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## GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

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Third round of monitoring the implementation of  
CM Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on  
balanced participation of women and men  
in political and public decision-making

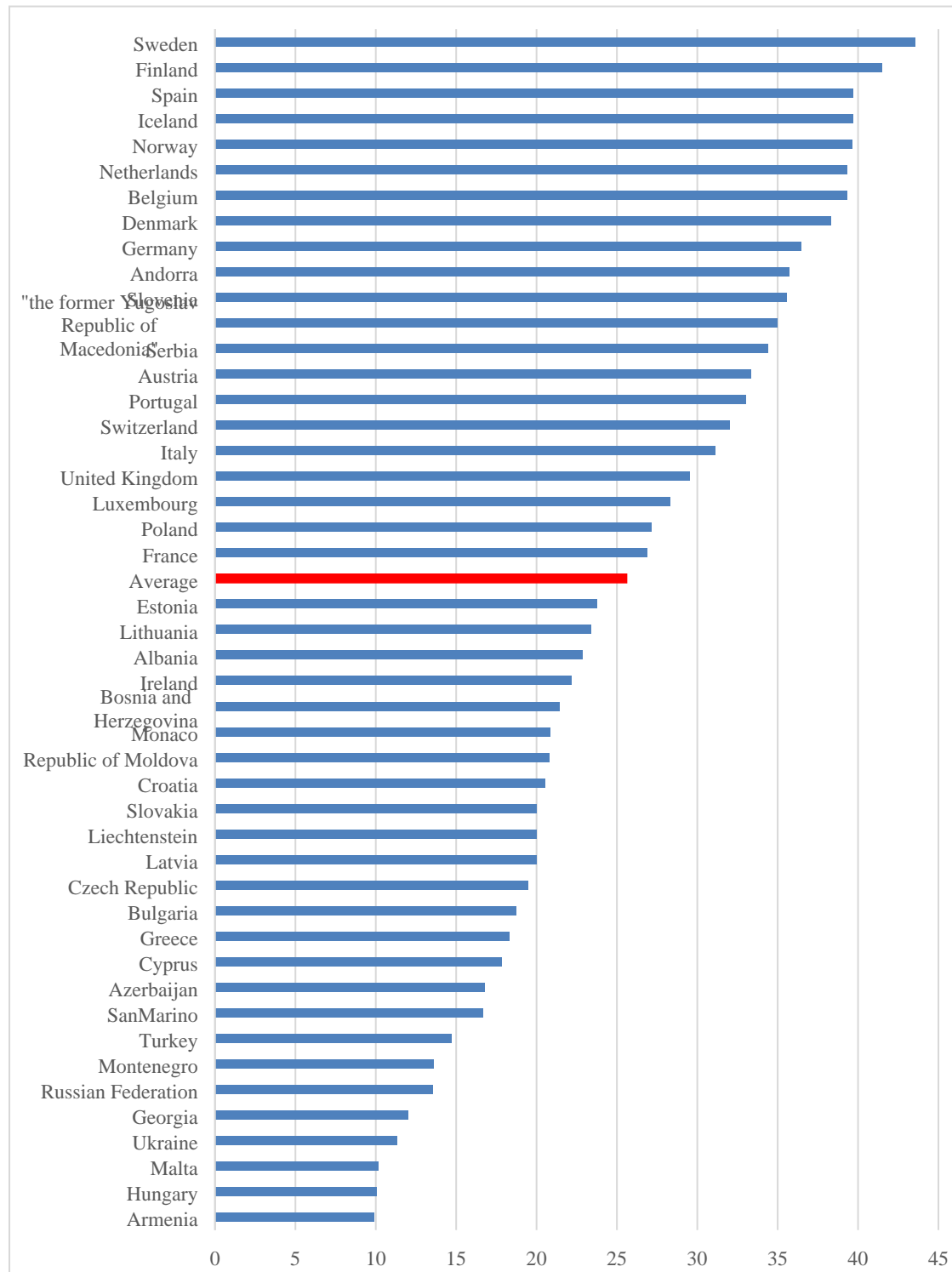
Preliminary findings by the consultants

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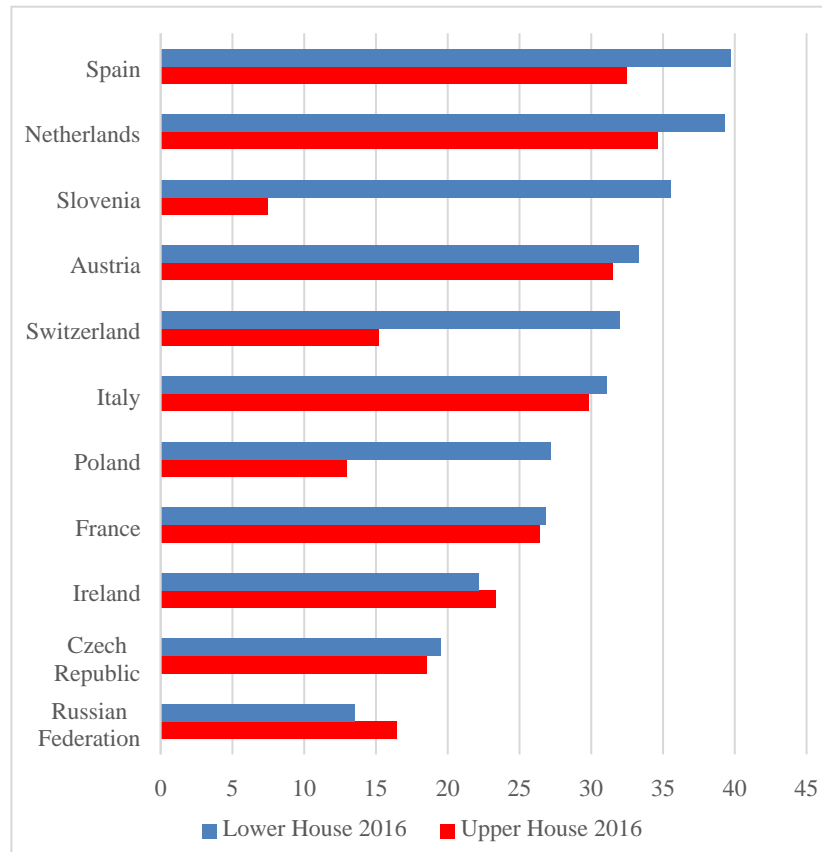
In 2016, the average of women's representation in national lower house/single parliaments is about 25%. The variation of women's representation is