proportion to the number of women elected to Parliament, and another 7.5% is allocated according to the number of women elected in local elections. Similarly, 5% of subsidies are allocated proportionally to the number of young people (persons under 35) elected to Parliament and another 5% are allocated to young people elected to local councils**.** The Central Election Commission (CEC) has set the amount of payments from the state budget to political parties for 2024 at 54 million lei. The amount is 6 million lei more than in 2023 and 12 million lei more than in 2022. Thus, the parties received 0.97 lei for each vote obtained in the early parliamentary elections of 2021, 0.49 lei - for the local elections of 2023 and 0.82 lei - for the presidential elections. Parties received 8 879 lei for each woman elected in parliamentary elections and 73 lei for each woman elected in local elections. Parties will receive 16 066 lei for each young candidate elected in parliamentary elections and 154 lei in local elections.

[1] https://statistica.gov.md/ro/portretul-statistic-al-femeilor-si-barbatilor-in-republica-moldova-9617_61689.html#:~:text=Femeile%20sunt%20implicate%20%C3%AEn%20activit%C4%83%C8%9Bi,m%C4%83sur%C4%83%20mai%20mic%C4%83%20dec%C3%A2t%20b%C4%83rba%C8%9Bii

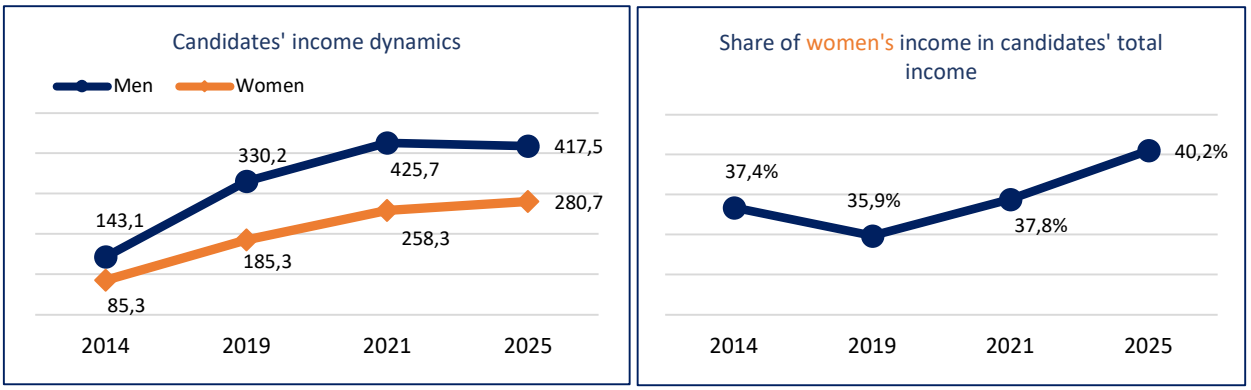
The Center Partnership for Development (CPD) has been monitoring parliamentary and local elections from a gender equality perspective for more than 15 years. The analysis of the ordinary parliamentary elections of September 28, 2025 covers several areas:**(i)** the way men and women are presented on the lists of candidates: compliance with the minimum representation quota of 40% for both sexes at the stage of drawing up the lists of candidates for early parliamentary elections and the positioning of candidates on the lists in accordance with the latest legislation (minimum of four candidates for every ten seats);**(ii) the** income and economic possibilities of male and female candidates: analysis of the income statements of male and female candidates and their correlation with their presence on the lists of candidates.**(iii)** Male and female candidates' access to the media: the analysis covers four types of media products: news, talk shows, election debates and spots. The aim of the monitoring is to identify the level of presence of women in general in the television media during the election campaign and their correlation with their presence on the candidate lists. **(iv)** Voters' perceptions of women and men candidates: this analysis was based on an opinion survey in which respondents comment on gender roles in the family, household and society; **(v)** Parties' electoral programs: examining political commitments to gender equality and inclusion by assessing the measures and promises made in electoral programs and the willingness of parties to support legislative initiatives in this area; **(vi)** Gender analysis of lower hierarchical electoral bodies and the electoral apparatus: assessment of the composition of constituency councils, electoral bureaus and electronic system operators in order to identify the degree of compliance with the principle of gender balance and barriers that may limit women's participation in election administration structures.

