

FINAL REPORT

ON GENDER MONITORING OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS

IN UKRAINE

2020



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INTRODUCTION

The Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has carried out gender monitoring of the local elections that took place on 25 October 2020.

The gender monitoring was aimed to deliver a comprehensive gender analysis of the electoral process with the purpose of identifying opportunities and obstacles for women's participation in elections and their election to local councils and the positions of mayors of communities, as well as their participation in the distribution of leadership positions following the elections.

The monitoring involved analysis of the following aspects: legislation, the composition of political party central governing bodies and oblast branches, representation of women among candidates on political party electoral lists for oblast councils, women's representation among candidates for mayors of communities and councilors of city councils in big cities, a sample of 10 cities with up to 10,000 voters, as well as interviews with women candidates and elected women councilors, women and men representatives of political parties.

Analysis of the women candidates' experience in the electoral process was carried out in three stages: at the first stage of the election campaign, at its final stage, and after the election of candidates and certification of the election results. In total, 200 women candidates have been interviewed. The candidates live in the following 10 oblasts: Vinnytsia, Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblasts. They ran for oblast councils, city councils in cities-oblast centers, for councils in communities with up to 10,000 voters, as well as for the posts of city mayors. They ran on party lists of a variety of political parties and as self-nominated candidates. Among the women candidates interviewed, 83 were members of political parties and 117 did not belong to any political party. 176 women among the interviewed

candidates ran on political party lists and 24 of them ran as self-nominated candidates.

The overall representation of women on political party lists, women's representation among the leaders of the lists, and among the leaders and top three candidates on territorial district electoral lists have been analyzed. Candidates standing for re-election and re-election of councilors, multiple nominations, the influence of open lists, withdrawal of candidates and elected councilors, the experience of women candidates in the election campaign, and women's representation in leadership positions after the elections have also been analyzed.

Interim results of gender monitoring of the local elections were presented in March-April 2021 during 8 interregional roundtables in Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi. During the events, 330 women candidates, councilors, mayors of communities, women and men representatives of local governments and civil society organizations were involved in developing recommendations based on the local elections and gender monitoring results.

The Ukrainian Women's Fund is drawing particular attention to the actual opportunities for equal participation of women and men in local elections. Political parties play a key role in achieving a more balanced representation of women in the electoral process and politics. This gender monitoring will serve as the basis for a dialogue with political parties on taking positive actions to achieve gender equality.

Women, who constitute 54 percent of Ukraine's population, are underrepresented in local self-government bodies and have limited influence on making decisions that are crucial for communities.



Gender equality in politics continues to be an expectation of the society. According to the results of a nationwide poll, carried out by NDI in December 2020, 64 percent of citizens want a more balanced representation of women and men in politics¹. In December 2019, in a similar poll, the respondents were asked about the reasons why there are fewer women in elected office: 67 percent of respondents said political parties are more likely to nominate men rather than women².

- 1 Opportunities and challenges facing Ukraine's democratic transition. National telephone survey [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/December_2020%20public%20UKR%20fin%20%281%29.pdf
- 2 Opportunities and challenges facing Ukraine's democratic transition. National survey [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI_December%202019%20survey_Public%20UKR%20fin.pdf

1. LEGISLATION

1.1 Legislation governing the electoral process in local elections

On 11 July 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 8th convocation adopted the Election Code. The president submitted his proposals to the Code and returned it to the parliament for re-consideration. Having considered the president's comments and proposals, on 19 December 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 9th convocation adopted the Election Code for the second time. The Code entered into force on 1 January 2020.

During the year 2020, a number of amendments were introduced to the Election Code. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine introduced the most systemic and fundamental amendments to the Election Code as it adopted the Law "On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine regarding improvement of the electoral legislation" as of 16 July 2020 No.805-IX. The amendments and novelties applied to the majority of the Election Code articles including general provisions, presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, etc.

The amendments concerning local elections, adopted by the parliament, addressed territorial organization of elections, the introduction of the proportional electoral system in communities with more than 10,000 voters, candidate nomination, the gender quota, decrease of the electoral deposit, and at the same time, introduction of the deposit for elections in small communities, restrictions on multiple nominations in local elections, the system of election commissions in local elections, formation, establishment, and powers of the commissions, filling out election-related documents, vote count, and other legislative provisions.

1.2 Key provisions of the Election Code governing the electoral process in local elections

In comparison with its initial version and the 2015 local elections, the Election Code, including the amendments introduced by Law No. 805-IX as of 16 July 2020, establishes a different size of local councils in communities with up to 100,000 voters, which is largely related to consolidation of communities and changes in the territorial-administrative structure. Thus, local councils in communities with up to 10,000 voters consist of 22 councilors; communities with 10,000 to 30,000 voters have 26 councilors; communities with 30,000 to 50,000 voters are represented by 34 councilors, and communities with 50,000 to 100,000 voters have 38 councilors. The size of local councils in communities with over 100,000 voters remains unchanged and consists of 42 to 120 councilors.

Under the current version of the Election Code, **councilors of village, settlement, and city councils in territorial communities with up to 10,000 voters are elected based on the system of relative majority** in multi-member districts, which comprise the territory of a community. The number of such districts is established by the respective territorial election commission that divides the size of the respective council by three with a deviation of not more than one district. At least two and not more than four councilors may be elected in each such district. Candidates nominated by political parties from among their members or non-affiliated citizens and self-nominated candidates from among the voters can run for these seats.

During candidate nomination, party branches are obliged to nominate at least 30 percent of candidates representing one gender of the total number of candidates for the respective council.



A novelty of the Election Code requires that parties nominating candidates as well as self-nominated candidates pay a cash deposit, which equals 20 percent of the minimum monthly salary as of the first day of the electoral process **for each nominated candidate**. The deposit is subject to return only provided that the candidate is elected.

Elections of Members of the Supreme Council in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, councilors of oblast, rayon, and rayon-in-city councils, and councilors of city, village, and settlement councils in territorial communities with over 10,000 voters are held under the proportional system with open lists of councilor candidates nominated by local political party branches. The party branches can participate in councilor seat allocation if they have been supported by 5 and more percent of voters of the total number of votes cast for all party organizations in the elections.

To organize and administer elections under the proportional system, the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, oblasts, rayons, cities, rayons-in-city, villages, settlements, or territorial communities are split into territorial districts by dividing the size of a certain council by 10 with a deviation of not more than two districts.

To participate in the respective elections, a party branch nominates and approves candidates from among its members or non-affiliated citizens at a meeting or conference and compiles a unified electoral list; the number of candidates on the list shall not exceed the size of the respective council. Besides, all candidates on the unified electoral list, except for the first candidate on the list, are allocated among territorial election districts and can only be placed on one territorial district electoral list that shall comprise not fewer than 5 and not more than 12 individuals.

When compiling the unified and territorial district electoral lists, party branches are required by law **to ensure that not less than two men or women candidates are present in each five candidates on each electoral list (from first to fifth place, from sixth to tenth place, etc.)**. However, if

the number of candidates on such lists is not a multiple of five, alternation of candidates of both genders in the last candidates on the list (from 1 to 4) is required.

Besides, under the Election Code, **candidate ranking on electoral lists, established at a party branch meeting or conference during candidate nomination, can only be altered based on election results if the respective candidate's voter support makes up at least 25 percent of the election quota**.

To register candidates for council elections, the party branch is required by law to pay a deposit of four minimum monthly salaries as of the first day of the electoral process for every 90,000 voters of the respective unified territorial election district.

Under the amendments introduced to the Election Code by Law of Ukraine No.805-IX as of 16 July 2020, village, settlement, and city mayors in cities with fewer than 75,000 voters are elected based on the relative majority system, while mayors in cities with more than 75,000 voters are elected through the absolute majority system. Such mayoral positions are open for nomination for both political party candidates and self-nominated citizens.

To participate in an election of the village, settlement, and city mayor in cities with fewer than 75,000 voters, it is obligatory to pay a deposit of one minimum monthly salary as of the first day of the electoral process; to run for mayor in cities with 75,000 voters and more, it is necessary to pay a deposit of four minimum monthly salaries for every 90,000 voters of the respective unified territorial election district.

The Election Code of Ukraine provides for **multiple nominations for councilor candidates and mayoral candidates in a village, settlement, or city**, however certain restrictions are stipulated: in particular, a person can be nominated as a councilor candidate for no more than two levels of local councils in a multi-member district.

1.3 Legal regulation of combating discrimination, sexism, and cyberbullying

The principle of equality and non-discrimination on all grounds is a constitutional norm that applies to all social relations and is one of the foundations of the entire Ukrainian legislation, including the electoral legislation.

The Election Code of Ukraine, namely part 4 of Article 47 states that election commissions, mass media and information agencies, government agencies, government agencies of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, local self-government bodies, their officials, associations of citizens, other individuals that disseminate election-related information that is not considered as campaigning are obliged to adhere to the principles of objectivity, impartiality, balance, completeness and accuracy of information, avoid discrimination and sexism.

Although part 4 of Article 47 of the Election Code establishes the requirement for non-discrimination only in terms of dissemination of information not considered as campaigning, the requirement to adhere to the principles of equality and non-discrimination on all grounds is a universal norm and it applies to all aspects of various social relations, including the electoral process.

The Law of Ukraine “On principles of preventing and combating discrimination in Ukraine” as of 6 September 2012 No.5207-VI establishes the principal directions of the state policy aimed at preventing and combating discrimination, in particular non-discrimination, positive action, creating conditions for prompt detection of discrimination cases and providing effective protection for individuals and/or groups of individuals who experienced discrimination.

The above-mentioned Law defines the concept of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, etc., and includes provisions specifying that an individual who experienced discrimination has the right to claim compensation for material and

moral damage in accordance with the Civil Code of Ukraine and other laws, and those guilty of discrimination are subjects to civil, administrative, and criminal liability.

Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine establishes liability, in particular a fine, restriction of liberty or imprisonment, for direct or indirect restriction of rights or granting direct or indirect privileges to citizens based on their gender.

The term “sexism” used in part 8 of Article 47 of the Election Code is a novelty in legislation and it currently does not have a clear legal definition, which leads to some ambiguity in the understanding of the term and complexity in law enforcement. However, the parliament is considering a number of draft laws that seek to define this term and establish legal restrictions regarding sexism.

Therefore, although the term “sexism” is mentioned in Article 47 of the Election Code of Ukraine, **currently, there is no clear legal definition of this term and legal liability for sexist behavior has not been established yet.**

As of now, adult cyberbullying and the lack of an effective state response mechanism constitute another gap in legislation.

It is worth mentioning that on 18 December 2018, the parliament introduced amendments to the Law “On Education.” The amendments define the concept of bullying aimed at minors and/or carried out by a minor in relation to other participants of the education process, including the use of electronic communication to bully. Besides, amendments establishing liability for bullying aimed at such individuals have been introduced to the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences. However, **the legislation does not offer a legal definition of adult cyberbullying.**



2. POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties nominate candidates for mayors of communities, compile electoral lists for local councils, and provide organizational, methodological, and financial support for candidates, thus playing a key role in engaging women and men in politics. Local party branches have a significant influence on candidate nomination, according to the information received from the in-depth interviews and meetings with political party representatives and women candidates and councilors that took place in the framework of gender monitoring of both the 2019 parliamentary elections and the 2020 local elections.

To analyze gender balance in political party governing bodies, 10 political parties have been selected. During the selection, the following criteria were applied: representation of the party in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, oblast councils and city councils of cities-oblast centers, and party ratings that have been published based on the survey results of the Sociological Group “Rating” and SOCIS Centre.

The following parties have been selected for gender monitoring: *Batkivshchyna*, *Golos*, *Trust the Deeds*, *European Solidarity*, *For the Future*, *Opposition Platform – For Life*, *Opposition Bloc*, *Samopomich*, *Svoboda*, and *Servant of the People*. In order to include regional specifics of electoral support, the three largest party factions in oblast councils and city councils of oblast centers have been determined, and oblast mayors’ party affiliation has been identified. Based on the analysis results, the political parties *Opposition Bloc* and *Samopomich Union* have been selected for monitoring.

Analysis of the websites of the political parties under monitoring found that information on party leadership in central bodies and local branches, presented on their public resources, is, in many cases, incomplete and differs from the information in state registries. In particular, details about individuals who comprise the leadership

of the governing bodies are often either entirely missing from the official political party websites or are incomplete: the websites mention only the heads or contact persons (who are not the heads) of such party branches, in other cases, the website information does not correspond to the registration information, etc.

Given this and to ensure an identical approach to all political parties analyzed, comprehensive analysis of gender balance in the leadership of central, oblast, and city-in-oblast centers branches has been carried out based on the following sources: official information on party central governing bodies received from the Uniform State Register of Public Organizations, and the responses of interregional departments of justice, received upon request, regarding all oblast, city-in-oblast centers, and Kyiv based branches of such parties.

With regard to party membership, based on the in-depth interviews, party branches rarely analyze gender balance among their party staff. The respondents believe that party branches led by women (which is more often the case in small towns) usually include more women members and their representation can reach over 50 per cent.

2.1 Women's representation in political party central governing bodies

Overall, **central governing bodies of the parties analyzed comprise 199 individuals, among them 162 men (81.4 percent) and 37 women (18.6 percent).** Women lead three parties: *Batkivshchyna*, *Golos*, and *Samopomich*. Other parties are led by men.

The largest representation of women in political party central governing bodies was observed in **European Solidarity** (17 men and 9 women (65.4 percent and 34.6 percent respectively)), *Trust the Deeds* (4 men and 2 women (66.7 percent and 33.3 percent respectively)), and *Golos* (5 men and 2 women (71.4 percent and 28.6 percent respectively)). The leadership of *Servant of the People* comprises 7 men (77.8 percent) and 2 women (22.2 percent).

In four parties, women's representation in the leadership varies from 18.2 percent to 12.5 percent: 18.2 percent in *Samopomich Union*, 17.3 percent in *Batkivshchyna*, 16.4 percent in *Opposition Platform – For Life*, and 12.5 percent in *Opposition Bloc*.

Women are least represented in the governing bodies of two political parties: *Svoboda*, there is only one woman among 19 individuals in the leadership, which makes up 5.3 percent, and *For the Future* – no women are represented among 6 individuals in the party leadership.

2.2 Women's representation in the governing bodies of political party branches

As of November 2020, **a total of 2,077 individuals, among them 1,563 men (75.3 percent) and 514 women (24.7 percent), comprised the governing bodies of oblast, city-in-oblast centers (except for Donetsk and Luhansk), and Kyiv based party branches of the parties analyzed.** It is likely that the number of individuals constituting the governing bodies of party branches is higher, since in some cases, the government agencies provided information only about the heads of party branches, lacking details about the full composition of such governing bodies. Besides, a significant proportion of the parties analyzed have no registered city branches in oblast centers, and in some cases – in oblasts either. The analysis is based on the official information provided upon request by the interregional departments of the Ministry of Justice.

Overall, out of 368 political party branches, 294 branches are led by men (79.9 percent) and 74 – by women (20.1 percent). Women are most represented among the heads of party branches in the following parties: *Trust the Deeds* (50 percent), *Golos* (40 percent), *Opposition Bloc* (29.3 percent), and *Samopomich* (22.2 percent); the lowest representation of women was observed among the heads of party branches of *Opposition Platform – For Life* (5 percent), *For the Future* (10.3 percent), and *Svoboda* (10.9 percent). In other parties, the number of women leading oblast and city branches ranges from 15 to 20 percent.

Analysis of the overall composition of the governing bodies in oblast and city party branches found that women's representation there varies from 16.4 to 48.6 percent. The highest percentage of women is observed in the governing bodies of the local party branches of *Trust the Deeds* (48.6 percent), *Golos* (36.3 percent), and



Opposition Bloc (31.7 percent). Women's representation varies between 20 and 27 percent in the following five parties: 27.2 percent in *Batkivshchyna*, 27.1 percent in *For the Future*, 24.4 percent in *European Solidarity*, 22.3 percent in *Samopomich*, and 20.3 percent in *Opposition Platform – For Life*. *Svoboda* and *Servant of the People* political parties have comparatively the lowest percentage of women in the governing bodies of their local party branches (16.4 and 18.2 percent respectively).

Overall, 1,377 individuals, among them 1,050 men (76.3 percent) and 327 women (23.7 percent) are members of the governing bodies of the analyzed oblast political party branches; 187 men and 45 women (80.6 and 19.4 percent respectively) are heads of the branches.

700 individuals, among them 513 men (73.3 percent) and 187 women (26.7 percent) comprise the leadership of all party branches in cities-in-oblast centers (except for Donetsk and Luhansk) and Kyiv-based city branches. 107 men (78.7 percent) and 29 women (21.3 percent) are heads of the 136 registered branches.

Altogether, women are somewhat better represented in the governing bodies of city branches, less so at the oblast branch level, and even less at the central level.

Half of the parties analyzed demonstrate a growing percentage of women in their oblast and city branches in comparison with their central governing bodies. In particular, the share of women in the central governing body of *Golos* is 28.6 percent, their representation in the party's oblast governing bodies makes up 35.4 percent, and 40 percent of women are represented in the party's city governing bodies. In *Batkivshchyna*, the ratio is the following: 17.3 percent of women are represented in the central governing body, 24.9 percent in oblast governing bodies, and 30.3 percent in the governing bodies at the city level. A similar trend is observed in *Samopomich* (18.2 percent, 21.7 percent, and 23.5 percent respectively), *Opposition Platform – For Life* (16.4 per-

cent, 17.8 percent, and 25.5 percent respectively), and *Svoboda* (5.3 percent, 15.9 percent, and 17.2 percent respectively).

Three political parties demonstrated an increase in the number of women in their oblast branch governing bodies in comparison with their central governing bodies, however, women's representation decreased in their city branch governing bodies, in comparison with the ones in oblasts. For instance, no women are represented in the central governing body of the political party *For the Future*, however, the share of women in the party's oblast branches is 28 percent, while a decrease in women's representation is observed in the party's city branches (21.4 percent). A similar trend is observed in *Opposition Bloc*: the share of women in the governing bodies of its central, oblast, and city branches comprises 12.5 percent, 32.4 percent, and 30.6 percent respectively. *Trust the Deeds* displays the same tendency with women comprising 33.3 percent, 50 percent, and 42.9 percent respectively.

The following trend was observed in *Servant of the People*: women comprise 16 percent of the oblast branch governing bodies, which is a lower number compared to the central body (22.2 percent), however, women make up 33.3 percent of members of the party's city branch governing bodies.

A decrease in the ratio of men and women in the governing bodies of city and oblast party branches in comparison with the central body is observed in *European Solidarity*. In particular, women's representation in the party's central governing body constitutes 34.6 percent; in its oblast branches, the representation reaches 23 percent, and in the city branches, women's share is 26.8 percent.

As for the regional specifics, women are least represented in the leadership of oblast branches of the parties under monitoring in Lviv oblast (19 percent of women), Zaporizhia, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblasts (18 percent in each), and Zakarpattia oblast (14 percent).

Women's representation is relatively higher in the leadership of oblast branches in Sumy oblast (30 percent), Mykolaiv oblast (34 percent), and Kharkiv oblast (40 percent).

In Kirovohrad and Cherkasy oblasts, none of the oblast branches of the parties under monitoring is led by a woman. A woman is the head of one oblast branch in each of the following oblasts: Kyiv, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Ternopil, Kherson, Chernivtsi, and Chernihiv oblasts. Two oblast branches are led by women in each of the following oblasts: Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Luhansk, Odesa, Rivne, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts. In Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts, women are the heads of three oblast branches in each, while only in Volyn, Zakarpattia, and Poltava oblasts four oblast branches are led by women in each of the oblasts.

Women are least represented in the leadership of city branches of the parties under monitoring in Sumy (18 percent), Uzhhorod (15 percent), Vinnytsia (14 percent), Ternopil (12 percent), and Odesa (10 percent). Women's representation is relatively higher in the leadership of city branches in Khmelnytskyi (30 percent), Lutsk (31 percent), Lviv (33 percent), and Rivne (35 percent). Women are well represented in the leadership of city branches in Mykolaiv (42 percent), Chernihiv (44 percent), and Zhytomyr (56 percent).

In the parties under monitoring, none of the city branches is led by a woman in Vinnytsia, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa, and Uzhhorod. A woman is the head of one city branch in Dnipro, Kropyvnytskyi, Lutsk, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi. Women lead three party branches in each of the following cities: Kyiv, Rivne, Kherson, Cherkasy, and Chernihiv, while only in Zhytomyr women are heads of four city branches.

2.3 Changes in the gender balance of political party governing bodies

Monitoring carried out by the Ukrainian Women's Fund at the end of 2019 - beginning of 2020 allows for a comparative analysis of changes in the gender balance of the central governing bodies and the governing bodies of oblast branches of seven political parties included in the respective sample, in particular, the parliamentary parties *Batkivshchyna*, *Golos*, *European Solidarity*, *Opposition Platform – For Life*, and *Servant of the People*, as well as non-parliamentary parties *Opposition Bloc* and *Samopomich*.

Overall, **analysis of the composition of political party central governing bodies demonstrates slight changes**. In some parties, the share of women has somewhat increased. In particular, the percentage of women in *Batkivshchyna* grew from 15.8 percent in 2019 to 17.3 percent at the end of 2020; in *Servant of the People*, this figure increased from 20 percent in 2019 to 22.2 percent at the end of 2020. In *Golos*, the percentage of women decreased at the end of 2020 in comparison with 2019: from 33.3 percent to 28.6 percent respectively. A similar downward trend occurred in *European Solidarity* as well: a decrease from 38.5 percent of women in 2019 to 34.6 percent at the end of 2020. Other parties did not undergo significant changes.

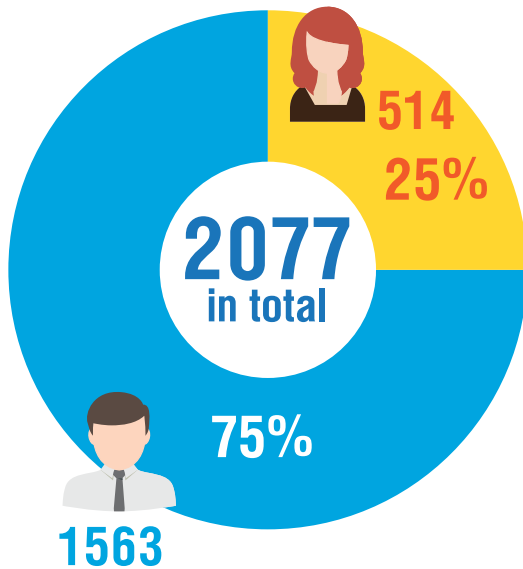
The governing bodies of oblast party branches have experienced considerable changes in their composition. For instance, in comparison with 2019, at the end of 2020, the share of women in *Golos* has grown from 17.7 percent to 35.4 percent; in *European Solidarity*, the number has increased from 16.7 percent to 23 percent, and in *Opposition Bloc*, women's representation has grown from 27.4 percent to 32.4 percent. At the same time, the representation of women has decreased from 26.6 percent in 2019 to 24.9 percent in 2020 in *Batkivshchyna*; from 20.9 percent to 17.8 percent in *Opposition Platform – For Life*; and from 27.2 percent to 21.7 percent respectively in *Samopomich*.



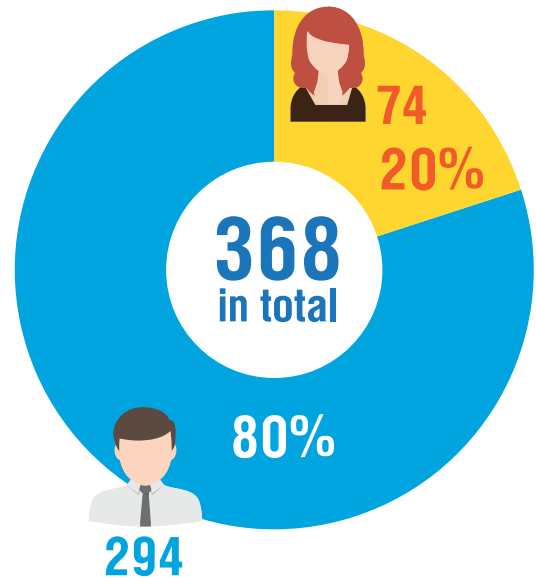
Gender balance in the governing bodies of oblast and city* party branches

TOTAL

Total number

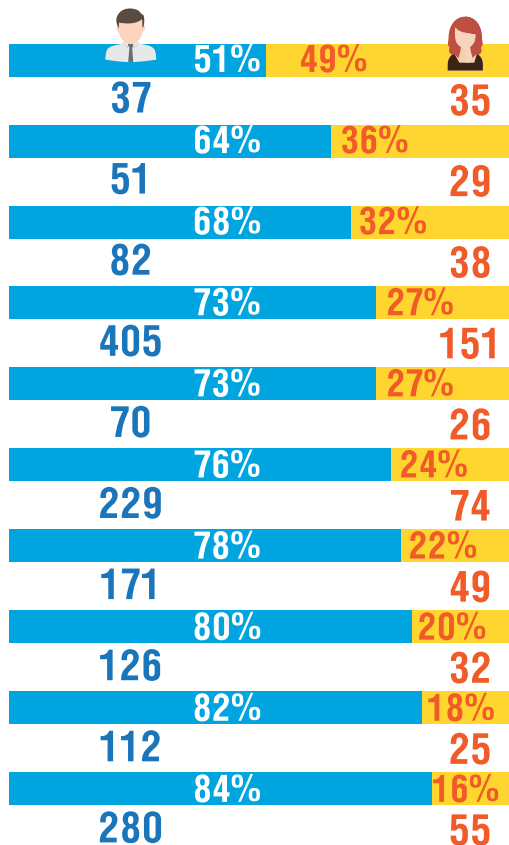


Heads

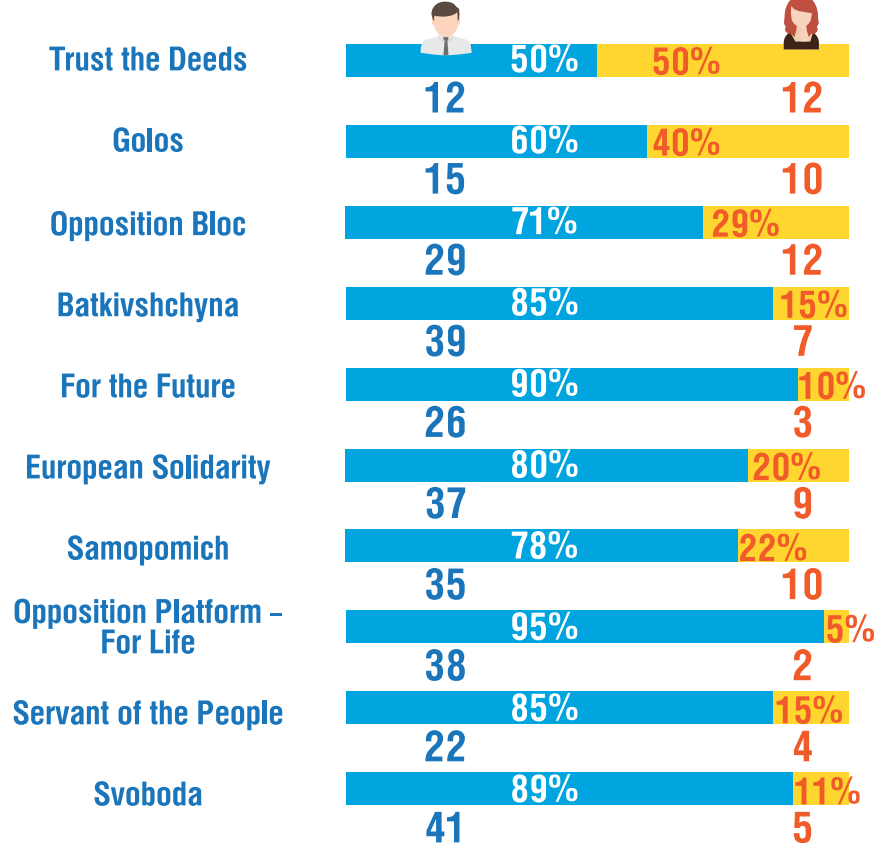


IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Total number



Heads









Data as of 25.02.2021

*Kyiv city and cities-oblast centers, except for Donetsk and Luhansk

Gender balance in the governing bodies of oblast and city* party branches

Data as of 25.02.2021

*Kyiv city and cities-oblast centers, except for Donetsk and Luhansk

PARTIES	Central governing bodies					Governing bodies in oblast branches					Governing bodies in city* branches				
	Total					Total					Total				
Batkivshchyna	52	43	82,7%	9	17,3%	325	244	75,1%	81	24,9%	231	161	69,7%	70	30,3%
Golos	7	5	71,4%	2	28,6%	65	42	64,6%	23	35,4%	15	9	60,0%	6	40,0%
For the Future	6	6	100,0%	0	0,0%	82	59	72,0%	23	28,0%	14	11	78,6%	3	21,4%
European Solidarity	26	17	65,4%	9	34,6%	191	147	77,0%	44	23,0%	112	82	73,2%	30	26,8%
Opposition Bloc	8	7	87,5%	1	12,5%	71	48	67,6%	23	32,4%	49	34	69,4%	15	30,6%
Opposition Platform – For Life	55	46	83,6%	9	16,4%	107	88	82,2%	19	17,8%	51	38	74,5%	13	25,5%
Trust the Deeds	6	4	66,7%	2	33,3%	58	29	50,0%	29	50,0%	14	8	57,1%	6	42,9%
Samopomich	11	9	81,8%	2	18,2%	152	119	78,3%	33	21,7%	68	52	76,5%	16	23,5%
Svoboda	19	18	94,7%	1	5,3%	207	174	84,1%	33	15,9%	128	106	82,8%	22	17,2%
Servant of the People	9	7	77,8%	2	22,2%	119	100	84,0%	19	16,0%	18	12	66,7%	6	33,3%
Total	199	162	81,4%	37	18,6%	1377	1050	76,3%	327	23,7%	700	513	73,3%	187	26,7%



The infographic is prepared by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and with the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the framework of the Ukraine Responsive and Accountable Politics Program. The content is the responsibility of the Ukrainian Women's Fund and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government or NDI.