however large, ranging from 10% to over 40%. We find the expected countries above the average: the Nordic countries and those with strong and long-standing quota laws (e.g. Belgium and Spain). Below the average, we also find the usual suspects (i.e. many Southern and Eastern European countries).

Table 1. Percentage of women elected to lower/single houses in 2016



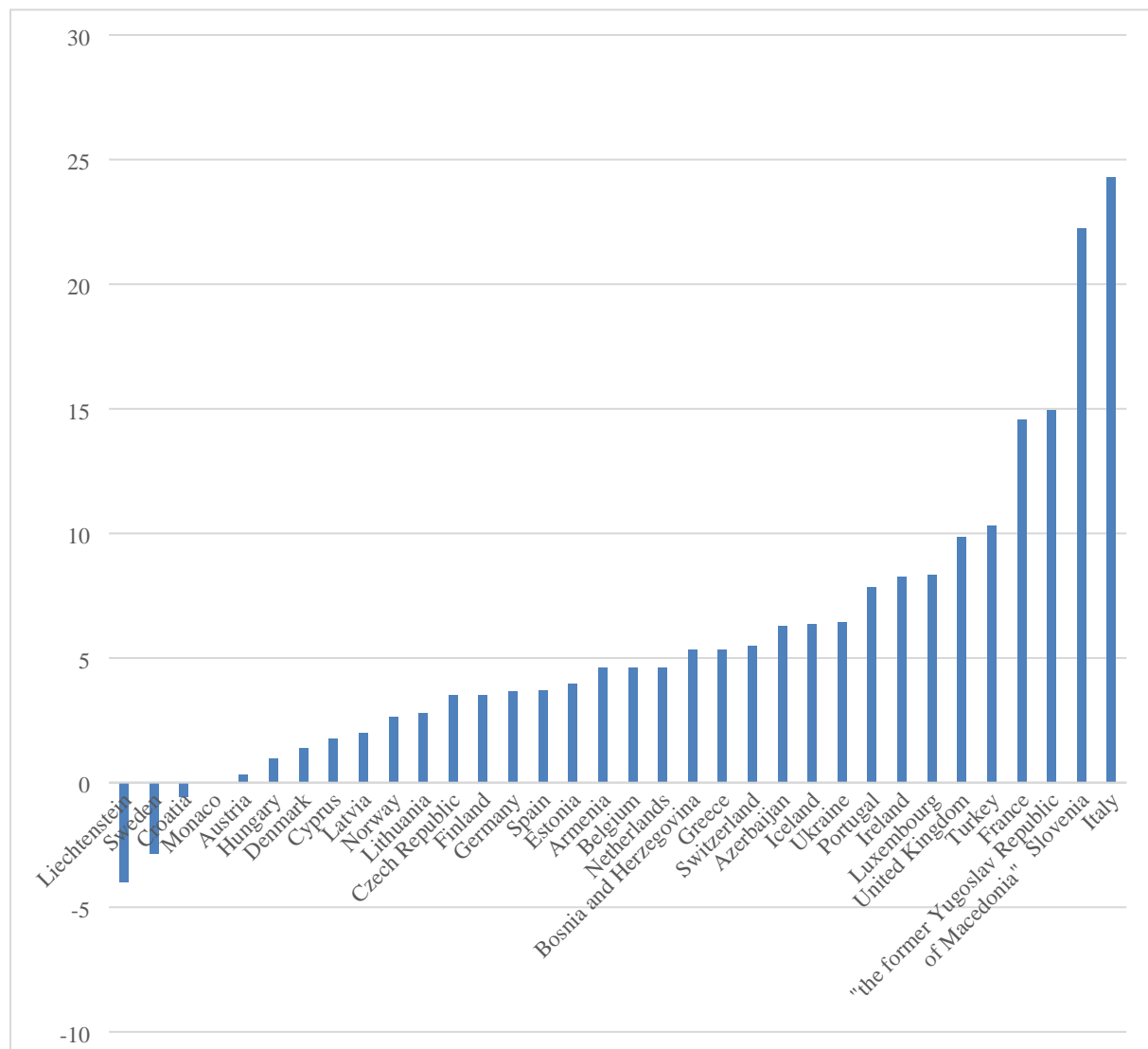
Overall, the percentages of women in the national lower houses of parliaments are higher than in upper houses. Given that upper houses often have less power than lower houses this is a good sign: it suggests that women are not directed to the assemblies holding less power.

