

ALBANIAN GENDER CHALLENGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF ALBANIA

Dr. Anna Xheka

Aleksandër Moisiu, University of Durrës – Albania

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this paper is to present the current situation in Albania, regarding women's representation in public administration, in front of European integration challenge. Women's representation in public administration is analyzed in this paper, with special focus at senior management position as well as in decision-making bodies, compared with the standards of gender quota in Albania and European Union countries. This analysis is based on secondary data; reports or other studies which are processed and analyzed through the statistical comparison. The methodology used is the descriptive and comparative one. There are different findings regarding the different levels of public administration. Women's representation at low and middle level of public administration, marks significant achievements, exceeded national and European gender quota standards, while at senior management level and decision making bodies it is still in critical level.*

KEYWORDS: Gender Equality, Public Administration, Gender Quota, Decision Making, Albania, European Union.

INTRODUCTION

Albania, like other Balkan countries, approved the Law Nr 9970 "On Gender Equality in Society" on 24.07.2008. Article 4/5 of the law, presents what "equal gender representation" in Albania means..

"There shall be "equal gender representation" in cases when neither of the genders is represented by less than 30% in any institution, hierarchical instance, nominated body, political parties", while article 15 express analytically gender equality standards;" Equal gender participation and representation in all legislative, executive, judicial power bodies as well as in other public institutions shall be achieved when: a) A representation of above 30% of both sexes is ensured, including their steering bodies is ensured".

Before approval of this law Albania has ratified some important international documents in the field of gender equality, such as the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women", in 1993 and the additional protocol in 2003, the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 etc.

However if the gender quota in legislative power and local government it is an obligation of the Law "On Gender Equality in Society" as well as of the Electoral Code, being accompanied with sanctions if not respected, it is not showing the same interest regarding gender quota in public administration and decision-making bodies. Gender quota in public administration, it is not reflected in any of the other laws or regulations, that constitutes the framework of the recruitment and career advancement in the public administration. It is not

also associated with sanctions in case when gender quota in public administration it is not achieved.

The law "On Gender Equality, provides sanctions in cases of gender discrimination, but not in case of gender quota's non-realization.

LITERATURE/THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Gender is an important consideration, connected to sustainable development, social justice and public administration itself.

Gender discrimination in public administration, increases economic, political and social disparities and women faces disproportionately regarding the development, delivery of services, and allocation of resources. Women's participation as a partner in administrative decision-making processes, is closely linked to sustainable development and harmonious society, to the improvement of social and environmental justice.

This kind of decision is much closer to the specific needs of the individuals, since often the focus of its, it is the everyday life. In this point of view, women's representation in decision making component, it's important, as it connected directly with the interests of the half of the population and in the same time contributes to the harmonization of the interests of the other half. Different authors of this issue, concluded that the representation of women in decision making bodies, affects directly the decision in favour of women.

"Women who have more colleagues women and work in institutions that have an interest in women's issues, are likely to work for programs that are important to women, and women who have few colleagues women and work in institutions that are not interested in women's issues, tends to make decisions that agree more with the interests of the men" (Mary J. D'Agostino & Helisse Levine, 2011: 9).

From the above conclusion is it clearly understandable the great importance of women's representation in the governing bodies of public administration, as a necessity for the interests of both, women and men.

Besides this basic reason, which has to do with the inclusion of the interests of both genders, experts have concluded that it is extremely important the participation of women in the governing bodies, referred to completeness and performance in all components of decision making process. The reason of this conclusion, according to them it is, because biologically women and men represents different qualities.

"Neurological and psychological studies shows that men and women (average) have different abilities. Women are more sensitive than men" (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983: 100-131), *while the men are more systematic* (Baron-Cohen, S., Richler, J., Bisarya, D., Gurunathan, N., & Wheelwright, S. {2003}: 361-374; Leahey & Guo, 2001). In this context a decision for the public, requires simultaneously the sensitivity of women and men's systematic also, in order to be complete.

Other authors have concluded that; *"women performs better than men in terms of organization and behaviour with citizens"* (Farrell & Finkelstein, 2007), *demonstrated as "individual, discretionary behaviour" which is not recognized directly or connected to special*

compensation from the formal system, which in total promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988; 4). Even if men perform better individually, they contribute less to the collective performance, which it's an existential necessity for the public administration.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper it is used the method of studying, processing, analysing and comparing the existing data.

The analyze is based to the secondary data from studies or reports, containing figures of women's representation in public administration in Albania and Europe.

Theoretical sources includes theoretical concepts and comparable approaches of the variables that defines gender equality in public administration.

