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Press Release:
Election to Senate 2008: Have women been forgotten?

There will be two elections held within several weeks: apart from the regional the Senate representatives will be voted. As we have already pointed out, the prospects for women in the regional elections are not very good. With respect to the list of candidates we cannot expect any significant increase of the current insufficient representation of female politicians in regional politics. This time we focused on nomination of women to the upper chamber of the parliament.

Unfortunately the result of our little research was not satisfying: this year 200 candidates in total will put in for the voters' favour from which only 34 are women. This is by five per cent less than in last election to senate. Participation of nominated women politicians forms only 17 % whereas in 2006 it was over 19 %. Amongst 27 electoral districts, in which the elections will be held, six of them are purely "male". There no women candidates in these districts so voters have no other choice than to chose amongst the male candidates. To be specific, these districts are Cheb, Plzeň – město, Česká lípa, Trutnov, Kolín and Karviná. This number reflects the situation in 2006: then we noted six districts without women candidates.

How many opportunities were given to women by the political parties? The approach the governing Civic Democrats had to this phenomenon was following: ODS did not nominate a single woman to the Senate. Even though the party had its candidates in all 27 districts, it was purely a "stag party". It is hard to believe that a party which is by more 30 % formed by women did not find any suitable woman candidate for its post in senate... KDU-ČSL did not show itself very well either: it sent only one woman politician to the election, doctor Drahomíra Peřinová from Rychnov nad Kněžnou. It might be worth reminding that within Christian Democrats women are in a slight majority, they form 52 % of the party membership. Does it mean that Christian Democrats are unable to find the right candidate? The statement that there is a "lack of good female candidates" makes in the least funny impression in the light of the current political scene.

On the contrary SNK – European Democrats gave the most opportunities to women from all the parties: four out of ten nominees were women which is respectable 40 %. Congratulations! The second best result was achieved by Party for open Society (Strana pro otevřenou společnost) with 27 % of women nominees. It is necessary to point out that SOS as one of the few gave women places on the top of the regional lists of candidates in three regions. KSČM nominated 22 % of women, then came Green Party with their 21 % of women candidates. ČSSD sent altogether five women candidates to the Senate which is 18,5 %. The outline of the assessed political parties can be found in the chart below.

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Nomination for Election to Senate 2008

Political party	Number of women nominees	Percentage of nominated women
ODS	0 (out of 27)	0 %
KDU-ČSL	1 (out of 17)	6 %
SNK-ED	4 (out of 10)	40 %
SOS*	3 (out of 11)	27 %
SZ	4 (out of 19)	21 %
ČSSD	5 (out of 27)	18,5 %
KSČM	6 (out of 27)	22 %
Total	34 (out of 200)	17 %

* the party candidates in a coalition in six districts

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