Table 2. Comparison of percentage of women elected to lower and upper houses in 2016



Almost all the countries surveyed witnessed an increase in the representation of women MPs in the last decade (2005-2016). One should however keep in mind that both the 2005 and the 2016 data are snapshots in time and do not reveal interval fluctuations. In some countries such as France, Italy, Slovenia and Turkey, this increase is substantial (over 10 percentage points); these countries had amongst the lowest numbers of women in 2005. However, other countries with remarkably low numbers of women MPs in 2005 (Armenia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Ukraine) witnessed only a minor increase. Liechtenstein and Sweden witnessed a slight decrease. The latter country is however still leading with regard to the numerical representation of women.

Table 3. Changes in percentage points of women elected to lower/single houses over time (2005-2016)



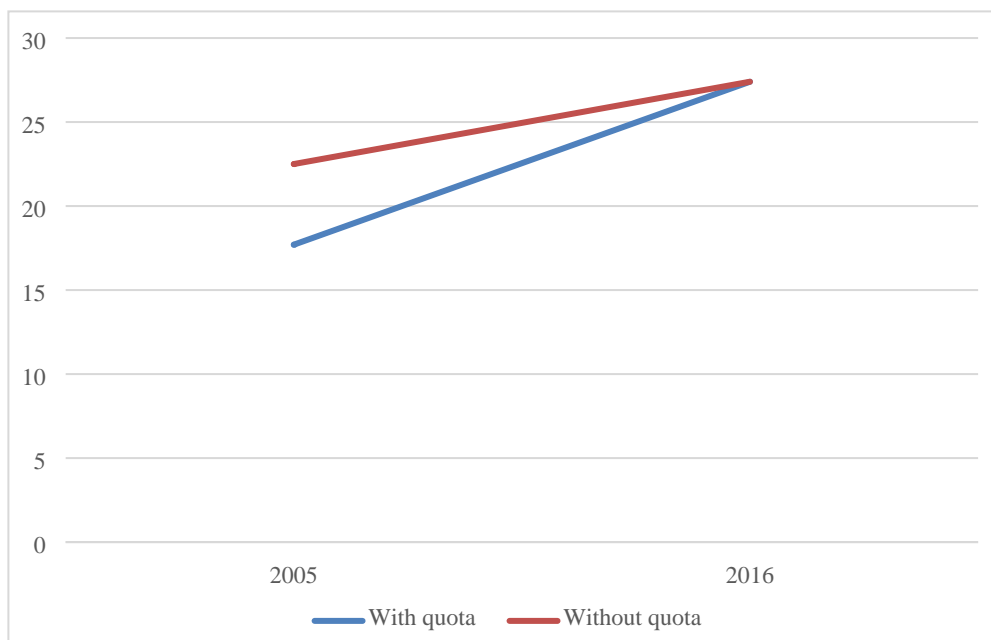
Parallel to the increase of women representatives, also the number of countries adopting gender quotas laws increased in the period 2005-2016.