This note is based on the hypothesis that economic gender inequalities are reflected in the resources available to male and female candidates, influencing their ability to engage in electoral competition and, subsequently, in the decision-making process. By analyzing the wealth and income declarations filed by electoral contestants for the September 28, 2025 parliamentary elections, we examine the distribution of income, property and other assets between women and men, identifying possible discrepancies and discussing how they may affect political participation. Thus, this note aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the correlation between economic resources and political participation, and to provide arguments for policymaking that can reduce financial barriers to women aspiring to public office.

INCOMES OF MALE AND FEMALE CANDIDATES FOR MPS

Women parliamentary candidates have lower financial capital. The analysis of the income declared by parliamentary candidates indicates a significant gender gap in terms of financial capital at the time of launching their candidacy. In 2025, women candidates reported an average income of 280.7 thousand lei, while men declared 417.5 thousand lei, which means that women hold only 40.2% of the total cumulative income of candidates. However, there is a positive dynamic. Compared to the parliamentary elections in 2021, when women declared an average income of 258.3 thousand lei, there is a modest but steady increase to 280.7 thousand lei in 2025. In contrast, the incomes declared by men show a slight decrease compared to 2021, which narrows the gap slightly but does not eliminate it. These dynamics suggest a gradual improvement in women's access to financial resources, but also indicate the persistence of systemic inequalities that require specific public policy interventions.

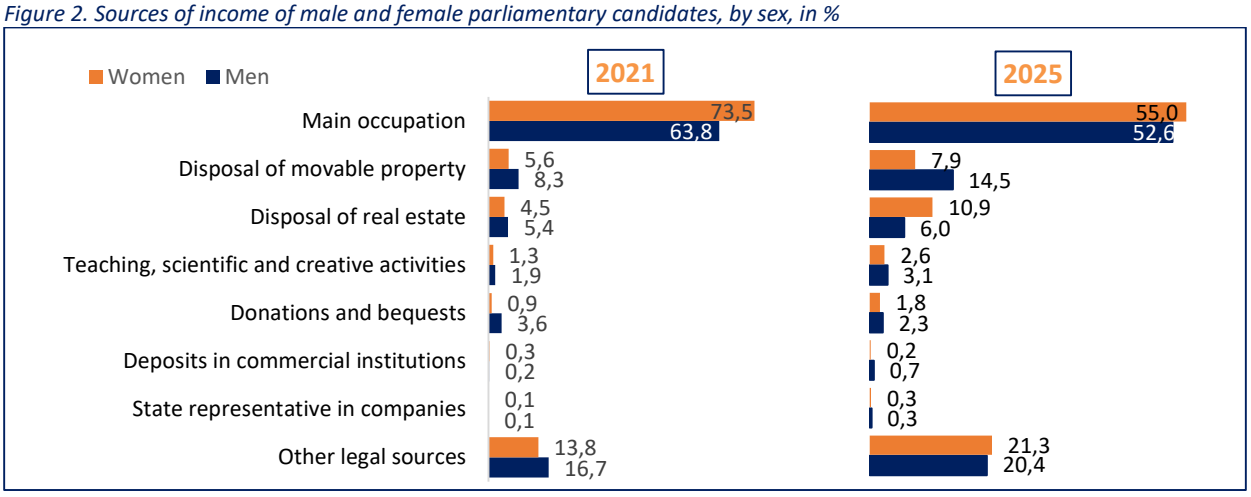
Figure 1. Income of male and female parliamentary candidates, in monetary value (thousand lei) and percentage



Source: CPD calculations based on CEC data

The main source of income for women and men in the electoral race remains the salary. In this election, although the sources of income of male and female candidates are more diversified than in the previous parliamentary election[2] , salaries received from the basic workplace account for half of the income, representing the main source. In addition, the second main source of income is income from other legal economic activities, such as pensions, scholarships, allowances, prizes, intellectual property rights, etc., constituting one fifth of total income.