At the same time, gender balance in Servant of the People has significantly changed from 45.2 percent of women in 2019 to 16 percent at the end of 2020; however, in this case, such a comparison is not entirely correct, since in 2019, the same individuals were members of the governing bodies in different oblast branches.

According to some women respondents of the in-depth interviews, during the local elections, men heads of local party branches resigned from their leadership positions in favor of women deputies or women activists if they did not see the position as a favorable project: if the party's rating has decreased considerably, due to funding cuts, or if they had been offered to join a different party with a high rating.

A week after I joined the party, the head offered, "You can have my position if you'd like to, I decided to leave." When I asked why, he said that money was scarce, and there was no way to win an election without money... he didn't want to waste his time.

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

Some women respondents and women participants of the roundtables noted positive changes in the fact that women run for leadership positions in party branches.

I was running for the head of the oblast party branch and my opponent was a man. My participation in the competition was taken positively at the party. Eventually, I did not win, but it wasn't because I'm a woman. In my opinion, I lacked visibility, experience, and resources. However, as a candidate, I was asked stereotypical questions: during online debates, I was asked how I found the time to manage my household chores. So, I answered by saying that I do have the time to make varenyky and lunch.

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

2.4 Attitude towards the distribution of leadership roles in party branches

According to the in-depth interviews, **women and men representatives of political parties realize that in the majority of parties, much fewer women hold leadership positions in comparison to men, and the higher the leadership level the fewer women are represented there.**

Women and men respondents named the following reasons for this:

- Financial resources are mostly concentrated in the hands of men; besides, it is believed to be easier for men to look for support in business circles, which are also male-dominated.
- It is a traditional belief that women have less time for politics, and by extension, for leadership roles. However, the respondents agree that women are well represented in the civic sector, and civic activism, just as it is with partly/political activity, takes time.
- Some respondents think that women party members themselves do not strive for leadership roles, choosing to be a deputy or an assistant of a man leader instead.
- Some respondents think it was more physically challenging for women than men to handle the election campaign workload, especially due to the limited time and changes in the Election Code.
- Some respondents think that women are less assertive in their aspirations to come to power because their motivation is different compared to men. A large number of women who run are volunteers, activists, and civic activists who pursue careers in politics rather to defend certain ideals, principles, and values

and solve certain social issues. Men mostly get into politics from business and while carrying out their councilor duties, they remember to lobby for their business interests, in other words, “make money off of politics,” thus creating fierce competition in more appealing districts.

- Some respondents believe that the majority of parties are founded by men, and thus men are creating a male-dominated environment around them.

The head of our oblast branch is a man, he engages other men, same businessmen as he is; you try to tell him there are powerful women, and he says, “So much trouble with them; I agree on things better with another man.”

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

- There are quite persistent gender stereotypes saying that it is a man’s role to hold a high-ranking leadership position because a woman “may perform worse in her role as a leader.” However, the respondents noted that successful women politicians are breaking these stereotypes step by step.

Indeed, there are more men in the leadership. But women are the ones who work more. The head is a man, and a woman who is on top of all tasks is a deputy

Woman representative of an oblast party branch



3. ELECTORAL DEPOSIT

The deposit amounts for the 2020 local elections, set by the Central Election Commission according to the Election Code provisions, **were higher compared to the 2015 figures. They were on average 4.4 times higher for oblast councils, and 4.5 times higher for city councils and mayoral candidates in cities-oblast centers.** Among oblast councils, the largest increase in the deposit was observed in Kyiv oblast – by 4.6 times, from UAH 70,446 to UAH 325,931. In Volyn, Lviv, and Rivne oblasts, the deposit has increased by 4.5 times.

Deposits for registering candidate lists for the elections to city councils, and for registering candidates for city mayors have increased the most in Ivano Frankivsk (by 5.1 times), Khmelnytskyi, and Lutsk (by 5 times), and Vinnytsia (by 4.8 times).

At the same time, **according to the official statistics alone, the average salary of women in 2019 was 23 percent lower. A significant increase in the size of the electoral deposit had a disproportionate impact on the opportunity of women and men to participate in the local elections.**

The majority of the 200 women respondents (74 percent), interviewed by the long-term observers, indicated that their electoral deposit was paid by their party. 21 percent of the women respondents said they paid their deposit solely from their personal/family funds. 2.5 percent indicated they had mixed sources of funds – personal funds and support from the party, and another 2.5 percent said they used fundraising costs. Out of **176 women respondents who ran on political party lists, 84 percent indicated that political parties paid their electoral deposits.**

The women respondents noted that normally, **political parties either paid or did not pay an electoral deposit for all nominated candidates – both women and men** equally. One woman respondent said she paid the deposit from her personal

funds, however, she knows that the party paid the deposit for those women candidates who did not have their own funds to cover it.

Results of the in-depth interviews with 20 party representatives demonstrated identical results: according to the respondents, parties provided equal resources for women and men candidates with regard to electoral contributions. Some of the parties paid the deposits for all candidates without exception, irrespective of the level of elections. In other parties, candidates collected their funds by themselves at all levels or at some levels of elections.

We basically just chipped in. The highest deposit, UAH 18,000 was covered by our party leadership. And our deposit was around UAH 6,000. It's not that much money for 25 people.

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

The majority of the 200 women respondents (40.5 percent), interviewed by the long-term observers, have a negative attitude towards the electoral deposit; 35.5 percent have a neutral attitude; 16.5 percent have a positive attitude; 7.5 percent did not answer the question.

My attitude is utterly negative. Cash deposits should be paid somewhere in the parliament where they at least get a salary. Alright, a few councilors will be selected to get paid, but everyone else will work for free and will get nothing but expenses for their work because you need to fill up your car to come and attend sessions or work in the district and nobody covers these costs.

Woman candidate for settlement and rayon councils

Those with a positive attitude towards the deposit mainly said that paying the deposit “disciplines” candidates and parties and eliminates those who lack an active approach and serious intentions.

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According to some women respondents, the electoral deposit also helps eliminate “technical candidates.” **Payment of the deposit by political parties received mixed feedback from the women respondents.** Some women candidates indicated that after all, the electoral deposit is taxpayers’ money that parliamentary parties get as state funding, and eventually, these costs return to the budget.

Our party sponsored it, thus giving an opportunity to the best active party members to be elected.

*Woman candidate
for Lviv city council*

If a person goes into politics, they should have money. One needs to be well off to go into politics and make decisions.

*Woman candidate for
Zaporizhia city council*

The size of the deposit is well thought out and affordable, and it eliminates “technical candidates.”

*Woman candidate for a
settlement council*

Other women respondents noted that a rise in the electoral deposit increased the dependence of parties and candidates on sponsors – big businesses, “forcing parties to turn to the oligarchs.” They also noted the forced dependence of local parties and individual candidates on large parties. At the same time, in their opinion, the deposit does not constitute a significant obstacle to registering “technical candidates.”

Some women candidates said they collected the money for list registration from fundraising, membership fees, and personal funds of candidates; because of the high electoral deposit, they failed to register the number of lists and candidates that had been planned.

This amount does not impact people who have funds. They can pay for themselves and for “technical candidates” as well.

*Woman candidate for
Khmelnyskyi city council*

This leads to a situation when less well-off parties cannot participate, while at the local level, local parties that are more familiar with the community issues are needed. It requires them to go cap in hand to the large parties, giving up their values; it undermines the very principle of local self-governance.

*Woman candidate
for Kharkiv city council*

We were able to raise funds only for city council candidates; under different circumstances, we would have had more opportunities, allowing us to nominate a mayoral candidate, oblast council candidates, having a larger total number of candidates.

*Woman councilor
for Kherson city council*

According to many women respondents, who expressed their opinions on the matter in addition to the survey questions, **introduction of the electoral deposit and an increase of the deposit had a negative impact either exclusively at the level of small communities or especially at the level of small communities.**

It was an unpleasant surprise, especially in small communities. Some people refused to participate in elections because of it.

*Woman candidate for a
settlement council and for
mayor of a community*

The deposit should not be introduced at all at the level of small towns and settlements because, in a village, it is quite hard to allocate money from the family budget.

*Woman candidate for mayor
of a consolidated community*

For the local elections, and for people from villages and settlements, in the time of economic struggles, it is a lot of money that is not subject to return in case when you lose the election. As for me, everything was arranged so that people would be forced to run on a list from a political party that was able to pay for them.

*Woman candidate for a
settlement council*



Half of the 200 women respondents (50 percent), interviewed by the long-term observers, indicated that it is more difficult for a woman to raise money for the electoral deposit. 41 percent of them noted that it is equally difficult or easy for both women and men to raise the money. 9 percent of the women respondents did not decide on the answer.

Results of the in-depth interviews held with political party representatives and women candidates and conclusions from the 8 interregional roundtables that brought together women candidates, elected councilors, and mayors of communities, and were held by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) also indicate that an increase in the electoral deposit was an unfavorable factor for women's participation in the local elections.

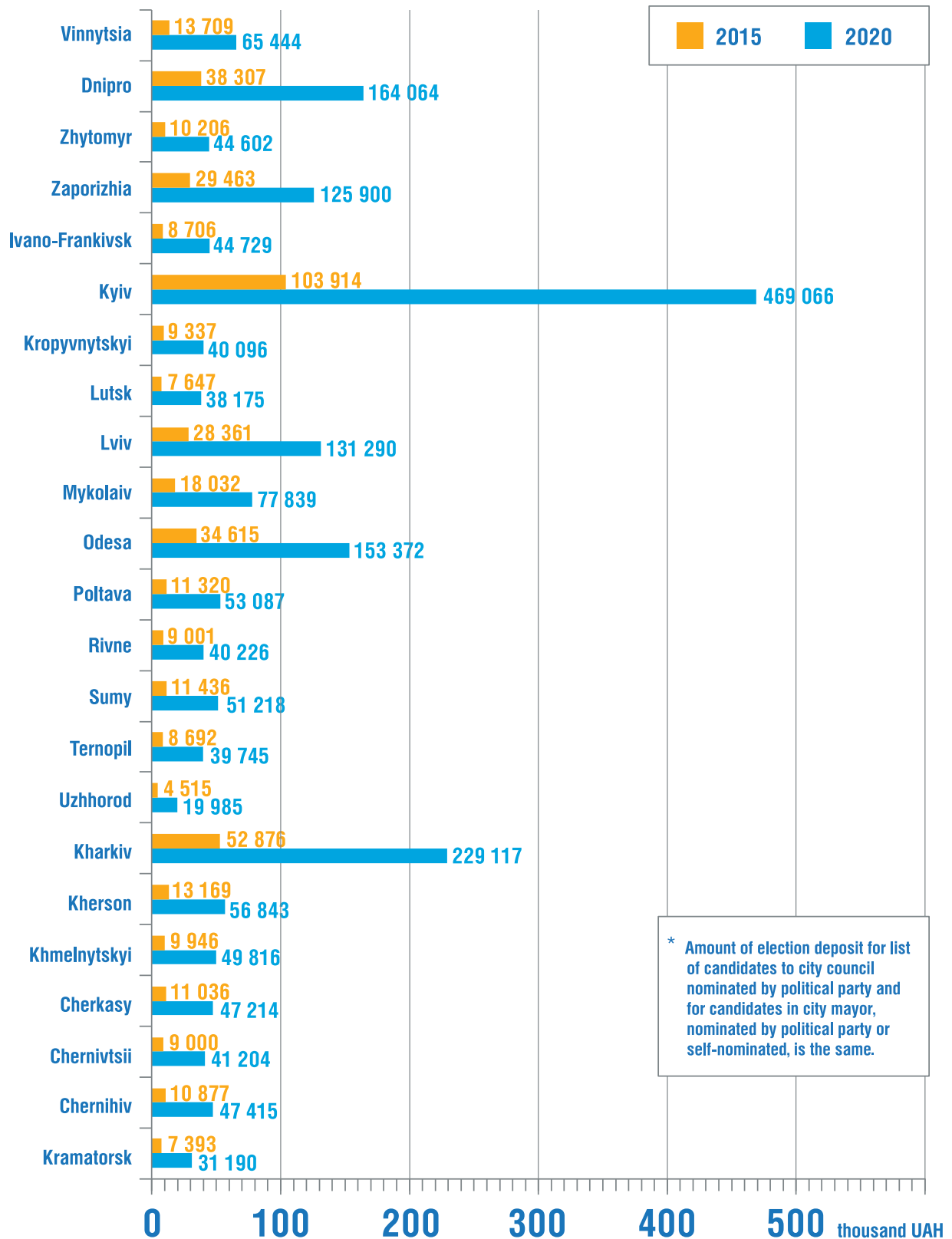
According to the respondents, unlike men candidates who get into politics from business, many women candidates have careers in the public field which pay less.

Women candidates are mostly the ones with doctoral degrees, teachers, doctors, librarians. Their jobs are not very well paid.

Woman representative of the central political party branch

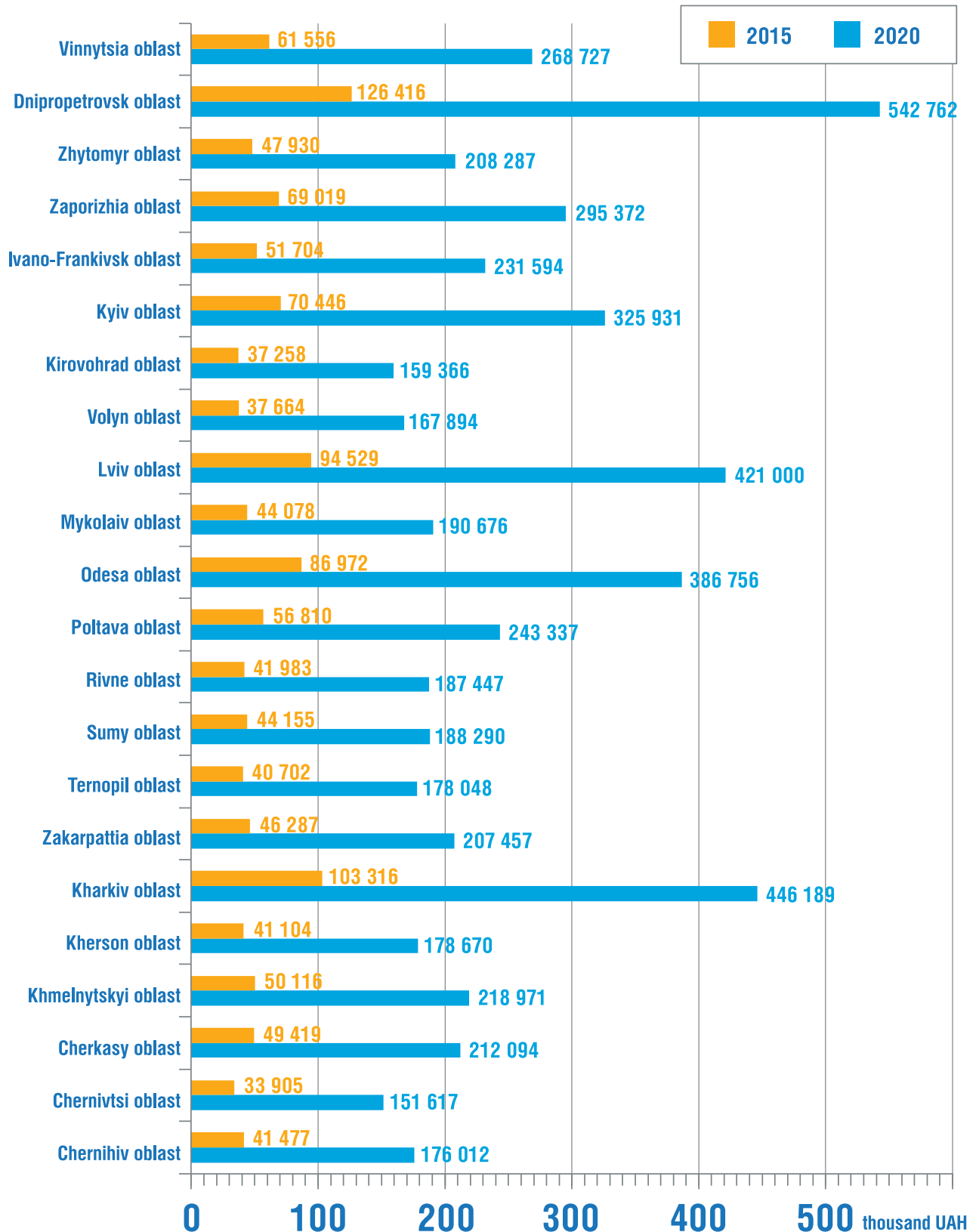
Election deposit

for list of candidates to city council and for candidates
in city mayor, UAH*



Election deposit

for list of candidates to oblast council, UAH



4. CANDIDATE NOMINATION AND GENDER BALANCE AMONG CANDIDATES

The Election Code requires political parties to ensure a ranking order on their lists, in particular no fewer than two candidates, men or women, shall be present in each five candidates of each electoral list. Thus, the gender quota constitutes 40 percent.

This rule applies to elections in communities with at least 10,000 voters and elections to oblast, rayon, and rayon-in-city councils.

In the elections to village, settlement, and city councils in small cities with up to 10,000 voters, parties shall ensure the representation of at least 30 percent of individuals of each gender on their electoral lists.

In practice, **according to the in-depth interview results, heads of party branches** (starting from the smallest ones to city and oblast branches) **were the ones with key influence on the formation of candidate lists and establishment of the ranking order (ordinal numbers of candidates).** Candidate rating/order on territorial district electoral lists was established by the party branch leadership responsible for the election campaign in the respective territorial election district. Further, candidate lists from various territorial election districts were submitted to the oblast party leadership, and together with the unified electoral list, approved by voting at party congresses and conferences.

In contrast to the parliamentary elections, **the majority of party branches did not hold primaries or discuss candidates on social media.**

Less than half of the 176 women respondents (44 percent) who ran on political party lists and were interviewed by the long-term observers among other respondents, indicated that the nomination

procedure in the political party was transparent to them.

Some women participants of the interregional roundtables expressed their concerns over the lack of party democracy: from their experience, party leaders compile the lists on their own, while party congresses do not make any decisions and simply legitimize the decisions of their leaders.

As positive examples, some of the women respondents named organizing roundtables where candidates were discussed and decisions were made collectively, open voting or secret ballot, including voting online. In some cases, the women candidates said that candidates were determined based on each candidate's rating in the territory where he or she was nominated. Alternatively, a rating of issues affecting a certain region was formed and based on that rating, candidates that could help solve the issues and be effective, judging from their experience, were selected.

We voted for the numbers on the list of districts secretly, it was transparent. The main list was offered by the leadership and we supported it.

Woman candidate for Zhytomyr oblast council

The final lists were compiled together with the leader and the person's abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and experience were discussed.

Woman candidate for Kherson oblast council



The nomination was transparent, the rating was discussed in detail. The list was often reviewed. There was a replacement in the team, a person refused to run before the lists were submitted, he vacated a place on the list, and adjustments were made. Everything was done openly.

Woman candidate for Vinnytsia city council

13 percent of the women respondents said the process was partially transparent, 9 percent said it was rather non-transparent or completely non-transparent. 34 percent did not decide on the answer.

The process was partially transparent, some entries on the lists remained a mystery to many of us.

Woman candidate for Zaporizhia oblast council

The nomination process was rather non-transparent; before registration at the CEC, nobody knew the place they had on the list.

Woman candidate for Khmelnytskyi oblast council

I have been informed that I wouldn't be the leader of the list basically right before the elections.

Woman candidate for a city council

Based on the survey on participation of women in the 2020 local elections, carried out by the Civil Network OPORA, only around one fourth of the women respondents believe the decision of political parties to place them on the unified and territorial district electoral lists under a certain number was fair and proper³.

3 Report on survey findings of the Civil Network OPORA on participation of women in the 2020 local elections — 2020 [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://www.oporaua.org/report/vybory/vyborchi-ombudsmeni/gender_2020

4.1 Influence of women on candidate nomination by political parties

Nearly all respondents from political parties (regardless of their gender) said that women have equal opportunities and tools to influence key decisions in the party. It has repeatedly been emphasized that the parties pay attention first of all to a person's professionalism and expertise. Some respondents pointed out that women politicians more often than their fellow men party members need to prove the value and relevance of their ideas/suggestions, which can be viewed with prejudice only because they were offered by a woman. According to the respondents, women can influence decisions if they show determination, perseverance, and persistence.

According to the respondents, **the interests of women in party branches are not entirely taken into account when it comes to the distribution of places on electoral lists and appointments to leadership positions.**

Some women said they faced nepotism: a practice when men leaders placed other men in winnable positions on electoral lists, appointed men to leadership positions, or placed on the lists their women relatives or acquaintances, who did not have any relation to party/political activities, in order to meet the quota. At the same time, some of the loyal party members who “were actually invested in the campaign” were tasked with the technical organization: producing campaign materials, preparing for meetings with voters, setting up campaign tents, or campaigning, and were often placed in unwinnable positions on party lists.

Composition of the winnable part of electoral lists, according to the in-depth interview respondents: representatives of party branches or election headquarters, candidates (women and men):	The gender aspect:
Current women and men councilors in local governments elected on party lists in the previous local elections.	In the previous convocation, women constituted only 15 percent of the councilors of oblast councils and only 20 percent of the councilors of city councils in big cities.
Women and men heads of party branches.	The share of women among the heads of party branches in oblasts and cities-oblast centers makes up only 21 percent.
Women and men candidates who were respected among voters, had an opportunity to make a financial contribution, and make their campaigning possible.	Women are mostly involved in small businesses and are self-employed. Women's share among private entrepreneurs is 44 percent; they constitute 35 percent among company owners and 30 percent among company directors ⁴ ; only 3 percent of biggest companies with a sole beneficiary belong to women. ⁵
Women and men candidates who represented their party in the media, campaigned and worked for the party's brand, worked on creating an appealing and recognizable image of their political party.	Ukrainian media cite women as experts only in 24 percent of their content items. Only 23.5 percent of women take part in political talk shows of the central TV channels. Sexism and bias towards women are widespread in mass media and in talk shows. ⁶

4.2 Attitude towards the gender quota

According to the in-depth interview results, **a large part of the party branches was not ready for the gender quotas to be introduced and they generally felt a lack of candidates, especially when it came to women candidates.** Parties were striving to engage as candidates successful women who are known in their respective districts, who are financially independent and charismatic, and have useful connections in government agencies and businesses. **Sometimes, political parties engaged in fierce competition to get on board those women who are known in their communities.** Some experienced women politicians negotiated with several well-known parties to secure the most winnable place on the list.

During the campaign, I represented the party in the media, I've got a lot of followers on social media, and they didn't care which party I represented, they voted for me!

Woman candidate, representative of a political party city branch

None of the men and women participants of the in-depth interviews said that their party or party leadership has a negative attitude towards gender equality. The majority, especially the women respondents, insisted that the gender quota be applied further; they believe the quota should not be abolished until there is sufficient representation of women councilors in power, and a community of experienced women politicians is formed equally with men.

4 Women are owners of 35 percent of Ukrainian companies [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://opendatabot.ua/blog/ru/177-lovely-woman-day>

5 For women only: how many Ukrainian businesses belong to women? [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://you-control.com.ua/data-research/suto-zhinoche-skilky-ukrayin-skykh-biznesiv-nalezhyt-zhinkam/>

6 Only 24 percent of content items in mass media cited women as experts — research study [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://imi.org.ua/monitorings/lyshe-24-materialiv-v-media-zgaduyut-zhinok-v-yakosti-ekspertok-doslidzhennya-i35410>



The gender quota is about a partnership, it means 50/50. Without the quota and without people getting used to it, it is impossible to reach 50/50 in Ukraine today. That is why I am in favor of keeping the quotas.

Woman representative of the central party branch

The majority of respondents assumed that in many councils, the percentage of elected women councilors is not compliant with the quota and can be lower than the percentage of women who ran as candidates for the elections. As a result, a large number of respondents (mostly women respondents) believe that the gender quota has not proved efficient.

However, a large number of respondents who represent political party branches/headquarters say the gender quota has worked nonetheless because it was binding and provided additional opportunities for women to run and be elected; without the quota, according to them, there would be even fewer women candidates and councilors.

The major part of the 200 women respondents, interviewed by the long-term observers, (65 percent) also believes it was the gender quotas that contributed to the wider nomination of women on political party lists in the local elections. One woman respondent said, “If it hadn’t been for the quota, there would only be men on the list.” However, several women respondents specified that their party is consistently guided by the principles of equal opportunities for women and men, so the gender quota would have been observed even without the binding legal norm. Some women respondents said they are aware of the cases when instead of including active women, interested in being elected, parties invited “technical women candidates” to meet the quota and to be able to replace them further.

Compliance with the gender quota was checked by both local leaders and representatives of oblast party offices. All of them noted that checking for compliance with the gender quota on the approved lists was a simple and rather technical process.

4.3 Gender balance on the lists for oblast councils and city councils of big cities

Overall, there were 43 percent of women on the electoral list to the 22 oblast councils, 7,248 women among 16,844 candidates. According to the CEC data, 5,387 women (29.9 percent) of 18,043 candidates ran as candidates for oblast councils in the 2015 elections. Due to compliance with the gender quota, women’s representation on political party lists for oblast councils has grown.

A similar situation was observed on the analyzed **electoral lists for the 24 city councils** of cities-oblast centers, Kyiv, Kramatorsk, and Bakhmut, where a total of 43.5 percent of women were represented – 7,547 women among 17,366 candidates.

The CEC data show that **due to the quota, parties also placed more women on the lists for city councils across Ukraine overall.** Thus, in 2015, 90,311 candidates, including 32,956 women (36.5 percent), ran as candidates for all city councils, and in 2020, the number constituted 113,118 candidates, including 50,417 women (44.6 percent).

An improvement in women’s representation also occurred on party lists for rayon councils (from 35.6 to 44 percent) and rayon-in-city councils (from 38.6 to 47.2 percent).

During seat allocation, an advantage is given to the first candidates on the unified electoral party lists; analysis of electoral lists for city and oblast councils found that **women and men were disproportionately represented** in these places.

Analysis of 393 electoral lists of all political parties registered for elections to city councils in Kyiv, cities-oblast centers, Kramatorsk and Bakhmut in Donetsk oblast found that **political parties nominated women as leaders of the unified lists only in 63 cases (16 percent).**

For instance, in Kherson, among 21 political parties that submitted their electoral lists, only one party nominated a woman as a leader of the unified list (women led 5 percent of the lists); in Cherkasy, one out of 20 parties placed a woman at the top of the list (5 percent); in Uzhhorod – 2 lists out of 25 were led by women (8 percent). In Poltava, women led 2 lists out of 20 (10 percent), in Chernivtsi – 2 out of 19 (11 percent), in Rivne – 2 out of 17 (12 percent), in Kharkiv – 2 out of 16 (13 percent), in Odesa – 2 out of 15 (13 percent), in Bakhmut – 1 out of 7 (14 percent). In Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, and Kramatorsk, women led 17 percent of the unified lists – 2 out of 12, 4 out of 24, and 2 out of 12 respectively.

Over 20 percent of party branches nominated women as leaders of the unified lists in the following cities: Ternopil (4 out of 19 lists or 21 percent), Lviv (4 out of 19 lists or 21 percent), Vinnytsia (4 out of 18 lists or 22 percent), Dnipro (4 out of 17 lists or 24 percent), Zhytomyr (4 out of 16 lists or 25 percent), and Sumy (4 out of 14 lists or 29 percent).

