

WHEN TRADITION OVERSHADOWS EQUALITY

Study on the population's perceptions of gender roles in decision-making



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On September 28, 2025, regular parliamentary elections will be held in the Republic of Moldova to elect 101 members of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova for the 12th legislature, the sole legislative and supreme representative body of the people. The election will be declared valid if at least one-third of the voters registered on the electoral rolls turn out to vote. Access to Parliament is conditional on reaching the electoral threshold set by law: 5% for political parties, 7% for electoral blocs, and 2% for independent candidates. This election will be an essential test for the consolidation of democracy in the Republic of Moldova and for assessing how the principles of equal opportunities and fair representation between women and men are respected.

Elections are not just voting exercises, but defining moments that indicate the level of democratic maturity of a society. They provide a framework through which we can observe the extent to which the principles of gender equality, enshrined in legislation, are translated into practical realities and reflected in the process of selecting and electing candidates. Elections thus become a barometer of society's openness to the equal participation of women and men in political life, revealing both the progress achieved through policies and regulatory mechanisms and the persistent barriers—from stereotypes and discriminatory perceptions to unequal access to resources and public visibility.

The Partnership for Development Center (CPD) has been monitoring parliamentary and local elections from a gender equality perspective for more than 15 years. The analysis of the regular parliamentary elections of September 28, 2025 covers several areas: **(i)** how men and women are represented on the list of candidates: compliance with the minimum representation quota of 40% for both sexes when drawing up the lists of candidates for the early parliamentary elections and the positioning of candidates on the lists in accordance with the latest legislation (a minimum of four candidates for every ten places); **(ii)** the income and economic opportunities of male and female candidates: analysis of the income declarations of male and female candidates and correlation with their presence on the lists of candidates. **(iii)** access of male and female candidates to the media: the analysis covers four types of media products: news, talk shows, election debates, and commercials. The purpose of the monitoring is to identify the level of presence of women in general in the television media during the election campaign and to correlate this with their presence on the candidate lists. **(iv)** voters' perceptions of female and male candidates: this analysis was based on an opinion poll in which respondents comment on gender roles in the family, household, and society; **(v)** parties' electoral programs: examination of political commitments to gender equality and inclusion by assessing the measures and promises made in electoral programs and the willingness of parties to support legislative initiatives in this area; **(vi)** gender analysis of lower-level electoral bodies and the electoral apparatus: assessment of the composition of constituency councils, electoral offices, and electronic system operators to identify the degree of compliance with the principle of gender balance and barriers that may limit women's participation in election administration structures.

This report is the first in a series of reports prepared by the Partnership for Development Center (CPD) in the context of the 2025 parliamentary elections and aims to investigate voters' perceptions of gender roles, the involvement of women and men in politics, and how these perceptions influence their participation in the electoral process. The analysis focuses on how stereotypes and social attitudes condition the real chances of women and men to accede to elected office and be accepted by the electorate as legitimate political leaders. Through this research, CPD aims not only to measure the persistence or dynamics of stereotypes, but also to provide a solid empirical database to serve as a foundation for public policies, educational programs, and information campaigns. The ultimate goal is to contribute to reducing gender bias, encouraging equal participation of women and men in political life, and strengthening authentic and inclusive democracy in the Republic of Moldova.

VOTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE

Gender stereotypes about the role of women in society not only persist but are becoming more pronounced. Data from recent years show that, although there are some fluctuations, gender stereotypes continue to be strongly held by a significant part of the population and are even intensifying. The proportion of those who believe that women "have no place in politics" has increased from 18.2% in 2021 to 26.2% in 2025, reflecting a strengthening of negative attitudes towards women's involvement in the political process. At the same time, the perception that women are "less capable of holding leadership positions" remains relatively constant at a high level of almost 20%, confirming the persistence of prejudices about women's abilities. Stereotypes about private life are much more pronounced. The proportion of those who believe that "a woman's destiny is family and household" has increased significantly, from 47.9% in 2021 to 62.4% in 2025. At the same time, nearly 70% of respondents believe that "it is more the duty of men to bring money into the home," and over 55% believe that "household chores" are primarily the responsibility of women. This paradoxical trend can be explained by several factors. On the one hand, traditional expectations persist in society that women should take priority in caring for the family and household, and their involvement in politics is perceived as a deviation from these roles. On the other hand, the multiple crises that Moldova faced between 2020 and 2024—the energy crisis, the pandemic, security crises, and inflation—were associated with the political leaders in power, most of whom were women. Although these crises were global and structural, responsibility for their effects was disproportionately attributed to women in decision-making positions, which reinforced critical perceptions and fueled the false idea that women are less competent to lead a state. Another major factor contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypes is the visible increase in hate speech and sexist attacks against women politicians. According to the Promo-LEX report¹ on hate speech in the 2024 elections, women were among the most frequently targeted social groups, alongside the LGBTQI+ community and politicians in general, being the target of dozens of cases of sexist and derogatory attacks in the media and on social networks. These attacks not only reflect but also fuel traditionalist perceptions, discouraging women from entering politics and reinforcing the public opinion that their role should remain primarily in caring for their families and children.

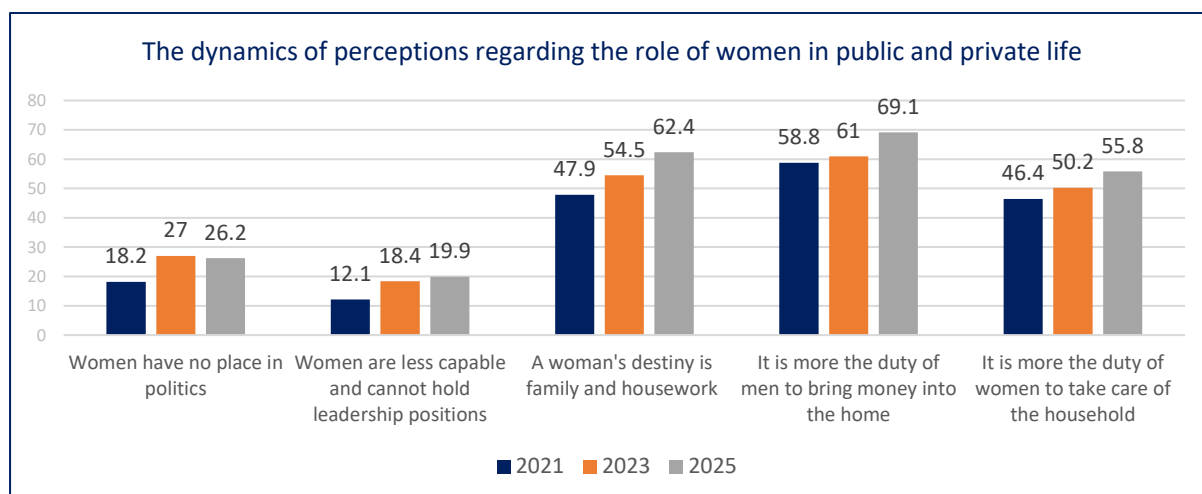


Figure 1. Public perceptions of women's role in public and private life, 2021-2025, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

¹ https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/raport-du_ap_rrc_2024_machetat_2025-1.pdf

Gender stereotypes are particularly pronounced among men, people with low levels of education, and those living in rural areas. According to the data below, between 2021 and 2025 there was a significant increase in the proportion of people who share stereotypes about the role of women in the family and in decision-making, especially in certain social categories. The most visible jump is among men, where the proportion increased from 35.6% in 2021 to 46% in 2025 (by 10.4 p.p.), confirming that they remain the main bearers of traditionalist views, with almost every second man sharing such views. Differences are also visible according to the level of education, where people with incomplete or secondary education record the highest values of agreement with the statements provided (58.5% and 47.6%, respectively), while among those with higher education the share remains lower than in the other groups of respondents (27%). The place of residence accentuates these discrepancies: currently, almost half of the inhabitants of rural areas share stereotypes, compared to 33.6% of respondents in urban areas, which reconfirms the prominence of a stronger traditionalist culture in rural areas. Occupational status also shows quite significant differences, confirming that stereotypes are more prevalent among economically inactive people (43.3%) than among those who are economically active (32.3%). In terms of socioeconomic status, stereotypes are more common among people with low incomes (36.5%) and less common among those with medium and high incomes. At the same time, we see a worrying trend from an age perspective: while the proportion of people aged 60+ who share gender stereotypes remains quite high (45.5%), stereotypes are also growing strongly among young people aged 18–29, reaching a share of 37.6% of respondents in 2025, compared to 27.6% in 2021. Therefore, there is a very alarming trend towards the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and even the consolidation of traditionalist mentalities among younger people, contrary to expectations of greater openness to equality.