Figure 2. Sources of income of male and female parliamentary candidates, by sex, in %



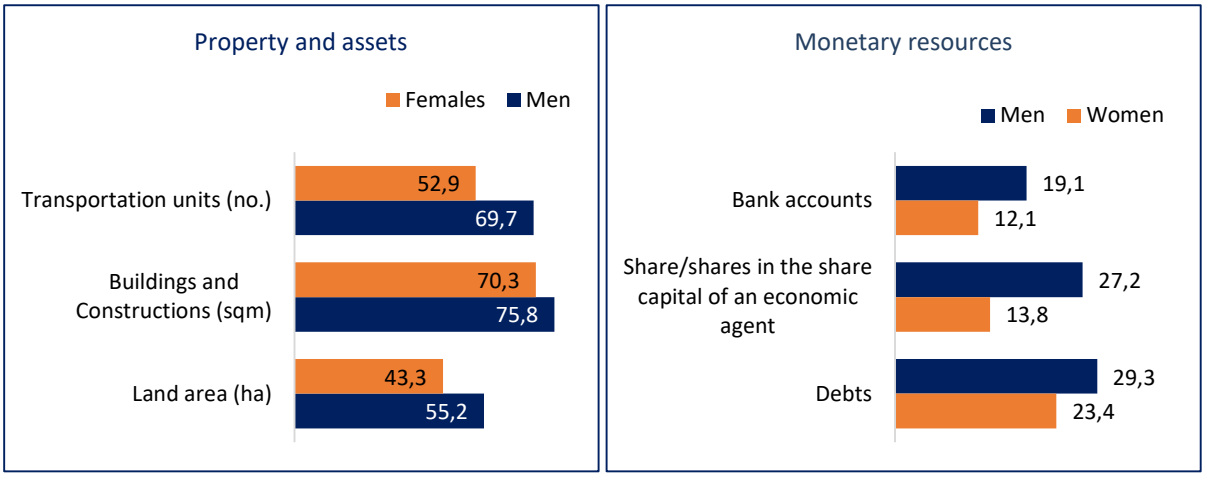
Source: CPD calculations based on CEC data, 2021, 2025

Women candidates' dependence on wage income limits capital accumulation and access to income-generating assets. Thus, significantly fewer women than men own assets such as land, transportation units

[2] https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Raport_Alegeri-Parlamentare-anticipate-2021.pdf

or buildings, which are indicators of financial independence. The discrepancies become even more evident when monetary resources and financial investments are analyzed. Only 13.8% of female candidates report owning shares in the capital stock of an economic agent, compared to 27.2% of men. Moreover, a smaller share of women have bank accounts (12.1% compared to 19.1% among men), suggesting a low participation in the formal financial system. These data reflect systemic barriers that influence women's ability to engage and participate on a level playing field in electoral competition and political life.

Figure 3. Share of candidates owning property, assets and monetary resources



Source: CPD calculations based on CEC data, 2025

Beyond the fact that women own fewer assets and properties, even their value is significantly lower than for men. For example, the cadastral value of land owned by women is about 1.6 times lower than that of land owned by men, indicating reduced access not only to property but also to more valuable forms of capital. Similarly, the average surface area of real estate owned by women is 129 sq.m. compared to 165 sq.m. for men, a difference which is also reflected in the cadastral value: about 1.7 times lower for women. There is, however, an encouraging trend: the dynamics of women's access to valuable assets show more rapid progress in 2025, while for men the increase is much slower or even constant in some asset categories. This trend suggests that inequalities in access to resources are narrowing, but the trend needs to be supported by policies and measures to ensure that the balance is maintained.