Women led over 30 percent of electoral lists for city councils only in two cities – Zaporizhia (5 out of 16 lists or 31 percent) and Chernihiv (4 out of 12 lists or 33 percent).

Analysis of 271 electoral lists of all political parties registered for elections to oblast councils **found that political parties nominated women as leaders of the unified lists only in 45 cases (17 percent).**

In particular, in Sumy oblast, none of the 12 unified electoral lists was led by a woman, in Chernivtsi oblast, a woman was placed first only on 1 out of 16 lists (7 percent), in Cherkasy oblast, the number of lists led by a woman was 1 out of 15 (7 percent), in Rivne oblast – 1 out of 12 (8 percent), in Odesa oblast – 1 out of 11 (9 percent). In Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts, women led 1 out of 10 lists (10 percent) in each. In Poltava and Kherson oblasts, 2 out of 14 lists in each (14 percent), were led by a woman; in Zaporizhia and Ternopil oblasts – 3 out of 13 lists in each (15 percent). In Zhytomyr oblast, 2 out of 12 lists (17 percent) were led by women, and in Dnipropetrovsk oblast, 2 out of 11 (18 percent).

A relatively larger number of party branches nominated women as leaders of their electoral lists in the following oblasts: Volyn (2 out of 10 lists or 20 percent), Lviv (3 out of 15 lists or 20 percent), Chernihiv (2 out of 9 lists or 22 percent), and Ivano-Frankivsk (3 out of 13 lists or 23 percent).

Only in the following three oblasts, over 30 percent of unified electoral lists for oblast councils were led by women: Zakarpattia (3 out of 10 lists or 30 percent), Kharkiv (4 out of 11 lists or 36 percent), and Kyiv (7 out of 18 lists or 39 percent).

Besides, **during seat allocation, an advantage is given to candidates who occupy first places on the territorial district electoral lists of political parties.** Thus, if a political party complied with the gender quota, but placed women lower than men on its territorial district electoral lists and allocated to them, for instance, places from 3 to 5, women stand much fewer chances of being elected.

Analysis of the territorial district electoral lists of political parties that submitted their lists to the above-mentioned city councils **found that although the parties nominated a total of 43.5 percent of women on the lists for city councils, among the first three candidates, the share of women was only 35 percent** (2,671 women out of 7,629 candidates in top three places). **Among the first candidates on territorial district electoral lists, there were 28.9 percent of women** (736 women out of 2,549 candidates leading territorial district electoral lists).

Analysis of the territorial district electoral lists for oblast councils displayed a similar trend. Although **the parties nominated a total of 43 percent of women on their lists, there were only 29.8 percent of women among the top three candidates on territorial district electoral lists, while the share of women among the leaders of the lists made up only 20.2 percent.**

Overall, **parties were somewhat more inclined to nominate women as leaders of the territorial district electoral lists for city councils rather than oblast councils.**



Thus, in the sample of Kyiv, cities-oblast centers, Bakhmut and Kramatorsk in Donetsk oblast, only in one city, less than 20 percent of territorial district electoral lists were led by women – in Sumy, women led 12 out of 83 or 14.5 percent of the lists. In 11 cities – Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Chernivtsi – from 22 to 29 percent of territorial district electoral lists were led by women. In 9 cities – Bakhmut, Zhytomyr, Kropyvnytskyi, Lutsk, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Rivne, Ternopil, and Kherson – women led from 30 to 39 percent of territorial district electoral lists. In one city, over 40 percent of lists were led by women – in Bakhmut the share of women constituted 46 percent.

At the same time, less than 20 percent of territorial district electoral lists for oblast councils were led by women in the following 11 oblasts: Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Chernivtsi, and Chernihiv. From 20 to 27 percent of territorial district electoral lists were led by women in the following oblasts: Vinnytsia, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Khmelnytskyi. Only in one oblast, over 30 percent of the lists were led by women – in Cherkasy oblast, the figure reached 31 percent.

4.4 Violation of the quota, withdrawal and replacement of candidates prior to the elections

Isolated cases of quota violations by political parties **have been reported: lists violating the quota in favor of men, mainly in the first five candidates on the lists**, have been submitted to TECs. Some TECs, despite their obligation to ensure compliance of the lists with the Election Code requirements, ignored the violations and registered such electoral lists.

For instance, in the elections to Bakhmut city council of Donetsk oblast, the list of the politi-

cal party For the Future was registered despite the quota violation. In the elections to Lutsk city council, the list of the political party Golos was registered with violations.

The ranking order of councilor candidates (ordinal numbers of candidates) on unified and territorial district electoral lists, approved by the party branch, may not be changed after the documents for their registration have been submitted to the territorial election commission; the order of candidates on territorial district electoral lists may be changed only based on the voting results.

At the same time, the Election Code establishes grounds when an individual is considered excluded from the electoral list: in particular, if the individual did not submit their statement agreeing to run as a councilor candidate from a particular party branch on the day when the party branch submitted an application to the territorial election commission to register its councilor candidates; or if prior to the registration, a candidate from a certain party branch withdraws their statement agreeing to run as a councilor candidate from that particular party branch.

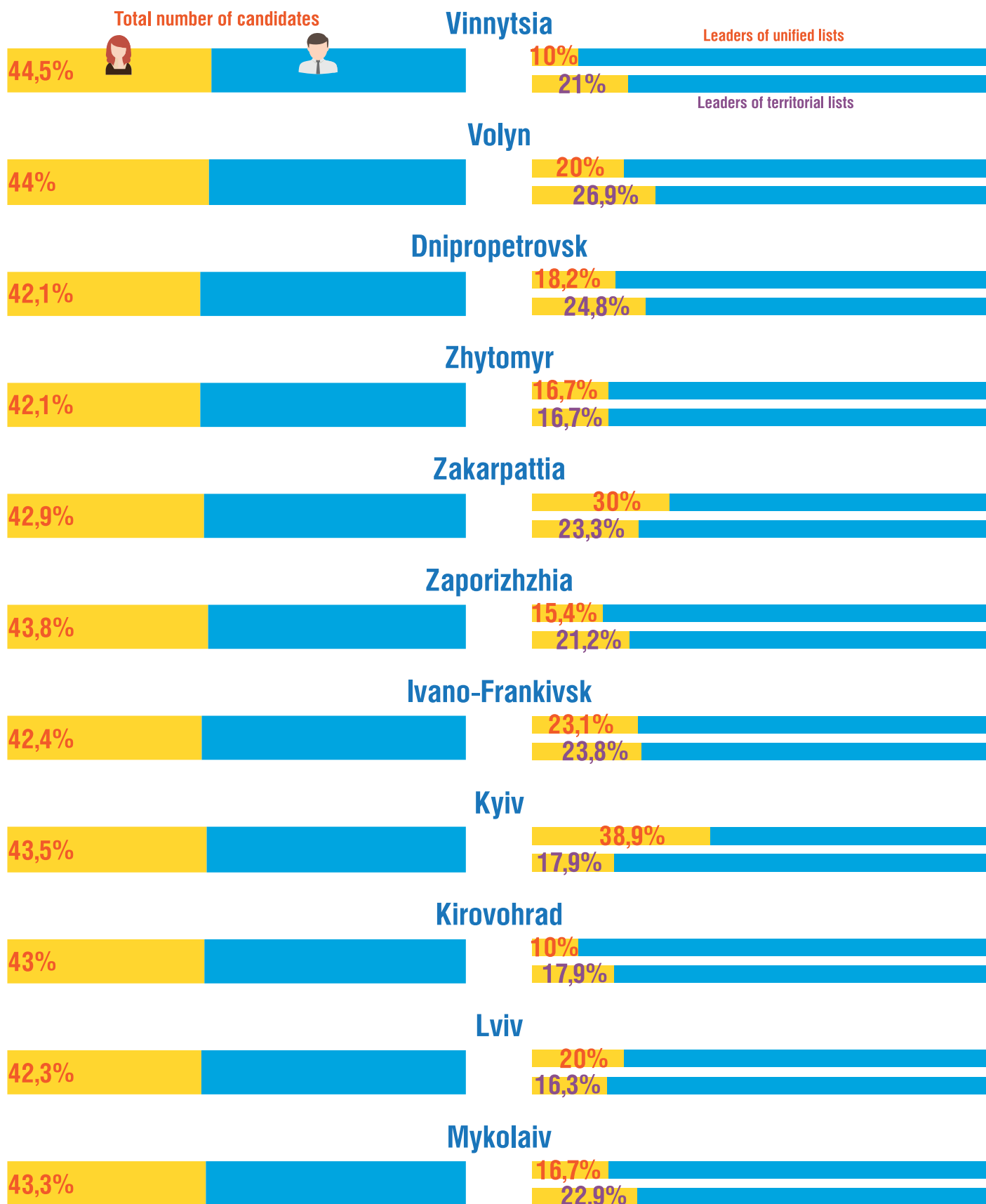
In certain cases, the territorial election commission may decide to cancel the registration of a candidate: in particular, when a candidate submits a refusal to run or if the party branch requests that the candidate registration be canceled.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) presented data saying that parties deliberately did not submit a full package of documents required to register a woman candidate so that their registration would be declined based on formal grounds.⁷

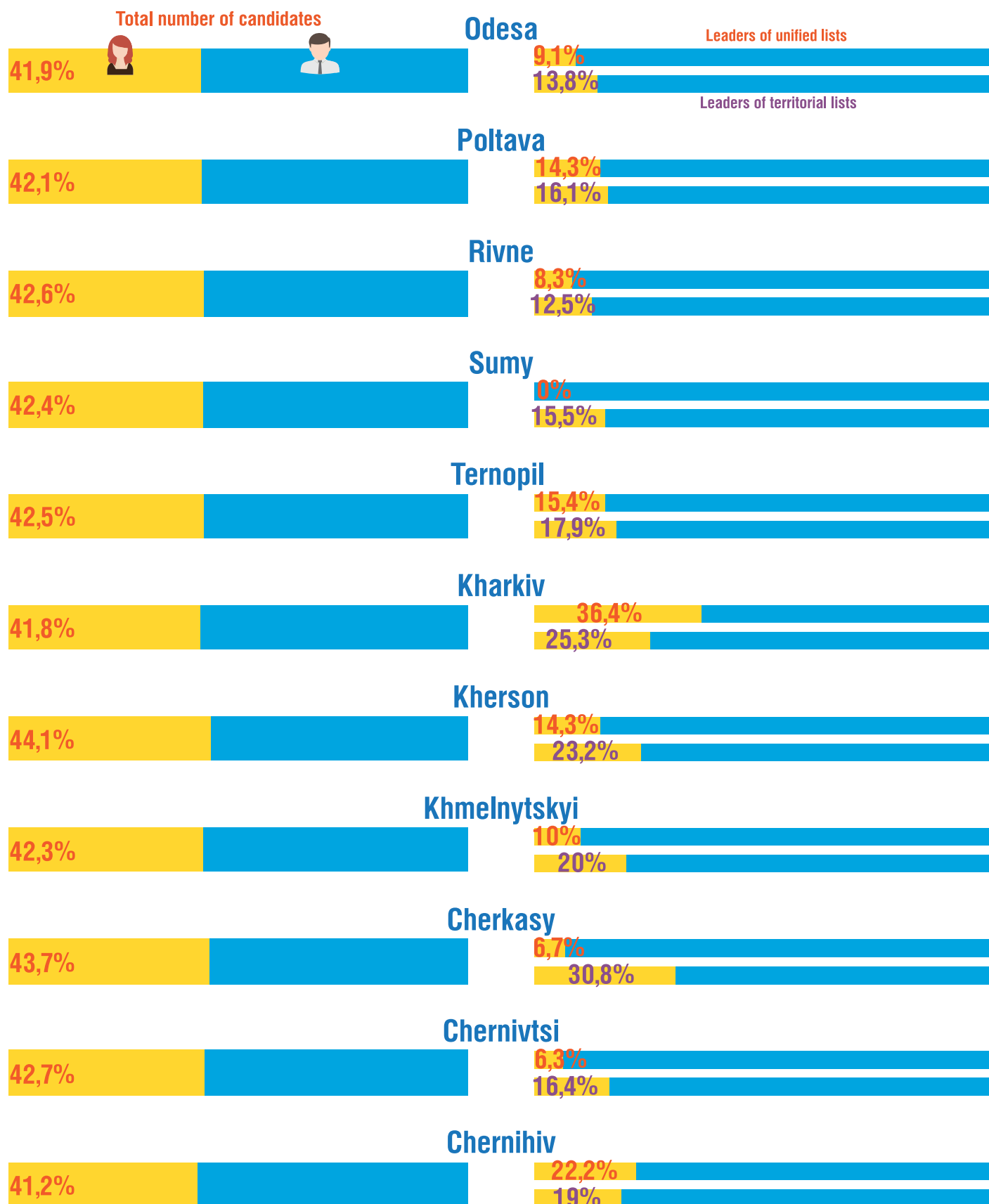
According to the monitoring results, **candidate withdrawal from the lists and change in the ranking order on the lists has led to de facto quota violations.**

⁷ National virtual conference “2020 Local Elections in Ukraine: Lessons Learned and Recommendations” [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://ifesukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CEC-IFES-OSCE-CoE-Lessons-Learned-Conference-2020-Local-Elections-in-Ukraine_Recommendations-d7-2021-03-02-UKR-final.pdf

Political parties' electoral lists to oblast councils



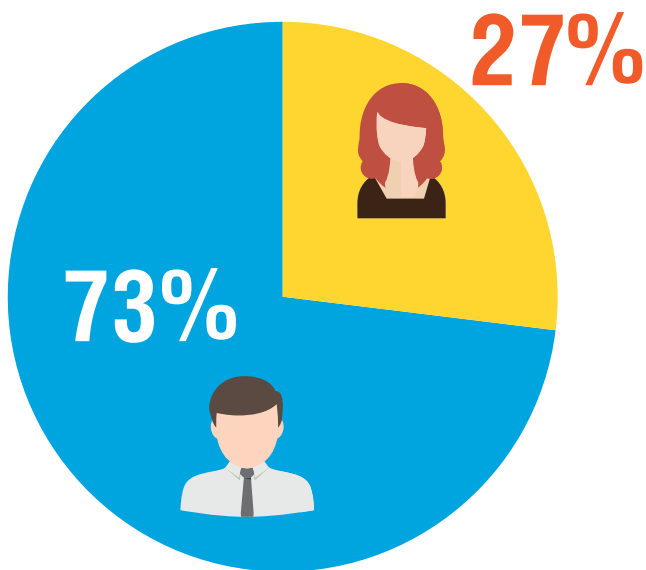
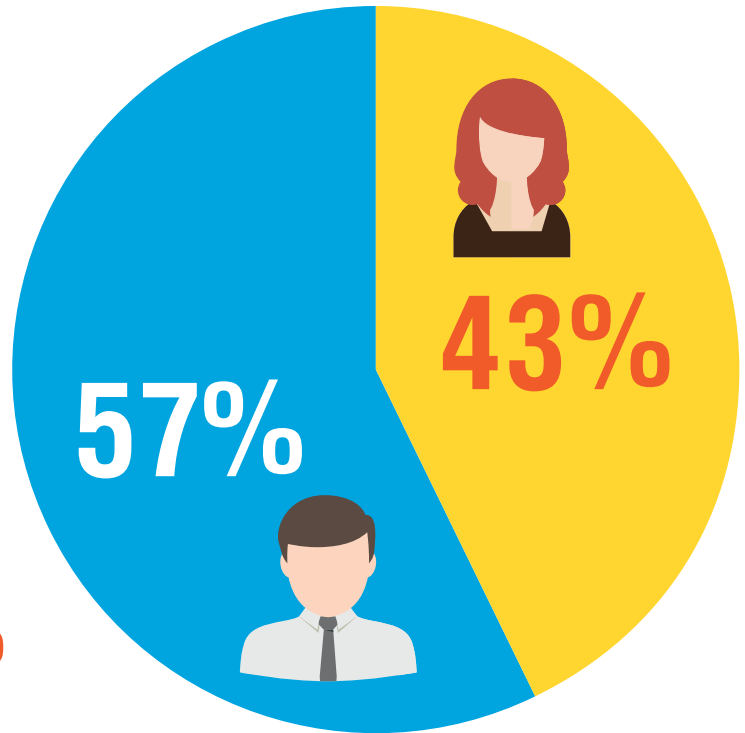
Political parties' electoral lists to oblast councils



Women's representation on the party list in elections to oblast councils

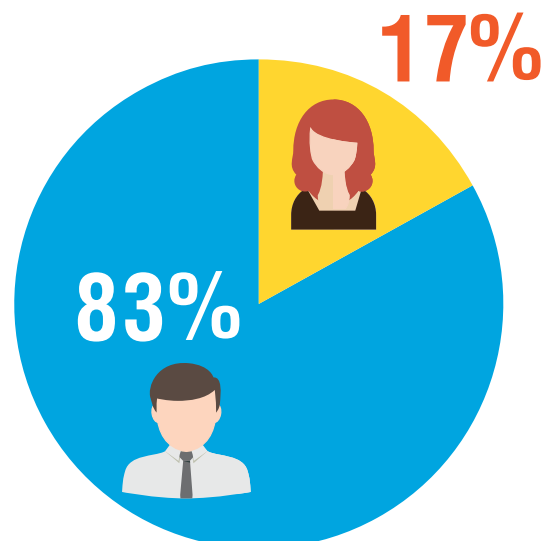
A sample of 10 political parties for the Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi oblast councils; Batkivshchyna, Golos, Trust the Deeds, European Solidarity, For the Future, Samopomich Union, Opposition Platform – For Life, Opposition Bloc, Svoboda, and Servant of the People political parties.

All party lists in elections to the oblast council



Top three candidates of the party lists for the territorial districts in elections to the respective oblast council

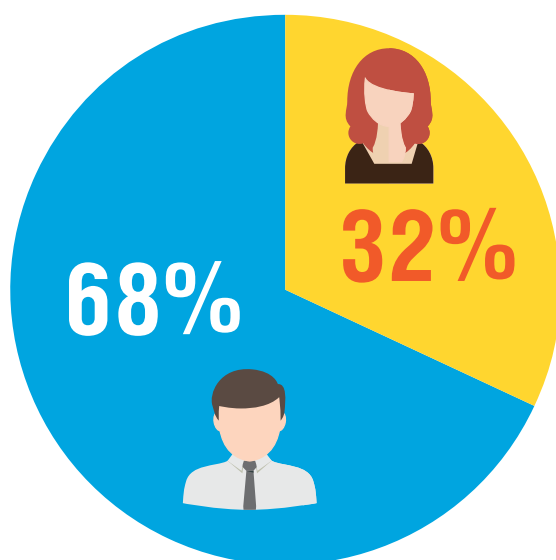
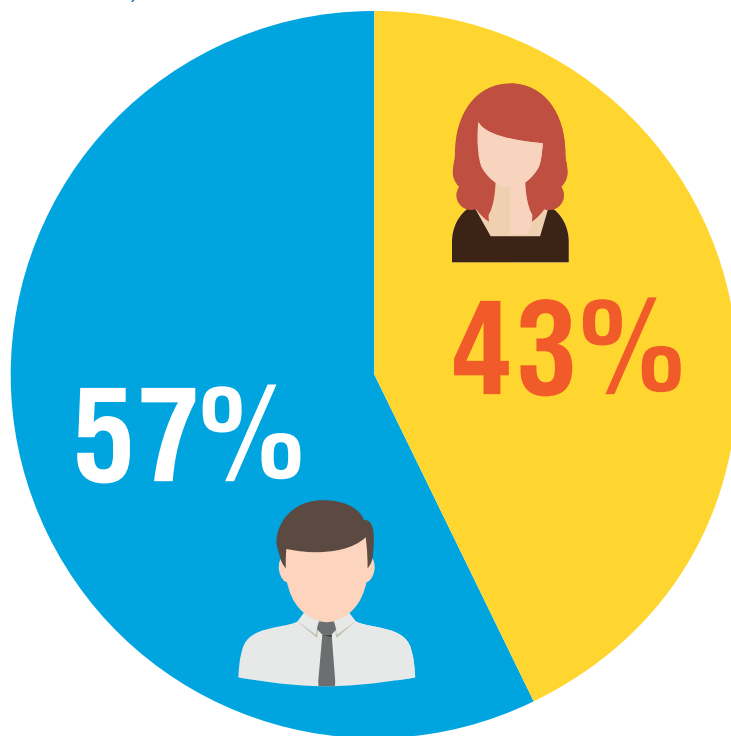
Candidates at the top of the party lists for the territorial districts in elections to the respective oblast council



Women's representation on the party lists in elections to city councils

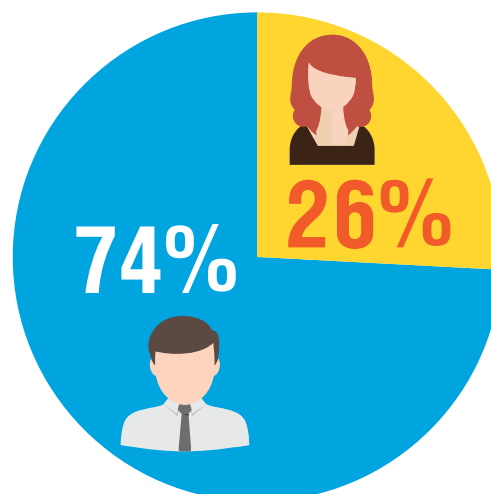
A sample of 10 political parties for bigger cities in 10 oblasts: Vinnytsia, Kramatorsk and Bakhmut in Donetsk oblast, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi; Batkivshchyna, Golos, Trust the Deeds, European Solidarity, For the Future, Samopomich Union, Opposition Platform – For Life, Opposition Bloc, Svoboda, and Servant of the People political parties.

All party lists in elections to the city council

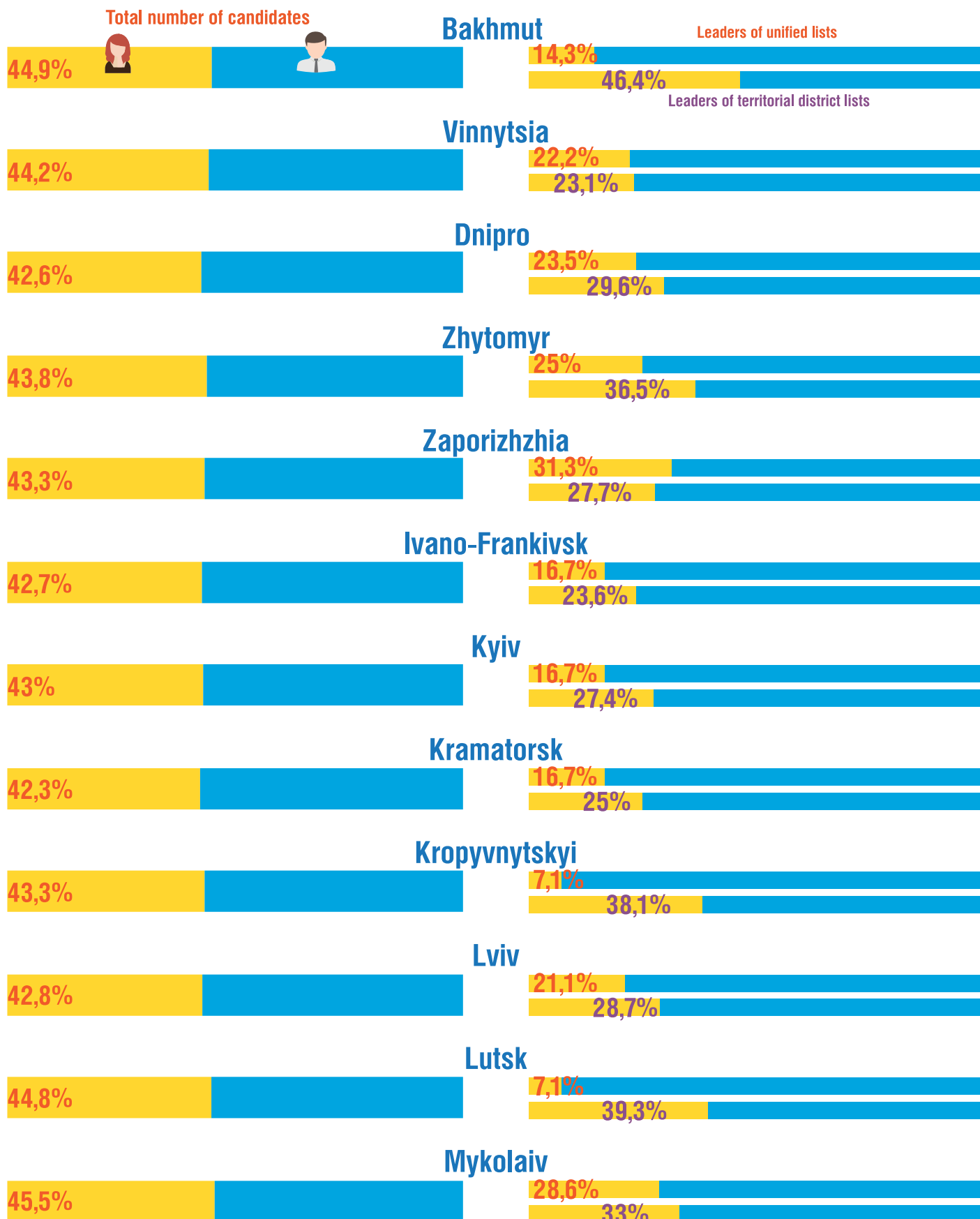


Top three candidates on the party lists for the territorial districts in elections to the respective city council

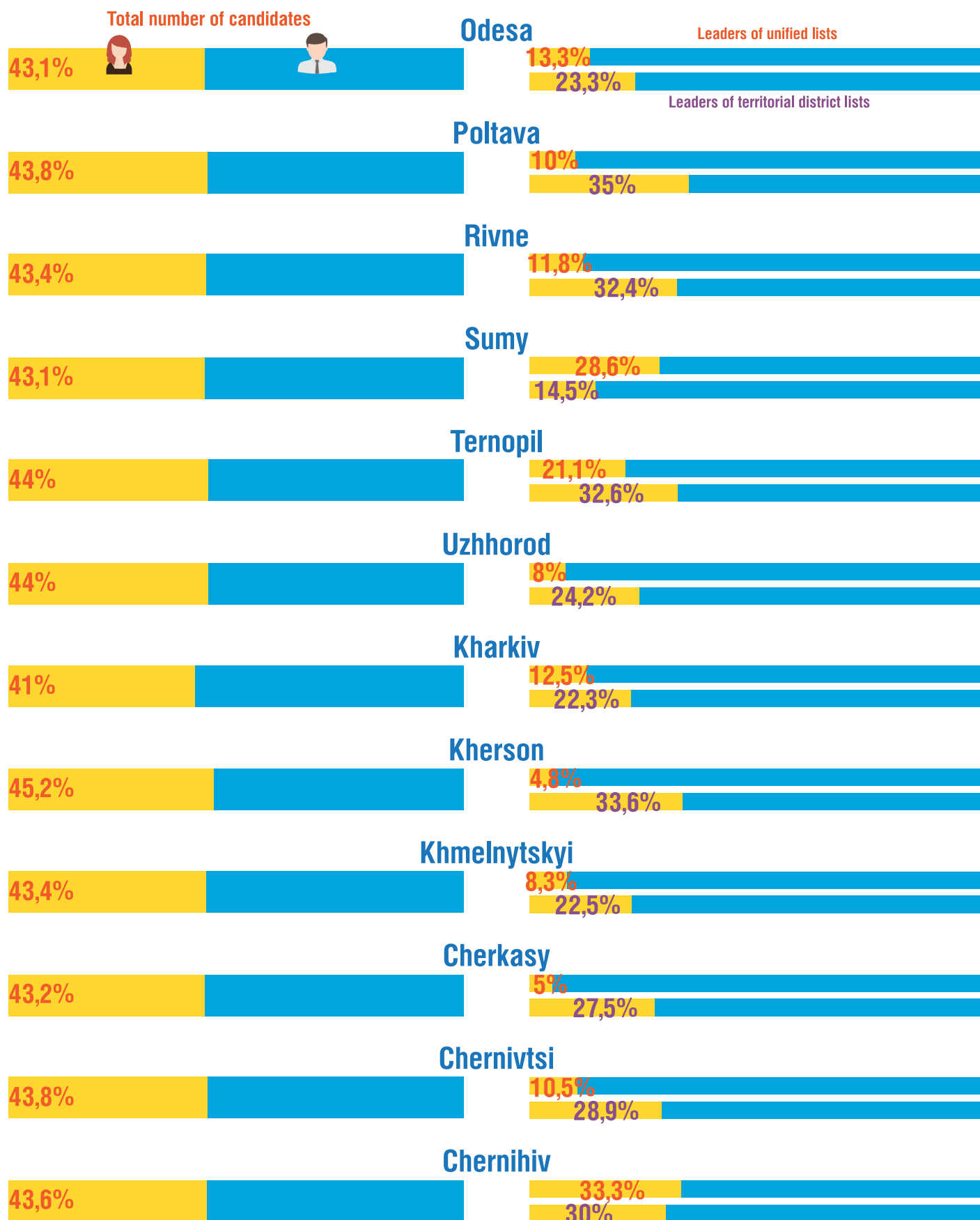
Candidates at the top of the party lists for the territorial districts in elections to the respective city council



Political parties' electoral lists to city councils



Political parties' electoral lists to city councils



For example, without taking into account those candidate lists that were rejected entirely, 52 candidates, including 32 women, withdrew from the party lists for city councils in the big cities selected for gender monitoring: Kyiv, cities-oblast centers, and Bakhmut and Kramatorsk in Donetsk oblast. Thus, **women make up 61.5 percent of the candidates who withdrew prior to the elections, while there were only 43.5 percent of women among all registered candidates.** As a result, a number of lists were not compliant with the gender quota on the election day: the list of the political party For the Future for Ternopil city council, *Batkivshchyna* list for Khmelnytskyi city council, *Peremoga Palchevskogo* and *Power and Honour* lists for Lutsk city council and the lists of *Shariy Party* for Kramatorsk and Odesa city councils.