**Average of respondents who said they totally agree or somewhat agree with the following statements: "Women have no place in politics"; "Women are less capable and cannot hold leadership positions"; "A woman's destiny is family and household"; "It is more the duty of women to take care of the house."*

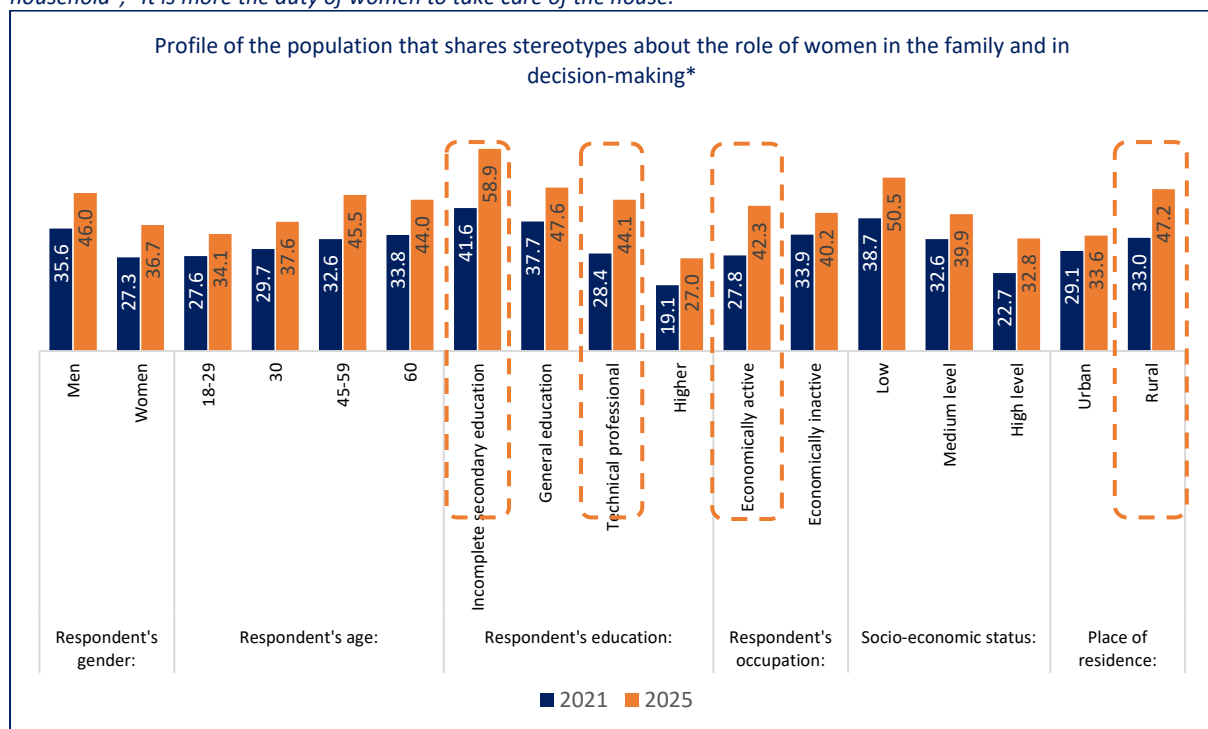


Figure 2. Profile of the population that shares gender stereotypes about the role of women in the family and decision-making, by socio-demographic categories, 2021, 2025, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2021–2025

Voters' preferences remain strongly oriented towards men in public and elected office. According to the research data, most respondents continue to associate leadership positions with men, and

women are preferred only for roles perceived as "closer to family and community." Thus, almost one-third of citizens (31.7%) would prefer a man as president of the country, compared to only 3.3% who would choose a woman. The same trend continues for the position of deputy (23.2% for men vs. 3.2% for women), mayor (27% vs. 3.5%), and district president (27.4% vs. 2.9%). Even at the local level, in the case of district or local council members, the preference for men remains four times higher than for women. The only positions where women are given greater preference are those in the educational and family spheres: school principal (17% for women vs. 16.9% for men) and chair of the parents' committee (12.2% for women, equal to the percentage for men). This confirms the persistence of the traditionalist perception that women are more suited to fields associated with education and care, and men to leadership positions in the state. The evolution of preferences for the position of deputy between 2019 and 2025 reinforces the same conclusion. In 2023, almost one in three voters would have preferred a man in this position, while only 5% would have chosen a woman. Even though in 2025 the preference for men fell slightly to 23.2%, the difference compared to women remains overwhelming (3.2%). These preferences directly reflect previous responses regarding gender roles, where women are perceived as belonging to the family and household sphere, and men as being more suited to leadership and political representation roles.

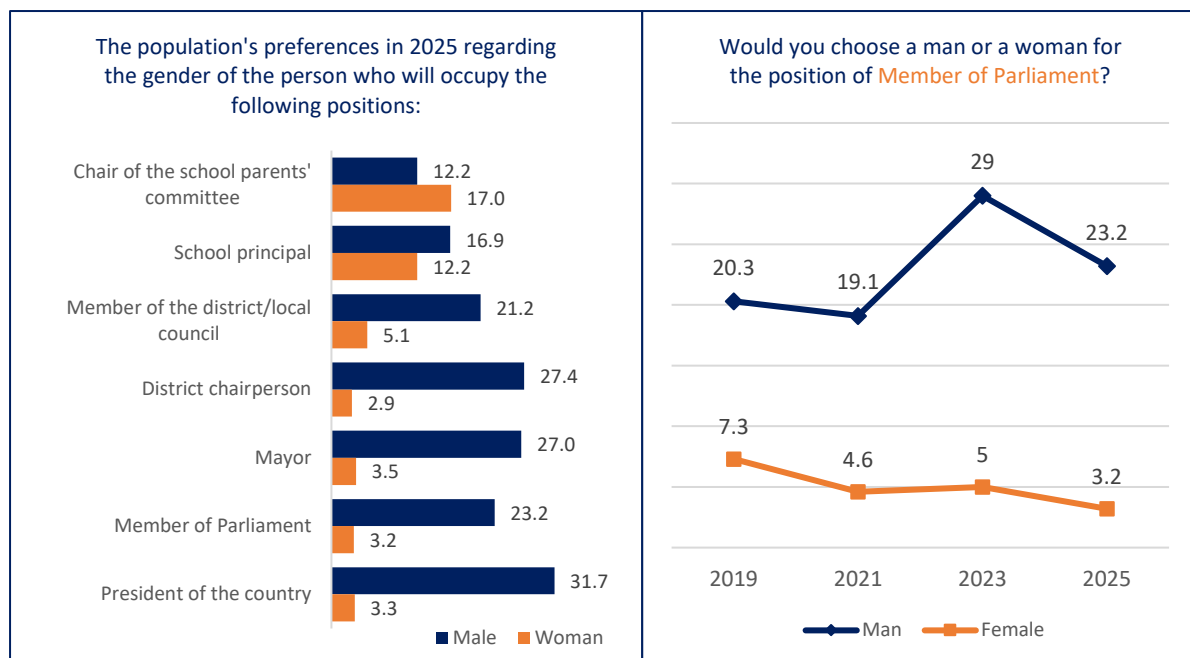


Figure 3. Population preferences regarding the gender of persons in public and elected office, by gender, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2019–2025

