

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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*Summary of the
Country Report
(1993 – 2013)*





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Introduction

Participation of women in the Czech political scene has been low for a long period of time. In the Inter-Parliamentary Union¹ ranking the Czech Republic currently occupies the 72nd place out of 189 countries together with Honduras. We can still state though that between 1993 when the independent Czech Republic was established and 2013 the participation of women increased in all aspects. At the same time it should be noted that this development was not linear and number of women in representative bodies decreased in some elections in comparison to the previous state of matter.

The Czech politics exhibits an inverse relation – the higher level of political decision the lower number of women. This same has been proved in the local governmental bodies where the highest participation of women politicians is in the smallest municipalities with lower budgets and where the mayor position is unpaid. On the contrary the situation in statutory cities resembles more the countrywide situation including the disproportion in number of men and women directly amongst the elected representatives and town leaders.

The ratio of women in membership bases of each political party is also diverse – the biggest parties have at least 30% of women members, in some case even more than 50%. The situation seems to be similar in the term of parties' leadership with women participating by one third on average. Thus low number of women in political parties does not represent the long-term issue but it is their absence in the leading and decision making positions which prevents them from influencing nomination of parties' candidates.

Women are also stereotypically linked to departments reflecting image of a woman-caretaker. A lot of women deputies or senators with only some exceptions work in committees and boards focused on family and social area, healthcare, education and culture. In these "soft" sectors women politicians also achieve ministry posts (Vlasta Parkanová was an exception as the Minister of Defence). The power sectors such as finance or defence but also transport or industry and trade still remain taboo for women.

There are many factors that influence the participation of women in politics. The most significant is the electoral system including the size of precincts and rules for granting preferential votes which relates to voter's behaviour, participation and order of women on lists of candidates (or their proportion amongst the nominees in case of majority electoral system) and success of each individual political subject in the elections. Czech political scene proves that parties are open to women participation with different degree and that they approach their support in distinct manners. There also appear well-known phenomena, for example tokenism.

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¹ Complete up-to-date ranking is available on <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

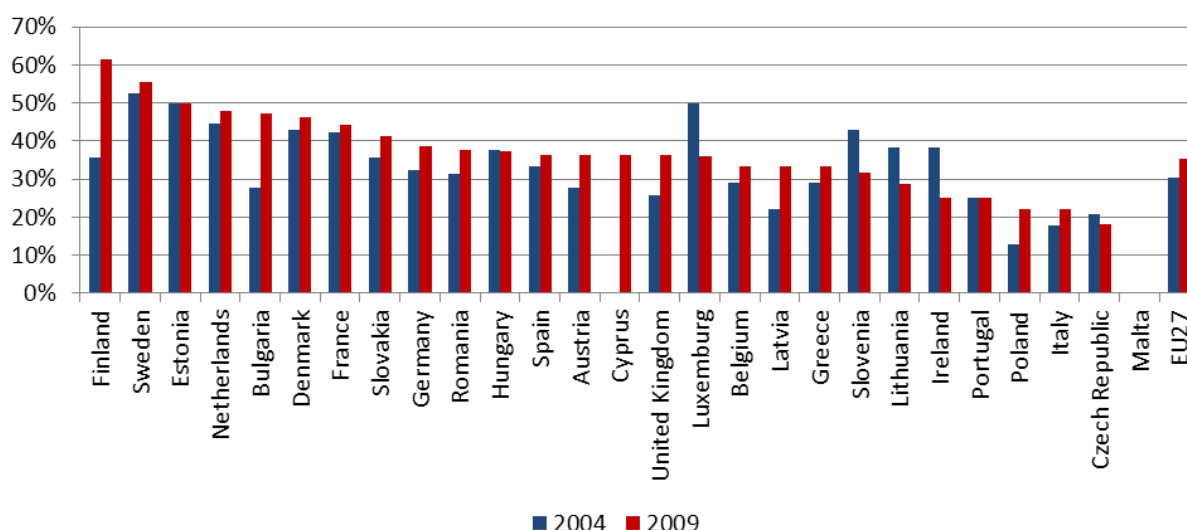
1. European Parliament



Within the entire political spectrum it is the most difficult to assess the development of women representation in the European Parliament for the Czech Republic because the elections to this body have taken place only twice in the Czech Republic up till now. The results show that representation of women seems accidental and it does not only depend on proportion of women on the candidate lists but also on their order and number of mandates taken by the particular party.

All 24 seats were taken by co-opted deputies in the period between the Czech Republic's accession to EU and regular election in June 2004 (i.e. start of term of office of the newly elected parliament in July of the same year). Overall participation of women was 17% which represents the lowest number compared to the outcome of both regular elections. Paradoxically the most influential in terms of gender participation within the historically first Czech delegation – as well as in the following two terms of office of the European Parliament – was the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) represented by two female deputies. In the following two elections only one female deputy was elected for ODS. It is interesting that none of the co-opted female deputies of the European Parliament defended successfully her mandate. On the contrary many men deputies who got to the European Parliament for the Czech Republic before the regular election in 2004 still keep their mandates in EP.

Chart no. 1: The number of women elected to the European Parliament in 2004 and 2009 for each member state



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union website (www.ipu.org)

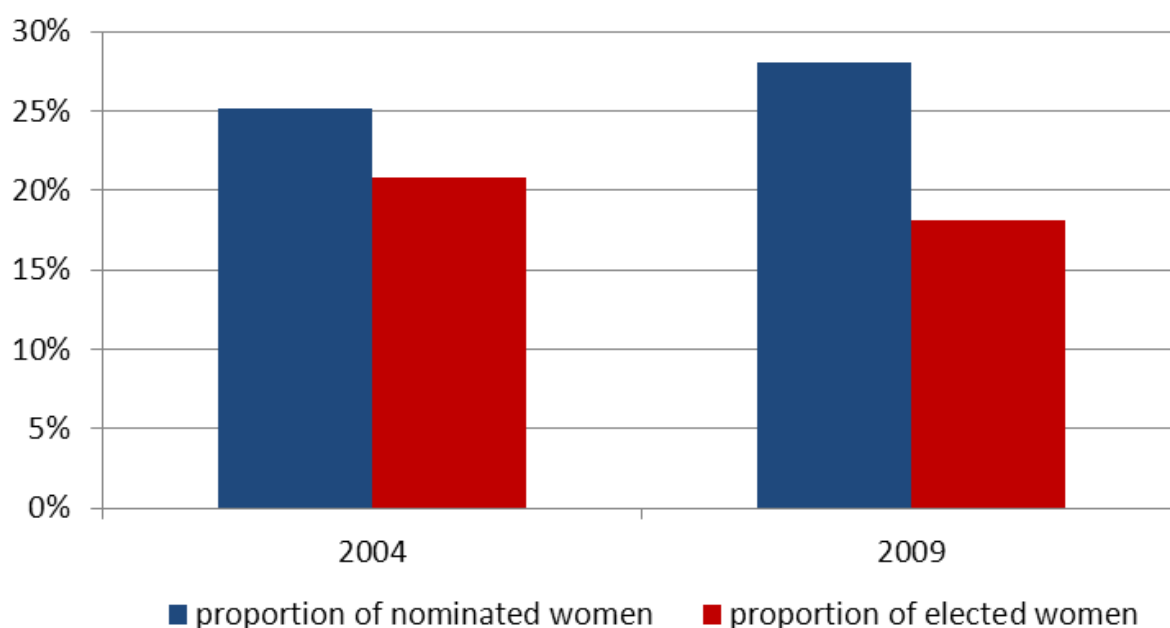
Evidently there are great discrepancies amongst the individual member states and the percentage of women elected in 2004 and 2009 dramatically changed – for example there were only three men elected in Cyprus in the first election, however five years later only 36% women were elected.



