

## Equal Access to Elective Offices: A Challenge for Italian Democracy

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### Abstract

One of the major innovations that have marked recent elections in Italy is the largest number of women ever recorded in the past, both in the lists submitted by the parties and, consequently, within the new Parliament. As shown in Table 1 women currently in the Chamber of Deputies are in fact 28.4% of the total number of representatives, while in the Senate 27%.

**Keywords:** Elective Offices; Italy; Democracy; Women; Gender

### Introduction

#### Women's political representation in the Italian Parliament

Italy moves in that way from the 63<sup>rd</sup> to the 34<sup>th</sup> place in the women's representation world ranking, drawn up periodically by Ipu (Interparliamentary Union). It is a novelty of no small matter, especially considering the number of women in Parliament in past terms. In fact, in the past parliamentary term, women in the Chamber of Deputies were about 136 and 61 in the Senate, and, respectively, 21.6% and 19% of the total number of representatives. The achievement of 20% in the national parliament represented a great result compared to the past, even fairly recent. Previous parliamentary terms experienced a female incidence significantly lower: in the XII legislature women were about 12% of the total, in the XIII and XIV parliamentary term the women representation goes further, at about 10% for then registering a small increase in the XV legislature with 109 women in the Chamber of Deputies and 45 in the Senate, respectively 17.3% and 14% of the delegates<sup>1</sup>.

This is the result of the exclusive choice made by the main parties to nominate the candidates through primary elections, including an approximately equal number of women and men. This choice was certainly prompted by a new climate that, in the field of gender equality, as will be discussed later, has recently triggered the introduction of many amendments to assert a greater presence of women in many areas of Italian social life and politics. It was, however, a choice made by the parties in the absence of any provision in the field of gender equality in the electoral law currently in force for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate.

<sup>1</sup>Data are drawn from the world ranking of women in national parliaments compiled by IPU on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments (1 April 2013). See [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org) See also the gender equality index drawn up by the EIGE (European Institute for gender equality), [www.europa.eu/content/gender-equality-index](http://www.europa.eu/content/gender-equality-index)

<sup>2</sup>With reference to other European countries, according to data from the IPU, it is noted that Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain are among the top twenty countries, but Italy is preceded by other countries such as Serbia, Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland and Portugal. At the global level, however, followed by countries such as Australia and Canada that are on the 46<sup>th</sup> place in the rankings and the USA only 78<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>This is the law by which, abandoning the electoral system introduced in 1993, Italy opted for a proportional system with closed lists, also characterized by corrective steps to minimize the risk of political fragmentation and create a bipolar logic, namely electoral threshold and premium. This law has been the subject of harsh criticism even from those who had been its fathers to the point that the then Minister for Reforms, Roberto Calderoli fact that, during a television interview, called it "a crap" for the changes that "were regarded during the parliamentary process. For this reason the law was later called "porcellum" by the political scientist Giovanni Sartori.

The considerations set lead to the conclusion that- although, there is no doubt that in recent years some steps have been made and that the issue of gender equality is currently the subject of increasing attention in our country-nevertheless, remains clear Italy's delay in the field of equal access to elective offices to the respects of most Western countries<sup>2</sup>. The reasons for this delay can certainly be ascribed to factors of social, cultural [1] and economic development still deeply rooted, although also to the lack of anti-discrimination measures in the electoral law currently in force. In fact, Italy's legal framework lacks of rules to remove barriers that have so far prevented women from being candidates possibly elected. It has to be pointed out that-while for regional elections anti-discrimination rules to encourage candidacies from women [2-4] have been provided, albeit not always effectively, and while recently has been established the double gender preference for municipal and provincial elections- nothing is established instead in the current national electoral law, n. 270 of 2005<sup>3</sup>, with regard to equal access to elective offices. This law was used in the recent elections of 24 and 25 February. Already at the time of the parliamentary debate for the approval of the latter, there were amendments to fix a limit to the candidacies of one sex over another, but these amendments were all rejected. Thereby, that "deafening silence" [5] that in matters of equal opportunities must be reported today with reference to the electoral law of the Italian Parliament. As is well known, in the past parliamentary term there have been several unsuccessful attempts to change quickly the so-called "porcellum" The issue of amending the current electoral law has obviously arisen again after the last election which, as is well-

Legislature	Women in Chamber of Deputies	Women in Senate	% Women Chamber of Deputies	% Women Senate
XII	95	29	15%	9.2%
XIII	70	26	11.1%	8%
XIV	73	25	11.6%	8%
XV	109	45	17.3%	14.3%
XVI	136	61	21.6%	19%
XVII	179	86	28.4%	27%

Table 1: Women in the Chamber of Deputies.