Measurement of this indicator is done in different period of times and different geographic coordinates too, with an approach to the triangle technique.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Representation of Women in Public Administration in Albania

After 7 years of entering into force of the Law "On Gender Equality in Society", the situation of women's representation in Albania shows improvement figures, regarding low and middle level of public administration, but not in senior official level.

Table 1. Women's representation in three levels of Public Administration in 2014

Level of Public Administration	Women in %	Men in %
High Level	24.9	75.1
Middle Level	39.8	60.2
Low Level	64.9	35.1

Source: Data processed by the author based on: Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. (2014) National Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action + 20, Tirana: MMSR, pp. 45 and Public Administration Department.

(2014) Raporti Vjetor 2014, Tirana: DAP, pp. 21.

The above table shows that women are represented nearly 65% in the low level, less in the middle level of public administration and even less in senior management positions, only 24.9%, or about 5% less than the gender quota (30%), as defined by Law "On Gender Equality in Society". This situation derives from a variety of reasons which are not the subject of this paper, but one of the main, it is the dominance of "male" stereotypes in positions of senior management, accompanied with the patriarchal mentality of the Albanian society. To correct the effect of those cultural and tradition factors, it was an necessity to settle the gender quota. But approving only a gender equality law and settling up the gender quota, doesn't lead to the end the mission. The gender quota in this law is more a declarative

format than a mechanism of results. The law doesn't provide the security mechanisms, as can be for example sanctions in case of not fulfilling gender quota. Department of Public Administration, in the recruitment process, is based on meritocratic criteria but nowhere can be find gender quota as a complementary obligation. It is also lack of a specific strategy for achieving gender equality in public administration and particularly in its decision-making bodies. Another serious deficiency of this institution is the lack of detailed gender analysis in public administration. Annual Monitoring Reports have very few attention regarding gender indicators. They limit themselves to gender data referred to new recruitments, but without giving the current situation of gender representation as whole.

During the last years it has been a very positive trend regarding women's representation in all levels in high public administration institutions as it is Council of Ministers and line ministries.

Table 2. Women's representation in the Council of Ministers and ministries for the years 2012 and 2013

Civil Servants Levels	2012		2013	
	Women in %	Men in %	Women in %	Men in %
High Level	29	71	47	53
Middle Level	43	57	49	51
Low Level	54	46	49	51
Experts level	64	36	69	31

Source: Data processed by the author based on: UNDP (2014) Përkatësia gjinore dhe korrupsioni në shërbimin civil shqiptar. Raport Studimor. Tirana, pp 22.

As it's shown in the table above, there is a very significant progress of women's representation in all levels of civil servants, including the high level, achieving about "the gold middle" of 50% (29% to 47% from 2012 to 2013), 49% in middle and low level and 69% in experts level. But this progress refers only to a small part of the public administration, Council of Ministers and line ministries and not the whole of it, making it inappropriate in terms of comparative analysis for decision-making bodies of the public administration as a whole.

DISCUSSION

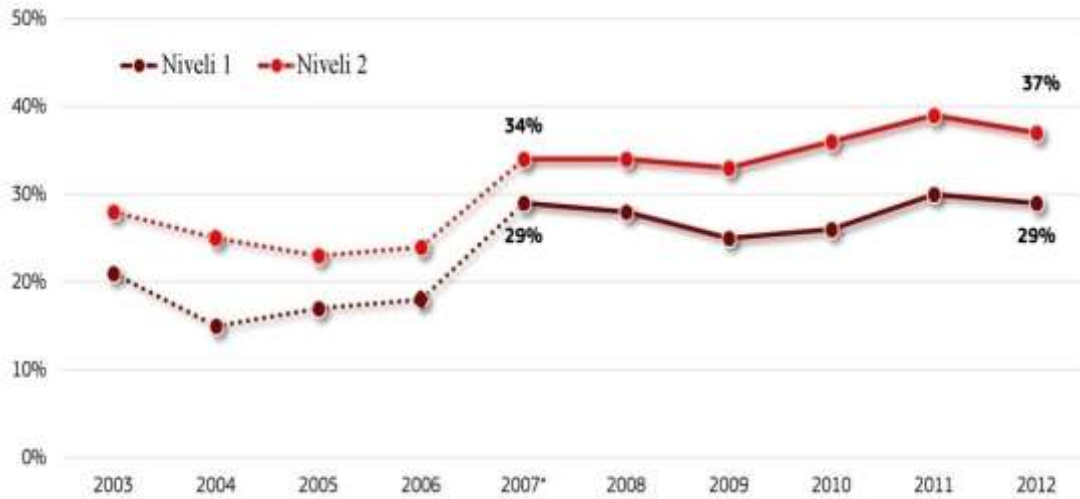
Albanian situation compare with the European Union countries situations

Albania received candidate status in June 2014. Actually it is on the way of the negotiation process. One of the main issues, concern the European integration it is the status of human rights in the country, included women's representation in all decision making bodies.

