



**WESTMINSTER
FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY**

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

CASE STUDY: UKRAINE

La Strada - Ukraine

Research was conducted by the civil society organisation La Strada – Ukraine at the request of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy's Multi-Party Office. The research covers the period from 2010 to 2018.

Research tools:

- Questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questions;
- Issues from semi-structured interviews with women politicians, leaders and activists of women's organisations, women deputies and experts in the field of ensuring gender equality;
- Analysis of Ukrainian legislation aimed at countering and preventing gender equality and gender-based violence;¹
- Analysis of mass media regarding violence and discrimination against women in politics.²

Research methods:

- Analysis of Ukrainian legislation aimed at countering and preventing gender equality and gender-based violence and discrimination;
- Analysis of mass media information regarding violence against women in politics;
- Anonymous targeted survey of women politicians, leaders and activists of women's organisations, other women related to politics and experts in the field of ensuring gender equality.³

Objectives of the study:

- To assess the prevalence of violence and discrimination against women politicians in Ukraine;
- To find out the attitude of women politicians towards the incidence of violence and discrimination against women politicians;
- To identify the basic manifestations of violence and discrimination against women-politicians in Ukraine;
- To assess the influence of such violence on women-politicians;
- To assess how national legislation protects women from violence in politics;

¹ Does gender equality legislation exist? Is there gender-based legislation? Is there an administrative or criminal liability for gender-based violence? Is the definition of "violence against women in politics" in national law? Is there a law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, et cetera.?

² The presence of sexist expressions in material, information about the lives of women politicians, et cetera.

³ The questionnaire was posted online and the link distributed to the target study groups.

- To learn about the role of political parties in responding to violence against women in politics;
- To formulate recommendations on the prevention and counteracting of violence and discrimination against women politicians.

Target groups:

- Women deputies;
- Women holding senior government positions;
- Women who are related to politics (members of the Verkhovna Rada (unicameral parliament) of Ukraine, assistants to People's Deputies);
- Experts on gender equality issues;
- Leaders and activists of women's organizations.

Limitations and research risks:

- Brief period of the research (20 January 2018 – 10 February 2018);
- Men are not included among the respondents.

This research was made possible thanks to women politicians, women active in citizenship issues, leaders and activists of women`s organisations who completed the questionnaire and were interviewed on issues of violence and discrimination against women in politics in Ukraine.



*Experts from La Strada – Ukraine:
(from left) Kateryna Levchenko,
Veronika Andreenkova
and Kateryna Borozdina.*

Special thanks to:

- Iryna Suslova, MP, of the 8th convocation, the head of the subcommittee on gender policy of Verkhovna Rada on human rights, national minorities and International relations;
- Mariya Ionova, MP, head of Verkhovna Rada`s committee on euro integration issues;
- Svitlana Voytsekhovska, MP, co-chairman of the interparty deputies' Equal Opportunities Caucus;
- Olena Bondarenko, MP, of the 4th to 6th convocations, the head of the subcommittee of gender policy of Verkhovna Rada on human rights, national minorities and international relations, member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;



Kateryna Levchenko and Iryna Suslova during the interview.

- Karteryna Levchenko, MP, of the 5th convocation, member of the committee of Verkhovna Rada on issues of legislative support of law enforcement bodies (2006-2007), member of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (2006-2007);
- Nadiya Stefaniv, Supreme Court of Ukraine judge;
- Anastasiya Dyeyeva, Vice Minister of internal affairs of Ukraine on European Integration issues (2015-2017);
- Natalya Bernadtskaya, Vice Minister of Justice of Ukraine;
- Mariana Yevsyukova, assistant to the People`s deputy of Ukraine (2006-2007), Deputy of Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (2008-2009), social activist;

GENERAL CONTEXT: GENDER ISSUES IN MODERN UKRAINE

Among the population of Ukraine, the number of women exceeds the number of men by almost 8% (53.9% women against 46.1% men in a population of 46,465,700 as of 2007), which raises serious demographic problems and which are the basis for gender inequality, both in relation to women and men.

According to information from the State Statistics Service, the average monthly salary of women is 26% lower than that of men.

Women control only 5% to 10% of the country`s economic resources. In the private sector, women control 30% of small, 12.7% of medium and only 13% of large enterprises.

Many professions and positions are inaccessible for women due to the existence of paternalistic legislation. At the end of 2017, the Ministry of Healthcare abolished an exclusion list which comprised 450 positions presumed to be hazardous for women to hold, thus expanding women`s access to the labour market.⁴

The life expectancy for women and men has a difference of more than 10 years. Women have longer life expectancy, which is the result of social factors that create significant demographic problems in the country and is an indicator of poor quality of life. Biology represents only two to three years as a factor in life expectancy.