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known, led to a long stalemate and to a difficult governance, requiring the involvement of President Napolitano. The President of the Republic appointed Enrico Letta president of the Council of Ministries in charge of the formation of a government that, among its objectives, should also have to proceed, before the next elections, to a modification of the “porcellum” The road to the adoption of a new electoral law, or to some limited “tweaks” to the law currently in force, is paved with obstacles considering both the divisions between the major parties that support the government, and the divisions within the parties, with particular reference to the Democratic Party. It is hard to say with which electoral law Italy will go to vote, probably long before the natural end of the parliamentary term, and whether or not changes will have been made by that time to promote women representation. Or if, once again, as has happened in past elections, the presence of women will still be all entrusted exclusively to the will or, if you prefer, the “good will” of party secretaries.

### Constitutional framework and constitutional jurisprudence concerning gender equality in politics

One of the arguments by means of which in recent years the issue has been addressed, with little interest in the provision of anti-discrimination measures within the electoral law, is the principle that the reasons for the gender gap, characterizing the overall circuit of political representation in Italy, are to be found not so much in a hostile attitude of the parties, reluctant to give space to women in the lists, but in “other problematic aspects of their position in society, first of all, the particular role of women in household and family management, as well as their carriers” [6]. Therefore, positive actions in favor of women in the electoral lists would end up not being that effective in rebalancing representation, thus revealing such amendments to the electoral law as in fact inappropriate. In this respect, however, can be accepted the theory that the regulatory instruments can never be sufficient alone to make changes that are primarily cultural and often practical. Rules certainly can help to urge changes whose effects are not, nor can they be immediate, but triggered by the “consolidated implementation and enforcement” of the same anti-discrimination rules [7]. In other words, as has been observed in the well-known decision n. 422 of 1995-in which the Constitutional Court did not fail to use the “heavy hand” on the first attempt to fix some electoral law limits to the representation of a gender over another—measures such as the use of “quotas” in the electoral lists are inconclusive “but certainly these too can contribute not in a little way (obviously not alone) to promote equality between women and men, removing a major obstacle consisting of the well-known strong male dominance in the Italian political system” [8].

The introduction of anti-discrimination measures in the electoral law appears today certainly compatible with the constitutional framework originating after the amendment of article 51 of the Constitution and the establishment of the provision according to which “the Republic promotes through specific measures equal opportunities between women and men” in order to guarantee the principle provided in the first part of the first paragraph of that article long before the reform of 2003. The provision states the principle that “all citizens of either sex are eligible for public offices and elected positions on equal terms, according to the requirements established by law” and following the drafting of paragraph 7 of article 117 of the Constitution under

<sup>4</sup>As stated by article 3 of the Italian constitution “All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic or social nature which constrain the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country”.

which, similarly, “regional laws shall remove any obstacle to the full equality of men and women in social, cultural and economic life and promote equal access for women and men to elective offices.”

Indeed, scholars have highlighted the ineffectiveness of the “addition” to the first paragraph of article 51 of the Constitution, since the provisions in this article before the 2003 amendment, together with article 3 of the Constitution, paragraphs 1 and 2, “were already clear and unambiguous provisions and constitutional principles to ensure equality and equal opportunities for women in elective positions, and with them the fullness of their right to vote” [9].

As is known, however, these statements of the constitutional legislator were actually triggered from the interpretation given by the Constitutional Court of article 51 as a provision that merely reiterates the principle of formal equality of article 3.1, in the field of political rights. This interpretation has led the Court to support, in the already mentioned decision n. 422 of 1995, that prevailing rule established by the Constituent Assembly in the first paragraph of Article 51 of the Constitution is that of absolute equality, with the result that “any distinction on grounds of sex cannot be objectively discriminatory, decreasing for certain third the actual content of a fundamental right in favor of other, belonging to a group that considered disadvantaged”. Even at that time, scholars remarked that the Court’s statement was based on an obvious “forced reasoning” [9] because the thesis supported by the Constitutional Court would be admissible only if the electoral law, through the constraints of gender quotas, had come to predetermine election results, certainly not in the case, brought before the Court, that the use of gender “quotas” in the nominations had contributed “to simply remove those social barriers that limit (this time for real!) the possibility of being elected, men or women, by the electorate” [9].

