Gender Equality in Parliaments - Where do we Stand in Europe?

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Abstract

In 2019, Europe observe the centenary of women’s rights in politics, but the participation of women in political life is still an unresolved problem. In most countries, women are underrepresented on the political scene and face difficulties in obtaining public positions. It is often emphasized in literature that women constitute half of all societies, but their needs and rights are not reflected in social decisions. This is due to the fact that still few women participate in politics. Arguments for gender equality in economy and politics are numerous and demonstrate that women can have a positive impact on politics and societies. The UN and other international institutions aim at changing the position of women in the world, which was reflected in the so called Millennium Development Goals, and currently in the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the latter being promoting gender equality and empowering women.

The aim of the following article is to determine women’s participation in European parliaments and to verify two hypotheses: 1) the presence of women in European parliaments is directly proportional to the economic development measured by GDP per capita; and 2) the number of women in parliaments depends on the type of society measured by the masculinity index.

We have covered all countries and territories (including those in dispute) that make Europe a political and an economical area. The conducted study allows to conclude that the involvement of women in European parliaments remains low and it is on average 28.04%. In only three countries the number is higher than 40% (Sweden, Finland, and Norway), but no European country reached 50%. The calculations confirmed the statistical significance of hypotheses, so we can say that the presence of women in European parliaments depends on the economic development of a country and the type of society.

Key Words: Europe, gender equality, economic development, Hofstede index, Sustainable Development Goals

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