The issue to discuss is: Does Albania fulfil women's representation standards in decision making bodies, compare with European Union standards and individual standards of member states as well?

Analyzing the figures of European Union, the member states and also the European Commission the situation it's as below:

Figure 1. Share of women in the top two levels* of (non-political) administrators in national administrations, EU-27, 2003-2012

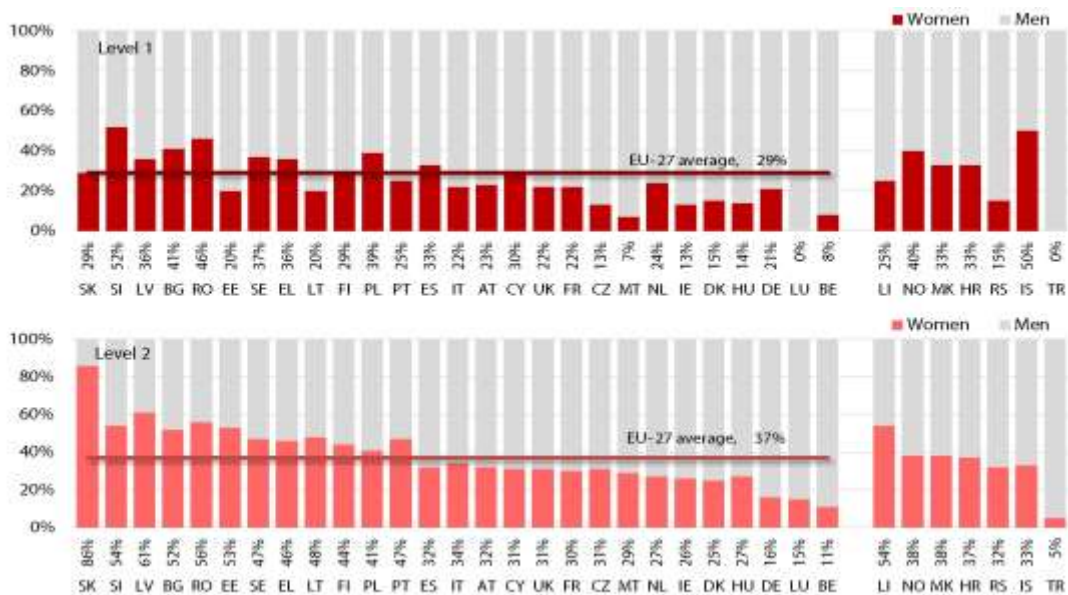


Source: European Commission. (2013) *Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union*. Brussels: European Commission, pp 35.

The overall figure above, shows a difference in the proportion of women and men in the first and second hierarchy. In 2012, women constituted 37% of the second level, but only 29% of the first level of public administration. However it's seen a slight drop in the representation's curve of women in 2012 compared with 2011.

If we analyze at the level of the individual states, the situation it is quite different. The women's representation has a wide divergence between countries, starting from 5% to more than 80%, as the figure below shows.

Figure 2. The representation of women in the two highest levels (non-political) administration in the national administrations of the European Union.



Source: European Commission. (2013) Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union. Brussels: European Commission, pp. 35.

There are already 11 member states of the European Union, that have achieved a gender balance in decision-making bodies of public administration, at least 40% of each gender, in both high levels of their administrations; Estonia, Sweden, Greece, Lithuania, Finland and Poland. Women hold more than half, but less than 60% of high-level positions (first and second combined) in 4 countries; Slovakia (57%), Slovenia (53%), Latvia (53%), Bulgaria and Romania (52%). On the other hand, women remain significantly under-represented in the two higher levels of the hierarchy in Belgium (11%), Luxembourg (13%) and Germany (17%).

By analyzing the average's data of the two levels of public administration, (in European Union countries as average, as well as in case of individual countries), the percentage of women at the first level, is lower than in second level in all countries except Germany (21% high level vs 16% middle level) and Spain, where there is a small difference (33% vs. 32%). There are only three member states of the European Union having at least 40% women in the high level, (Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria), while in most member states, men hold at least three quarters of the highest positions.