People attribute a number of characteristics to MPs that they consider essential for them to be perceived as legitimate representatives of society. The five most important qualities are: being a simple person from society who understands the problems of the population (80.3%); having political experience (80.0%); having experience in business/management (71.6%); having higher education in Moldova (74.2%); and be a person with financial resources (63.8%). In addition to these criteria, there has been an increase in the importance of traditional and conservative elements. The share of those for whom the decisive criteria for a deputy, such as religious affiliation, increased from 33.3% in 2021 to 53.6% in 2025, being married from 37.1% to 44.2%, and having children from 37.0% to 47.9%. At the same time, the age criterion is also becoming more important: 36.3% of respondents prefer MPs to be over 40, while only 24.9% would opt for someone younger than that. It is alarming that such criteria, which relate to private life, family status, or age, rather than the ability to perform a public function, are gaining ground, because they reduce the chances of unmarried, childless, young, or non-religious people being perceived as legitimate politicians and, implicitly, restrict diversity in the decision-making process. What is also serious is that these criteria, combined with the declared

preference for men (22.3% vs. only 6.1% for women), perpetuate the image of the political leader as a man over 40, married, with children, religious, with political and managerial experience, higher education obtained in the Republic of Moldova, own financial resources, and perceived as "a simple person from society who understands people's problems."

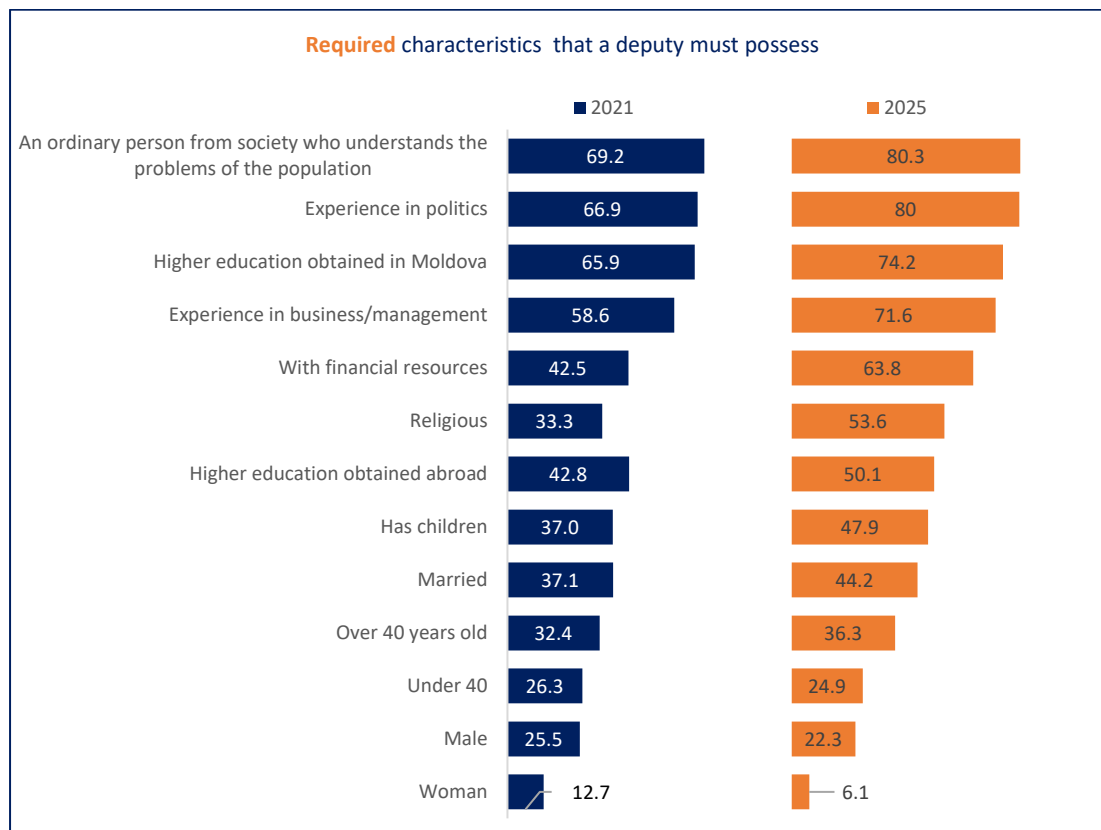


Figure 4. Characteristics considered necessary for an ideal member of parliament, 2021, 2025, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2021–2025

Traditional characteristics such as gender, religion, marriage, and children are considered "necessary" especially by men, older people, and those with low education. In the research, we set out to see if there are differences between socio-demographic groups in terms of the characteristics considered necessary for a member of parliament. The data show that these perceptions are not evenly distributed across society, but follow a clear pattern marked by gender, education, place of residence, and age. Thus, men mention much more frequently than women that a member of parliament should be male (24.5% versus 20.4%), which suggests a tendency to self-legitimise one's own social position and greater resistance to the idea of women's participation in politics. However, paradoxically, some women also share this view, which shows the strength of internalized stereotypes. On the other hand, the level of education radically differentiates attitudes: respondents with incomplete or average education are the most attached to religious and family criteria, with three out of four believing that MPs should be religious and over 60% believing that it is essential for them to be married and have children. In contrast, among those with higher education, the proportion is half that of those with lower levels of education, confirming that education plays a crucial role in reducing traditionalist perceptions and shifting the focus towards criteria related to competence rather than private life. In addition, we note that the living environment also determines certain opinions: in rural areas, almost one in three respondents believe that MPs should be male and two-thirds believe they should be religious, compared to only 16% and 40% in urban areas. This reconfirms the above statements that traditional norms continue to have a significant influence on political perceptions in rural areas. In terms of age, the differences confirm a more pronounced conservative orientation among people over 60, where almost two-thirds mention religion and more than half mention marital status and children as essential criteria for a member of parliament. In contrast,

among young people, these values decline significantly, with only a quarter considering that a member of parliament should be married or have children. This polarization shows that, although younger generations are distancing themselves from the traditional pattern, they are unable to sufficiently counterbalance the influence of older generations. In light of the above, we conclude that support for traditionalist criteria such as gender, religion, family status, and children is more characteristic of men, people with low levels of education, those living in rural areas, and older people. This reality shows not only the persistence of gender stereotypes, but also the fact that they are fueled and reproduced by social, educational, and cultural conditions, which makes the symbolic barriers to women's participation in politics stronger in some groups than in others.