⁴ Order of Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine №1254 13.10.17. Accessible at: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1508-17>.

Gender-based violence is also a serious problem and a serious issue for the society. Research conducted in 2017 by the United Nations Population Fund found that the economic losses due to violence against women reach \$208 million a year,⁵ and more than 90% of the losses (\$190 million) affect the victims.

There are no full-scale gender-disaggregated statistics in Ukraine.

The national system of gender statistics is opaque, and has a lack of statistical and research data. Data from the State Statistics Service mainly describes only demographic indicators, such as the state of the “population”, as well as its “education” and “health”. As an example:

- There is no data on the situation of rural women in the labour market, at decision-making levels, in their access to social services of the protection provided against violence;
- There are no full statistics on women`s representation in business, or the number of “female” enterprises.

STATISTICS ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE AND STATE REGULATION

The current national mechanism to address gender-based discrimination is not effective and does not cover all areas of public life. There is no adequate mechanism for recording gender-based discrimination facts.

The proportion of women in the 8th convocation of Verkhovna Rada is 12% which is an insignificant increase in comparison to previous convocations. In 2015, there were no women in positions of top management in five ministries (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Energy and Coal Mining and Ministry of Culture).

Only one of 25 regional state administrations and the city of Kyiv are headed by a woman. There are no women in the position of deputy chairman in 14 regional administrations. In general, only 16% of these positions are occupied by women. During 26 years of Ukrainian independence there were only six female governors.

⁵ The Economic Consequences of Violence Against Women in Ukraine was conducted in 2017 by the Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms at the request of the United Nations Population Fund. It is available at: www.unfpa.org.ua/publications/745.html.

There is very low number of female ministers in Ukraine. Only two of 18 Ministries are headed by women (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine). There is no women representation in ministries in the defence bloc.

From questionnaires

In the eighth periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the main legislative issues of gender equality in Ukraine and the problems of implementation of existing legislation were presented:

- Women in Ukraine receive 24% lower salary than men. This indicator has not changed since 2009;
- The national reformation programme of 18 reforms implemented in 2014 did not take into account principles of gender equality and human rights;
- The level of women`s participation in social and political life is low. The rate of women in parliament is 11%, in the cabinet is 12% and among senior civil servants is 16%.⁶

The election legislation guarantees that 30% of the electoral rolls shall be given to women. However, article 46 of the Law of Ukraine On Local Elections does not contain grounds to refuse to register a candidate for deputy if it does not comply with the gender quota: “a refusal to register candidates for election to Verkhovna Rada of Autonomous Republic of Crimea, district, regional and city councils in the multi-mandate constituency on the grounds of non-compliance with the provisions of the law on the representation of persons of one sex in the electoral rolls of candidates for local deputies in multi-mandate election constituencies on the basis of paragraph 1 of part 1 of article 46 of the Law is not allowed”.^{7, 8}

Non-compliance with the gender quota has provoked many debates. The interparty union of MPs in the Verkhovna Rada – Equal Opportunities Caucus issued a statement on facts of non-compliance with the gender quota in local elections of 25 September 2015.⁹

Ukraine was ranked 69 out of 144 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2016.

⁶ See: <http://www.un.org.ua/ua/informatsiyni-tsentri/news/4052-dopovid-systemy-oon-v-ukraini-na-66-i-sesii-cedaw>.

⁷ See: http://icps.com.ua/assets/uploads/images/images/eu/s_genders.pdf.

⁸ See: http://www.cvk.gov.ua/visnyk/pdf/2016_1/visnyk_1_2016_st_18.pdf.

⁹ See: http://grushevskogo5.com/verhovnaya_rada/zhenshchiny-deputaty-prizyvayut-soblyudat-gendernye-kvoty-na-vyborakh/.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as at 1 January 2017, the average percentage of women in parliaments around the world was 23.3%. In the overall ranking, Ukraine was 146 out of 193 countries with 12.3% female representation.¹⁰

From personal experience, I can say that there is very low number of women in Verkhovna Rada. There is also no direct support from political parties for their female candidates in both parliamentary and local elections.

From questionnaires

During the election campaign, I see no more than 20% of posters with women.

From questionnaires

LEGISLATION TO COUNTERACT VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

According to article 24 of the Ukrainian constitution, citizens shall have equal constitutional rights and there shall be no privileges or restrictions based on gender. The law of Ukraine On ensuring equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men was adopted in 2005.