After the constitutional changes have occurred, the Constitutional Court, seems to embrace the interpretation offered by those scholars critical of the decision n. 422 of 1995, but without deviating from the path traced by the very first decision, arguing that may only be approved provisions for the creation of candidates lists, therefore in the run-up to the vote stage, provided that such provisions do not condition the active and passive right to vote. Therefore, are admitted all the provisions for the neutral creation of the lists for these not to be result oriented, removing only the obstacles that prevent the increase of women’s political representation. In particular, it is interesting to highlight that in the following decision n. 49 of 2003, the Constitutional Court—ruling before the approval of the constitutional revision of article 51 of the Constitution, but after the reform of Title V

<sup>5</sup>*Electoral Gender Quota Systems and their Implementation in Europe*, update 2013, European Parliament-Directorate general for international policies—policy department c: citizens’ rights and constitutional affairs—gender equality. As is shown in this study “today women constitute 20.4 per cent of the members of national parliaments around the world (www.ipu.org) (...). In Europe, as in the rest of the world, women are still under-represented in political decision-making assemblies. Today, in 2013, women constitute 25.6 per cent of the members of national parliaments in Europe (www.ipu.org). A third—or eleven of the 33 countries across the world that have 30 per cent or more women in their national parliaments - are European. Until recently, Europe has not been in the forefront of the new global trend to adopt electoral gender quotas. During the last decade, however, many new measures have been adopted also in a European context. While reserved seats are not used in Europe, legislated quotas, party quotas, as well as many ‘soft’ quota provisions such as recommendations and targets have been introduced in order to achieve gender balance in political assemblies”. Besides, according to the Working paper—the quota instrument: different approaches across Europe, European Commission’s Network to promote Women in decision-making in Politics and the Economy, June 2011, 6, “half of the countries in the world are using some form of gender quotas in politics, some of which are written in the constitution or law (legislated quotas), others are voluntary”.

of the Constitution-states as the rules introduced, namely those of the Constitutional Law. n. 2 of 2001 and the seventh paragraph of article 117 of the Constitution “pose explicitly the objective of rebalancing and determine how respectful is the promotional campaign for equal access to elections, referring explicitly to the electoral law”.

### Signs of a changing climate for gender equality

According to the constitutional jurisprudence, therefore, law-makers action on the nominations appears today certainly compatible with the constitutional framework, which aims at removing obstacles to the full “social, cultural and economic” equality of men and women and the promotion of equal access for women and men to elective offices [10]. It is also important to remark that gender quotas in electoral legislation is today one of the mechanism introduced by many countries to address the women under-representation and reach a gender balance in political institution, as reported in a study of the European Parliament<sup>5</sup>. Besides, gender equality is considered as a fundamental right in European Union, enshrined in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and in article 23 of the charter of fundamental rights<sup>6</sup>. In 2010 the European Commission also adopted a “Women’s Charter” which, according to Barroso, President of the European Commission in that time, “represents the commitment of the Commission to making gender equality a reality in the EU”. Finally, the “Strategy for equality between Women and Men 2010–2015” which represent the European Commission’s work program on gender equality for the period 2010-2015, has among its priorities the promotion of equality in decision making, as well<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, considering Italian constitutional provisions and European Union treaty provisions as well as European Union work program on gender equality, hardly in the future electoral law of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate the issue of gender balance will be still avoided.

The evidence of a climate that is gradually changing, however, is also demonstrated by a series of new laws that might be recalled briefly. During the last parliamentary term, which, didn’t outstand for gender representation, our law-makers adopted at least three laws that appear to show very different intentions than in the past. The first reference is to the law n. 120 of 2011 establishing the so-called “Quotas” on the boards of directors of listed companies and companies controlled by public authorities not listed on regulated markets. This last provision, while not without its critics, appears to place Italy among the most advanced countries in terms of promotional activities for the affirmation of a principle of equality in work environments. Reference

<sup>5</sup>The *Treaty of the European Union* (2009) commits member states to non-discrimination and equality between women and men (article 2 and 3); the article 23 of the *Charter of fundamental right* states that “equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the underrepresented areas”. Finally, the *Treaty on the functioning of the European Union* provides that the union will aim to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between men and women (article 8). It also stipulates that the Union will aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (article 10).