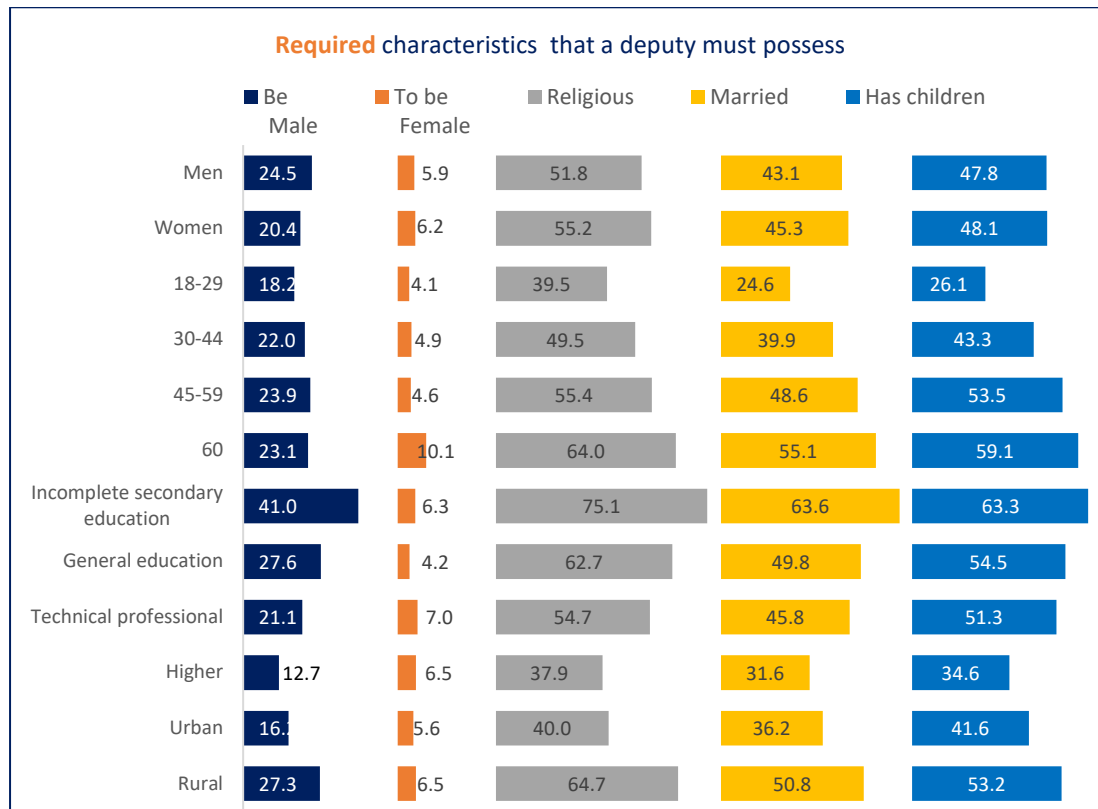


Figure 5. Support for traditionalist characteristics for MPs by socio-demographic groups, %
 Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

VOTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

Only young people are seen as needing greater representation in Parliament, while most respondents believe that the current number of women, people with disabilities, and minorities is sufficient. The research data reveal clear differences in perceptions of representation in Parliament. Young people are the only category for which almost half of respondents (48.7%) believe that their numbers should be higher, which shows an expectation for renewal of the political class. In the case of women, almost half of respondents (49.1%) say that the current level is sufficient, and only 12.2% say that there should be more. This opinion can be explained by the fact that after the application of the double quota system, the proportion of women in Parliament remained at 40% throughout the previous legislature. The situation is different for people with disabilities, where 34.2% believe that representation is sufficient, although in reality there are no MPs with disabilities. In the case of minorities, 38.4% of respondents consider that the current level of representation is sufficient, although in the previous legislature there was only one MP who declared himself to be Roma.

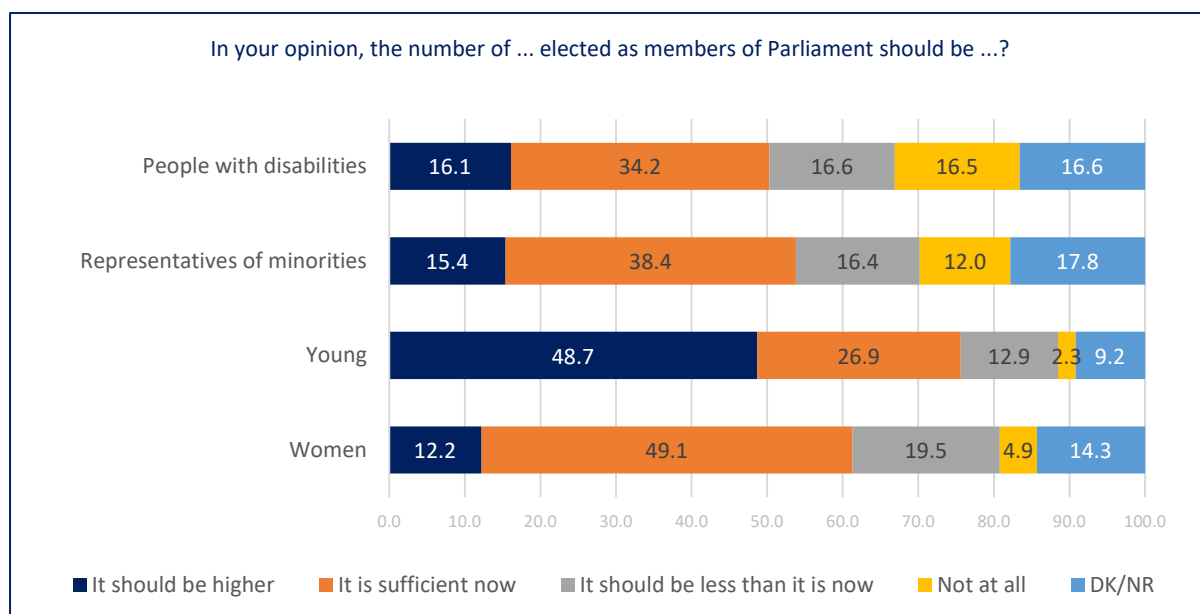


Figure 6. Population perceptions of the representation of women, young people, persons with disabilities, and minorities in Parliament, %

Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

Although the percentages are not very high, there are segments of the population that explicitly exclude women, young people, persons with disabilities, and representatives of minorities from among MPs. For women, opposition is stronger among men (7.1%) and people with low education, representing 12.2% of those with incomplete education and 8.1% of those with general secondary education. In the case of young people, the level of rejection is lower, but there is a peak among those with general secondary education (3.6%), suggesting that critical perceptions are related more to socio-educational status than to age itself. For representatives of minorities, rejection is noticeably higher, with 16.5% of people aged 30–44 and 14.3% of men believing that this group should not be represented in parliament. High values at all educational levels (between 10–13%) indicate that bias against minorities is more widespread and not exclusively related to education. The most alarming case is that of people with disabilities, where opposition is much more visible: 21% of people over 60 and 21.1% of those with incomplete education believe that they should not be in Parliament at all. On

average, between 15% and 20% of the population shares this exclusionary attitude, confirming the persistence of serious prejudices and structural discrimination. Overall, the data show that resistance to diverse representation in Parliament is fueled mainly by men, people with low levels of education and older age groups. The strongest prejudices are against people with disabilities and minorities, which shows that the inclusion of these groups remains one of the biggest challenges for representative democracy in the Republic of Moldova.

