

**INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION /  
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE**

**REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**

**REPORT OF THE IPSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**BACKGROUND**

At meeting no. XVII of the council in Seoul on 17 August 1997 (item 15), the following resolution was passed:

“That this council requests the incoming executive committee to develop mechanisms for increasing the representation of women on the council and in other IPSA activities and to report back, with recommendations, to the next council meeting”.

At its meeting no. 76 in Quebec on 14-15 February 1998, the executive committee responded to this resolution by:

- establishing a committee on participation with a view to seeking to maximise the participation of women scholars and scholars belonging to other disadvantaged groups; the committee was given strong terms of reference to allow it to address this task;
- referring the council resolution to this committee, and inviting it to submit its views and recommendations; and
- referring the council resolution also to a new committee on organisation and procedure, with a similar request for advice as to how the executive committee should respond to this resolution

IPSA's research committee on sex roles and politics (RC19) was also consulted.

The two subcommittees considered the resolution in detail at two subsequent meetings, and reported progress to the executive committee at meeting no. 77 Boston, 1-2 September 1998 and at meeting no. 78 in Krakow on 25-26 April 1999, where the committee reports were considered in some detail. At meeting no. 79 in Naples, 6 October 1999, and meeting no. 80 in Jerusalem on 27 February 2000, the executive committee considered a composite set of recommendations from the two committees, and arrived at the conclusions outlined below. These comprise an analysis of the existing position and a set of recommendations as to the way forward.

**CURRENT POSITION**

The executive committee, its committee on organisation and procedure and its committee on representation have reviewed the participation of women in as many sectors as possible of IPSA activity. In assessing the position within IPSA, they have sought to use four yardsticks:

- the proportion of women in the global population, which of course is close to 50%
- the proportion of women in global academic life; according to official statistics, the percentage of women on the teaching staff of universities or equivalent institutions ranges between 20% and 40%<sup>1</sup>
- the proportion of women in political science, on which no global information is available, but in respect of which we have some regional indicators. In the mid-1980s, for instance, women accounted for only 9% of political scientists in Europe<sup>2</sup>; and of applicants for university posts in the USA in 1998, 28% were women (implying an academic labour force more disproportionately male, given the tendency for the proportion of women to increase over time).
- the proportion of women active in national political science associations, on which, again, we do not have comprehensive data. However, the proportion of women at different levels of involvement in the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association may be a useful benchmark. At APSA meetings over the period 1991-99 the median proportion of women panel chairs was 25.4% (25.3% in 1999); of papergivers, 27.7% (28.1% in 1999); and of discussants 26.4% (27.1% in 1999).<sup>3</sup>

The figures below give some indication of the proportion of women active in different sectors of IPSA within recent years. In some cases, of course, the absolute numbers are very small and percentages are highly sensitive to individual-level changes (the drop in the number of women on the 18-member executive committee from five to four following the 1997 council meeting is an example).

Year	IPSA members	congress papergivers	congress convenors	council members	RC/SG chairs	IPSR authors	EC members
1988	-	14.2	15.6	13.8	13.3	6.0	11.1
1991	-	18.4	14.9	15.3	16.3	14.3	27.8
1994	-	20.3	19.3	20.8	12.2	17.3	27.8
1995	-	-	-	-	12.2	19.2	27.8
1996	19.4	-	-	-	10.0	7.1	27.8
1997	22.7	20.2	13.1	14.9	12.0	7.7	27.8
1998	19.0	-	-	-	14.0	19.2	16.7
1999	20.3	-	-	-	14.6	16.0	16.7
2000	24.2	20.1	23.5	28.6	-	31.0	33.3
2001	23.0	-	-	-	-	27.3	33.3
2002	23.1	-	-	-	-	35.5	33.3
2003	26.2	-	-	-	-	10.0	33.3
2004	20.6			-	19.4	8.4	23.5
2005	25.6			-	19.4	17.5	23.5
2006 (June 1)	28.6			-	19.4	16.7	23.5

<sup>1</sup>Unesco statistical yearbook, 1998; in a few countries the figure is less than 10%, while in others, such as the Philippines and Thailand, women constitute a majority of university teachers.

<sup>2</sup>Calculated from ECPR, *Directory of European political scientists* (1985).