For instance, the share of women was 45.5 percent and 46.4 percent (10 women out of 22 candidates in Kramatorsk and 19 out of 41 candidates in Odesa) on the lists for Kramatorsk and Odesa city councils, submitted by Shariy Party. Prior to the elections, 14 individuals (including 8 women) withdrew from the lists in Kramatorsk and 17 individuals (including 12 women) withdrew from the lists in Odesa. On the election day, 25 percent of women were represented on the party list in Kramatorsk and 29 percent of women in Odesa.

As a result of candidate withdrawals in advance of the elections, the list of political party *Power and Honour* for Zhytomyr oblast council did not comply with the quota; *Batkivshchyna* and *European Solidarity* lists for Poltava oblast council and *Servant of the People* lists for Kharkiv oblast council were not compliant with the quota either.

Such cases were quite widespread. Based on the CEC data, referenced by the National Democratic Institute in its analysis of the environment and procedures surrounding the local elections, overall, **in elections to 792 local councils, that were based on the proportional system, around 17 percent of the registered electoral lists (1,354 out of 7,943) were not compliant with the gender**

quota requirements. In these cases, some candidates were not registered or withdrew from the lists after parties submitted the lists for registration.⁸

Information about **isolated cases of putting pressure on women candidates so that they refuse to run** has been received as a result of the interviews that the long-term observers held with women candidates and the in-depth interviews with party representatives.

I got a phone call and I was offered to cancel my participation in the elections. I didn't agree. There was also a case when a car stopped close to my yard and two men came out of it, while another one stayed in the car. They started explaining to me that in my case, it was better to cancel, take the money, and stop showing off... I got angry and having said everything that was on my mind, I turned around and left...

Woman candidate for mayor of a community with up to 10,000 voters and for councilor of a local council

Women and men participants of the interviews and roundtables on the interim results of gender monitoring generally agreed that **introducing a legislative mechanism to replace a candidate who withdrew from the list prior to the elections with the next candidate of the same gender will minimize the preconditions for possible violations.**

Women withdrew from political party lists for oblast councils before the elections relatively less often than men: there are 27 women among 75 candidates who dropped out. Thus, women make up 36 percent of the candidates who withdrew, while there were 43 percent of women among registered candidates.

8 Ukraine Election Watch — Final Bulletin. [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Ukraine%20Local%20Elections%20Statement%20-%20October%202020%20-%20UKR%20final_v2.pdf?fbclid=IwAR37NgecWaeVKwkRX_KeCBhWXM4yMGmC0vil-y8FUb-Q7u5HvzNKgKnXeHg



4.5 Multiple nominations

In contrast to the initial version, Law No.805-IX as of 16 July 2020 introduced amendments to Article 216 of the Election Code that restrict multiple nominations for councils of different levels and the positions of village, settlement, and city mayors.

In particular, the law stipulates that a person can be nominated for councilor in a multi-member district for not more than two different levels of local councils, while a mayoral candidate in a village, settlement, or city cannot run simultaneously in any other single-mandate district in any other local election.

However, mayoral candidates in a village, settlement, or city with fewer than 75,000 voters are allowed to run for councilor of the respective village, settlement, or city council and/or the respective oblast council in a multi-member district, while mayoral candidates in cities with more than 75,000 voters are only allowed to be nominated as a candidate for the respective city council.

Besides, the law stipulates that in the event of multiple nominations, a candidate can be nominated from only one political party or can only be self-nominated.

In the framework of gender monitoring, analysis of the electoral lists for oblast councils and city councils of big cities was carried out to monitor multiple nominations of women and men.

Thus, there were 16,844 individuals on the electoral lists for oblast councils, and among them 7,248 women (43 percent). 16,796 individuals, including 7,301 women (43.5 percent), were on the electoral lists for city councils of Kyiv and cities-oblast centers. 2,727 individuals, including 1,344 women (49.3 percent), ran simultaneously for the councils of these two levels. Hence, the parties nominated women simultaneously for oblast councils and city councils of big cities somewhat more often.

Overall, although restrictions on multiple nominations had a positive effect and increased candidates' chances of being elected, considering the requirements to the number of candidates that parties have to nominate for the respective elections and the requirement to adhere to the gender quota, such restrictions have led to a **partially formal placement of the same individuals on different party lists in cases when parties lacked other candidates.**

The majority of the 200 women respondents (52.5 percent), interviewed by the long-term observers, indicated that multiple nominations were quite common; 43.5 percent believe that they were equally common for both men and women. 5 respondents (2.5 percent) said in their parties, multiple nominations were more common among women, and 13 respondents (6.5 percent) said they were more common among men.

A major part of the women respondents positively evaluated multiple nominations, saying it increased the chances of being elected.

This way, reliable and professional people on the team, who possess essential experience, are given more security.

Woman candidate for Kharkiv oblast council and for a city council in a city-rayon center

Some women respondents said they ran for councils of different levels as a favour for their parties so that the parties could meet the quota or ensure a sufficient number of candidates overall, since they lacked candidates to be able to register their lists.

Multiple nominations are common. For me they mean higher chances of being elected, but for others, they are an opportunity to fill the quota on different lists by the same women candidates.

Woman candidate for Zaporizhia oblast council and Zaporizhia city council

Being on one list is a favour for the party, and on another one – a real chance to be elected.

Woman candidate for Lviv oblast council and Lviv city council

On our lists, nearly all candidates are “doubled,” both men and women. 65 to 70 percent are “doubled.” I think yes, it serves both purposes: increases chances to win and is a favour for the party. It depends on the place that a person was assigned. The number is important on both the unified and territorial district lists.

Woman candidate for Zhytomyr oblast council and for a city council in a city-rayon center

Women respondents who negatively assessed multiple nominations said such nominations are used by parties as a “technical tool to fill vacancies.” According to them, candidates have to run for one position only because this way, they remain focused on the issues of a particular community.

Some women respondents pointed out that such nominations were at odds with the expectations of voters.

I am absolutely against it and I recommend that it be removed because, for instance, a party engages a powerful candidate, they bring the party to a higher level, and after they are elected, they pick a position that interests them the most; as a result, other unwinnable candidates, who have done very little to win, go up on the list. People are outraged by this situation, and I personally heard what people had to say about it, and they said, “You were the one we elected and you betrayed us”; it misleads people and undermines the electoral process, it is offensive to people.

Woman candidate for a city council in a city with up to 10,000 voters

Women respondents who ran as candidates for local councils of different levels, or for both mayor of a community and for council, noted it was difficult to combine both campaigns in terms of financial and time resources, the need to spread oneself thin in communication with voters, and complex financial reporting.

It is difficult both physically and financially. For instance, I am running as a candidate for the

city council, it is divided into 5 districts. I have been living in this city for 50 years and I know, I think, half of the city, and they know me as well, which is much more simple. And if we take the oblast council, it involves more communities, broader outreach, even driving to talk to people is, of course, more complicated.

Woman candidate for Vinnytsia oblast council and for a city council in a city-rayon center

4.6 Candidate nomination and gender balance among candidates for local councils in communities with up to 10,000 voters

With the purpose of gender monitoring, 10 communities with up to 10,000 voters have been selected: Mahala village in Chernivtsi oblast, Teplo-dar city in Odesa oblast, Nova Borova settlement in Zhytomyr oblast, Siversk city in Donetsk oblast, Molochansk city in Zaporizhia oblast, Trostianets village in Lviv oblast, Chornyi Ostriv amalgamated community in Khmelnytskyi oblast, Malynivka settlement in Kharkiv oblast, Tyvriv city in Vinnytsia oblast, and Velykokopanivska amalgamated community in Kherson oblast.

In total, **796 individuals, including 336 women (42.2 percent), participated in the elections to the local councils of the 10 communities. 489 individuals, including 239 women (48.9 percent), ran on party lists, and 307 individuals, including 97 women (31.6 percent) ran as self-nominated candidates.**

The level of women’s representation among the party list candidates varied from 37.5 percent in Trostianets community to 59.4 percent in Velykokopanivska community. Representation of women among the self-nominated candidates varied from 16.7 percent in Malynivka community to 60 percent in Velykokopanivska community.

Of 336 women who took part in the elections to city councils, 71 percent ran on party lists, and 29 percent ran as self-nominated candidates.



4.7 Gender balance among candidates for mayors of communities

In accordance with the Election Code, elections of the city mayors in cities with at least 75,000 voters are held under the absolute majority electoral system in a single-mandate city electoral district. Elections of village, settlement, and city mayors in cities with up to 75,000 voters are held under the relative majority system in a unified electoral district (in one round). Candidates can be nominated both by political parties and by self-nomination.

The gender monitoring sample included 24 big cities – Kyiv, 22 cities-oblast centers, Kramatorsk and Bakhmut cities in Donetsk oblast; among them, 23 cities have more than 75,000 voters and Bakhmut has up to 75,000 voters.

Overall, **305 people took part in the elections of city mayors, among them 49 women (16.1 percent). Among self-nominated candidates, women's representation made up 13 percent (9 out of 71); among political party candidates, their representation reached 17.1 percent (40 out of 234).**

In Khmelnytskyi, no women candidates ran for mayor. The level of women's representation among candidates varied from 5 percent in Uzhhorod (1 out of 22 candidates) to 30 percent in Vinnytsia and Kropyvnytskyi (3 women candidates out of 10 candidates in each), and to 40 percent in Sumy (4 out of 10).

Of the ten political parties included in the gender monitoring sample, *Batkivshchyna* and *Golos* nominated relatively more women candidates in big cities: 31 percent of women candidates (5 out of 16 candidates) nominated by *Batkivshchyna* and 3 out of 10 women candidates – by *Golos*. *Opposition platform – For Life* nominated 25 percent of women (4 out of 16 candidates), *Servant of the People* – 23 percent (5 out of 22 candidates), *For the Future* – 20 percent (3 out of 15 candidates), and *European Solidarity* – 18 percent (3 of 17 candidates). *Opposition Bloc* did

not nominate any candidates for city mayor. *Trust the Deeds* and *Samopomich* both nominated one man candidate. *Svoboda* did not nominate women candidates for mayor but nominated a total of 12 candidates.

Second round of the elections of city mayors in Lutsk, Kramatorsk, Odesa, Sumy, and Kherson took place on November 15, 2020; second round of the mayoral elections in Dnipro, Lviv, Mykolayiv, Poltava, Rivne, Uzhhorod, and Cherkasy happened on November 22; in Chernivtsi – on November 29. Only men candidates faced the second round of elections.

5. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

5.1 Women's involvement in the election headquarters and support of women candidates

Based on the interviews with the 200 women respondents, carried out by the long-term project observers in the 10 oblasts – Vinnytsia, Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernivtsi – **women were actively involved in the work of political party election headquarters.**

72 out of 176 women respondents (41 percent) who ran on political party lists, among the women respondents interviewed by the long-term observers, **said they took part in the work of election headquarters.**

According to the women respondents, 7 of them were responsible for the work with documents, including candidate registration, 6 of them worked as lawyers at the headquarters, 5 were tasked with media/public relations or publishing newspapers and other printed materials, 5 were responsible for appointments with citizens, 5 were in charge of campaigner and volunteer recruitment and organizing their work, 4 were tasked with running training and providing consultations for candidates, 4 provided expert support for the headquarters in terms of strategic planning and preparation of programs related to sociology, economics, etc., 3 were engaged in the recruitment of election commission members and organizing their work, 2 were responsible for organizing meetings with voters, 2 were in charge of recruiting observers and organizing their work. Some women respondents were involved in recruiting candidates, controlling party finance, served as authorized persons representing political parties in election commissions, or were responsible for working with women voters. A large number of respondents were involved in general organizational work, as well as combined several functions at the headquarters.

17 women respondents (9.7 percent of 176) were heads of election headquarters at the levels of consolidated communities, rayons-in-city, rayons-in-oblast, territorial election districts, or cities. Among them, 11 respondents had work experience in local councils prior to the 2020 elections; 11 were part of the leadership of local party branches, and 4 worked as observers, members of election commissions and election headquarters in the previous elections.

There were 6 headquarters in our oblast. And I was the only woman leading the headquarters, all the other heads were men. However, women made up around 75 percent of the headquarters staff. It would be better if women were better represented in the leadership.

Woman councilor of an oblast council

According to the information received during the 20 in-depth interviews with political party representatives, parties provided equal support for both women and men candidates.

Party support mostly involved:

- providing campaign materials with the party branding, less often – assistance in developing personal campaign materials;
- legal support;
- training.

According to the party representatives, **because of short campaign deadlines and lack of funds**, a significant number of men and women candidates did not have access to media and advertising in mass media. Besides, **due to the quarantine restrictions**, many candidates did not have meetings with voters. Under such circumstances, **the importance of social media for communication with voters has grown.**

According to 176 women respondents who ran on political party lists, among the respondents interviewed by the long-term observers,



the amount of support from different parties and at different levels of elections significantly varied: from the full support of an election campaign provided by the party to merely informational support, while women candidates covered the whole financial and organizational aspects by themselves.

I basically did not invest any personal funds; besides, I spent little time communicating with voters, the party's advertising campaign was quite powerful and I was relying on the party's experience.

*Woman candidate for
Vinnytsia oblast council*

I am investing funds in printed materials. Besides, I am investing my technical, intellectual resources, and my work. The election campaign was at my own expense. My friends helped with campaign materials.

*Woman candidate for
Lviv oblast council*

I am not investing funds, and I think in the village, these resources are spent in vain. We all know each other anyway, we know what everyone does, what kind of people they are, it is hard to hide anything here. We don't even have billboards. There are some billboards from those candidates who run on a party list either for oblast or rayon council. As for our local people, myself and other candidates, we don't do any billboards or campaigning.

*Woman candidate for mayor
of a consolidated community
with up to 10,000 voters*

Besides, **women were actively involved in supporting the elections.** According to the CEC data, referenced by the National Democratic Institute in its analysis of the environment and procedures surrounding the local elections, women constituted 74 percent of TEC members and 67 percent of TEC chairs.⁹

⁹ Ukraine Election Watch — Final Bulletin [Electronic resource]. — Access: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Ukraine%20Local%20Elections%20Statement%20-%20October%202020%20-%20UKR%20final_v2.pdf?fbclid=IwAR37NgecWaeVKwkRX_KeCBhWXM4yMGmC0vil-y8FUb-Q7u5HvzNKgKnXeHg

During gender monitoring of the 2019 parliamentary elections, carried out by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a tendency towards active involvement of women in various aspects of election support was analyzed in detail by the Ukrainian Women's Fund.¹⁰

The women respondents indicated that overall, parties provided support for women and men equally, however, there were certain specifics.

The women respondents believe that **support with social media and printed materials was provided most equally.** Some women respondents noted that women were more active in taking advantage of the opportunities that social media advertising provided. In their opinion, support from men and women leaders related to regional visits and public statements, as well as support with a network of campaigners was rather equally distributed; however, in many cases, the party did not provide such support and women and men candidates campaigned with their own support teams. **Support related to preparing and broadcasting political advertising in mass media, as well as outdoor advertising and access to TV and radio appearances was least equally distributed.** Women respondents who pointed out unequal access to these types of support said that mostly, candidates for city mayor and first candidates on the lists were the ones who received this support, and parties nominated men for these positions more often.

Some men respondents of the in-depth interviews said they made exceptions for women candidates and helped them with their personal funds.

There was a woman candidate who couldn't pay for her election campaign. Let's just say I printed leaflets for her at my own expense. She won.

Head of a rayon party branch

¹⁰ The UWF presented the final gender monitoring report of the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://www.uwf.org.ua/news/11720>

Cases of highly active women's support were observed, when a women's wing was so vigorously engaged in campaigning that the leadership consisting of men supported their initiatives. A newspaper "Women for the Future" aimed at a women's audience was published by the political party For the Future. Women candidates campaigned in communities using a bright modern bus with the party branding on it.

This information corresponds to the results of monitoring, carried out by the long-term project observers, regarding the prevalence of such outdoor advertising as billboards, city lights, campaign tents, and posters to support candidates for city mayor and party lists for city and oblast councils.

Women respondents gave positive examples of the party providing airtime on TV and offering all candidates to participate – their participation depended on how active the candidates were.

Our party paid for some amount of airtime on a TV channel. People who had knowledge of certain topics participated. For example, medicine, utilities, education, etc.

Woman candidate for Zhytomyr oblast council

Women respondents, interviewed by the long-term observers, expressed their strong interest in training opportunities to learn about campaigning and the work of a councilor. The majority (146 individuals, or 73 percent of the 200 women respondents) said they came across an opportunity to participate in such training in the 2020 local elections or earlier, and 141 of them (70.5 percent) took the opportunity. Those were mainly training sessions provided by international or civil society organizations, as well as by parties and election headquarters; they included paid webinars, international internship programs. The women respondents said they are also engaged in self-education.

The women respondents indicated they are interested in more in-depth training both on election campaigns and work in governments.

I studied online, was engaged in self-education, and I monitored the work of the previous city council.

Woman candidate for a city council in a community with up to 10,000 voters

Training provided by the headquarters was only focused on what things to say and what promises to give during the campaign.

Woman candidate for Vinnytsia oblast council

Women respondents who said they weren't looking for training opportunities or declined such opportunities were the ones who served as a resource for political parties. They were already experienced in election campaigns and working at local councils and often, they gave training sessions or consultations for their fellow party members – both women and men. They noted that such training is highly useful for women who have not yet gained experience in elections and politics.

Currently, I myself am teaching heads of election headquarters and parties because I've learned everything at this point, I have undergone training multiple times, and I know how to read laws and maintain documents correctly, unlike men who have difficulties with it. That is why I had to consult others. I was trained when I worked at the previous election headquarters.

Woman candidate for Kherson oblast council

In-depth interviews with 20 party representatives found that some party representatives do not distinguish gender specifics of an election campaign, while others observe differences in the way women and men run their election campaigns.

Part of the respondents pointed out the following **gender specifics of running an election campaign**:

- Women do better at holding meetings with voters, they are better at finding a way to connect with voters during campaigning.



- Women candidates were more likely to be seen in campaign tents than men candidates.

Women were the ones standing in tents. I don't want to say anything bad about anyone, but women do their best.

Woman representative of a rayon party branch

- Women are more active, they take initiative, demonstrate more resilience, are hard-working, and can hold more meetings with voters.
- Men are more pragmatic, they start with calculating the minimum number of votes they need to get, while women diligently run door-to-door campaigns, meet with voters.
- Men typically have more funds to hire a team of campaigners, print and distribute more campaign materials, place billboards, organize large meetings with voters. However, women activists can often count on free of charge support from civil society organizations, civic activists.

The above-mentioned specifics of running an election campaign correspond to the results of monitoring, carried out by the long-term project observers, regarding the prevalence of such types of campaigning as face-to-face meetings and advertising on social media to support candidates for city mayor and the lists of political parties for city and oblast councils.

This information is also confirmed by the results of the interviews with women candidates, carried out by the long-term observers in the 10 oblasts, as well as by the conclusions of the 8 inter-regional roundtables involving women candidates, elected women councilors, and women mayors of communities, held by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The majority of women respondents indicated they preferred campaigning that involves face-to-face meetings because they consider this type of campaigning to be more effective. In their opinion, on the one hand, face-to-face meetings give an opportunity to learn about the issues of local concern, on the other hand, one has a

chance to answer the questions that the voters have and gain their trust.

I chose to have face-to-face meetings with voters in my campaign, "on the ground" as they say. I think we need to explain to people why it is important to vote, what can be changed for the better for the city and its residents, and how we can change our lives together. In my opinion, face-to-face meetings with voters are the most effective type of campaigning.

Woman candidate for Kramatorsk city council

At first, we carried out an external audit of the village community, then we started going to the stores and asking around about opinion leaders, then we organized meetings with the leaders. We offered to organize meetings for all candidates. Mostly women candidates were the ones who showed up.

Woman representative of the election headquarters in a consolidated community

Besides, **women candidates actively used printed materials, although some women respondents said they were considering printed materials only as a support tool** to use for those voters that the candidate personally met with and was able to pique their interest.

Door-to-door, face-to-face communication, social media. In my opinion, they are most effective. The team's leaflets were made, announcements were placed at the building entrances. The party also offered me 500 leaflets with my bio, but I refused, I didn't want my face to be lying somewhere around mailboxes.

Woman candidate for Zhytomyr city council

We relied on personal meetings: we drove to the villages, went from door to door with our leaflets, and talked about ourselves, our candidates, and our activities so that people could see us. We did not leave leaflets at the gates on principle until we talked first.

Woman candidate for a city council in a community with up to 10,000 voters

The party brought together from 20 to 170 people for meetings with me, and in one day, I could sometimes have seven meetings.

*Woman candidate for
Kherson oblast council*

Throughout the entire electoral period, Ukraine was divided into quarantine zones with various restrictions on mass gatherings in place. **The COVID-19 pandemic made women candidates focus more on social media and printed materials, especially in the regions where face-to-face meetings were not possible to organize.**

On social media, women candidates used publications, online talks, advertising, and created groups.

I prefer face-to-face communication with voters and it works best, but this year, we had to slightly alter our strategy: because of the pandemic, people were reluctant to come to meetings, and we didn't want to put them in danger. We printed materials (each candidate at their own expense) and distributed them.

*Woman candidate for
Vinnytsia oblast council*

We organized the printing of materials on our own and distributed them from door to door. Then we created groups on Viber, Telegram, and Facebook, started inviting people more actively and sharing information in these groups.

*Woman candidate for
Kherson oblast council*

Taking into account considerable restrictions because of the coronavirus pandemic, I did not organize meetings. There were cases when people came to a meeting with a candidate and then got coronavirus. That's why people were afraid to meet face-to-face. I used social media.

*Woman candidate for
Zaporizhia city council*

Some women respondents said they appeared on TV and radio, and they consider this type of campaigning to be effective because there is an opportunity to reach a wider audience; others

indicated they did not have access to such appearances.

A major part of the 200 women respondents (67.5 percent), interviewed by the long-term observers, said they needed some support in the elections. The majority of those who said they did not require additional support were engaged in the leadership of the election headquarters and party branches, and had previous experience in elections.

Given the focus on communication with voters as a type of campaigning, 67.5 percent of the women respondents said they needed additional human resources for such campaigning, and 59.5 percent indicated they needed support in organizing meetings with voters. Besides, 60 percent of the women respondents said they lacked legal support. 58 percent of the women respondents lacked access to airtime on TV and radio; the need was higher among women candidates for oblast councils and city councils of big cities. In small communities with no regional TV channels and radio, women candidates did not indicate they had such a need.

Every second woman respondent said she felt a need for training on planning and running an election campaign, the work of self-government bodies (56.5 percent); mentorship support from mentors experienced in elections and politics (55.5 percent); and work on social media (51 percent).

5.2 Election-related violence, sexism, and cyberbullying

Election-related violence was widespread in the 2020 local elections, and a large number of women candidates faced it, according to the results of the interviews with women candidates, held by the long-term observers in the 10 oblasts, and the conclusions from the roundtables that brought together women candidates, elected women councilors, and women mayors of communities, and were held by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI).



Only some of the women respondents noted that from their experience, women candidates faced violence less often, while men candidates were more exposed to it. However, the majority of women respondents indicated that **election-related violence against men and women was equally common, even more so against women, since the opponents saw women as weak and expected that pressuring women would work better than pressuring men.**

According to the in-depth interviews, party representatives did not consider election-related violence an essential issue. According to the party representatives who participated in the **in-depth interviews and women respondents, interviewed by the long-term project observers, in the majority of parties, election-related violence was not discussed, and women and men candidates were not prepared at all by the party to react to such cases.** A large number of the respondents do not have a clear understanding of how the party can help women and men candidates in cases of election-related violence. It has frequently been stressed that such issues were the responsibility of the police, often not fulfilling their duties in a proper manner.

In the time when information is rapidly disseminated by means of electronic communication and can be altered, and largely because cyberbullies are anonymous, it is increasingly complicated to protect one's rights in accordance with civil law. To do so, it is necessary to identify a defendant before filing a lawsuit, which can be a rather difficult task when the information is being disseminated by an anonymous person.

However, **election-related violence was a relevant issue for women candidates.**

Of the 200 women respondents in the 10 oblasts of Ukraine, 58 percent answered in the affirmative to the question of whether they knew what election-related violence was. 38 percent of the women respondents said they did not know the answer, and 4 percent said they were unsure or did not answer the question.

When asked whether they personally faced election-related violence or if they knew about cases of election-related violence against other candidates, 32 percent answered in the affirmative. Including those women respondents who said they did not face election-related violence, however when asked some clarifying questions, they gave examples of bullying, damage to campaign materials and threats, **the percentage of women respondents who faced election-related violence against themselves or witnessed it against other candidates makes up 38 percent.**

One in five women respondents (21.5 percent) faced election-related violence against herself: ranging from damage to campaign materials to calls and visits accompanied by threats, assaults against her or her team of campaigners, damage to personal property, black PR, hacking into her accounts on social media, etc.

There was a lot of black PR. Newspapers and leaflets with "dirty" and false information were printed and disseminated; it undermined my reliability, our unity, and the reliability of our team that took years to build. We and several other candidates filed a complaint with the police and a lawsuit. But the city and rayon were flooded with newspapers and leaflets with false information. Even after filing a complaint with the police, the attackers did not stop their black PR campaign, and we had to find out where and when the newspapers and leaflets were distributed and eliminate them.

Woman candidate for Vinnytsia oblast council and for city council in a city-rayon center

I usually campaigned with my team, but that evening, they had left earlier and I stayed by myself. An inadequate and extremely aggressive man attacked me. I hid at a store, but he followed me. Luckily, a police officer was passing by, I asked him for help and he quickly solved the problem.

Woman candidate for Kramatorsk city council

Nobody has ever hacked my personal accounts, but then, my account, the accounts of my son, my kids, my sister, and my relatives had been hacked; they started sending out all sorts of horrible things, asking for money and so on... we were shocked. After that, our phones were hacked; it was happening late in the evening, and we managed to call the operator, but my sister's phone had been hacked at night, she didn't notice, and when she saw it in the morning, everything had already been blocked, cards, contacts, etc., had been hacked.

Woman candidate for mayor of a community with up to 10,000 voters

One in seven women respondents who faced election-related violence against herself or witnessed it against other candidates also faced sexism. Such cases involved verbal insults during meetings with opponents at mass events or party congresses, insults from instigators at meetings with voters, as well as other manifestations of sexism.

Part of the women respondents faced cyberbullying that was often combined with sexism. Several women candidates reported a mass attack by "bots" on their social networks.

They wrote all kinds of horrible things on Facebook, posted collages with my picture. There was an erotic photo montage with my face on it and a caption, "Take a look at the future councilor."

Woman candidate for Odesa oblast council and Odesa rayon council

My Facebook account and my phone have been hacked; now someone with this phone number is offering intimate services on Viber on my behalf.

Woman candidate for councilor in a community with up to 10,000 voters

I have encountered everything this year. From sexism to damage of property. We have excellent lawyers, so everything was eradicated at once. However, sexism generates gossip in

the community. The key message was, "A single woman without a husband must a priori be promiscuous. Are you really going to vote for her?"

Woman candidate for mayor of a community with up to 10,000 voters

It all started from cyberbullying, false information about all team members was being spread. In the first week of the election campaign, our tires were slashed. Then, my account was blocked, administrative resources were used, and it was done by the administrative staff, they banned others from coming to such meetings. We found out who was responsible for it and it all stopped. After that, online threats followed. We filed a complaint with the oblast police department.

Woman candidate for mayor of a community with up to 10,000 voters and for councilor of a local council

"Bot farms" are increasingly common on social media, and I constantly, 50 times a day, delete comments about the role of women, phrases like, "You are a woman, so stay at home."