At the same time, Ukrainian legislation on combating sexual harassment in the workplace is more declarative, but in practice it is almost not applicable. The law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, which contains a definition of sexual harassment and provides a procedure for appealing against such actions, in fact does not contain an effective mechanism for protection against sexual harassment. In addition, the definition of “sexual harassment” is discriminatory and provides a possibility of registering cases of sexual harassment in the workplace only if persons are in a subordination position.¹¹

The law of Ukraine On the Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine” contains definitions of “discrimination”, “direct discrimination”, “indirect discrimination”, “instigation to discrimination”, “aiding discrimination” and “harassment”. The law also requires anti-discrimination reviews, the results of which indicate their compliance with the principle of non-discrimination.

¹⁰ See: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/columns/2017/08/14/225868/>.

¹¹ See: <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15/print>.

The law extends to various spheres of public affairs, in particular public political activities, public service and service in local self-government bodies. But it does not categorise different types of violence, such as psychological and violence that can affect women in politics, including sexism, verbal abuse, humiliation and comments in the media and on social networks.

As the result, in 2010 the cabinet adopted a resolution to introduce a dress code. Dress codes were then adopted by other ministries, in particular by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The code introduced such restrictions as:

- Do not wear clothes that leave hands completely open;
- Deep neckline on blouses or dresses is not recommended;
- Do not wear too tight and short skirts;
- Do not wear transparent dresses or blouses, through which lingerie shows;
- Do not wear too tight dresses;
- It is recommended not to wear clothes made from synthetic fabrics that can become electrostatically charged; from elastic fabrics with lycra-type application; transparent fabrics, lace, dupion silk, denim fabric;
- It is recommended not to use clothes from fabrics in flowers, other drawings, using picturesque canvases, printed texts, portraits of people or images of animals, et cetera;
- Do not use trouser suits and trousers;
- It is not recommended to use massive and bright ornaments, as well as rushes, flutes, fringes, feathers, bows; in the design of a business suit it is necessary to avoid numerous details.

On 7 January 2018 the Law of Ukraine On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence came into force. The law is aimed at ensuring the protection of the rights of victims. The law: introduced new definitions, in particular the definition of “domestic violence”; expanded the range of objects and subjects covered by the legislation on domestic violence; and introduced special measures to counter domestic violence, such as an urgent prohibition order and restrictions on perpetrators.

There is no definition of “gender-based violence” and “violence against women in politics” in Ukrainian legislation. But such actions can be qualified in accordance with the Criminal Code of Ukraine or with the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences.

The Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for crimes that can be committed as a manifestation of gender-based violence, including those concerning family members, and are a manifestation of various forms of violence.

Physical violence for which criminal liability is foreseen may be committed in the form of crimes against life, health, crimes that pose a danger to life or health of a person, and crimes against personal will, in particular: article 115 murder, article 119 negligent homicide, article 120 driving a person into a suicide, article 121 intended grievous bodily injury, article 122 intended bodily injury of medium gravity, article 123 intended grievous bodily injury inflicted in the heat of passion, article 124 intended grievous bodily injury inflicted in excess of necessary defence or in excess of measures necessary to apprehend an offender, article 125 intended minor bodily injury, and article 126 battery and torture.

Sexual violence can be manifested in the commission of crimes against sexual integrity of the person in particular: article 152 rape and article 154 compulsion to have sexual intercourse.

Psychological violence, unlike other types of violence, entails responsibility only in very rare cases, in particular: article 129 threats to kill and article 195 threats to destroy property.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

A list of acts of violence against women in politics can be formulated based on the results of this study¹² and are classified into the following groups:

1. Physical violence
2. Economic violence
3. Sexual harassment
4. Psychological violence including discussing the appearance of a woman and her clothes
5. Sexist¹⁴ phrases and verbal abuse undermining the professional role of women
6. Organisation of PR campaigns aimed at discrediting reputations and humiliation through social networks and mass media

¹² The survey was completed by 100 respondents: people's deputies, women holding senior government positions, women-related politicians (Verkhovna Rada staff, assistant people's deputies), experts on gender equality, women's leaders and activists.

Respondents were aged: 35-45 (26.03%), 55-65 (23.3%), 45-55 (16.44%), 25-35 (15.07%), over 65 (13.7%), 18-25 (2.74%), no answer (2.74%).