Nevertheless, the general rule is that northern countries and France are able to achieve parity and Malta has the worst result with only men representing the state in EP. Critical 30% minimum was not reached in the last two elections by the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and Portugal.

The next chart focuses on the Czech Republic only and it clearly shows that even though there were 25% women nominated for the Czech Republic in 2004, only 5 were elected, i.e. almost 21% of the total number. The percentage of nominated women increased by 3% in the following election in 2009, however only 4 (18%)² women were elected which is the second worst result out of all member states (only Malta had worse result with no female EP participation)³. Though, the overall participation of women in EP increased from 30% in 2004 to 35% in 2009.

Chart no. 2: The development of women's representation in European Parliament for the Czech Republic



Data source: Czech Statistical Office

When looking at the election outcome in more detail we find out that there were big differences amongst the political subjects in terms of gained mandates and participation of women politicians. As stated above the Civic Democratic Party was the most influential subject with respect to the Czech gender representation in EP in 2004; however, only one female Euro-deputy (11%) was elected for the party; it was the worst result in terms of gender representation following the Czech Social Democratic Party that was represented by men only for the 2004 – 2009 electoral period. The other political subjects were all represented by one woman and at the same time it was the maximum for all elected parties. One man and one woman were elected for the Christian and Democratic Union –

² The Czech Republic took two mandates more in total in EP in comparison to the previous period (in 2004 there were 24 mandates and in 2009 only 22).

³ With respect to personnel changes the Czech Republic is currently a state with the lowest participation of women in the European Parliament. Luxembourg is represented by one female Euro-Deputy which makes 17% representation.



Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL) and the Independents thus the one third women participation was reached by SNK-European Democrats. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) was represented by one woman in EP only for this period which makes 16.7%.

The following elections in 2009 were distinct in many respects – only four subjects were successful. Contrary to the previous period women participation dropped by 4 percent from 21% to 17%. ODS had again determining impact on the total representation of women and as in the previous elections only one female Euro-Deputy (11%) was elected for the party. By contrast the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) suffered a great turnover ; in the previous period it was not represented by any woman but in 2009 two women were elected (which was the biggest number for one political party) – the participation of elected women thus raised to 28.6%. There was no woman elected for KSČM in these elections even though women nominees were presented in parity (44%). However, they were nominated for lower positions on candidate lists that were with respect to the party's election results unelectable. KDU-ČSL reached 50% in terms of women participation.

It is impossible to estimate outcome of next elections based on two elections. However, the present results clearly show that it is essential for political parties to nominate women candidates on electable positions. It especially regards parties with the highest number of votes as they have major influence on the final political representation of men and women. On the other hand even the political subject that gained only two seats were able to achieve exact parity in gender representation. The crucial condition was to put candidates of the opposite sex to the top of candidate lists. The order of preference votes slightly changed in both years – in some cases only first two positions swapped, yet nobody was elected from originally unelectable position. Therefore they had no influence on the final representation of men and women. Moreover, women got to EP from last electable positions even for parties with relatively high number of votes and assigned mandates (i.e. more than two).



2. National Politics

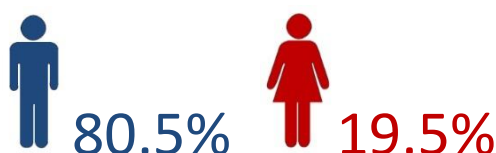
The situation in the Parliament of the Czech Republic is not much more favourable than the situation at European level. The representation of women in executive positions, i.e. in the Government of the Czech Republic is much lower.

It has to be mentioned that political parties have crucial – thus slightly less determining – influence on the percentage of men and women in representative bodies. The electorate have limited opportunity to influence the outcome of the election. The only option is granting preferential votes that can solely be used in the election to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (PS PČR) where the parity electoral system is applied. This option significantly helped women in PS PČR election in 2010 with preferential votes being considerably strengthened comparing to the previous elections. Given that preferential voting system has already been amended for several times and that preferential votes served against women in the last 2013 elections, this tool cannot be considered reliable solution to the considerable gender discrepancy on electable positions of candidate lists.

In case of Upper House the majority electoral system is applied; nomination depends strictly on political parties and voters cannot influence it at all. Contrary to that independent candidates candidate more often and their nomination does not depend on political parties' will but on the public support. Despite that the representation of women in Senate is usually lower than in the Chamber of Deputies, it alters less frequently during the electoral period as well.

The Czech governments represent far most the worst example of participation of women politicians. There have been two solely masculine governments formed in the Czech Republic. On the contrary the second government of the Prime Minister Miroslav Topolánek and the caretaker government of the Prime Minister Jan Fischer had an exceptionally high number of women presented – in both cases the participation of women was higher there than in representative bodies. These exceptions only prove the fact, which 2010 elections clearly showed, that voters do support women candidates, however political parties disrespect their will when making nominations for executive-level positions.

