

Women's Parliamentary Club in the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia

The Women's Parliamentary Club in the Assembly of Macedonia was established in 2003. Eleonora Petrova Mitevska, Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the current Ambassador of Macedonia to the Council of Europe, was the club's founding chair, followed by Blagorodna Mingova Krepieva (SDSM), currently Ambassador to Albania. Members of the club are by default all women Members of Parliament (MPs). The achievements of the Club during its first legislative period until July 2006 include the following:

- Amendments on electoral law for the inclusion of 30 percent of women candidates on the party lists, including half of them on upper, and half on lower positions;
- This amendment was followed by a second set of amendments on the electoral law, when Article 64 was modified to introduce the "zip system," which mandates that every third place on the list be a woman candidate. This amendment secured the election of 36 women MPs to parliament (almost 1/3) in July 2006.
- Amendments on the Labor Law that provides improved working conditions for women, improved retirement benefits to women workers, and the right to extended maternity leave;
- Following a legislative initiative by the Club, Parliament changed and amended the Family Law to include provisions on domestic violence. Additionally, the Criminal Law was amended to include domestic violence.
- Following the legislative initiative by the Club, Parliament changed and amended the Law on Health Insurance to provide free gynecological check-ups (PAP smears) for all women over the age of 14;
- An Expert Group of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, which included two Club members (Eleonora Petrova Mitevska and Cvetanka Ivanova, SDSM), drafted the Law on Equal Opportunities and its implementation provisions through ministerial departments and committees, and at the municipal level.

After the parliamentary elections of July 2006, Cvetanka Ivanova (SDSM) was elected Chair, and the Club defined several priority areas as its objective. In addition, the Club elected its presidency, which consists of vice presidents who are members of the major political caucuses in parliament. The Club has been working effectively since February 2007, and initiated the following:

- Amendments on Law on Gambling, i.e., two percent of the tax income from gambling to be allocated to a fund for the fight against domestic violence;
- Presentation of an initiative in parliament to amend the Health Care Law to provide free mammography tests;
- Presentation of an initiative to amend and broaden the Law on Domestic Violence;
- The Club, in cooperation with NDI and through the Constituency Offices, plans an awareness campaign to promote the opportunity for free PAP smear tests provided by the Ministry of Health;
- The Club recently submitted amendments to the Rules of Procedure to change the Club's status into a formal body of parliament with rights to use the services enjoyed by parliament's staff, but with its own sub-budget.

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