

## Indicator 7.2: Composition of parliament

### About this indicator

The composition of a democratic parliament should reflect diverse political opinions as well as different groups in society. A parliament that is unrepresentative of its society will leave some social groups and communities feeling disadvantaged in, or even excluded from, the political process, with consequences in terms of the quality of public life or the stability of the political system and society in general.

The composition of parliament is determined by multiple factors, including the electoral system, political parties and of course the preferences of the electorate. Parliament plays a role in shaping this system and ensuring that parliament reflects the social diversity of the nation. Many parliaments have also adopted special measures such as quotas to promote the representation of women, youth and other underrepresented groups.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 7.2.1: Representation of political diversity
- Dimension 7.2.2: Representation of women
- Dimension 7.2.3: Representation of youth
- Dimension 7.2.4: Representation of other underrepresented groups

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The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments are a multi-partner initiative coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Directorio Legislativo Foundation, Inter Pares / International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

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## Dimension 7.2.1: Representation of political diversity

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.2: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the legal provisions that support the representation of diverse political opinions in parliament. These provisions cover aspects such as the electoral system, the procedures for registering political parties and, if applicable, independent candidates, as well as electoral thresholds and the powers attributed to different political groups and, where applicable, independent MPs.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "representation of political diversity" is as follows:*

The design of the electoral system ensures that the allocation of parliamentary seats accurately reflects the proportion of votes received by political parties and candidates.

The legal framework establishes clear and transparent procedures for registering political parties and candidates for elections, including reasonable eligibility criteria, consistent procedures and feasible deadlines.

Where applicable, the legal framework sets a reasonable electoral threshold for parties and/or candidates to gain seats in parliament.

### Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establishing an electoral system that allows different political opinions to be represented in parliament
- Provisions of the legal framework on the delimitation/redistricting of boundaries for electoral districts
- Provisions of electoral law on party/candidate registration
- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework on electoral thresholds
- Election observation reports

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

#### Assessment criterion 1: Electoral system design

The design of the electoral system ensures that the allocation of parliamentary seats accurately reflects the proportion of votes received by political parties and candidates.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 2: Party/candidate registration**

The legal framework establishes clear and transparent procedures for registering political parties and candidates for elections, including reasonable eligibility criteria, consistent procedures and feasible deadlines.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 3: Electoral thresholds**

Where applicable, the legal framework maintains a reasonable electoral threshold for parties and/or candidates to gain seats in parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 4: Practice**

In practice, political parties are represented in parliament in proportion to their support among the electorate. No parties or candidates are arbitrarily prevented from participating in elections or taking up seats in parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

### Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [\*Report on thresholds and other features of electoral systems which bar parties from access to parliament\*](#) (2010).

## Dimension 7.2.2: Representation of women

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.2: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the legal framework and the mechanisms in place to achieve gender parity in the composition of parliament, as well as the means to make progress towards this goal.

The legal framework should guarantee equal opportunities for the political participation of women, and an electoral environment that is free from barriers and violence.

Parliament can take action towards gender parity in parliament by adopting legislation on measures such as candidate quotas or reserved seats. Many countries have demonstrated that quotas – including their design and objectives – have a significant positive impact on women’s representation.

Parliament also has a lead role in combating violence against women in politics, as well as in society.

The number of women in parliament is only one way of measuring progress towards a gender-sensitive parliamentary institution.

See also *Dimension 5.1.3: Gender mainstreaming*, *Dimension 5.1.4: Gender-responsive budgeting*, *Dimension 5.2.3: Combating sexism, harassment and violence* and *Dimension 7.3.3: Gender and age balance in parliamentary bodies*.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “representation of women” is as follows:*

There is gender parity in the composition of parliament.

The legal framework guarantees the political participation of women and promotes the equal representation of women and men in parliament.

Parliament has adopted legislative and other measures designed to increase women’s representation in parliament.

Legislative and policy measures are taken to address and prevent violence against women in politics, both as candidates for election and while in office.

### Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- The numbers of women and men holding seats in parliament, both currently and in the recent past, and a gender breakdown of leadership positions in parliament

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework highlighting the importance of women's equal political participation
- Provisions of electoral or other laws that aim to promote gender balance, such as gender quotas in parliament
- Parliamentary committee reports indicating recommendations for the amendment and/or review of legislation with a view to enhancing the political participation of women
- Laws and policies addressing violence against women in politics

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

#### Assessment criterion 1: Equal opportunities

The legal framework guarantees equal opportunities for the political participation of women and men in parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 2: Measures to increase women's representation

Parliament has adopted legislative and other measures designed to increase women's representation in parliament, such as quotas.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 3: Violence against women in politics

Legislative and policy measures are taken to address and prevent violence against women in politics, both as candidates for election and while in office.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 4: Practice

In practice, consistent progress is made towards gender parity in parliament and the elimination of violence against women in politics.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

### Sources and further reading

- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [Gender equality in national parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament](#) (2019).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#) (2011).
- IPU, [Guidelines for Women's Caucuses](#) (2013).
- IPU, [The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective](#), resolution adopted unanimously by the 135th IPU Assembly (2016).
- IPU, [Women in parliament in 2022: The year in review](#) (2023).
- IPU and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), ["Joint Call by IPU and CEDAW Committee on International Women's Day 2021"](#) (2021).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), IPU and Stockholm University, [Atlas of electoral gender quotas](#) (2013).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Guidance Note: Strategies and good practices in promoting gender equality outcomes in parliaments](#) (2016).
- United Nations, [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) (1979).

