

## Overview of Women's Political Participation at 2005 Parliamentary Elections

### 2001 Parliamentary Elections

In 2001 Parliamentary Elections the major parties which passed the four per cent threshold were the following: National Movement Simeon the Second (NMSS), United Democratic Forces (UDF), Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). Below is the total number of women candidates compared to male candidates that each party had put onto their lists:

Party	Men candidates	Women candidates
UDF	405	84
NMSS	241	79
BSP	372	67
MRF	108	13

An unprecedented number of women (63) were elected as MPs, mainly due to NMSS.

### 2005 Parliamentary Elections

The major political parties likely to pass the threshold in 2005 are BSP, NMS, ADF (Allied Democratic Forces, the major partner in which is UDF), MRF, DSB (which split from UDF in 2004), Bulgaria's People's Union (a coalition of three parties which also split from UDF between 2001 and 2004), and the New Time (which split from NMSS in 2004). Below is the total number of women candidates compared to men candidates that each party has put onto their lists:

Party	Men candidates	Women candidates
NMSS	296	193
New Time	276	176
DSB	293	121
BPU	324	103
BSP	360	101
MRF	374	87
ADF	347	70

A comparison between 2001 and 2005 brings about the following conclusions:

- NMSS continues to rank first in terms of number of women candidates, and UDF is the party with the least number of women candidates. MRF moves one place ahead.
- "New" parties (parties which originated after splitting from another parliamentary force) – the New Time, DSB, BPU – demonstrate a tendency of including more women in their lists, whereas "older" parties are more conservative and less inclusive.
- The only party that tried to introduce a 30% internal party quota for women – BSP – failed to implement it, and has a disappointingly small share of women.
- The only party whose chairperson is a woman – ADF (UDF) – is last but one in terms of the number of women candidates.

Another very interesting and significant development is that there have been established strong "women's" regions, where strong women candidates are running against other strong women candidates. A good example would be Rouse, where competitors are Meglena Kuneva (NMSS, minister of Euro integration), Emel Etem (MRF deputy leader), Eleonora Nikolova (UDF, mayor of Rouse) and Teodora Konstantinova (DSB, current MP). Other examples are Gabrovo and Pernik, where are running prominent Bulgarian women politicians like Tatyana Doncheva (BSP), Tatyana Kalkanova (NMSS deputy leader), Evdokia Maneva (DSB).

### Election Results

The results of the elections with the announcement of the 240 new MPs can be seen as a step backwards in terms of women representation in parliament. The number of women MPs has fallen to 51 (21.3%) compared to 63 (26.3%) women in the previous parliament. The tendencies in women representation within the parties have remained unchallenged while the decrease is largely due to the number of seats taken by parties traditionally ranking low in having women MPs. Moreover, parties

such as the New Time Movement which had nearly 40% of women in the lists, but did not make the 4% barrier in this way failed to contribute to at least preserving the same percentage of women in parliament.

The two largest parliamentary groups, that of Coalition for Bulgaria and NMSS, contribute to 75% of women MPs in the 40<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.

<b>Party</b>	<b>Men MPs</b>	<b>Women MPs</b>
NMSS	31	22
Coalition for Bulgaria	66	16
ADF	16	4
DSB	13	4
MRF	31	3
Ataka	20	1
BPU	12	1

This observation, however, does not result solely from the fact that Coalition for Bulgaria and NMSS have the two largest parliamentary groups. The disparity among the parties is best observed in the percentage of representation, where the comparison between MP candidates and elected MPs provides a clearer view of campaign strategies and actual party policies regarding women participation. Indicative, in this sense, are the cases of MRF, Ataka and BPU.