<sup>7</sup>The EU and its member states are also committed to promote gender equality through the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) agreed at the UN World conference on Women in 1995. Among its strategic objective the BPfA provides that governments would take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making and that Governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers’ organizations, subregional and regional bodies, non-governmental and international organizations and educational institutions will increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

should be made also to the Law 96 of 2012 on the financing of political parties and movements. As for gender equality, the law requires that government grants payable to each political party or movement must be cut of 5% if the party or political movement has presented a number of candidates of the same genus for more than two-thirds of the overall candidates, with rounding up. Finally, the law n. 215 of 2012, approved by the Chamber of Deputies on November 13<sup>th</sup> of this year, promotes effective equality between women and men to access elective offices of local government bodies providing both a share of the list by virtue of which neither genders can be represented in the lists by more than two-thirds of the candidates, and the introduction of the dual gender preference (the possibility for the voter to express two preferences for candidates to the municipal council in municipalities with populations of more than 5,000 inhabitants and to the District Council: one for a male candidate and one for a female candidate on the same list. This law, although not fixing further measures for local and regional councils, states the principle according to which the act of appointment or the regional electoral law must ensure the presence of both male and female candidates. Finally, some provisions of the law concern political communication and equal representation in competition commissions to access employment in the public sector.

From this context arouse the numerous proposals to amend the electoral law for the election of the national Parliament. Even though these proposals failed to pass before the early end of the parliamentary term, they represent a further sign of the new climate, as some proposals take into account the need to adopt measures for the promotion of gender equality in representative assemblies. In particular, of the 46 projects in the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Senate<sup>8</sup>, six exclusively concern the promotion of gender representation, while others regard the overall electoral system providing for measures balancing gender political representation [11]. The projects, presented in the previous term, questioning the electoral formula but not addressing at all the issue of the introduction of measures to promote gender equality, are in fact the majority. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how the basic unified text proposed by Sen. Malan in the meeting of 11 October 2012 also pursues the aim of gender balance through a dual system, namely that of the provision of a “quota reserve” in the list and gender preference, and gender alternating order for the blocked list<sup>9</sup>. In any case, even looking at the draft amendments to the electoral law currently in force, it is clear that the attention towards the issue of equal access to elective office has grown. It is certainly a sign of the greater awareness surrounding the issue of the balance between the genders in political representation, for the renewal of the political class and the healing of the deep wounds the relation between voters and elective officials.

### Political parties’ strategy to increase the number of women in politics: party voluntary quotas

The awareness of the importance of a democratic approach in the choice of candidates, and within this context, the implementation of the principle of equal representation, seem to gain space even within the parties whose role, also with reference to the current electoral law, proves to be crucial in achieving a gender balance [12]. In an electoral system as the Italian, characterized by closed lists, parties’ choice in

<sup>8</sup>These are the projects presented to the Senate: AS2; AS 17; AS 93; AS 104, AS 257 e AS 708.

<sup>9</sup>The basic text provides for a proportional system with proper electoral threshold and premium. The voter can cast one vote for the list, each list is divided in two sub-lists. On the first sub-list the voter can express a preference, while the second sub-list is blocked.

the creation of the lists is vital. In this regard it is interesting to note that already in 2008 elections, despite the claims of the major parties with reference to their will to nominate a large number of women, the choices made actually turned out to be in fact inconsistent with the statements of intent and with the principles expressed in the majority of the parties' Statutes. In particular, in the case of the PD (Democratic Party) there is a significant percentage of women, but almost all are relegated to the bottom of the list, making it very unlikely to be elected. In the case of PDL (Party of Freedom), the percentage of women included in the lists is quite low as it hits 10-15%. In some cases, moreover, women are absent or placed near the bottom of the list with only one data bucking the list for the constituency represented by the Piedmont where women candidates are 9 of 24 and also in such positions as to allow a good chance of election [13,14]

By examining some of the main lists submitted last February for the election of the Parliament-as shown in Table 2-it is clear how some significant changes compared to the past have been made.