Woman candidate for mayor of a community and for councilor of a city council

Results of a volunteer project #electionsWITHOUTsexism, initiated by a coalition of women's civil society organizations, also demonstrate that discrimination and sexism were widespread in the local elections. The project received around 50 complaints about cases of sexism through its Facebook chatbot and hotline where women candidates could get legal and psychological help. Cases of cyberbullying, cyberstalking, sexist statements on social media profiles of women candidates, ageism, lookism, sexist journalistic materials and TV programs, and sexist political advertising were reported.¹¹

¹¹ Martseniuk T., Tyshko I. Benefits of and challenges in the gender quota implementation during the 2020 local elections in Ukraine / T. Martseniuk, I. Tyshko [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://voxukraine.org/perevagy-ta-vyklyky-zas-tosuvannya-gendernoyi-kvoty-pid-chas-mistsevyh-vyboriv-2020-roku-v-ukrayini/?fbclid=IwAR3elilE3-xdRwXI0BH-1PZAXsrAz0auvqKtMEYC4BS4xkDz1ugwqOFQ4zs>



Cases of biased and sexist coverage of women candidates in the media have also been mentioned by the women respondents.

Based on the results of the monitoring of 20 most popular Ukrainian Internet publications, 5 printed publications, and 11 national TV channels, carried out by NGO “The Institute of Mass Information (IMI)” and “Detector Media” in October 2020 at the request of NDI, 8 out of 20 media published at least one article involving discrimination or sexism during October 2020. The media used detailed descriptions of the female body, emphasizing their cleavages, lingerie, harassing women for their appearance, and resorting to ageism in the headlines.¹²

A major part of the women respondents expressed readiness to counter election-related violence. Those women respondents who already had experience in election campaigns, politics and journalism, and had confidence in their support team, including the election headquarters and the party, were more certain about their willingness to resist threats. **Some women respondents gave positive examples of the election headquarters informing about possible cases of election-related violence** and providing training, facilitating experience exchange with more knowledgeable women in the party. According to the women respondents, such information did not scare them; on the contrary, it added to their confidence.

Some women respondents who personally faced election-related violence went to the police, cyberpolice, and filed lawsuits. Most of them did not find the mechanisms of protection against election-related violence effective enough.

I have personally encountered election-related violence and my only reaction was calling the police, however, they turned out to be ineffective... We filed many complaints, but all in

¹² The number of women experts in media increased by 3 percent in the campaign period — survey [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://imi.org.ua/monitorings/kozhen-chet-vertij-material-v-ukrayinskyh-media-komentuye-ekspertka-pres-reliz-i35821>

vain. But still, the opponents knew if something happened, we would call the police, and it was holding them back a little.

Woman candidate for city council in a community with up to 10,000 voters

According to the party representatives, who took part in the in-depth interviews, there is no law that would effectively protect a public person on social media, while the scale of psychological pressure and insults on social networks is growing and turning into a major problem. Some leaders recommended that their candidates, both women and men, isolate themselves from social networks.

Anyone can buy a SIM card, register a bot, upload a profile picture of a flower, and start harassing you on social media. It is impossible to fight. I, for instance, went to the police, asked what could be done, maybe I should file a complaint with the cyberpolice or the SSU, etc. They told me not to pay attention.

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

We tried to discourage our candidates from going on social media so that they don't read (the insults) and focus on their job instead.

Representative of a rayon party branch

One in three women candidates (37.5 percent) said there was a need for security services when organizing meetings and running an election campaign.

The women respondents said they felt the need for security services especially strongly during large meetings. According to them, instigators and “titushky” from both opponents representing other political parties and fellow party members were the main sources of danger. **Political parties did not always help to put an end to election-related violence among party members.**

I arrange meetings in the villages and my opponents send their instigators there. Fellow party members were my major opponents this year. I talked to the party and they said, "Solve it among yourselves, we care about the team's result."

*Woman candidate for
Vinnytsia oblast council*

The women respondents said they felt the need to learn about cybersecurity, protection of their data, card information, social media profile details in the information space, work out a certain action plan and stick to it in cases of various forms of election-related violence.

Given the short deadlines for campaigning, lack of access of women candidates to TV and radio appearances, unequal and at times biased coverage of women in the media, generally unequal access of women and men to financial resources and expensive forms of campaigning, such as TV and outdoor advertising, limited communication with voters in the quarantine time, a common form of campaigning for women candidates, **communication with voters on social media was an essential or nearly the only possible way to campaign for many women candidates. The spread of cyberbullying, sexism, and smear campaigns on the Internet was a significant obstacle to the women candidates' campaigning.**

Considering the rapid development of electronic communication devices and an ever-growing number of bullying cases by means of such devices, it is necessary to provide for appropriate legal regulation and ensure an effective mechanism to counter such negative social phenomenon as cyberbullying.

5.3 Funding of election campaigns in the elections of city mayors

According to the Election Code, the party branch that submitted its candidate list, councilor candidates, particularly those on the party branch list, mayoral candidates in villages, settlements,

and cities may open their own election fund to finance the cost of their election campaigns, including campaigning.

Election fund managers are required to submit to the respective territorial election commissions their interim and final finance reports reflecting detailed information regarding all receipts on the election fund account and all incurred expenses.

The current legislation did not provide for transparency and accountability when it came to financing election campaigns. Participants of the electoral process often did not report about election fund income and expenses, and the information on opening accounts for election funds and candidate financial reports was not always made public by TECs.

Overall, 305 people, among them 49 women and 256 men, ran for city mayors in cities-oblast centers, Kyiv, Bakhmut, and Kramatorsk cities. **Limited information from public sources, in particular on TEC websites, shows that both women and men opened accounts for election funds equally often:** 18 women (36.7 percent of all women candidates) and 95 men (37.1 percent of all men candidates). Regarding most candidates, there is no information on open accounts and final financial reports.

Limited information from open sources on interim and final financial reports of 108 individuals, including 17 women (16 percent of 108 persons) and 91 men (84 percent) demonstrates that overall, candidates of both genders declared the receipt of UAH 121.7 million on their operating accounts for election funds. Men declared UAH 89.8 million (74 percent) of the total amount, while women declared UAH 31.9 million (26 percent of funds).

In Kyiv city, Iryna Vereshchuk, a candidate from *Servant of the People*, declared the receipt of UAH 25.1 million on the operating account for election funds; this amount constitutes 79 percent of all costs that women candidates for city mayor in the cities under monitoring included in their reports.



If we exclude Kyiv from this sample, a different picture will emerge. The total amount of income declared by 101 individuals, women and men, is UAH 71.3 million: UAH 6.8 million is declared by women (17 candidates) and 64.5 million by men (84 candidates).

17 women, who make up 16.8 percent of the sample of 101 candidates, declared 9.5 percent of all funds accumulated in the accounts of candidates, while 84 men (83.2 percent of the sample) declared 90.5 percent of the accumulated funds.

The average amount of funds declared by a man was UAH 848,500, while the average amount declared by a woman was UAH 425,900, which is 50.2 percent less.

A similar difference in the size of election funds was observed by the Ukrainian Women's Fund during gender monitoring of the parliamentary

elections, carried out in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI): in single-member districts, an average size of the election fund of a woman candidate for a Member of Parliament was 20 percent lower than the size of the election fund of a man candidate, while among self-nominated candidates, the gap reached 54 percent.¹³

Some in-depth interview respondents also pointed out that men possess more financial resources to hire a team of campaigners, print and distribute more campaign materials, place billboards, organize large meetings with voters. However, women activists can often count on free of charge support from civil society organizations and civic activists.

Lower access to financial resources limits women's competitiveness in the election campaign.

13 The UWF presented the final gender monitoring report of the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine [Electronic resource]. — Access: <https://www.uwf.org.ua/news/11720>

6. ELECTION RESULTS

6.1 Results of elections to oblast and city councils of big cities

Prior to the 2020 local elections, there were only 15.3 percent of women, or 259 women among a total of 1,689 councilors, represented in oblast councils. Women were least represented in Zhytomyr, Odesa, and Ternopil oblast councils, their share constituted less than 10 percent. Women's representation did not make up 25 percent of any of the oblast councils. According to the CEC data, in the local elections that took place on 25 October 2015, there were 29.9 percent of women among the candidates.

Women's representation in the city councils of Kyiv, cities-oblast centers, Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk constituted 19.7 percent¹⁴ or 244 women councilors out of 1,237 councilors. Women were least represented in the city councils of Uzhhorod (8.3 percent), Cherkasy, and Ivano-Frankivska (9.5 percent in each council).

As a result of the quota implementation, women's representation in oblast councils has grown from 15.3 percent to 28 percent; women's representation in city councils has increased from 19.7 percent to 30.9 percent. Women's representation has improved in all oblast councils and in 23 out of the 24 cities in the sample.

The CEC data demonstrate that **due to the quota, parties included more women on their lists and more women have been elected to city councils overall across Ukraine.**

Thus, in 2015, 11,222 councilors, including 3,266 women (29.1 percent), were elected to city councils overall, while in 2020, 11,184 councilors were elected, among them 3,677 women (32.9 percent).

Women's representation has also improved as a result of elections to rayon councils (it has grown from 24 percent to 34.3 percent), and rayon-in-city councils (from 33.3 to 43.2 percent).

Although the representation of women on electoral lists for city councils of big cities and for oblast councils was 43.5 percent and 43 percent, it did not lead to the same level of women's representation among elected candidates.

The quotas helped women the most to be elected and get access to decision-making in communities where women's representation was the lowest.

For instance, in Zhytomyr, Odesa, and Ternopil oblast councils, where women made up 9.5 percent in each, their representation has increased by 2.5-3 times and has reached 29.7 percent, 26.2 percent, and 23.4 percent respectively. In Vinnytsia, Zakarpattia, Volyn, and Cherkasy oblast councils, where women constituted 10.7, 10.9, 12.7, and 13.1 percent, their representation has increased by more than twice: 25, 25, 26.6, and 29.7 percent respectively.

The situation in city councils was similar: women's representation has increased by 2.7-3 times in the councils where they were least represented. In Uzhhorod city council, women's representation has grown from 8.3 percent to 23.4 percent; in Cherkasy and Ivano-Frankivsk city councils – from 9.5 percent to 26.2 percent and 28.6 percent respectively.

In councils where women were relatively better represented, the change in their representation was less drastic – from 20.2 to 28.1 percent in Chernihiv oblast council, from 20.8 to 31.7 percent in Dnipropetrovsk oblast council, and from 21.9 percent to 25 percent in Sumy oblast council.

Women's representation has reached 30 percent only in three oblast councils – Dnipropetrovsk (31.7 percent), Khmelnytskyi (34.4 percent), and Zaporizhia (34.5 percent). Women's representa-

¹⁴ According to the data from the local council websites as of September 2020. Information on the composition of Severodonetsk local council – as of 10 April 2020.



tion has not reached 50 or 40 percent in any of the oblast councils.

Of the 24 city councils, women's representation has reached 30 percent in 13 cities: Kropyvnytskyi and Poltava (30.9 percent in each), Kyiv (31.7 percent), Vinnytsia, Lutsk, Rivne, Ternopil, Kharkiv, and Khmelnytskyi (33.3 percent in each), Mykolaiv (35.2 percent), Chernivtsi (35.7 percent), and Chernihiv (38.1 percent). Women's representation has reached 40.5 percent only in Zhytomyr city council.

The positive impact of the quotas was limited by the formal attitude of parties.

Fewer women were elected due to the fact that **parties gave preference to men when nominating first candidates and top three candidates** on both unified and territorial district electoral lists. These particular positions are most favorable for being elected to a city council.

Some women respondents and women participants of the interregional roundtables on developing recommendations based on the local election and gender monitoring results said that running for two local councils in one area, for example for city and rayon-in-city councils, reduced their chances of being elected.

Next time, I will run for one council only. It would have been easier to communicate with voters. The voters did not really understand those lists. They voted for me, but the votes were scattered.

Woman candidate for Chernivtsi oblast council and Chernivtsi rayon council

Of the ten political parties selected for monitoring **Golos and Samopomich demonstrate the most balanced composition of councilors in the newly elected oblast councils:** 42.9 percent of women in *Golos* (3 women out of 7 individuals who assumed their councilor duties), and 44.4 percent in *Samopomich* (4 out of 9). *Svoboda* has 32 percent of women (16 women out of 50 individuals).

In absolute values, **the largest number of women oblast councilors has been elected from**

European Solidarity and Servant of the People – 73 from each. The representation of women from European Solidarity made up 29 percent (of 252 individuals); in Servant of the People, the number reached 23.9 percent (of 293).

From *Batkivshchyna*, 53 women, 29 percent of 179 individuals, assumed their councilor duties. From *For the Future*, 48 women became councilors, which made up 26.2 percent of 183 individuals. From *Opposition Platform – For Life*, 47 women, 21.6 percent of 171 individuals, started their duties as councilors.

In *Trust the Deeds*, the share of women reached 27.3 percent (3 out of 11); in *Opposition Bloc* – 25 percent (2 out of 8).

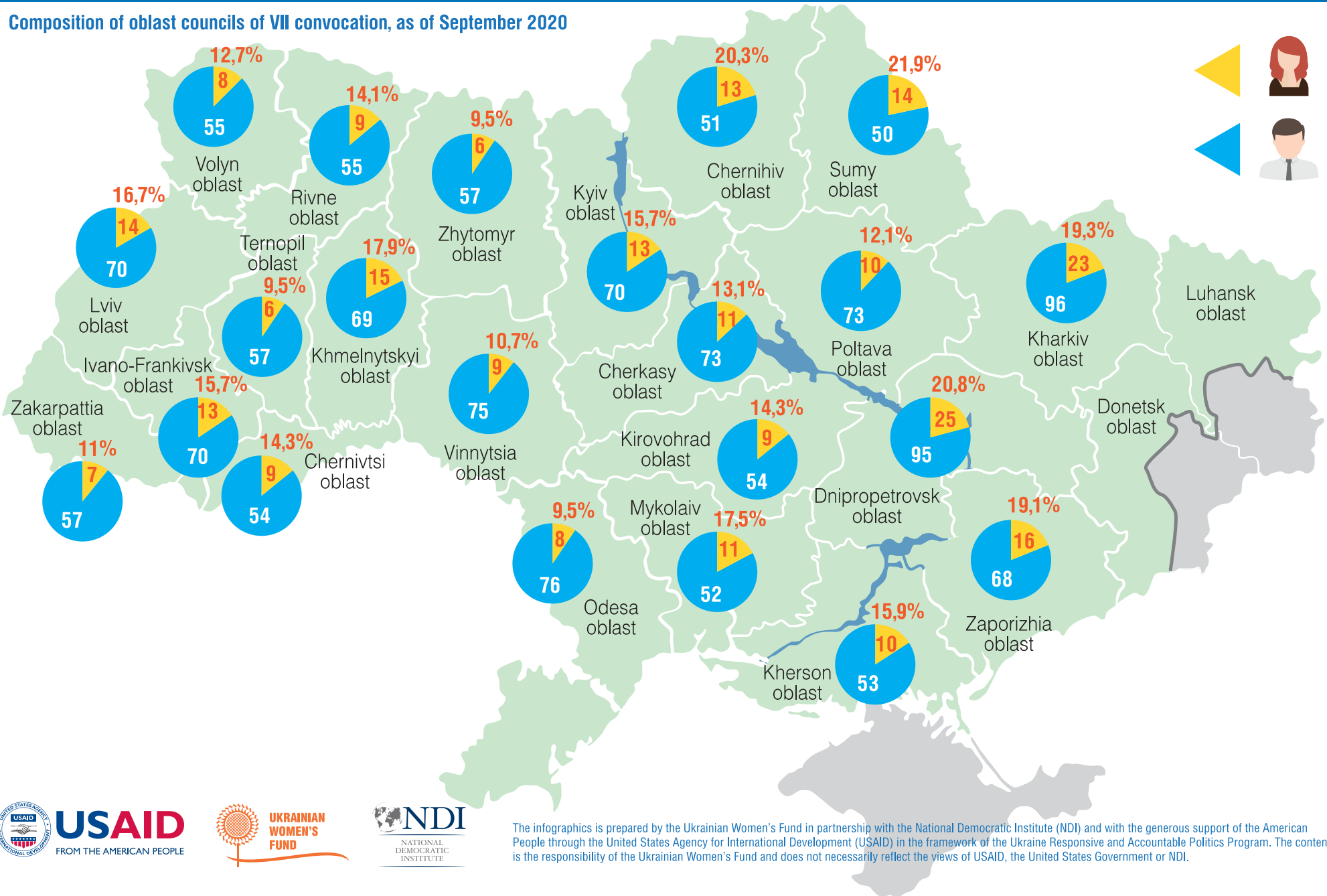
Trust the Deeds and Servant of the People demonstrate the most balanced composition of councilors in the newly elected city councils: 40 percent of women from *Trust the Deeds* (8 women out of 20 individuals), 36.2 percent from *Servant of the People* (59 out of 163). The number of women from *European Solidarity* reached 33.7 percent (71 women councilors out of 211), and 33.3 percent of women (14 out of 42) from *For the Future*.

In absolute values, **the largest number of women city councilors has been elected from European Solidarity – 71, and Servant of the People – 59.**

39 women, from *Opposition Platform – For Life*, 23.1 percent of 169, assumed their councilor duties. From *Batkivshchyna*, 17 women, 27.4 percent of 62 individuals, started their work as councilors. From *Svoboda*, also 17 women became councilors, 26.6 percent out of 64 individuals; 27 women councilors from *Golos* assumed their duties, 25 percent of 28 individuals; from *Samopomich*, 5 women councilors assumed their duties, making up 29.4 percent of 17 individuals. From *Opposition Bloc*, 3 men councilors started their duties, while no woman started her work as a councilor.

Women in oblast councils

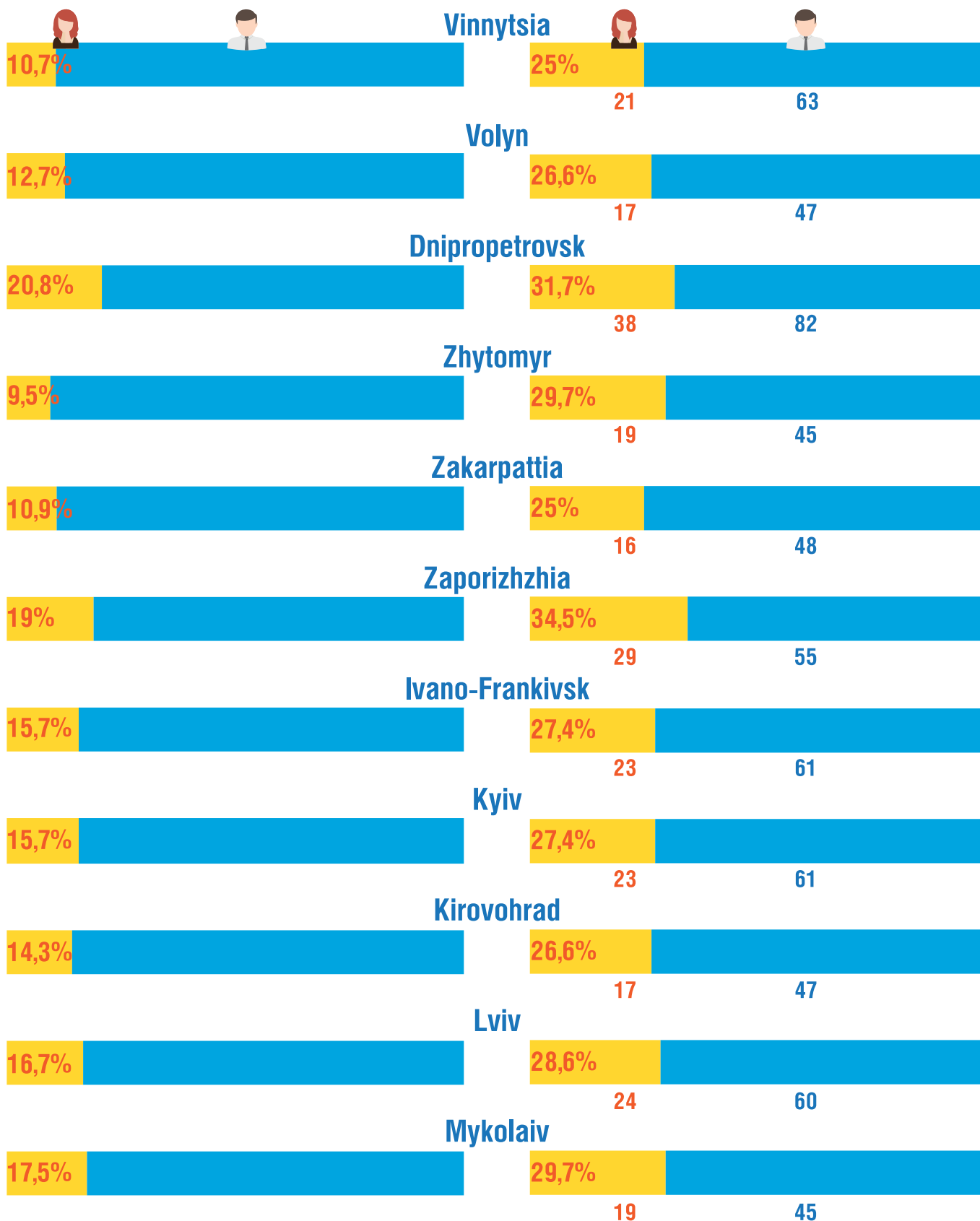
Composition of oblast councils of VII convocation, as of September 2020