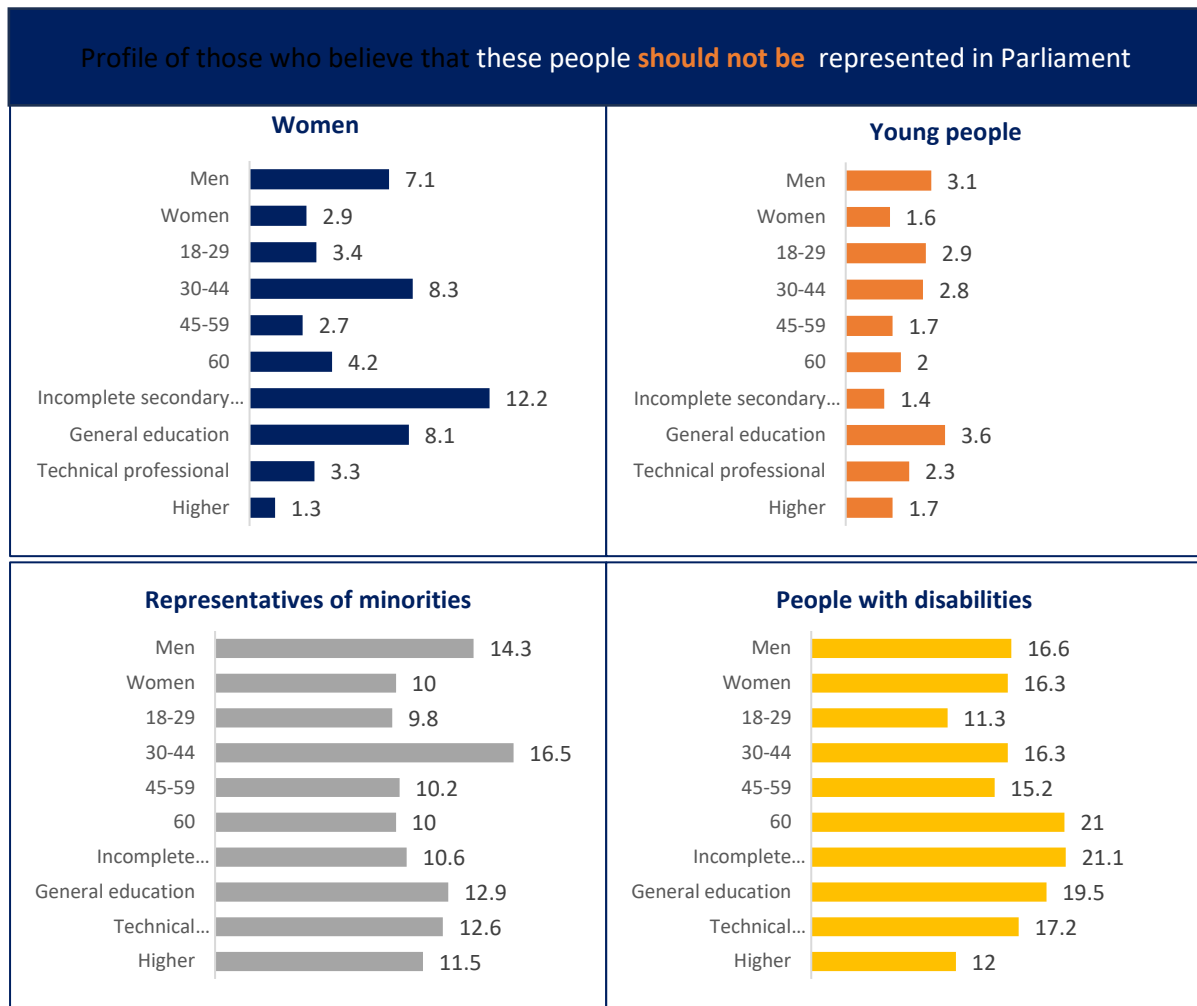


Figure 7. Profile of respondents who exclude certain social categories from parliamentary representation (women, young people, minorities, persons with disabilities)
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

Domestic responsibilities and traditional roles are seen as the main barrier limiting women's involvement in politics. The data show that many of the reasons cited for lack of political involvement are perceived as affecting women and men equally, for example, the perception that "politics is dirty and corrupt" (77.1%), lack of financial resources (79.4%), or lack of support from parties and the electorate (over 75%). These reasons relate to the general political context in the Republic of Moldova and are not explicitly associated with gender differences. However, there are some barriers that are perceived as being more specific to women. The most obvious is related to domestic responsibilities, mentioned by 20.5% of respondents, confirming that traditional roles of caregiving and domestic work continue to limit women's participation. Other reasons more frequently attributed to women are lack of confidence (10.7%), lack of family support (8.3%), and pressure from cultural norms regarding gender roles (9.8%). These data show that, beyond the structural barriers common to all, women are further disadvantaged by family responsibilities and social stereotypes. In contrast, some obstacles are perceived as more specific to men, although the proportion of those who stated this is quite low. These

include lack of support from other men (5.3%) and lack of support from women (7.6%), suggesting that in political competition, men feel more strongly the lack of solidarity within their own networks.

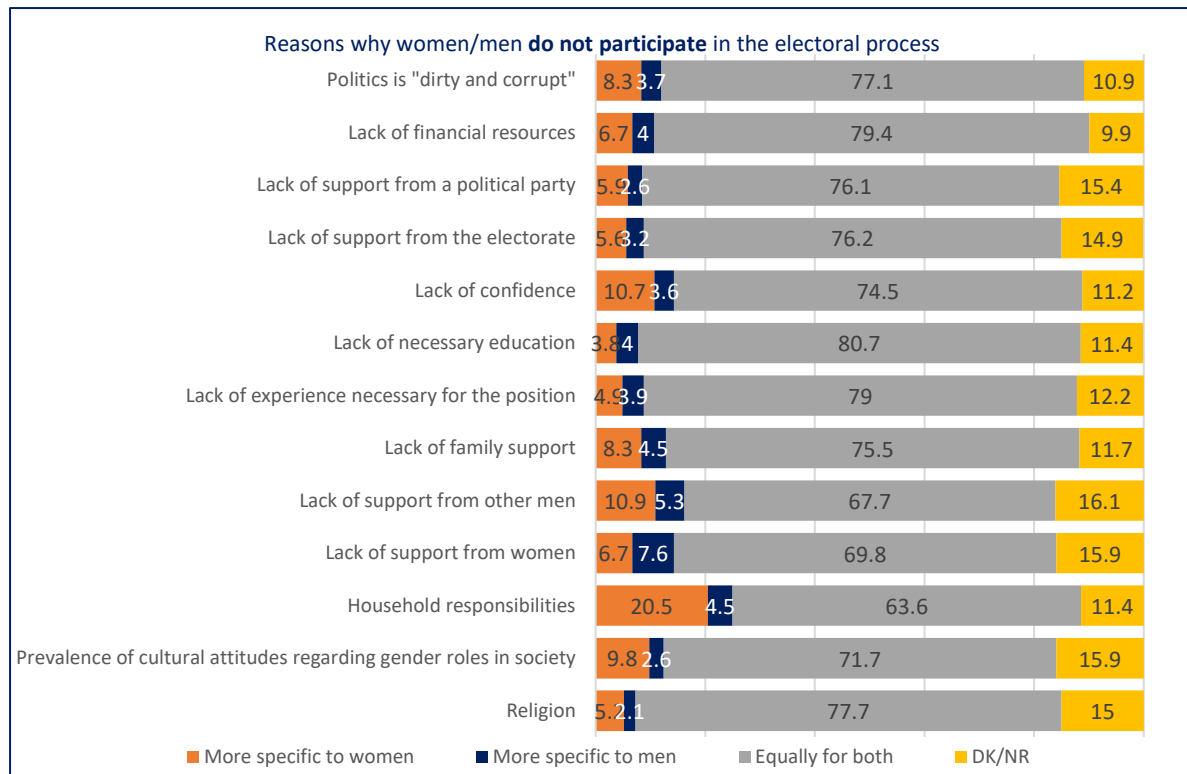


Figure 8. Perceived barriers to women's and men's involvement in the electoral process, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

Perceptions of barriers to women in politics have changed in recent years, but traditional roles and lack of support continue to be central elements. As mentioned above, domestic responsibilities remain the most commonly cited barrier for women: although they have decreased since 2021 (34.8%), in 2025 they are still cited by 20.5% of respondents. This confirms that caregiving and domestic work are consistently perceived as a major obstacle to women's participation in political life. Another significant barrier is lack of confidence, which has decreased from 18.4% in 2021 to 10.7% in 2025, suggesting a slight shift in perception, possibly influenced by the increased visibility of women in political office and the application of gender quotas. As for the lack of support from other men, this remains an important factor, but with fluctuating trends (14.5% in 2021, 8.3% in 2023, 10.9% in 2025). The persistence of this barrier highlights the role of male solidarity in access to resources and political careers, and the absence of this support can disadvantage women. Overall, the data show a decline in the importance of perceived barriers, but domestic responsibilities and lack of support from male networks continue to be seen as structural obstacles for women.