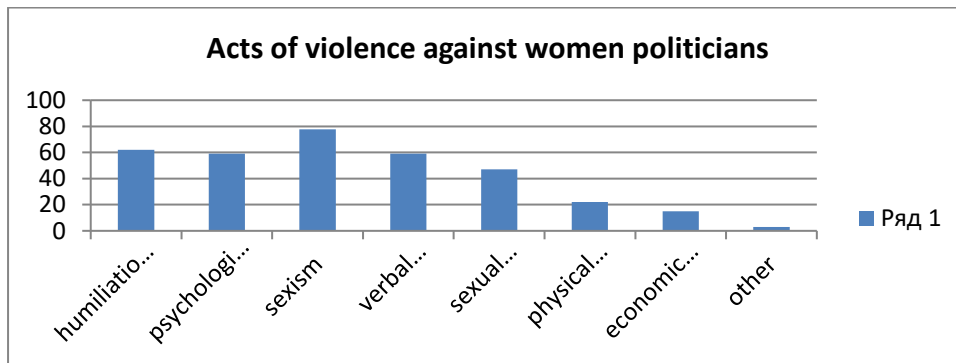
A total of 25.68% were politicians, 21.62% former politicians, 50% did not have any connection with politics but were civic activists, gender experts or heads of women's non-governmental organisations, 2.7% no answer.

Distribution of respondents by experience: 30.14% indicated they had no experience in politics. Among those who had experience, 20.55% had one to five years of experience, 19.2% had five to 10 years, 13.7% 10 to 20 years, 6.85% more than 20 years, 5.48% up to 1 year and 4.1% did not answer.

¹⁴ Sexism should be understood as discrimination on the basis of gender based on the notion of the benefits of moral, intellectual, cultural, physical and other qualities of one sex over another.

7. Brutal behaviour, in particular the use of obscene words in the presence of a woman.

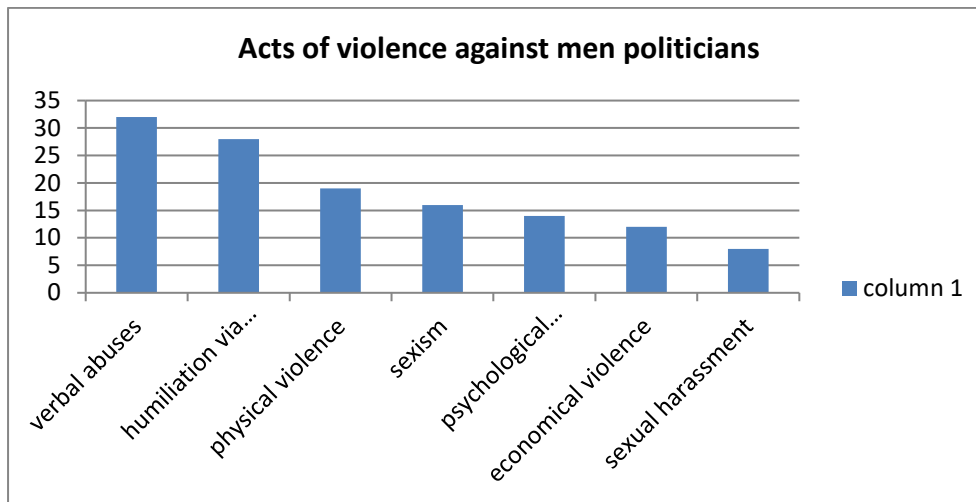
When conducting a survey of women politicians and experts, the distribution of responses to questions about the spread of various types of violence against women in politics was as follows:



The most common types of violence were:

- Humiliation through social networks and mass media – 62%
- Psychological violence – 59%
- Sexism – 59%
- Verbal abuses – 58%
- Sexual harassment – 47%

It is interesting that according to respondents, the proportion of men who suffer from sexist expressions is 16%, although the proportion of those men who suffer from verbal abuse is 32%. Consequently, when men are being verbally abused, the abuse is more likely to be associated not with male affiliation but with their professional activity.



Psychological violence presented during the interviews and in the questionnaires includes:

- Humiliation
- Sexualisation of a woman politician, accentuation on the sexual or reproductive qualities of a woman
- Reduction or distrust of women's professional abilities
- Using “little pet names” for women, which is also a manifestation of the humiliation of the role of women
- Increased attention to appearance and clothing
- Increased attention to the private life of women politicians
- Brutal statements

Humiliation

In most cases humiliation is manifested in the comparison of women with persons who lead an antisocial way of life, humiliation as a professional, comparison with children (“What can you know? – You are just a girl!”) and referring to men more politely than to women.

In Odessa, there were big banners with the image of a woman who was helplessly sitting on the ground. Under the image was the description: “That is how our deputies rest”.