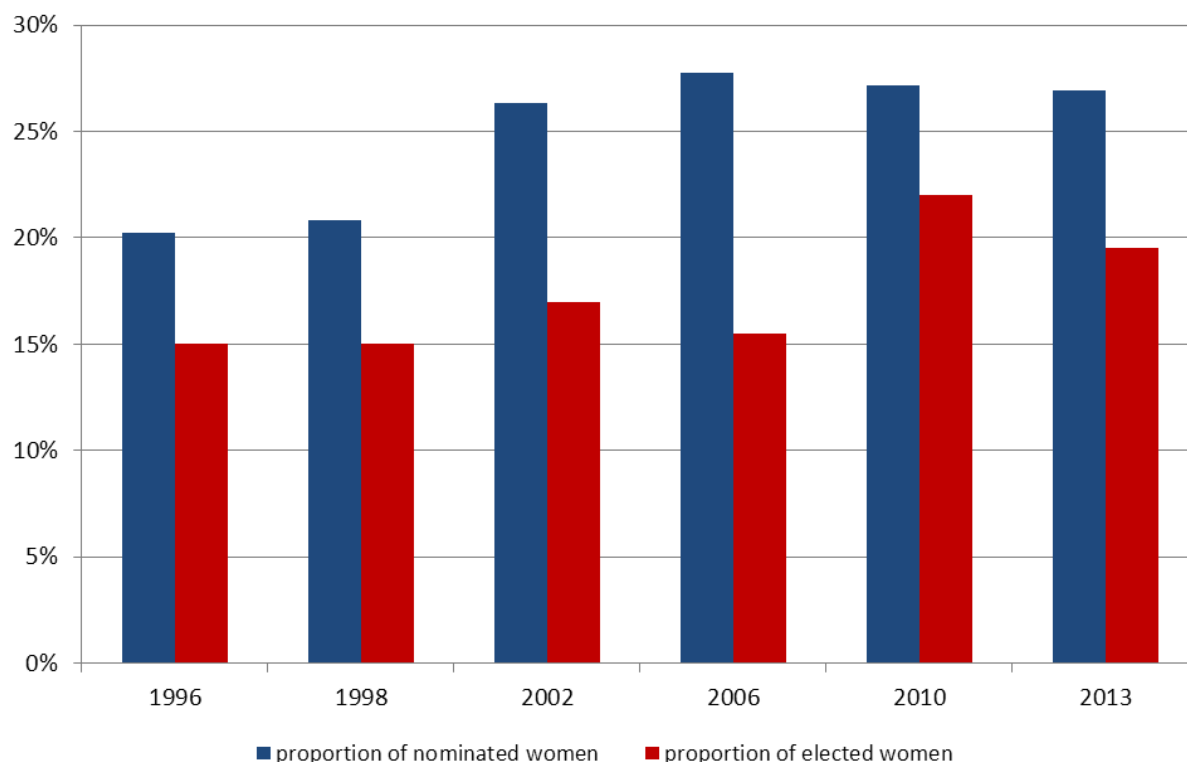
2.1. Lower House of the Czech Parliament



Contrary to the elections to the European Parliament that have taken place in the Czech Republic only twice so far, there has been certain ongoing tendency in the Chamber of Deputies. The following chart shows that the development has not been linear until now and that women's representation was changing from one election to another. Likewise, the overall ratio of nominated women to men was changing but since 2002 it has not dropped down to the level of the previous two elections (in 1996 and 1998) when it had not reached one third.



Chart no. 3: Presentation of women amongst the nominated and elected candidates to PS PČR from 1996 until 2013



Data source: Czech Statistical Office

The red column of the chart captures the situation right after the election, however the participation of women politicians was changing during the electoral period, for example the factual representation of women in the Chamber of Deputies in 2010 was 18%. Women usually take substitute positions (meaning the first unelectable positions on candidate lists), so if for some reason there appears a vacancy during an electoral period, women get to representative bodies and thus increase their political participation.

The chart also shows that in terms of women's representation the year 2010 was revolutionary. Their political representation increased by 4% in comparison to the representation of women before the elections (and by 6.5% when comparing to the situation immediately after the elections in 2006) reaching beyond the 20% limit. However, fewer women were nominated for the elections in 2013 hence the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic is currently represented by 19.5% women only. It is important to note that such a result is not only due to nominations political parties make but also due to voters' behaviour. Preferential voting worked quite oppositely giving mandates to 8 men at the expense of female candidates. If the order on the candidate list was the only determinative factor, 5 more women were to be elected which means 22% as in the previous elections. Additionally, voters made use of preferential votes generally less and instead of changing the order of the candidates for the "traditional" political parties, they voted for new political subjects (political movement ANO 2011 and Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy).