Table 4. Member states which have adopted electoral quota laws for the lower/single house

2005	2016
5 out of 34 member states: Armenia Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina France "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	17 out of 46 member states: Albania Armenia Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina Croatia France Georgia Greece Ireland Montenegro Poland Portugal San Marino Serbia Slovenia Spain "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

The main effect of gender quota laws in the last decade has been to make countries that were lagging behind catch up with the leading countries. Hence, gender quotas live up to their ambitions of being a fast track measure. Nevertheless, there seems to be a glass ceiling for women's representation that also gender quotas do not break: both countries with or without gender quotas end up at the same point. This speaks to the literature on quotas adapting to the country's 'acceptable minimum': they set the minimum at the level acceptable for the less willing party, thereby potentially also decreasing the efforts of parties that otherwise would have gone further. This is a level that is also within reach of countries without gender quotas laws whereby progressive parties in terms of women's representation might well compensate for the parties delivering fewer women MPs. Nevertheless, the countries with and without gender quotas producing the same level of women representatives might well be a momentum followed by a next phase where countries with gender quotas have higher numbers of women MPs. The future will tell.

Table 5. Effect of electoral quota laws on percentage of women elected to lower/single houses



The last decade also saw an increase in the number of party quotas. This increase is however less pronounced compared to the increase in gender quotas laws. The parties abolishing their party quotas are the ones with gender quotas laws.

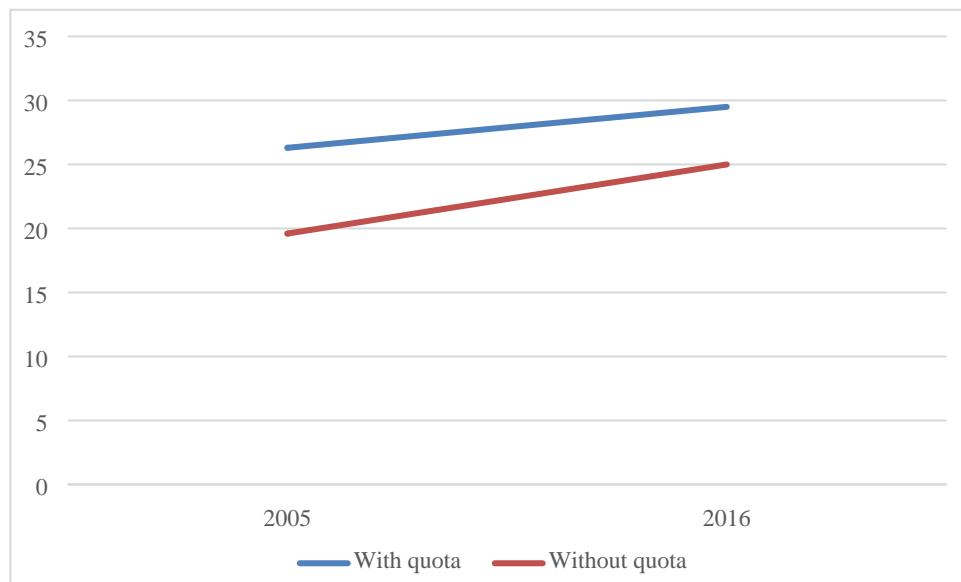
Table 6. Member states where some/all political parties have created quota rules/regulations

2005	2016
11 out of 19 countries that provided information: Belgium Croatia Cyprus Germany Iceland Lithuania Netherlands Norway Portugal Slovenia "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	17 out of 41 countries that provided information: + Austria Czech Republic Estonia Ireland Luxembourg Montenegro Republic of Moldova Sweden Switzerland Turkey United Kingdom  - Belgium Netherlands Portugal "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"