These banners appeared after courageous words of a female deputy in Odessa City Council that women are not allowed to make an incorrect decision.

From questionnaires

Accentuation on the sexual or reproductive qualities of women

As examples, respondents noted the perception of women politicians as sexual objects, paying more attention to their private life than to their professional qualities.

On 19 January 2018, the leader of the Radical Party Oleg Lyashko, on one of the television channels, distorted the surname of Vice Prime Minister for European Integration Ivanna Klimpush-Tsintsadze, and called her "Tsitskadz".¹⁵

When Nadiya Savchenko¹⁶ was released from Russian captivity, where she illegally stayed for more than two years, I would recommend her to take up her personal life, arrange a family, give birth to children. And it is better to refrain from active participation in Ukrainian politics, and from the work of the Verkhovna Rada because it is harmful to health.¹⁷

In 2012, the prime minister of the Crimea, Anatolii Mohylov, advised the woman deputy of the Crimean parliament Oleksandra Kuzhel to "grow cows" and noted that women of her age have certain problems with their psycho-emotional state.¹⁸

Reduction or distrust of women's professional abilities

One of the recent examples is the debate at the ZIK national television channel on the new composition of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), which took place on 25 January 2018. During the debate, former CEC head Yaroslav Davidovich said that today the CEC "wants to be made" a women's kingdom "and let in there the women's battalion", since the pre-candidates for this body were nine women, accounting for

¹⁵ See: <https://tabloid.pravda.com.ua/lounge/5a61a1e33f033>. This phrase is sexist. It refers to female breasts in slang usage.

¹⁶Nadiya Savchenko, People's Deputy of Ukraine, 8th convocation. In 2014, she was illegally sentenced by the Donetsk City Court of the Rostov region allegedly "for involvement in the murder of journalists" near Lugansk and sentenced to 22 years in prison. She was pardoned by a decree of the President of the Russian Federation in May 2016.

¹⁷ See: <https://112.ua/mnenie/hochu-napomnit-cto-nadezhda-savchenko-byla-otpushhena-putinyem-ne-prosto-tak-329044.html>.

¹⁸ See: <https://tsn.ua/politika/mogilov-diagnostuvav-u-kuzhel-klimaks-i-vidpraviv-pasti-koriv.html>.

60% of the total number of members of the CEC. “But there is still a greater threat – women can also take up positions in this body”.²⁰

Presidential candidates send women to the kitchen, the prime ministers say with authority that there is no place for women in politics, and the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada can easily afford phrases like “a man is a supreme being, because the woman was created from the rib of Adam. Accordingly, she is already at the lower position. (2012, From the interview with the former speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Lytvyn²¹).

From questionnaires

I am not a politician, but I constantly meet with manifestations of sexism. During interviews with candidates for the position of a judge of the Supreme Court of Ukraine, members of the commission asked female applicants questions about Christmas recipes, thereby showing that their place is in the kitchen.

Sexual hints for women took place in all commissions. Women suffer from sexism in any area, even when they hold high-level positions.

From interview

Some say that our government is big, others say that there are no women in the government so that there is no object to look at during the session. Only boring faces. For all my respect for women, it is not a women's affair to undertake reforms.²²

2010, the statement of the former Prime Minister of Ukraine Azarov Mykola

Using “little pet names” for women

The respondents to the questionnaire indicated that there is a tradition among male politicians to call the leader of one of the parliamentary parties simply a “girl”.

²⁰ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tm9ngAlqmkg&feature=youtu.be>.

²¹ See: <http://news.bigmir.net/ukraine/537455-Litvin-Cholovik---ce-visha-istota-bo-jinka-stvorena-z-rebra-Adama>.

²² See: <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/azarov-provoditi-reformi-ne-zhinocha-sprava.html>.

The use of obscene language in the presence of women politicians

In the session hall of the Verkhovna Rada, it is always possible to hear disrespectful calls to women. The same situation is outside of the session hall, in the circle of communication, in the offices and so on. Also, in the session hall it is often possible to hear obscene language in the presence of women politicians.

From the interview with a woman deputy

Increased attention to appearance and clothing of women politicians

Much attention is paid to the appearance of women politicians. This topic becomes the subject of increased attention of journalists, colleagues and society as a whole. This manifestation of violence can be described as psychological violence.

In the opinion of the majority of society, a woman politician should always look very good. And nobody thinks about how much time it takes. If the woman looks somehow wrong, it becomes a subject of discussion instead of the business abilities of a women politician.