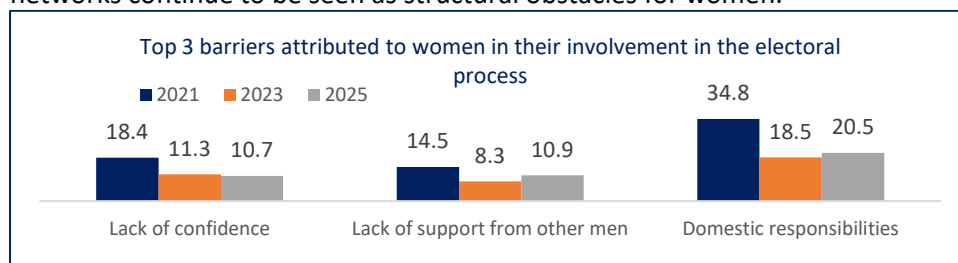


Figure 9. Perceived barriers to women's involvement in the electoral process,
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2021–2025

VOTER ENGAGEMENT IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS

More than half of Moldovan citizens (51.9%) fall into the passive category, i.e., people with little or no interest in the election campaign and the electoral process. An important element of this analysis concerns the behavioral aspects of voters during the election campaign, particularly with regard to their level of interest in the electoral process, in exercising their right to vote, etc. The level of involvement and interest of citizens was measured using an index based on six items² that reflect citizens' interest in the electoral process. The intensity of interest was estimated from 1 (low interest/involvement) to 5 (high interest/involvement). Based on this index, citizens were classified into three main groups, depending on their level of involvement and interest in the electoral process: (i) citizens who show active involvement, (ii) citizens with medium involvement, and (iii) citizens with low levels of interest and involvement. The data show that almost one-third (30.5%) show medium involvement, while only 17.7% of citizens can be considered active, following the news and electoral debates, analyzing the candidates' profiles, or participating in meetings with them. From a democratic perspective, this phenomenon is problematic because voter passivity can influence both the quality of public debate and the degree to which the right to vote is effectively exercised. It is reasonable to assume that those who are active in the election campaign are also the most likely to vote, while the passive group risks remaining outside the electoral process. Thus, differences in involvement not only reflect a level of interest in politics, but can also anticipate actual voting behavior.

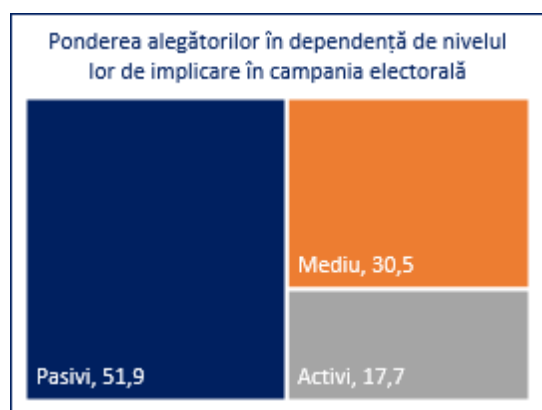


Figure 10. Voter groups according to their level of involvement in

the electoral process, %

Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

It is alarming that the proportion of passive voters is increasing year on year. Analyzing the level of voter engagement in election campaigns, we see a negative trend: the proportion of passive voters in 2025 exceeds 50%, an increase of 12.4% compared to the previous parliamentary election. Respectively, the proportion of active voters reached 17.7%, decreasing by approximately 2% from one election to another. This dynamic indicates not only a decline in interest in electoral processes, but also a decrease in citizens' confidence in the effectiveness of their involvement in this process.

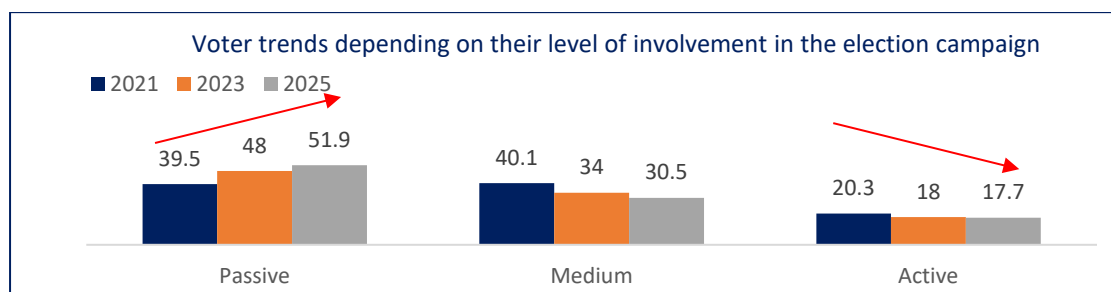


Figure 11. Trend of voter groups according to their level of involvement in the electoral process, %

Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2021-2025

² The items measure: how often citizens follow election-related news; how often they follow election debates; how much citizens analyze the profiles of candidates; how often voters are interested in participating in meetings with electoral candidates; how often they discuss/inform colleagues/family members/friends about electoral competitors; how interested citizens are in participating in electoral activities organized by electoral competitors.

In order to increase electoral involvement, it is essential to mobilize young people, people with low levels of education, low incomes, and linguistic minority communities, where passivity is most pronounced. The data show clear differences between social groups in terms of their level of involvement in the election campaign. The most passive are young people aged 18–29 (61.4%) and 30–44 (63.6%), as well as people with incomplete education (63.5%) or low income (55.7%). Similarly, the population that speaks Russian or languages other than Romanian/Moldovan has a higher proportion of passive people (60%). In contrast, the highest level of involvement is found among people over 60 (29.3% active) and those with higher education (21.1% active). These data suggest that if the aim is to increase citizen engagement in electoral discussions and processes, the focus should be on mobilizing young people, people with low levels of education, those on low incomes and linguistic minority communities. In these groups, the lack of interest or information is most pronounced, and civic education interventions, information campaigns, and the creation of accessible spaces for participation could have the greatest impact.

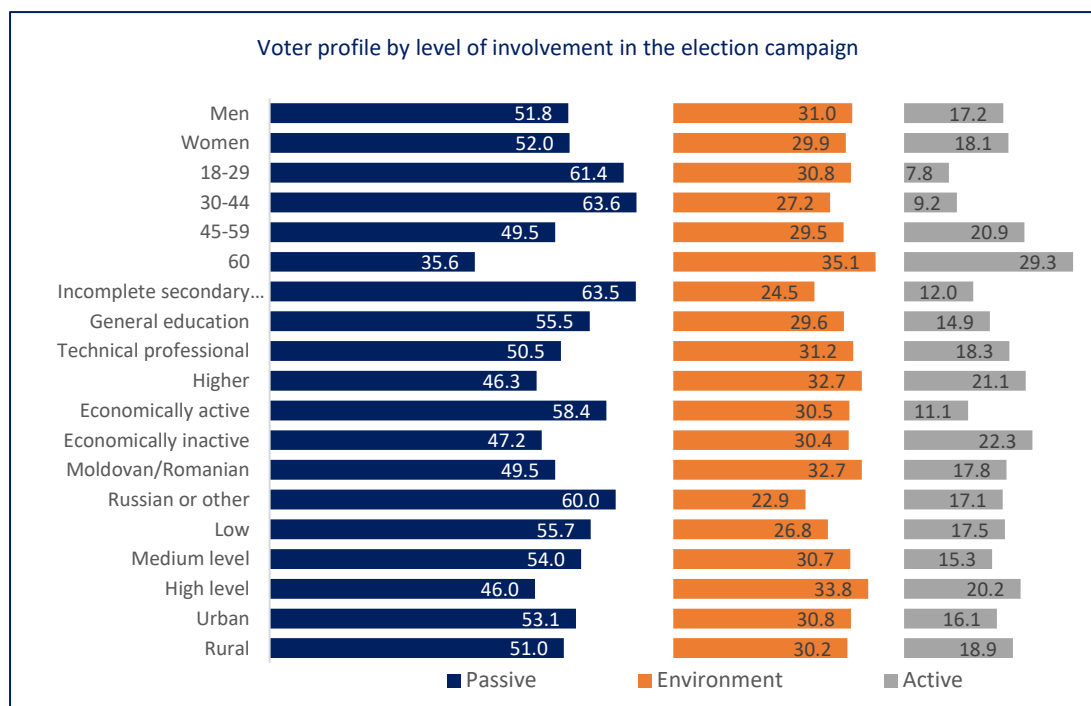


Figure 12. Voter groups according to their level of involvement in the electoral process, by demographic characteristics, %
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

Greater involvement reduces the preference for men in politics, but does not change traditional stereotypes about the roles of women and men in the family. The data show a paradoxical situation. **Active** voters, i.e. those most interested in election campaigns and informed about the political process, continue to reproduce traditional stereotypes about family roles: almost 70% believe that men should be the breadwinners, 60% that women's destiny is family and household, and half that housework is more the responsibility of women. However, when it comes to politics, only 1 in 5 openly say that women should not be involved or that they are less capable. This difference can be explained by the fact that stereotypes related to the private sphere are more deeply rooted and less socially contested, while in the political sphere there is still public and legislative pressure (such as gender quotas) that has normalized the presence of women to a certain extent. In other words, active voters are more accepting of women as political actors, but continue to assign them traditional roles in the family. On the other hand, when asked to choose between a man and a woman with the same skills, the majority say that gender does not matter (70–77%). However, the most passive voters tend to prefer a man more often (27.1%), which shows that a lack of information and contact with public debates keeps prejudices intact. The most active and those with medium involvement are more willing to accept a woman (5.2% and 3.8%, compared to only 2.3% among the passive). Overall, the situation

shows that civic engagement and exposure to political debate reduce explicit bias against women in the public sphere, but have not yet managed to erode traditional norms about gender roles in the family. This separation between "politics" and "private life" reflects an incomplete process of cultural change: women are "tolerated" in politics, but are still seen as having primary responsibility for the family and household.

