

## **WOMEN AND MEDIA COVERAGE DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN 2021**

### **Monitoring Report March – April 2021**

#### **Key Findings**

Albanian Women's Empowerment Network – AWEN, through the project "Inclusive Elections" funded by the Government of the United Kingdom and implemented by WFD, has prepared a report with the findings of the two-months (March – April) monitoring process of media outlets from a gender perspective, during the parliamentary elections process.

The report summarizes the monitoring data of the **9 largest media at the national level** (four televisions - TVSH, Top Channel, Klan, and Ora News; one national radio - Club FM; three portals - SYRI.net, Panorama, and RTSH 24; and one daily newspaper - Gazeta Shqiptare). The information was collected through a systematic monitoring of the broadcasted programs between **18:00 and 23:00 o'clock**.

The opening and the entire election campaign have been dynamic and rich in terms of the numbers of women candidates for MPs, but unfortunately, these numbers did not mean that women were properly included and represented in the media content.

- In almost all the **meetings of the political parties with women and girls**, issues such as unemployment, taxes, family, education, and economic empowerment were usually mentioned.
- Election coverage in news editions was dominated by events **focused on male politicians**. Very few women have been involved as panel speakers in TV political debates and shows.
- The media space was characterized by a marked differentiation between male and female candidates. Women had far **fewer opportunities** to be promoted.
- The **portals** have been exclusively **focused on male candidates**.
- **Women received more media attention** when they **attacked the PM or other party leaders** and when they followed a similar public discourse as their party's leader mainly characterized by rude vocabulary, shouting, blaming, victimization, humiliation, and slander of the opponent.
- **The content of news editions was concerning** due to the lack of coverage dealing with specific issues and problems of women in Albania.
- Generally, meetings of political party leaders with **women in rural and urban areas were broadcasted** in the morning and lunchtime news editions, after which attention was focused on the developments of the day, scandals, or clashes between political opponents.
- The inclusion of a significant number of **new names of women in candidates' lists** has conveyed **insecurity to voters**. The names of women, not known before, have often



been commented on through an inappropriate tactic through which the image of women in politics has been damaged.

- In these elections, the phenomenon of **glass rock** was also noticed, i.e., the participation/inclusion of women without any prior involvement in politics, which were placed on the top of the lists and inevitably often faced media attacks, while other men or women, part of the government and the parliament were positioned at lower positions in the list.

## **Recommendations**

- The **Independent Media Commission** should make the necessary legal changes to allow the Board of Directors to **react and take immediate measures** during the election campaigns in response to possible violations in TV and not only after the elections.
- **Journalists** covering the election campaign **should be trained** in order to fully cover and publish social, cultural, economic, and political events and matters, and also to plan an appropriate space and attention for women in their media.
- Political parties should **treat all media equally**, and media should **treat all candidates equally** and with respect, regardless of gender.
- Political parties should **encourage women candidates** to participate in televised debates.
- Political entities should **promote women candidates** in the media and social networks.