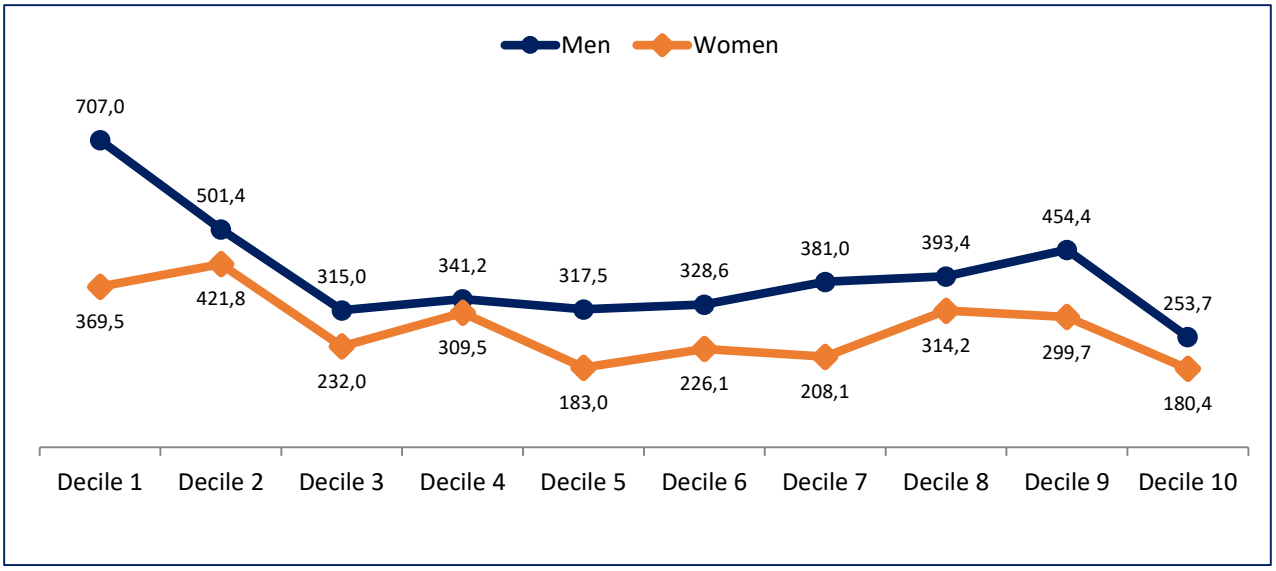
Table 1. Value of assets declared by parliamentary candidates

		2021		2025			
		Women	Men	% F vs B	Female	Men	% F vs B
Income (thousand lei)		**258,3**	**425,7**	**60,7%**	**280,7**	**417,5**	**67,2%**
Land owned	Surface area (m.p.)	1,36	1,37	**99,3%**	1,1	2,6	**42,3%**
	Cadastral value (lei)	22950,31	77309,3	**29,7%**	54037,4	88842,7	**60,8%**
Buildings owned	Surface area (sq.m.)	62,92	168,67	**37,3%**	129,4	165,3	**78,3%**
	Cadastral value (lei)	246004,2	350300,5	**70,2%**	439653,9	771669,5	**57,0%**
Cars owned	Units	0,5	0,8	**62,5%**	0,9	1,3	**69,2%**
	Amount (lei)	66858,68	152529,8	**43,8%**	170481,6	287994,4	**59,2%**
Bank accounts (lei)	Amount (lei)	23185,86	48940,66	**47,4 %**	50001,59	137414,4	**36,4 %**
Share/shares in the share capital of economic agents (lei)	Value (lei)	35874,14	53519,64	**67,0 %**	65969,73	50912,52	**50,0 %**

Source: CPD calculations based on CEC data, 2025

At the top of the electoral lists are mostly the candidates with the highest incomes. This trend is particularly noticeable among male candidates. In addition, the data show that their incomes are higher than women's in every decile of the lists, with a particularly large difference in the first deciles, where the candidates in the top positions declare average incomes of 707 thousand MDL, while female candidates in the same position have only 369.5 thousand MDL. The difference is also maintained in the intermediate positions, where men's incomes consistently exceed 300 thousand MDL, while women's incomes fall below 230 thousand MDL. The main conclusion from the gender perspective is that structural economic inequalities consistently favor male candidates and allow them to occupy the top positions on the electoral lists and dominate the political competition.