Oblast council election results

Oblast council of previous convocation

Oblast council of new convocation



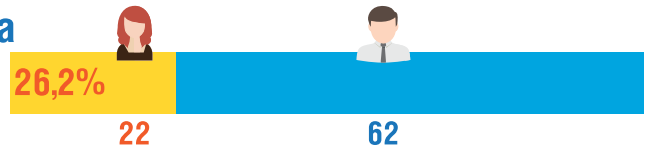
Oblast council election results

Oblast council of previous convocation



Odesa

Oblast council of new convocation



Poltava



Rivne



Sumy



Ternopil



Kharkiv



Kherson



Khmelnytskyi



Cherkasy



Chernivtsi

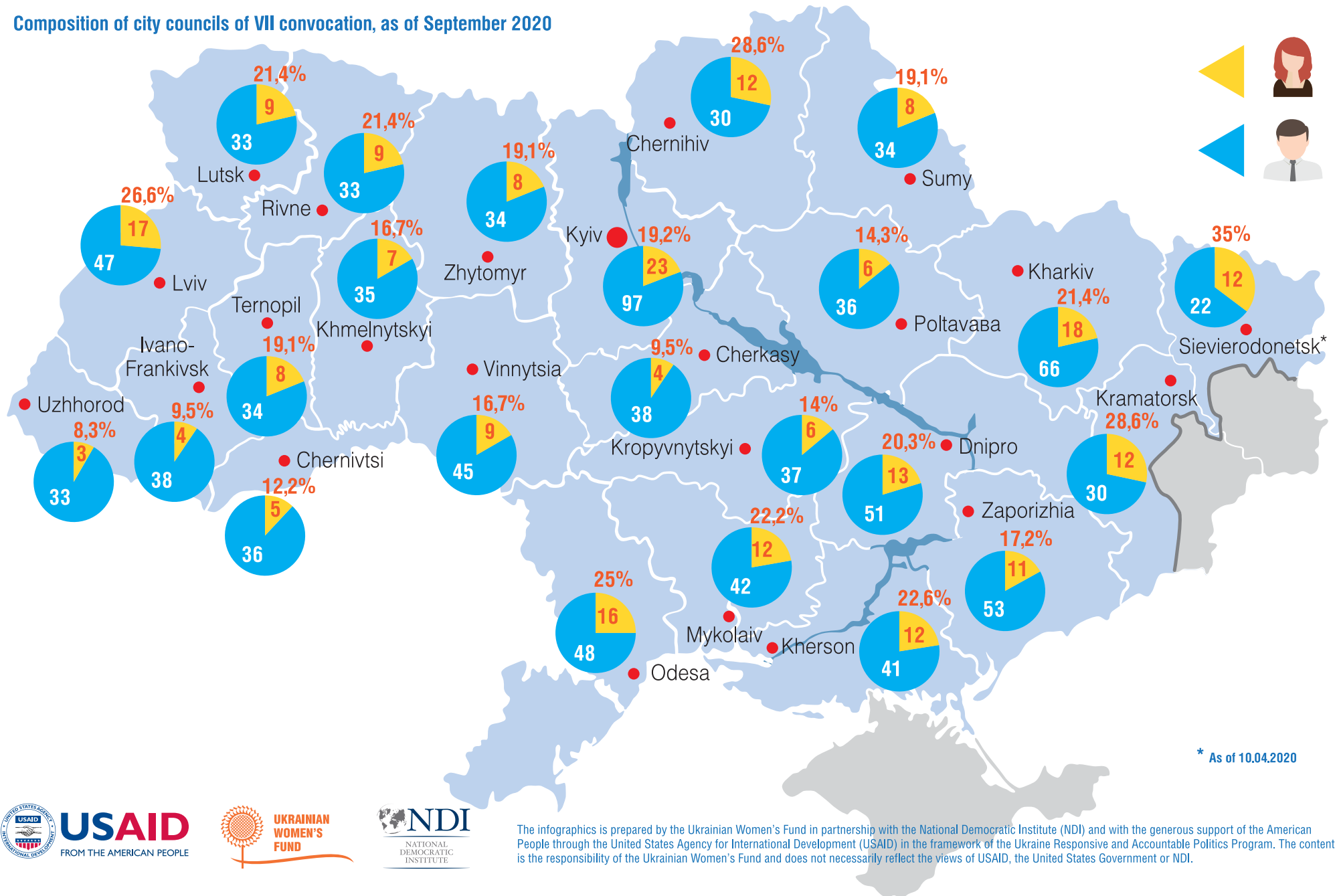


Chernihiv

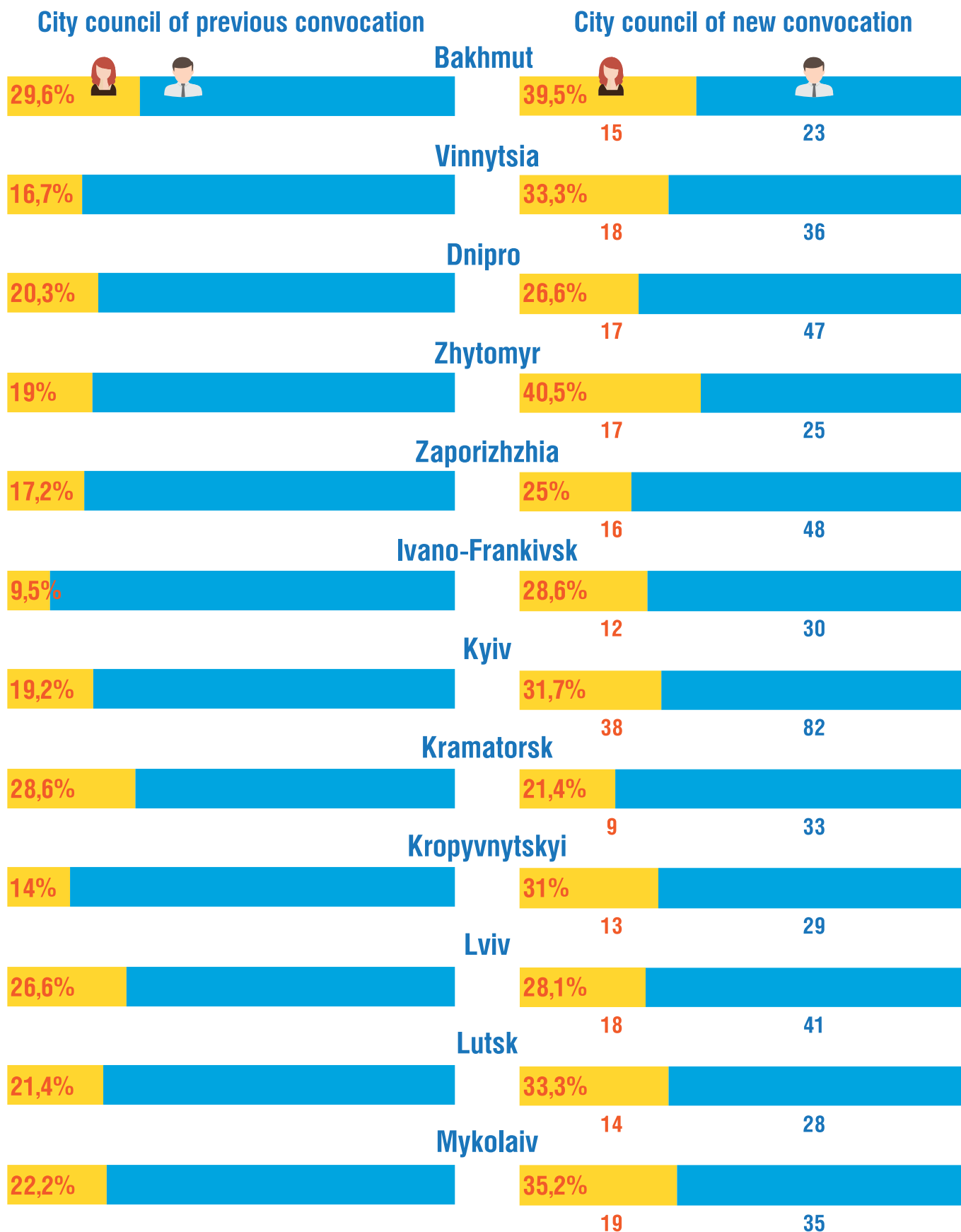


Women in city councils

Composition of city councils of VII convocation, as of September 2020



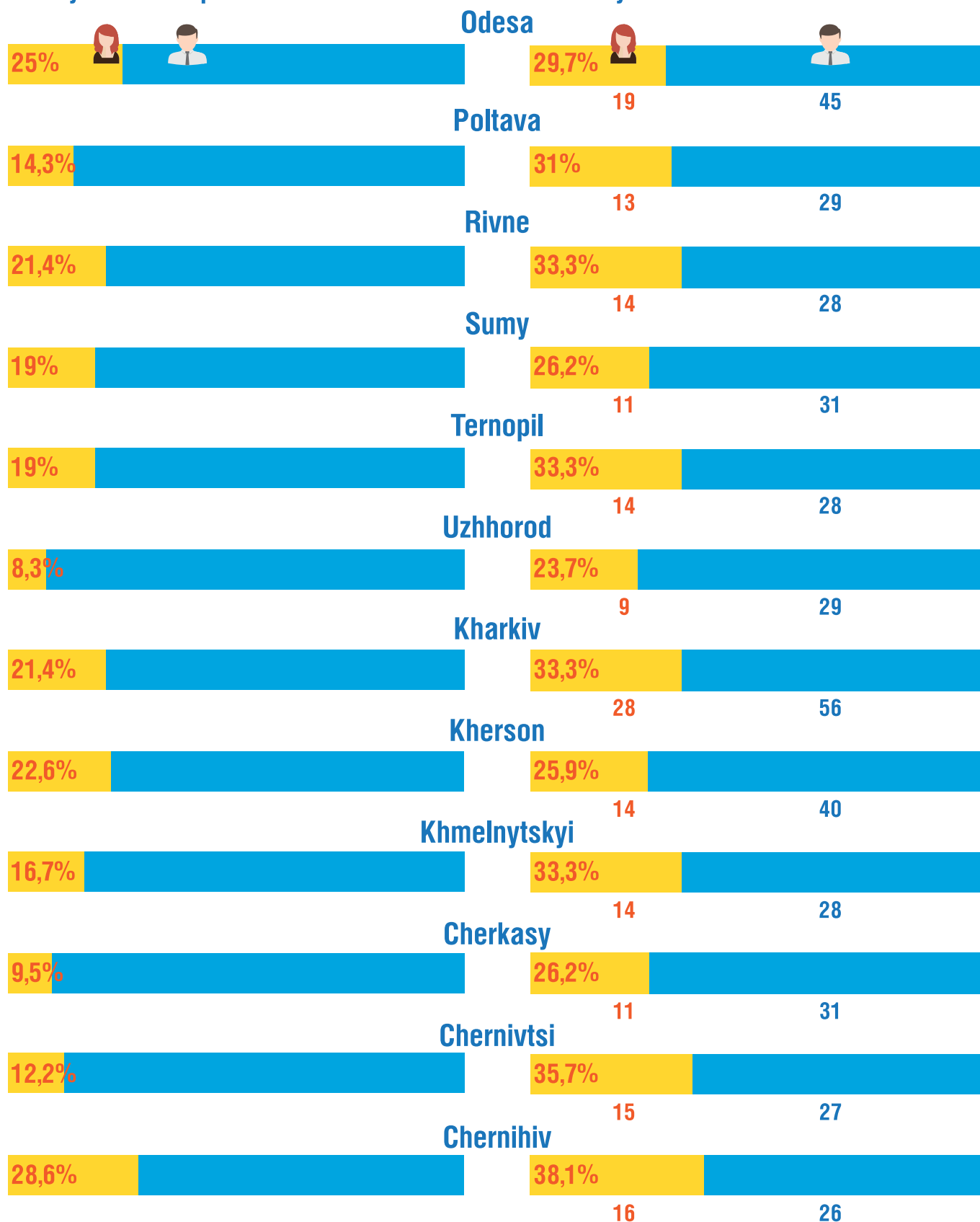
City council election results



City council election results

City council of previous convocation

City council of new convocation



6.2 Election of women from the unified lists and territorial election districts

Analysis of the election results in the 24 big cities, including city councils of cities-oblast centers, Kyiv, Bakhmut, and Kramatorsk, found that the **majority of candidates** (51.8 percent) **have been elected from territorial election districts**. Similarly, the majority of candidates (53.4 percent) have been elected from territorial election districts to the 22 oblast councils.

Men make up over 60 percent of the candidates elected to city and oblast councils from the unified lists. In particular, out of 600 candidates elected to city councils from the unified lists, 373 are men (62.2 percent), and 227 are women (37.8 percent). Among 773 candidates elected to oblast councils from the unified lists, 431 are men (60.9 percent), and 302 – women (39.1 percent).

According to the preliminary analysis of the unified lists of all political parties, in the elections to city councils, women were placed in top winnable position in case of the party's victory only in 16 percent of cases; in the elections to oblast councils, women were designated to top winnable positions only in 17 percent of cases.

Men make up over 75 percent of candidates for city councils and over 80 percent for oblast councils among the candidates elected from territorial district lists. In particular, among 644 candidates elected to city councils from territorial districts, 487 candidates are men (75.6 percent), and 157 – women (24.4 percent). Among 887 candidates elected to oblast councils from territorial districts, 724 are men (81.6 percent), and 163 – women (18.4 percent).

The majority of candidates elected from territorial districts were placed among the top three candidates on the territorial district list. 78.7 percent of candidates elected to city councils from territorial districts were among the top three candidates on the territorial district lists. Among the candidates elected to oblast councils from territorial districts, 83.5 percent were included among the top three candidates on the territorial district party list.

The majority of candidates elected from territorial districts held the first position on the territorial list: 64.5 percent of those elected from territorial districts to city councils, and 54 percent elected to oblast councils from territorial districts.

Among 327 candidates elected to city councils from the first places of the territorial district lists, only 73 are women (28.7 percent). Among 479 candidates elected to oblast councils from the first places of the territorial district lists, only 72 are women (15 percent).

According to the preliminary analysis of the territorial district lists of those political parties that submitted their lists to the above-mentioned city councils, although overall, the parties nominated 43.5 percent of women on the lists for city councils, women made up 35 percent of the candidates in top three positions of the territorial district lists and 28.9 percent of candidates among the leaders of the lists. Similarly, although the parties nominated 43 percent of women on the lists for oblast councils overall, the number of women among the top three candidates on the territorial district lists made up 29.8 percent, while women constituted 20.2 percent among the leaders of the lists.

The mechanism of altering candidate ranking order on the lists if a candidate's voter support was at least 25 percent of the election quota **did not have a decisive influence on the election results due to the high threshold of the election quota.** A small number of candidates reached the 25 percent threshold. Those candidates who received 25 percent of the election quota typically had already been placed among the top three candidates of the territorial district lists.

Women participants of the roundtables that were held by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and brought together women candidates, elected women councilors, and women mayors of communities, supported the open list mechanism overall, since it gave an opportunity for voters to support a specific woman candidate, however, they pointed out that the election quota threshold was too high.



The 25 percent favours closed lists. Even if you get 24 percent, it will all move up from third place to the number one candidate. If the threshold was 5-10 percent, there would be competition within the territorial district list. Then women would get a real opportunity to compete with men.

Woman councilor of an oblast council

Thus, **the election results correlate with how women and men were placed on the lists by political parties; the placing being less favorable for women.**

6.3 Re-election

Within gender monitoring, the election of women and men who ran for re-election to oblast councils and city councils in big cities has been analyzed.

Thus, in the 2020 local elections, 1,051 candidates, among them 172 women (16.4 percent) stood for re-election to the oblast councils of the 8th convocation. In the elections to city councils, 857 candidates, including 169 women (19.7 percent) ran for re-election. Considering that women's representation in oblast councils of the previous convocation constituted 15.3 percent, and their representation in city councils made up 19.7 percent, we can conclude that **women and men were equally active in running for re-election.**

475 councilors of oblast councils of the previous convocation, among them 77 women (16.2 percent) have been re-elected. Of 879 men who ran for re-election, 398 (45.3 percent) have been re-elected; of 172 women – 77 have been re-elected (44.8 percent).

374 councilors of city councils of the previous convocation, including 79 women (21.1 percent), have been re-elected. Of 688 men who stood for re-election, 295 have been re-elected (42.9 percent); of 169 women running for re-election, 79 have been re-elected (46.7 percent).

We can conclude that **women and men councilors have been equally effective in re-election for the next term.**

6.4 Withdrawal of mandate

The monitoring carried out by the Ukrainian Women's Fund found a **tendency towards a decrease in women's representation in the newly-elected councils following the announcement of election results.**

Thus, based on the 2020 election results that took place on 25 October, 1,660 councilors, among them 1,195 men and 465 women, have been elected to oblast councils. Out of them, 105 men and 60 women gave up their mandates (36.4 percent of women among the elected candidates that dropped out). **As a result of the replacements, the level of women's representation in oblast councils has dropped from 28 percent to 26.5 percent.**

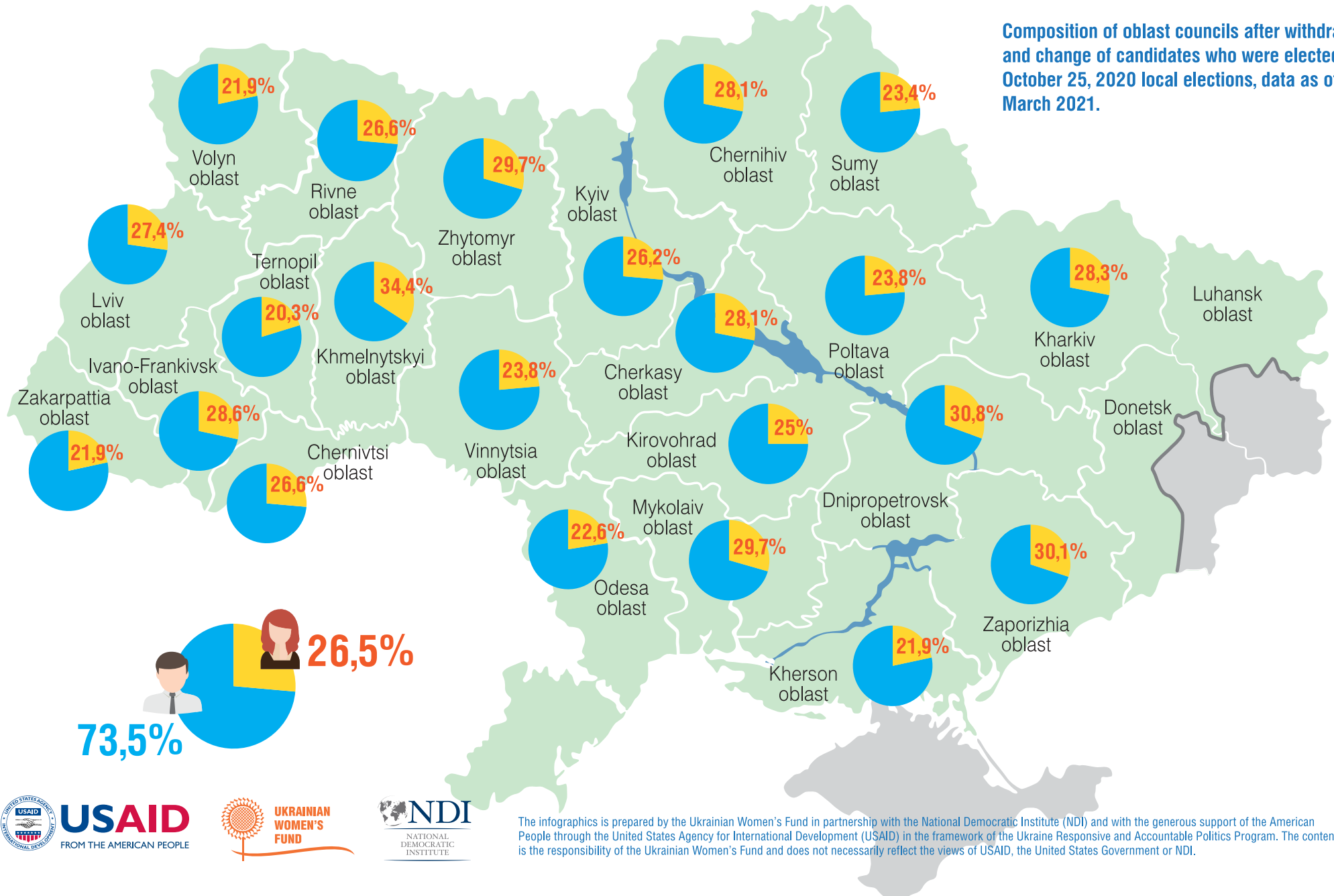
The level of women's representation remained the same after mandate withdrawals in the following oblast councils: Zhytomyr, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Rivne, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernihiv. In Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Lviv, Sumy, and Cherkasy oblast councils, women's representation has slightly dropped by 1.6 percent. In Ternopil, Kherson, and Chernihiv oblast councils, women's representation has dropped by 3.1 percent; in Odesa oblast council – by 3.6 percent, in Zaporizhia oblast council – by 4.4 percent, and in Volyn oblast council – by 4.7 percent. The level of men's representation has not decreased in any of the oblast councils as a result of mandate withdrawals and replacements.

1,244 councilors, among them 860 men and 384 women, have been elected to city councils of big cities, in particular, the 24 city councils of cities-oblast centers, Kyiv, Kramatorsk, and Bakhmut. Out of this number, 82 men and 42 women (33.9 percent of women among the elected candidates that dropped out) gave up their mandates. **As a result of replacements, the level of women's representation in the city councils of these cities has not changed substantially, declining from 30.9 to 30.5 percent.**

The level of women's representation has not decreased as a result of mandate withdrawals in

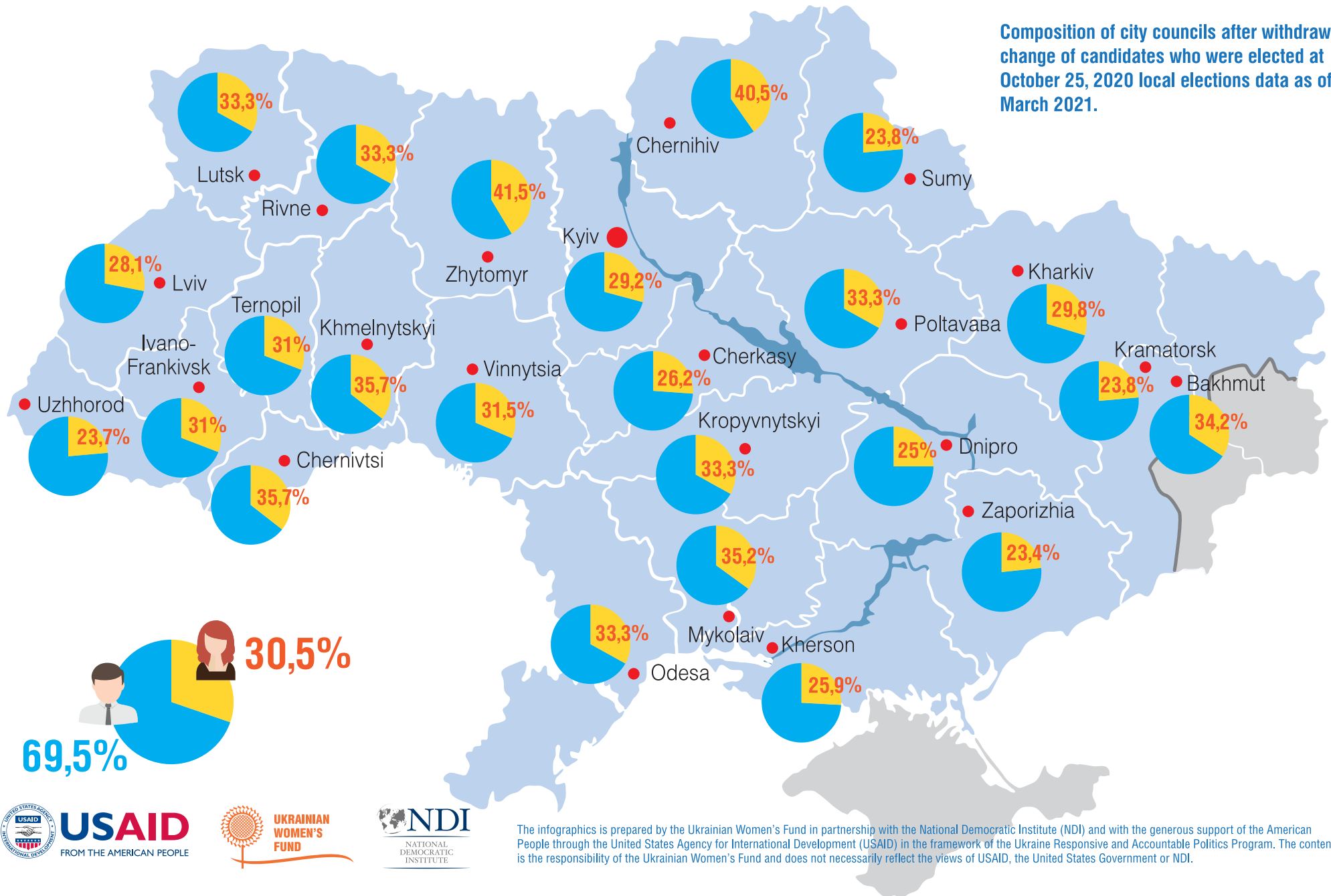
Women in oblast councils

Composition of oblast councils after withdrawal and change of candidates who were elected at October 25, 2020 local elections, data as of March 2021.



Women in city councils

Composition of city councils after withdrawal or change of candidates who were elected at October 25, 2020 local elections data as of March 2021.



the following city councils: Lutsk, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Rivne, Uzhhorod, Kherson, Cherkasy, and Chernivtsi. In Dnipro and Zaporizhia city councils, women's representation has slightly decreased by 1.6 percent. In Vinnytsia city council, the representation has dropped by 1.9 percent; in Sumy and Ternopil city councils, women's representation has decreased by 2.4 percent, in Kyiv city council – by 2.5 percent, in Kharkiv city council – by 3.6 percent, and in Bakhmut city council – by 5.4 percent. In Zhytomyr city council, women's representation has increased by 1 percent, in Ivano-Frankivsk, Kramatorsk, Kropyvnytskyi, Poltava, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernihiv city councils, the percentage of women has grown by 2.4 percent, and in Odesa city council – by 3.7 percent.

The total number of withdrawals among the elected candidates was higher, as several candidates could have given up one mandate one after another before the final election results were announced. Possible reasons for that include formal compliance with the gender quota by political parties for registration purposes, pressure from party branches, lack of candidates' interest in working at a local council, changes in their life priorities, etc.

Some women respondents reported **cases of pressuring** women candidates elected to both local councils: the party leadership pressured them to select a council where the women would carry out their councilor duties. **Cases of pressure to give up a mandate** have also been reported.

The party leadership threatened her with an imperative mandate. They said, "If you are elected to the rayon council, you are required to go there. You cannot stay in the city council, you have to submit an application to join the rayon council." I told her it wasn't true. She didn't submit any applications. Currently, she is basically in a small opposition within her own faction...

Woman representative of an oblast party branch

In my oblast, two women approached me as a representative of a women's movement and said they were under pressure from their political party. We made that case public and eventually, they did not give up their mandates.

Woman councilor of an oblast council

I was subjected to psychological pressure after the elections. I was part of two tough conversations and I was told to give up my seat. The candidate who received sixty votes, cannot calm down, he started threatening my husband. All sorts of troubles are taking place. A window at work has been broken. My husband and like-minded people support me.

Woman candidate for council in a community with up to 10,000 voters

Lack of women's involvement in decision-making during candidate nomination and in other essential internal party decisions is unfavorable for strengthening internal party democracy and representation of community interests by the women and men candidates elected from the party.

6.5 Results of elections to councils in communities with up to 10,000 voters

With the purpose of gender monitoring, 10 communities with up to 10,000 voters have been selected: Mahala village in Chernivtsi oblast (19.2 percent of women were represented in the local council prior to the 2020 local elections), Teplo-dar city in Odesa oblast (23.1 percent of women), Nova Borova settlement in Zhytomyr oblast (30.8 percent), Siversk city in Donetsk oblast, Molochansk city in Zaporizhia oblast, and Trostianets village in Lviv oblast (34.6 percent of women in each of the local councils), Chornyi Ostriv amalgamated community in Khmelnytskyi oblast (38.5 percent), Malynivka settlement in Kharkiv oblast (57.7 percent), Tyvriv city in Vinnytsia oblast (63.6 percent), and Velykokopanivska amalgamated community in Kherson oblast (65.4 percent). The average level of women's representation prior to the 2020 local elections made up 39.8 percent.

Based on the 2020 local election results, **the average level of women's representation in the above-mentioned communities has slightly decreased** to 38.5 percent.



In two communities, women's representation has significantly increased: from 19.2 to 27.3 percent in Mahala community and from 35 to 59 percent in Siversk community.

In one community, women's representation has increased – from 23.1 to 27.3 percent in Teplodar community.

In three communities, the level of women's representation has remained almost unchanged: 34.6 percent compared to 35 percent in Molochansk community, 38.5 percent in comparison with 38.1 percent in Chornyi Ostriv amalgamated community, and 31 percent in contrast to 31.8 percent in Nova Borova community.

In four other communities, women's representation has declined: from 65.4 percent to 59.1 percent in Velykokopanivska community, from 63.6 percent to 40.9 percent in Tyvriv community, from 57.7 percent to 50 percent in Malynivka community, and from 34.6 percent to 18.2 percent in Trostianets community.

Overall, 218 individuals have been elected to the 10 local councils: 120 individuals elected on party lists (among them 56 women or 46.7 percent), and 98 individuals who ran as self-nominated candidates (among them 28 women or 28.6 percent).

The level of election of self-nominated women candidates correlated with the level of those running, both overall (28.6 percent of the elected women, while there were 31.6 percent of women who ran as candidates) **and in the majority of select communities.** For example, while in Malynivka, Mahala, and Trostianets communities, women made up 16.7 percent, 18.4 percent, and 19.5 percent of self-nominated candidates respectively, among the elected self-nominated candidates, there were 20 percent, 23.5 percent, and 17.7 percent of women. In Molochansk, Nova Borova, and Chornyi Ostriv communities, the share of women among self-nominated candidates was 25 percent, 30 percent, and 39.1 percent respectively, and among elected self-nominated candidates, there were 20, 25, and 50 percent of women. In Velykokopanivska community, the share of women among self-nominated candi-

dates constituted 60 percent; among elected self-nominated candidates, this figure reached 66.7 percent. In two communities, the share of elected self-nominated women candidates is not proportional to the share of those running for elections: women constitute 25 percent among the elected self-nominated candidates and 41 percent among those running as candidates for elections in Tyvriv community. In Siversk community, the share of women among self-nominated candidates was 32.1 percent and none was elected.

Among the 336 women who ran for local councils, 71 percent ran on party lists and 29 percent ran as self-nominated candidates. Among the 84 women who have been elected, 66 percent have been elected on party lists and 33 percent as self-nominated candidates.

Overall, for the sample of communities with up to 10,000 voters, the election of women on party lists and self-nominated candidates was equally effective.

In the framework of discussing interim results of gender monitoring of the elections, one of the interregional roundtables was focused on elections in communities. Data of the Zaporizhia charitable fund "Unity "For the Future" demonstrated that 50 percent of women and 50 percent of men have been elected to the local councils of Zaporizhia oblast in communities with up to 10,000 voters where the 30 percent gender quota without the ranking order on party lists was imposed and there was an opportunity for self-nomination. In the same communities, where essentially, the 40 percent gender quota was put in place, with the ranking order in each five candidates, only 36 percent of women have been elected. **Opportunity for self-nomination had a positive impact on the women's chances of being elected to local councils in small communities.** Most women participants of the roundtable agreed that the opportunity for self-nomination should be provided in communities with over 10,000 voters, 25,000 and even 50,000 voters. They are convinced that in small communities, party branches are either absent or do not function between elections, thus the need to join party lists is an additional obstacle for active women residing in the communities

6.6 Results of elections for mayors of communities

Before the 2020 local elections, none of the big cities, including Kyiv, or cities-oblast centers, was led by a woman. In Kramatorsk and Bakhmut cities of Donetsk oblast, which have also been included in the sample, mayoral positions in communities were also occupied by men.

According to the CEC data, out of 10,131 village, settlement, and city mayors, 3,177 women (31.4 percent) were elected on 25 October, at the 2015 elections.

Women were not elected as mayors in any of the 24 big cities, according to the results of the 2020 local elections.

Of the 10 communities with up to 10,000 voters – Mahala village in Chernivtsi oblast, Teplodar city in Odesa oblast, Nova Borova settlement in Zhytomyr oblast, Siversk city in Donetsk oblast, Molochansk city in Zaporizhia oblast, Trostianets village in Lviv oblast, Chorny Ostriv amalgamated community in Khmelnytskyi oblast, Malynivka settlement in Kharkiv oblast, Tyvriv city in Vinnytsia oblast, and Velykokopanivska amalgamated community in Kherson oblast – women were elected as mayors in two communities: Velykokopanivska amalgamated community and Molochansk city.

According to the CEC data, **234 women (16.6 percent) out of 1,412 village, settlement, and city mayors were elected in the local elections on 25 October 2015.**

6.7 Impact of decentralization on women's representation in small communities

Despite an increase in the representation of women in large communities, women's overall representation in the local councils across Ukraine has dropped by 12.6 percent. While in the 2015 local elections, **49.5 percent of women**

were elected to the local councils, in 2020, this number reached only 36.9 percent.

A decline in the overall statistics results from a sharp decrease of women's representation in settlement and village councils – from 46.1 percent and 55.7 percent in 2015 to 37.9 percent and 41.3 percent in 2020.

Women's representation as settlement, village, and city mayors has also decreased – from 31.4 percent based on the 2015 election results to 16.6 percent according to the results of the 2020 elections.

The decentralization reform has led to consolidation of territorial communities and a reduction in the number of local councils. In 2015, elections to 9,831 settlement and village councils were held, and 131,989 councilors were elected; in 2020, elections to 1,051 councils took place, resulting in 23,894 elected councilors of settlement and village councils. While 10,131 village, settlement, and city mayors were elected as a result of the 2015 local elections, among them 6,954 men (68.6 percent) and 3,177 women (31.4 percent), in the 2020 local elections, the number of elected mayors reached only 1,412, 1,178 men (83.4 percent) and 234 women (16.6 percent).

