

January 14, 2020

Open letter to Political Entities

Honorable Representatives of Political Entities,

With the official election campaign approaching, including the compilation of voters' lists for early elections for the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on February 14, 2021, Democracy for Development invites all political entities to demonstrate a democratic and inclusive spirit. D4D calls on political entities to engage for an equal involvement of women and men throughout the electoral process through:

Increasing the inclusion of women in election lists, beyond the minimum requirement

Women in Kosovo are underrepresented, both in election lists as well as in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, as Members of Parliament. Political entities develop the voter lists based on the Law No. 03/L-073 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo, circumventing the Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality. In the 2019 Elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, all political entities certified by the Central Election Commission only complied with the minimum requirements for the inclusion of women in lists, with only 343 women candidates, out of a total of 1,067.

The Law on Gender Equality is the key instrument for addressing gender issues in Kosovo. Article 6.8 of the Law provides that: "Equal gender representation in all legislative, executive and judiciary bodies and other public institutions is achieved when ensured a minimum representation of fifty percent (50%) for each gender, including their governing and decision-making bodies" Accordingly, we encourage all political entities to compile voter lists with an equal, 50/50, representation for each gender.

Inclusion of women in Election Management Bodies

In addition to the low representation in election lists, inclusion of women in election processes remains a bigger challenge. Women are not equally represented as election staff, namely in Election Management Bodies. From the total number of MEC members in early elections of 2019, only 16% were women, and only four, from a total of 38 MEC chairpersons were women.

Democracy for Development Institute encourages all political entities to ensure equal nominations of women and men in field and management positions, including:

Municipal Election Commissions (MECs);

Polling Station Committees (PSCs);

Election Day Observers;

Observers at the Counting and Results Center (CRC);



Provision of merited and guaranteed space and equal inclusion in the election campaign and TV debates

Citizens' trust and inclusion of women in politics are closely interrelated with their public appearances in small gatherings and participation in televised debates. Democracy for Development has actively monitored all elections, both at national and local levels, and has observed a significant lack of women in these aspects. TV debates in the 2019 election campaign included a total of 252 representatives of political entities, of which 190 men and only 62 women. Therefore, we demand that women are provided equal space as men within political entities and in public appearances during election campaigns.

Compliance with safeguards against the spread of the Covid-19 virus

Kosovo continues to face the COVID-19 pandemic and, given that the provision of vaccines is yet to include sufficient quantities to cover the needs of all citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, the spread of the virus remains a potentially high risk. Therefore, we call on all political entities to exercise additional caution during the election campaign, and ensure that activities do not include a large number of people, that physical distance is kept, masks are worn, disinfectants are used, and all other measures are implemented, as per the Manual Against the Spread of Covid-19 Virus.

Sincerely yours,

Democracy for Development Institute (D4D)

The Democracy for Development Institute (D4D) is a non-governmental organization established in 2010. The Mission of D4D is to influence public policy development processes and accelerate the country's socio-economic development, improve governance, and strengthen the democratic culture in Kosovo. The Vision of D4D is to promote an active and educated society, which participates in the life and uses it for representation and decision-making to discuss and build consensus on the allocation of resources that are efficient, fast, long-term and leading to impartial development.