### Dimension 7.2.3: Representation of youth

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.2: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

#### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the representation of young men and women in parliament. An enabling legal framework, free of restrictive barriers, is important for increasing the political participation of young people.

The alignment of the minimum age of eligibility to run for office with the minimum voting age is a considerable factor for youth representation. In the case of bicameral parliaments, it is also beneficial to equalize the age of eligibility for both chambers.

Some parliaments have adopted special measures to enhance youth representation in parliament, such as legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats. Political parties can also make an impact by introducing voluntary quotas, by strengthening party youth wings/organizations and by promoting young people to run for office.

Many parliaments have committees that work on youth issues. In some parliaments, caucuses dedicated to youth issues or caucuses of young MPs have been formed, while in other cases young parliamentarians have developed their own networks.

Organizing specific training and mentoring for young MPs, as well as providing an enabling environment through measures such as childcare facilities, a flexible work schedule and remote working possibilities, are other examples of good parliamentary practices for enhancing the representation of youth.

For ways in which parliament seeks to include the views of young people in its work, see also *Dimension 5.1.5: Youth inclusion*.

#### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "representation of youth" is as follows:*

The legal framework establishes that the minimum age of eligibility to run for political office is the same as the minimum voting age.

Legislative and policy measures are taken to promote youth representation in parliament.

Parliamentary bodies, such as committees, caucuses or networks of young MPs, are mandated to address youth issues.

There is an enabling environment for young MPs in parliament, including the availability of training and mentoring.

#### Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.



The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establishing the minimum voting age and the minimum age of eligibility to run for office
- Parliament's policies, structures and/or documents addressing the engagement of young MPs and the support provided to them
- The number of MPs under age 45, under age 40 and under age 30
- Evidence of parliamentary communication promoting the work of young MPs

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

#### Assessment criterion 1: Minimum age of eligibility

The legal framework establishes that the minimum age of eligibility to run for political office is the same as the minimum voting age.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 2: Promoting youth representation

Legislative and policy measures are taken to promote youth representation in parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 3: Bodies addressing youth issues

Parliamentary bodies, such as committees, caucuses or networks of young MPs, are mandated to address youth issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion 4: Enabling environment for young MPs

There is an enabling environment for young MPs in parliament, including the availability of training and mentoring.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 5: Practice**

In practice, there is commitment to enhancing youth representation in parliament. Over the past three parliaments, there has been an increase in both the number and proportion of seats held by MPs under age 45, under age 40 and under age 30.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

## Dimension 7.2.4: Representation of other underrepresented groups

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.2: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the representation of groups and communities who may otherwise be underrepresented in parliament. The definition of “underrepresented groups” is highly dependent on the context of each country, but generally includes national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, Indigenous peoples and other social groups in vulnerable situations. Underrepresented groups often face marginalization and are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. Representation in parliament is an important step towards overcoming these challenges and ensuring equality more broadly.

Different mechanisms for promoting the representation of underrepresented groups are observed across different countries. Special measures to ensure the representation of minority and Indigenous groups in parliament are often used, such as reserved seats. Some systems allow the formation of political groups on the basis of ethnic, religious or linguistic identity, while in other countries this may be prohibited.

By virtue of their numerical size, the number of MPs representing minority groups is likely to be quite small. Parliament should consider ways to ensure the equitable participation of such MPs in its work.

In addition to guaranteeing their parliamentary representation, parliaments often seek to maintain dialogue and to consult with underrepresented groups in order to ensure their voice is heard in the decision-making process. See also *Target 6: Participatory parliament*.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “representation of other underrepresented groups” is as follows:*

The legal framework guarantees the right of all people, including underrepresented groups, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to vote and to stand for office, without discrimination.

Parliament has adopted special measures to promote the representation of underrepresented groups in parliament, such as quotas and reserved seats.

Parliament’s rules of procedure provide opportunities for MPs representing minority groups to participate actively in the work of parliament.

### Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework guaranteeing the political rights of minority and Indigenous groups and prohibiting discrimination
- Provisions of the legal framework establishing special measures for minority and Indigenous groups
- Evidence of representatives of minority and Indigenous groups in parliament, including on parliamentary committees, caucuses and/or councils
- Statistics on minority and Indigenous MPs in the current parliament

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

**Assessment criterion 1: Right to participate in public affairs**

The legal framework guarantees the right of all people, including underrepresented groups, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to vote and to stand for office, without discrimination.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 2: Special measures**

Parliament has adopted special measures to promote the representation of underrepresented groups in parliament, such as quotas and reserved seats.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 3: Rules of procedure**

Parliament's rules of procedure provide opportunities for MPs representing minority groups to participate actively in the work of parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 4: Practice**

In practice, underrepresented groups are represented in parliament and are able to engage effectively in parliamentary work.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

### Sources and further reading

- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), [The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life](#) (1999).
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), [Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process](#) (2001).
- Oleh Protsyk, [The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament](#) (2010).