



Resolution 1585 (2007)¹

Gender equality principles in the Parliamentary Assembly

Parliamentary Assembly

1. At the 3rd Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, the member states undertook to achieve real equality between women and men.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly underlined that women should be given a genuine opportunity to accede to top posts in political and public life at national and European level in order to ensure a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making.
3. Equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and gender-based discrimination is an impediment to the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making is at the heart of the functioning of pluralist democracy. Therefore, the Assembly considers that the Council of Europe, as the continent's human rights watchdog and home of democracy, should set the example by applying gender equality principles in its internal structures and working procedures.
4. The Assembly is conscious of the importance of national electoral and party systems for the representation of women in the national parliamentary delegations to the Assembly. In this regard, it welcomes the adoption by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) of a declaration on women's participation in elections, which will reinforce the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters. It also recalls its [Resolution 1546 \(2007\)](#) on a code of good practice for political parties, which includes good practices for increasing the equality between men and women in political parties.
5. In its [Recommendation 1738 \(2006\)](#) on mechanisms to ensure women's participation in decision making, the Assembly invited the Committee of Ministers to pursue its follow-up action on its Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making. It welcomes the intention of the Committee of Ministers to follow up on this recommendation by stepping up its efforts to achieve the minimum level of representation of 40% for women in the steering committees and other bodies of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the Assembly encourages all organs and bodies of the Organisation to continue to focus on gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a specific aspect of its equal opportunities policy.
6. In its [Resolution 1489 \(2006\)](#) on mechanisms to ensure women's participation in decision making, the Assembly agreed to pursue its efforts to ensure gender-balanced representation in the Assembly and, where appropriate, to reinforce it with binding provisions, amending the Rules of Procedure if necessary.
7. In the same resolution, the Assembly agreed to prepare a report on how the representation of both sexes can be realised with respect to candidatures to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), to the posts of Commissioner for Human Rights, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as to that of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly. New provisions should be introduced to ensure that these posts, and that of President of the Assembly, are not continuously occupied by representatives of only one sex.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 23 November 2007 (see [Doc. 11432](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, rapporteur: Mrs Mendonça; [Doc. 11439](#), opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mrs Circene; and [Doc. 11433](#), opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Err).*



8. With respect to candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, the Assembly has already expressed its position in Resolutions 1366 (2004) and 1426 (2005). Furthermore, in its [Resolution 1540 \(2007\)](#) on improving selection procedures for CPT members the Assembly established the procedure for candidatures to the CPT.
9. Consequently, with regard to the appointment of members to the Assembly and national parliamentary delegations, the Assembly decides to:
 - 9.1. reiterate its appeal to political parties and groups to, first and foremost, promote equal access of women and men to elected offices in national parliaments;
 - 9.2. urge national parliaments to ensure that women are present in the national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly in at least the same proportions as they are present in the national parliament, with the aim of achieving, as a minimum, a 30% representation of women, bearing in mind that the threshold should be 40%;
 - 9.3. invite political parties and groups in national parliaments which are involved in the appointment of the delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly to take into account the aforementioned proportions, especially if they are entitled to propose two members at least, and to encourage active participation of women in political parties and in European affairs.
10. With regard to gender balance applying to the presidency and the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, in the Bureau of the Assembly, the bureaux of Assembly committees and sub-committees, ad hoc committees of the Bureau and to the appointment of committee rapporteurs, the Assembly decides to:
 - 10.1. ask its own members, when candidates of both sexes are equally qualified, to support the appointment of the candidate of the under-represented sex;
 - 10.2. ask national delegations to the Assembly and any national authorities concerned:
 - 10.2.1. as regards the vice-presidencies of the Assembly, to implement [Resolution 1348 \(2003\)](#) on gender-balanced representation in the Parliamentary Assembly by applying the principle of gender equality for candidatures for vice-presidencies of the Assembly;
 - 10.2.2. as regards the chairmanship of national delegations, to appoint more women as chairpersons of national delegations;
 - 10.3. ask general Assembly committees to elect more women as chairpersons or vice-chairpersons with a view to ensuring that both sexes are represented in these posts at least in the same proportions as in the committee;
 - 10.4. furthermore, ask the Assembly's political groups to:
 - 10.4.1. give women greater opportunity to accede to top posts in the groups themselves, including in the selection of candidatures for the position of President of the Assembly;
 - 10.4.2. appoint more women as their spokespersons in general policy debates of the Assembly;
 - 10.4.3. ensure that women are represented in the Monitoring Committee in at least the same proportions as in the respective political groups;
 - 10.5. amend Rule 48.7 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, by adding, at the end of the second sentence, the following words: "while taking into account the principle of gender equality";
 - 10.6. invite the Bureau, when appointing chairpersons of ad hoc committees of the Bureau, to take into account the principle of gender equality;
 - 10.7. add, at the end of Rule 49.1 of the Rules of Procedure, the following sentence: "For the appointment of rapporteurs, the committees shall take into consideration the following criteria by order of priority: competence and availability, fair representation of political groups (based on the 'D'Hondt system'), gender-balanced representation, geographical and national balance";
 - 10.8. encourage its members to participate in the informal group of women members of the Assembly (women's caucus), above and beyond any national and political divisions, in order to facilitate exchanges of experience concerning, *inter alia*, the representation of women in posts of responsibility.

11. Furthermore, with regard to gender balance in the procedures for elections to high-level posts in the Council of Europe in which the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers are involved, the Assembly decides to:

11.1. encourage governments and personalities who have the right to submit proposals for candidates to the posts of Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly (“specially appointed officials”) to propose candidates of both sexes where there is more than one candidate;

11.2. encourage political groups of the Assembly, when taking indicative votes on candidates for posts of “specially appointed officials”, to bear in mind the necessity for gender balance;

11.3. come to an agreement with the Committee of Ministers whereby the list of three candidates for the post of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, which it draws up under its Resolution (99) 50 on the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, shall always include candidates of both sexes.

12. The Assembly decides that the changes to the Rules of Procedure proposed in this resolution shall enter into force at the opening of the January 2008 part-session.