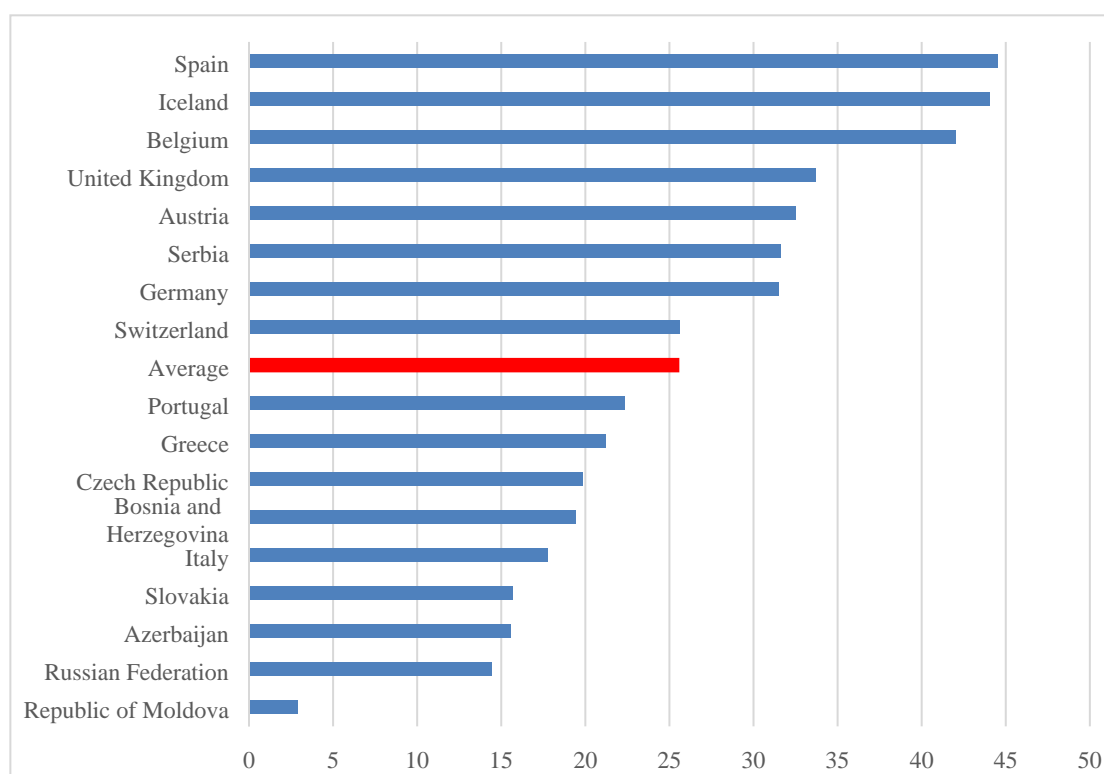
Party quotas seem to have another effect than gender quotas laws. They do not produce a catching up in terms of numbers of women MPs resulting in a common endpoint with countries without gender quotas. Instead, party quotas produce systematically higher numbers of women MPs as compared to countries without party quotas and even slightly higher when compared to countries with legislative gender quotas. The explanation might be that parties that are eager to have high numbers of women representatives set the barrier relatively high and implement these party quotas effectively. Party quotas, notwithstanding gender quotas laws, thus remain desirable.

Table 7. Effect of party quota rules/regulations on percentage of women elected to lower/single houses



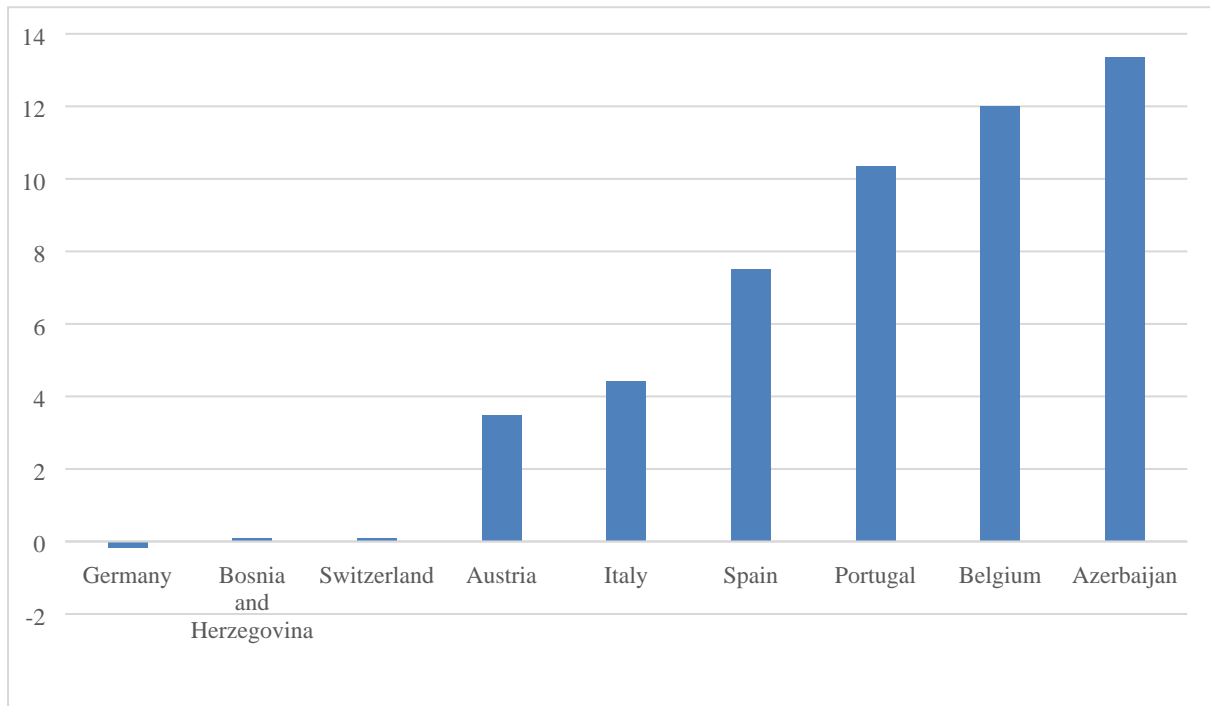
The trends we highlighted with regard to the national lower houses/single parliaments also apply to the regional level. The average percentage of women is also 25%. With some exceptions (Italy and Poland) the level of women in regional parliaments mirrors the level national parliaments in that the same countries are above and below the average. This again is a reassurance that women are not directed towards less powerful regional parliaments (if these would be less powerful at all). The regional parliaments in the United Kingdom traditionally score higher than the national parliaments. The expectation that regional parliaments - because of their newness and hence less entrenched male dominance - are favourable for women's representation is not a widespread phenomenon, or the effects of the newness of institutions have by and large faded away by 2016.

