

Committee: World Conference on Women
Topic: The Representation of Women in Government
Country: The Republic of Serbia
School: Liceu Jardim

A: Even though the 2021-2022 growth from 67.9% to 68.1% of global gender parity scores according to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2022, women's representation in government is still threatened by chauvinism and the heritage of conservative social policies. In this way, the promotion of equality is the main objective of this committee and should be a common interest of its members, as it was first stated and emphasized in 1975, in the first World Conference on Women, and formally structured in 1995, by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Efficient population proportional legal quotas and dynamic programs and policies to increase the participation and perennity of women in the public sphere are suggested to assure women's rights in regional and, consequently, national and global dimensions. Regarding the exemplarity on women's education and political empowerment rates, the Republic of Serbia is willing to face its structural conservative roots and to prioritize the world's tendency on the recognition of the importance to protect and promote women's rights to vote and participate in political life.

B: The lack of representation of women in government (0,460 pts scored on global rank) is considered a relevant issue to the Republic of Serbia: the introduction to GRB in 2015 caused Serbia to be one of the seven countries in Europe that established and has been monitoring investments in gender equality. In 2017, the election of the prime minister Ana Brnabić, endorsing, finally, the constitutional principle of equal rights to men and women, demonstrated that having women in the parliament encourages other women to raise their voices, such as what happened during the Pandemics when there was an increase of 37% on requests of assistance on women's welfare. Understanding the need to engage women on political affairs, Serbia also promoted the OGP Action plan - Novi Pazar, which aims for transparency of local self-government and citizens involvement in decision-making processes.

Besides that, in 2008 Serbia already was above European rates of acceptance of women in government (only 19,1% of non-Nordic European countries had women in the parliament), but in 2022 the Republic of Serbia found itself with 50% of feminine parliamentarians, in opposition to the latest 33% of the first year of Brnabić's mandate. Using the system of legal candidates and reserved seats (30%) since 2002, Serbia challenged Yugoslavian conservative heritage about gender equality and gender hierarchy and approximated its government to the evident essential democratic basis.

C: Concerned about this issue, the Republic of Serbia recommends the following proposals to increase women's representation in government:

Legal candidate quotas and reserved seats mechanisms show up as decisive solutions to the problem if applied proportionality to the rate of women and men in society. These quotas must be accompanied by the creation of a conduct code for parties to promote cooperation in representative bodies and avoid gender-based discrimination of any type; and should also be applied to every government sector. Furthermore, Serbia believes that this action should be taken regionally, respecting the particularities of each state or province of a country, but following the international ambition on promoting equality. As this topic is controversial between countries that adopt voluntary quotas or do not apply it at all, such as other Balkans and Hungary, it must be understood that to enforce this system is not to deprive a nation of its sovereignty, but to enable women to occupy power spaces safely and effectively. Having more flexible quotas tolerates chauvinism and actions of overly conservative conceptions, such as the Orthodox Church heritage in Serbian patriarchal society and men-dominated political parties' behaviors. Although efforts have a progressivist scope, it is still a delicate theme.

Besides the short term policies, it is imperative that long term measures are taken to guarantee the perennity of these resolutions. Serbia recognizes the methods on education taken by EU and AU countries and Rwanda as brilliant examples: the Republic of the Congo, for instance, recently dedicated Women's Day to promote public debates on women's acknowledgment about their rights and empowerment in a NGO-governmental collaboration event. This kind of act promotes the citizens to get involved with the country's gender-based issues, instructing women - but not solely - about their life opportunities and rightful places. By the further pacific acceptance of women in government and the rise of women in power positions scores, the measures are going to be seen as effective and its eventual flaws could be easily spotted and solved in order to prioritize countries' social development.

Finally, the Republic of Serbia endorses larger funding for parity initiatives. Serbia recognizes that without incentives, not every country may invest in infrastructure and educational systems to enable not privileged women to learn, vote and be eligible. Understanding its political relevance and influence in the Balkans since Yugoslavia and its desire to integrate the EU, the Republic of Serbia prioritizes the investments on long-lasting opportunity creation for women's political welfare.