2.2. Upper House of the Czech Parliament



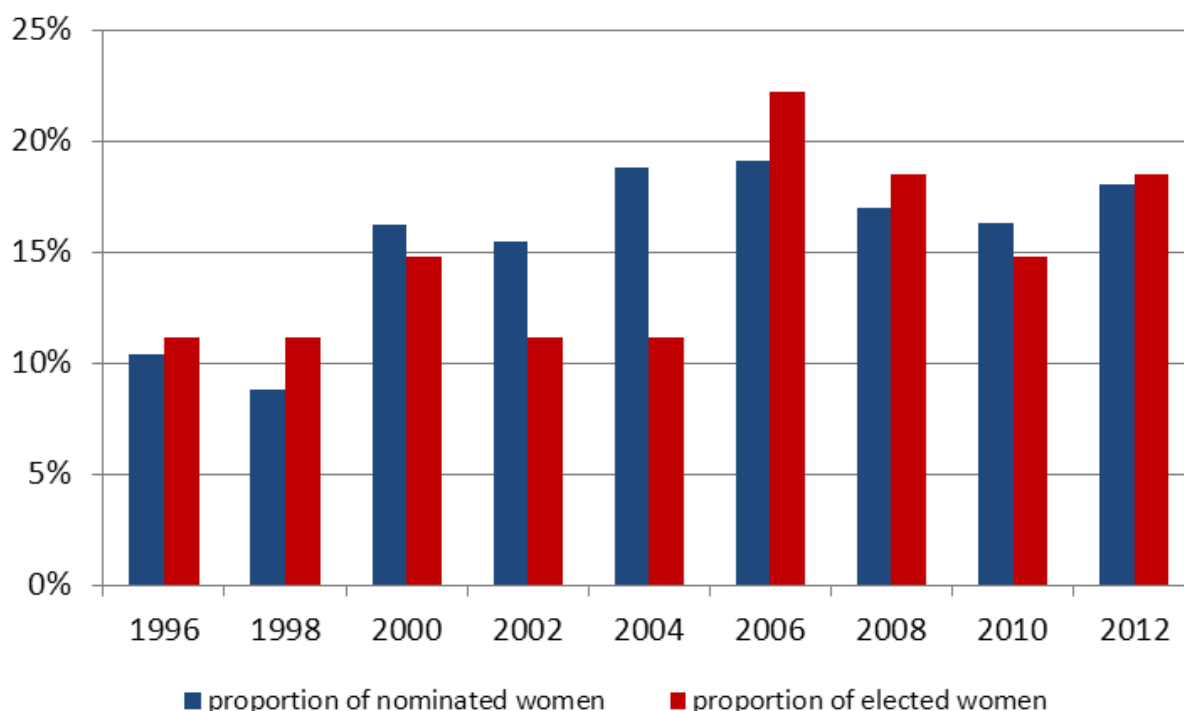
82.7 %



17.3 %

In case of Upper House the development of participation of women nominees and elected women politicians seem even more coincidental. The ratio of women to men amongst the nominees was changing equally as the ratio of women senators to men senators. Women candidates were most successful in 2006 when 6 (22%) were elected in total. On the contrary, only 3 women were chosen in 1998, 2002 and 2004 in all 27 precincts making 11%. It means that the ratio equals the outcome of the historically first elections to the Upper House when women were elected in 9 out of all 81 precincts. Given that elections are only held in one third of the precincts (with the exception of the first election in 1996) the percentage of elected women (Chart no. 4) does not reflect the overall representation of women in the Senate for the given electoral period (Chart no. 5).

Chart no. 4: Ratio of women to men nominated and elected to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic from 1996 until 2012

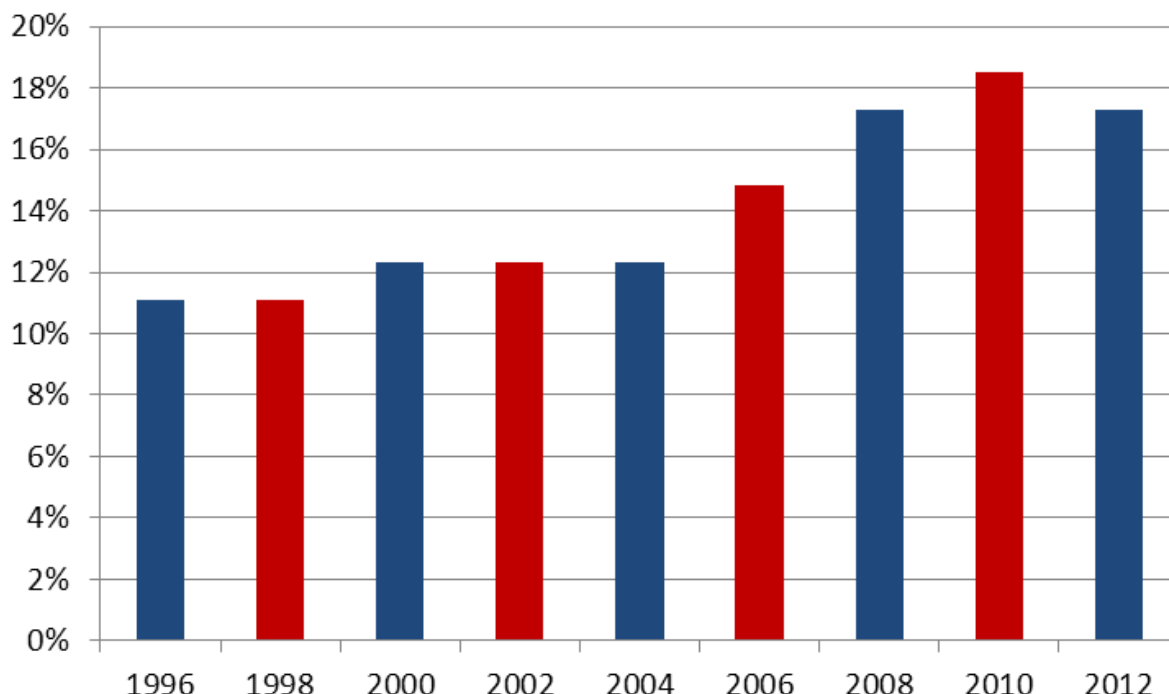


Data source: Czech Statistical Office

When comparing representation of women in the Senate any noticeably positive development is traced down either. The gender composition of the body was relatively stable in the first electoral periods – women formed 11% of the Upper House in the first two periods, subsequently there was a slight increase by 1.4% in 2003. From 2006 onwards representation of women grew sharply – at first to almost 15%, after 2008 elections by 2.5% and it reached its historical maximum of 18.5% in 2010. Women then represented 15 electoral districts in total. The positive tendency reversed in the last elections in 2012 when representation of women dropped down to current 17.3%. This fall was

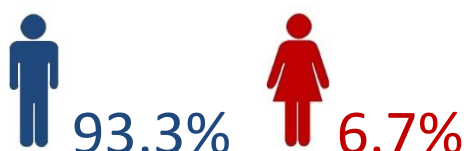
caused predominantly by the fact that the elections took place in the same districts like in 2006 when women achieved their best results.

Chart no. 5: Development of representation of women in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic from 1996 until 2012