<sup>3</sup>Calculated from Martin Gruberg, "Participation of women in the 1999 APSA annual meeting", *PS* 32 (4) 1999, p. 761.

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It should also be noted that the data are indicative rather than definitive, in that in many cases analysis is based on probabilistic assumptions about gender based on first names. In the case of “IPSR authors”, the data refer to the proportions of articles authored by women, making appropriate allowance for multi-authored articles.

While additional conclusions might be drawn from this table, one obvious one is that the involvement of women in IPSA activities is rather lower than the level that would be implied by the proportion of women among all IPSA members (20%).

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the advice of its committee on organisation and procedure and its committee on representation, the executive committee suggests the following mechanisms for increasing the representation of women on the IPSA council and in other activities:

1. that national associations be informed of the relatively low number of women on the council, and that they be invited to consider nominating a larger proportion of women among their delegates to the council
2. that the IPSA president be urged to use the right of nomination of individual members to the council more vigorously to increase women’s representation
3. that the secretary general be directed to continue monitoring the level of involvement by women in all IPSA activities, and that this monitoring be extended as far as data permit
4. that the chair of the committee on the congress programme be directed to ensure that women are adequately represented among all categories of participants
5. that the chair of the committee on research and training be directed to consider encouraging applications for the establishment of additional research committees in the area of women and politics, designed to explore barriers to the emergence of an appropriate balance between men and women in high political office
6. that the chair of the committee on research and training be directed to take measures to ensure that open recruitment policies be maintained by all research committees and that the due representation of women be facilitated
7. that the executive committee be invited to consider the endorsement of a specific body committed to maximising the participation of women in IPSA activities
8. that the executive committee authorise the establishment of an award for the best paper on gender and politics, one that would focus particularly on barriers to women’s entry to decision making arenas.
9. that a booklet on women political scientists that are members of IPSA be produced and distributed at the World Congress 2003

It is noted that the executive committee cannot impose conditions on national associations in relation to the criteria they use when selecting council members, and that, unless the constitution is to be changed by the council itself, no stronger weapon than exhortation can be utilised.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The IPSA executive committee has taken the following steps in response to the spirit and the letter of the resolution passed by the council.

1. National associations were informed by the secretary general of the relatively low number of women on the council, and they were invited to consider nominating a larger proportion of women among their delegates to the council.
2. With the strong support of the executive committee, the president will ensure that the proportion of women among individual members of IPSA appointed by him to the council under article 11B of the constitution is maximised. It is refreshing to be able to record that after many years during which the proportion of women members remained stable at 20%, this percentage jumped by four percentage points in 2000-2001, to reach 24%. This increase in the proportion of women is probably a function of congress participation, and was almost certainly influenced strongly by IPSA's travel grants scheme.
3. The secretary general has continued to monitor the level of involvement by women in all IPSA activities, and reports on this each year in the first issue of *Participation*. This has also been extended to an analysis of long-term trends in council and executive committee membership.
4. The chair of the committee on the congress programme has sought to ensure that women are adequately represented among all categories of participants, both by inviting a large number of women convenors and by encouraging women paper givers. The points system for the allocation of congress travel grants contains a systematic bias in favour of women applicants. This had begun to pay dividends already in 1997 (33% of travel grant applicants were women, but women obtained 37% of the grants). In 2000, the contribution of the travel grants scheme to women's participation was dramatically enhanced: 41% of applicants were women, but the proportion of women among those obtaining awards was 58%. In 2003, although the percentage of female applicants for travel grants dropped to 39%, the percentage of those being allocated an award still was at 46.3%. However, the percentage of women applying for travel grants keeps declining, counting only 37.5% in 2006, with 43.7% of the grants being allocated to female applicants.
5. The chair of the committee on research and training has sought to encourage applications for additional research committees in the area of women and politics
6. The committee on research and training has revised rules for research committees to ensure that open recruitment policies be maintained by all research committees and that the due representation of women is facilitated
7. The executive committee has made a vigorous effort to maximise the participation of women by giving strong terms of reference to its standing committee on participation, and by ensuring that that committee's advice on this issue is given careful consideration and that its recommendations are implemented
8. The executive committee has established an award for the best paper on gender and politics, that was awarded for the first time at the Quebec congress.