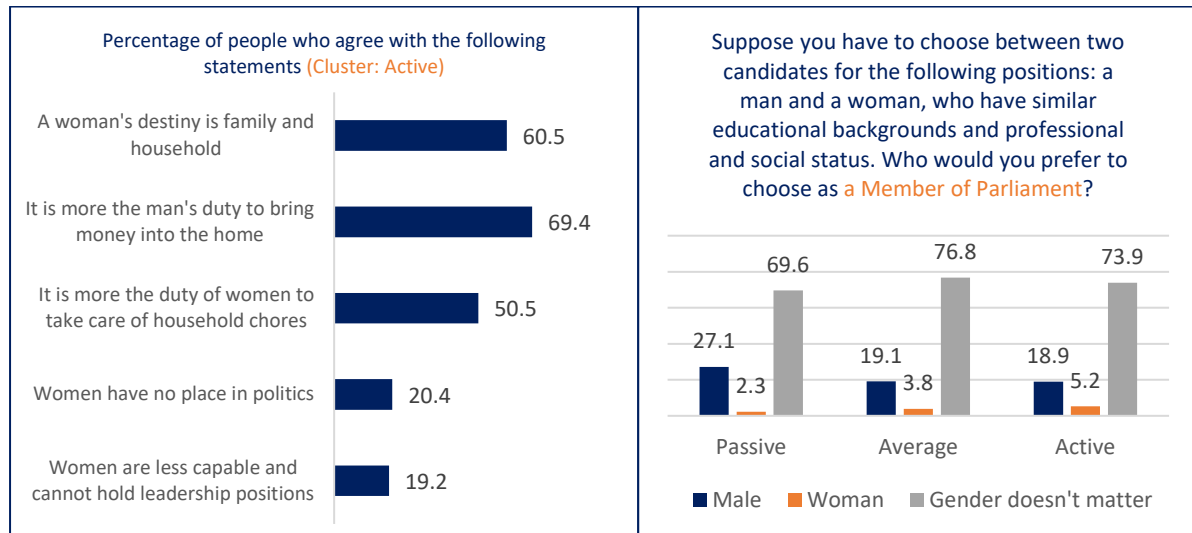


Figure 13. Share of gender stereotypes and electoral preferences among active, passive, and moderately involved voters
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

Top priorities for the new Parliament: corruption, living standards, and jobs. The data show that reducing corruption is the highest priority for citizens, especially for men (60%), but also for almost half of women (46.8%). The next two major issues, shared by both sexes, are raising living standards (44.1% of women and 40% of men) and job creation (46.3% of women and 44.9% of men). These results confirm that the public agenda is dominated by concerns about integrity and general economic conditions. Gender differences become apparent in areas related to social protection. Women place greater emphasis on increasing pensions and social benefits (33.6% compared to 27.7% of men) and on raising wages (38% compared to 35.3%). This reflects the fact that women, who are more frequently affected by wage inequalities and care responsibilities, associate their own and their family's well-being with direct financial support measures.

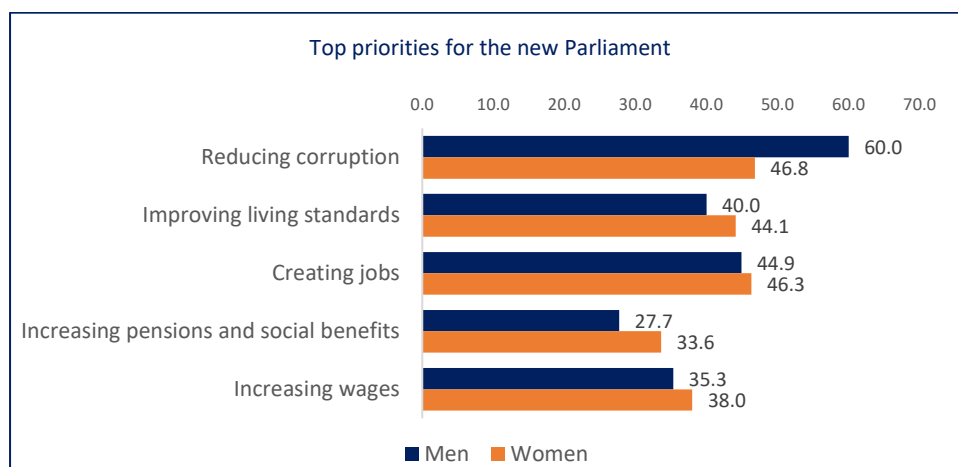


Figure 14. Citizens' main priorities for the new Parliament, broken down by gender
Source: CPD national opinion poll, 2025

FINDINGS

This section summarizes the findings of the study on Moldovan voters' perceptions of women's and men's participation in political life, the representation of underrepresented groups, and the level of involvement in the election campaign.

1. A woman's destiny is family and children: 62% of voters believe that a woman's destiny is to take care of the family and household, and almost 70% believe that men should be the main breadwinners in the household. This shows that, despite legislative progress, traditional gender roles remain deeply rooted in society.

2. Reticence towards women in politics is increasing: The proportion of those who say that women "have no place in politics" rose to around 26% in 2025, signaling a worsening of attitudes towards women's involvement in decision-making. In addition, about one in five respondents still believe that women are "less capable" of holding leadership positions—a high level that has remained relatively unchanged from previous years, confirming the persistence of gender bias in Moldovan politics.

3. Profile of those who support gender stereotypes: Stereotypes are more prevalent among men (46%), people with low levels of education (up to 58%), those in rural areas (47%), and seniors over 60 (45%). They are also common among people with low incomes or who are economically inactive, while only about a quarter of those with higher education share them.

4. Young people, the only ones voters want to see better represented: Almost half of voters (49%) want more young people in Parliament, but only 12% want more women. At the same time, more than a third consider the presence of people with disabilities and minorities to be sufficient, even though they are almost absent from the legislature.

5. More than half of voters are passive: half of Moldovan citizens (51.9%) fall into the category of passive voters, their share increasing from year to year, i.e., people with little or no interest in the election campaign and the voting process. Those most disinterested in politics are young people, with over 60% of people under 45 not getting involved, and voters with lower levels of education and income. In contrast, the highest level of civic engagement is found among people over 60 (approximately 29% are active voters) and those with higher education (21% active).

6. The ideal MP remains traditionalist: The preferred profile of a parliamentarian, in the perception of many voters, aligns with a conservative pattern. Approximately 22% of respondents say they would prefer a male MP (vs. only ~6% who would prefer a woman), and the importance of criteria such as religiosity, marital status, and having children has increased significantly—each being considered "necessary" by almost half of citizens. Thus, the image of an ideal politician emerges as a man over 40, married, with children and religious, in addition to attributes such as political experience, higher education (in the country) and personal financial resources.