From the interview with a woman deputy

Excessive attention is paid to the appearance of a woman politician: shoes for 1000 hryvnas²³ – bad; shoes for \$1,000 – even worse. There is no evaluation of women's professional skills as a politician, but lots of attention is paid to appearance.

From questionnaires

One of the MPs deputies “became famous” in the media as “dirty head” just when she returned from a business trip and headed to the workplace, where journalists actually spotted her. At the same time, the professional and business qualities of women politicians remain outside the attention of the community.

From the interview with a woman deputy

It should be noted that such increased attention to appearance and clothing, which should be considered as discrimination and interference with private life, was reflected

²³ Approximately US\$35.

in the cabinet dress code regulation adopted in 2010 and which has still not been rescinded.

Humiliation through social networks and media

Mass media and social networks play a negative role in the proliferation of sexism and in the spread of violent and discriminatory media-related messages against women politicians. A total of 81.6% of respondents noted humiliation through the mass media, social networks and others. In fact, this manifestation of violence against women in politics was rated at the top of this study.

Campaigns against a specific woman politician can be bought. I know it from my own experience. This was done by those who did not want to see me in the post.

You have not done anything at the position yet, but you already have a bunch of shortcuts for yourself. For example, you are a fool because you are a girl, or that you are “nothing”, because you are only 25 years old, or even a whore, because you got a job at a young age. At the same time, no matter what and how you do, the authors of the labels are not interested.

From interview

There are many more examples of discrimination in social networks than in real life, including in the professional field. Most of those who write simply perform someone's paid order.

From interview

Politicians surveyed said that the problem was also that media representatives and representatives often ignored the humiliation of women in politics, did not cover such information or spread negative stereotypes and images. Even in a situation where a woman is injured, the media focus on it only if there is something “spicy”.

Economic violence

This type of violence, according to the survey, took the penultimate position with 19.7% of respondents reporting the existence of this kind of violence against women politicians.

Violence against women also includes the order of the formation of party lists. In the united territorial communities, a local budget is formed and the united territorial communities are the administrators of these funds. At local elections in the combined territorial communities the party lists contain only men – because men are where the money is.

From the interview with woman deputy

Physical violence

Such manifestation of violence against women in politics is also common in Ukraine.

There was a conflict between MP Andrii Teteruk and MP Oleksandra Kuzhel during which Mr Teteruk hit Ms Kuzhel in the head with a glass bottle. The conflict took place at the reception of the Chairman of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine²⁴.

In the face of colleagues, men do not say anything bad, just behind their backs. Maybe there was sabotage of my orders from the subordinates, but it is about the other. There were physical threats, aimed at making me afraid.

From interview

FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In theory

Violence against women in politics is a type of a gender-based violence. As a result, the law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men can be used in such cases.

Article 22 provides avenues to combat gender-based violence:

1. An appeal to the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights with a complaint;

²⁴ See: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/27347727.html>.

2. An appeal to the special authorised central executive body on equal rights and opportunities for women and men. This executive body is in the Ministry of Social Policy which has an expert council for gender-based violence complaints;
3. An appeal to authorised persons (coordinators) on the issues of ensuring equal rights for women and men in executive bodies and local self-government bodies (such authorised persons are deputy heads of central executive authorities and regional state administrations). However, as of the beginning of 2017, there are no such authorised persons;
4. An appeal to law enforcement authorities;
5. Legal recourse;
6. An individual complaint to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, if domestic remedies are exhausted or if the application of such remedies is unjustifiably delayed, as well as in cases of grave or systematic violations by a state party of rights set forth in the Convention.²⁵

In practice

An example: In the Ukrainian government that was formed in March 2010, there were no women.

On 19 March 2010, the prime minister of Ukraine, Azarov Mykola, stated that “it is not a woman`s affair to undertake reforms in Ukraine”. There is another similar statement of his on the internet made after introducing a new governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region: “Some say that our government is big, others say that there no women in the government so that there is no object to look at during the session – only boring faces. For all my respect for women, it is not a women's affair to undertake reforms”.

According to him, the new government was formed by people who can work 16 hours a day, without weekends and “passes”, can take on obligations, and are not afraid to say “no” to management.²⁶ This speech was broadcast on 19 March 2010 on the television programme “Fakty” on ICTV.

²⁵ The complaints mechanism of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is covered by the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1999) that was ratified by Ukraine in 2003. According to article 17 of the protocol, no reservations to the protocol shall be permitted. Complaints from Ukraine were sent by La Strada – Ukraine, but they have not yet been considered. The small number of complaints is the result of the fact that there are sporadic gender-based discrimination lawsuits, which is a result of significant barriers for women's equal access to justice, gender stereotypes and prejudice in the criminal justice system. In addition, the complaints mechanism is very difficult, bureaucratised and hampered by the courts and other state authorities.