Consolidation of territorial communities leads to increased competition and a growing role of financial and other resources needed for election campaigns. This is confirmed by the results of the interviews with women candidates, held by the long-term observers in the 10 oblasts, as well as conclusions from the 8 interregional roundtables that brought together women candidates, elected women councilors and mayors of communities, and were held by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). While large-scale advertising during election campaigns was not typical for a small community, since opinion leaders were well known to the community and could organize in-person meetings with voters and share information on their own, in a bigger community, **unequal access of women and men to resources can impact election results.**

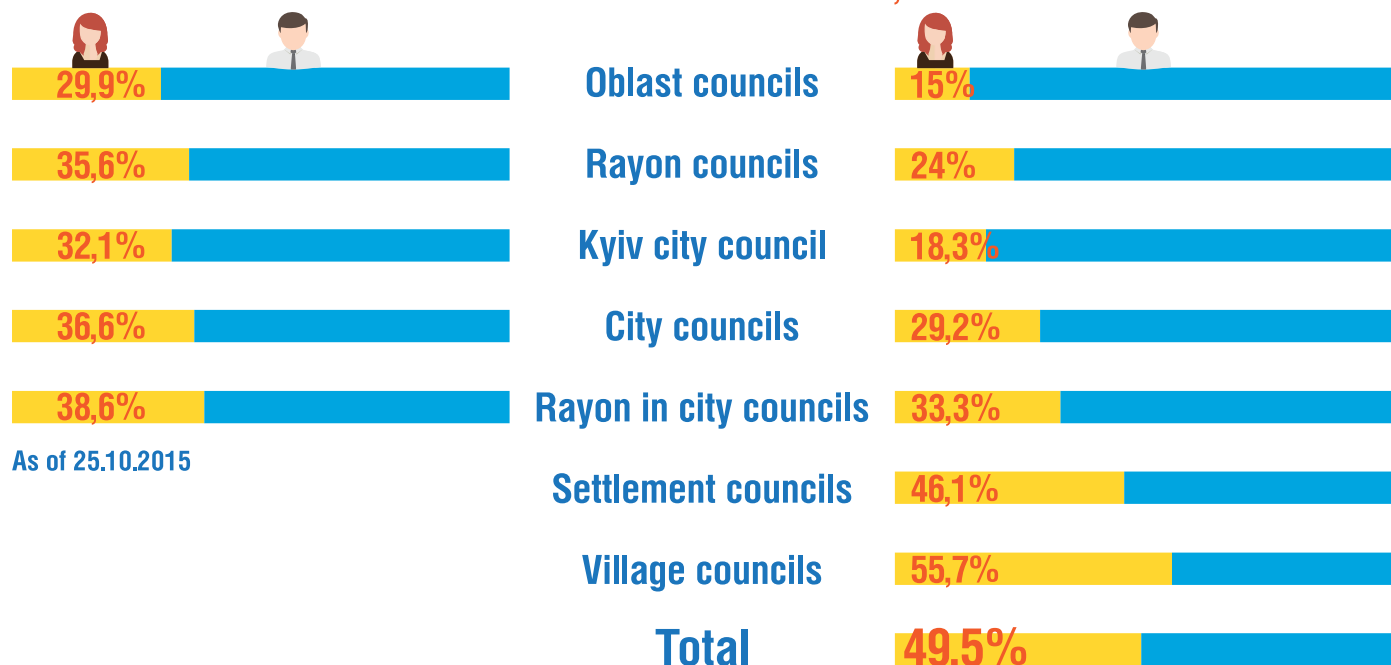


Women among candidates and elected officials in 2015 and 2020 local elections

Women among candidates

Women among elected officials

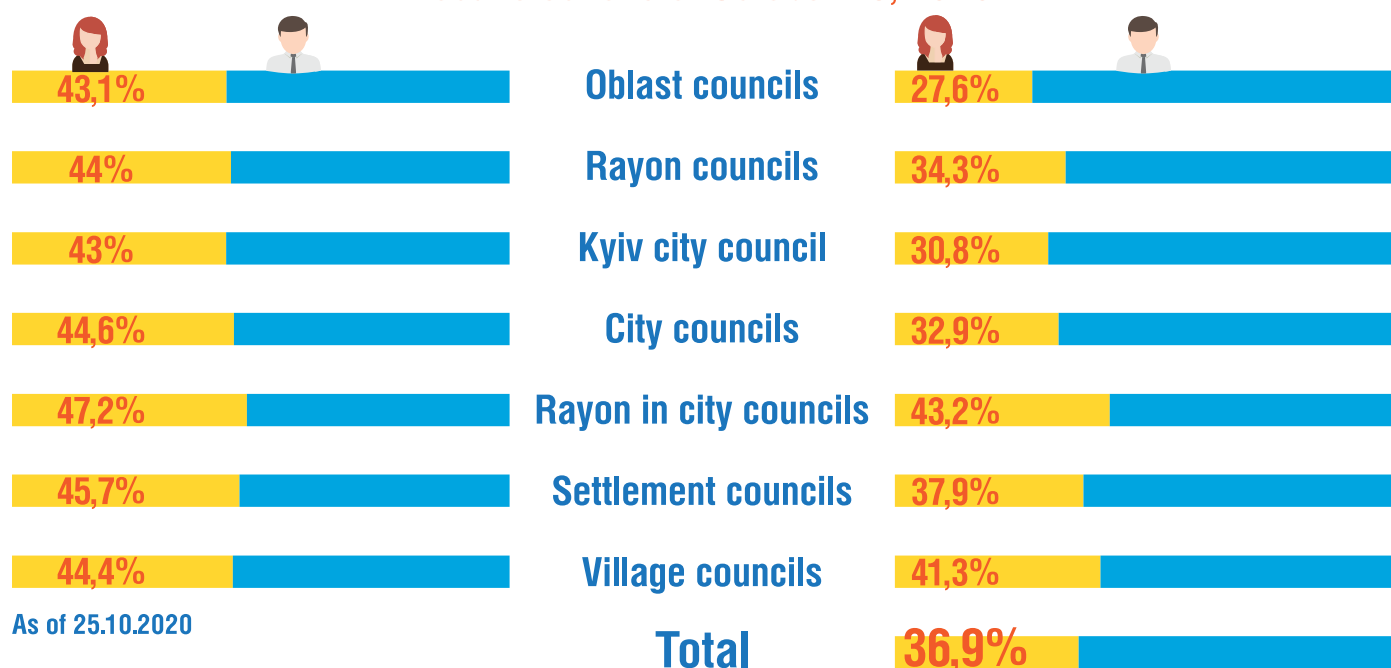
Local elections of October 25, 2015



As of 25.10.2015

As of 01.01.2016

Local elections of October 25, 2020



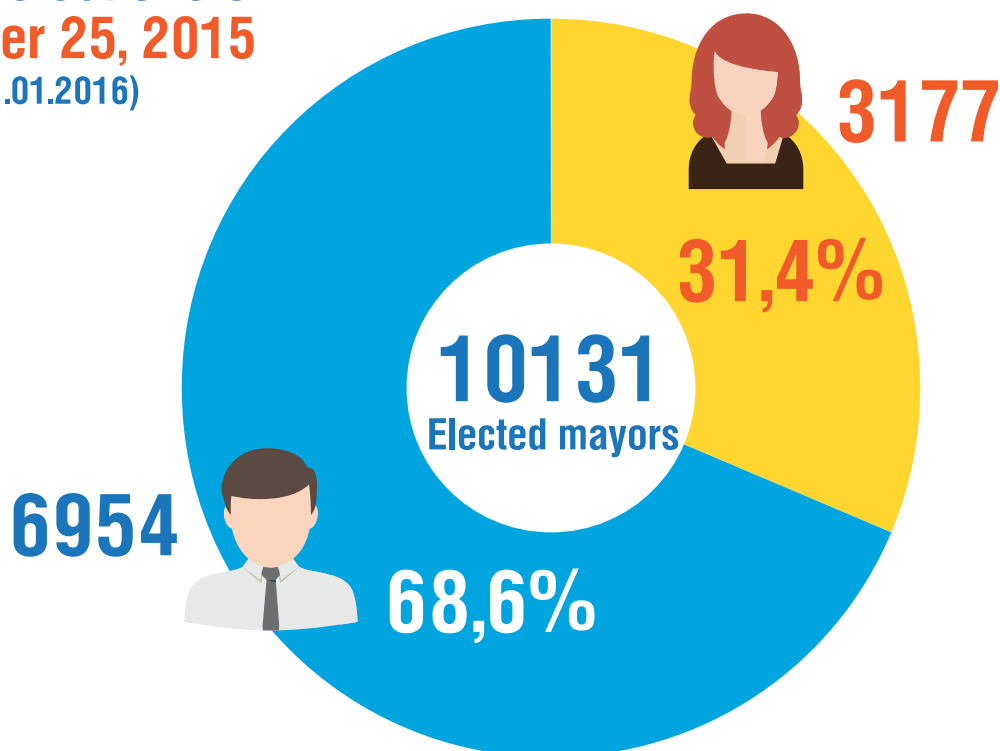
As of 25.10.2020

As of 24.12.2020

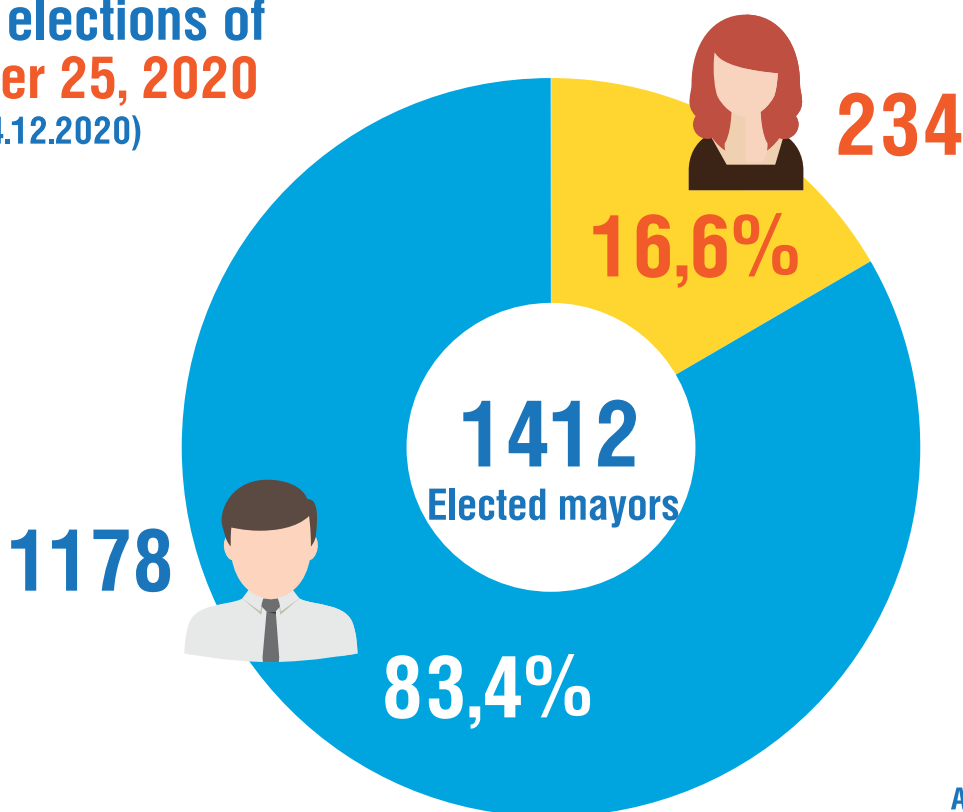
According to the CEC data

Women among elected village, settlement, city mayors in 2015 and 2020 local elections

Local elections of
October 25, 2015
(As of 01.01.2016)



Local elections of
October 25, 2020
(As of 24.12.2020)



According to the CEC data

7. WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Based on the monitoring results, **women take an active part in the work of the newly-elected councils, including leadership of standing committees. However, they are more likely to be appointed to deputy and secretary positions rather than positions of committee heads.**

Thus, the leadership of city council standing committees consists of 443 individuals, including 176 women (32.4 percent) and 367 men (67.6 percent), while women's representation in city councils equals 30.5 percent. The leadership of standing committees in oblast councils comprises 617 individuals, among them 178 women (28.8 percent) and 439 men (71.2 percent), while the representation of women in oblast councils makes up 26.5 percent.

In city councils, the percentage of women among the heads of standing committees equals 30.7 percent, their representation among deputy heads constitutes 29.4 percent, and among secretaries – 37.7 percent.

In oblast councils, there are 23 percent of women among the heads of standing committees, 27.7 percent among deputy heads, and 36.8 percent among secretaries.

Women mostly chair standing committees on healthcare, social protection of the population, and education.

Thus, there are 44 percent of women among the heads of oblast council standing committees on

healthcare, social protection of the population, and veterans. Women also lead 35 percent of oblast council committees on education, science, culture, physical education and sports, tourism and recreation. There are 65 percent of women among the heads of city council standing committees on healthcare and social protection of the population.

Women lead 62 percent of city council committees on education, science, culture, sports, and tourism, 41 percent of committees on ecology and environmental protection, and 32 percent of committees on councilor work, local self-government, human rights protection and the rule of law.

There are fewer women among the heads of committees on finance, infrastructure, land, the use of natural resources, and communal property.

Thus, there are 27 percent of women among the heads of oblast council standing committees on finance, budget, economy, pricing policy, and investments. Women also chair 12 percent of oblast council committees on industry, transport, communications, fuel and energy sector, architecture, construction, communal and housing sector, agriculture, and land. Women make up 9 percent of committee heads on the use of natural resources, ecology, environmental protection, and emergency situations.

65

In city councils, women chair 17 percent of committees on industry, transport, communications, architecture, housing and communal sector, communal property, and urban planning. Women make up 16 percent of committee heads on finance, budget, economy, pricing policy, and investments.

The difference in access to decision-making with regard to resource allocation can be observed when we consider the example of standing committees on ecology. In city councils, where separate committees on ecology are common, women chair 41 percent of such committees. In oblast councils, where ecology is typically included in the scope of work of the committees on the use of natural resources, women chair only 9 percent of such committees.

Women are less represented in city council executive committees; their representation makes up 24 percent (102 women out of 427 individuals). They are best represented in the executive committees of Bakhmut – 8 women out of 15 individuals (53.3 percent), Kramatorsk – 10 out of 22 individuals (45.5 percent), Zhytomyr – 4 out of 10 individuals (40 percent), Kropyvnytskyi – 4 out of 12 individuals (33.3 percent), and Cherkasy – 2 out of 6 individuals (33.3 percent). Women are least represented in the executive committees of Lutsk – 2 out of 18 individuals (11.1 percent), Chernivtsi – 2 out of 16 individuals (12.5 percent), Zaporizhia – 2 out of 15 individuals (13.3 percent), and Chernihiv – 1 out of 7 individuals (14.3 percent). Women's representation varies from 20 to 24 percent in the executive committees of Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Sumy, Kharkiv, and Kherson. In the executive committees of Mykolaiv, Poltava, Ternopil, Uzhhorod, and Khmelnytskyi the representation of women ranges from 17 to 19 percent.

Besides, **women are poorly represented among the city council secretaries; their representation reaches only 12.5 percent** (3 women out of 23 individuals). Women have been appointed to secretary positions in Bakhmut, Kherson, and Chernivtsi.

After the elections, women took up the leadership roles in 5 out of 22 oblast councils (22.7 percent): Zaporizhia, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Khmel-

nytskyi, and Chernihiv. In April 2021, following the replacement of the head of Kyiv oblast council, **women were appointed as the heads of 6 oblast councils (27.3 percent)**.

Women make up only 9.8 percent among deputy heads of oblast councils (5 out of 51), including 13 percent of women among first deputy heads (3 out of 20). Women have been appointed as oblast council deputy heads in Zaporizhia, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv oblasts.

Among the ten political parties selected for monitoring, the following parties represent the most balanced composition of the leadership of standing committees in the newly elected oblast councils: Golos, women's representation equals 50 percent (2 women holding leadership positions), while women make up 42.9 percent of the party's councilors; Opposition Bloc, 50 percent of women (1 woman), while women constitute 25 percent of the party's councilors; Samopomich, 50 percent of women (2 women), while women's representation among the party's councilors equals 44.4 percent; and Svoboda, 48 percent of women (12 women), while there are 32 percent of women among the party's councilors.

From *Batkivshchyna*, 30 percent of women (18 women) have been designated to leadership positions in the committees, while the number of women councilors in the party makes up 29.6 percent. From *Servant of the People*, 29.6 percent of women (34 women) have been appointed, while women make up 24.9 percent of the party's councilors; from *European Solidarity*, 27.8 percent of women (27 women) have been appointed, while they constitute 29 percent among the party's councilors; from *Opposition Platform – For Life*, 26.7 percent of women (24 women), while the number of women among the councilors equals 21.7 percent. Women representing the political party *For the Future* have been appointed to leadership positions less often: 17.5 percent of women holding leadership positions (11 councilors appointed as heads, deputy heads, and secretaries), while there are 26.2 percent of women among the party councilors. No woman representing *Trust the Deeds* has been appointed to the leadership of the committees, while among the party's councilors, women constitute 27.3 percent.



In the newly elected city councils, the most balanced composition of standing committees was observed in the following parties: *Trust the Deeds* – 50 percent of women (2 women holding leadership positions), while women make up 40 percent of the party councilors, and *For the Future* – 43.5 percent of women (10 women), while women make up 33.3 percent of the councilors.

From *Servant of the People*, 36.7 percent (29 women) have been appointed to leadership positions, with 36.2 percent of women among the councilors; from *Golos*, 33.3 percent (4 women), with 25 percent among the councilors; from *European Solidarity* – 31.1 percent (27 women), with 33.7 percent of women among the councilors; from *Svoboda*, 28.1 percent (9 women), with 26.6 percent of women among the councilors. Women councilors representing the following parties have been appointed to leadership positions in the city committees less often: *Samopomich* – 22.2 percent (2 women), with 29.4 women among the councilors, *Opposition Platform – For Life* – 20 percent (11 women), with 23.1 women among the councilors, and *Batkivshchyna* – 10 percent (2 women), with 27.4 women among the councilors. Women from *Opposition Bloc* are not represented in city councils.

Women participants of the interregional roundtables highlighted positive tendencies, such as the atmosphere of equality, respect for a person's competencies and professionalism within factions, deputy groups, and committees, and pointed out the negative trends, including common cases of sexism affecting women in local councils.

"Condescending" sexism is common in our council and it is absolutely unacceptable to me – all these "unintrusive" hugs, phrases, "Oh, look, a girl is saying something."

Woman councilor of a city council

Women participants of the interregional roundtables noted that positions of faction leaders were mostly given to the heads of local party branches who are typically men. Previous experience of councilor work played a significant role during

the distribution of the committee heads positions, and women had less such experience.

In the future, an increase in the number of experienced women politicians serving as councilors of oblast and city councils in big cities can influence the gender balance in the leadership of local political party branches.

It was difficult for me to become a faction leader. A man does not have to prove his ability to lead a council or a faction. At least on the sidelines, a woman needs to stand up for herself. I was told, "So, a woman can be a faction leader? Does it mean I can go for a drink with you?" And this is the oblast council we are talking about.

Woman councilor of an oblast council, faction leader

Women participants of the roundtables named participation in gender-focused caucuses, such as the Equal Opportunities Caucus in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, among the opportunities to strengthen women's positions in decision-making, exchange experience, and implement socially significant initiatives. Women councilors initiated such gender-focused caucuses in local councils and offered women and men representing various political parties to join them. **Some women participants said they could not join such gender-focused caucuses because of the stance expressed by their party branch: the party prohibits any kind of membership in any association except for the party faction.**

Besides, women councilors pointed out the significance of women's wings within parties.

To be able to impact decision-making, we established a gender-focused caucus. Currently, there are 14 people in the caucus.

Woman councilor of a city council

There is a women's wing in the party, online training sessions and webinars regularly take place; they are valuable for the women's work and networking. It is also important to look for allies, irrespective of what party they represent.

Woman councilor of a city council in a city-rayon center, faction leader

Nearly all political parties have their women's wings. Women's opportunities in elections also depend on the work of such wings. The work of women's wings should have broader coverage. We need to show that women and vulnerable women are supported so that our voters can see the real actions done by women.

Woman councilor of a local council

Women participants of the interregional roundtables generally assessed their experience of participating in the elections and the experience of other women candidates as positive, even if they have not been elected.

People say politics is a dirty business, while a woman is stereotypically associated with something kind, heartfelt. Not all women are ready to discard this perception straight away. But perhaps that is the point of women coming to power and changing politics. To make sure that we finally drain this swamp and that politics starts working for the people.

Woman councilor of an oblast council

Gender did a good job, it helped women to be seen as potential candidates; and even if they are not elected, this participation experience will be helpful in future campaigns.

Woman candidate for Kherson oblast council

Women participants of the interregional roundtables outlined the following **barriers to the productive work of women in local self-government bodies**:

- Lack of financial compensation for the work of local councilors and their assistants, lack of resources to travel and meet with voters in order to understand the issues of local concern and find a solution, which is especially relevant in large communities.

Now that I am a councilor, I am in desperate need of an assistant who is able to work officially. There are lots of things that have to be done for the people, and it is necessary to meet with them.

Woman councilor of a city council

- Bias and sexism in local councils and political parties. Lack of behavioural standards for councilors of local councils.

Bias, sexism, and bullying haunted me throughout my entire previous term.

Woman candidate for mayor of a community

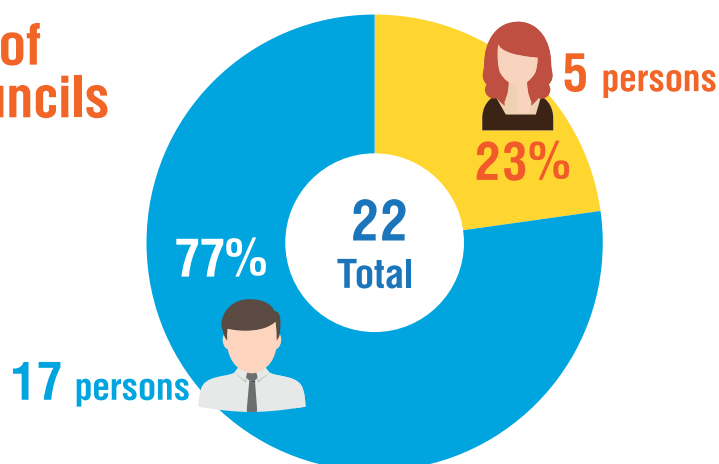
- Several cases when parties imposed restrictions for councilors on joining gender-focused caucuses that support equal opportunities of women and men.
- Lack of systematic work carried out by political parties in communities between elections, including work with women voters and women candidates who have not been elected.
- Lack of gender-sensitive political party statutes and programs, insufficient involvement of women, who constitute nearly half of the party members, in decision-making.
- Poor coverage of the activities of women politicians and associations of women in parties and local councils.



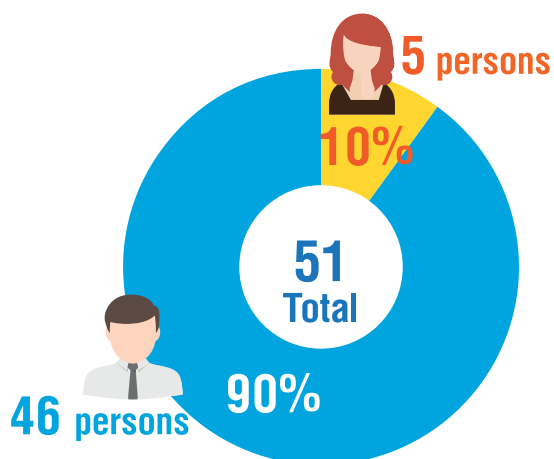
Women and men in oblast council leadership

Data as of 25.02.2021

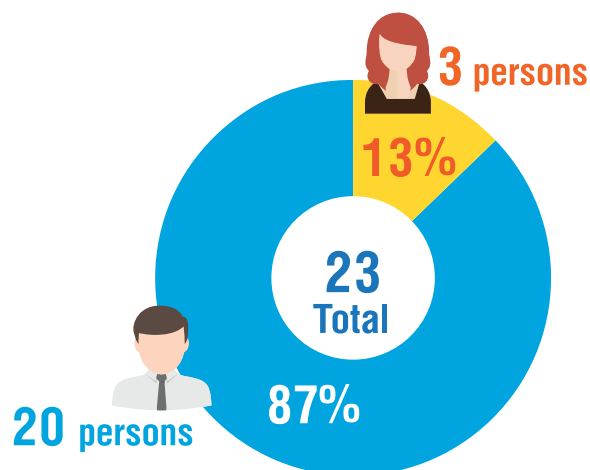
Heads of oblast councils



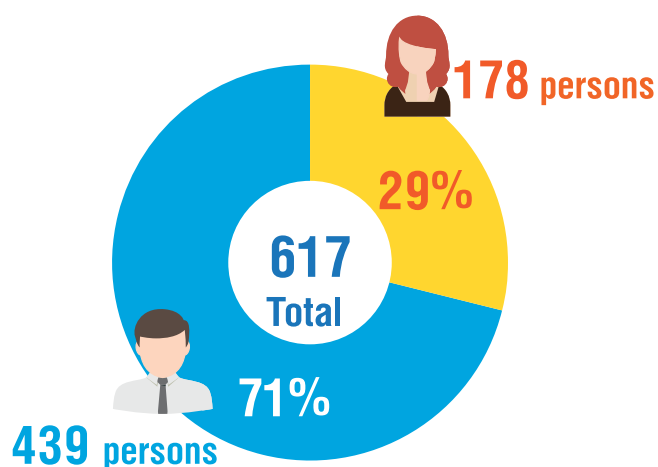
Deputy heads of oblast councils



First deputy heads of oblast councils



Leadership of oblast council standing committees



Heads of committees



Deputy heads of committees



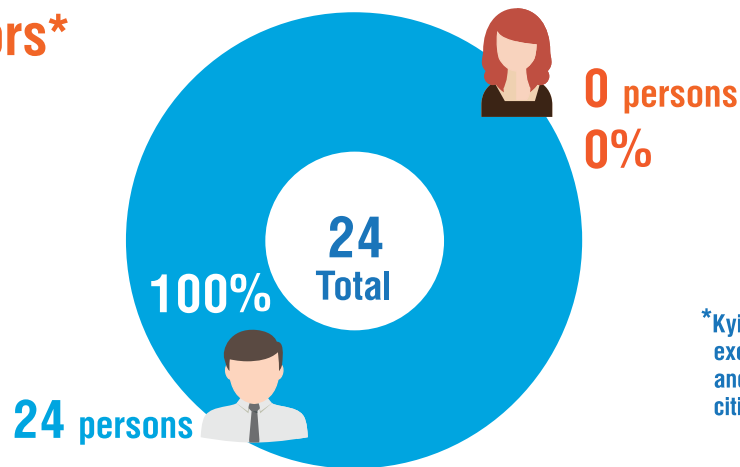
Secretaries



Women and men in city council leadership

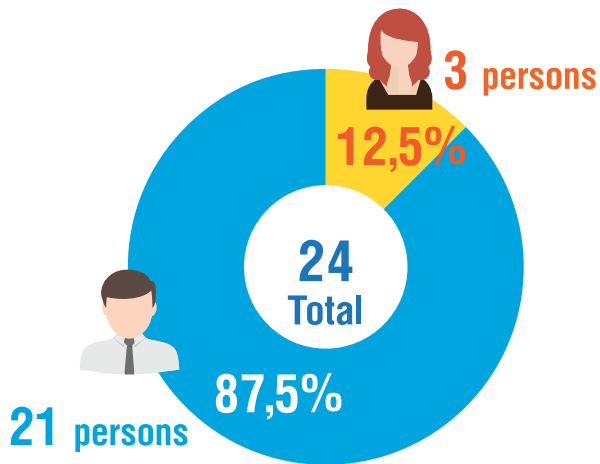
Data as of March 2021

Mayors*

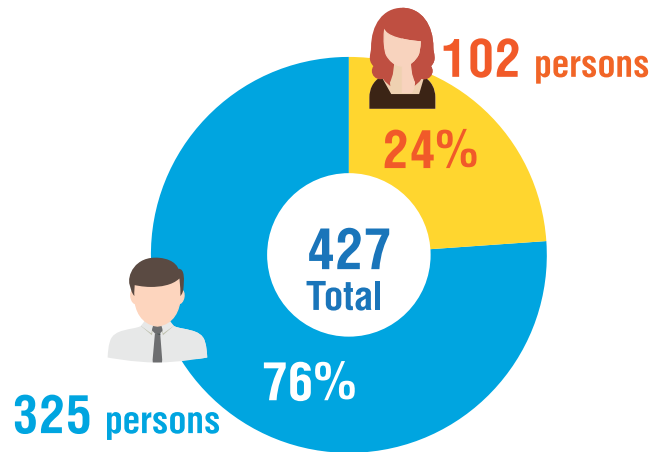


*Kyiv city, cities - oblast centers, except for Donetsk and Luhansk, and Kramatorsk and Bakhmut cities