Table 8. Percentage of women elected to regional parliaments in 2016



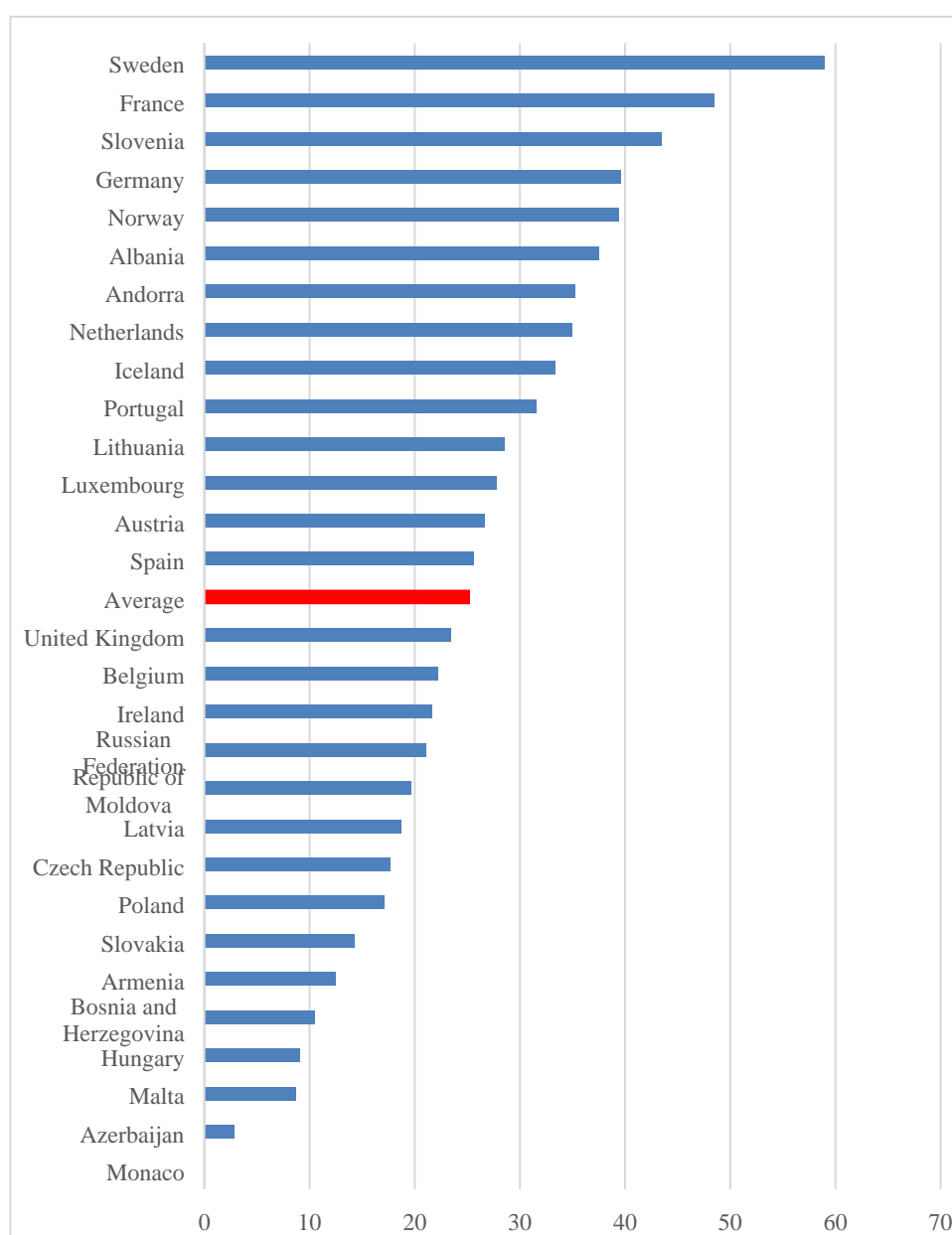
Also with regard to the evolution of numbers of women in regional parliaments there are no patterns that sharply contrast with the national evolution. Many countries more or less stay stable, increase slightly and some even substantively increase.