²⁶ See:

<http://www.unian.net/ukr/news/news-368344.html>[http://www.zaxid.net/newsua/2010/3/19/190028/;](http://www.zaxid.net/newsua/2010/3/19/190028/)

Mr Azarov's statement was a public statement of a senior leader that can be considered as an administrative action but which resulted in the violation of the rights and interests of a huge group in Ukrainian society – women. As a result, another obstacle was created in the path of women's constitutional right to participate in state affairs, which is also a manifestation of direct discrimination. His statement was not only discriminatory and sexist but also an insult to all Ukrainian women because it called into question their abilities and skills and also hinted at their lack of equality and inferiority compared to men.

In fact, the statement restricted women's exercise on an equal footing of their constitutional rights enshrined in article 38 of the constitution of Ukraine: "the right to participate in the administration of state affairs, equal rights of access to the civil service and to the service in local self-government bodies". It was therefore discrimination by violating women's rights of access to the civil service and to the service in local self-government bodies.

Kateryna Levchenko in 2010 filed a complaint with the Pechersk District Court against Mr Azarov demanding his statement to be recognised as gender-based discrimination. At the same time, Olena Suslova (Chairwoman of the board of the Women's Information Consultative Centre, a non-governmental organisation) filed a complaint with the Kyiv District Administrative Court with same demand. After more than a year of litigation, none of the competent courts (local court, court of appeal, the court of cassation) found expressions of discrimination in the statement. The claimants were not satisfied with the outcome.²⁷ Therefore La Strada – Ukraine made a complaint to United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. There were no replies as of February 2018.

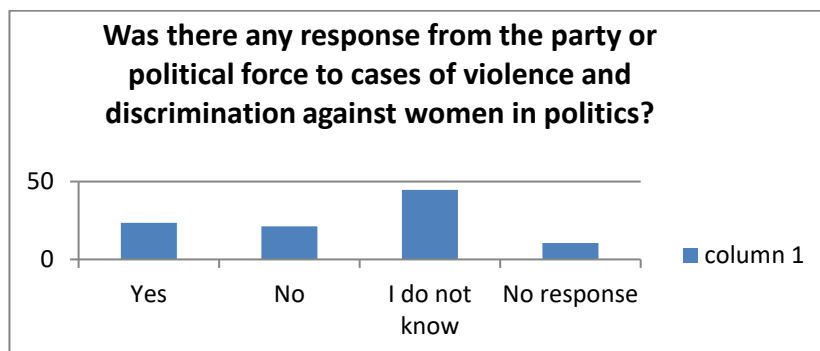
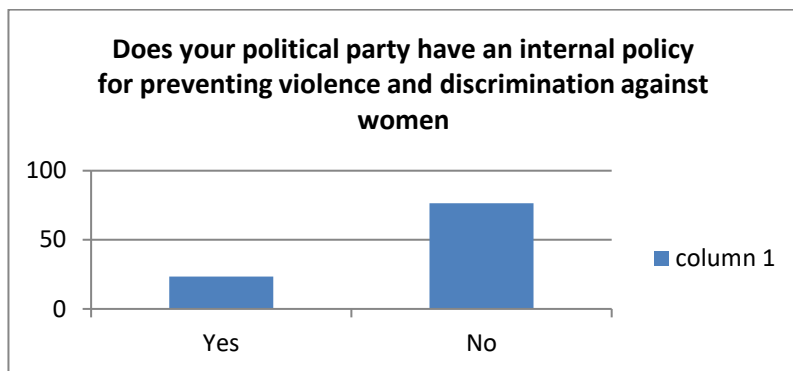
WHO CAN STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS AND HOW: THE ROLES OF POLITICAL PARTIES, PARLIAMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MASS MEDIA

In this research, 23.5% of respondents stated that their political party has an internal policy for preventing violence and discrimination against women in politics. Accordingly, 76.5% of respondents stated that their political party does not have such policy.

At the same time, 23.5% of respondents stated that their party has responded to cases of violence (discrimination) against women in politics.

<http://www.expres.ua/articles/2010/03/19/36005/>; <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/azarov-provoditi-reformi-ne-zhinocha-sprava.html> ; <http://newsru.ua/arch/ukraine/19mar2010/hehder.html>.

²⁷ See: <http://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/9728662>.



It is necessary to pay attention to counteracting gender-based discrimination at the community level: during the formation of united territorial communities management, elections to local authorities, et cetera.