Data source: Czech Statistical Office

2.3. Women in the Government

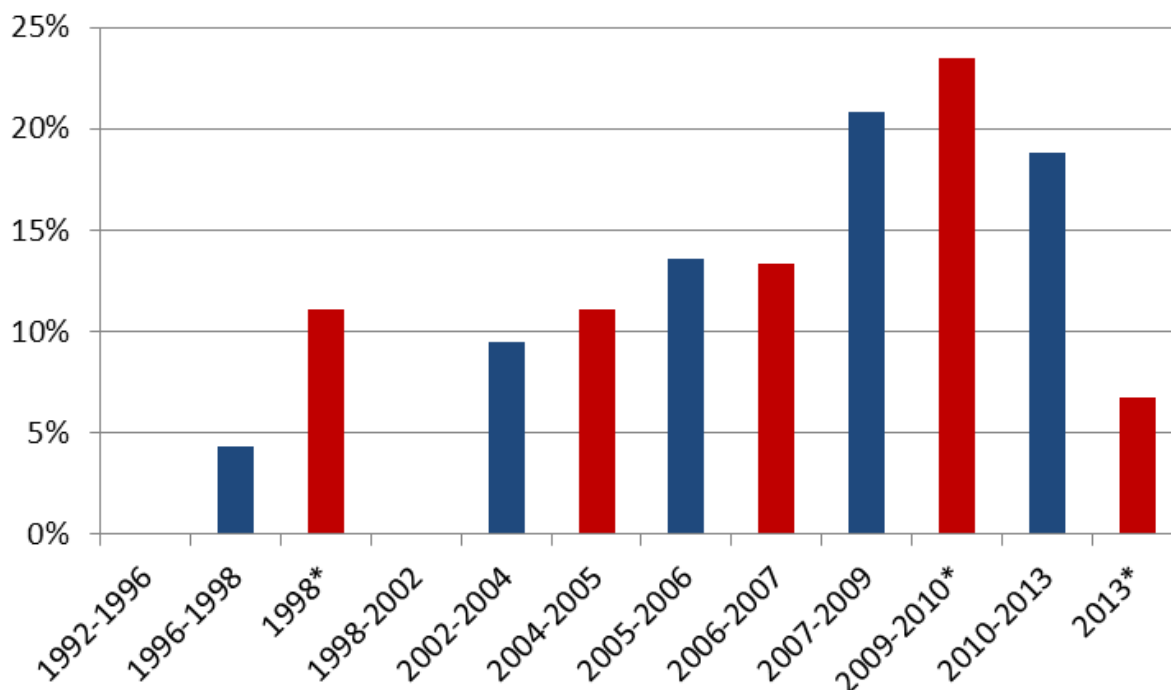


The personnel structures of the governments have often, especially in recent years, changed and together with that the representation of women has also altered. The situation on the appointment of government may differ to the situation at the end of its term of office. From this point of view the government of the Prime Minister Petr Nečas can serve as an illustrative example; in July 2010 it was appointed as exclusively male cabinet and three years later upon its resignation women formed almost 19% of the government personnel.

Presence of women in the Czech governments to certain extent resembles general, often chaotic Czech political situation, especially in the top echelons of politics. Similarly to the Parliament of the Czech Republic the development of representation of women in the government was not linear (see Chart no. 6). There is no evident correlation between women representation and the fact that the government is either political, or caretaker as there have been 3 caretaker governments appointed since 1992.



Chart no. 6: Development of women representation in the Government of the Czech Republic from 1992 until 2013



*caretaker government

Data source: The official website of the Government of the Czech Republic (www.vlada.cz)

Four governments, i.e. one third of the mentioned ones, in total were composed without any female minister. There was no woman in the first government of the Prime Minister Václav Klaus between 1992 and 1996 and in the minority cabinet of the Prime Minister Miloš Zeman between 1998 and 2002 for the whole term of office. Initially the second cabinet of MP Václav Klaus had been appointed as male; however one female minister entered the cabinet about a half year after its appointment. Likewise women were appointed to the government of PM Petr Nečas only during its term of office – two got minister positions and one got a post of vice prime minister and President of the Legislative Council⁴. The following table clearly shows that the highest number of seats taken by women occurred in the caretaker government of MP Jan Fischer; women formed more than one fifth of the cabinet in the second government of MP Mirek Topolánek, too.

Table no.1: Representation of women in Czech governments from 1992 until 2013

Prime minister	Term of office		Number of members*	Number of women	Ration of women*	Women in office during the whole term
	from	until				
Václav Klaus	2. 7. 1992	4. 7. 1996	26	0	0%	-
Václav Klaus	4. 7. 1996	2. 1. 1998	23	1	4,3%	0
Josef Tošovský	2. 1. 1998	17. 7. 1998	18	2	11,1%	2
Miloš Zeman	22. 7. 1998	12. 7. 2002	28	0	0 %	-
Vladimír Špidla	15. 7. 2002	4. 8. 2004	21	2	9,5%	1
Stanislav Gross	4. 8. 2004	25. 4. 2005	18	2	11,1%	2
Jiří Paroubek	25. 4. 2005	4. 9. 2006	22	3	13,6%	0
Mirek Topolánek	4. 9. 2006	9. 1. 2007	15	2	13,3%	2

⁴ Karolína Peake worked shortly as the head of the Ministry of Defence.



Mirek Topolánek	9. 1. 2007	26. 3. 2009	24	5	20,8%	1
Jan Fischer	8. 5. 2009	25. 6. 2010	17	4	23,5%	3
Petra Nečas	13. 7. 2010	10. 7. 2013	29	3	18,8%	0
Jiří Rusnok	10. 7. 2013	dosud	15	1	6,7%	1

**for the entire government term of office*

Data source: The official website of the Government of the Czech Republic (www.vlada.cz)

2.4. Regional and Local Politics

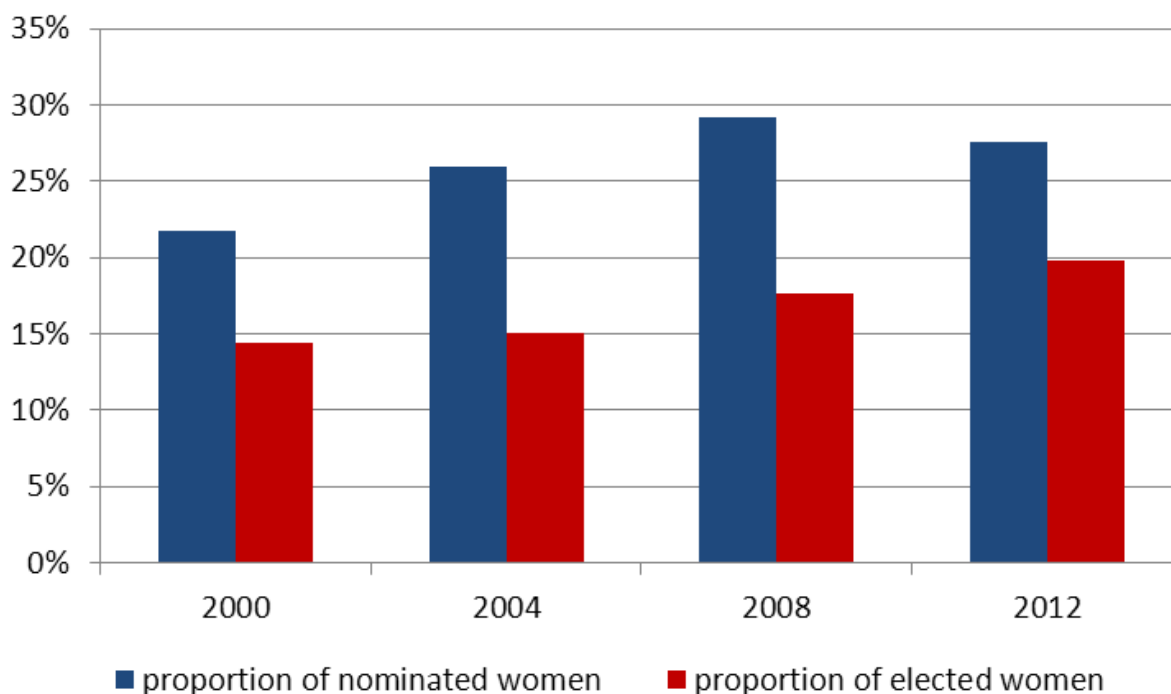
The representation of women in regional and local politics is more favourable in comparison to the countrywide situation. Even here the rule holds that the smaller the local administration is the more women are present. Comparison of women representation in town and municipal authorities can serve relevant illustration of the major difference between statutory cities and smaller municipalities. Similarly to the previous chapter, there is discrepancy between elected posts and executive – there are fewer women in the decision-making bodies at this level.