Even in this case the submission of the lists was preceded by proclamations of principle that show how the issue of gender representation has now gained a central role: almost all the leaders of the major parties have expressed the desire to present lists with a considerable number of women. In this circumstance the proclamations were followed by choices made to promote effectively women's representation, partly as a result of the selection of candidates made through the primary election.

This is the case in the first place of the PD whose lists were in fact created so as to guarantee the presence of women in the proportion of about 40%. Women candidates' names are in the upper part of the list, on the basis of fairly regular alternation with men. Furthermore, the lists have been shaped mostly (3/4), taking into account the results of the primaries that was held last December. In this case the choice of the primaries was accompanied by the expectation that each voter could express over the candidates a maximum of no more than two preferences of each gender, under penalty of nullity of the second. This with the stated aim of achieving at least 40 percent women MPs. Also SEL (Left, Ecology and Freedom) while drafting its lists decided to use the primary election system. As provided for in the primary election rules "in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate nominations in top eligible positions in order to ensure gender representation are: a woman and a man in the regions where the likely to be elected are two, in the ratio of two to one of the genders where the likely to be elected are 3, at least two eligible women where the likely to be elected are

superior to 3". In other words, the system guarantees not only a certain percentage of women on the lists, but also that women and men are both present in the eligible positions. In open primaries voters may cast a vote for each of the two lists, one per gender for each constituency of the Chamber of Deputies and regionally for the Senate. The final result is that out of 927 candidates overall women are 406, while women top candidates are 15 out of 38. Women candidates are also on the lists in such positions as to allow the election<sup>10</sup>.

As is well known also in the case of the M5S (Five Star Movement) nominations are the result of primary elections, held on-line. Primary elections led to choose 16 women top candidates in the Camera and 5 in the Senate. In this case, however, the total number of women on the lists is quite low, about 14% for the Chamber of Deputies and about 25% for the renewal of the Senate, although it should be noted that women are often found at the top of list, therefore with a good chance of being elected.

Monti's centrist list selected for the Senate race about 80 women candidates out of a total of 301, thus representing about 25% of the nominations. For the Chamber of Deputies women candidates from Monti's list represent about 31% of the candidates. Women top candidates are approximately 8, considering both the lists of those in the Senate and in the Chamber. In most cases a sufficiently broad distribution of women within the lists has occurred, but there are cases in which women are present only in the second part of the list.

Looking at the composition of the lists of the PDL may be noted -although with reference to the presence of men and women- that is difficult to draw a clear-cut indication. In fact, while in some cases women are on the lists in a particularly high percentage- as in the case of the constituency of Friuli Venezia Giulia with approximately 66% of women candidates in the House or about 43% of women in the list of the Abruzzo Region for the election of members of the Senate- in others, the presence of women is much reduced, as in the case of the list submitted in Lombardy for the Senate, where women candidates are 6 out of 48 and where women are present only at the bottom of the list, from the twenty-second place onwards, or in the list presented in Puglia for the Senate with only one woman candidate, as well as Sardinia, Molise and Trentino Alto Adige where women candidates are completely missing. Overall, the number of women on the lists for the election of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate in the first case amounted to almost 30% and in the second case only about 18%. Women top candidates are 8.

## Conclusion

The remarks concerning the drafting of the lists certainly make clear, also in the light of the electoral results obtained (such as the smaller or bigger presence of women in the circuit of political representation) if in part it depends on the electoral law, for the other hand it is the result of today individual choices carried out by political parties. If there is no doubt that the need to rebuild the broken relationship between voters and elected officials has led in many cases to consider favorably the adoption of democratic methods for the selection of candidates and the making of choices leading to the balanced presence of both genders in the lists, the question is whether or not it is desirable the introduction of a law on political parties that binds them to democratic

Lists	% Women candidates Chamber of Deputies	% Women candidates Senates	% Women elected in Parliament
PD	41,93%	43,06%	41%
SEL	42%	46,27%	20%
MONTI	30,84%	25%	22%
UDC	31,85%		
FLI	31,41%		
5 STELLE	13,62%	25,30%	38%
PDL	27,90%	18,20%	22%
LEGA	38,91%	28,47%	14%

Table 2: Elected women of the Parliament.