Table 9. Changes in percentage points of women elected to regional parliaments (2005-2016)



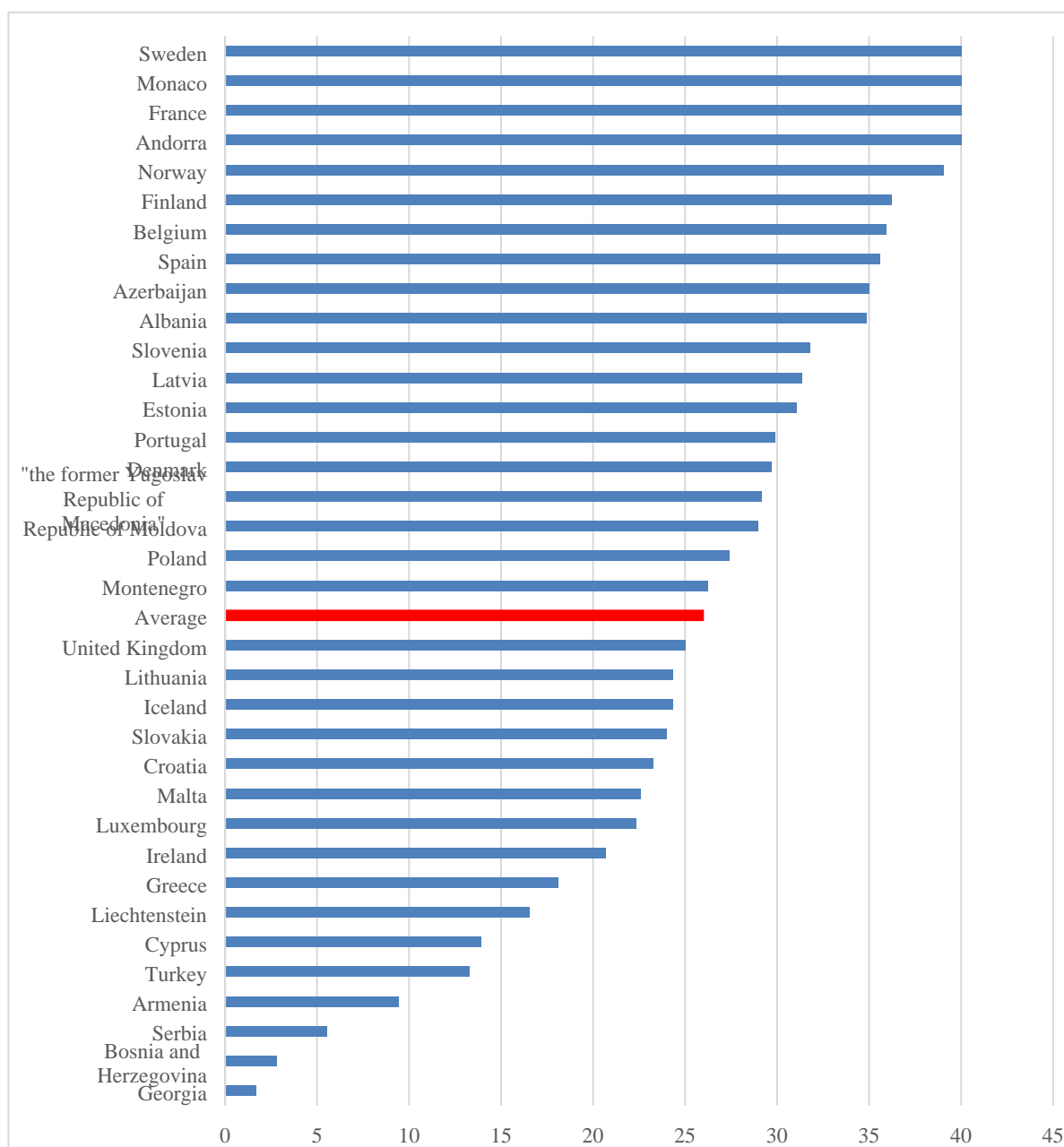
Also the numbers of women in executives is predominantly in line with the numbers of women in the national parliaments. The average of women in executives and parliaments is about 25% and the same countries are above and below the average both with regard to the number of MPs and ministers. There are however exceptions such as Albania and Lithuania with a more than average percentage of women in executive notwithstanding that they have a less than average percentage of women in the national parliament; and Belgium, Poland and the United Kingdom with a less than average percentage of women in executive notwithstanding that they have a more than average percentage of women in the national parliament.