2.4.1. Regional Assemblies



Elections to Regional Assemblies have been held only four times and women have not reached one fifth quota in the overall representation within the whole Czech Republic. Contrary to the top echelons of politics, percentage of women in Regional Assembly bodies has gradually increased despite the fact that there were fewer women candidates in the last elections than in the previous ones.

Chart no. 7: Percentage of women amongst nominated and elected candidates to Regional Assemblies from 2000 until 2012



Data source: Czech Statistical Office

The impact of preferential voting in regional elections was relatively strong; however, in 2012 it slightly disadvantaged women candidates. It seems that gender composition of Regional Assemblies depends more on which political party succeeds in elections. The so far highest percentage of



women representatives in the regional authorities were brought in by regional associations that were willing to nominate women (and place them on top of candidate lists) more than bigger parties. Success of left-wing parties, i.e. failure of right-wing parties was another significant factor because they had sent fewer women to the elections. Therefore there are differences between every region – the participation of women oscillates from less than 13% in Ústecký region up to 26% in Moravskoslezský region.

The following table clearly shows that the Civic Democratic Party decreases the overall participation of women in the decision making process. Out of all parties that obtained significantly more mandates in Regional Assemblies (10 and more) less than 12% representation of women for ODS is actually the lowest (KDU- ČSL had very similar result – only 0.14% women more ended up in the Regional Assemblies for this party):

Table no. 2: Results of elections to Regional Assemblies in 2012 in terms of representation of women elected for each political party and movement

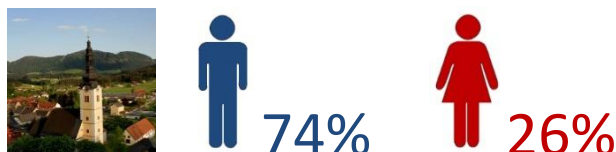
Party	Total percentage of women nominees	Mandates obtained in total	Number of mandates taken by women	Representation of women
Alternative	20 %	4	0	0 %
Czech Social Democratic Party	25 %	205	47	23 %
Movement of Independents for Harmonic Development of Municipalities and Towns	20 %	5	0	0 %
Movement For! Region	35 %	6	1	17 %
South-Bohemians 2012	29 %	9	0	0 %
Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party	20 %	42	5	12 %
Coalition for Královéhradecký Region	16 %	7	1	14 %
Coalition for Olomoucký Region	22 %	8	0	0 %
Coalition for Pardubický Region	20 %	10	2	20 %
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	27 %	182	45	25 %
Independents	36 %	5	1	20 %
Civic Democratic Party	19 %	102	12	12 %
For Vysočina Region	28 %	3	1	33 %
North-Bohemians.cz	22 %	9	1	11 %
Party of Civic Rights – Zeman's people	22 %	7	0	0 %
Mayors for Liberecký region	26 %	13	3	23 %
TOP 09 + Mayoers and Independents	19 %	44	9	20 %
East-Bohemians	43 %	4	2	50 %
Change for Liberecký Region	50 %	10	4	40 %
Total in the Czech Republic	28 %*	675	133	20 %

*For all candidate subjects.

Data source: Czech Statistical Office

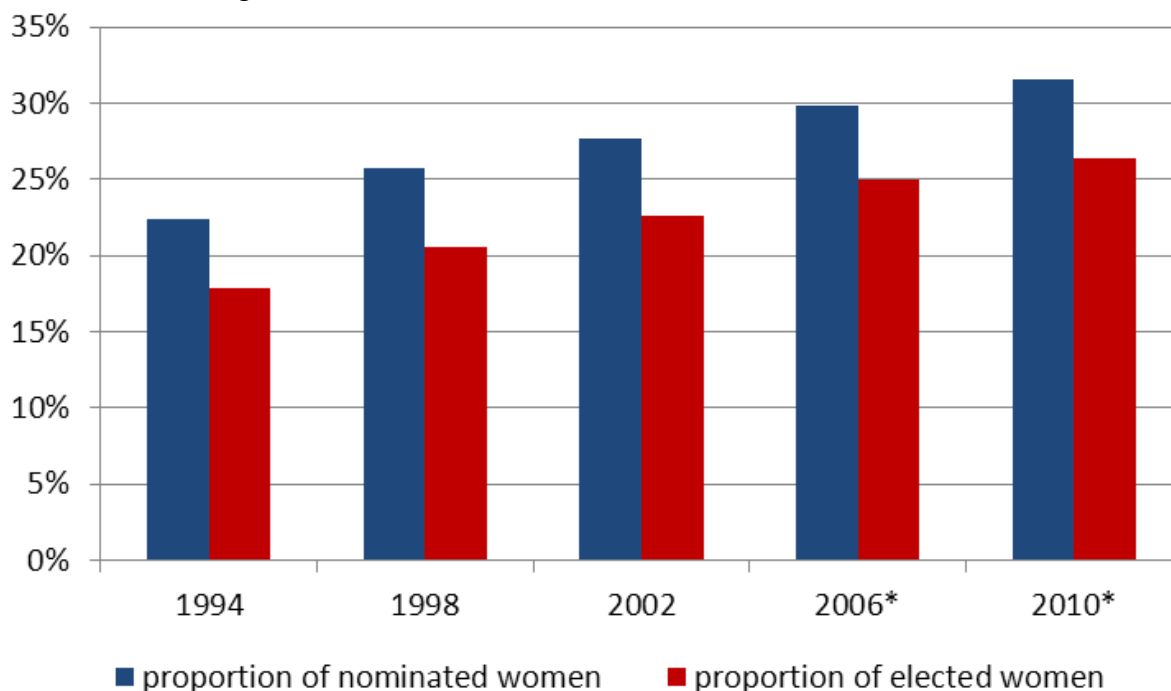
It applies to the regions as well that fewer women are elected to executive positions than to Regional Assemblies. In the first two elections when these posts were taken by ODS and KDU-ČSL members there was no woman chosen to head any region. First women Governors were elected only in 2008 for ČSSD.