Women are pushing forwards from the local level due to the decentralisation process. Traditionally, there were lots of women at the local level. But today, these positions are becoming more interesting for men due to the expansion of powers of local councils.

From the interview with a woman deputy

Unfortunately, Ukraine has not yet had a political leader or party that would publicly acknowledge the existence of sexism, violence or discrimination against women in politics. Most of the modern political leaders are sexists.

From the interview with woman deputy

Gender budgeting depends on women`s participation in local politics: the allocation of money for social services including allocations for women, for the creation of programmes to counteract violence, for the creation of jobs for women, for the creation of economic opportunities for women.

From the interview with woman deputy

The strong demotivating factor is that women politicians and women who work in the public sphere who are affected by discrimination do not have any support from society.

There is no public condemnation of discriminatory behaviour.

From the interview



МФО "Рівні
можливості"/Equal
Opportunities Caucus

Mariya Ionova and Svitlana Voytsekhovska, co-chairs of the parliamentary caucus on Equal Opportunities.

Parliamentary caucuses have a very important role in the prevention of violence and discrimination against women in politics. In particular, the Equal Opportunities Caucus was created to work toward improving women`s situation in society and generate social dialogue on ensuring gender equality in all spheres of social and political life.

The Equal Opportunities Caucus issued a statement regarding the conviction of the incorrect distortion of the name of the Vice Prime Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ivana Klimpush-Tsintsadze by Oleg Lyashko, leader of the Radical Party.²⁸

²⁸ See: <https://www.facebook.com/MFOEqualOpportunities/posts/2064875367079605>.

The Equal Opportunities Parliamentary Caucus categorically condemns the lack of elementary respect and basic skills of intelligent communication among deputies. In particular, it condemns attempts to incorrectly distort the name of the vice prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, Ivana Klympush-Tsintsadze, by the leader of the Radical Party of Ukraine, Oleg Lyashko. Moreover, the members of the party responded with ridiculous laughter to the words of their leader in the live broadcast on one of the Ukrainian television channels. We insist that this kind of communication be regarded as unacceptable and we ask MPs from the Radical Party of Ukraine to apologise to the vice prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. We remind you that some MPs, including MPs from the Radical Party of Ukraine, systematically allow themselves to make incorrect and sexist speeches.

Text of the statement on ethical conduct of parliamentarians

Women politicians also noted the need to change the rules of procedure of the Verkhovna Rada regarding the prohibition of sexist expressions and the use of profanities.

A lot of activities to address discrimination and violence are also carried out by civil institutions and international organisations.



Повага. Кампанія
проти сексизму в
українських ЗМІ та
політиці

@povaha.org.ua

Webpage of the campaign "Povaha" against sexism in Ukrainian mass media and politic

Activists launched a website and campaign on *Povaha*²⁹ (Respect) to combat sexism in politics and the mass media. As the campaign website says, "the damage caused by the comments and statements aimed at humiliation and gender-based discrimination in politics are a loss of trust of the electorate and, as a result, half of the country's population is not represented in government".

Recent research on gender equality and the prevention of violence and discrimination against women in politics that have been conducted in Ukraine were carried out by civil society organisations. For example:

²⁹ See: www.povaha.org.ua.

- In 2014 – Women in Ukrainian politics at the local level: Ways, problems, participation³⁰
- In 2015 –Gender quotas against the status quo: Women's access to politics³¹
- In 2015 – Has the gender quota in the 2015 local elections worked?³²

These studies were conducted by non-governmental organisations and gender experts. Each one has a summary, conclusions and recommendations. However, at the state level, these recommendations are not actually implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Research on violence and discrimination against women in politics should be conducted which includes interviewing men.
2. Political parties should formulate internal policies for preventing and countering gender-based violence and discrimination against women politicians.
3. Inter-party training on the formulation of internal policies for preventing and countering gender-based violence and discrimination against women politicians should be organised.
4. Gender problems should be taken into account during the formation of united territorial communities.
5. The rules of procedure of the Verkhovna Rada should be changed to prohibit sexist expressions and the usage of profanities.
6. Amendments should be made to legislation to provide that physical and legal entities are administratively responsible for sexism and discrimination, including gender-based discrimination.

³⁰ See: https://wcu-network.org.ua/public/upload/files/1398666454_WCU_politika_fin.pdf.

³¹ See: <https://commons.com.ua/uk/genderni-kvoti-proti-statusu-kvo-dostup-zhinok-do-politiki/#note-22452-8>.

³² See: http://icps.com.ua/assets/uploads/images/images/eu/s_genders.pdf.