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The Role of Women's Parliamentary Network in Serbian Politics

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Panel 160

Understanding Exclusion and Resistance to Representation

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B: Technicum 2, R: Leslokaal 1.13, F: 1

Chair KROOK, Mona Lena (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey)

Discussant GOODYEAR-GRANT, Elizabeth (Queen's University Canada)

Abstract

After the parliamentary election in 2012, according to legal quota system, the number of elected women in the National Assembly of Serbia reached 33 percent. A high number of women who won seats in parliament for the first time launched an initiative to form an inter-party informal working body, consisting of all women parliamentarians regardless of party affiliation, the Women's Parliamentary Network (WPN). The assumption is that WPN is an important mechanism for cooperation and building trust among women parliamentarians from different parties, an important tool in the contesting gender equality and the means for democratization of parliamentary politics. This paper will explain the principles of functioning, mechanisms and ways of operation of the WPN in the National Assembly of Serbia. The aim is to answer the following questions: Why do we need women's network in parliament? How is the WPN organized in terms of seats in the parliament, structure and relations? What activities does the WPN perform? How does the structure of parliament and overall political context affect the results and efficiency of the WPN? What are the most significant achievements of the WPN in terms of gender equality mainstreaming? The analysis of the role of WPN is based on the study of the political representation of women and the critical actor's theory.