Table 10. Percentage of female senior and junior ministers in 2016



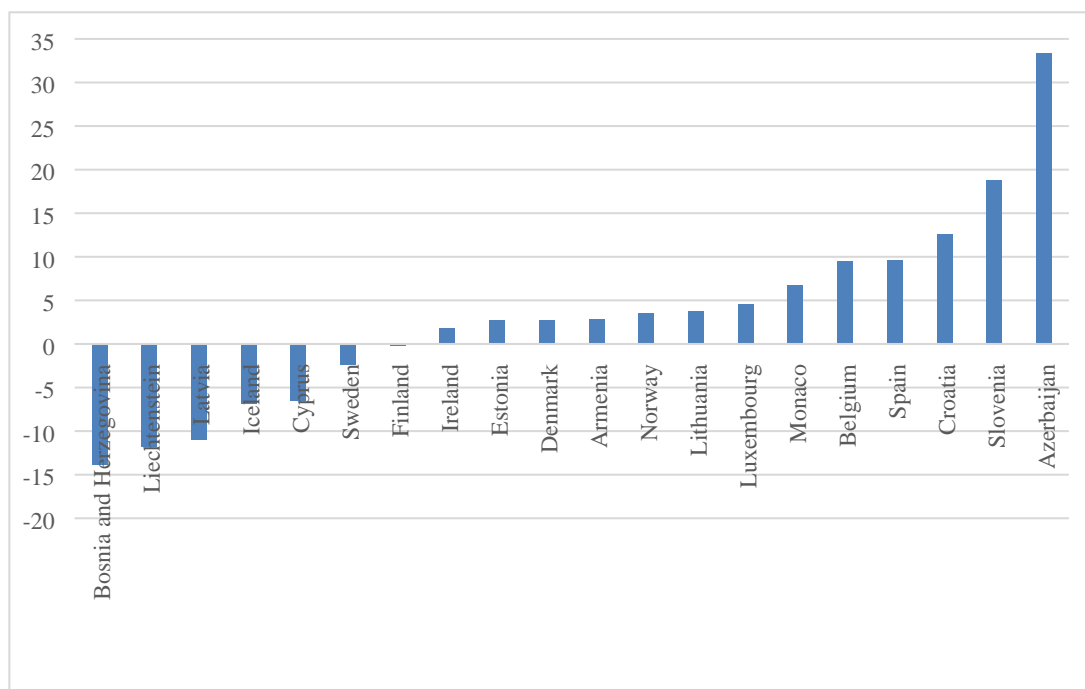
Similar to the national and regional parliaments, women constitute on average 25 % of the municipality councillors in 2016. There is however more variation between women's numerical representation between the local and the national level compared to the previous comparisons (i.e. between national, regional and executive). 7 countries that were below average in the national parliament are above average at the local level (Albania, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Monaco and Montenegro); 4 countries that were above average in the national parliament are below average at the local level with a remarkable difference for instance in Serbia with over 30% national MPs and only about 6% municipality councillors.

Table 11. Percentage of female municipality councillors in 2016



When compared to the national and regional level, also the evolution of female municipality councillors over time (2005-2016) is less straightforward. Notwithstanding that many countries remained stable over time; the local level features the strongest drops in numbers of women parallel to some steep increases. The local level seems to be the most instable one. This might be explained by the centralisation hypothesis: when gender equality policies are centralised they can be enacted more efficiently; in contrast, when local party branches are in charge many more can decide to not or inefficiently implement them.

Table 12. Changes in percentage points of female municipality councillors over time (2005-2016)



States target political parties to further gender equality: one third of the countries include gender equality provisions in the legal frameworks for parties and almost one quarter include rules on gender equality in the law on the public funding of parties. An impressive amount of parties implements gender quotas in 2016: over 40% of the countries have parties that apply electoral gender quotas and over half of them apply gender quotas for party bodies. Notwithstanding that gender quotas have become a widespread strategy in 2016, also other strategies are not forgotten: in one third of the countries parties provide training for women candidates.

Table 13. Presence of party rules and regulations

	% of countries with party rules/regulations
Gender equality in legal framework for parties providing	32%
Rules on gender equality in law on public funding of parties	23%
Party quotas for elections	42%
Party quotas for party bodies	56%
Training for women candidates	30%