In the second level, 10 member states have achieved gender balance with at least 40% of each gender. There are two countries where in the second level, men are underrepresented; in Latvia men make up 39% of this category against to 61% of women. The indicators presented with a very large margin in Slovakia, respectively, 14% men and 86% women. Totally in the opposite direction, there are three other states, in which women still make up less than one in five positions in the second level of administration; as are Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany

In 2012, France introduced a gender quota law on civil service, starting with 20% by 2015, to 30% from 2015 -2017 and to 40% from 2018 onwards (Law No. 2012-347, 2012, France).

Belgium has sanctioned special provisions for public administration through a special Royal Decree in 1990, sanctioning equal gender opportunities at all levels of employment and in all sectors of the civil service (UNDP, 2014; 34).

World Women Index 2012, shows that regarding Head of Sector's position, in the major economies of the G20, women constitute about 48% of the workforce of the public sector, but representing less than 20% in decision-making bodies (Dods, 2013; 14).

Gender balance in the administration of the European Commission

Gender balance in decision making bodies, is considered a priority by the European Commission too. "Comprehensive strategy for equal opportunities between men and women", was the instrument that led gender battle in the administration of this organization for the period 2010- 2014, setting up concrete indicators. The percentage of women on high, middle and low level's European Commission's administration, until 2014 result respectively 25%, 33% and 43% (Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union, 2013; 33). It is important to mention that the above strategy and objective indicators are closely associated with respective recruiting goals in administrative positions.

Table 3. The representation of women at all three levels of the European Commission

Women's representation at all three levels of the European Commission			Source: European Commission.
European Commission	2012	2014	
High Management	27.2%	25%	
Middle Management	28.7%	30%	
Low Management	42.4%	43%	

(2013) *Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union*. Brussels: European Commission, pp. 33.

Despite reaching the target indicator of 25% on the Commission's high senior official positions, this figure it is still far from the minimum of gender quota (30%), set by the Platform of Action of Beijing and further away from the target of 40% set by the European Union itself.

The reasons for women's under-representation are numerous and are not covered by this paper, but one of the most predominant is "the gender stereotype".

The researchers have shown that gender stereotyping exist also in the level of scholars and scientists, as reports a study of the University of Yalës, 2012.

Researchers commissioned scientists at six universities to review applications for the position of a "laboratory manager", by random order, man or woman with the same professional levels. Findings showed that the scientists selector staff, men and women, supported male candidates as competent candidates more that women (Dods, 2013; 21).

Implication to Research and Practice

Implication in this study refers mostly to the lack of update data, regarding women's representation at different levels of public administration.

As the main purpose of the paper was to study the Albanian case, the author had have difficulties, finding consistent data regarding all levels of public administration. It was necessary to collect them from different sources and to process in a mathematic and statistic way to reach the figures presented in the paper.

Conclusions of this paper does not have serious practical implications, as are conclusions derived from the comparison of existing or processed data, regarding the representation of women's representation of public administration.

CONCLUSION

Comparative analysis of this paper leads us to the conclusion that the women's representation in Albanian public administration, presented in the highest standards in the executive level, about the double figure of the legal gender quota's standart (30%) . In the middle level, are

also very satisfactory figures, exceeding by almost 10% the gender quota and being closer to the European Union's objection to gender's representation, (40%). Far from the minimum standard of 30%, it's women's representation in the management level, or otherwise in decision-making bodies, as it is requested specifically by the second paragraph of Article 15 of the Law "On gender equality in society", and also by the international legislation ratified in the field, such are; "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", "The Beijing Platform for Action," etc., which explicitly required to achieve the minimum standards of representation of women in decision making bodies.

Compared to the average of the European Union, the situation in Albania approximated to the second hierarchical level, having a slight progressive trend, about 2% more. In the first level the European Union average, passes about 5% the Albanian's situation. If we compare the average of women's representation in Albanian public administration in two higher levels of it, with the individual countries of the European Union, it's clearly concluded that Albania ranks worthily between European countries, being preceded by several of them, but leaving behind many others.

That means that Albania with the current levels of women's representation in public administration, it's a potential candidate to be a member of the European Union. This indicator it is in many cases higher than in many member countries of the European Union.

There is a need of other measures, except legislation and political reforms. Of course the lasts helps in making better decisions, regarding the meritocratic recruitment in public administration, but never are enough, without being accompanied by the creation of a set of social conditions friendly for women and family, increased education , professional capacity and the elimination of gender stereotypes.

Future Research

Taking in consideration that the integration challenges of Albania is still open and women's representation remains one of the permanent membership and post accession's issues, this field is always attractive for future researches.

The research fields, other than those related to quantitative gender quotas, can aim to analyze also the quality of both genders in all public administration's levels, referring to the educational level of women and men, work experience, the results of work etc.

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