<sup>10</sup>In a press release issued by the party, it is stated that the top list candidates of Left Ecology and Freedom (that is useful in the positions to be elected) for the elections to the Senate, women represent 56% while men 44 %. In the lists for the Camera dei deputati women are 41%, while men are 59%.

<sup>11</sup>Law projects introduces to the Chamber of deputies, blocked since June 2012 at the constitutional affairs committee: AC 244; AC 506; AC 1722; AC 3809 e AC 4194. For an analysis Dossier della Camera, Attuazione dell'articolo 49 in materia di partiti politici, in [www.camera.it](http://www.camera.it).

<sup>12</sup>With reference to the decisions n. 49 del 2003 e n. 203 del 1975.

<sup>13</sup>AC 1722.

choices with regard to candidacies<sup>11</sup>. During the XVI legislature several parties law projects were presented. Beyond the age-old question, widely addressed by the Italian doctrine concerning whether or not to proceed to the adoption of a constitutional law in order to change the skinny provisions of article 49 of the Constitution, or to amend the limits, as someone correctly suggested, by ordinary law which is likely to be nothing but a simple “self-reform” [15-19], the various solutions that have been envisaged converge all on the need to adopt democratic and transparent rules within the parties statutes. These are to be made public and the law on political parties should identify the “minimum” necessary content in order to guarantee internal democracy. Among these contents should be acknowledged the provision in terms of selection of candidates which, as known represents one of the crucial aspects, and namely one of the points of greatest suffering of the democratic principle [20]. This selection is now entitled exclusively to the parties, but it appears reasonable the thesis of those who suggest that in the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court cannot be identified a restrictive attitude<sup>12</sup> towards efforts to rule by law “some aspects, for example, parties competitive method, in the words of the Court, for the selection of candidates, ensuring grassroots participation (with primary or whatever) [21].” In this perspective, some of the mentioned projects provide for the selection of candidates by primary elections [22-28] while in other cases not considering primaries foster the adoption of a set of rules that among other means provides for an equal number of men and women in the creation of candidates lists at any election<sup>13</sup>.

Another crucial aspect is women’s representation within political parties. It is obvious how women’s under-representation in decision-making bodies have negative also to the respects of a choice of candidates that is respectful of gender balance. In this perspective may be considered with favor all proposals that attempt to foster the adoption of the required contents by the parties Statutes, also a core set of measures aimed at balancing the gender representation in governing bodies<sup>14</sup>. It is clear how parties self-regulation through the provisions of the statutes conceived to promote internal democracy and the democratic selection of candidates especially in application of the principle of gender equality, proved in the past not to be sufficient alone to prevent -as the examples given above show- that the obstacle of the Statute, in the absence of a law on the legal regulation of political parties, can be overcome and that the usual practice in the choice of candidates deviate from the rules provided by statutes. The mentioned proposals, however, were not approved before the anticipated end of the parliamentary term<sup>15</sup> [24].

This dilemma concerns the ability of parties to reform themselves, choosing a legal regulation able to give back to them their own function: that of becoming a channel, in “democratic ways” between voters and institutions [25]. It is, however, well-known that guaranteeing a transparent procedure for the selection of the candidates would allow a greater woman representation in the lists [26] and, in turn, solving the problem of internal party democracy certainly strengthens representative democracy, given the role played by political parties themselves in selecting the candidates. The lack of democracy at this stage may reverberate negatively even in the moment of the election,

<sup>14</sup>Should be reminded that the projects AC 244 E AC 506 according to which no gender can be represented in governing bodies exceeding the 2/3 or, as the bill AC 4194, by less than 55%.

<sup>15</sup>Cost: Those regarding party financing. At the beginning of May a unified text for the enactment of article 49 Cost was adopted. From 31 May onwards the projects follow separate procedures. The funding bill will quickly become law, and the other will be permanently abandoned on 13 December for the early end of the parliamentary term. On the desirability of obtaining the approval of a law on political parties and on the financing of political parties see the comments in [24].

as the selection of candidates and the elections are not independent moments, but rather seem to live in an osmotic process, made of reciprocal influences. There is then to hope that an “osmotic” process may somehow be triggered even by a future greater representation of women in the decision-making bodies of national institutions and political parties, possibly overcoming the crisis that, at least from the 90s onwards, and still today, struck the Italian party system as a whole.

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