7. Corruption, the number one priority: The fight against corruption dominates the public agenda, being mentioned as the main priority for the new Parliament by 60% of men and 46.8% of women. The next major concerns, shared by both sexes, are raising the standard of living of the population and creating jobs (indicated by approximately 40–46% of respondents). At the same time, women attach relatively greater importance to social protection measures, such as increasing pensions and wages (34% of women vs. 28% of men), a difference that reflects the different needs and perspectives of the genders.

8. Civic activism does not break down stereotypes at home – Although active voters mostly say that gender does not matter at the polls, 69.4% of them believe that men should support their families, and 60.5% believe that women's destiny is to be housewives. This paradox shows that exposure to political debate does not automatically mean overcoming traditional roles.

METHODOLOGY

The analytical report was prepared based on data generated by a nationally representative opinion poll conducted among the population aged 18+ in the Republic of Moldova. The research was conducted with the aim of identifying persistent stereotypes about gender roles, including the openness of the Moldovan electorate to women's participation in politics. The research was conducted by the Center for Sociological and Marketing Research "CBS-RESEARCH" on a sample of 1,117 people in the Republic of Moldova during August 2025.

Sample structure:

		Total		Respondent gender			
				Male		Female	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total		1117	100.0	486	100.0	631	100.0
Respondent gender:	Male	486	47.4	486	100.0	0	0
	Female	631	52.6	0	0	631	100.0
Respondent's age:	18-29	206	14.2	10	15.6	106	12.8
	30-44	268	30.8	116	33.4	152	28.4
	45-59	246	28.9	118	30.1	128	27.7
	60+ years	397	26.2	152	20.8	245	31.0
Respondent's education:	Incomplete secondary education	131	12.9	51	11.6	80	14.0
	Overall averages	289	23.5	135	24.9	154	22.2
	Technical professionals	349	30.0	164	32.3	185	27.8
	Higher	345	33.7	135	31.2%	210	36.0
Respondent's occupation:	Economically active	370	41.7	178	46.8	192	37.1
	Economically inactive	747	58.3	308	53.2	439	62.9
Language of communication:	Romanian	866	77.4	369	75.5	497	79.2
	Russian or other	251	22.6	117	24.5	134	20.8
Socio-economic level:	Low	389	33.4	144	29.5	245	36.8
	Average level	377	33.4	174	34.8	203	32.2
	High	351	33.2	168	35.7	183	31.0
Place of residence:	Urban	493	45.0	224	46.6	269	43.6
	Rural	624	55.0	262	53.4	362	56.4

ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO VOTER CLUSTERS

In order to understand the level of citizen involvement in elections, respondents were classified into three groups in this study. Respondents were classified based on six items related to citizens' interest in the electoral process. The intensity of interest was estimated from 1 (low interest/involvement) to 5 (high interest/involvement).

How interested are you in the following aspects of this election campaign and the elections on September 28, 2025?

Items	Numerical value				
	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither	Somewhat interested	Very interested
I frequently follow election news	1	2	3	4	5
I frequently follow election debates	1	2	3	4	5
I analyze the profiles of electoral candidates	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in meetings between electoral competitors and voters	1	2	3	4	5
I inform my colleagues/family members and friends about the electoral candidates	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in electoral activities organized by electoral competitors	1	2	3	4	5

By applying the arithmetic mean, we were able to classify citizens into three groups depending on their level of involvement and interest in the electoral process: (i) **low involvement**— , who show no involvement or interest in the electoral process, or show it to a limited extent, with their responses scoring up to 2.5 points; (ii) **medium involvement** – people who show a medium level of involvement and interest in the electoral process, with their responses scoring between 2.6 and 3.5 points; and (iii) **high involvement** – people who show a high level of involvement and clear interest in the electoral process, their responses being rated between 3.6 and 5 points.

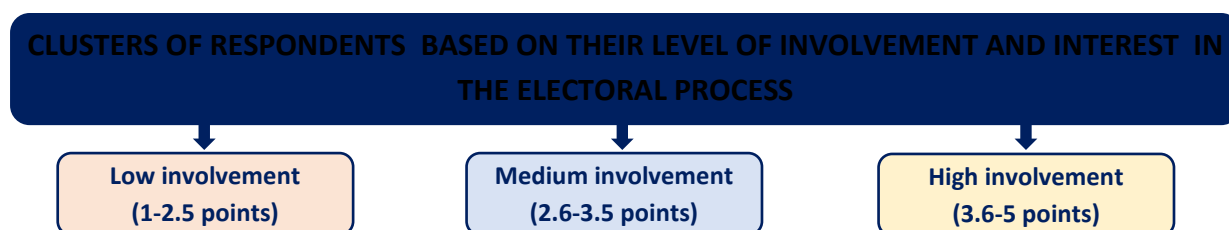


Figure 11. Clusters of respondents according to their level of involvement and interest in the electoral process
Source: Authors' calculations based on data generated by the CPD opinion poll, 2025

Sample structure:

		Respondent gender:								
		Total			Male			Female		
		Passive	Medium	Active	Passive	Environment	Assets	Liabilities	Environment	Assets
Total		51.9	30.5	17.7	51.8	31.0	17.2	52.0	29.9	18.1
Respondent gender:	Male	51.8	31.0	17.2	51.8	31.0	17.2	0	0	0
	Female	52.0	29.9	18.1	0	0	0	52.0	29.9	18.1
Respondent's age:	18-29	61.4	30.8	7.8	67.2	27.2	5.6	55.1	34.7	10.1
	30-44	63.6	27.2	9.2	57.7	32.4	9.9	69.7	21.7	8.6
	45-59	49.5	29.5	20.9	52.6	29.5	17.9	46.6	29.5	23.9
	60+ years	35.6	35.1	29.3	29.8	33.8	36.5	39.2	35.9	24.9
Respondent's education:	Incomplete secondary education	63.5	24.5	12.0	56.8	31.7	11.5	68.4	19.1	12.5
	Overall averages	55.5	29.6	14.9	56.8	26.5	16.7	54.2	32.7	13.1
	Technical professionals	50.5	31.2	18.3	53.4	26.6	20.0	47.4	36.1	16.6

	Higher	46.3	32.7	21.1	44.5	39.0	16.5	47.6	27.7	24.7
Respondent's occupation:	Economically active	58.4	30.5	11.1	56.5	34.3	9.2	60.6	26.1	13.3
	Economically inactive	47.2	30.4	22.3	47.7	28.1	24.2	46.9	32.2	20.9
Language of communication:	Moldovan / Romanian	49.5	32.7	17.8	48.2	34.8	17.0	50.7	30.8	18.5
	Russian or other	60	22.9	17.1	62.9	19.3	17.8	56.8	26.7	16.4
Socio-economic level:	Low	55.7	26.8	17.5	62.6	19.9	17.5	50.7	31.8	17.5
	Average level	54.0	30.7	15.3	50.6	33.7	15.7	57.2	27.8	15.0
	High	46.0	33.8	20.2	44.1	37.6	18.3	48.0	29.9	22.1
Place of residence:	Urban	53.1	30.8	16.1	52.3	33.4	14.3	53.8	28.3	17.9
	Rural	51.0	30.2	18.9	51.4	29.0	19.6	50.6	31.2	18.3

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Established in 1998, *the Partnership for Development Center (CPD)* is a public institution that aims to contribute to the promotion of an inclusive discourse on gender issues, the status of women, and equal opportunities for women and men. The CPD is a non-governmental organization that advocates for the implementation of the concept of gender equality in all areas of life, the promotion of public policies in this field, addressing issues related to the role of women in society and their empowerment, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. It also serves as a center for documentation, information, and training center for relevant NGOs and initiative groups.

Purpose. To develop and strengthen resources and mechanisms for the equitable empowerment of women and men in order to promote gender equality in the Republic of Moldova by supporting a coherent approach to influencing policies.

Mission. CPD promotes the values of gender equality as part of an open society in order to strengthen a genuine gender partnership.

Vision. CPD advocates for the building of a community with equal prospects and opportunities for its members, a society in which women and men are full citizens, able to solve problems together, benefit equally from new opportunities, and engage fully in political, economic, and social activities.

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