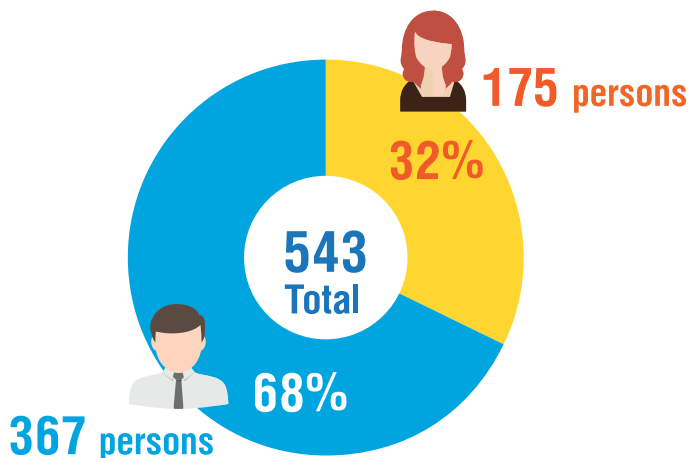
Secretaries of city councils



Executive committees of city councils



Leadership of city council standing committees



Heads of committees



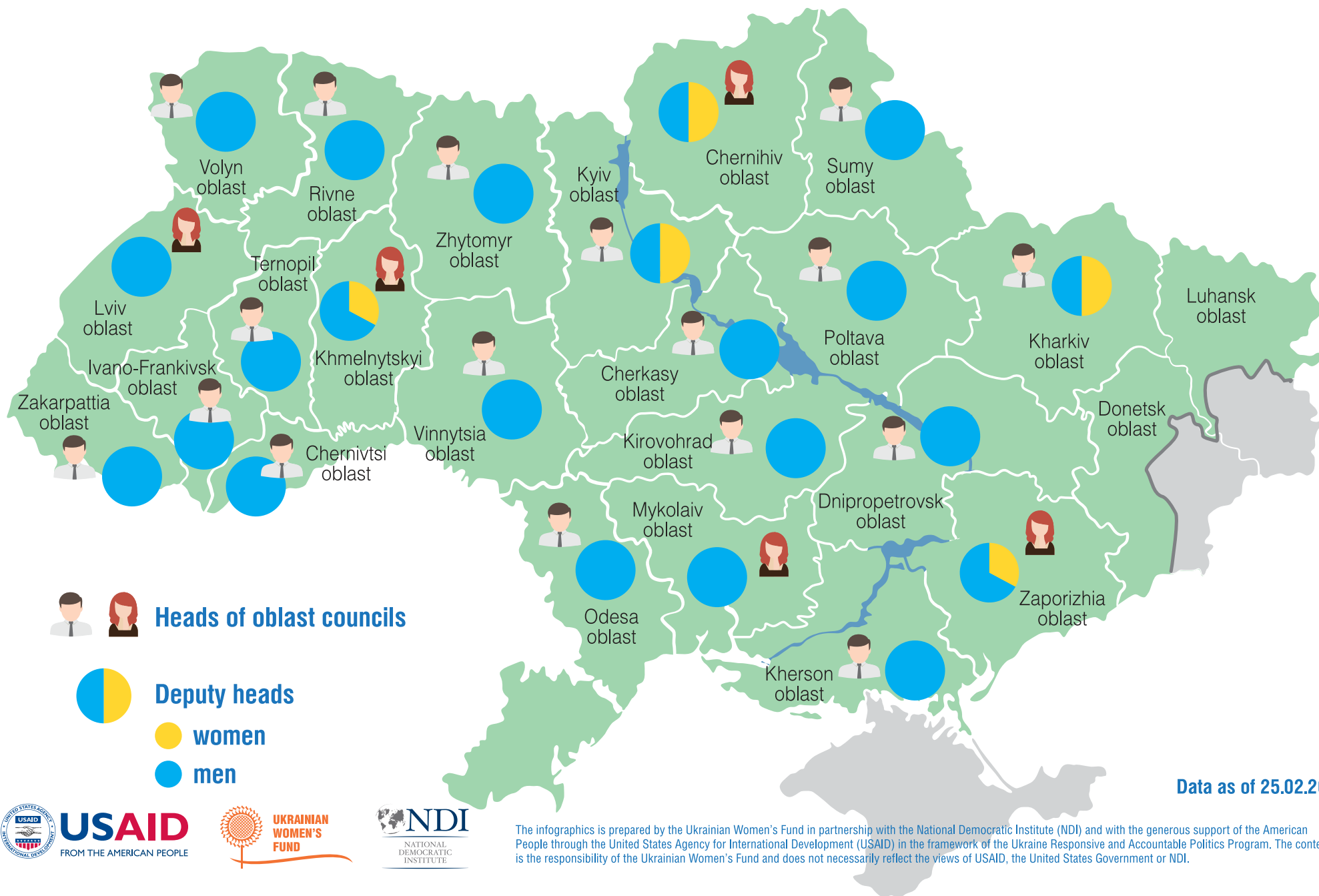
Deputy heads of committees



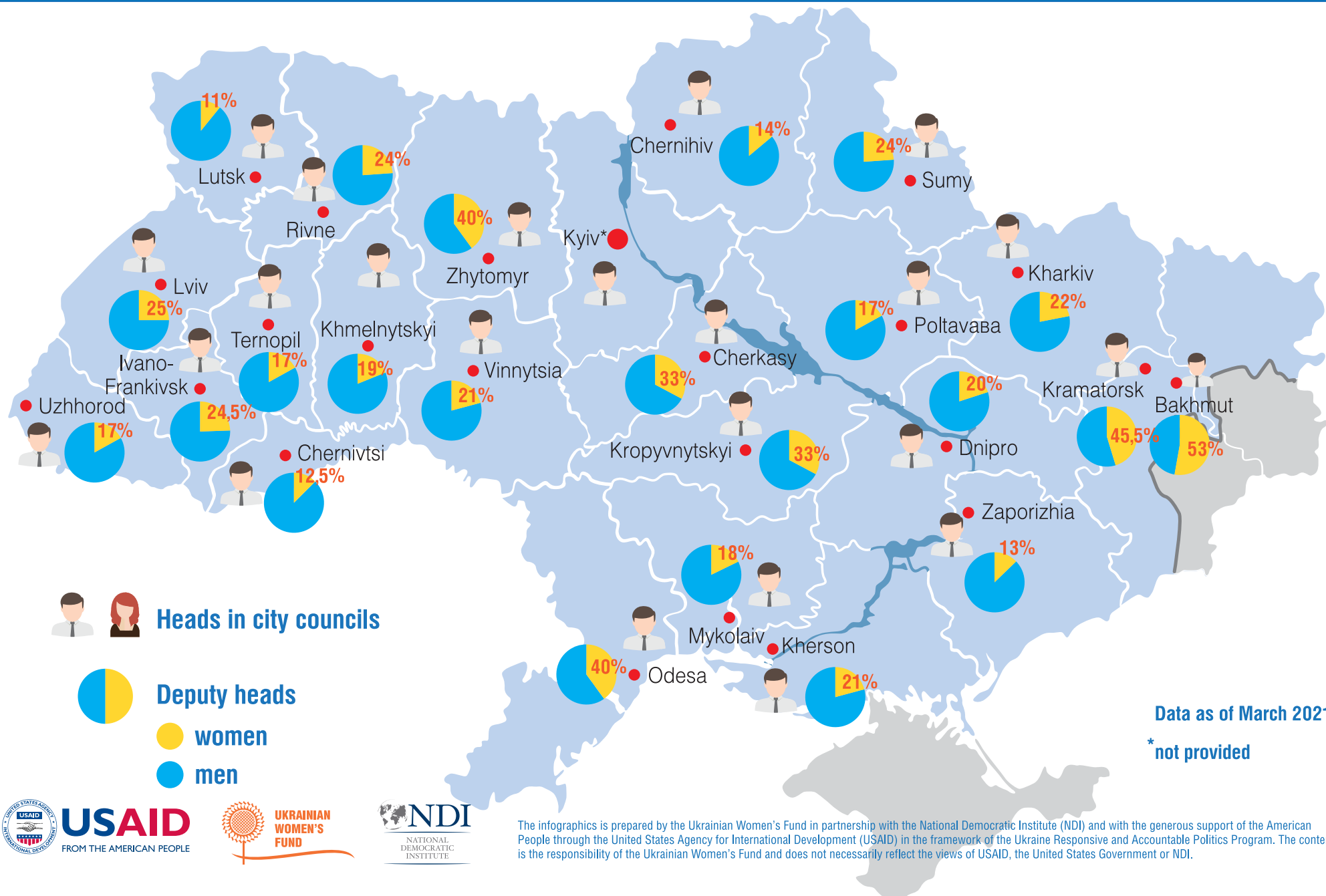
Secretaries



Women and men at oblast councils' leading positions

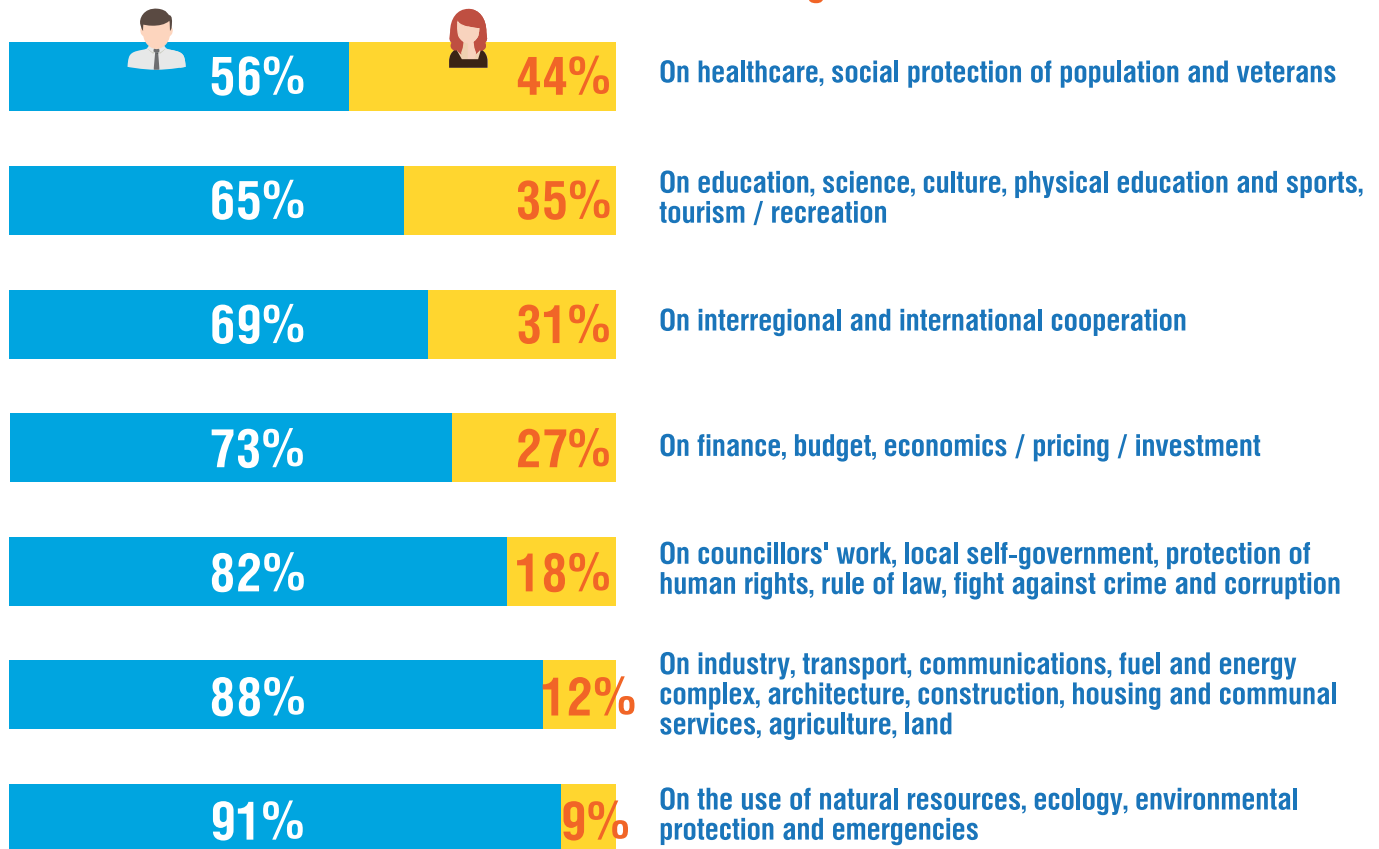


Women and men in city councils' leading positions

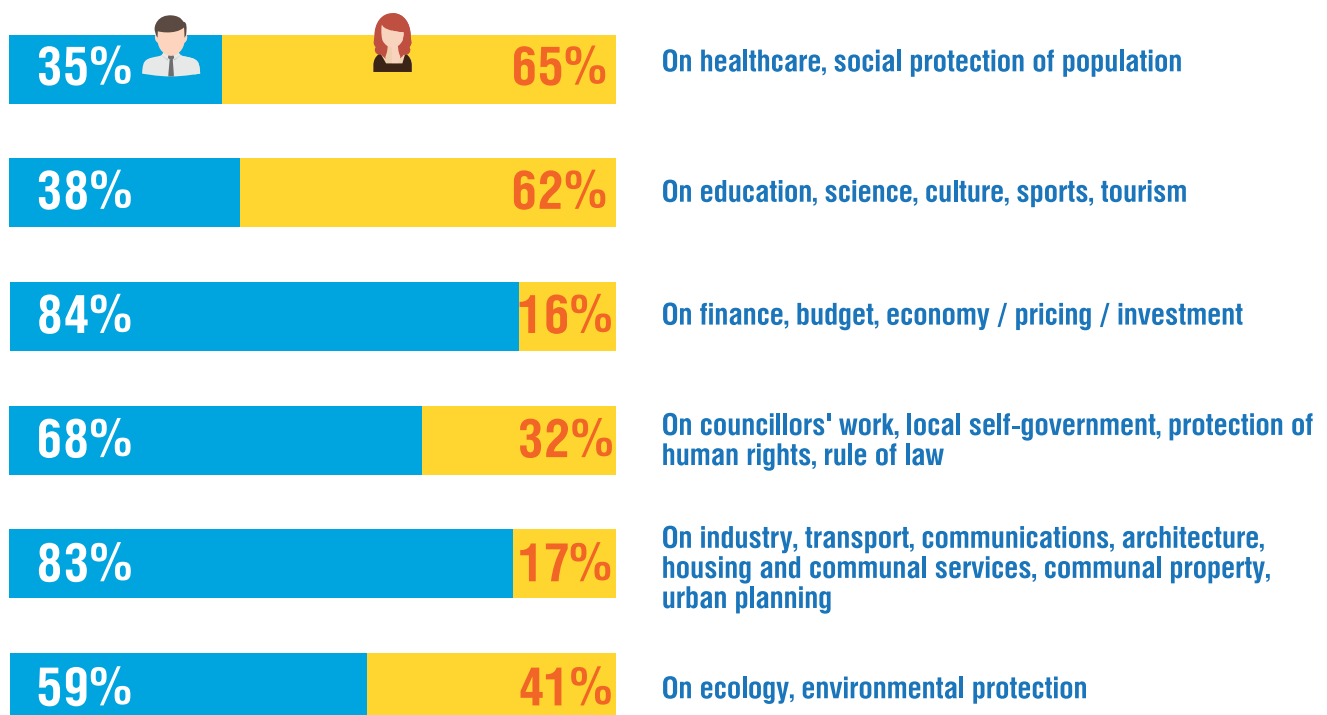


Leadership of standing committees by area of activities

Heads of oblast council standing committees



Heads of city council standing committees*



*Cities – oblast centers, Kyiv, Bakhmut and Kramatorsk

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to compliance with the gender quota, and in particular, due to the fact that parties are required to ensure that not fewer than two men or women candidates are present in each five candidates of each electoral list, women's representation on political party lists for oblast and city councils has significantly increased leading, in turn, to better representation of women in oblast and city councils.

As a result of the quota implementation, women's representation in oblast councils has grown from 15.3 percent to 28 percent; the representation of women in city councils has increased from 19.7 percent to 30.9 percent. Overall, more women have been elected to city councils (the representation has grown from 29.1 to 32.9 percent), rayon councils (from 24 percent to 34.3 percent), and rayon-in-city councils (from 33.3 percent to 43.2 percent) across Ukraine.

Despite increased representation of women in large communities, women's overall representation in the local councils of Ukraine has dropped by 12.6 percent. Women's representation as settlement, village, and city mayors has also decreased – from 31.4 percent based on the 2015 election results to 16.6 percent according to the results of the 2020 elections.

The insufficient mechanism for ensuring the gender quota has limited the quota's positive impact. One in six registered electoral lists was not compliant with the gender quota requirements. The reasons behind it include unlawful decisions of election commissions to register the lists not compliant with the quota, excluding women candidates from the electoral lists, and canceling the registration of women candidates. An improvement in women's representation in oblast and city councils of large cities has been obscured by the trend towards a decrease in the representa-

tion of women in the newly elected councils and reports of pressuring elected women candidates into giving up their mandates. As a result of replacements, the level of women's representation in oblast councils has dropped from 28 percent to 26.5 percent.

The legislation, which does not stipulate that the withdrawn candidate should be replaced by the next candidate of the same gender, presented an opportunity for violations, such as submission of incomplete document packages by political parties to register women candidates and further replace them, including "technical" women candidates to replace them further, taking advantage of the fact that candidates can run for two councils, and partially formal placement of the same individuals on different party lists, as well as pressuring women candidates to give up their mandates in case they are elected.

The formal approach of political parties to nominating women candidates was another factor that contributed to decreased effectiveness of the gender quota. Although overall, the parties nominated 43 and 43.5 percent of women on their lists for oblast councils and councils in big cities, mainly men were the ones placed in most winnable positions on territorial district lists – first and top three places on the lists. A large number of candidates elected from the territorial district lists were placed in the top three positions of the territorial district lists. The majority of candidates elected from the territorial district lists were leaders of such lists. The mechanism of altering candidate order of priority on the lists if a candidate's voter support reached at least 25 percent of the election quota did not have a decisive influence on the election results due to the high threshold of the election quota. Thus, election results correlate with how women and men were placed on the lists by political parties; the



placing being less favorable for women.

The 30 percent gender quota in the elections of village, settlement, and city councilors through the relative majority system in small communities did not have a significant influence on candidate nomination and election results. Consolidation of territorial communities has led to both increased competition and a growing role of financial and other resources needed for the election campaign. The introduction of the electoral deposit played a negative role in the elections of all levels, starting from the smallest village. Unequal access of women to financial resources and tough economic situation led women to refuse to participate in the elections or save on election campaigns, which reduced their chances to be elected. Interpretation of the “symbolic” electoral deposit was vastly different among the legislators and women from the villages. As a result, women’s representation in settlement and village councils has dropped.

A significant increase of the electoral deposit, 4.4 times for oblast councils and 4.5 times for city councils and mayoral candidates in cities-oblast centers, had a negative impact on the opportunity of women to stand for the local elections. High electoral deposit made men and women candidates dependent on sponsors and has become a significant obstacle to exercising the right of the less affluent candidates and political parties to stand for elections.

Analysis of the financial reports of candidates for city mayor found that the size of an average election fund of a woman was two times smaller in comparison with the election fund of a man.

The reasons behind a formal approach of political parties to the gender quota include insufficient representation of women in party governing bodies both at the central level and in party branches; lack of women’s involvement in party decision-making, including decisions on compiling electoral lists. Heads of party branches, mostly men, were the ones with key influence on compiling candidate lists and establishing the order of priority. Despite some positive practices, the majority of party branches did not hold primaries

or discuss candidates, and candidate nomination by a political party was not transparent for the majority of women candidates.

Women were actively involved in the work of election headquarters, although they rarely served as heads of the headquarters. Women candidates were interested in training on running an election campaign and councilor work, they found and took such training opportunities provided by political parties, civil society and international organizations, or experts on a paid basis. The majority of women candidates lacked support during the elections, including methodological, legal, security, media support, and support with resources. More experienced women candidates served themselves as a resource for political parties, they provided training sessions or consultations for their fellow party members – both women and men.

The majority of women candidates preferred face-to-face meetings in their campaigns. The COVID-19 pandemic led women candidates to focus more on social media and printed materials, especially in the regions where face-to-face meetings were not possible to organize.

Overall, party support was distributed equally between both women and men, however, there were certain specifics. Support with social media and printed materials was most equally distributed, while support in preparing and broadcasting political advertising in mass media, as well as outdoor advertising and access to TV and radio appearances was distributed least equally.

Election-related violence was a relevant issue for women candidates – one in three women candidates faced election-related violence against herself or witnessed it against other candidates, while one in five women candidates faced such violence against herself. Part of the women respondents faced cyberbullying that was often combined with sexism.

Given the short deadlines for campaigning, lack of access of women candidates to TV and radio appearances, unequal and at times biased coverage of women in the media, generally unequal

access of women and men to financial resources and expensive forms of campaigning, such as TV and outdoor advertising, limited communication with voters in the quarantine time, a common form of campaigning for women candidates, communication with voters on social media was an essential or nearly the only possible way to campaign for many women candidates. The spread of cyberbullying, sexism, and smear campaigns on the Internet was a significant obstacle to the women candidates' campaigning.

The term "sexism" used in the Election Code is a novelty in legislation and there is currently no clear legal definition of the term or legal liability for sexist behavior. According to the Election Code, sexism and discrimination are unacceptable when disseminating election-related information that is not considered as campaigning.

Legislative gaps in defining the term "sexism," definition of adult cyberbullying, unregulated campaigning on the Internet, lack of effective protection mechanisms against election-related violence, cyberbullying, sexism, and smear campaigns contributed to the lack of conditions for fair campaigning. Given the short deadlines, women candidates lacked prompt intervention from the law enforcement bodies.

Despite some positive examples of training for women candidates and party support of the women candidates who faced various kinds of election-related violence, many of them lacked information and party support, especially when it came to unfair campaigns ran by fellow party members.

Women take an active part in the work of the newly-elected councils, including leadership of standing committees, however, they are more likely to be appointed to deputy and secretary positions rather than positions of committee chairs. Women mostly chair standing committees on healthcare, social protection of the population, and education. There are fewer women among the chairs of committees on finance, infrastructure, land, the use of natural resources, and communal property.

The decentralization reform resulted in a reduction in the number of local councils and consequently a reduction in the number of councilors by 3.5 times; at the same time, it raised the importance of resource allocation issues, decided by local councils, and the area where voters of the elected councilor live grew larger. Lack of remuneration for the working hours that councilors spend at sessions and meetings of standing committees, as well as travel expenses for meetings with voters not only contribute to the low efficiency of work in local councils but make this work less accessible to the less well-off councilors, which can have a disproportionate impact on the work effectiveness of women councilors.

Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men to participate in elections, in the distribution of leadership positions, decision-making in parties and communities requires coordinated actions of the legislators, political parties, election administration bodies, civil society organizations, and everyone interested in moving towards Ukraine's democratic transition.



THE UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S FUND URGES:

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine:

- to increase the effectiveness of the gender quota by introducing rules that prevent parties from using “technical” women candidates to fill the quota and putting pressure on women candidates to give up their mandates; in particular, to add a provision to the Election Code establishing that the withdrawn candidate shall be replaced by the next candidate of the same gender;

to ensure the following mechanism in the elections of all levels, parliamentary and local, and at all stages:

- excluding a candidate from the electoral lists;
- canceling candidate registration;
- refusal or withdrawal of an elected candidate.
- to cancel the electoral deposit in local elections in small communities with up to 50,000 voters in order to remove a significant obstacle to exercising the right of the less affluent candidates and political parties to stand for elections and reduce the negative impact on the opportunities of women and men to take part in local elections, caused by the introduction of the deposit; to amend the Election Code accordingly;
- to decrease the electoral deposit in local elections in order to reduce the dependence of political parties on sponsors and eliminate a significant obstacle to exercising the right of the less affluent candidates and political parties to stand for elections and reduce the disproportionate impact on the opportunities of women and men to take part in the local elections, caused by an increase in the deposit: a 4.4 times increase for oblast councils and a 4.5 times increase for city councils and mayoral candidates in cities-oblast centers; to amend the Election Code so that it provides for a decrease of the electoral deposit from four minimum monthly salaries as of the first day of the electoral process for every 90,000 voters of the respective unified territorial election district to one minimum monthly salary;
- to restore the opportunity for self-nomination of independent candidates in small communities, thus preventing the artificial partization of the electoral process in communities where party branches do not work systematically between elections and preventing discreditation of the Ukrainian party system and the gender quota; in particular, to increase the threshold for implementing the proportional representation system from communities with over 10,000 voters to communities with over 50,000, 75,000, or 100,000 voters, while involving all interested sides in the expert discussion, including women's organizations and associations of women councilors in local councils;
- to increase the efficiency of the 30 percent gender quota in the elections of village, settlement, and city councilors in small communities through the relative majority system by requiring political parties to ensure an alternation of candidates of both genders; to amend the Election Code accordingly;

- to increase the efficiency of open lists by removing the guaranteed seats for leaders of the unified electoral lists and by decreasing the required voter support of at least 25 percent of the election quota to be able to alter candidate order of priority on territorial district electoral lists and establishing a 10 percent threshold, thus reducing the impact of party leaders' preference when placing men in top positions on the unified and territorial district electoral lists; to amend the Election Code accordingly;
- to give a clear legal definition of sexism and impose legislative restrictions on sexism in all aspects of social relations, including the electoral process and unify the legislation; to amend the Election Code, the Law "On advertising," the Law "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men," and the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences accordingly;
- to amend the Election Code provisions on non-discrimination and prohibition of sexism when disseminating election-related information that is not considered as campaigning and add a requirement that discrimination and sexism should be prohibited during an election campaign;
- to give a clear legal definition of cyberbullying in relation to adults and impose legislative restrictions on cyberbullying in all aspects of social relations, including the electoral process; to amend the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences and establish liability for cyberbullying in relation to adults;
- to provide regulation of online campaigning, in particular, to put in place effective opportunities to file complaints against the dissemination of false information, sexism, and discrimination, and to establish sanctions against the perpetrators;
- to initiate an expert discussion on introducing amendments to the legislation that are essential to the implementation of an effective mechanism for restoring violated rights related to the electoral process, including those associated with discrimination, harassment, sexism, and cyberbullying aimed at participants of the electoral process;
- to initiate the work on legislative restrictions on the maximum size of election funds in order to shift the focus of election campaigns to meaningful political programs, debates and communication with voters, reduce the dependence of political parties on sponsors, and make running in elections more accessible to women and men, as well as to various categories of citizens; to involve all interested sides in the expert discussion, including women's organizations and associations of women councilors in local councils, not only political party leaders;
- to introduce requirements to comply with the gender quota when composing party governing bodies and party branches so that women party members have access to decision-making; to amend the Law "On political parties in Ukraine";
- to introduce remuneration for the working hours of councilors spent at sessions and meetings of standing committees, and reimburse travel expenses for meetings with voters; to involve all interested sides, including women's organizations and associations of women councilors in local councils, in the expert discussion on amendments to the Law "On the status of councilors of local councils."



Political parties:

- to adhere to the principle of gender equality when forming central governing bodies of the party, governing bodies of party branches, electing faction leaders and deputy leaders, heads of election headquarters, chairs of council standing committees, executive committees and other governing bodies;
- to work systematically in communities between elections, including work with women candidates who have not been elected; to involve women in the process of developing party branches;
- to conduct a gender audit of statutes, programs, political party management bodies and systems; to introduce gender-sensitive approaches;
- to counter any form of violence, discrimination, and sexism against women candidates, councilors, and party members; to include the topics of preventing and combating violence, discrimination, and sexism in candidate training, to introduce cybersecurity training; to provide security services for women candidates at large meetings during the election campaign; to offer and provide legal, technical, and psychological support for women candidates and councilors who are facing related issues; to introduce an internal committee within the party for considering the cases of unethical behavior in the party and reacting to such cases;
- to support the establishment and work of women's wings within parties; to provide coverage of the women's wings activities on party information resources, at meetings;
- to organize and conduct training sessions for elected women councilors, mentorship programs for less experienced women candidates and councilors in the party involving women councilors with more experience, women faction leaders and heads of party branches; to create conditions suitable for exchanging experience between elected women candidates and women activists in the party to encourage women's political participation;
- to cooperate with other parties on strengthening women's political participation; to contribute to the establishment of gender-focused caucuses in local councils and refrain from preventing councilors from joining such caucuses;
- to ensure equal access of women and men to party resources, in particular, to provide women and men candidates with equal opportunities in terms of access to TV and radio broadcasts, TV advertising, outdoor advertising, and party media resources;
- to start preparing for the nomination of women candidates for parliamentary elections; to engage active women party members, women councilors in local councils, active women candidates who have not been elected in the local elections, women opinion leaders in communities; to organize and conduct training sessions for women candidates, to create conditions for exchanging experience with more experienced women councilors, women faction leaders and heads of party branches to encourage women's political participation;
- parliamentary political parties to support changes to the legislation that would promote actual opportunities for equal participation of women and men in elections and political life.

The Central Election Commission:

- to introduce a systematic approach to collecting and publishing gender statistics on elections at all levels; to publish the respective information on a regular basis during the election period; to create a respective page on its website;
- to publish explanations on the grounds for declining the registration of political party electoral lists on account of their non-compliance with the gender quota; to focus on compliance with the quota requirements during training sessions with members of election commissions;
- to actively exercise its right to review the work of lower-level election commissions; to ensure that lower-level election commissions strictly observe legislative requirements on compliance with the gender quota.

Civil society and international organizations interested in promoting opportunities for women to participate in political life and decision-making:

- to cooperate with political parties, government agencies, and election administration bodies to carry out a gender analysis of the legislation and the electoral process; conduct gender audits in political parties; monitor opportunities and obstacles for women to participate in elections; counter violations of the law related to the quota implementation; monitor and counter election-related violence, discrimination, and sexism;
- to organize and implement study programs for women candidates and those elected.





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