Figure 4. Incomes of male and female candidates for deputy depending on their position on the list, by sex and deciles, in thousand MDL



Source: CPD calculations based on CEC data, 2025

FINDINGS

The main general finding is that the existing barriers in the society - wage differentials, dependence on social payments and limited access to capital - are mirrored among the candidates. Female candidates report substantially lower incomes than male candidates and are much less likely to own property or hold financial assets, confirming that structural economic inequalities are also reflected in the electoral contest. This section brings together the most important findings from the analysis of income, assets and monetary resources of candidates in the September 28, 2025 parliamentary elections and shows how income influences political participation and list positioning. The main findings on this uneven reality are presented below.

1. Female candidates report significantly lower incomes than male candidates: on average, a female candidate in the 2025 parliamentary elections reported an annual income of about 280.7 thousand lei, about 33% less than the average income of a male candidate (417.5 thousand lei). Thus, although women account for almost half of all candidates, they account for only ~40% of the income reported by all candidates.

2. Salary remains the main source of income for all candidates: About 50% of the combined income of candidates (women and men) comes from the salary earned in the basic job, which is by far the most important source of income. Other legal income - pensions, allowances, prizes, scholarships, royalties, etc. - is the next largest category, accounting for about one fifth (20%) of total declared income.

3. Fewer women candidates own land, vehicles or real estate: Women enter the electoral race with much less land, transportation or buildings - assets that usually indicate a degree of financial independence. The proportion of female candidates owning such assets is considerably lower than for male candidates.

4. Limited financial access for female candidates: Very few female candidates are present in business or banking. Only 13.8% of female candidates say they own shares in a company, compared to 27.2% of male candidates. Also, about 12% of female candidates have bank accounts, compared to 19% of male candidates, suggesting a lower participation of women in the formal financial system.

5. Assets owned by female candidates have significantly lower values: Land and real estate owned by female candidates are, on average, significantly smaller in area and lower in value than those owned by male candidates. For example, the average floor area of women's dwellings is ~129 m² (compared to ~165 m² for men), and the value of land owned by women is about 1.6 times lower than that owned by men.

6. Men dominate incomes at the top of the electoral lists: male candidates have higher incomes than women in every segment of the lists, with the difference being most pronounced at the top. At the top of the lists, a male candidate declared on average about 707 thousand lei, almost double the average income of a female candidate (about 370 thousand lei). Even in the middle positions of the lists, men consistently report more than 300 thousand lei, while women's incomes drop below 230 thousand lei.

7. Gender economic gaps are slowly narrowing: Compared to 2021, the average income of female candidates has slightly increased (from ~60% to ~67% of the level of male candidates), and women's access to valuables has also progressed faster . Nonetheless, female candidates remain economically disadvantaged, with inequalities persisting and requiring sustained public policy measures to correct .

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Established in 1998, the *Center "Partnership for Development" (CPD)* is a public institution which aims to contribute to the promotion of an inclusive discourse on gender issues, the status of women and equal opportunities for women and men. CPD stands out as a non-governmental structure, which advocates the implementation of the concept of gender equality in all areas of life, the promotion of public policies in the field, addressing issues related to the role of women in society and their empowerment, the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, being at the same time a center for documentation, information and training for NGOs and initiative groups.

Aim. To develop and strengthen resources and mechanisms for the equitable empowerment of women and men in order to promote gender equality in the Republic of Moldova by supporting a coherent approach to influencing policies.

Mission. CPD promotes the values of gender equality as part of an open society in order to strengthen a genuine gender partnership.

Vision. CPD advocates for the building of a community with equal prospects and opportunities for its members, a society in which women and men are full citizens, able to solve problems together, benefit equally from new opportunities and engage fully in political, economic and social activities.

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