



Side event to the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Regional organisations as accelerators of gender parity in national politics

Thursday, 12 March 2026, 15:00-16:30

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, 666 Third Avenue, 31st Floor

Organised by: European Union & OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in partnership with the African Union, the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe & the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Review theme anchor: *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.*

While we have witnessed incremental increases in women's political participation all around the world in the last 30 years, stagnation and mobilisation against gender equality are becoming the 'new normal'. The 2024 CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 provides states with a roadmap to achieve gender parity in decision-making across all levels of public life. It calls for comprehensive legal and policy measures and for decisive action to prevent and respond to violence that excludes women from politics. Regional organisations are well placed to translate this recommendation into region-specific standards, incentives and peer learning that speed national adoption. Regional organisations shape national pathways to gender parity by setting standards, offering model legal provisions and practical guidance, providing comparative evidence, and funding programmes that parliaments, governments and political parties can adopt.

- ODIHR's [Gender Parity Roadmap](#) (2025) sets out seven steps to achieve gender parity in numbers, influence and organisational culture, including reforms to electoral systems, candidate recruitment and selection within political parties, strengthening parliamentary practice, and ensuring safe and enabling environments for women in politics;
- **European Union** institutions and agencies — including the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality — support gender equality in political decision-making within the EU and in partner countries with policy guidance, data, peer exchange, funding and diplomatic engagement;
- The **Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (OAS CIM)** has advanced region-wide standards, including a model laws approach to violence against women in political life and gender parity that countries have used;

- The **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)** sets parliamentary standards for national parliaments on how to transform politics and work towards equal and meaningful participation;
- The **African Union's** gender equality frameworks and related policy instruments provide continent-wide commitments and programmes that Member States use to drive gender-responsive governance and representation;
- The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** tools provide guidance for states on how to introduce temporary special measures, including gender quotas, to enable reforms towards equal representation;

To show how regional organisations convert global norms and region-specific frameworks into national results: electoral and party reforms, changes in parliamentary and governmental practice, and effective responses to violence against women in political life. Specifically, the side event will

1. Present concrete regional tools and programmes that States can adopt to achieve gender parity nationally;
2. Share national reform examples catalysed by regional standards, including electoral rules, party selection procedures, local parity measures and provisions addressing violence against women in political life;

Audience

Member State delegations, parliamentarians, political party representatives, electoral authorities, equality bodies, civil society and international organisations.

Please note seating is limited; [registration](#) is required.

Contact

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Agenda

Moderator:

Yulia Netesova

Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

15:00–15:08

Opening remarks

Julia Koch-De Biolley

Head of the Task Force for Equality, European External Action Service

15:08–15:18

Scene-setter:

From the CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 to national gender parity

Mona Lena Krook, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University & author of [Elect Women for a Change: The Path to Gender Parity in Politics](#) (Polity, 2025)

15:18–16:00

Panel: Regional levers that change national rules

- Saša Gavrić, ODIHR: The seven-step [Gender Parity Roadmap](#)
- Maruša Gortnar, EIGE: Policy guidance and comparative evidence in achieving gender balance in parliaments and governments (*contribution via video conferencing*)
- Petra Bayr, PACE: International parliamentary assemblies setting norms and standards for national parliaments
- African Union: African Union's frameworks to support national parity reforms (*speaker to be confirmed*)
- Alejandra Mora Mora, OAS CIM: Instruments on parity and the eradication of political violence against women
- Bénite Dibateza, CPA: Effective gender quota design as a precondition for incremental increases in women's political participation

16:00–16:25

Interactive discussion and Q&A

16:25–16:30

Closing remarks

Ann Linde

former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden & 2021 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Special Advisor on Foreign Affairs, Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)