2.4.2. Local Assemblies



Women's participation in Local Assemblies is traditionally the highest; it is also the only decision-making sphere where they have one third participation. As we implied at the introduction to this chapter it is necessary to distinguish statutory cities, where the representation of women resembles countrywide political scene, from smaller towns and municipalities. As the below chart outlines municipality scene is the only one where women's participation on candidate lists and in elected bodies has developed linearly and has increased by percentage from one election to another.

Chart no. 8: Percentage of women nominated and elected to Local Assemblies between 1994 and 2004



**The overview includes male and female candidates elected to Local Assemblies and to town boroughs and town districts assemblies. The difference between representation of women on candidate lists for Local Assemblies and total number is like in case of elected ones insignificant.*

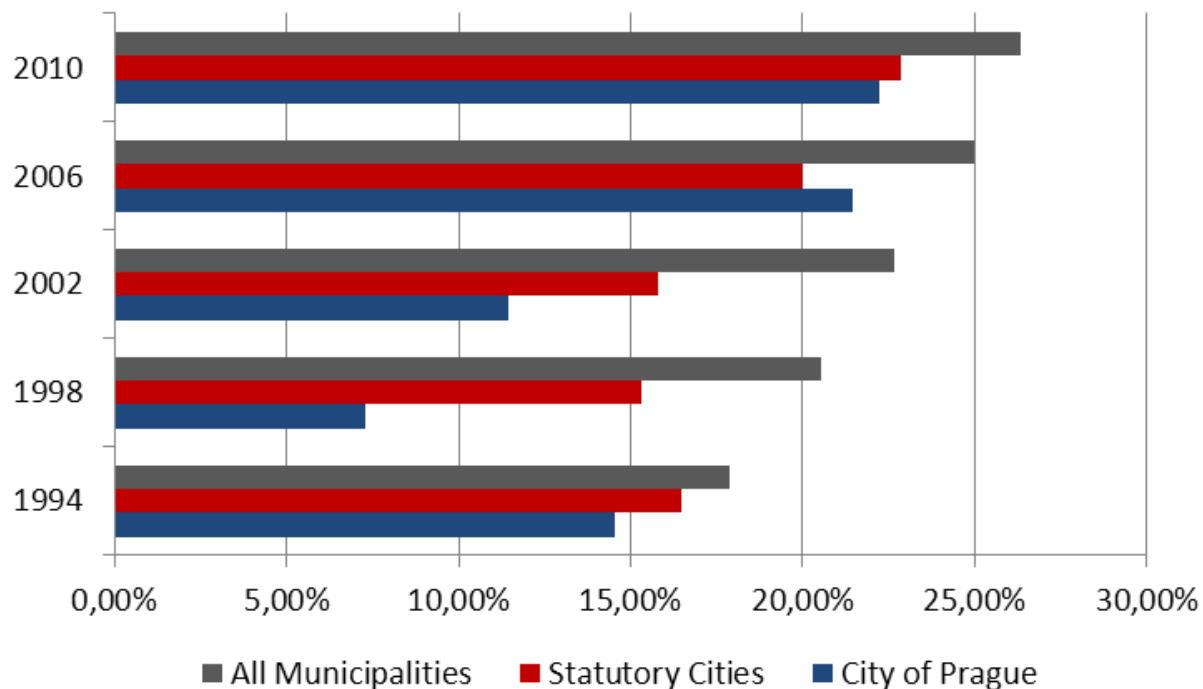
Data source: Czech Statistical Office

However, at town and municipality level their sizes must be considered. Traditionally the representation of women in statutory cities is lower than the overall ratio. As the following chart implies the lowest number of women representatives is traced in Prague City Assembly which approximates to women representation in regions. This holds with the exception of the year 2006



when the percentage of women in Prague City Assembly plummeted by almost 10% comparing to the previous elections.

Chart no. 9: Comparison of representation of women in Local Assemblies leadership with City of Prague and statutory cities between 1994 and 2010

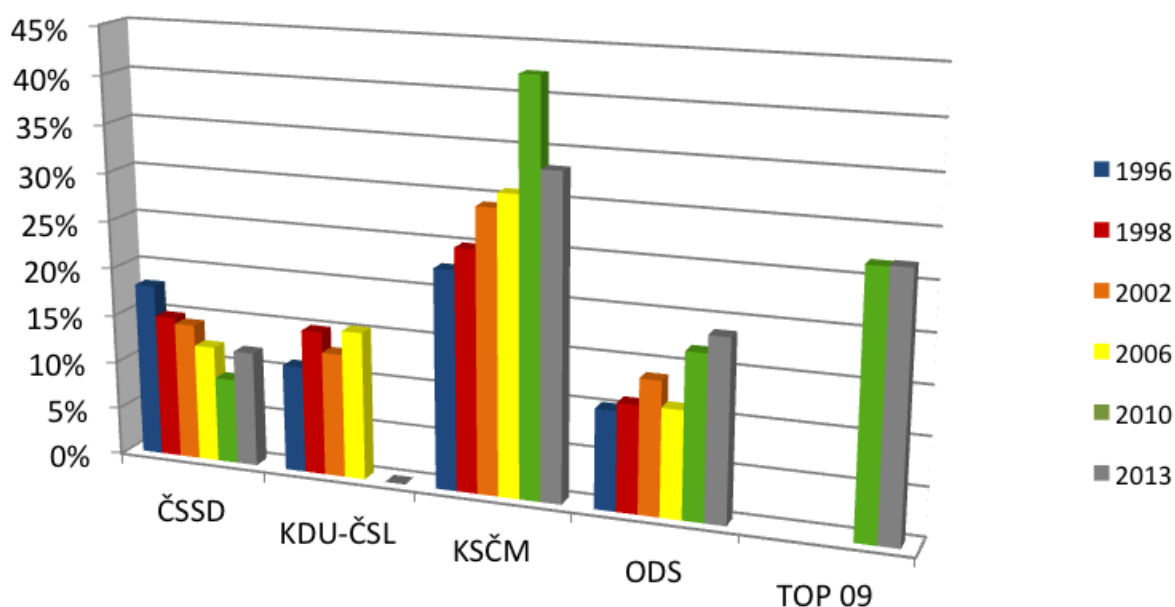


Data source: Czech Statistical Office

2.5. Women in Czech Political Parties

It is the political parties that have the fundamental influence of status of women in the Czech politics. As there are no measurements to countervail representation of women and men in decision making positions at the state level, it is purely within the competences of political parties to decide whether they should self-impose any countervailing measurements (in the form of mandatory quotas or recommendations). The following chart illustrates different approaches to gender equality; it captures the development of representation of women in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic for each political party:

Chart no. 10: The development of representation of women in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic from 1996 until 2013 for selected political subjects



**The chart only includes political parties that were represented in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic for longer than one electoral period.*

Data source: Czech Statistical Office

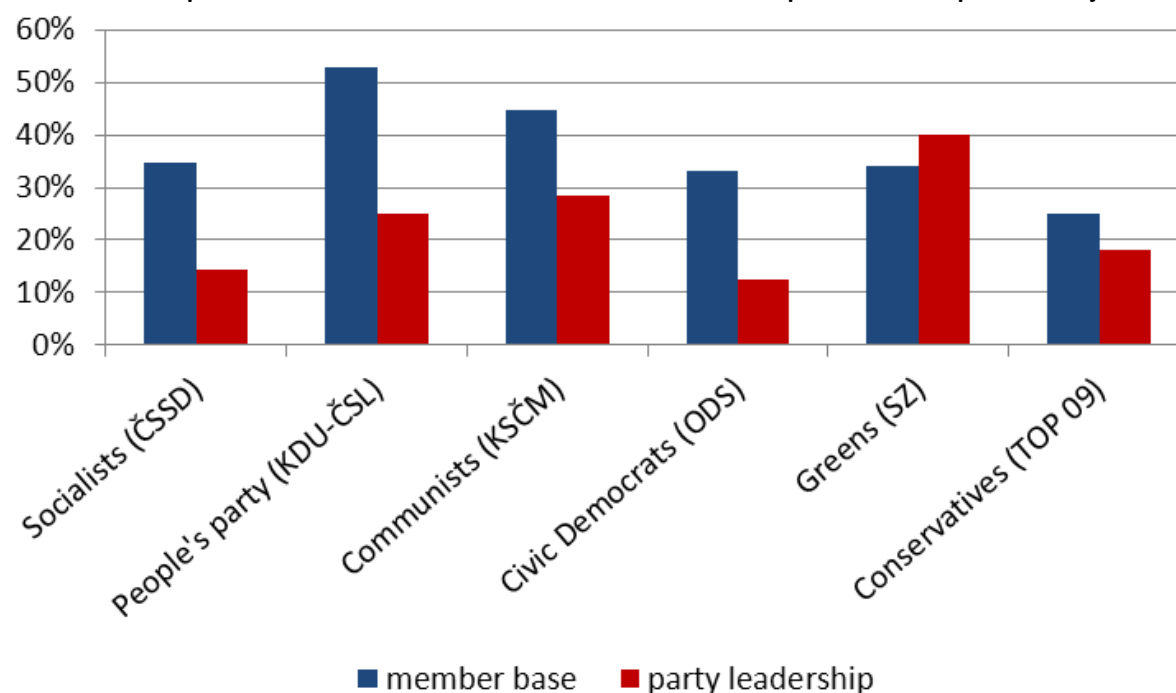
Most evidently there are major differences in terms of representation of women in the representative bodies for each party and period. These alternations can be partially caused by the overall number of votes and mandates obtained in each election; however, the attitude towards greater support of representation of women in politics can be tracked for each political subject because it reflects women in parties' leadership positions as we will see below. We have to mention that two Czech political parties apply quota or recommendation for compilation of candidate lists – it is the Green Party and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia.

The statutes of the Green Party embed that at least one person of the opposite gender has to be presented on a list of candidates in order to reach the minimal one third female representation. At the same time two people of opposite gender have to be placed on top of a candidate list. The party met the obligation to taking into account gender of the candidates when drawing up candidate lists even before the formal ratification of quota was passed in 2011 and for example after the elections in 2006 women formed exactly half of the club of deputies of the Green Party.

The case of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia seems extraordinary as the party has not applied any formal quota yet. However, mandatory recommendation for nominating at least one woman within first three positions on a candidate list is issued for every election. Although the recommendation is not met in all regions, it is followed by the vast majority of regions, hence influencing directly the final participation of women in decision-making bodies for this party. In the elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2010 KSČM achieved parity as historically second party after the Green Party – women formed more than 42% of the club of deputies; after the elections in 2013 it is one third. Women represent this party in lower echelons of politics (contradictory to the general tendency) less; nevertheless in comparison to other parliamentary parties KSČM excels in participation of their women politicians.

The following chart captures the disparity between representation of women in member base and leadership. Except for the Green Party the presentation of women in member base is higher than their representation in the leadership for all relevant subjects. Two political parties apply gender quota for nomination of leading posts. It is the Czech Social Democratic Party with 25% quota for women representation (it means it is not gender-neutral) and the Green Party. Its statutes define that the first vice-chairperson has to be of the opposite sex to the chairperson. At least one person of the opposite sex has to be represented in the elected bodies in order to gain the minimal one-third limit within each triad.

Chart no. 11: Representation of women in member base and leadership for selected* political subjects



**The chart only includes parties evaluated within the Party Open to Women 2013 contest that were elected to the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2013 and the Green Party that like ČSSD applies gender quota for nomination for the political bodies.*

Note: Not all posts in the party's leadership are currently filled.

Data source: Official website of each subject, surveys filled out by the political parties for the Women-Friendly Party contest.



The following table compares representation of women for political parties at different levels of politics. Given the changes on the Czech political scene occurring since 2010 only four political subjects with representation in all political spectrum have been included to the table.

Table no. 3: Representation of women at different political levels by parties

	ČSSD	KSČM	ODS	TOP 09
Chamber of Deputies	12 %	33 %	19 %	27 %
Senate	17 %	50 %	13 %	0 %
Regions	23 %	25 %	11 %	20 %
Towns and Municipalities	26 %	26 %	24 %	25 %

Note: Except for the Senate data capture the situation immediately after the elections.

Data source: Czech Statistical Office

It is therefore clear that when comparing the parties it is necessary to take into account the political level and course of electoral period during which representation of women can change. In general we can state that out of all observed parties the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia deals with supporting women at all levels of politics in the best way. Percentage of women representing this party reaches beyond one third at all levels. Contrary to that the two “political stars” of the political scene the Czech Social Democratic Party and the Civic Democratic Party evince the worst attitude to inclusion of women in politics.

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